



2025 Conference Sessions

Seattle

Thematic and Panel Sessions Proposed by NASSS Members

A description of each session follows this list.

The code for each session is either F2F or V, for face-to-face or virtual, respectively.

F2F Seattle	Athlete Health
F2F Seattle	Sport, Media, and Masculinities
F2F Seattle	Sport and Justice: Notions of Fair Play and Cheating
F2F Seattle	Cricket and the Social Fabric: South Asia and Global Dynamics
F2F Seattle	On the Mountain-Lifestyle Sports Today
F2F Seattle	Alternative and Activist Sports Media
F2F Seattle	Sport, Red Pill Masculinity, and the Reproduction of Gendered Power
F2F Seattle	Beyond the Spotlight: The Complexities of Visibility and Belonging
F2F Seattle	Beyond the Politics of Toxicity: Rethinking Sport and Masculinities
F2F Seattle	Socio-Cultural, Economic, Mental Health, Ethical Issues Impacting College Athletics
F2F Seattle	NIL and the Future of College Athletics: Issues and Controversies
F2F Seattle	Exploring the Impact of Non-Traditional Forms of Resistance in Sports
F2F Seattle	Sports Gambling, Media and Addiction: Causes and Impacts
F2F Seattle	Rituals and Resistance: The Contested Terrain of Sporting Ceremonies
F2F Seattle	Sport, Power, and Datafication
F2F Seattle	Critical Analysis of Sport Communication Practices
F2F Seattle	Critical Analyses of Sport Workers: People Behind the Machine
F2F Seattle	Sport and Sustainability: Unpacking Ecological, Economic, and Social (In)Justices
F2F Seattle	Sport, Bodies, Disabilities, and Social Justice
F2F Seattle	College Athlete Employment as a Moral Imperative
F2F Seattle	College Sport, the House v. NCAA Settlement, and Racial Capitalism
F2F Seattle	¡Luchando por Justicia! Fighting Against Injustices Towards Latines in Sport
F2F Seattle	Flash Talks
F2F Seattle	Sport Activism Under (Increasing) Authoritarianism
F2F Seattle	Activist Athletics: Putting Research into Practice in Collegiate Sport
F2F Seattle	Navigating Political Shifts: DEI Policy Changes' Impact on Sport
F2F Seattle	Shifting the Narrative: The Impact of DEI Policy Changes on Faculty
F2F Seattle	American Sport & "this" far-right: challenges of Worldmaking Post-Kaep

- F2F Seattle Sport as a Racialized Space: Racial Formation and Cross-Racial Solidarity
- F2F Seattle Sport in the Anti-DEI Era
- F2F Seattle Separate but Equal? Women-Identifying Athlete Experiences, Intersectionality, & College Sport
- F2F Seattle Athlete Activism & Youth Sport
- F2F Seattle Sport in the Arts
- F2F Seattle Applying Sociology to Sports Performance

Venue **Seattle**

Thematic Session Title **Athlete Health**

Lead Organizer **Caitlin Clarke**

Co-organizer **Kait Pericak**

Lead Organizer Email vitosky@illinois.edu

Lead Organizer Affiliation **University of Illinois Urbana Champaign**

Session Description

This panel seeks papers concerned with athlete health broadly. Emphasis on the intersection of sport sociology and medical sociology, medical anthropology, and/or critical public health is preferred. Of particular concern are the ways such participation impacts marginalized groups including BIPOC and LGBTQ+ athletes, as well as immunocompromised athletes and those with other health conditions that may be exacerbated by or created by sport participation. Specific attention to these groups is needed given the disproportionate rate of health inequities. Such concerns warrant critical and holistic approaches to athlete health. Therefore, this session invites such papers to further the conversation regarding health and sport participation, especially in relation to longterm health outcomes and/or approaching health holistically from a biosocial perspective.

Venue **Seattle**

Thematic Session Title **Sport, Media, and Masculinities**

Organizer **Lawrence Wenner**

Organizer Email lawrence.wenner@gmail.com

Organizer Affiliation **Loyola Marymount University**

Session Description

The area of media and masculinities, beyond feminist critique of hegemonic and "toxic" masculinities, has been little explored. This panel looks for papers that shed new light on the nexus of sport, media, and masculinities. Papers for this panel should offer examinations of how masculinities are manifest and represented through a wide range sports media (i.e., legacy media, new digital and social media, journalism, advertising, etc.). Papers can explore longstanding stereotypic problematics and power relations, emerging "hybrid" masculinities (including variants in hegemonic masculinities), and alternative and progressive masculinities. Studies of the nexus of sport, media, and masculinities that consider media and sport institutions, media content, and uses and effects of sport media content are welcome.

Venue **Seattle**

Thematic Session Title **Sport and Justice: Notions of Fair Play and Cheating**

Organizer **Gretchen Peterson**

Organizer Email gpterson@memphis.edu

Organizer Affiliation **University of Memphis**

Session Description

This proposal is for an open submission session for presentations centered on issues of fair play or cheating in sport. The complexity of these concepts and the symbolic meanings that we invoke when using these concepts provide fertile ground for understanding the context in which athletes engage with their sports. Submissions are welcomed that engage with these concepts at any level of sport and in any type of sporting activity.

Venue **Seattle**

Thematic Session Title **Cricket and the Social Fabric: South Asia and Global Dynamics**

Lead Organizer **Umer Hussain**

Co-organizers **Simran Kaur Sethi, Johan Rewilak**

Lead Organizer Email umer.hussain@wilkes.edu

Lead Organizer Affiliation **Wilkes University**

Session Description

This session invites a wide range of papers that critically examine the multifaceted relationships between cricket and societal dynamics in South Asia and its wider transnational contexts. We particularly seek contributions that position cricket as a lens to interrogate and reframe dominant narratives both within South Asia and in regions shaped by South Asian diasporic communities. Potential topics include but are not limited to, the colonial legacies and post-colonial trajectories of cricket in South Asia, gendered dimensions of the sport, and the ways cricket is mobilized to forge community, identity, and social capital among South Asian diasporas in settings such as North America, Middle East, the UK, and other global regions. We are also interested in studies that address contemporary developments, such as the influence of major cricketing franchises (e.g., the IPL) on emerging leagues like Major League Cricket (USA) and the cross-regional flows of players, capital, and cultural practices.

Venue **Seattle**

Thematic Session Title **On the Mountain-Lifestyle Sports Today**

Organizer **Faye Wachs**

Organizer Email flwachs@cpp.edu

Organizer Affiliation **CPP**

Session Description

While many conflate sports with professional leagues and college athletics, lifestyle sports continue to grow in participation and spectatorship. This section foregrounds research on lifestyle sports today.

Venue **Seattle**

Thematic Session Title **Alternative and Activist Sports Media**

Organizer **Brandon Wallace**

Organizer Email bratwall@iu.edu

Organizer Affiliation **Indiana University**

Session Description

Contemporary sports media appears to be experiencing a moment of backlash to the 2010s' sport-politics articulation, characterized by the rise of openly conservative sports media and overt corporate and algorithmic domination. Amidst this clear rightward shift, it is increasingly important to identify what Lievrouw (2023) calls alternative and activist new media, referring to "media projects [that] deploy communication infrastructures...to challenge or alter dominant, expected, or accepted ways of doing society, culture, and politics" (p. 25). How and why then – in such an unstable contemporary political conjuncture – might we articulate an alternative/activist sports media? This session seeks presentations that critically examine the forms, emergences, potentials, challenges, and implications of alternative and activist sports media, particularly in relation to media projects that mobilize sport in framing social critique, hailing digital publics, nurturing critical thought, and imagining alternative sociopolitical orders. Submissions and questions can be directed to Brandon T. Wallace (bratwall@iu.edu).

Venue **Seattle**

Thematic Session Title **Sport, Red Pill Masculinity, and the Reproduction of Gendered Power**

Lead Organizer **Max Klein**

Co-organizer **Sayvon Foster**

Lead Organizer Email max.a.klein12@gmail.com

Lead Organizer Affiliation **Curry College**

Session Description

The so-called “manosphere” refers to a network of digital forums and spaces explicitly promoting hegemonic masculinity, misogyny, and gendered power hierarchies (Vallerga & Zurbruggen, 2022). These spaces operate as echo chambers reinforcing heteronormative, racialized ideologies (Ging, 2019). Central to the manosphere is the concept of the “red pill,” which frames feminism as a societal ill and promotes the subjugation of women, including coercive practices regarding sex and relationships (Dignam & Rohlinger, 2019). In sport, hegemonic masculinity has shaped institutional norms and cultural narratives, predating the rise of the manosphere. However, the manosphere’s influence has become increasingly visible in sport fan discourse (Phipps, 2023) and leadership behaviors (Passan, 2021), deepening existing patterns of exclusion and misogynoir. This critically examines how sport functions as a site where manosphere and red pill ideologies are reproduced, resisted, and negotiated. Scholars engaging in theoretical, conceptual, or empirical work—whether proposed, ongoing, or completed—are encouraged to submit.

