

# Is Climate Change affecting the UK Sport Industry, or is the UK sport industry fuelling Climate Change?

Having read Philip Dawke's BBC article, titled *Football's fight to stay afloat*, I found myself reflecting on not only the devastating effects that climate change has created onto UK sports clubs, but also how the sports industry and sports clubs may be affecting the climate.

It was clear that global warming, and therefore climate change, has a huge economic impact upon various sporting industries; in the UK, football in particular has been significantly affected by flood risks and extreme weather conditions, among others. This impact can obviously be detrimental for smaller sports clubs; a club in Carlisle have recently lost two club houses, and now "have an unfunded insurance gap" according to the club's chief executive. These effects can clearly cause major financial burden on clubs, and individuals alike.

However, the difference between large, famous sports clubs, and smaller, less profitable clubs is one to be questioned; sports clubs hosting immense fans and supporters, such as one of the many mainstream UK football teams could be argued as hypocritical in this sense. An amateur club such as Caverley United, as Dawke's mentions in the article, will feel the effects of climate change far more than a more high-profile club like Liverpool or Manchester. These mainstream clubs arguably cause more environmental damage than they receive; thousands of football fans gathering in huge stadiums not only cause a monumental amount of waste and single-use plastic, but they also contribute to global warming when it comes to travelling to the venue, littering, and more. Football clubs on this level also require a large amount of space to build clubhouses, offices, pitches, stadiums, and more construction or development that only contributes to destroying wildlife and the use of even more fossil fuels. It seems ludicrous that these organisations complain about the effect climate change is having on them when little effort seems to be made in return. Besides this, the income made by professional footballers is at an astronomically high level, with the average yearly salary being approximately £3million for Premier League players, and over £200,000 for lower end professionals. While it is understandable for amateur and low profit clubs to be affected economically by the climate, it is evident that these large clubs exploiting these clubs by complaining about the same issue but in completely different circumstances.

Improving sustainability efforts has been a focus for many of the clubs within the UK sports industry, yet significant improvement within the industry has only truly been seen amongst lesser-known clubs; Birmingham County FA launched a pioneering programme earlier this year, titled "Save Today, Play Tomorrow". Aimed to highlight and educate about the role football plays at contributing to climate change, the initiative appears to be an anomaly within more profitable football clubs. Famously reputable, and iconic clubs such as Chelsea and Arsenal among others, have seldom made a true effort at promoting and acting with environmental consciousness; with the money and fame to do so, it is unacceptable to see the work left for smaller clubs that do not have disposable profits.

Overall, while climate change is having ever-rising effects upon a multitude of industries, the UK sports (and specifically football) industry has taken a large toll due to these impacts. However, I find it evident that the true initiative and care has emerged from less profitable, lesser-known clubs; mainstream clubs contribute a monumental amount of waste and carbon emissions, yet seem to do little to promote sustainability. Before these clubs complain with crocodile tears about the economic impacts they face, it is clear to all that a drastic improvement in regard to environmentally conscious behaviour must be made.

