

Sports Geek Nation AMA with Andrew Hammond

Andrew Hammond is the General Manager of KJR Australia a technology-focused strategic advisory firm based in Melbourne. Before his stint in KJR, Andrew worked with several tech companies where he practised his skills in software testing and management. Aside from his love for testing and numbers, he has the heart for sports having been a 3-time TourXOz finisher, Cycling Enthusiast and a Netball Dad.

Connect with Andrew Hammond on [LinkedIn](#) and Slack [@NetballDad](#)
Find out more about KJR Australia at <http://kjr.com.au/>

Here's the full transcript:

Links to names will link you into Slack community, if you are not a member [please sign up here](#).

Q. [Sean Callanan](#): I'll kick things off [@NetballDad](#) as I just asked you this 90 minutes ago over coffee, tell us about your start in sports tech both the "how you started" but more importantly "why you started"

A. [NetballDad](#): Thanks [@seancallanan](#) it was great to chat this morning and a great way to start my ama's slot. My sports tech journey started on the sidelines of Netball court. As the number 1 fan for my daughters (I have 3) teams and being frustrated that when I couldn't attend all their games, and I couldn't get any feedback of how the games were going, I decided that crowd sourced scoring could be an option. My research had found that 75% of the people on the sidelines were trying to keep score anyways, it seemed simple enough. Through the journey I've dabbled in iOS app development and now moved into building an autonomous scoring system, using a bespoke built netball smart ring. In addition to automated scoring, my smart ring "lights up" in team colours when the goal is scored as both a feedback mechanism and also to engage the crowd on the sidelines. I'm currently talking with the UK Netball league, the International Netball Federation in regards to using the smart ring at the Netball World cup next year (it's early days and loads of work needs to be done to get it over the line).

In my day job, I run the ACT office for KJR and have done for 9 1/2 years, with 30 consultants in my ACT team. KJR is a technology consultancy specialising in Quality Assurance and Risk mitigation, assisting organisations to build a resilient technology-based businesses. We've assisted with the roll outs of everything from deployable (in war zone) networks for Defence, to large systems for DHS touching almost every Australian citizen and everything in between. We recently partnered with the Queensland University of Technology and Isobar to create the Digital Maturity Benchmark, which we're currently capturing data for, to take the pulse of Australia's digital maturity.

My other side hustle, related to KJR and relevant to the sports technology sector is the creation of a Smart Steering wheel for long (and short haul) truck drivers. Our concept is to passively capture truck drivers heart rates using Medical grade ECG monitoring; and to predict their fatigue levels in 1, 2 & 3 hours time, giving them suggestions on where they should rest (road houses, rest stops etc) in order to prevent a fatigue event. In the last 12 months **185** people have died because of crashes involving heavy vehicles; and road transport workers are **12-15** more likely to be killed whilst performing their job than any other profession.

Q. [Tod Caflich](#): @NetballDad do you think there is long term viability in your truck driver monitoring system? Don't get me wrong, I love the idea but there is already driverless long haul trucking taking place. Maybe a consumer version based on my own drowsy driving experiences?

A. NetballDad: Hey @Tod Caflich thanks for the question mate. We've certainly thought about driverless vehicles and their potential impact on our product. Based on the industry feedback to-date the view that the transition to driverless will take at least 15 years (maybe longer); and then whoever is responsible for the vehicle (think pilot) will still need to be alert in case they need to takeover control. We're starting to look at a consumer version, but started with the heavy haulage as the idea was born out of a Hackathon sponsored by the Australian Trucking Association earlier this year. We'd love to recruit some participants for the data collection phase - would you be interested in participating?

Tod Caflich: I'm always up to help a good idea get a little further down the road - pun intended. Count me in to participate. I live in Texas so we frequently have long stretches to cover. Let me know how/when to engage.

Q. Sean Callanan: Another one from our discussion @NetballDad how do you balance designing a product for fan engagement vs high performance?

A. NetballDad: Thanks @seancallanan that's a great question and I thought I had an answer, but trying to write it down proved tricky! So far on my journey I've bounced between striving for fan engagement and then high performance and then switching back again. I believe finding the convergence of these two (2) areas will deliver a win-win situation. First and foremost we need to be solving problems for the sports community. If we can make high performance technology available, easy to use and at a compelling price point, then we'd have additional content to provide to coaches, players, fans, supporters and sponsors. Used smartly, the additional content, be it video footages, deeper statistics or court side feedback could be used to create greater engagement and better experiences for all.

Q. [simon](#): Hi @NetballDad great concept! We're doing something similar with automated football scores straight from the referee. What have been the general responses from the leagues or governing bodies you've pitched the solution to?

A. NetballDad: Hey @simon, great to hear you're doing similar things. The feedback has been really positive for the most part - the only push back I've had was from the more traditional netball administrators. This was a combination of the fear of the unknown and a bit of organisational change management that I'd not done as well as I could of. The additional of the lights to the ring "changes the ring" and therefore may impact scoring was the comment. Fortunately, we had some of the Diamonds shooting coaches visit the ACT and I took the chance to pitch to them, with a demo. They gave the setup the all clear, stating was it doesn't change the diameter of the goal ring it won't impact the ability to score. The Diamonds coaches suggested I get the umpires on board, which I'm doing and I've approached the International Netball Foundation (INF) to get the all clear to use the system. The INF controls the on court specifications of poles, rings and alike.

Q. [jase](#): @NetballDad - additional to @simon's question, have you found blanket "we own everything" rights deals to be an issue?

A. NetballDad: Hi @jase not so far; when I started the journey I chatted to ACT Netball, who suggested I check with Netball Australia about the IP Rights of the competition data, as they own it all as you've said. I spoke to then commercial manager and his advice was as long as I wasn't using the Suncorp Super Netball brand or infringing on there activities, then in the lower leagues everything would be fine. As started at grass roots netball in Canberra this wasn't an issue. I've always asked for permission first just to be sure - interesting case in point, I was able to get permission from Netball NSW to advertise their "Samsung State Championships" on my iOS platformed application.

jase: I've found Netball to be typical. From what I understand, what I do - offering fan engagement at games via locker room video etc pushed to fans doesn't infringe broadcast rights but no-one quite knows and they don't want to examine the agreement.

NetballDad: Are you doing much in the Netball space @jase?

jase: Trying to get in but Super Netball is tough to crack. Not sure the crowds are big enough at other levels (>500)

What is Sports Geek Nation?

Been forwarded this from a colleague? That's great we love seeing our members get credit for sharing their knowledge. Sports Geek Nation is a curated sports business community in Slack and Facebook which will help you learn from the very best in the world. Sports Geek Nation was founded by Sean Callanan in 2015 (as #SportsBiz Slack), it connects sports executives who work in digital, data and technology.

Sports Geek Nation has members from (in alphabetical order) Australia, Canada, Denmark, India, Lithuania, New Zealand, Sweden, United Kingdom and United States working in sports such as basketball, football, ice hockey, baseball, AFL, horse racing, golf, rugby league, netball and more.

You can join Sports Geek Nation by going to SportsGeekNation.com