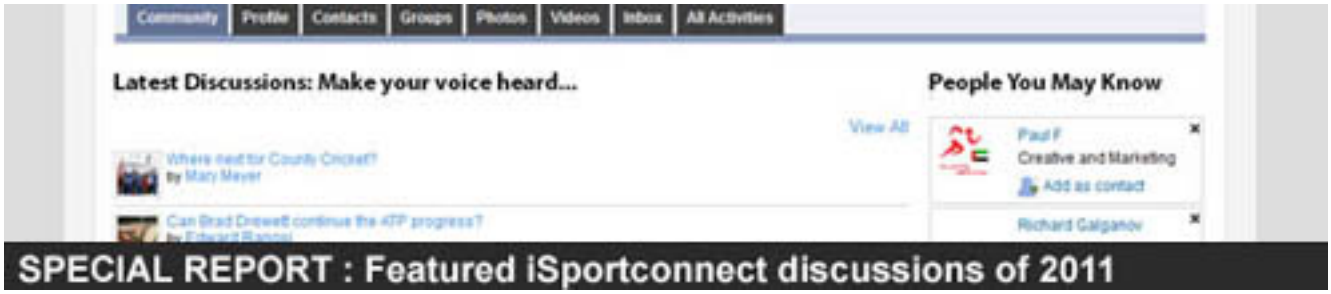


The discussions section is one of the most engaging and informative iSportconnect features. The popularity of the concept is something that iSportconnect – sports largest online business community – is hoping to promote through networking with some of the need-to-know people in the industry. The real success of the feature has been down to the members, some of whom are of the highest end in their industry sector, sharing their thoughts on the matters relevant to them.

**In 2011, there were 495 iSportconnect discussions that covered key events and issues from a wide range of sports, as well as sports business industry trends. Leading industry experts, including Sir Craig Reedie (former chairman, BOA), Richard Worth (CEO, Americas Cup), Phillipe Blanchard (former director, IOC), Umberto Gandini (organising director, AC Milan) and Paul Barber ( CEO, Vancouver Whitecaps FC), participated, providing their insight, opinions and expertise.**

**Top ten most popular iSportconnect discussions of 2011**

---

**1 -'Will more TV exposure for the Extreme Sailing Series change the way sailing is seen?'**

**( Most Popular)**

**Synopsis:** Analysis of the importance of television coverage of major sailing events, what is required from broadcasters and what challenges they face.

**Main participants:** Richard Worth (CEO, America's Cup), Mark Turner (Executive Chairman at OC ThirdPole)

**Key quote:** "Will the Extreme Sailing Series change the way sailing is seen? Seeing is not enough. People need to be shown." –David Fuller (CEO, Pilote)

Read more>>

---

**2 - 'Serie A match fixing scandal- the aftermath'**

**Synopsis:** Following Luciano Moggi's appeal against his jail sentence for match fixing, members of iSportconnect discussed what impact the 2005 match fixing scandal and the punishments that followed have had on Italian football.

**Main participants:** Umberto Gandini (organising director, AC Milan)

**Key quote:** "Off the pitch Italian football has huge problems and the lack of a strong leadership

is making these difficulties even worse. I therefore see no link with these times and the scandal , but unfortunate coincidences only."- Umberto Gandini

Read more>>

---

**3 - 'Stadium costs'**

**Synopsis:** A discussion about the per-seat cost of building a new stadium, and how costs can vary when building with steel as opposed to concrete.

**Main participants:** Michael Cunnah (former CEO of Wembley Stadium), Paul Freudensprung (Venue General Manager 2006 Torino Organising Committee of the Olympic Games)

**Key quote:** "When looking into reports on construction costs and capacities of stadia built in the last 5 years, it seems that costs-per-seat oscillate widely for top-notch facilities."- Paul Freudensprung

Read more>>

---

**4 - 'Which sports should be in the Olympics?'**

**Synopsis:** After UK athlete Dai Greene questioned whether football should be an Olympic sport, a thread was started about which sports should be included in the games. The debate centred on the notion of some sports having higher honours than Olympic gold medals, and athletes' enthusiasm for their sports at Olympic level.

