

INSIGHT SESSION  
**MATCH  
OF THE  
DAY** **bpi** PROMOTING  
BRITISH  
MUSIC

REPORT : DECEMBER 2021

THE INTERSECTION  
OF MUSIC AND SPORT



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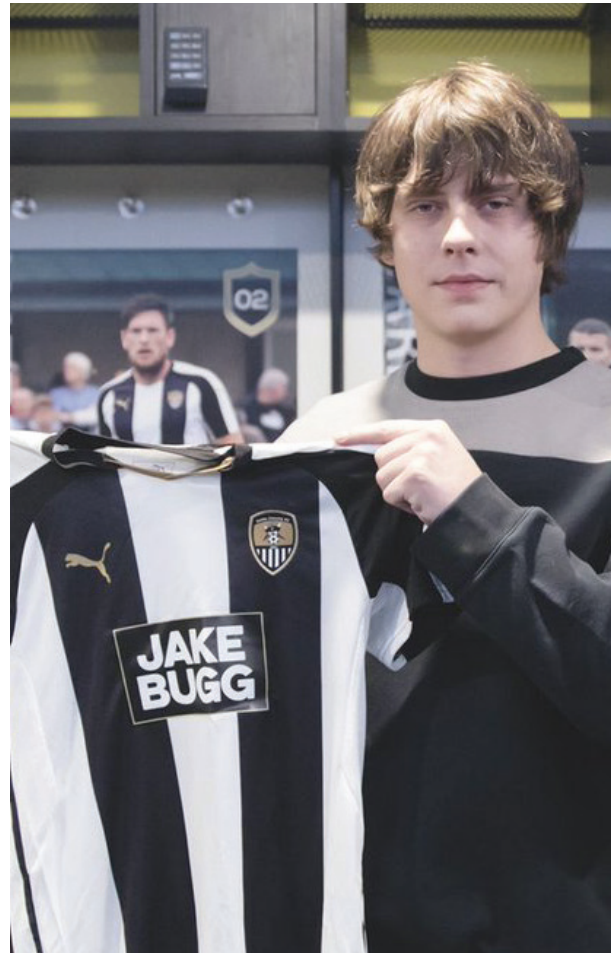
## INTRODUCTION

**The BPI's latest Insight Session, Match of the Day, took place in early November as an online event, presented in association with Music Ally and BPI official partner Bowers & Wilkins.**

Its focus was on the intersection of music and sport, two sectors that have long overlapped through the shared passion of their fans, and their evolution in the age of online video and social media.

Following the successful pattern of previous Insight Sessions in 2021, executives and experts from both industries were given 10-minute slots to share their views on one or both of the two industries, and how their collaboration might grow in the future.

This report offers writeups from each of the talks, as well as a case study where a CEO of a Premier League football club outlines its approach to talent management. There is also a 'takeaways' section gathering some of the key lessons from the event.





# 01 LESSONS TO LEARN FROM SPORTS STARTUPS



2021 HAS BEEN AN EXCITING time for new music-tech startups: Music Ally had reported on more than 125 of them by the end of October.

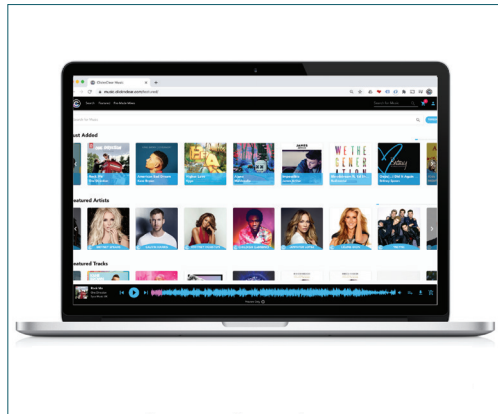
One of the key trends in this space is the music industry casting a wider net in terms of the startups it is keen to explore partnerships with, or simply learn from.

The opening session at the Match of the Day event saw Music Ally editor Joe Sparrow talk about 10 sports-tech startups that have been making waves in 2021, and how they might inspire music companies.

## ClicknClear

[www.clicknclear.com](http://www.clicknclear.com)

» *ClicknClear's Licensing Platform*



He kicked off with a startup whose CEO would be presenting later in the event, citing ClicknClear as a prime example of a company finding new revenues in the intersection of music and sport.

In this case, that involves pre-clearing and curating music for use in performance sports

– cheerleading, figure skating and more – ensuring that they are fully licensed for its usage.

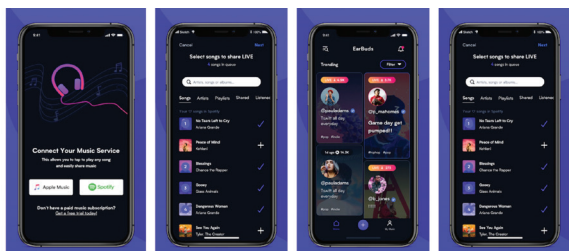
“A solid business model solving a specific problem in a large, niche industry that is parallel to the music business,” as he put it.

## Earbuds

[www.earbudsmusic.com](http://www.earbudsmusic.com)

Earbuds is “an example of a platform that starts with sports fandom then expands from there” explained Sparrow.

» Earbuds syncs with Spotify and Apple Music



Earbuds was founded by former professional American football player Jason Fox as a way for fans to listen to playlists curated by their favourite stars.

In August 2021, the company raised a funding round of \$3m (about £2.2m) to continue developing its app, which pulls music in from Spotify and Apple Music, with more streaming services to be added soon.

“Users can now import their own playlists and record voice clips,” noted Sparrow.

## Sleeper

[www.sleeper.app](http://www.sleeper.app)

Sadly nothing to do with the recently-reformed Britpop band.

» The Sleeper app interface



Sleeper is one of a crop of fantasy sports apps in the US, which let people construct a team of their favourite players then compete based on those stars’ real-life performances. The app has more than three million players and recently raised \$40m (£29.8m) of funding.

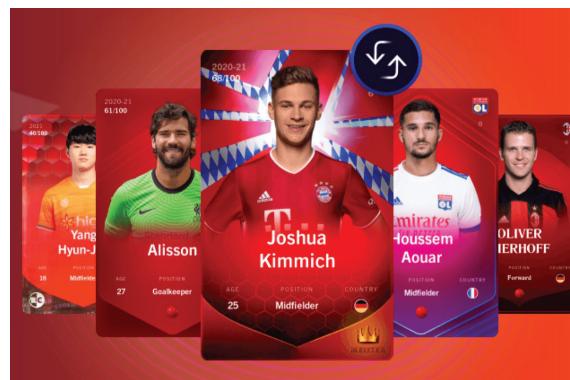
Could this spark a new wave of startups trying to apply the fantasy sports model to music? “Users could virtually sign artists to a virtual label, then compete with their friends based on data from the charts or streaming success for those artists,” he said.

“This idea has been tried unsuccessfully a few times already, but sport and music fandom have so many similarities, it’s possibly an idea that’s just waiting to be done correctly.”

## Sorare

[www.sorare.com](http://www.sorare.com)

» Sorare allows fans to collect player cards



Sorare is another fantasy sports startup, but with a twist: it incorporates blockchain technology and non-fungible tokens (NFTs) so that fans can buy, collect and trade limited edition ‘digital player cards’ based on their favourite footballers.

Sparrow compared the company to Fanaply, a music-tech startup which has been exploring a similar model with artists: for example creating NFTs that fans can claim for being early listeners or concertgoers for a particular musician.

“Sorare shows how those cards could be used beyond bragging rights, as a store of value,” he said. “Used as trading cards in a competitive game or league where you play against fellow fans or fandoms.”

## Minute

[www.minute.ly](http://www.minute.ly) » Minute offers video analysis of matches



Lots of music-tech startups are using various flavours of artificial intelligence technology, and the sports-tech world is no different. Minute uses deep learning tech to analyse video of sports matches, identifying key moments and editing them into video teasers and thumbnails.

“Major broadcasters are using it to generate highlights of sports and various games, including major tournaments like the last World Cup,” said Sparrow.

“Could technology like this be trained to identify the key moments in live music performances, and serve those videos in discrete, targeted ways to groups of fans?”

## Sport Buff

[www.sportbuff.com](http://www.sportbuff.com)

Sport Buff is a startup that

» Sport Buff brings betting on top of live streams



aims to bring gamification to live sports broadcasts, layering quizzes, polls, trivia, competitions and betting on top of the live streams of events being watched online.

