

The Sustainable Sports Agenda

OPPORTUNITIES
FOR THE SPORTS
INDUSTRY TO
#BUILDBACKBETTER

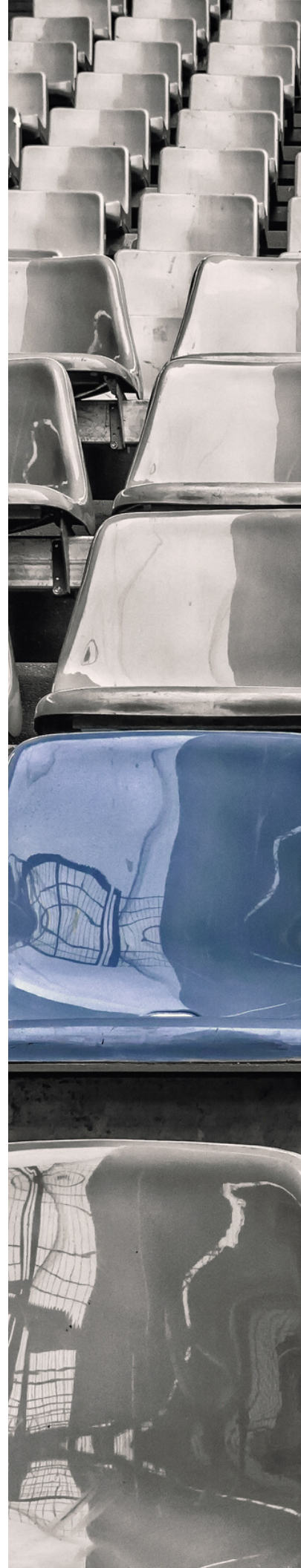


TOWARD A 'NEW NORMAL'

Since the mid-2000s, the sport sector has made fast and widespread improvements with regard to environmentally sustainable practices. These efforts have ranged from adopting LED lighting and energy-efficiency systems, to installing solar panels, pursuing LEED certification for new or renovated facilities, implementing zero-waste plans, installing low-flow water systems, planting stadium gardens, sourcing food locally, and progressing toward the elimination of single-use plastics. Unfortunately, the coronavirus pandemic has temporarily halted live events and may stymie progress toward sustainability goals.

It is clear that the coronavirus must be immediately addressed without exposing fans to unnecessary or additional risks, or compromising on safety standards. However, facility managers have a rare opportunity to synergize pandemic response efforts with sustainability strategies to proactively address climate-related threats. In other words, efforts to make the stadium cleaner and safer for fans can be achieved through the use and implementation of sustainable products and practices. The result would be a greener, safer, more sustainable and healthier environment for fans when they return to live events.