Venue **Seattle**

Thematic Session Title **Beyond the Spotlight: The Complexities of Visibility and Belonging**

Lead Organizer **Tomika Ferguson**

Co-organizer **Cherese Fine**

Lead Organizer Email tferguson2@vcu.edu

Lead Organizer Affiliation **Virginia Commonwealth University**

Session Description

This open session examines the tension between hypervisibility and invisibility in sports, particularly for minoritized athletes. While some athletes, such as Black male football and basketball players, are highly-visible, visibility does not always equate to belonging. This session will explore how race/ethnicity, gender, funding disparities, and institutional power structures impact how visibility is experienced in athletics. A central question driving the discussion is: Does visibility ensure belonging? And conversely, can one belong without being visible? The session will analyze and explore how these concepts intersect, diverge, and shape the landscape of athlete recognition and value. Presenters will explore these questions through the experiences of minoritized athletes, coaches, and sports professionals, highlighting the layered identities and power dynamics that shape their realities. By engaging with theoretical and practical perspectives, this session will challenge attendees to reconsider how visibility functions within sports and explore strategies that foster authentic belonging for marginalized athletes.

Venue **Seattle**

Thematic Session Title **Beyond the Politics of Toxicity: Rethinking Sport and Masculinities**

Organizer **Christopher Finlay**

Organizer Email cfinlay@lmu.edu

Organizer Affiliation **Loyola Marymount University**

Session Description

The relationship between sport and masculinity is associated with fostering male toxicity, often channeling it toward chauvinist nationalist movements and authoritarian worldmaking. Yet contemporary sport also serves as a refuge for men of all political leanings with both progressive and conservative politicians using it as a tool for communication and recruitment. Thus, this panel asks whether masculinity reveals an inherently authoritarian nature within sport (or vice versa), or whether sport can serve as a vehicle for newer, progressive constructions of masculinity that move beyond toxicity. Panelists are invited to interrogate how sport operates on and through diverse articulations and formations of masculinity to reveal how sports-based masculinities might help disrupt authoritarian practices and contribute to a more just worldmaking. Papers for this panel can examine the political implications of diverse articulations of sporting masculinities across amateur sport, professional sport, simulated sports entertainment institutions like the WWE, fan communities, and politics.

Venue **Seattle**

Thematic Session Title **Socio-Cultural, Economic, Mental Health, Ethical Issues Impacting College Athletics**

Organizer **Robert Case**

Organizer Email rcase86@gmail.com

Organizer Affiliation **Old Dominion University**

Session Description

College athletics is a multi-billion dollar industry that plays a major role in society. It has been plagued by a number of issues related to the commercialization of sport, the athletic arms race, exploitation of minority athletes, NIL problems, academic integrity concerns, recruiting scandals, Title IX and gender equity dilemmas, player violence and drug use, escalation of coaching salaries, academic clustering and athlete graduation rates, sexual assault by athletes, realignment of conferences, influence of television and the media on college athletics, unionization of athletes, and the mental health of college athletes. The list goes on and on. The purpose of this session is to explore issues that impact the future of college athletics from socio-cultural, economic, mental health, and/or ethical perspectives with the hope of shedding additional light on these issues and providing suggestions for their possible resolution.

Venue **Seattle**

Thematic Session Title **NIL and the Future of College Athletics: Issues and Controversies**

Organizer **Robert Case, PhD**

Organizer Email rcase86@gmail.com

Organizer Affiliation **Old Dominion University**

Session Description

In recent years, NIL has become a major part of the college athletic landscape. The commercialization and professionalization of college athletics has reached new heights with millions of dollars being spent on NIL athlete endorsement deals and the transfer portal has become a necessary part of college athlete recruiting efforts. Some individuals question the future of college athletics and the uncertainty that the NIL situation is creating. The purpose of this session is to examine the nature and scope of NIL and how it is impacting college athletics. In particular, analyses and studies that examine flaws with the transfer portals and collectives, social, economic, financial benefits, ethical, racial, gender, demographic, legal, governmental, legislative, organizational, athlete mental health, historical, future, and other research angles are encouraged. At the present time, no consistent national standards exist to guide NIL into the future.

Venue **Seattle**

Thematic Session Title **Exploring the Impact of Non-Traditional Forms of Resistance in Sports**

Lead Organizer **Dr. Katja Sonkeng**

Co-organizer **Dr. Augustus (Gus) Hallmon**

Lead Organizer Email ksonkeng@towson.edu

Lead Organizer Affiliation **Towson University**

Session Description

In recent years, several scholars have discussed how forms of resistance could evolve beyond digital media and social media hashtag campaigns (e.g., Wallace, 2024). Accordingly, it is worthwhile to broaden the examination from the use of hashtags as a vehicle for positive social change in sports to various non-traditional forms of resistance that may be transformative and impactful in dialogues that allow people, sports organizations, and communities to engage in social justice issues openly and safely. Amid a turbulent political environment, the need to resist is more important than ever in the United States and beyond. Sports can be used as a vehicle to form resistance to social change where freedom of speech is being attacked and the fear of retribution is high. The purpose of this open session is, therefore, to invite scholars and practitioners to share their insights and research on non-traditional forms of resistance in sports.

Venue **Seattle**

Thematic Session Title **Sports Gambling, Media and Addiction: Causes and Impacts**

Organizer **Aaron Baker**

Organizer Email **Aaron.Baker@asu.edu**

Organizer Affiliation **Arizona State University**

Session Description

Betting on sports has grown dramatically since the Supreme Court legalized it in 2018, generating \$13.7 billion in revenue in 2024. Such growth represents a reversal in American professional sports that have long avoided connections to gambling because of its negative impacts, including addiction, subversion of the work ethic, and game-fixing. Prompted by profits from their collaboration with gambling companies, sports leagues and media corporations now ignore such negative effects to emphasize that betting increases fan interest. With unprecedented access to sports wagering, many bettors experience difficulties regulating their gambling behaviors, leading to financial, relational and legal consequences. The National Council on Problem Gambling estimates that 2.5 million Americans have a “severe gambling problem.” This panel will examine the precarity that has sparked the surge in sports betting but also the impact of problem gambling and how betting subverts the ideology of sports as a model of work and achievement.

Venue **Seattle**

Thematic Session Title **Rituals and Resistance: The Contested Terrain of Sporting Ceremonies**

Lead Organizer **Bryan Clift**

Co-organizers **Adam Talbot, Conor Wilson, Verity Postlethwaite, Luke Harris**

Lead Organizer Email **bcclift@ncsu.edu**

Lead Organizer Affiliation **North Carolina State University**

Session Description

Sporting ceremonies and rituals are key narrative sources about cultures, nations, urban spaces, people, and identities. Opening and closing ceremonies, half-time shows, celebrations, player drafts, torch relays, historic inductions, or in-game traditions, to name a few, have been critiqued by journalists, pundits, and academics in relation to nationalism and internationalism (e.g., anthems, salutes, branding, communication strategies, etc.), urbanism (e.g., regeneration or spatial representations), gender and sexuality (e.g., displays at weigh-ins, celebrations, or crowd engagement and communications), and race and ethnicity (e.g., Black Lives Matter, activism and social justice). In this session, we welcome critical analyses of sporting ceremonies and rituals that engage with power dynamics of ceremonies, including analyses of official discourses and acts of resistance. We welcome analyses at different scales (e.g., international, league or domestic, and the everyday) and from multiple disciplines or traditions from media and communications, cultural studies, feminisms, sociology, anthropology, urban studies, history, and more.

Venue **Seattle**

Thematic Session Title **Sport, Power, and Datafication**

Lead Organizer **Pratik Nyaupane**

Co-organizers **Brandon Wallace, Vincent Peña**

Lead Organizer Email **nyaupane@usc.edu**

Lead Organizer Affiliation **University of Southern California**

Session Description

Contemporary life is increasingly governed by datafication, which refers to the phenomenon of quantifying human life through digital information for economic, political, and social value (Mejias & Couldry, 2019). The logics and impacts of datafication are now firmly entrenched within the realm of sport. Examples range from the collection and manipulation of athlete biometric data to the algorithmic presentation of digital sports discourse to the implementation of surveillance technologies towards athletes and spectators. This session seeks presentations that critically assess the economic, political, social, cultural, and moral/ethical implications of big data for the cultures of sport. We invite presentations that analyze these tensions from a range of empirical, methodological, theoretical, and disciplinary approaches, including (but not limited to): critical data studies, science and technology studies, critical algorithm studies, media/communications studies, new materialism, cultural studies, and information studies.