Could this work for music events too? Think TV awards shows as well as artist and festival livestreams. Sparrow admitted that music people may not like to think of their viewers as being anything less than 100% rapt in the performance, but suggested that it could be a useful technology to, for example, sell merch or get fans talking to one another.

## MyLads

[www.mylads.com](http://www.mylads.com)

Fandom meets figurines with this sports startup, which partners with professional clubs and stars to create physical toys – from Cristiano Ronaldo to Portuguese legend Eusebio – which fans can buy.

Those toys can then be used to unlock augmented reality content. “You can take photos and videos

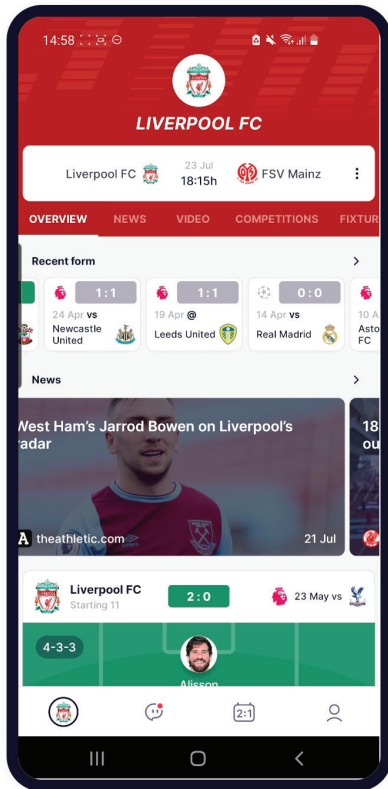
with a virtual avatar, or walk around their virtual stadium,” said Sparrow, who sees ample opportunities to apply this to music.

“Imagine a Freddie Mercury figurine, with a virtual AR Freddie on your phone and a virtual stadium Live Aid experience,” he said. “Or you could buy an exclusive piece of tour merchandise, which comes with an exclusive tour-date NFT, which then unlocks a VR/AR experience to hang out with the pop star!”

» Smart figurines from MyLads



» Sportening allows fans to chat and connect with others across the world



## Sportening

[www.sportening.com](http://www.sportening.com)

There have been a few attempts to launch music-focused messaging apps down the years, and they have all disappeared without a trace when fans decided they were perfectly comfortable messaging about music on WhatsApp, Messenger or other bigger apps.

However, Sportening is an example of the model being applied to sports: "Fans gather in a team-specific room to discuss the match, gossip and engage in terrible banter!" said Sparrow.

"In a time where Discord servers are huge, and in some ways flying under the radar, a music app equivalent to this – if it can get the fan groups aligned correctly – might find its time has come."

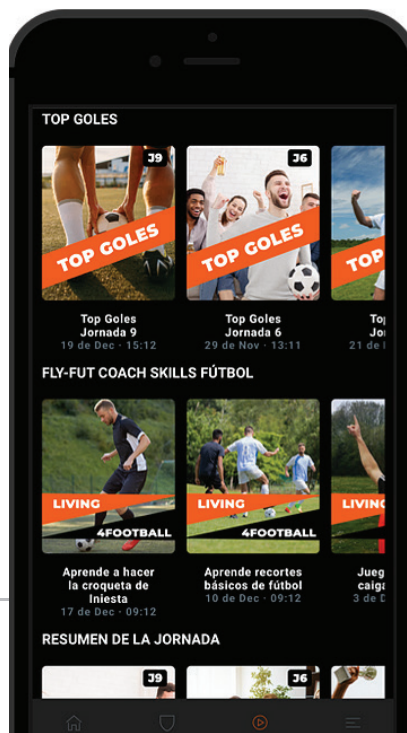
## Fly-Fut

[www.fly-fut.com](http://www.fly-fut.com)

You don't have to be a top-level football star to have your on-pitch exploits preserved for posterity. Fly-Fut is taking a high-tech approach to this opportunity by providing drones to record football matches at amateur or pro level, stream the footage to companion apps, and also archive it for later analysis.

Sparrow wondered whether there is mileage in drone recording for music events, like outdoor festivals. "A possible

» Fly-Fut's drones stream to its app

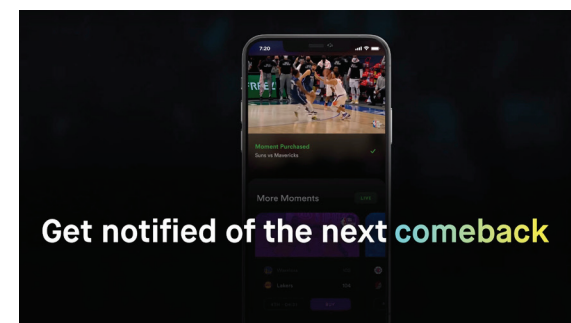


equivalent service, providing video of festival events, delivered straight to the festival's app perhaps as a paid add-on, or bundled with the festival ticket?" he said.

## Buzzer

[www.buzzer.com](http://www.buzzer.com)

» Buzzer tracks individual sports stars



Buzzer is another startup focusing on the fandom around individual sports stars. "You follow a sports star you love, and when they do something dramatic in a game, you get a notification and the option to watch it for a small fee," explained Sparrow.

He saw an obvious parallel in the artist world. "Buzzer could point to how premium content, live in the moment, could work for musicians. Say you're a Taylor Swift fan. She just dropped a new behind-the-scenes clip of her new song. Pay 59 cents to view it!" he said.



## 02 SPREADING THE ROOTS OF THE BEAUTIFUL GAME

**INDEPENDENT LABEL CHERRY Red Records has plenty of musical fans, but it has won hearts and minds in the football world too, thanks to its sponsorship of various teams and grassroots leagues. Chairman Iain McNay was the second speaker at the Match of the Day event, to explain why and how the label got involved in football.**

“Everyone who joins Cherry Red is obviously into music, and most of them are into football as well. You’re likely, if you come to interview at Cherry Red, to

be asked who you support. That’s actually a very important question!” he laughed.

“I can’t say we’ve ever rejected a person because they support a dodgy team, but we’re a grassroots company. We like grassroots people. We like people who go to matches, and we like people who go to away matches even more!”

Cherry Red’s football journey began by sponsoring Kingstonian FC, a non-league club who were on the rise, reaching two FA Trophy finals that were televised

in the UK – complete with the Cherry Red-branded shirts.

The company has since gone on to sponsor entire leagues further down the English football pyramid: the Chiltonian League, which subsequently merged with the Hellenic League in Oxfordshire, then the Combined Counties League and the Middlesex County League.

“It’s such honest football! We like to support things like that. The money we give them helps with prizes for cup competitions and things like that,” said McNay.

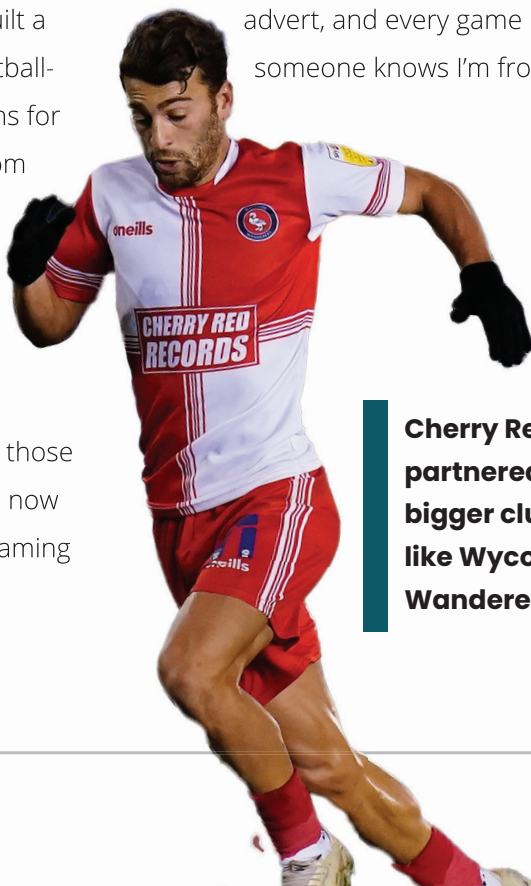




“You get your advert in the programme and can advertise whatever you like.”

Cherry Red also sponsors several magazines focusing on non-league football, but has also partnered with bigger clubs: Wycombe Wanderers and AFC Wimbledon.

