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**POSTGRADUATE  
RANKINGS 2022**



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# PGR

## POSTGRADUATE RANKINGS 2022

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**Editor:**  
Matthew Williams

**Research:**  
Mark Nervegna

**Project Manager:**  
Rodrigo Duarte

**Designer:**  
Jacklin Kuneva

**Published by:**  
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SBG Companies Ltd

T: +44 (0) 20 7265 4100  
F: +44 (0) 20 7265 4220

**Registered address:**  
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# Welcome... To the 2022 SportBusiness Postgraduate Course Rankings



As another year speeds by, the time to publish the latest edition of the SportBusiness Postgraduate Rankings has once again come around. Now entering its 11<sup>th</sup> edition, the rankings remain as competitive as ever with familiar courses jostling for the top positions, as well as some newer contenders making their mark on the rankings. While aspects of how the rankings are conducted continue to evolve, the purpose remains the same – to provide students and course leaders alike with the most dependable and reliable ranking system for postgraduate sports management programmes around the world.

The 2021 edition of the Postgraduate Rankings described the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic as the dominant theme of the academic year. While the pandemic is by no means over or forgotten, it is pleasing to be able to remark that its impact is a less prominent consideration this year. Indeed, course leaders have begun to talk more about the return to normality, with a greater number of in-person classes and large-scale events being held. Moreover, there is a sense that rather than

grappling with the impact of the circumstances, universities are now able to look upon the period reflectively and translate learnings from the challenges into improving future practices.

Following on from the precedent of previous editions, the rankings are complemented by a suite of content in the pages that follow. In both North America and Europe, each of the top three courses are covered by a snapshot overview, as well as an Alumni Interview and Academic Insight article, showcasing the work and expertise of those who have graduated the programmes and those who teach on them.

There is also a poignant note to this year's edition, with a tribute article dedicated to Florida Atlantic University stalwart Jim Riordan, who sadly passed away earlier this year.

Readers will also find the first edition of Professor Dino Ruta's series of interviews with athletes on their academic endeavours. This type of article will form part of a regular content series featured on the SportBusiness University platform in the coming months.

Another regular content stream on the SportBusiness University

platform is our Academic Insight series and this year we have decided to celebrate the most viewed article that has been published within this feature over the past 12 months. The article in question comes from Loughborough University's Dr Alex Thurston, who wrote about how adhering to internationally accepted procurement integrity frameworks and standards helps sport practitioners mitigate integrity risks and, consequently, potential corruption risks inherently linked to international sport event procurement.

As in previous years, feature articles have also been written especially for the rankings for those who enjoy a longer read. This year, we focus on the topics of networking and esports education.

### Methodology

Our rankings are based on two surveys, completed by course leaders and alumni who graduated three years prior to publication – meaning the 2022 edition is based on responses from the classes of 2019. Each course is ultimately given a score out of 100 based on a weighted average of results from both the graduate and course leader surveys. ○

### PGR Scoring System

Number of points shown here is the maximum possible score.

#### STUDENT MEASURES

Quality of faculty: **5 points**

Extra-Curricular Initiatives: **5 points**

Alumni Network: **5 points**

Quality of Curriculum: **5 points**

Industry Network: **5 points**

Return on Investment: **5 points**

Professional mentorship/advocacy: **5 points**

Career Advancement: **3 points**

Skills Applicability: **3 points**

Skills Frequency: **3 points**

#### EMPLOYMENT

Employment status at 12 months: **11 points**

Current employment status: **12 points**

Job Support: **5 points**

#### OTHERS

Mentorship: **1 point**

Work placement: **1 point**

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: **5 points**

Peer Review: **5 points**

Current salary: **5 points**

Acceptance rate: **3 points**

Female:Male student ratio: **3 points**

Female:Male faculty ratio: **1 point**

International:National student ratio: **3 points**

International:National faculty ratio: **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.

#### Sue Bridgewater

Professor of marketing, director of executive education, director of Centre for Sports Business, University of Liverpool.

#### Michelle Harrolle

Director of the Vinik Sport & Entertainment Management Programme, University of South Florida, Tampa president Women In Sports and Events.

#### Dan Rascher

Professor and director of academic programmes, sport management, University of San Francisco.

#### Daniel G Kelly II

Academic director of graduate programmes and clinical assistant professor, Preston Robert Tisch Institute for Global Sport, New York University.

#### Dino Ruta

Lecturer; associate professor of human resources and sport management, SDA Bocconi School of Management, Bocconi University.

#### T.Bettina Cornwell

Professor of marketing, head of the department of marketing at the Lundquist College of Business and Philip H. Knight chair, University of Oregon.

#### Peter Dickenson

Programme director, sport management (postgraduate), Loughborough University.



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# Top 40 Global PGR Rankings

Rank	University	Program	Region	Class size 2018/19	2019 graduates	Class size 2021/22	Re-sponse rate	Course duration (months)	Average age (years)	Accept-ance rate	Female: Male student ratio (%)	International:National student ratio (%)	Female: Male faculty ratio (%)	International:National faculty ratio (%)	Work place-ment	Mentor-ship	Avg. salary (int\$)	Employ-ment at 12 months	Current employ-ment	Quality of faculty	Quality of curricu-lum	Job support	Extracur-ricular initia-tives	Alumni network	Industry network	Return on invest-ment (ROI)	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	Profes-sional mentor-ship/ad-vocacy	Career advance-ment	Skills applica-bility	Skills fre-quency	Peer review	Total score
1	University of Massachusetts Amherst, Isenberg School of Management	Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management MBA/MS Sport Management	North America	21	21	22	95%	12-21	25	17%	55:45	23:77	50:50	0:100	YES	YES	72,898	93.68	90.53	98.95	94.74	92.63	93.68	98.95	97.89	88.42	93.68	97.89	90.35	90.35	80.70	90.00	89.35
2	Ohio University	Dual MBA/MSA Program	North America	29	29	35	97%	22	23	27%	46:54	11:89	45:55	18:82	YES	YES	58,191	96.43	98.57	92.14	90.00	91.43	99.29	99.29	98.57	92.14	80.00	95.71	88.10	76.79	89.88	100.00	88.51
3	University of South Florida	Vinik Sport & Entertainment Management MBA/MS	North America	24	24	27	71%	22	24	31%	44:56	19:81	50:50	25:75	YES	YES	66,882	97.65	80.00	92.94	92.94	92.94	98.82	92.94	98.82	88.24	95.29	95.29	83.33	81.37	80.39	70.00	86.11
4	The International Centre for Sport Studies (CIES)	International Master (MA) in Management, Law and Humanities of Sport – The 'FIFA Master'	Europe	28	28	32	93%	10	29	17%	47:53	63:37	30:70	40:60	YES	YES	94,181	87.69	90.00	86.92	80.00	73.85	83.08	93.85	93.85	82.31	87.69	81.54	80.13	69.87	73.08	80.00	84.79
5	University of South Carolina	Master of Sport and Entertainment Management	North America	22	22	49	77%	15	25	45%	43:57	55:45	21:79	17:83	YES	YES	49,206	95.29	90.59	98.82	89.41	91.76	83.53	88.24	95.29	82.35	83.53	94.12	72.55	81.37	81.37	50.00	82.76
6	George Washington University	MS/MBA in Sport Management	North America	20	4	35	100%	18-22	25	44%	40:60	23:77	60:40	0:100	YES	YES	57,500	80.00	90.00	95.00	95.00	90.00	95.00	90.00	95.00	95.00	90.00	95.00	91.67	100.00	100.00	20.00	82.35
7	Columbia University	Master of Science in Sports Management	North America	77	22	84	58%	12-16	26	28%	40:60	32:68	30:70	3:97	YES	YES	135,132	90.22	91.56	89.78	82.22	71.11	74.09	81.33	88.44	72.00	74.67	78.22	80.74	74.44	82.96	40.00	80.15
8	University of Central Florida	DeVos Sport Business Management Program	North America	30	30	20	50%	17	25	36%	65:35	10:90	27:73	13:87	YES	YES	67,925	98.67	90.67	86.67	78.67	78.67	84.00	82.67	92.00	82.67	98.67	84.00	87.78	73.33	74.44	30.00	79.20
9	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Masters of Sport Administration	North America	10	9	12	100%	22	24	19%	67:33	0:100	43:57	0:100	YES	YES	50,733	82.22	93.33	95.56	91.11	82.22	88.89	80.00	97.78	95.56	84.44	77.78	77.78	94.44	96.30	30.00	78.97
10	The Ohio State University	MS in Kinesiology (Sport Management)	North America	26	17	40	82%	12-21	23	33%	40:60	5:95	50:50	0:100	YES	YES	56,308	92.86	82.86	97.14	88.57	85.71	94.29	88.57	88.57	82.86	85.71	90.00	72.62	82.14	80.95	20.00	78.80
11	Florida Atlantic University	MBA in Sport Management	North America	120	45	37	53%	23	24	13%	49:51	11:89	46:54	22:78	YES	YES	73,982	87.50	81.67	94.17	89.17	85.83	85.00	88.33	90.00	78.33	83.33	86.67	76.39	77.78	84.03	-	78.61
12	University of Parma & University of San Marino	International Masters in Strategic Management of Sports Organisations, Events and Facilities	Europe	25	25	25	48%	12	26	43%	24:76	4:96	17:83	10:90	YES	YES	42,111	91.67	88.33	93.33	93.33	90.00	95.00	95.00	98.33	93.33	90.00	90.00	93.06	77.78	90.28	20.00	77.93
13	University of Oregon	Masters in Business Administration	North America	20	20	28	65%	21	27	24%	32:68	39:61	20:80	30:70	YES	YES	82,690	89.23	86.15	72.31	72.31	73.85	80.00	90.77	93.85	73.85	63.08	75.38	79.49	70.51	76.92	60.00	77.73
14	VCU	Center for Sport Leadership	North America	41	41	42	44%	12-16	23	31%	52:48	14:86	33:67	33:67	YES	YES	56,117	83.33	82.22	87.78	90.00	90.00	84.44	88.89	91.11	83.33	83.33	83.33	84.26	76.85	70.37	20.00	77.59
15	University of Windsor	Master of Human Kinetics in Sport Management	North America	9	11	9	64%	16-24	23	25%	33:67	22:78	33:67	0:100	YES	YES	53,670	82.86	91.43	97.14	91.43	82.86	91.43	85.71	97.14	91.43	65.71	74.29	73.81	73.81	76.19	10.00	76.66
16	University of San Francisco	Master of Science in Sport Management	North America	109	102	97	45%	23	26	40%	32:68	16:84	29:71	13:87	YES	YES	74,565	80.00	88.26	89.57	87.39	87.11	78.70	87.83	89.78	81.74	78.70	83.91	81.52	79.35	77.17	10.00	76.27
17	ESBS European Sport Business School - Formación Valencia CF	Master in International Sports Management	Europe	44	42	99	57%	9	27	24%	20:80	83:17	18:82	26:74	YES	YES	55,183	83.33	95.83	86.67	86.67	79.17	86.67	80.83	85.83	85.83	85.83	84.17	83.33	87.50	84.03	-	75.90
18	Georgia State University	Master of Science in Sport Administration	North America	40	28	38	54%	24	24	25%	66:34	8:92	33:67	33:67	YES	YES	64,667	84.00	90.67	88.00	89.33	81.33	80.00	78.67	89.33	78.67	86.67	84.00	68.89	73.33	71.11	20.00	75.82
19	University of Bayreuth	MBA Sportmanagement	Europe	18	16	30	19%	24	27	33%	30:70	7:93	19:81	9:91	YES	NO	83,447	93.33	100.00	93.33	86.67	80.00	66.67	100.00	86.67	93.33	66.67	73.33	83.33	83.33	100.00	-	75.60
20	New York University	MS in Sports Business	North America	40	53	72	28%	12-16	26	37%	28:72	61:39	29:71	0:100	YES	YES	69,417	77.33	81.33	89.33	82.67	78.67	81.33	84.00	89.33	74.67	80.00	82.67	80.00	73.33	68.89	20.00	74.57
21	University of Vigo (Spain)	Master in Business Administration of Sport	Europe	20	19	25	79%	9	26	78%	20:80	24:76	50:50	5:95	YES	YES	38,843	90.67	86.67	81.33	90.67	85.33	80.00	74.67	84.00	89.33	89.33	85.33	90.00	86.67	76.67	10.00	73.47
22	Temple University	Master of Science in Sport Business	North America	54	37	46	49%	21	24	39%	52:48	20:80	26:74	11:89	YES	YES	57,161	86.67	88.89	83.33	80.00	70.00	75.56	74.44	78.89	66.67	68.89	72.22	72.22	81.48	70.37	30.00	72.92
23	Ca' Foscari University - Venice	Master in Sport Business Strategies - Master SBS	Europe	36	36	34	8%	12	24	61%	15:85	0:100	59:41	8:92	YES	YES	56,592	80.00	100.00	86.67	80.00	80.00	86.67	86.67	93.33	80.00	86.67	86.67	72.22	61.11	83.33	10.00	72.63
24	University College Dublin	MSc in Sport Management	Europe	27	24	27	29%	12-24	30	30%	26:74	7:93	20:80	40:60	YES	YES	77,859	85.71	82.86	88.57	80.00	80.00	77.14	71.43	80.00	77.14	80.00	82.86	76.19	80.95	64.29	-	72.37
25	University of Tennessee	Sport Management	North America	21	24	29	92%	18-24	23	21%	45:55	14:86	30:70	30:70	YES	YES	54,139	83.64	80.91	87.27	80.00	70.00	80.91	78.18	75.24	71.82	75.45	77.27	71.21	71.97	75.00	-	72.26
26	AMOS Sport Business School	Master in Sport Management	Europe	115	74	142	81%	24	21	82%	40:60	33:67	42:58	25:75	YES	YES	46,870	85.67	85.33	76.67	79.66	75.67	75.67	73.33	80.67	73.33	70.33	78.67	76.11	73.89	75.28	10.00	72.12
27	Real Madrid Graduate School	MBA in Sports Management	Europe	40	38	40	45%	10	31	37%	33:67	87:13	24:76	35:65	YES	YES	79,516	80.00	83.53	81.18	80.00	67.06	71.76	68.24	77.65	64.71	70.59	67.06	74.51	71.57	58.82	70.00	71.88
28	Unisport Management School	Online - MBA Sport Management	Europe	40	40	40	23%	13	29	77%	25:75	30:70	20:80	0:100	YES	NO	48,755	88.89	93.33	86.67	82.22	68.89	85.00	82.22	66.67	82.22	82.22	80.00	74.07	75.93	87.04	-	71.39
29	Seattle University	MBA in Sport and Entertainment Management	North America	20	20	29	60%	24	24	21%	31:69	24:76	50:50	0:100	YES	YES	64,221	83.33	76.67	86.67	86.67	76.67	70.00	71.67	70.00	71.67	73.33	76.67	72.22	84.72	81.94	-	71.20
30	Johan Cruyff Institute - Online	Online - Master in Sport Management	Europe	28	28	34	50%	13	31	92%	29:71	68:32	18:82	51:49	YES	YES	85,657	80.00	88.57	83.08	81.43	74.29	71.43	75.71	61.43	74.29	80.00	81.43	76.19	75.00	64.29	-	71.05
31	The University of Liverpool Management School - football	Football Industries MBA	Europe	22	24	16	17%	12	29	17%	13:87	100:0	25:75	33:67	YES	YES	210,271	90.00	90.00	85.00	85.00	50.00	75.00	75.00	90.00	60.00	80.00	60.00	62.50	79.17	50.00	-	69.95
32	The University of Liverpool Management School	MSc Sports Business and Management	Europe	50	50	72	36%	12	24	14%	18:82	82:18	33:67	33:67	YES	YES	49,497	88.89	81.11	84.44	82.22	56.67	74.44	67.78	74.44	70.00	78.89	74.44	77.78	63.89	64.81	30.00	69.87
33	Loughborough University (School of Sport, Exercise, and Health Sciences)	Sport Management	Europe	78	76	80	38%	12-24	24	12%	18:82	85:15	30:70	33:67	YES	YES	50,632	87.59	89.66	82.07	73.79	60.00	78.62	68.28	62.76	63.45	71.72	72.41	68.97	75.86	60.34	30.00	69.70
34	Global Institute of Sport	MSc International Sports Management	Europe	10	10	12	20%	12	24	27%	17:83	33:67	42:58	33:67	YES	NO	73,421	100.00	100.00	70.00	60.00	60.00	80.00	60.00	80.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	66.67	66.67	50.00	-	69.00
35	Vrije Universiteit Brussel / University of Brussels	Postgraduate Course in Sports Management	Europe	56	56	62	25%	8	23	79%	13:87	3:97	67:33	33:67	YES	YES	50,166	92.86	88.57	78.57	78.57	77.14	81.43	82.86	81.43	68.57	68.57	78.57	67.86	63.10	61.90	-	68.41
36	AISTS - International Academy of Sport Sciences and Technology	Master of Advanced Studies in Sport Administration and Technology	Europe	35	34	24	47%	15	32	27%	38:62	96:4	20:80	70:23	YES	YES	77,547	77.50	83.75	78.75	75.00	70.00	78.75	70.00	72.50	66.25	73.75	67.50	72.92	67.71	56.25	30.00	68.11
37	Rutgers University	The Global Sports Business MS program	North America	26	26	24	73%	15	25	13%	42:58	33:67	33:67	8:92	YES	YES	81,540	82.11	85.26	69.47	57.89	57.89	62.11	70.53	81.05	56.84	66.32	54.74	66.67	74.56	49.07	-	67.81
38	Johan Cruyff Institute	Master in Sport Management – On campus	Europe	32	31	34	35%	10	30	43%	26:74	44:56	18:82	51:49	YES	YES	46,157	81.82	81.82	80.00	67.27	54.55	74.55	61.82	69.09	65.45	69.09	67.27	78.79	63.64	56.06	20.00	67.73
39	University of Cincinnati	Online - Master of Science in Sport Administration	North America	39	33	111	55%	12	28	85%	34:66	0:100	25:75	0:100	YES	YES	59,888	83.33	75.56	88.89	77.78	60.00	73.33										





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\*Annual SportBusiness global post-grad program rankings

#1 – UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST



## University of Massachusetts Amherst's MBA/MS Sport Management and MS Sport Management



The University of Massachusetts Amherst's MBA/MS Sport Management and MS Sport Management moves into its 51st year in 2021-22 and marks it by placing top of the 2022 Postgraduate Rankings. Having achieved the same feat in 2019, the programme dropped one place in 2020 and finished second again in 2021 but returns to first position this time round.