Venue **Seattle**

Thematic Session Title **Critical Analysis of Sport Communication Practices**

Lead Organizer **Natalie Bunch**

Co-organizer **Shannon Scovel**

Lead Organizer Email bunchnn@ucmail.uc.edu

Lead Organizer Affiliation **University of Cincinnati**

Session Description

Athletes, coaches, sport organizations' communication specialists, sport fans, among other related entities, have the ability to use a variety of communication platforms (e.g., social media, newspaper articles, press conferences, etc.) to speak to issues of social justice and inclusion (e.g., racism, LGBTQ+ inclusion). Aligned with the conference theme, sport communication efforts are important to examine as they contribute to world-making and are potential sites of dissent. Pertinently, the current political landscape may alter the ways in which sport entities implement communication strategies to combat injustices. Accordingly, sport sociology and sport management scholars must heighten critical evaluations of such efforts. The purpose of this session is to assess current communication practices at the intersection of sport, justice, and inclusion. This session welcomes presentations that take a critical approach to explore how sports entities utilize communication strategies to promote, or to respond, to social change. All social justice communication topics are welcome.

Venue **Seattle**

Thematic Session Title **Critical Analyses of Sport Workers: People Behind the Machine**

Lead Organizer **Beau Manierre Houston**

Co-organizer **Brian Gearity**

Lead Organizer Email beau.houston@du.edu

Lead Organizer Affiliation **University of Denver**

Session Description

The sport industry is upheld by a dynamic global labor force embedded within multi-level organizational processes, marketplace positioning, and performance operations (Purdy et al., 2019). Sport workers meet their unique goals despite ever-changing working conditions and increasing performance expectations. Thriving as a worker within the industry can be complicated by the unpredictability and emotionally charged nature of sport (McEvoy & McKelvey, 2022). These characteristics allow for a constant public evaluation of skills, effort, and expertise at every level. We invite critical analyses of sport workers that challenges the perspectives of those exercising power to (re)produce social hierarchies in these employment and volunteer capacities, illuminates the lived experiences of those working within the sports machine, and examines the conditions of this work to reveal broader social dynamics.

Venue **Seattle**

Thematic Session Title **Sport and Sustainability: Unpacking Ecological, Economic, and Social (In)Justices**

Lead Organizer **Alex Gang**

Co-organizers **Yong Chae Rhee, Jin Park, Ju Young Lee, Paul Kimbrough, Elodie Wendling, Ji Young Park**

Lead Organizer Email alex.gang@wsu.edu

Lead Organizer Affiliation **Washington State University**

Session Description

Building upon the discussions from last year's conference, this session aims to further explore the intersection of sport and sustainability. While sustainability has become an increasingly prominent concern in sport, many initiatives continue to operate within anthropocentric paradigms that prioritize human interests over the well-being of non-human life and ecosystems. The bidirectional relationship between sport and climate change is often conceptualized in ways that reinforce extractive and exploitative logics, rather than challenge them. This session seeks to facilitate discussion about the various commitments to sustainability in sport by examining how it is entangled with broader systems of ecological, economic, and social (in)justice. A range of perspectives—including, but not limited to, sustainable development, ecocriticism, sport ecology, Indigenous epistemologies, and environmental justice—are welcomed to deepen and broaden critical dialogue on the ways sustainability narratives in sport can simultaneously reinforce and challenge colonial and capitalist logics.

Venue **Seattle**

Thematic Session Title **Sport, Bodies, Disabilities, and Social Justice**

Organizer **Faye Wachs**

Organizer Email **flwachs@cpp.edu**

Organizer Affiliation **Cal Poly Pomona**

Session Description

This session invites scholars to share research on disability, sports, bodies and social justice.

Venue **Seattle**

Thematic Session Title **College Athlete Employment as a Moral Imperative**

Lead Organizer **Ellen Staurowsky**

Co-organizers **Richard Southall, Mark Nagle, Christopher Corr**

Lead Organizer Email **staurows@ithaca.edu**

Lead Organizer Affiliation **Ithaca College**

Session Description

For the past 16 years, college athletes have sought relief from the exploitative business practices of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) through legal challenges under the Sherman Antitrust Act, the Fair Labor Standards Act, and through efforts to organize under the National Labor Relations Act. Despite those ongoing efforts, and contrary to narratives pushed by college sport executives and members of the media, the small gains athletes have made in accessing their value in the competitive college marketplace, power and control of the lives of athletes remains with college sport executives in the NCAA and conferences. Thus, the question of whether college athletes should be employees is not simply a legal one but a moral one. In this session, we explore this through the lens of neoliberalism, racial capitalism, and feminist economics.

Venue **Seattle**

Thematic Session Title **College Sport, the House v. NCAA Settlement, and Racial Capitalism**

Lead Organizer **Ellen Staurowsky**

Co-organizers **Billy Hawkins, Richard Southall, Mark Nagle, Chris Corr**

Lead Organizer Email **staurows@ithaca.edu**

Lead Organizer Affiliation **Ithaca College**

Session Description

For the NASSS 2025 conference, presenters have been encouraged to consider what worlds sport contributes to building/sustaining. The worlds created by the college sport system were revealed in the months preceding the approval or rejection of the House v. NCAA settlement. Some challenged the settlement as being “fake” because it represented a unilateral agreement among lawyers that reflected little in the way of a fair representation of athlete interests. Some athletes accepted the terms and others were coerced into agreement. Objections abounded, grounded in concerns that Plaintiffs’ lawyers had conflicts in settling the case. Allegations emerged that the framework used for the distribution of monetary damages favored athletes in the sports of football and men’s basketball disproportionately to women and “non-revenue” sports. This session explores the dynamics that promote a world where the monetary benefits gleaned from the labor of a predominantly Black workforce are freely distributed among White beneficiaries.

Venue **Seattle**

Thematic Session Title **¡Luchando por Justicia! Fighting Against Injustices Towards Latines in Sport**

Lead Organizer **Jaime Morales**

Co-organizers **Jorge Moraga, Stacey Flores**

Lead Organizer Email jaime.morales@uconn.edu

Lead Organizer Affiliation **University of Connecticut**

Session Description

Baseball legend Roberto Clemente was a passionate advocate for social justice, using his platform to fight racism, poverty, and champion the rights of Black and Latine communities. In April 2025, the Pittsburgh Pirates removed a “Clemente 21” sign from the right-field wall to advertise alcohol, sparking backlash. After public criticism and a statement from Roberto Clemente Jr., Pirates President Travis Williams called the move an “oversight” and denied any intent to disrespect. The team later reinstated the sign and issued an apology. This incident highlights how the legacies of heroes like Clemente can be commodified and erased. Today, Latines in sports continue to face systemic injustices rooted in power, domination and control. This session invites scholars to submit work on Latines in sports that centers la lucha—the ongoing fight for justice, belonging, and legitimacy—as part of a broader political vision to reimagine sports as a space of equity and inclusion.

Venue **Seattle**

Thematic Session Title **Flash Talks**

Organizer **Gretchen Peterson**

Organizer Email gpterson@memphis.edu

Organizer Affiliation **University of Memphis**

Session Description

Flash talks are intended to be brief presentations (no more than 5 minutes) that focus on key ideas or key findings. This format allows presenters to get feedback focused on a specific aspect of their work and can be used for presenting completed work or works in progress. Topics for flash talks are open and efforts will be made to group flash talks into sessions based on common themes.

Venue **Seattle**

Thematic Session Title **Sport Activism Under (Increasing) Authoritarianism**

Lead Organizer **Yannick Kluch**

Co-organizer **Joseph Cooper**

Lead Organizer Email ykluch@illinois.edu

Lead Organizer Affiliation **University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign**

Session Description

North American sport has a rich legacy of athletes utilizing their platform for activist pursuits. Whereas athletes and other sportspeople had been empowered to use their time in the athletic spotlight to advocate for positive social change just a few years ago, these social justice leaders now find themselves in a drastically different political climate. Indeed, as the United States takes a turn toward authoritarianism under Trump’s second term in office, sport activists are faced with increasing pressures to remain silent on matters of social justice. The goal of this session is to provide a space for critical analyses of sport and/or activism against the backdrop of such (increasing) authoritarianism in North America, bringing together scholarship on topics such as (but not limited to) activists’ lived experiences in times of increased political peril, organizing strategies under fascist regimes, and practices, policies, and procedures inhibiting or elevating activist efforts.