The label’s football involvement is not just about sponsorship though: it has built a catalogue of football-song compilations for clubs ranging from Liverpool and Arsenal to Coventry and Kilmarnock. Originally released as CDs, those compilations are now available on streaming services too.



McNay is keen for other labels to follow Cherry Red’s lead in supporting grassroots sport. “It’s amazing what you can do with very little money. For a couple of grand you can sponsor a league,” he said.

“Every league we sponsor, we get an ad in the programme. There may be only 50 or 100 people there, but they get the programme, they see the advert, and every game I go to, if someone knows I’m from Cherry

Red, they almost always know something about the company and the releases.”

Even individual artists can explore these kinds of sponsorships. McNay cited the example of punk-poet Attila the Stockbroker, who was once signed to Cherry Red and remains a good friend of the company.

“He sponsors his local team, who play way down the pyramid. They have ‘Attila the Stockbroker’ on their shirts, and he can sell those at gigs, so there’s something back for him, and that’s a real special thing for an Attila fan,” said McNay.

“I don’t know how much he paid for that, but I bet it’s in the hundreds of pounds! I want to encourage people: fire your passion!”

**Cherry Red has partnered with bigger clubs like Wycombe Wanderers**



## 03 HIP-HOP AND PROFESSIONAL SPORTS IN THE US

DAN RUNCIE IS THE FOUNDER of *Trapital*, the free, weekly memo that is keeping more than 10,000 people abreast of the latest trends in the business of hip-hop. Who better, then, to give the Match of the Day event a taster of how hip-hop and sports are intersecting in the US?

Runcie started off by pointing out that these collaborations go a long way back, with a rich history of rappers and producers working with sporting bodies like the NBA and NFL. However, he sees changes in how these partnerships are evolving.

» *Dan Runcie*



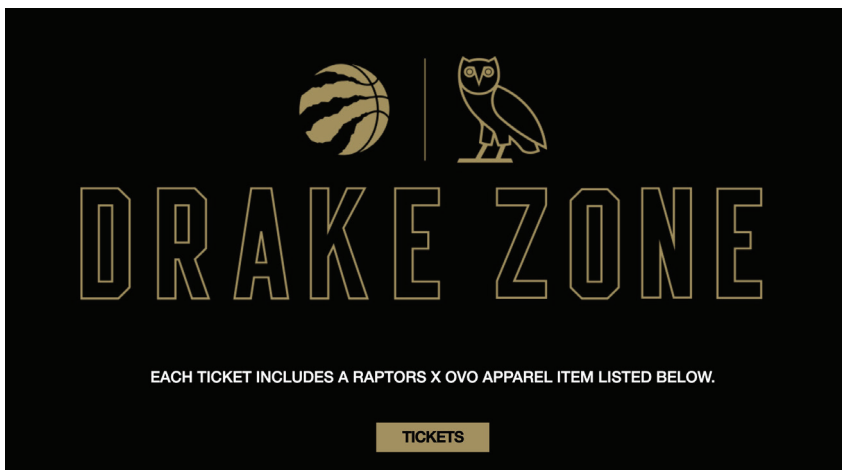
**Hip-hop and sports collaborations are “happening much more frequently” in 2021**

He pointed to Damian Willer, who plays for basketball team the Portland Trail Blazers, but who also releases albums under his rap alias Dame Dolla. “He’s a

real rapper that has been able to manage both of those jobs,” said Runcie.

He also suggested that hip-hop and sports collaborations are “happening much more frequently” in 2021, with hip-hop’s rise to the top of the streaming economy coinciding with sport’s broader impact on US culture.

“33% of streams are now hip-hop music,” he said. “This is an era, especially in social media, where there’s less gatekeepers than ever before. In the days when radio plays and TV stations



controlled exposure, it was much tougher to happen [for hip-hop artists] so it's no coincidence now that we're seeing hip-hop rise to the top when it's more of a democratised landscape. And pro sports has leaned in to hip-hop."

Why? Because we are in an attention economy now, and sports (like music) are competing with games, social media and a host of other digital entertainment options, particularly for younger people.

"Outside of a few NFL broadcasts, most live TV sports ratings have been in steady decline. That has forced sports to think less about the broadcast of what they're doing, and more about the overall entertainment experience."

Cue partnerships with artists. Drake is a good example, having been associated with basketball

team the Toronto Raptors for many years now – the team even named its practice facility after his OVO brand – as well as hosting several sports awards events.

Recently, he doubled down on this, partnering with ESPN and its 'Monday Night Football' show for the release of his 'Certified Lover Boy' album. Drake announced its release date on ESPN, with a succession of articles and social media posts from the network further promoting it.

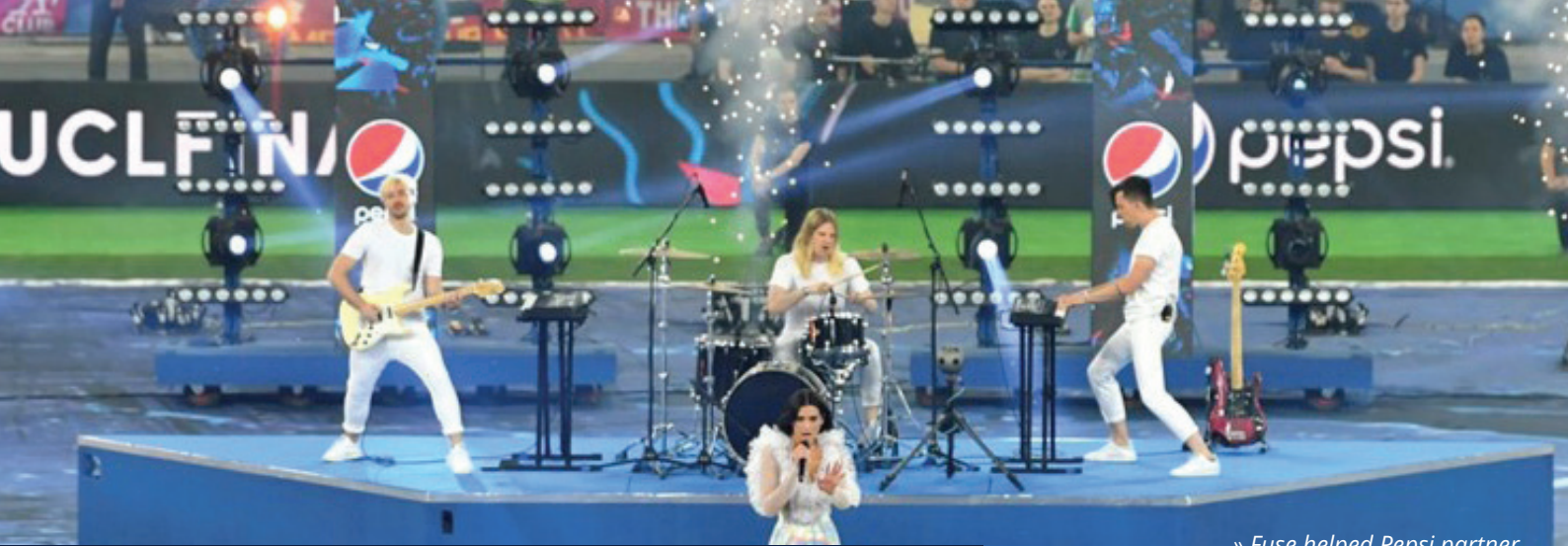
"We really haven't seen ESPN go this deep into promoting an album before," said Runcie. Drake

is also going to be curating music for 'Monday Night Football' as part of the campaign. "It signals something that we clearly see: the big stars want to partner with major brands to distribute their music," he continued. "And sports is one of the biggest ways and opportunities to do so."

Runcie noted that Snoop Dogg (pictured below) bagged a hosting spot on NBC for the last Olympic Games, complete with footage of his commentary on an equestrian event going viral. Meanwhile, musicians have invested in sports teams, and created more songs to soundtrack big events.

"It's an exciting time, and I think there are plenty of opportunities that even aren't at the superstar level. Think about all the local teams," said Runcie, in a neat callback to the previous session from Cherry Red.





» Fuse helped Pepsi partner with Dua Lipa for the UEFA Champions League Final

# 04 FUSE ON WORKING WITH PARTNERS



THE NEXT SESSION AT THE Match of the Day event came from sponsorship and marketing agency Fuse, as its Director, Culture and Entertainment Marketing Partnerships Danielle Sammeroff and Head of Asia Pacific Jon Drakes talked about lessons from sport for music.

