

### THEMATIC SESSIONS PROPOSED BY NASSS MEMBERS

A description of each session follows this list.

- Sport, Capitalism, and Desire
- Esports and Athletic Identity: Diverse Perspectives and Insights\*
- Enhancing Sport Management Education through Experiential Learning\*
- “For Better Or Worse”: A Sociological Understanding of Sports Betting\*
- Imagining Futures: Body, Movement and Culture\*
- Imagining Futures: Sociology of Sport Coaching and Movement Facilitation\*
- Toiling Amidst the Ruins: Labor Precarity and Sport Sociology\*
- Working with Postpartum and Parenting Athletes: Moving Toward Praxis\*
- Contemporary Youth Sport, from Development to Dystopia
- Critical reflection on sport and sustainability discourse\*
- Sporting Diaspora: The Agony and the Ecstasy in the Foreign Field\*
- Critical Approaches to Athlete Health\*
- Revitalizing Autoethnography? A Methodological Debate for Sport Sociology\*
- The Gift of Black Athletes
- Vulnerabilities and Messy Encounters\*
- Sexuality, Race, and Pleasure/Play\*
- Examination of Impacts of Climate Change on Sport: Challenges and Solutions
- We are living in a material world, and we are socio-material sports girls
- Examining attempts at EDII in sport\*
- US-NATO-Zionist-Imperialist fascism rampage: What's to be done to/by sport?\*
- Arts-Based Methods: Innovative Approaches to Sports Research\*
- Issues Related to NIL and the Future of College Athletics
- Sport & Human Rights: Re-Directing Attention to North America/Global North\*
- Sport and/as Activism: Interdisciplinary Perspectives\*
- Centering Joyful Movement, Play, and Community Building in Sport
- Examining Cricket and Societal Dynamics in South Asia and Beyond\*
- Socio-Cultural, Economic, Mental Health, Ethical Issues Impacting Athletics
- A Critical Response to Contemporary Sociology of Sport: Where Are We Now?\*
- International College Athlete Experiences To and Thorough U.S. Universities\*
- A burden or a blessing? Examining the “true” power of hashtag activism\*
- Politics and praxis of ensuring safety and welfare of displaced athletes\*
- Critical Perspectives in Sport Communication\*
- Critical Muslim Studies: New Insights into Sport and Physical Culture\*
- Sport Media, Distraction, and Political Awakening\*
- (Re)Creating NASSS: Digital Justice, Sport, and Movement Cultures\*
- En Comunidad: Advancing the Commitment to Increasing Latinx Representation at NASSS\*

**Thematic Session Title**

Sport, Capitalism, and Desire

**Name of Organizer(s)**

Mariann Vaczi

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**Session Description**

In 2021, two pieces of news shook the sport world: the potential establishment of the European Super League, and Leo Messi's potential departure from FC Barcelona. Both events provoked intense reactions of protest. The idea of the European Super League showed for fans the despicable greed of elite sport; and with Messi's departure due to lack of funds, the "fairy tale," the "dream," the "greatest romance of football" was broken. These events were only two of the most spectacular recent outgrowths of sport capitalism, or what fans see as the transformation of an enchanted, poetic passion into a disenchanting, prosaic business. They also revealed the double binds of rich and powerful clubs: their relentless necessity to increase funds, to eliminate risks, and to win at all costs, which drives them to billion-euro debts. How can we explain the staying power of capitalism in sport despite widespread discontent, and growing grassroots activism that rejects it? Why is it so hard to resist the neoliberalism of sport despite acknowledged evils and warning signs? How does it create landscapes of desire that keep its actors in its orbit? This session will seek to identify the intricate interactions and mutual nourishment between sport, the logic of capitalism, and human modes of desiring. Some point at the overpowering hegemony of capitalist stakeholders, in sport as elsewhere. Others have variously identified the impacts of capitalism in terms of inequality, exploitation, or repression. Following McGowan (2017), we may add that the power of (sport) capitalism is owing to its ability to engage with human modes of desiring: wanting the next commodity, the next player, the next championship title. This session will seek to fathom sporting capitalism's hold of our psychic lives, and it will speculate about the ways one might escape, in sport and beyond, the grasp of its Invisible Hand.

**Thematic Session Title**

Esports and Athletic Identity: Diverse Perspectives and Insights

**Name of Organizer(s)**

\*\*Shelby Masse; David Hodge

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**Session Description**

This session invites a broad exploration of the sociological issues related to esports and athletic identity. Electronic sports, or esports, are a rapidly growing segment of the sport industry, both for participants and spectators. We seek to understand how digital athletes construct, perceive, and navigate their identities within the competitive gaming landscape. Athletic identity (AI) is defined as "the degree to which an individual identifies with the athlete role" (Brewer et al., 1993, p. 237). These roles are typically formed through social interactions that confirm and validate one's self-concept (Reifsteck et al., 2013). Contributions may address a range of topics, including social dynamics, cultural perceptions, psychological experiences, and the impact of technology on identity formation. By fostering a

multidisciplinary dialogue, we aim to uncover the unique and shared challenges faced by athletes across different contexts, comparing esports with traditional sports. All authors with related scholarship, including practical/theoretical/conceptual work or proposed/ongoing/finished empirical research, are invited to submit.