Venue **Seattle**

Thematic Session Title **Activist Athletics: Putting Research into Practice in Collegiate Sport**

Lead Organizer **Erica Tibbetts**

Co-organizers **Miriam Merrill, Lilliana Fellows**

Lead Organizer Email **etibbetts86@smith.edu**

Lead Organizer Affiliation **Smith College**

Session Description

Sport sociology offers well supported critiques of the NCAA and the way that college athletics uphold forms of oppression related to race, gender, sexuality, and class (eg. Hextrum, 2020; LaVoi et al., 2019; Sharrow, 2020; Walker & Melton, 2015). However, less research focuses on actions being taken to disrupt these power dynamics, making it hard for students and others to understand how change might occur. For this session, we encourage submissions that cover actions taken by those involved in college sport to make positive change. This could be related to how recruiting practices have been changed to encourage a more diverse student-athlete population, how coaches are supported to make their work sustainable, how student athletes are given a voice, or anything related to the idea of activism within athletics.

Venue **Seattle**

Thematic Session Title **Navigating Political Shifts: DEI Policy Changes' Impact on Sport**

Lead Organizer **Courtney Flowers**

Co-organizer **Joyce Olushola-Ogunrinde**

Lead Organizer Email **Courtney.Flowers@tsu.edu**

Lead Organizer Affiliation **Texas Southern University**

Session Description

As political scrutiny intensifies around Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion policies, sport administrators and faculty in higher education face significant challenges. This Sista Doc session acknowledges how the rollback of DEI initiatives disproportionately affects Historically Black Colleges and Universities, people of color and women in athletics. This session will examine the current political landscape and its implications for athletic departments and higher education. Presenters will share real-world experiences, discussing the legal and ethical ramifications while offering strategies to maintain equity and access in collegiate athletics. We invite presentations that explore: Recent legislative changes impacting DEI efforts in higher education, particularly for sport programs at HBCUs. The effects of DEI rollbacks on marginalized groups in college athletics, including recruitment and leadership representation. Practical strategies for sport administrators and faculty to advocate for equity despite policy challenges. Case studies highlighting the impacts on students, coaches, and faculty of color.

Venue **Seattle**

Thematic Session Title **Shifting the Narrative: The Impact of DEI Policy Changes on Faculty**

Lead Organizer **Akilah Carter-Francique**

Co-organizers **Jacqueline McDowell, Jasmine Hamilton, Courtney Flowers, Joyce Olushola-Ogunrinde, F. Michelle Richardson, Algerian Hart, Charles Crowley, Lamont Williams**

Lead Organizer Email **akilah.francique@benedict.edu**

Lead Organizer Affiliation **Benedict College**

Session Description

As uncertainty increases regarding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) policies, faculty in higher education face evolving challenges. The recalling of DEI initiatives affects institutions of all classifications (i.e., HBCUs, HWIHEs, MSIs). This Sista and Brotha Docs workshop will critically examine the shifting political landscape and its impact on faculty agency in sport studies and related fields. Facilitators will explore how anti-DEI discourse serves as both policy and ideology, leading to new forms of constraint and surveillance. Participants will learn strategies to navigate these challenges while maintaining a commitment to equity and justice. A key focus will be on using DEI language intentionally, equipping attendees with tools to articulate equity-based values in legally sound and strategically effective ways. This workshop is particularly relevant for scholars and practitioners committed to inclusive practices in sport and higher education, especially those dedicated to racial justice and gender equity. We welcome early-career faculty, graduate students, and scholar-activists to join us.

Venue **Seattle**

Thematic Session Title **American Sport & "this" far-right: challenges of Worldmaking Post-Kaep**

Lead Organizer **Jorge Moraga**

Co-organizers **A. Jaime Morales, Stacey Flores**

Lead Organizer Email jemoraga@calpoly.edu

Lead Organizer Affiliation **Cal Poly (San Luis Obispo)**

Session Description

Given that American sports will continue to provide a public platform for athletes and fan bases alike, one that dances beyond the pleasurable and sways into the political, this session seeks contributions that examine the relationship between minoritized communities (of color) and their ongoing relationship to American far-right conservatism. How are athletes and fanbases (of color) responding to the current US administration? How do they (dis)prove investigative journalist Paloma Ramos' thesis in "Defectors" (2024) that claims that some of these historically marginalized groups are becoming willing participants in American settler-colonial racialist belonging? Who among America's sporting enterprises will "defect" from normalizing authoritarian totalitarianism, one pitch, ball game, or White House visit at a time? This session seeks contributions from critical scholars dedicated to examining the apparent limitations of (1) desegregating sport by way of racialized capitalism and (2) celebrating the nuances of the human condition by way of corporate consumerism.

Venue **Seattle**

Thematic Session Title **Sport as a Racialized Space: Racial Formation and Cross-Racial Solidarity**

Lead Organizer **Doo Jae Park**

Co-organizers **NaRi Shin, Ketra Armstrong**

Lead Organizer Email doojae@umich.edu

Lead Organizer Affiliation **University of Michigan**

Session Description

This session seeks papers focused on racialized experiences within sport and physical culture. We welcome studies from fields adjacent to sport sociology, sport management, and other related disciplines that utilize a critical sociological lens. Following Audre Lorde's assertion that "there is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives," this session examines how sport and physical culture construct racialized experiences and the justification of racial differences and inequalities. Our primary goal is to recognize the distinctiveness of racialized experiences across various groups, highlighting both the incommensurability of racialization and the importance of intersectional experiences in fostering cross-racial solidarity. While we prioritize empirical papers that document racial formation in sport and physical culture, we also welcome broader conceptual papers and cultural critiques.

Venue **Seattle**

Panel Session Title **Sport in the Anti-DEI Era**

Lead Organizer **Joseph N. Cooper**

Co-organizer **Yannick Kluch**

Lead Organizer Email josephn.cooper@umb.edu

Lead Organizer Affiliation **University of Massachusetts Boston**

Session Description

In 2020, there were international DEI efforts spurred by the burgeoning Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement in the United States (U.S.). Sport organizations across the world expressed their commitment to combatting racial injustice through policy and practice reform efforts as well as the establishment of partnerships with advocacy groups and increased financial support for communities that have been systemically marginalized due to racism. However, in more recent years, there has been pronounced backlash against DEI initiatives and messaging as a result of the reemerging fascist regimes across Western societies. Consequently, this era has been described as the "Anti-DEI Era" whereby any programs, positions, policies, partnerships, and/or trainings explicitly dedicated to advancing DEI in sport have been either minimized, restructured, or eliminated altogether. We seek to highlight scholarship that focuses on how sport organizations, athletes, coaches, and various sport stakeholders are navigating and responding to the pressures of the Anti-DEI era.

Venue **Seattle**

Panel Session Title **Separate but Equal? Women-Identifying Athlete Experiences, Intersectionality, & College Sport**

Lead Organizer **Jennifer Hoffman**

Co-organizers **Kirsten Hextrum, Valynica Raphael-Woodward**

Lead Organizer Email jennilee@uw.edu

Lead Organizer Affiliation **University of Washington**

Session Description

In this session, contributors to the Special Issue, *Separate but Equal? Women-Identifying Athlete Experiences & Intersectionality in Intercollegiate Athletics*, appearing in the *NASPA Journal of Women and Gender in Higher Education* speak to the themes and topics of the volume appearing in 2026. Currently in the final stages of manuscript review, the special issue editors will invite contributing authors to discuss their work. The dialogue will: 1) address the themes of the special issue conceived of in Winter 2023, 2) discuss how these themes resonate in the swiftly changing legal and political higher education and college sports moment, and 3) contend with the forms of gender segregation is permissible under Title IX (the 1972 Education Amendment to the 1964 Civil Rights Act). Additionally, this session considers the challenges of steering academic work amidst the current onslaught of retribution and swiftness of policy change.

