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FOREWORD

CARMEN VAN VILSTEREN

Sport and Vitality. Sport and Health. Sport and Innovative Products and Services.

After more than 35 years in the Life Sciences & Health domain, I was well aware of these cross-links. Yet even I was pleasantly surprised this summer during the Life Sciences & Health mission to Osaka 2025, where I joined around 80 participants, including the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport. The breadth and depth of the connections between sport, health, and technology were truly impressive.

The link between physical activity and both our physical and mental health is self-evident. What particularly inspired me was witnessing how elite sport manages to reach and genuinely motivate millions of people, from young to old, to get active themselves. That is remarkable, as behavioral change is often a major challenge within the field of prevention. Moreover, this applies not only to healthy athletes and fans but also to people with disabilities.

It also became clear that technology, and especially AI, is no longer the exception but the rule in the world of sport. Think of technology for scouting new players or analyzing matches. Among the innovative companies and organizations participating in or visited during the mission, technology played a crucial role. In addition, the participants from the Sports & Vitality track established valuable new partnerships with Dutch peers from other mission tracks.

We also learned a great deal from the Japanese approach to organizing sport. Collaboration with Japanese organizations, and particularly the strategic partnership with football club Gamba Osaka, has been further strengthened. A truly special moment was presenting, on behalf of the Dutch delegation, a statue of their hero Johan Cruyff to the chairman of Gamba Osaka.

I am convinced that this mission has forged new connections, not only with Japan but also among the Dutch participants themselves. Connections that will leave a lasting impact on a sporty, enterprising, and healthy Netherlands.

Carmen van Vilsteren

Chair Topsector Life Sciences & Health (Health~Holland)

Read more about our visit to Japan on pages 80–83.



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FOREWORD OSF

Dear members, partners, and friends of sport,

We are proud to present to you the new edition of the Holland Sports & Industry Yearbook 2025/2026. Once again, we look back on a period in which the Dutch sports sector has strongly positioned itself internationally, achieving major successes in rowing, athletics, sailing, track cycling, and of course, the Kingdom Team's victory at the European Baseball Championship in Rotterdam, the Netherlands.

In 2025, Orange Sports Forum experienced another outstanding year, with more than 18 events and activities both in the Netherlands and abroad, leading to tangible business successes for our members. From trade missions and networking sessions to knowledge and innovation events, our network continues to grow and strengthen.

One of this year's highlights was the SportUp Boost Spring Edition in the south of the Netherlands, a pre-accelerator program for early-stage startups. Throughout the 3-month program, innovative sports startups, investors, and organizations also came together to build new connections between sport, technology, and entrepreneurship. In doing so, we contribute to strengthening the innovative sports ecosystem in the Netherlands, a necessity for maintaining the country's competitive position in international markets. We are therefore pleased to announce that a new edition of SportUp Boost will launch in 2026.

We also took an important step in expanding our international presence with the opening of new Orange Sports Hubs in Barcelona and Cape Town, complementing the successful launch in Lausanne in 2024. These hubs serve as structural anchor points for Dutch companies in key international sports markets and contribute directly to sustainable cooperation and visibility of the Dutch sports industry worldwide. Through these hubs, the first concrete business successes for participating Dutch companies have already been realized.

Looking ahead to the major sporting events of the coming years, collaboration remains intensive. Together with partners such as the KNVB, RVO, various ministries, and Dutch diplomatic posts in the United

States, OSF is actively supporting companies to capitalize on business opportunities surrounding the 2026 FIFA World Cup and the 2028 Olympic Games in Los Angeles. This public-private collaboration is a strong example of the collective power of the Dutch sports ecosystem, an ecosystem driven by knowledge and innovation, creating both social and economic impact at home and abroad.

Another highlight this year was the Life Sciences & Health (LSH) Week in Tokyo and Osaka. In cooperation with organizations such as Health~Holland, OSF organized a dedicated Sports & Vitality Track around to the World Expo in Osaka. This collaboration demonstrates how strongly sport and vitality contribute to societal themes such as health, prevention, and healthy aging. Sport and vitality are essential pillars for a healthy and active society and, at the same time, offer new opportunities for innovation, export, and international cooperation in the years ahead.

On behalf of the Orange Sports Forum team, we thank all our participants, partners, and relations for their continued commitment and trust. Thanks to your dedication, our network continues to grow and build toward a future in which sport and entrepreneurship go hand in hand.

We will continue strengthening the Dutch sports ecosystem, nationally and internationally, and look forward to the sporting, social, and business successes that the Dutch sports sector will achieve in 2026!

We wish you plenty of inspiration as you read this edition of the Holland Sports & Industry Yearbook 2025/2026.

With sporting regards,

The Board of Orange Sports Forum

Arun SwamiPersaud, Camil Smeulders, John van de Laar, Marielle Wiegmans, Rick Slegers and Peter Sprenger



from left to right: Peter Sprenger - John van de Laar - Marielle Wiegmans - Rick Slegers - Arun SwamiPersaud - Camil Smeulders



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Our focus areas:

- Physical activity behaviour
- Active-friendly environments
- Youth & lifelong participation
- Inclusion through sport and movement

Internationally, we collaborate in EU-funded projects and networks such as SHARE 2.0, TAFISA, HEPA Europe and ISPAH. Working with partners across Europe and beyond, we exchange expertise, foster innovation and contribute to a more active world.

Contact

We believe that knowledge drives impact. Connect with us to explore partnerships, share expertise or join our international projects.

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TEAMNL LOOKS AHEAD TO THE WINTER GAMES

For the first time since Turin 2006, the Winter Olympics return to the European continent. Back then, the Netherlands dominated the ice with seven medals – all in speed skating. Sven Kramer made his Olympic debut, Ireen Wüst wrote history by claiming her first Olympic title, Marianne Timmer flew to gold in the 1000 meters, and Carl Verheijen skated to bronze in the 10,000 meters. Those Games cemented our image as a speed skating nation but also showed that there was room to grow beyond the rink.

Twenty years later, the Winter Olympics are on the horizon once again. This time, Carl Verheijen is no longer competing himself – instead, he leads TeamNL as Chef de Mission. His mission: to work together with athletes, coaches, and staff to secure a spot in the top ten of the medal table. And that means looking beyond speed skating alone. Skeleton athlete Kimberley Bos already proved in Beijing that the Netherlands can compete for medals outside

the ice rink. In Cortina d'Ampezzo, she will now face a completely renovated bobsleigh track, once used for the 1956 Games. There are also opportunities elsewhere in the Italian Alps: in Livigno for freestyle and snowboarding disciplines, and in Bormio for alpine skiing. The Opening Ceremony will take place at the iconic San Siro Stadium, home to AC and Inter Milan, while the Closing Ceremony will be held in the magnificent Verona Arena.



Paralympic Games in a historic setting

After the Olympics, it's time for the Paralympic Winter Games, led by Chef de Mission Esther Vergeer. Under her guidance, TeamNL will chase new successes in para-snowboarding and para-skiing. Prominent athletes like para-skier Jeroen Kampschreur and para-snowboarder Chris Vos are ready to shine once again. In Cortina d'Ampezzo, they will compete in a stunning setting: the famous Olimpia delle Tofane slope will host the para-alpine skiing events, while the Cortina Para Snowboard Park will be the stage for thrilling snowboard cross and banked slalom races.

With six winter sports and a total of 79 medal events, the Games promise to be historic — especially since Milan-Cortina 2026 marks the 50th anniversary of the very first Paralympic Winter Games.

Oranje at home in Milan

The countdown is truly underway. After months of preparation, the athletes will soon line up at the start in Milan, Cortina d'Ampezzo, and Livigno. But the Games are about more than just competition. Beyond the arenas and slopes, there is one place where everything comes together: the Staatsloterij TeamNL House. This is the meeting point for fans, families, partners, and athletes — a place to relive the day's excitement, celebrate successes, and feel at home in a sea of orange, right in the heart of Milan.



The Staatsloterij TeamNL House

From 6 to 20 February 2026, the Staatsloterij TeamNL House will open its doors in Milan during the Olympic Winter Games. It's the place where athletes, fans, families, and partners meet and share the Olympic experience. The venue, Superstudio Più, is centrally located in the city, right between the Olympic venues for speed skating and short track.

From the moment it opens, visitors can watch TeamNL athletes compete on big screens and cheer them on together with thousands of other fans. Throughout the day, there will be a wide variety of food and drinks available, and the merchandise shop will offer official TeamNL items. In the evenings, the focus shifts to the stage: Dutch artists and DJs will provide music and entertainment, and medal winners will be honored on stage, hosted by Rob Kemps. Together with the audience, their achievements will be celebrated in style.

TeamNL House Paris

For NOC*NSF, 2024 marked the very first official TeamNL House — and it was an instant success: a fully sold-out venue with more than 100,000 visitors during the Olympic and Paralympic Games at Parc de la Villette. Memorable sports moments were celebrated there — from the 3x3 basketball team's remarkable achievement to Olympic gold in athletics and hockey. Medal or not, all TeamNL athletes were continuously cheered on by a sea of orange fans. Performances by artists like Diggy Dex, Flemming, and Kraantje Pappie, and DJ La Fuente's nightly sets kept the atmosphere electric.

Paris proved that the renewed concept works: sport in all its forms takes center stage, and fans feel closer to TeamNL than ever before.



New this year: visitors can also try out various TeamNL winter sports for themselves. By participating in activities, they can get a taste of what it's like to be an athlete on the Olympic stage.

The House is open daily from 16:00 to 01:00 and welcomes more than 3,000 orange-clad fans every day.

A special edition

In Milan, the venue will carry the name Staatsloterij TeamNL House in celebration of the Staatsloterij's 300th anniversary. This one-time naming highlights the long-standing and close partnership between NOC*NSF and Nederlandse Loterij, of which Staatsloterij is a part. Earlier this year, Nederlandse Loterij transferred its role as main sponsor of TeamNL and 28 sports federations to Staatsloterij. As a result, the Netherlands' oldest lottery will remain a proud supporter of Dutch athletes through the Brisbane 2032 Games.

The Staatsloterij TeamNL House in Milan is made possible thanks to the support of partners. In addition to main sponsor Staatsloterij, Odido, Rabobank, AD, and PON also contribute to this edition.





A meeting place for business relations

Within the Staatsloterij TeamNL House, the Rabobank Olympic Club offers an exclusive space for hospitality packages. Here, guests can experience the Winter Games in a welcoming setting with excellent facilities and a full range of food and beverages. The club is accessible during the House's regular opening hours, and guests can move freely between the public areas and the Rabobank Olympic Club.

In addition to daily hospitality packages, the Rabobank Olympic Club is also available for tailored events. During the day, outside of public opening hours, the space can host meetings for groups of 60 people or more. Fully equipped for presentations, receptions, or networking events, the venue provides an inspiring Olympic backdrop.

The combination of a central location in Milan, proximity to Olympic venues, and the vibrant orange atmosphere of the Staatsloterij TeamNL House makes the Rabobank Olympic Club a unique meeting place for organizations and their guests.

Building the Staatsloterij TeamNL House together

The TeamNL House is an initiative of NOC*NSF, which owns and oversees the concept and strategic direction. The venue is operated by Papendal, while technical production is managed by Tribe. Together, they create a place where sport and athletes take center stage.



Baukje Ter Huurne, Chief Marketing Officer, NOC*NSF: *"Since Paris, the TeamNL House has been more focused than ever on celebrating sport in a big way — watching competitions together and honouring our top athletes. In Paris, this renewed concept proved its strength. Thousands of fans, athletes, and partners found their way to the House. It became more than just a stage for medal ceremonies; it was a place to truly experience sport and feel closer to TeamNL. We're now building on that foundation for Milan, where fans will also be able to try out Olympic sports themselves — with even more sport, more experience, and more connection among everyone who supports Oranje."*

Jochem Schellens, Director of Papendal: *"We are proud to bring the sense of home we provide for TeamNL in the Netherlands to Milan and Cortina d'Ampezzo, together with all involved partners. What happens daily in Arnhem — where elite athletes train, recover, and prepare — will continue in Milan in an environment that feels like home."*

Tribe will once again handle production and technology. Everything visitors see and hear in the Staatsloterij TeamNL House — from stages and screens to lighting and sound — is created by their team. Their expertise ensures that medal ceremonies shine, competitions come to life, and every detail is perfect.

As a result, the Staatsloterij TeamNL House is much more than a meeting place. It's a home where athletes celebrate their achievements, fans share unforgettable moments, partners inspire each other, and the Dutch spirit shines at its brightest.

Practical information Staatsloterij TeamNL House

- Open from **6 to 20 February 2026**
- Location: **Superstudio Più, Milan**, centrally located and easily accessible by metro and tram
- Open daily from **16:00 to 01:00**, accommodating over 3,000 visitors per day
- Tickets on sale since **September 2025**
Day tickets: **€34.50** (adults)
€22.50 (children aged 3–12)
- Exclusive **Olympic Club packages** available from **€195 excl. VAT**
- Features:
 - Large screens showing live TeamNL competitions,
 - extensive food & beverage options,
 - a merchandise shop with fan gear,
 - live performances by Dutch artists and DJs.





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With prestigious venues like the Keizerzaal for strategy sessions and Breakers Beach House or La Terrasse for fine dining, the hotel provides the perfect setting for focus and relaxation. At Grand Hotel Huis ter Duin, athletes find not just a place to stay, but a trusted partner in their journey to success.

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ORANGE SPORTS HUBS: CONNECTING DUTCH INNOVATION TO THE WORLD

The global sports industry is transforming faster than ever. Digitalization, sustainability, and social impact are reshaping how sport is organized, funded, and experienced. For the Netherlands this transformation presents a unique opportunity to make Dutch innovation visible, valuable, and connected worldwide.



At the heart of this effort stands Orange Sports Forum (OSF), a public-private platform that for more than fourteen years has helped Dutch companies and organizations expand internationally. What began as a collaborative initiative between entrepreneurs, governments, and knowledge institutions has evolved into a powerful network of over 300 members working in sport, vitality, and innovation.

Our goal is to connect people, ideas, and opportunities. We bridge the gap between public and private sectors, between innovation and diplomacy. We help Dutch organizations find their place abroad and bring valuable international knowledge back home.

From missions to momentum

Since its foundation, OSF has organized dozens of trade missions, fair participations, and networking events across the world, from China, Qatar, and the U.S. to the Caribbean and Europe. These activities have opened doors for Dutch companies in fields ranging from smart facilities and circular infrastructure to fan engagement and high-performance sport.

Yet one recurring challenge persisted: how to maintain momentum after a mission ends. There was always great enthusiasm during events, but sustaining long-term cooperation was difficult. That's why everyone agreed that it's important to have something more permanent.

The answer became the Orange Sports Hubs, a network of international bases providing long-term presence, visibility, and cooperation for Dutch sport-related companies.

The Hubs make OSF's work tangible. They are not one-off projects, but long-term commitments to building relationships, sharing expertise, and strengthening local ecosystems.



A new model for international collaboration

Each Orange Sports Hub serves as a shared international platform: a local gateway where Dutch and foreign organizations work together on sports innovation, business development, and sustainability.

Every Hub operates on **three key pillars**:

1. **Market Access and Visibility:**
connecting Dutch companies to local sports ecosystems through trade promotion, events, and joint showcases.
2. **Local Presence and Support:**
offering flexible office and meeting space, local representation, and ongoing follow-up on business leads.
3. **Knowledge and Community:**
organizing CEO sessions, workshops, and innovation roundtables that connect experts and foster partnerships.

It's a hybrid model, part accelerator, part knowledge centre, and part endorser of Dutch sport.

Strategic alignment

The Orange Sports Hubs perfectly align with the Dutch government's international strategy for trade, innovation, and diplomacy. In close cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO), and Dutch embassies and consulates, OSF promotes the Netherlands as a reliable and innovative partner in sport.

This approach is already paying off: evaluations of OSF's international projects show an average tenfold economic return on investment over a three-year period.



Dutch expertise in global demand

The Netherlands is recognized as a living laboratory for sport and vitality, a country where technology, design, and social innovation go hand in hand. Dutch companies excel in practical, sustainable solutions that address real challenges:

- smart lighting and data-driven energy systems;
- circular and modular sports infrastructure;
- digital communication and fan platforms;
- and innovations for inclusion, accessibility, and active living.

These strengths come together in OSF's International Strategy 2034, built around six themes:

1. Digital Sports Technology
2. Sports Medical Innovation
3. High-Tech Facilities and Equipment
4. Sustainable Sports Infrastructure
5. Sports Performance
6. Sport for All

The Orange Sports Hubs are the vehicle that brings these themes to life internationally.

