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## **Peter Holmes a Court launches sports conglomerate.**

**By Rhys Haynes**

THERE'S plenty of money to be made from sport, according to one man who would know.

Co-owner of the South Sydney rugby league club Peter Holmes a Court has said little has been done to cash-in on something Australians love so much. Which is why he this week launched The Passionate Group, a new sports management, digital media and investment company, which will provide an investment opportunities for sports fans.

"Sport is a very large business - an \$8.5 billion industry in Australia - but the number of listed sports entities here, and the number of ways for investors to participate in sports is very, very small," Mr Holmes a Court told The Daily Telegraph.

"The number of ways for management to get equity in the business they are running is also very small. So my goal was to build a listed sports and related digital media business."

The business has acquired International Sports Facilities Management, a company providing specialist management services to the sports and leisure industries. The Passionate Group also owns a sports apparel division District Apparel Company, jointly owned by actor Russell Crowe, who is co-owner with Homes a Court of the Rabbitohs.

Setting up the company was a project unrelated to the pair's involvement in the rugby league team. "This is not about going out and buying football teams, Souths is not part of this - my investment with Russell is a personal passion and sits outside of this," he said.

The club's history is having an influence on the way the business is run. "About 50 years ago 100 per cent of South's revenue came from gate takings," Mr Holmes a Court said.

"Gate takings are now less than 8 per cent."

"Income derived from or transacted through the internet two years ago was less than 5 per cent of total revenue, but it will be 30 per cent in a few years."

The internet is the future for sporting clubs, as far as revenue goes, Mr Holmes a Court believes.

"If you look at sporting apparel, it is dnow what people wear, it isn't something they just wear at the weekend going to a match, it is actually casual wear," he said.

"It is one of the key ways that sporting clubs generate revenue."The Passionate Group is headed for a public float.

"That is the goal, we are on an acquisition strategy."

Mr Holmes a Court said the company was also keen to be part of the digital age - including giving fans access to live footage.

"The rule of digital content is that if you don't find a way to get it to your customers, they'll find a way of getting it from you," he said.

"Industry after industry have been left behind by trying to control their digital rights and prevent the public having access to them. It has decimated the music industry.

"We have got to get smarter about getting digital access to our fans."