

# Press Release

Contact: Andy Reed / Sam Tomlin

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Phone: 07850 341236 / 07792 259087

**INSPIRE A GENERATION? 80% SAY OLYMPICS NOT INSPIRING THEM TO  
PLAY MORE SPORT**

Rhetoric used to justify sport challenged by new report.

*Give us our Ball Back: Reclaiming Sport for the Common Good*, a new report by the Sports Think Tank and Theos think tank, reveals that the big claims made for the Olympics, and sport more generally, don't stack up.

A poll by ComRes supported the report's claim that big sporting events don't have a significant impact on participation. Only 4% of people agreed strongly with the statement "I'm inspired to play more sport at the moment because of the London 2012 Olympics", and 80% disagreed or disagreed strongly.

The report argues politicians assertions about how far sport can deliver on health, values and morality, economic benefits and even peace are misleading, and are ruining the fun of it.

While the polling shows most people think that the Olympics will be good for the British economy, as often claimed (agree 59% , disagree 30%, don't know 11%), the report reveals that "no recent Olympic Games has produced proven significant economic

benefits to the host country or city", and the balance between private and public investment is often misrepresented. For London 2012 private investment is likely to contribute only a quarter of total costs.

Most people are clear about the cost to the public purse; 64% say the taxpayer has contributed too much, and in London, where taxpayers have contributed more, it is even higher (70%).

The report takes a good look at the evidence for the claims being made on behalf of sport and argues that sport is being set up to fail. It reveals that sport can't be shown to make us better people, contribute to reconciliation, develops our economies or even directly make us healthy. In our desire to justify it, we over-claim on its behalf. It concludes that sport shouldn't be a tool, used for other objectives, but valued for itself.

Andy Reed OBE, director of Sports Think Tank said " Those of us who love sport need to remember to be cautious about placing unrealistic political, economic and social demands on it and relearn how to value it for its own sake."

Notes for editors:

1. Methodology: ComRes interviewed 2,045 GB adults online from 20<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> June 2012. Data were weighted to be demographically representative of all GB adults. ComRes is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules. Full data tables are available [here](#).

2. *Give us our Ball Back: Reclaiming Sport for the Common Good* was written by Paul Bickley of Theos and Sam Tomlin of Sports Think Tank. The executive summary and full report can be read [here](#).

3. All media enquiries can be directed to: Sam

Tomlin : 07792259087 [sam.tomlin@sportstheinktank.com](mailto:sam.tomlin@sportstheinktank.com)

The Sports Think Tank is a new, independent organization with the aim of advancing the education of the public in sports policy, in particular by promoting and publishing research for the public benefit in all aspects of sports policy. Our website is: [www.sportstheinktank.com](http://www.sportstheinktank.com) and you can follow us on twitter: [@sport thinktank](https://twitter.com/sport_thinktank)

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