Venue **Seattle**

Panel Session Title **Athlete Activism & Youth Sport**

Lead Organizer **Dela Acolatse**

Co-organizer **Joyce Ogunrinde**

Lead Organizer Email dacolats@cougarnet.uh.edu

Lead Organizer Affiliation **University of Houston**

Session Description

Athlete activism has been a constant in sport, and has received heightened notoriety in the 21st century. While this topic has been researched at the professional and collegiate levels, there is less knowledge regarding this topic among youth athletes, particularly in the high school levels. As adolescents are shaping their worldview, there is potential to discover how their political knowledge and advocacy falls in the world of sports. Therefore, we invite researchers to submit work regarding athlete activism in youth sport. Judging criteria: Activism in sport administration Activism among youth sport participants Political knowledge or development of youth sport participants

Venue **Seattle**

Panel Session Title **Sport in the Arts**

Organizer **Nicole Willms**

Organizer Email nawillms@nic.edu

Organizer Affiliation **North Idaho College**

Session Description

Sport itself has been called “art form,” “theater” or “dance” by both scholars and the everyday fan, but what can we learn from studying artistic attempts at capturing the dynamic energy of sport, or by examining how and why sport is used as a symbol or vehicle for creating meaning? This session will feature scholarship on sport as it appears in various forms of artistic expression including, but not limited to, creative writing, film, theater, dance, visual arts, and musical arts. Approaches will likewise be creative and diverse - culture as an object of study, culture as an approach in understanding the symbolic, or original frameworks.

Venue **Seattle**

Panel Session Title **Applying Sociology to Sports Performance**

Lead Organizer **Scott Brooks**

Co-organizer **Stacey Flores**

Lead Organizer Email scott.n.brooks@asu.edu

Lead Organizer Affiliation **Arizona State University**

Session Description

This session will explore the psychological and sociological challenges and positive factors that affect the performances of athletes from historically marginalized groups. This will include sports psychology and understanding community based motivation and support, coaching, role models, sports’ opportunity structure, and the impact of systemic racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination on their experiences, mental health, and performance.

Poster Sessions Proposed by NASSS Members

A description of each poster follows this list.

F2F Seattle Sport Anthropology Caucus V: Student Research in Ethical Spaces

Venue Seattle

Poster Session Title **Sport Anthropology Caucus V: Student Research in Ethical Spaces**

Organizer Sean Seiler

Organizer Email sseiler@kennesaw.edu

Organizer Affiliation Kennesaw State University

Session Description

In 2024, the Sport Anthropology Caucus [SAC] invited graduate, undergraduate, and early career scholars to a poster session to showcase and/or refine their ethnographic projects at the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport [NASSS]. This session sought to [1] expand the reach of the SAC from North American Society for Sport History [NASSH] to NASSS, [2] creating a community of scholars with different approaches, commitments, and assumptions to research, [3] accommodating persons of various social and occupational positions, and [4] creating community of praxis that [5] changes the way sessions are conducted as [6] NASSS aligns with UNDRIP. The session was widely successful, achieving the abovementioned goals and facilitating meaningful connections between people and their ideas. We seek to build on last year's session by creating an ethical space for undergraduate, graduate, and early career scholars to showcase and/or refine their projects in a poster session.

Vancouver

Thematic and Panel Sessions Proposed by NASSS Members

A description of each session follows this list.

- F2F Vancouver Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Indigeneity in Sport
- F2F Vancouver Critical Muslim Studies: Evolving Discourses on Sport and Physical Culture
- F2F Vancouver Vulnerabilities and Messy Encounters
- F2F Vancouver The Future of Campus Athletic Work
- F2F Vancouver Misgendering in Sports: Female Dopers, Gender Fraudulences, and Racialized Bodies
- F2F Vancouver Action Sports in 'The Great White North'
- F2F Vancouver Future workshops: An arts-based approach to (re)imagining sport
- F2F Vancouver Sport policy and politics in multi-level governance systems
- F2F Vancouver Making the invisible visible in sport organizations
- F2F Vancouver Sports as a Space for Queer and Trans Possibility
- F2F Vancouver Wellness, Wellbeing and Sport: Perspectives on Identity, Embodiment and Community
- F2F Vancouver Sociology of Sport Coach Education
- F2F Vancouver Rethinking Economic Power: The Political Economy of Sport Today
- F2F Vancouver (Dis)ability, Justice, Belonging and Sport Washing
- F2F Vancouver Sporting Diasporas in North America and Beyond
- F2F Vancouver Reclaiming the Motions: Sport, Movement, and the Art of Returning
- F2F Vancouver Open Session
- F2F Vancouver Author Meets Readers - The End of College Football
- F2F Vancouver Safe and Violence-Free Sport Under Capitalism: A Contradiction in Terms?

F2F Vancouver Colonial Rupture, Decolonial Praxis: Embodiment as Resistance toward Coloniality

F2F Vancouver Whither Trans Sports? Global Gender Politics and Sporting Futures

Vanue Vancouver

Thematic Session Title **Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Indigeneity in Sport**

Organizer **Audrey Giles**

Organizer Email agiles@uottawa.ca

Organizer Affiliation **University of Ottawa**

Session Description

Efforts to promote equity, diversity, inclusion, and Indigeneity (EDI) in sport continue - despite Serapis threats from a variety of sources. In this session, we welcome examinations of EDI programs, policies, and practices, including those that have met with success, those that have not, and those that have yielded mixed results. We particularly welcome presentations that demonstrate methodological or theoretical innovation, or innovation in presentation style, though it is by no means required.

Vanue Vancouver

Thematic Session Title **Critical Muslim Studies: Evolving Discourses on Sport and Physical Culture**

Lead Organizer **Adam Ali**

Co-organizer **Umer Hussain**

Lead Organizer Email aali45@uwo.ca

Lead Organizer Affiliation **Western University**

Session Description

This session invites a broad spectrum of scholarly contributions that offer critical interrogations of how Muslim, Middle Eastern, and South Asian identities are constructed and represented within the realms of sport and physical culture. We are especially keen on research that employs sport as a critical lens to deconstruct and contest Orientalist, Eurocentric, and positivist narratives that underpin civilizational hierarchies. We welcome submissions rooted in intersectional, postcolonial, and decolonial frameworks. Areas of interest include, but are not limited to, the politicization of sport in the post-9/11 context; the entrenchment of Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism across both the Global North and South; and the intensification of surveillance and securitization practices targeting Muslim, Middle Eastern, and South Asian populations by state and non-state actors. We particularly encourage scholarship that amplifies and validates the lived realities and embodied knowledge of these communities through sport and physical culture.

Vanue Vancouver

Thematic Session Title **Vulnerabilities and Messy Encounters**

Organizer **Daniel Uy**

Organizer Email daniel.uy@mail.utoronto.ca

Organizer Affiliation **University of Toronto**

Session Description

In this session we challenge the axiological underpinning of our polished/neat work by exposing our mess, missteps, omissions in our qualitative research as a way to show our vulnerabilities, humanness, and our desire to be and do better as researchers. We are interested in papers and presentations that critically examine our own identities, how they show up in research and how our learning and growth is driven also by an unlearning. Rather than hiding these parts of research work, this session encourages researchers to share their own struggles and how they shifted their research and/or future research work in order to address this. We look forward to discussing or individual and collective messes with each other.

Venue **Vancouver**

Thematic Session Title **The Future of Campus Athletic Work**

Organizer **Derek Silva**

Organizer Email dsilva28@uwo.ca

Organizer Affiliation **King's University College**

Session Description

In many ways, the labor of campus athletic workers drives the contemporary university, particularly at the PWI institutions that make up the Power Four. For decades, critical scholars and journalists have belabored the economic exploitation that is foundational to the maintenance of one of the most egregious sites of wage theft in contemporary society. Indeed, it has become commonplace for observers to offer incremental reforms to make college athletics more palatable within racial capitalism. Far too often, such discourses work to minimize and obfuscate the mass harm done to campus athletic workers. This panel thus begs the important questions: Is reform enough? Can we reimagine college athletics (and higher education in racial capitalism more broadly) from the ground up? What might a revolutionary future in college athletics look like?

Venue **Vancouver**

Thematic Session Title **Misgendering in Sports: Female Dopers, Gender Fraudulences, and Racialized Bodies**

Organizer **Narisa Vickers**

Organizer Email narisa.vickers@outlook.com

Organizer Affiliation **University of Toronto**

Session Description

Imane Khelif, an Algerian Olympic gold medalist, faced immediate misgendering and harassment, fueled by deliberate misinformation designed to discredit her victory. This session critically examines the faulty sex science often used to regulate athletes, which relies on oversimplified and biologically reductive measures of sex. Rather than an objective biological fact, sex—like gender—is socially constructed, shifting throughout history depending on racialized and colonial anxieties surrounding the body. These flawed frameworks are disproportionately weaponized against athletes of color, reinforcing colonialist and racist narratives. Through critical discourse analysis, this session situates Khelif's case within North American and Algerian histories of colonialism and transphobia, highlighting how these histories shape the weaponization of gender fraud allegations. Grounded in Black transgender feminist theory and decolonial queer of color critique, this session equips scholars with tools to challenge harmful misinformation and advocate for equitable athlete evaluation standards.

