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Abstract
Internationally the past three decades has seen a significant growth in the staging of major sport events (Cashman, 2006). These events are staged by host organisers and governments for many varied reasons. One rationale often provided by governments to justify their investment in such events is that they will encourage their population to become more physically active through sport participation. The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to explore the impact that hosting major sport events has on sport participation for a host nation. To address this research question two recent events hosted in Australia, the 2003 IRB Rugby World Cup and Australia’s qualification for the 2006 FIFA Football World Cup, are investigated. The findings from the study suggest that both the sports of rugby and football witnessed an increase in sport registrations following the staging of the events. These increases however, with the exception of the junior rugby category, were consistent with the recent trend for each sport.

Keywords
Sport Participation, Legacy, Rugby, Football, Trickle-down effect

INTRODUCTION
Participation in sport is viewed as an important aspect of social life for many cultures (Vamplew & Stoddart, 1994). For more than a century now, in countries such as Australia and Great Britain, the common vehicle for sports participation has been through local sport club membership (Cashman, 1995; Sport England, 2004). A key feature of the local sport club system is that it provides the club members with the opportunity for regular and structured sport competition (Shilbury, Deane & Kellet, 2006). Not only does being a member of a sport club provide participants with many social benefits, the physical activity associated with playing sport has been also been shown to improve ones health and mental wellbeing (Steptoe & Butler, 1996).

Given the range of benefits associated with sport participation, governments for many years now have been advocating greater physical activity at a community level through organised sport competition (Stewart, Nicholson, Smith & Westerbeek, 2004). As a consequence of promoting the benefits of playing sport to their constituents, governments have often used the staging of major sport events as a method to foster and promote physical activity (Cashman, 2006). Through the hosting of major sport events such as the Olympic Games, governments in the past have increased their funding for sport programs and infrastructure in the event lead up...
period (Toohey & Veal, 2007). The aim of host governments and policy makers has often been to build on the political capital, as well as the social capital, that ensues when staging these particular events (Bloomfield, 2003; Toohey & Veal, 2007).

Given then the large amounts of public funds expended on the hosting such occasions it is important for event researchers to conduct studies into the effectiveness of these events in stimulating sport participation (Cashman, 2006). To date only a small number of studies have been conducted in this area (Veal & Frawley, 2009). The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to explore the impact that staging major sport events has had on sport participation for a host population. In order to address this research problem two recent high profile sport events, hosted in Australia were investigated. The events include the 2003 IRB Rugby World Cup (held in October 2003) and Australia’s final qualification match for the 2006 FIFA World Cup (held in November 2005). Specifically, the study explored whether these events influenced any immediate increase in rugby and football participation in Australia.

In order to address the research problem official rugby and football registration data were examined for the years leading into each event and then the year immediately post event. In addition, interviews were undertaken with senior sport managers employed by both the rugby and football governing bodies. These managers worked for the national, state and territory rugby and football federations in Australia (further details are provided in the methodology section). The purpose of these interviews was to gain further detail on how each sport organisation was impacted from a participation perspective due to the staging of the associated events.

The paper is divided into four sections. The first section examines the limited number of studies that have been conducted to date on major sport events and sport participation legacy. The second section outlines the methodology employed for the study. The third section examines the two selected case studies. The rugby case study is explored first followed by the football case study. Both case studies start by providing a contextual overview of each event followed by an analysis of the collected quantitative and qualitative data. The final section will conclude the paper and suggest areas for future research.

**Major events and sport participation legacies**

A benefit of staging major sport events that is often promulgated by host governments is that these events will motivate their communities to play more sport (Coles, 1975). The term often used to describe this process is the ‘trickle-down effect’ (Hogan & Norton, 2000). This is where increased mass sport participation is assumed to result from the media exposure generated when covering elite sport performances at major events (Cashman, 2006). For instance, an Australian Government document published in 1973, termed the Bloomfield Report stated: “the focus should not be on the number of gold medals our competitors can win, but rather on the inspiration and impetus their success gives to the citizens of our nation for mass participation in physical activity in all age groups and at all levels of ability” (Bloomfield, 1973, pp. 3-4).

