**Flinders University**

Fearless Conversations
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**SPEAKERS**

Andrew Daniels, Sam Elliott, Andrew Capel, Bronwyn Klei, Matthew Richardson

**Andrew Capel** 00:06

Welcome to the first fearless conversations panel discussion. A joint venture between the advertiser and Flinders University is about being brave in our thinking about how we drive South Australia forward and challenge ourselves to position this great state for future success. There'll be 13 fearless discussion panels over the next 13 weeks, involving a range of topics from defence and high tech innovation, tourism, infrastructure, education and health, among others. For each discussion, we've assembled a group of high profile thought provoking leaders in their field to pose a series of questions in order to explore their views on the opportunities and challenges relating to each topic. Today we explore the opportunity, power and influence of sport. Feel free to join the conversation through Twitter using hashtag fields conversations, or in the comments section on advertiser.com.au. Thank you for joining fielders conversations. My name is Andrew capelle, Senior sports writer with the advertiser, and I'll be facilitating today's discussion and encouraging our guests to be brave. Before I introduce today's panellists, I would like to acknowledge that we are meeting in the traditional country of the canopy of the Adelaide plains and pay respects to elder's past and present. We recognise and respect their cultural heritage beliefs and relationship with the land. We acknowledge that they are of continuing importance to the kind of people living today and we also extend that respect to other Aboriginal language groups and First Nations people. Today we are joined by four experts in sport. On the end Matthew riches and chief executive of the Port Adelaide football club welcome Matthew. Andrew Daniels next to Matthew chief executive, the Adelaide Oval stadium Management Authority. Bronwyn klei, Chief Executive of nipple si and former general manager of Adelaide strikers t 20. men's and women's teams, and Sam Elliot next to me, multiple award winning researcher and senior lecturer at Flinders University. Welcome team. Thanks for being on board. So we're gonna start we're going to explore the world of sport in the COVID pandemic era, one of the biggest challenges facing sport in South Australia as we emerge from the pandemic, and how do we overcome this problem, you understand? Well, I

**Bronwyn Klei** 02:26

think the main challenge that sports going to face is probably financial. You know, I think sports being very hard hit during the pandemic. It's cost a lot of money to run sport over the last couple of years. Now there's talk of the AFL spending 500 to $600 million over the past couple of years to keep the competition playing. You know, we know that tennis Australia is blowing through a lot of reserves, trying to get the Australian Open, played last year. And it costs a lot of money to fly players around and keep them in bubble. So I think financially, this is going to take a long time for sport to recover.

**Andrew Daniels** 02:59

And I think that's quite right from when and I think what we're seeing is that a lot of a lot of sporting clubs, a lot of stadium business, sporting business organisations, the cash has been burned over the last 18 months. So the reserves that were built up for a rainy day, Well, it certainly poured over the last year and a half and and so they're now gone. So looking ahead the challenges of finance, we know the the Adelaide Oval part of our big role is to is to generate, provide a basis on which sports can generate income to survive. We also of course, need to pay for the Adelaide Oval, which is an incredibly expensive asset in its own right. So that is a huge challenge. The next challenge, from a venue viewpoint is going to be what the expectations of clubs have, whether it be football, cricket, or anyone else and patrons. They've changed over the last 18 months and we need to respond to that change. Ready? Yeah,

**Matthew Richardson** 03:59

I think I agree with the points. I think people's behaviours and the impact that it has, across all levels, whether it be participation or attending sport, or its people have got used to staying at home and watching on television. I think that's some that'll be a challenge for sport, but, but also, I think, you know, and feeding into, you know, the filas theme is, it also presents great opportunity for sports. And you can either do, you can take a glass half empty or glass half full approach and for those sports and teams and clubs that see the opportunities that can come from it to do things differently. There's also great opportunity coming out of coming out of this and that's certainly how Athletic Club is approaching. Sir.

**Sam Elliott** 04:45

Yeah, I've got a slightly different take. I mean, fundamentally, I come to this conversation as a researcher and what the research tells us is that the pandemic, especially in South Australia, has impacted community and youth sport in ways that have been unprecedented. And so for me, one of the biggest challenges that I see is that while many families, many communities have returned to sport, there's been a lot of families, a lot of communities that have not. And I think as an industry, we have an obligation to ask questions about who has not returned, maybe why, and what we can do across all sectors of our industry, what we can actually do to assist. I think that's like a really important immediate, short term challenge. And longer term, I think, given the uncertainty of the world that we live in right now, I think one of the big challenges for any sector of industry at the local level at the grassroots, right through to the elite level is how do we create a more knowledgeable, a skilled and agile sector so we can actually navigate change. And I think that's one of the, for me as a research to be one of the key challenges to make sure that knowledge that is generated through our research is accessible, is usable, and has immediate impact for all our stakeholders. So there's probably a short and long term I think, challenge for all of us in sport. And we all love sport. That's all we're here today.

**Andrew Capel** 05:56

But how important will sport be in helping communities recover from COVID?

**Bronwyn Klei** 06:01

sport plays a massive role. We know in communities anyway. And I think back to the time just before COVID when we had the bushfires in Kangaroo Island. And we were all over there trying to help those communities recover and fundraise and rebuild their facilities to get people back on courts and fields. So I think when you return to sport, in many ways, you return to normality, and that's what people are seeking.

**Andrew Daniels** 06:22

That's a good point for them. And, in fact, I think back the last, the biggest event, probably other than the the Port Adelaide showdown that we've had in the last two years was the bushfires showdown, just before COVID here, and we had a packed Adelaide Oval saying, a showdown of the 20 cricket, which was an amazing sort of conglomeration of different sports, different people. And it works so well. And we raised over a million dollars, and that was for bringing community together. And it was a classic example of the good that really can be done.

**Andrew Capel** 06:54

There's a fantastic day wasn't a massive crowd there too. great publicity. Yeah. Matthew.

