

Temporary solutions

South African architect, Ruben Reddy, the masterplanner for the 2022 Durban Commonwealth Games, wants temporary structures to create a sustainable future for sport. Matthew Campelli reports

When *Sports Management* first met the highly-regarded South African architect Ruben Reddy, he had just told a room packed full of football industry bods that West Ham United made a mistaking moving into the London Stadium, that Manchester United should move in with Manchester City, and that football stadiums were, generally, unsustainable.

Unorthodox, but full of logic, his arguments during his panel session at the Soccerex Global Convention made people sit up and take notice. While many sessions and keynotes at



the conference provided moments of insight, Reddy's talk was one of the few to challenge the status quo.

The thrust of his short address centred on the sustainability – or, more accurately, unsustainability – of sport stadiums. He said, if possible, that sports clubs playing in the same city should attempt to share a venue, while all sporting infrastructure for major events should be temporary.

While the latter point will resonate with many, particularly in light of the white elephants that dominate the skyline of Athens, and potentially

◀ Reddy does not shy from challenging the status quo

now Rio de Janeiro post-Olympics, the ambition appears to be a fanciful one.

Governments with five-to-10 year terms like to build monument when it comes to hosting major events, but with sustainability being a key part of the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) Agenda 2020, combined with the rising cost of staging major events, Reddy is sure temporary venues will become the norm in the not-too-distant future.

"Adopting temporary venues will have to be feasible," Reddy tells *Sports Management*. "I can't see it going any other way."

BURDEN ON THE TAXPAYER

Durban-based Reddy has seen firsthand what a burden on the public purse permanent venues can be. He was involved in the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi and also



The handball arena built for the Rio 2016 Olympics was a temporary structure, which became four schools



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had a view of the work that was completed for the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa.

Of the former, Reddy says: "Not a hell of a lot happens in that coastal Olympic Park."

But his main focus is South Africa after being handed the brief to oversee the masterplan of the Durban 2022 Commonwealth Games. He is clear that he doesn't want to repeat the mistakes of the World Cup in a nation that is still developing.

"We're not going to be burdening the taxpayers of Durban Province and the country to upkeep the maintenance of capital projects," he explains.

"We've learned a hard lesson in South Africa because of the 2010 World Cup. We gave, gave, gave, gave, gave, gave and didn't get a hell of a lot back in return apart from a pat on the back to say 'well done'."

He highlights the Durban-based Moses Mabhida Stadium, which cost US\$450m to construct, as an example of a venue which has not been sustainable for the South African government. While the original outlay was significant enough, Reddy is keen to demonstrate that sustainability becomes an issue when considering the ongoing maintenance of the building.

Reddy says: "Building the stadium is only 25 per cent of its life cycle. Keeping the thing to a world-class standard is a constant drain on the budget. Every year that it sits there that money could be used for something else."

"We're a developing country and our priority list is quite long. Never get away from the fact that these events should come to the developing world – of course

they should. They must be global in all their forms and go to far-flung parts of the world."

To create the right conditions for these countries to bid and host these events – without stretching themselves financially – Reddy is an evangelical advocate of the use of temporary venues.

DURBAN 2022

In fact, all of the venues he has designed for the Durban Games are temporary. Facilities for weightlifting, volleyball, hockey, squash and table tennis have been designed by his firm, and will all be temporary, using materials that will be reused following the Games. All the permanent structures that have been earmarked for the Commonwealth Games have been built already.

STADIUMS



German supporters cheer for their handball team in one of the permanent stadiums built for the Rio 2016 Olympics

Reddy lauded examples of good practice with temporary facilities, such as the handball court constructed for the Rio Olympic Games. Following the event the venue was deconstructed and used to build four schools, but Reddy reveals Durban's plans are slightly more modest than that.

He explains: "The total infrastructure spend of a Commonwealth Games is around eight per cent of the Olympic Games. The temporary facilities we'll look at will be standard stock and not on the same level as Rio."

But the principle remains the same, says Reddy, and stresses that it should be implemented at every major event. However, difficulties occur when governing bodies, such as FIFA, promise broadcast rights-

holders that each stadium will have at least 45,000 spectators to attract sponsorship.

"What do you do afterwards with a building of 45,000 seats when your average gate for the local club is between 5,000 and 10,000 spectators per game?" he asked.

FIFA and the IOC "have to take the lead" on stadium sustainability, he says, adding that the latter must now "operationalise" its Agenda 2020 plan and "take the actions required in order to make the policy work".

Government, says Reddy, should not view the hosting of an event as a "big megalomaniac ribbon-cutting opportunity", but need to be supported by the sports governing bodies to make the right decision for their nation's society and economy.