Celebrations of the Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management reaching its half-century mark in the last year were slightly delayed due to the pandemic but the recently concluded summer saw the University hold three days of events in June to mark the anniversary. This included the welcoming back to campus of over 125 alumni and dignitaries of the programme.

As well as representing the 50th anniversary of the course's inception, 2021-22 saw Will Norton move into the role of graduate programme director, taking the reins from Steve McKelvey, who held the role for the previous 13 years. McKelvey retains an influence on the programme as head of the Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management at UMass. Dr. Nicole Melton is also instrumental to the programme as Associate Department

Chair.

The overall number of full-time faculty working on the programme rises to 13 for the upcoming academic year, with Katie Sveinson joining as assistant professor of sport management. Sveinson's research has focused on the areas of marketing and consumer behaviour, specifically as it pertains to women sport fans and culture/cultural production of sport fandom. Yiran Su also joins as assistant professor of sport management and provides a research background in digital marketing and applied technology, with interests in identity-based digital consumption, the relationships between technology, sports, and wellbeing, and brand-consumer interaction in the digital and virtual space, such as Web 3.0.

The typical size of cohort on the dual MBA/MS programme ranges from 22 to 30, with applicant rates typically at about 125. On average, the university fully funds at least 50 per cent of each student's tuition cost and almost all students are members of a union via their graduate assistantships, which provides income and health insurance during their time on the course.

Integrated within the University's Isenberg School of Management, the course is centred on experiential

learning, with the aim of providing students with a holistic view of the sports industry.

The inter-departmental research labs, based within the McCormack Department and focused on areas such as sport rivalry and diversity and inclusion within sport, are seen as a provider of competitive advantages to graduates of the programme by its leadership. Graduate students work directly with the research labs to contribute to work with external organisations including the Wasserman agency and Japan's Pacific League.

The data from the 2022 Postgraduate Rankings survey indicates the programme to be particularly strong across metrics such as employability and quality of faculty. This year, the programme was also the only example of an institution which had graduates progress into positions within the Research & Analysis category. Part of the reason for this may be that students on the programme are provided support with industry placement in sports agency consulting, market research analyst, and business intelligence positions, while classes such as Sport Market Research and Sports Analytics teach students to apply proper research methodologies to a given business problem. ○



# What do women (sport fans) want?

## Fan clothing that doesn't suck

**Katie Sveinson** joined the UMass Amherst faculty ahead of the 2022-23 academic year, having previously been part of the staff at Temple University and the University of Regina, where she earned a PHD in Sport Management/ Sociology of Sport.

It's game day, so what's the first thing sport fans do? Throw on some team gear. Studies have found that sport fan clothing is an essential product to show identification with and attachment to favourite teams and players. But what if they don't like the style, design, or fit of the clothing? My research has shown this is often the case for women fans. Using qualitative approaches, including in-depth interviews, text analysis, and open-ended surveys, I found that sport fan clothing is underwhelming for women consumers. This is a crucial issue as not only are the number of women sport fans growing, but they also carry significant purchasing power.

There are two major issues with team apparel for women: availability and design.

In a previous study (with Dr. Larena Hoeber and Dr. Kim Toffoletti), I conducted in-depth interviews with women who were fans of men's major league teams. A reoccurring theme was dissatisfaction with the clothing. The women expressed a dislike for items that were pink, bedazzled, sequined, low-cut, or too fitted. Though women wanted to demonstrate their authentic fandom, they often felt that feminising clothing made their gender identity (women) seem more important than their fan identity. Specifically, when items were not the same colour as the team's colors, they felt disconnected. Since these women were unhappy with the few options available, it often drove them to reluctantly purchase limited items in the "men" or "youth" categories.

In another study, my collaborator Dr. Rachel Allison and I explored language choices of consumers in their responses to a now-deleted



tweet from U.S. Soccer promoting girls' apparel. The tweet included clothing that was pink, sparkly, and included the term "cutie." Out of 307 tweets analysed, 99% were negative in tone. Through text analysis, we found consumers argued the items suggested women and girls lacked athletic skills and emphasised physical appearance as the most valuable, and therefore, the organisation engaged in sexist marketing practices. These findings show clothing are not just items fans wear but are products that have symbolic meanings beyond identification. Since the clothing did not align with consumers' values in relation to gender equity and equality, the negative reaction transferred onto the organisation itself. For a summary of this study, [watch this video](#).

Along with poor design, the lack of availability of fan clothing is a more significant issue for women's sports. Specifically, consider women's soccer which has taken off on a global scale. Not only did the historic Lionesses win at the UEFA Women's EURO 2022 final reach record-breaking attendance, but the recently announced October 2022 match between the Lionesses and the United States women's national team (USWNT) sold out within 24 hours. What does this tell us? The demand for women's sport is constantly growing. Yet, the supply of fan clothing is lacking. The Canadian women's national soccer team won gold in the 2020 Olympics and came second in the 2022 CONCACAF W Championship, however fans have struggled to get their hands on any type of clothing to represent their team. While it was said that supply chain issues are to blame, my research suggests it is not that simple.

In my current international collaborative research project (with Dr. Beth Clarkson, Dr. Keith Parry, and Dr. Jessica Richards), we created an open-ended survey for fans of women's national soccer teams and professional soccer leagues in three locations: England, Australia, and the United States. Women fans who responded said the worst aspect about their soccer team's apparel is the lack of options and availability. These fans were often frustrated as they wanted to show their identity in supporting women's sport, and even encourage others to become fans, but frequently found many items out of stock. One participant even said: "I'm trying to spend money and not being able to because items go out of stock very rapidly." They were also looking for a broader range of sizes, designs, cuts, and fit in their apparel.

Overall, these issues can be related back to supply and demand. When it comes to fan clothing for women's sport, there is more demand than supply. This is a major issue that can impact the growth of women's sport, as these items create visibility, exposure, support, and investment in the players and teams. In other cases, there is no demand for what is being supplied. Meaning, the clothing items that are available are not what women sport fans want to wear to show their fandom. Recently, these issues have been addressed through strategies, such as that from the USWNT players association creating their own online store, independent of U.S. Soccer. The new site provides items with a range of designs and sizes, and showcases a support for

women's sport (a good strategy as suggested by these research findings).

To meet the needs of women consumers, organisations must realise that women fans are not "one-size-fits-all" and have varying needs and wants. This starts with recognising that sport fan clothing goes beyond the functional aspect (i.e., wearing clothing to show identification with a team or player), and should be considered a valuable item that communicates meanings about the organisation, and consumers identities and values. Organisations should provide gender neutral items simply designed with the team color and logo. Items should also come in a wide variety of sizes and fits, as well as embrace a variety of body

types in marketing strategies. This presents opportunities to include real fans modelling the clothing items, building a deeper connection and loyalty to the team. Lastly, conduct market research to ask women what they want in their fan clothing and ensure manufacturers can supply desirable items while meeting demand. Organisations must speak with a variety of women that represent the diversity within their fanbase.

So, what do women sport fans want? To feel and look good as fans by their own standards, not a limited, predefined appearance created by the organisations. They want to feel empowered as consumers to show their fandom without having to put their gender first. ○





# Dominic Macklin, football operations manager, City Football Group

Having grown up and studied in the UK through undergraduate level, **Dominic Macklin** was part of UMass' MBA/MS Sport Management graduating class of 2015. He then returned to UK and joined City Football Group, where he has worked in a number of roles and currently holds the position of Football Operations Manager.

## Why did you choose to take the path of a postgraduate degree in sports management?

I had completed my undergraduate degree in the UK at Cambridge and when I graduated, I wasn't really sure exactly what I wanted to do. None of the main career paths my friends were following particularly appealed to me at the time, so I took some time out whilst I decided what to do before ultimately realising it was a career in sports which I was passionate about.

I'd always been keen on doing something in sport and was interested beyond the typical fandom that my friends had. I had spent a lot of time in the States growing up and was fascinated by the US sports culture and the size of the economy around it, so it felt like a logical move to try to begin my career over there. Going via the academic route, getting a postgraduate degree felt like the best step to gain an understanding of the industry, build a network and start to develop a plan for my career.

## In terms of picking which institution to go with what was decisive about selecting UMass?

I was aware from my research of just how competitive the world of sports was in terms of securing a job. That's why I wanted to begin my path on the academic side, to earn a qualification as a means to help differentiate and establish myself in a crowded market, but also a way to make connections in the industry. When I was researching programme, the UMass name came up time and time again as being the best, pretty much wherever you look. The more I read, the clearer it became just how strong the programme's alumni network was and how focused it was on helping students secure a great job in the world of sports. The



worlds of college athletics, corporate partnerships, consulting, and a whole range of areas of the sports industry through the programme's alumni network and the mentorship programme.

As I mentioned, I think the programme prioritises the alumni network and therefore provides the opportunity to build strong relationships with them. As a result, the alumni are then very helpful, and they reach back out. Even now, I'm not that long out the programme – I graduated seven years ago – and I've had numerous calls and conversations with current and past students of the programme who have wanted to pick my brain and connect to understand my career path and how I might be able to advise or help them. As it's something I benefited from so greatly, I'm more than happy to pay it back and I know this is the case with UMass alums all over the world. Even outside of the direct alumni network, the respect that the programme has in the industry means that a lot of people in the world of sports tend to be happy to speak to you because the programme is so well regarded. The UMass name tends to help open some doors.

## Are there any experiences from your time on the course which stand out as being either memorable or influential that you carry with you today?

We visited New York City to meet with a range of different companies in the sports industry as part of the career development programme. Those introductions, those meetings and networking sessions, were all set up through the programme's network. We went to visit the New York Mets, Madison Square Garden, a couple of consultancy agencies, the NHL. As students at the time,

it was great to see in real life that these weren't just names on a piece of paper. These were real people working in the real NHL office in Manhattan or the real New York Mets office. It brought to life how strong the network was in getting the chance to meet people at these great institutions in the world of sport.

As part of the programme, I spent the summer between my 2 years of study interning at USA Rugby in Colorado. I was a full-time employee of the organisation for three or four months which was an incredible experience and gave me the chance to see and be involved first hand with a lot of the ideas we'd talked about back in the classroom in Amherst. I was lucky enough in that I was asked to carry on working for USA Rugby until Christmas, whilst back in Amherst. UMass supported me and allowed me to keep doing this whilst studying, including this experience as part of my course credit. The programme was so geared towards career development and helping you find a job that they realised something like that was extremely beneficial and so they were incredibly supportive in it.

## What would you say to someone in a similar scenario today considering following a similar move from abroad to study in the US to help build their career in the sports industry?

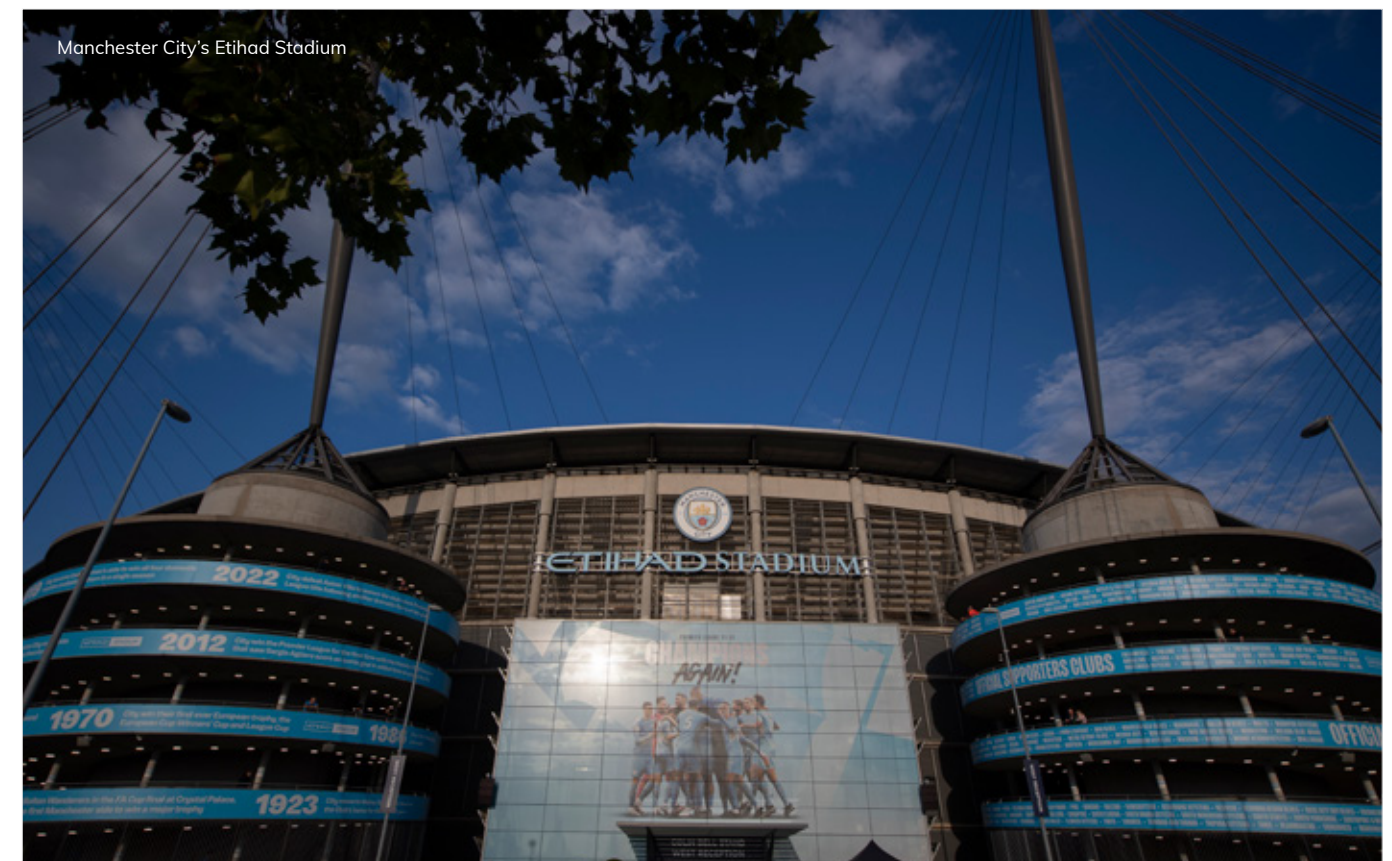
From my own personal experience, I couldn't recommend it highly enough as a way to learn the industry and to take the first steps in your own path in sports. When I was considering the move, part of what helped me make the decision was the knowledge that on the academic side, sports management as a discipline was far more established and well regarded than in most countries.