In a later Australian Government report the concept of a sporting pyramid was presented suggesting that where a population is placed in the pyramid structure is determined by their sporting interests and their sporting ability (Coles, 1975). The
pyramid “shape demonstrates that the high-performance apex expands as the base broadens; and it allows for the view that the better the standard of performance at the top, the more it can serve to inspire and encourage participation at lower levels” (Coles, 1975, p. 14). Based on these government reports the Australian Government for more than 30 years has concentrated its sports funding on the elite end of the sports pyramid (Daly, 1991, Hogan & Norton, 2000; Stewart et al., 2004). The rationale behind such government expenditure has often followed the perspective that it is a “powerful and appealing argument in political circles that increasing resources for elite level sport will eventually trickle down to the grass roots levels” (Olds, Dollman, Ridley, Boshoff, Hartshorne & Kennaugh, 2004, p. 109).

A study conducted by Hogan and Norton (2000), titled The Price of Gold showed that through the years 1976 to 2000 the Australian Government spent A$1.37 billion on sport and recreation funding. From this amount 15% was spent on community participation while the remaining 85% (A$1.164 billion) was spent on elite level high-performance (Hogan & Norton, 2000). The study also examined Australia’s performance at the Olympic Games from the years 1980 to 1996. Hogan and Norton (2000) found that through this period Australia won a total of 173 Olympic medals. However, despite this considerable athletic success no clear evidence was found to suggest that a trickle-down effect took place throughout the general Australian population.

Paradoxically, the authors found that from 1984 onwards sedentary levels among the Australian adult population actually increased (Hogan & Norton, 2000). For example, the proportion of obese male and female Australians increased from 1980 to 1995, with only 7.8% of men and 6.9% of women classified as obese in 1980 compared to 17.6% of men and 16.1% of women in 1995 (Hogan & Norton, 2000, p. 214). The evidence presented by Hogan and Norton (2000) highlights therefore that the trickle-down effect did not eventuate in Australia over the years examined. This finding led the authors to state that “it is time to revisit the notion that elite sporting success leads to greater mass participation as a result of the so called trickle-down effect” (Hogan & Norton, 2000, p. 203).

Three later studies by Toohey and Veal (2005), Toohey, Veal and Frawley (2006) and Veal and Frawley (2009) have explored the impact the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games had on sport participation for Olympic and non-Olympic sports in Australia. Despite a short immediate peak after the Sydney Games the research found little evidence of a trickle-down effect (Toohey & Veal, 2005; Toohey et al., 2006; Veal & Frawley, 2009). Toohey and Veal (2005) concluded that Australia’s status as a sporting nation is for the most part based on the performance of its elite athletes, a strong contrast to the moderate levels of mass sport participation found across the general Australian population.

**Methodology**

This research employs a case study methodology. According to Flyvbjerg (2001, p. 70) the strength of case studies as a methodological approach is that they provide “concrete, practical and context dependent knowledge”. Moreover, Yin (1989) suggests that a core benefit of the case study approach is that it allows the researcher to study an organisational or social problem in its natural context. Through this
approach the researchers were able to collect membership registration data directly from the national, state and territory rugby and football federations based in Australia. The registration data was supplemented with interview data collected from senior managers who worked for the governing bodies of both sports. Across the two cases a total of 20 interviews were undertaken. Of these interviews 15 were conducted in person while the other five were conducted via telephone.

In the middle of 2005, the respective Australian national, state and territory rugby unions were approached to see if they would be willing to participate in this study. In total, nine organisations represent the interests of rugby in Australia. Of these nine organisations six agreed to participate within which two in person interviews were conducted with managers from the Australian Rugby Union (ARU) while telephone interviews were conducted with the remaining state and territory organisations. Telephone interviews, rather than face to face interviews were employed due to resource constraints.

A similar process was undertaken for the football case study. In the early months of 2006 the respective Australian national, state and territory football federations were approached by the researchers to determine their willingness to participate in the study. At the time of this study a total of ten different organisations represented the interests of football in Australia. All of these organisations were approached to participate in the study. All organisations except for one were interviewed for the study. A total of 13 managers across these organisations agreed to be interviewed. All of these interviews due to private funding were conducted in person with three of the organisations providing more than one manager for an interview. These interviews took place in the offices of the respective federations across Australia and each interview was recorded and transcribed. The collected data across both case studies was manually coded and separated into key emergent themes (Gratton & Jones, 2004; Veal, 2006). These themes will be discussed later in the results section of this paper.

In addition to the interviews, the study also gathered membership registration data for both sports. This data was collected from the ARU and the governing body for football in Australia, known as the Football Federation of Australia (FFA). The registration data from the ARU included all senior and junior (under the age of 18) male players from the years 2000 to 2004. The ARU registration data for each year and each category was analysed with a particular focus on the percentage change in participation between the years 2000 to 2004. For the football case study, the registration data was collected from all of the state and territory football federations from the years 2003 to 2006, with the exception of the newly formed federations of South Australia and Western Australia.

