

Women and girls in Sportivate

Are women and girls more likely to be sustained in team sports or individual sports and activities within the Sportivate programme?



Sportivate



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**SPORT
ENGLAND**

Overview

Introduction

This case study will firstly consider previous research, national trends, history and the social impact of female participation in team and individual sports. The online survey results (collected for this case study), together with this research and the Sportivate Annual Evaluation data, will serve to prove or disprove the theory that team sports* are more likely to sustain young women and girls in sport than individual sports within the Sportivate programme. The survey also gives a snap shot of the Sportivate sustainability success rate 6 months to 2.5 years after Sportivate.

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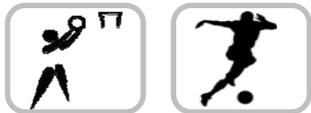
*For the purpose of this study, we defined team sports as sports that can ONLY be played in a team rather than any sport that COULD be played in a team. 27 sports were classified as team sports, 59 sports were classified as individual sports or activities.



National trends



Athletics, cycling and swimming are the top three most popular **sports/activities** for women on a weekly basis across all age groups



Netball and football are the only team sports in the top 20 most popular activities list – #11 and #15 respectively



16-24's and over 65's are the only age groups that recorded a decrease in participation amongst women. All other age groups increased

WSFF - Women's participation in sport and physical activity trends (2005-06 to 2011-12) and Sportivate Programme Evaluation Year 2

Sportivate trends



Netball, football and basketball are the top three most popular **sports** for women/girls on a weekly basis



Gym/fitness & dance, are the two most popular **activities**



Physical Activity
Team sport
Ind. sport

As can be seen above, more team sports are played through Sportivate than amongst women and girls as a whole. Netball and football are the most popular team sports across the board, however they are played with far greater frequency within Sportivate than amongst the wider population. In both settings women and girls are most likely to take part in individual sports and activities.

Team & individual sports: history & facts

Some people argue that the masculine image of team sports has inhibited women from participating in them for a long time. It is quite a recent event that women's team



sports began to develop and professional organisations of those sports emerged

Google 'unknown source'

In women's professional sports, individual sports such as golf and bowling have much longer histories than team sports.

First ever televised sporting event – men's baseball



1950

English women's FA is formed



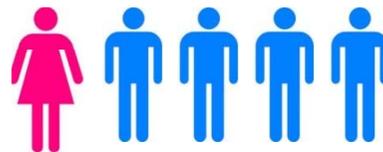
1994

Equal prize money awarded to male and female champions at Wimbledon

2007

Google 'unknown source'

The Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation (WSFF) identified that only 5% of sport media coverage is for women's sport and research from the charity revealed that women's sport receives just 0.5% of all commercial sponsorship, while only one in five board members of national governing bodies are women.



Images were found using a Google Image search

Team vs individual sports

Not only are there fewer team sports to take part in than individual sports, but the profile of the role models in individual sports is significantly higher than the profile of those taking part in team sports.

This means that inspiring and encouraging young women and girls to take part in team sports is even harder than for individual sports and activities



Images were found using a Google Image search

Sportivate female participant survey

SPORTIVATE SURVEY TEAM

We are working on a project to understand how many women and girls exercise more than 6 months after attending a Sportivate project. We need your help to complete this survey to let us know your thoughts.

FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN SPORT

1 Are you still taking part in sport? (If no, go to question 3)

Yes

No

2 What sport did you take part in for Sportivate and when did you last take part and the month and year. e.g. netball - March 2012)

3 If you answered 'no' to question 1, why are you no longer taking part in sport?

Method:

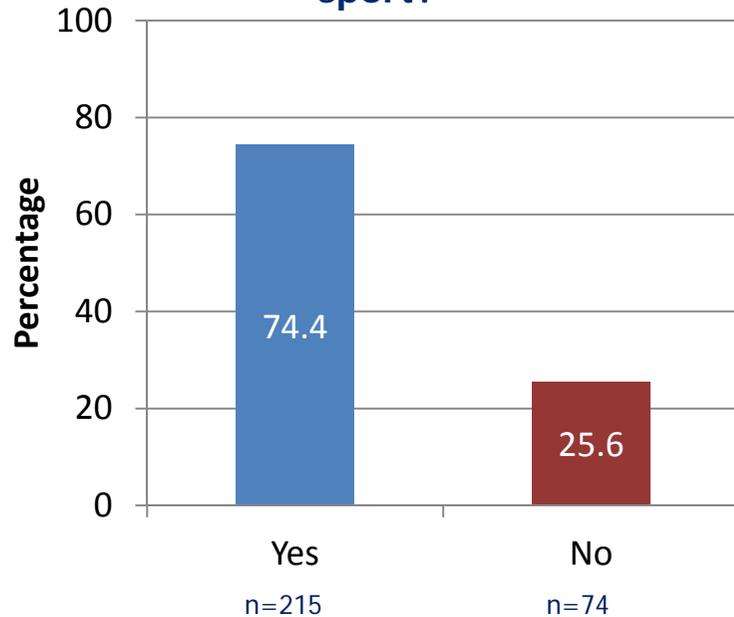
- We identified 20,812 female Sportivate participants, who took part in the programme in year 1 or year 2 and who agreed they were happy to receive further contact
- We reviewed the sports list to define 'team' and 'individual' sports
- We devised a simple questionnaire to capture an understanding of current participation, 6 months – 2.5 years after taking part in Sportivate
- We circulated the same questionnaire to two separate lists – one to participants who took part in 'individual' activities (n=13,943) and one to those who took part in 'team' activities (n=6,869)*
- We analysed the responses as well as using initial data capture information from the portal

*27 sports classified as team sports, 59 sports classified as individual sports or activities

Results - Still taking part in sport

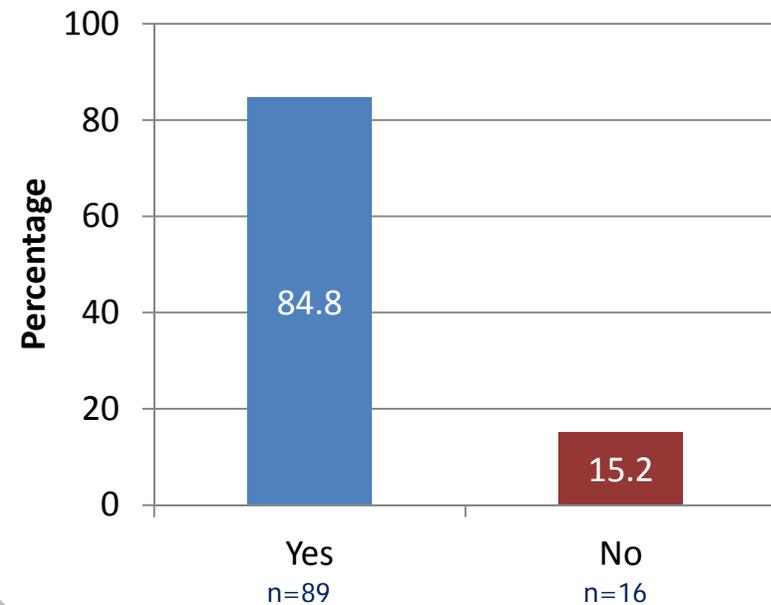
+10.4% difference between 'individual' and 'team'

Individual: Are you still taking part in sport?