In addition, the US sport industry was more diverse, larger and also probably a bit better established than over here; when you consider all of the professional sports in the U.S., collegiate athletics, the wider sports marketing industry over there – it just felt like there was more opportunity. All of this added together just made it seem a great place for me to start. Hopefully myself and a lot of others who've done the same are proof that you can bring that knowledge and the skills from the U.S. to help build a good

career for yourself in the U.K. or elsewhere.

## Following on that point, do you think that the Masters at UMass is a differential for you in the UK sports market?

I've been working in the UK for six and a half years, and even being based here I've come across multiple people in my day-to-day work who are either fellow alumni, know or work with alumni or who just know of the reputation the programme has, which is fantastic. There's a huge amount of respect that people across the industry have for the programme, even here in the U.K., which of course is only a positive for your career, particularly in the early stages. With the programme offering a dual degree of both an MBA and M.S., a lot of the business management concepts I learned have proved increasingly helpful as my career has progressed. Very few sports management programmes include an MBA, which has certainly been a differentiator and will hopefully help me have a successful career in sports for a few more years to come! O





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## ADVERTISING FEATURE

### Mead Al Emadi, Project Director at the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy, Qatar 2022 World Cup, and FIFA Master 2016 graduate

In July 2016, Mead Al Emadi became the first female Qatari to ever graduate from the prestigious FIFA Master in Management, Law and Humanities of Sport – an accomplishment that made her very proud and, according to her, was what opened the doors for her to join the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy, the State-led organisation responsible for the delivery of the required infrastructure and host country planning and operations for Qatar to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

Mead studied computer science at university and had a promising job in the banking industry, but it was only when she joined the sports broadcaster beIN Sports that she felt she was in a place where she could do exceptionally well. "I grew up watching sports with my father, and having three sisters and two brothers, our household was very competitive in sports too", she recalls. "But it was only when I started working for beIN Sports that I realised how much I loved being in that environment". However, Mead felt that she needed more than her passion for sport, so when she found out about the FIFA Master through an alumnus of the course, she didn't hesitate to apply, and couldn't have been happier than when she was accepted to enrol onto the award-winning programme.

Here is more of the interview with Mead Al Emadi:

#### What is your job like at the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy?

My main role is working as a Fan Festival Director. This is no easy task as you are responsible for making sure that people will have a good time! There are various key elements to my job, but the three most important would be research, planning and marketing. We focus on understanding fan expectations then reaching out to different stakeholders who can help us to achieve these expectations. An even bigger element involves making sure that our visitors know of the wide range of events which are occurring around them.

#### What is the main career goal you'd like to achieve?

I consider myself lucky to have been able to find my passion very early in life. Working in the sports industry for fifteen years has provided me with exceptional experiences from being part of international events hosted by

my country. I would say my main career goal now is to continue growing within the sports industry and representing Qatar on the world stage.

#### What's the plan for after the World Cup?

I definitely see myself as part of an organising committee that oversees and hosts sports events in Qatar. Our country is passionate about raising awareness of the importance of having an active lifestyle. The FIFA World Cup is the biggest event we are going to host so far, but we have successfully hosted other important tournaments like the Asian Cup and Asian Games. This is only the beginning for our country and we aspire to host and promote various sporting events in the near future.

#### What are the particular challenges of being a woman working in sport?

Working in the sports industry in the Middle East was an even bigger challenge from the start because it was so rare to see females participating or working in this particular industry sector. Nonetheless, Qatar has taken a huge leap in improving the role of women through several different initiatives. We have women in executive roles and I believe that we are more empowered now than ever before to voice our opinions and take responsibility. Because our country has promoted this sense of passion towards sport, now almost everyone is interested, capable and driven to be a part of the industry.

#### What are your fondest memories of the FIFA Master?

The fondest memories I have were formed with my classmates. I am grateful for being able to learn about different cultures and have made lifelong friends who have taught me confidence, strength and resilience. Furthermore, I am happy to have left a positive influence and changed their perspective on the capabilities of a small Arab country in hosting the World Cup. As a Muslim Qatari woman, many were astonished how I had made it this far in the sports industry. However, after spending time with them and showing them what we are capable of, they were able to see Qatar in another light.



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#2

## Ohio University's Master of Sports Administration



The University of Ohio's Master of Sports Administration degree takes second place in both North America and globally in the 2022 Postgraduate Rankings. While the position represents a slight drop from top spot in last year's edition, the programme retains its record of featuring in the global top two in each of the 11 years since *SportBusiness* launched the rankings.

The programme, which was launched back in 1966, is offered as a MBA/MSA dual-award and is based out of Ohio University's College of Business in Athens, Ohio. Up to the end of the 2021-22 academic year, Jim Strode was chair of sports administration but he has recently been promoted within the College of Business and so has vacated the role. Strode's work now focuses on overseeing

all undergraduate programmes in the College of Business. The search for a new department chair is set to get underway imminently, while Matt Cacciato remains in post as executive director of the university's AECOM Center for Sports Administration and oversees the Master's resident programme, as he has done for the past five years. Mick Andzulis is also key to the running of the programme, especially from an administrative process perspective.

The course leaders view the amount of real-world projects and wider experiential learning opportunities afforded to students as a distinguishing feature of the course. As well as this, the wide-ranging alumni network of the programme is leveraged to provide an extensive schedule of guest speakers throughout each academic

year.

In terms of faculty, there are 10 full-time staff working on the MBA/MSA programme. Its cohort for the upcoming academic year is 35, refined from a typical total of 150 to 160 applicants. This represents an increase of one from the previous year, with the feeling among staff that 35 is the maximum number the course can go to, particularly to ensure efficiency in group-project based learning.

The curriculum will be under review this coming academic year, as scheduled on the programme's cycle. It is understood to be most likely that the current programme will be augmented by the integration of additional certificate options for students, leveraging the capabilities of the College of Business as a whole. ○

## International influence on sports gambling in the US Market

**Matt Cacciato**, Executive Director AECOM Center for Sports Administration and Director, MSA Program writes with Dean McKenzie, MSA Graduate '00 and Director, McKenzie Sport International and Scott Pincombe, MBA Graduate '22 and current MSA student, on the influence of foreign companies on the evolution of sports gambling in the USA.

The expression 'time flies' is an appropriate framing to understanding the explosive growth in legalised sports gambling across the United States since the repeal of the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act (PASPA) in May of 2018. Various industry tracking agencies estimate that Americans have wagered more than \$125 billion since the decision, with two-thirds of states having legalised some form of sports gambling. While many a news outlet has reported this incredible momentum, what has been less discussed is the presence of foreign companies driving the American evolution of sports gambling.

What dawned on us recently through a class assignment with our graduate students from our Ohio University's College of Business dual MBA/MSA programme was the amount of learning and market developments abroad that could inform our country's management and oversight for the betterment of intended audiences and future sports gambling consumers. Specifically, various regulatory efforts abroad aimed at the marketing and promotion of sports gambling in the hope of lessening a wave of new and younger problem gamblers. With that backdrop I turned to one of our current graduate students from Canada, as well as an alumnus from New Zealand with extensive executive experience in the Australasian sports gambling markets.

To begin, on June 23, 2021, the Canadian government passed the Safe and Regulated Sports Betting Act (C-218) that legalised single-game and online wagering for the first time in the country's history. After this initial announcement, bill C-218 went live on August 27, 2021, when provincial governments could



then decide if their province would adopt this new bill or stay the course of previous years. Seven of the 13 provinces and territories initially jumped on board, legalising single-game wagering, with Ontario leading the charge. Ontario is Canada's most populous province, and upon implementing bill C-218, was the first to launch mobile wagering in April of 2022, with theScore's mobile platform leading the way. As a result, MGM, FanDuel, Bet365, and other large players are now operating across Ontario, in the hope that additional provinces will join soon.

Ultimately, the goal of passing this bill was to allow the government to be able to regulate sports betting. Illegal books, run both through the US and Europe, were extremely prevalent across Canada, as it was estimated that Canadians were spending north of \$10 billion per

year through unregulated sites. This new legislation not only helps to ensure the safety of individuals partaking, but also enables that money to come back into the Canadian economy. As mentioned, Canada is a large market for sports gambling, a market that had been taken advantage of by 'organised crime' through illegal wagering methods throughout history. To quote Brian Egger of Bloomberg Intelligence, "Canada is playing catchup, today's legislature is just smart, so that the Canadian marketplace can be governed by Canadians." Generally, it will be quite interesting to see how provincial governments navigate this new space as the law matures, and what additional measures will be enacted to provide both success and safety across the country in the sports gambling space.

To continue with the international discussion, sports betting has been legal in New Zealand since 1996, and former TAB NZ Executive Chair/CE Dean McKenzie, who is now based in Southern California, has some interesting insights quoted below.

"In my view, there are really three key influencing factors to consider when examining the issue. Firstly, the regulatory framework operating in that jurisdiction; secondly, the cultural or social acceptance of sports gambling there (or gambling in general really); and thirdly, the commercial realities the sports book operator faces in optimising the returns for its shareholders.

"As a result, when considering the marketing and promotion of its products, the operator will obviously want to operate within the boundaries of that regulatory framework but just as important will be the social licence aspects of that. In my experience, these will differ from one territory to



another. Whatever the regulatory framework, which will also likely differ from state to state, what may be socially acceptable in one state may not be acceptable in another. Don't underestimate the importance of having a strong social licence, it's critical in my view. Finding the 'Goldilocks' spot where regulatory compliance is achieved, harm is minimised, and returns are optimised is clearly the goal. However, at times this can be difficult to achieve and of course not every operator will have the same view on where that spot is.

"When it comes to my personal thoughts, I believe any legitimate, responsible sports book operator, with a long-term vision for the industry and their business, wants to minimise the harm that may come from its products. Harm

minimization will sit at the very centre of what they will do every day. In my view, without a strong social licence, they just won't be able to optimise their organisations value and long-term performance.

"Furthermore, you will find these best-in-class operators will have strong messaging in all marketing and promotions they undertake, regardless of regulatory requirements. They will also have robust harm minimisation tools available for their customers, together with well-resourced back of house infrastructure to support these. This is obviously one of the great advantages of sports betting being legalised here in the US; these tools and resources become part of the social licence to operate at a minimum and are available to all customers, something which is

not always true in the alternative unregulated model.

"Finally, the regulatory framework in Australia in particular has certainly evolved over the years with regards to the marketing and promotion of sports betting. For example, specific restrictions in and around live sporting events are now in place, something which was not the case in the early days, and I would suspect the same sort of general evolution to occur, at varying degrees, throughout the US as the market matures more."

The sports betting industry is facing large expectations, and as more states and countries come on board, the different processes set in place to help with its regulation will continue to be a point of emphasis. We are all eager to see its development in the near future. ○

## Dr. Mónica Lebrón, deputy athletics director of championship resources, University of Tennessee

Dr. Mónica Lebrón was part of Ohio University's graduating class of 2003, earning a MS/MBA in Sports Administration. Dr. Lebrón has since built an extensive career in college athletics, currently holding the position of deputy athletics director of championship resources, as part of the executive leadership team at University of Tennessee.

### Why did you choose to take up a postgraduate degree in sports management?

My love for sports began at birth, but my love for athletics administration began with my work study job at Yale University. I was on financial aid at Yale, so in addition to going to school and playing softball I also had to work an on-campus job. My head coach asked me if I wanted to work for the administrative assistant of the AD. I said, "Sure, I don't know what an AD does, but sign me up." Three months later, I sat Mr. Beckett, our Director of Athletics (AD), down and asked, "How do I become you?" As I continued to work throughout my four-year playing career at Yale, I was encouraged to pursue a Sport Administration degree upon graduation. The more I explored it, the more I realised it was a perfect next step for me.

### What was decisive in selecting the programme at Ohio University as your chosen course?

To determine which graduate school was the next best step for me, I asked anyone and everyone which Sport Administration graduate programmes were the best. The Ohio University Sport Administration programme was ranked #1, at the time, but it was also anecdotally one of the programmes that continued to be mentioned due in large part to the strong alumni. I knew I not only wanted to learn from those alums, but I also wanted to be one. In addition, I appreciated the dual degree aspect of the programme requiring students to earn an MBA prior to earning the Sport Administration degree which I knew would open more doors. Lastly, I was



excited to explore a different region of the country, having grown up in San Jose, CA, and attending college in the northeast.

### How has your time on the course influenced your career path in college sports?

There is no question that the most valuable asset to earning a degree from the Ohio University Sport Administration programme is the opportunity to forge meaningful and lasting relationships, not only with the classmates that attend with you, but the hundreds and thousands of alumni that earn the same degree. I have been calling on those classmates and other alumni since I graduated 20 years ago for any number of reasons from sharing industry best practices to recruiting top talent. I was even hired at the University of Tennessee by a friend I made 20 years ago, through the programme, in Danny White SAFM '05. My experiences through the Ohio University Sport Administration programme have helped me almost every day of my career.

### Are there any experiences from your time on the course that stand out as being particularly memorable/influential?

Experiential learning is such an invaluable tool and I continue to be most proud of the partnerships forged by the Ohio University Sport Administration programme for the purpose of providing hands-on learning for past, present, and future OU Sport Administration students. My classmates and I had those opportunities to travel the roads and work various sporting events and the opportunities for the students of today continue to grow exponentially.

### How often do you utilise what you learned on the course within your current role? Can you provide some examples?

I believe the most valuable skill you can acquire from any level of education is the ability to think critically. Whether it be K-12, when you are establishing the notion of critical thinking, college, when you are sharpening those skills, or graduate school, when you are mastering them, critical thinking is the tool used most in one's career and in life. I feel blessed to have crossed paths with some of the smartest sports minds an institution can attract through the Ohio University Sport Administration programme as they challenged me, and therefore pushed me as a critical thinker, to my utmost potential.

### What would be your advice to new students starting out on the same course at Ohio this year?

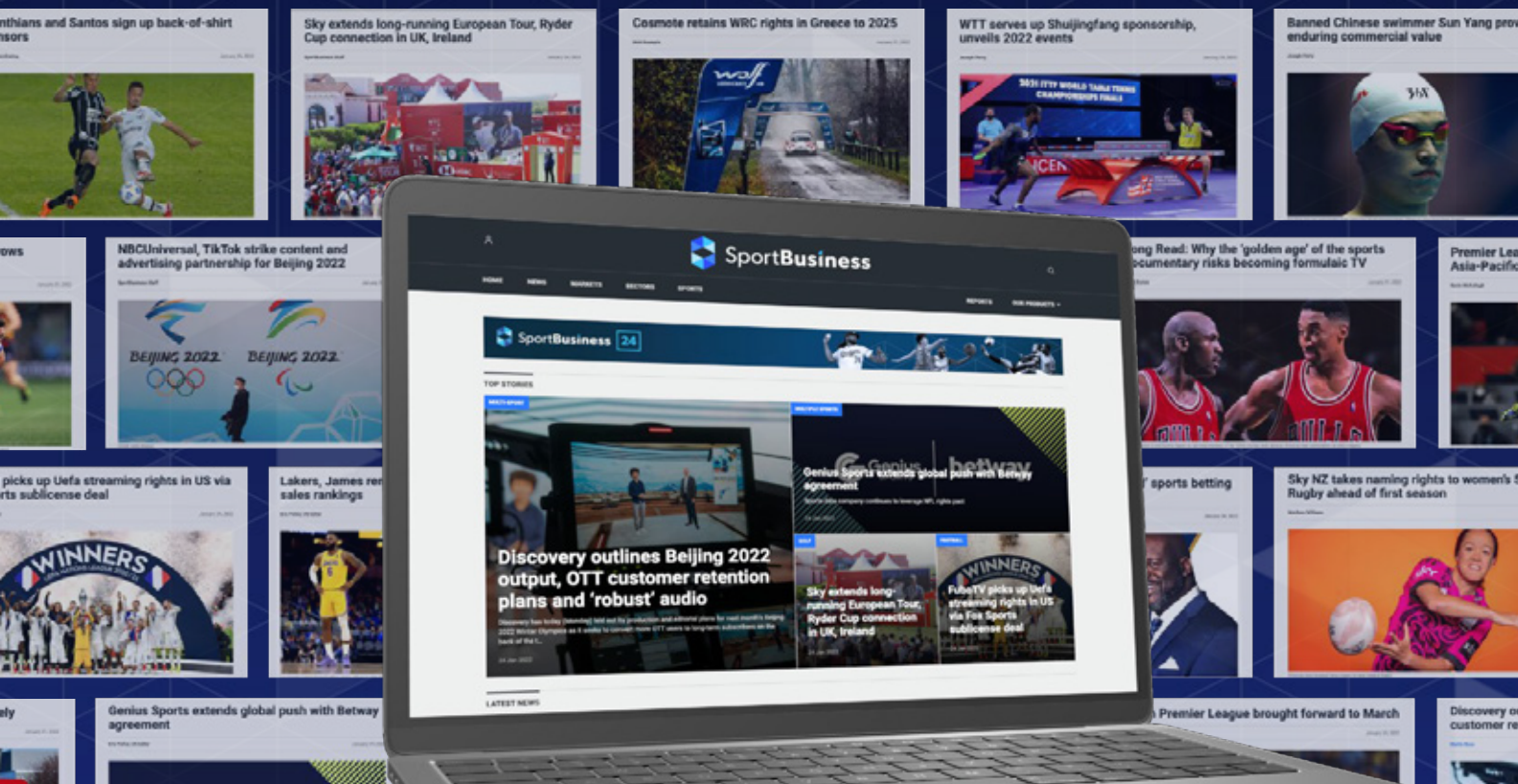
My advice to current and future students is to nurture all relationships, both with peers and alumni. It is through those relationships that we continue to learn, grow, and lean on as we advance throughout our careers. ○



Sports gambling platform FanDuel displays its presence at a US sports venue



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#3

## University of South Florida, Muma College of Business MBA/MS



The University of South Florida's Vinik Sport & Entertainment Management programme finishes in third place in the Postgraduate Rankings for the second consecutive year. The programme moves into its 11th year in 2022-23, although 10th anniversary celebrations will take place in the Spring of 2023, around the 10th anniversary of the course's first graduation.

