



Impact of Sport on Women in Business

Research Report

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& 30% Club

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About KPMG in Ireland

KPMG in Ireland is a provider of professional services that offers a range of audit, tax, advisory and consulting services to a broad range of domestic and international clients across all sectors of business and the economy. We operate on an all-Ireland basis and have 117 partners and over 4,000 people in offices in Dublin, Belfast, Cork and Galway. Find out more at kpmg.ie.



About 30% Club

The 30% Club is a global campaign supported by Board Chairs and CEOs of medium and large organisations. They are committed to achieving better gender balance at leadership levels and throughout their organisation, for better business outcomes. Established in 2015, the Irish chapter is supported by the leaders of more than 300 leading Irish businesses and organisations across all business sectors, representing more than 650,000 employees.





Ireland has made strong progress since 2015, with a much higher gender representation at Board level, and the percentage of women on ISEQ 20 boards now exceeding 36%.





Research Overview

Why KPMG and 30% Club Ireland carried out this research

KPMG has a rich history of not only supporting women in sport through their various sponsorship properties, but also in supporting women to excel in business through their 'Going for Growth' initiative. KPMG and the 30% Club have worked closely together since the campaign's inception in Ireland in 2015. The 30% Club aims to have a 30% gender balance at all senior decision-making levels in organisations, for better business outcomes. One of the key pillars of the 30% Club's strategy is to support the talent pipeline and add emphasis to initiatives that lead to equal career progression for men and women based on capitalising on their unique and individual skills. The link between sport and leadership is an important area for consideration.

While the health benefits of participation in sport are well known and documented, the most recent Irish Sports Monitor shows that women play less sport, that female sporting events are not as well attended as their male counterparts, and that women's sport does not receive the same level of media attention.

Ireland has made strong progress since 2015 with a much higher gender representation at Board level, and the percentage of women on ISEQ 20 boards now exceeding 36%. However, we still have capacity for growth in terms of CEO and C-Suite roles, with less than 14% of CEO roles in Ireland being held by women, and less than 25% of Senior Executive roles held by women.

Through this research, KPMG and 30% Club aim to investigate the impact of sport participation on Irish women in the workplace, from both an economic and well-being perspective. We wanted to spark a conversation within the sport and business communities around Irish businesswomen's attitudes towards the role that sport has played in their professional development.

Research Methodology

With similar research in the UK and the US indicating that women who partake in sport attain higher levels of educational roles and are more likely to be in management roles, KPMG and the 30% Club commissioned first-of-its-kind research to explore whether the same applies in Ireland.

The research was conducted by iReach through a nationwide study with fieldwork support on behalf of KPMG and the 30% Club amongst female business decision makers in Ireland.

13% of the research participants are CEO/Managing Directors of their organisations, while 33% of participants are Senior Managers, and 53% are in Middle Management.

Key Findings from the Research

Sports Participation:

75%

of respondents indicated they had participated in sport at some stage in their life.

90%

of CEOs had participated in sport.

Participation in Team Sports vs. Individual Sports:

Team - 44%

Individual - 20%

Both - 36%

Still active in Sport:

36% of all respondents

37% of CEOs

45% of senior management

29% of middle management

Skills learned through sport that have transferred into the boardroom:



88%

of those surveyed believe skills learned through sport can be easily transferred to the boardroom.

90%

said teamwork was the top skill that respondents believed transferred from sport into the boardroom.

Confidence: 86%

Communication: 74%

Leadership: 71%

Self-Belief: 63%

Sport positively impacted their career:

68% of senior management believe that sport positively impacted their career, along with 57% of CEOs and 51% of middle management.



69%

Perform skills better in the workplace due to participation in sport.

Sport as a vehicle for Networking/ Business Development:

74%

of respondents believe that sport is useful for networking or business development.

83%

of senior management believe that sport is useful for networking or business development.

Key Findings from the Research

Encouraging Sporting Participation in female family members:



94% would encourage female relatives to participate in sport



87% believe it builds confidence



86% as a way to meet new people



69% as a way to build communication skills.



64% to build leadership skills

Volunteering in Sport:

19%



of all respondents are involved in volunteering or coaching in a sporting organisation.

Participation in Sports on CVs:

45%



of all respondents examine applicant CVs for evidence of sporting participation.

What This Means:

Sport, it is widely established, has many benefits for participants in terms of health and wellness, but the key piece that this research aimed to unveil was, can the benefits of sport extend into the boardroom?

