

# FOR 2023

# CIES OFFERS TOP-LEVEL ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES ALL OVER THE WORLD



### FIFA Master

**International Master (MA) in Management, Law & Humanities of Sport**



 3 Universities

 3 Countries

 1000 Contact Hours

 Full-Time Programme

 600+ Alumni

 90% of graduates working in the sports industry

### FIFA/CIES

**International Programme in Sports Management**



 19 Universities

 19 Countries

 150 - 200 Contact Hours

 Part-Time Programme

 5500+ Alumni

 70% of graduates involved in football



**Master in Sports Law**

 1 University

 1 Country

 500 Contact Hours

 Full-Time Programme

 240 Alumni

 One of a kind in Switzerland



# Kirsty Burrows

HEAD OF THE SAFE SPORT UNIT • IOC

FIFA MASTER ALUMNA

The British Kirsty Burrows has a remarkable career trajectory that has taken her from the heart of sports physiotherapy to the forefront of championing safe and inclusive sporting environments. A graduate from the 15th edition of the FIFA Master in Management, Law and Humanities of Sport, Kirsty's journey is a testament to the profound impact of sports on both individual lives and society at large.

As a seasoned sports physiotherapist, she worked alongside elite athletes across diverse locations including Singapore, Italy, Qatar, and the UK. While she enjoyed her work as a physiotherapist, Kirsty decided she wanted to tackle wider societal issues in and through sport helping to magnify the potential that sport has as a force for good. That feeling propelled her to enter the FIFA Master, in mid-2014. She then secured a position in the sports department at the International Olympic Committee (IOC) immediately following her graduation in July 2015. "This role included supporting the work of the IOC on a topic which was a particular passion of mine, the prevention of harassment and abuse in sport", she recalls.

She then started her own consultancy, focusing on holistic approaches to protecting and promoting athlete well-being and strengthening safeguarding in, through and around sport.

"After five successful years, I re-joined the IOC in the Medical and Scientific Department as Head of the Safe Sport Unit, alongside my role as Director of the IOC Certificate: Safeguarding Officer in Sport, and whilst undertaking my PhD", she explains.

Join us as we delve into Kirsty Burrows' inspiring journey of elevating sports beyond physical excellence to a realm of social responsibility and inclusivity, and the role that the FIFA Master played in her career.

### What is your job like, as Head of the Safe Sport Unit at the IOC?

**Kirsty Burrows:** The Safe Sport Unit focuses on two main topics: firstly, safeguarding or the prevention of harassment and abuse in sport, and secondly the protection and promotion of athlete mental health and well-being. Our unit focuses on strengthening the measures in sport to ensure physically and psychologically safe athletic environments across all of the IOC's spheres of influence including at the Olympic Games and Youth Olympic Games, as leader of the Olympic Movement by working closely with all International Federations and National Olympic Committees to drive change from the international to the national level, and through collaboration with key partners to reflect how sport can help to address these endemic societal issues more broadly.

### What would you say was the biggest achievement of your career so far?

**KB:** I am immensely proud of the work that I have had the opportunity to do with the IOC including authoring the IOC Safeguarding Toolkit and co-authoring the IOC Mental Health in Elite Athletes Toolkit, but I would say the biggest collective achievement has been seeing these topics cemented as leading priorities for the Olympic Movement. This has helped galvanise action and collaboration. In March 2023, the IOC Executive Board announced a 10M USD fund per

Olympiad to establish independent structures and systems to strengthen the prevention of and response to harassment and abuse in sport.

I am also honoured to be a co-director of the IOC Certificate: Safeguarding Officer in Sport, a 7-month course led by leading experts in the field which seeks to ensure all athletes and organisations have access to trained safeguarding leads.

### Do you still remember why you did the FIFA Master?

**KB:** I was looking to change direction in my career, towards a field that was humanities-based but with a strong legal dimension and a requirement to understand more deeply the sports industry from a business and management perspective – only then can you comprehend the forces at play that drive and shape the sporting ecosystem.

### How important was the FIFA Master for your career?

**KB:** Incredibly important! In addition to providing me with the opportunity and tools to change direction in my career, I became part of an outstanding alumni network working across the sports ecosystem in all manner of diverse ways.

### What advice would you give to the current (or future) students of the FIFA Master?

**KB:** Enjoy every second, be curious and open minded with your colleagues and during field visits and ask questions!



## FIFA Master ranked Europe's No.1 course for a record 11<sup>th</sup> time by SportBusiness



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## STUDENT MEASURES

Quality of teaching: **10 points**

Support in finding a job in the industry: **7 points**

Quality of extra-curricular support: **5 points**

Opportunities to connect with the alumni network: **7 points**

Ability to network with industry executives: **7 points**

Value for money provided by the masters program: **7 points**

Value of the degree in furthering career: **5 points**

Usefulness of the skills and knowledge provided by the programme in current position: **5 points**

## EMPLOYMENT

Employment status at six months: **12 points**

Current employment status: **13 points**

## OTHERS

Course Leader choice: **5 points**

Current salary: **5 points**

Percentage of applicants to places: **3 points**

Percentage of female students: **3 points**

Percentage of female teaching staff: **1 point**

Percentage of international students: **3 points**

Percentage of international teaching staff: **1 point**

Work placement: **1 point**

## ADVISORY PANEL

As ever, we would like to express our gratitude to our advisory board, who are critical to the Postgraduate Rankings and the credibility at the centre of the process.

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# Welcome... to the 2023 SportBusiness Postgraduate course Rankings

The end of summer heralds new beginnings across sport and academia. As the NFL, NBA and NHL seasons spark into life, the fresh academic year brings new opportunities for students around the world. As ever, the SportBusiness Postgraduate Rankings are the only guide you need to the best sports business courses on offer in 2023-24.

It is a year that will obviously live long in the memory for the entirety of the world, and sports education was naturally affected as restrictions were imposed across the globe. Recent editions of the SportBusiness Postgraduate Rankings have extensively covered the measures course leaders took to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on students from an educational perspective. Therefore, in the interests of avoiding repetition, readers will not find in-depth discussion of this topic over the pages which follow.

There is some coverage of the experience of individual students of the unique circumstances in question within some of our Alumni Interviews, which again appear in the PGR as a window into the top three courses in both the US and in Europe.

Alongside this, a brief overview of each of these

courses is included. There is variance from last year's rankings to be found in one spot within the US top three and two of the top three positions in Europe.

Away from covering some of the top ranked courses, we have two feature articles by Adam Nelson, the former editor of the rankings. Adam returns to covering the sports management education space with an article built around advice for prospective students debating which programme(s) to apply for and another which takes a look at the question of why these rankings have traditionally been dominated by US-based courses across the twelve editions.

We also hear about some of the emerging trends in academic research from two esteemed names from the field, T.Bettina Cornwell and Michelle Harrolle.

As ever, the data tables that provide the framework for the rankings are also included below for readers perusal, allowing the opportunity for forensic data analysis of the specific measures that are most important to any individual who may be considering whether to take the path offered by one of the many courses which take part in the rankings.

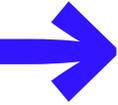
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**METHODOLOGY:** Our rankings are based on two surveys, completed by course leaders and alumni who graduated three years prior to publication – meaning the 2023 edition is based on responses from the classes of 2020. Each course is ultimately given a score out of 100 based on a weighted average of results from both the graduate and course leader.

# Top Global PGR Rankings

2023 Rank	University	Program	Region	Class size 2019/20	2020 graduates	Class size 2022/23	Re-sponse rate	Course duration	Average age	Acceptance rate	Female:Male student ratio (%)	International students (%)	Work placement	Me shi
1	UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS	University of Massachusetts Amherst, Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management MBA/MS Sport Management and MS Sport Management	North America	21	21	16	67%	12	25	25%	44:56	19%	YES	100
2	OHIO UNIVERSITY	Professional Master of Sports Administration	North America	29	29	29	76%	23	24	24%	45:55	17%	YES	100
3	UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA	Masters in Sport Administration	North America	8	8	11	75%	22	23	12%	55:45	0%	YES	100
4	CIES (INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR SPORT STUDIES)	International Master (MA) in Management, Law and Humanities of Sport – The 'FIFA Master'	Europe	32	32	27	69%	10	29	6%	22:78	74%	YES	100
5	OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY	MS in Kinesiology (Sport Management)	North America	23	11	32	39%	12	22	31%	56:44	9%	YES	60
6	GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY	Masters of Sport Management	North America	20	17	30	25%	18	25	43%	40:57	27%	YES	80
7	UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO	Master of Science in Sport Management	North America	109	98	92	29%	23	25	27%	36:63	30%	YES	100
8	UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA	Master of Science in Sport and Entertainment Management	North America	29	29	38	52%	15	24	42%	47:53	24%	YES	80
9	VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY	VCU Center for Sport Leadership	North America	32	31	38	94%	12	23	38%	42:76	18%	YES	80
10	FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY	MBA in Sport Management	North America	29	27	35	41%	23	24	13%	34:66	20%	YES	100
11	UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA	Vinik Sport & Entertainment Management Program	North America	28	28	30	71%	22	n/a	40%	50:53	20%	YES	100
12	GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY	Master of Science in Sport Administration	North America	25	30	24	76%	24	24	34%	50:50	17%	YES	40
13	UNIVERSITY OF VIGO	Master in Business Administration of Sport	Europe	20	19	20	45%	9	25	44%	40:60	30%	YES	40
14	UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL	MSc Sports Business and Management	Europe	70	65	145	24%	12	24	22%	19:81	88%	YES	60
15	UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE	Sport Management	North America	22	2	22	77%	20	23	17%	36:64	23%	YES	100
16	UNIVERSITY OF PARMA & UNIVERSITY OF SAN MARINO	masterSport - Master in Management dello Sport System	Europe	25	25	25	44%	12	25	37%	24:76	4%	YES	40
17	TEMPLE UNIVERSITY	Master of Science in Sport Business	North America	46	4	43	67%	21	24	40%	28:72	12%	NO	100
18	SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY	Master of Science in Sport Management (MSSM)	Europe	29	22	28	31%	12	24	27%	39:61	14%	YES	20
19	UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR	Master of Sport Management & Leadership	North America	11	12	9	64%	20	24	23%	33:67	0%	YES	60
20	UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN	MSc in Sport Management	Europe	24	24	26	38%	12	25	29%	38:62	31%	YES	20
21	UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA	Master in Human Kinetics (MHK) - Concentration in Sport Management	North America	16	16	19	63%	12	23	25%	37:63	21%	YES	40
22	UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA	DeVos MBA/Sport Business Management Program	North America	22	21	18	27%	18	24	46%	67:33	11%	YES	60
23	UCFB - GLOBAL INSTITUTE OF SPORT	MSc International Sport Management	Europe	9	9	9	56%	14	26	17%	11:89	33%	YES	60
24	LOUGHBOROUGH UNIVERSITY	MSc Sport Management	Europe	79	81	133	34%	12	23	20%	33:67	92%	YES	80
25	NEW YORK UNIVERSITY	Masters in Sports Business	North America	45	48	70	22%	12	25	27%	27:70	54%	YES	80
26	WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY	Master of Arts in Sport Management	North America	15	12	11	40%	21	23	50%	45:55	27%	YES	80
27	WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY	Master of Sciences in Sport Management	North America	133	67	75	13%	21	26	69%	48:52	11%	YES	100
28	UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAVEN	Sport Management	North America	20	12	20	10%	12	23	53%	45:55	20%	YES	60
29	BALL STATE UNIVERSITY	Master of Arts (MA)/Master of Science (MS) in Sport Administration	North America	15	9	15	67%	22	24	58%	33:67	7%	YES	20
30	JOHAN CRUYFF INSTITUTE	Master in Sport Management	Europe	28	28	66	50%	10	28	65%	20:80	39%	YES	80
31	UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL - FOOTBALL INDUSTRIES MBA	MBA Football Industries	Europe	28	23	24	14%	12	34	20%	21:79	79%	YES	20
32	UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS	MBA Sport Entertainment Management	North America	16	15	14	44%	17	24	52%	50:50	14%	YES	100
33	CA' FOSCARI UNIVERSITY OF VENICE	Master in Sport Business Strategies	Europe	38	38	29	74%	6	25	39%	24:76	0%	YES	100
34	ESBS EUROPEAN SPORT BUSINESS SCHOOL	Master in International Sports Management	Europe	90	86	111	7%	9	27	49%	12:88	73%	YES	100
35	DEAKIN UNIVERSITY	Master of Business (Sport Management)	APAC	82	82	61	21%	24	27	73%	30:70	52%	YES	80
36	VRUJE UNIVERSITEIT BRUSSEL	Postgraduate Course in Sports Management	Europe	54	52	56	15%	8	23	85%	18:82	2%	YES	100

