Disability, sport and COVID-19: Imagining disability accessible and inclusive sport management futures.

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Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated inequality for disabled people[1] (Dickinson et. al, 2020; Qi & Hu, 2020). According to the United Nations (UN) the pandemic is a catastrophe that has unduly impacted upon 'one billion' disabled people stating:

> grave concern at the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on persons with disabilities. The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed that the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) has not been comprehensively implemented by States Parties. It has starkly exposed the heightened vulnerability and risks to persons with disabilities that is underpinned by entrenched discrimination and inequality (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2020)

For the individuals and their families who need care in home or residential settings, concerns about access to education, to health care, to personal protective equipment for disability support workers and isolation from families have not been adequately addressed during the COVID-19 outbreak (Campanella, 2020; McAlonana & After, 2020; Sverepa, 2020). The crisis has augmented the need for access to basic and essential services and, at the same time, made access to those same services more complex through the intensification of competition that, arguably, disadvantages many disabled people. There has been shortages in supply due to panic buying that has led to disabled people being the subject of theft (Zaczek & Moore, 2020). Access to home delivery services have also been scarce or unreliable or unavailable in rural and remote areas (Melvin et al., 2020). In contexts where online grocery shopping has been

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[1] Throughout this chapter we use the term disabled people rather than disability first language required by the APA 7th edition. We use this term deliberately and hopefully evocatively for readers to reflect on the UK Social Model's political viewpoint. In addition, we refer the reader to Peers et al. (2014) for a further discussion on the choice of terminology in this chapter.

available through services such as Amazon Prime, vulnerable workers, people of colour and other precarious workers have risked infection for others and still disabled people have struggled to get what they require due to limited supply and overwhelming demand (Bokat-Lindell, 2020). In short, the pandemic has intensified inequality for many already on the margins with disabled people frequently left out of strategic initiatives for community support in the same way that aged care services had been prioritised (Chandon, et al., 2020; Etheridge et al., 2020; Kirby, 2020; Sigafoos, 2020).

In addition to exacerbating existing barriers to essential services and the basic elements of social participation, the pandemic has also illuminated that some lives are valued more than others. For example, the British National Health Service (NHS) attempted to develop an ability hierarchy through its implementation of a COVID-19 score tool to guide the allocation of scarce medical supplies and treatment – where low scores are associated with higher value and thus prioritized (Financial Times, 2020). Based on the Canadian Study of Health and Aging clinical frailty scale (see Rockward et al., 2005) people gained points for intellectual status and age, regardless of their health history (Disability Rights UK, 2020). The COVID-19 score tool implied that nondisabled lives are worth more than disabled lives, and even within those who experience disability a hierarchy of lives worth saving. To reinforce the notion that accessible and inclusive responses to the pandemic need to be prioritised the UN, the International Disability Alliance (IDA) and the International Disability and Development Consortium have launched a number of international campaigns (see IDA, 2020). These initiatives by the IDA, the UN and others are attempting to strengthen resolve to place disabled people at the heart of efforts to identify, control and eliminate the virus, and to restore social and economic life.

So what has this all to do with sport management? As scholars of disability, sport and management, our specific interest lies in understanding how structural inequalities are linked to ability hierarchies which will impact and constrain the participation of disabled people in social participation generally and in sport specifically in a post-COVID world (IDA, 2020; Qi & Hu, 2020). The purpose of this chapter is to consider the implications of the COVID-19 outbreak for disability, sport and sport management in the Global North. Global North countries are the resource-rich nations while the Global South are those countries who have less resources (see Figure 1) (Banda & Gultresa, 2015). Our overarching question is how can disability culture and research be used as an impetus to inspire sport managers to enact more accessible and inclusive sporting futures in a post COVID-19 world? We review various discourses about the restart of sport and synthesise contemporary commentaries on disability culture and sport to offer recommendations for a 'better' accessible and inclusive future. Supporting this, we draw on the lens of ableism to address three sub-questions;

1. How is COVID-19 furthering inequalities for disabled people in sport?

2. Are there aspects of disability culture, documented in and outside of sport studies research, that could inform the reimagining of a more accessible and inclusive sporting landscape following the COVID-19 pandemic?