**Matthew Richardson** 06:59

Yeah, I think sport at every level, connects communities and connects people at the elite level. It gives people something to look forward to something to be part of and feel part of. And then you look at the community level that in the regional areas that have, as you said, been impacted by bushfires, or those types of things, that it's so important to the fabric of regional communities to bring people together, and especially through these times where with a lot of people have been isolated or had to stay at home or their works being impacted. Sport is a great thing that actually brings people together together, and it's very cool. So, yeah, I

**Sam Elliott** 07:38

mean, I agree, I think the the economic benefit of community sport participation, so just at one tier of, of engagement is around a $6.3 billion, you know, economic benefit nationally. So you cannot underestimate, you know, at the grassroots ground up approach of re engaging people, families in sport. But some research that I've actually been doing is actually showing that when you compared before and during the pandemic, in terms of sport participation, and the people that are involved in community sport, there's been a one in three, or one out of every three people, young persons included, have reported a decline in mental health and well being. And so that's significant. And it probably shows the importance of social connectedness. It probably shows the importance of community cohesion. And they're the kind of things that I think under right they're not just the economic but the social importance of what you in the industry do. I think it's super important

**Andrew Capel** 08:31

in sports played a massive role in getting us through co has been tough on sports people, too hasn't a lot. There's been seasons delayed season shortened weeks and months during season when players applying that's been put on hold. Maybe you've got a you know, Major, I feel foreign or an Adelaide over on Friday night crowd of 15,000. So it's been it's also impacted in many ways.

**Matthew Richardson** 08:55

Yeah, it has. And I think the first thing to say is every part of the community has and much more severe levels than you know, elite sport, elite sports is fortunate in a way but all all of our players and across the AFL and the AFL itself in order to and netball to keep a lot of the elite sport going in order to end the role of players in the community has been senior, but all of those people have made really significant sacrifices, whether it be through isolation, or you know, living away from family for long periods of time. We've got AFL teams that are about to go on the road for four or five weeks to Perth, potentially we've got Sydney and GWS who have been away from family now for the best part of three months. So it's, it's real and to Sam's point, well being is is absolutely a major focus and will be a major focus coming out as well.

**Andrew Capel** 09:52

It has been so good for the public to still have sport in this period, because it could easily have been shut down.

**Bronwyn Klei** 09:59

Can I just say that There's a weekend July there where that nipple so we we've COVID border restrictions coming into play, there's a week there where we were a COVID hub. So the entire assistant came to Adelaide at the start of that week and we hosted two games, they're all things are coming here. By the by the middle of the week, we're in lockdown. And by the end of the week, our stadium was a COVID testing station. So you know, that is the pivot, you know that that's how how much people have been affected by the pandemic and how much our organization's have had to adapt,

**Andrew Capel** 10:32

but Tommy wasn't great for nipple was

**Bronwyn Klei** 10:34

terrible for never will finally have and then we lost it. But you know that that that's the way we're rolling at the moment.

**Andrew Capel** 10:41

Let's talk about racism, we don't want to talk about it's disappointing. But the title Walker incident and subsequent Edie bits response felt like a line in the sand moment. Was that a line in the sand moment? What did we learn from the situation? What do we need to do to get better in this space?

**Bronwyn Klei** 10:59

Yeah, I think it was a bit of a line in the sand moment, it was a different moment. And I think what was different about it was that instead of moving to protect, you know, the football star, or the football icon, there was movement to protect the person that reported the incident. And I think that that was different. And I think that it's incumbent on us to make sure that people know that it's not acceptable to say things and that we empower our people to actually be able to say that and knowing that sports will act on will act on those incidents.

**Andrew Daniels** 11:30

I think that's that's quite right. I was very pleased to see the the, the number of people that came out in support of the crow's official that reported, we push very, very hard that the Adelaide Oval obviously to being fully inclusive stadium and 99.999% of people do the right thing. But we also rely on the crowd to self report as well to report we've got security we've got fascism, we've got CCTV and police. But there's nothing like people who are in amongst the crowd, being able to text confidentially, which is the best way so nobody knows they've done it to us and and report incidents so that we can respond. And we have seen an uptick in that which is which is really good. And we get some ridiculous people complaining, particularly like the umpires very bad you know, we can't respond to that. But, but it is so important that we get a chance to react and react quickly. It then does. It disappoints me when I think that we haven't done that, right? Because we're the venue, big venue, lots of people working there from all different walks of life. So we need to keep the pressure on our own staff to make sure that we are responding appropriately and quickly to any incidents they are rare but when they happen they can be really devastating. So they are quite rare not getting too many incentives that they are quite were quite rare, but and you know about them when they happen. I mean, obviously the the the terrible, you know, banana incident A few years ago, that was just horrifying. But they the ripple effects go for for years from an event like that. And it's so important that we are presenting the Adelaide Oval as a totally inclusive, a fun place to come. Yes, sport is is tense and people get so engrossed in the game. And we respect them, we want them to cheer and criticise the Empire and all sorts of things. But within appropriate limits. We are on a journey with this, there is still more education needed. And some people are still back in the 1960s in their approach,

**Andrew Capel** 13:36

but you think we are getting better? Oh, definitely. The numbers show that.

**Andrew Daniels** 13:39

Yeah, in the nearly 10 years that I've run the Adelaide Oval, I have seen that constantly improve. But we've still got more to go. And we need to keep that pressure on. Matthew. perspective,

**Matthew Richardson** 13:51

I think there are probably three things that stood out for me one was, it's just a stark reminder that we can all be better. If there's anything that is good that comes from it, it drives conversation, whether it be conversation at home with our kids or with their families or in the workplace. And the other thing for me was, there is no part in this conversation. And it's I think that was one of the things that really stood out for me there were there were too many parts. And it just can't be in the space. Yeah. Same your take on it. Yeah, I