» *Danielle Sammeroff and Jon Drakes*



**“Music can be quite daunting for brands. They don’t understand the rights structure, whereas sports is a lot clearer to understand”**

Drakes offered a big-picture view of a “very volatile environment” for brands: “a rapidly changing cultural landscape, with new audience behaviours being driven by, and in turn driving, ongoing fragmentation of that media landscape”.

That means brands are looking for partnerships that offer “a demonstrable impact on growth... they’re expecting us to pull levers for them that will grow audiences and ultimately add value to the business”, as well as “creating a

greater sense of participation around and with their brands”.

Drakes explained that sports organisations slot neatly into this dynamic because of their ability to “operate at scale as a marketing platform... your ability to reach a lot of people at once is still the foundation”.

Sports also have a lot of what marketers call ‘touchpoints’ with the population, from TV and digital media to live matches and events.



Sports organisations also have good access to data on their audiences, and sports is seen as a 'brand-safe' environment in terms of the control over brand messages and partnerships with stars.

This is all great news for sports, but it can present challenges when music companies are trying to offer themselves or their artists as an alternative partner for brands' campaigns.

"Music can be quite daunting for brands. They don't understand the rights structure, whereas sports is a lot clearer to understand," said Sammeroff, who also reiterated the point about having access to data on the audience, claiming that too often music companies are still "not providing the makeup or

geography of where an artist's following is, or who's listening to them on Spotify" when trying to work with brands.

"You need to include that quite basic information in there, that sports would always have, at least at the first pass," she said. "When brands do want to get into music, they'll go to a media publisher like Boiler Room, where what gets sent to them as a proposal is packaged up with the metrics they'd want to see."

Sammeroff also advised music companies to think hard about timing when trying to work with brands. "A lot of opportunities land with us two to three weeks out from when it's happening. We work with big brands, which is great in so many ways, but they're generally not agile. Getting

something approved and the creative delivered in two to three weeks? It's just not possible."

Drakes suggested that as largely B2B businesses whose main revenues come from broadcasting rights and sponsorship, sports have "a little bit of muscle memory for how to approach and work with brands". However, he thinks there is a good opportunity for the music business to learn from how the sports industry operates.

"The massive lesson, the thing to steal, is how can music businesses start to position their opportunity as a media and marketing platform that can deliver the right outcomes for the client, and can do that at a scale that's simple for clients to understand and execute?"



# 05 MUSIC AND SPORTS TV WITH SKY AND SHOOT MUSIC

THE FIFTH SESSION AT THE event involved the prime sports broadcaster in the UK, Sky, whose Director of Music Peter Bradbury explained how the company works with music, and what the opportunities are for labels and artists.

» Peter Bradbury



Sky uses music under a variety of deal structures, from blanket and direct licensing to specifically commissioned tracks. It commissions around 1,000 pieces of music from composers every year, and that



## Sky worked with Celeste and her label to ensure it had different remixes and edits for its purposes

accounts for about 11% of the music used on its 11 sports channels in the UK. Meanwhile, 26% of the music is commercial, and 63% is library (production) music. "So, commercial music is only 26%

of what we have on Sky Sports. There is quite a lot of headroom and opportunity there," suggested Bradbury, noting that most of those uses are handled through Sky's blanket licences in the UK and Ireland.



Directly licensed music is reserved for specific uses, such as title music. “A small volume, but highly coveted spots,” as Bradbury put it. Celeste’s ‘Stop This Flame’, for example, has been used for Sky’s English Premier League football coverage for the last year, and will be instantly familiar to viewers. Sky worked with Celeste and her label to ensure it had different remixes and edits for its purposes.

Music is also key to Sky Sports’ promo spots, of which there are around 64,000 transmissions a month across 230 promos. Around 50% of those use commercial music, so he noted they are a big

opportunity for labels. “They’re great profile spots for new artists and new music, and also great in terms of society revenue: PPL-type revenue,” he added.

What should labels be doing to improve their prospects of having music used by Sky Sports? “Upload your catalogues to us. We’ve been going through a process of engaging with labels and trying to make the whole thing easy,” said Bradbury.

“The ones that have engaged with us early on are getting more use [of their music]. The ones who have not really engaged yet; there’s a bit of an opportunity there.”

He also noted that registrations are really important: new releases can’t be considered unless they’ve had all the necessary registrations (PPL for example) sorted out. And obviously, swear lyrics can’t be broadcast, so for songs with explicit content, clean edits need to be provided.

Bradbury stressed the positive aspects of such partnerships. “Music can really elevate what we do in sports, and can provide a real focus and profile to artists that want to engage in sports. It can create the best win-win,” he said.

“And remember, the right track for sport is not necessarily the

'best' track, the most successful one. The right track is the right emotion to go with sport, which could be about its lyrics, its tempo, its attitude. Or, indeed, its humility."

Bradbury shared his session with Tom Roberts, Director at Shoot Music, a specialist music promotions company focused on the sports market. It provides video and audio music content to more than 250 stadiums across the UK and Europe, including compiling a chart of the top tracks played at those venues.

The company is also building a profile for itself on streaming services, with more than a quarter of a million followers on Spotify of its sports playlists.

It also helps get artists onto TV and radio shows, including those focused on sport, and works with Formula 1 on its music strategy. Roberts explained some of the facets of the UK's sports broadcasting market.

"Sky has a music team we work very closely with, but other companies are different. The BBC have different producers for



**If an artist has an affinity for a particular sport or supports a certain team, that is relevant to whatever they're pitching to**

all their shows that move about constantly. They're independent, so some are on one show doing athletics one week, then the next week they're doing something different," he said.

"There is a big variation in licensing, the paperwork that needs to be done. All broadcasters have got different blanket agreements with PRS, PPL and MCPS. I've got a team member who spends his days purely on making sure the right paperwork is done!"

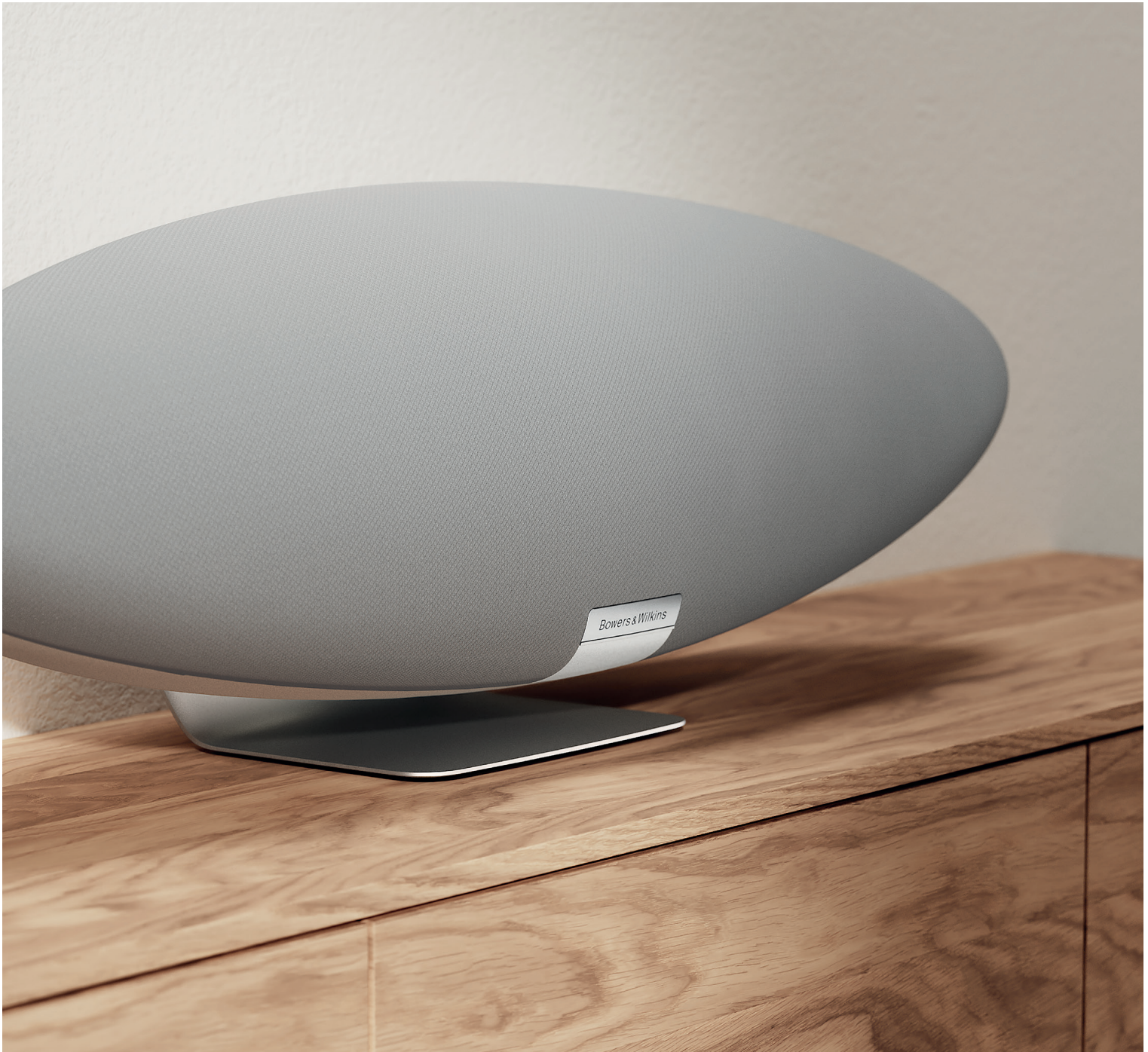
"Channel 4, for example, can't use anything that isn't 100% MCPS-assigned publishing, so you might have filled out your PRS form, but if you haven't assigned your rights to MCPS, you can't get played there."