The findings of our research indicate that 75% of respondents had participated in sport at some stage in their life. 44% said they were involved in team sport, 20% in individual sport, while 36% were involved with both.

90% of CEOs had participated in sport, with 46% of them having been involved in sport at third level. Participation in sport dropped to 78% for those in senior management - yet it is this group who appear the most pre-disposed to the benefits of sport as a tool to aid career progression.

36% of respondents are still active in sport. This figure creeps up to 37% for CEOs, rises to 45% for senior management, yet just 29% of middle management are currently involved. Notably, just 19% of all respondents are involved in volunteering or coaching in a sporting organisation.

88% of those surveyed believe that skills learned through sport can be easily transferred to the boardroom, with teamwork, confidence, communication, leadership, self-belief, and decision-making identified by respondents as the key transferable skills. 69% of respondents believe that participating in sport has helped their performance in their career, although this rises to 77% for those in senior management positions.

It is those in senior management who also believe that sports participation has positively impacted their career, with 68% of this cohort believing this to be the case, compared to 57% of CEOs and just 51% for middle management. More than half believe that these benefits come from learned skills such as teamwork, leadership, and communication.

Interestingly, it is those in senior management who are also most likely to examine CVs for evidence of sporting participation when hiring, with 56% of them agreeing they do so, compared to 52% of CEOs and just 30% for middle management.

Many would encourage their female relatives to participate in sport, with 87% believing it builds communication skills, 86% to meet new people, 69% as a way to build confidence and 64% to build leadership skills.



Event Panel



Sarah O'Connor
Deputy CEO, Wilson Hartnell
Head of Sports Marketing & Sponsorship

Sarah is Deputy CEO and Head of Sports Marketing & Sponsorship at Wilson Hartnell. An experienced business leader and seasoned communications professional,

Sarah's diverse and passion-fuelled career includes experience as a commercial lawyer with Arthur Cox, and eight years in a leadership role at the heart of Irish Sport before joining Wilson Hartnell in 2015.

A firm believer that the power of sport extends well beyond the field of play, Sarah is a Director of Golf Ireland and coaches underage football and hockey – all while also trying to steal some time for a dip in the sea and a walk in the outdoors.



Mary O'Connor
CEO, Federation of Irish Sport

Mary is CEO of the Federation of Irish Sport. She is a native of Cork and has worked in sport for all of her professional life and is an avid sports fan.

Mary has represented her native Cork in both camogie and Ladies Football, amassing a total of 12 Senior All-Ireland medals over a 16-year dual inter-county career. She has won All Stars in both codes, National Leagues and provincial titles and, more recently, was honoured with an Honorary Doctorate from University College Cork (2012) in recognition of her amazing contribution to sport in Ireland.

In 2016, Mary graduated from University College Cork with a Masters in Voluntary and Community Sector Management. Before joining the Federation of Irish Sport, Mary worked with the Camogie Association as Director of Technical Development and Participation. She excelled in this role and led the Association into an unprecedented era of growth. Under her direction as Acting CEO of the Camogie Association in 2013, she successfully guided the Association through change in the form of the new affiliation model for individual members, which saw camogie ensure a more equitable membership structure for all clubs.



Vera Pauw
Republic of Ireland Women's
National Football Team Manager

Vera is the current manager of the Republic of Ireland Women's National Football team. Having joined the team in 2019, Vera has overseen a period of immense improvement for the squad

and, in 2022, they secured Ireland's first-ever qualification for the FIFA Women's World Cup, which will be held in Australia and New Zealand in 2023. A decorated player

in her own right, Vera earned 89 caps during a 14-year career with Holland, scoring two goals. Following the end of her international career, Vera ventured into coaching and has managed teams in Scotland, Russia, South Africa and her native Holland before joining the Irish set up.

In 2022, Vera was named the RTÉ Sports Awards Manager of the Year, in recognition of her incredible achievements with the Irish team.



Sinéad Aherne
Dublin Senior Ladies Footballer
& KPMG Director

Sinéad Aherne has been a Dublin senior footballer since making her debut in 2003, collecting 14 Leinster titles and four National League titles. In 2010, when Dublin won their first All-Ireland title, Sinéad received the Player of the Match award, scoring 2-7 in the final. She went on to captain Dublin from 2017 to 2020, as they won four All-Ireland Senior Football Championships while, in 2018, she was named the TG4 Senior Player's Player of the Year and received her seventh All-Star award.

At club level, she helped her club St Sylvester's to win the Dublin, Leinster and Intermediate All-Ireland titles in 2021 - to go alongside previous junior and intermediate Dublin titles - and has also represented Ireland at International Rules.