**Sam Elliott** 14:23

agree fundamentally with the sentiments that have been shared already. But I guess my additional comment is that, from an academic standpoint, when we're talking about racism in the context of sport, I've just published a paper on this. One of our key arguments is that right now in Australian society, it'd be fair to say that we live in, we live in what we might call a post racial context. And so if you sort of take a history of this as well in the 80s, in the 90s, multiculturalism was a really key government priority. And so you're seeing the sort of the artefacts of that and the consequences of that but you fast forward to 2021 characteristics of a poster Context might be that when something happens, there are still proponents of our society, you can see it in social media feeds, where people reduce these incidences to a slip of the tongue, or I made a gaffe or I made a blue. And so you've got that sort of one end of the scale. But the other can, I guess at the other end, there are other people that would call out that type of behaviour and be labelled a social justice warrior or a, you know, someone that's got a political correctness agenda. And so it's, it's it, that's the tension that we're still working through, when you say we still have some conversations. It's about how we navigate as a society, this this post racial sort of context, because that that bandwidth is something that we need to try and close the gap on. And I think that's where, you know, the need is, like, the question might be, where do we go from here? Okay, and I think one of the things that we need to look at is how we can establish how we call it like maybe like an anti racism Alliance, I know Flinders we take, we take these issues seriously, we're fully committed to a Reconciliation Action Plan, but at the same time, that's that's specific to Flinders. And I'd love to see in sport, a more integrated approach where we are literally on the same page saying the same course. And actions speak louder than words. I think that's what we need to see. And it's the across all domains, it's in schools, it's in the elite level sports at the state level organisations, it's in universities, I think that's a step in the right direction, but if we don't do that, then this post racial context will continue to exist where if it's a you know, a high profile commentator, Nashville making a gaffe, we saw that a few years ago to recently with you know, with what's happened in the media so I think that's my sense on on where we go from here

**Andrew Capel** 16:38

was I feel like racism is more prominent with male sports rather than female. Is that perhaps because the men get more publicity from what you're

**Bronwyn Klei** 16:49

Yeah, I don't know if it's well, I don't know if that's fair that I think there it's not not fair to say it's more prominent in men sport. I think some women can be racist in some men can be racist. You know, I think it's incumbent on all of us to just empower empower each other as Sam said, to find a way to call it out when you see it. You know, it's also not just about elite sport my my kids have now started going to community footy. On weekends. I'm I'm not on here to pick on on footy. But I know some of the things that are said at grassroots 40 on a Saturday are pretty bad. So it really shows me that we do you know, we do have a long way to come I think we're able to call it out and, and deal with a little bit

**Andrew Capel** 17:26

little boys playing or from the watching

**Bronwyn Klei** 17:29

from parents or from spectators. I think it's still a little rough out there. So I think, you know, to Sam's point, how can sport get one narrative? I don't know if there's a reason why we couldn't do that Sam's to find one narrative be on one page, find one narrative and make it a course. I think that would be an excellent starting point. But the your thoughts on making a one narrative?

**Matthew Richardson** 17:48

Yeah, absolutely has to be if we're, if we're serious about it, which we are, then it can be no difference.

**Andrew Daniels** 17:55

I think it has to be led from the elite level. So because that the kids look up to the elite, that's where they want to get to. And so we need an elite level need to set that person, for example. And I think that's a very interesting to make sure the narrative is consistent across the top so that kids know that they can call their parents out. That's inappropriate if it's got to be top down, as well as bottom up. And that

**Andrew Capel** 18:23

appears to have happened in the title Walker situation, doesn't it? With the trainer calling out text. So in the end, there might be some positive results from that. Women's sport has come a long way in the past few years in South Australia, particularly due to the emergence of the AFL w because we had a team in Port Adelaide, we have a team in now for the 2022 23 season. A great result, Australia's female athletes also, were the dominant performers at the Tokyo Olympics. What have we learned how much better is women's sport as far as not only the standard but also getting the publicity that it deserves? And what needs to happen next?

**Bronwyn Klei** 19:04

Okay, well, I'm gonna go out on a limb here and say, you know, anyone would put, you know, AFL have been playing women's sport now for five years. Anybody would think that the AFL or traditional men's sports, cricket etc, have invented women's sport? You know, I think that ignores the fact that women have been, you know, 54% of women participate in sport. teams like the opals the diamonds, the Matilda's, the hockeyroos have been successful on the world stage for many, many years. You know, as you rightly pointed out, Andrew, you know, women had double the double the propensity to win gold medals at the last Olympic Games, soccer had their first international women's competition. I think it was something like 48 years ago, so I kind of get a bit annoyed when it said okay, well now women's we're finally making some progress. Because AFL have come along, they've been doing it for five years, you know, and I'd like to see women's sport credited with, you know, with the efforts that it's already put in and try and and you know, and reap the rewards of of many years of hard work. For many sports.

**Sam Elliott** 20:02

Yeah, I think it's a really interesting point, I guess, I come to this conversation, again as a researcher. And I think my, my sense is that I'm living uneasy, I'm a little uneasy with these, these narratives that I find troubling about progress. And we, you've cited some examples there at the elite level and they should be celebrated. We should nurture them, we should try and cultivate them to energise and inspire a generation to come absolutely, I'm all for that. But as a researcher, the evidence would also show that these these narratives of progress, actually kind of juxtapose against the reality of community level sport. And so when young children, when young girls enter sport, the participatory experience is far from the narratives of opportunity and access, you know, limited access to quality coaching, changes, resources, education, this is not theoretical, these are things that have actually been published and research in a range of sporting context. And I think we need to try and again, try and redress The, the gap between the, the, I guess the, the the inspiration that that sport at the elite level and success at the elite level inspires with the reality of the challenges, or let's call them the barriers that a lot of young people still face. I think that's absolutely key until we do that these gold medals and the success at the Tokyo Olympics will get young people looking at sport, they're like that they'll consider their involvement, but their first initiation to sport, we need to actually get that right. And if we do that, then our retention strategies and our ability to grow, again, is going to be you know, there's no boundaries to that. Interestingly, the autoplay data will show that before the pandemic, so let's sort of ignore that since 2017. Participation in female sport nationally is largely been about the same. So the idea that we're growing in participation, or the idea that there's there's been significant gains, in terms of membership and participation, I'm not sure it actually stands up to social or scientific scrutiny. So I think we've got a long way to go. But there's more women's change rooms.

