

Sporting Capital Resource Sheet 6¹

To what extent do levels of Sporting Capital impact on the frequency of participation and vary by the type of sport people play?

Introduction

The other Sheets in this series have focused attention on the relationship between Sporting Capital and participation in sport based on the Sport England definition of at least once a week 30 minutes of at least moderate intensity. This Resource Sheetⁱ extends the analysis to explore the relationship between Sporting Capital levels and different frequencies of participation – at least once a month and at least three times a week. It also examines mean levels of Sporting Capital amongst those who do no occasions of moderate intensity sport a month – what might be referred to as the ‘non participant’. Further analysis is carried out to examine how Sporting Capital levels impact on the probability of participating in different types of sport. It concludes by summarising some of the public policy and practice implications.

What is Sporting Capital?

Sporting Capital is analogous to the theory of Human Capital and may be defined as:

“The stock of physical, social and psychological attributes and competencies that support and motivate an individual to participate in sport and to sustain that participation over time.” It is a theory that can help us to better understand and explain sporting behaviour across individuals, communities and populations. More information about the nature of Sporting Capital and its important characteristics is provided in **Sporting**

Capital Resource Sheet 1.

How do Sporting Capital levels vary in relation to different frequencies of participation in sport?

We have seen in **Resource Sheet 2** how the probability of participating in sport (at least once a week for 30 minutes moderate intensity) increases with increasing levels of Sporting Capital. It is interesting, however, to explore how this relationship might change with changes in the frequency of participation. Figure 1 shows that the probability of participating at lower frequencies increases at lower levels of Sporting Capital and picks up more steeply through

¹ This Resource Sheet was prepared by Nick Rowe with analytical support from Oliver Norden at TNS-BMRB. It was commissioned by StreetGames and published in April 2013.

the mid range Sporting Capital levels than is the case for the highest frequency group of three times a week. The probability of participating for both the once a month and once a week group flatten off at the higher Sporting Capital levels while the high frequency three times a week group continues to increase.