3. What strategies and initiatives can sport managers take to develop more accessible and inclusive sporting practices as we learn to live with this coronavirus?

These questions will be addressed as this analysis progresses throughout this chapter. Moreover, disabled people do more than play sport. As such, we take a holistic view on the involvement of disabled people in, and through sport. Involvement includes the participation in physical activity, recreation and organised sport from the grassroots to

elite levels, but also spectating or consuming sport, and also (although notably absent from much of the sport management literature), working or volunteering in sport through coaching, refereeing, administering or as parents taking an active role in their children's sporting lives. By drawing on ableism we will explore how disability culture can be used to make the management of sport more accessible and inclusive in the future.

Insert figure 1 about here

Ableism

Some disability studies theorists have called for attention to be shifted from models of disability to the actions, attitudes and practices of non-disabled people that create 'disablement,' a term which describes "society's discriminatory response to disability" (Campbell, 2009; Goodley, 2017, p. 3) and ableism. Ableism is defined by Campbell (2001) as:

> a network of beliefs, processes and practices that produce a particular kind of self
> and body (the corporeal standard) that is projected as the perfect, species-typical
> and therefore essential and fully human. Disability, then, is cast as a diminished
> state of being human. (p .44)

Conceptually, this shift allows us to consider disability sport as mainly governed and managed by non-disabled people (Howe, 2008a), and to consider how ideas, decisions or practices within sporting space make disabled people feel "different" or "out of place" (Kitchin, 1998, p. 351).

Focusing on disablement and ableism allows us to think both about the interplay between milieus of disability (individual impairment) and social structures (sporting clubs and organisations) which are underpinned by ableist and disablist norms. These structures produce conditions that have led to the disabling of subjects (Jeanes et al., 2018, 2019; Spaaij et al., 2019; Storr et al., 2020) and the embodiment of disability and, in some cases, the damaging internalization of ableism (Peers, 2012; Wickman, 2007).

> Ableism constructs the able body as conditional to a life worth living, thus devaluing all those perceived as 'dis'-abled. This hegemonic ideology develops into a 'logic of practice' through a cultural appropriation of body's lived complexity, by reducing it to symbolic dichotomies (able/disabled) (Silva & Howe, 2019, p. 1).

The dichotomy offered by Silva and Howe (2019) then creates the conditions for discrimination in the everyday practice of sport. Following this logic, it can be understood that sport managers, scientists and medical professionals may not be anti-disabled, but rather pro-non-disabled (Silva & Howe, 2019). Increasing academic attention is fostered by adopting the lens of ableism to explore these logics of practice to demonstrate the ramifications of this 'pro-non-disabled' stance (Brittain et al., 2020; Darcy et al., 2017; Hammond et al., 2019; Silva & Howe, 2019).

Ableism's impact on the production of sport

As C. Wright Mills argues "we cannot very well state any problem until we know *whose* problem it is," (Mills & Giltin, 2000, p. 76). Therefore, we argue that engaging with ableism, specifically prompts us to question 'who is COVID-19 a problem for in the context of disability and sport?' If we think of sport managers working in governing bodies in Canada (Howe, 2007; Peers et al., 2020), Australia

(Hammond & Jeanes, 2018; Jeanes et al., 2018), continental Europe (N. Thomas & Guett, 2013), the United States (Hums et al., 2003) the United Kingdom (Kitchin & Crossin, 2018; Kitchin, et al., 2019; Kitchin & Howe, 2014), we know that the question of what to do about disabled athletes has been politically contentious for, at least, the last 30 years. We also know from prior research that managers will be reluctant to encourage disabled sport if it takes the priority (re-funding) away from able bodied sport (Howe, 2007) and will view disabled versions of sports as lesser and restrict and marginalize the visibility of disabled programs in sport (Peers et al., 2020).