**Andrew Capel** 22:05

Whether it's cricket, football, whatever, so that certainly is progress. Matthew, obviously the importance of an AFL w team support like,

**Matthew Richardson** 22:16

yeah, obviously, on that front, it's really important. But, you know, to Brian sands point, you know, someone that has come through sport development. You know, I'm reflecting on what you're saying, and you're upset, right? It's, um, you know, in some ways, it's disappointing that it's just now that we're starting to have this conversation where, you know, if we've been having this conversation 2030 years ago, where would we be now? So the great thing is that that is happening. And I suspect that, that, you know, there's no doubt in South Australia growth in women's football in particular has has been growing. And that in itself is then driving that investment into infrastructure and facilities. And then I think the other thing, which is something that we do take really seriously a poor lady is that he also is a thing about providing opportunity. Because unless you unless you provide that opportunity, then we're not going to move anywhere. So that for us, that's Yeah, absolutely. That's about players, but it's also about coaches, it's about administrators, providing more women with those opportunities is a really important part of what the journey that we're on.

**Andrew Capel** 23:23

So the roadmap forward, but when can we be at a time where we're actually don't have to, say women's sport needs more? It's actually got what it should have? How many years down the track? Do you think we are wrong with that? Yeah, well, I think

**Bronwyn Klei** 23:39

it is a really tough question. And I think that something has, we have to try and change the status quo of it. Because, you know, I think one of the questions you're gonna ask me a minute, and it relates to paying women and the money that they can earn in sport. And there's an argument that says, well, women, women's sport needs to bring more money into the economy, but they have, you know, they're 100 years behind those traditional big men's sports, you know, men have had men's sports have had 100 years to build up, you know, facilities sponsorship, corporate dollars, media rights, etc. So if we're waiting for women's sport to be able to contribute at that level, that's we're gonna be waiting generations. So I think something has to change on the status quo. To be able to move that dial quicker,

**Andrew Capel** 24:22

shouldn't be paid more professionally as athletes.

**Bronwyn Klei** 24:25

Yeah, I think I think they should be and if we're waiting for, you know, if we're waiting for the corporate dollar, if we're waiting for the TV ratings for that to happen, I think we're going to be waiting a long time because the reality is that the men's sports are fiercely protective of their media rights deals and the good broadcast times on a Saturday and the better access to pictures and fields and courts. So you know, unless something changes at that level, we were going to be waiting generations for this to come

**Andrew Capel** 24:49

live in a world professional tennis the men's and women's winner of major tournaments the women do not get paid as much prize money as the men that needs to change. I think it does your take Andrew.

**Andrew Daniels** 25:03

I think the potential is there when we held the the AFL w Grand Final a couple of years ago with which the crowd is one and there was over 50,000 people turned up the demand, we got absolutely caught short. We expected this is sort of the role. We asked the AFL, the club's, we expected 20, maybe 25,000 would turn up for that game. But they just kept on coming. And if anybody was there, you would have seen we were madly opening up different roles. They didn't have enough staff, I was out there directing people telling him where to go live, please, telling them where to go. The so the demand is there, I think we just got to really capture that demand to create the flow of funds that that is needed.

**Andrew Capel** 25:49

As social media, it's a great tool for athletes to communicate directly with fans. But the flip side is the abuse a cop and the impact on mental health. We know this is a big issue. How do athletes find a balance? Should they stay on social media? Or should they give it the flick? Completely? messy?

**Matthew Richardson** 26:07

Yeah, well, I mean, you know, as you said, it's a great tool for players and athletes around the world to connect with fans. So it really brings fans into that one on one conversation. But you can't have that, if that abuse is going back the other way. And what you'll see is there will there are players now that are switching off from social media or not engaging now what that ultimately will do that will that will that will reduce the fan experience and the connection that fans have with athletes. So it's a little bit like the the, you know, the race racism conversation that we're having, like, we've got to get serious about this. And, you know, for those platforms not to be able to identify people is wrong.

**Andrew Capel** 26:57

So you've been through this recently, with a literally,

**Matthew Richardson** 27:01

yeah, absolutely. Yeah. So, you know, for people to think that that now we understand in that scenario, there's a person who thinks that that's okay. And they're trying to get a response. It's not okay. And it needs to be called out. But also, we would say that those companies and the authorities need to do more to stop that, when you

**Andrew Capel** 27:23

when you called it out was an instant reaction? Or how much thought Have you given that?

**Matthew Richardson** 27:27

Yeah, no, it was instant reaction? Because the reality is that, you know, the players see it. And unless you call it out, then it's not going to stop. So,

**Andrew Daniels** 27:41

Andrew, it's the anonymous nature of social media is what I hate it. To be honest. I see. You know, the game that literally played that day was just, he was brilliant. No one should ever be put through anything like that. And it's allowed because it's anonymous. And that's what I don't like about social media. If people are going to make a comment, then the man or woman and have to stand up and say, I'm going to make a comment, because as soon as they got to put their name to it, it won't happen. Because it's anonymous. They feel like they're a keyboard warrior. And they can go and do it. We have I mean, some of the some of the feedback that I see coming in to the to the Adelaide Oval, it's just you in some printable and sought to fill up and we have what criticising the wall could be criticising the oval criticising staff criticising players. And I tell her Oh, you know, and it's read by young people who are working at the Adelaide Oval and having to filter through what is feedback that needs to be responded to what is feedback that needs to hit that, you know, the big x and deleted because it is very important that we respond to appropriate feedback. But some of the stuff that that I've seen, it's just it's just horrifying. And I, and it affects young people. I've got people that are 2122 23 years old working at the outlet, I mean, a dream job for them. And they're reading some some really unpleasant things. So

**Andrew Capel** 29:16

what sort of roles you're talking about, what sort of autism do they get reception? who receives this stuff? What are the complaints about generally, oh,