Rank	University	Avg. salary (int\$)	Employment at 12 months	Current employment	Quality of faculty	Quality of curriculum	Job support	Extra-curricular initiatives	Alumni network	Industry network	Return on investment (ROI)	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	Professional mentorship/advocacy	Career advancement	Skills applicability	Skills frequency	Placement Alumni	Placement Professors	Covid	Preparation	Peer review	Total score
1	University of Toronto	70.252	90,00	95,71	95,71	97,14	92,86	95,71	98,57	95,71	98,57	98,57	95,71	88,10	86,90	91,67	37,50	50,00	96,92	97,14	100,00	90,00
2	University of British Columbia	76.842	92,73	85,45	91,82	93,64	88,18	98,18	99,09	99,09	92,73	88,18	94,55	82,58	84,85	90,15	32,95	46,59	94,29	96,36	90,00	87,59
3	University of Alberta	80.000	93,33	90,00	93,33	90,00	86,67	90,00	86,67	96,67	96,67	86,67	90,00	83,33	83,33	77,78	33,33	50,00	90,00	93,33	40,00	83,32
4	University of Saskatchewan	49.366	91,82	97,27	87,27	86,36	79,09	84,55	96,36	90,91	78,18	89,09	83,64	79,55	76,52	78,79	34,09	47,73	78,18	86,36	60,00	82,86
5	University of Manitoba	61.250	86,67	93,33	97,78	91,11	88,89	93,33	93,33	97,78	84,44	82,22	91,11	88,89	90,74	85,19	33,33	38,89	97,78	97,78	50,00	82,47
6	University of Regina	90.000	92,00	92,00	92,00	92,00	96,00	96,00	84,00	96,00	84,00	84,00	92,00	63,33	63,33	50,00	30,00	15,00	93,33	85,00	20,00	81,20
7	University of Waterloo	70.760	82,50	86,88	93,13	89,38	91,25	85,63	92,50	91,88	80,00	85,00	90,00	78,13	77,60	74,48	25,00	49,22	83,75	92,50	30,00	79,78
8	University of Ottawa	58.214	88,00	93,33	93,33	93,33	82,67	85,33	84,00	88,00	78,67	81,33	93,33	84,44	76,67	67,78	20,00	43,33	88,57	90,67	50,00	79,59
9	University of New Brunswick	60.555	86,00	87,33	94,00	88,67	84,67	87,33	95,33	94,00	88,00	89,33	90,67	89,44	83,89	86,67	27,50	49,17	91,03	94,00	30,00	79,21
10	University of Saskatchewan	73.500	90,00	88,33	90,00	90,00	88,33	83,33	78,33	81,67	85,00	88,33	91,67	83,33	90,28	75,00	16,67	43,75	98,33	93,33	10,00	78,93
11	University of Saskatchewan	71.521	75,00	75,00	92,00	89,00	80,00	88,00	87,00	94,00	84,00	90,00	87,00	79,17	80,83	73,33	22,50	42,50	90,00	92,00	60,00	78,55
12	University of Saskatchewan	59.000	85,26	88,42	92,63	86,32	91,58	90,53	85,26	93,68	87,37	91,58	91,58	80,70	79,82	75,44	22,37	43,42	97,89	94,74	-	78,54
13	University of Saskatchewan	56.517	66,67	66,67	95,56	95,56	93,33	91,11	95,56	93,33	100,00	91,11	97,78	90,74	85,19	70,37	44,44	50,00	97,78	97,78	-	77,36
14	University of Saskatchewan	42.888	94,12	92,94	96,47	95,29	81,18	84,71	78,82	92,94	80,00	90,59	90,59	86,27	88,24	75,49	23,53	44,12	85,88	90,59	20,00	77,29
15	University of Saskatchewan	66.875	87,06	89,41	89,41	85,88	81,18	87,06	85,88	87,06	81,18	81,18	84,71	77,45	80,39	66,67	27,94	36,76	82,67	87,06	-	76,30
16	University of Saskatchewan	41.968	90,91	90,91	90,91	92,73	92,73	78,18	87,27	78,18	85,45	89,09	89,09	93,94	84,85	90,91	31,82	59,09	80,00	85,45	20,00	76,28
17	University of Saskatchewan	59.050	83,23	87,10	85,16	82,58	80,00	80,00	77,42	84,52	72,90	81,29	86,45	76,34	76,34	71,51	25,00	45,97	83,23	87,74	60,00	75,90
18	University of Saskatchewan	82.500	86,67	75,56	91,11	91,11	80,00	88,89	82,22	97,78	91,11	82,22	95,56	68,52	70,37	75,93	16,67	33,33	82,50	93,33	-	75,57
19	University of Saskatchewan	70.768	85,71	74,29	85,71	82,86	88,57	91,43	88,57	97,14	77,14	77,14	97,14	76,19	76,19	71,43	21,43	42,86	93,33	94,29	10,00	74,93
20	University of Saskatchewan	75.406	88,89	88,89	86,67	84,44	71,11	71,11	66,67	77,78	75,56	80,00	80,00	88,89	81,48	77,78	19,44	41,67	80,00	86,67	10,00	74,32
21	University of Saskatchewan	52.980	82,00	76,00	92,00	90,00	80,00	86,00	70,00	82,00	72,00	90,00	88,00	85,00	73,33	73,33	22,50	45,00	78,00	86,00	10,00	72,64
22	University of Saskatchewan	57.500	93,33	90,00	73,33	66,67	70,00	80,00	76,67	80,00	70,00	96,67	76,67	80,56	61,11	66,67	20,83	54,17	76,67	86,67	30,00	72,55
23	University of Saskatchewan	51.232	88,00	92,00	84,00	76,00	68,00	72,00	68,00	88,00	68,00	76,00	92,00	76,67	86,67	86,67	15,00	45,00	72,00	84,00	-	72,53
24	University of Saskatchewan	28.079	78,52	80,00	85,19	82,22	67,41	85,19	77,78	72,59	74,81	80,74	83,70	80,25	80,25	66,05	25,93	48,15	68,89	78,52	60,00	71,88
25	University of Saskatchewan	76.877	86,00	88,00	88,00	84,00	70,00	72,00	66,00	70,00	70,00	78,00	72,00	75,00	81,67	81,67	37,50	32,50	72,00	86,00	30,00	71,87
26	University of Saskatchewan	45.131	73,33	90,00	83,33	83,33	60,00	73,33	76,67	73,33	73,33	80,00	83,33	72,22	80,56	88,89	29,17	37,50	90,00	86,67	-	71,55
27	University of Saskatchewan	61.000	85,88	90,59	80,00	75,29	67,06	78,82	80,00	84,71	76,47	70,59	80,00	72,55	69,61	68,63	19,12	32,35	83,53	90,59	-	71,55
28	University of Saskatchewan	65.000	50,00	100,00	90,00	80,00	90,00	80,00	70,00	70,00	70,00	60,00	90,00	75,00	50,00	66,67	37,50	50,00	60,00	80,00	10,00	69,63
29	University of Saskatchewan	46.111	92,00	94,00	86,00	80,00	74,00	68,00	54,00	64,00	72,00	74,00	88,00	83,33	80,00	81,67	22,50	35,00	91,11	94,00	10,00	69,57
30	University of Saskatchewan	46.845	78,57	84,29	81,43	77,14	70,00	68,57	74,29	78,57	64,29	74,29	80,00	65,48	78,57	65,48	19,64	44,64	84,29	80,00	20,00	68,57
31	University of Saskatchewan	49.473	65,00	90,00	85,00	75,00	50,00	80,00	100,00	85,00	75,00	75,00	75,00	58,33	54,17	62,50	31,25	31,25	70,00	80,00	30,00	67,14
32	University of Saskatchewan	75.000	68,57	60,00	77,14	74,29	62,86	65,71	68,57	91,43	74,29	65,71	68,57	80,95	80,95	69,05	32,14	53,57	80,00	82,86	-	66,30
33	University of Saskatchewan	38.276	70,00	80,71	80,00	76,43	80,00	74,29	72,86	77,14	66,43	72,86	75,00	79,76	72,02	72,62	38,39	57,14	76,19	85,71	-	65,65
34	University of Saskatchewan	31.583	70,00	93,33	86,67	76,67	53,33	60,00	60,00	73,33	60,00	66,67	63,33	72,22	72,22	47,22	16,67	58,33	73,33	73,33	-	61,57
35	University of Saskatchewan	54.495	78,82	85,88	69,41	67,06	49,41	51,76	51,76	45,88	45,88	48,24	55,29	61,76	69,61	50,00	20,59	35,29	62,35	71,76	60,00	59,66
36	University of Saskatchewan	45.883	75,00	72,50	75,00	77,50	57,50	70,00	70,00	75,00	60,00	65,00	65,00	56,25	68,75	50,00	21,88	37,50	75,00	80,00	-	59,12



# Decisions, decisions... Things to think about when choosing your course



**W**ith more and more postgraduate sports management courses starting each year, and the quality of those on our rankings always growing, it can be more difficult than ever for prospective students to decide which programme is right for them. Here, SportBusiness takes a look at some of the biggest factors you should be focusing on when shopping around for a programme.

## LOCATION

The 2020s so far have seen significant societal shifts – including, of course, the pandemic, as well as rising global inflation and increased costs of living – that have led many students to rethinking how they choose their courses. According to recent research from University College London, as many as one in three new students starting university in the UK in 2023 are set to live at home and study at a local university, rather than choosing the once-traditional route of moving farther afield and living in halls.

But it's not just costs that should impact your decision when selecting the location of your sports management course. With many programmes, particularly at masters level, including things like work placement elements or guest lecturers from nearby sports organisations, it's worth considering the market in the area, and also looking at each institution's ties to local sports bodies: are there multiple teams nearby offering internships to students and graduates? Do relevant local executives make appearances on the course to share their knowledge?