On the other hand, we know that in any economic downturn that accompanies the pandemic, sport managers will need to 'fire-up' the sports marketing machine to tout the social value of sport. One of their most reliable strategies is to (re)engage in 'charity cannibalism' (Baudrillard, 1994) and wheel out Paralympians to inspire us once again hoping that we will all watch and support charities that assist with Paralympic sport development. The potential for elite disability sport organizations to exploit this crisis of exclusion so their funds can develop more talent identification systems at the continued expense of grassroots sporting opportunities exposes two issues (Hammond & Macdougal, 2020; Peers et al., 2020; Select Committee on Olympic and Paralympic Legacy, 2013). First, even within Paralympic sport there are those that are regarded as 'blue ribbon' and can access greater financial resources (e.g. t54 400m) than those that rarely gain even the shadow of the spotlight (e.g. disabled people with higher support needs playing boccia). Second, it will be more likely that people will engage in Paralympic sport - or donate to Paralympic sporting organizations and unwittingly maintain the status quo - than engage with radical disability rights campaigns for local community development initiatives that substantively improve the conditions of the lives of disabled people.

How is COVID-19 furthering inequalities for disabled people in sport?

There is a cliché uttered by many of us who teach: 'sport reflects society and society reflects sport' (Coakley, et al., 2011). However, when it comes to inequality and sport in the era of COVID-19, we find the cliché to resonate more than usual, and not in a positive way. Numerous examples point to how elite athletes were prioritized first to access sport facilities and competition venues (Hanson, 2020; Sanhi, 2020; Sport Ireland, 2020) during and following lockdowns. For example, in many countries, exemptions to lockdowns were made to allow national team athletes to continue training in facilities closed to the general public. Professional sports leagues (i.e. the National Hockey League in the U.S. and Canada, world cycling tours such as the Tour de France) also continued to hold events throughout the pandemic often receiving special permission to cross national borders despite travel restrictions and mandated quarantines. Given the public investment in elite athletes in many countries, combined with the importance of using sport as entertainment for the locked-down masses, it is perhaps unsurprising that this priority has been given to elite athletes, even if the majority culture lens remains transfixed on the elite sports of the non-disabled (Mohr et al., 2020; Rowe, 2020). However, it is important to note that while extreme lengths were taken to ensure access to sport for elite athletes, elite non-disabled athletes were left behind. For example, in 2020 the organizers of the U.S. Open initially stated that they would not be including the wheelchair competition before reinstating it under wide-spread public pressure (CNN, 2020; Sydney Morning Herald, 2020).

In sport, disabled people are often seen as merely 'service users' or as passive sporting participants (Kappeliedis & Spoor, 2019). However, we know that disabled people play an important part in other roles that allows the industry to function.

Disabled people are volunteers within not-for-profit sport organizations, fans, customers of sporting clubs and leagues, and employees in the workplace. Recent findings from a British disability advocacy charity demonstrate the impact on disabled fans of having COVID-19 restrictions halting live football (Level Playing Field, 2020). Disabled football spectators stated that their mental health had been negatively affected by the cessation of the season. Many feared that any delays to the following season would prolong these feelings (Level Playing Field, 2020). Likewise, it is well documented that disabled people are discriminated against in the workforce and face difficulties accessing and maintaining employment (Coleman et al., 2013; OECD, 2010) and this is no different in the sport sector compared with the broader economy (Darcy, et al., 2014; 2016; Dickson, et al., 2017; Kappelidis & Spoor, 2019; Prieto & Paramio-Salcines, 2018).

For those disabled people who have been able to maintain their regular employment during the pandemic, there has been an opportunity for 'disability gain'. As non-disabled, and some disabled staff, only begin to adapt to online communities as a replacement for the face-to-face workplace, this is the norm for some disabled staff who have high support need disabilities. For many disabled people, working from home is not the 'new normal' but the lived reality that many use to engage in the workplace. Participation in online communities have provided disabled people with an important 'lifeline' (Wong, 2020, online) to build communities for social interaction, advocacy and activism. Until the outbreak, requests from disabled people to be able to perform their employment roles using these physically isolated, but virtual connections have been rejected by many employers (Wong, 2020). Following the pandemic, the question remains as to whether employers will allow all staff to choose remote ways of working wherever possible, or revert to pre-COVID-19 approaches potentially losing this

'innovative' reasonable adjustment in employment and telehealth. Exercise physiologists have also sought to maintain contact with their disabled clients through telehealth options to reduce the risk of pandemic related contact.

