

# Spectator Sports - UK - April 2011

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## What is this report about?

The spectator sports market, relying as it does on discretionary spending, has come under pressure during the economic recession and subsequent economic weakness but has responded well. In many ways it is cushioned from recessionary pressures by the tremendous television coverage given to the most popular sports, which creates a strong fan base who are often prepared to give up a lot to still be able to attend their chosen sport. However, admissions in some sectors have declined in the current season and it appears that the emphasis will be very much on providing excellent value and a great experience at venues if spectator numbers are to be maintained.

## What have we found out?

- Overall spending on tickets for spectator sports events grew by 20% between 2006 and 2010, to reach a value of around £800 million. In real terms this equates to a more modest rise in spending of 2%. However, in 2011, the value of the market is expected to decline as the continued economic weakness, low levels of consumer confidence and public sector job cuts make an impact.
- In all, one in three UK adults have been to a live sports event in the past year either in the UK or abroad, whether it required paid admission or not.
- Interest in live sport is strongly driven by TV and other media coverage. TV coverage has increased by 30% in the past five years, with strong growth in football, golf, tennis and rugby, among the major sports.
- Cost is the biggest deterrent to people going to live sports events more often, cited by 51% of people who watch live sport either in person or on TV.
- Atmosphere is seen as being the main aspect which makes it worth paying to go to live sports, particularly among cricket fans (62% cited this compared to an average of 54% among people who attended live sports in the past year). If people cannot go to a live event, watching it in a pub or bar is seen as the next best thing to being there, again because of the atmosphere.
- Looking forward, around one in four people who have been to a live sports event in the past 12 months say they will probably watch less live sport in person and more on TV in 2011, rising to one in three among people who have been to rugby union. However, on the positive side, there is interest in the idea of loyalty reward schemes linked to visits, mobile phone apps providing information/commentary and other innovations such as heated seats in winter, which gives venues scope to further develop their revenues.

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