**Andrew Daniels** 29:25

it could be about, you know, the Adelaide Oval or a mob of money grubbing so and so's, which is totally unfair and untrue. I might say that, but it could be about it could be about players, it could be about play, it could be it's a whole range of things. It could be about other people in the crowd. You know, there was a person next to me in the in this seat number, and they were a so and so so and so. And what I don't like is that a lot of this is anonymous. So if we get proper feedback about things to do wrong, no problem. Improper feedback, I don't like and it is almost Always anonymous. And so it's very hard to respond to. There have been occasions where we've had feedback about all sorts of people rather than the old one, they quite know where it's going. But sometimes I've actually contacted the individual back and said, I am the chief executive, I have seen this, this is inappropriate, we will not deal with you in the future. And invariably, that's it. Thank you never hear from them again. So it's social media has good elements. That's a great way to communicate great way for players to link in with with their fans. But it has a really nasty side. And I agree with Matt, that the government, the big organisations, they've got to stamp out anonymous comments. Just not let anybody log on. Unless you know, it is Andrew Daniels, and I am writing

**Andrew Capel** 30:57

you in discussions about that at all. With the with the right authorities, or

**Andrew Daniels** 31:01

actually, honestly, moment. No, we're not. But you've actually spurred me on to maybe we should be just on a point you've gone down that path. Have you tried to without DSL certainly have. Yeah, yeah. Yeah. Well, we would support them. Probably on your take on it. Oh,

**Bronwyn Klei** 31:15

yeah. I agree. I mean, I love who was the who was the female player that had the post pulled down? It was Taylor, Taylor, Harris. Harris, you know, and she that CHANNEL SEVEN pulled that picture down wearing that it was offensive to her? And she said No way. You know, I'm putting that picture back. It's not about me on the victim and all this. It's about the trolls. Let's call that out. So I think what Andrew and the points ever make it relevant. Let's get on, get on to the bigger organisations and try and stop this anonymous posting,

**Andrew Capel** 31:44

saying, What's your research? So on the subject?

**Sam Elliott** 31:46

Well, I haven't done a lot of research per se on this specific issue. But I do have an opinion on it. And it probably speaks to my point here, we tend to live in an era right now that we might label the opinion era. And so social media is simply the conduit for that. And I think this is an issue for sport, this is just a consumer behaviour issue in terms of, you know, that's a person's behaviour. I think that the the challenge going forward is not specific to elite level players, as an example, as distinct from the volunteer coach that has a social media group, behind their back of parents disrupted with their behaviour or their their skills that they're displaying in a volunteer role. This is this is across all tiers of sport, and indeed, all tiers of society. And so the the conversation reduced to sport is probably not useful, because it's something that speaks to just broader consumer population behaviour. Where do we go from here? I think there's, there's potentially, you know, two ways forward and they're not mutually exclusive. So maybe the first way is to look at whether the people that are using social media that the elite level players as an example, do they have the the assets and the psychological resources to navigate their way through a career when this is part of inevitably their day to day life? So some some training and some support mechanisms, I think could be useful, in addition to what is already provided. But I think on the other hand, some more restrictive measures, as has been suggested, could be worth considering. Yeah.

**Bronwyn Klei** 33:13

And Sam equipping clubs to deal with it, because it is at a community level or volunteer level. It's, the damage is real. It has has the ability to reduce volunteers participation at community levels, so equipping clubs and committees to assist members to deal with it is important too.

**Andrew Capel** 33:28

And sports were tough enough without having abused on social media. Yeah, yeah, it's appalling behaviour. We see a lot of incidences of athletes leaving sport or a club, and having issues adjusting to so called normal life. What are clubs doing to properly prepare their players as much as people as athletes? Are they doing enough and what needs to change? in this space? Matthew? Yeah, it's um, because I feel players can get flipped out of the system. Yeah, within a year Canada spending

**Matthew Richardson** 34:01

234 years in reality. So yeah, there's no doubt it's something that we continually need to get better at. We we ourselves have to Justin West off and Paul Stewart work in warfare in our club. And the conversations from the senior coach down that we're having with players now is not just about performance on field, it's about their life. Because, you know, we know that people perform better no matter what field they're in, if they're feeling good about themselves in their happy on field or field. So those conversations, you know, something I know that Ken takes very, very seriously in the relationships that he has, and all the other coaches have with their players, more than just about more than just about what's happening in football. So it's, um, it's certainly an area that over the last 10 years, there's been a lot of growth in and again, I think one of those issues that some that the impact of COVID with less resources in clubs It's it's a real issue that all clubs need to be really focused on.

**Andrew Capel** 35:05

And you set them up with with unique courses and jobs away from just applying arena A times. Yeah, look, I

**Matthew Richardson** 35:12

mean that they have limited time is the reality they have, they do have limited time. A lot of the guys trying to part time study, number of the universities have and Flinders do this really well have specialist programmes for elite athletes that give them that flexibility, online learning now is much more prevalent. So it gives the guy it gives the guys more flexibility to be able to do that. It's one of the big issues in in certainly in AFL W is with the the issues we're gonna have, we're going to be getting ready for with the, with our female athletes is those types of things because they're not gonna they're not quite yet fully professional. So there's work in this study, and there's internships and mentorships that are going to be part of that package around making sure that the best way you can ensure that your athletes are going to perform the best is prepare them for life, not just for what happens on fuel. Andrew,

**Andrew Daniels** 36:08

I think that we can do more to help in this space when we're not really involved in at the moment. But I see it as Matt said, I see players come through with, you know, web l players, the comms written in the goal. A lot of them. So I think if we can participate more in helping trying to open was a lot of different areas of the lead over whether it be from finance, marketing, to management, there's all sorts of all sorts of different areas, and a lot of players are very interested in sport as a business as well. So I think this is an area that we can actually assist moral, we haven't done it, really in the past. But I'd be very interested to explore it from Yeah,

**Bronwyn Klei** 36:55

I think as Matthew said, the players don't have a lot of time. But most particularly elite netball players are studying or they do have part time jobs still. And there are also improved conditions of maternity, you know, maternity conditions now for mothers coming through a late system. So we've got you know, we've had this year, quite a few mothers travelling with babies. So setting people up for life after netball is something that everybody is very conscious of. But you know, you can always do more.