Risks created from starting too soon

Besides the heightened risk of re-infection brought about by re-opening economies too early, or the resistance or inability of a significant portion of the global population to obtain a vaccination, restarting sport will be accompanied by the scarcity of resources brought about by, in some cases, months or more of little economic activity. The question for adopting an inclusive restart asks; how will sport go about deciding who gets what? Ideally, prioritising an inclusive approach where all programmes receive an equitable share of a sport organization's resources is important, but previous research on mainstreaming has found that mainstreaming seldom leads to harmonious integration (Darcy, 2014; Hammond, 2019; Howe, 2007; Kitchin & Howe, 2014). Knee-jerk reactions, such as the proposed elimination of wheelchair athletes from the U.S. Open in 2020 with the proposed elimination of wheelchair competition, create a situation where disabled athletes, spectators, and employees are viewed as vulnerable – which some might have been. However, we need to understand better and unpack the notion of vulnerability, given that vulnerability is part of the human condition (see Howe & Silva, 2017; Penfold & Kitchin, 2020). The exclusion of wheelchair tennis from the U.S. Open prey on the false notions of that the disabled are more vulnerable than the able majority and should be excluded from social participation for their own protection (ABC, 2020; Howe & Silva, 2017; Tuohy, 2020).

One common cause of both exclusion and the reinforcement of health inequalities for disabled people in the built environment is through an over-rigorous

interpretation of occupational health and safety regulations (Breslin, et al. 2018; Newtown et al., 2007). The key aspect in many regulations is that 'reasonable adjustments' are made to the built environment to permit greater accessibility. However, the diversity of disability means that reasonable adjustments cannot apply equally across this population group. As Darcy et al. (2017, 2020) has explored, disabled people are a heterogeneous rather than homogeneous group when considered across disability types and levels of support needs. In the context of COVID-19, some disabled people have remained shielded despite vaccines being available when it is possible that their recreation could be technologically assisted (Fitzgerald, et al. 2020). However, this should not be interpreted as a blanket approach for disabled people not requiring shielding. Disabled people have their own agency and should be listened to with respect to their embodied state in the same way that "challenge by choice" is used in outdoor recreation for people to accept personal risk for the experience on offer (Grenier et al., 2018; Wallia, 2008). Limiting access to sport and recreation facilities for many would be an over-extension of health and safety regulations. Given the relatively small number of disabled people participating regularly in grassroots sport in many countries this could mean that general recreation programming, at a minimum could be offered to allow this participation to be maintained. These reasonable adjustments are clearly being applied to ensure elite athletes can train, therefore they could foreseeably be applied to a range of other 'vulnerable' groups ensuring the facilities reopen in a more inclusive manner.

Reimagining a more inclusive sporting landscape post COVID-19

Much attention in the disability sport and sport management literature has been focused on how sport is adapted or managed to cater to members of the disability

community (Hammond, 2019; Howe, 2007; Jeanes et al., 2018; Kitchin & Howe, 2014). However, little is focused on what non-disabled sport professionals (and academics) can learn from disability culture. In response to our second research question, we now outline how the development of technology and online communities that can enhance participation, spectatorship and employment opportunities in sport.

The World Wide Web has, since its earliest days, been heralded as a 'tool' for advancing democracy and the public and social engagement of individuals and groups otherwise barred from participation in physical spaces. In particular, it has been claimed that the Web and subsequent networked digital media platforms have enormous emancipatory potential for disabled people by making obsolete barriers related to cost, transportation, built environment access, and communication (Ellis & Kent, 2011; Goggin & Newell, 2003 for discussions and debates of these claims). In fact, Tim Berners-Lee, the man credited with inventing the World Wide Web in 1997, said: "The power of the Web is in its universality. Access by everyone, regardless of disability is an essential aspect" (Ellis & Kent, 2011, p.1). These rather utopic claims about the power of the digital world to overcome or make irrelevant disability have largely been debunked as subsequent scholarship that has pointed out that disability is not 'left behind' in online contexts and that many with disabilities are excluded from online participation by inaccessible software and hardware, the high cost of data plans and other barriers (Goggin et al., 2017; Goggin et al., 2019; Lazar & Jaeger, 2011). Whilst digital platforms have not 'solved' the problems that disabled people face when attempting to access and participate in social worlds, they have opened up new possibilities. As previously discussed, many with disabilities are able to pursue employment because of, and through, the use of various technologies and were thus positioned better than their able-bodied peers to work remotely during the pandemic.