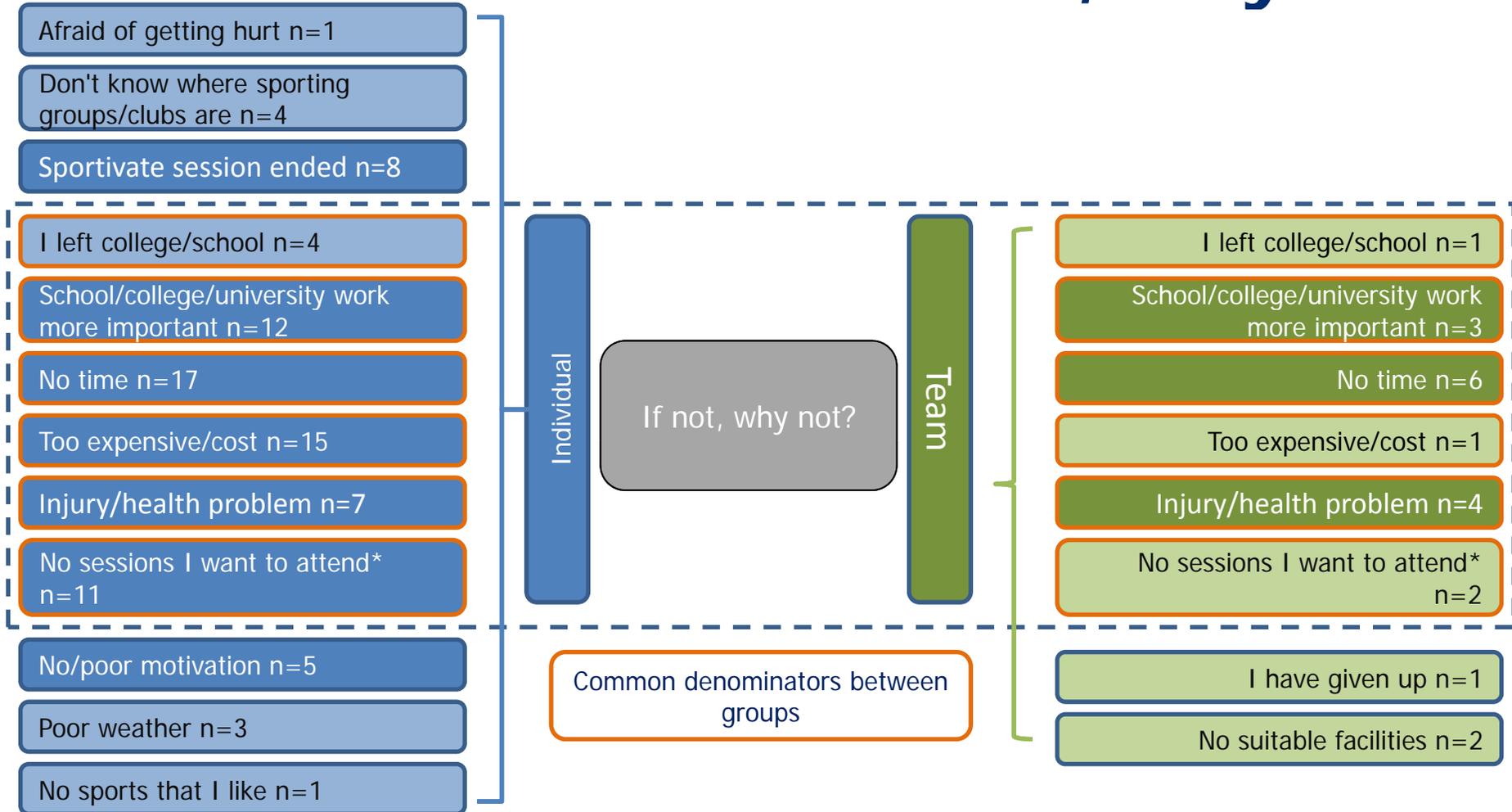
*Based on 289 responses

Team: Are you still taking part in Sport?



*Based on 105 responses

Results - If not, why not?