Michelle Harrolle is the program's director and has held the role since 2019. Dr. Harrolle is one of four full-time faculty members, alongside four adjuncts. Its typical class size is close to 30 and graduates earn a dual-award MBA/MS and study a curriculum designed around providing rounded personal and professional development around the business of sports, placing the industry in its wider global and cultural context.

The course is named after the Vinik family, owners of the NHL's Tampa Bay Lightning and was

launched via a partnership with the franchise. The partnership with the Lightning and the wider Tampa Bay sports community, including organisations such as Fanatics, Valspar, USF Athletics, Women's Tennis Association, and Hard Rock Casino, is leveraged as part of the program's focus on experiential learning, with a significant emphasis placed on relationship building throughout the program. Part of this is achieved through trips and events, with students visiting Las Vegas in 2021-22 and presenting student created partnership proposals to MGM Resorts executives as part of the trip.

This was part of a busy schedule in Spring which would see the course leaders plan several in-person events, including the annual USF Esports Summit and USF Sports and Entertainment Analytics Conference, after the opportunity to do so was lessened over 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic. These type of trips and events can be

linked to the high score the Vinik program achieved in the extra-curricular and industry network metrics among respondents to the 2022 Postgraduate Rankings survey. The program ranked top globally on the industry network measure, with a score just under 99 out of 100 and achieved the same score in the extra-curricular category, placing it second worldwide here.

The program's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion is also reflected in the data, topping the global rankings in this measure with a score of 95. Dr. Harrolle discussed the approach of the program in this area in last year's edition of the rankings, detailing one example of recruitment being conducted virtually to help engage students from underprivileged backgrounds, while Kristine Propokec, class of 2015, details experiences of the commitment to gender equality within the Vinik program in the Alumni Interview below. ○



# Beyond the Classroom. The Ecosystem of Personal and Professional Development

**Michelle Harrolle**, director of the University of South Florida's Vinik Sport & Entertainment Management programme, writes that universities have a chance to get in on the ground floor by offering cutting-edge education to the esports leaders of the future.

While we can all agree that curriculum and classroom work is important, most career development occurs outside of the classroom. When hiring managers and recruiters are looking at two equally qualified applicants, who are they going to hire? The applicant who sent the handwritten thank you note? The one who had a personal referral from a mentor in the industry? Or the applicant with the impactful online brand with 1,000 followers on TikTok? Or the one who had the most inspiring online presence during the video interview? Or the one who...

At the University of South Florida in the Vinik Sport and Entertainment Management Programme, we have developed an eco-system of personal and professional development encompassing seven main areas.

## 1. Social and emotional essential skills

While often called “soft” skills, the social and emotional essential skills for a successful career in the sport and entertainment industry are grounded in building relationships and developing interpersonal skills. Our faculty, especially Dr Janelle Wells, leads our Power Placement initiative. Within this programme, our students meet four times throughout the year outside of the classroom to build these essential skills. We focus on communication, such as how to conduct an informational interview, meeting someone for the first time, understanding body language, and thank you cards. A perfect example would be our hand-shake discussion. We spend over 20 minutes discussing handshakes, practising handshakes, and giving feedback on handshakes, because first impressions have such a strong impact on success



in the job market. Moreover, our students learn about the importance of gratitude and growth mindsets, and read books (e.g., *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* by Dweck) outside of the classroom for their professional development. Our faculty dedicate their time assisting students to become more self-aware (e.g., DiSC assessments) while encouraging them to have courageous conversations, work on their priority management, and learn the power of their voice.

## 2. Mentorship

We have all succeeded through the help of others, thus mentorship is embedded within three main areas of our community. First, our seasoned, second-year students are paired with our incoming, first-year students the first week of classes. These mentors provide a sounding board, an “expert” of our programme for

our incoming students to ask non-school related questions and develop lifelong friendships. As with many other universities, our second type of mentor is our faculty advisors who really assist with skill development. Faculty meet with students at least once a semester, and then students must “drive the bus” and learn to be an exceptional mentee. Lastly, we pair up all of our first-year students with industry professionals, many who are our alums. These mentors guide our students through the career process, are a sounding board for interviews, and assist our students with job placement and personal development.

## 3. Relationship building

Our industry is all about relationships! From day one of the programme, we stress the importance of relationships and teach specifically about cultivating and stewarding relationships. Students are taught how to connect with someone they do not know, how to respond to emails using BCC, and then are personally connected with industry experts via faculty connections/relationships within the industry. During orientation, students are encouraged to check LinkedIn, look at the faculty connections, and ask to be connected with an industry professional within our network. Afterwards, faculty personally connect students and the beginning of a beautiful relationship begins. Students follow up throughout the year and work to maintain these relationships to build their own professional communities. Additionally, as a part of the Power Placement programme, the faculty facilitate 80+ virtual interviews with 35+ executives from around the world to provide practice and additional connections for students headed out to the market.

## 4. Personal brand

With our constant connection to the digital world, students must focus on their personal brand, especially their online presence. During orientation, our programme provides professional headshots for each student. After an extensive digital footprint review, students update their resumes and LinkedIn profiles consistently within intentional sequential courses and assignments throughout the year. Within our marketing course, students are required to create meaningful content to push out on numerous social media channels and tag our programme. Our motto is “you are selling yourself every day!” and we prepare our students for this accordingly.

## 5. Community engagement

Within our university, college, and programme, each student is expected to increase their cultural and global awareness. While all of our courses have a focus on DEIB (Diversity,

Equity, Inclusion and Belonging) teachings, our students take a social issues course, dedicated to 20 hours of community service projects in our local community. For example, our students have worked with the YMCA, Special Olympics, Junior Achievement, and Metropolitan Ministries, within the course.

## 6. Global and cultural awareness

Our vision is for every student to travel internationally and present a major business strategy project to a corporate partner. In years past, we travelled to London and our students presented partnership campaigns to Harlequins FC while learning about the cultural experiences in all parts of London and Spain. These experiential opportunities are the most impactful for a student's development and the memories built are the most meaningful to our students.

## 7. Wellness

While we recognize that we are

not mental health and physical wellness experts, our faculty and fellow students encourage students to be aware of their overall health and encourage them to seek help as needed. As a part of our students' semester discussions on their personal and professional development plans, students reflect on their health goals. Due to our open dialogue and open-door policy, many students feel comfortable sharing very personal information. Faculty are there to listen, provide direction to resources on campus, and assist in any way that we can.

This eco-system is built on relationships, among all of our stakeholders – students, faculty, alumni, and partners. Our network is strong because our community is built on trust and care for one another. Together, we all have a relentless commitment to developing the next generation of talent and helping students reach their dreams. ○



A view of the USF campus



# Kristine Prokopec, senior manager, brand strategy & operations, EA Sports

**Kristine Prokopec** is an alumna of the University of South Florida's Vinik Sport & Entertainment Management Programme, which she graduated in 2015. Following completion of the programme, Kristine joined CSM Sport & Entertainment, before joining the NBA's marketing strategy and operations team in 2019. As of August 2021, Kristine is a senior manager, brand strategy & operations at EA Sports.

## Why did you choose to take up a postgraduate degree in sports management?

In undergrad I tended to gravitate towards internships in sports. One with the Outback Bowl and the other as the Student Athletic Director for admissions. I loved how sports bring such a diverse global population together unlike anything else. I was passionate about marketing and I wanted to explore ways that I could combine this passion with sports. Pursuing a graduate degree in sports management seemed like the most natural next step for me in my professional career.

## What was decisive in selecting the Sports Management programme at USF as your chosen course?

When I found out that the USF sport management programme offered two master's degrees in two years, I was sold. The residency experience during the second year was also a selling point because I knew that the combination of education and industry experience was going to be the right mix that would propel my professional career into sport management.

When I went into the programme I knew I wanted to work in sports, but I didn't know exactly what I wanted to do. That was just because I wasn't familiar with all the roles sports entailed. Taking the agency route during my residency gave me the opportunity to work across various roles and be open to these roles. Having that residency allowed me to identify that the agency route would be the next step with me – my first full-time job outside of graduate school was at a sports and entertainment agency in New York City and that residency led me to understanding the agency route is where I wanted to develop a breadth



of knowledge across various strands to be able to identify the direction I wanted to go in with my career.

## How has your time on the course influenced your career path?

The coursework throughout the two years at USF provided me with a diverse set of understanding of all components it takes to be an impactful contributor to the business of sports. It's the macro understanding of how the industry and organisations within operate that really helps sets you apart from others.

## Are there any experiences from your time on the course that stand out as being particularly memorable/influential?

I have so many! Everything from the 29 other students that I spent two years learning from and developing

relationships with, to the many mentors that guided me through coursework and professional development, to the FoxSportsU and business case projects that allowed me to become deeply entrenched into real-life problem solving.

My FoxSportsU project was around how do we get more fans into the stadium for Tampa Bay Rays Major League Baseball games. It was a problem they were facing in terms of needing to increase ticket revenue. When you're tasked with that problem with a team that isn't performing very well, it's a little challenging. You have to think of other ways to engage fans beyond riding the coattails of the team's performance. So it led the team I was part of to think of alternative fan engagement tactics that would bring fans to the stadium and also to identify that not all fans are the same in terms of interest level. There are more casual fans that would consider going to game for the social aspect, so we had to figure out engagement tactics for that.

## How often do you utilise what you learnt on the course within your current role at EA Sports?

All the time! There are so many learnings and experiences from my time at USF that have contributed to my career path. My current day-to-day consists of brand building and operationalising marketing and brand teams. I would say the research, data, and application skills I learned in grad school have remained very valuable throughout all of my roles. Professional and persuasive writing along with effective communication are also skills that I use on a daily basis. Additionally, understanding the industry through assigned and optional readings will always be

something I prioritise so that I can stay on top of identifying opportunities that drive impact.

## What would be your advice to new students starting at on the same course at USF on the Vinik Sport and Entertainment Management programme this year?

Take on every opportunity that comes your way. If it's selling raffle tickets at a game, coordinating speakers for an event, attending a conference, or taking on an incremental research project, do it! Through every opportunity comes unique experience and networking.

## As someone who combines a prominent role in the sports/entertainment industry with motherhood, what are your thoughts about the level of gender equality within the industry and the support given to people in a similar position? Did your time at USF shape your perspective on this subject at all?

I won't lie. I was nervous when I found out I was going to be a mom because of the career path that I chose in sports. Am I going to fall behind in my career development? Will I be treated differently because I may not be able to stay late at games or at work? Will this hold me back from getting a promotion? Real thoughts that that would keep me up

at night because this industry is still more male dominated. And they kept me up because gender inequality still exists. But just like anything else, it's not a standard related to only the sports industry. Inequality exists throughout many industries.

I have made a conscious effort to join organisations that are accepting of diversity of thought, gender, and race, and acknowledge that there is a large growth opportunity to be better.

Being a working mother in the sports & entertainment industry has not only created an opportunity for me to show others that it's possible, but to also show how rewarding it can be to overcome any stigmas around being a mother and holding a prominent role within sports and entertainment! If I can be an example and contribute to the growth of women in sports, that's a win! I am proud that I went to a university that championed women in sports.

Whenever I was looking at programmes, not once did I speak to a female director, they were all male. When I looked at USF I noticed the difference with Dr. Michelle Harrolle on the staff and during my time there Dr. Wells also joined. There was a conscious effort to ensure that women were respected and championed within the programme.

It builds on aspects like Women

in Sport and Entertainment (WISE), a national non-profit organisation which brings women in sports together around aspects like networking opportunities, mentoring, leadership and coaching. Dr. Harrolle sat on the board of WISE and it was something that all of us were involved in. It allowed us to draw inspiration from the paths of other successful women within the sports industry and benefit from their mentorship. It created an avenue for us to see past what the typical view in a male-dominated industry.

I was also a graduate assistant to a director in my first year so was one of two individuals on the programme who worked in the admissions office and everything we did, from the speaker series, to adjunct professors, to opportunities for students, we ensured there was equal opportunity and a diversified group of individuals partaking in them.

I have taken that conscious effort I experienced at USF with me, so in my roles that I have had I also make sure that on interview panels, for example, there's diversity. When we think about opportunities, the stigmas and bias go out the window, it's really around the diversity of thought and diversity of perspectives and that's something that was ingrained in me from grad school. ○



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## Jim Riordan: A Tribute

Jim Riordan, the founder of Florida Atlantic University's (FAU) MBA Sport Management Programme, leaves a substantial legacy at FAU and across the wider sports industry after sadly passing away in March of this year.

Highlighting Riordan's importance and standing at FAU, the university held a celebration of his life on April 28 at the FAU Stadium with attendees including former and current students of the MBA Sport programme, colleagues, and friends.

Prior to launching FAU's MBA Sport programme in July 2000, Riordan had established his academic credentials by earning both his bachelors and MBA degrees from St. John's University, New York, and then pursuing doctoral studies at Temple University, Philadelphia, before going on to earn his Ph.D. in Higher Educational Leadership-Higher Education from FAU.

Throughout Riordan's professional career, he specialised in event operations and crowd management, was appointed as director of security and event services for the Spectrum Centre in Philadelphia, and served in several key roles: Manager of Event Services at Long Island's Nassau Coliseum; Director of Operations for the Richmond (VA) Coliseum and Mosque Theatre; and as Director of Operations for the Philadelphia Civic Center during his time working for Spectacor Management Group (SMG) between 1989 and 1994. He also applied his event management skills to the 1996 Olympic Games and both Super Bowl XXXIII in Miami and XXXIV in Atlanta.

Riordan's first foray into working in higher education was the five years he spent as the Director of the Master of Science in Sport Administration at Canisius College in Buffalo, New York.

After moving to South Florida, Riordan went on to make a highly significant impact in sport education when he initiated the

MBA Sport Management Programme at FAU.

FAU has never placed outside of the global top 30 since *SportBusiness* began its Postgraduate Rankings

FAU has again achieved a strong result in this year's rankings, placing 11th worldwide.

The high career placement rate of the MBA in Sport Management students was one of the distinguishing features and biggest achievements of the course.



### Personal Tributes

**At the event to celebrate Riordan's life, several of those who knew him paid personal tributes.**

**John Kelly**, FAU president: "He wasn't going to let you fail unless you chose to fail and that's a really great attribute of an educator. He didn't like anyone to beat him at what he was doing and that's a great competitor and a person you really want on your team. When I arrived here and looked at what FAU did, the person who had the

highest ranking of anything we did was Jim Riordan with the Sports Management programme; so I said to him, 'How much better can you get?' And he said, 'How much better do you want?'"