There are also a limited number of problems posed by sports organizations that justify the marginalization of disability sport. These arguments present opportunities to showcase how information communication and assistive technology can and has supported the involvement of disabled people in sport, recreation and physical activity and it is from these solutions that we can start to understand the potential of the current moment.

One problem used by sport managers to deflect responsibility for delivering more opportunities for disabled people is that the numbers of potential participants are too low in a particular geographic location and the program would not be financially viable (Wareham et al., 2019). Nevertheless, when programming is being provided online this is not a limitation. As described in Bundon and Clarke (2015) and Bundon (2016), disabled athletes frequently use online platforms to find others 'like them' and online connections, sustained through multiple and overlapping one-to-one and one-to-many digital communications (i.e. personal emails and private messages, social media posts, shared Facebook groups or co-authored blogs) allow athletes to experience belonging and community but also to access very disability specific knowledge and resources (for example, discussions about where to purchase a talking GPS watch or how to modify the brakes on a bicycle to work with one hand). It is our contention, that in the move to create a more inclusive sporting system in light of COVID-19, sport organizations should learn from and learn to leverage these online connections. A program that may not seem worth the investment for only a few local athletes could be very viable if offered online to larger number of disabled athletes more geographically dispersed. Furthermore, while coaches often work with athletes that are diverse in age, gender, sport discipline, etc. many claim they lack the knowledge to coach a person with a disability. This problem is frequently heard to excuse organizations from

providing more disability inclusive programming because of the lack of 'expertise' (Townsend et al., 2018; Wareham et al., 2017). Similarly, this argument becomes irrelevant when there is no longer a need for coaches and athletes to occupy a shared space and when expertise can be found online.

A second problem involves the profile and promotion of elite disability sport. The Paralympic Games have always struggled to secure mainstream media coverage. When the Paralympics are covered by mainstream media, the coverage is often found to perpetuate certain stereotypes about disabled people or to reproduce narratives such as the 'supercrip' (Howe, 2011; Silva & Howe, 2012). In recent years there has been an increase in the amount of coverage of the Games on television and during prime time but it still lags far behind coverage of the Olympics (Cottingham & Petersen-Wagner, 2018). There have also been many concerns raised that Paralympic sport will never be attractive to general audiences because it is 'too hard to understand'. This is, in part due to the classification system which allows athletes with disabilities to compete against others with like impairments. This means that there is a complex system at work, frequently deemed too confusing for mainstream audiences or requiring a level of explanation and commentary that mainstream media is not prepared to provide (Richter et al., 1992; Howe, 2008b).

Another area in which sports organizations might learn from the disability community is in looking at how the Paralympic Movement has leveraged social media and streaming platforms to enhance spectatorship. The Paralympic Games, and their athletes, have thrived in newer, online environments (McNary & Hardin, 2013). Precisely because they have been marginalized by mainstream media outlets and ignored by sponsors, Paralympic athletes have been proactive in taking to social media where they have the opportunity to engage in practices that showcase disability on their

own terms (Cottingham & Petersen-Wagner, 2018; Pate et al., 2014; Toffoletti, 2018). It is not only disabled athletes individually who are leveraging the affordances of new media to connect with fans and bring a new audience to disability sport, the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) itself has been proactive in developing an online media strategy. For example, as early as 2006, the IPC launched ParalympicSport.tv – the first online channel dedicated exclusively to Paralympic sport – stating that limited television coverage by, and the inconsistency of contracts with, broadcasters had forced them to take matters into their own hands to ensure "people around the world [have] the opportunity to watch Paralympic sport where they want and whenever they want" (IPC, 2014, online). In 2012, there were 12.9 million views equating to 46.8 years' of video footage in a 12 month period. The IPC has continued with this strategy of producing content, amplifying content produced by others (including individual athletes), and going directly to audiences bypassing traditional media gatekeepers. The most recent IPC annual report (2018) stated that the 2018 PyeongChang Games reached over 251.5 million people via the IPC's website, YouTube channels, Twitter accounts, Facebook and Instagram (IPC, 2019).