A growing global network

The first Orange Sports Hub opened in Lausanne in June 2024, followed by Barcelona in May 2025. Both serve as blueprints for future locations in South-Africa, the U.S., Middle-East and Austria, planned for 2026–2027.

Each Hub has its own local host and focus area:

- **Lausanne**, home to the IOC and 50+ international federations, provides visibility at the heart of world sport.
- **Barcelona**, connects Dutch sporttech and sustainability to Spain's vibrant sports market.

Together, they form a connected network, a global web of Dutch expertise. The Hubs strengthen one another. A company that enters Spain can later expand through Lausanne or other hubs. It's one ecosystem, one network.

Sport as a force for sustainable growth

The Hubs are not just about business. They reflect a broader belief: that sport can drive sustainable economic and social progress. By promoting innovation in energy use, facility design, and inclusivity, the Hubs contribute to healthier communities and a more responsible global sports economy.

OSF collaborates closely with Dutch (semi-) public organizations, sport organizations, and Dutch knowledge institutions to ensure that business ambitions go hand in hand with social impact.

Looking ahead

The coming decade, from LA28 to Brisbane 2032, will be decisive for the global sports industry. The Netherlands is ready to play a leading role.

"The Orange Sports Hubs are more than physical spaces. They are platforms for cooperation and symbols of Dutch openness, a way to connect ideas, build partnerships, and make lasting impact. We're not just exporting technology. We're sharing our vision for the future of sport."





ORANGE SPORTS HUB LAUSANNE: A DUTCH PRESENCE IN THE HEART OF GLOBAL SPORT

On the shores of Lake Geneva, Lausanne stands as the world's sports capital, home to the International Olympic Committee (IOC), and more than fifty international federations. In 2024, the Netherlands established its presence with the launch of the Orange Sports Hub Lausanne, a new anchor point for Dutch innovation in the global sports ecosystem.

"Lausanne is where the future of sport is decided," says Geert Hendriks, Managing Partner of Orange Sports Hub Lausanne. "If the Netherlands wants to play a leading role in shaping that future, we need to be part of the conversation, on location."

The Hub partners in Lausanne, AAA-LUX, RSI Sports Group, Share Logistics, Sorama, and Techonomy, attended several events, like the Hosts and Federations Summit 2025, where global sports leaders, event organizers, and cities meet to discuss the next generation of mega-events. For OSF and its partners, it's the perfect opportunity to showcase Dutch solutions in sustainability, smart venue design, and data-driven innovation.

The Orange Sports Hub Lausanne will offer Dutch and Swiss organizations a platform for cooperation, meetings, and visibility. Regular workshops and showcase events will focus on key topics like sustainable infrastructure, digital transformation, and governance.

The Hub builds on findings from the 2025 market study *"Building a Bridge Between the Swiss and Dutch Sports Industries"*, which identified major potential for collaboration between both countries in innovation and sustainability.

"Our presence in Lausanne strengthens the Dutch position in international sport," concludes Hendriks. "It's about connecting with the world, not from a distance, but from within the beating heart of global sport."

Orange
Sports Hub
.....
Lausanne



ORANGE SPORTS HUB BARCELONA: A GATEWAY TO THE SPANISH SPORTS MARKET

On 22 May 2025, the Orange Sports Hub Spain officially opened its doors at the Real Club de Polo de Barcelona, a symbolic venue chosen during the TRAM Barcelona Wheelchair Tennis Tournament, organized by the Johan Cruyff Foundation. The atmosphere captured the essence of the Hub: collaboration, innovation, and inclusion.

Over fifty guests from Spanish clubs, federations, municipalities, and companies attended the opening, celebrating a new step in Dutch–Spanish cooperation in sport.

"Spain breathes sport," says Walter Joosten, Managing Partner Orange Sports Hub Barcelona. *"From La Liga to the America's Cup, sport is part of everyday life here. But it's also a highly professional business environment looking for sustainable innovation, exactly where the Netherlands excels."*

The Orange Sports Hub Barcelona provides Dutch companies with a shared working and meeting environment in one of Europe's most dynamic sports regions. It offers practical local support, access to an extensive network, and tailored business matchmaking.



The first participants, AAA-LUX, Bundeling, RSI Sports Group, Share Logistics, and Sorama, showcase the range of Dutch expertise: from smart lighting and communication tools to circular sports surfaces and acoustic technology. Beyond commercial opportunities, the Hub also serves as a community of knowledge exchange. In August 2025, the Hub hosted its first CEO Event, with Maurits Hendriks speaking on AI in Sport. His keynote, exploring the future of data and technology in performance and management, symbolized the Hub's mission

to connect business, innovation, and thought leadership. In October 2025, the Hub and its partners attended Sportbiz Europe and participating in a panel with the Johan Cruyff Institute about *"Smart Stadiums, Sustainable Innovations & Fan Engagement"*.

"Barcelona combines tradition with progress," Joosten reflects. *"The Orange Sports Hub is about long-term presence and shared ambition, building a sustainable bridge between two nations that live and breathe sport."*



BORDERLESS FOR SPORTS & VITALITY

Challenges and opportunities in sports & vitality

In our society, we face the challenge of keeping people active and vital. At the same time, we want to get the best out of ourselves and optimise performance in sports and work. Whether it is about monitoring performance, optimising training, stimulating a healthy active lifestyle or motivating people to sport and exercise, we can realise solutions through innovation and use of smart technology. Solutions, with which we not only meet these challenges, but also create new business opportunities.

Cluster Sports & Technology: proven effective in innovative collaboration

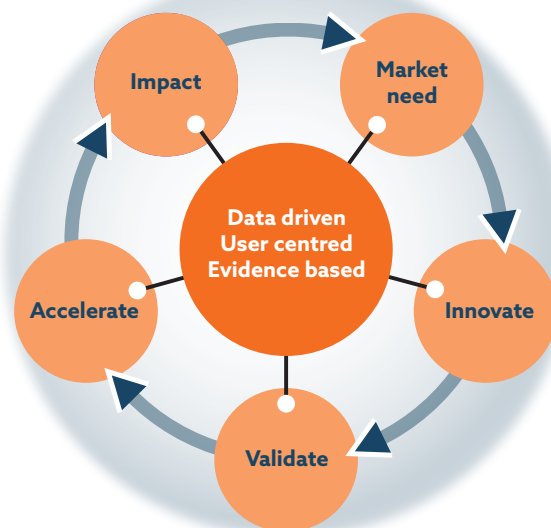
The Cluster Sports & Technology is an open network organisation in which a growing group of Companies, Knowledge Institutions, SportFieldlabs and Governments have been successfully collaborating for years on innovations for an active, healthy and vital society. Innovations with social, economic and individual impact. We do this with technology and open innovation as the driving force, building on the strengths of the Brainport region in South Netherlands.

Borderless innovation

Open innovation knows no borders, neither do market opportunities. The Sports & Technology Cluster is founder of a European network of innovation hubs for sports & vitality; the INSHAPE-Network. This allows us to successfully create new cross-border collaborations and innovation projects.

Innovating with impact: ELIS Innovation Hub for Active Healthy People

From the Cluster Sports & Technology, the ELIS Innovation Hub has been established. In the ELIS Innovation Hub, a core group of partners from the Cluster Sports & Technology work together to bring innovative ideas to market ready products and services in the practice of @work, @public space and @sport through the innovation cycle and with smart use of data.



Your path to success in sports and vitality?

- Do you also want to make an impact with your innovation idea in sports and vitality?
- Do you want to realise the road from idea to market impact with greater success?
- Are you looking for cooperation and funding?
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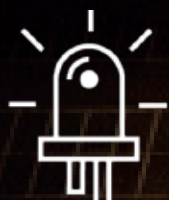


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▲ Bron: TeamNL

Interview Carl Verheijen

By now, Carl Verheijen has gained considerable experience as Chef de Mission for TeamNL. From this experience, he knows how crucial the preparation phase is for athletes to perform at their best during the Games. NOC*NSF has been preparing for the 2026 Games for about six years already, and Carl is involved for one and a half years as Chef de Mission.

TEAMNL & MILAN-CORTINA 2026

Preparation & Strategy

As Carl Verheijen explains: As Chef de Mission, you bear ultimate responsibility for the participation of TeamNL in the Olympic and Paralympic Games and in my case, the Winter Games. This means I serve as the primary point of contact for the IOC and local organizing committees, but my main focus is the athletes of TeamNL. The most important thing is that they can perform under optimal conditions. If anything is needed, they come to me, and together with the team we make sure the issue is resolved as quickly as possible.

To achieve this and ensure a smooth preparation, we collaborate closely with several partners from the broader ecosystem. Among the most important are the three main sports federations for the Winter Games: the Dutch Ski Federation (N SkiV), the Royal Dutch Skating Federation (KNSB), and the Dutch Bobsleigh and Skeleton Federation (BSBN). In addition, the professional teams play an essential role, such as the skating teams and the team around athletes like Kimberley Bos.

At NOC*NSF, we support athletes not only during the Winter Games but throughout the entire preparation process. We also take a broader view of how to elevate the sports sector through innovation, technology, nutrition, mental coaching, clothing, and logistics.

Within NOC*NSF, we also ensure continuity in all these developments and experiences. The "Team de Mission" consists of three people: Hanneke van den Pol (TeamNL Games Operations), André Cats (Director of Elite Sports), and the Chef de Mission. The Chef de Mission changes with every Olympic and Paralympic Games, while the other team members ensure continuity across editions.

Ecosystem partners

A wide range of partners from the sports ecosystem is involved in the preparation, execution, and follow-up of the Olympic Winter Games.

Papendal, as the Olympic Training Center, is a key partner in the run-up to the Games. During the Games, they also co-manage the Staatsloterij TeamNL Hui, the official hospitality house, where athlete celebrations take place and where a Friends & Family Zone is set up. Since the Winter Games will be held in Europe, we expect many fans, friends, and family members of the athletes to attend.

▼ Bron: TeamNL





Looking at other ecosystem partners, Sportinnovator also plays an important role. Together with Sportinnovator, we continuously work on innovations and technologies to improve athlete performance, as well as on initiatives to encourage participation in grassroots sports. This grassroots base is essential to ensure long-term elite performance. Ultimately, both aspects contribute to an even more important theme: a more active and healthier Netherlands.

The business community is also involved in several ways. We are in contact with the Dutch Consulate General in Milan, and NOC*NSF has contributed to a trade mission supporting Dutch companies doing business in Italy in the run-up to the Winter Games. NOC*NSF partners can benefit from our international network and introductions to relevant stakeholders. Companies can join as TeamNL sponsors, and at the Staatsloterij TeamNL Huis there will be an Olympic Club available for corporate events and meetings.

International Role

As Chef de Mission, I am also very aware of the international image of the Netherlands and TeamNL. In recent years, TeamNL has become a true ambassador for the Netherlands abroad.

The Games are a major platform to showcase the Netherlands, especially in the field of elite sports. The strong performances of Dutch athletes attract attention from international federations, governments, and companies. Personally, I find it important that the Netherlands continues to be a vital and active nation, so I am constantly looking for ways to link these achievements to promoting grassroots sports and active lifestyles. This also ties in with my roles within the Beweegalliantie (All about Health) and Sportinnovator.

It remains crucial to invest in quality facilities and to keep sports affordable. Several programs and initiatives aim to leverage the Olympic momentum to achieve these goals, for instance, the Sports4All Innovation Summit organized by Sportinnovator during the Paris Paralympic Games.

The Netherlands must keep innovating. More attention and funding are needed for this, including from the government. The international success of our elite athletes creates a strong positive ripple effect at home, not only in terms of the sports sector's export value but also in fostering national pride and social cohesion. Equally important is the inspiration this gives to grassroots sports.

Our biggest challenge is to ensure a healthier younger generation. Alongside physical activity, healthy nutrition and reducing smoking or vaping are key priorities. It is also the responsibility of politics to help people stay fit and healthy. Currently, no single organization holds clear responsibility for this, and the approach is often misaligned. We focus too much on extending life expectancy rather than improving the quality of life. The goal should be to help people live healthier longer, not merely longer.

This is my passion, and it's rewarding to contribute to it from three different organizational perspectives.



Bron: TeamNL ▲

About Carl Verheijen

Carl Verheijen is Chef de Mission for TeamNL at the 2026 Olympic Winter Games in Milan-Cortina. It's his second time as Chef de Mission, after serving in the same role at the 2022 Olympic Winter Games in Beijing. In the past, he served twice as Chef de Mission for the Youth Olympic Games.

Carl's career in sports began as a professional speed skater. He competed in two Winter Olympics, winning two bronze medals at the 2006 Turin Games. In addition, he became a five-time world champion, three times in the team pursuit and twice in the 10,000 meters.

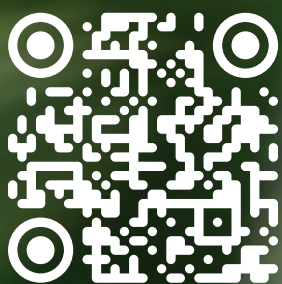
Carl combined his elite sports career with a medical degree and has always been active in the field of sport, physical activity, and health. Currently, he combines his position as director of the Zwanenhof retreat center with roles as chair of the Beweegalliantie, member of the Sportinnovator Top Team, and Chef de Mission for TeamNL at the Milan-Cortina 2026 Winter Games.

These may seem like very different positions, but together they offer the opportunity to operate strategically across all levels. In the end, it all comes down to one common thread: sport, movement, and health.





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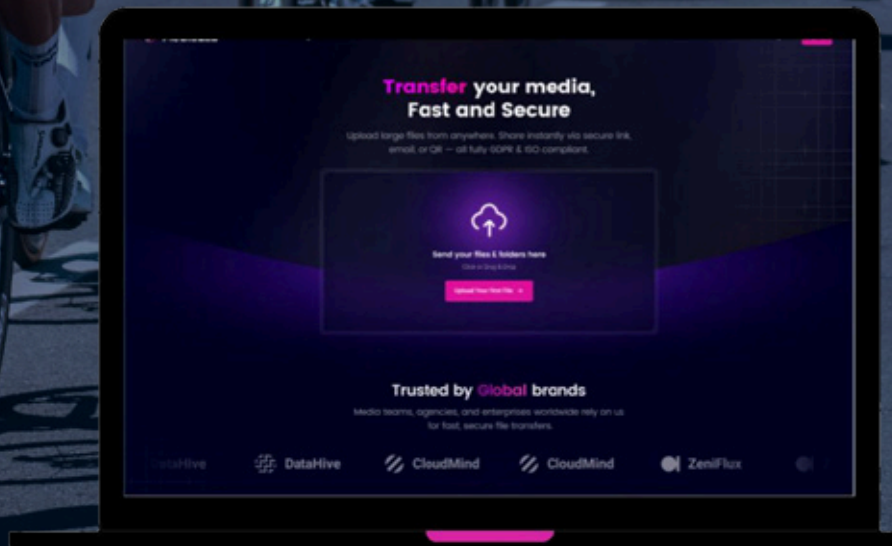
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SPRINGBOARD 2: WOMEN IN SPORTS TECH

When an elite athlete retires,
one question inevitably looms large:
what comes next?

For many women in sport, that question comes with a double challenge, not just finding a new career path, but doing so in industries that are still overwhelmingly male-dominated. The Erasmus+ project **SPRINGBOARD 2: Women in Sports Tech** aims to change that narrative by helping women athletes turn their drive, discipline and leadership into thriving entrepreneurial careers in Europe's rapidly expanding sports technology sector.



Building on the success of Springboard 1, this new European collaboration brings together a powerful consortium of partners: Igloo Innovation (Norway), Collective Innovation (Sweden), Güler Legacy Sports Accelerator (Turkey), GSIC – Global Sports Innovation Center (Spain), Johnsen Skillz (SheSkillz Global Mentoring Platform), and the Orange Sports Forum (the Netherlands). Together, they represent a cross-section of Europe's sports innovation ecosystem, from education and entrepreneurship to technology and gender equality.

"Sports and entrepreneurship share the same DNA. Athletes know what it means to take risks, work strategically and lead under pressure, exactly the qualities that drive innovation. SPRINGBOARD 2 helps women translate those skills into new tech-driven ventures."



From field to founder: why women athletes need a 'springboard'

The European sports technology industry is booming, transforming how athletes train, how fans engage, and how data drives performance. Yet despite this momentum, women remain underrepresented in leadership and innovation roles. Research cited in the project proposal reveals that female-founded start-ups still receive a fraction of venture capital funding compared to their male counterparts, and that women athletes often lack access to mentors, networks and the flexible education needed to prepare for post-sport careers.

