



Sport England: Understanding variations in sports participation

Case study in driving participation: LTA and tennis
August 2010

Background

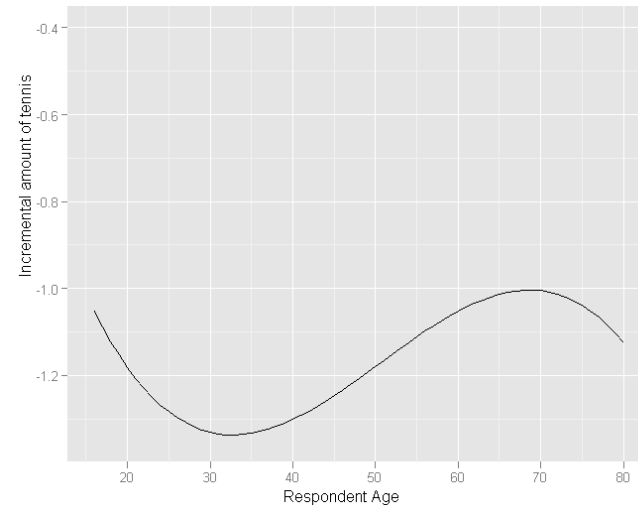
- Sport England is focused on the creation of a world-leading community sport system
 - Investing to grow and sustain participation in grassroots sport
 - Collaborating with partners at a national and local level
 - Targeting an additional 1 million people doing more sport by 2012-13.
- As part of this objective, Sport England has commissioned a series of robust quantitative models aimed at better understanding the factors which account for variations in sports participation, and thereby identify the levers most amenable to public policy intervention.
- This case study attempts to illustrate some of the findings from the quantitative modelling, and also provide practical learning with examples of specific interventions.



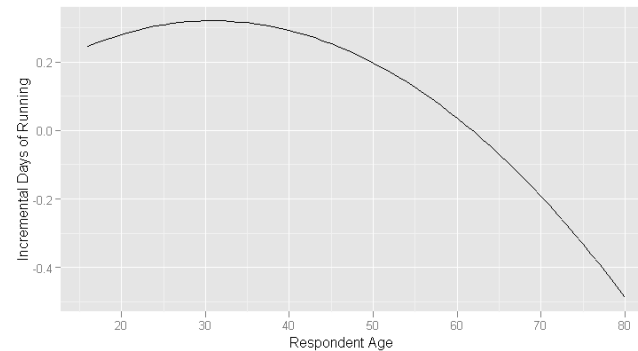
Participation in tennis is driven by younger and older age groups

- The modelling work found that active people who are younger than 20 or in their late 40s to late 60s, play tennis more often (see diagram on right hand side). In other words, if you are a 55 year old active person you are more likely to play tennis than a 25 year old active person, all other things being equal.
- We can see how different this is to running by comparing the drivers of participation by age, running peaks in the early 30s then recedes with age.
- The “double peak” within the graph indicates reengagement with tennis at an older age. This appears partly due to the adaptability of a sport like tennis, which enables people to play at a level appropriate to their age and fitness level (for example through “social doubles” or veterans leagues). Ease of participation and the sense of enjoyment that older people can get from playing, relative to other sports, means tennis can be enjoyed by everyone whether they are 8-85.

Incremental number of Tennis Days
Amongst active respondents



Incremental number of Athletics Days
Amongst active respondents



Examples of initiatives targeting age groups at both ends

- Because participation in tennis is driven at two parts of the age spectrum, it is important that initiatives are not only targeted at both the young and old, but that there are also initiatives that join up participation between the two groups.
- The LTA club forums provide some examples of these, which may be transferable to other sports
 - Using older juniors/students to help with coaching and organising competition with other age groups
 - Implementing joint membership schemes where older family members subsidize younger ones
 - Opening access for younger people, for instance by reducing membership fees, introducing flexible membership paid in instalments, or lowering the cost of entry by offering off peak membership when courts are under utilized.



“Tennis is a great sport for life, and it must be made available to everyone.”

Sir Geoffrey Cass, President of the Tennis Foundation

“We reduced the membership fee for 18 – 26 year olds. Since implemented numbers in this age group have increased significantly.”

