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THE VALUE OF SCOTTISH FOOTBALL

INTRODUCTION

Football has deep and wide roots in Scottish communities. This briefing paper sits alongside the Scottish FA podcast on *The Value of Scottish Football* produced in partnership with Grant Jarvie¹ from the University of Edinburgh.

The briefing explains why football is a real asset to Scotland. Those who know football will recognise a lot of this and the real challenge is to make a convincing case to those who don't know or maybe skeptical about the value of football to Scotland.

Scottish football may not be as rich as the big five European leagues but revenue generation over the last five years has been increasing².

	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15
Matchday	£102m	£93m	£68m	£42m	£39m
Broadcast	£45m	£56m	£38m	£23m	£21m
Commercial	£65m	£57m	£75m	£46m	£43m
Total revenue	£212m	£206m	£181m	£111m	£103m
Wages and salaries	£137m	£126m	£105m	£74m	£66m
Wages / revenue ratio	65%	61%	58%	67%	64%
Average attendance	15,965	15,890	14,058	9,658	8,637

- In 2014/15 Scottish Premiership revenue was about £103 million. This rose to to about £212 million by 2018/19.
- The new Sky Sports five-year domestic broadcast rights deal is expected to deliver a 20% increase on revenue by 2020/21. A figure that is dependent upon the impact of the health pandemic.

Having made the point that football money in Scotland is relative but on the rise let's start by providing some further context.

¹ Professor Grant Jarvie, University of Edinburgh and Toronto. Grant.Jarvie@ed.ac.uk . I am grateful for the collaboration and support provided by the Scottish FA and Danny Bisland in particular.

² Source: Deloitte Annual Review of Football Finance 2019. I am grateful for the help provided by Calum Ross at Deloitte.



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Firstly, compared to other footballing nations a disproportionate % of money in Scottish football comes through the turnstiles. Football is supported heavily by its local communities and so it should demonstrate what it gives back to communities. Secondly, we should not confuse the vast amount of grassroots work through football with the elite professional game. Both of these are crucial and inter-dependent, but less than 2% of football in Scotland is the elite game. Finally, football is more than a game, it makes a difference on so many fronts for Scotland. Football like all sports, all governments, and all businesses needs to be held to account but this should not cloud or obscure all the good news stories that happen because of football.

FOOTBALL IS A GOOD NEWS STORY

The good news stories that occur because of football need to be heard more often. The work that occurs on an almost daily basis where football helps to deliver national outcomes often gets lost in the drama and excitement of football, the great matches, the nostalgia, the goals and a few not so great moments as well. The following is but an example of the work of one club during the coronavirus pandemic.





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FOOTBALL IS A PILLAR OF CONNECTION

Football is a pillar of connection all over Scotland. A resource that responds and is effective across Scottish communities even when matches are not being played. The lockdown in response to the coronavirus started in March 2020. Scottish football clubs all over Scotland have responded.

Next season Hibernian FC strips will carry the banner Thank You NHS. £5 from the sale of every strip will be donated to an NHS charity. The club has been supporting the NHS for almost six years. Motherwell FC Community Trust have been delivering more than 100 support packages to Forge wood and Craigneuk as well as delivering mental health support parcels in partnership with Time to Tickle.

Cumnock Juniors Community Enterprise, Glenburn Miners Welfare and Ayr United Football Academy have all been delivering front line services in partnership with their respective Local Authorities.

Rangers Charity Foundation money has been going to UNICEF to help tackle the [coronavirus](#) pandemic. The Celtic FC Foundation pledged £150,000 to support vulnerable families, pensioners, individuals affected financially by the crisis and NHS staff, while Pollok Academy, Partick Thistle Trust, Glasgow Girls and St Mirren FC community trust are all delivering front line services.

Cumbernauld Colts, Stenhousemuir FC, Bo'ness Community Football Club, Spartans Community Football Academy, Big Hearts, Bonnyrigg Rose, Hibernian Community Foundation all delivering front line services.

Aberdeen FC and its Community Trust, Deveronvale FC, Inverurie Loco Works, Nairn County, Elgin City all delivering incredible work and responding to coronavirus.

