



SIGA

SPORT INTEGRITY JOURNAL

VOLUME 01
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THIS EDITION IS DEDICATED TO
**FEMALE LEADERSHIP
IN SPORT**

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#StandWithSIGA

WE'RE BACK IN PERSON
SEE OUR UPCOMING EVENTS
JOIN OUR GLOBAL MOVEMENT



FOREWORD

As the SIGA Global COO and Managing Director of #SIGAWomen I am very proud of the commitment SIGA, as an organisation, is making to enhance Female Leadership in Sport.

As I reflect on what has been accomplished by our global movement, I am enthused by the progress we have made, including our impactful #SIGAWomen Global Mentorship Programme, which returned in 2022 bigger, stronger, and better than ever. Across the board SIGA has cultivated an extensive network of incredible relationships and partnerships all united behind our quest for an equal playing field, starting with the boardroom of sports organisations as enshrined in the SIGA Universal Standards on Good Governance in Sport.

Just a few weeks ago, SIGA's Founding Member, Mastercard, activated their membership by hosting the 2022 iteration of our Summit on Female Leadership in Sport at their Technology Hub in Manhattan, with the in person element reminding us all that we are slowly returning to a sense of normality. The event was a celebration of female leadership in sport and a call to action for leaders, brands, and sports organisations in the industry to join our global movement to press for gender equity.

A special word of thanks to the vision of Alison Giordano, Vice President, Global Sponsorships and Consumer Marketing at Mastercard and Vice Chair of SIGA, who saw the potential that this thought leadership event could have and the reforms that we're promoting to promote gender equity in sport. However, the normality we are returning to needs to be a New Normal, a more Equitable Normal. This we know.

Through my role at SIGA I regularly engage with incredibly inspirational Female Leaders such as Jessica Berman, the newly appointed Commissioner of the NWSL, Sandra Lopez, CMO at Microsoft, and Renee Brown, pioneer at the WNBA to name but three. Their drive, commitment and example motivates me every time I meet them, and I have no doubt countless others share these feelings and aspire to follow in their footsteps. That's one of the reasons I am so encouraged that SIGA is committed to providing inspirational women platforms such as SIGAWoW, to showcase their leadership –at our events, collaborations and in this Special Edition of the Sport Integrity Journal.

I mention these women not to name-drop but to illustrate the powerful outcomes that can occur when an individual

opens previously closed doors. All pioneers had a catalyst for their actions, a role-model, a level of bravery, and the more Female Leaders we see, the larger the critical mass will become that follows. Their efforts and examples extend beyond Gender consideration and resonate widely across the entire Sport Integrity landscape.

SIGA seek to collaborate with such champions on individual and organisational levels to drive change. We are a multi stakeholder coalition that brings together all sides of the industry, united behind common goals. The topic of Female Leadership in Sport is of paramount importance, but it is just one aspect of the reform agenda that is part of our drive to promote Good Governance in our industry.

Our **GOALS** are enshrined in the **SIGA Universal Standards on Good Governance in Sport**. They matter because Integrity matters, because we can, and must, do more; and because diversity and inclusion matter in the boardroom and at every other level. These values are what underpin the **SIGA Universal Standards** and are what the **SIGA Independent Rating and Verification System (SIRVS)** evaluate. Combined, they will instigate deep seated cultural change and deliver greater accountability to sport, which is an industry like no other - that has the power to unite the world, generate billions in revenues and deliver social cohesion, which is now more important than ever in the turbulent times that we live in.

The contents of this Journal bear testament to what is possible and outline the challenges and opportunities presented to Women in Sport. This journal is a celebration of the women that have achieved Senior Leadership Positions, a galvanising portrait of where we are and where we can go as an industry, and perhaps more importantly it is also an invitation asking others to follow in their footsteps.

As such, I invite you to enjoy the Journal and join SIGA.

Thank you.



KATIE SIMMONDS
GLOBAL CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, SIGA
MANAGING DIRECTOR, #SIGAWOMEN



The Sport Integrity Global Alliance (SIGA) is the largest multi-stakeholder, global coalition for Sport Integrity. Founded in 2017, SIGA is dedicated to the delivery of sport, played and governed under the highest integrity standards, free from any form of unethical, illicit and criminal activity, to safeguard values and ensure its positive impact and benefits to all citizens. SIGA's mission is to provide global leadership, promote good governance and safeguard the integrity of sport through a set of universal standards operated and independently verified by an independent, neutral and global body.



ABOUT SIGA

SIGA is an independent, neutral, not for profit, membership based international organisation. We are not driven by any political motivation or commercial interest.



OUR VISION

SIGA works towards a vision of sport played and governed under the highest integrity standards, free from any form of unethical, illicit, and criminal activity, to safeguard sports values and ensure its positive impact and benefits to all citizens.



OUR MISSION

The mission of SIGA is to provide global leadership, promote good governance and safeguard the integrity of sport through a set of universal standards operated by an independent, neutral, and global body.

EDITOR'S FOREWORD

Welcome to the second edition of the **Sport Integrity Journal (SIJ)**. This edition of our on-going Quarterly Publication is dedicated to **Female Leadership in Sport**. We have a fantastic range of articles and interviews and I'd like to extend my personal appreciation to all those who contributed their time, knowledge and enabled us to produce this inspirational edition.

The SIJ is a core component of SIGA's commitment to delivering accessible content that showcases best practice, unique perspectives, barriers and opportunities for positive evolution and mechanisms to align behind mutual **Sport Integrity GOALS**. Through every edition it is our objective to provide Integrity Champions a platform to showcase Integrity in Sport and drive cultural change throughout the entire Sports Industry.

I am excited to hear your perspectives on our efforts and your thoughts regarding how we can evolve and make this more interactive and accessible moving forwards. You can reach me via email or our social media channels.

This SIJ edition has its origins in two questions that have been at the forefront of our minds for a considerable amount of time:

- **"How do we make our organisation more diverse and inclusive?"**
- **"How do we help facilitate cultural change so that other organisations are empowered to do likewise?"**

As the articles in this edition of the SIJ bear testament to – there can be no ambiguity – a diverse and inclusive organisation is a productive, dynamic and representative organisation. Moreover, it is clear that many other organisations, across the entire range of industries, are also asking themselves this question and working to rectify these issues. Which, in and of itself, is encouraging. However, it is clear these questions have needed to move from problem to solution for quite some time.

In this regard, from a SIGA perspective, within the following pages you will find opportunities for Female Leaders at various career stages to join us, including the **SIGA Council**, the **SIGA Youth Council** and via **SIGA**

Membership. Your participation and collaboration will be critical to helping us achieve our objectives.

Returning to the specific aim of this journal: It is to provide knowledge, examples, inspiration, frameworks and thought leadership that combine to act as a catalyst for widespread, deep rooted, cultural change so that other organisations can, and will, follow suit.

As is identified in the pages that follow - Quotas and Targets may be useful to some degree to move towards diversity but, fundamentally, increasing numbers is not the same thing as inclusivity in action. Nor will it deliver the associated benefits or insightful decision making. It is in that vein that I am delighted to include the perspectives of many inspirational examples of **Female Leadership in Action** and share their narratives to instigate meaningful reform that extends far beyond ticking boxes.

I trust you will feel equally empowered, enthused and motivated by these articles and join with us to continue to push for widespread Integrity reform in Sport.

Future editions of the SIJ will continue to apply this framework to different Sport Integrity themes. Our ambition is for the SIJ to continue to be the touchstone for Sport Integrity-related knowledge exchange. As such, I encourage all interested stakeholders that would like to explore collaboration, sponsorship or SIGA membership to contact me directly.

I look forward to hearing from you.



DR IAIN LINDSAY
SENIOR DIRECTOR, RESEARCH
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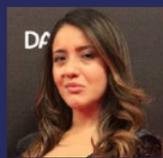


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INTEGRITY LEADERSHIP INTERVIEW

JESSICA BERMAN
 COMMISSIONER,
 NATIONAL WOMEN'S SOCCER LEAGUE (NWSL).



Firstly, congratulations on your recent appointment as NWSL Commissioner. If you reflect on your career trajectory what would you say were the key landmarks that helped you reach this leadership position; and what advice would you give to others who aspire to follow in your footsteps, especially young female executives?

Thank you so much. I'm incredibly excited to be joining the league at such a consequential moment in its' short history. Heading into the NWSL's 10th season, with its' first-ever collective bargaining agreement with the players association in place, a fan-base like no other in sport, and skyrocketing interest from sponsors, media partners and owners, the NWSL is poised to unlock its potential.

I believe that everyone has a superpower and it takes a lot of introspective self-reflection to identify and cultivate the unique attributes that make you uniquely you. My superpower is my ability to connect with people. When I was younger my mother told me I was a people collector; when I would meet someone interesting, I would make a connection and invest time and energy into the relationship, creating a meaningful connection. As the years and decades have passed in my career, that network has multiplied and I now feel fortunate to be surrounded by countless inspiring mentors,

mentees and peers, all of whom added tremendous value in shaping my career.

In terms of experiences, there were certainly pivotal moments in my career. One that comes to mind is the moment when I met Dan Mannix, who is the Chairman of the North American Advisory Board for SIGA. We were attending Sports Business Journal's Game Changers event and we were standing in a group of people conversing about sports business. The group dispersed and Dan boldly approached me and asked me where I wanted to be in 5 years and told me that I had massive career potential. At that time I had been at the National Hockey League for 12 years and was quite content with my career journey. I followed up and spent a half-day with Dan in his office to understand what he saw in me. Dan's question prompted me to ponder my career aspirations. That was a moment I will never forget and I will always be grateful for the confidence he instilled in me in that moment.

Of course there were many other experiences, for example, working for and with the sports industry icons at Proskauer Rose, working for and with Gary Bettman and Bill Daly at the NHL was priceless, and having the opportunity to work for and with Nick Sakiewicz at the NLL, all prepared me for this opportunity.

As for advice, I would say trust yourself, invest in yourself and be yourself. Say yes to opportunities,

accept constructive criticism when it's offered (and even seek it out), and remain rooted in who you are as a person. Accept the challenges that are presented, ask for help when you need it, and try to see your underrepresentation as a differentiator. The world is finally leaning into diversity and beginning to understand that different perspectives are the way we will make better business decisions – that means, we need people from all backgrounds to have a seat at the table.



You have taken the NWSL reigns at a particularly difficult time. The first 100 days are critical to any leadership transition. What concrete objectives do you intend to prioritise during your first 100 days for the NWSL?

My leadership style is rooted in listening. To develop our strategic plan and successfully lead through this incredibly important moment in the NWSL's history, I have to understand the challenges and opportunities for all of our constituencies. I will have the opportunity to infuse my vision into our path forward but building consensus and alignment with our stakeholder groups will be the key to success.

portunities for all of our constituencies. I will have the opportunity to infuse my vision into our path forward but building consensus and alignment with our stakeholder groups will be the key to success.

It is clear that you have an inspiring list of achievements on your CV. Interestingly, you have been quoted in the press to say that you „don't look like the other people who work in the sports industry“. How did this impact upon you as you progressed through your career; what can sport, as an industry, do to facilitate a cultural change towards greater diversity at the highest levels and how important is this shift in your opinion?

Nelson Mandela said, "Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they can understand." That quote has truly served as a guiding light for me. I remember being at an Islanders game as a kid and seeing two random

fans embrace following a goal. I asked them whether they knew each other and when they said they didn't and only were hugging and high-fiving because they shared a love for the Islanders, I knew I wanted to work in sports. I decided in that moment that I needed to work in an industry that had the power to do so much good.



You have a long history of alignment, mutual goals and shared objectives with the Sport Integrity Global Alliance (SIGA). What made you first want to get involved with SIGA and what would your message be to other sports stakeholders considering joining SIGA's collaborative approaches to multi-stakeholder led Sport Integrity reform?

The collaboration that SIGA leads around the world is critically important. SIGA's vision is for sport to be governed by the highest standards for integrity, safeguarding the values sport seeks to advance, and ensuring every person around the world benefits from the positive impact of sports.

I think anyone that works in our industry can get behind those goals and objectives and I hope more and more executives and organizations with continue to join us. These types of principles, and making them a priority, create the foundation for any organization's success.



SPORTS GOVERNANCE



DIVERSITY & INCLUSION: IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT PULLING UP A CHAIR

SABRINA IBÁÑEZ
Secretary General, Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI).



FINDING THE NEXT FEMALE LEADER

RADMILA TURNER
Head of National Federations & Sport / Youth & Anti-Doping Europe. International Basketball Federation (FIBA).



"IF I CAN SEE IT, I CAN BE IT": HARNESSING THE POWER OF INSPIRATION TO TAKE ACTION TOWARDS MORE BAME FEMALE LEADERS IN FOOTBALL

SARAH SOLÉMALÉ
Senior Governance Services Manager, FIFA.