Venue **Vancouver**

Thematic Session Title **Action Sports in 'The Great White North'**

Lead Organizer **Nikolaus Dean**

Co-organizer **L. Dugan Nichols**

Lead Organizer Email n.dean@waikato.ac.nz

Lead Organizer Affiliation **University of Waikato**

Session Description

In Canada, participation in mainstream sports is declining while engagement in action sports is rising. Often referred to as 'alternative,' 'extreme,' or 'lifestyle sports,' action sports are highly individualised activities that diverge from the 'traditional,' rule-bound Western sporting cultures. Each day, action sport athletes traverse the concrete, dirt, snow, and frigid waters of Canada. However, sociological research examining action sports in 'The Great White North' requires further development. This inquiry is particularly significant now, considering events such as the International Olympic Committee's inclusion of new sports in the Olympics (e.g., climbing, skateboarding, and surfing) and the resurgence of nationalism and isolation during the Trump era. In this session, we invite presenters to share work that critically explores action sports in Canada and encourage them to contemplate how social, political, cultural, and historical forces can shape and constrain the experiences of various groups with these informal sports.

Venue **Vancouver**

Thematic Session Title **Future workshops: An arts-based approach to (re)imagining sport**

Organizer **Madeleine Orr**

Organizer Email madeleine.orr@utoronto.ca

Organizer Affiliation **University of Toronto**

Session Description

Dominant narratives about the future, both within and beyond sport, are overwhelmingly dark and scary. In these times, it is important to harness feelings of concern and uncertainty, and to flex our creative muscles, as we take the opportunity to collectively (re)imagine the possibilities for sport which will drive our movement(s) forward in the coming years. In 2023-24, twenty-two 'future workshops' were delivered across Canada to more than 1100 children and youth aged 9 to 25. Developed based on positive psychology theories and arts-based therapy interventions, workshop facilitators aimed to foster an environment where young people could imagine a positive future for themselves and their communities which they depicted through artwork. In this workshop, NASSS members are invited to participate in our own future workshop, and to create artwork which depicts sport in a future where 'we get everything right'. Supplies for drawing, painting, and collage will be provided.

Venue **Vancouver**

Thematic Session Title **Sport policy and politics in multi-level governance systems**

Lead Organizer **Kyle Rich**

Co-organizers **Audrey Giles, Ann Pegoraro, Larena Hoeber, Jonathon Edwards**

Lead Organizer Email krich052@gmail.com

Lead Organizer Affiliation **Brock University**

Session Description

Many sport systems are characterized by multi-level governance structures in which organizations at the local, regional, and national level play various roles in delivering sport participation opportunities, supporting athletes, and through which norms and expectations are established. However, in diverse social and political contexts, these sport system structures vary, and the implementation of sport policies are shaped by complex jurisdictional issues. In North America and elsewhere, sport policy issues (e.g., safe sport/safeguarding and trans athlete participation to name a few) have been politicized and in some cases weaponized by actors within and outside of sport systems. In this session, we invite presentations from scholars with a variety of theoretical and disciplinary backgrounds that explore the complexity of contemporary sport policy processes, the political economies and ideologies that underpin sport policy, as well as the social and cultural outcomes of sport-related policy in diverse contexts.

Venue **Vancouver**

Thematic Session Title **Making the invisible visible in sport organizations**

Lead Organizer **Annelies Knoppers**

Co-organizer **Martha McGrath-Brown**

Lead Organizer Email a.e.knoppers@uu.nl

Lead Organizer Affiliation **Utrecht University**

Session Description

In order to be able to facilitate more equitable and sustainable sport practices, scholars and policy makers need to increase their understandings of (sport) worlds including sport organizations. In this session we aim to make practices visible that are often invisible in sport organizations although they contribute to inequities. Specifically, we focus on invisible labor often engaged in by women such as emotional and performance labor and on invisible bonding engaged in by many men in sport organizations that shapes organizational culture and contributes to their overrepresentation as managers/leaders. Although these practices are embedded in sport organizations, they are often not seen or ignored by scholars, managers, policy makers and colleagues. We welcome papers that address either one/both of these invisibilities.

Venue **Vancouver**

Thematic Session Title **Sports as a Space for Queer and Trans Possibility**

Organizer **Lindsey Freeman**

Organizer Email lindsey_freeman@sfu.ca

Organizer Affiliation **Simon Fraser University**

Session Description

Even in a global climate where we see increasing scrutiny on queer and trans bodies, lives, and practices, sports can offer spaces for possibility. This session takes inspiration from the visibility and activism of two soccer players: Canadian star Quinn, the first trans and non-binary athlete to win an Olympic gold medal, and Megan Rapinoe, former US Women's National Team forward, who said: "Go gays. You can't win a championship without gays on your team. It's never been done before, ever. That's science, right there." While these two examples come from soccer, this session highlights research on activism, goals, saves, three-pointers, visibility, and wins across sports using queer and trans methodologies. That's our social science, right there.

Venue **Vancouver**

Thematic Session Title **Wellness, Wellbeing and Sport: Perspectives on Identity, Embodiment and Community**

Lead Organizer **Asha Edwin**

Co-organizer **Janelle Joseph**

Lead Organizer Email aedwin@brocku.ca

Lead Organizer Affiliation **Brock University**

Session Description

This session invites critical and interdisciplinary explorations of wellness, well-being, and sport through sociological perspectives. In a changing world, there is a growing focus on holistic, integrative, and sustainable sports cultures that acknowledge the broader social, cultural, political, and economic dimensions shaping social life. Sport illuminates an opportunity to build new relationships and examine how the landscape of sport is a site for rich engagement and interrogation of how wellness is constructed, experienced, and embodied across diverse contexts and cultures. We welcome papers and panels that engage with theoretical and empirical investigations into how wellness and well-being are influenced by and shaping sporting cultures and practices. Our goal is to foster dialogue that challenges narrow and traditional conceptions of sport, expanding definitions to include various forms of movement and exploring how sport—whether leisure, recreational, amateur, or competitive—can serve as a tool for personal and collective transformation and social justice.

Venue **Vancouver**

Thematic Session Title **Sociology of Sport Coach Education**

Lead Organizer **Joe Mills**

Co-organizer **Clayton Kuklick**

Lead Organizer Email joseph.mills@du.edu

Lead Organizer Affiliation **University of Denver**

Session Description

The sociology of sports coach education is an academic field at an almost constant crossroads. Coach education curriculums are constituted primarily from the sports sciences, and as such are largely composed of quantitatively-driven, linear, conforming—and confirming—facts positioning coach students as passive, inactive recipients of a prescriptive knowledge that requires fact-repetition and role-prescription to demonstrate competence (Andrews, 2008; Bush et al., 2016). Coaches themselves critique such obvious curriculums (e.g., Downham & Cushion, 2020; Piggott, 2011) but when presented with more critical content and pedagogies often complain (e.g., Mills & Kuklick, in press). We call for creative, innovative and challenging papers that explore how the sociology of sports coach education can move from its academic ivory tower and solidify its place with policy makers to produce meaningful coach education programs.

Venue **Vancouver**

Thematic Session Title **Rethinking Economic Power: The Political Economy of Sport Today**

Lead Organizer **Priyansh -**

Co-organizers **Simon Darnell, Chen Chen**

Lead Organizer Email **priyansh.p@mail.utoronto.ca**

Lead Organizer Affiliation **University of Toronto**

Session Description

Recent interventions in sociological research have called for a return to the question of political economy. In a time when macro-institutions are reformulating power in violent forms, it is urgent for sports scholars to rethink the significance of economic power alongside cultural and ideological articulations. While research on sport in the past would often directly interrogate themes in the study of political economy, newer theorisations and analyses are urgent for updating and renewing critique about the state, neoliberalism, imperialism, and capitalist accumulation. This session invites critical perspectives that reflect on the relevance of political economy for understanding the global system of sport from a vertical and horizontal lens. Participants are encouraged to contribute research, commentary, or artwork that demonstrates how thinking with and against economic power can extend and refine dominant modes of theory-crafting in the sociology of sport.

Venue **Vancouver**

Thematic Session Title **(Dis)ability, Justice, Belonging and Sport Washing**

Lead Organizer **P. David Howe**

Co-organizer **Andrea Bundon**

Lead Organizer Email **david.howe@uwo.ca**

Lead Organizer Affiliation **Western University**

Session Description

It has long been assumed the sport programming for people who experience (dis)ability (PWED) at both the grassroots, and high-performance levels are the hallmark of progressive society. As critical scholars of sport, we are interested in how sport has been and can be used to promote affirmative ways of understanding disability and to build more just worlds. We are also intensely aware that (dis)ability sport is used in ways that sustain unequal power relations. Many programs and events are delivered by non-disabled leaders, portrayed as altruistic actors who 'provide opportunities' to disabled people. We are seeking theoretically and methodologically robust papers that explore the experiences of PWED in sport and ask critical questions such as: How do PWED understand the relationship between (dis)ability sport and social justice? How is belonging (not) experienced by PWEDs in sport? How is sport used to reproduce or resist existing power relations or hierarchies?