For elite athletes, this challenge is especially acute. Their commitment to training and competition leaves little time to gain business experience or academic credentials. Moreover, the financial disparity between male and female athletes, male professionals earn on average 21 times more, means that women often retire with fewer resources to invest in a new venture.

SPRINGBOARD 2 recognizes these systemic barriers but also sees an opportunity: women athletes bring unique strengths to the table. They are leaders, problem-solvers, and experts in their sport and thus possess deep insight into unmet needs within the market. By combining that expertise with entrepreneurial and digital training, the project envisions a new generation of female founders shaping the future of sports tech.

Learning from experience: the legacy of Springboard 1

The initiative builds directly on Springboard 1, an Erasmus+ project that explored how athletes could transition into technology-oriented entrepreneurship. Surveys conducted during that first phase revealed striking results: nearly 80% of athletes expressed strong interest in entrepreneurship training, yet only a handful had access to such programs.

Springboard 1 also confirmed that athletes do not necessarily need to become programmers or engineers to succeed in tech. Instead, the key lies in understanding innovation processes, identifying user needs, and building teams that can translate sports insight into scalable products or services.

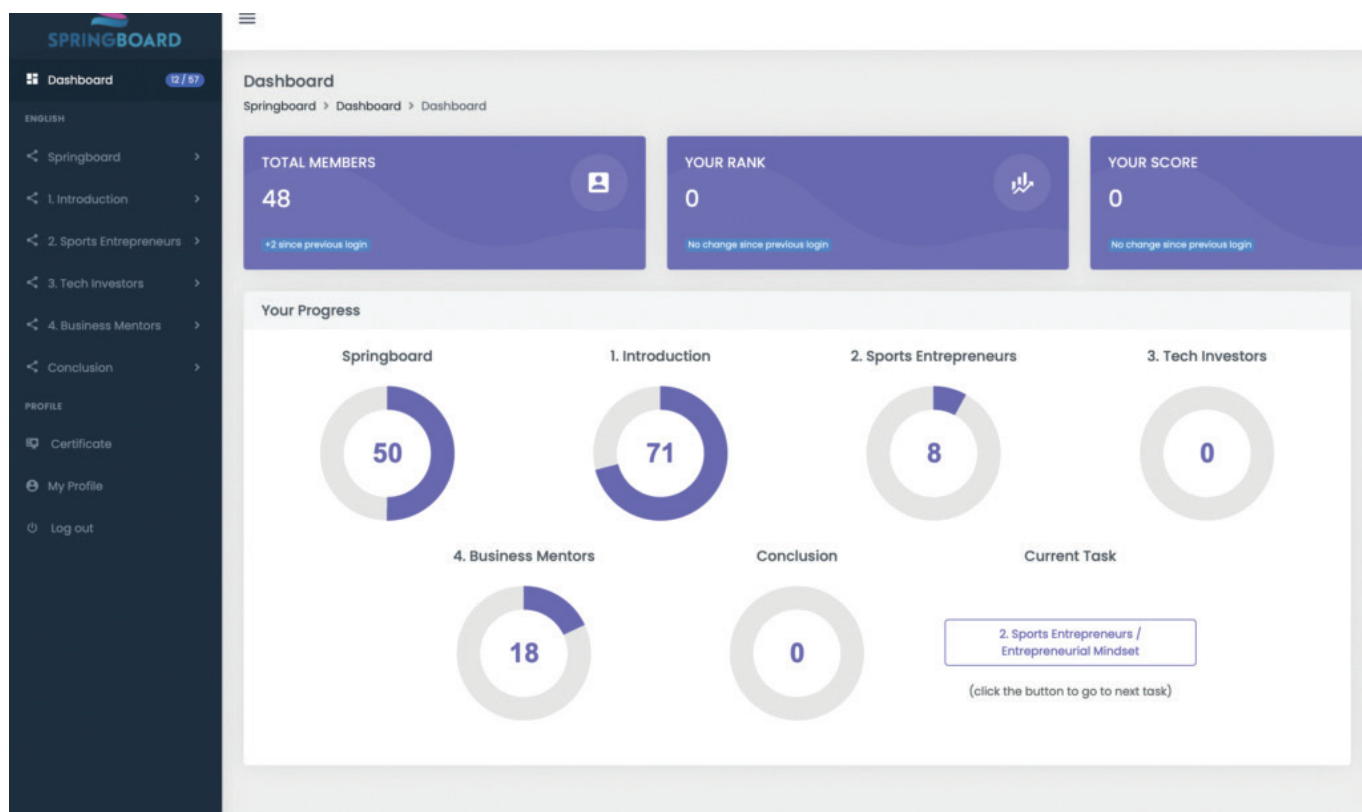
What Springboard 1 also revealed, however, was a persistent gender gap. Women athletes showed equal enthusiasm but faced additional barriers, from lack of female role models to doubts about belonging in the tech sector. Hence, Springboard 2 zeroes in on this intersection: women, sport, and technology.



A European alliance for change

Coordinated by Igloo Innovation (Norway), SPRINGBOARD 2 connects five European countries and a broad network of supporting organisations.

This consortium is not merely academic; it is hands-on. OSF, for instance, will lead workshops and networking events to connect Dutch and European stakeholders with the broader Sports Tech ecosystem. The project's collaborative design ensures that every partner leads at least one work package, from training delivery to mentor recruitment, fostering true European co-creation.





Innovative approach: from mentorship to digital empowerment

SPRINGBOARD 2 introduces several innovative elements that set it apart from previous Erasmus+ initiatives:

1. Tailored Entrepreneurial Training

The project develops specialised learning modules combining sports experience with business and tech competencies. Training covers leadership, innovation management, funding strategies, and digital literacy, designed to fit athletes' demanding schedules through blended online and offline formats.

2. Digital Mentoring & Networking Platform

Partnering with the SheSkillz Global Mentoring Platform, SPRINGBOARD 2 creates a European digital hub where women athletes can meet mentors, share experiences, and explore opportunities. This online ecosystem extends beyond the project's lifetime, ensuring long-term impact and accessibility.

3. Policy and Advocacy Framework

Beyond training individuals, the project advocates for structural change. Policy recommendations will be developed to encourage sports tech organisations to adopt gender-inclusive hiring, funding, and leadership practices.

4. Showcasing Role Models

Success stories matter. The program invites established female entrepreneurs and innovators in sport to share their journeys, demystifying entrepreneurship and inspiring participants to follow their path.

Concrete goals and measurable impact

Over its 24-month duration, SPRINGBOARD 2 aims to directly empower at least 100 women athletes aged 24–35 across Europe. These participants, active or recently retired athletes, will receive mentorship, skills training, and access to a cross-border network of peers and investors.

The project's objectives are clear and measurable:

- Develop and implement tailored training modules and mentorship programs.
- Build a European network of women in sports tech through workshops and events.
- Produce policy guidelines for inclusive practices in sports and innovation sectors.
- Strengthen organizational capacity among consortium members to support women entrepreneurs.

By the project's end, the consortium expects to see a tangible increase in women-led startups, enhanced employability, and greater representation of women in decision-making roles within the Sports Tech ecosystem.

Short-, medium-, and long-term effects

In the short term, participants gain concrete skills in entrepreneurship and technology while being paired with experienced mentors who can guide their transition. Awareness of gender disparities in sports tech will be raised within participating organisations and the wider sports community.

In the medium term, the impact becomes visible through the emergence of new ventures and networks. Alumni of the program will continue to collaborate, mentor others, and expand the ecosystem, a ripple effect reaching beyond the initial 100 participants.

In the long term, the project aims to bridge the gender gap in sports innovation across Europe. By 2030, the partners hope to see more women leading startups, developing new technologies, and influencing the future of sport. This aligns directly with EU objectives on gender equality (SDG 5) and decent work and economic growth (SDG 8).

Towards a more inclusive and innovative future

The promise of SPRINGBOARD 2 extends far beyond its immediate participants. By creating open-access educational resources, digital mentorship tools, and policy frameworks, the project aims to leave a lasting legacy that other organisations across Europe can adopt. Its holistic approach, combining personal empowerment with systemic change, positions it as a model for future EU initiatives in sport and innovation.

Ultimately, SPRINGBOARD 2 reminds us that the future of sports innovation depends not only on technology, but on diverse leadership. When women athletes step into the tech arena, they bring the same determination that once drove them to Olympic podiums, now directed at building companies, products, and communities that will shape the sports world for decades to come.





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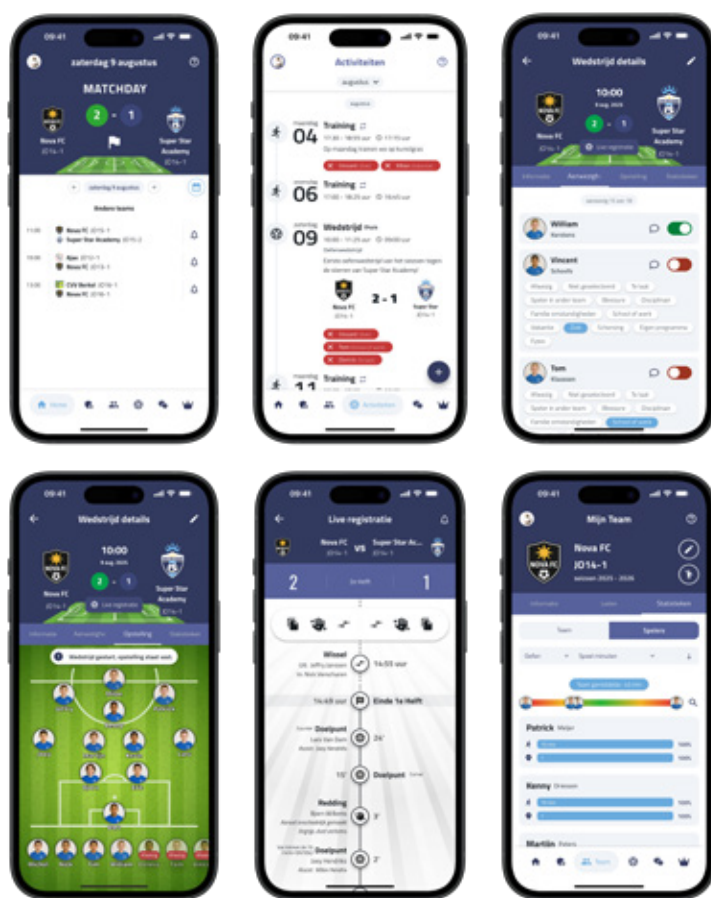
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Sports: the economic driver for South Africa

On October 13, Orange Sports Forum (OSF) officially launched the Orange Sports Hub South Africa (OSH SA) in Bellville, Cape Town – a major step in strengthening the economic and sporting ties between the Netherlands and South Africa. A second office will open in Sandton, Johannesburg in early 2026, expanding the Dutch sports network across the region.



The festive launch took place at Damen Shipyards' impressive headquarters in the port of Cape Town. Mark Agterdenbosch, Managing Partner of OSH SA, announced the opening in the presence of Dr Ivan Meyer, Minister of Economic Development, Tourism and Agriculture of the Western Cape, and Johan van de Hoef, Deputy Consul General of the Netherlands. Over 70 distinguished guests attended, among them a business delegation from the Johan Cruyff Foundation, led by Edwin van der Sar.

A day before the event, the Cruyff Foundation celebrated the opening of a new Cruyff Court in George, about 300 km from Cape Town. This symbolized the shared vision between the Foundation and the new Hub: using sport to create social impact and long-term opportunity. Guests from both countries—entrepreneurs, policy makers, sports federations (rugby, hockey, football), knowledge institutions like Stellenbosch University, and private companies—met to explore future cooperation, hosted jointly by OSF and Damen Shipyards.

Strong economic and social significance

In his keynote address, Minister Meyer emphasized the enduring relationship between the Netherlands and the Western Cape. He welcomed the Hub as a catalyst for sustainable economic growth, mutual trade and innovation, and a partner in improving vitality and well-being through sport. The provincial government will work closely with OSH SA to align sport with economic development policies.

Earlier that day, OSF and the Department of Sport & Culture of the Western Cape Government hosted a Sports Round Table with around 30 key stakeholders. Representing Minister Ricardo Mackenzie, Chief Director Dr Lyndon Bouah opened the session. The Cruyff Foundation presented its South Africa 2030 strategy, highlighting the positive community impact of the 12 existing Courts and future plans to expand across the country. Quoting Johan Cruyff – *"You can't do anything alone; you have to do it together"* – Dr Bouah underlined the essence of collaboration that the Hub now embodies.

Participants discussed how Dutch and South African partners can jointly strengthen grassroots development, sport innovation, and entrepreneurship.

A milestone for Dutch–South African sports cooperation

The Orange Sports Hub Cape Town marks a new phase of structured, long-term engagement between the two nations. Built on a formal partnership with CapeBPO, the Hub continuously monitors sports policy, investment flows and business opportunities across South Africa and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

This enables OSF members to access real-time market intelligence, support trade missions, and identify innovation opportunities in digital sports, infrastructure, and social programs. Early founding members include Lumosa and Infosys, represented by Hans Sanders and David van der Merwe respectively. More OSF partners are expected to join soon.

Local leadership with international reach

Heading the Hub, Mark Agterdenbosch combines experience in economic diplomacy and a strong network across public and private sectors. Under his leadership, OSH SA functions as a gateway for Dutch sports organizations seeking lasting partnerships and visibility in the region.

"South Africa and the Netherlands are natural partners in developing sports ecosystems that create growth, health, and prosperity,"

Agterdenbosch noted. *"The country faces challenges, but also enormous potential. Emerging trends—from sports tech to social inclusion—are paving the way for sustainable progress."*

Five strategic pillars

The Hub operates through five strategic pillars, tailored to the local context:

1. Market access & visibility – Linking Dutch innovation to South African ecosystems through trade facilitation, joint showcases and events.
2. Local presence & support – Offering flexible workspace and local representation for sustainable business growth.
3. Knowledge & community – Organizing workshops, CEO sessions and innovation rounds to connect experts.
4. Support for startups and tech programs – Building the Innovation Sport Valley concept in South Africa.
5. Social impact through sport – Developing community programs that promote inclusion and vitality.

These pillars directly align with OSF's International Strategy 2034, which prioritizes digital sports technology, sports medical innovation, high-tech facilities, sustainable infrastructure and sport-for-all initiatives.





South Africa's vibrant sports economy

Sport is a major economic driver for South Africa, contributing to job creation, tourism and local identity. The country's sportswear market alone reached around USD 888 million in 2024, growing at an annual rate of 3.8%. This growth is powered by a young population, urban fashion trends and rising health awareness.

Beyond apparel, the broader sports industry—including equipment, events, media, and licensed products—continues to expand. Digitalization and social media amplify fan engagement and open new commercial channels, even as funding and talent development remain structural challenges.

The most popular sports—football, rugby and cricket—are joined by fast-growing interest in athletics, hockey, basketball, golf, cycling, swimming, tennis, and netball. The Western Cape and Gauteng provinces serve as national hubs for sports infrastructure, education and innovation.

Driving sustainable cooperation

The creation of the Orange Sports Hub South Africa represents a strategic shift from short-term trade missions to permanent collaboration. The Hub ensures that relationships evolve into mutual investment, research partnerships, and local impact programs. It strengthens both nations' ambitions for inclusive growth and healthier societies through sport.

By facilitating knowledge exchange, public-private partnerships, and joint innovation projects, OSH SA contributes to a resilient sports economy that benefits communities on both sides.

Looking ahead, the Hub aims to play a central role in supporting South Africa's participation in global sporting events, as well as in preparing for future continental competitions. It will serve as a testbed for sustainable sports solutions, from renewable energy lighting and smart venues to community health initiatives.

A shared vision for the future

The opening of OSH SA demonstrates how sport can bridge continents and drive both economic and social transformation. It provides Dutch and South African companies, knowledge institutions and governments with a permanent platform for cooperation.

With its focus on innovation, sustainability and inclusion, the Hub is set to become a model for international collaboration in sport—empowering the next generation of athletes, entrepreneurs and changemakers across Africa.



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HOW EUROPE IS PEDALING TOWARD A HEALTHIER, SAFER FUTURE

E-bikes are no longer a niche gadget for early adopters. Across Europe, they've become a symbol of how people move, exercise, and connect with their cities. From Vienna to Porto and from Warsaw to Eindhoven, e-bikes are transforming urban life, one pedal stroke at a time.