**Vegar Wiik**, assistant dean, FAU Business, executive director, FAU executive education: "Describing him was describing passion for his work, passion for FAU Sports, passionate about the sports industry but most passionate about his students."

**Marc Savain**, assistant coordinator, FAU Sport Management MBA: "He used to always say it was never about him; it was all the students' hard work, 'I had nothing to do with it,' he'd say."

**George Linley**, FAU Sport Management, MBA Class of 2003; executive director, Palm Beach County Sports Commission: "He has been one of the most influential leaders in my life. A person I respect immensely and love dearly, who represents a university that I also love very dearly. Together this university and Dr. Riordan are responsible for my success and triumphs, both from a professional and personal perspective. This is true for so many other students. He was first my teacher, then he became one of the greatest mentors that I had; he also became a great friend and will always be part of my family."

### Legacy

Riordan's legacy is surely best illustrated by the students that have come through the MBA Sport Management Programme at FAU and gone on to great success in the sports industry and by those that doubtlessly will follow the same path in the future.

Some of the organisations that have hired FAU sport management students include: the Miami Dolphins, Miami Heat, the Boston Bruins, the University of Miami Hurricanes, the LPGA and the Atlantic Coast Conference.

His legacy will be further cemented by the establishment



of the Dr. Jim Riordan Student Support Endowment by the FAU College of Business. The fund will support students in the MBA Sport Management programme.

Dan Cornely, Assistant Director of FAU's MBA in Sport Management Program will succeed Dr. Riordan and he had this to say about the program: "We are so fortunate to have a world-class foundation set

by Jim for our Sport Management Program here at FAU. We will continue his legacy of excellence daily by recruiting the right students, ensuring they have high-profile jobs in the sports industry, and developing an elite and innovative curriculum that prepares students for success in their careers."

We'll leave the last word to

Daniel Gropper, dean of FAU College of Business, who said at Riordan's celebration of life event: "Jim Riordan was one of those guys who was a pillar of the community, a pillar of the college. Jim is a legend not only here with our students, but he carried that reputation outside. He made a positive impact on so many people and his memory will not be forgotten." ○

# Dr. Jim Riordan

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*#ForeverAnOwl*

## Professor Ruta's Athlete Education interview series | Damjan Rudež

Welcome to the first of a new series of interviews carried out by Professor Dino Ruta, Sport Knowledge Center Leader at SDA Bocconi, on Athlete Education. Professor Ruta has worked with numerous high-profile sportspeople from around the world, helping to provide them with education and skills necessary to take forward into their second careers and prepare them for a life after sport.

In a series of exclusive interviews, Professor Ruta will speak to elite former athletes and coaches in order to explore how athletes approach their post-playing careers and look at how those lessons can be applied across the worlds of sport and education.

For this first edition, Professor Ruta spoke with former NBA and European basketball star Damjan Rudež. From 2004 to 2006, Rudež played for Oostende, winning the Belgian championship in his final year before returning to his home country of Croatia, where he played two seasons for Split. In 2014 he reached the NBA, signing a contract with the Indiana Pacers, where he led all rookies in three-point field goal percentage in his first season. In 2015 he moved to Minnesota Timberwolves, and in 2016 played his last season in the NBA with the Orlando Magic. Lastly, in 2017, he came back to Europe, where he played for Valencia, Monaco, Murcia and Donar Groningen until his retirement in 2021.

**Professor Ruta: Damjan, when did you first realize you could become a professional athlete?**

**Damjan Rudež:** The first realization came when I was 15 years old, during the Eurocamp organized in Treviso and other camps that gathered all the best young European basketball players. I had the chance to match up with other peers and realized I was really good. I didn't feel uncomfortable and I realized that in a couple of years I could have

become a professional.

The following year, I actually became a professional. I moved to the senior team of my local team and, even if I was 16 I played with grown athletes playing the first division in Croatia.

**Who have been your role models during your professional career?**

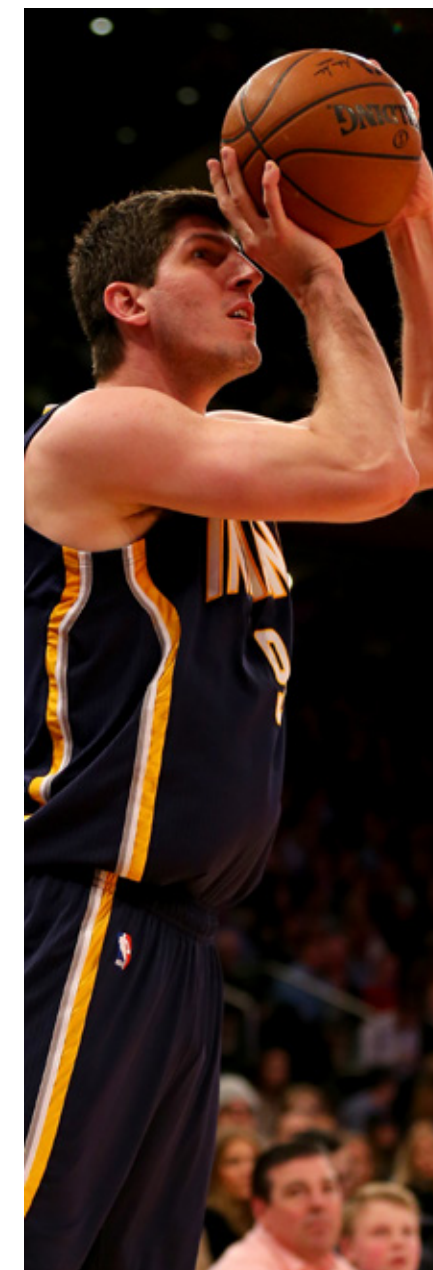
During the first part of my childhood my role models were Michael Jordan together with Toni Kukoč and Dražen Petrović, who both played for our national team. However, my first real idol was Dejan Bodiroga. Seeing a guy of my size with such an amazing skill set made me dream that one day I could play like him at professional level.

When I became professional, Kobe Bryant was for my generation what Jordan was for the previous one. Little by little, LeBron came to the scene, but he was always viewed as an extra-terrestrial. However, if I really had to pick one I was really connected to, I would say Bodiroga.

**What was the most difficult moment in your career to date and how did you get over it?**

The most difficult moment in my career was when I was traded from the Indiana Pacers to the Minnesota Timberwolves. It was a crushing moment because I had a good fit with the organization and I felt I found my place. All of a sudden, the team decided to trade me and it was the first time for me experiencing something like that. I felt unwanted and it took me a long time to recover and realize that even if I got traded, I still had my value.

To get over it I let time take its course and focused on what I could do. There is a saying in the NBA: control what you can control and what you can't control you have to make peace with it. That is the way I looked at it. I focused on the fact that I was still in the NBA, I still had the chance of being productive and part of the NBA ecosystem.



Damjan Rudež during his playing days in the NBA

**When did you start planning for your post-athlete career, and thinking about what additional education or training you would need?**

I started thinking about my post career during the last 4 years. I left the NBA at 32 and I started realizing it was time to start thinking about the next steps. Even if I had time, I didn't have the focus, the concentration, and the willingness to dive into an educational program.



I planned to play the last years to my maximum and enjoy every second of my basketball.

Maybe it was the wrong thing to do because I lost a little bit of time. I could have accomplished a little more on the educational side if I started earlier but I just didn't feel like I should start anything without being 100 per cent focused. Literally, the moment I decided to retire, I started actively planning my next educational steps and post career.

#### What professional activities have you nurtured during your career?

I never did any vocational training during my career but playing at the highest levels, in 14 different teams and seven different countries, helped me develop a cultural agility which represents a valuable asset.

Professional sport teaches you a lot about what you need to succeed both in business life and in sports. I think I developed a strong discipline, a feeling of responsibility towards my job, team-mates, group and organization. I learned a lot about patience, short-term and long-term planning when it comes to personal development. My sporting career taught me a lot about working with people for a common cause.

#### Tell us about the training you are undertaking or have already completed to move into the next phase of your career.

I just finished vocational training for being a professional FIBA basketball coach, because I want to be able to go down that path if I decide to. I am also enrolled in the kinesiology undergraduate program at the university of Zagreb and at the 1-to-1 Academy in Management and Entrepreneurship at SDA Bocconi.

I wanted to explore different playing fields, not just staying connected to one road, whether it is in coaching or on the business side. While I am waiting for the image of my future to crystalize, I want to give myself different options.

#### How do you think education for athletes needs to be different? Does it need to be more similar

#### to training and reflect the way athletes are used to preparing?

Absolutely, yes. Because there are certain patterns of how days are organized that athletes are more used to. Athletes are used to staying in the gym and having free time, so loose schedules might be useful. They are used to having one practice a day and that might be the only thing they have to do, so it would be helpful to go along with that schedule and be more flexible instead of doing highly condensed programs, putting them in uncomfortable positions where they wouldn't be able to learn. It all depends on personal learning capabilities. Some guys are used to gathering more information than others, but organizing the schedule would be wise.

#### What are your motivations and ambitions in this second part of your career?

My motivations and ambitions are to find something I am equally passionate about and to see if the qualities and traits that brought me to success in the first phase of my career can also be translated and copied in another playing field.

#### Do you have any role models who have made a similar transition from professional sport to working in business?

I would definitely say Luis Scola, who was one of my teammates at the Pacers. He is now doing a fantastic transition with the project he is doing in Varese [the Italian Lega Basket Serie A team where Scola became chief executive after retirement last year]. He is a guy I always liked playing with and a very good guy to talk to.

#### What were the strengths that distinguished you from the others during your athletic career, and how do they apply to the next stage?

When you reach a high level, everybody is there for a reason. So it is hard to mention what separates you from the others when everybody has their own strengths and weaknesses. However, I was very proud of how resilient I was and how

I managed to jump over obstacles. Also, my adjustability was very high and I think it really helped me to navigate through my basketball career. Looking at how athletes who climbed the ranks managed to take the next step, they based their success not on talent but on their hard work and resilient mindset.

Talking to a lot of people from the business world, I think resiliency and the ability to adjust are good qualities to have throughout all the career.

#### What advice would you give current professional athletes to build a long-term successful and sustainable career?

I would stress that without hard and extra work it is hard to succeed. It is the extra work that makes the difference. What is good for me is not necessarily good for everybody. Follow your instincts and listen to your heart because playing basketball at professional level requires 100 per cent dedication. If your focus is shifting to other things in terms of education it could be good because you are prepared in time and you could reach the end line being ready to cross over but it might also take away some concentration.

#### How important do you think it is that athletes go into administrative roles in sport, and that people in those positions have experience of playing the sport?

It is crucial, but we need a good balance of people with different perspectives. I don't think sport would be in a good place if it was only run by former athletes. More former athletes should hold important positions but there is a reason why businesspeople, especially experienced business people, have success. They know how to run things from a different perspective and two pairs of eyes are always better than one.

We should find the right balance between businesspeople and people who come from the centre of the ecosystem, bringing different skills and perspectives. ○

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

**Sporty Jeralds** | senior instructor and consultant and former manager of the Charlotte Coliseum

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

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



Danny Morrison



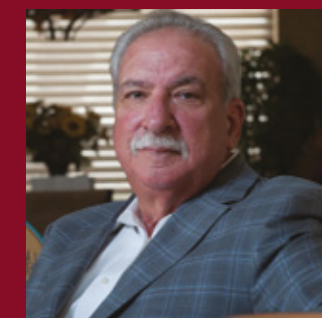
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## The FIFA Master at the International Center for Sport Studies



FIFA Master class of 2020 visit FIFA HQ in Zurich



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The FIFA Master retains its position as the top course in Europe and the fourth placed in the world in this year's Postgraduate Rankings.

Operated by the International Center for Sport Studies (CIES) in Switzerland, the FIFA Master launched in 2000. During the year-long programme, a maximum cohort size of 32 candidates study across Europe at partner institutions De Montfort University in Leicester, SDA Bocconi School of Management in Milan and the University of Neuchâtel in Switzerland.

The course's leaders place high value on interdisciplinary learning, centered on the fields of humanities, management and law. It aims to allow students to understand sport as an international phenomenon. The fact the course is spread across three separate universities is seen as key to achieving this.

During the course students must conduct original research and

write a dissertation which bridges the three disciplines of the course – humanities, management and law. As a group exercise, it also aims to replicate the complexity of working in a team of international individuals from different backgrounds. The below Academic Insight article by Heather O'Keeffe illustrates some of the work that underpins these dissertation projects.

Across the three institutions, the number of full-time faculty working on the course amounts to 24, with many guest lecturers and industry speakers invited to contribute to learning across the curriculum. This past year, the course's longest-serving member of staff, Professor Pierre Lanfranchi, retired after 22 years of service as a Scientific Committee member.

2022 was also significant in that those who completed the final months of the course virtually in 2020 were finally welcomed back

to Switzerland for a week of special events and a belated graduation after this had been delayed due to the pandemic.

The last year also saw the course's alumni association ratify a new Code of Conduct for its membership after a year-long project led by the FMA Good Governance and Ethics Task Force. The results from the survey shows the programme already scores close to 94 out of 100 for its Alumni Network.

Another area of strength suggested by this year's data is the average salary earned by graduates from the 2019 class, with the course placing third globally for this metric at \$94,181.

Moving forward, as per the UK government Quality Assurance Agency, the programme is entering its five-year external collaborative review, out of which a new phase of developments for the FIFA Master will evolve. ○

## Thinking beyond the pitch to develop women's football



Heather O'Keeffe is a FIFA Master Alumna 2021 and current revenue strategy and planning trainee at FIFA. The following article shines a light on one of the group projects undertaken by O'Keeffe and some of her classmates from the 2021 FIFA Master edition.

After years of hard work, hustle, and pioneering spirit, women's football has broken into mainstream sports media. Seemingly every week a new spectatorship record is broken at a women's football match. However, this success comes with a big caveat: records are being broken and women's football is making headlines in Europe, North America and Australia. For being widely understood as the world's game, women's football is hardly close to being accepted, much less respected or celebrated, in many parts of the world.

One glaring indicator of this disparity in the acceptance of women's football around the globe is the number of matches played by senior women's national teams. During the last FIFA Women's World Cup cycle (2016–2019), the USA

played 85 matches, Germany played 56 matches, and Nigeria competed in 35 matches, while the Egyptian women's national team played just 12 matches, Honduras played two matches and Armenia did not play a single match. (*chart 1*)

How do we ensure women's football grows around the world? And young girls in Egypt, Honduras and Armenia can cheer on their women's national teams just like young girls in the USA, Germany and Nigeria?

This is exactly what my colleagues (Thomas Grimm, Lorenzo Mazzone, Diana Yonah) and I set out to understand through our thesis during our FIFA Masters studies. We wanted to understand the key reasons for the existing gap between national team strength in women's football through a holistic methodology. We tested four hypotheses against 44 key

performance indicators (KPIs) across five categories: economic, geographic, socio-cultural, political and sporting. By taking a broad, holistic approach, we analysed the implications of broader societal context on the scheduling of women's senior national matches. This research was conducted on a sample of 16 out of 211 FIFA member associations.

The results of the research paint a very clear picture of the state of women's football and the obstacles it faces in becoming mainstream in various cultures and countries around the world.

First, we found a close relationship between economic indicators (e.g. GDP/capita) and the number of matches scheduled for a women's national team. This can be intuitively understood: nations with disposable income can afford to direct public and private funding



to support elite athletes, whereas in financially insecure nations that funding is more urgently needed to provide basic services.