**Sam Elliott** 37:23

Yeah, I echo these sentiments, I think, my sense is that the the traditional model has been when athletes especially in a pathway, and they move through the, let's say, to a professional or an elite level, what tends to happen in a traditional model is that there is some attention given to a holistic approach to athlete development. So some interesting family, some interesting career education, so forth. But the primary responsibility is to be an elite athlete. And so that's to be protected, because that's, that's your core business. Right. But at the same time, I think there's a conversation where we can coexist with, you know, person first, not athlete first and what that might encourage, I think you've elaborated nicely, you will have some of the things that Porter doing really well, but it's not mainstream, I think across all tiers of society, certainly in sport, that that tends to sort of be relegated in preference for participation, performance pathways. And I think that's something that we could, we could do a lot better.

**Andrew Capel** 38:17

It's a big issue as the middle of the pliers, obviously, you know, they've got the crowd cheering, they've put so much energy into this sport, the adrenaline, it's an adrenaline rush. Constantly, suddenly, you stop playing the crowds, not cheering other players take your spot. So the mental health aspect of applier, post Korea is tough.

**Matthew Richardson** 38:40

With it, they're very structured environments, very structured, they have no time, it's all everything is set out for them. So that coming out of that environment where all the sudden, it's you that's got to be organised and create that structure can be a challenge and and also that takes time. You know, kids in school now that don't know what they necessarily want to do. In the future. Well, these guys are a little bit the same. They've come from school into an elite sport pathway. Six or seven years later, they're they're out the other end there. They're like that 789 year old kid going right, what am I going to do now? So the better you can prepare them on the way through for what's what's after. The reality is, the better they're going to perform when they're when they're in your organisation. And as you said, Sam, that's the core business about performing but the reality is, the more settled they are, the happier they are in their life. They're going to perform better

**Andrew Capel** 39:41

and you see warning signs are made you look for warning signs in plasma, you warn treadright the poor I'd like right. They were setting himself up on the media before he retired. Patrick Dangerfield is doing it a jilong so you know, certain players so it's telling us about others. a different space, aren't they? They just totally fine. Just on this board, have no idea what they're going to do after you see warning signs during their careers.

**Bronwyn Klei** 40:06

Yeah, I think you do see some warning signs with some plasmin. Not all of them. But there's definitely been a couple of players that I can think of that you've seen the warning signs coming through, and some behaviours that are just, you know, not not what not what that player would normally exhibit. The other thing he's saying I think we particularly men sport is they have managers too. So you've got managers now, which you didn't have many years ago that are also there to set them up and equip them and make sure their finances are okay. And you don't see it as much in women's sport with management. But I think that that will be something that will improve in the future. And I think that also helps players equip themselves to lots of magic compatible rolling assistant classes.

**Andrew Capel** 40:39

Yes, a very good point, not only as far as career opportunities, but also financially making sure that I waste their money. That's right, nine best ages ago. Yeah, your take on this.

**Sam Elliott** 40:50

I just think that my colleague who's actually just published a book in this area on athlete transitions out of sport or across across the sporting journey. And I think one of the things I've taken from her work is that the mental well being risk is really significant when they are vaping. athletes are forced into retirement, sometimes through injury, sometimes through decisions not of their own and, and it doesn't matter how you come to a retirement or transition out of sport, there is an inevitable process of reconstructing your identity. And when you don't have sport and that structure, that environment that you are so familiar with. It's It's It's It's a cultural edit who you are, and it's taken away from you. That's a significant undertaking for an individual. So I think there's definitely some some work to be done not just in terms of the forms of support that are available, but making sure that they are set up at intervention points prior to inevitably being cut from a list or being moved on. You know, as an elite athlete. I think that's a it's a significant challenge and investment is necessary to get that right.

**Andrew Capel** 41:45

But we are getting better on this. Everyone would agree with that.

**Matthew Richardson** 41:48

Yeah, I think we are Yeah, although, you know, I guess I'm coming from a sport that has more resource to be able to provide that support. But yeah, I think in the NFL setting, we are but at the same time that the challenge is still there, when guys are delisted or the career ends that Yeah, they they do they do face those challenges.

**Andrew Capel** 42:11

How important is the emerging discussion regarding concussion in sport, both men and women. This year, the I feel brought in a medical stub was supposed to be purely for concussions, we haven't seen it really rolled out that way. But how important is this discussion in in protecting the head? And all the research going into that moving forward?

**Matthew Richardson** 42:34

Yeah, well, certainly from an AFL perspective, that's real. You know, the AFL have changed the rules, from the the elite level down to, you know, certainly you can see that transition over the last 10 years around the protection of the head and tackling techniques and those types of things. So that there's no doubt that it's, it's real, and that the AFL and, and football generally as a code is taking an extremely seriously as, as we should.

**Andrew Daniels** 43:02

I think as a venue wages, were hidden support, certainly the medical facilities that we have on site. Now, the benefit of being an elite Stadium, the medical facilities are quite extraordinary, really, whatever, whatever is needed by whichever sport cricket rugby, AFL football is their foes, it's what does worry me a little bit is how much they get reflected down to suburban grounds. And then, you know, for other facilities that obviously can't afford what what we've got, it is a very serious issue, we need to protect play. And we need to obviously, look after the long term health of the game.

**Bronwyn Klei** 43:41

Yeah, it has to be taken seriously. And no, as I understand it, from whatever women are slightly more susceptible to concussion than what what men are, from what I understand it. So it shouldn't be necessarily a barrier to playing the sport, and how we deal with it and how policy and treatment is informed I think has to be taken very seriously. Because obviously, we we know that it can lead to long term mental health issues down the track. So we have to do all we can to address them.

**Sam Elliott** 44:07

So yeah, I think in the main context, sports that come to mind, such as football as an example, I think the AFL as just one example of doing some really good things to try and manage the concussion risks. But I think there's more that can be done for sure. I think the most recent review that I've read, has indicated that we can achieve a 70% reduction in concussion risk, as long as we not in isolation, but in combination. Look at the protective, the educational and the governance elements of sport. And so what that looks like at a protective level, it's it's headgear, mouthguards, helmets, etc. But you know, isolation, that's not enough. And so the next layer might be around education to make sure that we've got good concussion protocols.