**Thematic Session Title**

Enhancing Sport Management Education through Experiential Learning

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\*\*Shelby Masse; Christopher Streeter

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**Session Description**

Experiential learning engages students to “learn by doing” and to reflect on the experience. Research has shown that practical and applied sport management experiences not only appeal to future employers but fosters opportunities for students to gain knowledge through the transformation of experience (Brown et al., 2018; Kolb & Kolb 2009). With many universities and colleges holding COSMA or AACSB accreditations, experiential learning within sport management curricula is frequent practice. Due to Sport Management education being housed in multiple departments, business, kinesiology, or education, experiential learning factors into all disciplines. Therefore, this session seeks to share the benefits, successes, and challenges of experiential learning in practice, while also allowing presenters the opportunity to network and share their experiences. We invite all authors engaged in related scholarship, including practical, theoretical, conceptual work, or proposed, ongoing, and completed empirical research, to submit their work.

**Thematic Session Title**

“For Better Or Worse”: A Sociological Understanding of Sports Betting

**Name of Organizer(s)**

\*\*Jackson Sears; Beth Cianfrone; Lauren Beasley

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**Session Description**

With changing legislation and technological advancements in mobile betting sport betting is of the preeminent trends in the world of sport. Sport betting presents a litany of impacts on entities within sport and greater society. For example, sociological constructs like risk, socialization, inequity, power, and dissonance each can influence sport bettors. A few examples of how these constructs may materialize is through addiction (e.g., problem gambling), threats to the integrity of sport (i.e., match fixing), social benefits (e.g., group cohesion), abusive fan behavior in the stadium and on social media, and the role of power maintaining an unhealthy balance between bettor and sportsbook. As sport betting increases its accessibility across the world, sport scholars must understand all ways in which it impacts society. This session welcomes any submissions that apply sociological theory to sport betting on various sport entities (e.g., athletes, coaches, administrators, referees, fans, leagues, sportsbooks, teams).

**Thematic Session Title**

Imagining Futures: Body, Movement and Culture

**Name of Organizer(s)**

\*\*Allison Jeffrey; Joseph Mills

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Cape Breton University

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**Session Description**

This session welcomes papers that embrace expansive theoretical frameworks to broaden cultural understandings of moving bodies in sport, physical activity and movement practices. In this session, we solicit works by researchers from multiple theoretical and performance backgrounds who share a common interest in research that aims to understand the complex social forces that shape and inform the moving body in contemporary society. We welcome all paper submissions inspired by innovative theoretical frameworks that can bring new insights to experiences in moving bodies, imagining futures that incorporate the intellectual legacy of research on physical cultures while acknowledging the complexities of contemporary times.

Example topics might include:

- Post-structuralism, post-humanism, post-qualitative inquiry
- Engaging theory as applied practices informing research and/or movement facilitation
- Multi-disciplinary explorations of natural and social sciences, materialisms, human/non-human relations
- Narrative, ethnographic, performance ethnography, and/or autoethnographic inquiry

**Thematic Session Title**

Imagining Futures: Sociology of Sport Coaching and Movement Facilitation

**Name of Organizer(s)**

\*\*Joseph Mills; Allison Jeffrey

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**Session Description**

Sociology's impressive array of theories offer untold intellectual insights for anyone connected with research on sport coaching and movement facilitation. They also offer sports' natural scientists, policy makers, program directors, coaches, and recreation facilitators the opportunity to reflect upon and shift their practices when offering sport/recreation opportunities. While sociology in research on moving bodies is expanding understandings of the complexities of natural cultural influences contributing to experiences in sport culture, there remain few studies that question the practices of coaches and facilitators who are leading sport and movement practices. In this session, we are interested in sharing insights on the ways that sociological theory can influence applied and practical aspects of sport coaching and movement facilitation. How can we think differently about sport coaching and how is this philosophical shift influencing our practices when facilitating practices with moving bodies?

Example topics might include:

- Applying social theory as a practical sport/movement science

- Applied practices with moving bodies towards social change
- Engaging theory as applied practices informing research and/or movement facilitation

**Thematic Session Title**

Toiling Amidst the Ruins: Labor Precarity and Sport Sociology

**Name of Organizer(s)**

Zachary Smith

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**Session Description**

This session seeks proposals that critically examine labor precarity for sociologists of sport. Nearly a decade ago, Dave Andrews (2015) noted that sport sociology was increasingly taught by non-tenure track faculty, a symptom of the field’s larger “evisceration” (p. 371). This situation has only worsened, alongside the continued neoliberal University shift towards contingent labor and University priorities for “fundable” research.