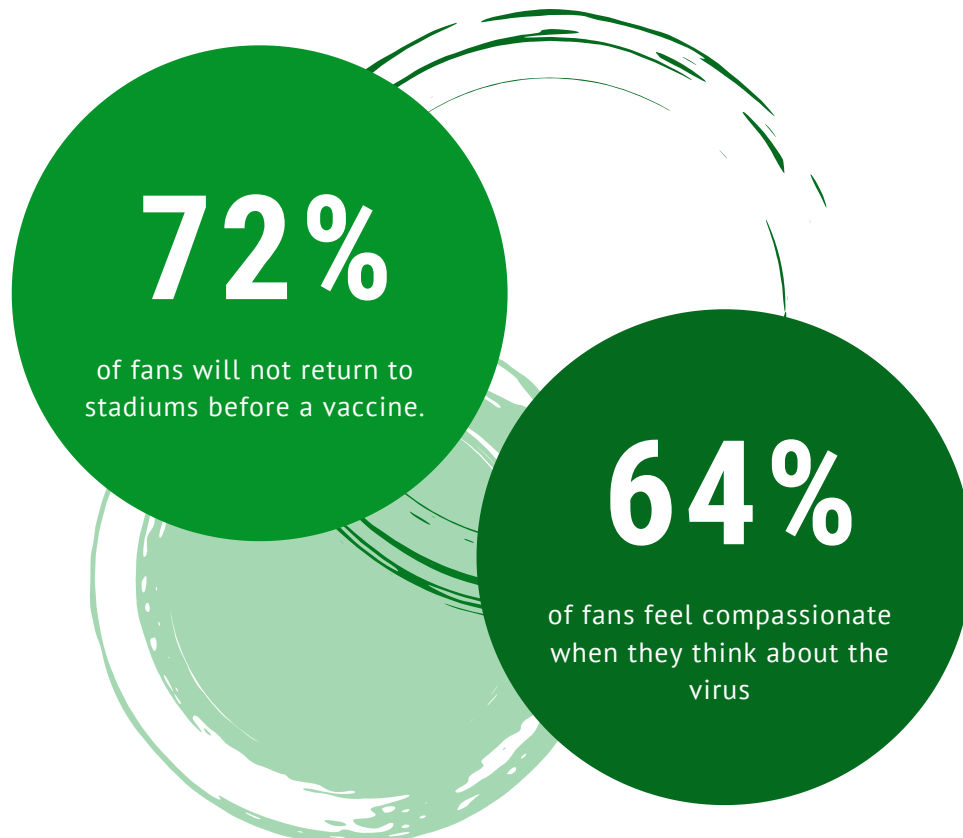
"Across all sectors, the call is resounding to #BuildBackBetter"



Across all sectors, the call is resounding to #BuildBackBetter. In the rush to return to live events with in-person spectators, the critical urgency of addressing health and wellbeing may cause sport organizations to backslide where sustainability is concerned. In other words, efforts to make stadiums clean and safe may dwarf any progress that organizations have made with regard to climate action and sustainability. For instance, single-use plastic disposables may be adopted in lieu of current multi-use food serviceware, or environmentally-harmful chemical products may be used for cleaning as these are sometimes perceived as more effective at removing bacteria from surfaces. However, the definition of sustainability is grounded in healthy systems - healthy environmental, social and economic systems that are naturally and inextricably linked. This principle is truly being laid bare through the current global crisis - that human health is essential to economic health. And that human health is very much determined by environmental health; influenced by both natural and man-made surroundings.

Recent surveys confirm the hesitations: a [Seton Hall University](#) study found that 72% of fans would not return to stadiums before a vaccine, and [Morning Consult](#) reported a very similar response to their poll: only 30% would feel comfortable returning to stands when live sports return. To guide sport managers in their response to fans' safety concerns, several organizations including [the WHO](#) and [LiveStyled](#) have released resources that promote safe, clean, and socially distanced solutions for sport venues. However, gaps remain with regard to sustainability. The industry is already talking about this: [Sport Positive Summit](#) hosted a series of Twitter conversations on this topic, and it has been discussed briefly by facility experts at the [ACC Sport Sustainability Conference](#), recent [Beyond Sport meetings](#), the digital [GreenBiz](#) conference, [Green Sports Alliance webinars](#), and more. Building on those conversations and the most recent data on fan preferences, **this report identifies opportunities associated with maintaining sustainability advances in sport facilities amid pandemic recovery efforts.**

Fortunately, research by the Yale Program on Climate Communications and the George Mason University Center for Climate Change has shown that the majority of Americans feel compassionate (64% “very” or “moderately”) or hopeful (54%) when they think about the coronavirus. We propose that managers should focus on that hope, and take full advantage of this pause and transition time to explore long-term solutions that enhance resilience and prepare organizations to face future possible disruptive events with the full power of insights gained from past challenges. A recommitment to the triple bottom line is necessary: fans expect organizations to take care of people (fans, athletes, staff, and community), planet (through sustainability efforts), and profits. Indeed, in many ways the triple bottom line objectives are synergistic: environmentally sustainable solutions are also typically healthier for humans (e.g. less toxic cleaning materials, less traffic pollution, etc.) and produce long-term cost-savings. All moments of challenge present opportunities for growth and evolution and though the scale of tragedy of COVID-19 has been catastrophic, this moment is no different.