Bradbury noted that each broadcaster has its own different musical "palate" that governs what it uses: BT Sports sounds very different to Sky Sports, and a show like the BBC's Football Focus sounds very different to Sky's Soccer AM.

His advice to labels was to learn these differences to ensure the right artists and music are being pitched to each broadcaster, and making use of a "good story" – for example if an artist has an affinity for a particular sport or supports a certain team that is relevant to whatever they're pitching to.

Relevance is key, not to mention that paperwork. "Just because you've been played on Radio 1 doesn't mean you can be played on Sky Sports!" he warned.





## THE BEAUTY OF SOUND

INTRODUCING  
THE NEW ZEPPELIN

Bowers & Wilkins

[BOWERSWILKINS.COM](http://BOWERSWILKINS.COM)

# Case Study: Sports Talent Management



**THE ART OF TALENT management is an ever-evolving beast, and one that varies wildly between different industries, depending on the types of artists or athletes involved.**

It's an area the music industry has been looking at constantly,

developing its offering to adapt to new artist needs, whether they're created by the plethora of new technologies that enable increasingly intense fan interactions, expectations around global touring as more and more markets open, and many other factors.

As part of this Insight Session, we were keen to hear how the sports industry goes about managing talent. We have had the privilege of sitting down with the CEO of a top Premier League football club, who has kindly offered insights into their process under the condition of anonymity. We are extremely grateful for their time,

wisdom and for offering us a window into a world that most of us on the music side don't have access to.

Football and music have a long history of connection – from the songs adopted (and adapted) by fans to the rich tradition of the football record – but the role that the talent plays and the infrastructure surrounding it is quite different.

Professional athletes will work under contract almost like employees and the team's success is ultimately paramount, although individual glory is undeniably part of that. Certainly, there are similarities in that individuals are idolized by fans, but the allegiance to a greater entity (the team) is a key difference.

The topline finances of the football industry differ too - the top clubs tend to have independently wealthy owners, meaning that P&Ls are a relatively minor consideration. The goal, ultimately, is team glory.

Although there are vast structural differences between music and



football, we hope what follows will be of interest to our music-focused audience whatever their level of knowledge about football and also provide some food for thought.

## Identifying and Developing Talent

The search for excellence begins early in football. At the top club in question selected kids join an academy at age seven to eight where they build up their training regime whilst balancing school. Not letting go of the academic side of things is important, as not everyone will make it.

Physical fitness and overall health are of course paramount

to a career in sports, so the club monitors the children's development through puberty and adolescence, with each stage increasing the level of attention and care they receive. We were fascinated to hear that MRI scans are being regularly administered from the age of 13, to make sure there have been no hits or falls that would damage the players' health.

Particularly in the context of working with such young children, the family's cooperation throughout the process is crucial. Parents are required to sign a contract guaranteeing they will look after their children and 'not get in trouble'.

Nutrition is a hugely important aspect in the development of the youngsters, and, given the regular physical examinations the young players receive, any deficiencies are easily spotted.

The club will support parents throughout the process – instructing them to keep a diary of what the child eats and going as far as facilitating cooking classes, should they need to improve their skills.



It's easy to ascertain that physical health is central to an athlete's ability to perform, and our secret football club has a medical team of no fewer than 40 on call, full of experts who can cover all imaginable needs – for both men's and women's teams. But mental health is equally important, and the club works with counsellors to usher players through their development and contribute to their overall wellbeing.

The pressures are high, but the support is there to help players cope and guide them through everything from having a bad day, feeling lonely due to being separated from their

families, going through a stretch of underperforming or bad behaviour, and many more. A team can only win if everyone is healthy overall – and that includes having their 'head in the game'.

### **Making the Leap to a Contract**

From the age of 17, if the players demonstrate a high level of skill, they are invited to sign a professional contract. With that, the expectations increase, and the rigours become more acute.

School must be finished, and at the same time, the training regime and match schedule becomes more intense.

On top of that, players start taking part in commercial activities and are put through a metaphorical crash course into adulthood. That includes being placed in situations outside of their comfort zone and being taught how to cope with that. Some players are then loaned to lower league clubs for further development and to gain game experience.

Two thirds will go abroad for this – which, as a teenager, can be an intense experience. Again, the club provides support throughout, but only the best of the best will get to come back and play for the main (adult) team. Often, to inspire the players and

further instil a sense of aspiration towards excellence, the club invites role models from other industries to give them talks.

The experts hail from wide ranging backgrounds – from surgeons to senior army personnel and everything in between – who can speak about values such as bravery, persistence, and commitment to one's goals.

## Dealing with Challenges and Changes

As much as their training and care regime sets the young players apart from their peers, they grow into their teenage years like everyone else. The club employs outside agencies to provide media and social media training – from helping set up accounts to offering guidelines for responsible behaviour and communications.

With social media also comes the risk of receiving abuse, which can be quite destabilising, so navigating those choppy waters is crucial. Apart from social media, risks can come from other usual suspects: partying too



hard, falling in with bad crowds or being taken advantage of by people only interested in money or fame by association – and the club has teams in place to help deal with all these issues.

Upon signing a professional contract at 17, the players start receiving good wages – and dealing with relatively large amounts of money can be overwhelming or overly exciting for the young men and women.

The club takes financial responsibility seriously and the team members are taught

the basics of how to manage their finances, the importance of helping their families and generally given advice on how not to squander wealth.

That's not to say the players are stopped from purchasing whatever they wish – and one of the first big acquisitions does tend to be a flashy car, and the club advises not to go too flashy too early – but even with that, the club will help put them in touch with trusted dealers, as well as give them advice on the implications of leasing versus buying, for instance.



## Life Admin and Negotiating the Next Stages

Elite clubs are in a position to 'go beyond' for their players. Need an insurance company? There's a list of trusted partners. A lawyer? An accountant? Same. Want to buy a house? Someone will help sort the whole process out so none of these issues distract you from work.

Has your phone number leaked and you're receiving abuse? The club will deal with getting you a new number. Want to go to a friend's wedding in Brazil? The club will arrange for a car to pick you up, drive you to the airport, the flights will of course be sorted, as will the hotel on the other side and a car to take you to it.

Granted, the club will not pay for all of this, but not having to deal with the hassle associated with any of these tasks sounds like a dream (at least to this author) – and the generous pay package top players receive means none of these costs will seriously impact their financial health.

We've already covered the extensive health-related and admin support players receive to enable them to be in top professional form, but the club goes further than that and helps their athletes with their personal growth.

That means supporting them through their life stages (which we've begun outlining above), including starting a family. Beyond just sorting out the house situation, extensive care is provided when babies arrive on the scene.

Wives and girlfriends are supported by private doctors round the clock, on call, as well as help with psychological issues like post-natal depression, or, once again, loneliness caused by family separation if the teams are playing abroad.