Geographic isolation also proved to be a statistical obstacle to the scheduling of women’s football matches. Countries with a lower International Air Connectivity score have limited access to global air transport, and thus it is more difficult and more expensive to organise travel for senior women’s football matches. For example, there are fewer flight options for the Bhutanese women’s national team to travel for tournaments and friendlies than the Italian women’s national team. **(chart 2)**

In an analysis of socio-cultural obstacles, two clear indicators emerged. Power Distance, a social indicator which quantifies the role and acceptance of hierarchy in a society, had a statistically significant relationship with the scheduling of women’s football matches. Our analysis found that in countries where vertical hierarchies are prevalent, such Egypt, Honduras, Bhutan and Armenia, fewer matches were played than in countries that have a flatter social hierarchy such

as Australia or South Africa. **(chart 3)**

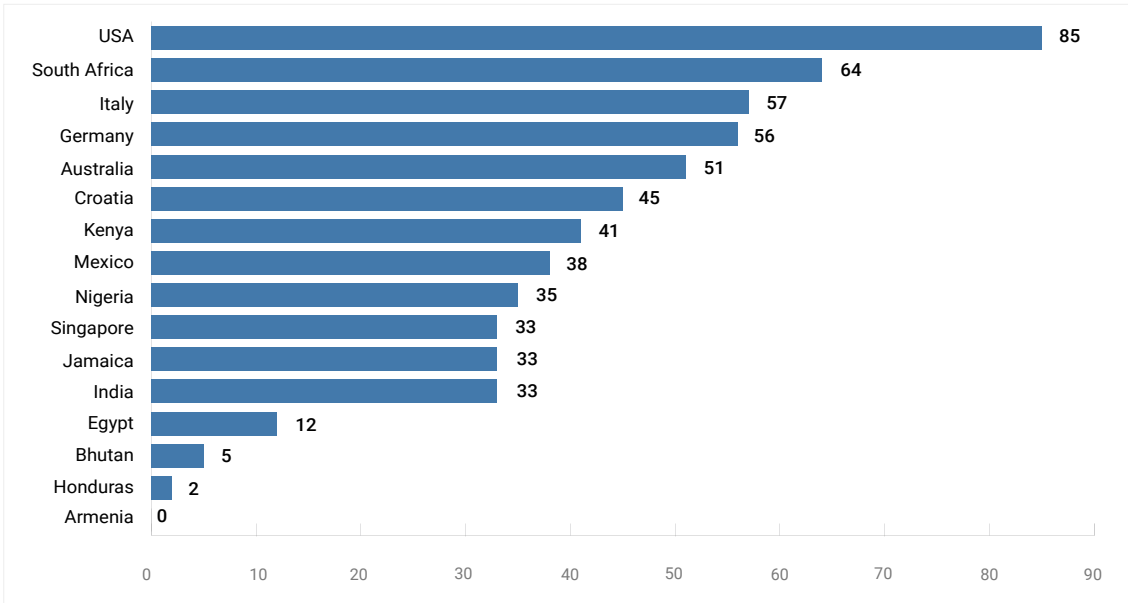
Another noteworthy socio-cultural indicator was the level of LGBT acceptance in a society. Countries and societies which had a higher overall level of LGBT acceptance had more active women’s national teams. This finding was supplemented through interviews with women’s football administrators who described interacting with parents who didn’t want their daughters to play football as they were fearful football would “turn their daughter gay”. This harmful stereotype can position football as a non-desirable activity for girls and young women. **(chart 4)**

This research clearly showed that a variety of factors impact the acceptance and promotion of women’s football. The most startling finding was that the indicators that were statistically significant obstacles for scheduling women’s football matches were not statistically significant for the scheduling of men’s national team matches in the same country. A low GDP/capita, limited ability to travel internationally, or a rigid hierarchy were all surmountable obstacles in the face of men’s national team

programmes. This finding suggests that a lack of willingness to invest in women’s football is perhaps the most significant hurdle to the scheduling of senior women’s national team matches (although a much harder obstacle to quantify). In the end, of the 16 countries analysed, women’s national teams played, on average, 30 per cent less than their male counterparts.

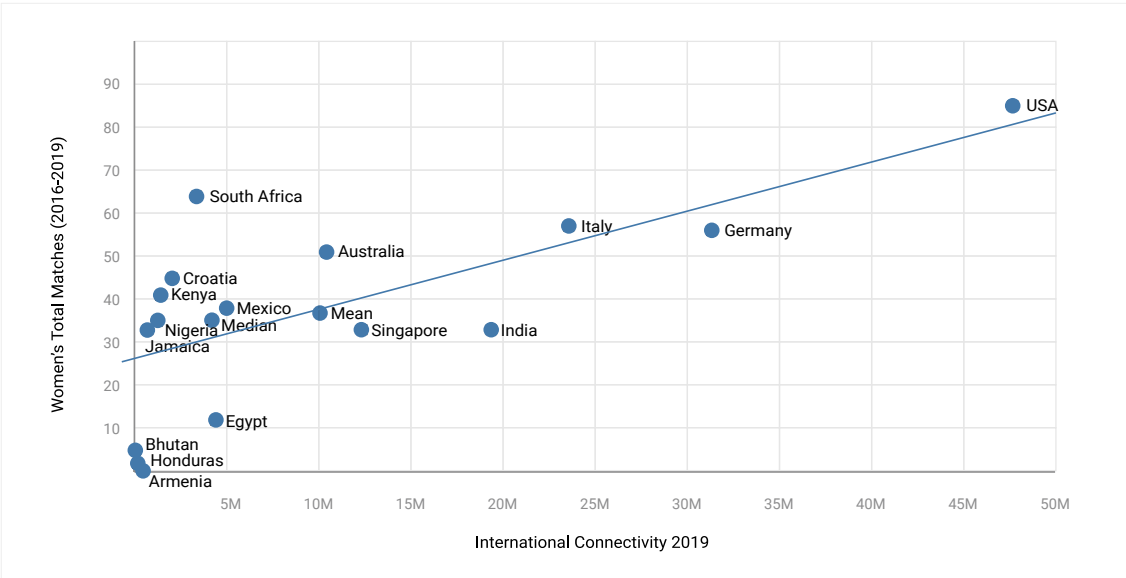
As women’s football continues to grow and develop, special attention must be paid to the broader societal and cultural contexts in which women’s national teams operate. Landmark solutions in one nation are not plug and play solutions in countries with their own unique cultural and financial contexts. Organisations and administrators driving the exceptional growth of women’s football should carry out similar holistic analysis of the societal context to properly identify solutions which will allow women’s football to truly prosper around the world. If we want girls and women to succeed on the pitch, it is imperative to consider the extenuating circumstances impacting women’s football development that extend far beyond the touchline. ○

(chart 1)

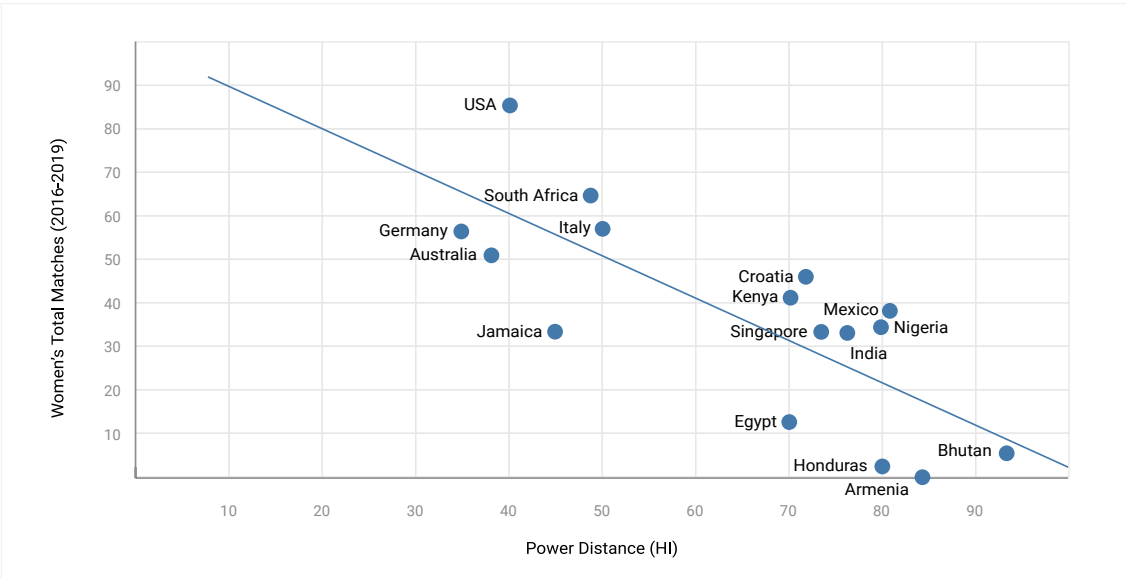


Total number of women’s football matches (2016 – 2019)

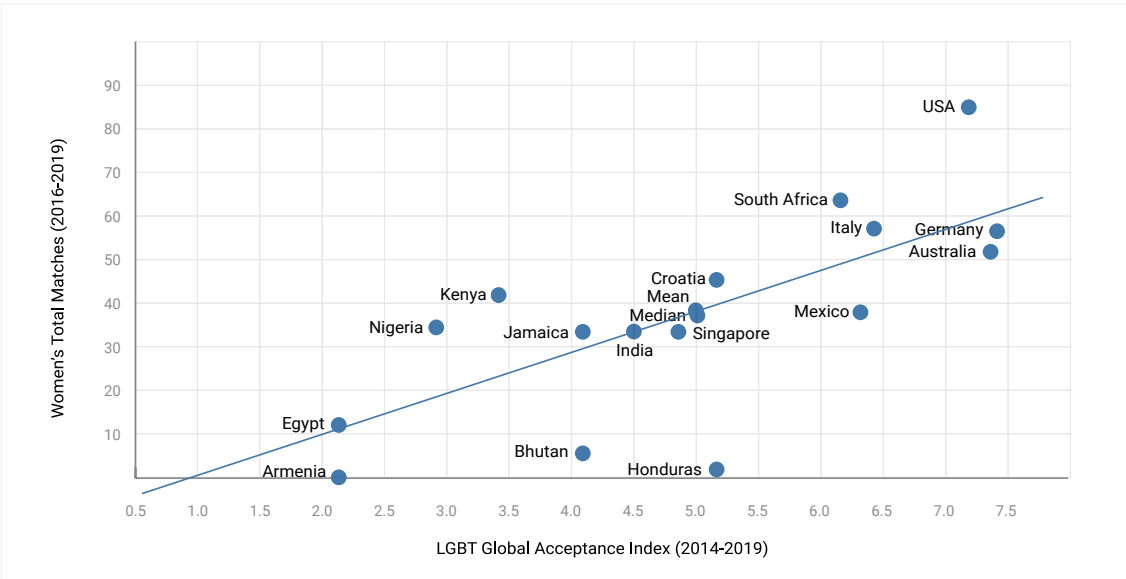
(chart 2)



(chart 3)



(chart 4)





# Rhali Amrani, strategy and analysis director, Qatar 2022

Rhali Amrani completed the FIFA Master in 2012 and took up a role as part of the organising committee behind the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar in the first half of the following year. His current position within the tournament's organisational structure is strategy and analysis director, reporting directly to the CEO.

## Why did you choose to take up a postgraduate degree in sports management?

Back in 2010 when I decided to take up the course, I was a corporate banker in Montreal. My life and career in Montreal was good but I really wanted to get into sport. I've always been a football fan, living and breathing football and I wanted to see how I could live my passion. My brother (also an Alumnus of the FIFA Master since 2004) was a senior administrator of the Confederation of African Football at the time, and I went with him to the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa and was privileged to attend a few matches and meet lots of people, so that experience was incredible and influenced my thinking at the time. I was also very lucky to have full support from my father and eldest brother, which was also a decisive factor.

## What was decisive in selecting the FIFA Master programme as your chosen course?

When I took the decision to take the course it was 2010 and you didn't have many courses offering sports management as a Master's or even MBAs specialised in sport. It was always about getting into football rather than wider sport and the idea of the network the FIFA Master could provide influenced my choice. At any football association in the world there'd be someone you could be connected with and that network has helped me significantly within my career. It was also about giving myself credibility and differentiation within the industry and the FIFA Master was really the quality stamp I needed.

It's been one of the best professional decisions I have ever made. The year you do the Master is incredible. The course was so



diverse in terms of nationalities, it broadened my horizons from a cultural perspective and was an incredible experience. The international angle was always very attractive to me, it was valuable to interact with such a highly diverse class in terms of both culture and mindset.

## How has your time on the course set up and influenced your career path?

The course was one of the main factors that allowed me to be where I am today because it provided me with the tools to hit the ground running in an environment driven by passion rather than profit. The humanities-focused element of the course allowed me to track back to the origin of sports and understand the humanity angle to it. The management module was an easier transition as I had the

banking experience, but the financial metrics don't take into account passion which plays such a huge role in sport. The law element really provided me and helped me build a systematic approach.

After the course, I worked on various small events then I had the opportunity to join the World Cup in early 2013. The reason I waited for months after finishing the course was that I wanted to take time for the right opportunity to be presented to me after such a drastic change in career. When I got the offer from Qatar, I also had a few offers from marketing agencies and other organisations but the Qatar 2022 opportunity stood out for various reasons. I did not know much of Qatar growing up, but their innovative bid prompted a lot of comments about the country and their ability to deliver the tournament. This increased even more my curiosity and attractiveness about the event, apart from the obvious fact that the tournament will be hosted in an Arab country for the first time. I had already the chance to attend the 2010 FIFA World Cup in Africa, I am convinced this tournament will also leave a long-lasting legacy. The opportunity to contribute to this historic event made it something more attractive to me. I also wanted to form my own opinion of Qatar and ten years later, I feel we're about to deliver the greatest ever FIFA World Cup.

## Are there any experiences from your time on the course that stand out as being particularly memorable/influential?

There were many but what really blew my mind was to be able to wake up every morning and meet football club representatives to talk about their experience and collect

their advice. For instance, we went to Bolton Wanderers' stadium and visited the hotel connected to their stadium and the next day we spoke to both Man United and Man City. From a marketing standpoint, both teams were unbelievably strong and amongst the best teams in the world at the time. Another memorable moment was going to Italy and seeing the passion of people with low financial means going to the stadium to support their team every single week no matter the result on the pitch. For instance, I saw a game between AC Milan and Napoli in -2 degrees at the San Siro and everyone was chanting to the last minute despite a quite boring goalless draw.

Once more, what really stuck with me was that passion. I was making a very good living in banking but there was something missing. The FIFA Master and those experiences helped me see that it was that passion factor which was the missing ingredient, with football being so much more

than just kicking a ball around – it involves teamwork, discipline and respect. All those things stuck out for me, especially coming from the corporate financial world. I saw the power of sport in practice here in Qatar – sport is really used as a vehicle to improve and develop society.

## Can you describe how what you learned on the course has been applied to your current role working as part of the organising team for Qatar 2022?

I attended the Monaco GP and Champions League final in 2012. This really stuck in my head because they were two massive events, with such large amounts of people attending, but there were so many opportunities to improve the fan experience and make the events more enjoyable as a whole. I have taken this with me into the current role because this is something we are really focusing on. We want every fan who comes to the 2022 World

Cup to have a positive experience and I was mindful of that time at the Grand Prix and Champions League final when approaching the fan experience challenge.

## What would be your advice to new students starting at on the same course on the FIFA Master this year?

Enjoy every single second because you are about to have the best year of your life in terms of learning, experience, interacting with new cultures and new people and joining the FIFA Master family, which professionally is one of the best things that has happened to me. It taught me many things, including to treat everyone with respect and to not focus on outperforming others because there's enough space for everyone to succeed. Always have an open mind, taking into account differing opinions. Ultimately, when I think back about the Master I always have a smile on my face. O



Lusail National Stadium, a host venue for the Qatar 2022 FIFA World Cup and the final.



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## MasterSport International Masters in Strategic Management of Sports Organisations, Events and Facilities



**L**aunched in 1996, the masterSport programme once again takes a place among the top three courses in Europe in the Postgraduate Rankings, rising one place to second after finishing third in 2021.

The course, which is jointly based at the University of San Marino and University of Parma, has featured in the European top 10 in every year since the launch of the rankings in 2011.

Its initial foundation was based on the desire of a group of senior Italian sports executives to establish a sports education platform that gave students an opportunity to learn directly from senior figures in the industry. The programme has since stayed true to its Italian roots, continuing to be taught in Italian

with the vast majority of its cohort coming from the country.

The head of masterSport is Marco Brunelli, who is also secretary general of the Italian Football Federation. Brunelli has held the role since the course's inception. There is a permanent faculty of around 10 professionals each year underpinning the course, made up of academics who have run regular courses in other universities and teach individual modules on the masterSport programme.

This is augmented by what the course's organisers see as its central characteristic, its ability to bring the real-world experience of the sports industry to its curriculum via guest speakers. The course hosts 80 to 90 professionals from the industry each year. The interaction with industry is

further solidified by a project which centres on a placement within an organisation, which concludes the course.

In terms of performance on the metrics that comprise this year's Postgraduate Rankings survey, the masterSport scores particularly well on Quality of Curriculum, scoring third globally with a total of 93.33. Moreover, it is placed first globally on the Career Advancement metric with a score of 93.06. The programme also excels on the Industry Network measure, with a score of 98.33.