Over the next four weeks, the Sustainable Sport Research Collective will present opportunities to integrate operational environmental sustainability into the reopening of stadiums and venues to fans. The team has identified three components of operations that may suffer environmental implications and have detailed opportunities to mitigate those risks, while addressing the critical need to safely reopen.

UPCOMING

Environmental Strategies for Gameday Logistics to #BuildBackBetter

Document: June 2nd |. Discussion: June 9th

Opportunities in the Back of House to #BuildBackBetter

Document: June 9th |. Discussion: June 16th

New Communications and Partnerships Opportunities as Fans Return to #BuildBackBetter

Document: June 16th |. Discussion: June 23rd



THIS JUNE 2020...

Following the release of each topic, we invite you to participate in informal conversations to share feedback and ideas on each topic, with the mission to #BuildBackBetter. These conversations will be geared towards identifying and discussing the many opportunities for environmental sustainability to be integrated into post-COVID live sports. To foster thoughtful and productive conversation, we're keeping the discussion groups to 25 participants.

The first of these dialogues will be held tomorrow, Tuesday June 2nd, at 4pm ET.
[Registration Link](#)

Environmental Strategies for Gameday Logistics to #BuildBackBetter

Gameday begins at home - often several days ahead of teams taking the field - as fans coordinate their transportation, meeting points and pre-game rituals. Once fans arrive on-site, they may also visit the ticketing counter, and move through entry/exit and security points. COVID-19 presents new challenges that require adaptation to the 'normal' venue operations at each of these points. There are many innovative opportunities to integrate more efficient, sustainable solutions and #BuildBackBetter on Gameday. Let's discuss.

Document Release: Tuesday, June 2
Discussion: Tuesday, June 9
[Registration Link](#)



Opportunities in the Back of House to #BuildBackBetter

Though not visible to spectators, back of house operations are the nucleus of the gameday experience. Carefully curated experiences require essential staff to execute policies and plans, and coordinate logistics to ensure that each moment is seamless. As teams plan for a safe return, there are many opportunities to make progress on environmental sustainability efforts that began pre-COVID. We will discuss opportunities to integrate progress in sustainability in concessions, waste diversion measures, and safe custodial services, to support us to #BuildBackBetter.

Document Release: Tuesday, June 9
Discussion: Tuesday, June 16
[Registration Link](#)

New Communications and Partnerships Opportunities to #BuildBackBetter

Changes in our feelings and expectations of attending live events will introduce a sense of unfamiliarity among fans. Fans will arrive at the gates with a heightened attention to signage and communication - can our messaging around sustainability be more engaging and capture a more receptive audience? How do we work with existing partners in a newly sensitized environment? In this closing segment of our discussions, we'll explore the potential to foster positive fan experiences after a long offseason.

Document Release: Tuesday, June 16
Discussion: Tuesday, June 23
[Registration Link](#)



SUSTAINABLE SPORT RESEARCH COLLECTIVE

Sustainable Sport Research Collective is a collaboration among 4 established sustainability professionals exclusively focused on the sports industry. With strong knowledge of venue operations, environmental sustainability, social responsibility and fan experience and engagement, the group recognized the need for insights into fans' primary concerns, and latent trepidation, in returning to large public gathering spaces. As advisors and practitioners working regularly with sports league and team executives, we've established a robust survey method, including a novel virtual focus group, representative of the broad demographics of sports fans.

Sustainable Sport Research Collective Members:

Aileen McManamon, Founder of 5T Sports

Monica Rowand, COO of Phase 3 Sport

Kristen Fulmer, Founder of Recipric

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