In the context of an inclusive-sporting restart, there is the opportunity to learn from how disability sport and the Paralympic Movement have used digital media to reimagine the consumption of sport. The challenges and risks of hosting large sport spectacles with thousands of people travelling to gather in a stadium are enormous. But the IPC has demonstrated that it is not (always) necessary to gather together in physical space in order to create and sustain an incredibly engaged fan base. They have also learned to leverage digital channels to connect smaller, geographically dispersed events and make those involved 'feel' part of a broader para-sport community. They have managed to find the viewers that are passionate about disability sport even when it is

deemed too 'niche' for mainstream audiences - a lesson that will be invaluable as sports compete for sponsorship in an economic downturn.

Reflection

Above we have addressed the way that technology can assist the playing and the watching of sport, however during this crisis there have been a number of areas where many nondisabled managers of sport have learnt from members of the disability community with regards to a more flexible and technology-driven approach to working in sport. Thus COVID-19 has provided us with an opportunity to reimagine sport management and question the hegemony of ableism. Despite the problematic nature of totalizing concepts like disability culture, for the purposes of this chapter it involves asking experts, for instance, those with personal experience of disability to utilise their knowledge to create unique and innovative ways of doing things (Brown, 2002). Although we acknowledge the diversity of disability makes advancing innovative approaches that apply to everyone difficult, the pandemic has seen many sports and their workplaces shift how they engage citizens. Rather than threaten our working and social lives, Shew (2020) suggests that we have been able experience these social lives without having to leave home. Whether socialising through a Zoom quiz night or engaging fully in online education we have harnessed the power of technology to make some work practices more efficient. For example, the inbuilt live captioning of MS Teams has made the inclusion of people with hearing impairment or those who are Deaf relatively seamless compared to previous face to face meetings.

Online life has allowed us to maintain a modicum of routine. It has been noted that many disabled people had been advocating for these types of reasonable adjustments for some time and that with COVID-19 they have become a reality. For

some disabled people, who require personal assistance for self-care and/or their sporting involvement, social and/or physical distance is not possible and, hence, the importance of well-trained support workers with access to personal protective equipment (PPE) is essential. Yet, unlike health and aged care workers, disability support workers have been denied access to this equipment (Touhy, 2020). Without these considerations then disabled people's lives come to a stop.

New ways of working in sport management can change the practices that may have marginalized others pre-COVID. Working practices need to become more inclusive of flexible modes of working, many of which can now be done remotely. Most important of these is changing the way we view conventional measures of productivity. COVID-19 has softened our approach to deadlines (Shew, 2020). Flexible schedules are now required as economies around the world (re)start, stop, sputter and restart again as infection rates go up and down. In England, managers within sport organizations such as football, cricket and darts had to be cognizant of this, given the uncertainties about the British government's response to reopening different sectors, at different times, and with new ways of working (Clarkson et al., 2020; Mohr et al., 2020).

With much of sport being event-based and therefore time dependent, hard deadlines are a feature of the industry. However, we need to reimagine our conventional measures of productivity to facilitate the needs of employees for flexible schedules, and not just for disabled people but for all who can be marginalized in the workplace by inflexible practices (including those with caring responsibilities). A need exists to convince the majority culture that flexibility is in everyone's interests.

Conclusion: The Significance of Disability in Post -Pandemic Sport Management

In this chapter we used extant literature viewed through the lens of ableism to argue that disabled people should not be forgotten about post-pandemic. We considered the implications of the COVID-19 outbreak for disability, sport and sport management during the lockdown phases to provide concrete recommendations for how sport managers could re-start sport to be more inclusive following the pandemic. Above we have shown how neoliberal economies within sport (such as the U.S. Open) have used ableism or 'compulsory able-bodiedness' to further restrict who can access sport.