At the heart of this movement stands We-Bike, an Erasmus+ Sport project that's helping Europe rethink what cycling means today. Bringing together municipalities, researchers, innovators, and sports networks, the project promotes the healthier and safer use of e-bikes for commuting, leisure, and sport.



The reasons are clear. E-bikes are affordable, comfortable, and sustainable, and they allow riders to avoid traffic jams while staying active. The energy crisis and post-pandemic mobility shifts have only accelerated this change. Cycling is no longer just a sport or a hobby, it's part of how Europeans live, work, and stay healthy.

But growth brings new questions. How do we keep riders safe? How do cities adapt their infrastructure? And how can policy, education, and technology keep pace with an evolving cycling culture?

Coordinated by ANCI Piemonte (Italy) and powered by a consortium that includes Orange Sports Forum (Netherlands), EPSI (Belgium), FEDAS (Germany), FH Technikum Wien (Austria), Everythink (Portugal), Verde Foundation (Poland), and the Municipality of Borgomanero, We-Bike is blending science, policy, and communication to help Europe embrace e-mobility responsibly.

Riding the Wave of an E-Bike Boom

Europe's e-bike market has exploded over the past decade. Sales have grown by double digits year after year, and e-bikes now represent almost one in three bicycles sold in Europe. Germany and the Netherlands lead the way, but the trend is unmistakably continental.





Europe-Wide Research, Local Impact

To answer those questions, We-Bike is taking a scientific approach. Over two years, the partners have combined desk research, surveys, focus groups, and interviews across six countries. The project's findings reveal striking similarities and sharp contrasts between regions.

In Austria, safety training programs and cycling infrastructure are well-developed, yet accident rates among older riders remain a concern. In Italy, cycling culture is thriving but still fragmented, with initiatives like FIAB's ComuneCiclabile working to unite municipalities under shared cycling standards. In Poland and Portugal, electric mobility is emerging fast, driven by local innovation hubs and EU-backed investments.

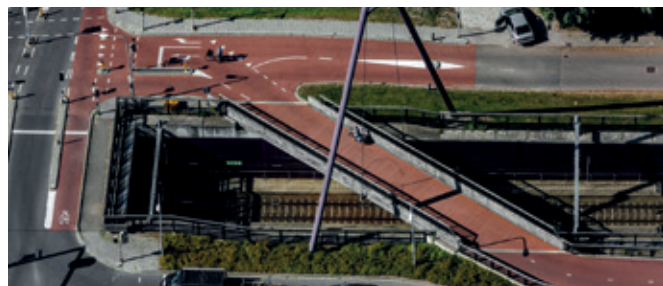
Meanwhile, the Netherlands continues to serve as Europe's reference point for cycling excellence. But even there, the rise of e-bikes has raised new safety challenges, particularly around speed differences between riders and shared-use paths.

Orange Sports Forum, the Dutch partner in We-Bike, plays a key role in translating these insights into practical action. By linking Dutch expertise in sport and international cooperation, OSF helps shape a European conversation around sustainable mobility.

Pedaling Toward Education and Safety

One of We-Bike's core goals is to make e-biking safer and more accessible. Across partner countries, the project has found that while people are enthusiastic about e-bikes, many still lack confidence or technical knowledge.

In a Europe-wide survey of 170 respondents, a majority said they wanted training in safe riding, maintenance, and battery care, while others emphasized the need for clearer rules and better infrastructure. Older riders in particular expressed concerns about balance, traffic interaction, and road safety.



Responding to this, We-Bike is developing a training package and a practical handbook for local authorities, schools, and community groups. These materials will help riders of all ages learn how to handle e-bikes responsibly, whether it's teaching children how to ride in traffic or helping seniors adjust to pedal-assist technology.

From schoolyards to city halls, We-Bike is building a culture of safe, confident e-bike users across generations.

Cycling Knowledge as an Export Product

The project also recognizes that e-bike know-how is becoming a valuable export commodity. According to a 2024 Dutch government report, the bicycle industry generated €3.24 billion in production value in 2022, largely driven by e-bikes. The Netherlands has turned its expertise in cycling infrastructure, policy, and design into a powerful international calling card, one that We-Bike partners are helping to share across borders.

By identifying and promoting "good practices" such as Cycle Competence Austria, Pro Velo Brussels, and the Dutch Cycling Embassy, the project is mapping Europe's most effective models for cycling education, infrastructure, and governance. Each case shows how the right combination of policy, planning, and community engagement can accelerate e-bike adoption while keeping safety front and center.

From Research to Real-World Change

As the project moves into its final phase, We-Bike is preparing to deliver a set of concrete outcomes:

- A European e-bike research report outlining trends, barriers, and opportunities.
- An educational toolkit for trainers, municipalities, and schools.
- A handbook of best practices and safety guidelines.
- And a set of policy recommendations to help decision-makers integrate e-bikes into sustainable urban mobility plans.

Together, these deliverables aim to create a lasting framework that continues to shape policy and education well beyond the project's end in 2026.

A New Culture of Movement

Ultimately, We-Bike is about more than mobility, it's about quality of life. E-bikes are making cities more accessible, reducing emissions, and enabling people to stay active well into old age. They bridge generations, connect communities, and contribute to a healthier, more sustainable Europe.

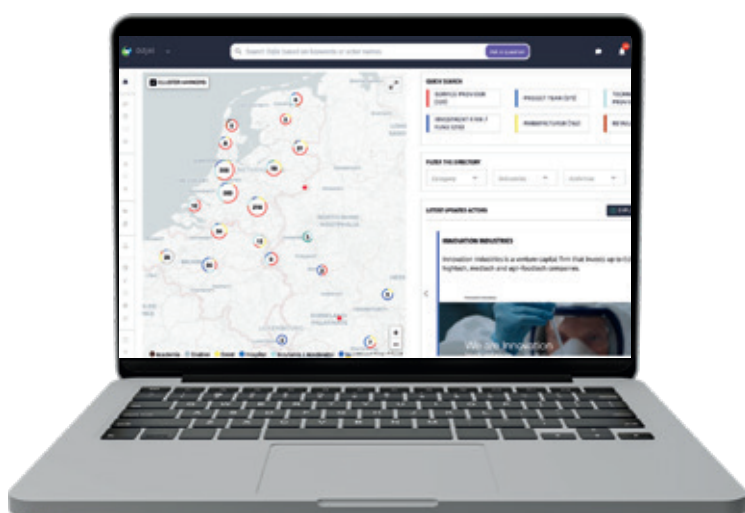
That's the vision driving We-Bike: a Europe where getting on a bike, electric or not, isn't just a way to get from A to B, but a step toward a cleaner, safer, and more connected future.





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NEXTGENSPORTFACILITIES: FROM WICKED PROBLEMS TO A MANIFESTO FOR ACTION



Across Europe, thousands of sports parks and community facilities are reaching a turning point. Once symbols of civic pride, many are now outdated, expensive to maintain, and no longer aligned with the way people live, move, and connect. At the same time, the need for sport has never been greater. As societies face climate change, demographic shifts, and rapid technological progress, sport remains one of the few domains that can unite people across age, culture, and background.

It was this paradox that inspired the Erasmus+ project **NextGenSportFacilities (NGSF)**, coordinated by **Orange Sports Forum** together with partners from the Netherlands, Portugal, and Türkiye. Over two years, universities, students, and experts worked together to reimagine how sports facilities can evolve into resilient, inclusive, and future-ready community assets.



Wicked Problems: Why Europe's Sports Infrastructure is Stuck

Our analysis began with three case studies: Sportpark Cuijk (NL), Sportcenter Beja (PT), and the ITU Sports Complex in Istanbul (TR). Though diverse in context, they revealed similar challenges. In planning theory, such issues are known as wicked problems: complex, interdependent, and resistant to simple solutions.

We identified four domains where these wicked problems converge:

- **Space & Land:** In cities, sports facilities compete with housing, transport, and commerce for scarce land. In rural areas, space is abundant but populations are too small to sustain investment.
- **Money & Resources:** Facilities are costly to build and maintain. Pools consume vast amounts of energy and water; pitches require constant care. Municipalities often run deficits, while fragile financial models fail to capture lifetime costs.
- **Governance & Institutions:** Responsibility is fragmented across municipalities, clubs, schools, and NGOs. Overlaps create duplication and inefficiency, while short political cycles undermine long-term planning. Procurement practices that reward the lowest price often lock in higher lifetime costs.
- **Society & Environment:** Facilities are meant to serve communities, yet many exclude through high fees, distance, or poor accessibility. At the same time, climate change adds pressure: facilities must adapt to heatwaves, floods, and energy transition challenges.

These are not isolated obstacles. Every attempted "fix" generates new dilemmas: lowering costs can reduce quality; expanding access increases financial strain; cutting maintenance creates future liabilities.

Yet precisely because they are wicked, these problems can become catalysts for innovation. They force us to think holistically—about design, governance, finance, technology, and community together.





From Research to Vision: A New Manifesto for Sport 2040

The NGSF project combined three methods—design research, design thinking, and design futures. Together, these provided a structured yet imaginative process: analysing context, generating creative solutions, and exploring long-term scenarios for sport in 2040.

The outcomes are captured in a new Manifesto for the Next Generation of Sports Facilities. It sets out eight principles for action:

1. **From Single-Use to Multi-Purpose Impact:** Sports parks must become multifunctional hubs for health, leisure, culture, and education.
2. **Inclusive Access for All:** Facilities designed for universal access, reflecting the diversity of communities across age, ability, and background.
3. **Resilient & Climate-Smart:** Infrastructure that is energy-efficient, circular, and adapted to climate extremes.
4. **Technology and Nature in Synergy:** Smart services and data-driven tools working together with ecological design.
5. **Built With and For Communities:** Co-creation to ensure relevance, ownership, and long-term stewardship.
6. **Modular and Future-Ready:** Adaptable structures that evolve with community needs.
7. **Active Integration into the Urban Fabric:** Sports parks as central, visible, and accessible public assets.
8. **Sport as a Platform for Values:** Spaces that foster fairness, respect, inclusion, and civic pride.



This is not just theory. Student teams created bold design prototypes: multifunctional modular facilities, climate-positive sports parks with renewable energy systems, and community-driven complexes blending physical activity with social and cultural life. Together, they demonstrate how wicked problems can be turned into opportunities for innovation.

What Comes Next: Sport 2040 Book Launch

The results of the NGSF project will be published in the upcoming book *Sport 2040: Rethinking the Future of Sports Facilities and Experiences in Europe*, to be launched in Q4 2025. The publication includes visionary designs, essays from experts, and four scenarios for sport in 2040—ranging from survivalist resilience to technology-driven *"power play."*

For policymakers, architects, federations, and investors, the message is clear: sports infrastructure is not a liability but a strategic asset. Done right, it can deliver health, cohesion, climate resilience, and economic vitality.

As Orange Sports Forum, we are proud to have coordinated this international effort. We now call on our members and partners to take the next step: to bring these ideas into practice and co-create the next generation of sports parks across Europe and beyond.

More information: www.nextgensportsfacilities.eu





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Team Kingdom of the Netherlands 2025:

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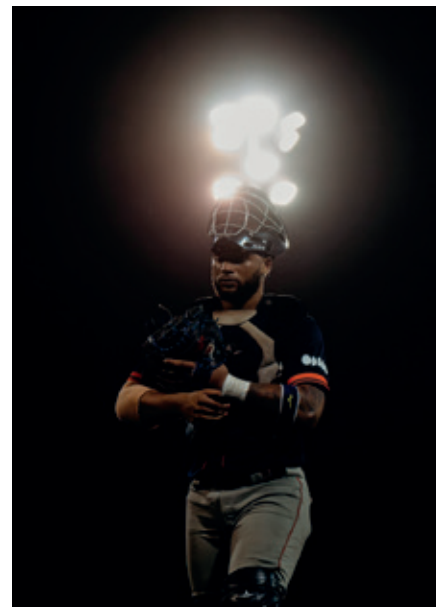
Team Kingdom of the Netherlands once again embodied talent, diversity, and collaboration within the Kingdom this past year. Major events and international tournaments continue to shine a global spotlight on the Kingdom Team—synonymous with excellence, resilience, and pride.

Kingdom Series Aruba – Sport as a Unifying Force

Sun, sea, and... baseball. During the Kingdom Series 2024 in Aruba, everything came together. What began as preparation for the unofficial World Championship in Mexico transformed into a vibrant celebration for the entire island community. The Kingdom Team didn't just play games—they connected with people. Players and coaches hosted clinics, visited schools, and inspired a new generation to dream big.

For Aruba's youth, it was a chance to train with their heroes and experience firsthand how sport can open doors. The Kingdom Series proved that elite baseball is more than competition—it's about connection, inspiration, and Kingdom-wide pride.





RAXUS Samurai Japan Series 2025 – Oranje Takes on Japan

A defining highlight of 2025 was Team Kingdom's participation in the prestigious RAXUS Samurai Japan Series. Facing Japan—reigning Olympic Champions and 2023 World Baseball Classic winners—was the ultimate test. Before 50,000 passionate fans in Osaka, Oranje showcased its skill, resilience, and world-class mindset.

Beyond the field, the team visited the Netherlands Pavilion at Expo 2025, where Consul General Marc Kuipers praised the squad for representing the Kingdom in a nation where baseball is a national passion. Under the Expo's theme 'Common Ground,' the team personified international collaboration and the unifying power of sport.

European Baseball Championship 2025 in Rotterdam – The Home of European Baseball

In September 2025, the heart of European baseball beat in Rotterdam. The Neptunus Family Stadium became the stage where Europe's best battled for the crown. With home fans behind them, Team Kingdom claimed its 25th European title—an extraordinary milestone.

But it wasn't just about the championship. Rotterdam transformed into a baseball festival where culture, community, and competition blended seamlessly. Under manager Evert-Jan 't Hoen, experience met young ambition as stars like Didi Gregorius, Jonathan Schoop, and Kevin Kelly led the way, while rising talents Jaydenn Estanista, Justin Morales, and Sem Kuijper announced themselves to Europe. The blend of Caribbean flair and European precision once again proved to be the formula for success.

World Baseball Classic 2026 – The Kingdom on the World Stage

Just months later, the world's biggest stage awaits: the World Baseball Classic 2026. In Miami, Houston, Tokyo, and San Juan, Team Kingdom will once again stand among baseball's elite. With Major League veterans and emerging stars from across the Kingdom, Oranje will bring its trademark passion, unity, and fearless play.

The final week in Miami will be the ultimate showcase—a moment to write history. For the players, it's the dream of a lifetime. For fans from Rotterdam to Willemstad and Oranjestad to Amsterdam, it's pure pride.





Road to LA28 – The Olympic Dream

Beyond the WBC, the next great challenge lies ahead: Los Angeles 2028. Team Kingdom is already preparing to return to the Olympic stage, driven by ambition and belief. Through intensive training, tactical innovation, and mental preparation, the team is building towards another historic run.

The Olympic dream is more than just a goal—it's a mission that unites the Kingdom. With MLB experience and homegrown Caribbean and European talent, Oranje has everything it takes to become a true medal contender.

The Kingdom Team – A Symbol of Unity and Excellence

Team Kingdom of the Netherlands represents more than baseball—it represents the strength of collaboration across the entire Kingdom: from Amsterdam to Aruba, from Curaçao to Sint Maarten. Legends like Hensley Meulens and Rob Cordemans paved the path, while today's stars—Jonathan Schoop, Didi Gregorius, Shairon Martis, Dwayne Kemp, and Juremi Profar—carry that torch into a new era of success.

With deep Caribbean roots, dynamic youth development, and an unshakable team spirit, the Kingdom Team embodies everything the sport stands for: passion, growth, and pride.



Conclusion – Oranje Inspires the World

From the Kingdom Series in Aruba and the European Championship in Rotterdam to the RAXUS Samurai Japan Series and the World Baseball Classic in Miami—Team Kingdom of the Netherlands continues to shine on the world stage. It's more than a team—it's a symbol of unity, ambition, and excellence.

With the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games on the horizon, new milestones and heroes await. The Kingdom Team will continue to inspire fans across the Netherlands, the Caribbean, and the world.

Join the journey.

Partner with Team Kingdom of the Netherlands and become part of its Olympic dream.