CHANGE IN PERSPECTIVE

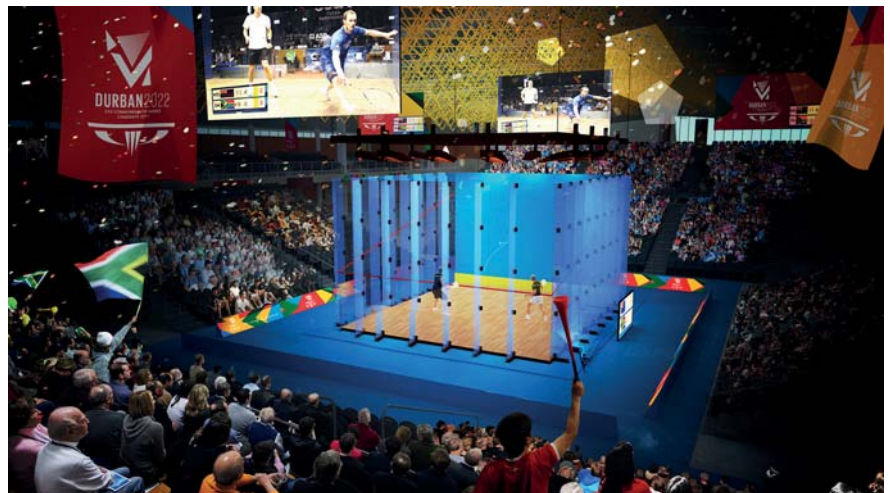
Reddy's fellow architects also have a responsibility to drive the agenda forward, but he doubts many of his contemporaries will have a similar stance.

"Why don't architects promote temporary facilities? You have to be a stupid architect like me who has talked himself out of a job," he says, tongue in cheek. "Why would any architect want to tell you not to build something, when their living is premised on the fact you have to build? Maybe I'm a pioneer or maybe I'm a village idiot."

Architects with a differing opinion can point towards sustainable practices when building, with several new stadiums being awarded the Leadership in Energy and



LUKAS SCHULZE / PRESS ASSOCIATION



▲ All venues for the Durban 2022 Commonwealth Games, such as the table tennis arena, squash venue and beach volleyball stadium, will be temporary structures

Environmental Design (LEED) certification. But Reddy is sceptical the award means anything substantial. He says: "LEED is suppose to be the thing that everyone hangs their hat on, but how is it possible when you can build a 40,000-seater facility, upwards of 180,000sq m? How can that be sustainable? It doesn't matter what technology you add to save on water, electricity and heating.

"If we take the ridiculous end of sustainability – not to build at all – my argument is closer to that than saying 'let's build it!'"

Brave words from a man who makes his living designing buildings, but it may just take renegades like Reddy to make sport infrastructure more economically and environmentally sustainable. ●

Building rugby across the pond: US development on the agenda at Rugby Expo 2016

While domestic growth is still a priority for those in charge of English rugby, the sport's great and good were keen to highlight the opportunities in the US. Matthew Campelli reports

During the final few weeks of 2016 Coventry's Ricoh Arena became a haven for the sport of rugby. Originally developed as a purpose-built football ground, the Ricoh is now very much a rugby-first venue thanks to its acquisition by Wasps in late-2014.

That new status was reflected when the stadium hosted the Rugby Expo conference on 3 and 4 November – the first of a three-exhibition deal it signed last year – and the rugby league Four Nations double-header between England, Scotland, Australia and New Zealand on the following Saturday.

For Rugby Expo veterans, the move 100 miles north from Twickenham, the home of rugby in England, to the unfamiliar surroundings of the Ricoh Arena may have felt like a bit of a departure. The Ricoh is no doubt an impressive arena for a rugby union club, and was more than capable of hosting such an event, though.

Unfamiliar territory was somewhat a theme of the first day, with America and the merits of developing its rugby market dominating the discussions.

NEW YORK EXPERIMENT

A Q&A with Premiership Rugby chief executive Mark McCafferty kicked off proceedings, and his take on developments across the pond would have interested newly-instated World Rugby chair Bill Beaumont, who was absent due to ill health.

McCafferty spoke generally about the growth he thought the league could continue to make in terms of television deals, sponsorship and spectator numbers. But the US was highlighted as a key area of growth – indeed the nation was described as McCafferty's "number one target".

In March, Premiership Rugby took a Saracens and London Irish league fixture to New York in a

bid to generate interest, particularly among the expatriates with ties to the latter. The match sold just over half the tickets for the 25,000-capacity Red Bull Arena, and despite the demotion of London Irish from the league, McCafferty is optimistic inroads can be made.

His optimism, he said, stems from two factors. The first is the level of interest had in flagship international matches which have been staged in Chicago. When New Zealand defeated USA Rugby 74-6 in November 2014, more than 60,000 people came to watch. Similar numbers attended when Ireland avenged the US by beating the All Blacks in the Windy City in November.

McCafferty is also encouraged by the perceived decline of the National Football League in the States, and feels that rugby may be able to fill a gap.

NFL DECLINE

He said the NFL had been having a hard time, and in terms of televised viewing figures he'd be right, with double-digit year-on-year declines. The sport is also suffering with an image problem with a number of ex-professionals expressing health concerns, particularly in terms of head damage.

McCafferty's sentiments were echoed by a panel of chief executives who took the stage after his session. Heath Harvey,



▲ Premiership Rugby chief executive Mark McCafferty said that making rugby a big sport in the US was the organisation's "number one target" internationally