FEMALE LEADERSHIP IN SPORT

GABRIELLA BASCELLI
President of the SS Lazio 1900 Foundation.





SABRINA IBÁÑEZ

Secretary General, Federation
Equestre Internationale.



SPORTS GOVERNANCE

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION: IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT PULLING UP A CHAIR



Equal access and opportunity to sport is a fundamental human right and it is this capacity for inclusivity that gives sport its true power.

Sport has the ability to transform the lives of people and communities around the world and our diverse groups of athletes demonstrate this power on a daily basis.

However, the organisational structures that currently exist across the sport's world are not as inclusive, and some groups of people are relegated to the side lines so they are not fully involved in important decision-making processes.

The issue of gender equality in sport has come under scrutiny in recent years. While some progress has been made on increasing gender equality on the field-of-play, unfortunately many sports governing structures still lack diversity and inclusion at the decision-making table.

To put this into perspective, as the Secretary General of the Fédération Equestre Internationale (FEI) I am currently one of only seven women who hold this position among the 39 Olympic and Summer sports federations. This is a disappointing statistic and a poor reflection of global demographics, as women make up more than half the world's population.

Diversity at the leadership level is not a nice-to-have but a must-have, especially for sports organisations that speak to a diverse stakeholder group and fan base, and are required to innovate constantly in order to remain competitive.

Moreover, inclusivity and good governance go hand-in-hand and the latter is a determining factor in the longevity of any organisation. If an organisation is to survive in the long run, then it needs to have as many views, opinions and ideas as possible informing its decision-making processes.

With diverse viewpoints at the decision-making table, we are more likely to have our finger on the pulse with key demographic groups and have someone put forward a position and viewpoint that may not have been taken into consideration otherwise.

McKinsey's Diversity Wins: Why Inclusion Matters report, published in 2019, showed that companies in the top quartile for gender diversity on executive teams were 25% more likely to have above-average profits. Those in the top quartile with ethnically and culturally diverse leadership teams outperformed companies in the fourth quartile by 36%.

But how do you move an organisation towards greater diversity and inclusion in the top levels of decision-making?

Top-down or bottom-up?

Shirley Chisholm, the first black woman to be elected to US Congress said, "If they don't give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair."

While I am a strong supporter of self-advocacy, I am not wholly convinced that just 'pulling up a seat' is a sustainable option for improving diversity and inclusion in sport structures.

This is because often the problem is with the table, and not the seat itself.

Simply increasing the presence of marginalised groups in decision-making circles may raise the level of diversity in organisation, but it does not always lead to inclusion.

The people around the table need to feel comfortable and confident of their contribution to the decision-making process. And it is more encouraging to be an active participant when you know that your presence at the table is based on your know-how, experience and skill, and not tokenism.

Sports organisations need to select the person best for the post, and not just tick the gender equality box, or indeed the ethnic minority or disability boxes. It's about giving everyone an equal opportunity to apply for and succeed in filling open positions, whether that is in the HQ workforce or on Boards and Technical Committees, or working as an Official.

If International Federations are to allow for an equal influence of power in decision-making, then as an organisation this requires us to 'fix the table' by taking a critical look at our working practices to pinpoint the areas for improvement and then actively searching for solutions.



Fighting unconscious bias

A common theme that comes through strongly in the literature on diversity and inclusion is that unconscious bias can limit inclusiveness in the workplace. And the FEI's history in the area of gender equality is a good example of the ways in which unconscious biases can impact our views and perceptions and lead to us to make incorrect assumptions about our organisational environments.

In 2019, the FEI dedicated an entire session to gender equality at the FEI Sports Forum. During this session we heard from an expert in leadership and human behaviour, which allowed us to take stock of where we are as a sport and to inject some new thinking and ideas into the discussion.

To the outside observer, it may seem that equestrian does not have a problem with gender equality.

After all, strict parity between men and women is at the heart of equestrian sport where male and female athletes compete as equals at all levels of competition from grassroots to the Olympic and Paralympic Games as well as World Championships.

While I am the FEI's first female Secretary General since the organisation was founded in 1921, our President Ingmar De Vos became the first male to head the organisation after a 28-year run of consecutive female presidents in 2014.

At the time of the 2019 Sports Forum, women made up 67% of the staff working at the FEI Headquarters in Lausanne (SUI) and this included entry and director level positions.

But a closer look at the figures showed, that while 65% of the FEI's managers were women, only 31% held the post of Director. And of the 14 FEI Board members at the time, only four were women.

Looking more broadly, across our 137 National Federations, we nearly reached gender equality when it came to the position of Secretary General with 43% women and 57% men. But this ratio fell when it came to Presidents, with only 23% women occupying that position. It was quite the eye-opener, because we had for so long patted ourselves on the back for being champions of gender equality on the field of play. But it was clear that we needed to match this in the workplace, at the Board and Committee level, not just at the FEI but also within our member Federations.

This level of self-analysis has forced us to pay more attention to the levels of gender equality in our organisational structures.

At the FEI Online General Assembly in 2020, the promotion and election of a number of women to full Board member status at the FEI General Assembly increased female representation from 28% to 38%.

While we still have some way to go to achieve full gender equality, challenging our widely held biases has helped to make small but meaningful improvements in our organisation.





Purposely shifting the dynamics in favour of inclusion

The end goal for most companies is to create a work culture where people feel confident to speak out and be heard, because without this, diversity is meaningless.

As inclusion strategist, cultural change analyst and influencer Verna Myers famously said, "Diversity is being invited to the party. Inclusion is being asked to dance."

Providing the right environment for this free flow of ideas is as important as hiring the right talent. And this setting can be provided by actively introducing policies and practices can help reduce structural barriers and create a more diverse and inclusive organisational culture, especially at the leadership level.

A key change to the wording of Article 2 in the FEI Statutes for example has made gender equality less of an internal numbers game and more about the professional capabilities of the individual, which in turn leads to more inclusion.

This Article now reads: "The FEI shall encourage and support the promotion of gender equality in sport at all levels and in all structures with a view to implementing the principle of equality in men and women." This is much stronger than the provision that was there before which said that the FEI needed to strive for "20% women leadership in the work place".

Corporate language policies, plays an important role in level of inclusion that can be created in an organisation. And while text changes to corporate policies may seem insignificant in the short run, it is a key first step in showing a commitment to change.

Can policy really affect diversity and inclusion?

From a governance perspective, the FEI experience has shown that diversity and inclusion is a mind-set that needs to be championed continuously from the top if it is to cascade down into the organisation and become embedded in its DNA.

While the examples provided in this article have primarily centred around gender equality, the work we have done in this area is slowly opening up the discussion about how we can make our work and our organisation more accessible to other marginalised groups.

As an International Federations that governs the Olympic and Para side of sport, we have made changes to our internal governance structures to ensure that the Para voice is consistently part of any decision making process. The Chair of the Para Dressage community is now a fully integrated member of the FEI Board.

We are also looking at ways to make our physical environment more accessible to people with disabilities, and to open our hiring practices to attract people of more diverse backgrounds to our work place.

While bottom up approaches have a role to play in challenging widely held beliefs about diversity and inclusion, top-down policy changes have had a real impact in providing the structure and space available for change to happen.

While an organisation's diversity and inclusion journey is rarely linear, even small modifications have can have a significant impact.

And if each sports organisation takes the time to analyse their internal practices and see what changes can be made, then maybe we can start to pack up the folding chairs once and for all.

SIGA COUNCIL

TERM 2021 - 2025

COMPOSITION

MEMBERS ELECTED ON 20.07.2021

					
FRANCO FRATTINI CHAIR (INDEPENDENT)	MOHAMMED HANZAB VICE CHAIR, CIVIL SOCIETY (ICSS)	ALISON GIORDANO VICE CHAIR, GLOBAL BUSINESS (MASTERCARD)	DENSIGN WHITE VICE CHAIR, SPORT (IMMAF)	EDDIE MARSHBAUM (QUEST)	JOÃO PAULO ALMEIDA (NATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE OF PORTUGAL)
					

EX OFFICIO

CO-OPTED

					
EMANUEL MACEDO DE MEDEIROS GLOBAL CEO	TAYLOR GREEN AD INTERIM CHAIR, SIGA YOUTH COUNCIL	KARIN KORB (INDEPENDENT)	KATE BEAVAN (INDEPENDENT)		
					

NOTE: In accordance with the SIGA Constitution and in compliance with SIGA's gender parity rule, 2 additional female members shall be co-opted to the SIGA Council

APPLICATIONS OPEN FOR TWO SENIOR FEMALE LEADERS TO JOIN SIGA COUNCIL!

The SIGA Council is responsible for setting the mission, strategic direction, policies and values, of the Association.

We are proud to continue to walk the talk and lead Sport Integrity Good Governance by example.

SIGA amended its Constitution to deliver Gender Parity throughout all our Internal Organs and are opening an accessible application process for two new senior female leaders to join the SIGA Council to achieve our commitment to reach gender equity across all of our internal organs.

We are passionate about broad representation and inclusion and seek to be as diverse as possible, and welcome applications from all stakeholder demographics. If this is something that you feel you could play an active role in we would welcome your application.

#StandwithSIGA #BreaktheBias

How to Apply?

If you are a senior female executive and would like to play an active role in shaping the future of sports governance, please send the following items to us at:

info@SIGA-Sport.com

- A Covering Letter
- CV with reference(s)

The deadline for applications is 18:00 CET on the 28th April 2022.



RADMILA TURNER

Head of National Federations & Sport / Youth & Anti-Doping Europe. International Basketball Federation (FIBA).



SPORTS GOVERNANCE

FINDING THE NEXT FEMALE LEADER



Topics such as gender equality, women's empowerment and increasing diversity in various organisations are not new. As society changes and discussions grow on this critical issue, we, in the sporting world, are still failing to match the leadership shown by other industries. This is a reflection of the fact that sport is still predominantly male-dominated and leadership positions "naturally" are taken by men.

Positive changes are starting to occur more often in various sporting organisations, and opportunities for women to assume leadership positions are growing. However, it is equally important to adequately prepare future female leaders by focusing on their individual development, support networks and mentoring.

Reflecting on my own personal journey, and those of other female friends and colleagues, I learned over the years that among the many factors that can affect one's professional path, perhaps the most important is to know yourself. In our recent programme for future female leaders WiLEAD, we started by using Insights Discovery, a psychometric tool which helps individuals understand themselves and how they interact with others through evaluating perceptions and communication preferences.

Our academic partners from the Business School of Northumbria University in the UK led a course which, through identifying each person's own individual strengths and areas for development, can develop more productive, respectful and positive working relationships. More specifically, through completing the Insights Profile, the WiLEAD participants learned about their own preferences and built on self-awareness, including how to improve on collaborating with others and how to overcome challenges and conflict.

This provided a very good base for building the following sessions "Exploring values, beliefs, and emotions in the workplace", "Personal journeys and development", "Building your resilience" and "The secret of time management".

When building the WiLEAD programme for 30 women, identified and nominated by their National Federations as future leaders, my colleague Elisabeth Cebrian and I had long discussions among ourselves and with other experienced women in our network and outside of the sporting world. We wanted to create a vibrant, interesting, and most importantly – impactful programme that would empower and motivate these young women to step up with competence and confidence into their new roles. It was important to create from the outset the relaxed atmosphere of teamship, friendship, sharing and motivating each other while at the same time learning and challenging oneself and others.



Using such tools in order to understand oneself well, reflect on your personal values, beliefs, emotions and goals is imperative before making major career decisions. Often, we move to a career path without having the opportunity to think properly if this is something we are passionate about, have the necessary personal traits and qualities for, and the ambitions to commit to long term.

In the sporting world this is very typical, particularly for elite athletes who look to transition to another career after competitive sport. Most prefer to stay involved in sport and to have an impact rather than just a small role in the organisation. When looking at the career path of some female elite athletes, we can find some very positive examples of successful transitions into leadership roles; however quite often we see stereotyping impeding their progress, the lack of a suitable support network, and limited education and training opportunities.

The typical stereotypes when describing female leaders as “too emotional”, “not tough enough” or “too tough”, being there because of a “quota”, etc. are still used often, particularly when a more attractive position opens. The best way to address such stereotypes is to find your voice, be true to your values, have the confidence to express yourself and most fundamentally, prove that you are a true professional – reliable, loyal, competent and team oriented. You also have to learn the importance of networking, both within your organisation and with other stakeholders.