The 2003 Rugby World Cup and Australian rugby registrations

This case study considers the change in rugby union participation in Australia, between the years 2000 and 2004. The analysis is based on registration data provided by the ARU. The registration data presented in this case centres on male players categorised into either a ‘senior’ cohort (18 and over) or a ‘junior’ cohort (under 18). Reflecting the federated structure of Australia, the organisation of Australian rugby consists of six state (New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and Tasmania) and two territory unions (Australian Capital Territory
and the Northern Territory). The responsibility for coordinating these state and territory rugby unions is the ARU, the national governing body.

**National senior and junior rugby registrations**
The ARU registration data for both senior and junior players increased from 2003, the year the Rugby World Cup was staged, to 2004 the year immediately following the event. For example, senior rugby registrations increased by 5%, from 2003 to 2004. Over the same period junior registrations increased 20%. The increases in both senior and junior rugby registration between 2003 and 2004 follow a wider trend (see Figure 1). For instance, senior participation grew 16% between the years 2000 to 2004, while junior participation grew by 45% over the same period. Interestingly though for the year leading into the 2003 Rugby World Cup both senior and junior categories suffered falls in participation. In 2003, junior registrations decreased by 408 players (-1.2%) while over this period senior rugby registrations fell by 595 players (-1.6%).

**Figure 1: Senior and Junior Australian Rugby Union Registrations (2000-2004)**

![Graph showing senior and junior rugby registrations from 2000 to 2004](image)

**State and territory senior rugby registrations**
Reflecting the broader national trend senior rugby participation grew across six of the eight Australian state and territory unions following the staging of the 2003 Rugby World Cup. The percentage growth from 2003 to 2004 included: 7% for the Australian Capital Territory (ACT); 6% for New South Wales (NSW); 20% for Queensland; 9% for South Australia (SA); 15% for Tasmania; and 4% for Victoria. In contrast, senior rugby registrations fell in the Northern Territory (NT) and Western Australia (WA) by 12% and 13% respectively.

The increase in senior registrations post 2003 achieved by five of the state and territory unions also follows the trend started in the year 2000 (see Table 1). Strong growth in senior registrations occurred in the traditional rugby markets of NSW (23%), Queensland (67%) and the ACT (15%) between 2000 and 2004. Increases were also achieved in the smaller rugby markets of SA (21%) and Victoria (19%).
However, the smaller and newer rugby playing markets of the NT, Tasmania and WA witnessed a significant decrease in senior player registrations over the 2000 to 2004 period. This included a reduction in registrations of 80% for the NT, 49% for Tasmania and 18% for WA.

Table 1: Australian State and Territory Senior Rugby Registrations (2000-2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>1,620</td>
<td>1,892</td>
<td>1,778</td>
<td>1,745</td>
<td>1,858</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>17,577</td>
<td>17,665</td>
<td>20,172</td>
<td>20,456</td>
<td>21,622</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NT</td>
<td>1,339</td>
<td>1,083</td>
<td>953</td>
<td>846</td>
<td>744</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>7,386</td>
<td>7,564</td>
<td>8,714</td>
<td>8,169</td>
<td>9,047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>869</td>
<td>835</td>
<td>1,096</td>
<td>958</td>
<td>1,048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>551</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>1,742</td>
<td>1,535</td>
<td>1,850</td>
<td>1,981</td>
<td>2,062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>2,504</td>
<td>2,626</td>
<td>2,427</td>
<td>2,433</td>
<td>2,127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33,648</td>
<td>33,767</td>
<td>37,541</td>
<td>36,946</td>
<td>38,919</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

State and territory junior rugby registrations
For the year immediately following the 2003 Rugby World Cup, junior rugby registrations increased across every Australian state and territory rugby union (see Table 2). The percentage increase for junior registrations from 2003 to 2004 included: a 20% increase for the ACT; 15% for NSW; 41% for the NT; 11% for Queensland; 40% for SA; 32% for Tasmania; 53% for Victoria; and 33% for WA.

