

# VENUES OF THE FUTURE

In this Q&A, Chris Paterson, Principal, Populous (Australia), Greg Sherlock, Principal, Populous (USA), and Paul Shakespeare, Associate Principal, Populous (UK), share their insights as to the sports venues of the future.



Chris Paterson



Greg Sherlock



Paul Shakespeare

**In the future, how will teams need to approach revenue generation, and how will that differ from existing approaches?**



To me, the answer is two-fold. Firstly, there will need to be a greater focus on winning, meaning teams will be expecting more from their athletes, particularly with new salary cap rules being introduced in many sports. More emphasis could be put on the data that teams capture from their players. This will mean greater demand for elite training facilities and stadia designed at the cutting edge for teams to get the very best from their athletes. Secondly, there also needs to be a greater understanding of the fans. I think Asia in particular will see a real boom in seeking to understand how fans experience an event, as well as bringing in new ways to reward them.



The nature and proportion of the revenue generation type, be it media rights, sponsorships and partnerships, merchandising or event day revenues, will always develop and vary according to a combination of event type and host location.



Sketch 1: Revenue generation will always depend on a number of important factors such as media rights and merchandising.



Revenue from media rights is driving both the entertainment and sports industries, meaning that media coverage of games will become even more relevant to the work we do in the future, as technologies continue to deliver astounding content to remote viewers. We have an opportunity to bring an event to life – showing people celebrating, and presenting an event as if you were there virtually.

**We have a fairly comprehensive understanding of the generation known as the 'Millennials'. What can we learn from the next generation – Generation Z – and their expectations of the fan experience?**



To a certain extent, this is what we're always looking at, as a practice. We really value the experience of up-and-coming young architects; the great thing

Sketch 2: Future venues will look at new ways to get closer to the team.



about the next generation is that they view the world differently from you!

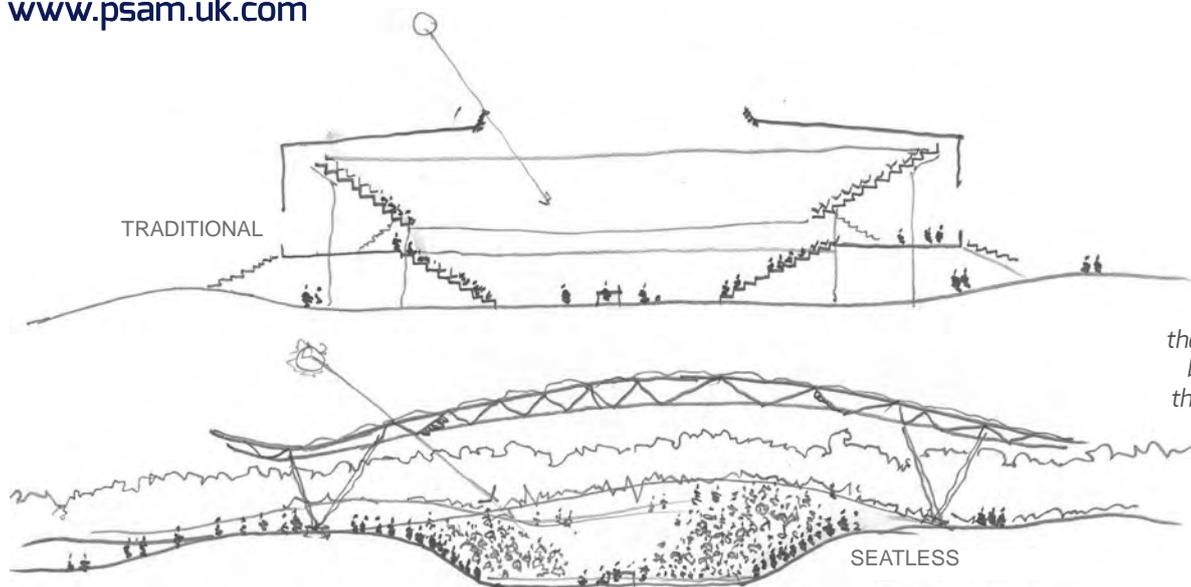


We know that the lives of Generation Z will be influenced by technological advancement in information exchange and the globalisation of content. As architects, we have to pay close attention to new social engagement trends which bring Generation Z together to participate and gather face-to-face. Events in the next generation are more likely to be participatory performances: crowd-sourced engagements, where everyone plays an active role in the occasion.

