

Theme 4

Widening the competition environment to improve health

Man v Fat: Incorporating weight loss in the league tables

Man v Fat Football is a 14 week six-a-side football league that has a weight management programme built into it (with the intention that follow on leagues are organised after the initial 14 weeks).

Participants all have a body mass index (BMI) of 30+, which is defined by the National Health Service as being obese.

Players are put into teams, and they play a 30-minute game every week. In between games, they are supported with resources such as behaviour-change tools and peer support to help with weight loss. The league position is decided not just by the points won on the pitch, but by the pounds lost off it: players score bonus goals for weight loss and this is added to the match scores to give a new league table.

After the 14 weeks, the intention is that follow on leagues are organised, which includes consideration for the different BMI bands so that men can continue to have a level playing field.

What are the benefits?

The programme has demonstrated the following achievements:

- 94% of men lost 5% of body weight.
- 89% of participants reported improved health outcomes.

How was this used in the School Games Pilot?

Replicating the exact model of Man v Fat in the School Games could be challenging and it is recommended that SGOs and schools follow the concept rather than the exact model.

As the animation in the resource shows, the concept could be applied with literacy as the motivator to engage young people. Points could be scored for the number of books young people read as well as the result of the sporting competition.

This concept could also be used to target whole school outcomes. Young people with poor attendance could be engaged by the sport and then earn additional points if their attendance improves. The same concept could be used for behaviour.