The ultimate aim is to make sure the players become well rounded individuals who can lead full lives not just as part of the team, but beyond sport as well.

## Role Models and Responsibility

Football, like other sports (or possibly even more so than most sports), has a huge impact on society. From fans supporting their teams passionately and building communities around them, to players becoming celebrities and, as such, influencers in the broadest sense of the term – football's impact permeates society at large. And the club takes this very seriously.

One aspect that's a point of pride is the demonstrated fact that the popularity of football inspires children to get fit and stay active, which has been objectively proven to lead to them living longer lives.

More recently, football players have played an active role in combating racism and changing attitudes in pockets of population that would have been difficult to reach otherwise.



Overall, the impact on culture and the top players' important position in society is something that is drilled into the whole team – who are urged to take this seriously and lead inspiring lives, ensuring they are positive role models for the younger generations coming through.

The recent success of the women's teams and their increased visibility on social media has also broken down barriers and inspired a whole new generation of girls to embrace football – which can only be a good thing.

## Adjusting to a New Reality

Being told you're not good enough for a top tier club can be a devastating experience, especially if that's the only life

you've known and have been training for from the age of seven. It is, however, the reality a lot of players face.

Our club does have a process to handle this and make the transition as smooth as possible.

The release programme lasts for four to six months, depending on individual needs, and involves psychological support, career advice and referrals to lower league teams and a small financial package to help with travel to trials at other clubs, as well as a handover package including video replays of their games, which will help them train further.

Their extensive medical notes are also transferred to a GP and whilst a counsellor helps

them through dealing with the rejection and finding their new direction, the club does also sever ties by making it clear this is a point of no return. To that end, their player badge to access the building no longer works, and they need to go to their sessions via the visitors' entrance.

Striking a balance at this stage is never easy, but the aim is to provide support for the player while also emphasising the need to psychologically start adjusting to the new reality.

It goes without saying that football is a highly competitive industry that comes with great responsibilities for those at the top level. The rewards can be immense but so is the pressure, with scrutiny of players more intense in the age of social media than it ever has been.

The emphasis on peak physicality means that careers can be short but there is a greater awareness at all levels of the game that preparation for life outside it – whether that day comes after a long and fulfilling career, or sooner than expected - is paramount.

# 06 THE POWER OF MUSIC AND SPORTS FANDOMS

» Below: YouTuber KSI has been making music and participating in sports events with fellow influencers

THE NEXT PRESENTATION came from Srishti Das, Consultant at MIDiA Research, whose topic was the power of music and sports fandoms, which together “have created cultural moments” when the two worlds have crossed over.

Some of those crossovers are happening with sports and/or music stars, including people who straddle both worlds. Das pointed to British artist KSI as an example: having started as a YouTuber making videos based on the FIFA football games, he has recently been both releasing music and taking part in televised



» Srishti Das



**Having started as a YouTuber making videos based on the FIFA football games, KSI has recently been both releasing music and taking part in televised boxing matches against other influencers**





**“Lando Norris [who races for the McLaren team] has his own content platform, Quadrant, where he and a couple of friends stream games and have fun. That’s part of who he is as a Formula 1 driver”**

boxing matches against other influencers.

Another example: “Look at Formula 1. Lando Norris [who races for the McLaren team] has his own content platform, Quadrant, where he and a couple of friends stream games and have fun. That’s part of who he is as a Formula 1 driver,” she said.

“Lewis Hamilton is also a musician, a fashion designer, and his fans mostly love it. They love it when people they love are able to engage with all the things that they are a fan of.”

F1 was a recurring theme of Das’s presentation, as she explained how the sport has worked hard to bring in a new generation of fans. “They no longer just cater to Rolex watch wearers, they’re all

about Twitch streamers,” as she put it.

Netflix documentary series Formula 1: Drive to Survive has also played a role in attracting a younger audience, and helping them to understand what goes on behind the scenes of the sport – as well as familiarising them with its drivers. Podcasts are also proving popular.

Das said that this is creating a world where what was once the prime metric – TV viewership – is now not the only way of measuring a sport’s popularity. “Sport has communities on Discord, on Instagram and on Twitter,” she said.

It all came back to the t-word: touchpoints. “Creating more touchpoints in music fandom is

extremely important,” she said. It’s also important to understand what new fandoms care about. In F1, for example, the newer generation of fans care about the climate emergency, and F1 has been engaging in that issue as a result.

“Old generation fans want the cars to be really loud and noisy, but the young generations are more interested in the personalities, what’s going on behind the race, and what’s going on on the track,” said Das. “Formula 1 has put in the effort to cater to a generation that’s absolutely different from the generation that has fed Formula 1 so far.”

For F1, that effort has paid off in various ways, including increased ticket sales to the US Grand Prix, which she said have almost doubled. Her suggestion was that music can watch what’s being done with sports like F1, and learn from it, just as those sports have learned from music fandom.

“The stronger the fandom becomes, the more opportunities there are going to be for monetisation,” said Das.



# 07 FOCUS ON NFTs WITH DAPPER LABS

NO MUSIC INDUSTRY EVENT is complete in 2021 without at least a few mentions of non-fungible tokens (NFTs), but for Match of the Day they were a very relevant topic. NFTs have been causing as much of a stir in the sports world this year as they have in the music industry.

Dapper Labs is one of the reasons. The startup played a major role in igniting the original excitement around blockchain-powered digital collectibles with its CryptoKitties game in 2017, and has since taken investment from Warner Music Group and launched a lucrative NBA

» *Micky Maher*



Top Shot initiative with the US basketball association.

“We’ve invented the NFT space as we know it today. We were the first true NFT developer on the Ethereum platform with CryptoKitties, and our CTO [Chief Technology Officer] wrote what’s called the ERC-721 standard,

**“We’ve invented the NFT space as we know it today”**

which is what developers use today to create NFTs,” said its SVP of Platform and Blockchain Partnerships Mickey Maher in his session at the event.

“We took the learnings to build NBA Top Shot on our own blockchain that we built specifically to cater to mass market applications in gaming and entertainment. We’ve created our own NFT blockchain, and one of the most well known, if not the most well known NFT project in the world.”

Top Shot is a game that involves buying virtual 'packs' in the same way that people would collect baseball cards (or in the UK, football stickers) in packs, sight unseen.

"You can open your packs and get surprised and delighted by what's in the pack. Rare, valuable, your favourite player or team," said Maher. "The same concept holds true in NBA Top Shot, but it's digital. And in the digital realm, these assets are more verifiably rare and scarce because they're on the blockchain."

These aren't just photos of players, however: each Top Shot is a "video collectible" based on a particular moment from a match. "It's encapsulated in a video clip, then we put it in a 3D cube, and that's the collectible," explained Maher.

"Beyond that there is a community and a marketplace where folks can go and discuss the packs and trade their cards or sell their moments. They can also build sets with their moments to unlock more exclusive digital experiences or collectibles, or even physical

activations or exclusive physical things for you to participate in."

During the last season, that included a contest whose 12 finalists got to travel to one of the NBA Finals matches in Phoenix, Arizona. Maher was bullish about the impact that Top Shot has had both in the sporting and NFT worlds.

"At one point, we were the fastest growing marketplace in the history of anything," he said. "We're approaching a billion dollars worth of secondary market trading value. And we haven't actually turned on marketing as much as we could, but just organically we've attracted over two million users to Top Shot who are buying and collecting these moments."

Exciting for the basketball world, but how could this work in music? That WMG investment hints at the potential for Dapper Labs to apply its Top Shot lessons to our industry too.

"These things, NFTs, can allow much greater ability in a digital format than just collecting.

They can offer exclusive access, they can offer you ownership in different things from creators, from musicians," he said.

Some music NFTs are already being launched by other companies using Dapper Labs' blockchain, which is called Flow. For example, artist Method Man (of the Wu-Tang Clan) is dropping NFTs via his Tical World project, which uses Flow.

"Collectibles is one aspect of this. You can go a lot further down the road, and essentially what you want to be doing as a musician is connecting with your audience much more directly, and much more closely, giving your audience access to you through NFTs, access to ownership of your music, the rights to your albums, or even leveraging NFTs as backstage passes, and more exclusive access to you as an artist," said Maher.

"These are all things that can be accomplished, and that's just the start of it," he concluded. "The implications in music are far and wide, and we are just scratching the surface of that."