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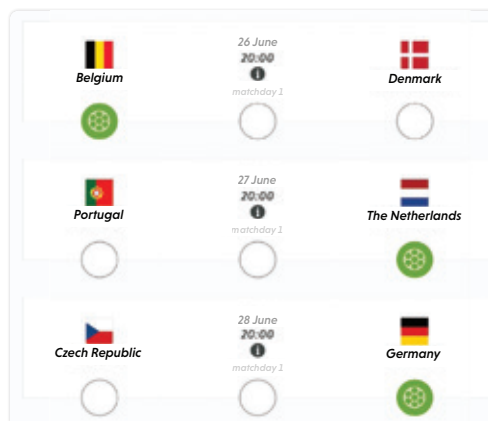
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WEPARK: DUTCH INNOVATION DRIVING CHINA'S SPORTS CITIES

In a country where urban development and sports culture are evolving at lightning speed, the Netherlands is helping shape the future of sport in China.

The project WePark, initiated under the *Partners for International Business (PIB) – Football Development in China* program, embodies how Dutch expertise in sports, urban design, and sustainability can come together in one of the world's most dynamic markets.

From Football Ambition to Urban Transformation

It all started in 2017 with an ambitious goal: to contribute to the development of football in Western China. The Chinese government had identified sport, particularly football, as a national priority. New academies, stadiums, and community sports parks were to promote not only athletic excellence but also urban well-being and social cohesion.

For Dutch companies, this ambition represented a major opportunity. Under the coordination of Orange Sports Forum (OSF), a consortium including Feyenoord Rotterdam, Royal HaskoningDHV, Yalp, VDL Seating Systems, SportBizz, and Royal Ten Cate joined forces. It was later on expanded with organizations like YOU, FO and the Johan Cruyff Foundation. Together, they focused not only on infrastructure but on a broader challenge: *How can sport become a driver of sustainable and social urban development?*

The answer resulted in WePark, an innovative concept for multifunctional sports parks integrating sport, education, health, and recreation into the fabric of the city.

"A Park Where the City Moves"

The vision behind WePark is as simple as it is revolutionary: sports facilities should not be isolated or hidden, but embedded in the daily lives of citizens. *"In China, many sports complexes are built top-down, large, impressive, but often underused,"* explains Ms Zhou Li, Founder and Chairman of Happy Sports China. *"With WePark, we show that a sports park can be both a social hub and an economic catalyst."*



The first WePark concepts were developed in collaboration with local authorities in Chongqing and Chengdu. Dutch partners contributed their expertise in smart and sustainable materials, and active community programming, from circular materials to digital play solutions encouraging physical activity among children and families.

Co-Creation as a Success Factor

What sets WePark apart is the way Dutch and Chinese partners collaborate. Instead of a traditional export model, delivering a product and moving on, the project is built around co-creation. Dutch organizations work hand in hand with local governments, universities, and architects to ensure long-term knowledge exchange and local capacity building.

This approach aligns perfectly with the OSF Strategy 2024–2034, which emphasizes structural, sustainable international partnerships over one-off trade missions. *"The value lies not only in the projects themselves, but in the networks and trust they create,"* says Ms. Zhou. *"WePark represents a Dutch model that exports not just technology, but values, inclusivity, sustainability, and social engagement."*

The Power of the Dutch Sports Ecosystem

The Dutch sports and vitality ecosystem has earned international recognition for its integrated approach combining hardware and software, from innovative sports surfaces and smart data analytics to community engagement and education.

In WePark, all these disciplines converge. Yalp provided interactive play installations generating real-time movement data, while the Johan Cruyff Foundation shared expertise on youth training, sports education and sport fields. *"The strength of this consortium lies in its diversity,"* says Ms. Zhou. *"We can offer a complete ecosystem, from design and financing to activation and legacy."*



China's Shift Toward "Healthy Cities"

WePark's timing could hardly be better. The Chinese government's Healthy China 2030 strategy emphasizes physical activity and well-being as key pillars of urban life. Cities are seeking sustainable, human-centered solutions to tackle challenges of urbanization, pollution, and sedentary lifestyles, precisely where Dutch know-how comes in.

The Netherlands has decades of experience in spatial planning, circular economy, and community sports," Ms. Zhou explains. *"China is undergoing a transition, and we can help guide it, not by prescribing, but by collaborating to make cities more livable through sport."*

Sustainable Diplomacy in Action

Beyond business, WePark is a story of connection. It reflects how sport can serve as a bridge for cultural understanding and collaboration. *"Sport is a universal language,"* Ms. Zhou says. *"Whether in Chongqing, Barcelona or Los Angeles, it creates common ground, a space where people and nations can work together despite differences."*



The close involvement of OSF and the Dutch embassy and consulate generals in China illustrates the value of what's often called sports diplomacy. The Netherlands positions itself globally as a trustworthy partner that thinks long-term, respects local context, and delivers measurable impact.

A Blueprint for Global Sports Hubs

The success of WePark in China has paved the way for new OSF initiatives in other parts of the world. Build on the same philosophy: a locally anchored, globally connected network that promotes Dutch sports innovation abroad.

What started in Chongqing has become a blueprint for how the Netherlands can collaborate worldwide through sport and innovation. WePark is more than a sport park, it's a vision for how sport can strengthen communities and create lasting value.



In September 2025 the first WeParks and Cruyff Courts were opened in the Province of Jiangsu in the city of Kunshan. It were already the 13th and 14th WeParks in China. OSF has the pleasure to attend the grand opening and continue the strategic partnership with Happy Sports China.

Cooperation OSF & Happy Sports China



Opening WePark & Cruyff Court Kunshan



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ECOSYSTEM INNOVATIVE SPORTS STARTUPS STRENGTHENS THE DUTCH SPORTS SECTOR

▲ Partners SportUp Boost NL: Innovatielab Thialf, Cluster Sports & Technology, Orange Sports Forum and Sportinnovator (on the right: Eric van der Veen)

Innovation is important because it stimulates growth, provides a competitive advantage, and helps organisations adapt to changing markets. This applies to the business world, but certainly also to the sports sector. Eric van der Veen, community manager at Sportinnovator, explains why a strong ecosystem around sports startups is so crucial.

"In the Netherlands, we have a unique sports infrastructure with our countless amateur sports associations, but it's also quite traditional," Van der Veen starts off his argument. "You see that young people, in particular, have different needs these days. So it's important that clubs and other sports providers innovate their range of sports in order to appeal to Gen Z. The sports sector must continue to evolve."

Sports Innovation in the Netherlands

The Netherlands is performing very well in elite sports. According to Van der Veen, this is partly due to its well-organised infrastructure for knowledge and innovation. *"The Sports Innovation Monitor shows that sports organisations create more new solutions than the average organisation in our country."* Van der Veen does, however, note that these innovative solutions are not always equally groundbreaking. *"Compared to other sectors,*

the sports sector is particularly strong in adopting each other's innovations, less so in developing them independently." The Monitor also shows that the innovation capacity of sports organisations significantly improves when they collaborate with external parties specialising in sports innovation. *"Club sports in the Netherlands and the federations still have room for improvement in the area of co-creation,"* Van der Veen concludes.

SportUp Boost

To support innovative entrepreneurs in their early stages, SportUp Boost NL was launched last year. This program gives sports startups the opportunity to develop and scale their ideas faster, contributing to the innovation and strengthening of the Dutch sports sector. Van der Veen explains: *"To be eligible to participate in the SportUp Boost program, you first need a good idea that has already been developed to*

some extent. You also need to have the ambition to turn it into a business. And the innovation has to be scalable."

In the program, startups are first confronted with the basic question whether there is a market for their sports innovation. *"What you often see with startups is that innovators fall in love with the solution but lose sight of what problem they're actually solving,"* Van der Veen observes. Participants in SportUp Boost NL are challenged to answer the question who their innovation is intended for. *"Especially if you've developed something for elite sports, your market is very small, and the chances of a viable business model are usually slim. Then you need to consider whether your innovation can also be applied in another field, such as healthcare. This way, sports serves as a launching market for an innovation that can ultimately be applied in other sectors as well."*



SPORTS INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM



Sport Innovation Ecosystem

Sportinnovator's mission is to stimulate and propagate innovations. To this end, it has built an entire ecosystem consisting of Sportinnovator centers, sports institutions, businesses, knowledge institutions, and municipalities. Through this ecosystem, innovations are supported and stimulated in various phases of their development. Van der Veen: *"In our case, it starts with the Sportinnovator centers, which are breeding grounds for innovation. Starting from there, startups can apply for our calls and other forms of early-stage financing. After that, they can access the Sportinnovator Academy and participate in the SportUp Boost program. In subsequent phases, there is often a need for funding, and various programs, funds, and venture capitalists are available, such as NL Sport Tech Ventures, Sports Innovation League, and the Dutch Sport Tech Fund."*

Innovating for a future-proof sports sector

Van der Veen is optimistic about the sports innovation culture in the Netherlands. He's enthusiastic about the SportUp Boost program and the positive drive of the innovative entrepreneurs in the program. *"I hope the number of participants continues to grow and that all the startups can scale up their development through SportUp Boost. Only by continuing to innovate can we ensure a healthy and future-proof sports sector."*

For further information:

sportupboost.nl
eric@sportinnovator.nl

PARTICIPANTS SPORTUP BOOST NL



Super Star Academy

This platform was specifically developed to help coaches save time and provide a pedagogical boost to the development of amateur football players. Founder Bart de Ruijscher: *"We focus on the individual development of players. The Super Star Academy app ensures that children get more joy from their development and can also contribute more to it themselves. SportUp Boost offered me a relevant network of people who can truly help develop the platform. I received feedback primarily on how to turn my innovation into a business. It was fantastic to be part of a group of people who are truly knowledgeable about the world of sports. I found that to be a very positive experience."*

Dzjie

Helps create a resilient Netherlands by strengthening sports clubs with smart, future-proof business networks. Through better insights and targeted activation, Dzjie helps networks grow. Co-founder Niels Glerum: *"We support sports clubs in their ambition to grow and the resources to invest in a business network that suits them. These can be both elite and amateur sports clubs. SportUp Boost has particularly helped us refine our revenue model and strategically assess our market proposition. We have also been able to expand our network significantly, enabling us to achieve the desired growth into a scalable company."*



Fitycal

An innovative fitness tracker using an advanced 3D scanning technology to provide detailed insight into your physical development. CEO Adil Hanafi: *"With Fitycall, we want to make fitness tracking simple, effective, and motivating. SportUp Boost helped me figure out how to start and grow a business. It provided incredibly valuable information that I really needed at the time. I learned how to create a business plan. I can find that on YouTube, but it's completely different when you're in a classroom with a teacher explaining and providing direct feedback. You also learn about target audiences, your growth strategy, how to generate leads, and how to plan your next steps. The networking was also fantastic. It's truly a complete package."*

PSV FOCUSES ON DIGITAL STADIUM ACCESS AND INCREASING FAN ENGAGEMENT



In recent years, various Dutch football stadiums have been extensively experimenting with smart technology designed to contribute to a positive stadium experience. One of these pilots took place at PSV in the Philips Stadium in Eindhoven. Manager Strategy Damian Bott explains how PSV, by introducing personal digital access and innovative sound visualisation, is creating a safe and positive atmosphere in the stands.



Personal digital access simply means that as a supporter, you no longer need a paper ticket or hard plastic season club card to enter the stadium, but a digital ticket in your club's app. Not surprising in an era where almost everything has become digital. In recent months 85% of PSV season club card holders have switched to personal digital access, with regular tickets to follow later.

Benefits of personal digital access

Damian Bott: "Personal digital access is important for PSV from a security perspective. We want to know who is in the stadium. If there's an incident in the stadium, we want to be able to act quickly and apprehend the person who

is misbehaving. This is easier when the access system is personalised. It's also important that this system allows PSV to communicate directly with everyone who comes to the stadium. This has major advantages for supporters, allowing us to serve them more effectively. Digital access also improves the supporter flow so people can enter the stadium more quickly. The app also allows supporters to easily transfer their seats digitally to family or friends or simply put them on offer through PSV Resale. This reduces the number of empty seats. Moreover, the app is less susceptible to fraud than some current solutions, making black-market trading a thing of the past. And digital tickets are, of course, more sustainable."

◀ Damian Bott



The technology that enables personal digital access was developed by the Zwolle-based software company Siip. CEO Remco Voorhorst: *"When you buy a ticket through the PSV App, you must identify yourself once. Our technology links this information to your right of access to the stadium. Technically, you don't receive a ticket that gets you in, but you are on your club's guest list."*

"Our technology complies with all privacy laws and regulations. Your identification information is encrypted in a digital vault on your phone. It is not stored in a central database and is not managed by PSV. Only your essential data is shared with the club when you accept a ticket. All this personal data is deleted thirty days after the match. Safe, honest, and reliable. That's what matters most to us."

Pilot and phased rollout

Having said all this, PSV didn't rush into introducing digital stadium access. It is being implemented in phases this season and was preceded by a pilot program with thorough evaluations and feedback from test users. The technology that enables personal digital access came with the introduction of a renewed PSV App. *"Our starting point is user-friendliness,"* Bott emphasises. *"That's why we wanted to make sure everything worked properly before we launched it. If a user has problems with the PSV App or doesn't understand it, we will resolve it together with the supporter. On match days, we've set up a service desk, and outside of matches, supporters can contact our FANdesk for this."*

Linking with your ID

Supporters have to identify themselves once for personal digital access by scanning their ID in the PSV App. This can be sensitive for privacy reasons. Bott: *"A valid point. That's why we've ensured that everything is properly arranged, both legally and technically. We received a lot of support from the government (state attorney) and the KNVB (Royal Dutch Football Association). We ask our supporters for information, so we also have a duty to show them that we're doing the right things with it. We call it 'Show me you know me.' There was therefore no significant resistance when we launched personal digital access. This is, of course, also because we at PSV have the trust of our supporters. We handle that with the utmost care."*

Fangage for Football

A second component of the pilot project conducted at PSV involves detecting and combating unwanted chants, racism, and discrimination using acoustic sensor technology developed by Eindhoven-based technology company Sorama. Damian Bott explains how it works: *"Sound cameras installed above the stands capture sound and recognise whether it's singing or chanting. The security officer listening in can use the system to determine whether it's a supporter song or an unwanted chant. It's a tool, an enrichment of the security officer's eyes and ears."*

Visualised sound

PSV uses this technology not only to identify inappropriate behaviour, but also to positively influence the atmosphere in the stadium. Bott: *"We developed a heat map for this purpose, allowing us to visualise sound in the stadium. This offers a wide range of possibilities for engaging fans before, during, and after the match. For example, we can show on our screens that a cheering stadium produces the same number of decibels as a Boeing 747 taking off."*



QR code to Sorama-video explaining the sound visualisation.

By visualising the supporters' interactions, PSV expects to strengthen the atmosphere and sense of community in the stadium. *"By enhancing a positive ambiance, you immediately drown out negative voices,"* says Bott. *"And of course, you always want your supporters to make themselves heard because that has a major impact on the players. That's how we cheer PSV on to win the league."*



The pilots at PSV are part of the project "Smart Technology against Racism and Discrimination in Football Stadiums."

This program uses test setups of smart image and sound technologies to explore solutions that combat racism and discrimination in football stadiums. Solutions focus on personalised access; better detection and recording of racism and discrimination, both in image and in sound; and predicting and influencing supporter behaviour. The project is supervised by Sportinnovator.

More information:

www.sportinnovator.nl

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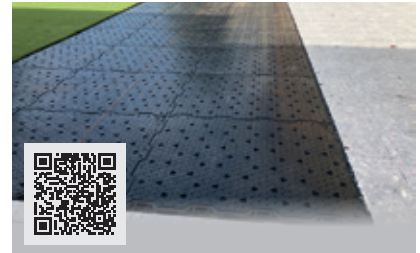
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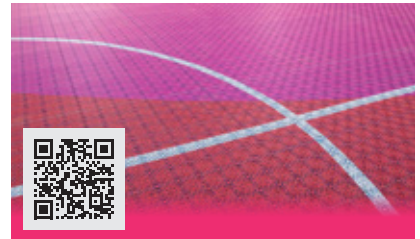
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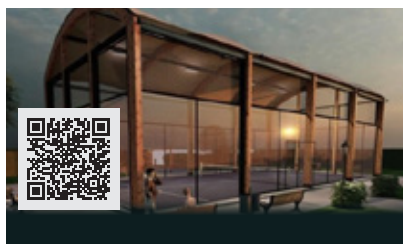
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WITH THE 2027 BEACH VOLLEYBALL WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS, THE BAR IS RAISED ONCE AGAIN



In 2015, the world watched in awe as the Netherlands hosted an innovative and spectacular Beach Volleyball World Championship on some of the country's most iconic locations. In 2027, the Dutch Volleyball Federation (Nevobo), TIG Sports & Events, and four host cities and provinces will join forces once again - with the same ambition: to create a lasting legacy.



Track record

TIG Sports & Events and Nevobo have an impressive track record in event organization.