Surbiton Tennis Club, LTA October Club Forums

Questions and implications for other sports

- *What services can you tailor to different age groups to better meet their needs and the trade-offs they are willing to make (for example less flexible but lower cost memberships for young people)?*
- *How do you devise programmes that ensure that participants stay in your sport throughout their life?*
- *What initiatives are there that “join up” different age groups to raise overall participation levels?*

Achieving Clubmark accreditation can help clubs engage more closely with their local community

- Tennis Clubmark, run in association with the national Clubmark quality accreditation scheme, means that the LTA endorses and supports a club's tennis programme, action and development planning, and club management.
- One of the four requirements for a club to achieve this is "Club Action Planning", which requires clubs to actively consider the drivers and barriers for participation in tennis in their local community.
- Many of the drivers of frequency of participation in tennis established by the modelling work are factors that differ by region, for instance, age profile or population density. The process of going through with Clubmark accreditation has historically helped tennis clubs understand in greater detail how factors like these play out in their local community, and by extension improve their programmes and marketing, to better deliver against the barriers and drivers of participation in their local area.



“Clubs that have joined the scheme are finding it well worth it. By having recognised standards of child protection, coaching, equity and good management they find it easier to attract and keep members, improve the club’s profile and build for the future.”

Roger Draper, Chief Executive, LTA

Overview of the drivers of participation in the tennis model

- Demographic factors
 - Age
 - Education level achieved
 - Occupation Grade (professional, skilled manual, etc.)
 - Illness
- Lifestyle factors
 - Home owners participate slightly more
 - Gym members less likely to play tennis
- The type of area you live in
 - Deprived areas drive lower participation
 - Denser population drives higher participation
 - Sport England region
- Environmental factors
 - Seasonality
 - Temperature

The benefit of Clubmark: two testimonials



Olney Tennis Club, Milton Keynes

The club was awarded Tennis Clubmark accreditation in July 2009.

Prior to starting the Clubmark process, the club had a good membership base but there was definitely room for growth. Since achieving Tennis Clubmark the club has increased membership by 40%. There are now 142 adult members from a pre Clubmark baseline of 98 and 169 juniors from a pre Clubmark baseline of 95.

The club, which at the moment, has 3 floodlit courts and a pavilion, is now in a strong position to apply for funding to build an additional floodlit court.



Belbroughton Tennis Club, Hereford and Worcestershire

Belbroughton is only the sixth club in Herefordshire and Worcestershire to achieve Clubmark accreditation, and has seen large growth in junior coaching and competition participation since joining 18 months ago.

Chairman of the club, David Slann commented on the scheme, "although the club was operating well with a great coaching programme the process of working towards Clubmark has ensured that we are now working safely, communicating well with players and parents and are delivering a quality on court programme...It's fantastic that we are being recognised as a great club that is contributing towards the future of British tennis and that our junior membership has grown from 30 to 100 in the last year."

Questions and implications for other sports and sporting clubs

- How can you promote the benefits of Clubmark accreditation using testimonials and data?
- What else apart from achieving Clubmark accreditation would help you understand the nuances of drivers of participation in your local area?

Marketing the social side of sport: learning from tennis

- While the primary drivers of satisfaction in tennis are more directly related to the sport itself (for instance the quality of facilities or staff)¹, the social side to a sport is also an important factor in and of itself, and arguably adds to the sense of release and diversion, which is such an important driver of satisfaction in tennis.
- Many tennis clubs make the most of this and arrange a number of social events linked to tennis activity throughout the year for their members. For example, Putney Lawn Tennis Club, arranges a 'club night' every Wednesday, and many social events throughout the year including parties, quiz nights and wine-tasting evenings, as well as a tennis/social session on the first Sunday afternoon of the month where members are organised into games to get to know other members.
- The LTA helps individual clubs market themselves online, including the social aspects of the club, through the Places to Play self service². Much of the content about clubs is generated by the information they provide during the LTA Affiliation process, but there are also personalised areas for clubs to post additional photos and information about activities offered and club ethos.
- This effectively gives small clubs much more online presence than they would have by themselves, as the LTA website is the most visited tennis website in the UK, with 500,000 unique visitors' each month.