Professionally, Sinéad joined KPMG in 2010, qualifying as a Chartered Accountant and Chartered Tax Advisor. Sinéad is currently a Director in the Tax Practice. She has wide-ranging experience advising clients across various sectors, in both a tax compliance and advisory role. She is also an ambassador for GOAL and a director of Beaumont Hospital Foundation.



Paul McCabe
Chief Operating Officer
VLE Therapeutics Ltd

Paul is a senior business executive with more than 30 years' diversified experience in the Life Sciences sector,

working in a number of blue-chip Global Pharma companies such as Bristol Myer Squibb, Intel, Wyeth, Pfizer, Amgen, and Alexion.

A member of the 30% Club Ireland Steering Committee, Paul is also the current Chair and board member of IBEC BPCI - the Industry Association of Ireland's Pharma-sector Co-Chair of the BPCI Pharma Working group on Diversity & Inclusion, and a member of the Advisory Board of the DCU STEM Internship programme.

KPMG Sponsorship Portfolio

KPMG is proud to invest in a wide range of sponsorships, showcasing the firm's commitment to encouraging exceptional people to fulfil their potential.

KPMG is committed to the development, advancement, and empowerment of women's sport in Ireland. Having previously supported the 20x20 campaign and now, with ongoing sponsorships with the KPMG Women's Irish Open, Irish golfer Leona Maguire, Irish jockey Rachael Blackmore and the Dublin Ladies Gaelic football team, KPMG has strived to create a Level Ground and parity between men and women's sport in Ireland.

In addition to its support of women's sport in Ireland, KPMG also works to help inspire greatness amongst golfers at both the grassroots and professional level of golf. KPMG has a long and proud heritage in the game of golf, both in Ireland and abroad, having been title sponsor of the KPMG Women's PGA Championship since 2015, one of five majors in women's golf. In Ireland, KPMG is also the title sponsor of the KPMG Irish Kids Golf Tour and the KPMG Women's Irish Open.



Away from sport, KPMG is also committed to developing future Irish entrepreneurs through sponsorship of the 'Going for Growth' programme and its participation as supporters of the 30% Club, committed to gender balance at all levels.

As part of its proud support of women's sport in Ireland, KPMG was a leading sponsor of the successful 20x20 programme from its inception in 2018.

20x20 was created by Sarah Colgan and Heather Thornton, with the objective of creating a shift in the perception of women's sport so that it can become a bona fide part of our culture.

It was the first time globally that governing bodies across all sports in a country (76 in total) had signed the same charter via a partnership with The Federation of Irish Sport.

The 20x20 Charter was a commitment from sporting federations to champion women in sport. In addition, 28 out of Ireland's 30 national universities signed the 20x20 Third Level Charter, and over 300 grassroots clubs across 24 different sports signed up to the 20x20 Club Charter.

The 20x20 movement was so-called because of its three measurable objectives: to increase media coverage of women's sporting fixtures, participation in women's sport and attendances for women in sport by 20% by the end of 2020. Its slogan was 'If She Can't See It, She Can't Be It'.

Research conducted in October 2020 showed that the 20x20 campaign had a strong impact on Irish culture around women in sport, but that there was still more to be done. In terms of media coverage, research conducted by Nielsen at the outset of the campaign, found that just four per cent of sport's online coverage and three per cent of sport's print coverage was dedicated to women's sport. By the end of 2019, each of these had grown by two per cent. TV coverage of women's sport meanwhile saw a 40 per cent decrease in the same period, even though coverage of women's sport grew across both RTÉ and TG4. Despite the decline in coverage levels, the audience for women's sport on TV grew from seven per cent in 2018 to 18 per cent in 2019. Participation grew by 13 per cent while attendance at sport increased by 17 per cent during this period.

20x20 Movement Impact

80%
of the population are more aware of women's sport since the launch of 20x20.

61%
are more likely to support women's sport since the launch of 20x20.

75%
of men say 20x20 changed their mindset positively towards women's sport.

42%
of women say they are participating in more sport and physical activity than in 2018 due to awareness of 20x20.

50%
of the population and 60% of females say they would be more inclined to purchase from brands that support women's sport.



Leona Maguire

KPMG has been a proud supporter of Irish golfer, Leona Maguire since the beginning of her professional career in 2018.