A recent example was the 2022 Women's Volleyball World Championships. That event introduced healthy food as part of the event experience, setting a new standard. In addition, team presentations in the heart of Apeldoorn and the pairing of international teams with small towns in the region were successful initiatives to strengthen connections with local fans and sports enthusiasts.

Moreover, the creation of multiple volleyball courts inside a single football stadium (Gelredome) proved to be a great success.

In earlier years, the Netherlands also proved its role as an innovator, for instance by transforming the **King of the Court** training concept into an official format and competition — which has since grown into an exciting new branch of beach volleyball, attracting an increasing number of fans and media worldwide.



The Dutch approach to sport is unique: organizing major sporting events can confidently be entrusted to this 'small country,' and creating an event with great social impact has become a Dutch trademark. The Dutch Volleyball Federation (Nevobo) has long been one of the sports organizations in the Netherlands taking the lead in this area.

With the 2027 Beach Volleyball World Championships, the organization aims to build on the success and insights gained during the 2015 World Championships. Once again, the tournament will be held in four cities, at iconic locations. Each participating team will receive the stage it deserves — everything will be played on a center court. In short: perfect conditions for players and an unforgettable experience for fans.

Building bridges

One of the key insights has been that sport is an excellent means to build a bridge to society. Even before 2015, Nevobo recognized the economic and social value of volleyball and has since expanded that focus to a global scale. The federation is actively involved in numerous development projects, now also supported by the International Volleyball Federation (FIVB).

This aligns with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which have also been embraced by the IOC and governments worldwide. The programs **Volleyball4Life** and **We Lead Volleyball Together** are just two examples of projects that align with these SDGs and demonstrate how volleyball can contribute to positive social change. At the 2027 World Championships, these SDGs will be naturally and purposefully integrated into every part of the event.

Identity

The vision is clear: to create the most sustainable beach volleyball event ever. *"Equal opportunities, inclusion, and a healthy lifestyle"* will be woven into the DNA of the event. Each host city will embrace specific SDGs that fit its unique identity.

The Hague, known as the City of Peace and Justice, will promote peace initiatives, while Rotterdam — as Europe's economic engine and port city — will focus more on **Decent Work and Economic Growth**.

Rotterdam's southern district (*'Zuid'*) is also the most multicultural area of the city, with more than 150 nationalities and corresponding challenges in integration and inclusivity. Around the 2027 World Championships, a program will be developed together with the FIVB and the Volleyball Foundation to strengthen life skills and gender equality, particularly for young women (who often face more societal challenges than boys).





Efficiency

Working with cities that have frequently hosted such events, even after 2015, has its advantages — including efficiency and decisiveness.

"We have been working with Nevobo for more than twenty years, and the FIVB has also hosted many events in our city. The Hague has grown into the beach volleyball capital of the Netherlands, and it has become part of our DNA," said Hilbert Bredemeijer, alderman of The Hague, where the semifinals and finals will be played in a floating stadium on the Hofvijver, next to the epicenter of the Dutch government. Amsterdam (Museumplein), Rotterdam (Rijnhaven), and Apeldoorn (Marktplein) will also feature locations that will undoubtedly draw attention.

Legacy

The experience of all partners should lead, in the summer of 2027, to another high-quality event with lasting social impact — one that will become a new blueprint for future global volleyball events, where the power of sport can increasingly be used to inspire and connect communities around the world.

The 2015 Beach Volleyball World Championships already served as a great source of inspiration for the organization of the 2023 World Championships in Mexico. *"I am convinced that with this World Championship, we will once again make history and create an unforgettable experience and memory for countless fans — and certainly set a new standard in taking social responsibility in sport,"* said Peter Sprenger, president of Nevobo.





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THE NETHERLANDS UNITES FOR GLOBAL SPORTING OPPORTUNITIES

A Public-Private Partnership drives Dutch sports innovation toward the U.S., ahead of the 2026 FIFA World Cup and LA28 Olympic and Paralympic Games

Over the next three years, the United States will become the center of the global sports world. With the FIFA World Cup 2026 and the Olympic and Paralympic Games Los Angeles 2028, the stage is set for two of the biggest events on the planet. For the Netherlands, it's more than a sporting opportunity, it's a moment to strengthen international business, showcase innovation, and position Dutch expertise in one of the most dynamic sports markets in the world.

To achieve this, a public-private partnership was initiated by the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO) and various Dutch diplomatic missions in the United States, in which the Royal Netherlands Football Association (KNVB) and Orange Sports Forum (OSF) joined forces to coordinate this effort on behalf of the private sports sector. This program, coordinated on the public side by the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport and the Dutch diplomatic missions in the United States, aims to create concrete business opportunities and partnerships for the Dutch sports sector in the United States in the run-up to the World Cup and the LA28 Games.

A new generation of public-private collaboration

Unlike earlier *Partners for International Business (PIB)* programs, this initiative takes a more flexible and inclusive approach. Instead of forming a closed consortium, companies and organizations can join on a project-by-project basis.

The goal is to create a dynamic platform where every Dutch sports-related organization with international ambitions can participate. From sports technology and infrastructure to fan engagement and sustainability, it's about telling the Dutch story together in the U.S.



This modular structure increases accessibility and ensures broad representation across the Dutch sports ecosystem. The first activities show strong enthusiasm from businesses, with more than 30 companies already joining the Sports Trade Mission to Los Angeles in October 2025, ranging from established players with an existing U.S. presence to newcomers eager to take their first steps in the American market.

Shared leadership: KNVB and OSF

The program will be jointly coordinated by the KNVB and OSF, each taking the lead at different stages. The KNVB will focus on the run-up to the FIFA World Cup 2026, while OSF takes the lead toward LA28.

Both organizations will work closely with public partners such as RVO, the Consulates General in Miami and San Francisco, and the Netherlands Business Support Office (NBSO) in Los Angeles. Existing initiatives, including NLA Hub, will be involved as well.

A \$500 billion opportunity

According to the RVO market study *The U.S. Market for Sports Innovation* (2022), the U.S. sports industry represents an annual economic impact of roughly \$500 billion.

Sports in the U.S. is not just entertainment, it's an integrated sector tied to education, infrastructure, and innovation. That opens enormous opportunities for Dutch companies active in sportstech, smart venues, sustainability, community sports, and much more.



The study identifies four key segments where Dutch expertise aligns closely with U.S. market demand:

- **Green Venues** – sustainable sports facilities, circular infrastructure, and efficient energy and water management;
- **Innovative Fan Engagement** – digital and immersive technologies to enhance the fan experience;
- **Enhanced Sports Performance** – high-tech equipment and medical innovation for athletes;
- **Community Sport / Sport for All** – inclusive participation models and social impact through sport.

These segments connect directly with OSF's strategic pillars and the sustainability commitments of the LA28 Impact & Sustainability Plan, which emphasize community legacy, inclusivity, and innovation.

Dutch expertise as an international asset

The Netherlands is internationally recognized for its integrated approach to sports, combining technological innovation, social impact, and sustainability. From smart data analytics and high-tech surfaces to circular stadium design, Dutch companies have become leaders in sustainable sports solutions.

That expertise resonates strongly in the U.S. market. The LA28 Games are about much more than elite sport, they're about the future of Los Angeles as a sustainable, resilient and innovative city. The Netherlands can be a strategic partner in that transformation.





The Dutch Sports Mission to Los Angeles

A great example of the growing collaboration is the upcoming Dutch Sports Mission to Los Angeles (October 2025), coordinated by OSF in partnership with among others RVO, NBSO LA, the Consulate General in San Francisco.

Over 30 Dutch companies and institutions will join the delegation, representing the fields of Sports Infrastructure and SportsTech & Media.

The program includes visits to SoFi Stadium, the Intuit Dome, Crypto.com Arena, and AECOM, as well as high-level workshops and network events with U.S. city officials, architecture firms, and sports organizations.

It's not just about export or trade, it's about knowledge exchange, innovation, and building long-term partnerships that last beyond 2028. In order to be successful in the U.S. and establish sustainable partnerships, companies need to invest and to co-create solutions that leave a positive legacy long after the Games are over.

Momentum in the making

The timing is ideal. Los Angeles and other host cities are preparing for a massive investment wave in infrastructure, sustainability, and community development. The "28 by 28" program, part of the city's Olympic plan, prioritizes dozens of projects, from mobility and water management to sustainable construction, all areas where Dutch companies excel.

The LA28 Games are positioning themselves as "Games for All of LA," emphasizing inclusivity, youth development, and social cohesion. This vision aligns perfectly with the Dutch philosophy of Sport for All, where sport acts as a bridge between health, innovation, and community.

From opportunity to legacy

Through initiatives like this Public-Private Partnership, the Netherlands is not only seeking business, it's aiming to leave a lasting impact on how sport and society connect.

Combining the networks and strengths of the KNVB and OSF, we can act as the connective tissue of the Dutch sports and vitality ecosystem, linking businesses, governments, and knowledge institutions, from grassroots development to global events.

This Public-Private Partnership marks a strategic evolution in how the Netherlands approaches international sports business. By uniting public and private forces, it transforms major events like the World Cup and LA28 into platforms for innovation, diplomacy, and sustainable growth. As the countdown to 2026 begins, one thing is clear: The Netherlands is ready, not only on the field, but also in the global ecosystem of sport.

Dutch Sports Mission to Los Angeles 2025

A week full of inspiration, innovation, and international collaboration during the Dutch Sports Mission to Los Angeles in October 2025. With over thirty companies and organizations from the Dutch sports ecosystem, the delegation explored how innovation, sustainability, and cooperation can shape the future of sport in the lead-up to major events such as the FIFA World Cup 2026 and the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The mission kicked off at the LA Sports Innovation Conference in the brand-new Intuit Dome, where more than 35 international speakers shared their visions on the future of sport. The strong Dutch presence underscored the Netherlands' reputation as a leading nation in sports innovation and sustainable solutions.

Throughout the week, the delegation visited world-class sports venues including SoFi Stadium, Crypto.com Arena, Dignity Health Sports Park, and the Intuit Dome, icons of Los Angeles' ambition and innovative strength. Valuable connections were also established with local policymakers, sports organizations, and Dutch experts active in the U.S., including Bob Heere, Danny Cortenraede, and Sacha van der Most van Spijk.

Highlights included matchmaking sessions at the LA Kings, the Sports & Sustainability Workshop, and a networking reception hosted by Honorary Consul Reinout Oerlemans. The week was all about knowledge exchange, connection, and strengthening collaboration between the Netherlands and Los Angeles.

The Dutch sports ecosystem continues to make an impact worldwide: ranked #6 at the Olympic Games, #4 at the Paralympic Games, with over 60% sports participation, a Social Return on Investment of 2.76, and an export value exceeding \$1.25 billion. Dutch companies have long played a structural role in iconic events such as the Olympic and Paralympic Games, FIFA World Cups, and the Super Bowl, as well as in the development of state-of-the-art sports facilities like the Intuit Dome.

The mission to Los Angeles marks not an endpoint, but a new chapter. Together with public and private partners such as the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the NBSO Los Angeles, the Consulate General in San Francisco, the Consulate General in Miami, and the Netherlands Embassy in Washington, the Netherlands continues to build sustainable international partnerships towards LA28 and beyond.





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SPORTS INNOVATION LEAGUE: STARTUPS DRIVING PARTICIPATION IN SPORT



How can we ensure that millions of Dutch people exercise more often and enjoy doing so more? This is the question at the heart of NOC*NSF's Sports Agenda 2032. The goal is for 12 million people to engage in sport or exercise three times a week, and for 14 million people to experience joy through sport every week – either actively as athletes or passively as fans. As the largest supporter of sport and physical activity, Nederlandse Loterij (Netherlands Lottery) actively contributes to this goal. In 2024, Nederlandse Loterij, together with NOC*NSF and Rockstart, launched the Sports Innovation League: a programme designed to accelerate and implement fresh ideas from the world of startups. Its mission is clear: to get the Netherlands moving on a massive scale.

A breeding ground for sport

The Sports Innovation League is a breeding ground where sport and technology challenge each other. Startups, experts and sports organisations collaborate to develop innovative ideas that encourage people to take part in sport and physical activity. This includes smart training methods, digital fan experiences or sustainable solutions for clubs and events. It is a testing ground where concepts are implemented in practice – from locker rooms to stadiums. The Sports Innovation League is rapidly becoming the place where the sport of tomorrow starts today.



Why Nederlandse Loterij is organising the Sports Innovation League

Nederlandse Loterij was founded by sport, for sport. A significant part of its annual revenue still flows back into sport – €54.6 million in 2024 alone. This contribution keeps sport accessible to everyone. However, funding alone is not enough. To engage new generations, fresh ideas are needed. That's why Nederlandse Loterij, NOC*NSF and Rockstart joined forces to create the Sports Innovation League: a programme that not only offers startups a stage, but also provides them with the network and resources to grow.

A flying start

The first edition of the Sports Innovation League attracted significant interest – with 68 applications. Nine startups were selected for a four-month intensive programme. With mentorship, workshops and access to a wide network, they learned to professionalise, internationalise and scale their innovations. The programme opened doors to sports federations, municipalities and investors.



From smart lockers to flexible football

The Swiss company Equip Sport shows the power of the Sports Innovation League. Their smart lockers give athletes access to balls and equipment via an app. 30 of these sports stations will be installed in Haarlem in 2026; hopefully resulting in playgrounds once again being filled with children and young people.

"We're also in advanced talks with the City of Utrecht and Sportinnovator to create a lasting impact in the Netherlands," says Quentin Geromin, Head of Business Development at Equip Sport.

Another eye-catcher was FC Urban. Their app allows users to easily join a football match without having to commit to joining a team on a permanent basis. This makes participation more accessible.

"Our app makes football more flexible and accessible," explains founder Joep Lamme. *"We want to promote an active lifestyle and give more people the opportunity to play."* The Sports Innovation League enabled FC Urban to forge new partnerships and launch inclusive initiatives.

Both startups also proved their potential internationally: during the Champions League final in Munich, Equip Sport and FC Urban were named winners of UEFA's Champions Innovate programme – a testament to the impact of the Sports Innovation League.

And then there's Renewaball, the company that developed the first biodegradable tennis balls made from sheep's wool. These balls have a significantly lower carbon footprint than traditional versions and have already been approved by the International Tennis Federation (ITF). This is a tangible example of how innovation can also make sport more sustainable.



Looking ahead: the 2025–2026 edition

After the success of the first edition, the second edition of the Sports Innovation League is set to begin. The five participating startups will be announced at the end of November 2025 and will start their intensive programme in January 2026. Their results will be presented during a final major event in May. This time, the focus will be on innovations that increase accessibility and enhance the sports experience.

What's new? Participants will receive more personalised guidance, including an internal pitch day and additional one-on-one sessions. They will also work more closely with sports partners such as the KNVB, Sportinnovator and the Johan Cruijff ArenA, while media partners

will provide broader visibility. This will make the programme more targeted and strengthen the Sports Innovation League's position within the sports sector.

New technologies are also playing a greater role. Artificial intelligence, data analytics and digital platforms offer opportunities to reach people faster, motivate them and keep them engaged longer. Sustainability remains a cornerstone: sports of the future must be not only fun but also responsible.

Whereas the first edition focused mainly on professionalisation and visibility, the bar is now set higher. The second edition aims to deliver measurable impact: how many additional people get moving, how fan engagement grows and how innovations contribute to inclusivity and sustainability.

Sports Innovation League as a quality label

In just a short period of time, the Sports Innovation League has grown into more than just a programme. It is becoming a quality label: proof that a start-up is ready for the next step. For investors and partners, participation signals professionalism and potential. For the sports sector, it means faster access to innovative solutions. In this way, the Sports Innovation League is helping make Dutch sport more enjoyable, sustainable and meaningful.

Nederlandse Loterij is continuing its commitment as the biggest supporter of sport. With the Sports Innovation League, it is giving innovators the chance to turn passion into impact. The goal is clear: a sporty, healthy and connected society. The Sports Innovation League is a movement that brings sport closer to everyone.

For more information, visit:

<https://sportsinnovationleague.nl/>



A brief summary of the Sports Innovation League

The Sports Innovation League is an initiative by Nederlandse Loterij, NOC*NSF and Rockstart. The programme helps startups accelerate and scale their ideas into impactful innovations. After a successful first edition with 68 applications, the second Sports Innovation League is launching in 2025. Five selected startups will receive intensive guidance to contribute to the ambitions of the Sports Agenda 2032: getting more people to participate in sport, enhancing the sports experience and making sport future-proof.