# 08 PARALLEL LANES IN THE EVOLUTION OF MUSIC AND SPORT

» *Daniel Ayers*



**DANIEL AYERS IS ONE OF THE executives who has watched digital developments**

**at close quarters in both the music and sports industries. He spent 13 years working in music for BMG, Sony/BMG and Sony Music, before moving into the sports sector.**

He is now Consulting Partner at Seven League, which helps sports organisations to become true media and entertainment

**“Any businesses in the record industry that did not go through digital transformations successfully no longer exist”**



powerhouses. Ayers started his Match of the Day talk by contrasting the two industries.

“Digital transformation in music has pretty much already happened. Yes, it’s still ongoing, but any businesses in the record industry that did not go through digital transformations

successfully no longer exist,” he said.

“Sport is not like that at all. It has never had those pressures driving it to change. Some sports organisations have taken the opportunity to change. They see it as a thing they need to do. But there has been no event like the unbundling of the album and the change that had on music revenues.”

“Nothing like that has happened in sports yet. But you could say that is coming soon, certainly for tier two and tier three sports who are not getting the broadcasting revenues they might have done in the past.”

On the plus side, Ayers talked about the straightforward digital ecosystems in the sports world. A football club like Leicester City, for example, will have a club website, a ticketing site and a retail / e-commerce site, all run by the club with a single, unified user experience and fan login.

However, sport is not as simple as it may sometimes appear to the music industry looking in, he noted. It may seem that people follow a particular club or sport for life, but internationally it’s not quite the same: people might be fans of a few clubs outside their home countries.

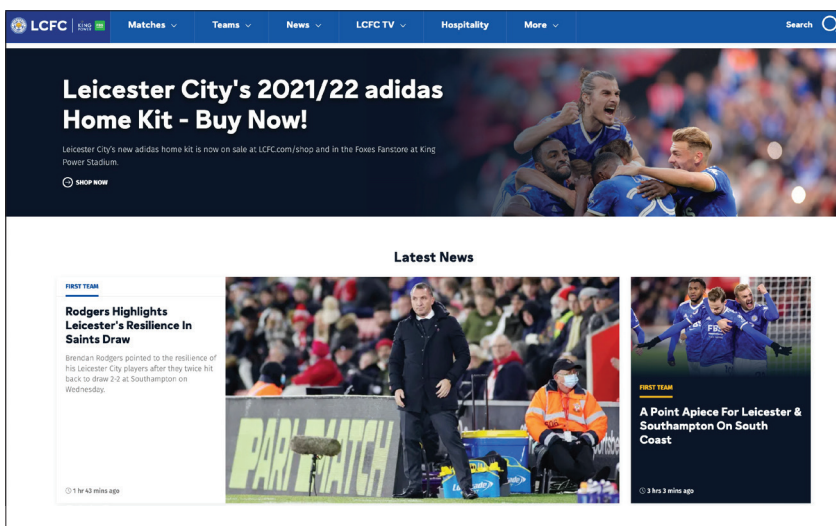
“It’s a very different relationship. Yes, you might be a fan of Liverpool, but it’s diluted with also following other clubs. And in that shared fandom, you’re competing against other clubs or brands in your sector, which is

exist at the moment in sport.” Ayers offered some constructive criticism of the way music and sport relationships work at the moment, zeroing in on the challenges of sporting events being broadcast and archived on platforms like YouTube.

“If you’re running a live sports event, you can buy a licence to play music at that event. But if you want to livestream it on YouTube, you’re fairly likely to end up with your stream being taken down and blocked at some point [on copyright grounds] so you’re not going to choose to do that,” he said.

Ayers showed details from an athletics event which had its stream blocked on YouTube when a karaoke version of an S Club 7 track was played. Meanwhile, in the US there have recently been takedowns of social media clips of sporting events from as far back as a decade ago for music copyright reasons.

“That can’t be the way forward! If there’s one thing the two sectors could get together to work on, cracking that nut would be the one,” he said.



“All the data flows back into a single customer view. You know a lot more about what’s going on,” he said. “There’s a massive miss in music of knowing what drives sales and what drives streams digitally. You can’t close that loop.”

much more common in music,” he said.

“That’s something that people in music could teach people in sport how to do, as to an extent that [knowledge] doesn’t really



## 09 MUSIC AND SPORT ON THE SAME TEAM

**THE NINTH SPEAKER AT MATCH of the Day** was Chantal Epp, CEO of UK-based startup ClicknClear, which had been included in Joe Sparrow's introduction covering 10 tech startups earlier in the event's first presentation.

Epp is a world champion athlete herself, in the sport of cheerleading, and founded her startup after observing a lawsuit where a major label sued a cheerleading organisation for copyright infringement, based on it editing music into mixes for routines without licensing deals.

» *Chantal Epp*



**"This is a whole new untapped market where a billion specialist licences are required each year. It's a chance to break new artists"**

"ClicknClear was set up to handle that licensing, as well as to curate its catalogue of music to help organisations, teams and athletes in performance sports – cheerleading, but also figure skating, and anything else where

music is used to soundtrack the performances themselves – put together their mixes legally.

"Traditional mainstream sports like football, cricket and American football don't typically use

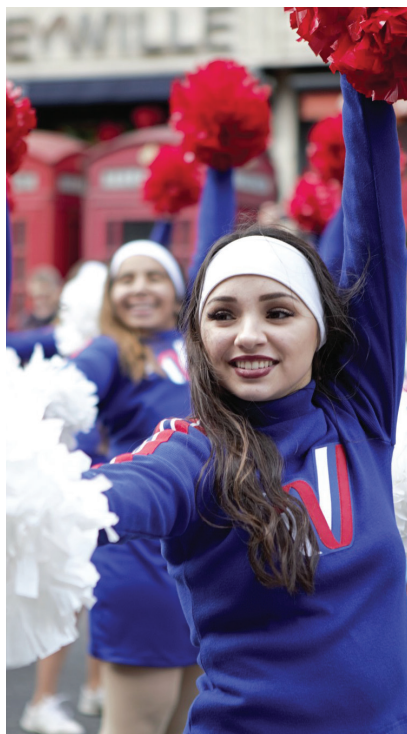
music to perform or play their sport. There will be music in the background or as a theme song, but they're not playing football in time to the music!" said Epp.

"But the performance sports tend to edit or adapt music to fit their routine and help them highlight choreographic moments. It has an impact on the judges and the audience, and it can really help elevate the energy of a room, which in turn can help increase their score in the competition."

Epp offered a breakdown of the structure of the performance sports world. International federations sit at the top of the pyramid, governing the sports globally, creating rules and guidelines, and running world championships.

Below them there are national federations who govern the sports in their own countries and run national championships, as well as adapting the rules to their local laws. Below that are the teams and their athletes / performers.

"The music used at opening ceremonies, as theme songs



and as background music at events is typically covered under a performing rights licence, and is the responsibility of the sports organiser," said Epp. "With routines, and editing and adapting music into a mix, that is the responsibility of the team or performer who's creating that mix."

Epp agreed with Daniel Ayers that online streaming of sports events is creating some headaches, because music used in the background or in performances can lead to copyright takedowns.

"Licensing on YouTube is a nightmare, so many of these sports are not using YouTube

any more. They're creating their own video-on-demand and subscription channels, where they can monetise the content," she said. "But they currently have no way to license the music, or even identify the music being used."

ClicknClear has deals with more than 700 labels and publishers in the major and independent sectors, and is working with all levels of those sporting pyramids. International federations can mandate the company as their licensing solution – "we get written into the rules!" – while Epp's startup educates national federations on the music rights landscape, and helps teams and performers choose and license music for their routines – including trying to crack the live-streaming and video-on-demand challenges.

Epp suggested that there could be as much as \$2.5bn of revenue to be found for the music industry. "There's a new opportunity here: this is a whole new untapped market where over a billion specialist licences are required each year. It's a chance to break new artists and generate new revenue."



# 10 MUSIC AND SPORTS: SAME LEAGUE?

**THE FINAL PRESENTATION AT Match of the Day saw Universal Music Group for Brands EVP Olivier Robert-Murphy joined by FIFA Marketing Director Jean-François Pathy to talk about the opportunities they see in music's intersection with sports.**

"The fans of music and sports are the same. Being a fan of Phil Collins, as I am, doesn't stop me being a fan of Arsenal!" said Robert-Murphy. "And both sport and music work closely with brands... We have a lot of things in common. By working together, we can maybe give even more to fans around the world."