*Due to weather, location, time of year and poor facilities, or relocation



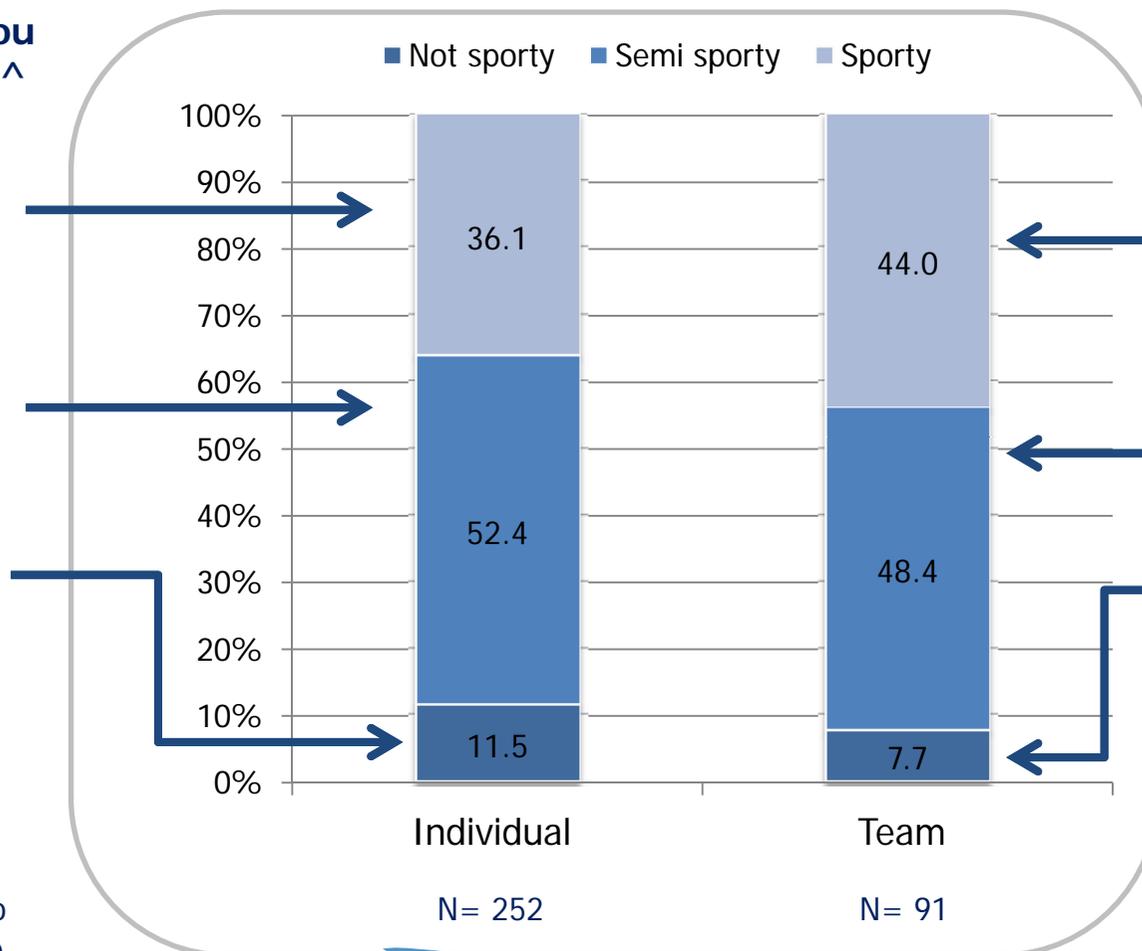
Results - pre Sportivate activity levels

Individual: Are you still doing sport?^

Team : Are you still doing sport?

- Yes - 87%
- Yes - 67%
- Yes - 61%

- Yes - 93%
- Yes - 82%
- Yes - 71%*



*Based on less than n>30

^This is 6 months to three years after the initial programme

Data analysis

Sustainability

Whilst individual and team activity participants termed 'sporty'* are fairly evenly matched in terms of their likelihood to continue participating, '**semi sporty**'* participants that took part in a team activity are **15%** more likely to continue to participate than their individual activity counterparts. 'Non sporty'* team participants are 10% more likely to continue to participate than their individual activity peers.

Team sports sustained **10.4%** more young women and girls than individual sports. 25.6% of those doing individual sports did not continue to take part in sport

Further comments summary - Negative

The most identified reason that girls are no longer taking part in sport across team and individual activities is a **lack of time**.

Those taking part in both team and in individual sports identified that women's sport needs to be more accessible and flexible. This was backed up by the feeling that more female coaches are needed and more 'all female environments'. It should be noted though, that all female environments were a greater priority for those who took part in individual sports than those that took part in team sports.

Some of the more common reasons, identified by those from individual sports/activities for not taking part in sport did not feature from those that took part in team sports such as '**the Sportivate sessions ended**' and '**I don't know where sporting groups or clubs are**'.

The cost of taking part featured much more highly as a limiting factor from those who took part in individual sports than those who took part in team sports.

Further comments summary- Positive

The positive comments received from both groups reported that the sessions were fun and enjoyable and they helped build self esteem and improve their well being

Explanations

One CSP identified that there are **fewer team sport activities** offered, particularly for those over 16 years old. It was suggested that this could be as a result of sports clubs (the most common team sports setting) preferring to deliver through educational authorities due to the access to participants this gives, especially considering there is performance related pay in operation. Clubs are usually led by volunteers who may not have the capacity to invest the time to attract new participants.

