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The 2021 edition of the European Academy of Management (EURAM) conference has been once more marked by the Covid-19 pandemic. For a second time the conference was organised as a 100% online format due to the resurgence of infections in many countries during 2021. Despite a decrease in conference contributions mostly likely due to illness and lower attractivity of the online version of the conference, the Managing Sport SIG organised six sessions, including four full paper sessions, one kick-off event, and a plenary session. I would like to thank all contributors as authors, reviewers, guest speakers, SIG members, conference participants, and especially the SIG office team for making this possible.

Thanks to the voluntary work of reviewers, we had on average 2.6 reviews per submissions, a total of 37 reviews. In terms of topics and themes, contributions were quite equally distributed across the topics Sport Governance, Managing Sport Events and Participation, Sport and Sustainability and papers for the General Track. Within these submissions, we selected four papers for this Special Issue based on their originality, methodological rigour, and their practical and theoretical contributions. The four articles are quite different, but they all carry some links to innovation in sport management research. The first three are empirical articles and the Special Issue closes with a conceptual article.

The first article deals with innovation concerning new ways of accounting for the value created by professional basketball clubs. It applies a redesigned accounting method for non-market and market social value created by two Spanish elite basketball clubs. The findings of the study suggest a new way of measuring the holistic value created by elite sport organisations. The second article examines the concept of competitive intensity in two differently regulated sport contexts – the Premier League and the Bundesliga. It makes a methodological contribution through application and generalisation of the recent Competitive Intensity Index Mode. Furthermore, it contributes to the debate around the attractivity of leagues and, hence, informs the recent debate on UEFA's plans of a new European "elite" league. The third article investigates sport sponsorship and

its effects in the context of sport event participants. It empirically investigates antecedents of sponsor awareness and consequences for attitudinal aims in the context of Taekwondo competitors. The fourth and final article of this Special Issue is a conceptual article. It suggests a definition for sport event innovation and a research agenda for scholars in the domain of sport event innovation.

The first article in this Special Issue, entitled "Monetising social value in sports clubs" is authored by Mendizabal, San-Jose, and Garcia-Merino (2022). It provides an interesting example on how market and non-market social value can be accounted for in the context of elite sport organisations. This clarifies the contribution of sport organisations to society and, hence, helps sport organisations to show their importance of for society. This paper also makes a contribution from a methodological perspective as it further develops and tests an existing multi-value accounting method (SPOLY) which allows to evaluate the social value creation of other sport organisations. Consequently, in the future, elite sport organisations' activities can be evaluated not only based on their economic success but furthermore on their contribution to social value in their community. This paper provides guidance for other sport organisations to follow this path of multi-capital accounting.

The second article carries the title "Competitive Intensity in differently regulated men's football leagues: evidence from English Premier League and German Bundesliga". The authors Wagner, Preuß, and Könecke (2022) confront the Competitive Intensity of two fundamentally different approaches in terms of ownership regulation and distribution of media revenues in professional sport leagues. They shed light on the competitive intensity of differently regulated elite sport leagues which informs the debate on the ideal organisation of the latter maximising the attractiveness for spectators and sponsors.

The third article entitled "Unlocking the Black Box of Sponsorship in Participant-Based Sport" and authored by Koronios, Ntasios, Dmitropoulos, and Gerke (2022) investigates sponsorship in the context of internal audiences of sport mass events. Rather than focusing on the marketing and communication potential of sport events on spectators, the authors investigate sport sponsorship in a participant sport setting. This work indeed opens new horizons in terms of mainstream sport sponsorship research that has been focussing on sponsorship's impact on viewers' purchase and word-of-mouth intentions rather than on sponsorship's impact in the context of sport event participants. The authors report that results of the study show that determinants of sponsor awareness as well as consequences for attitudinal aims were more noteworthy than in the sport event viewer context. They argue that this might be due to the participants' perception of sponsors' engagement in the sport event as more authentic anticipating sincere motives rather than purely economic interests by the sponsors.

The fourth and final article of this Special Issue carries the title “Sport Event Innovation: A Preliminary Conceptualisation and Directions for Future Research”. The authors Hoff, Leopkey, and Ellis (2022) bring together, in an original manner, innovation and sport innovation literature around the topic of sport events. This article produces three contributions, a comprehensive research agenda around sport event innovation, a novel definition for sport event innovation, and a visual framework pertaining to the latter. The novel definition describes sport event innovation as “a continuous process through which stakeholders of sport events […] successfully implement a new or significantly improved practice to address an identified problem, resulting in a novel outcome.” (Hoff et al., 2022).

Beyond these excellent papers I would like to highlight here the winners and candidates of the best paper and best reviewer award of the SIG. The Award Committee consisted of Konstantinos Koronios and Cleo Schyvinck, winner of the 2020 SIG awards. I acknowledge here their voluntary work to evaluate the candidates selected by the SIG chair and programme chair. Winner of the Best Paper award was the paper “Competitive intensity in European football leagues” authored by Fabio Wagner and colleagues appearing as second paper in this Special Issue. There were two papers as runner-up candidates. The first carries the following title “The Grey Zone Between Tactics and Fixing: An Explorative Study of Match-Fixing in Road Cycling” and is authored by Stef Van Der Hoeven and colleagues. As second runner up we congratulate Xabier Mendizabal and co-authors for their paper “Monetising social value in sports clubs” which appears in this Special Issue as first paper. Furthermore, the Best Reviewer runner-up candidate was Geraldine Zeimers and the Best Reviewer prize was awarded to Reinhard Kunz. My sincerest acknowledgments go to Rafael Muela Pastor and Rocio Ruiz Berdejo who entertained the Kick-off session on the important topic of environmental sustainability in sport. Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all these valuable and high-quality contributions to the Managing Sport SIG community. Thanks to people like you the SIG has grown and developed since its foundation in 2009 to what it is today.

2021 was a year of change in the SIG office team. As my regular term in office, three years as SIG chair and three years as Programme Chair, came to an end, I happily handed over to Konstantinos Koronios as new SIG Chair who was nominated by the existing SIG officer team. Furthermore, Igor Perechuda was nominated as new Communications Officer and Olivier Reiman as Local Organising Officer for the 2022 edition of EURAM in Winterthur / Zurich. My warmest thanks to all your contributions and good luck with new wind in the sails for the new office team of the Managing Sport SIG. Finally, I would like to thank the Emerald Team for their trust

and the opportunity to publish this yearly Special Issue in the journal Sport, Business, and Management: An International Journal which counts as one of the best mid-tier sport management journals. I am assured that in the future it will make its way to the top tier sport management journals. I take the opportunity here also to announce that I am stepping down from my role as Special Issue guest editor for this journal. Konstantinos Koronios will take over from me. However, I will continue serving the journal and collaborating with the Managing Sport SIG community at EURAM as newly appointed Deputy Editor for Sport, Business, and Management: An International Journal. Finally, I would like to thank all the contributors whether as authors, reviewers, SIG officers or loyal members and friends of the Managing Sport SIG for their participation and support. With the hope of meeting you in person in the next or the following year, I can just encourage you to stay tuned on our social network accounts (Facebook: @euramsportsig ; Twitter: @sportEURAM).

Anna GERKE (Deputy Editor, former EURAM Managing Sport SIG chair, former EURAM Special Issue guest-editor)