» *Oliver Robert-Murphy*



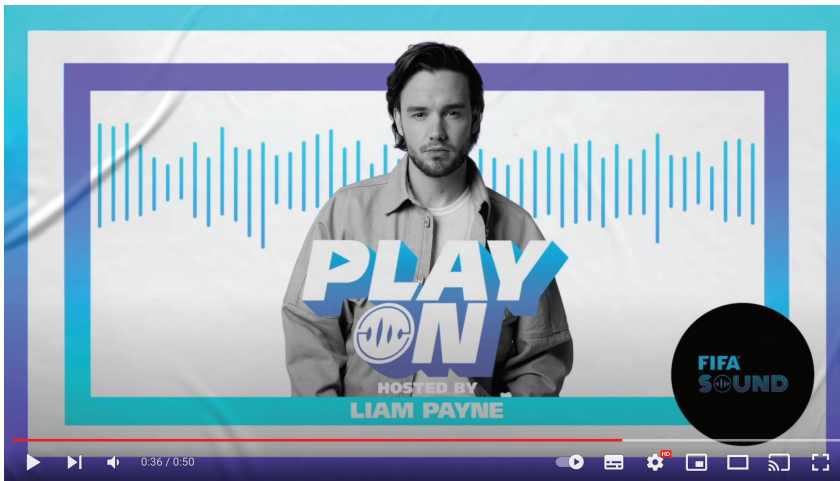
Pathy agreed. "As marketers, it's quite telling that most of the biggest sports-marketing football campaigns are also featuring awesome tracks. Adidas, Nike, Coke... they're big into music as well, and nowadays that even extends into esports. With the EA FIFA franchise, the playlist plays a big role in the success," he said.

He went on to outline FIFA's realisation that "it was about time we took music seriously, not as an opportunistic gimmick, but as core to our music strategy".

The organisation created a dedicated team within his department to focus on music, and struck a deal to work with Universal Music as part of that.

That's FIFA Sound, an initiative which was launched in January 2021 with a podcast series called 'PlayOn' hosted by artist Liam Payne and sports broadcaster Jaydee Dyer that saw footballers talking with musicians about the





songs that had soundtracked their lives.

“It is a new opportunity to create powerful stories and deep engagement with our brand and our tournament,” said Pathy.

Robert-Murphy expanded on that. “FIFA Sound is not a concept, it is an always-on, connected ecosystem. It’s about inspiring football fans, but also about increasing FIFA’s ever-growing cultural relevance around the globe.”

The goal is to help FIFA engage with a younger audience with a different demographic split to its existing fanbase. “They’re young, they’re diverse, they’re very socially conscious, and that’s something where the music industry is a step ahead of us, and we can learn a lot,” said Pathy.

Season two of ‘PlayOn’ is launching in November with new

hosts – “a charismatic duo!” – and a different format. Pathy said that the immediate connections made between the artists and sports stars interviewed have shown that the cultural crossover is real.

“Sports and music are two huge businesses. Obviously there is monetisation and all sorts of business metrics behind this, but what’s at the core of it is emotions. Both music and sports have that, and it’s the best way to connect with an audience,” he said.

Both men talked about the importance of data, while stressing that it is not the sole driver of the moves they are making.

“It should not be your strategy. Data is not the strategy, it’s a phenomenal tool that can bring science behind the emotions, and can bring the business metrics behind creativity. It will be key to build a business plan,

because sports and music are also expensive businesses!” said Pathy. “You need to make the right choices based on the right data.”

Robert-Murphy agreed. “It’s combining the science and magic,” he said, before talking about the importance of collaboration between different industries.

“There is a massive convergence of entertainment. Before it was very much siloed: you had sports, fashion, film, gaming, music, all of this was working very separately,” he said. “But none of these cultural businesses live in a bubble anymore: they are all interacting with each other. That’s why collaboration is crucial.”

Pathy left the audience with a musical quote to ponder as the event drew to a close, citing Drake’s track Thank Me Now and its “Damn, I swear sports and music are so synonymous / ‘Cause we want to be them, and they want to be us” line.

“If I haven’t convinced you, I’m sure Drake will do the job much better than I can!” he laughed.

## **Keep an eye on sports startups**

Joe Sparrow's opening presentation was a snapshot of some of 2021's most interesting sporty startups, but there are hundreds more out there. They're tackling challenges and exploring opportunities for an industry that has large physical events, healthy audiences online, and keen fandoms.

As such, they can provide plenty of inspiration for startups and labels alike in the music world.

## **Sports stars can be music curators**

The personal bonds that fans feel with their sporting heroes can easily extend to music, and we're seeing growing attempts to channel that: from startups like Earbuds to Drake's curatorial role on 'Monday Night Football'. With new artists trying to cut through the noise of tens of thousands of tracks released every day, curation from sports stars could help.

## **Musicians can be sporting pundits**

If you haven't watched Snoop Dogg commentating on equestrian dressage at the Olympic Games, head to YouTube now: it's a joyful moment. And one that shows that musicians' sporting interests can bring them opportunities too.

Not all of them will get a slot to ponder dancing horses on primetime TV, but sports shows of all kinds are keen to enlist artists who have a genuine passion for sport.

## **Sponsoring sports isn't always expensive**

Iain McNay's passion for Cherry Red Records' involvement in grassroots football was clear, and he made a persuasive case for other labels – and even artists on an individual level – to get their wallets out to support local sport.

The key point being that this doesn't have to be expensive. Attila the Stockbroker certainly won't be the last artist with their name emblazoned on football shirts.

## **Music can learn from sport to attract brands**

The Fuse and Seven League presentations at Match of the Day highlighted some constructive areas for music companies to work on: particularly when competing with sports to secure brand partnerships. Providing good metrics on the audience for a particular artist or music brand when pitching is one key requirement, and offering longer deadlines for brands to get their creative in order is another.

## **TV playback can be about the little things**

While a lot of the music used by broadcasters like Sky Sports is under blanket licences, there are still some small but important things labels can do to give their tracks the best chance of being picked.

Being on top of the paperwork, including registrations with collecting societies, was one thing that Sky's Peter Bradbury pulled out. Having the right edits available (particularly removing swearing) is also important.

## Lessons to be learned around mental health

The lifeblood of the music and sports industries are young, talented artists and athletes, but success can come fast and bring with it huge pressures, particularly in the social-media age. Our Premier League CEO case study outlines some of the efforts football clubs are making to protect their young stars' mental health, and it's a key task for labels and management companies in music too: the two industries can learn a lot from one another on this score, and it might be good to create the forums to do that in 2022.

## Create more and better touchpoints for fans

Srishti Das's presentation at Match of the Day used Formula 1 as a good example of a sport striving to attract younger fans by creating new and better 'touchpoints' for them to follow their favourite stars, and understand the sport's workings. Her point about the F1 Netflix documentary was interesting: in music we tend to think about such series as best for famous, heritage artists, but these behind-the-scenes properties can be just as important for helping fans deepen their love of newer musicians too – even if Netflix isn't footing the bill.

## Sports NFTs could offer some ideas for music

It is still so early for the NFTs sector, with lots of big ideas, a fair amount of bluster, and understandable scepticism around the grandest claims for what this technology can offer. NBA Top Shot shows that NFTs can be lucrative in a sporting context, and may offer ideas for music NFTs. However, as Mickey

Maier made clear, labels and artists should not look at sports' digital collectibles and assume that's the only path for music tokens: building communities and finding inventive ways to give fans access to artists and their music may be more rewarding in the long term.

## Working together to solve YouTube headaches

Sports events use music, and have the licences to do so in their physical venues. Those events also want to stream live and be archived on platforms like YouTube, which is where licensing challenges can lead to streams being blocked and on-demand videos being taken down. That's a challenge, but as Daniel Ayers noted, it can be a constructive one: encouragement for music rightsholders, sporting organisations and tech platforms to figure out new licensing structures that can benefit everyone.

## Music and sports can be powerful together

FIFA and Universal Music's 'FIFA Sound' is clearly at the top end of sports / music partnerships in terms of scale, but it illustrates the wider thread running throughout the Match of the Day event. There is so much fertile territory to be explored through the intersection of these two worlds: labels working with broadcasters, artists sitting down with athletes, sports stars founding their own startups (as Chantal Epp has done) and more. The fact that these and other partnerships can work at every level from the biggest labels and stars to smaller independents and grassroots leagues is powerful encouragement to continue exploring the possibilities.

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