All over the country football is and has been helping communities through periods of lockdown brought about by a health pandemic.

Football is a resource that is working alongside other health interventions to reduce the impact of this pandemic.



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Football's ability to help improve health is not a new thing. Edinburgh University student John Hope is credited with forming the first organised football club in the world. He saw football as a means to tackling the poor health conditions of the citizens of Edinburgh back in 1824³.

POPULARITY AND SCALE

Football is popular, it has scale and reach and that helps a lot. Commentators on the global game of football say that "No history of the modern world is complete without an account of football⁴." Studies that evidence the global impact of sport will tell you that sport connects with 1 in 5 people in the world⁵.

Football connects people in Scotland but it also connects Scotland to the world. It is both Scotland's and the world's most popular sport. Its popularity, scale and reach is one of the reasons politicians use it if they want to get a message out to a large audience. Everyone seems to have an opinion on football and in some senses that may be its strength.

Scotland is often referred to as a footballing nation because of its history and early involvement in the international game. Its historical involvement is very real compared to other nations but so is the popularity of the game in Scotland today.

³ See <https://www.ed.ac.uk/news/2014/football-030614>

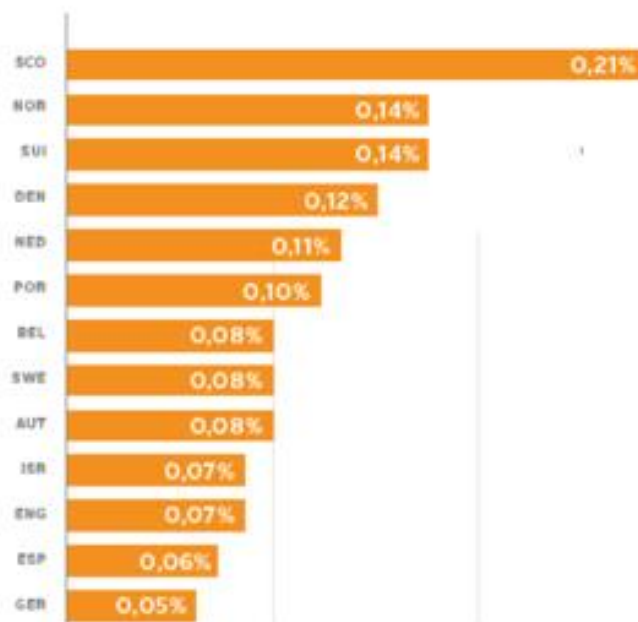
⁴ See David Goldblatt. The ball is round: a global history of football. London: Penguin.2017.

⁵ See Global sports impact report 2017 - <https://www.sportcal.com/Impact/GSIProject>

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AVERAGE ATTENDANCE PER MATCH Top-tier Leagues % of inhabitants 2016/17



If you take an average attendance per match as a % of population then Scotland scores higher than three of the big five football leagues namely, Germany, Spain and England, also Belgium and Holland⁶.

Football match day income provides about 43% of annual football revenue. Scottish clubs are about three times as reliant on gate receipts as the average European top flight side⁷. Football's popularity in Scotland is in part demonstrated by those who walk through the turnstiles.

However, it is not just about the number of people who walk through the gates.

1.4 million viewers in 120 countries tuned into to watch one Scottish SPFL match alone in 2019 providing sky with record viewing figures for one Scottish match⁸.

⁶ See [European league fan attendance report 2018](#).

⁷ See <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/football/51177558>

⁸ [SPFL press release 7 January 2020](#).



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The Scotland v England match at Hampden in 2017 was watched by almost half the population north of the border (46%) while the average audience for the match itself was 4.6 million.

A record crowd of 18,555 thousand turned up to the Scotland v Jamaica match, sending Scotland's women on to the world cup⁹. The number of registered girls and women playing football in Scotland jumped by 21% following the 2015 Women's World Cup in France.

From its base in Scotland, The Homeless World Cup (HWC) uses football to tackle homelessness. It also connects Scotland through football with more than 450 locations across the world. When it was held in Glasgow, in 2016, it generated an online audience engagement of more than 30 million people around the world¹⁰.