The strong increases in junior rugby registrations across Australian states and territories follows a corresponding trend across the years 2000 to 2004. Over this period the NT Rugby Union was the only sport federation that did not achieve a rise in junior registrations, decreasing 68%. From 2000 to 2004, junior rugby registrations in percentage terms increased for the following state and territory unions: 42% for the ACT; 41% for NSW; 22% for Queensland; 36% for SA; 26% for Tasmania; 146% for Victoria; and 30% for WA.

Table 2: Australian State and Territory Junior Rugby Registrations (2000-2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>2,604</td>
<td>2,682</td>
<td>3,510</td>
<td>3,077</td>
<td>3,692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>12,603</td>
<td>13,257</td>
<td>15,299</td>
<td>15,461</td>
<td>17,784</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NT</td>
<td>816</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>7,747</td>
<td>8,630</td>
<td>10,228</td>
<td>10,285</td>
<td>12,363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>502</td>
<td>701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>618</td>
<td>913</td>
<td>1,046</td>
<td>992</td>
<td>1,519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>1,943</td>
<td>2,105</td>
<td>1,925</td>
<td>1,904</td>
<td>2,529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>27,111</td>
<td>28,945</td>
<td>33,225</td>
<td>32,817</td>
<td>39,406</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interview data

Interviews were conducted with senior sport managers from the respective rugby unions. The purpose of these interviews was to explore the impact the World Cup had on rugby registrations for the following 2004 rugby season. The collected data suggests that hosting the event significantly increased the exposure of the sport within Australia. This was particularly the case in ‘non-rugby’ states such as SA, Tasmania and Victoria. The respondents however argued that while the exposure generated by the event was important so too was the game development programs instituted by the ARU. For instance, in the lead up to the event the ARU provided resources for sport development so that the state and territory rugby federations could implement school and community rugby programs.

Development

As displayed by the registration data, rugby participation increased across both male senior and male junior categories. However, the strength of the increases across the junior category was particularly noted by one manager who suggested: “it is by far now more junior and school based than … senior based” (Respondent 1). So while the rugby registrations for senior players increased by 8% between 2003 and 2004, over the corresponding period junior players increased by 20%. A possible reason for this increase provided by the ARU, centres on the delivery of rugby development programs:

Previously schools were left to themselves … if you played rugby it was down to the interest of someone at that school, the Sports Master, which it still tends to be. You need drivers, but we … expanded our programs. One program that we did put on board … was EdRugby. (Respondent 1)

The quality of the school based program called EdRugby was noted in 2004 when the ARU won the Australian Sports Commission’s Junior Sport Award for developing a fun, safe and positive sports program (ARU, 2005).

Funding

Another factor noted by the respondents was the recent commercialisation of rugby, especially from the mid 1990s (Respondent 6; Respondent 7). A clear example of the commercial growth of rugby was the A$45 million profit the ARU made from staging the 2003 Rugby World Cup (O’Neill, 2007). Part of this revenue was allocated to the state federations enabling them to employ further rugby development officers (Respondent 7). As one respondent stated, “in many respects our success in community rugby is measured by participation numbers … The Rugby World Cup … enabled us to increase our resources and programs” (Respondent 2). Likewise, another respondent argued that the ability to employ staff was a significant factor in their ability to increase rugby participation: “we now have six full-time staff and continue to evolve at a rapid rate … The [state] Government is prepared to back this, after achieving over A$8 million in economic benefit from [staging] just two matches during the Rugby World Cup” (Respondent 3).

Profiling the sport

Most respondents praised the exposure rugby was able to achieve due to the 2003 event. One respondent stated the World Cup “definitely created an interest in the
The traditional season as far as we are concerned, doesn’t really exist so much in terms of community rugby and particularly at the sampling recruitment end of the game. Quite a lot of our recruitment programs are run in [school] term four and term one, because what we are finding is the analysis of new participants, not the ones that have got a rugby contact in the family or they’re already in the system, is that those people are not so entrenched in these competitions that have to be at certain period of time, on a certain day. (Respondent 1)

Both the WA Rugby Union and the SA Rugby Union agreed that the timing of the event was actually advantageous in that it allowed the promotion of the 2004 rugby season, assisting with player recruitment drives that clubs and associations were conducting. According to one respondent “it was the perfect build up and timing. The hype that led up to the World Cup was enormous. The regular rugby [season] and other codes had finished, which left the sole focus on the World Cup” (Respondent 4).