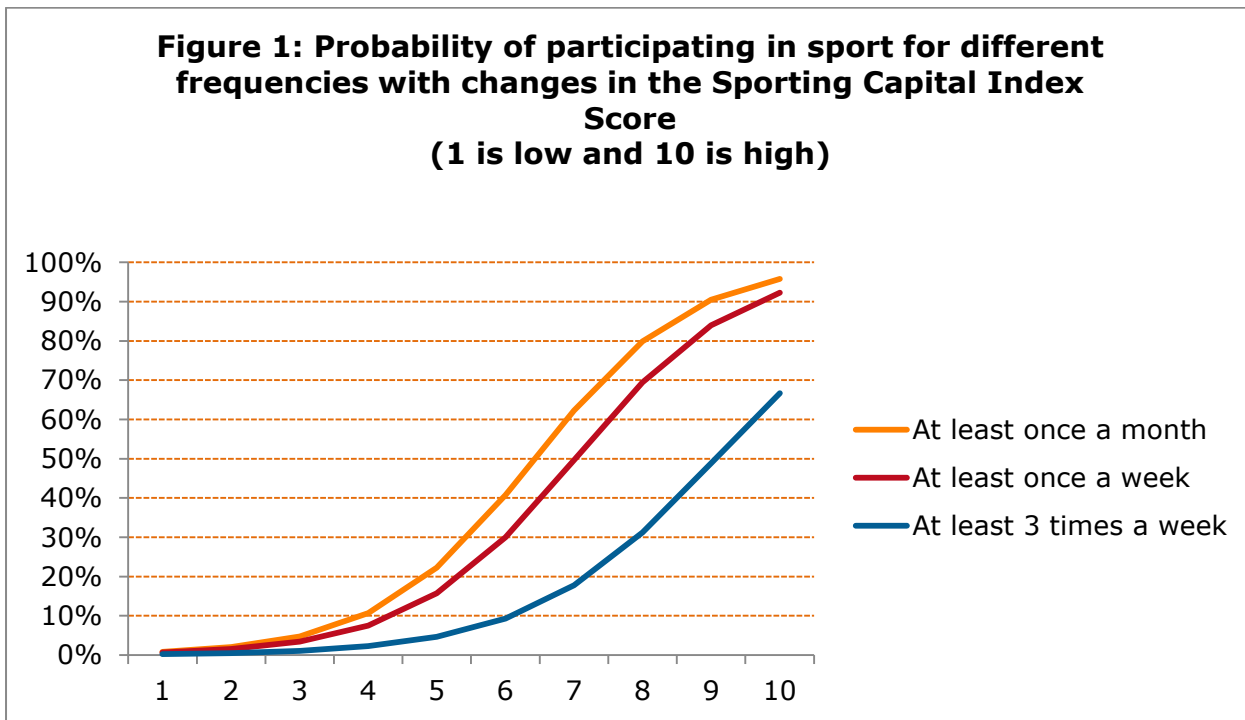
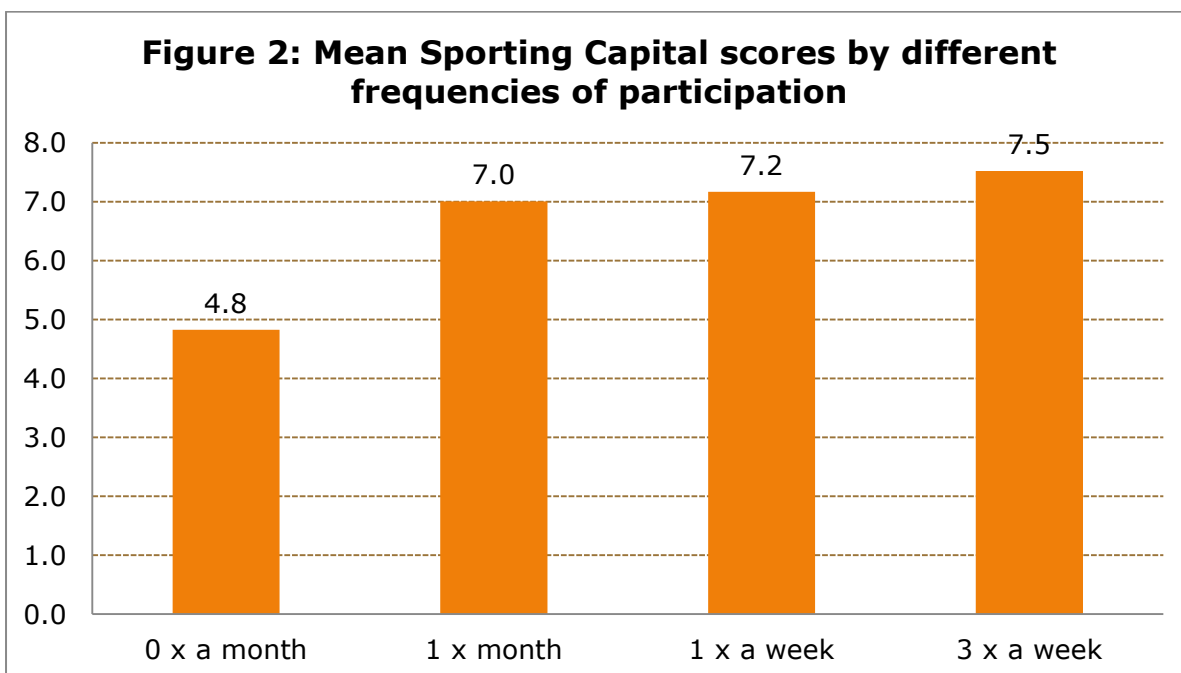
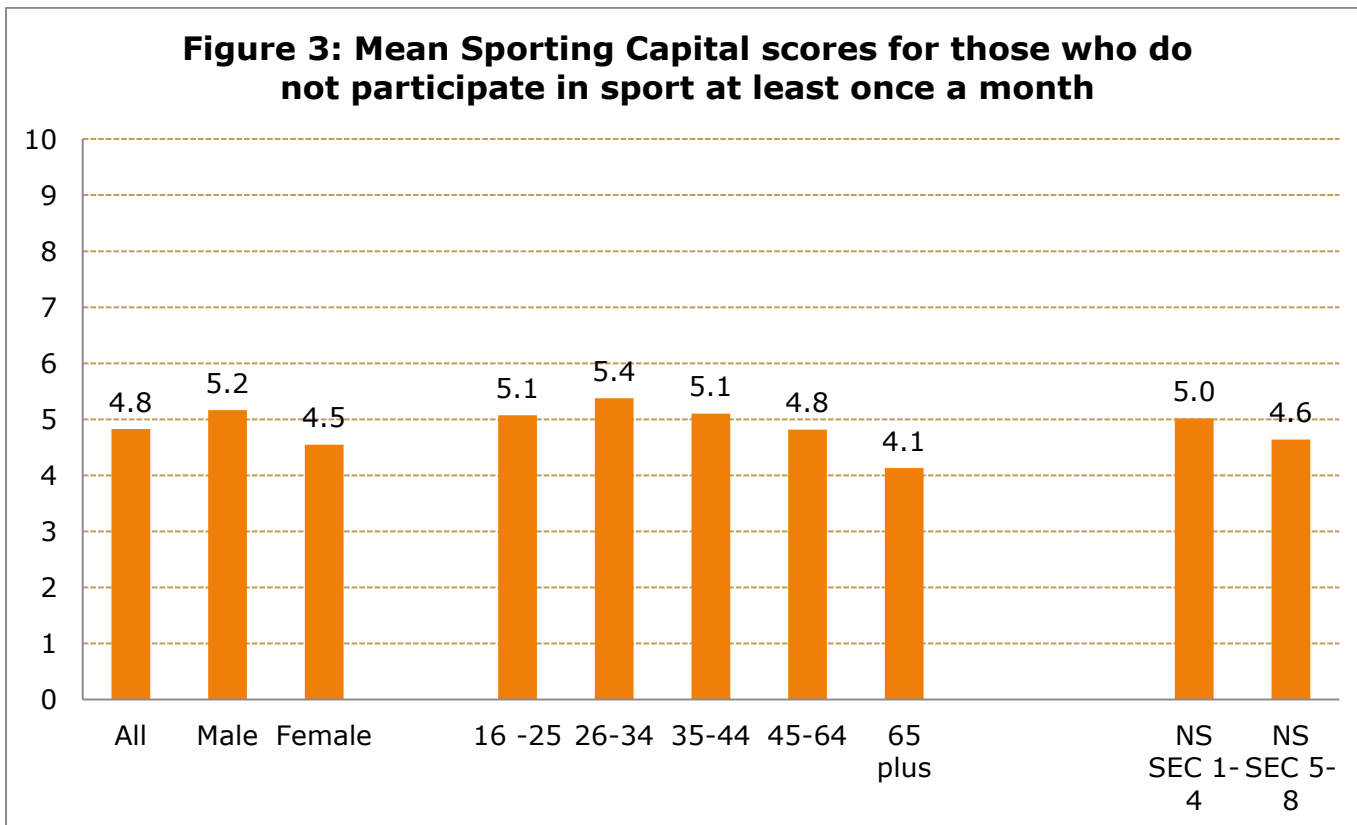