Finally, with the explosion of distance learning and MOOCs (massive open online courses), you might consider that you don't need to leave your desk to get a great sport management degree. Some of the biggest and best schools in the world are now offering

virtual programmes you can complete from wherever you are in the world, which may suit many students, particularly those looking to study alongside being in existing full-time employment or who have other family commitments.

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#### **AFFORDABILITY**

Naturally, a key question to ask before settling on a course is: how much is this going to cost me? The price for postgraduate courses has risen steadily over recent years and while it can vary considerably depending on numerous factors, any two-year postgraduate course in the US is going to run into the tens of thousands of dollars.

All universities will offer a limited number of scholarships, financial aid and bursaries to support students, so it's worth making sure that each of your shortlisted schools have a good selection of packages available for you to apply for. Other avenues of support may be available in different countries, such as grants from research bodies like UK Research and Innovation, or interest-free career development loans which you won't pay back until after your course has finished.

Consider also that the the course is not the only cost involved: a year at Columbia in New York City is going to be considerably more expensive than a year in Athens, Ohio, so think about your living costs and other expenses, as well.

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#### **EMPLOYMENT AND EARNING POTENTIAL**

One of the key metrics of the SportBusiness Rankings is employability, looking at factors like how soon after graduation students find employment, what level they're at three years

**"A strong alumni network can help open so many doors, not just to fresh graduates looking for a first break in the industry, but throughout an entire career in sports."**

after completing the course, and the salary they're earning. It's clearly an aspect worth keeping in mind as you shop around for programmes – and you may occasionally find yourself surprised by some of the outliers. The University of Liverpool, which offers highly specialised courses in particular sectors of the sports world, leads the way for employment in sport after 12 months on this year's rankings, showing the value of specific knowledge to employers and recruiters.

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#### **SPECIALISATION AND TEACHING STYLES**

Not all sports management masters courses are made equal, and not all of them highlight and foreground the same things. Some courses will be clear about their specialisation from the outset, while others may offer a more rounded education but simply have greater teaching and research strengths in particular areas. Look into the professors on each course as much as you can, and see which ones best align with your own interests.

The best programmes will offer a complete industry-wide view, and when choosing a postgraduate course, it's natural to not know what your ultimate destination may be. But if you do have a solid idea of which sector of the sport sector appeals to you most, it may pay to choose a course which has stronger teaching experience and industry connections in that area, rather than to aim for a higher-ranked, but more generalised, programme.

Many courses will also offer blended approach between in-classroom learning, theory-based modules, and hands-on industry experience, but the precise ratio of this will differ between institutions, and it's important to consider which approach best suits your learning style and will allow you to maximise the value you get out of the degree.

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#### **ALUMNI NETWORK AND MENTORSHIP**

What you learn on your course is crucial, of course, as are the kinds of opportunities your

particular degree will afford you once you've graduated. But the old cliché remains true: sometimes it's as much who you know as what you know. A strong alumni network can help open so many doors, not just to fresh graduates looking for a first break in the industry, but throughout an entire career in sports. Part of what keeps schools like UMass and Ohio University at the top of our rankings year after year is the strength and depth of their alumni networks, with both having now offered sports management courses for more than fifty years – that's over half a century's worth of graduates who have passed through their halls and are now working at all levels of the sport industry, in the US and internationally.

A long history is only one part of the equation, though – some universities are better than others at utilising these networks and ensuring former graduates continue to give back to their alma maters. Several schools in the USA now have multi-tiered mentorship programmes, which see alumni, staff and industry figures offer one-on-one mentorship to current students, while PhD candidates may offer support to postgrads, who in turn mentor undergraduates students – all contributing to creating a network that can continue to support an individual throughout their career in sport.

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#### **RANKING AND REPUTATION**

Finally, it wouldn't be much of a ranking if we didn't recommend you take a look at our own table, as well as those of other publications which are likely to assess at universities' more general strengths away from purely the sports management courses. It's worth remembering, however, that all of the courses we rank – and even many we don't! – offer great postgraduate sports management degrees, and the criteria that separate them in our overall rankings may not always be the key criteria for the specific requirements of each individual student. Use this ranking as a guide, an inspiration and a starting point, but don't let it become your ultimate decision maker.



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\*Annual SportBusiness global post-grad program rankings





COUNTRY  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

CATEGORY  
GLOBAL RANKING

Postgraduate Rankings 2023 – 13

NAME

# University of Massachusetts

CITY  
BOSTON

ATTENDANCE  
60,000+ STUDENTS



**T**he University of Massachusetts Amherst's MBA/MS Sport Management and MS Sport Management claims first place overall in the SportBusiness Postgraduate Rankings for the second consecutive year.

Having also placed first in 2019, it represents the third time in five years that the Boston-based course has achieved the feat.

The programme, which forms part of the Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management at UMass, has a typical cohort size of 22 to 30, with applicant rates normally reaching 125.

The number of full-time staff working on the course is 13, all under the leadership of graduate programme director Will Norton, who assumed the role ahead of

the 2021-22 academic year. The total faculty number will increase to 15 when two new-year full-time staff are added ahead of the 2024-25 academic year.

#### **2022-23 HIGHLIGHTS:**

- Dr Nicole Melton joins as the new chair of the Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management from September 1.
- Jeffrey Pollack has been named the programme's first-ever professor of practice. The former XFL commissioner will be particularly focused on developing student mentorship, career coaching and industry relations.
- 2023 saw the launch of the programme's annual 'international sports business

immersion trip'. This involved the entire cohort of each master's programme travelling to the UK for a week of business seminars, stadium/venue tours, live spectator sporting events, and alumni networking events. This year's trip included visits to Wembley Stadium, Formula 1, Lord's Cricket Ground and Wimbledon, among others.

- Sport management alumna Sandy Barbour has established an endowed fund with a \$500,000 gift that will provide financial support for the Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management's ongoing initiative to best prepare women for careers in the sport and entertainment industry.



# Lauren Yung



WORKPLACE

United States Olympic and Paralympic Association



## CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:

---

### VARIOUS ROLES

NIELSEN

JUL 2015 - AUGUST 2018

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### GRADUATE INTERN

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS  
AMHERST

AUG 2018 - MAY 2019

---

### MANAGER, COMMERCIAL PARTNERSHIPS & DEVELOPMENT

UNITED STATES OLYMPIC AND  
PARALYMPIC ASSOCIATION

2020 - PRESENT

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**SportBusiness: What drove your interest in pursuing a postgraduate qualification in sports and why was UMass the right choice?**

**Lauren Yung:** Before making the pivot into sport, which UMass was obviously a big part of, I was keen to hedge my bets in case a career in sport wasn't what I imagined it to be - that's where the dual degree programme at UMass came in. The fact it combined an MBA with a Master's felt like the type of comprehensive approach I was seeking.

In addition, I enjoyed that the sport management programme was anchored in the business school. When I was looking at the options for different programmes, not all of them existed within that business background and I wanted to come into the industry through that specific lens.

Some are more collegiate athletics focused, some are more marketing focused, some might be more events management focused, and the UMass programme felt like it offered a look into potentially the entirety of the sport business, because it was rooted in the MBA programme as well.

**SB: You undertook a graduate intern scheme during your time at UMass, how important was this?**

**LY:** The opportunity for experiential learning was another aspect that attracted me to the UMass programme. During my time with the programme, I had three or four different practical experiences which helped me get my bearings within the sports industry and ultimately find the right area for me.

There is the summer internship which UMass is great at helping identify opportunities for, then there is the chance to embark on an 'externship' or 'fellowship' across different parts of the UMass campus. Mine was with the athletic department, which was a hugely beneficial experience – working within a Division 1 programme and gaining an understanding of the different components of an athletic department as well

as potential paths for myself.

There was also an important opportunity in the spring semester of the second year, which is a consulting practicum the programme organises with different sport entities – agencies, teams, leagues, brands, etc... Mine was very much focused on the property side, which was the exact direction I was seeking to go in. It was primarily about identifying new business opportunities, which is very similar to the role I have now.

**SB: You graduated from the course in 2020. Was your experience at all impacted by the pandemic and the restrictions which came with it?**

**LY:** Like a lot of undergraduate courses, the graduate programme left for spring break and did not return because of the pandemic. It was a quick switch from in-person every day to embarking on this new virtual world. UMass did have an online course for its MBA programme which I think helped them pivot fairly well, but one of the key challenges was approaching the consulting project which is client-facing and typically in person.

In hindsight, it was a very useful shift. We adapted in real time with our client and the industry so it actually prepared us very well for today's working environment.

If anything, I think the biggest challenge was sports pausing at the time. Myself and others in the programme were going through application processes and all of a sudden the whole landscape of the industry

you're looking to join halts. Thankfully, things have come back very strong, but as a new graduate that was a very daunting experience at the time.

**SB: How did you land your role at United States Olympic and Paralympic Properties (USOPP)?**

**LY:** I had been in conversation with USOPP regarding a role prior to the pandemic. So I had already established a lot of connections there and had really enjoyed my experience getting to know them. When the pandemic hit and sport stopped, that conversation also hit pause, understandably so.

Given the onset of the pandemic, the outcome of a job or not was not necessarily the most important thing. While UMass advisors had always encouraged fostering and maintaining relationships, it rang particularly true during those times when we all were checking in on each other.

Following this advice meant that in August when the landscape was slightly clearer, I was able to pick up those conversations again regarding a totally different opportunity within USOPP. It certainly wasn't an expected or linear journey but I couldn't have asked for a better outcome. If you told me I was going to be working on the Olympics & Paralympics when I started out this journey, I wouldn't have believed you, so I feel very fortunate.

**SB: Can you expand on your work in regards to the Olympics & Paralympics?**

**LY:** My work touches both the LA28 Games and Team USA – USOPP is a joint commercial venture which is focused on advancing the movement as a whole. Some of my most recent work has been on LA28 and our goal is really on making it a Games like no other and one that drives the movement forward. Obviously, Los Angeles has a great history with the Olympics and we want to embrace that but also continue to enrich this tradition with new memories and legacies. So, that's really the remit that guides us on a daily basis.

**"If you told me I was going to be working on the Olympics & Paralympics when I started on this journey, I wouldn't have believed you, so I feel very fortunate."**



Eric Sudol, SVP Corp. Partnership Sales & Marketing, Dallas Cowboys

Dexia Smith, MBA Sport Entertainment Management ('22), Sales Associate, Corporate Partnership Sales, Dallas Cowboys

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**83%**

of all graduates received a promotion or started in a new job since they enrolled.

**66%**

of graduates are full time employed in the sport entertainment industry.

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COUNTRY  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

CATEGORY  
**GLOBAL RANKING**

Postgraduate Rankings 2023 – 17

NAME

# Ohio University

CITY  
ATHENS.

ATTENDANCE  
25.000+ STUDENTS



**T**he University of Ohio's Master of Sports Administration degree takes second place in both North America and globally in the Postgraduate Rankings for a second consecutive year. The programme also holds the enviable record of having placed in the global top two across all 12 editions of the rankings.

The course, which is offered as an MBA/MSA dual-award, is based out of Ohio University's College of Business in Athens, Ohio and has run since 1966. Its typical maximum cohort is 35, supported by 11 full-time staff working on the programme.

Heading up this group is the recently appointed department chair, Dr. Lamar Reams, Ph.D. Dr. Reams is responsible for all sports degree programmes in the college of business.

