



Sport and the City

A provocation by *Future Places Studio*, exploring the relationship between sport and cities.

We are actively looking for partners to work with us on this research.

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What is the relationship between sport and our cities? Does sport have a bigger and more pivotal role to play as part of the placemaking mix on both a macro and micro scale? If so, how?

Sport has the potential to excite and enthuse. To bring young and old together and create a sense of community. To breathe life into forgotten places whilst creating meaning and personal connection. To create jobs and economic prosperity and to keep people well and active.

Sport can achieve many of the placemaking ambitions that urban spaces and places work so hard to accomplish. Despite this, it is questionable whether sport forms part of the placemaking 'kit of parts' as much as it could.

On a micro scale there are opportunities for sport to bring joy and energy to places, long term or temporarily. Chess boards on café tables, five a side pitches on office roof tops, basketball courts in redundant spaces and glass fronted squash and padel courts as part of high street parades. But sport can also be informal and integrated into squares and parks as playable landscapes for people of all ages.

On a macro level sport can fundamentally re-shape neighbourhoods and districts. The development or regeneration of stadiums can stimulate improved transport infrastructure, and lead to the development of new homes, workspaces and local amenities. Game day foot fall brings buzz, excitement and the creation of thousands of local jobs. On non-match days stadiums and venues can be animated for events, gatherings and community activities.

Despite the benefits that sport can bring, is its potential overlooked due to the associated challenges and negative connotations? Do skateparks and basketball courts lead to anti-social behaviour? Is there a business model in delivering space hungry pay-to-play facilities? Does the economic benefit of match day fans come at the cost of litter, noise and crowd trouble?

The ambition for this paper is to unpack the relationship between sport and our cities with a view to establishing a clear direction for how sport can play a greater role in the placemaking mix.

Our approach would be:

- 01 Interview industry leaders to establish key learnings from how to develop, design and deliver macro and micro sports-based propositions..
- 02 Explore the role of sport as a valuable meanwhile use.
- 03 Articulate the wider wellbeing and socioeconomic benefits of urban sports.
- 04 Identify and draw learnings from a series of best-in-class global case studies.
- 05 Establish and analyse the challenges associated with sport and the city.
- 06 Provide a tool kit for the built environment to integrate sport into their placemaking approach.

The aim is to undertake this research during summer 2023. The final output will be a digital report (with optional hard copy format) released in autumn 2023 with a networking event.

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