¹ Source: Ipsos Mori SSQE Results

² <http://www.lta.org.uk/Clubs/Places-to-Play-Self-Service-1/>

Overview

1 Enter a short description of your Place to Play (500 character limit)

- Click on the 'Overview' tab on the left hand side of your screen and wait for the page to load.
- Enter a short description of your Place to Play (500 characters max) in the description text box [1] provided and click 'Update' to save. Please ensure you check your text carefully before clicking 'Update'. If you do make a mistake simply change the text and click 'Update' again. Your changes will be reflected on the LIVE website.

EAST GLOUCESTERSHIRE CLUB

Log out / My account / My profile / My clubs

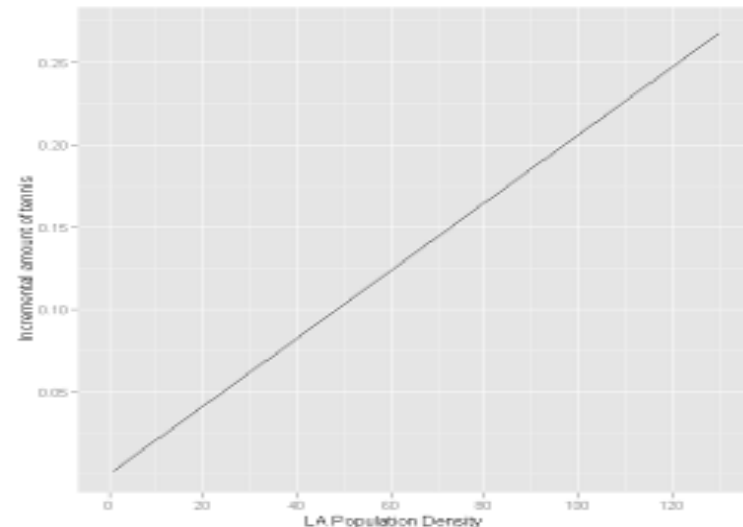


Tennis combined with other sports can make the best use of space in urban areas

- The modelling work found that people living in Local Authorities with denser populations play tennis more often (see diagram on the right). Our hypothesis for why this is the case is that tennis requires less space than other sports that offer a combination of social activity and exercise (particularly for older people) such as golf or even walking. In other words, tennis has a natural advantage over other sociable sports as it doesn't require as much space.
- However, tennis is also a highly seasonal sport – the modelling found that higher temperatures increase the likelihood of playing tennis.
- Because of the seasonality of tennis, some places to play have repurposed their facilities to be used for other sports, for example Alverstoke tennis, squash and badminton club. The club has also recruited Gosport Road runners to their facility. The other sports sections are busy recruiting runners to their rackets programme through products such as Cardio tennis. This is a sensible approach as APS data shows that a relatively high proportion of people who play badminton and squash or run also play tennis.

Incremental days of tennis

Due to Local Authority Population Density



Questions and implications for other sports

- How can the facilities for your sport be used for other sports, particularly if your sport is seasonal or infrequent?
- Which sports have the strongest overlap with your sport (see appendix slide), and what implications does this have for combined sports programmes or use of facilities?

Summary of key messages

- **Different approaches will be required to increase participation levels at both ends of the age scale for sports like tennis**
 - Potential interventions on the future could focus on both or either of these groups, but could also focus on keeping people involved in sports like tennis in the transition period from 20s to 40s
- **The process of Clubmark accreditation can help clubs engage more closely with their local community, as well as raising the profile of a club**
 - As a single, national standard, Clubmark can give sports of all types structure and direction
- **Marketing the social side of sport**
 - The social element of sports like tennis is important. Small clubs can publicize themselves more effectively by working with National Governing Bodies, who are more likely to be the first place that people looking for a new club visit. A model similar to the LTA's Places to Play system could be adapted to other club-based sports
- **Tennis is a compact sport that complements other sporting activities to make the best use of available space**
 - Facility based sports like tennis have a natural advantage in urban areas over other sociable sports that take up more space like golf
 - However, tennis and other sports like it that are seasonal can get even more out of their facilities by repurposing them for use for other similar sports. This may also help with club member retention, as well as raising overall sporting participation rates in an area.

Appendix: sports overlap

Sports Overlap Playing at least 4 times over 4 weeks

Percentage of respondents who play...