Recommendations

While identifying ablest practices is important we must move beyond identification to contributing to transformative solutions. Hence, we wish to contribute to provide sport and sport managers at the community, the regional and national sport development pathways with an inclusive response to restarting sport post COVID-19 so "that no one is left behind" (UNWTO, 2020, online). The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has placed accessible tourism within its vision over the last 15 years and, not surprisingly, with the COVID-19 outbreak places accessibility as a central pillar of tourism recovery. As part of their recovery strategy, the UNWTO has prioritized inclusive policies such as: better customer service, opportunities for employment, innovative use of technology and the application of international standards. To address research question three, we adapt the UN guidelines to prioritise disability inclusion in any restart of sport. This will:

> result in a COVID-19 response and recovery that better serves *everyone*,
> more fully suppressing the virus, as well as building back better. It will
> provide for more agile systems capable of responding to complex

situations, reaching the furthest behind first. (United Nations, 2020, online, *our emphasis*)

We suggest that each of these recommendations could inform sport managers by ensuring that relevant and diverse stakeholder groups are consulted about the recovery strategies to be used through a codesign process. We use four principles to structure our recommendations based upon our analysis throughout this chapter;

1. Ensure mainstreaming of disability in all COVID-19 response and recovery together with targeted actions.

In an environment that seeks to mitigate ableism; elite is elite. Whether it be Paralympic or not, all people require access to sporting facilities and programmes. Arguments about prioritisation simply reflect ableist viewpoints that have, at their extreme end been deliberated through the euthanasia debates by philosophers such as Peter Singer, who has argued for the prioritization of life for the non-disabled (Singer, 2011). Groups such as "Not Dead yet" strongly resist the underlying discourse that disability equates to Singer's articulation of a lesser humanity (Not Dead Yet, 2021). Despite issues around the management of mainstreaming sport, it is not a new practice. As such responses to restarting sport during, and/or following the pandemic should strive for harmonious integration that can supress dominant voices to allow for a more inclusive and equitable role for others in decision making. Placing the onus on the lived experience of those considered 'vulnerable' to navigate their own re-entry into sport is vital. Disabled people will establish their own targets for restarting and can also provide a valuable voice in wider discussions around how sport will operate following the

pandemic. The findings of the Level Playing Field (2020) study on disabled fans include some good examples of how sports organizations can mainstream their restart by assisting all fans, not just those with disabilities. This can be achieved by protecting allocated seats, providing extra time for renewals, and potentially ensuring free live streaming or refunding the percentages of unused season tickets if future matches are played behind closed doors.

2. Ensure accessibility of information, facilities, services and programmes in the COVID-19 response and recovery

Accessibility is crucial in any attempts to restart sport. As discussed above this accessibility is not just restricted to facility-access but a key aspect of sports' communications, services and programming. Even in New Zealand, where the response to the outbreak of COVID-19 was lauded, accessible information provided by the government and key agencies was delayed (see also Pring, 2020). Tesoriero (2020) highlighted that in the face of inaccessible communication it fell to disabled people's organizations to create accessible formats. Information shared throughout the workplace needs to be multi-modal which can encourage greater uptake and understanding for all staff. This could include the sharing of new ways of reading, communicating and contributing that will benefit the work of all within an organization (Shew, 2020).

3. Ensure meaningful consultation with and active participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in all stages of the COVID-19 response and recovery.

