



# All Together Now Uniting the Movement in Hertfordshire



# Foreword



“ There are challenging and exciting times ahead and we are fully committed to ensuring that the Partnership shows system-leadership in support of both its strategic objectives, and those within Sport England’s 10 year Uniting the Movement strategy.

It gives us great pleasure to present this 5 Year Strategic Plan on behalf of the Herts Sports and Physical Activity Partnership.

The document is the culmination of extensive consultation with key partners and stakeholders, to ensure that the strategic priorities contained therein meet with the needs and aspirations of the wider sport, physical activity, and wellbeing sector in Hertfordshire.

It also sets out to prioritise those within our communities who are in most need and have traditionally faced the greatest barriers to participation.

Collectively, we have the power to help our residents live happier and healthier lives and this strategy aims to transform those lives by radically reducing inequalities in terms of opportunities and access to sport and physical activity.

Those inequalities have undoubtedly been exacerbated by the pandemic and it is imperative that we now use sport and physical activity as a vehicle to help our communities recover and reinvent themselves as safer, stronger, and better places to live and work.

Arguably, a focus on sport and physical activity in that recovery, is more important than ever. We are confident that through an inter-agency approach, this strategy can make a telling contribution to some of the key national policy agendas, including helping to reduce the burden on the health sector; employment and prosperity; levelling-up; and net zero carbon emissions.

Ability Without Opportunity has become something of a mantra for the Partnership and an enhanced sport and physical activity offer at the local level will not only improve the lives of our

residents, but it will also help to unearth a wave of new talent and create opportunities and pathways for that talent to be nurtured and to reach its potential.

We look forward to working with all our stakeholders, in realising our aspirations and collectively we can make a huge difference to the lives of our people. This strategy will ensure that we have a laser-like focus on identifying and addressing inequality and using an insight-led, evidence-based approach we aim to optimise the use of what will always be limited resources, for the greatest impact.

Moreover, we will put in place a robust measurement and evaluation framework for the delivery of this strategy, so that our funders and stakeholders can hold us to account and ensure that we deliver on what we have promised.

There are challenging and exciting times ahead and we are fully committed to ensuring that the Partnership shows system-leadership in support of both its strategic objectives, and those within Sport England’s 10 year Uniting the Movement strategy.

We look forward to working with you all and would thank you in anticipation of your continued support of the Partnership’s work.

**Mervyn Morgan- Chair**  
**Hester Brierley- Vice Chair**  
Herts Sports and Physical Activity Partnership.



## Vision:

More  
**People**

More  
**Active**

More  
**Often**

## Mission:

Working strategically and collaboratively to improve the lives of the people of Hertfordshire, by using the power of sport and physical activity to tackle inequality and disadvantage.

# Values:

Everything we do is underpinned by the following values:

## Proactive

constantly thinking ahead to anticipate opportunities and challenges in the operating environment.

## Reliable

Set clear expectations and do all we can to deliver on our promises.

## Inclusive

we value diversity and will tackle inequalities so that everyone gets the chance to benefit from an active lifestyle.

## Collaborative

we recognise that no single organisation or programme can create sustainable change at scale, therefore we will adopt a collaborative approach working closely with partners across Hertfordshire to co-ordinate our efforts and maximise impact.

## Environmental sustainability

ensuring we meet today's sport and physical activity needs, while contributing to the enhancement of future opportunities by improving the integrity of the natural and built environment on which it depends.

# Enablers of Change:

Threads running throughout the strategy that are key to driving transformational change

## Fit for purpose

**workforce** - a diverse and welcoming workforce with the skills and behaviours to be able to offer fun, safe and progressive activities that attract and retain individuals in sport and physical activity.

## Fit for purpose

**organisation** - robust governance with distributed leadership, a commitment to continuous improvement, equality, diversity and inclusion, and operational agility to respond to changing needs.

**Insight led** - an in depth understanding of the factors influencing activity levels, inequalities and the impact of sport and physical activity, and using this insight to make customer-led and evidenced-based decisions.

## Systems change -

understanding the key systems in place, coalescing around our shared purpose, and delivering interventions that will shift the conditions holding the problem (inactivity, inequality) in place.

## Embracing technology

**& innovation** - creating the conditions where we are constantly exploring new ways to achieve our strategic objectives, using technology and innovation to improve impact and efficiency.



“Creating the conditions where we are constantly exploring new ways to achieve our strategic objectives.”





# Strategic Objective 1: Community Sport & Physical Activity Sector

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In partnership with schools, and those involved in community sport to provide opportunities for the people of Hertfordshire to start, continue and thrive in their chosen sport or physical activity.

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Back in 2003 the Partnership was established to support the local sporting infrastructure in Hertfordshire – including sports clubs and the army of volunteers that organise and run them. Together with our schools, these clubs and other sporting organisations make an immeasurable contribution to community life in the county and play a vital role in making our communities safer and better places to live and work.

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They provide myriad opportunities for our residents to get involved and stay involved in sport and physical activity and make a positive impact on key social areas including health and wellbeing, social inclusion, community cohesion, educational attainment, crime and disorder reduction, and skills and employment.

Our schools and sports clubs have a massive role to play as part of the recovery and rebuild from the pandemic - particularly to the lives of our young people and it is essential that there is a joined-up approach between the outstanding work undertaken in our schools and the continued lifelong participation in sport and physical activity

that involvement in local sports clubs can facilitate.

To maximise the impact of this we need to develop a workforce able to nurture both the mental and physical wellbeing of participants.

Unfortunately, however, for many of these organisations the daily reality is a hand to mouth existence where they face burgeoning legislation, creeping regulation, and escalating costs against the backdrop of an increasingly litigious society, where gratitude is often in short supply.

Over recent times it has become increasingly clear that if we are to connect with the most inactive, disadvantaged and

marginalised within our communities we will also need to work closely with those organisations that have the reach to, and trust of, our target audience. Some of these less traditional sports and physical activity organisations are best placed to make the biggest difference in helping us achieve our goal of ensuring that every resident of the county can get involved and stay involved in their chosen sport or physical activity.

Our aim is to work closely with key partner organisations to strengthen Hertfordshire's local sport and physical activity infrastructure and to help create sustainable pathways from schools to community sport.

## We will do this:

- By supporting the development of a fit for purpose workforce that better reflects, understands, and represents the communities that it works with, to encourage lifelong participation.
- By working in partnership with National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs) to assist community sports clubs and other like-minded organisations in the county to develop and sustain inclusive opportunities, and pathways to participation in sport and physical activity.
- Through advocacy - and in collaboration with schools, local government, and other relevant bodies - for enhanced and affordable community access to schools, leisure centres, community facilities and parks and open spaces.
- By working across the education sector to encourage the provision of positive experiences for children and young people in physical education, sport, exercise, and physical activity, including the transition from school to community-based opportunities.

# Strategic Objective 2: Covid Recovery

Support the community sport and physical activity sector and individuals to recover from the impact of the Covid pandemic using sport and physical activity to improve health and wellbeing and community resilience.

The COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the importance of sport, recreation, and physical activity to the lives of individuals and our communities, and we must work creatively and collaboratively to make the case for sport and physical activity and demonstrate the huge social, economic and health benefits that it can bring.

We know from Sport England's research that existing inequalities have been widened, with some groups hit much harder by the pandemic than others - including women, young people aged 16-34, older adults, people with a disability, people with long-term health conditions, and those from Black, Asian, and other ethnically diverse communities. Those living in deprived areas and those in urban

areas have also found it more challenging to be active. Moreover, we know that getting active can play a role in boosting the nation's physical health and mental wellbeing with the most active people in England having the highest levels of mental wellbeing.

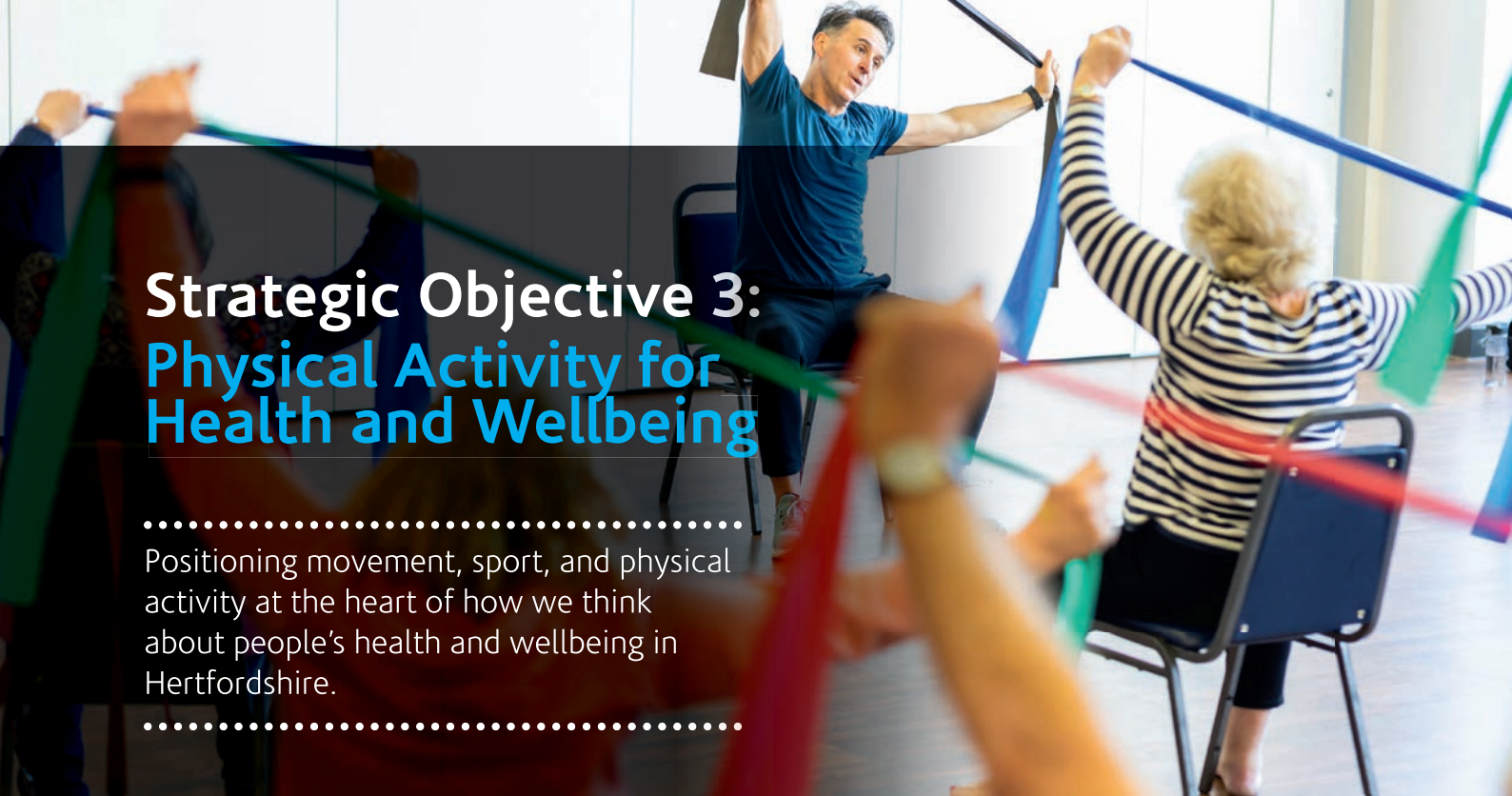
In addition, the pandemic has brought home the real human cost of inequality. Many people and communities still feel

excluded, and more work is needed to ensure that sport and physical activity at all levels, is a place for everyone not just some. As we go about supporting the sport and physical activity sector in Hertfordshire to become even more resilient and sustainable in tackling the challenges that lie ahead, the promotion of diversity, inclusion and collaboration will need to be at the heart of our efforts.

## We will do this:

- By working with relevant stakeholders in the sport and physical activity sector and the wider voluntary and community sector to ensure that those residents who have been disproportionately impacted by Covid-19 can access appropriate opportunities to be active, ensuring resources are targeted and tailored to those in greatest need and facing greatest inequalities.
- By supporting the community sport and physical activity sector to be resilient, innovative and embrace technology, to help address the effects of Covid-19 on the physical and mental wellbeing of the residents of the county.
- By promoting and sharing an innovative approach to insight, knowledge and digital opportunities and supporting stakeholder organisations to use it effectively.
- As a catalyst for change to ensure that more people from all backgrounds can participate in sport and recreation and by encouraging partners to work together to achieve this.





# Strategic Objective 3: Physical Activity for Health and Wellbeing

Positioning movement, sport, and physical activity at the heart of how we think about people's health and wellbeing in Hertfordshire.

It is well documented that being physically active can help people to lead healthier and happier lives encouraging improvements in physical, mental, and social wellbeing.

Those taking part in regular exercise have a lower risk of developing many long-term health conditions and illnesses including coronary heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and cancer. Being physically active is also proven to increase self-esteem, mood, sleep quality and energy levels and reduce the risks of stress, clinical depression, dementia, and Alzheimer's disease.

It is also clear that health is not experienced equally by everyone with inequalities influenced beyond someone's individual lifestyle - to include wider social determinants. These effects are felt more significantly by certain groups within society and can lead to a marked reduction in physical and mental health, as well as overall life expectancy.

Physical activity has been described as the 'miracle cure' that can help overcome the inequalities faced by so many. It should not be a privilege, but a basic human need. Our goal is to ensure that the people in Hertfordshire can reap the benefits of physical activity, regardless of wider circumstance, targeting resource at those that are least active and facing greatest inequality.

## We will do this:

- Through advocacy for movement, physical activity, and sport as beneficial to health and wellbeing by working collaboratively to support meaningful links between health systems and structures and physical activity opportunities.
- By promoting a fully inclusive physical activity and sport provision in Hertfordshire, recognising that people with more challenging health needs may need extra support or new ways to take part.
- By working as a systems connector with those who have trust, credibility and reach among people who are least active or in poorer health, to ensure that those facing greatest inequality have accessible, affordable, and appropriate opportunities to be physically active.

“ Physical activity has been described as the 'miracle cure' that can help overcome the inequalities faced by so many.



# Strategic Objective 4: Sport for Social Change

Use sport and physical activity to drive social change to enhance the lives of Hertfordshire’s residents by supporting community cohesion, social inclusion, economic prosperity, crime and anti-social behaviour reduction, educational attainment, and employability.

Sport has massive potential to play a greater role in addressing social issues across Hertfordshire. It can be used as a catalyst to build social capacity and develop socially and physically healthy communities. This can be through the physical and mental strength it gives to individual athletes or teams; the joint passion that bonds fans together from many backgrounds and cultures; and a vehicle to deliver life skills and learnings that help communities to grow stronger.

Until recently, those involved with sport and physical activity have been primarily concerned with increasing activity levels in a bid to achieve healthier lifestyles. While this objective remains of great importance, non-sporting agencies are

increasingly campaigning for a greater understanding of how sport can play a role in tackling wider social issues.

Whether creating long-term behaviour changes, or simply offering a distraction

to wider life, sport and physical activity has the power to create significant social change and we aim to work with other relevant agencies and organisations to maximise the impact of sport and physical activity on community life in the county.

## We will do this:

- By engaging with a wider range of diverse leaders and community stakeholders, charities, business, and policy makers in health, education, criminal justice, housing, and community development and advocating for the intentional use of sport and physical activity to generate positive social outcomes.
- By supporting the empowerment and capacity-building of a range of non-sporting and sporting partners to promote the social benefits of sport and physical activity participation.
- Through the collection, building and sharing of evidence of what works, and what doesn't, when using sport and/or activity for positive social outcomes.
- By securing resources to work with targeted groups and individuals to co-design and implement appropriate sport and physical activity interventions that promote wider social outcomes.