**Main participants:** Michael Cunnah (former CEO of Wembley Stadium), Sir Craig Reedie (Member of the Executive Board, IOC)

**Key quote:** "The Olympic programme has developed over many years and reflects a truly international view."- Sir Craig Reedie

Read more>>

---

**5 - 'A new approach to relationship management?'**

**Synopsis:** What are benefits of managing relationships with existing sponsors rather than having regularly agreeing new sponsorship deals?

**Main participants:** Steven Falk (former director of marketing, Manchester United FC), Lou Imbriano (former CMO, New England Patriots), Ben Wells (former head of marketing, Chelsea FC), Joe Sharphouse (commercial manager, Nottingham Forest FC)

**Key quote:** “Clubs ignore the needs of their sponsors at their peril and can no longer assume that a better deal (i.e. more money) will be available from someone else by the end of the contract period.”- Steven Falk

Read more>>

---

**6 - ‘Any thoughts on the Green Bay Packers’ plans to expand its NFL stadium?’**

**Synopsis:** Green Bay Packers’ stadium plans include improved facilities and 6,600 new seats possibly to be paid for by loans, user fees for season tickets and a stock sale, how viable and worthwhile would this be?

**Main participants:** Rory Squires (director, Squires Media), Michael Cunnah (former CEO, Wembley Stadium), Chris Campasano (managing director of US operations, iSportconnect)

**Key quote:** “Green Bay is a very unique franchise. There are currently over 81,000 people on the season ticket waiting list with some people who have been on the list for years (some over 20 years) to get their hands on tickets. They are also looking at the option of paying for this expansion solely through the sale of GB Packer Stock.”- Chris Campasano

Read more>>

---

**7 - ‘Shahid Khan becomes first non-white owner of an NFL team’**

**Synopsis:** Could Shaheed Khan’s ownership change the fortunes of the struggling Jackonsville Jaguars? Would Khan attempt to move the franchise to Los Angeles?

**Main participants:** Lou Imbriano (former CMO, New England Patriots)

**Key quote:** “The best thing any new owner can do is to hire business people with proven track record and experience to aid them in this ramp up period to get up to speed and to help implement the correct structure.”-Lou Imbriano

Read more>>

---

**8 - ‘Too many international fixtures?’**

Synopsis: A discussion about whether there are an excessive number of international football fixtures and the future of international friendlies.

Main participants: Steven Falk (former director of marketing, Manchester United FC), Umberto Gandini (organising director, AC Milan), Michael Cunnah (former CEO, Wembley Stadium)

Key quote: “Ultimately, the fans will decide the future of international friendlies. When they stop buying the tickets, matches will no longer be scheduled.”- Steven Falk

Read more>>

---

**9 - ‘Third party ownership and financial fair play’**

**Synopsis:** Will clubs outside of the UK find it easier to break even under UEFA’s financial fair play rules, as they are able to pay for player transfers using third party finance arrangements? What might UEFA do to prevent such disparity?

**Main participants:** Daniel Geey (solicitor and UEFA financial fair play expert, Field Fisher Waterhouse)

Read more>>

---

**10 - ‘Does it make more sense to sponsor events than athletes?’**

***Synopsis:*** The merits of sponsoring events or teams rather than individual athletes.

**Main participants:** Steven Falk (former director of marketing, Manchester United FC), Phillipe Blanchard (former director, IOC)

**Key quote:** “Sponsors also need to endorse people, because you can have intimacy with people and you cannot have it with an event, we need heroes (true heroes or plain people who are thrown under the spotlights).”- Phillipe Blanchard

Read more>>

---

We look forward to many compelling debates throughout 2012. iSportconnect will publish a monthly review of the most illuminating discussions and users will be able to win prizes for their participation.