While any proposal on this theme will be considered, special consideration will be given to work by contingent or otherwise marginalized academic workers (including graduate workers). Both full conference papers and shorter working papers are welcome, providing an opportunity for collaborative discussion between presenters and the audience. Virtual papers will be accommodated.

Papers could address:

Autoethnographies of contingent faculty experience

Creative scholarship, such as eulogy or requiem for career hopes and dreams that will not be

How academic labor fits into the larger questions raised in the conference theme description

**Thematic Session Title**

Working with Postpartum and Parenting Athletes: Moving Toward Praxis

**Name of Organizer(s)**

\*\*Talia Ritondo; Audrey Giles

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**Session Description**

Despite the increase of pregnant and parenting athletes (PPAs) continuing sport participation into parenthood (Darroch et al., 2022), sport policy is lacking when considering their needs. While progress has been made by some sport organizations, many must improve their commitment to gender equity by re-evaluating their policies and working with PPAs to understand the resources and support they need at elite levels. In this session, we invite submissions from those who examine gender politics embedded in PPA sport policies, participation, and research.

**Thematic Session Title**

Contemporary Youth Sport, from Development to Dystopia

**Name of Organizer(s)**

Doug Hartmann

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**Session Description**

This session will assemble papers on the current programming and practice of youth sports in North America and around the world. Empirical papers that document specific programs or broad patterns and emerging, new initiatives will be prioritized, but broader theoretical and synthetic treatments will also be considered. All papers should offer analysis and critique as well as situate these sporting practices in appropriate social, cultural, political or community contexts. Some discussion of broader implications, especially those related to constructive alternatives for the future, will also be encouraged.

**Thematic Session Title**

Critical reflections on sport and sustainability discourse

**Name of Organizer(s)**

\*\*Alex C. Gang; Jin Park; Ju Young Lee; Yong Chae Rhee; Ji Young Park

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**Session Description**

In the face of the imminent threats posed by global warming and climate change, the discourse on 'sustainability' has become increasingly prevalent in sport. While there is a shared sense of righteousness embedded in the concept of sustainability, which drives sport towards environmental consciousness, we must ask: Is sport truly becoming more sustainable? In other words, are we critical enough in our examination of the words and actions associated with sustainability in sport?

Despite the frequent use of the term, some critics (e.g., Kimmerer, 2013) argue that sustainability often serves colonial approaches to environmental justice, merely finding ways to continue exploitative practices (McMain, 2020). Ecocriticism challenges the nature/culture binary and highlights the interconnectedness of various systems of oppression.

Reflecting on the need for rigorous scrutiny, this session aims to facilitate a critical reflection on the intersection of sport and sustainability, encompassing discussions on broader theoretical and practical approaches.

**Thematic Session Title**

Sporting Diaspora: The Agony and the Ecstasy in the Foreign Field

**Name of Organizer(s)**

\*\*Saidur Rahman; Janelle Joseph

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**Session Description**

The West Indies and the United States will co-host the 2024 ICC Men's T20 Cricket World Cup, and Canada, Mexico, and the United States will jointly host the 2026 FIFA Soccer World Cup. Despite the lack of popularity of these sports in North America, these global sporting events are significant for diasporic communities as these sports invoke memories of their homeland, bind communities together in a 'foreign land', and create 'new' stories to tell across generations. Diasporic communities face a myriad of challenges in navigating their identity, culture, and belongingness in a 'new country'. However, sports provide them space to reproduce their culture, express their identity, and turn their despairs into joy. Thus, sport becomes a critical lens in diasporic studies, where the contestation of culture, identity and belongingness can reveal the agony and ecstasy of diasporic/immigrant communities more vividly than most other cultural practices. The proposed session welcomes papers from graduate students and early career researchers located in the Global North investigating, collecting, and documenting stories of diasporic sporting cultures.