#### **2022-23 HIGHLIGHTS**

- 100-per-cent placement rate for the class of 2022.
- 32 out of 35 May 2023 graduates placed in positions within sport.
- Appointment of Dr. Reams, who is co-editor of the Journal for Amateur Sport and will also

serve as the new chair of the Sport Marketing Association, where he is already a member of the executive board.

# Chad Estis



WORKPLACE

Dallas Cowboys  
and Legends



## CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:

---

**MASTER'S DEGREE,  
SPORTS ADMINISTRATION**

OHIO UNIVERSITY

1994

---

**CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER,  
VICE PRESIDENT OF SALES**

CLEVELAND CAVALIERS

2001 – 2006

---

**EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT,  
BUSINESS OPERATIONS, VICE  
PRESIDENT OF SALES**

DALLAS COWBOYS

2007 – 2017

---

**EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT,  
PRESIDENT GLOBAL SALES**

LEGENDS

2010 – 2018

---

**VICE PRESIDENT OF SALES**

TAMPA BAY LIGHTNING

JUL 2015 – NOV 2021

---

**SportBusiness:** You were an undergraduate at Ohio University, what prompted the decision to continue your journey there with the Master of Sports Administration?

**Chad Estis:** I was a college athlete, playing basketball at Ohio and I didn't have a real strong idea of what I wanted to do – I thought I would go into business but I didn't know in what area specifically.

I learned about the programme as an undergraduate by speaking to someone who was studying it at that time. I quickly thought that this could combine my interest in sport with my interest in business. I really didn't know that this opportunity existed at the scale it did until this point. The real revelation for me was looking through the programme's alumni yearbook and seeing all the high-profile positions that people held across the industry.

I was advised to pursue an internship to boost my chances of being accepted onto the programme and so the summer between the junior and senior year of my undergraduate course I was an intern at the Cleveland Cavaliers.

**"It's good to have a passion for sport if you work in our industry, but it doesn't sustain itself. You also need to have a passion for the work that underpins the industry."**

**SB:** Is the transition from college level athlete to a career in the sports industry a common one in your experience?

**CE:** Many people we hire or that I've worked around have played collegiate sports or have some athletic background. It makes sense because people develop their passion through participation and want to stay around sport – for lots of people who work within our industry it simply begins with that.

What I always say is that it is good to have a passion for sport if you work in our industry, but it doesn't sustain itself. You also need to have a passion for the work which underpins the industry – sales, marketing and service. There's still an enjoyment and passion around sports, but the reality is you spend far more time behind your desk in an office than you do around the sporting element itself.

**SB:** How influential was the course on your career pathway?

**CE:** It was highly influential, particularly at the start of my career given the strength of the programme's reputation and the reach of its alumni network throughout the sports industry. More than any coursework that was involved in the programme, it was really about the success of the alumni and having access to that network, which could then be a major help with the start of your career. Having graduated from the programme really separated you from others trying to work in sport due to its credibility. I think that the alumni network and their interest in hiring Ohio University graduates is really a major asset of the programme.

There's three key people that all graduated from Ohio's sports administration postgraduate degree who hired me early in my career. One is Jim Taylor who hired me for the Cleveland Cavaliers and later actually ran the programme at Ohio. He helped me with my internship and hired me back to the Cavs two different times, so he was really impactful. John Ciszewski who now works in the athletic department at Oakland University, hired me to my first leadership position in sports at the Detroit

Pistons. The third is Michael Yormark, who is now president at Roc Nation Sports, but was previously chief revenue officer at the Tampa Bay Lightning and hired me as vice president of sales there. So, it's really hard for me not to say that Ohio University had a lot to do with some of the early opportunities that I received in my career.

**SB:** Tell us about your current position?

**CE:** As we are today, I have a dual role. I work for both the Legends agency and the Dallas Cowboys. The origin of the story comes from when I was working full-time at the Cowboys and the team's new stadium was being built. Legends was built as a concessions business to compete in the space and operate the new venues for the Cowboys and also the New York Yankees.

As we were wrapping up the sales project for the new Cowboys stadium, which I had been spearheading, I thought that we had built a competency around the sales process for what is now known as AT&T stadium, which would be useful to the industry. As stadium and arena costs skyrocketed and the revenue generated from premium inventory increased alongside it, I thought the industry was maybe ready for an outsourced solution.

As I was working within the Dallas Cowboys organisation, who owned half of Legends, I went to the owners of the Cowboys and proposed that we start new division of Legends which would be focused on outsourced sales. Shortly after, the San Francisco 49ers hired us and that kickstarted the outsourced sales division of Legends, which is still thriving today.

That was around 14 or 15 years ago. Now, I oversee all the revenue areas for the Dallas Cowboys and AT&T Stadium and I also continue to work with Legends, mainly on helping develop new business, utilising my relationships across the industry and helping spearhead some NFL projects, such as working with the Buffalo Bills on their stadium project.



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COUNTRY  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

CATEGORY  
GLOBAL RANKING

Postgraduate Rankings 2023 – 21

NAME

# University of North Carolina

CITY  
CHAPEL HILL

ATTENDANCE  
34,000+ STUDENTS



**T**he University of North Carolina's Masters in Sport Administration is a new arrival into the top three for 2023, both in the US and Globally. This marks a rise of five and six places respectively when compared with last year's rankings.

The two-year course, which is based out of the university's Chapel Hill campus, sees students assigned a full-time internship within the UNC Athletic Department during their second year. Alumni Zach Lassiter discusses his experience of the internship next.

Each year the course cohort is comprised of nine fully

funded students. The decision to limit this number to nine is a conscious one by the faculty, viewing this as the ideal group size to facilitate an effective experience for its students. It has, however, expanded this year with the launch of its dual MA/MBA degree, combining its Masters in Sports Administration with the university's Masters of Business Administration degree.

The programme director is Erienne Weight, who assumed the position in 2022 after many years where the course was under Barbara Osborne's leadership.

Having been formed in 1982,

the UNC celebrated the 40th anniversary of the programme in 2022.

#### 2022-23 HIGHLIGHTS

- Launch of the MA/MBA degree.
- Celebrations of the 40th anniversary of the original MA programme, including a 40th anniversary alumni reunion event in April this year.
- The institution's online hybrid course also claims second position overall for online courses in the SportBusiness Postgraduate Rankings.



# Zack Lassiter



WORKPLACE

Abilene Christian  
University

## CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:

### MA, SPORTS ADMINISTRATION

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

2001 - 2002

### ASSISTANT TICKETING MANAGER

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

JUL 2001 - JUL 2003

### ASSISTANT ATHLETIC DIRECTOR – TICKETING AND CORPORATE SALES

UNIVERSITY OF UTAH ATHLETICS

JUL 2005 - OCT 2010

### DEPUTY ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY

JUL 2015 – NOV 2021

### VP FOR ATHLETICS

ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

NOV 2021 - PRESENT

**SportBusiness:** Can you take us back to when you first decided to apply for the course and what your thinking was then?

**Zack Lassiter:** I grew up out West in California and had actually studied Politics and Economics at undergraduate level and was on a path towards studying Law. I was a sports fan but wasn't a college athlete or college coach, so I didn't really see it as my desired profession, but always appreciated sport.

During my undergraduate experience and professional experience that followed shortly after it, I just didn't find the same passion and love as I would later

find in sports. I had a particular interest in college sports and so searched for programmes across the country that could provide the foundation for a career in that space.

At that time, there was significantly fewer sports management programmes to choose from at the postgraduate level. What really stood out about the University of North Carolina was its emphasis on college sports administration, which obviously aligned with my interests.

It also combined classroom experience with practical application through the

internship opportunity in the second year of the programme which involved working in one of the most prestigious athletic departments in the country.

**SB:** Can you explain your experience of the internship further?

**ZL:** After the first year where we were taking classes and also teaching undergraduate classes, the second year involved us working on a thesis and also a full-time internship. There was a matching process where we would identify our desired programmes and the programmes would interview us.

My role was ultimately within the ticket office, which was an area I wouldn't have thought would be particularly suited to me and candidly wasn't my first choice, but I found a home there. There were several people there who I worked with that were great to work with and learn alongside. This included two current division one athletic directors in the US – Richard Hart and Matt Roberts. I was on the phone all day talking to people across the great state of North Carolina about North Carolina Athletics and it was a great practical experience that set me up for my professional future. I ended up getting into ticketing at Louisiana State University as a first job coming out of the programme. My boss at LSU was friends with my boss during the internship at

North Carolina and he made the initial introduction for me that lead me on the career path I've been on since.

So, I'm very grateful for that ticket office experience and the people there that looked out for me personally and gave me that first chance. The fact they took an interest in me and tried to help me along the way was invaluable for my future career pathway.

**SB:** On that career pathway, since graduating from the University of North Carolina, you've stayed in college sports. What do you enjoy about working in the space?

**ZL:** The US is obviously somewhat unique in terms of its system of marrying high-level athletics with high-level education, whereas in other countries you are generally going to be at some kind of sporting institution if you are an elite level athlete. The system we work in here is complex and growing more so by the minute. The reason being that a lot of folks enjoy college sports in a similar way to professional sports, as an entertainment industry where they can enjoy watching their favourite teams and following their results.

However, most of the people that work within the space view it as an education business. The passion and the entertainment side of it definitely allows us to create more opportunities business wise, but if you're just focused on that element and not the educational mission of getting these young people degrees and developing their passion outside of sport, so they can become impactful members of their communities, we are missing out on an opportunity.

It's a very misunderstood business at times and that's why I feel like a dedicated programme, whether it's at North Carolina or elsewhere is a really good background and understanding to the educational element of what we do. Otherwise, we might as well work in professional sports, which is of course a worthy career and something I'm a huge fan of and certainly not meaning anything negative

about, but I think we have to keep the distinction from college sports clear. That's why I believe a graduate degree and diving into the educational mission of what we do is a worthy reminder and foundational piece that allows you to understand that distinction.

**SB:** You are now vice president for athletics at Abilene Christian University. What type of work does this entail on a daily basis?

**ZL:** There's lots of different aspects. One of the most enjoyable is that I regularly get to hear and interact with the stories of the athletes and staff members that are part of the institution who have amazing life changing experiences. At the same time, you also get to deal with all of the challenging dynamics at play. In this role, I'm effectively a parent of 450 student athletes, so it's fair to assume that someone among that group is making a bad decision or facing a challenge every day. We obviously try to help them navigate those situations so that's a significant element of the work we do. There's also the personnel management of the staff we have here which again is about problem solving and service.

Every day I come into the office and have a set plan, which ultimately plays out about one in 10 days. The other nine it's about making sure everything and everyone is going in the right direction and adapting to the unique scenario of the day.

There's also the need to ensure we have the resources and revenue to carry out our work. That could involve advocating for our department on campus, or advocating to generous people within the local community, making sure that they understand our mission and why what we're doing matters.

Overall, I feel so blessed and lucky to have what I view as one of the best jobs. I constantly get to be around the next generation of leaders who are at a really critical time of their life and because of sport we've got an opportunity to get their attention and impact their lives, which is an incredible and very rewarding responsibility.