With the WiLEAD programme, we offered 30 women the opportunity to hear from some amazing speakers, all sharing their personal careers and tips of how to succeed. Topics such as “Dealing with pressure; women in a male dominant environment”, “Changing Culture and Developing Inclusivity”, “Finding your personal career pathway” were led by outstanding leaders like Carol Callan, FIBA Americas President, Marijke Fleuren, President of EHF and Member of the IOC Commission “Women in Sport”, Aurélie Merle, Associate Director of Sport Paris 2024, Nadine Kessler, UEFA’s Head of Women’s football, and many others. Our aim was to offer a wide variety of opinions, case studies, experiences and advice from women who have reached leadership positions across a wide range of careers within the sports industry.

In addition to the proper and relevant education and training, the additions of mentorship and support networks are vitally important to the success of all aspirational young female leaders. Quotas have helped to open opportunities for women to join the boardrooms,

however, often they have been put in a position to compete with each other for a place. Clearly a change of culture is needed, and this takes time. Equally, growing the base by increasing the number of women who are competent, committed and interested in these high-level positions will solve this in due time.

Every organisation has the responsibility to invest in this process and every woman currently in a leadership position must commit to contribute and drive it forward.

Identifying a suitable mentor early in your career path is invaluable. This mentor can be a female or a male, depending on the support required at certain times. A person can have multiple mentors and draw support, advice, and positive energy from them, and this can offset many negative experiences.

We all need a good support network in order to strive. Equally, we can also offer support, lift, empower, encourage and motivate other women in their road to success.

WEB SUMMIT ON FEMALE LEADERSHIP IN SPORT 2022 | PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS



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The Web Summit on Female Leadership in Sport is the flagship thought leadership event which is part of the #SIGAWomen Mentorship Programme, designed to drive greater equality and opportunities for women in sport, as advocated by the SIGA Universal Standards on Good Governance in Sport.



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SARAH SOLEMALÉ

Senior Governance Services
Manager, FIFA.

FIFA

SPORTS GOVERNANCE

**“IF I CAN SEE IT, I CAN BE IT”:
HARNESSING THE POWER
OF INSPIRATION TO TAKE
ACTION TOWARDS MORE
BAME FEMALE LEADERS IN
FOOTBALL**



A couple of years ago, I decided to reflect on my almost ten-year career in the industry and eventually observed it was not evolving at the speed that I wanted it to on an internal comparative leadership scale. As such, I decided to take the bull by the horns and do everything I could to proactively prepare myself to take advantage of any leadership opportunities as they arose (unexpected or provoked). In particular, what motivated me at the time was the attestation drawn up throughout my career on many professionals whom I considered had a strong potential for growth within the organisation but, when given the opportunity, unfortunately failed to make the transition from manager to leader. I consider this a reality that is more prevalent for people like me, who can be described as BAME¹ professional women working in football, a demographic where promotion opportunities are statistically very low.

As a result, I strongly believe that the power of effective coaching can inspire greater performance and potential on an individual, a team and ultimately an organisation. As such, at the early stages of my career it made sense to me to seek opportunities to learn from others to enhance my outlook and skill sets accordingly. One such opportunity I came across at this time was the SIGA Global Female Mentorship Programme.

When I applied to join this initiative - as a mentee - several years ago, I was asked in the interview questionnaire to mention a woman who I thought was my role model, specifically in the sport industry. At the time, I reflected on my childhood memories when I was watching men's football thanks to the brilliant international career of a family member of mine. I also looked back on the early days of my career in sport law. Eventually, I replied to the questionnaire by referring to Michelle Obama and Serena Williams, sadly unable to think of a single BAME female reference from within the football sphere

Since then, filling this vacuum of BAME female representation at football leadership level has driven my constant interest for inspirational figures and has prompted me to create an uplifting chain of values to move myself and others into leadership.

¹ The acronym BAME stands for Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic and is defined as all ethnic groups except White ethnic groups

I also enrolled in a leadership course with Women in Football (WiF). There, I found in Ebru Koksal (the WiF Chairperson and lead of the program) an inspiring and empowering figure that helped me to develop the skills needed to fulfill my leadership potential throughout the course and beyond. I additionally integrated as a staff representative the Board of a network created within my organisation (i.e. FIFA Women's Network) in order to promote gender-equality internally and to provide a

In this regard I believe it is important to not only take, but to give back and the SIGA Global Female Mentorship Programme enabled me to do both; first under the brilliant mentorship of Katie Simmonds, and later becoming a mentor myself.

Being in charge of mentees who recently started in the sport industry granted me a valuable opportunity to support and encourage aspiring female leaders to notice their potential from the very start of their career in order to set their objectives at an early stage. It is an immense responsibility, which I take very seriously. I also intervene as guest lecturer in a couple of university programs where I do not hesitate to call on stereotypes and bias in the sport industry. I usually challenge my students to think outside the box since I believe they represent the next generation that shall continue the work that is currently being done to forge a more inclusive world for those that come after them.

From a now experienced practitioner perspective the quest for self-development is always on-going. I have found it very rewarding to exchange knowledge and experience in the framework of a boardroom, a mentorship session, or a university lecture. What I

platform for the development and empowerment of female employees. I have found there incredible women and men whose support has allowed me to thrive in developing new ideas and in designing new concepts to have more impact amongst our organisation as a whole. Throughout these experiences, the friendly and supportive relationships that naturally emerged created a positive network of likeminded people that I feel is very important to cultivate.

have learnt there, I have not found in the books or in my daily work. These hands on experiences that have been hard earned underpin my passion to share these pearls of wisdom and strategies with others that I wish I had learnt earlier in my career. Retrospectively I may have lacked proactiveness or awareness at the early stages of my professional career when it comes to leadership trainings and mentorship programs, but what is sure is that the latter were not as common as they are now in the football industry when I started off. I am therefore a big promoter of them, especially for BAME women who tend to feel isolated in the workplace, towards sport organisations as I myself have witnessed their positive effects on the short and long run.

Over the years, I have then become better acquainted with the overall football governance system and a fortiori with a few BAME female high officials working in football, such as FIFA Secretary General Fatma Samoura, FFF Secretary General Laura Georges or TCIFA President & FIFA and Concacaf Council member Sonia Fulford. Exchanging with them on so many different topics has been a game-changer and has authenticated values of mine such as hard-work, tenacity and self-abnegation as being essential and even more relevant for BAME women to make a difference in this industry. Through their role and their journey, these BAME female leaders have inspired me, and others, in the football industry via their actions, by using their voice to support important causes.



Through their tremendous responsibility as high-ranking women in football who have led by example, they have paved the way for girls and women to follow their lead and, in turn, to support other women. Indeed, in order to create an equal working culture, I believe that we, as BAME women, should not be scared to be bold and to believe that we deserve more than what the industry currently allows us to have. We should be more willing to challenge both ourselves, and the system, in which we navigate. We should be better at strategising, at designing a plan for ourselves and sticking to it. Fundamentally, we should be aware that in order to reach higher levels, we must show better solidarity amongst ourselves.

As a matter of fact, gender equality, diversity and inclusion; women's football and the promotion of more women in senior leadership positions are essential subject matters for FIFA. As an international organisation leading the World's most popular sport, it must ensure that everyone from bottom to top believes in

diversity insofar as diverse teams and leaders create greater innovation with differing approaches, questions and ideas. As it happens, following the outstanding success of the FIFA Women's World Cup (FWWC) in France in 2019 which inspired even more women and girls around the world, FIFA has taken a number of important steps, further highlighting its commitment to developing and empowering women on and off the pitch.

There are reasons to be optimistic, for instance, FIFA has launched for the 2020-2023 period a program for member associations (i.e. the FIFA Women's Development Programme) to further develop women's football on a sustainable basis whilst simultaneously pushing it forward into the mainstream, in line with FIFA Women's Football strategy². FIFA has also passed groundbreaking reforms to better protect female players, thus establishing new global minimum standards particularly in relation to maternity³. FIFA also provided USD 500,000 to every member association as part of the

COVID-19 Relief Plan to specifically support women's football from the financial impacts of the pandemic⁴ as the latter cannot be underestimated and in order to preserve the momentum of FWWC France 2019 towards the next one in 2023 in Australia and New Zealand.

Furthermore, FIFA continues to run a wide range of initiatives to support women across different divisions such as Women's Football, the FIFA Foundation as well as through development programmes led by our Member Associations Division. All this is in addition to FIFA's commitment to invest USD 1 billion to develop women's football over the current four-year cycle⁵. In terms of FIFA staff, amongst 63 nationalities, 42 per cent are women and 58 per cent are men. Obviously, more needs to be done to ensure a greater range of women (especially from BAME category) can reach leadership positions at FIFA, but the above proves that positive steps are being made and shall not stop there.

I hope that by sharing my testimonial, I am going to arouse further and constant actions by sport organisations regarding gender equality and the promotion of BAME women to leadership positions. I am also hoping to give women, in particular BAME female professionals in football, what I did not have: some inspiration and formalised direction into leadership. I hope I am showing them that we can be amazing leaders and we can always be evolving as leaders. Because:

"if I can see it, I can be it"!



² <https://www.fifa.com/media-releases/fifa-launches-programme-to-help-member-associations-further-develop-women-s-football>
³ <https://www.fifa.com/media-releases/fifa-council-passes-landmark-reforms-for-female-players-and-coaches-agrees-further-reforms-to-protect-women-in-football>
⁴ <https://publications.fifa.com/en/annual-report-2020/football-united-against-covid-19/covid-19-relief-plan/>
⁵ <https://publications.fifa.com/en/annual-report-2020/2020-financials-and-2022-budget/foreword-alejandra-dominguez/>

SPORTS GOVERNANCE

FEMALE LEADERSHIP IN SPORT



GABRIELLA BASCELLI

President of the SS Lazio 1900
Foundation.



Gabriella Bascelli has held and continues to hold a number of appointments in various institutions and sports clubs in Italy. In 2008, she was elected a board member for the Italian Rowing Federation and in 2013, she was awarded a certificate by the City of Rome for her achievements working for women in sports. In the same year, she was nominated as an honorary member of the Lazio Rowing Club and the Italian Rowing Federation. In 2018, she graduated with a BA in Political Science and International Relations, her second undergraduate degree, and in the following year she won a scholarship for an MBA in Sports Law, which was completed in 2020. Gabriella worked as Head of International Relations and Projects for the European Multisport Clubs Association from 2018 until early 2022. In 2020 she held the position of Vice President of Sport at the Circolo Canotteri Lazio club (Rowing Club). Currently, Gabriella works as a Junior Technical Expert at Studiare Sviluop Srl, in collaboration with the Department of Sport of the presidency of Council of Ministers in Italy and she is the President of the SS Lazio 1900 Foundation (<https://fondazionesslazio.org/en/the-foundation/>), a non-profit organisation, built on the foundations of the Lazio Multisport Club. She also served as an expert for the European Commission in 2022 for the #beactive awards.



If life has taught me anything it is that people still tend to judge a book by its cover. In a world where the fight against discrimination is one of the most prioritised values for many states globally, superficial traits still play an overbearing role. My path has never been easy, looking back now, I can affirm that in most cases my life decisions have always been dominated by decisions regarding gender equality.

As a young girl I attended an all-girls school and the first time I faced an issue regarding the topic at hand was when I fell in love with a male dominated sport, rowing. Despite achieving international success and the necessary qualification times, my first team refused to send my crew to the Junior World Championships as women's rowing was not a priority at the time. It was at this point that I decided to leave the club and find a new one in Italy. Coincidentally, my choice of new club was also a gender-based decision, many other rowing clubs did not accept women but my new one did. I went on to make the Italian national team and a mere 10 months later I broke the junior world rowing record and won the silver medal in the final. The biggest accomplishment however was seeing my old crew also race at the championships; my determination had opened the eyes of the coaches and the doors for female rowers in my home country.

Many policies have been put into place in the last decade regarding gender equality and it is comforting to see the rise in percentages of women advancing in many sectors of the work place, the situation in the sports world is still somewhat lagging. As a woman, and as a former professional

athlete, my goal has always been to support other women reach their goals in the sports world, both as athletes and as professionals in the workplace. As such, in 2018 I began collaborating with the European Multisport Club Association on projects concerning Social Inclusion, Gender Equality and Dual Careers.

Since then, some of the best opportunities for opening doors have been through the multi-national EU funded projects. I have also had the opportunity to help promote female access to minor or male-dominated sports (Field Hockey 4 Women and Women in Rowing) as well as helping women reach their goals in the workplace. Two projects, which are having a substantial effect on the lives and future working careers of athletes, are EDoC (European Day Of Care) and BounceBack which aim to create a bridge for former athletes into the professional world once their professional sporting careers.

The two projects Women in Rowing and Field Hockey 4 Women promoted the participation of young female athletes (13-16) in rowing and field hockey respectively. What we found was that collaboration between the international teams and coaches, especially the exchange in learnings and experiences, was extremely impactful. The feedback was positive and the girls involved cited it was important knowing that they were part of something bigger. This translated into enthusiasm and increased self-esteem, which constituted a vital foundation for the future of these young women.