**Thematic Session Title**

Critical Approaches to Athlete Health

**Name of Organizer(s)**

Caitlin Clarke

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**Session Description**

This session seeks papers concerned with athlete health broadly. These could be sport management adjacent papers but must include a critical sociological lens. Of particular concern are the ways such participation impacts marginalized groups including adaptive sport athletes, BIPOC and/or LGBTQ+ athletes, as well as immunocompromised athletes and those with other health conditions that may be exacerbated by or created through sport participation. Specific attention to these groups is needed given the disproportionate rate of health inequities in the aforementioned marginalized groups. Such concerns warrant new 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 long-term health outcomes and/or approaching health holistically from a biosocial perspective and/or using such frameworks as Critical Race Theory, Critical Public Health, Syndemics, Cultural Health Capital, and Biomedicalization

**Thematic Session Title**

Revitalizing Autoethnography? A Methodological Debate for Sport Sociology

**Name of Organizer(s)**

\*\*Caitlin Clarke; Jesse Couture

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**Session Description**

The International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry 2024 memorialized both the late Norman Denzin and the late Jim Denison, each qualitative inquiry/ autoethnography scholars of sport in their own right. The Keynote and numerous additional sessions discussed the current state of qualitative inquiry as a

methodology in a moment of significant political turmoil and uncertainty for higher education. Remarks included the need for more critical self reflection as scholars of qualitative inquiry with a tendency to position ourselves against those conducting mixed method or quantitative analyses. Thus, this session calls for papers concerned with any position on qualitative inquiry and/or autoethnography, with priority for those who have attempted qualitative inquiry / autoethnography for the purpose of discussing both the values and limitations of the method for interrogating sport, play, health, and the body. Papers advocating for qualitative inquiry would include those who have examples of case studies or simply propose to present an auto-ethnographic / QI paper for the panel with inclusion of discussion related to what could not have been accomplished or understood without the method selected. Papers critiquing qualitative inquiry could provide case studies from previously published work but should not rely simply on other scholar's work unless the examples were used for situations such as teaching. Thus, critiques must move beyond a distaste for a particular methodology and towards productive critique that might help move qualitative inquiry forward in the sport sociology spaces. Critiques might also come from those who have conducted qualitative inquiry but did so with significant hesitation, in no small part due to scholarly debate on the values of qualitative inquiry / autoethnography.

### **Thematic Session Title**

The Gift of Black Athletes

### **Name of Organizer(s)**

John N. Singer

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### **Session Description**

In the book *How Blacks Built America*, sociologist Joe Feagin (2016) drew inspiration from W.E.B. Du Bois's (1924) book, *The Gift of Black Folk* to examine the many positive and extraordinary contributions that Black people have made to the United States in three broad areas: 1) labor, 2) creativity and cultural innovations, and 3) spirituality and morality. In discussing the centrality of Black people in these areas, Feagin only briefly touched on the context of sport. Therefore, drawing on this earlier work of Du Bois and Feagin, this session welcomes papers that focus on the gift of Black athletes in these areas. Although the primary focus is on the United States, papers that extend beyond the United States to the global influence of Black athletes are welcomed.

### **Thematic Session Title**

Vulnerabilities and Messy Encounters

### **Name of Organizer(s)**

\*\*Daniel Uy; Tricia McGuire-Adams

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### **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.

**Thematic Session Title**

Sexuality, Race, and Pleasure/Play

**Name of Organizer(s)**

Daniel Uy

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**Session Description**

This session explores the intersections of race and sexuality as it relates to the pleasure and joy of participating in sport or physical activities. Utilizing one or combinations of Indigenous knowledges, Black feminist studies, women of colour feminism, queer of colour critique, and decoloniality, sites of pleasure and play can be important to contextualize racialized differences and offer we spaces for research that highlights more joyful and safe places of expression. This session is open to paper presentations that engage and play with ideas and questions around the type of world we want to inhabit - what does connection to people through their bodies and expressions of joy, love, liberation, resistance mean as sexual embodied beings? What does it mean to engage in research at the intersections of sexuality and race in terms of strength-based sport research? What are the hopes and imaginings of that type of space to be?

**Thematic Session Title**

Examination of Impacts of Climate Change on Sport: Challenges and Solutions

**Name of Organizer(s)**

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**Session Description**

Since the keynote speech on sport and environment in 2005 NASSS conference, which detailed how changes in environment was starting to impact the landscape of sport for recreation and competition, government policy makers, sport entities including sport federations, even ordinary community organizations, have witnessed dramatic transformative changes in the environment no matter location. The purpose of this session is to discuss research studies that focus on how the impacts of climate change are addressed through policy development and implementation, advocacy campaigns, initiatives, noting that sport is both a resource to fight climate change and producer of carbon emissions that jeopardize the air we breathe, needing carbon-offsetting programs to bring about positive change, and ways to curb problems associated with mega events, and stadia developments and enhancements, as well as ways to save the planet in general, such as the air we breathe, and places of play and competition.