**Sam Elliott** 44:48

We've

**Sam Elliott** 44:48

got problem training, good follow up practices, and then I guess sitting underneath that as well governance and so this might be rules of the game as an example and I know that the this is I can hear my dad saying this lightly The game alone. But the reality also that all the time, I can appreciate that we're taking this conversation Yeah, actually, yes, in the spirit of the conversation if we're, if we're dead serious about that, then as a as a consumer and as a sport fan with one understand that the well being of the players is absolutely critical. And I think we should compromise on that. And so the rules and the governance of the game that work to protect the players helped to contribute to that overarching, you know, up to 70% risk reduction, which I think is is really key.

**Andrew Capel** 45:29

We've got a couple more questions to work through. But you said one come in from from the public from Gareth, what lessons are the panellists learned from their involvement in sport, have helped them navigate life more broadly. Start with you from thanks for that, Andrew. The lessons you've learned, it's made you a better person in

**Bronwyn Klei** 45:48

the lessons I've learned. I've been involved with sport for a long time. And to me, what I've learned is that sport really matters. It matters to community, it matters to people. It brings communities together, you know, I look at my own club, I'm still involved in still play for the August netball club, you know, look at a man we've got out there who's who once had a daughter with rheumatoid arthritis and our members as the president of that club, saying, you know, that little girl couldn't play shouldn't play, she just wanted to come and stand on the side of the court in her dress. And I said to that, man, what do you need from us? You know, what, as a club, how can we support you and she said, I just need my daughter to feel normal. I just need her to feel like she's part of a team. And this is her tribe. And that that day to me just told me how important sport is to communities, and it really matters. So as a sports administrator, now I get to make sure that we're, you know, running. A sport is alive, it's robust, our clubs that are welcoming places for the community to be in, I've learned that sport matters to communities.

**Andrew Daniels** 46:46

Andrew, it's a really good question. And I've learned so much in through sport, one of the things that I also see perhaps slightly differently, is what goes behind putting an event on. And two, you have the amazing players out there, on the field on the court, doing what they do best. But then behind the scenes, often, unsung is all of the people that helped to put that on, whether they be volunteers, whether they be event staff, whether they be security in the kitchen thing, all sorts of different things. And they are also proud of what they do. And it makes me incredibly proud to be to be part of that whole system. And what I've seen particularly over the last two years, or 18 months of COVID is how resilient that group is, but also how much when they are not able to do their bit to deliver for their sport, how much they feel like, Oh, I'm not I'm not participating. What am I doing wrong? What can I do to help bring the sport back? So I find that that has made me very proud. It's broadened my outlook in terms of the people that I've got to meet the incredible stories that go behind virtually every one of them has their own heads, right one everyone has their own stories, which is a journalist you find they've all got their own great stories to tell. Absolutely. And it's and it's it's amazing and people who come and work and work for us for years and years have come up from me Stadium, have been in the cricket system since the days of Muslim Don Bradman. You know, it's so long serving, and they're so passionate about what they do.

**Bronwyn Klei** 48:22

Just to Andrew's point, people talk a lot about the player player sacrifice. But every time the government has has released a new COVID management, you know, seating plan, no one thinks about this ticketing manager who's sitting there to 2am receipting every member in that stadium.

**Andrew Daniels** 48:39

Absolutely. They do an amazing job. And and they don't but nobody, nobody sees no. And they're not there for they don't want to be out there in front.

**Bronwyn Klei** 48:50

But they want to make sure that member in that sports fan has a good experience I really correct. You get an email saying it's not big enough?

**Andrew Daniels** 49:00

Correct. I get email saying, you know, how come I didn't get my ticket? Or you know, or something went wrong, because things go wrong. So it's, it's been an amazing journey.

**Andrew Capel** 49:11

And Matthew, what have you learned from sport, this helped you navigate life more broadly?

**Matthew Richardson** 49:16

Yeah, I've been involved in sport my whole life sport is, you know, it's about it's always about teamwork, and about the way your people work together. And you know, there's just amazing people, whether that's on field or off feed the off field or that are generally involved around sports, never about them. And it's, you know, as a team of people, it doesn't matter what sport you're involved in, or what organisation involved in it. You know, it is always about teamwork and what you can achieve as a group of people. So, you know, sport meant a lot to a lot of people and now I'm really fortunate as a sports administrator, that you know, that we're custodians and the people that that we serve our members and our supporters, the joy that it brings them really is incredibly rewarding, sir. Yeah, I

**Sam Elliott** 50:08

mean, I'm just reflecting on when I was play school back in back Gambia as a child and just play for the South Gambia demons, and, you know, you were flicked on then. And now as a, you know, as a parent with a couple of young kids, and I think the lessons that I'm gleaning, you're calling, you're involved with this other life coaching capacity development coach there as well. And, you know, with these multiple hats, and even through my research, where I, I fundamentally look at like parent involvement in sport, the two things sort of, I guess, come to the surface number one, that relationships matter, doesn't matter what you're doing as a coach or volunteer, a participant relationships matter and, and that's, that's in any in any achievement domains, schools, you know, workplaces, definitely sport, I think that that rings true. And, and I don't always get that rod and it's like that, you know, we, we constantly use sport as a as a point of reflection, because people it brings different people together different worldviews and, and navigating and working and growing, you know, with different people is a challenge. But I think that's what sport invites. And I guess the second thing is that, that there's no boundaries, there's no boundaries to this conversation. You know, we've covered a lot of topics today. But the thing that I'm learning from sport is that people have their own way of coming into this world, and it needs to be respected and, and nurtured and there are endless possibilities when you start from that point of departure.

**Andrew Capel** 51:22

This is very topical, given the fact the the AFL Grand Final, most likely won't be held in Melbourne, at the MCG this year due to COVID. How important is it that we attract premium sports events to South Australia? Should we go after the grand final? And how would we generate a long term return? Andrew over to you?