The Sendai Framework (United Nations, 2015) recommends that disabled people are empowered to publicly lead and promote a universally accessible response, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction phase (p. 21). Ideally this preparation could still be established before it is needed, as the recovery from the COVID-19 outbreak, in the absence of a vaccine, will take some time. In this time we can plan and progress ideas for a disability-inclusive response. While the IPC's denouncement of the US Open's decision to cut the wheelchair tennis programme from the 2020 tournament was appreciated, the IPC could be in a position to lead these meaningful consultations through its athletes with the various national federations they are members of. At lower levels, managers needs to understand the diversity of disability (and its intersection with gender, race, sexuality, first nation's people, geographic location et cetera) of those who play, watch and work in sport. This means that consultation must be targeted and meaningful, the time has passed for committees of white, middle-class men with physical disabilities – despite their high participation numbers in disability sport - to speak for the entire disability sport community (and these groups voices must be managed so they do not drown out minority perspectives). Engagement must occur with individuals who exist at elite, performance and grassroots layers of participation, those who watch and those who work in sport. The formation of coalition building between advocacy organizations and sport could also provide fruitful ideas for response and recovery.

4. Establish accountability mechanisms to ensure disability inclusion in the COVID-19 response.

Given the nature of our arguments above, it is inevitable that performance metrics will be needed to assess any investments made that specifically encourage the involvement of disabled people within sport. New partnerships can be forged between sports organizations and advocacy groups to assist engaging not just sport's existing networks but reaching out to new participants, fans, employees. Some potential examples could include monitoring the engagement, through both direct and virtual participation in the live streaming of matches, participation in online forums during matches, attendance at virtual training sessions, and/or measuring the effectiveness of partnerships on facilitating projects and programmes.

In considering the marginalised position that disabled people inhabit within the sports workplace, workplaces must ensure that employment and working conditions need to be responsive to accessibility and inclusion. For sports programming, practitioners must be able to access the environments and remain safe while performing their roles. While this provides barriers to a traditional sport development session of a fitness class, solutions to protect employees from harm should apply to all employees. Managers also need to ensure that Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) measures are disability-inclusive. Any attempts to use health and safety as an additional barrier to re-entering the workforce, should be seen for what they are, a discriminatory tool relying on ableist views of vulnerability. In addition to this, and with all actions sport's approach to managing sport through the pandemic needs to be sensitive to the particular situation of each person, irrespective of ability and intersectionality.

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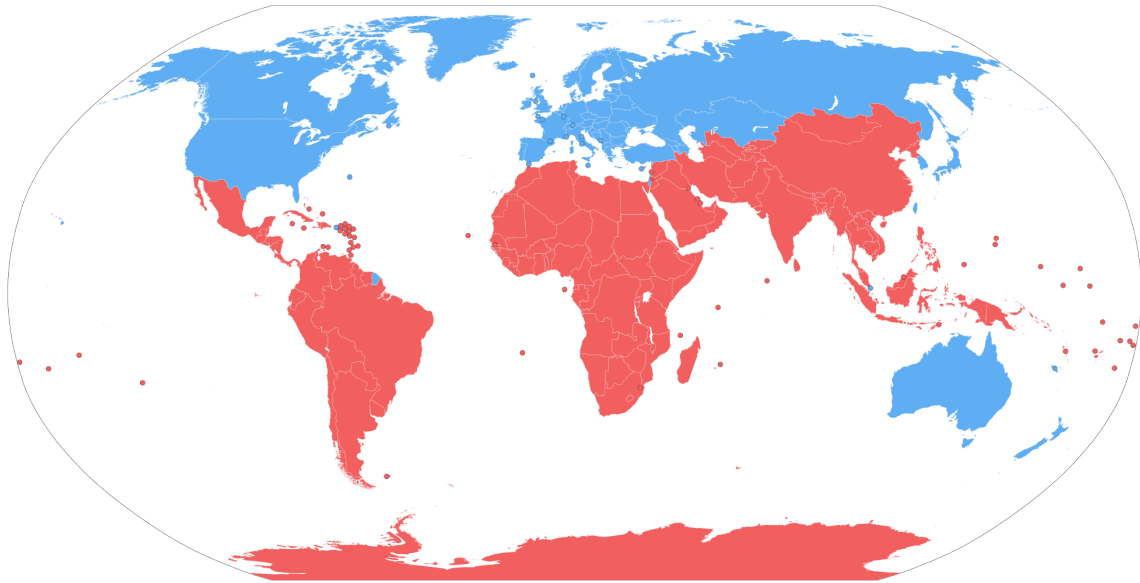
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Figure 1: A Map of the Global North

Source: