



In collaboration with:



# Weekly #SportPositive Twitter Chat

## Tuesday, April 21

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### Sport and Single Use Plastic

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*\*\*Please note we have just taken salient points that were added in the discussion and have not given attribution. This document is to give a flavour of the Twitter Chat, it is not a transcription. If you wish to see who wrote points that resonate with you, to pick up a discussion, search #SportPositive on Twitter and you will be able to see the original tweets.\*\**

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**Q1 - What are the barriers and challenges that sport still faces in removing single-use plastic from an operational, safety and waste management perspective?**

Barriers to removing single-use plastic could well increase in post-COVID-19 situations as people will be worried about hygiene, especially relating to food packaging. Other challenge is systemic ubiquity of plastic packaging and lack of alternatives at scale

Challenges: possible waning social pressure from consumers, lack of affordable and accessible alternatives that align with current practice. Barriers: a feeling of urgency to revisit the way events/concessions are run to reduce plastics

Perceptions of efficiency - We've heard people in Operations tell us that they are concerned that utilizing reusables could lead to an increase in the time it takes to serve a customer. The opportunity is in leveraging the time & resource efficient products!

Inertia is a big problem. Also, there are multiple stakeholders involved, so you have to solve the problem balancing multiple agendas. Not easy to do.

So many barriers are in the mind. When I started to get deeply involved in the #singleuseplastic debate in 2017, many thought efforts were fruitless. In 2020 mindsets are changing, and a sense of urgency finally coming

Old habits die hard. Asking customers / supporters to change behaviour, even in a straightforward way, not easy. Engagement has to be about tangible, positive impact and common endeavour, not preaching

1st, we need to proceed to a mindset shift in terms of event scope and what we associate[d] to clean venue, then waste management strategy and finally move from linear towards circular economy.



Radical transparency first (stealing your phrase @sprintwsap) then passionate practical engagement

There could be a lack of imagination. Meaning a simple solution would be to only offer straws upon request. That would reduce SUP significantly without changing supply chain, cost increase, etc

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## Q2: In what ways can sport use its power to advocate/mandate reduced single use plastic throughout the supply chain?

The problem of single-use plastic is not limited to sport. While we think of sport sector as a big influencer, this goes well beyond sport and will require multi-sector coordination to shift supply chains. This is of course not an excuse for inaction and sport sector can take a lead here, but it needs to be coordinated across events, sports, leagues, venues etc. rather than a succession of individual initiatives.

-> Also many stadiums / clubs are not the direct procurers of products. The majority of procurement is undertaken by their contractors and is often driven by their HQ centrally, with company objectives, which might not necessarily be aligned with the venue's goals

Implementing efficient, impactful products that leverage trends and current concerns. In 2019, that may have been banning straws, in late 2020, maybe that's products that promote health. Fans need to see something and say "That's cool. I want one at home."

-> As much as I LOVE banning straws, and even help promote bamboo straws from <https://gumibamboo.com>. Are we fast enough, is it not only the very tip of the iceberg, that is covering a plastic ocean?

—> Agree that organizations cannot stop at straw-related strategies. More that it's one very small way to scratch the surface and show fans that 'we hear you' in implementing strategies that they may care about! Then come in with the heavy stuff.

—> The straws are the gateway drug to further single-use plastic reduction. Start with the silliest habit first

Tender/contractual clauses are such a strong leverage. Collab's with sponsors are great activation. Water sports can lead by example, all should follow. Ambassador programs. Beach clean ups

Sport organizations can use their collective power to influence supply chains. I don't think sport orgs fully realize or fully leverage their power with supply chains and other corporate partners in this area to demand more sustainable options

So many great example already. This was so well executed and communicated: <https://www.innovatorsmag.com/sports-can-set-sustainability-standard/>

Be a part of the solution, not a part of the problem. We're encouraged at the number of moves the sports world has made in the last couple of years. Hoping these will inspire industry-wide changes to achieve scale.

Could be a good way to engage young fans, the biggest concern of sports commissioners, no?

All about leadership. Sport is the focal point for communities and businesses, and shouldn't expect anyone else to set the tone

Please all go to <http://AEGGoGreen.com> to calculate your own plastic footprint! Also digging out an article on ATP at The O2: <https://atptour.com/en/news/sustainability-efforts-nitto-atp-finals-2018...>

Seems like there are solid examples of single use plastic reduction programs throughout the sports world. @OceanicGlobal is but one. Key is publicizing via media, social and otherwise. To make this rule rather than exception

Sustainable procurement is a must moving forward. Tenders should have sustainability and circularity as Question 1.

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### Q3 - What alternatives\* exist when removing single use plastic from sport?

*\*To include sustainable product replacements or more systemic changes in behaviour.*

So many alternatives. We've got a materials library on @aplastic\_planet website. My own personal favourite right now is what's happening in pro sports in USA: @BallAluminumCup

Ongoing education - frankly you can not offer plastic products (cups, straws, lids) and pivot to alternative products like @BallCorpHQ aluminum cups - however, that doesn't reduce waste it simply uses a 'more sustainable' product

Metals are infinitely recyclable, woods and glass cycle many times over. It's only polymers where "recyclable" is greenwash of the highest order.