**Andrew Daniels** 51:43

The answer is absolutely yes. I mean, my as this guy, go for the grand final. I mean, my, my career in event management in sport goes all the way back to the days of Formula One. And I saw, I was part of the team that delivered that he have for a number of years. And that was an amazing event. And we all saw what it did for Adelaide back then bringing it into a big international event. And we saw the devastation when that when that left. When we lost it to our friends over in Victoria. The importance of the highest elite level of sport being played here. I think is incalculable seeing as party when the airlines international last year that was that was incredibly we had the world's best tennis fi here in Adelaide to have the opportunity to then host the AFL Grand Final in what would be a once in a lifetime opportunity. Well, I have to say probably hopefully a once in a lifetime opportunity. We don't want pandemics again, the Adelaide Oval, we know that we can do it. We know what's the best location for it. We know that we are going we are up against that with our friends over in Western Australia because they've got the biggest stadium. And they've got a capacity that they can go to there and they're in a different COVID plan to us. But I can assure you that we are doing everything that we can as a venue to put South Australia in the best possible position so that if we don't, don't get it, I can look in the mirror and say, well, there's nothing that we could have done differently or that we didn't do that cost us.

**Andrew Capel** 53:22

What sort of crowd can we possibly hope to get in a month's time? It's fine. The skies? No good.

**Andrew Daniels** 53:27

pilot. Currently we're at 15. Yep. We need to be a lot north of that. I would love to see a full stadium. And but I think that's probably, unfortunately unrealistic. I think if the South Australia's numbers stay good, then significantly more would have to be at least 75%. But it's it's out of our hands. And it's it's you know, I take my hat off to what the the team that SA Health have done, they've kept the state safe, they basically kept it open, we have still been able to hold games have crowds have events, even if they're not where we want them to be, at least we've handled. And if we hadn't had the gardens over the last 18 months, that wouldn't have happened. So it's it's Fingers crossed Andrew where they're pushing for every every single body that we can to get in there safely and in a way that if I held the proof, I know

**Andrew Capel** 54:26

you're very biassed Matthew or Adelaide is a second seed for the AFL finals. But should we be going hard at the gf? Yeah, look, I

**Matthew Richardson** 54:35

mean, one of the things. One thing that we've talked a lot about today is the community impact and the mental health impact that sport has but probably, you know sticking up for Andrew here and the stadium is the economic the economic impact that sport has is significant and any investment that goes into securing content at the Adelaide Oval like a grand final, whatever money that goes Put in in order to secure that that money comes back through into grassroots football, that the money that Adelaide Oval generates that goes into the NFL and comes back into community clubs. If that if that game is not there, then effectively the government is going to have to or someone's got to fund that anyway. So the economic impact at the other end of having football at Adelaide Oval of having a grand fall at Adelaide Oval, that economic benefit to the state and to community sport is significant.

**Bronwyn Klei** 55:32

I personally think the AFL Grand Final should be rotated through states anyway. So, you know, I think, you know, sure I'm planning granfondo I think you should earn the right to host it. So that's, that's my view.

**Sam Elliott** 55:45

Yeah, I agree. But to I guess to echo the point that you've made there is that any investment in elite level sport I think should be matched at the grassroots, I don't think it's a top down compensation or ground up, I think you need them both. If you want sport to thrive in the state, and I think the grandfather would be a great ticket. But the consequence of that is most likely that we inspire more people to hopefully want to play a game. But we need to get that entry level experience, right for kids and families. We want to hold on to them. And so that's a key. I think it's a key medium term sort of ambition that we need to take seriously to couple the success that bringing the grandfather to South Australia, possibly our promises.

**Bronwyn Klei** 56:23

And by the way, it's not just about the grand final, it's about bringing Dawn's content towards elite, soccer cut whatever it is, it's about bringing elite content for a week. Unfortunately, it's about being added. You know, should the government be pitching for that content to come straight? Yes, I think it should for future generations, that would have been fantastic for netball. It's been amazing. So we you know, we had the two games here without even promoting it within 24 hours and 800 people present? Yeah, no, without any promotion. So I think it had it stayed here. South Australia was really supportive and

**Andrew Capel** 56:55

very unlucky there. Now, question from diamond. What does Australia sport learned about other countries bubble sporting solutions? And how can we implement them in Australia? Yeah,

**Matthew Richardson** 57:10

I know, there's been a lot of research go into, you know, the NBA and the NFL, and so on, and how some of those sports have had managed through COVID. And you look at the EPL at the moment, and they're back to full crowds, full stadiums. And I think we sort of see here and we're quite jealous of that. It's difficult to separate the the health and the societal impacts of COVID. And where each country is at to sport it is intertwined. I would say that, you know, the, from certainly from a AFL perspective, the fact that we've been able to keep the season going across all the jurisdictions is has been incredibly challenging. That's the I feel deserve a lot of credit for that. But yeah, it is interesting to see how sports around the world have managed in different ways.

**Andrew Daniels** 58:01

I think it's been a lot of learnings, Andrew, and I were in the fortunate position of seeing many different sports and how they've, how they've responded, whether it be international cricket, whether it be AFL football and so forth. I think now that Australia is doing extremely well, the Australian Sports are doing extremely well. And I think that the that gives health, the confidence to still have cricket matches still have AFL matches, because they understand that the controls that are put over the players and the players and the teams are professional, and therefore, hopefully they do what they're told. And they follow the rule. I'm sure that's always the case isn't always, always exactly the. So I think that the whole world has learned a lot. I think that a lot of this COVID protocol issues that we face are going to be with us for a number of years. And I think that's what South Australia, South Australia has developed the AFL, the sterile corridor that allows teams to come in play a game at the Adelaide Oval fly out there now tried and tested. And I think and obviously other countries are also looking at what we do and how they can do things better.

**Andrew Capel** 59:21

And we could go forever. This has been a very interesting hours conversation. I really thank you all very much. Unfortunately we run out of time with questions still up. Absolutely. So thank you for being a part of fielder's conversations. And this was Episode One of third as of the next 13 weeks. So please stay tuned.