**"The US is obviously somewhat unique in terms of its system of marrying high-level athletics with high-level education."**



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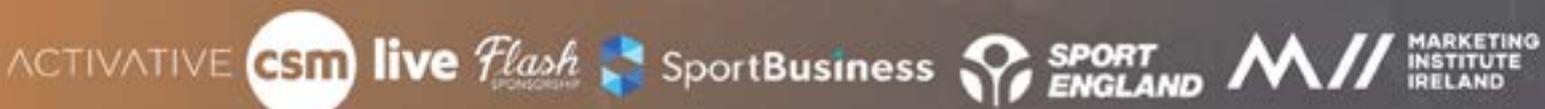
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COUNTRY  
SWITZERLAND

CATEGORY  
EUROPEAN RANKING

Postgraduate Rankings 2023 – 25

NAME

# Centre for Sport Studies

CITY  
NEUCHÂTEL

ATTENDANCE  
300+ STUDENTS



**T**he FIFA Master, operated by the International Centre for Sport Studies (CIES), has once again been named as the number one ranked course in Europe.

CIES is based in Switzerland, but the FIFA Master course itself sees a maximum cohort of 32 students study at De Montfort University in Leicester, SDA Bocconi School of Management in Milan and the University of Neuchâtel in Switzerland during their year on the programme.

The Pan-European course was also top in Europe in 2022 and has now held this title in 11 of the 12 editions of the Postgraduate Rankings. As with

last year, it is also ranked fourth overall around the world.

#### **2022-23 HIGHLIGHTS:**

→ 26 new graduates successfully completed the 23rd edition in July. With that, the FIFA Master Alumni Association (FMA) now counts 651 members, from 119 nationalities.

→ Staff changes saw two new female professors join the Scientific Committee

→ 2023 marks the 20th anniversary of the FIFA Master Alumni Association. A 'World Gathering' to mark this has

already begun in places such as Los Angeles, Tokyo, Paris and Seoul. It will continue in Bogota, Mexico City, Cairo, Kuala Lumpur, Lausanne and Sydney.

→ One of these events also took place in Qatar during the 2022 Fifa World Cup. More than 100 alumni attended and were given the opportunity to play football at the Ahmed bin Ali Stadium.



# Solomon Mudege



WORKPLACE

FIFA



## CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:

### FIFA MASTER – INTERNATIONAL MA IN MANGEMENT

LAW AND HUMANITIES OF SPORT  
2001 – 2006

### CONTRACT LECTURER, HUMAN MOVEMENT SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

NELSON MANDELA METROPOLITAN  
UNIVERSITY  
JAN 2006 – AUG 2009

### MARKETING CONSULTANT

EASTERN CAPE ACADEMY OF SPORT  
MAY 2007 – AUG 2009

### FIFA MASTER TRAINEE

FIFA  
SEP 2010 – AUG 2011

### VARIOUS ROLES, HEAD OF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

FIFA  
AUG 2011 – JUN 2022

working around the world. I wanted to understand the best standards in football around the world and ultimately use this if I should come back to work in South Africa and Zimbabwe.

**SB:** Can you outline some of the most influential aspects of your time on the course?

**SM:** What went over the academic element was the integration with the sports industry itself – the opportunity to go to Wimbledon, to Lord's, to talk to the Professional Footballers Association and visit Bolton Wanderers, who were in the Premier League at that time. Something that really stuck out was that they had integrated a hotel within their stadium. The concept of people coming for match day and then sleeping at the stadium at the club's own hotel was something new and quite exciting to see how things were done at that level. Then ultimately coming to the course's base in Switzerland, where a lot of the big international federations are based, that was really what I was looking for as a touchpoint with how sport really works at the highest level and how I could aspire to be involved in these organisations.

The close proximity of the course to the sports industry was also valuable in regards to the people we were able to interact with. I'll always remember my favourite lecture was one that didn't happen initially. One of the speakers was a lawyer who was going to come in and present to us on a Thursday but he had to delay because one of the players for the club he represented had got a red card in a recent match. He had to cancel to go and represent the player during the disciplinary procedure. I remember thinking that while it was a shame he wasn't there, the reason he wasn't was exactly

**SportBusiness:** Can you explain what drove your decision to enrol on the course?

**Solomon Mudege:** I was in South Africa at the time and had just completed the CIES international university network course in South Africa. I then applied to enrol on the FIFA Master - it was actually the second time I had applied - I became the first person to enrol on the course from the CIES global network of international courses and this has since become an established pathway.

In terms of what I was looking to achieve, I had studied and gained some experience in South Africa and knew how things were done there and in my home country of Zimbabwe but I really wanted to add a global outlook and understand the benchmark standards of

why it would be so interesting to speak to him when the talk ultimately did happen.

**SB:** Following completion of the course, you moved straight onto the FIFA Master Trainee programme. How did this come about?

**SM:** My cohort was the tenth edition of the course and Fifa had announced that as of the ninth edition, an opportunity would be granted to one student to embark on an internship at Fifa. It was a rotational internship, working across different divisions, so I thought it would be a great opportunity to understand how different areas of FIFA work and gain a great insight into how the organisation as a whole was run. No matter whether I ended up staying on at Fifa or moving elsewhere following the conclusion of the internship, this was going to be really beneficial to my career.

I was ultimately successful in my application for the internship and it was a hugely positive experience. I ended up working with other FIFA Master alumni in each division, so they were really supportive for me throughout. What I particularly enjoyed about it was the fact that it was recognised that I had a voice and a significant experience in my home country, which meant I could make a tangible contribution and feel like I was a valued member of the team. This was quite beneficial in terms of becoming more confident across the different roles I occupied.

Towards the end of the internship, I was made aware of a marketing alliances manager position that was available within Fifa, which felt like an excellent fit for me. I took on this role and have never left Fifa since.

What's particularly pleasing is to see how the internship programme has developed since it was launched with the FIFA Master cohort I was a part of. I believe there's now around five interns each year who join FIFA following completion of the course.

**"What's particularly pleasing is to see how the internship programme has developed since it was launched with the FIFA Master cohort I was a part of!"**

**SB:** Some of your recent work has included working as part of the Qatar 2022 World Cup team, as a marketing manager for one of the stadiums used during the tournament? What are your reflections on that experience?

**SM:** I had previously worked on the 2014 World Cup in Brazil and the 2015 Women's World Cup in Canada. The idea behind this type of secondment is to support our member associations with the hosting of these major events. I found Qatar a particularly fulfilling experience in terms of making new connections and also having the opportunity to invite some of our member associations in Africa to the event. I'm usually working with some of these people on projects in Africa and now you're able to have a scenario where they are at a World Cup and I'm in charge of marketing for a stadium. This provides the opportunity to demonstrate examples of how things are done at the top level of event hosting, which ultimately could be implemented for their national team matches or domestic league.

**SB:** To finish up, can you discuss your current role and highlight any particular projects you may be working on?

**SM:** I'm currently involved in the operational delivery of The FIFA Forward programme. This is focused on providing development funding to our member associations in Africa. It's varied work, because each member association has different priorities. For

example, in terms of countries that participated in the recent Women's World Cup, FIFA Forward provided funding to Morocco for the purpose of professionalising its women's football leagues and contributing to the association's own ongoing initiatives to develop women's football in the country.

We were also recently in South Africa as they announced their bid to host the 2027 Women's World Cup and their own desire to professionalise women's football in the country. We were there to support them in agreeing their objectives around the development of the women's game in the country and over time we'll be assisting with the achievement of those objectives.

With Zambia, prior to the qualification of its women's team for the world cup, we ran a project to provide funding to the Zambian national team to participate in its first ever Olympic Games in Tokyo. The team then proceeded to qualify for the 2023 World Cup and we help provide the necessary to facilitate their participation.

In addition, there is an acceptance that progression is needed in Africa with regards to higher quality infrastructure to ultimately make football safer and more appealing in terms of what is available within a stadium. So, FIFA Forward is working with the South Sudan Football Association to build its first ever international standard football stadium according to CAF standards. That's a long-term project that we're really excited about as a team.

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COUNTRY  
SPAIN

CATEGORY  
EUROPEAN RANKING

Postgraduate Rankings 2023 – 29

NAME

# The University of Vigo

CITY  
VIGO

ATTENDANCE  
20.000+ STUDENTS



**T**he University of Vigo's Master in Business Administration of Sport takes second place in Europe for 2023. The programme also rises from 21st globally in 2022 to 13th this year.

Average annual cohort size is typically close to 25, with a maximum of 30 as the course leaders prefer a personalised approach to teaching.

The course, which is led by coordinator Patricio Sánchez, is the only postgraduate

programme in its field across the Galicia region of Spain

Internships are described as a 'pivotal' aspect of the course, with the university collaborating with numerous organisations, federations and sports clubs around the provision of these internships.

The course leaders have placed an emphasis on expanding its international reach in recent years and have therefore been pleased

to see a marked increase in students from Ibero-America enrolling on the course.

# Thadeu Gasparetto



WORKPLACE  
Leeds Beckett  
University



## CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:

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### ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER

TUPI FOOTBALL CLUB  
JAN 2013 - MAY 2013

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### PREDOCTORAL FELLOW

UNIVERSITY OF VIGO  
FEB 2016 - FEB 2018

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### SENIOR LECTURER

LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY  
NOV 2022 - PRESENT

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## "I decided to take the opportunity and contribute to the industry in a different way."

### SportBusiness: What was the reasoning behind your decision to pursue a postgraduate degree in sports management?

**Thadeu Gasparetto:** I was working for a football club in my native Brazil after completing my undergraduate degree. It was a third division club and while it was a very good opportunity, it was a very local team. So, I couldn't see a huge opportunity to grow within the industry in Brazil at that point.

I realised I required a deeper education to help achieve what I wanted to in the industry – I needed a proper sport management or sport business background because I was focused on sport science in my previous education, so I had some understanding but not a thorough education in the space.

### SB: Why was the University of Vigo the right choice to pursue this opportunity?

**TG:** We do not have many sport management programmes available in Brazil, so I saw it as a good opportunity to go to Europe where this field of education is more established. I couldn't speak English at this time, so this ruled out courses in most European countries and meant I had to focus on Portugal and Spain, where the language was the same in the

case of the former and similar with the latter.

I then decided to rule out Portugal so I could use the experience to fully learn Spanish and master another language. At the time I had actually had an article published in an academic journal and in the same journal there was an article written by someone at the University of Vigo. I reached out to him and asked him whether they ran a postgraduate degree in sports management, and he was super supportive and informative. From there, I chose between Vigo and a few other Spain-based universities and ultimately chose Vigo for a variety of reasons, including how supportive the professors seemed.

### SB: What were some of the most memorable elements of the course for you?

**TG:** As I further developed my personal interest in research through the course, I had such strong support from my professors, particularly from my supervisor, who guided me as I took more interest in furthering my research, and this was part of what ultimately encouraged me to a PHD at Vigo following the Master's.

Also memorable was the internship that is part of the programme. This was also a

great learning experience – mine was with the Celta de Vigo Foundation. It was super powerful to get that practical experience at a top-tier football club in Spain and see how things really work there.

### SB: Your thinking obviously shifted from going back into the sports industry towards a career in academia. When and why did this happen?

**TG:** It was very natural. As I was developing my Master's dissertation, my interest in the research route developed and as I finished the course, some of the academics mentioned to me that there could be opportunities for me at the University of Vigo if I wanted to pursue a PhD there.

I decided to take the opportunity and contribute to the industry in a different way. Firstly, with my PHD which was focused on the development of Brazilian football and now working at a university I can help develop those looking to enter the industry.