Venue **Vancouver**

Thematic Session Title **Sporting Diasporas in North America and Beyond**

Lead Organizer **Saidur Rahman**

Co-organizer **Janelle Joseph**

Lead Organizer Email **saidur.rahman@mail.utoronto.ca**

Lead Organizer Affiliation **University of Toronto**

Session Description

People migrate with their sports. In hostlands, diasporic and immigrant communities reproduce the sporting and physical culture of their homeland and recreate their memory, identity and belongingness. Pickup and community-based soccer and cricket leagues are a common feature in big cities of North America, where participation of diasporic and immigrant populations is increasing. These diasporic sporting spaces often eliminate the spatial (here and there) and temporal (past and present) differences and become a site for sustaining cultural, racial and transnational identities and connections. Thus, sport has emerged as a critical area of diasporic studies, particularly when anti-immigrant rhetoric and politics are resurfacing. The proposed session welcomes papers on diasporic sporting spaces and practices from graduate students and early career researchers.

Venue **Vancouver**

Thematic Session Title **Reclaiming the Motions: Sport, Movement, and the Art of Returning**

Organizer **Miruthula Queen Anbu**

Organizer Email m.queenanbu@queensu.ca

Organizer Affiliation **Queen's University**

Session Description

Since time immemorial, the movement of Indigenous, Black, and racialized peoples—on Land, in Water, and through their bodies—has been appropriated, repackaged, and commodified to construct a naturalized White identity through sport. In doing so, violence, cultural genocide, and the occupation of Indigenous Land are naturalized through what Sarah Hunt (2014) calls the colonialscape: the shaping of a settler colonial nation and the spaces “which form their outside—the city, civility, spaces of progress and resource extraction”—used to justify displacement and erasure (p.72). This session reflects on the embodied movements and cultural practices that disrupt and refuse the colonial dream, seeking racial justice through physical activity and sport. As we move our bodies, we transform spaces into places of reclamation, resurgence, and return—to ourselves, our cultural lineages, and our ancestors. This session welcomes all who are committed to unsettling colonial worldmaking, liberation, and building more just presents and futures.

Venue **Vancouver**

Thematic Session Title **Open Session**

Organizer **Travers Travers**

Organizer Email atravers@sfu.ca

Organizer Affiliation **Simon Fraser University**

Session Description

Working on a paper but not seeing an appropriate session to submit to? Submit it here.

Venue **Vancouver**

Panel Session Title **Author Meets Readers - The End of College Football**

Organizer **Derek Silva**

Organizer Email dsilva28@uwo.ca

Organizer Affiliation **King's University College**

Session Description

This Author-Meets-Readers panel focuses on Nathan Kalman-Lamb and Derek Silva's new book *The End of College Football: On the Human Cost of an All-American Game* (University of North Carolina Press, 2024). Grounded in the experiences of former college football players who generously shared their stories, *The End of College Football* explores how one of the United States's favourite pastimes is saturated in racialized exploitation and harm. Drawing on extensive testimony from the authors' athlete interlocutors, the book chronicles how universities systematically extract value from players who are subjected to a remarkable amount of physical and emotional harm in the course of labor that is not acknowledged as such. The panel will bring together four readers to deeply engage with the book.

Venue **Vancouver**

Panel Session Title **Safe and Violence-Free Sport Under Capitalism: A Contradiction in Terms?**

Organizer **Daniel Sailofsky**

Organizer Email daniel.sailofsky@utoronto.ca

Organizer Affiliation **University of Toronto**

Session Description

Drawing from Sailofsky's recently released (2025) book *'Playing Through Pain: The Violent Consequences of Capitalist Sport'*, this session will examine the systemic barriers built into capitalism as well as capitalist cultural hegemony that make sport violence so common. Spanning diverse areas of harm including physical violence on the field and off of it, athlete labour exploitation, spectator hooliganism, and the political and environmental violence of elite sport mega-events, panelists will discuss the connections between the business of sports and violence, but also, more importantly, imagine along with the audience new forms of sport that are not places of harm. (Tentative panelists listed - fourth panelist TBC)

Venue **Vancouver**

Panel Session Title **Colonial Rupture, Decolonial Praxis: Embodiment as Resistance toward Coloniality**

Lead Organizer **Saidur Rahman**

Co-organizer **Janelle Joseph**

Lead Organizer Email saidur.rahman@mail.utoronto.ca

Lead Organizer Affiliation **University of Toronto**

Session Description

Colonialism continues to marginalize the Indigenous and native people, traditions and ways of life by shaping contemporary knowledge, power structures, and social and cultural systems. The dehumanization of the colonized was initiated and sustained through an asymmetrical global power structure, the subhuman status of the colonized as (non) being through social categorization and racial hierarchization and the erasure and subjugation of Indigenous and native knowledge(s) through epistemicide and cultural appropriation. To dismantle colonialism from its core, decolonization should address interlocking oppressions of power, being and knowledge in a transformative manner through decolonial praxis. The proposed panel will explore embodiment as a decolonial praxis engaging with the three interrelated concepts: coloniality of power, being, and knowledge. In the session, sports sociologists will share personal experiences and critical strategies on utilizing embodiment for decolonization to navigate teaching, research and lived experience in colonized societies/systems toward true liberation of being, knowledge and power.

Venue **Vancouver**

Panel Session Title **Whither Trans Sports? Global Gender Politics and Sporting Futures**

Lead Organizer **Satoko Itani**

Co-organizers **Siufung Law, Jinsun Yang**

Lead Organizer Email s.itani@kansai-u.ac.jp

Lead Organizer Affiliation **Kansai University**

Session Description

Following President Trump's executive order banning trans women from women's sports, the NCAA revised its gender policy to permit only those assigned female at birth to compete on women's teams. This policy change reflects a broader global rise in anti-trans rhetoric, especially concerning the participation of trans athletes. In light of these developments, this session will engage urgent questions in current scholarship on trans athleticism: What is the state of the field today? How do U.S. policies influence both local and international sports federations? How are debates around fairness, inclusion, and gender equality shaping contemporary discourse? Most importantly, whose voices are still missing from these conversations? The panel will also examine new directions in trans sports research, including nonbinary inclusion, the increasingly blurred line between elite and amateur competition, and the participation of transmasculine athletes in women's divisions.

Poster Sessions Proposed by NASSS Members

A description of each poster follows this list.

F2F Vancouver Sport Anthropology Caucus V: Student Research in Ethical Spaces

Venue **Vancouver**

Poster Session Title **Sport Anthropology Caucus V: Student Research in Ethical Spaces**

Organizer **Miruthula Queen Anbu**

Organizer Email **m.queenanbu@queensu.ca**

Organizer Affiliation **Queen's University**

Session Description

In 2024, the Sport Anthropology Caucus [SAC] invited graduate, undergraduate, and early career scholars to a poster session to showcase and/or refine their ethnographic projects at the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport [NASSS]. This session sought to [1] expand the reach of the SAC from North American Society for Sport History [NASSH] to NASSS, [2] creating a community of scholars with different approaches, commitments, and assumptions to research, [3] accommodating persons of various social and occupational positions, and [4] creating community of praxis that [5] changes the way sessions are conducted as [6] NASSS aligns with UNDRIP. The session was widely successful, achieving the goals mentioned above and facilitating meaningful connections between people and their ideas. We seek to build on last year's session by creating an ethical space for undergraduate, graduate, and early career scholars to showcase and/or refine their projects in a poster session.

Virtual

Thematic and Panel Sessions Proposed by NASSS Members

A description of each session follows this list.