Figure 2 shows how the mean Sporting Capital scores increase with different frequencies of participation from not participating at least once a month up to participating at least three times a week. It is interesting to note the large difference in the mean score between those not participating and those taking part at least once a month and the relatively small shifts in the mean population scores between higher frequency levels.



It is interesting to examine further the mean Sporting Capital levels of those who do no occasions of 30 minutes moderate intensity sport a month (the non-participants). Figure 3 shows how the mean scores for non-participants vary by different social groups. The scores range from a mean of 4.1 for those aged over 65 to a one of 5.4 for those aged 26 to 34 years. Generally speaking Sporting Capital levels need to achieve a mean score of approximately 7 before the probability of participating in sport at least once a week is more likely than not participating (i.e. achieves 50%) (see Resource Sheet 2). The low scores we see for non-participants demonstrates the extent of change required to get them up to this level of participation and hence the challenge to public policy of a focus on these groups.



Does Sporting Capital have anything to do with the types of sports people play?

It is interesting to explore the relationship between Sporting Capital and the types of sports people play. There are theoretical grounds to think that this relationship will vary with for example some sports having more challenging technical demands than others, some being more physically demanding and some being more dependent on organised social structures around clubs and competitive sport.

Figure 4 shows how the relationship between Sporting Capital and participating in sport varies by different type of sports. The sports have been grouped into broad categories of 'team', 'individual', 'racquet', 'water' (including swimming) and 'health and fitness related' (excluding

walking and cycling).² The results show an interesting variation in the profile by the type of sport and suggest that:

- ❖ Fitness related sports provide a higher probability of attracting those on the lowest Sporting Capital levels into sport (i.e. those with Sporting Capital Index scores of between 3 and 6) than other types of sport. Conversely there are smaller relative returns to be gained for fitness related sports participation from incremental increases in Sporting Capital levels at the higher end of the spectrum (8, 9 and 10) than there are for other types of sports.
- ❖ With the probability of participating in team, individual and racquet sports so low up to a Sporting Capital level of 6 or 7 the biggest gains for these sports are to be achieved by increasing Sporting Capital levels between 8 and 10. The profile for racquet sports is a particularly challenging one with the biggest relative gains to be achieved – a doubling of the probability of participating from 10% to 20% - by moving from a Sporting Capital score of 9 to one of 10.