### SB: Can you further outline the focus of your current work?

**TG:** I'm teaching a fairly broad range of subjects, but I'd say I'm mostly specialised in sport economics – economic analysis of broadcast demand, ticket demand, determinants of performance and revenue. However, recently I've turned this upside down and am looking at how sports can contribute to economics. So essentially using sports as a setting for testing economic theory or management principles, rather than the other way around.

### SB: Do you see yourself returning to the industry one day?

**TG:** It's a difficult question! I can't deny that many times I've thought of going back to the industry and the idea of working for a football club or governing body is attractive to me, but I would say my current plan is to reach a professorship level where I can fully contribute with reapplied research. Such a position would allow me to work alongside PhD or post-doctorate students in their research and ultimately contribute to the industry in this way.



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COUNTRY  
UNITED KINGDOM

CATEGORY  
EUROPEAN RANKING

Postgraduate Rankings 2023 – 33

NAME

# University of Liverpool

CITY  
LIVERPOOL

ATTENDANCE  
24,000+ STUDENTS



**T**he University of Liverpool's MSc Sports Business and Management is a new entry to the top three in Europe.

The programme, which is led by Dr. David Cockayne, had its first cohort of 35 students in the 2017-18 academic year. Student numbers have grown considerably since, reaching 145 for the 2022-23 cohort.

When the course was first designed, its leaders made use of the local sports industry

network, consulting with the chief executive officers of both Liverpool Football Club and Everton Football Club, as well as directors and partners at Deloitte and PwC Sports Advisory Practices, in order to develop a course that married with the key challenges facing the sports industry in the present day.

The local network is again leveraged for some of the extra-curricular initiatives associated with the course. For example,

students have undertaken research-led internships with the Liverpool FC Foundation and work-based internships with Tranmere Rovers Football Club.



# Raj Taprial



WORKPLACE

**Nielsen  
Sports**


## CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:

### FOUNDER

**SPLENDORA FOOTBALL LEAGUE**

JAN 2018 - OCT 2020

### SPORTS BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT STUDENT

**UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL**

SEP 2020 - OCT 2021

### ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

**NIELSEN**

JAN 2022 - PRESENT

### SportBusiness: What drove your interest in a career in the sports industry?

**Raj Taprial:** The story starts when I was a kid. I started watching football from the Champions League final in 2009. Barcelona had an amazing team and style of play, they defeated Manchester United in the match and I became a Barcelona supporter from there. Watching them closely over the following years made me fall in love with football and all the stories that go with it. When I was an undergraduate, I was always wanting to build a career in sport and never lost sight of that aim.

This was bolstered even further when during my undergraduate studies I founded my own football league. Football is obviously not a hugely popular sport in India, especially in terms of its recreational presence. There is university level football, but it is not highly competitive, and selection is very politicised,

so it's difficult to make teams even if you are keen to.

With local football options therefore limited, the idea of the league developed from a few friends hanging round wondering where to play football. It began with two or three small seasons involving 30 to 35 players competing on a five-a-side and seven-a-side basis.

After a successful first few seasons, I decided it could be something bigger. To push it forwards, I started taking steps like making videos of in-game action and posting them on social media. The popularity spread from here and people seemed to enjoy the style of highlights, while the players appreciated the opportunity to interact with the league in this way.

By the eighth season, the league totalled 250 different players across Mumbai. This included former professional

coaches and former football players. It all built from the marketing and hype. We always had a structure where we would have a trial phase where we'd look at players and then hold an auction for players, which added to the hype.

Ultimately, the league turned out to be a huge success and in terms of preparing me for my career, I was able to understand different aspects of management through it. For example, I managed all the hosting, which started off small and eventually became a big 11-a-side venue. We also brought in sponsors who were crucial in providing equipment. Financially, it was profitable most of the time. The first three or four seasons around break even as we wanted to focus on maintain interest and bringing value to participants.

I had to manage the majority of the most recent edition from London and then fly back to India for it. This was the tenth edition and because of the logistics of me now being based in London, it will probably be the end of the story.

**SB: What was decisive when you were considering which postgraduate degree to pursue?**

**RT:** The University of Liverpool really intrigued me from the outset. I also had other choices but how Liverpool helped manage my situation with the pandemic was appreciated and helped tip the balance.

The pandemic created an issue because I was supposed to have final undergraduate exams around the time when the pandemic hit, so the exams were postponed to October 2020. Obviously this was problematic in terms of my applications to UK universities, because they were due well before October.

I communicated the situation to the University of Liverpool to see if we could work it out. They were really supportive and eventually I was able to join the course virtually right on time even despite my final exam results not being confirmed.

**SB: Once you started the postgraduate course, how much did the pandemic impact your experience?**

**"How Liverpool helped manage my situation with the pandemic was appreciated and helped tip the balance!"**

**RT:** I started off the course virtually from India due to travel restrictions and then moved to the UK in December. At the time, we were expecting restrictions to be gradually lifted and to be able to experience some of the remainder of the course in person. Of course, restrictions remained in place and ultimately meant the course was delivered virtually in its entirety.

Even though it was not the situation anybody would have wanted, the way the course was delivered was exceptional. Everything was done in a timely manner and we were consistently helped out with individual video calls and other aspects like this, so it didn't feel like we were away from university as such.

Some of our projects and assignments were also quite interactive. I love creativity and they were flexible in allowing us to deliver assignments in different ways, such as using video content, which really allowed us to put our own stamp on assignments. It all culminated in a dissertation on fan engagement and digitalisation, two areas I'm incredibly keen on building upon in the industry

**SB: How did you secure your role at Nielsen?**

**RT:** The people network provided by the course was helpful. Hannah Goodridge of Nielsen Sports gave a guest lecture about Nielsen's work and the brands and rights-holders which they work with. I realised how big Nielsen is as a player in sport and I've always wanted to work with

the type of organisations the company works with.

I pursued the opportunity there and ultimately had a face-to-face interview with Hannah before being offered the role, so there was a link back to the course and its network.

**SB: What is involved in your role at the company?**

**RT:** Right now we're working across several of the world's biggest rights-holders, one example being Fifa. I'm currently focused on the media valuation side of things – how much value brands are getting out of sponsorships with organisations like Fifa. This allows me to help with the process of providing insights into how to get best value out of partnerships.

Day to day, I stay up to date with sports I'm working on and then analyse the data and identify areas brands and rights-holders could improve in terms of areas like social media and television exposure. Eventually, we present reports which help these organisations with their strategic decision-making. During the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, I was able to work across all brands and make sure they were earning expected value and achieving the right numbers with Fifa in terms of audiences, television values and other measures, making sure it was in line with their initial objectives.

Overall, it's been a fantastic experience so far and I'd just like to take a moment to formally thank my parents - my father Varinder Taprial and my mother Priya Taprial for all their support, which has been crucial in getting me to this point.

# Advantage America: Why US-based courses consistently come out on top



**F**or second year in a row, the top ten of the SportBusiness Postgraduate Rankings contains just a single course from outside of the United States of America – which happens to be the only non-US-based course to have ever topped the list in its 13-year history: the Fifa Master at CIES. This year has also seen a decline in the number of non-US programmes in the overall top 40, down to 13 – having made up almost half of the rankings in 2021, when 18 came from the rest of the world.

To understand why America continues to dominate our rankings, we took a look at some of the key distinctions between US programmes and the rest of the world, and some innovations that may

change things in the future.

#### **A MORE DEVELOPED MARKET**

One reason is simply that the US has been doing this far longer. The courses at Ohio University and UMass have finished in the top spot of our rankings in every year but one, and it's no coincidence both have been running for over 50 years. That's not just 50 years in which to hone and refine their teaching methods, but 50 years' worth of graduates seeded across the global sports industry, creating an unparalleled alumni network.

At the centre of the US's dominance, though, is the fact that the American sports market is so much more mature and developed, in a commercial sense, than anywhere in the rest of the world. Real Madrid,

the world's biggest and most valuable football team, is only the 13th most valuable sports team overall, behind 12 US-based teams from across the NFL, NBA and MLB. And beneath the major leagues, the American collegiate system provides another layer of the sports business which requires just as many people to run, staff and operate it at all levels.

Michelle Harrolle, Director of the Vinik Sport & Entertainment Management Programme at the University of South Florida, notes that this also creates far more opportunities for students to get hands-on experience of the sport industry while studying, and great employment opportunities after graduation. "In the Tampa Bay Area, we

have access to the National Football League, the National Hockey League, the United Soccer League, the Women's Tennis Association, Ironman... all within reach of our campus, so our network is super strong in this space," she says.

"And this density of professional sports organisations is true for lots of American big cities. Meanwhile, if you take a state like Iowa, there's not a lot of professional teams, but people live and breathe the college sports teams, so even in smaller markets there's a hugely developed sports ecosystem."

Peter Dickenson, Postgraduate Programme Director at Loughborough University, observes that in the North American market, sport is viewed and run much more strictly as a business, while in Europe it still often retains its more social, egalitarian roots. "There's a lot of stuff that happens in the States, where it's a cutthroat, business-oriented perspective, that perhaps we're beginning to catch up with but haven't necessarily got there yet," he says. "That said, for some things, we might not want to get there, or have gone in a

completely different direction. 'Sport for good', it its broadest sense, is still important."

#### EMPLOYABILITY FOCUS

A bigger sports sector and more developed economic model means not only more demand for educated graduates, but for the kinds of specialist knowledge of the industry that are being generated by sports management courses – fuelling another aspect that gives American courses an advantage in the rankings, which is their greater focus on employability.

It is worth noting here that the methodology we use for the SportBusiness Rankings have also tended to foreground those elements, particularly as we assess only postgraduate, not undergraduate courses. (The QS Rankings, for instance, which look at a much wider range of criteria, places Loughborough as the best in the world for sports-related subjects, while schools in Canada and Australia also appear in the top ten.) By far the biggest weighting in our survey – carrying more than double the points of any other individual criterion – is given to employment status at 12 months and three years after graduation, which plays far more into the US approach.

"If you look just at the state of Florida and the people who govern our university system, there's a huge focus on how universities are going to help students with jobs," says Harrolle. "Getting them onto job placements, preparing them for the job market. The way it's seen here is, you're paying for a service to be educated, so with that, let's make sure we're preparing you the best way possible for what's next, so we do a lot of 'above and beyond the classroom' work, helping you with interviews, teaching you about gratitude, teaching you about leadership, and integrating those within everything we do."

It is not the case, of course, that European courses don't focus on creating employable skillsets, but that they often prioritise a more traditional university model of theory and

research, says Dickenson. "From my experience of the US market, I've seen a lot of student assessments that focus on the 'real world', [with] answers are expected to be underpinned academically," he tells SportBusiness. In the UK system, the focus might be inverted. "We're pretty good at using academic underpinnings to explain the 'real world'." Neither approach is necessarily 'correct', he says, but "a bridge linking both camps is paramount to sport management."

A traditional advantage for American sports management courses has been an ability to be more reflexive and reactive, Dickenson adds. "The US is very agile in what it can do. If something's happening [in the sports world] and they see a movement in it, they are allowed to run with it. Because of the nature of the US market, if they see something changing, they can go and have a play." The tenure system in the US also creates a greater level job stability for senior professors, he points out, meaning academics feel freer to play around with elements of their teaching, leading to more opportunities to innovate.