One of my best experiences was collaborating in the EU Funded project ¹ SWinG (Supporting Women In achieving their Goals). When the project began in 2019, a survey was conducted on 41 sports organisations in Europe and the result was that only 25,9% of all board members were women only and 20,3% women held decision making positions. The objective of the project was to identify and support 20 emerging women leaders and empower them to become decision makers in the European sports' governing bodies.

This was achieved through three main phases:

Phase 1 – Research and Development, which consisted of academic research on the current state of play, best practices regarding mentorship and a review of external barriers that prevented women attaining leadership positions.

Phase 2 – Specialised Support and Campaigning that consisted of two components: the mentorship programme and the expertise brought in by the partners (capacity building and community development). This phase was the most critical and it included:

- Practical recruitment, selection, and matching of mentors and mentees;
- Curriculum development and delivery during mentor/mentee orientation sessions;
- Production of capacity-building tools and expert guidance;
- Activation of the SWinG community (various ring including mentors, mentees, project partners,& allies).

Phase 3 - Recommendations that were based on the outcomes of the 9 intellectual outputs and experiences during the project. This project delivered a "SWinG model" which can be consulted and used by all women aiming to reach decision-making positions in addition to a toolkit to help guide women who had already reached this level.

Many other national and international organisations have their own work plans and policies that contribute to gender equality. I was fortunate to collaborate with FISA (Fédération Internationale des Sociétés d'Aviron) and contribute to their inclusive strategies. In 2020 FISA formed a Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Cross-Commission, GEDI Management Group and GEDI Advisory Group. This included establishing a work group

every year to discuss and implement a strategic plan for gender equality, diversity and inclusion in the rowing world. The four main goals are Good Governance, Development Programmes, more Inclusive Events and Respectful Communication. The Working Group successfully developed a Proposed GEDI Position Statement; a Proposed GEDI Strategy and a Proposed Commission Duties which was presented to the Council in August 2021 and then to the Congress in October 2021 for the implementation of a cross-commission which started in January 2022.

Fortunately, these are not the only organisations or strategies that are being implemented but they are the ones that I have had a personal experience in and have experienced the benefits first-hand. There is, however, still a lot of work to be done to reach an equal distribution, according to a recent study by the Rockefeller Foundation², 1 in 4 Americans think it is more likely humans will colonize on Mars before half of all Fortune 500 CEOs are women. The Covid-19 pandemic has also played a role in reversing a lot of progress; I have witnessed women with booming careers voluntarily stepping back to look after their families during the heavy restrictions. The "solution" of online schooling and "smart working" was detrimental to many. Young children needed support and supervision during the virtual lessons. Even if the family could afford a baby sitter and/or au-pair for the entire day every day, Covid-19 limitations restricted this unless the babysitter lived with the family. The elderly were considered most at risk, so even for those who had grandparents close and could help, wouldn't rely on them for their own safety that meant that the family had to be the solution, which in most cases meant the mother having to choose. This should not be overlooked.

I feel it is important to carry on creating innovative strategies as female leadership at a global level isn't just fulfilling for women, it is also beneficial to the single economies. As food for thought I would like to conclude with an interesting fact from the McKinsey Global Institute Analysis which states that numerous studies have proved that gender-balanced organisations are 21% more likely to increase their profits and placing women in "non-traditional roles" could benefit a company's output by 25%. It also states that Global GDP could grow by 26% (28 trillion dollars/economic weight of US and China combined) if 95% of women would participate in the economy (vs. 64% of women which participate today).

¹ www.gamechangeher.org

² <https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/>

MEDIA & GLOBAL BUSINESS



**INTERVIEW:
LEADERSHIP
IN ACTION**

ANN CAIRNS
Executive Vice Chair, Mastercard;
Global Chair, 30% Club;
Chair, Financial Alliance for Women.



**VOICE FOR
CHANGE**

**SARAH CASTRO
LIZARAZO**
Director of Diario AS
Colombia & Deportes
Caracol Radio.



MEDIA & GLOBAL BUSINESS

LEADERSHIP IN ACTION INTERVIEW:

ANN CAIRNS

Executive Vice Chair, Mastercard;
Global Chair, 30% Club;
Chair, Financial Alliance for Women.



THE 30% CLUB

The 30% Club is a global campaign led by Chairs and CEOs taking action to increase gender diversity at board and senior management levels to a minimum of 30% - the point at which minority voices achieve critical mass and can be heard!

Under the leadership of Global Chair, Ann Cairns, the campaign continues to expand its international footprint with presence in 20 regions around the world. They support diversity in its very broadest sense and while gender has been their starting point, they fully realise that considerations of ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background and beyond are all part of the journey - and that gender identities are themselves evolving rapidly. They believe that only those organisations that foster truly inclusive cultures - cultures that embrace women who look, act and, importantly, THINK differently - can reach their full potential to positively impact their people, their markets and their communities.

Their GLOBAL MISSION: At least 30% representation of all women on all boards and C-suites globally.

You hold a variety of leadership roles, including being the executive vice chair at Mastercard and Global chair of the 30% club. Can you give us a brief summary of your impressive career journey?

I began my career as a research scientist. I was the first woman working offshore on the oil and gas rigs in Britain, and then I moved into international banking. I restructured Lehman during Chapter 11* and then I ended up with for the last 10 years at Mastercard, which has been the pinnacle of my career. I absolutely love this company.

Mastercard are one of the biggest global sponsors of sport and one of SIGA's founding members. Why does diversity and inclusion matter to a brand like Mastercard?

Diversity and inclusion are hugely important to us. We are no longer living in a world where just your share price matters.

You have to think about the customers you serve, the communities that you live in, and the people who work for you. Those three things have to come together and reflect each other. In our case, it's a no brainer to think about women because women make 85% of the day-to-day buying decisions, so they are hugely important part of the population as far as we're concerned. And remember that we reach 3 billion people on the planet through our network.

* Chapter 11 is a form of bankruptcy that involves a reorganization of a debtor's business affairs, debts and assets.



How are diversity and inclusion linked to integrity?

Really, when you think about what message you want to deliver to the world, I think people are expecting companies to stand for something these days; to have a purpose. We regularly hear the SIGA Global CEO Emanuel Macedo de Medeiros talk about the fact that we are living in quite dark times and we need to find a collaborative way forwards. I think that it's not just the political world, but it's also the corporate world that has to take a stand. To say we believe in acting in a right and appropriate way, and an honest way, and to deliver, the right level of service and to have people trust us that we're doing the right thing. I think that's not just true of companies, but it's true very much in the sporting world.

Which is why I applaud SIGA!

Corporate Social Responsibility is now, as you mentioned, more important than ever. How can SIGA attract other global brands like Mastercard to join our efforts?

I would say that you could do it in a similar way to the 30% club. The 30% club started in Britain at a time there were only 12% women on boards and we actually got together a group of CEOs and chairs and said:

- Do you want to change the world?
- Do you want to change your own companies?
- Do you want to create something that is much better for tomorrow?

And they said yes we do, and they pledged to go for more than 30% women at their corporate boards. Once they started to do that, they reached out to their own friends and colleagues, who were also CEOs and chairs of companies, and said this is just the right thing to do, It's the

decent thing to do and we should all be in it together. And through this we created this hugely powerful organisation of something like 1200 chairs and CEOs of the top companies in the world. In Britain, in the last few years, we moved from 12% women on boards to almost 40%, without quotas, without anything other than aspirational targets from the people at the top.

You touched on the word quotas and targets. Are they a necessary evil?

Sometimes they are. We like to think that we would go for aspirational targets because if you have a CEO or a chair that stands up and says I want my company to change, then they usually change the culture, whereas quotas and mandates often impose a change from outside.

That said, if you're not really getting any change to happen, then sometimes you need to have quotas to move things forwards.

How do we activate male chairs and CEOs around the mission to have at least 30% representation of all women on all boards

I think the way that you do it is, as I say, you set these targets and then work tirelessly to make them happen through collaboration. The 30% club operates in different countries around the world from Australia, to Japan, to Mexico. It's expanding across Latin America, and I think that you have to be very cognizant of culture when you're trying to instigate change and really get local people to want to move in that direction and that's really how you achieve it.



You mention recognising and overcoming regional and cultural barriers - what is your perception of those that cite cultural differences as a key barrier to reaching representation levels of 30%?

We would look to bring in people from other countries, certainly people who are running global businesses that influence the whole world, and try and have them discuss, introduce their ideas and drive that change globally. I think in the sporting world that's a very real phenomena because if I think about all of the things that Mastercard supports, like the Open tennis, the golf, the Rugby World Cup and football, these all span many different geographies and they bring people together from different countries. I think that is the power of sport, and the power of having ambassadors in sport, who can appeal to people around the world.

What can women do to help other women achieve positions of leadership? How can we get female leaders to drive change?

I think it's very incumbent upon people who climb to the top of their profession, people who are perhaps the best sports people in the world, to say I've climbed up the ladder and made it to the top. And now I'm going to reach down and help those people, and especially those women, coming behind me to make it an easier climb for them. This act of sharing the reasons that you're successful, sponsoring and mentoring those that follow is critical. We also need to put programmes in place that help develop them.

Inside Mastercard we've got a fantastic programme that I sponsor that actually puts senior women executives on Not-for-Profit boards. We started rolling it out in America. We're now rolling it out in Britain, Latin America and it will soon move to Singapore. The other thing that we did was when we saw how successful this was we expanded and we said, how about we do this for black Americans as well? Match them with Not-for-Profit boards? That was an even more successful programme, so I think the corporate world and the sporting world can come up with all sorts of ideas like this.

You mentioned about leaving a legacy and paving the way. What is your one piece of advice for young women, like the #SIGAWomen mentees, that aspire to leadership positions of their own? What would you tell them?

I would say, we're not on a level playing field. Let's admit that to ourselves. There isn't a single country in the world today where, under the law, women have equal rights to men. Including America, including Iceland, which is perhaps the most advanced, but even though we know we're not on a level playing field we can still get out there and play. We can change things and we can strive to be the best we can possibly be. You can reach for what you want and really go for it in life because life is not a rehearsal, and if you do that, whatever level you achieve, at least you'll know that you've done your best and you'll have a sense of self-esteem and respect.



SARAH CASTRO LIZARAZO

Director of Diario AS Colombia &
Deportes Caracol Radio.

as

MEDIA & GLOBAL BUSINESS

A VOICE FOR CHANGE



There are still times when I enter set and there are 30 men, I am the only woman and I think: 'This is so out of step with what's going on in society. How is it possible for us to connect with the audience like this?' Those are the words of the Australian actress Cate Blanchett in an interview with the newspaper El País, but they describe a scene that has been repeated in many industries over time, not least in the media or in sport.

It's an imbalance sustained by structures that are imposed by a society dominated and narrated by men, a society in which the voice of women is limited to private settings or specific roles, fundamentally linked to care-giving tasks. A society with a partial view of reality that presents an incomplete portrayal of the human experience.

Historically, some years ago, the world began to change thanks to the social and political struggles of women who put their rights at the forefront of efforts to instigate positive change and, with this, society began to change the narrative around gender. Today, we are going through a historic moment. Not only are women becoming more prominent in many aspects of life but are actively feminizing others. Expressing our experiences, needs, and vision of culture, politics, and economics.

This means that many women today not only do the work that was previously assigned to men, but we give it a different perspective. The way in which we lead and express ourselves reflects our multidimensional character, our history, and the legacy we want to leave behind. Processes in which we, as women, have found our voices and seek to help other women to find theirs too.

But what does this have to do with contemporary journalism and the sports industry?

Without a doubt, we are facing a moment in time where we are constantly questioning the relevance journalism continues to have inside the ecosystem where social platforms and the new forms of consuming information challenge its role in society. Despite all the obstacles that journalism and media companies face, it is impossible to deny that the audience is still interested in searching for, reading, and listening to relevant stories about sports and everything that surrounds the industry.



Journalism will change in response to this new reality where new values and issues have gained relevance. Issues like those I already mentioned though, to be honest, those subjects can never be discussed or brought up too much. At the same time, we must take advantage of the new social and technological platforms and opportunities to tell stories. To share these in ways that are objective and responsible whilst also understanding that the thing people prioritise now, more than ever, is their time. And those people that give us their valuable time must feel compelled, emotionally connected, and touched from the first moment they engage with our content to the last.

The challenge for the media and the sports industry is for all of us involved to take on the responsibility of connecting with audiences, fans, or clients through content that reflects the reality of what is happening on the streets, in the schools, and in the homes around the world. This is only possible if there is real analysis and change in organizations: it is not only up to us to give women more space in the news, but also to allow more and more women to reach positions of power in companies.