**Thematic Session Title**

We are living in a material world, and we are socio-material sports girls

**Name of Organizer(s)**

\*\*Lauren Nowosatka; Anna Goorevich

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**Session Description**

Viewership, interest, and commentary on women’s sport has peaked in recent years. Simultaneously, there is growing awareness of new and continued challenges for gender and racial equity within the current socio-political context, including but not limited to gender-based violence, trans-exclusionary sport policies, bodily surveillance of athletes, and unequal pay (Posbergh, 2023; Swarr, 2023). Sport sociologists have demonstrated the utility and importance of socio-material frameworks in more comprehensively contextualizing the social and embodied aspects of sport to better understand the opportunities and challenges pervading contemporary women’s sport and physical culture, although largely on an individual scale (Jette et al., 2019; Thorpe et al., 2021; Brice, 2022). With particular reference to Frost’s (2016) biocultural creatures, we invite presentations that expand sportswomen’s biocultural habitat(s), specifically examining the role of governance and policy, sporting structures, and the mediascape, among other agents. We also encourage presentations that utilize queer, indigenous, intersectional, and post-colonial frameworks.

**Thematic Session Title**

Examining attempts at EDII in sport

**Name of Organizer(s)**

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**Session Description**

Attempts at meaningful equity, diversity, inclusion, and Indigenization (EDII) in sport have ranged from the meaningful to the performative to the deeply offensive. Learning from practices that have had a positive impact is just as important as learning from the ones that have been flagrant disasters. In this session, presenters are invited to critically examine examples of attempts at EDII at any level of sport - from grassroots to professional, and the ways in which they have challenged and/or reproduced inequities.

**Thematic Session Title**

US-NATO-Zionist-Imperialist fascism rampage: What's to be done to/by sport?

**Name of Organizer(s)**

\*\*Chen Chen; Anthony Weems

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**Session Description**

We foreground this session against the current iteration of US-funded Zionist genocide in Gaza (which has also killed hundreds of athletes, destroyed numerous sports facilities, etc.) and the repression of student uprisings by police forces across Global North universities (whose existence is predicated on ongoing settler colonialism, land dispossession, exploitation of racialized and gendered labor - including athletic labor - while protected by the state apparatus of violence). With an increase in research that interrogates the relationship between sport and fascism in the US, we call upon the field to situate these developments within the imperialist system of global white supremacy. We welcome theoretical and empirical works grounded in a serious materialist analysis, embodying a sense of emergency in activating collective, unabating study and activity that denormalize the conditions of settler colonial occupation (from Turtle Island to Palestine) and imperialist fascism in which sport and higher education are both deeply embedded.

**Thematic Session Title**

Arts-Based Methods: Innovative Approaches to Sports Research

**Name of Organizer(s)**

Niya St. Amant

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**Session Description**

This session invites scholarship that utilizes arts-based methods in their research. This session seeks contributions that utilize any type of art form or medium, including but not limited to visual arts, performance, storytelling, and multimedia, to deepen our understanding of sports culture, identity, and experiences. In recognition of the questions posed for this year's conference, presenters are encouraged to engage with questions such as: How can we use art to foster inclusive spaces that welcome diverse voices and paradigms? How can arts-based methods work to respond to and anticipate political pressures and histories of marginalization? What unique values do arts-based methods bring to the study of sports? How can we use arts-based methods to enact change within sports communities and beyond? By recognizing the potential of arts-based research, this session hopes to challenge traditional paradigms of research to enrich sport sociology and help contribute to a more equitable world.

**Thematic Session Title**

Issues Related to NIL and the Future of College Athletics

**Name of Organizer(s)**

Robert Case

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**Session Description**

Name, image, and likeness or NIL has become a major part of the college athletic landscape over the past three years. 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. A major question involves whether the NCAA will survive the overall impact of NIL. 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 the social, economic and financial benefits, ethical, racial, gender, demographic, legal, governmental, legislative, organizational, athlete mental health, historical, future predictions, and other research angles is encouraged. At the present time, no consistent national standards exist to help regulate NIL activity at the state level. Selected sport experts argue that NIL will eventually lead to the reorganization and possible demise of college athletics as we know them.

### **Thematic Session Title**

Sport & Human Rights: Re-Directing Attention to North America/Global North

### **Name of Organizer(s)**

\*\*Yannick Kluch; Joseph Cooper

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### **Session Description**

Academics in settler colonial states in the Global North are often socialized to view human rights abuses as something “far away” (i.e., Global South), which delocalizes human rights abuses and re-directs “away from localized responsibility” (Snelgrove et al., 2014, p. 22). The goal of this session is to counteract such re-direction by providing space for critical examinations of human rights abuses by Global North actors, with a particular focus on North America. Potential areas of inquiry include human rights violations of global sport mega-events held in North America (e.g., 2026 FIFA Men’s World Cup, 2028 LA Olympic/Paralympic Games) or national sporting events (e.g., Super Bowl, NCAA Championships), human rights issues with corporate partners of sport organizations (e.g., Nike, Amazon), human rights issues associated with environmental hazards and/or with neoliberal capitalism, and human rights implications of sport policy/practices at various levels (e.g., youth sport, professional sport).