“ Sport has massive potential to play a greater role in addressing social issues across Hertfordshire.



# Strategic Objective 5: Stronger Communities

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Taking a place-based approach to tackling inequalities and reducing inactivity, by concentrating limited resources and empowering local communities from target areas, for maximum impact.  
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We are passionate about making sure that everyone across Hertfordshire has the same access to physical activity and sporting opportunities, to enhance their health, well-being, and life chances.  
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However, we also acknowledge that with a widening inequality gap in certain parts of the county, it is imperative that we adopt a place-based approach to addressing stubborn inequalities and worrying physical inactivity levels.

Introduced in September 2020 Active Local is the Partnership's place-based initiative. Favouring an Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approach, the programme seeks to use sport and physical activity to address

inactivity, social disadvantage, and health inequalities in some of Hertfordshire's most disadvantaged communities.

We aim to use Active Local to achieve change by bringing cross-sector organisations together to address the underlying causes of complex social problems – including physical inactivity levels - in a more holistic and joined-up way.



The programme seeks to use sport and physical activity to address inactivity, social disadvantage, and health inequalities in some of Hertfordshire's most disadvantaged communities.

## We will do this:

- Through collaboration with organisations and individuals that know their communities best, creating robust local partner networks to achieve sustainable outcomes.
- By targeting available resource towards communities of greatest need.
- By developing a granular understanding of targeted communities ensuring that any community provision is co-designed and that outcomes are aligned with local priorities.
- Through the enhancement of local community leadership capacity - to help grow and sustain meaningful change.



# Strategic Objective 6: Active Environments

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The development of inclusive and sustainable places and spaces to encourage participation in sport and physical activity for all our residents - particularly those from inactive and disadvantaged communities.  
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Well-designed places and spaces can enable increased physical activity levels leading to a positive impact on physical and mental well-being, which in turn creates more joined up communities and improves community safety, air quality and noise reduction.  
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An active environment is also a key mechanism for tackling the climate emergency by promoting active travel (reducing emissions), promoting the provision and use of green infrastructure, and reducing carbon intensive sedentary lifestyles.

We believe that initiatives such as active travel potentially have

a more substantial role to play in the policy response to the climate crisis. While planning decisions and associated legislation to promote active environments often focus on infrastructure investment, targeted interventions are also required to activate places and spaces and address social and cultural issues which are key barriers for many people and communities.

Sporting organisations also play an important leadership, education, and advocacy role in many communities, often supporting individuals outside formal education and civic engagement structures through place-based initiatives which are meaningful and sustainable. We intend to mobilise these assets across the sector to support the creation of active environments and positive climate action.

## We will do this:

- Through collaboration with partners to improve accessibility to the natural environment – including the countryside, parks and open spaces.
- By encouraging the development and activation of active travel for a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of residents and the environment, including a reduction in congestion and air pollution.
- By embracing the climate change and sustainability agenda by embedding sustainability principles across our work, aiming to achieve the dual benefit of a more active lifestyle and reduced carbon emissions.
- Support stakeholders in the local planning system to encourage design that promotes inclusive and sustainable active lifestyles.



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# How will we measure success?

It is important that we set ambitious and measurable goals, including milestones along the way, to provide a focus for our work and so we know whether we are on track.

During the first 6 months of the Strategy, we will establish an Evaluation Framework that will include:



## Place based learning

Qualitative learning linked to our Active Local work.



## Project Indicators

tangible measures for our key projects linked to our strategic priorities.



## Outcome Measures

where work is directly related to specific social outcomes.



## System Change

providing progress on our work to influence policy and to create the conditions for systems change.



## National Indicators

showing high level and long-term direction of travel.



## Overall Ambitions

high level aspirations for 2027 linked to our strategic priorities.

Each work stream will have a detailed Action Plan, including measures that will feed into the Evaluation Framework, and we will create a reporting mechanism so we can share progress with our Board and key stakeholders.

Measures that demonstrate our effectiveness at reducing inequalities will be a key feature of the Evaluation Framework.