V Virtual	Fighting for Sustainable Empowerment Project: building more just sporting spaces/practices
V Virtual	Deleuze's Posthumanism and the Moving Body
V Virtual	Olympics for Humanity Academic Champions of Change:
V Virtual	Liberalism-Fascism: The Good & Bad Cop of (Sport) Imperialist Capitalism
V Virtual	Gender, Race & Sport: Intersections & Assemblages
V Virtual	Spotlight on the WNBA
V Virtual	Spotlight on the NCAA
V Virtual	Meet-up for Retired NASSS Members
V Virtual	Registering Resistance : Sports Activism in the Global South
V Virtual	Open Session
V Virtual	Significant Others in Sport

Venue **Virtual**

Thematic Session Title **Fighting for Sustainable Empowerment Project: building more just sporting spaces/practices**

Organizer **Fabiana Turelli**

Organizer Email **fabiana.turelli@umanitoba.ca**

Organizer Affiliation **University of Manitoba**

Session Description

A round table with community co-creators (participants) in a participatory action research pilot project carried out at University of Manitoba from September 2024 to April 2025. Participants withdraw their anonymity and became actively engaged in the project, raising their voices through the creation of an Instagram account (@FSE_project). They are keen to share their experiences of growing confidence and ability to self-protection, fighting to conquer an improved sense of safety - we are against violence against people identifying as women! As the researcher, I am developing a pedagogical model to teach women and girls in martial arts, as martial environments are excluding of them. To have more just karate spaces/practices, I propose to queer them and empower usually oppressed practitioners. The co-creators in the project got my point and engaged in the struggle with me to transform the martial context. Together, we will report this experience through this round table.

Venue **Virtual**

Thematic Session Title **Deleuze's Posthumanism and the Moving Body**

Lead Organizer **Pirkko Markula**

Co-organizer **Allison Jeffrey**

Lead Organizer Email pirkko.markula@ualberta.ca

Lead Organizer Affiliation **University of Alberta, Canada**

Session Description

This session welcomes papers that embrace Deleuze's posthumanism as an approach that can expand ways of thinking about and doing research in sport, physical activity and movement practices. In this session, we solicit works by researchers who share a common interest in projects that aims to understand the complexities of Deleuzian philosophy and the associated challenges of doing research that does not rely on traditionally humanist qualitative methodologies and methods. We welcome paper submissions that address the intricacies of Deleuzian theoretical concepts and are interested creative/exploratory/innovative research practices that can bring new insights to the doing of posthumanism with moving bodies. Through this session, we share possibilities for innovative research that acknowledges the complexities of contemporary times and attempt to imagine how we might think differently about moving bodies with Deleuze.

Venue **Virtual**

Thematic Session Title **Olympics for Humanity Academic Champions of Change:**

Lead Organizer **Alexis Lyras**

Co-organizers **Chris Prosser, Andrew Yiannakis, Manuella Picariello, Sungjae Hwang**

Lead Organizer Email alyras@umes.edu

Lead Organizer Affiliation **University of Maryland Eastern Shore & Olympism for Humanity Alliance**

Session Description

Sport and the Olympic ideal are often characterized as a powerful platform that can embrace positive impact across various levels of the society. The institution of Sport, however, often reproduces, sustains and amplifies polarization, violence, corruption and conflict (Lyras, 2007, 2021; Sugden & Tomlinson 2017,2018, UNODC, 2021). Despite this paradox, the upcoming LA 2028 Games provide opportunities for a Sustainable Academic Innovation Legacy to leverage intern-institutional synergies, applied knowledge production and impact (Lyras, 2023). Olympism for Humanity (O4H) and Sport for Development (SFDT) Theories (Lyras, 2007, 2012, 2020, 2021), which are grounded on Applied Sociology of Sport foundations (Yiannakis, 1989, 1992) provide solid transdisciplinary capacity building guidelines for effective and impactful programming- and for preparing of the Next Generation of Academic Champions of Change (Chalip, 2015; Lyras, 2023, Yiannakis & Lyras 2023). This session is inviting critical contributions that optimize Olympics for Humanity Academic Innovation ventures, applied knowledge and impact.

Venue **Virtual**

Thematic Session Title **Liberalism-Fascism: The Good & Bad Cop of (Sport) Imperialist Capitalism**

Lead Organizer **Chen Chen**

Co-organizers **Anthony Weems, Priyansh -**

Lead Organizer Email cchen@uconn.edu

Lead Organizer Affiliation **University of Connecticut**

Session Description

Not least surprised by the recent ostensible "shift" in mode of governance in countries in the Global North, this session invites theoretical and empirical contributions that address the ideological and/or material roles played by the sport industry, in various geopolitical contexts, including but not limited to the US, in flexibly adapting to the needs of the ruling class in perpetuating/naturalizing the capitalist and imperialist social order. For example, contributions could address the limitations of liberal 'social justice' reforms in the sport industry in the last decade (with the Gaza genocide as one of the more significant examples) or highlight/theorize effective resistance within/beyond sport under liberal and fascist modes of governance across geographical and historical contexts.

Venue **Virtual**

Thematic Session Title **Gender, Race & Sport: Intersections & Assemblages**

Organizer **Travers Travers**

Organizer Email **atravers@sfu.ca**

Organizer Affiliation **Simon Fraser University**

Session Description

This panel will feature papers that foreground critical analyses of gender, race and sport as interrelated and mutually reinforcing.

Venue **Virtual**

Thematic Session Title **Spotlight on the WNBA**

Organizer **Travers Travers**

Organizer Email **atravers@sfu.ca**

Organizer Affiliation **Simon Fraser University**

Session Description

Papers in this session should address issues related to justice, equity, fandom or other sociological analyses of the WNBA.

Venue **Virtual**

Thematic Session Title **Spotlight on the NCAA**

Organizer **Travers Travers**

Organizer Email **atravers@sfu.ca**

Organizer Affiliation **Simon Fraser University**

Session Description

Sociological analyses of issues related to the NCAA will be featured in this session.

Venue **Virtual**

Thematic Session Title **Meet-up for Retired NASSS Members**

Organizer **Nancy Spencer**

Organizer Email **nspencr@bgsu.edu**

Organizer Affiliation

Session Description

NASSS provides an important social space for academics. Those who retire can sometimes feel removed from their academic community and long-time friends and colleagues. In this session, we invite retired members of NASSS to gather in an online space, visit with their colleagues and friends, and have an opportunity to share in the NASSS community. NASSS provides an important social space for academics. Those who retire can sometimes feel removed from their academic community and long-time friends and colleagues. In this session, we invite retired members of NASSS to gather in an online space, visit with their colleagues and friends, and have an opportunity to share in the NASSS community.

Venue **Virtual**

Thematic Session Title **Registering Resistance : Sports Activism in the Global South**

Lead Organizer **Padma Prakash**

Co-organizer **Simon Darnell**

Lead Organizer Email padma.prakash@mail.utoronto.ca

Lead Organizer Affiliation **Centre for Sports Policy Studies, KPE, Univ of Toronto**

Session Description

Athlete activism in the Global North has today found a place in history and is well-acknowledged in current sports literature. In the Global South and in repressive states there may be emerging other genres of protest, athlete or spectator-led, some bold, and others quiet. In 2011 Haquim al-Araibi, a celebrated Bahraini footballer risked imprisonment to speak out against the repressive Bahraini uprising. Protest may be collective as when Indian women wrestlers took to the streets protesting their years-long sexual harassment. Or, it may be spectator-led; or, subtle. Are social movements or sports-for-development initiatives using the sports space in mounting resistance to sectarian and divisive public policies? What forms of athlete activism are emerging in locations where open demonstrations on the sporting field may be inadvisable? What conceptual or theoretical frameworks can we employ to understand how these actions arise, evolve and garner support, how they are constructed and produced?

Venue **Virtual**

Thematic Session Title **Open Session**

Organizer **Travers Travers**

Organizer Email atravers@sfu.ca

Organizer Affiliation **Simon Fraser University**

Session Description

Working on a paper that doesn't quite fit any of the session descriptions? Submit it here.

Venue **Virtual**

Panel Session Title **Significant Others in Sport**

Organizer **Mariann Vaczi**

Organizer Email mvaczi@unr.edu

Organizer Affiliation **University of Nevada Reno**

Session Description

This panel calls on papers to examine the diverse sexual personae of the partners of athletes, their relationships, media presence, and impact on social perceptions of gender roles, romantic relationships, marriage, and sexuality. Limited analysis has identified significant others in sport in such broad terms as “hero-worshipping” wives and “helpmates;” groupies, “buck bunnies” or “buckle bunnies;” and WAGs (wives-and-girlfriends) or HABs (husbands-and-boyfriends). From Edith Piaf through Victoria Beckham and Shakira to Taylor Swift, WAGs have been constructed as “dangerous destabilizers” that threaten elite male sport performance through their sexuality. This panel invites papers that examine significant others in sport (male, female, and non-binary), their relationship with athletes, and the media construction of their sexual personae as they impact social perceptions of, among other, the powers of sexuality; sexuality and athletic performance; relationships and their salient events like weddings, cheating, divorce; and views of marital and gender roles.