Since then, Leona's career has gone from strength to strength, with 2021 proving to be a breakthrough year for the Cavan golfer. After being selected as a captain's pick for the European Solheim Cup team, she played a starring role as Europe claimed only their second victory on US soil in Ohio. Leona's singles victory over Jennifer Kupcho gave her four-and-a-half points from five matches - a record for a rookie – paving the way for Europe's 15-13 success.

Leona picked up where she left off in 2022 and became the first-ever Irish winner on the LPGA Tour, securing victory in the Drive On Championship in Florida. Leona won by three shots to beat Lexi Thompson, securing her maiden title, much to the delight of her supporters at home and abroad.

Leona now sits inside the top 15 on the World Rankings and, in 2022, KPMG announced a four-year extension to its partnership with the Cavan golfer, continuing their great relationship as Maguire's career on the LPGA tour progresses. In September 2022, Leona played in the KPMG Women's Irish Open, marking the first time she competed in a professional event in the Republic of Ireland since turning pro in 2018.



Rachael Blackmore

In 2022, KPMG announced a two-year partnership with one of Ireland's leading jockeys, Rachael Blackmore, complementing KPMG's partnership with Leona Maguire.

March 2022 saw Rachael make history by becoming the first female jockey to win the Cheltenham Gold Cup as well as defending her Champion Hurdle title on board Honeysuckle. Her success in 2022 came off the back of a stunning 2021, when Rachael became the first female to win the Ruby Walsh Trophy for leading jockey in Cheltenham, riding an incredible six winning horses during the four-day festival. Less than a month later, she continued to make history, becoming the first female ever to win what is widely regarded as horse racing's biggest and toughest race, the Aintree Grand National.

Rachael races over 250 days of the year, up and down the country, and KPMG is proud to support her on her journey as she continues to break the glass ceiling.

KPMG Irish Kids Golf Tour

Supporting young Irish talent is a key focus for KPMG and, in addition to its other golf sponsorships including the KPMG Women's Irish Open and Leona Maguire, KPMG also sponsors the Irish Kids Golf Tour, which forms part of the firm's grassroots to high performance investment in Irish golf.

The tour, which is open to girls and boys aged from 6 to 13 years old, takes place from June until August each year and features some of the best young golfers in Ireland.

In 2021, KPMG renewed its sponsorship of the Irish Kids Golf Tour for three years, helping to develop the next generation of Irish golfers.



KPMG Women's Irish Open

Further to its long-standing support of women's sport in Ireland, KPMG became the title sponsor of the KPMG Women's Irish Open, cementing a three-year commitment as the tournament returned to the Ladies European Tour schedule for the first time in 10 years.

The inaugural KPMG Women's Irish Open was staged in September 2022 at Dromoland Castle's championship course in County Clare and saw more than 24,000 people - a record for a women's golf event in Ireland - pass through the gates over the four days of the tournament.

The 2022 tournament was won by Klara Spilková from the Czech Republic, claiming her first LET Tour victory in over five years, overcoming Ursula Wikström and Nicole Broch Estrup on the final day

The 2023 staging of the KPMG Women's Irish Open will take place at Dromoland Castle from August 31st to September 3rd.



Going for Growth

KPMG partners the 'Going for Growth' programme, a six-month award-winning business development scheme for female entrepreneurs across all sectors of business, as part of the firm's commitment to diversity.

The programme, which is also supported by Enterprise Ireland, assists ambitious female entrepreneurs in achieving their growth ambitions. 'Going for Growth' has seen more than 850 businesswomen take part over the past 15 years, and past participants include Aimee Connolly of Sculpted by Aimee; Áine Kerr of Kinzen; Jennifer Corley of Equitrace; Louella Morton of TestReach; Tara Beattie of Mange Tout and Prepsheets.com; and Vanessa Creaven of Spotlight Oral Care.

Those selected for the 'Going for Growth' initiative join interactive round table sessions led by Lead Entrepreneurs. The Lead Entrepreneurs are successful businesswomen with personal experience of growing a business. These high-profile business leaders volunteer their time to encourage participants to set and achieve personalised goals and milestones to address the opportunities and challenges they face in driving growth in their businesses.

KPMG believes the invaluable expertise given to these budding entrepreneurs will allow them to succeed and ultimately boost entrepreneurship in Ireland.



Dublin Ladies Gaelic Football

KPMG has been a proud supporter of the Dublin Senior Ladies Gaelic Football team since 2018, as the team embarked on a series of unprecedented success, winning four consecutive All-Ireland titles.

KPMG Director and panel member, Sinéad Aherne has previously captained the Dublin Ladies to All-Ireland victory in 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020. Sinead is also a six-time All Star winner.



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