### **Thematic Session Title**

Sport and/as Activism: Interdisciplinary Perspectives

### **Name of Organizer(s)**

\*\*Yannick Kluch; Joseph Cooper

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### **Session Description**

Sociological scholarship on sport activism has covered topics such as motivations for activism, the impact of social norms in/on activism, the role of power, privilege, and resistance in activist movements, connections between sport activism and broader social movements, positionalities and intersecting identities of sport activists, and barriers to activism in the sporting arena. To expand our current knowledge on the topic, this session seeks to answer the question: How can interdisciplinary perspectives enrich the study of sport and/as activism? Potential areas of inquiry include new perspectives on sport activism research (e.g., historically neglected sport spaces, activist causes, strategies for activist organizing, longitudinal examinations of sport activism and its impacts, and/or relationships between sport activists and their non-activist supporters), innovative methodological approaches to studying/understanding sport activism, (inter)disciplinary critiques of sport activism research, and analyses of sport activism in un(der)examined geopolitical and sociocultural contexts.

**Thematic Session Title**

Centering Joyful Movement, Play, and Community Building in Sport

**Name of Organizer(s)**

Kasie Murphy

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**Session Description**

The benefits of play and joyful movement are often overlooked in sport sociology. There are countless personal benefits of participating in leisure, recreational, and participatory sport and physical activities. But there is also the potential for transformative social outcomes of play. Johann Huizinga sees play as something incredibly important to social formations and argues that “to play is to take on the world, take it apart, and frequently to build it anew” (1971). To Huizinga, play lets people create conditions based on their desires and insights outside of the everyday conditions of inequality that they endure. Therefore, play offers the potential for "players" to escape and reshape their social conditions to better meet their needs. Aligned with this idea, this session invites papers that broadly center the joyful movement, community building, and/or play elements of sport. Papers that focus on marginalized communities and/or emphasize sport as a form of social transformation are especially encouraged.

**Thematic Session Title**

Examining Cricket and Societal Dynamics in South Asia and Beyond

**Name of Organizer(s)**

\*\*Dr. M. Fahad Humayun; Dr. Simran Kaur Sethi; Dr. Umer Hussain

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**Session Description**

This session seeks a diverse range of papers that critically examine the complex relationships between cricket and societal dynamics in South Asia. We are particularly interested in contributions that use cricket as a framework to challenge and critique established narratives within the region and beyond. We encourage submissions that engage with historical, socio-economic, and cultural dimensions of cricket through interdisciplinary and intersectional approaches. Potential topics include, but are not limited to, the historical evolution of cricket in South Asia, exploring its colonial origins, post-colonial developments, gender issues in cricket, and other topics related to sociology of sport.

We encourage scholars to challenge and expand existing theoretical frameworks, promoting a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of cricket’s role in shaping social identities, national consciousness, and cultural practices. Through this session, we aim to enrich academic discourse and provide valuable insights into the complex interplay between cricket and South Asian society.

**Thematic Session Title**

Socio-Cultural, Economic, Mental Health, Ethical Issues Impacting Athletics

**Name of Organizer(s)**

Robert Case

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**Session Description**

Intercollegiate athletics is a multi-billion dollar industry that plays a major role in American society. Over the years, it has been plagued by a number of problems related to the exploitation of minority athletes, NIL issues, athletic arms race and budget concerns, DEI issues, academic integrity problems, Title IX and gender equity issues, player violence, drug scandals, recruiting violations, escalation of coaching salaries, illegal behavior by coaches, academic clustering, athlete graduation rates, sexual assault by athletes, realignment of conferences, spiraling expenditures on college athletics, influence of television and the media on college sports, 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 in the future.

**Thematic Session Title**

A Critical Response to Contemporary Sociology of Sport: Where Are We Now?

**Name of Organizer(s)**

\*\*Junbin Yang; Emilio Jared Weber

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**Session Description**

Recently, the Sociology of Sport Journal celebrated its 40th anniversary and spotlighted the top-10 cited articles of each decade from the 1980's through the 2010's. Inspired by these issues, this session aims to examine the status of the Sociology of Sport in our contemporary society. Rather than emphasizing a single or binary approach, such as quantitative vs. qualitative or theoretical vs. empirical, this session seeks to discover new possibilities within the field. What are the field's dominant/overlooked theoretical/empirical and quantitative/qualitative ideas? What are the most pressing social issues that the field should highlight? What are unseen topics that the field should address? We encourage submissions at all stages of development. By examining the individual and collective positionality of the Sociology of Sport in this context at this moment, this session aims to offer better "futures" that can envision the next "top 40 at 40".