We are focusing on first eliminating the items (ex, straws) then finding reusable products wherever possible. "Biodegradable" and "recyclable" are aspirational words only. Just shams.

Reusable, and/or biodegradable plastics, bamboo-based products. Here's a link to a story re: an interesting company in this space,

@polymaterialtd - <https://greensportsblog.com/the-gsb-interview-niall-dunne-polymateria-ceo-bringing-biodegradable-plastics-to-sports/...>

Easiest to look first at items that are not specific to sport, such as catering supplies, office equipment, wayfinding, signage, banners and wraps etc. Need to work with other sectors for common solutions. Best alternatives to single-use plastics is often to do without product in first place. So much unnecessary waste from business as usual approach, so now is chance to rethink and do better with less. Also cheaper

Let's move from small to BIG plastics, ex. Signage or Look. We often have kms in play. Like straws, 1st habit is to think about Reuse like wallets. Freitag bags=1993! Bigger 2nd life solutions can be found within building industry (isolation, road work, etc.)

**REUSE [REDISIBUTE / REPAIR /UPCYCLE]**  
NEIL BECKOFF

- SOURCING
  - DO WE REALLY NEED IT?
  - RIGHT QUANTITIES?
  - IN WHICH MATERIAL IS IT DONE?
  - PACKAGING?
- INNOVATION
  - IDENTIFY 2<sup>ND</sup> LIFE PRIOR TO ORDERING !
  - REUSABLE TABLEWARE
- INFRA / FOOD / LOOK [SIGNAGE] / FURNITURE / SPORTS EQUIPMENT / ETC.

when was Freitag founded ?

#LeapFrog  
#Disrupt

#### **Q4 - How can sport continue to educate and engage fan bases to reduce single use plastic, both now and after the pandemic eases?**

Important to be consistent in approach and aligned with systems and processes operating in the communities where your fan base comes from. Otherwise good work is diluted because people don't see same approach elsewhere

Expert guidance for venue operators (BASIS will be developing and sharing some), and massive drive to educate and reassure on washing, hygiene, etc

New Mantra - Reduce & Reuse. Reduce & Reuse. Reduce & Reuse. Constant repetition gets the message home, constant repetition gets the message home, constant repe.....

Continue to try to move things in the right direction, that is, minimizing single use plastics. We're continuing education and outreach (see <http://AEGGoGreen.com>) and planning for life after pandemic. Won't be without challenges though

Engagement/education campaigns specific to attendees, gatekeepers to educate at waste receptacles, statements from the team about moving away from plastics. We had a study on such campaigns published recently. You can find it here: <https://authors.elsevier.com/c/1axQE57kRyxRVR...> And here is another: <https://tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/16184742.2019.1580301...>

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#### **Q5 - Do you think sport is doing enough when it comes to single use plastic reduction, removal and influencing change more broadly? Blue sky thinking, what else can sport do?**

There's much to do to take a lead in enviro responsibility – focus can be on sustainable behaviors like public transit, edu. on sustainable consumption, waste disposal, carbon offsets, energy consumption, energy options + a whole host of other initiatives.

[@ProtectWinters](#),

[@sustainablesurf](#), [@11thHourRacing](#) and others have really taken the lead at advocacy beyond just protecting their respective sports but a holistic view to protect and reinvigorate the natural environment. These behaviors that can be promoted and encouraged at events DO transfer into everyday life

Not just sport; nobody is doing enough to reduce single-use plastic. The change has to be done at scale and that means lots of organisations working together to give consistent message. Many voices, one big message. It will need massive collaboration across multiple sports and events to define and amplify a consistent message. Will require parking egos at the door though, which may be biggest challenge

One idea is to put focus on looking at BIG plastics. Other one: important role sports could play: Mutualise sharing/reuse within event Industry. Could be one (single use) platform per region/country. E.g. equipment such as reusable tableware to recycled carpets etc.

There's some green shoots but still a ways to go. And it's kind of beyond sports at this point. But we should all do what we can do, and try to influence others where/when we can.

Everyone in sport has a huge role to play. We've seen what happens when sporting legends get involved in educating on single use, but also teams, organisations and sports media. Sports & Entertainment truly move the needle. [#KickSingleUseOut](#) [#PassOnPlastic](#) - highly effective

Our dream is for these factors to be on the list of considerations for brand partnership/sponsorship opportunities. Do our goals align? Will the sales of your product help fulfil my goals while providing you with the platform to expand sustainable practices?

Athlete perspective: Sports and sportsmen do not make enough effort to reduce their impact on the environment. But every action is important. Sport must set an example and drive change. Sport must use its share of affect to raise the awareness of as many people as possible, but must be exemplary. The current crisis must be the turning point for a more responsible sport.

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## Thank You!

If you contributed to the #SportPositive Twitter Chat on March 31<sup>st</sup>, thank you for being a part of it! If you didn't, I hope you find this document useful, and mark your diaries now to join us next week, **Tuesday, April 28<sup>th</sup> at 4-5pm UTC.**

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