

## Performance Improvement Technology In Elite Sports

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In competitive sport, small margins make the difference between winning and losing.

It is therefore no surprise that elite sport is experiencing transformational change due to the increasing use of performance improvement technology.

We have recently advised Formula 1 and Premier League football teams on their use of performance improvement technology solutions including in:

- The adoption of bio-analytics services aimed at reducing injury, improving recovery rates and the creation of individualised insights for performance optimisation; and
- The use of equipment and software for movement analysis, strength training and range of motion analytics.

Elite teams engage performance improvement technology providers to support them in monitoring athlete health and physical performance and benefit from sophisticated analytics and personalised recommendations for performance enhancement.

Typically, they remain heavily involved in the use of the technology and associated services, including in terms of arranging for the collection and analysis of samples, for example, blood samples, and the implementation of any recommendations, for example, the adoption of specified training and nutrition plans. In short, the technology provides doctors, coaches, physiotherapists and training principals with more information and an individualised framework in which they can work in respect of each athlete.

The combination of the new technology and the elite teams' focus on ensuring their athletes' performance and team success is creating an increasingly challenging regulatory environment for teams to navigate, in relation to both athlete performance management and transfers, where it is becoming common for individuals to be required to take such tests before any deal is concluded.

One of the key issues in the use of such technology and services is the sensitivity of the data. There is arguably little that competes in value for elite teams with information on athletes' strengths and weaknesses.

Equally, performance improvement solutions are new and the businesses that provide them often hope to use the information collected to train their own algorithms and improve their products.

Another challenge is often the perception of the product as software and hardware rather than as data processing technology. Contracts are often focused on IP and licensing and fail to adequately provide protections for the highly sensitive data that are needed to generate the analytics and recommendations. At the same time, hardware for this technology is often expensive for teams to buy or rent but how long teams can make good use of it

depends heavily on the software being maintained and updated on a regular basis.

One thing is for sure – performance improvement technology is fundamentally changing the landscape of sports. It provides tailored results and insights that previously were simply not available. Elite teams and athletes must embrace it but also navigate the complexities that come with it.

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