**Thematic Session Title**

International College Athlete Experiences To and Thorough U.S. Universities

**Name of Organizer(s)**

Simran Kaur Sethi

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**Session Description**

The purpose of this session is to amplify research about international college athletes (ICAs) and their experiences across all higher education institutions (HEIs) in the United States (U.S.). This session welcomes topics related to ICA recruitment, admissions and enrollment, athletic experiences, cultural and social adjustment, health and wellness, Name, Image and Likeness (NIL), advocacy and activism, labor and exploitation, career preparation, job search/workforce experiences and more. In addition to amplification and exploration, providing best practices and strategies for athletic department staff, athletic administrators, higher education institutions, national governing bodies like the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), Intercollegiate Tennis Association (ITA), Department of Homeland Security (DHS) etc., and the U.S. workforce/employment market are encouraged. Additionally, raising critical questions arising from your research, leaving audience with food for thought and/or hosting space for discussion is appreciated.

**Thematic Session Title**

A burden or a blessing? Examining the “true” power of hashtag activism

**Name of Organizer(s)**

\*\*Augustus "Gus" Hallmon; Katja Sonkeng

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**Session Description**

Amid a recent study from The Collective at Wasserman (2024) that identified social media as the key driver for the growth of women’s sports media coverage to 15%, it is important to examine the “true” power of hashtag activism. Strongly led by high-profile athletes (e.g., LeBron James, Serena Williams), social justice discussions surrounding sexual violence, racial justice, gender equity, and LGBTQIA+ rights have become a commonplace across various social media platforms, widely shared through hashtags such as #MeToo, #SayHerName, and #wewillnotshutupanddribble. But how transformative and impactful are these dialogues on social media that allows people, sports organizations, and communities to engage in social justice issues openly and unfiltered? The purpose of this open session is therefore to invite scholars and practitioners to share their insights and research on the use of hashtags as a vehicle for positive social change in sports and the society as a whole.

**Thematic Session Title**

Politics and praxis of ensuring safety and welfare of displaced athletes

**Name of Organizer(s)**

\*\*Katja Sonkeng; Dr. Jepakorir Rose Chepyator-Thomson

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**Session Description**

At the upcoming Paris 2024 Olympics, the IOC will field its largest-ever Refugee Olympic Team yet. More specifically, 36 displaced athletes from 11 different countries, hosted by 15 National Olympic Committees (NOCs) and competing in 12 sports will represent more than 100 million displaced people across the world.

In today's volatile world, sport organizations and governments are more than ever required to ensure the safety and well-being of displaced athletes while staying involved in their athletic careers and pursuits. The purpose of this session is to discuss policy initiatives as well as strategic ways to provide for safety and welfare of the athletes and to help them continue to engage in sport. Along with this, this session intends to examine and highlight how displaced athletes cope with uncertainties associated with living in unpredictable, ever-changing environmental conditions, socio-political conflicts and cultural issues.

**Thematic Session Title**

Critical Perspectives in Sport Communication

**Name of Organizer(s)**

\*\*Natalie Bunch; Lauren Beasley; Beth Cianfrone

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**Session Description**

Communication platforms (e.g., social media, press conferences, newspaper articles, television commercials, etc.) provide athletes, coaches, and sport organization personnel the ability to speak about, and raise awareness of, a host of social justice issues (e.g., racism, LGBTQ+ inclusion, health initiatives, etc.). Despite the increased use of communications to address social change, there remains a lack of critical evaluation of such communication efforts within sport management and sport sociology research. As such, the effectiveness, and appropriateness, of many of these communication strategies is unknown. Accordingly, this session invites papers that use a critical lens to examine how sport entities (e.g., fans, coaches, athletes, and sport organizations) use, and engage with, communication strategies aimed to draw awareness or create social change. All social justice communication topics are welcome. Ultimately, the purpose of this session is to explore current communication practices and to provide suggestions to better address social justice and change through sport communications in the future.

**Thematic Session Title**

Critical Muslim Studies: New Insights into Sport and Physical Culture

**Name of Organizer(s)**

\*\*Adam Ali; Umer Hussain

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**Session Description**

This session actively seeks a diverse range of papers that critically analyze Muslim, Middle Eastern, and South Asian representations and perspectives on sport and physical culture. We are particularly interested in contributions that use sport as a framework to challenge and critique Orientalist, Eurocentric, and positivist perceptions of civilizational hierarchies. We encourage papers that engage with intersectional, postcolonial, and decolonial methodologies. Potential topics include, but are not limited to, the role of sport in the post-9/11 era; the pervasive presence of Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism in both the Global North and Global South; and the heightened surveillance and securitization of Muslim, Middle Eastern, and South Asian communities by governmental and societal



institutions. We strongly welcome submissions that inform and authenticate the experiences and knowledge of individuals from these communities through sport and physical culture.