#### INTERNATIONALISATION AND 'CROSS-POLLINATION'

So, are there any reasons that the US's dominance of the SportBusiness and other university rankings should change in the coming years? One reason may be the increasing internationalisation of the sports industry.

With the NBA, MLB and NFL now using annual international fixtures to expand their reach, and bodies like Fifa and World Rugby looking enviously at the US market for growth, the industry is starting to require different kinds of people, both with more general commercial skillsets, and with more specific local knowledge. The Global Institute for Sport, which operates postgraduate degree courses out of major sports venues in London, Manchester, Miami and Melbourne, is one provider that is prepared for this development.

**"The US is very flexible if something is happening [in the sports world]. If they see a movement in it, they are allowed to run with it."**

By having an international base and approach, GIS president Sharona Friedman feels that the course is able to cherry pick the best knowledge from each territory it works in, and then disseminate that knowledge around the world. “When looking at Australia [where GIS has its newest campus], for instance, they’re really big on sustainability,” she says. “They have the best fan engagement in the world, it’s very successful and very different from the model in the US, where they’re much better on things like sponsorship and marketing. So every market has something different they bring to the table, which we want to build into our courses.

“And I would argue that different places have inherently different cultural values, so a part of what we’re trying to do is actually level the playing fields around the world by taking areas of strengths and weaknesses and disseminating them accordingly. It’s about that cross-pollination.”

But internationalisation is not just an advantage for institutions like GIS. Dickenson and Harrolle also both attest to an increased number of international students from the likes of India or China coming to the UK and the US respectively and then taking the knowledge they acquire back to their home markets and developing the sports industry there, where there is now greater demand for those specific skillsets, rather than choosing to stay within the Western ecosystems.

Friedman concludes by noting that the advantages the US has long enjoyed will be eroded as the sector matures around the world, and suggests that “levelling of the playing field” will come to the education sector, too. “Sports subjects have always been really popular in the US, because sport has always been big, big money in the US. That’s now happening all around the world in markets that previously didn’t have commercially developed sports sectors. If you look at the sheer number of people outside the US verses inside of the US – it can catch up and even eclipse it at some point.”



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**Danny Morrison** | professor of practice and past president of the Carolina Panthers

**Susan O'Malley** | senior instructor and first female president of a professional sport franchise

**Stephen Shapiro** | professor and former editor of *Sport Marketing Quarterly*

**Nick Watanabe** | associate professor and international graduate program director

**Bill Sutton** | professor of practice, industry consultant and former NBA executive

**Khalid Ballouli** | associate professor and past president of the Sport Marketing Association

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**South Carolina**

AUTHOR

**Michelle Harrolle**

WORKPLACE

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA**  
DIRECTOR, VINIK SPORT & ENTERTAINMENT



# The Future of Sport Business Education: AI and Humans?



**D**uring this year's orientation for our graduate program, I shared a logo of Chat GPT on the screen, and about half of the students didn't recognize it. After pondering a second or two, I asked the incoming students - fresh out of undergraduate programs "How many of you were told by your professors to NOT use Chat GPT or any AI program?" Any guesses how many raised their hands - 20%? 40%? 60%? 80%?

Well, if you guessed 80%, you would be correct. I was stunned, but not overly surprised. I said, "Well that won't fly here. We will be innovative, forward thinking, and equip you to be the best sport business leader you can be! You need to leverage technology, especially AI, and you need to see how this amazing tool will make you better professionals."

As soon as our faculty had learned about Chat GPT in Fall 2022, I dove headfirst into understanding this AI tool, learning about it, and seeing how it could help our students personally and professionally, as well as our industry partners. This is what we should be doing as Sport Business Educators. Learning the next generation of technology tools and teaching our students how they can use them to improve the sport industry in ethical ways.

Even after the briefest of research and exploration, our faculty are looking for ways that AI could be used to improve the productivity our students, ourselves, and our program partners. We have used AI in the classroom: Sport Marketing, Social and Ethical Issues, Communications, Sales and Fundraising, just to start with. Within the sport business industry, here are a few examples of where AI could be used:

→ **Fan engagement and customer service:** To personalize the fan experience by recommending content, products, and services that are relevant to each individual fan.

→ **Marketing and sponsorship:** To analyze data to identify potential marketing and

sponsorship opportunities, and thus reaching the right audience with the right message and to maximize the partners' return on investment.

→ **Injury prevention:** To analyze large amounts of data, including player movement (via computer vision) and health data, to identify potential risks of injury, therefore developing preventive measures, such as customized training programs or changes to playing and coaching styles.

→ **Scouting and recruitment:** To identify potential talent by analyzing game footage and other data. Instead of using a scout's intuition, we could help teams find players who are a good fit for their needs and who are likely to be successful.

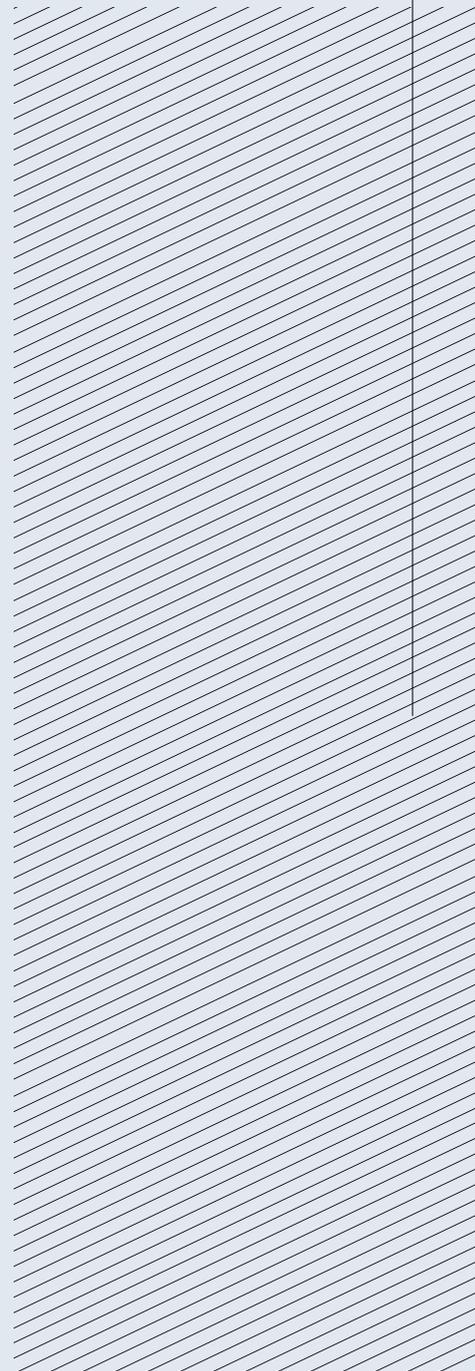
→ **People operations:** To automate administrative tasks, create job descriptions, and assist with workforce planning by analyzing current workforce skills, industry trends, and organizational growth plans.

Do you know what made me the most disheartened when I saw all of the hands raised of our incoming students? It was that those hands represented fear; fear from our educators who will be teaching the next generation of sport leaders. I don't know if it is the fear of being replaced, fear of losing control, or fear of the unknown. What I do know is that we should learn about AI, experiment with AI, and be open to feedback from our students, especially as we are moving into the next evolution of education. As we guide the next leaders, we should be facilitating their education and learning along the way, and not holding them back. If we hold them back, others learning the developing technologies will be leading the race.

The bottom line is that AI is a powerful technology that has the potential to be used for good or for evil. It is up to us, the educators in sport business, to ensure that AI is used for good. We can do this

by educating ourselves about AI, by developing ethical guidelines for the use of AI, teaching our students the best approaches for using AI, and by holding those who develop and use AI accountable for their actions.

Now consider, a few sentences of this article were written by AI, can you tell which ones? I doubt it!



AUTHOR

**T. Bettina Cornwell**

WORKPLACE

**UNIVERSITY OF OREGON**  
LUNDQUIST COLLEGE OF BUSINESS  
PHILIP H. KNIGHT CHAIR & HEAD,  
DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING



# What We Build in Sport Sponsorship is Shared Brand Equity



Anyone in the sports industry would be familiar with the idea of brand equity – made popular by David Aaker decades ago. This idea is that brand loyalty, awareness, associations, and perceptions of quality determine brand value. Associations to the brand were seen as assets or liabilities- things to be added or subtracted.

Fast forward to today's communication landscape, rich with brand collaborations, and new thinking is needed. Co-branding with an allied brand, partnering with an influencer, placing your brand in a movie, hiring a celebrity for promotions, or sponsoring a sport property all bring brands together often for many years. These collaborations build shared brand equity. In shared brand equity means the meaning and understanding of the brands are intertwined and this shared understanding influences brand audiences (Cornwell, et al., *Journal of Advertising*).

We have known for a long time that sponsoring in sport builds long-lasting shared brand equity. When a sponsoring relationship ends, it is not forgotten.

We showed for sport events that when a new sponsor takes over, the old sponsor is remembered after years, even decades (McAlister et al., *Journal of Advertising*).

*At the time of the event 35% correctly recall the new sponsor and 17% recall the old.*

*Six months later 20% correctly recall the new sponsor and 42% recall the old.*

Researchers in Europe (Edeling et al., *European Journal of Marketing*) showed similar results in their study of 33 German soccer sponsorship relationships. They found that the duration of an original sponsorship influences correct recall decades later.

While we have known about the long-lasting nature of sponsorship associations for some time, we have not

considered the strategic importance as shared brand equity. We need to think in terms of (1) brand control and (2) brand performance.

**Shared brand equity can reduce the control that either partner has in strategic brand decisions.** *Think of the celebrity relationship between Ye (formerly known as Kanye West) and Adidas. Putting aside product contracts for the moment, the association between the two brands when soured did not simply subtract from the value of the sport brand Adidas but forced a brand crisis.*

**Shared brand equity can impact the performance that either partner realizes from strategic brand decisions.** *Research shows that sponsor brands in sport are remembered years after they have been replaced by another sponsor brand. This persistent partnership recall can be advantageous to the old sponsor but problematic for the new sponsor. Strategies must adjust for shared brand equity.*

When will the challenges of shared brand equity be the greatest? For a new brand taking up a sport property relationship, the situation will be more challenging:

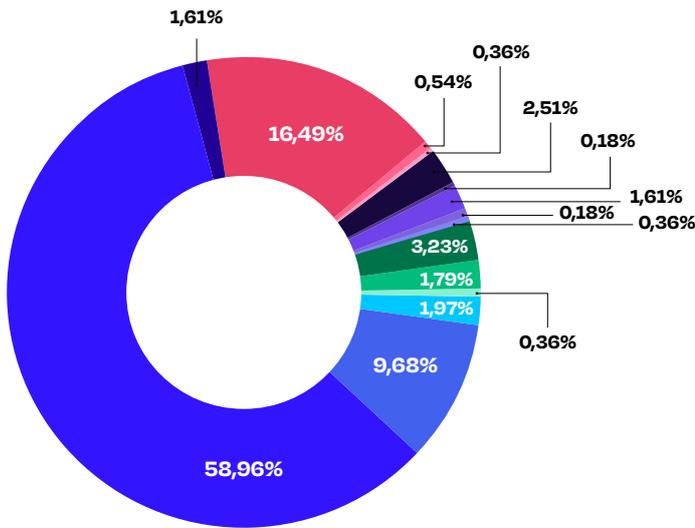
- ① when the new sponsor is a direct competitor to the exiting sponsor since this adds confusion,
- ② when the previous brand sponsor has held the partnership for a long time, and
- ③ when the quality and frequency of the previous brand's activation has been outstanding.