EN: Health~Holland reflects on Japan:

A SPRINGBOARD FOR NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Article written by Health~Holland

During the 'Health-week' of the World Expo 2025 in Osaka, a broad Dutch delegation – including representatives from companies, research institutions, and many other partners – demonstrated how the Netherlands, as an innovative Life Sciences & Health (LSH) sector, looks beyond research, treatments, and (bio)medical innovations aimed at preventing or curing diseases. During this visit, the Netherlands emphasized the importance of sports, vitality, and healthy ageing as crucial pillars for building a healthy society. After all, health begins with enhancing quality of life and well-being, both inside and outside hospital walls.



Four themes, one mission

The mission focused on four central themes in total: regenerative medicine, digital health, sports & vitality, and healthy ageing.

Although the participants came from diverse backgrounds and each pursued their own goals – ranging from scientific collaboration with

Japan to exploring business opportunities or policy development – there was considerable overlap and synergy within the group. Each theme had its own program elements and meetings, complemented by joint activities that facilitated valuable knowledge exchange and new connections. This cross-over created an inspiring added value that often emerges less readily in missions centered on a single theme.

Solving health challenges together



Why did a delegation travel to Japan?

Japan is a natural and strategic partner for the Netherlands. The country is one of the world's largest economies, boasting leading research expertise, high-quality infrastructure, and a growing focus on health and well-being. At the same time, both the Netherlands and Japan face similar societal challenges: ageing populations, increasing healthcare demands, and the need for personalized, preventive, and regenerative solutions. These shared challenges call for smart, innovative solutions, which is precisely where collaboration between the two countries proves its strength.

Health~Holland, together with various partners including Orange Sports Forum, organized the Dutch participation in the 'Health-week' of the World Expo 2025 and the accompanying LSH mission. As a driving force behind innovation in the Dutch Life Sciences & Health sector,

Health~Holland stimulates, facilitates, and finances (inter)national public-private partnerships that aim to achieve both economic and societal impact. The mission to Japan is a prime example of this.

A key focus of this collaboration was the role of sport as a driver of preventive care. With a Social Return on Investment in Sport of €2.76, sport significantly contributes to reducing future pressure on healthcare systems.

With this insight, the Dutch delegation explored in Japan how inspiring initiatives such as the GameChanger Project, the Ajinomoto National Training Center, and Gamba Osaka can contribute to health, innovation, and digitalization.





Success through preparation and collaboration

Thorough preparation proved to be essential. Collaboration with Japan requires a different approach than in many other countries: relationships are built step by step, and mutual trust plays a crucial role. This means investing time, patience, and cultural understanding to establish sustainable partnerships.

As the coordinating party, we also prepared extensively. We immersed ourselves in local customs to optimally support the Dutch delegation. For example, we learned that in Japan it is customary and even important to present and receive business cards with care and store them in a dedicated holder during business meetings. Therefore, a stylish business card holder was an essential and symbolic goodie for all participants during the mission.

A springboard full of opportunities

We do not view the mission as a standalone event, but rather as a springboard for new collaborations and the opening of international markets for Dutch organizations. The meetings and conversations held in Japan form a valuable foundation for this.



Whether your innovation focuses on sports or digitalization, it's often the unexpected combinations with less obvious partners that lead to the most exciting opportunities. We carry these insights forward as we shape future events and international missions.

Want to know more about the mission? Health~Holland created a (Dutch) podcast episode in which two colleagues share their experiences. Listen to the podcast via the QR code.

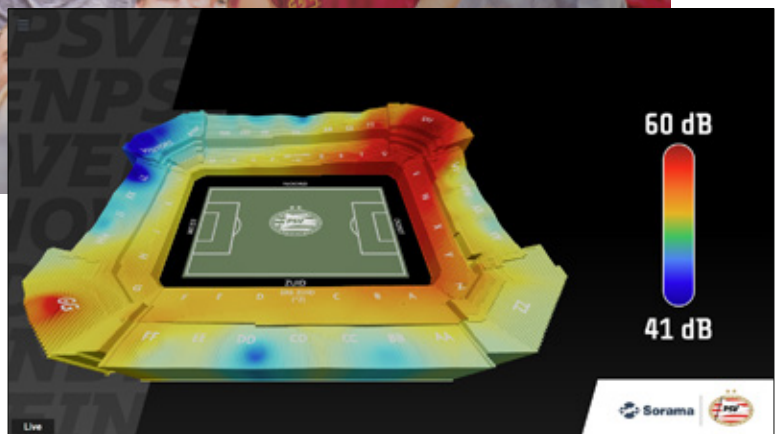


Organization

The mission was coordinated by Health~Holland in collaboration with the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport. The Dutch Embassy in Tokyo, the Consulate-General in Osaka, and various private partners also made valuable contributions to the Dutch participation in the 'Health-week' and the accompanying LSH mission.



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FROM MISSION TO MOVEMENT

How the Disabled Sports Foundation brings barrier-free sport closer

You only need to talk to Nike Boor for a moment to sense that you're not speaking with a mere director, but with the captain of a movement. As Managing Director of Fonds Gehandicaptensport (Disabled Sports Foundation), he radiates commitment, vision, and determination. For him, sport is far more than an activity, it's a way of life, a key to independence, and a source of humanity.

"Fifty years of Disabled Sports Foundation symbolizes struggle, movement, and progress," he says. "We're not there yet, but the gratitude for what we've achieved together gives us the energy to keep building every single day."



Half a century of struggle and progress

The fiftieth anniversary of Disabled Sports Foundation marks not only an impressive history, but an ongoing evolution. The organization began in 1975 as a pioneer, founded by people who believed that sport is a right, not a privilege.

"In those early days, we were a passionate soloist," Boor explains. "We stood at the starting line, full of ideals and fighting spirit, but without a clear course or team. Our founders were literally on a train when they decided something had to change. They started with campaigns, TV programs, and collections to raise awareness and funds."

Today, that picture looks completely different. *"We've become a strategic team player,"* says Boor. *"We now work alongside healthcare, education, municipalities, and businesses. No longer on the sidelines of the system, but right in the middle of it. We have perspective, connection, and endurance."*

The story behind the mission

Boor's personal motivation becomes clear when he talks about the encounters that have stayed with him, one of them with a sailor with a high spinal cord injury. *"He told me, 'When I'm on the water, I'm completely independent. I'm the captain of my own life.' That still moves me,"* Boor says. *"Because that's what sport is really about: experiencing freedom, having control over your own life, and being able to participate fully."*

For Boor, that is the heart of his work: enabling people to make their own choices despite limitations. It's also what drives him to keep developing structural solutions that go beyond temporary projects or campaigns.



Uniek Sporten (Unique Sports): more than a platform

One of those structural solutions is Unique Sports, the digital platform that has become indispensable within the world of adaptive sport. Yet outside that circle, it's still relatively unknown. "That's a shame," says Boor. "Unique Sports isn't a campaign; it's a lasting instrument that helps people and their surroundings truly get moving."

The platform offers everything needed to play sports with a disability — from finding suitable sports clubs to arranging the right equipment. "It works across the boundaries of healthcare, education, and municipalities," Boor explains. "That's exactly why it can remove barriers in a structural way. My dream is that Unique Sports becomes as natural as the local library or health desk in your neighborhood."

This ambition shows how Disabled Sports Foundation looks beyond subsidies or symbolic actions. It's about system change, making sport an integral part of society, not a separate domain.

Where the real difference is made

Boor believes that real change becomes visible the moment people experience what's possible. "You see the difference when someone signs up through Unique Sports and thinks: this is my sport, this is my equipment, and this is how I get there. It starts with that first step over the threshold, with the feeling: I belong."



That step may seem small, but its impact is enormous. A club that opens its doors to athletes with disabilities. A municipality that helps a child participate in gym class with adaptive equipment. "Those are the moments when we see it's working. Change happens when we think in terms of opportunities rather than limitations."

Goosebumps on the mountain

One of the most powerful examples of that spirit, for Boor, is the HandbikeBattle in Austria. An annual race where rehabilitation patients cycle 20 kilometres uphill. "What you see there is pure mental strength. Of course, it's impressive when someone reaches the top in just over an hour, but the person who moves me most is the last participant, the one who takes seven hours, with aching arms, but finishes with a smile. That moment symbolizes everything we stand for. It's not about being the fastest; it's about being part of it at all."

For Boor, that's what sets sport apart from so many other societal domains: its ability to make people mentally stronger. "Sport doesn't just move bodies, it moves lives."

From ideals to impact

Under Boor's leadership, Disabled Sports Foundation has evolved into an organization that is as idealistic as it is strategic. "It's taught me to be both goal-oriented and people-oriented," he says. "Of course, strategy, budgets, and partnerships are important. But the ultimate goal remains: that by 2030, sport for people with disabilities will be as natural as education or healthcare."

He doesn't see his role as that of a manager, but as part of a larger movement. "We're building something that will eventually make us unnecessary," he says. "My dream is that people will one day simply play sports in their own neighborhood, with the right support, without even knowing that a fund once made that possible."

The power of collaboration

That vision can only be realized through collaboration. Boor emphasizes that inclusive sport only works when healthcare, education, municipalities, and businesses join forces. "The strength of Unique Sports lies precisely in its ability to connect those worlds," he says. "A healthcare provider can point someone to sports opportunities, a community sports coach can guide them, and the municipality can ensure accessibility. Only together can we truly get the movement going."

Collaboration also takes courage. "We need to move away from silos and short-term thinking. It's not about isolated projects, but about creating a sustainable ecosystem where sport is accessible to everyone."

A moment of pride

Still, Boor believes the Netherlands doesn't show enough pride in what has already been achieved. "We tend to focus on what's still missing. But when you see how far we've come in fifty years — from collection boxes to a digital ecosystem — we should allow ourselves to feel proud. That pride isn't an endpoint; it's fuel to keep going."





Dreaming of tomorrow

When asked what he dreams of, Boor pauses. Then he says, *"I dream of a Netherlands where sport for people with disabilities is no longer a separate world. Where sports facilities are naturally accessible, and where people with and without disabilities play together or choose their own environment out of freedom, not necessity."*

He refers to figures from the Sport Participation Index of NOC*NSF: about 60% of Dutch people play sports, but among people with disabilities that number is only 37%. *"My goal is to make those percentages equal. Not because everyone must play sports, but because everyone can."*

A vision for the future

When asked what his dream project would be if money were no object, Boor doesn't hesitate. *"I'd invest in a mobility platform within Unique Sports,"* he says enthusiastically. *"A place where you can simply enter: I want to play wheelchair tennis in Utrecht on Thursday at 7 p.m., and immediately see what transport options are available. No bureaucracy, just control in the hands of the athlete."*

For him, that's the next step in removing barriers: practical, scalable solutions that literally get people moving. *"That's the power of innovation, using technology to enhance humanity."*

A movement that keeps moving

Fifty years of Disabled Sports Foundation isn't just a rich history, it's a future full of ambition. Boor doesn't see that future as a straight line, but as a continuous movement. *"We've become agile,"* he says. *"We know that the start and finish line are different for everyone. That understanding makes us stronger."*

And perhaps that's the essence of his leadership: the ability to keep moving, even when the route changes. *"If I've learned anything,"* he concludes, *"it's that every step counts. Whether you're leading the pack or the last to reach the summit, as long as you're moving, you belong."*



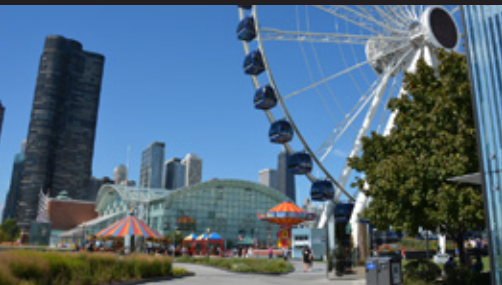
DUTCH WHEELS



Video



Kansas City



Chicago



Dubai

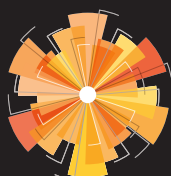


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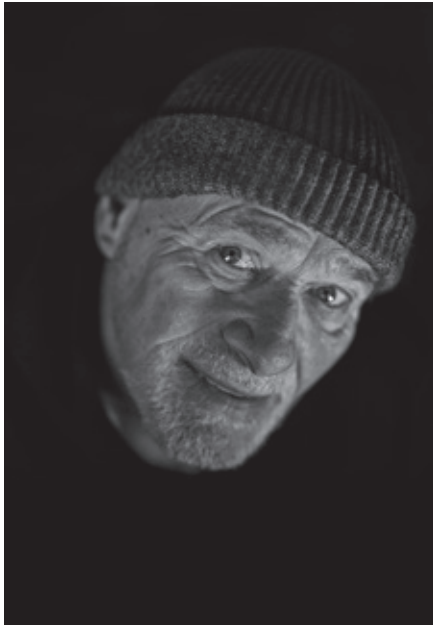
WORLD PRESS PHOTO CATEGORY SPORTS

WINNER AND SPORTS PHOTOGRAPHER

KLAAS JAN VAN DER WEIJ

Interview with Klaas Jan van der Weij:

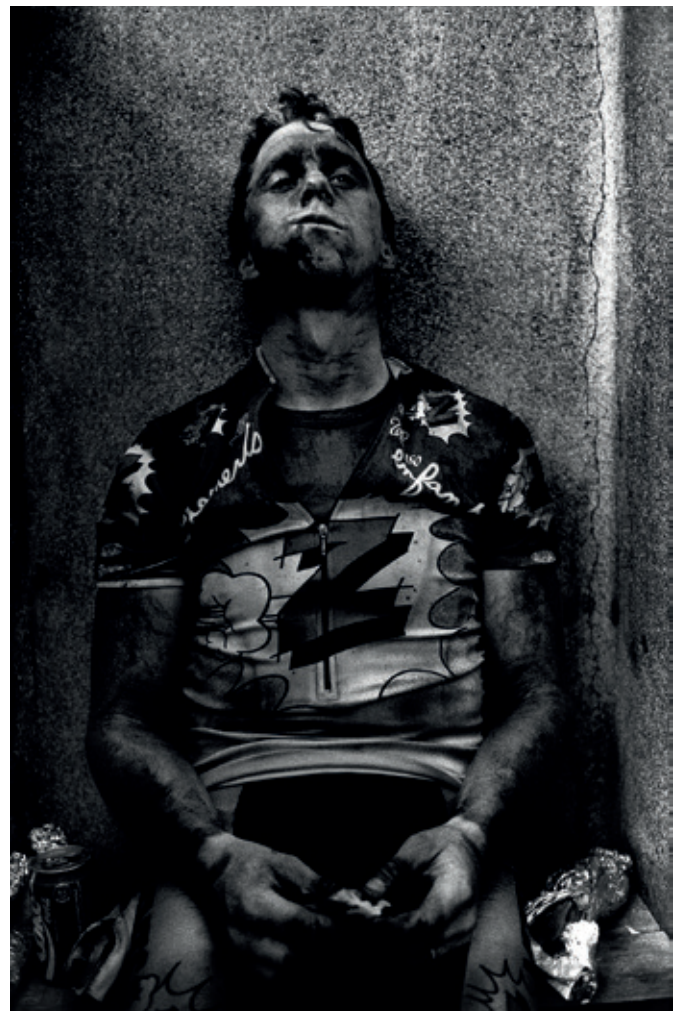
Klaas Jan van der Weij is one of the most influential sports photographers in the Netherlands. Born in Emmen in 1952, he grew up in a setting where sport and pragmatism met: the game matters, but the difference lies in the details. That outlook defines his photography. He didn't start behind the lens but trained first as a physiotherapist. That body-focused perspective shaped his visual language—he reads rhythm, muscle tension, balance, and release like someone who understands anatomy from the inside out.



▲ The Netherlands, Amsterdam, 11-02-2025
Black White Portret Klaas Jan van der Weij.
Photo: Tamar Huijbregts

Van der Weij's passion for photography emerged in his twenties. While studying, he picked up a camera and discovered he could capture what fascinated him in people: posture, timing, the microsecond when intention becomes visible. In the late 1980s he shifted toward photojournalism. By the 1990s sport became his natural territory—not because it was easy, but because it exposes human emotion in its purest form. Joy, despair, doubt, overconfidence, euphoria—often within seconds.

For Van der Weij, great sports photography lives at the intersection of choreography and unpredictability. Sport is structured to the millimeter, but the outcome is never scripted. This forces the photographer to anticipate, plan, and let go at the same time. He positions himself in unexpected places—high above the finish line, just after a corner, at an odd distance—to let composition work before the decisive moment arrives. His physiotherapy background helps him read patterns of movement and sense where the breaking point will come. The result is imagery that goes beyond spectacle to reveal sport as form and narrative.