**Thematic Session Title**

Sport Media, Distraction, and Political Awakening

**Name of Organizer(s)**

Brett Pardy

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**Session Description**

Watching sport broadcasts is one of the world's most popular media pastimes, peaking with well over a 100 million viewers in the United States alone for mega-events. Sports media has been written off by scholars like Noam Chomsky and Marc Perelman as propaganda and distraction from political engagement. This session invites scholarship which pushes back against the idea that sports media is a only distraction and considers the ways sport media has, is, and can be used as what Ranci re (2010) called a "dissensus" moment, where media disrupts the "common sense" view of the world and encourage the audience members to consider alternatives. This session encourages submissions covering the full range of media, from broadcast giants to emerging blogs and podcasts.

**Thematic Session Title**

(Re)Creating NASSS: Digital Justice, Sport, and Movement Cultures

**Name of Organizer(s)**

\*\*Mary G. McDonald; Sarah Barnes; Janelle Joseph; Tricia McGuire-Adams; Danielle Peers; Nassim Parvin

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**Session Description**

The Covid-19 pandemic gave rise to a rapid shift to on-line and digital forms of communication. Conferences like NASSS now offer hybrid options recognizing how digital environments offer unique modes of knowledge transfer while enabling broader accessibility. On-line conferences are matters of justice potentially enabling participation for those who are disabled, immunocompromised, under resourced, are located across the globe, and/or are concerned about the impact of travel on the environment.

This virtual session seeks to recreate NASSS via inviting scholars, artists, and practitioners currently creating asynchronous digital products that theorize the synergies related to the digital, justice, sport, and movement cultures through such methods and formats as (but not limited to): video, sound, digital storytelling, data visualizations, podcasting, multimedia formats, digital exhibitions and websites. Presenters will expand virtual networks, share digital artifacts synchronously, while also discussing conceptual and axiological groundings, key

components of production processes, potential audiences, and/or epistemological contributions.

**Thematic Session Title**

En Comunidad: Advancing the Commitment to Increasing Latinx Representation at NASSS

**Name of Organizer(s)**

Stacey Flores

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**Session Description**

What does (or might) scholarly community look like is one question posed as NASSS continues on the path of (Re)Creating the culture of the organization. Two years ago a panel discussion led to the creation of a space to highlight both Latinx scholars and scholars who center Latinidad and sports in their work as Latinxs continue to be rendered invisible in critical sports studies scholarship and also underrepresented within NASSS. For us, creating a space and being 'en comunidad' with scholars who support this mission and vision of opening the doors to visibility of Latinx scholars and Latinidad and sports scholarship is one step towards (Re)Creating NASSS together. We invite any graduate students, junior scholars, or seasoned faculty to join us in this movement and submit work that centers Latinx sporting experiences to build up Latinx representation at NASSS.

**POSTER SESSIONS PROPOSED BY NASSS MEMBERS**

A description of each session follows this list.

- Sport Anthropology Caucus IV: Student Research in Ethical Spaces

**Poster Session Title**

Sport Anthropology Caucus IV: Student Research in Ethical Spaces

**Name of Organizer(s)**

Sean Michael Seiler

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**Session Description**

Since 2022, the Sport Anthropology Caucus (SAC) has been held at the North American Society for Sport History (NASSH). In three SAC's, a community of anthropologists interested in sport as context to explore contemporary issues, such as urban studies, labor migration, and race, gender, and ethnicity, as well as traditional games such as he'e nalu in Hawaii, tbourida in Morocco, tánczás in Hungary, and 龍舟 in Canada. Interest is growing rapidly and extending beyond North America to include researchers in Europe, Asia and North Africa. With the fourth edition of SAC, this session attempts to answer the call of NASSS conference organizers regarding the following areas: (a) creating a vibrant scholarly community with different approaches, commitments, and assumptions to research, (b) accommodating different social and occupational positionalities, and (c) creating community of praxis that (d) changes the way sessions are conducted.

In order to do this, a poster session for graduate, undergraduate, and early career scholars is offered to showcase or refine their ethnographic and/or their anthropological projects. Projects can be anything from an idea that needs a space to work through, to a finished project ready to share with the NASSS community. The session is to have an art-based approach grounded in the principles of ethical spaces.

An ethical space is a term used to describe material and non-material spaces in which reciprocity and mutual negotiations can and do occur (Longboat, 2010) and a strategy to balance asymmetrical power dynamics (Nikolakis & Hotte, 2022): "there is no God's eye view to be claimed" (p. 202) by anyone (Ermine, 2007). In practice, this art-based poster session grounded in the principles of ethical spaces provides a meeting place for engagement (Ermine, 2007) for persons of all philosophical and cultural backgrounds through intra-action (Kleinman & Barad, 2012) between the materiality of bodies and posters and the immateriality ideas flowing through dialogue. It should be noted that ethical space is a praxis sourced from Indigenous pedagogies (Ermine, 2007; Longboat, 2007; Nikolakis & Hotte, 2022) and facilitating such an environment space aligns with NASSS approval of aligning with UNDRIP in November 2023.