Case summary
In summary, this case study highlights that rugby participation in Australia increased following the hosting of the 2003 Rugby World Cup. The registration data suggests that the recorded increases post event followed an already positive trend that started in the year 2000. However, whilst there were increases in rugby registrations across both junior and senior categories, only the junior cohort met the projected ARU target of increasing participation by 15% in 2004 (ARU, 2003). Moreover, the interview data collected from the senior managers representing the national, state and territory rugby unions in Australia suggested that the mere hosting of the 2003 Rugby World Cup was not the sole reason for increased rugby registrations. The interview data highlighted the importance of the ARU’s continued investment in rugby development programs that originally started in the late 1990’s. This investment was viewed by the
respondents as the most effective way of increasing long-term rugby participation in Australia.

The 2006 FIFA World Cup and Australian football registrations

The second case study considers the change in football registrations in Australia between the years 2003 and 2006. The analysis is based on data collected from the state and territory football federations. All the state and territory football federations with the exception of SA and WA were able to provide the researchers with their registration data from 2003 to 2006. The SA and WA football federations stated that they did not have any registration data dating back to 2003, as they were newly formed organisations at the time. The data collected from the states and territories includes male and female football registrations across all age groups. The registration data provided by some of the football federations contained more detailed demographic breakdowns such as age and gender categories. However, more than half of the federations were only able to provide bulk registration numbers without further demographic details. Unfortunately, for this reason the analysis cannot provide junior, senior, male or female comparisons.

The registration data as shown in Table 3 (below) highlights that football participation in Australia increased steadily between the years 2003 and 2006 (12.6%). As outlined earlier in this paper, this steady increase in football registrations takes into account that the Australian Men’s National Football Team qualified for the 2006 FIFA World Cup in November 2005. Hence with the football season in Australia being staged between the months of April and September, any increase in football registrations as a result of World Cup qualification would occur in the 2006 data. For example, Australian football registrations between 2005 and 2006 increased by 4.8%, while between the years 2004 and 2005 registrations increased by a smaller amount of just 2.2%. Between 2003 and 2004, however, football registrations increased 5.1%, an amount slightly greater than for the 2005 to 2006 period. The fact that the growth in football registrations between the years 2003 and 2004 (5.1%) was greater than between the years 2005 and 2006, demonstrates that qualifying for the 2006 FIFA World Cup did not result in any dramatic increase in Australian organised football participation.

Table 3: Australian State and Territory Football Registrations (2003-2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>13,505</td>
<td>13,127</td>
<td>12,855</td>
<td>13,526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>214,420</td>
<td>225,515</td>
<td>228,730</td>
<td>240,741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NT</td>
<td>2,811</td>
<td>2,900</td>
<td>2,730</td>
<td>2,890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>54,624</td>
<td>57,346</td>
<td>61,741</td>
<td>63,538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>10,492</td>
<td>12,161</td>
<td>12,338</td>
<td>13,219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>25,957</td>
<td>27,242</td>
<td>27,371</td>
<td>28,499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>321,809</td>
<td>338,291</td>
<td>345,765</td>
<td>362,413</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interview data

Interviews were conducted with the FFA and all of the state and territory football federations with the exception of WA. A total of 13 interviews were undertaken with senior sport managers from these federations. The lead researcher who was based in Sydney, New South Wales, visited all the states and territories with the exception of WA, in order to collect the interview data. Four federations provided more than one sport manager for interview. The interviews were conducted in the middle months of 2006. As with the rugby case study the managers interviewed were asked a range of questions relating to their views on the impact of Australia’s qualification for the 2006 Football World Cup on football registrations. The following themes emerged from the interview data.

Profiling the sport

Each of the managers interviewed were asked to consider the impact that Australia’s qualification had on football participation in their particular state or territory. The respondents suggested that the exposure gained from qualifying for the global football event was the most significant outcome. One respondent argued that “qualification … had a large effect” (Respondent 8), while another stated that apart from the profile gained through qualification, long time supporters had their faith in the sport repaid: “it lifted the profile of the sport, and it gave the true believers of the game some hope that a dream can come true” (Respondent 9). Furthermore, one senior manager interviewed, outlined the duration of the exposure generated from qualification was “sustained” for a period of at “least three months” post qualification (Respondent 10). The continual nature of the awareness generated over a period of time was reinforced: “football has been in everyone’s face and the general awareness is there now” (Respondent 13). These points are further reinforced by another manager who stated that: “absolutely, without a doubt the qualification [was important], the game against Uruguay … after [that] there was enormous interest and we experienced another increase … the interest after the Uruguay game, in November [2005] was phenomenal” (Respondent 15).