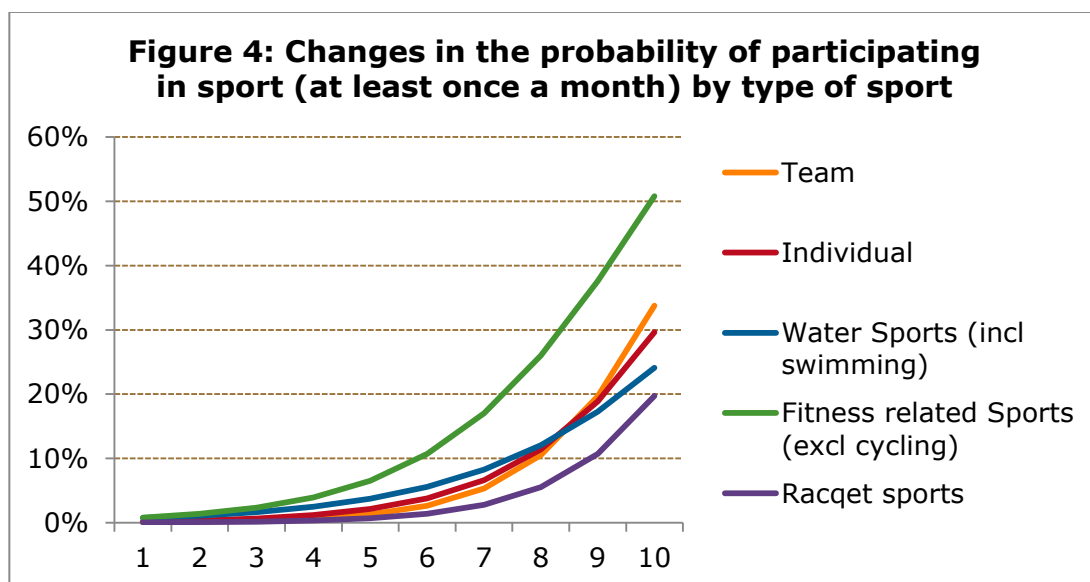
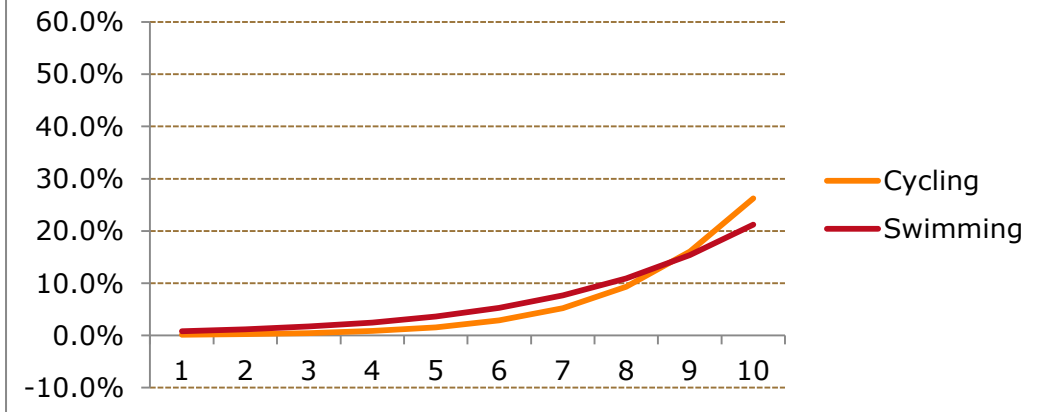


Figure 5 looks at changes in the probabilities of participating for two of our largest participant sports – cycling and swimming. Although both sports show very small gains in the probability of participating with increasing Sporting Capital levels from 1 to 3 both show a steady increase with Sporting Capital increases from 4 upwards. However, the results suggest bigger relative gains for cycling than swimming of increasing Sporting Capital scores from 6 upwards.

² See the Technical report for more detail about the definition of 'sport groups'

Figure 5 Changes in the probability of participating in sport for different levels of Sporting Capital for swimming and cycling



What are the public policy and practice implications of Sporting Capital on the frequency and types of sports people take part in?