Weeks ago, the United States women's national football team (USWNT) reached a historic agreement with U.S. Soccer over equal pay. Megan Rapinoe highlighted the impact of this decision not only for this group of players but for generations to come. "This is a huge win for us. As always, there's really no justice going backwards. The only justice now is ensuring that this never happens again and this lawsuit is a massive step forward."

We are talking about representation. After the FIFA Women's World Cup France 2019, the IDB published a report that showed that the countries with the greatest presence in these tournaments coincide with those with the best levels of gender equality, according to the ranking of the World Economic Forum. That is, greater access to education, economic opportunities, health, and political empowerment. Norway and Sweden are the best examples of this.

The new dynamics of news consumption, like the relationship between our sources and our audience, have evolved. But because of that, in this new ecosystem, journalism needs to remember and embrace its' social responsibility. The responsibility to inform and add value to the conversation occurring within the world of sports. But, it goes beyond the industry. Because at the end of the day, sports amplify the transformation that society is undergoing. Our audience is not just looking for commentary on what is happening on the

field, they are expecting journalism that is able to write the history of our time through sport.

Historically journalism has had the challenge of informing, even if it means questioning power. It is true that the way power manifests itself and the way it relates to journalism has changed. But our duty will always be attached to good practices, promoting good governance, and holding those in power accountable

Journalism continues to matter because we are living in historic times that need good reporters, producers, editors ... that understand that unprecedented moments require more than just best practices and objectivity. We need journalism that can explain and present the new social context that understands and contextualises themes such as equity, diversity, social and racial justice, and intersectionality – to name but a few. Journalism is still the place where society finds context, different voices, narratives, and stories that help us understand the world around us. Information is power – the power to decide and act accordingly.



Megan Rapinoe

Although much remains to be done, the structures that historically belittled women are being reformed. Our experiences and needs have moved to the center in terms of both decision and market. Women's bodies have ceased to be objects and have become vehicles of change in sports, and in offices, where policies that will impact communities at various levels are decided. Simone Biles, for example, set the conversation about mental health at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.

As journalists we need to be conscious that at this moment in time, media outlets are not the only ones setting the agenda, society and its evolution are also doing it for us.

WEEK SIGA SPORT INTEGRITY 3RD EDITION

12 - 16
SEPTEMBER
2022

The Sport Integrity Week™ is aimed at promoting the implementation of the highest integrity standards at all levels and across all areas of Sport.

Bringing together relevant industry leaders, decision-makers and top experts, the Sport Integrity Week™ offers a unique, powerful platform to raise awareness about the most critical challenges facing Sport and the wider industry, facilitate collective action and pave the way to the necessary reforms.

Following the success of last year's inaugural Sport Integrity Week™, the third edition will take place in hybrid form for the first time following the success of the initial two entirely digital editions ensuring greater connectivity and enhancing the networking opportunities for speakers, exhibitors and delegates alike.



"Integrity is a value we take in our sport and personal life. What we learn in Sports can be applied in every area of our life. Sport Integrity Week is very important."

MIGUEL OLIVEIRA
MOTO GP PILOT - SIGA CHAMPION

#SIW2022

EXHIBITION AREAS (VIRTUAL & PHYSICAL)

ESTORIL CONGRESS CENTER, CASCAIS, PORTUGAL



- The Most Influential Leaders
- All Sports
- World Media Social Media Coverage
- All Continents
- Thought leadership
- Leading the Way for Sport Integrity Worldwide
- Action-Oriented Discussions
- Global Digital Event
- All Key Stakeholder Groups

5 DAYS DEDICATED TO SPORT INTEGRITY

THEMATIC WORLD CONFERENCE (INCLUDING KEYNOTES, FIRESIDE CHATS, PANELS SESSIONS, ETC)



SIW2020 & 2021 TARGETED EVENT NUMBERS

- +2500 DELEGATES
- +350 SPEAKERS
- +1,000,000 SIW TWITTER IMPRESSIONS
- +500,000 @SIGALLIANCE TWITTER IMPRESSIONS
- +100 WORLD CLASS HYBRID EVENTS
- +3000 COMMUNITY BOARD MESSAGES
- +5000 PRIVATE NETWORKING MESSAGES

TOP 5 AUDIENCES





SIGA SHOWCASE

WOMEN IN MMA: HOW IMMAF CHANGED THE LANDSCAPE OF WOMEN'S MMA WORLDWIDE



GOSHA MALIK
Director of Member Services, IMMAF.



JASMIN OSMAN
Writer, Women's Commission, International Mixed Martial Arts Federation (IMMAF) / IMMAF Young MMA Journalist Competition Runner-up 2021.



LEADERS OF TOMORROW TODAY

TAYLOR GREEN
Chair, SIGA Youth Council.



SQUASHING THE MYTH ON THE NEED FOR FEMALE LEADERSHIP?

ANGELA SMITH
Stoke City Supporters Club; Team GB World Champion Squash Athlete.





GOSHA MALIK

Director of Member Services,
International Mixed Martial Arts
Federation (IMMAF).



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Writer, Women's Commission, IMMAF /
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SIGA SHOWCASE

WOMEN IN MMA: HOW IMMAF CHANGED THE LANDSCAPE OF WOMEN'S MMA WORLDWIDE



Some people still find it hard to believe that mixed martial arts warrants female participation. However, Gosha Malik is amongst the heads at the IMMAF who would like to beg to differ. Fortunately, her actions, and those of her colleagues, at the Federation have proven the doubters wrong.

Born and raised in Poland, Gosha never believed that she would find herself calling England "home", much less as the Director of Member Services of an International Sports Organization and one of five female heads within the IMMAF's administration team. She reminisced on her journey into the world of mixed martial arts: "One of my colleagues at work was an MMA athlete and introduced me to the world of MMA. I never thought that my future would involve a career in MMA."

Gosha dreamt of travelling the world, but she never thought she'd be doing that while also playing a big role in a growing sport. One of the biggest things Gosha loves about her role as Director of Member Services is how she is able to connect with people around the world, especially within the last few years. The ease of modern communication has grown the IMMAF by leaps and bounds.

"Hosting Zoom meetings helped boost our personal relations with each member country's president; WhatsApp enabled us to create and maintain instant contact with federation leaders. Projects became available and could be completed much faster thanks to online tools. We

don't have to hide behind emails any longer, we can communicate directly and, more importantly, share experiences with others more easily. Who would have thought that this would be possible?"

Much like most of those involved with the IMMAF, she started working with the Federation as a volunteer – utilising her creativity from her professional experience in the hospitality and banking industries. The newness of the sport was what first attracted Gosha to MMA and her growing love for the sport as well as her involvement with the IMMAF. "When I became the Director of Member Services and started communicating directly with federations worldwide, I realised just how big the world of MMA really is. It completely blew my mind!"

The proudest moment of Gosha's tenure as Director of Member Services was the launch of the IMMAF Women's Commission alongside her colleague Hayzia Bellum. "It was a dream come true!" she said. "We were surprised at how quickly federations were setting up their own women's groups and commissions after the inauguration of IMMAF's Women's Commission."

Much like the rest of the world, 2020 was hard on Gosha and the IMMAF. But, rather than provide an endless shadow of uncertainty, 2021 provided hope – “IMMAF projects continued on and were even stronger than ever before. Federations worldwide achieved goal after goal, seminar and course participation hit all-time highs, and competitions started picking up around the world as countries started easing pandemic restrictions. It was so uplifting.”

Clearly, however, challenges still remain. Due to the lingering effects of COVID-19, the IMMAF had to implement constant and frequent testing on all participants and staff. Although the precautions were important for the protection of all involved in the competitions, it also became an extra burden on the IMMAF’s resources.

Increasing women’s participation within the world of MMA still remains a challenge. While conditions for female participants have not yet met the same standards as their male counterparts, the industry has definitely taken leaps and bounds within the last few years. Coaching female athletes remains the largest of the challenges the IMMAF faces and the push for increasing the number of female coaches within national teams remains strong. Gosha can’t help but feel tremendous pride to see more experienced, well-known, coaches now include their female counterparts within national teams.



“It’s the best example of addressing the needs of female athletes during competitions,” she explains.

“Women’s participation in MMA is still small compared to other sports,” she continued. “Lots of older girls never had the opportunity to compete until the IMMAF Championships kicked off. They could never find opponents in their home countries, but now they can participate on an international stage.”

But there’s still more for Gosha, the IMMAF, and their member federations to do. “Women still struggle to hold higher positions within member federation administrations. My dream would be to see one woman with a high-level position on each board.”

“I think for any branch of business I would say it does not matter if you are a man or a woman. But the IMMAF knows that MMA is far from being able to honestly say that, especially at the international level.”

“The time for fighting for women’s rights was done by our grandmothers and mothers, we just need to get to work now and use their victories to our advantage. Just knock on any possible door you think you need to open and I wish you good luck.”

Gosha is still hopeful that things will change for the better, and has a few words of advice for girls and women who are interested in joining the world of MMA:

“If you are an athlete and dream of getting into MMA, go for it. If you have admin experience, share it with your local federation – most of these organisations are working on a voluntary basis and helping hands are always appreciated. Plus, the MMA sport is still relatively new in many places and so it needs all the help it can get. There is nothing more rewarding than seeing the smiling face of a girl with a gold medal, female judge or referee during the bout raising the hand of a winner.”

Gosha believes that women in general still need to fight for their place in the world, but on a different level compared to that of the 70s and 80s.

GOALS



SIGA Invites you to #StandWithSIGA & support the Sport Integrity Goals.

A global movement is emerging and Sport Integrity is at its core. Bridging the insights of the world's youth and visionary leaders.

Setting the path for the future of Sport.

With One Vision | One Mission | One Voice



GOOD GOVERNANCE

SPORTS ORGANISATIONS MUST GOVERN THEMSELVES AND OPERATE UNDER THE HIGHEST GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES, INCLUDING DEMOCRACY, TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT.

OUTSTANDING ETHICAL CONDUCT

SPORTS ORGANISATIONS MUST UPHOLD AND RESPECT THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF SPORTS ETHICS, WHICH REFLECT THE VALUES OF FAIR PLAY, SOLIDARITY, RESPECT FOR THE RULE OF LAW, HUMAN RIGHTS, DIGNITY, INTEGRITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVENESS.

ACCOUNTABILITY

SPORTS ORGANISATIONS MUST TAKE ACCOUNTABILITY FOR THEIR OWN AFFAIRS AND IMPLEMENT A ZERO-TOLERANCE POLICY AGAINST ALL TYPES CRIMINALITY (INCLUDING CORRUPTION, BRIBERY, MONEY-LAUNDERING, TAX EVASION, SMUGGLING AND TRAFFICKING OF MINORS), AS WELL AS RACISM, VIOLENCE AND ALL FORMS OF ABUSE AND DISCRIMINATION

LEGALITY

WHILST RECOGNISING SPORT'S SPECIFIC NATURE AND AUTONOMY, SPORTS ORGANISATIONS MUST RESPECT AND COMPLY WITH ALL APPLICABLE LAWS AND REGULATIONS IN THE GOVERNANCE, REGULATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF SPORT.

SCRUTINY

SPORTS ORGANISATIONS MUST IMPLEMENT AND COMPLY WITH THE SIGA UNIVERSAL STANDARDS ON SPORT INTEGRITY AND BE INDEPENDENTLY SCRUTINISED THROUGH SIRVS.