Next year, 2023, a new chapter of masterSport's history will begin, with the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia joining as a partner university, with the University of San Marino also retaining its role within the course. ○



# From glory to tears in eight months: so what can we say about Italian football?

**Niccolò Donna**, head of FIGC Research & Development and chief of the Italian Football Module (MasterSport - University of Parma & University of San Marino) discusses the profile of Italian Football and the strategic assets to focus on, in order to enhance the growth of calcio.

When Roberto Mancini's Italy won the European Championships at Wembley, overcoming England to claim their second continental title, it seemed as if Italian football had restated itself as a force in the world game. However, ecstasy was to turn to sadness only 256 days later. On 24 March 2022 in Palermo the Azzurri were defeated by North Macedonia in the 2022 World Cup playoffs, meaning that Italy would be missing out on the world's most prestigious football tournament for a second successive occasion.

In light of this rollercoaster of emotions, what conclusions can we draw from the current state of Italian football?

## A strategic asset for the Italian economy

The FIGC-run module as part of the postgraduate MasterSport programme has presented a snapshot of Italian football, revealing it in numerical terms to be an important industrial sector and a strategic asset: there are 30 million fans (all of the top 50 most viewed programmes in the history of Italian television are football matches), 4.6 million participants, 1 million FIGC members (which if it were a municipality would be the third biggest in Italy by population, after Rome and Milan), a turnover of €5bn (12 per cent of world football's GDP) and 12 product sectors involved in the value activation chain, with an impact on GDP of €10.2bn and 112,000 jobs created. In the last 14 years, football's tax and social security contributions amounted to €15.5bn; for every euro invested by the Italian government in football, the country's economy has received a return of €18.3 in terms of tax and social security contributions.



While these numbers testify to the relevance of football, it is evident that the sport is still yet to fully realise its potential.

## Loss of competitiveness

The sport's decline is nothing recent: the 1990s saw Italian teams reach seven consecutive Champions League finals (winning two of them) and the following decade (2001-10) saw five final appearances and three victories. However, between 2011 and 2022, there have only been two finals and three semi-finals, with no trophies, in comparison to Spain (19 semi-final appearances, seven victories), England (11 semi-final appearances, three victories) and Germany (10 semi-final appearances, two victories). The last time an Italian club won a European competition was back in 2010, when Inter won their fabled triple (Champions League, Serie A and Coppa Italia).

This is a reflection of the gradual weakening of Italian clubs' financial dimension, with Serie A sides less able to compete with their La Liga, Bundesliga and Premier League counterparts in the transfer market to sign top players. The change in fortunes is most greatly exemplified by the widening gap with the English

game: in the 1992-93 season, the Premier League's inaugural campaign, the competition had a turnover amounting to half of Serie A's (€390m compared with over €700m), while in 2020-21 Premier League clubs had a turnover of more than double the Italian top flight: €5.1bn compared with €2bn. Considering the media rights, the main source of revenues in both leagues by far, in 2021-22 Norwich City FC, last-placed team in Premier League, had more turnover than Inter, the champions in Italy; €116m for the English club, €84 million the Italian one.

## Stadiums: a crucial issue

The difficulties which have caused this scenario are no secret. They stem from a short-term oriented managerial vision which penalises investment in "virtuous" assets, starting from sporting infrastructures: 187 stadiums were built across Europe between 2007 and 2021, totalling an investment of €21.7bn; however this only includes five in Italy (Juventus, Udinese, Frosinone, Albinoleffe and Südtirol). This equates to just 1 per cent of the total investments in Europe, meaning that the current scenario is far from ideal: the average age of a stadium is 60 years and only 7 per cent are privately owned.

However, the growth potential is notable, with 13 new stadium projects in the planning stage, including at important clubs such as AC Milan-Inter and Roma, with a total investment of €2.5bn. Should Italy be named as the host nation for Uefa Euro 2032 then such renovation would be furthered.

## Starting again with young Italian talent

A crucial aspect concerns the exploitation of youth talent. Italian

youth national teams have shown their quality in recent years, reaching four U19 and U17 European Championships finals, finishing third and fourth in U20 World Cups and achieving their best historical ranking. On the other hand, the glass ceiling between youth and senior teams persists: in Serie A Italian U21 players account for just 1.5 per cent of the total playing time, compared to 35.9 per cent of Italian over-21s, 59.5 per cent of foreign over-21s and 3.1 per cent of foreign U21s. This unsustainable talent dispersion prompted the Italian football federation (FIGC) to implement some projects, such as the training path for footballers of national interest, with many others in the offing: a system of federal academies, the reorganisation of the youth sectors, the introduction of a rating system for youth teams and the improvement of FIGC scouting.

## Financial sustainability

There are extremely worrying signs for the financial sustainability of professional football. In the 12 pre-Covid years, the sector was consistently in the red, amassing €4.1bn losses. It's a structural crisis connected to unsustainable player

wages, accelerated by the pandemic: in the two seasons which have been impacted by Covid-19 the aggregate loss was equal to €2.2bn (€878m in 2019-20 and over €1.3bn in 2020-21), while debts rose from €4.8bn in 2018-19 to almost €5.4bn in 2020-21. These figures were influenced by the stadium closures (23.1 million lost spectators and €513.3m less revenues from unsold tickets), costs associated with health protocols, but also the continuous increase in salaries and amortisations.

However, Italian football remains attractive to foreign investors, with 23 overseas owners, including the recent American acquisitions of Atalanta, Milan, Roma and Fiorentina. But the alarm bells are still ringing and must not go unheeded; the objective of the path to reform that the FIGC is developing attempts to bring stability to the sector, with the introduction of progressively more stringent indicators and controls, inspired by the new principles introduced internationally by UEFA.

## The value of investing in human capital for the future of Italian football

This data testifies the value of

Italian football and its untapped potential. It underscores the need to take a new direction, including at a managerial level. There are numerous case studies which testify the added value of investing in Human Capital within sports organisations, and one of these concerns the FIGC itself and its business area. Since 2019, the FIGC has internalised the commercial functions previously delegated to an external advisor, investing in young, well-trained staff members with an international profile, coming in part from the masterSport. The roster has grown from seven to 25 people in the last four years, with extraordinary results: the revenues deriving from sponsorships in the four-year period 2019-22 grew by 22.9 per cent compared to 2015-18, up by €36 million.

The FIGC case testifies how investing in a new generation of young sports management figures trained through specific courses of excellence is a fundamental step and a new starting point for the future and the aim of building a footballing model which is able to increasingly combine on-the-pitch results, financial sustainability and social impact. ○





# Niccolò Donna, head of research and development, FIGC

After graduating in Economics at the SAA in Turin, **Niccolò Donna** earned the International Master of Sport Management. He has worked at Juventus FC and Lega Serie A, before joining the Italian Football Association (FIGC) in 2011. He had a role of Bid Dossier Coordinator for the FIGC's bidding for UEFA EURO 2020 for the 2019 UEFA European Championship Under 21. As well as teaching on the masterSport course, he currently holds the role of Head of Research and Development for the FIGC, and he is the author of the main publications aimed at representing the figures of Italian football, the main trends in progress and the strategic profile of FIGC, such as ReportCalcio, the Italian FA's Integrated Report and The Income Statement of Italian Football.

## Why did you choose to take up a postgraduate qualification in sports management?

After my first professional experience at Juventus, I realised that I wanted to work in sport but I also thought I needed some specific training in top-level sports management before I could seriously start out on such a career path. The sports sector is rather peculiar: it works very differently to nearly all the other traditional economic and industrial sectors. I thought I needed to learn more about this fascinating but complicated world before I could potentially become a part of it.

## What was decisive in selecting the programme in question as your chosen course?

MasterSport offered the best teaching programme and I was particularly interested in the lecturers, some of whom were also involved in the FIFA Master – another course I would have liked to attend. I was impressed by the overall organisation, which was clear from the initial application and selection process for the course, and most of all the high percentage of placements with leading Italian and international sports organisations. From the very first interview I had in San Marino, I knew it was the right choice. I found a common language with the other candidates and the professors of the selection committee, and this feeling of being in sync remained throughout the Master. I thoroughly enjoyed it from a professional and personal point of view.

## Are there any experiences from your time on the course that

## stand out as being particularly important to your development?

I think where MasterSport most aided my development was helping me work out which specific areas I was most interested in within the world of sport. Nowadays sports organisations have a vast range of strategic objectives and activities and the Master was key in helping me understand that I should go down the path of researching and studying economic, financial and strategic profiles within the sector. I loved the topics in the lessons on sport's industrial profile. That is what has enabled me to combine one of my great passions with my work – a privilege many people do not enjoy. That was the greatest gift the MasterSport gave me.

## How often do you use what you learnt on the course in your work at the Italian Football Association? Can you provide some examples?

The knowledge and skills I learnt during the lessons on the football industry, on business models and balance-sheet analysis enabled me to later take up a position at the FIGC Study Centre and produce official FIGC publications like ReportCalcio (which for the last 12 years has analysed the state of Italian football, partially through comparisons on the international stage). More generally, MasterSport was crucial for my personal and professional development. It helped me build up a network of contacts with companies and people working in the sector which is still very useful to this day.

## What made you decide to become

## a junior professor on the course and contribute to its teaching?

I began teaching almost immediately after I finished my MasterSport, giving lessons on the business models of Europe's top five football leagues, based on my end-of-course dissertation. In the years that followed, my work at the FIGC Study Centre enabled me to expand the topics I covered in lessons. More recently I've had the honour of setting up a "Calcio" Module as part of the MasterSport curriculum which is the result of a strategic partnership with FIGC. It means there's more in-depth analysis of the different areas within FIGC and students get to see the bigger picture: analysis of the international landscape in the value creation processes of football organisations, and a specific case history of the biggest Italian Sports Federation.

## What would be your advice to new students starting on the same course this year?

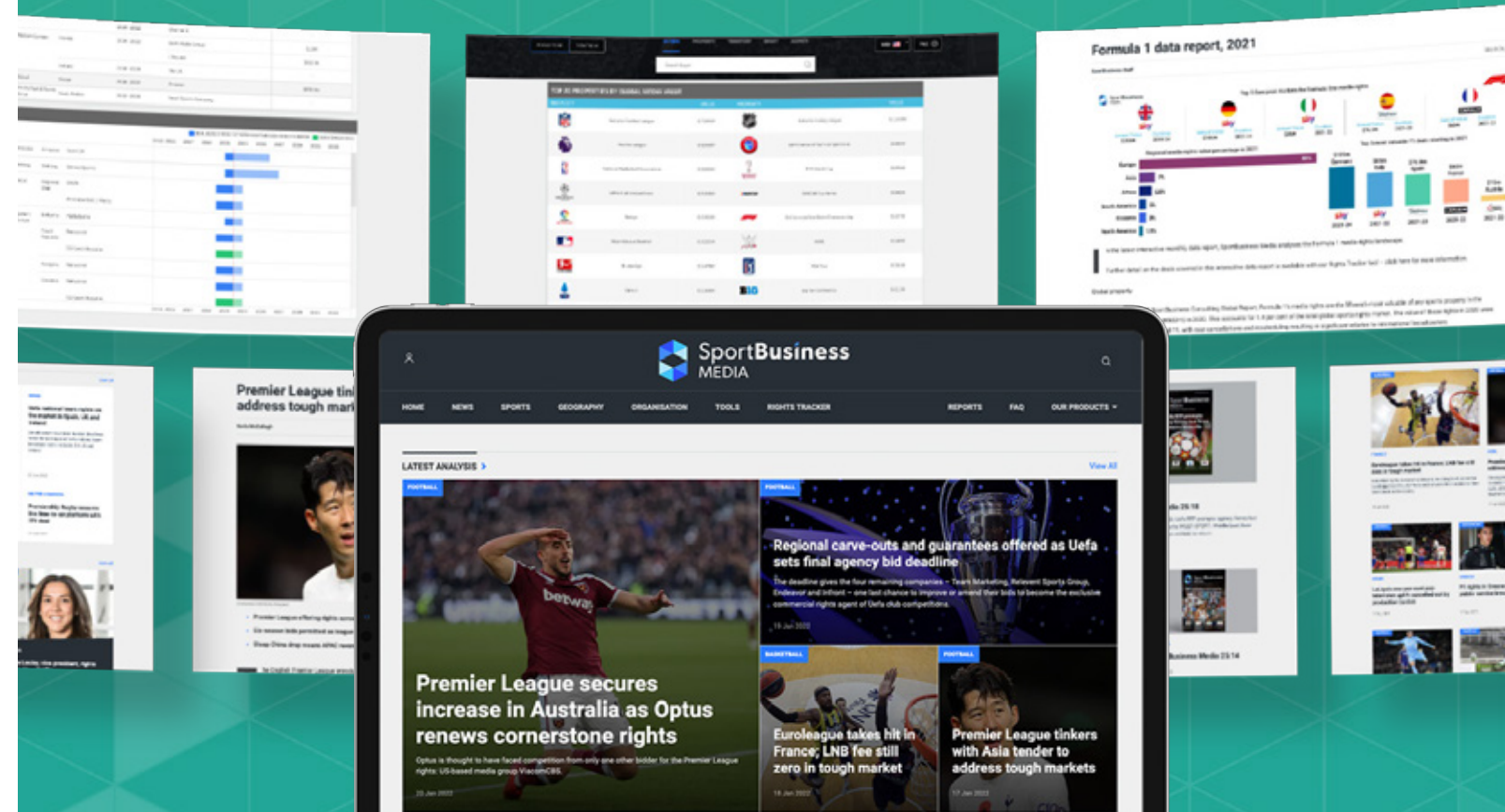
Make the most of this opportunity to take part in a fantastic learning experience, both in terms of the lessons themselves and the quality of life in the cities hosting the courses. Above all, make sure you use the experience to lay the foundations for your own career in the world of sport. My personal advice would be to try to interact with the professors as much as possible during lessons. It's often the case that when a student asks a question or makes an observation and shows an aptitude for critical analysis, the professor bears it in mind in their assessment of the student, which can help in planning the placement process. ○

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## European Sport Business School–Master in International Sports Management



The European Sport Business School (ESBS) Master in International Sports Management, run in partnership with Spanish football club Valencia CF, enters the European top three for the first time since 2019.

Since 2021, ESBS has partnered with and become part of the eco-system of Amos Sport Business School, one of the largest sport management training groups in Europe.

The Master in International Sports Management was initially launched in 2009, with Valencia CF involved from its inception. The link to the

LaLiga club is leveraged within the course, with classes taking place at the Mestalla stadium and the club's sporting complex.

As well as in-person teaching, the course is offered both online and in hybrid format, while it is also available to be studied in both English and Spanish.

The lecturers who teach on the course are sports industry professionals with a minimum of 10 years' experience. Employability is a significant focus of the structure of the programme. This emphasis is reflected in the results of the Postgraduate Rankings survey, with

the course among the top scorers on the current employment metric, achieving 95.83.

There is also an emphasis placed on adapting the curriculum to recent trends in the sports industry, with topics such as blockchains in sport recently introduced to the programme. This is perhaps influential in the course placing fourth worldwide on the skills applicability metric, with a score of 87.5.

In 2022, ESBS announced it will take its total of campuses in Spain to two by opening an additional hub in Madrid. ○

## The role of women in the sports industry

**Carmen Ruano** is the academic director of the ESBS Master in International Sports Management, as well as being a lecturer on the course for a module entitled 'The Role of Women in the Sports Industry'. Ruano has a PHD in Sports Science and was previously a lecturer at Universidad Miguel Hernández and Universidad de Alicante.

According to the World Bank, 49.6 per cent of the world's population are women.

If we used a mathematical or statistical vision, we could think that the proportion of women who practise sports, or who are dedicated to the world of sport business, could move in similar numbers.

But that is too far away from reality.

### Participation of Women in Sport

1967. It was the year in which the first woman participated in a marathon. And not because women were able to do it, but because an individual woman managed to sneak around the ban that the race management of the Boston Marathon imposed.

Fortunately, the vision of women's participation in sport, especially in the Western market, and increasingly around the world, is changing. Sports practice is a growing trend, with average growth rates in sports practice of between six and 10 per cent in the last five years. Now, it's totally normal to see women participating in sports competitions or practising physical activities in their leisure time.

