Sports Geek Nation AMA with Ben Tripodi

Benjamin Tripodi, Chief Executive Officer at Lumin Sports Technology, has been heavily involved in sports technology startups and established key relationships with high profile sports businesses and professional sporting teams. He has founded and co-founded three sports technology companies including Lumin Sports Technology which combines health science and data analytics to offer solutions that solve unique performance problems both in professional and amateur sports.

Connect with Ben Tripodi on Twitter @bentripodi, Instagram, LinkedIn and Slack @Ben Tripodi (Lumin Sports Technology)
Find out more about Lumin Sports Technology at https://luminsports.com/

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 @Ben Tripodi (Lumin Sports Technology) easy one - tell us more about what Lumin Sports Technology does and how did you find yourself in the space?
A. Ben Tripodi (Lumin Sports Technology): thanks @seancallanan. Morning/ Evening all.

Lumin Sports Technology is all about helping High Performance Managers or Sports Scientists in Professional Sporting Teams tell the story of the athletes to the rest of team. We centralise all athletic data from Health & Wellness, GPS, HR, Power Meters, Force plates etc into one platform which we call ARC and we focus on visualising this data in a really engaging and meaningful way.

The creation of Lumin Sports is a bit of a long one. I have been involved in the sports technology space since I was about 17. I was involved heavily in triathlon from a young age and triathlon was all about having the best gear to go faster.

Because of this, I created my first sports company at 17 when I begun importing carbon fibre cycling wheels from Switzerland and China and begun selling them locally. This was my first adventure into what the sportsbiz all about.

This business morphed into a company called Finch Composites that involved the design and manufacture of advanced composite cycling products in Adelaide, Australia.

During the time of running both these businesses, I was completing a Sports Science and Nutrition degree and still racing triathlons.

Finch Composites fizzled out after a few years of trying to manufacture carbon products in Australia, where manufacturing is a very expensive process. However we developed some incredible IP and made some great connection in the sports world.

Post Finch Composites, I begun working in software, briefly in a heath tech start up out of Sydney, before moving into a more creative digital agency role.

This role was where I learnt everything about software creation, its limitations, its benefits and I begun thinking about how this could play in the sports performance world.

Being in the creative agency space, I was also forced to think creatively and not except poor user experience and front end design. It also forced me to understand that making something simple on the front end meant that you needed incredibly skilled engineers on the back end. Anyone can make something look complicated but it takes skills to make something look simple.

After a few years and building close relationships with a number of international professional cycling teams and domestic AFL teams, I saw that there was a big need for representing athletic data in a centralised location and presented in a really engaging way.

At the time and still to this day, many sports tech solutions are very outdated and really complicated to use. A common theme amongst performance managers.

We launched Lumin Sports at the start of this year in conjunction with global tech company Dimension Data, who have been major supporters of Lumin Sports.

In a short 11 months, we have grown significantly and work with some of the biggest cycling teams in the world, olympic programs, AFL teams and now entering the US college space with Boston University.

Q. jase: Hi @Ben Tripodi (Lumin Sports Technology) - have you seen teams use your (approved) visualisations in fan-facing applications?
A. Ben Tripodi (Lumin Sports Technology): Hi @jase, this is something that I always see the teams we work with doing in the future but has not been used in this way as of yet. We are always open to hearing about how fans would like to interact with the teams and monitor their athletic data. Any ideas?

We are almost trying to bring a traditional fan experience to the more data heavy internal processes inside a team.

We help managers make better decisions quicker through presentation of data. Our platforms are starting to be picked up by roles outside of the performance team such as CEOs, GMs, coaches etc that traditionally would not look at the performance data as it was too complicated and would clout their decisions.

> **jase**: I think even something as simple as a quarter-by-quarter or half-by-half summary of certain performance data would be well received by fans. Whether player-specific (player unions don't usually like this) or team-specific visualisation comparisons served to fans at the completion of the period of play would add insight to changes being made by the coach.

Q. sophiemoore: Hey @Ben Tripodi (Lumin Sports Technology) have you looked/ are you looking into how certain movements/actions that may be similar between different sports may enhance performance in each other i.e., throwing a javelin - outfielder throw to home plate, netball goal shot - basketball shot, cricket batting - softball swing.
A. Ben Tripodi (Lumin Sports Technology): Hi @sophiemoore. This is a really interesting question. Learning from one sport to enhance another sport is something that has been around for years. However using the vast amounts of data being collected in particular sports is rarely shared nowadays.

We do not currently use the data for anything other than visualisations and team instructions, although it would be very interesting to make comparisons between sports. We now live in a world where data is a big conversation when you begin working with any client and often there is strict uses of that data.

It's a shame but I think moving forward sports data companies that have mountains of data on multiple sports and professional athletes will be limited to what they can do with that data in other purposes such as the one you have suggested.

> **sophiemoore**: How frustrating! Using data to improve and enhance performance is the ideal outcome i would imagine. I'd be fascinated to see if you could work with NSO's and SSO's to gather data independently (at no cost to the organisation) to for your own findings. Broader range of sports (lower resourced) and may find some interesting similarities...!
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> **Ben Tripodi (Lumin Sports Technology)**: yes I think the prime groups to do this cross comparisons is with NGOs and SSO's. To be fair it is almost there role in national sport to be gathering this data on their athletes and sharing with all sports countrywide
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> **sophiemoore**: Oh 1000%, keeping in mind that alot of these sports are under resourced at all levels with high volunteer workforce and limited experience outside of

their own sport, unaware or unwilling to learn about options available. In the end this will ultimately damage the sports and athletes.

It would also be interesting in this environment as the athletes would be linked with an SSO before they are professionals and then throughout their professional career. So the data would be far richer than just a pro team

Gathering data on the 'frog' evolution of an athlete and seeing the differences would be fascinating. Not just basic movement, but specific to positions etc.

Ben Tripodi (Lumin Sports Technology): Definitely

Q. sophiemoore: @Ben Tripodi (Lumin Sports Technology) extending on the limited resources to athletes.... is there anything that works for remote coaching with live data for remote athlete development?

A. Ben Tripodi (Lumin Sports Technology): One product that we created specifically for professional cycling is the 'Phila' app. Essentially in a professional cycling team you have almost every member of the team remote to each other in almost every city in the world. Therefore daily communication between team and athlete was very difficult.

One issue that the coaches and medical team had was not knowing when one of their athletes was sick/injured or showing signs of illness or injury before it became worse. The coaches also found it hard to understand how the athlete was adapting to training.

We created the Phila app which was designed to be athlete facing. An athlete would log onto the app every morning and be asked a series of questions whilst the app was also tracking various other data points from wearables and phone location etc. It takes less than 30 seconds to complete and all that information is sent to the relevant person on the team.

Any illness/injury would be sent to the medical team to action and the coach would receive information on how they felt about yesterday's training or if they have any concerns for the days training.

The mechanics would also receive information on any bike problems or equipment feedback.

sophiemoore: So lets say that a cricket player was based in tamworth and their coach was in perth, could they use wearables, and be logged into the app to give live data to their coach who would be watching the the swing, throw etc. and allowing them to coach in real time for adjustments to stance etc?

Ben Tripodi (Lumin Sports Technology): In theory yes most certainly. Tech is still a little way off before live data stream like that is feasible. Sometimes though real

time data is not always necessary and something like 'near real time' is more feasible and practical.

We work with an Olympic cycling program on the track and we have devices on all their bikes which is recording all their wearables and data such as power. We then push that data to a platform where remote coaches can review and provide feedback. This is not quite real time but a few minutes delayed.

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