

## 1. Read the article. What is the connection between sports events and the climate crisis?

### When it comes to climate action, the ball is in sport's court

Usain Bolt burned about 10kcal of energy to win his gold during the 200 metre sprint final at the 2016 Rio Olympics, roughly equivalent to powering an old 60W light bulb for 11 minutes, or just one gummy bear (apparently you can measure energy in gummy bears). If you could harness all the power generated by all the athletes during the Games, you would still be nowhere close to reaching the 29.5 billion Watts it is estimated was consumed overall by the athletes, spectators and organisers over the event. We take sport for granted, but do we ever consider its cost to the planet?

From the water required to maintain the golf course during tournaments to the hundreds of flights it takes to bring football fans to a World Cup, to the tonnes of freight shipped from venue to venue during Formula 1's season, major sports events are not helping much in the fight against global heating. What's more, there is a lack of recognition within sport of its responsibilities and little discussion about possible solutions.

This is strange given that the effect works both ways; the climate crisis is not just affected by sports, it is already having a negative impact on many sports. When ice-climber Will Gadd set out to conquer the world's glaciers he didn't realise it would become a race against climate change. 'I'd seen pictures of the ice on [Mount] Kilimanjaro ... and I thought glaciers are there forever – they don't go away. I started reading research and discovered that the ice on Kilimanjaro could be gone in five years.' When he arrived at the summit, Gadd was shocked: 'The ice was gone. The things I planned to climb were gone.'

Global heating is noticeable in other sports. Amy Steel played professional netball until 2016, when she suffered from heatstroke after playing in 39°C conditions. Unfortunately, the damage was permanent, and Steel only has to run for a few minutes for her body to overheat and shut down. More and more, tennis players face even higher temperatures in tournaments – 42.2°C at points during the 2014 Australian Open. Not only that, but extreme weather events made more frequent as a result of global heating mean sporting events are more often delayed or cancelled. The Covid-19 pandemic itself likely stems from human mismanagement of wildlife, and that has cost sport billions in revenue.

Yet sport can be a powerful motivator and has the potential to communicate the climate crisis to its fans: it can unite whole nations behind its teams. Could sport have a role to play in driving climate awareness and empowering people to take action? Will Gadd and Amy Steel are among a growing number of athletes who think so. Will hopes that the striking images of his climbs will raise awareness of the effects of global heating, while Amy now works on emissions-reporting for large financial corporations, aiming to reduce their emissions. Sport, like humanity itself, is in a race against time. It must put climate change at the top of its agenda and decarbonise at a Usain Bolt-like pace if we're going to get a handle on climate.