
World Athletics Air Quality project highlighted at Sport@COP in Glasgow

At the Sport@COP event in Glasgow (© World Athletics)

The World Athletics Air Quality project shared centre stage in Sport@COP, a side event held at COP26, the United Nations (UN) Climate Change Conference, in Glasgow, Scotland, on Monday (8).

The all-day event, which included participants taking part virtually and in-person, kicked off with an athletes assembly, a closed hour-long peer-to-peer session on athlete activism for climate change, providing elite level athletes an opportunity to ask questions, learn, and network with peers.

The programme continued with a sport sustainability showcase which included presentations about how several regional associations around the world, including the **Green Sport Alliance** in North America, the **Sports Environment Alliance** in Oceania and the **Sport Ecology Group**, an organisation of academics producing ground-breaking research into the intersection between climate change, sustainability and sport.

Paolo Emilio Adami, the Medical Manager at the World Athletics Health and Science Department, discussed the air quality project, highlighting some of the pioneering work his team has produced since the inception of the project in 2018. Air quality monitoring will continue in 2022 at each World Athletics Series event, Adami said, as well as at several World Athletics Indoor Tour meetings, at each stop of the Wanda Diamond League as well as several mass participation road running events.

'Pick Up and Play' wins inaugural Global Sport Sustainability Hackathon

The programme also included the presentation of the five finalists in the Global Sport Sustainability Hackathon, a competition for undergraduate and masters level university students to ideate and pitch their best ideas for sustainable sports solutions to global industry leaders.

The winning team was Meredith Whiting and Mia Duckers of Coventry University for 'Pick Up and Play', a programme which would have sports clubs doing litter pick-ups in their community parks followed by a training session or a game. The idea was to marry something hard and undesirable, such as picking up trash, with something fun, like sport.

"This was the first year running the Hackathon and it was so great to see students from all over the world participating in the competition," said Dr. Madeleine Orr, founder of The Sport Ecology Group and a principal organiser of Sport@COP. "We saw a huge range of solutions, from food waste to college athletics, and some interesting ideas on fan engagement campaigns, upcycling clothing, and park clean-ups. The Sport@COP event wouldn't have been the same without the next generation's input and the Hackathon was a really special and meaningful way to bring their voices into the room."

Miguel Escribano Hierro of Kunak Technologies, the manufacturer of the air quality monitoring devices used in the World Athletics Air Quality project, served as the competition's head judge.

"It was an exciting process to judge these submissions," he said. "Most of the teams covered all the key elements of a sustainable innovation. We had a good range of innovative ideas. It was truly spectacular to see the students using data to drive the creation of their solutions, and in some cases we saw prototypes, and then the teams demonstrated strong plans to scale their projects, too."

The winners received a prize of GBP 2500 (USD 3300/ EUR 2900). World Athletics, along with **Tentree**, was a sponsor of the event.

The afternoon concluded with a Sport x SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) Challenge, an interactive session during which leaders from sporting bodies, global brands and NGOs were asked to create an impact-driven fan engagement campaign, facilitated by world-leading sustainable sports pros and athlete climate activists.

Laureus launches Sport for Good Index

Drew Barrand, the Commercial Chief for Laureus, used the opportunity presented by the gathering to announce the release of the first global index dedicated to celebrating the brands that are having the most impact in delivering social or ecological impact through sport.

The inaugural Laureus Sport for Good Index included 29 major corporations and blue-chip brands spanning multiple industry sectors that were assessed according to a set of seven key criteria, including evidence of creativity in purpose-led campaigns, level of investment in 'sport for good' causes, and the extent to which their sports investments align with the United Nations' (UN) Sustainable Development Goals.

An overall assessment was also made of the brands' commitment towards building an equitable society, reducing sport's ecological footprint, and growing the sports industry's economy through sport for good campaigns.

Paul Guest, Commercial Director for Sports Pro, a co-founder of the index, said the index was a first-of-its-kind, intended to shine a light on organisations that are having the clearest and most meaningful impact through their sports-related corporate social responsibility (CSR) and environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG) activities.

"The Sport for Good Index is a timely reminder of the transformational power of sport," said athletics legend Edwin Moses, the chair of Laureus Sport For Good.

The index can be downloaded [here](#).

Bob Ramsak for World Athletics