**Sports and entertainment are rapidly evolving – from developments in broadcast, to the rise of e-sports. How does the changing nature of sports impact our future venues?**



Going to an event is increasingly more about the entertainment provided around the venue, rather than the



*Sketch 3: Rethinking the traditional stadium bowl to interact with the local environment.*

sport or show at centre stage. Team owners and broadcast advancements are starting to provide access to all areas of venues and into the inner sanctum of the team. Letting fans access locker room talks, green rooms or the coach's bench is a fantastic draw, and something that we will develop more into our designs.



It's the 'challenger' sports vying for worldwide attention that will have a global impact. The example of e-sports,

bringing a live, physical audience into an environment that was previously only experienced by a few geographically-separated players, is really interesting. E-sports really could lead the way in the evolution of the stadium experience.

**Is there a particular future development that you're really excited to see?**



I think from a North American perspective, it's all about broader mixed-use development projects, which consider peripheral land use in conjunction with the stadiums, arenas or ballparks themselves. When the two are conceived and built in tandem, there are opportunities that lead to completely new urban models of innovation. In addition, there are opportunities to create even greater connectivity between the stadium and the surrounding district by entirely re-thinking what a stadium's seating bowl may look like. We did some sketches (see Sketch 3) that show what a stadium that exhibits this may look like, functioning as much as a public park and activated green space as a traditional stadium.



Following on from Paul's answer to the previous question, there has been a lot of discussion about e-sports

in our market due to its growth in Asian markets, such as South Korea. The sport also offers opportunities as a designer to adapt or create new ways of using arenas – just take a look at the work our firm did for Gizmodo last year, with imagery that showed what the first e-sport specific venue could look like. I think we'd also be looking to the evolving nature of sports such as T20 Cricket and extreme sports, which require venues to be flexible to hold multiple sport/entertainment types.

**We often talk about the technical side of venues – what is it that you love about stadium and arena design?**



The evolving nature of these venues, as well as the game, technology and the communities they serve creates a very exciting canvas for us to practice in. Understanding that these venues are more than physical structures, but cathedrals which define communities, is why I love what we do.



These are buildings that have a significant impact on cities and people's lives. They are places where memories are formed that are outside of the everyday experience. Weaving a big venue into the fabric of a city is really exciting, constantly negotiating with the identity of a location, drawing from it, and sometimes adding something a little bit different through new technologies and the changing fan domain.



I am a lifelong Aston Villa supporter. I took my son to his first FA Cup game at Wembley this year, when we beat Liverpool despite the odds. We loved it, and the atmosphere was electric, everyone coming together. As humans we're drawn to shared experiences, and that's why live experiences and venues will always exist. Also, the uncertainty

of the result in sport is part of what makes it so authentic, so real.

**How do you foresee sports venues evolving over the next decade? And what will be the key drivers?**



To me, it really depends on the country and the sport. Established football markets in Europe will be battling for their share of ever-increasing TV rights deals, while emerging markets will be convincing their communities that new facilities and opportunities to participate will help transform their teams and communities on the global stage.



I feel there will be a continued emphasis on multi-functionality and transformable spaces. Venues that can do everything, but suffer no loss of quality in fan experience and which offer increased offerings in hospitality options.

Having back-to-back events for a venue means maximum revenue for operators and surrounding businesses. The sports venue can become the active hub of a city, right throughout the year.



As Chris says, the industry is constantly evolving; venues which are capable of adaptation will drive success. Ultimately, these venues are places where fans love to be, want to interact and want to enjoy themselves – together. The best broadcast platform is one that is packed at every single event, showcasing people around the world having a great time. ■

For more information about the Tomorrow's Together project being carried out between Populous and PS&AM, visit: [www.populous.com/venuesofthefuture](http://www.populous.com/venuesofthefuture) or join the conversation on Twitter at: [#venuesofthefuture](https://twitter.com/venuesofthefuture)