More importantly it works as one girl who played for Scotland said:

"It's about getting your skills better, cos once you've got good skills you can tell your employer – it's just about getting a chance"¹¹. This is football in action.

Or the Street Soccer Scotland voice that said "football taught me that the unbelievable was achievable ... I'm building a life for myself now"¹².

Football also links generations – father, daughter, mother son and families.

From Annan to Aberdeen, from Paisley to Peterborough; from Drumchapel to Dundee, from Brora to Berwick upon tweed, from Motherwell to Mull; from Stornoway to Stenhousemuir and from Leith to Largs and beyond football has been working for people, places, and communities.

The point that is being made here is that football has the ability to connect at scale because of its popularity and reach, nationally and internationally. It is a real asset but we do not capitalize on it enough.

⁹ See [BBC sport 28 may 2019](#).

¹⁰ See [Homeless World Cup Impact](#).

¹¹ See Jarvie, G and Ahrens, S. Sport, homelessness and capability: voices from the street. *Quest: Vol 71 (2)*239-251: 2019. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00336297.2018.1552160>

¹² See Jarvie, G and Ahrens, S. Sport, homelessness and capability: voices from the street. *Quest: Vol 71 (2)*239-251: 2019. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00336297.2018.1552160>



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FOOTBALL IS A LANGUAGE AND PHILANTHROPY

Football has its own language, an appeal and vocabulary that extends around the world but it does lots of other things as well. There are many socially responsible footballers and clubs who have used their wealth from football to help others¹³.

Barcelona FC is one of the wealthiest clubs in the world. They have a 1% rule which means that 1% of player salaries go to their community foundation – this enables the club to deliver education in 156 countries.

Andy Robertson the Liverpool and Scotland player has regularly supported food banks, urging family to make donations rather than give him presents on his birthday, and in 2018 rewarded a young Liverpool fan who showed his backing with a Roberto Firmino shirt. Furthermore, the Scotland full-back responded and donated to Back Onside a mental health charity whose emphasis is on 'Support Through Sport', and in the wake of the pandemic and the suspension of sport across the UK, appealed for donations to continue their efforts¹⁴.

Caroline Weir the Scotland and Manchester City player pledged to commit one per cent of her income to sporting charities. Led by Manchester United's Juan Mata and Street Football World, Common Goal was launched in 2017 – a project that is used to fund charities across the globe.¹⁵

Jürgen Klopp the Liverpool manager has also signed up to the 1% pledge:

"I would like to celebrate this occasion by sharing that I am joining Common Goal and pledging one per cent of my earnings to help change the world through football¹⁶.

So footballers and clubs are making a difference in the lives of those less fortunate than themselves and that can be a powerful legacy in and of itself.

The value of football in many different ways is known to football circles but the value of football needs to be demonstrated much more widely. Governments,

¹³ [See soccer as philanthropy.](#)

¹⁴ [Liverpool's Andy Robertson supports charity.](#)

¹⁵ [Caroline Weir supports common purpose.](#)

¹⁶ [Liverpool manager pledges 1% of salary.](#)



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civil servants and key influencers should understand much more about the contribution that football makes not just across department portfolios but to national AND international outcomes and objectives. We need to make this happen.

Football is an input that delivers outputs which in turn delivers on national outcomes.

HEALTH

In Scotland, sport and therefore football lies within the public health, sport and wellbeing portfolio¹⁷.

So why use football to improve health outcomes? (i) It is needed in order to maximize health and well-being benefits; (ii) it helps with the economic impact of physical inactivity and (iii) it delivers health education through football.

Helping to improve health is a natural goal for many clubs but it is more than this. Local sports trusts, schools, community groups all use football and football related programmes to help people be active, tackle obesity, promote healthy eating, enable better mental health, reduce inactivity, raise health awareness and deliver outcome focused interventions that reach people.

Consider the following:

¹⁷ Although this is not the case in other countries. Being placed within a health portfolio can both enable and constrain the football, sport contribution.

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3 MAJOR SAVINGS REALISED THROUGH PREVENTION OF LIFESTYLE DISEASES


HEALTH
 = HEALTHCARE SAVINGS FROM FOOTBALL PARTICIPATION
€762.6 MILLION SAVINGS



- Health care savings from Scottish football participation as whole is estimated to be valued at about £679 million.
- Spartans Community Football Academy's work in the local community on mental health and reducing type 1 and type 11 diabetes is worth about £239,000 to the community¹⁸.
- Mental health messaging had over 7 million impressions during Scottish Cup Fifth Round.

If we take an example of just one club – in this case Ayr United. The value of its health interventions with its local community equate to more than £4 million. This is just one club.

We are talking here about the football contribution of one club:

- £4.1 million in enabling people feel better about the quality of life or what is termed subjective wellbeing¹⁹.
- Football participation is found to be associated with higher subjective wellbeing.

¹⁸ [Spartans Football Club Academy - Social return on investment.](#)

¹⁹ [Ayr United Football Club- Social return on investment.](#)



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- In excess of £432,000 assistance with improving mental health.
- More than £243,000 value in tackling dementia.

You could add to this the estimated £4.1 million in mental health provision that Aberdeen FC and its community trust saves the National Health Service²⁰.

These are facts that help make the case for the football resource that enables the delivery of health outcomes in Scotland. The real action is what goes on quietly behind the scenes and rarely hits the headlines. If you are reading this you will be able to think of many more examples than the ones presented here but they all add up to a significant contribution to delivering on national outcomes relating to health in Scotland²¹.

This is about:

- Motherwell, the first Premiership club to have suicide prevention on their strips - other clubs followed suit in recognising the incredible platform that football provides to be proactive in local communities. Football club staff and volunteers being trained in safe talk and suicide awareness²².
- The walking football programmes for men and women – listen to the voice of this walking football person - “feeling so much fitter.... since starting walking football. I've made some great new friends too!”²³
- The football memories Scotland programme, which is the oldest in the world. The football reminiscence sessions delivered in care homes across Scotland is medically recognised as being as effective as any of four drugs on offer through the NHS to those living with dementia²⁴.
- The hours that many football heroes and heroines put in every year visiting sick children’s hospital helping, mood, morale or just being the right thing to do.

²⁰ [Aberdeen Football Club and Community Trust- Social return on investment.](#)

²¹ [National health and wellbeing outcomes framework for Scotland.](#)

²² <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-50081909> . The author is grateful for the support and information provided through Motherwell Football Community Trust.

²³ [Scottish walking football organisation and programmes.](#)

²⁴ Morgan, J. Reshuffling the deck with Euro memories. *The Herald*. 29 February, p 8-9. 2020.



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Scale, reach, connectivity, popularity make football a powerful medium for carrying social justice messaging, often linked with health.

When health and justice messages about period poverty first went out through the medium of Celtic Football Club it received 75,000 responses. Football and sport in general has long served as a platform for social and political activism.

Celtic FC is a perhaps a less obvious advocate for menstrual activism than an Olympic athlete or tampon company, yet professional football is exactly the kind of high-profile sport that has served social justice movements so well in the past. The football club was the first in the UK to provide free menstrual products in its stadium.

If delivering health outcomes for Scotland is about fighting and preventing cardiovascular disease; diabetes; breast cancer; mental health disorders as well as fixing and addressing football injuries, or enabling subjective wellbeing then football is really walking the walk.

EDUCATION

Education is a Scottish priority and access to football can help to alter life chances and advance educational achievement²⁵.

So, why use football to deliver formal and non-formal education? (i) It helps to improve education outcomes; (ii) It creates quality learning environments; (iii) It engages disenfranchised learners and (iv) It delivers holistic education.

Consider the following examples:

- The improved educational attainment related to registered recreational involvement in football has a value of £5.5 million per annum to Scotland²⁶.
- The educational value in Ayr United combatting absences from school has been valued at about £216,000 per annum²⁷.

²⁵ [See Sport, poverty and education briefing paper 2016.](#)

²⁶ [See UEFA Scotland: Social return on investment report.](#)

²⁷ [See BBC 5 March 2020.](#)

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- The educational value of one club supporting educational attainment is valued at about £302,000 per annum²⁸.
- Hibernian Community Foundation run classes with Edinburgh University at Easter Road on Wednesday mornings that carry SCQF credit at level 7. Something that could be taken to other football stadiums²⁹. About 500 people per year access lifelong learning through the clubs learning centre.

This is about:

- Access to free hot meals during school holidays provided by many clubs. Football clubs helping school aged children to be fed, have school uniforms assisting with building physical, social and cultural capital so crucial to educational attainment.
- Football providing for many people an engrossing, pleasurable adventure of self-discovery and expression but involvement in football also carries with it lessons about teamwork, what it means to be part of a team and what it means to look after the weaker links. Football can deliver lessons for life, about life and about the team being more important than the individual.
- The My School of Football (2088 young people) programme which is an attainment and aspirational programme aimed at individuals who are at high risk of exclusion. It works to support pupils aged 12-14 and the schools involved in the programme are selected based upon those in areas of multiple deprivation.
- The innovative education pass programme working with SYFA youth teams which has 41% of the Educated Pass cohort having a post school destination of HE, compared to 32% of male school leavers across Scotland during this time³⁰.

²⁸ [See BBC 5 March 2020.](#)

²⁹ [See Football more than a game.](#)

³⁰ [See Educated Pass or contact the author.](#)



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- East Renfrewshire Council, which has the top state school performance in Scotland, having a great partnership with its *Leisure, Culture and Sport Trust* to create a great learning environment for 200+ teams, 2000+ players, 350 coaches across numerous venues and assisted by seven venue coordinators³¹.
- The pre-school physical literacy work with children from 18 months to five years through Motherwell Football Community Trust.

If education through football is about advancing educational achievement, working to close the attainment gap, providing alternative pathways into education; keeping people in the education system; delivering qualifications, and widening access to education then football is one of Scotland's real education assets.

If education is a jewel in the Scottish crown, then football is part of that jewel.

SOCIAL

Education of course has a social value but there is so much more social value delivered through football. Perhaps it is something that we take for granted but rarely capture adequately.

³¹ I am grateful for the information provided by East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust.



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SCOTTISH FA DIVERSITY CALENDAR 2020

FOOTBALL FOR ALL

WE FOCUS ON THE GOAL **WE SHARE AND CONNECT**

	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE
DISABILITY	4: World Braille Day	National Heart Month 4: World Cancer Day	Cerebral Palsy Awareness Month Prostate Cancer Awareness Month 1: World Wheelchair Day 16-22: BSL Awareness Week 21: World Down Syndrome Day	30 March - 5 April: World Autism Awareness Week	6-12: Deaf Awareness Week 16-24: Mental Health Awareness Week	
SEX/GENDER IDENTITY			8: International Women's Day Women's History Month			Men's Health Awareness Month
RACE & ETHNICITY			21: International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination	8: International Romani Day		Gypsy, Roma & Traveller History Month 20: World Refugee Day
RELIGION & BELIEF	5: Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh – Sikh 6: Epiphany 7: Orthodox Christmas Day 14: Orthodox New Year 19: World Religion Day – Baha'i 25: Chinese New Year	25: Shrove Tuesday – Christian 26: Ash Wednesday – First Day of Lent – Christian	10: Holi – Festival of Colours – Hindu 21: Naw-Ruz / Nowruz – Baha'i, Persian, Zoroastrian 22: Isha and Mi'raj	5: Palm Sunday 8: First Day of Passover – Jewish 9: Maundy Thursday 10: Good Friday 12: Easter Sunday – Christian 13: Easter Monday 13: Vaisakhi 21: Yom HaShoah – Jewish 24: First Day of Ramadan – Islam (Lasts a month)	7: Vesak – Buddha Day – Buddhist 12: Lag B'omer 24: Eid al-Fitr – Islam 28: Shavuot 31: Pentecost	
SEXUAL ORIENTATION		Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans History Month			17: International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia & Biphobia 30: Grampian Pride (Aberdeen)	20: Pride Edinburgh
OTHER	1: New Year's Day 2: Bank Holiday (Scotland) 25: Burns' Night	20: United Nations' World Day of Social Justice	1: Zero Discrimination Day 20: Spring Equinox 22: Mother's Day	1: April Fool's Day 6: International Day of Sport for Development and Peace	National Walking Month 21: World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue & Development	5: World Environment Day 21: Father's Day

*dates included for general guidance; please feel free to include your own.

scottishfa.co.uk

So why use football to deliver social outcomes in Scotland? (i) It contributes to civic and civil engagement; (ii) It is a social work tool that works hard in Scottish communities; (iii) It can assist rates of social cohesion and (iv) It tackles inequality and can alter life chances.

2 IMPACT OF FOOTBALL PARTICIPATION

SOCIAL = ECONOMIC IMPACT OF SOCIAL BENEFITS
€352 MILLION SAVINGS

CRIME REDUCTION
€255,000

Based on the known risk and cost of youth convictions to estimate total cost

Estimate value based on football's ability to reduce risk

NEET*
€3.4 MILLION

Use existing rates to determine total cost of youth not in employment, education or training

Estimate value based on football's ability to reduce risk

IMPROVED EDUCATION
€14 MILLION

Assessment of the value of football's contribution on improved education is based on OECD calculation

Then modelled using impact of education on GDP

VOLUNTEERING
€334.4 MILLION

Based on EU assessment of value of sports volunteering and ratio of those in football to estimate value of each volunteer

* Not in employment, education or training (NEET)

SCOTTISH FA | NOTHING MATTERS MORE

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It is estimated that football delivers about £313 million worth of social benefits to Scotland.

A former Secretary General for Europe once said that:

“The hidden face of sport is also the tens of thousands of enthusiasts who find in their football and other sports a place for meeting and exchange but above all the training ground for community life”

The social arguments are compelling:

- A reduction in youth convictions amounting to a saving of about £146,000 per year as a result of participation in football. The origins of the great community work done by many clubs like Spartans was very simply to take kids of the street and provide alternatives. Football is a great social work tool.
- Community-level effects of football based crime prevention programmes, such as midnight and early hours football options, might appear, on the face of it, to be rather limited in scope and design - **they are not.**
- Changing social perceptions about people living with disabilities or being homeless.
- Changing perceptions about what it means to be living with dementia. More than 25 Scottish football league clubs are working with a combination of club staff, community trust staff, volunteers and Alzheimer Scotland staff.

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- 4% increase in the number of coaches from ethnic minority communities
- 21% increase in the number of women playing football after the world cup.

This is about:

- 42 football stadiums, not to mention the work that goes on through football in sport trusts, local authorities, community foundations, schools, community sport hubs that are all rooted in communities.
- My Inclusive Community (1890 young people) working young people born into ethnic minority households. This involves the creation of a network of 20 participation centres, in asset rich areas of multiple deprivation, providing access to coach education courses every year as well as mentoring programmes and equalities awareness workshops.

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- The 2300 people supported by food drops by Aberdeen FC from Mastrick to Macduff as well as more than 3000 calls to socially isolated people all during COVID 19.
- The 320 grassroots female teams to receive free sanitary products and Hampden being the 1st National Football Stadium to provide free sanitary products to its fans.
- The Scottish FA being the world's first affiliated national association dedicated to para-football and investing more than £100k per year in para-football
- Using football with cashback for communities funding to stop young people re-offending.
- One four-year study of the HWC substantiates the fact that this football based intervention builds capabilities, improves confidence, and provides pathways out of difficult circumstances³².

Football can help to build capabilities and help individuals feel valued.

Listen to the voice of this football participant

³² Jarvie, G and Ahrens, S. Sport, Homelessness and Capability: Voices from the Street. *Quest: Vol 71 (2)*239-251: 2019. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00336297.2018.1552160>



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"I live a life I'm proud of today and football gave me that. They loved me before I loved myself³³".

Perhaps one of the greatest social benefits provided by football is that it provides a network, a social network that connects people and reduces isolation. The sort of thing provided by clubs, trusts, football community foundations, schools, local authorities, national and local football associations do not just happen by accident.

That is why investment, leadership, training and political will are so important in order to harness what football does on an even greater scale.

Football helps in the fostering social capital – including building connection, networks and resilience.

ECONOMY, JOBS AND EMPLOYMENT

Scottish football is part of a global sports industry which the Australian Government estimates to be worth between at least £267 and £345 billion³⁴. Some estimate the figure to be higher but The World Economic Forum notes that sport has become one of the top ten global industries.

So, why would you use football to deliver economic outcomes? (i) It provides employment and jobs; (ii) It capitalizes upon the economic impact of football events; (iii) It levers funding into Scotland; (iv) It responds to and is part of an international industry; (v) It provides a social return on investment; (vi) It advances skills development and (vii) It provides opportunities to volunteer.

Scotland has access to and is part of an international sport and football industry. UEFA's revenue for 2018-19 was reported as £3.4 billion with £506 million in reserves³⁵. FIFA'S last accounts reported cash reserves of £2.2 billion³⁶. Scotland has access to funding that can be levered into Scotland.

The average annual player salaries for Scottish Premier Clubs for 2019-2020

³³ Jarvie, G and Ahrens, S. Sport, Homelessness and Capability: Voices from the Street. *Quest: Vol 71 (2)*239-251:2019. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00336297.2018.1552160>

³⁴ See [Australia 2030 for a conservative estimate.](#)

³⁵ The *Scotsman* Saturday 4 April 2020, p49.

³⁶ The *Scotsman* Saturday 4 April 2020, p49.



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ranging from about £41, 156 to £895, 564. So some clubs are significant SME's***³⁷.

This is separate from the football related employment in local authorities where 97% of Scotland's sport effort resides.

Consider the following:

- Scotland's 627 artificial pitches create value and spending in communities of about £62.1 million³⁸.
- SPFL club activities in the 2017-18 season contributed a gross figure of £444 million to Scotland's GDP and helped to support around 9300 full time equivalent jobs***³⁹.
- The economic value associated with recreational registered football player spend equates to £51 million per annum⁴⁰.
- 40,000 jobs linked to current football participation alone.
- Volunteering is associated with improved individual subjective wellbeing and greater life satisfaction.<sup>[L]
[SEP]</sup>Volunteers create social capital for the organisations that they give their time to. Volunteering helps to build local communities and at least 30,924 volunteers in football perform activities to the value of about £295 million per annum⁴¹.

This is about:

- Football participation in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire that has been estimated to contribute about £16.8 million to the local economy and

³⁷ *** In 2017/ 18 the average revenue of an English Premier League Club was greater than the total Scottish Premier League revenue for the same year. The average revenue of a Premier League club increased to £241m in 2017/18 compared to the total revenue of the SPFL which for 2017/18 stood at £206m.

³⁸ [UEFA Scotland- Social return on investment report.](#)

³⁹ *** Adjusting for the impact of spending which is not additional to the economy the net contribution was £244 million supporting 5,700 FTE's for 2017-18 season. Celtic FC commissioned a report 2016-17 season which reported that the club contributed £165 million to the Scottish economy and supported the equivalent of 2,820 full-time jobs. See *The Times* 23 April 2020, p60.

⁴⁰ [UEFA Scotland- Social return on investment report.](#)

⁴¹ [UEFA Scotland- Social return on investment report.](#)



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creates about 1400 jobs⁴².

- The Spartans Community Football Academy contributes about £2.5 million to the local economy and supports about 98 employment related roles⁴³.

This is about Paul⁴⁴: He says:

"I've been volunteering with Walking Football on a Monday. I help with the after school club..... It's a special education school - I like to see how the kids don't let their problems stop them.

Football in Scotland contributes to the economy, jobs, volunteering, apprenticeships.

CULTURE AND INFLUENCE

Can Scotland be more influential and does football have a part to play in winning friends for Scotland? The answer to this is yes but Scotland needs to do more to capture what football can and does deliver⁴⁵.