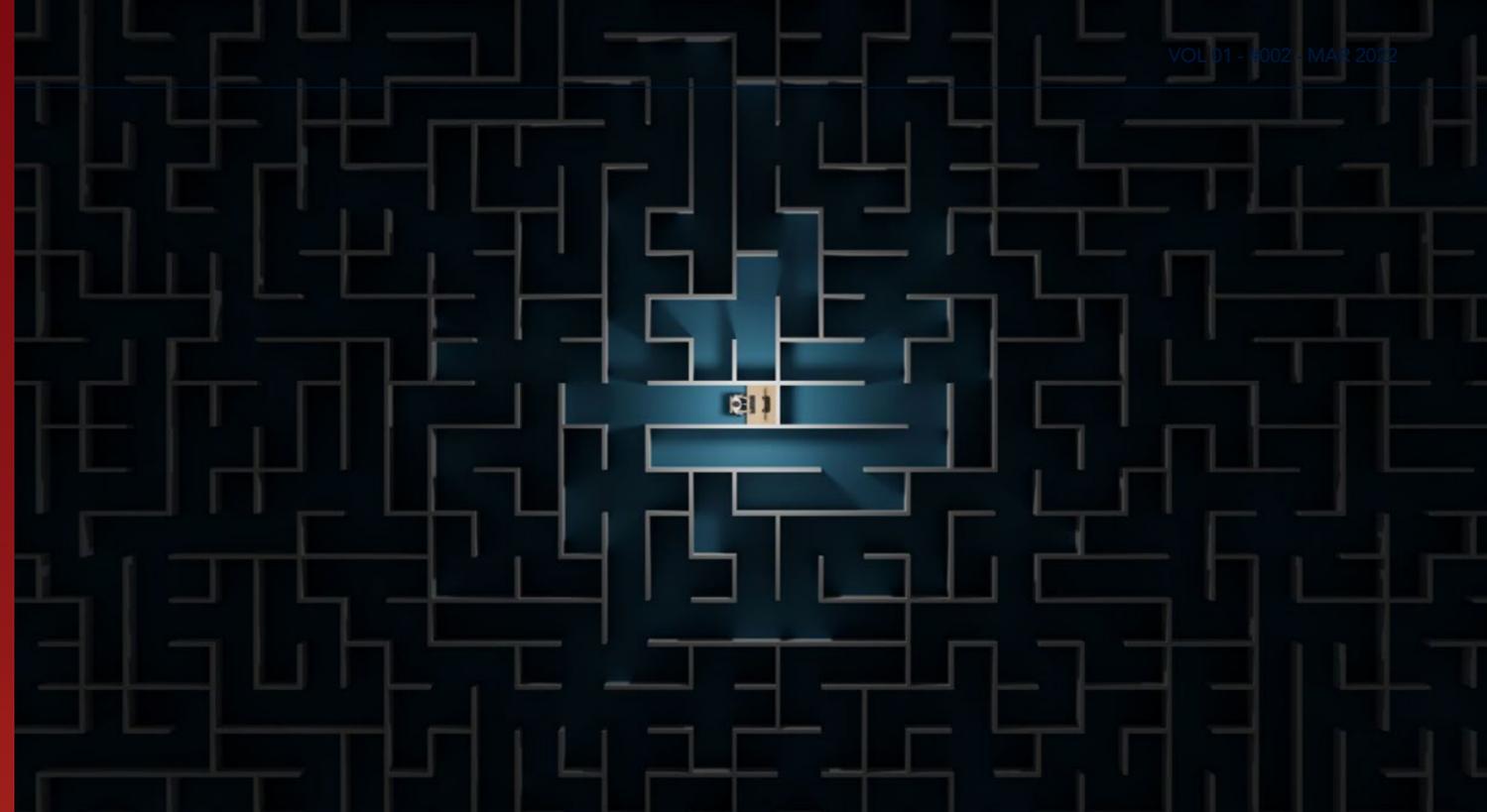
TAYLOR GREEN

SIGA Youth Council.

SIGA **YOUTH COUNCIL**

SIGA SHOWCASE

LEADERS OF ~~TOMORROW~~ TODAY



In his final speech, intended to be delivered at the Trade Mart in Dallas, Texas, President John F. Kennedy wrote, “leadership and learning are indispensable to one another”. Indispensable. Necessary. Essential. A warped stereotype of leaders is that they have it all figured out; but President Kennedy’s quote begs to differ. To constantly seek and acquire knowledge is an inherent acceptance of not having it all figured out. To the contrary, it equips us with a level of self-awareness we should desire in any leader. Uniting leadership with learning liberates us from the archaic paradigm of being measured by one’s seniority or rung on the corporate ladder.

From a gendered lens, as elaborated in Alice Eagly and Linda L. Carli’s September 2007 Harvard Business Review [article](#), we now interpret the dynamic between women and access to leadership more accurately manifesting as a labyrinth instead of a ladder, defined by the Cambridge Dictionary as “a confusing set of connecting passages and

paths in which it is easy to get lost.” Coincidentally the sentence offered by the dictionary for context of the definition is, “Finally, through a labyrinth of corridors she found his office.” However, not all women navigate the labyrinth at the same pace. In an annual report published by McKinsey titled [Women in the Workplace](#), research shows Black women are most likely to seek leadership roles, yet are the least likely to be promoted. Why are women of color not benefitting from initiatives targeting women and people of color? Perhaps an intersectional approach to ensure no voices, and therefore no emerging leaders are left behind. Whether by a simple stock photo image search of a leader or by closing your eyes and envisioning one, the results will likely be similar. [Intersectionality, as conceptualized by Black feminist scholars](#), acknowledges the interconnected realities of social identities resulting in the overlapping systems of our unique lived experiences. In essence, a more vivid understanding of what makes us, us.

As we adopt more inclusive practices in leadership, I challenge each of us to embrace the fullness of ourselves as we uphold integrity in sport and require integrity in each other.



Although I did not initially read much into Paulo Coelho's signature quote from his international bestseller, *O Alquimista* (The Alchemist), "...when you want something, all the universe conspires in helping you achieve it", it revisited my thoughts while at home in 2020. What did I want? What did I want to achieve? Who did I want to achieve with?

I stumbled upon the application to the SIGA Youth Council thanks to Senior Director, Research, Knowledge, and Innovation & Sport Integrity Journal Editor, Dr. Iain Lindsay. In a thoughtful post on LinkedIn, he issued a clarion call for young leaders to engage in governance and integrity, to create sustainable change, and to empower others. I applied to the Youth Council because I wanted to be a part of something bigger than myself, I am perpetually eager to learn from others, and I genuinely wanted to work toward a more accessible, equitable, and just world in sport. True to his word, one of my first interactions with Iain was the opportunity to assist with a report co-authored by UNESCO on the business implications of sport integrity. In the spirit of self-awareness and not having it all figured out, I am grateful to SIGA for providing the space for me

to more effectively balance the emotive appeal of access, equity, and justice in sport in harmony with empirical, data-informed strategies on how to achieve such a reality. It is easy (and necessary) to diagnose problems, let's work together on how to solve them.

Just as with our evolution of leadership, more nuance is needed on networking. We all can recite the clichés of reaching out to those who can open doors for you, but what about reaching out to those alongside you? A key element of the Youth Council that I treasure most is the collective opportunity to flourish and achieve with a group of individuals who are impressive in their own right, as opposed to a more stratified, hierarchical model that mirrors traditional forms of leadership and networking. In her New York Times bestseller, *Dare to Lead: Brave Work. Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts*, Brené Brown explores the intersection of the practice of leadership with a rapidly changing environment and an incessant thirst for innovation. Maybe it is through the nurturing of emerging leaders that different frameworks of leadership and networking can blossom to better reflect our diverse, complex, and static sporting landscape.

Through the Youth Council, my fellow members and I were able to play an integral role in bringing the inaugural SIGA Youth Forum to fruition in January 2021, which featured over 50 speakers and 500 delegates participating in 50 countries. Collectively, we contributed to SIGA's marquee events including the Global Female Mentorship Programme, Summit on Female Leadership in Sport, and Sport Integrity Week. As my personal ascension and commitment to the Youth Council progressed, I was humbled to represent SIGA during the Youth Consultations at the 2020 Securing Sport conference, hosted by our partners, The International Centre for Sport Security.

The reality is in order to truly prepare the leaders of tomorrow, we need to begin viewing them as the leaders of today.

In the midst of my final semester before earning my master's degree, I found myself scrambling for employment opportunities to parlay my academic skills into a professional career and justify those two years of postgraduate education. A classmate and

I contemplated applying to a cohort in the [National Sports Forum](#), designed to open opportunities to senior-level positions accompanied with revenue-generating responsibilities. The classmate, a self-professed networking guru who thrives on connecting ideas with action, contrasted with myself, an introvert content with more organic interaction. Riddled with fear and intimidated by the perception of not being "enough", I opted not to apply. Upon reflection, I was enough then and I most certainly am enough now. After being in community with individuals who are trailblazers in every sense of the word, it is indisputable to me that young leaders are enough and they too are ready to lead today. On the urgent issues of climate change, anti-racism, integrity in sport and beyond, young people are confronting these challenges with uncompromising passion and fervent resentment for milquetoast platitudes enabling these problems to fester.

Let us not use the adjective young as an excuse for dismissal but rather as an opportunity for difference and renewal.




 SIGA Youth Council


SIGA YOUTH COUNCIL 2022

The SIGA Youth Council was first established in 2020 and on April 4th we will open the application process for the Second Class of Future Leaders to build upon the fantastic foundations of the inaugural group.

The 2020 Class brought together individuals from a range of continents, backgrounds, skills and experiences that combined to form a formidable team.

We are dedicated to providing an environment that supports and enables Youth Leadership, with the strategies, deliverables and opportunities Youth Driven.

The creation of invaluable opportunities and experiences, over the course of the 18 month term, will offer members the opportunity to forge long lasting and invaluable networks with current and future Sport Leaders and help to kick start their own path to the top.

This is your opportunity to take a leadership role and help shape the future of Sport in the way that you envision it – hand in glove with the World's largest coalition in the field of Sport's Governance and Integrity.

#StandwithSIGA #TakeCharge #SYC2022

How To Apply?

4th April 2022: Application Open

1st May 2022: Applications Close

This programme is available for all young people between the ages of 18-29.

We will be promoting this widely through our networks, social media channels and on our website from April 4th.

To apply please you will need to complete the relevant application form and attach a CV, letter of recommendation and a short video (maximum 2 minutes) stating why you want to join the SYC.

CLICK TO PLAY THE VIDEO





ANGELA SMITH

Former GB and England International,
founder of ladies pro squash circuit.
Ambassador Stoke City Charitable
Trust and Chair of Supporters Council.



SIGA SHOWCASE

SQUASHING THE MYTH ON THE NEED FOR FEMALE LEADERSHIP?



As a former professional squash player I am delighted to add my thoughts to the debate on "Female Leadership In Sport". I have first hand experience of the difficulties experienced by women in sport at any level. I started the women's professional squash competitive circuit many years ago and, hand on heart, a few walls that impinge on women progressing to leaders are still firmly in place many years on. That is really difficult to accept.

The "you have to see it to believe it" point of view is as valid today as ever, although those with a certain drive and imagination will do there damndest to get there anyway. I am also acutely aware that people from a BAME background appear to be even more disadvantaged.

Some sports have listened to the wake up call but many have not. Most professional clubs are so far behind it is staggering. Clearly the belief that men are better suited as leaders is still alive and flourishing.

We are probably all aware that gender diversity helps with better organisational outcomes. Leadership positions are still dominated by men and progress varies from sport to sport globally. Without interest and attention there will not be a continuation of female leaders. Certain funding bodies stipulate a percentage of women on boards and whilst that is a good thing is it really just paying lip service to the situation?



Going back to the days when I started competing as a professional squash player, we felt that we had to prove ourselves so much more than our male counterparts and whilst it has improved, let's just say that there is still plenty of room to continue that improvement.

If the imbalance of female leaders at the top improves then it follows that this should permeate through to grass routes level. If you want something you have never had, then you have got to do something you have never done.

During Covid lockdowns, the appetite for watching sport of any type increased and women's sport was more visible. Post-pandemic many are still gripped and as Tracey Crouch MP pointed out, "women's sport has great resilience and is not just surviving, but thriving". To drive forward, to inspire the girls and women of the future we need more women leaders who are able to push on and champion women's leadership in sport. It isn't good enough to invite some women to the table to ensure funding.

A real shift in thinking is needed to ensure inclusive and empowering governance frameworks are also in place to ensure the essential benefits that women leaders bring to sport around the world are utilised.

We need to ensure that sport is diverse and inclusive to help all in society. A ripple effect will then be created and more women will look at working in sport as a viable option. It needs to be sustainable. It is clear that inequalities faced in sport by women stem from many hundreds of years where it has been normal to have just men in leadership roles. We need to break down the barriers in sport, and in life generally, to reach the point where women no longer feel discriminated against or feel the necessity to continually prove themselves more due to their gender. The positive outcomes from women in sport leadership positions are more than positive educational outcomes and health improvements; they can assist with economic growth too. Sadly, some of the prestigious leadership positions in sport are really difficult for women to attain. Those that have attained such positions have a massive responsibility and must articulate how important it is to develop women leaders by mentoring and also show the importance of networking.

The position of networking in sport should not be underestimated. I have been lucky enough to take on roles in various organisations as a result of networking and have gained much valuable experience by working with Stoke City and SIGA, who are driving forward initiatives for the advancement of sport via opportunities and good governance. Indeed the SIGA mentorship programme is a wonderful opportunity worth applying for.

Young female athletes should be growing up realising and seeing that female athletes are just as talented as their male counterparts; and be valued and celebrated as equals. Today's female leaders need to set higher expectation levels and have a meaningful impact. In addition, male athletes and leaders can drive awareness around women's sport, helping to expand work conditions, increase pay and fan groups. Ultimately, women need real decision-making power to drive through positive changes. To succeed, past assumptions on females in sport need to be forgotten and new solutions are required from grass roots to key stakeholders, with collaborative approaches implemented to enhance alignment and improve women's sport.