▶ Roubaix, Frankrijk, 12 april 1992
The American Greg LeMond, multiple Tour de France winner, is completely exhausted after the race, having controlled the peloton to help his teammate Duclo-Lasalle to victory.
Photo: Klaas Jan van der Weij



◀ Frankrijk, Andorra Arcalis, 10-07-2016 Wielrennen, Tour de France, 9e etappe. Van Vielha Val D'Aran naar Andorra Arcalis. Tom Dumoulin tijdens de beklimming van de Andorra Arcalis in de stromende regen en de dikke hagelstenen. Foto: Klaas Jan van der Weij



▲ ST Austria, Kitzsteinhorn, 15-10-2021 Adriana Jelinkova, the Dutch athlete with the Czech name, during a slalom training session on the Kitzsteinhorn in Austria. Jelinkova is the first and so far the only Dutch athlete selected for the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics. / Photo: Klaas Jan van der Weij.

His breakthrough came in 1992, when he won a World Press Photo award in the Sports category with a cycling image that captured the brutal beauty of the sport. It wasn't a lucky shot but the result of years of patience, positioning, and vision. From there he built an extensive body of work—cycling, athletics, and other disciplines as windows into human behavior. He became

a fixture at major events, working for national newspapers and covering more Olympic Games than many athletes compete in.

His photographs have become iconic: pelotons carving through landscapes like living organisms, runners reduced to graphic lines, a single calm face amid chaos. His compositions

are clear, his vantage points surprising, and his frames are often charged with quiet tension—the moment before the explosion, when anything seems possible. His work has also transcended sports pages, appearing in exhibitions, books, and lectures that underline its artistic quality.

▼ The Netherlands, Amsterdam, 1988. Inauguration of the Dutch National Team, European Champions Foto: Klaas Jan van der Weij.

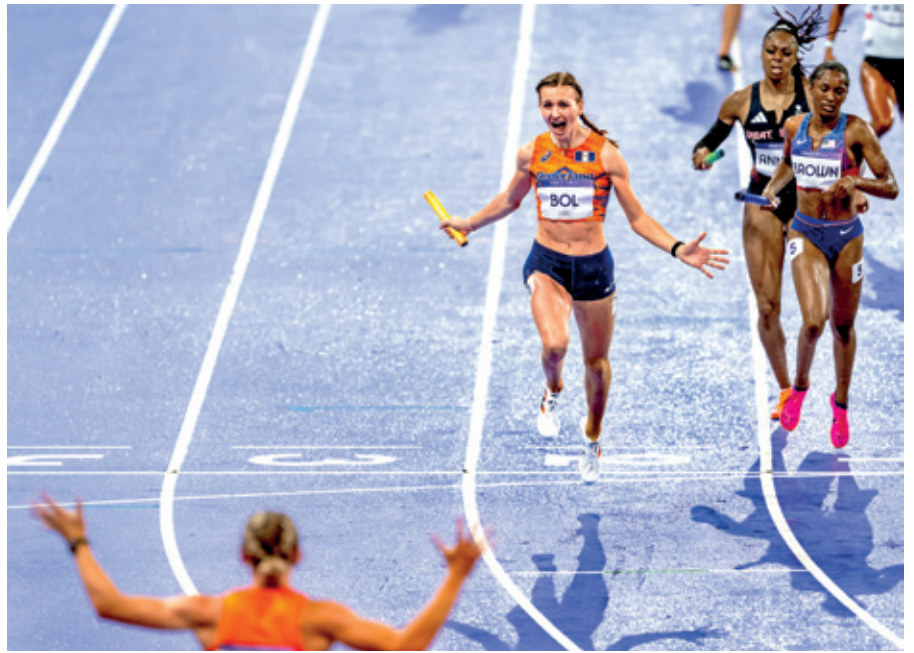




Stylistically, Van der Weij is less interested in spectacle than in structure. He uses framing, shadow, repetition, and emptiness to guide the eye. Sometimes the athlete is just an accent in a larger pattern; sometimes one detail—a hand, a shoe, a glance—carries the whole image. This approach makes his work timeless. It reads as sport but also as studies of form and timing, standing out in an era when thousands of images are made every second.



▲ 28.09.00 Olympic Games Sydney, Australia – Tennis The "GOLDEN WILLIAMS SISTERS" (USA) Serena & Venus Williams during the doubles final against the Dutch players Kristie Boogert and Miriam Oremans, whom they defeated with ease. Photo : Klaas Jan van der Weij



▲ France, Paris, 03-08-2024. Olympic Games 2024. Athletics, 4 x 400 meters, Mixed Relay Final. The Netherlands wins gold unexpectedly ahead of the USA after a phenomenal comeback by Femke Bol, who is embraced by Lieke Klaver (bottom left). Team: Eugene Omalla, Femke Bol, Lieke Klaver, and Isaya Klein Ikkink. Photo: Klaas Jan van der Weij

Looking ahead, Van der Weij aims to keep photographing, but more selectively. He wants to step away from routine sideline work and initiate more personal projects that force him to look differently. His ongoing fascination is body language: how small variations in gesture carry big shifts in meaning. He also embraces analog medium-format photography to slow down, sharpen intent, and reconnect with the craft in a digital world built on speed.

This is not nostalgia but method. By slowing the process, he refines every decision: What image am I making? Where do I stand? What belongs inside the frame? His future is about depth, not volume. Precision, not speed. At the same time, he continues to share knowledge through lectures and conversations, convinced that photography grows stronger when photographers think more consciously about position, timing, and story.

www.fieldofplay.online

Instagram: [@klaasjan.photography](https://www.instagram.com/klaasjan.photography)



▶ The Netherlands, Amsterdam, 16-10-2016 The two leaders, Sammy Kitwara from Kenya (right) and pacemaker Edwin Kiptoo from Kenya, running along the Amstel River back toward the city. Photo : Klaas Jan van der Weij



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OVERVIEW OSF EVENTS IN 2025

1 Pitch Event SportUp Thialf



● January 10

3 OSF Meeting RAI Amsterdam



● January 24

5 OSF business trip Barcelona



● February 4-5

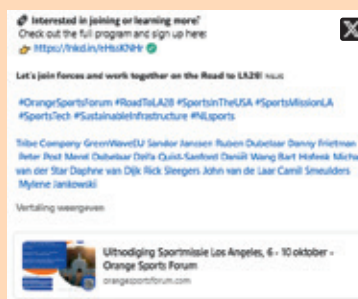
7 Opening Orange Sports Hub Barcelona during TRAM Barcelona



● May 22



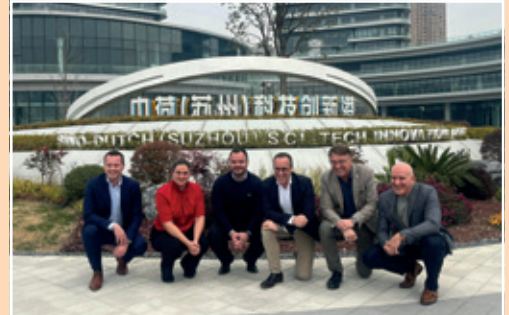
8 Sports in USA Event



● June 11

Orange SportsForum®

2 Mission to China with Brainport Industries & CoWin



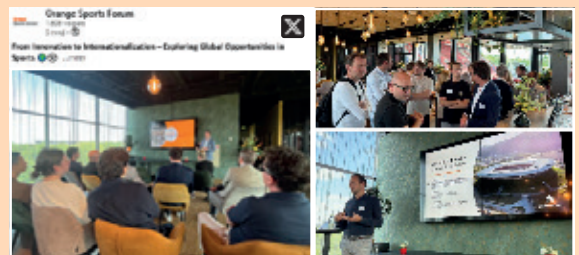
● January 12-16

4 Projectmeeting We-Bike! Brussel



● January 30

6 OSF Meeting – From Innovation to Internationalization, in collaboration with ROM Utrecht Region & FC Utrecht Next



● May 16

9 Pitch Event SportUp Boost Spring Edition



● ????????

OVERVIEW OSF EVENTS IN 2025

10 Hosts and Federations Summit Lausanne

● June 16-18



11 Sports & Vitality during Life Science & Health-week in Tokyo & Osaka

● June 22-27



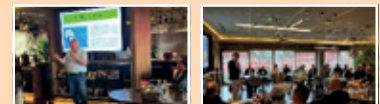
12 Kick-off Event Curaçao International Sports Week

● July 28



13 CEO Event Legends Lounge Philips Stadion

● August 27



14 Mission to China and Opening WePark

● September 23-27



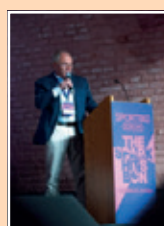
15 Netwerklunch Dutch Dutch Portuguese Chamber of Commerce

● September 25



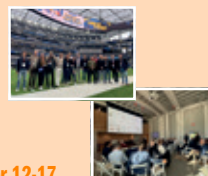
16 Sportbiz Barcelona

● October 7-10



17 Sportmission Los Angeles

● October 12-17



18 Caribbean Sports Week 2025 Curaçao

● November 18-21



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You will find various topical programs and information relevant for doing business between Europe and the United States.

As 2026 celebrates the 250th anniversary of the United States, EACC Netherlands will work closely with the U.S. Embassy on programs for Dutch companies looking to expand to America. We highlight two below:

On Tuesday, February 10, 2026, the U.S. Embassy will host 'Building Bridges to the USA' at the High Tech Campus in Eindhoven. This includes informative sessions on U.S. expansion, U.S. government policy updates, and a networking reception with 15+ U.S. States. Visit the EACC Netherlands' events calendar for more information.



From May 3-6, 2026, the U.S. Embassy will lead a delegation to the 2026 SelectUSA Investment Summit in Washington, DC. The Summit is designed to assist foreign companies looking to expand to the United States. It includes participation from all 50 States, multiple U.S. Government agencies, White House staff, and many more. Registration & information: www.selectusasummit.us



ROADMAP TO BRISBANE 2032

When the Olympic and Paralympic Games take place in Brisbane in 2032, it will be far more than a celebration of sport. For Queensland, it marks the start of an ambitious transformation, an opportunity to reshape cities, drive sustainability, and leave a legacy that will last for generations. Under the guiding principle *"Making our region better, sooner, together through sport,"* Australia is using the Games as a catalyst for climate-positive urban development. And the Netherlands is playing a pivotal role in that journey.

A consortium of ten Dutch organizations, coordinated by Orange Sports Forum (OSF), has joined forces in the approach *Sustainable Smart Communities – Roadmap Brisbane2032 and beyond*. The cluster brings together Dutch expertise in sport, sustainability, infrastructure, technology and urban vitality, with a clear goal: to build long-term partnerships and position the Netherlands as a key innovation partner towards sustainable and smart communities.



AND BEYOND



Sport as a Driver of Sustainable Transformation

Over the next decade, Australia will invest more than AUD 180 billion in infrastructure, transport and urban renewal. The Brisbane 2032 Games are the springboard for a much broader national agenda, one focused on carbon reduction, circular economy principles, inclusivity and healthier communities. Queensland's ambition is to host the first climate-positive Olympic Games in history, creating a tangible legacy that endures well beyond 2042.

That vision aligns perfectly with Dutch expertise. With a strong international reputation in circular urban design, mobility innovation, sustainable infrastructure and sport technology, the Netherlands is uniquely positioned to help deliver on Australia's aspirations.

The Olympics in Brisbane are not just a sporting event, they are a vehicle for social and environmental change. The Dutch approach, where sport, sustainability and innovation go hand in hand, resonates strongly here. We speak the same language as Brisbane.



The Power of Collective Innovation

The consortium of Dutch companies is closely working together with the Dutch government and is supported by embassies and consulates worldwide. Its mission: to strengthen the international position of Dutch sports ecosystem through strategic, long-term collaboration.

The Australian cluster unites expertise from sustainable mobility to digitalization and sport facilities. Together, they form a multidisciplinary cluster offering smart, scalable solutions for the creation of Sustainable Smart Communities, urban environments where sport, sustainability, and innovation converge to enhance quality of life. The consortium is using the Olympic momentum as a catalyst to create synergies and partnerships in this field.

The Australian Context: Policy Meets Opportunity

The initiative perfectly complements a range of Queensland and federal strategies, including the 2032 Delivery Plan, the Elevate 2042 Legacy Strategy, and the Queensland-Europe & UK Trade and Investment Strategy 2025–2028. Each of these frameworks places sustainability, innovation and international cooperation at the centre of Australia's growth agenda.

According to KPMG's *Economic Analysis of the Brisbane 2032 Games*, the event is expected to generate up to AUD 8.1 billion in economic and social benefits for Queensland and create over 120,000 full-time equivalent jobs nationwide. Beyond the numbers, the Games are designed to fast-track urban resilience, green mobility and climate-positive infrastructure, precisely the areas where Dutch expertise can make the greatest impact.

As Brisbane's Lord Mayor Adrian Schrinner put it: *"This is a plan that builds much more than what's needed for a few weeks of competition. This is a plan that builds for Queensland's future."*

From Vision to Action: What the Dutch Roadmap2032 Delivers

The *Sustainable Smart Communities* cluster will deploy a range of initiatives over the coming years:

- Trade missions and networking events.
- Demonstration projects
- Matchmaking and knowledge exchange
- Joint branding and communication

A key milestone will be the establishment of a physical presence in Brisbane serving as a bridge between Dutch innovators and Australian partners, like an Orange Sports Hub Brisbane. Local presence is crucial in Australia, the Hub can give the consortium, and broader Dutch network, visibility and continuity, turning short-term opportunities into long-term relationships.





Beyond Brisbane: A Nationwide Opportunity

While Brisbane is the focal point of the 2032 Games, opportunities extend well beyond Queensland. Major cities like Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide are also investing heavily in sustainability, digital transformation and community sports.

These markets are ripe for collaboration in areas such as data-driven sport technology, green infrastructure, inclusive design and circular economy innovation. The Olympics serve as a national showcase, but the broader goal is to embed Dutch expertise in Australia's long-term urban development agenda.

Shared Values, Shared Vision

The Netherlands and Australia are natural partners. Both nations share a commitment to democracy, open trade and innovation-driven growth. In an increasingly complex global landscape, that shared value base forms a strong foundation for collaboration.

Queensland's government has identified Europe as a strategic innovation partner. The *Queensland-Europe Trade Strategy* explicitly highlights partnerships with "trusted, high-value economies" as a key driver of sustainable growth and global competitiveness.



For Orange Sports Forum, this initiative fits seamlessly into its broader Strategy 2034, which aims to strengthen the global presence of the Dutch sport and vitality ecosystem.

Over the past 15 years, OSF has evolved into a key platform representing over 300 Dutch companies and institutions across the international sports industry. Acting as a connector between public, private and knowledge sectors, OSF facilitates trade missions, knowledge exchange, and cross-border collaboration in sport innovation.

Each euro invested in international projects led by OSF has generated up to ten times its value in economic return, underscoring the tangible impact of its network approach.

Looking Ahead: Brisbane as a Global Laboratory

The *Sustainable Smart Communities* cluster views Brisbane 2032 not as the destination, but as the beginning of a long-term collaboration between Dutch and Australian partners.

Through pilot projects and applied innovation, the consortium aims to demonstrate how sport can act as a catalyst for sustainable cities, offering solutions that are not only relevant for Brisbane, but also for future Olympic hosts and growing urban regions worldwide.

Sport is a driver for positive change, not just for medals, but for livable cities, healthy people and a resilient economy. That's the true legacy of Brisbane 2032 and the Netherlands loves to join forces towards this major event.





TEAMNL HOUSE IN MILAN 2026

In February 2026, Papendal will open the doors to the TeamNL House during the Olympic Games in Milan, on behalf of NOC*NSF. Right in the vibrant heart of the Games, we're creating a home for everyone who supports TeamNL. It's where fans, family, friends, and partners of Dutch athletes come together to cheer for their heroes, share emotions, and celebrate victories.

At the Rabobank Olympic Club restaurant, Papendal also serves the tastiest dishes in Milan – prepared with the finest local, sustainable and vegetarian ingredients.

Jochem Schellens: "The fact that Papendal will be the home base for TeamNL in Milan makes us incredibly proud. Together with all involved, we look forward to creating many unforgettable moments."



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Euro stadiums in Poland and Ukraine to name a few. Today we are shaping the future of stadiums by using our venue as a fieldlab for new fan experience, mobility, safety & security, sustainability and facility management services.

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