So, what can football do? (i) It is soft power in action; (ii) It helps Scotland connect with cities and with other nations; (iii) It helps connect people, places and communities; (iv) It serves as a diplomatic tool and (v) It can help Scotland be even more influential in a post Brexit and a Post Covid environment.

The soft power value of football is a game that Scotland can win. Imagine if, like France, sport – including football- was really prioritised as an international soft power tool. It is a tool that Scotland should exploit to the full⁴⁶.

The following are all within Scotland's gift.

⁴² [Aberdeen Football Club and Community Trust- Social return on investment report.](#)

⁴³ [Spartans Community Football Academy- Social return on investment report.](#)

⁴⁴ [Spartans Community Football Academy- Social return on investment report.](#)

⁴⁵ I grateful here for contributions made by Stuart Murray, Gavin Price and Stuart Macdonald.

⁴⁶ Jarvie, G. Open goal for Scotland's politicians. *The Scotsman*. 9 March 2020, p23.

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- The football ambassadors – Sir Alex Ferguson has experience of not just leading successful football teams but working British embassies all over the world.
- Iconic Scottish football clubs, stadia, players and coaches offer an ideal mechanism for encouraging international trade dialogue.
- Football business networking programmes connecting Scottish businesses with global partners at major sporting events.
- Our football history, heritage and infrastructure as being a major magnet for football tourism, which often works as a springboard for international visitors to find interest in wider Scottish society and places.



The football knowledge in our universities can facilitate knowledge exchange on the world stage – take for example Edinburgh University and their partnership with FC Barcelona. It is based on working together to facilitate knowledge exchange for the sports industry including football⁴⁷.

⁴⁷ [Edinburgh secures partnership with Barcelona FC](#). The picture is Professor Jarvie with the UEFA Champions League Cup in the Camp Nou stadium, home to Barcelona FC.



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Other nations, such as Australia⁴⁸, France and the US, are using football and sport diplomacy to seek out increased agency and opportunities to collaborate globally.

This is not the preserve of large sovereign nations, as smaller countries such as Wales and Croatia are also considering policy options in this space. Scotland is well placed with its considerable football and sporting heritage - if it acts without delay.

- China has built so many sports stadiums in Africa that this has become known as stadium diplomacy.
- The Norwegian Minister for International Development says that **The Norway Cup** is one of the best tools Norway has to bring the youth of the world together and if in the future these kids remember that Norway helped them that is worth more than any money that they we put in.

Scotland should catch up with other parts of the world that are aggressively using their popular sports to foster a whole nation approach to international relations – even more so if you are a nation that does not control all the foreign affairs levers.

CONCLUSION

I hope this short report has helped to persuade you about the value of football and that it is much more than just a game⁴⁹.

Football's popularity, scale, reach and connectivity makes it a real asset when it comes to advancing national and international objectives and outcomes. This includes fostering international relations. Every day, incredible projects, initiatives, activities, and people show us the power of connection, innovation and resilience in and through football.

⁴⁸ [Australia Sports Diplomacy Strategy 2030.](#)

⁴⁹ The report accompanies the podcast on **The Value of Scottish Football** and both are available through the Scottish FA website.

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Football delivering across education, justice, poverty, social cohesion, health, the environment, international engagement year after year across Scotland but also beyond Scotland.

Making football work for more people, in more communities, more often is always an ongoing project. Giving everybody the chance to experience the very best of what football and other aspects of culture have to offer.

One *previous* American President once said that football- soccer - has done more to help tackle poverty than almost any single government initiative. I am sure many will question this. Football is rarely talked of as being in the vanguard of any movement for the bettering of humanity but maybe it should - football has the scale, reach and potential to deliver national outcomes across the board, it is doing this and should be supported to do so.

If a better society is to emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic that arrived in 2020 and the lessons are learned, then football can and should have a significant part to play. The Covid-19 crisis has helped clubs strengthen community bonds and there is an opportunity to cement and sustain these – even be the *raison d'être* for football in Scotland.

Finally, I hope you have enjoyed this, football is a great resource to work with and I hope this small intervention about the value of football has helped us to remember all the good work that goes on through football.

It is a resource that works for Scotland and through Scotland.

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