Like many others I was encouraged to take part in sport, but when I decided to pursue my sport squash as a career there were zero opportunities available to me. Luckily I persuaded some like-minded individuals to join me and create an opportunity to make this a reality and female professional squash was born. We didn't care about fighting for equal pay in the early days; we had to prove that we were every bit as capable as our male counterparts. We fought for the right to play and to earn a living doing what we loved.

I am looked upon as a pioneer in women's squash, I am incredibly proud of what we achieved and how standards improved but still, many years later, males and females need to address together gender equality across the board. Just as I forged a pathway for women to play squash professionally, we need to pave the way for all future generations of girls and women, as well as boys and men, to take part in sport and to be treated equally in life. Gender should not be a reason to separate us.

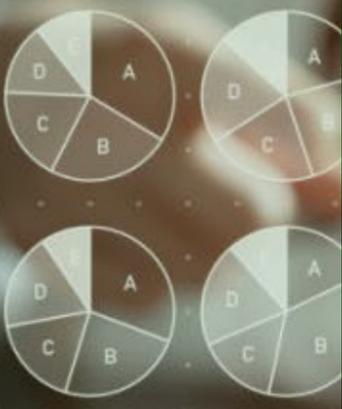
Female leaders in sport are required to show young girls, throughout the world, that they can be whatever they want to be. If I had been able to look to another female professional squash player then I would have found it so much easier to make the move to being a professional. This was not the case so instead I needed to take a giant leap of faith, fortunately this worked out for me but it could have been very different. When I look back now the risks that I took going into the unknown were many (the impetuosity of youth!).

Never did I question the belief that it was the right thing for me to do. I also had the safety net of a qualification and a career that I could fall back on if it did not work out. I have of course since shared advice on making your sport a career and I will always say have a plan B. Most of all I will say look at the examples that have gone before you, your role models and learn what you can. This is why it is so critical for more female leaders to emerge so that they can support the efforts to ensure that anyone with a dream has a chance to achieve it – simply put - we need more and we need them now.

Women are not there to fit the mould made by men. My advice to all aspiring females:

- ***Chase your dreams!***
- ***Believe in yourself!***
- ***Don't give up!***

Gender equity in sport will come, the sooner the better!



1,822 (-35)	1,822 (-35)	1,822 (-35)	1,822 (-35)
MBC 3,605 (+210)	LJH 9,542 (+128)	MJE 2,609 (+35)	2,609 (+35)
YBV 3,204 (-33)	DMN 5,211 (+154)	MMJ 7,100 (+40)	7,100 (+40)
MBB 3,320 (-120)	WFF 712 (+12)	HUM 134 (+5)	134 (+5)

GLOBAL RESEARCH



EMPOWERING FEMALE LEADERSHIP THROUGH SPORTS DIPLOMACY

DR. LINDSAY SARAH KRASNOFF,
Consultant & Historian, Communications and Sports Diplomacy Research Associate. Centre for International Studies & Diplomacy. SOAS University of London.



FEMALE LEADERSHIP IN SPORT: DOES THIS REALLY MATTER?

CAROLE PONCHON
CEO & Founder, BeInnovActiv'.





WHAT IS SIRVS?

The SIGA Independent Rating and Verification System (SIRVS) is an important part of SIGA's global reform agenda to usher sport and the wider sports industry into a new era of enhanced governance, integrity, transparency and accountability.

SIRVS is designed to independently assess, rate and certify sports organisations' level of compliance with the SIGA Universal Standards on Sport Integrity.

Sponsors and those who invest in sport are demanding SIRVS because it gives them certainty that their investments are protected from the risk of reputational damage.



"Mastercard has supported SIGA's reform agenda since the early days as we believe that from a sponsor's perspective, preserving sport integrity is integral to protecting our investments & reputation. Today's consumers are more demanding and as a global business that has a vested interest in the sports industry, we expect the same accountability as our consumers from the sports we sponsor. SIGA & it's independent rating and verification system will be the game changer that the sport industry needs."

Michael Robichaud,
Senior Vice President, Global Sponsorship,
Mastercard:



"We sponsor passion. Reputational risk keeps us awake at night. For brands, sponsorship is no longer about putting your logo up. It is about protecting your brand."

There is currently nothing out there for sponsors to evaluate their investments. We are SIGA Founding Members and Qatar Airways is excited about SIGA's Rating System. We will use this tool when carrying out our due diligence."

Babar Rahman,
Head of Global Marketing, Sponsorships and
IFE & Connectivity, Qatar Airways





DR. LINDSAY SARAH KRASNOFF

Consultant & Historian,
Communications and Sports
Diplomacy Research Associate,
Centre for International Studies
& Diplomacy, SOAS University of
London.



GLOBAL RESEARCH

EMPOWERING FEMALE LEADERSHIP THROUGH SPORTS DIPLOMACY

The world celebrates women every March 8, highlighting their achievements across numerous sectors, and the sports world is no different. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) took the occasion this year to [fête achievements by women in the Olympic movement](#), FIBA Foundation spotlighted its [female leaders in the field](#), countless federations, leagues, teams and organizations followed suit, and SIGA hosted its annual [Female Leadership Summit](#). This recognition is well merited, but such achievements and trailblazers should be championed every single day and sports diplomacy can help do so by empowering female leadership.

The sports diplomacy framework is a newer name for a centuries-old practice. Since the ancient Greeks, sports have been used to engage in the act of diplomacy: communication, representation, and negotiation. Thus sports diplomacy is when these actions occur in and around the sporting realm. The agents of diplomacy traditionally were representatives of the state: diplomats attached to Ministries of Foreign Affairs, heads of state, and national teams or elite athletes competing for their country at international competitions like the Olympics or FIFA World Cup. That's why so many people equate sports diplomacy with governments. Yet, as J Simon Rofe argues, [the concept of who conducts diplomacy has become more diffuse](#). In an Internet-connected twenty-first century, citizens increasingly engage in diplomatic acts of people-to-people cultural, technical, or knowledge exchange particularly through sports diplomacy.

That's why a natural use of this unique tool is to empower female leadership. Many government sports diplomacy programs emphasize using sport to work towards greater gender equality in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The U.S. Department of State's [Empower Women Through Sports](#) program, created in 2012, is one such example; the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office's ["Addressing Violence Against Women and Girls Through Football"](#) in Kenya from 2014-17 is another. But it is the use of sports diplomacy by the NBA-FIBA Basketball Africa League (BAL) that's a powerful example of how this framework can be used by non-state actors to promote female leadership.

The BAL is a history-making endeavor in many ways. It is the first pan-African professional sports league, the first time that an international sports federation partnered with a professional entity to create a new championship, and the NBA's first outside of North America. In speaking with NBA, FIBA, and BAL executives for the [Basketball Diplomacy in Africa Oral History Project](#), an initiative I co-directed through the Centre for International Studies and Diplomacy at SOAS University of London, it was clear that the BAL was conceptualized not just for the sports, entertainment, and business opportunities, but to also use basketball to work towards other, more community-centric goals. For, as former U.S. President Barak Obama noted upon the BAL's launch in 2019, ["this can be about a lot more than what happens on the court."](#)

The league exudes sports diplomacy in its DNA. The degree of communication, representation, and negotiation involved between state and non-state actors is diverse and widespread. Each season 12 teams from 12 African nations compete for the BAL title, their rosters composed of eight country nationals and a small handful of players from other countries. This year, the competition is co-hosted by three different states: Senegal, Egypt, and Rwanda. Key BAL partners include Visit Rwanda, the country's tourism and marketing arm, U.S. sports manufacturer Wilson, and Hennessy, part of the France-based LVMH Group. So, while there are government representatives involved, the BAL's sports diplomacy efforts focus on individual citizens and their personal exchanges.

One of the topics that the BAL communicates about is gender equality. For, although it's a professional men's sports competition, it proactively promotes female leadership within the larger basketball ecosystem that it is building.

According to BAL President Amadou Gallo Fall:

"the league is an evolution of what [the NBA has] been doing on the continent all these decades ... I'm talking about grassroots infrastructure, courts, providing equipment, building the local expertise in terms of training of trainers and coaches. And we have done all these across gender."

To that end, the BAL is co-built by females who are blazing new trails through the sports landscape. The league has women helming different critical functions, from its sound and music coordinator ([Ke-nyan-American DJ Poizon Ivy](#)) and former WNBA players like [Astou N'Diaye](#) who participate in promotional and community events to those leading on-court: two referees ([Sara Gamal](#) and [Dorothy Okatch](#)), an assistant coach ([Dakar Université Club's Khardiata Sourang Diop](#)), and a head coach with AS Salé's Liz Mills.



These pioneers are engaging in sports diplomacy by communicating, representing, and negotiating perceptions about the BAL, basketball, and Africa more broadly. They represent female leadership on and off the court, that basketball is an arena of equal opportunity. They negotiate cultural attitudes about women in sports, policymaking, governance, and more. And they visually communicate to generations worldwide that if they see it, they can be it. Take a recent example that Coach Mills recounted to Andscape: a mother took her two daughters to an AS Salé match in Senegal in order to watch the basketball tactician in action. ["I have to remind myself that young girls in particular need to see women in these roles," Mills said.](#)

The women of the BAL are just one example of non-state actors engaged in sports diplomacy working to empower female leaders. But they are not the only ones, and it is incumbent upon the global sports community to develop better policies and initiatives to promote, support, and sustain them.

To create more intentional strategies requires work and investment. It necessitates moving beyond greater awareness of the ways that sports diplomacy can serve as a tool to empower female leadership. It requires educating organizations and/or governments of this framework, its uses (and abuses), and the resources available to them. Here are three places to start:

1. Communications and storytelling are of high importance, especially given of diplomacy's core acts: to communicate. Invest in telling the stories of women who lead, the trail blazers who are empowering others thanks to the cultural, technical, and knowledge they exchange on and learn from through sports diplomacy efforts.
2. Build and cultivate deeper networks for women-to-women support, as well as extending the web of male allyship. The networked sports diplomacy world can provide critical advantages and opportunities for state and non-state actors alike.
3. Bear in mind that sports diplomacy's impact on one person, helping to empower just one female leader, has trickle-up and trickle-down effects for entire organizations. The investment in one individual has the ability to scale-up and enrich all and can lead to team-wide benefits.

The idea for this piece originated from conversations at the March 8, 2021 ["Empowering Women in Sports Diplomacy"](#) roundtable and interviews for the [Basketball Diplomacy Africa](#) Oral History Project, as well as discussions with my SIGA mentee, Bethany Hushon, and members of the #SIGAWomen Global Mentorship Programme Sarah Solémalé and Maureen Rosita Ojong Ebob-Besong.



The SIGA University Network (SUN) is a coalition of global leading universities and research institutes united by a commitment to an expanding and evolving series of joint initiatives in the field of sport's governance and integrity.

World leading Sports Stakeholders are committed to collaborating with SUN on thought leadership projects to drive meaningful reform.

The SUN drives the synergy between need, ideation, innovation and outcome through collaboration at the very highest levels.

Research, Stakeholder Network and in-depth industry knowledge are the three key pillars that underpin the SUN.

Interested in joining
Contact Dr Iain Lindsay: iain.lindsay@siga-sport.com

SUN OBJECTIVES



RESEARCH

to act as a platform for collaboration between academia and stakeholders intended to cultivate synergies between research and implementation. Research will focus upon Sport Integrity issues and underpin multi-stakeholder thought leadership initiatives. Emphasis will be placed upon the commercialisation of research and cultivating projects capable of attracting funding and investment from a variety of sources.



KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

to ensure that Sport Integrity becomes a key component of university curriculum through additions to existing courses and bespoke Executive Education initiatives.



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to deliver integrated development, recognition and enrichment opportunities that create a bridge between the university and practitioner environments, specifically tailored to help shape the leaders of tomorrow. This will include high-level internship opportunities for university students with SIGA, our Members and Committed Supporters.



CAROLE PONCHON

CEO & Founder, BeInnovActiv'.



GLOBAL RESEARCH

FEMALE LEADERSHIP IN SPORT: DOES THIS REALLY MATTER?



I was recently asked to share my story and journey as a women leader in sport at a conference. The aim of the event was to inspire other women to step up into leadership positions. Unsurprisingly to those who know me, my first reaction was that of defiance and doubt – pretty similar feeling than when I was facing this blank page being asked to provide an opinion piece for the SIJ. Why are they asking me? What is it they might be seeing that I'm not (in spite of my new glasses)?

Life, I have discovered –sometimes the hard way– affords the wildest and best opportunities when I am prepared to step out of my comfort zone. So – despite the stress and the debilitating self-doubt - I embraced this feeling and collecting my thoughts for this article.