Team sports could offer a **greater opportunity for learning** due to the coached nature of delivery and the greater technical challenge, perhaps offering a greater feeling of progression and development

The **interaction opportunities** are greater in team sports than individual sports, getting young people more involved in the activity and making friends, resulting in an increased chance of staying involved

Opportunities to start a new team sport **are harder to come by** for young people than, for example attending an exercise class at a leisure centre. This could perhaps result in a greater early buy in from the young people attending a team sport activity than an individual activity

The amount of **training and experience** a coach has may differ depending on the activity, for example, a level 2 rugby coach, compared to a jog leader. This may alter the level of experience they offer at their sessions and therefore the quality of the sessions

The social aspect is vital and is often more present in team sport activities. **Exit routes** for team sport activities are often much clearer than for individual sports and activities, with clubs putting in strong applications with clear outcomes

Although, as identified in 'How to Develop a Sporting Habit for Life', it has been found that longer term, women and girls are more likely to be sustained in individual sports, Sportivate creates the opportunity to offer a **specific type of introduction or reintroduction to team sports**. Clearly, the way these sports are offered is resulting in greater sustainability up to 2 years after taking part

What do the experts say?



England Netball have conducted extensive research into who takes part in netball and why and can help us understand what it is about team sports that is sustaining females more successfully. In the development of 10 netball playing market segments, England Netball researchers identified that the key trends keeping all segments in the game are:

loyalty, selection to be part of a team, and that players describe the sport as '**part of who we are**'. It was identified that team sports are more likely to be played at school from a younger age so confidence levels are likely to be higher. Team sports with the correct 'product' have seen the greatest growth. Following the in depth customer insight collected, England Netball has invested extensively in creating appropriate marketing material and establishing role models. The steady growth in the number of people playing netball until October 2013 shows that the right product marketed correctly will have an impact.



The Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation commented that the analysis undertaken by Sport Structures shows that the Sportivate programme is bucking the trend by engaging and retaining girls and young women in team sports. Sport England's Active People Survey 7 shows that girls and women aged 14 plus are considerably less likely to take part in team sports than individual sports. As girls and young women move through the Sportivate age band they are significantly less likely to participate in team sports – 14-15 year olds have participated in a team sport in the last month this drops to 5.1% for 22-25 year olds*. What we now need to understand is what Sportivate is doing differently in terms of both delivery and communication to successfully sustain participation.

* Active People Survey 7

Recommendations

Consider specifically team sports for those **aged 16 and older** once they have finished in the education setting. How are team sports offered to this age group? How do they find out about the activities?

Use the fact that women and girls **know how to play** many of the team sports, having taken part in school as a way to encourage them to take part

It's **loyalty** to the team and being part of something that seems to be the trigger for staying involved – ensure individual sport activities do something to replicate the team environment to help sustain more girls. Ensure there is opportunity to interact within peer groups

Ensure that team sport activities don't shy away from **competition**. An exit route that can offer competition at the right level has a greater chance of keeping girls interested as they will continue to achieve progression

Consider the value of investing slightly more time and resource in **marketing** the team sports activities. If more women and girls take part in these activities the long term prognosis for continued participation is good

CSPs consulted have seen good success in **lacrosse** projects

Establish local team sport **role models**, either using local elite performers or providing peer role models from within local team sports. Use a competition, having young people nominate their local team sport hero

If you have **provider/deliverer meetings**, tell them about the research – tell them what they can do to market their activity and attract girls to their sessions. Help them understand that one size doesn't fit all in sports development

Calculate your team sport to individual **activity ratio**. Could it be considered and amended in light of this research to achieve different results for your Sportivate programme?

Key findings – Team vs individual sports

Our literature and culture review says:

Evidence identifies that **more** women and girls take part in individual activities than team activities

Women and girls often identify **individual activities** as activities in which they would rather take part

Social acceptance, role models and the **media** directs young women and girls towards individual activities

Our sample survey says:

Women and girls who took part in Sportivate are **10.4%** more likely to be sustained longer term in a team activity environment rather than in an individual sport or activity environment.

What have we learnt:

Whilst individual sports engage, retain and sustain young women and girls with great success and should always be promoted and offered, we should also strive to create opportunities that could give more than a 10% greater yield on sustained participants in Sportivate by investing in **team sport** activities.

This may require a greater **investment in resources** such as marketing and raising the profile of role models for these activities, but if achieved could help us achieve better success in long term sustainability

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