# Strategy Summary

## Our values underpinning everything we do

Proactive

Reliable

Inclusive

Collaborative

Environmentally Sustainable

### Key insight driving our Strategy

- ▶ A more joined-up approach between schools and community sport<sup>1</sup>
- ▶ The covid pandemic has disproportionately affected the most disadvantaged communities<sup>2</sup>
- ▶ People taking part in regular exercise have a lower risk of developing long-term health conditions<sup>3</sup>
- ▶ Sport and physical activity has massive potential in addressing social issues and having a positive economic impact<sup>4</sup>
- ▶ A widening inequality gap in certain parts of the county<sup>5</sup>
- ▶ Well-designed places and spaces can enable increased physical activity levels and improved mental health<sup>6</sup>

### Our long-term Mission



**Working strategically and collaboratively to improve the lives of the people of Hertfordshire, by using the power of sport and physical activity to tackle inequality and disadvantage.**

### Our Strategic Objectives

**Community Sport & Physical Activity Sector**  
- provide opportunities for the people of Hertfordshire to start, continue and thrive in their chosen sport or physical activity.

**Covid Recovery** - Support the community sport and physical activity sector and individuals to recover from the impact of the Covid pandemic using sport and physical activity to improve health and wellbeing and community resilience.

**Physical Activity for Health and Wellbeing**  
- Positioning movement, sport, and physical activity at the heart of how we think about people's health and wellbeing in Hertfordshire.

**Sport for Social Change**  
- Use sport and physical activity to enhance the lives of Hertfordshire's residents by supporting community cohesion, social inclusion, economic prosperity, crime and anti-social behaviour reduction, educational attainment and employability.

**Stronger Communities**  
- Taking a place-based approach to tackling inequalities and reducing inactivity, by concentrating limited resources and empowering local communities from target areas, for maximum impact.

**Active Environments**  
- The development of inclusive and sustainable places and spaces to encourage participation in sport and physical activity for all our residents.

### How we will measure success



- ▶ Place based learning
- ▶ Project indicators
- ▶ Outcome measures
- ▶ System change
- ▶ National indicators

### Long Term Outcomes

- ▶ Increased activity levels
- ▶ Reduction in inactivity levels
- ▶ Reducing the inequality gap between those who are least active and those who are most active.
- ▶ Our ability to positively transform lives through sport and physical activity.

### Vision



**More People**



**More Active**



**More Often**

Fit for purpose workforce

Fit for purpose organisation

Insight led

System change

Embracing technology & innovation

## Key Enablers of Change

### Evidence Base

- <sup>1</sup> Young people (years 7-11) receiving free school meals (an indicator of affluence) in Hertfordshire, have significantly reduced activity levels compared to peers not receiving free school meals (Sport England Active Lives Children and Young People Survey Academic year 2020-21).
- <sup>2</sup> There were 1.2 million (+2.6%) more inactive adults (less than 30 minutes activity per week) in November 2020 compared to November 2019. (Sport England, Active Lives survey (mid-May 20/21))
- <sup>3</sup> 40% of long term health conditions could be prevented by reducing inactivity (Public Health England, Everybody Active Every Day).
- <sup>4</sup> £9.5bn value in improved physical & mental health generated by physical activity (Sport Industry Research Group, Social Return on Investment in Sport & Physical Activity in England, 2020).
- <sup>5</sup> Activity levels (taking part in at least 150 minutes a week) were on average 62.4% in the 10 Active Local Areas compared with 64.5% for England. (<https://local.communityinsight.org/>)
- <sup>6</sup> Reports by Dr William Bird found that benefits from contact with the natural environment included reductions in obesity, heart disease, diabetes, cancer, stress, ADHD, aggression and criminal activities, among others (Green Walking in mental health recovery. Centre for Sustainable Healthcare, May 2020)





**Herts Sports & Physical Activity Partnership**

University of Hertfordshire | de Havilland Campus | Hatfield | AL10 9EU

01707 284 229 | [sportinherts.org.uk](http://sportinherts.org.uk) | [@sportinherts](https://twitter.com/sportinherts) | [/sportinherts](https://facebook.com/sportinherts)