I've never pictured myself as a leader. And yet, I admit some may say my "lifebook" tells a different story – it's all a question of perspective and perception after all. I grew up in a small village in the French countryside. In the early 1990s I was one of the few girls, although not the only one, playing football (soccer for the US audience) and soon faced the

challenged of proving myself in a mixed team. And I loved it – I soon discovered I was the fiercest one on the pitch, tackling the ball, and succeeded as a defender. Aged 12, I was asked to be involved as a trainer/coach for the local Football Spring Camp... it was challenging, it was exhausting for the introvert perfectionist that I was and yet I showed up. Not only did I do this once, I came back every year until I turned 17 when I moved away for my education.





It was around this time that I discovered, by accident, my real place on the pitch as goalkeeper (I was asked to first put on the gloves when the regular goalkeeper got injured). A 'keeper is an individual and a leader that operates within the team dynamic. The position can be a lonely path but it says a lot about the person I was and still am. Despite the fact that I might not have been able to adequately articulate the experience, I always felt and knew deep down that sport saved me and helped me get out into the world and claim a place.

That's why I want to give back. That's why I chose to work in the sector. Subtly, I got the opportunity to explore the leadership landscape in various form of its' expression through sport.

My first radio interview had been on the topic of female leadership 13 years ago at the downturn of my career. I was so stressed I fainted afterwards. In 2017, I got the honour of being selected to represent my country in a very selective leadership programme by the US State Department and conducted by the Center for Sport Peace and Society – the Global Sport Mentoring Program. In 2018 I created my own organisation, BelnovActiv' and since then have been involved in various roles; as volunteer, as a strategic adviser and as project leader-, across various initiatives from the Equal Playing Field conference in Lyon during the FIFA Women World Cup in 2019, to the Global Goals World Cup Europe and more recently the SWinG project. I've seen, I've observed, I've tasted the contours of leadership in sport.

Through the SWinG project that I co-initiated in 2018, and had the pleasure to lead from Jan 2019 to Dec 2021, we initiated a consortium of ten partner organisations that focused on opening doors for more women to attain elected decision making positions within sport governing bodies. As the first phase of the project was to capture the current landscape in terms of leadership in sport, the results of our research we discovered an obvious lack of diversity in sport governing bodies. Highlighting in particular changes in the last 20 years but not as fast as we would like (ie still far from representing the very minimum of a third of the members of governing bodies). There was also a clear and distinct pushback from the sector against imposed change (quota).

Yet, behind the harsh reality that was uncovered during this research there was another point of consideration. There were women leaders wherever we looked. Whether in the spotlight or not, what they had in common was that they stepped up, they filled roles where they identified a need and they disrupted the system by questioning it in a variety of ways – even silently! In fact, one of the key insights that will stay with me for a long time is that we identified that the super power of women in leadership position is questioning! And for this specific reason and because we need to move towards a more respectful, sober and resilient sport environment while ensuring inclusivity – bringing more diversity is the way forward!

We need to put responsibility and sustainability at the centre of sports evolution. Ultimately, gendered leadership debates should not be a topic per se in the long term. Indeed, what we should aspire to is a vision of leadership that is non-gendered, this is ultimately necessary for sport to thrive and fulfil its potentia

True evolution will only occur at the intersection of the letter and the intent of change, the competencies must align with the vision, we must acquire the ability to see and develop approaches that achieve power with rather than enable power over. This is what we should all strive for.

We know the path and we know collaborative, creative and relationship-building initiatives are key. Let's build bridges between all involved rather than building barriers and creating more disparity. We need more safe and inclusive spaces for sure but not for women and girls, but for EVERYONE!

In summary what I am trying to say is that, in my opinion, it is time we started refocusing the debate. In addition to working for the voiceless, we need to also start working to re-educate the hearless! Some may add a "t" to such groups. I would never as I want to hold on to this dream that we can build with, and through, sport lives with meaning that touch and inspire others. In sport and elsewhere, I strongly believe that we will only win when the focus moves away from biology of leadership and more towards transformational leadership! What if, beyond the categories in which we „must“ place ourselves, beyond the labels stuck on us (by society but also let's face it - sometimes by ourselves), we allowed ourselves to simply be, to simply be human?

Let's be mindful with our choices, our words and our actions. Let us support coalition – men and women together – support those that demonstrate they can cope with seeing and hearing what might be disturbing to them and their privilege. In bringing more diversity in leadership, we might enable the sector to rethink the unknowns of a problem with a new approach.





LEGAL PERSPECTIVES

RAISING GOVERNANCE STANDARDS: HOW TO IMPROVE GENDER BALANCE IN THE BOARDROOM



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RAISING GOVERNANCE STANDARDS: HOW TO IMPROVE GENDER BALANCE IN THE BOARDROOM



A Google search of “gender inequality in the boardroom” will return no shortage of reports and statistics indicating that many companies across the world are falling short when it comes to having an equal male to female ratio of board members. The sports industry is no exception. Yet if gender equality is achieved the potential benefits for sport are staggering. A recent report by Fair Game argued that more gender diversity in football would ultimately lead to improved decision-making, an enriched workplace culture and higher financial performance.¹

So how can sport lead the way when it comes to balancing the boardroom? No matter the size of sporting organisation, minimum standards of governance centred on fostering a transparent culture in which internal and external relationships are focused on accountability to certain standards of gender equality are key to improving female representations on the pitch and in the boardroom.

How good governance can help

To set the tone for gender equality, all sporting organisations, whether local grassroots clubs or national governing bodies, need to have, or at least be aiming for, a balanced boardroom. A good governance structure and robust processes can both help to prevent gender inequality from developing and also encourage change.

Implementing minimum standards or quotas for the board of directors, as encouraged by the SIGA Good Governance Universal Standards Implementation Guidelines (“SIGA’s Universal Standards”), is a direct approach to guaranteeing a diverse and balanced board, as is the limiting of tenure of office, which can encourage, or perhaps force, long serving male board members to vacate their positions. Blunt mechanisms that link funding requirements to gender equality can be equally as effective in boosting female representation at the top. are key to improving female representations on the pitch and in the boardroom.

However, indirect methods can be beneficial in ensuring that a governance structure cultivates the right culture for gender balance to flourish. SIGA’s Universal Standards’ encouragement of openness and the implementation of whistleblowing policies will allow employees and stakeholders to hold sporting organisations to account on their commitments to gender parity.

¹ <https://www.fairgameuk.org/press-releases/gender-divide-report>

Increasing transparency

In today’s world of trial by social media, popular opinion can be one of the most potent drivers of positive change. Hashtag activism is a constant pressure on entities to adhere to their principles, remain accountable and uphold high standards of governance.

That said, being under the spotlight is not something for the sporting world to fear. On the contrary, sports organisations should be leading the way in terms of accountability and transparency, encouraging open critiques of their structures, decisions and implementation of governance mechanisms to ensure gender equality.

In a formal sense, a robust reporting policy, which encourages the regular publishing of diversity statistics and information about the constitution of the board, is a useful governance tool to help strive for a more balanced boardroom. By codifying openness, providing a means for employees to challenge non-compliance with agreed standards and being transparent on recruitment processes, sporting organisations will be actively cultivating an environment where gender equality is the norm. Not only will this make balancing the boardroom an easier task, it can also help to encourage the conversation about gender inequality in sport on a broader scale.



This is actively encouraged by SIGA’s Universal Standards, which directs sporting organisations, relevant governing bodies and commercial partners to collaborate in the pursuit of higher standards of governance. By enshrining commitments to certain standards of governance in contractual relationships and using SIGA’s Universal Standards as a guide, commercial partners and sporting entities could hold one another mutually accountable in the pursuit of progressive and more gender-balanced boards.

Concluding remarks

There are various ways of tackling gender inequality in the sporting boardroom from both an internal and an external perspective.

Rethinking commercial relationships

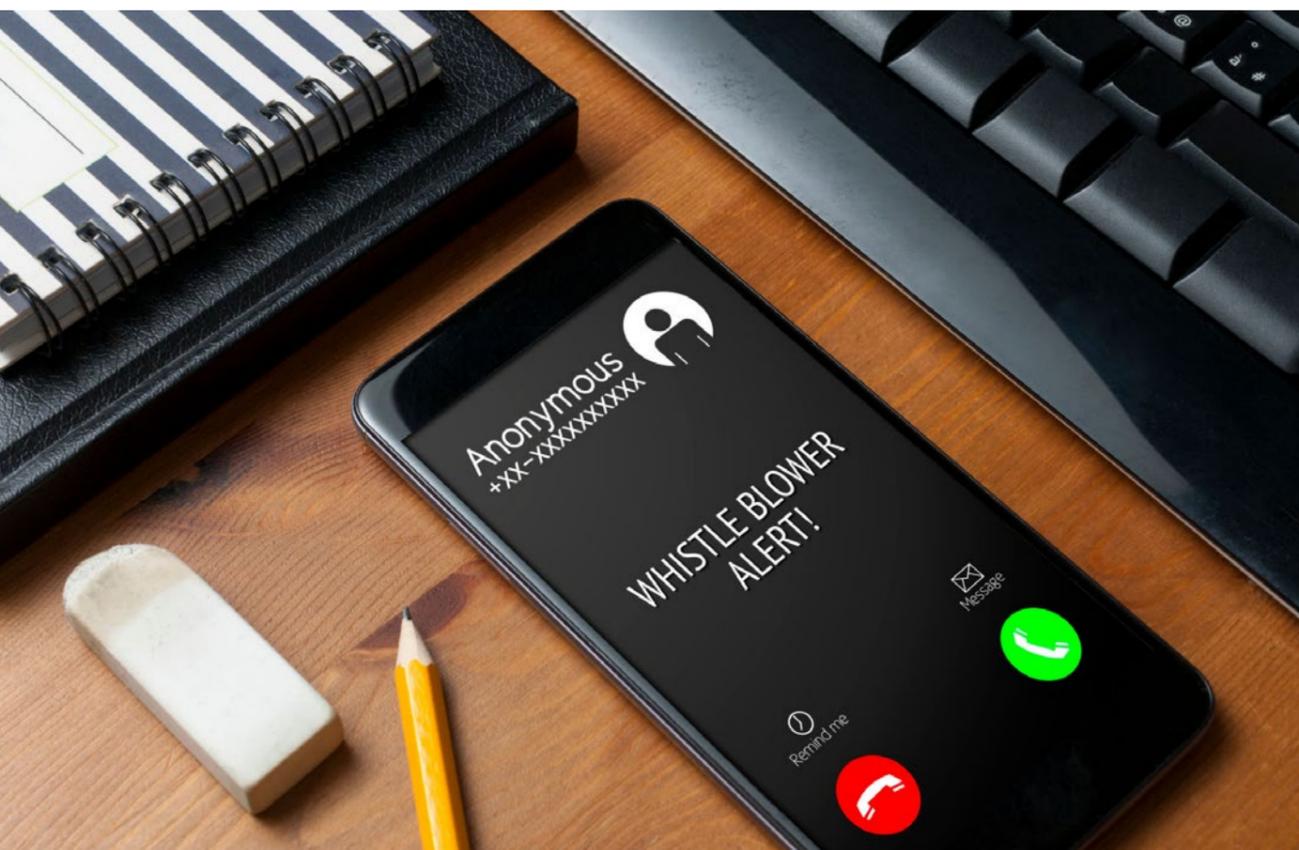
Recent global events have operated to force all of us, as individuals or as organisations, to re-evaluate our commercial ties and determine whether our business relationships truly align with our values. Whilst partnerships can be incredibly powerful and beneficial for sport, exits of commercial sponsors for sports organisations often take the form of well-publicised condemnations of behaviour.

Having in place a robust set of rules will encourage an open culture that is committed to gender parity and invariably make it more difficult for all-male boardrooms to exist in perpetuity, regardless of the sophistication of the sporting body.

In recent months in the UK, we have seen mobile phone company Three suspend its sponsorship of Chelsea FC following the abhorrent events in Ukraine²; life insurance firm Vitality respond to premier league player Kurt Zouma’s deplorable kicking of a pet cat³ by suspending its deal with West Ham United; and renowned author Val McDermid withdraw her support of Raith Rovers FC following a controversial signing.

External relationships also have a role to play. Whether it is fully engaging with social media cries for accountability or carefully drafting contracts to ensure that both parties to commercial partnerships can be answerable for failing to adhere to common sets of values, gender parity in the boardroom is something that the entire sports industry should be striving to achieve together.

Sport as an industry is deeply rooted in the concept of individuals coming together under shared values. Although these values vary between organisations, respect, integrity and teamwork are regularly positioned as fundamental tenets of the sporting experience. Yet unbalanced boards with positions filled predominantly by men do not truly reflect those sporting values. Therefore, in the same way in which sponsors react to unacceptable behaviour, commercial relationships could be the catalyst for ensuring gender equality at board level.



² <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2022/mar/10/mobile-phone-company-three-suspends-chelsea-shirt-sponsorship>
³ <https://insidersport.com/2022/02/11/vitality-suspends-west-ham-deal-following-zouma-scandal/>



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