Event timing

The timing of the qualification match and the World Cup itself was outlined as a factor that can shape football registrations. For example, some respondents argued that the timing of the World Cup qualification worked against the football federations in promoting the 2006 football season. One manager noted that “because registrations were not taken until February and March [2006] we probably missed out straight after the Uruguay game [because it was staged in November 2005]” (Respondent 15). Another manager when referring to the staging of the actual World Cup in the middle of 2006 stated: “we won’t see whether it reflects in participation numbers for a while. The problem of course is … the last three weeks we have had an average of 10 phone calls a day from people who want to play football. Of course, everyone … is in the middle of their season” (Respondent 11). From a similar perspective another respondent stated that in the build-up to the 2006 World Cup campaign, “enquiries into this office have been huge … [with] parents wanting to know where they can get their kids signed up. Unfortunately the timing is wrong with just six to eight weeks to go [with the current season] it is hard to bring them in now” (Respondent 12).
Development
A number of respondents commented that the interest generated from Australia’s qualification was predominantly directed at the junior football market. For example, one respondent stated that qualification had a “significant impact on juniors … our junior associations are certainly reporting increases in the number of players this year, and they had some steady growth over the previous years” (Respondent 8). The increased interest shown by the junior football market also enabled the football federations to grow the programs that they delivered to schools and clubs. For example, a senior manager commented that even in isolated parts of Australia there was strong demand for junior football programs: “our numbers are up for the [junior] programs we are running next week in Darwin, Alice Springs and the rural areas” (Respondent 13). While, another respondent stated: “from the grassroots point of view we have experienced a 30% to 50% percent increase in our grassroots programs, for the year. We have already surpassed the number of programs in schools that we did all of last year. So the participation numbers are huge and our clubs that usually run one … [football development] program … a year are now onto two and are looking at … a third” (Respondent 17).

Case summary
This case examined the immediate impact on football registrations in Australia as a result of the national team’s qualification for the 2006 FIFA World Cup. Australia’s qualification for this event created extensive local media coverage. This was partly due to the fact that it was only the second time Australia has been successful in qualifying for the event. In line with other studies that have examined sport participation legacy and major events (Hogan & Norton, 2000; Veal & Toohey, 2005; Toohey et al., 2006) the case was unable to exhibit any significant impact on football registrations resulting from Australia’s successful World Cup qualification. Although registrations increased between 2005 and 2006, the actual growth rate between 2003 and 2004 was marginally higher. Therefore, while football registrations in Australia have been steadily increasing between 2003 and 2006, it was found that no significant trend breaking growth occurred in 2006.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS
The two sports examined in this paper both witnessed an increase in sport member registrations following the staging of a major sport event. However, the increased registrations for both sports, with exception of the junior rugby category, were consistent with each sports recent growth trends. The football case study, for instance, highlighted that the registration increase was greater between the years 2003 and 2004 than it was for the year 2005 and 2006, following Australia’s successful World Cup qualification. The football case study, however, contrasts with the rugby case study, specifically with the large increase in junior rugby registrations. This particular category witnessed a significant increase of 20% from 2003 to 2004.

This junior rugby data set contradicts research by Toohey and Veal (2005) and Toohey et al (2006). These two studies found that following the hosting of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games, only modest increases in sport participation occurred in the host country of Australia. It should be noted though that for this study the researchers were unable to gain access to junior football registration data. Access to this data set would provide further evidence on whether a sport participation legacy resulting from
hosting a major sport event is more likely to influence junior sport participation categories rather senior categories.

Future research should, therefore, consider investigating how hosting major sport events might impact sport participation legacy differently across various demographic groups. Further research should explore whether it is predominantly younger sport participants that are most likely to take up organised sport because of the increased media exposure generated by staging such major events. Furthermore, future research could explore the best sport development practices and methods that sports organisations can employ to effectively leverage their event association in order to build sustained participation growth over time.

In conclusion this study gathered responses from rugby and football administrators that highlighted three main themes that shape sport participation and the hosting of major events. Firstly, the study highlighted the importance of implementing sport development programs both before and after the staging of a major sport event in order to leverage and capitalise on the increased sport awareness. Secondly, the study outlined the benefits of the increased media exposure and profile gained from major sport events and that this involvement provides many commercial and sport development opportunities. And thirdly, the research suggests that major sport event timing can influence how a sport is able leverage its profile in order to promote member registrations for the following sport season.

**REFERENCES**


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