The results from this analysis show that there are differences in the relationship between levels of Sporting Capital and the frequency and types of sport people take part in. All frequencies and all sports have one thing in common, as Sporting Capital levels increase the probability of participating increases and vice versa. As we might expect, however, those with the highest frequency of participation have the highest levels of Sporting Capital – and this is consistent with what the theory would predict (see [Resource Sheet 1](#)). This finding is important for public policy as it enables us to say with some degree of confidence that not only will we get more people participating in sport with increases in Sporting Capital but we will also get more people participating more frequently. This has particular relevance for public policy in health where higher frequencies of participation are related to enhanced health outcomes. However, the results also show the 'Sporting Capital deficit' of those groups who are non-participants in sport and the extent of the challenge to public policy to achieve wide scale behaviour change amongst these groups.

The relationship between Sporting Capital and the probability of participating in different types of sports raises interesting questions about the nature of those sports and how they are provided. We can see from the results that fitness related sports are potentially much more attractive as an entry point into sport for those on low levels of Sporting Capital than team and racquet sports. Why should this be the case? It may be that some sports are inherently more demanding on Sporting Capital than other sports – many fitness related sports have few technical demands, can be taken part in casually, and require little organisation. However

sports like golf, tennis and rugby are very technically demanding – and have strong social and institutional structures and can be very competitive. The results would suggest that sports like these – unless they can make significant innovative changes to the way they are structured and delivered to make them more like fitness related activities - are wasting their time trying to recruit participants with Sporting Capital levels of 5 or less. The National Governing Bodies of these sports have a particular vested interest in finding ways to raise overall Sporting Capital – and particularly amongst the young - through providing more attractive junior schemes and working co-operatively with schools and colleges. Many need to go beyond this to change the culture of how they are provided and operated to make them less threatening for people on low levels of Sporting Capital. Without these kinds of changes these types of sports will always be consigned to competing with each other for a minority of the 'very sporty' (the 20% with Sporting Capital levels of 8, 9 or 10 see [Resource Sheet 3](#)) in the population.

ⁱ This Sheet is the sixth in a series of eleven 'Sporting Capital Resource Sheets'. The Resource Sheets are organised in way that move from the general to the more detailed and specific. The common thread is the theoretical concept of Sporting Capital and its application to public policy and practice.

Each individual Sheet has been designed to be freestanding and to make sense in its own right – the series of Sheets has been designed to provide a logical progression that builds knowledge and understanding about Sporting Capital, its characteristics, the relationship it has to participation in sport, its distribution in the population, its variation across different social groups and its potential to influence and shape future sports policy and practice.

The Sheets have been purposefully designed to be succinct and selective rather than long and comprehensive. Each should leave the reader with an interest to think further about Sporting Capital as an idea and what it may mean for their work in sports development whether at the higher strategic levels of policy making or delivering localised programmes on the ground.

All the analysis in the Sheets draws from empirical data collected by Sport England's Active People Survey (6). The analysis in these Resource Sheets is carried out on the household survey sample collected in APS6 (October 2011 to October 2012) of the APS6 survey period. The sample size used in this analysis was 4,527 cases. For more information about the methodology see the full Technical report available from StreetGames.

These Sheets build on earlier thinking and analysis in work carried out for StreetGames and available in the following publications:

Sporting Capital – a new theory of sport participation determinants and its application to 'Doorstep Sport' Nick Rowe, Sport Research Consultant, September 2012, A report commissioned by StreetGames

Part 1. What is Sporting Capital and how can its principles be applied to create a new generation of sustained sports participants?

Part 2. The Sporting Capital Index – exploring the levels of Sporting Capital in the English population and its variation across different social groups.

The following Sheets are available in this series:

Sporting Capital Resource Sheet 1: Sporting Capital – what is it and why is it important to sports policy and practice?

Sporting Capital Resource Sheet 2: What is the relationship between Sporting Capital and participation in sport and why does it matter?

Sporting Capital Resource Sheet 3: Are we a sporting nation – what are the levels of Sporting Capital in England?

Sporting Capital Resource Sheet 4: Sporting capital and gender – mind the gap

Sporting Capital Resource Sheet 5: Sporting capital and inequality – does social class make a difference?

Sporting Capital Resource Sheet 6: To what extent do levels of Sporting Capital impact on the frequency of participation and vary by the type of sport people play?

Sporting Capital Resource Sheet 7: Sporting Capital and ethnicity

Sporting Capital Resource Sheet 8: Sporting Capital amongst the young – a focus on 16 to 25 year olds

Sporting Capital Resource Sheet 9: Sporting Capital - why it is important to public policy – a strategic perspective

Sporting Capital Resource Sheet 10: Doorstep Sport - building Sporting Capital to increase participation in sport – applying the theory to practice

Sporting Capital Resource Sheet 11: Sporting Capital – testing and applying the theory - future research requirements.