The concept of shared brand equity also suggests that when taking up a relationship as a sport or sponsor, it is critical to imagine what will be unique and defining, so as not to be lost in the myriad of brand relationships afloat in the minds of sport audiences.

The article titled "Shared Brand Equity" has been published in the *Journal of Advertising* with open access and can be [downloaded here](#).

# Top of the Class

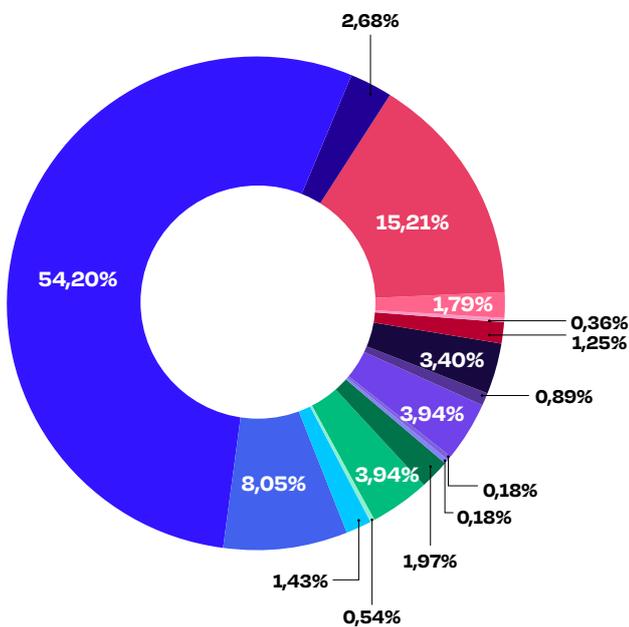
## Which of the following best describes your current employment status?



**LEGEND**

- Enrolled on a full-time non-sports academic program
- Enrolled on a full-time sports-related doctoral/PhD program
- Full-time employment in a non-sports industry company but your work is connected to sport (e.g., the marketing department of a major sponsor, working in a legal firm but specializing in sport)
- Full-time employment in the sports industry
- Full-time or Part-time employment in a non-profit organization
- Full-time or Self-employed/freelancing outside the sports industry
- Internship/Work shadowing in the sports industry
- Internship/Work shadowing outside the sports industry
- Internship/Work shadowing within the sports industry that did not lead to a full-time position in the same company
- Other (please specify)
- Part-time employment in a non-sports industry company but your work is connected to sport (e.g., the marketing department of a major sponsor, working in a legal firm but specializing in sport)
- Part-time employment in the sports industry
- Response
- Self-employment/freelancing in a non-sports industry company but your work is connected to sport (e.g., the marketing department of a major sponsor, working in a legal firm but specializing in sport)
- Self-employment/freelancing within the sports industry
- Unemployed

## Which of the following best describes your employment status at 12 months after graduation?



- Enrolled on a full-time non-sports academic program
- Enrolled on a full-time sports-related doctoral/PhD program
- Full-time employment in a non-sports industry company but your work is connected to sport (e.g., the marketing department of a major sponsor, working in a legal firm but specializing in sport)
- Full-time employment in the sports industry
- Full-time or Part-time employment in a non-profit organization
- Full-time or Self-employed/freelancing outside the sports industry
- Internship/Work shadowing in the sports industry
- Internship/Work shadowing outside the sports industry
- Internship/Work shadowing within the sports industry that did not lead to a full-time position in the same company
- Other (please specify)
- Part-time employment in a non-sports industry company but your work is connected to sport (e.g., the marketing department of a major sponsor, working in a legal firm but specializing in sport)
- Part-time employment in the sports industry
- Response
- Self-employment/freelancing in a non-sports industry company but your work is connected to sport (e.g., the marketing department of a major sponsor, working in a legal firm but specializing in sport)
- Self-employment/freelancing within the sports industry
- Unemployed

## Average Salary

	UNIVERSITY	PROGRAM	AVG. SALARY (INT\$)
1	UCFB - GLOBAL INSTITUTE OF SPORT - Online	MSc International Sport Management	138,683
2	Ohio University - Hybrid	Professional Master of Sports Administration	107,000
3	New York University	Masters of Global Sport - Online	104,173
4	Indiana State University	Sport Management M.S.	92,479
5	George Washington University	Masters of Sport Management	90,000
6	Southern Methodist University	Master of Science in Sport Management (MSSM)	82,500
7	University of North Carolina	Masters in Sport Administration	80,000
8	New York University	Masters in Sports Business	76,877
9	Ohio University	Professional Master of Sports Administration	76,842
10	University College Dublin	MSc in Sport Management	75,406

## Career Advancement

	UNIVERSITY	PROGRAM	CAREER ADVANCEMENT
1	University of Parma & University of San Marino	MasterSport - Master in Management dello Sport System	93.94
2	University of Vigo	Master in Business Administration of Sport	90.74
3	Virginia Commonwealth University	VCU Center for Sport Leadership	89.44
4	Ohio State University	MS in Kinesiology (Sport Management)	88.89
5	University College Dublin	MSc in Sport Management	88.89
6	University of Massachusetts	University of Massachusetts Amherst, Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management MBA/MS Sport Management and MS Sport Management	88.10
7	University of Liverpool	MSc Sports Business & Management	86.27
8	University of Ottawa	Master in Human Kinetics (MHK) - Concentration in Sport Management	85.00
9	University of South Carolina	Master of Science in Sport and Entertainment Management	84.44
10	University of North Carolina	Masters in Sport Administration	83.33

## Peer Review

	UNIVERSITY	PROGRAM	PEER REVIEW
1	University of Massachusetts	University of Massachusetts Amherst, Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management MBA/MS Sport Management and MS Sport Management	100,00
2	Ohio University	Professional Master of Sports Administration	90,00
3	CIES (INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR SPORT STUDIES)	International Master (MA) in Management, Law and Humanities of Sport – The 'FIFA Master'	60,00
4	University of South Florida	Vinik Sport & Entertainment Management Program	60,00
5	Temple University	Master of Science in Sport Business	60,00
6	Loughborough University	MSc Sport Management	60,00
7	Deakin University	Master of Business (Sport Management)	60,00
8	Ohio State University	MS in Kinesiology (Sport Management)	50,00
9	University of South Carolina	Master of Science in Sport and Entertainment Management	50,00
10	University of North Carolina	Masters in Sport Administration	40,00

## Top Online PGR Rankings

2023 Rank	University	Program	Region	Class size 2019/20	2020 graduates	Class size 2022/23	Re-sponse rate	Course duration	Average age	Acceptance rate	Female-Male student ratio (%)	International students (%)	Work placement	Membership
1	NEW YORK UNIVERSITY	Masters of Global Sport - Online	North America	6	6	8	83%	12	31	29%	38:63	25%	YES	80
2	OHIO UNIVERSITY - HYBRID	Professional Master of Sports Administration	North America	22	22	13	27%	21	n/a	59%	23:69	0%	YES	0
3	JOHAN CRUYFF INSTITUTE - ONLINE	Master in Sport Management Online	Europe	46	36	51	33%	13	31	94%	27:73	75%	YES	80
4	UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI	Master of Science in Sport Administration	North America	118	35	89	12%	12	29	61%	27:73	0%	NO	60
5	INDIANA STATE UNIVERSITY	Sport Management M.S.	North America	36	14	24	6%	24	25	83%	25:75	0%	NO	40
6	UNISPORT MANAGEMENT SCHOOL	MBA Sports Management	Europe	45	45	45	22%	13	34	80%	33:67	40%	YES	20
7	UCFB - GLOBAL INSTITUTE OF SPORT - ONLINE	MSc International Sport Management	Europe	20	14	17	20%	14	30	49%	24:76	29%	YES	60

# Graduates Choice

University	Program	Total	Quality of faculty	Quality of curriculum	Job support	Extra-curricular initiatives	Alumni network	Industry network	Return on investment (ROI)	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	Professional mentorship/advocacy
1	UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS	University of Massachusetts Amherst, Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management MBA/MS Sport Management and MS Sport Management	96,51	95,71	97,14	92,86	95,71	98,57	95,71	98,57	95,71
2	UNIVERSITY OF VIGO	Master in Business Administration of Sport	94,81	95,56	95,56	93,33	91,11	95,56	93,33	100,00	97,78
3	OHIO UNIVERSITY	Professional Master of Sports Administration	93,94	91,82	93,64	88,18	98,18	99,09	99,09	92,73	94,55
4	OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY	MS in Kinesiology (Sport Management)	91,11	97,78	91,11	88,89	93,33	93,33	97,78	84,44	91,11
5	UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA	Masters in Sport Administration	90,74	93,33	90,00	86,67	90,00	86,67	96,67	86,67	90,00
6	GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY	Masters of Sport Management	90,67	92,00	92,00	96,00	96,00	84,00	96,00	84,00	92,00
7	VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY	VCU Center for Sport Leadership	90,22	94,00	88,67	84,67	87,33	95,33	94,00	88,00	90,67
8	GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY	Master of Science In Sport Administration	90,06	92,63	86,32	91,58	90,53	85,26	93,68	87,37	91,58
9	UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI	Master of Science in Sport Administration	89,84	94,3	91,4	91,4	88,6	84,3	90,0	90,0	91,4
10	NEW YORK UNIVERSITY	Masters of Global Sport - Online	89,33	88,0	88,0	88,0	88,0	88,0	92,0	88,0	96,0

Avg. salary (int\$)	Employment at 12 months	Current employment	Quality of faculty	Quality of curriculum	Job support	Extra-curricular initiatives	Alumni network	Industry network	Return on investment (ROI)	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	Professional mentorship/advocacy	Career advancement	Skills applicability	Skills frequency	Placement Alumni	Placement Professors	Covid	Preparation	Peer review	Total score
104,173	100,0	100,0	88,0	88,0	88,0	88,0	88,0	92,0	88,0	88,0	96,0	86,7	90,0	90,0	30,0	45,0	100,0	96,0	30,0	85,84
107,000	100,0	93,3	86,7	80,0	83,3	80,0	90,0	83,3	90,0	73,3	90,0	77,8	86,1	88,9	33,3	41,7	100,0	96,7	-	77,60
67,931	92,0	90,7	90,7	92,0	88,0	81,3	84,0	84,0	88,0	85,3	97,3	80,0	82,2	66,7	21,7	41,7	97,1	93,3	-	75,41
56,162	82,9	80,0	94,3	91,4	91,4	88,6	84,3	90,0	90,0	87,1	91,4	75,0	81,0	71,4	25,0	41,1	95,4	94,3	-	73,04
92,479	80,0	80,0	90,0	80,0	80,0	80,0	70,0	70,0	70,0	70,0	60,0	41,7	66,7	75,0	25,0	25,0	100,0	100,0	10,0	65,45
56,850	78,0	82,0	76,0	74,0	62,0	70,0	74,0	68,0	70,0	76,0	80,0	76,7	83,3	53,3	20,0	32,5	86,7	98,0	-	64,13
138,683	80,0	90,0	60,0	55,0	55,0	55,0	40,0	40,0	35,0	50,0	65,0	75,0	75,0	29,2	81,3	43,8	70,0	65,0	-	58,10



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