Despite that, there are big differences still. According to Eurostat, the rate of sports activity (at least 150 minutes a week) is 35.7 per cent among men and 26.2 per cent among women. However, there are large differences between countries: only five EU countries have a higher percentage of active women than men in their population. We can find one "exception": the world of esports, where this gap seems to be reduced. According to Statista, in 2021, 46 per cent of the players in the USA were women. In Asia, similar numbers are shown.



How could we explain that? Maybe because it's a newer market, that is not affected by a historical stigma? Maybe.

### Women and Sports Science

Another trending question is related to sports science: Do women perform the same as men? Should women and men train in the same way? Maybe not, or at least not in all cases. Despite the increase in the number of sportswomen at all levels, scientific research is mostly carried out with a male sample and has not yet considered the influence of female biological features (such as the menstrual cycle) and their possible influence on performance. Fortunately, more articles are emerging around this topic and there is a growing interest in this trend.

### Women and Sports: Trending

### Topic Nowadays?

"Women in sports" is a leading topic in today's society. Here are some facts:

In 2021, according to Forbes, the 10 best paid women athletes earned a total of \$166.6 million, an increase of 20 per cent on the previous year.

According to a Nielsen Report in 2022, 61 per cent of US sport fans name "gender equality" among the causes that make them passionate about sports. That can be linked to the fight of the US women's national soccer team players to close the salary gap, a story that was covered by media all around the world.

The media coverage of events also holds a key role. A new TV deal in the UK in 2021 made it easier to watch the women's football Super League and led to a 542 per cent increase in TV viewers. In the US, an increase in the coverage of the NCAA Women's Basketball Tournament doubled the audience in 2021 compared to 2019.

### Women in Sport Business

These numbers were just a small sample of the growth and potential that women's sport has within the sport business. Despite this, how many women do you know in "positions of responsibility" in the sports industry?

Maybe the first answer that comes to our mind has been something like: only a few.

Cynthia Marshall, Kim Ng, Nicole Lynn, Laura Martínez or Elaia Gangoiti. If we read those names, maybe, they don't sound very familiar. However, they are, respectively: CEO of Dallas Mavericks, General Manager of Miami Marlins, the first female to represent an NFL Agency and the presidents of Athletic de Bilbao CF in Spain.

Women hold positions of responsibility in between 10 and 20



per cent of the total positions in the sports industry field, depending on the country. Although in the last 10 years, the figure has tripled.

Why can't we find more women in those top positions in sport business?

There is no single answer to this question and it is surely the result of a combination of different factors: social stigma, lack of motivation, lack of support, lack of references, and many other "lacks".

Now comes the most important question, how can we change that?

Again, the answer is not simple, but one of the most powerful means can be education. Through education, we have the power to change the world, and thus the role of women in the sports society.

Only 13 per cent of the students in sports business postgraduate programmes are female. However, their employability rate is the same or even higher than males.

This could be explained with the change of mindset of

some organisations, who are now prioritising competences, technological skills and attitude of people above gender. Moreover, they're giving priority in hiring more women, in order to close the gender gap in their employees.

We can find business schools such as ESBS and AMOS, where we work to encourage women to fight to reach their goals in the sports business. Roland Garros, Major League Soccer, Redbull, Valencia CF, JC Ferrero Equelite Sport Academy or FIBA, among others, are some of the organisations where our female graduates are currently working, occupying positions of responsibility.

In addition, we lead by example, with a staff of 64 per cent women in the Spanish Campuses. Every year the proportion of women on our list of lecturers increases. They contribute with their knowledge to the teaching of undergraduate and master's students, thus fighting for gender equity in the sector.

### The Future of Women in the Sports Industry

It's a fact that women have still a lot to say within the sports world. The rise in involvement is huge, but so is the gap that we can find in comparison to men. There are lots of things to do yet, and education is the key.

Concerned professionals in sports organisations, clubs and media, are essential to lead the change and close the gender gap, but we shouldn't forget where we come from. It's really important to raise children with a mindset where careers are not associated with gender, but with the passion that moves people.

Now, it's time for some personal reflection. What role do you think women play in sport business? Do you think it should change? And the most important one: what are you going to do, from your own position, to realise that change? Once you have some answers to those questions, it's time to act. ○

## Simon Hernandez Oramas, commercial analyst, Kosmos Tennis

Simon Hernandez Oramas completed his Master's Degree in International Sports Management at the European Sport Business School in 2019. He has since worked at Club de Tennis Valencia, Goiko Games and took up a position as commercial analyst at Kosmos Tennis in May 2022.

### Why did you choose to take up a postgraduate qualification in sports management?

Well, I took this decision because sports always has been a fundamental pillar for my journey. Since day one, my parents wanted sports to play an important role in my life, and that happened. In 2012 I had the opportunity to move to the US because of a soccer scholarship and earn my undergrad degree. After I finished my last university soccer season, I didn't really know what to do with my life. I was asking myself, should I focus my career in marketing? Finance? What industry should I focus on? Should I stay in NYC? Should I go back to Venezuela? Many questions came to my mind, and the reality was that I didn't really know what to do with my professional career.

One day, a college friend invited me to watch Real Madrid's training at the Red Bull Arena in Harrison, NJ. The first moment I got the chance to see the stadium, I knew I wanted to work there. A few months later, I graduated and started looking for jobs in sports or anything related to marketing – I sent hundreds of emails with no replies. One day, I checked on [teamworkonline.com](https://www.teamworkonline.com), an opening for the New York Red Bulls position; I applied and got my first real job in the sports industry and since day one at the job I knew I wanted to do a postgraduate in sports management.

### What was decisive in selecting the ESBS programme as the best option for you?

I considered many things, for example, professors, programme, city/country, job opportunities, alumni, ranking, etc. ESBS was the perfect fit for what I was looking for, and I believe this decision depends



a lot on each individual situation. However, in my personal experience, I also thought that ESBS partnering with Fundación Valencia CF was going to give me an important insight into how a top LaLiga club was operating.

### Are there any experiences from your time on the course that were particularly influential in your development?

My internship with Club de Tennis Valencia was an experience from my time at ESBS that stood out. This internship specifically introduced me to the world of tennis. In this case, I was able to

organise a professional women's ITF tournament, which is now a WTA. Having the experience on my CV is key to working for Kosmos Tennis now.

### How often do you utilise what you learnt on the course within your work at Kosmos tennis? Can you provide some examples?

Every day, we are constantly looking for new partners for the Davis Cup and new innovative ideas/assets we could offer them, and this is just a small part of many KPIs (key performance indicators) we have.

### What would be your advice to new students starting on the same course this year?

Many people have a passion for this industry, and sometimes we forget to be humble and open-minded because we are so focused on finding a specific job in an organisation, and that mistake closes our possibilities in our personal and professional life. Be ready to learn from everyone, especially your professors and future classmates, and don't miss any opportunity you get. ○



Graduates of the ESBS Master in International Sports Management celebrate at Valencia's Mestalla stadium



Action from the 2022 Davis Cup match between Spain and Korea Republic in Valencia.



## Engaging Esports



SportBusiness speaks to **Jason Chung**, the man helping to craft New York University's approach to esports education, and **Rick Burton**, David B. Falk Professor of Sport Management at Syracuse University, about the challenges universities and academics face in teaching esports – and some of the practices they recommend to deal with them. We also hear from **Matteo Masini** of masterSport to hear about how the institute responded to industry interest to create an esports-focused masters.

There's no truly comprehensive and up-to-date textbook and even if there was it's going to be obsolete in five minutes." These are the words of Jason Chung, who set up the Business of Esports course, offered as part of New York University's (NYU) MS in Sports Business, before creating the world's first fully online esports business Masters degree programme at the University of New Haven. He has now returned to NYU and taken on his current position as director of the university's Esports and Gaming Initiative.

His thoughts speak to one of the several challenges and questions educational institutions are facing when it comes to teaching esports management – aligning teaching to trends in a highly dynamic and burgeoning space.

There's no denying the eye-catching potential of esports. The latest research by SkyQuest Technology indicates that the global esports market was valued at \$1.08bn (€1.08bn) in 2021 and is



Jason Chung, director, Esports and Gaming Initiative, New York University.

expected to reach a value of \$2.8bn USD by 2028, at a compound annual growth rate of 14.5 per cent over the forecast period (2022–2028).

Around the globe, educational institutions are grappling with how to harness this potential juggernaut and provide meaningful options for students wishing to focus their studies on this space. Research published in September 2021 in the International Journal of Esports showed there to be 10 bespoke esports/esports management

masters in operation at the time. Many more institutions offer modules or classes focused on the subject.

Chung is one of those involved in shaping the future of the approach at NYU. His view on how to ensure teaching is aligned to the most relevant trends in esports is centred on people and industry engagement.

Chung says: "Ensuring relevancy comes down to the people you have in the programme and the relationships you have. I've focused a lot of capital and time on bringing the right people in to teach and to bringing in real-world examples and consulting projects.

"It's also about understanding the importance of not fetishising the subject matter, if an esports course has that business element then students still need to understand business principles, be able to present, work with clients and so on. So it's about understanding and sourcing the right people who can focus on the most relevant topic areas and then having the confidence to execute on that

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education by leveraging existing resources and knowledge bases as well.”

When crafting the Online Masters at the University of New Haven, Chung struck multiple partnerships with industry organisations to bolster the curriculum with real-world examples. He says: “I think any time you’re teaching applied business, having real-world and project-based learning is critical. Don’t just think that of this as an esports and gaming thing, it is a general higher education thing.

“In esports and gaming, experiential learning is even more critical, because what else will we teach? We are just starting to get publicly traded esports organisations, we are just starting to get financials, so if I’m going to create an esports finance class, what am I relying on? Where are the materials? So ultimately you do need that industry engagement, just to get the content that you need to teach in a meaningful way.”

Rick Burton, David B. Falk Professor of Sport Management at Syracuse University and the former Commissioner of Australia’s National Basketball League, arrives at the subject of esports education from a slightly different angle, as someone who has been involved in the traditional sports industry for decades. However, referring to the esports module he currently teaches, he agrees with Chung’s sentiments.

Burton says: “The biggest part is incorporating practitioners and organisations into the class and having them provide assignments that relate to their organisation’s current initiatives. I’ve worked with the likes of ESL and Copa90 for this purpose and therefore we rely less on me being a sole lecturer and look to involve industry professionals to ensure the class is at the cutting edge of the space.”

### People supply presents challenge

While a strong industry network can be crucial for the success of esports education, there is a challenge in terms of the supply of academics suited to teach the subject at the higher education level. The demographics of the teaching base dictate that most

experienced academics in the sports management space haven’t grown up with esports and gaming at the forefront of their experience and have instead more often been entrenched in the traditional sports industry via their education and professional experience.

There is also an issue around attracting people to teaching positions in the space. Chung says: “There are not a lot of people in general qualified to teach it and certainly not a lot of professionals who are willing take a pay cut to teach it depending on where a programme sits within an institution’s organisational structure. The question around attracting the right people to teach often comes secondary for a lot of places to the economic potential of establishing a programme. My advice would be that attracting the right people is the entire economic element. You can have great initial demographics and enrolment but if you don’t have the personnel and resources to exploit that or expand on that you’re barking up the wrong tree.”

With supply perhaps not meeting demand in terms of esports-focused academics, there is the question of how those more versed in traditional sports can excel in teaching the subject. For Burton, part of the answer to achieving this is found in increasing the involvement of students in the actual teaching process. He says: “Teaching esports has to be more Socratic than with traditional sports. I’ve found students that already had expertise in the area and were more informed than I was, so I’ve asked them to help teach and it’s exciting.”

“For a lot of faculty, that might be a scary concept. To give up the power and authority, but there’s an empowerment to it. If I have a student with prior knowledge teaching about League of Legends I can then put something about the subject on a test. All of sudden, the information imparted by the students’ peer was something I could test on and it helps my students pay that much more attention, whereas if I tried to talk about it off the cuff I just wouldn’t have that latent knowledge and

therefore true authority on the subject.”

On the subject of traditional sport management professors teaching esports, Chung adds: “I think the key here is authenticity and honesty. That’s a tentpole of just all interaction with Gen Z audiences.

“Authenticity really matters here. If you go in saying, ‘I’m the cock of the walk and I know everything about esports after reading a textbook,’ they’re going to figure you out right away but if you go in and you say, ‘I don’t really watch esports for fun, but I understand and am researching the business fundamentals of the industry, how it interacts with other stakeholders, and I can teach you on that front,’ that is fine. If you also say, ‘I am exploring the space and I am doing it with you,’ that is also valuable.”

The second-highest ranked institution in Europe in the 2022 Postgraduate Rankings, masterSport is one of the organisations that has taken the step of launching a degree in eSports management at the Postgraduate level.

In response to interest from its industry partners, including some of Italy’s biggest football clubs, the Italian Football Federation and the Italian Olympic Committee, the masterSport staff began studying the esports space and launched its masterSport, the first master’s degree in the esports market within Italy, in 2018. Like the original masterSport course, the degree was designed and built with the input of professionals and experts from the industry.

Mateo Masini, masterSport coordinator, said: “At the moment, specializing in a sector like esports management is a great opportunity because the esports sector is booming, especially in Italy, having started late compared to the UK and northern Europe, and has a continuous search for new professional figures. Studying the sector, getting to know the dynamics that animate it, getting to know the universe that revolves around the global phenomenon, getting into the details of the Italian system and being able to do it with constant confrontation with professionals makes the master Esports a unique

experience on the national scene and offers the opportunity for enthusiasts to approach the job market with knowledge and tools.

“The response from the students was, and still is, incredible. Since its creation in 2018 we have already produced 5 editions and all have sold out thanks to partnerships with industry players who have given us their support in the implementation of the initiative and in the story of the project.”

### Bespoke approach to gain popularity?

Although there are notable exceptions such as masterSport, it is noteworthy that despite the esports market already accelerating past the \$1bn mark, there are still a limited number of degrees currently available for students at the postgraduate level.

Is this because more traditional sports management degrees that offer an esports module are satisfying student interest? And is this model sufficient in terms of preparing the next generation of esports commercial leaders to cope with the market’s predicted growth?

Chung said: “There’s no problem with sports management degrees offering components on esports and obviously no problem with the

bespoke model; it really comes down to how the subject matter is treated. I think there are some places that will take a sport management degree, slap an e in front of it and recycle 90 per cent of the same courses to claim a new degree programme. That is not something I ascribe to, but there is a lot of overlap where it makes sense to have economies of scale, where it makes sense for students to learn about the wider sports industry. At the same time you must understand it is a different industry as well.

“You have to understand the culture, the market dynamics, the stakeholders within it and achieving that within the programme properly is the most important thing.”

Looking to the future, Burton and Chung agree that a greater volume of bespoke esports degrees is inevitable, with several institutions featured in the 2022 Postgraduate Rankings actively building a greater presence with regards to esports. NYU’s re-hiring of Chung is evidence of its interest in developing its offerings to the market, with this remit primarily focused on helping cultivate and develop the university’s strategy in regards to its offering in the esports space.

Meanwhile, global third-placed Vinik Sport and Entertainment

Management programme has hosted an annual esports summit for the last three years at USF, with programme director Michelle Harrolle writing about the approach of the programme to esports education in the 2021 Postgraduate Rankings.

Chung summarised: “It’s inevitable we’ll see more and more bespoke esports degrees at the postgraduate level. Colleagues and friends within the industry have been charting this in North America, but also in the UK and globally. As responsible organisations, institutions will go where enrolment is and tuition dollars are.

“It’s key, though, to understand that it’s not a field of dreams situation, where if you build it they will come. You need to put money and weight behind it and a lot of unis are finding that out the hard way. The interest is there, we’re still early in the progression but we do anticipate massive growth, just as sport and entertainment programmes have been growing over the past years. But organisations have to understand where they are in the geographic market, mindset market and whether you are able to place students in industry and make connections. If you can’t do that, it’s hard to justify a programme.” ○



Speakers at the 2019 USF Esports Summit



# How improving infrastructure procurement frameworks can enhance the integrity of international sport events and reduce corruption risks

Loughborough University's **Dr Alex Thurston**, part of an international team of researchers (led by Sue Arrowsmith QC (Hon), Prof Emerita, University of Nottingham and recent expert advisor to the International Partnership against Corruption in Sport (IPACS) ) who worked on a mapping project in conjunction with the OECD, writes about how adhering to internationally accepted procurement integrity frameworks and standards helps sport practitioners mitigate integrity risks and, consequently, potential corruption risks inherently linked to international sport event procurement (ISEP).

Full research team		
<a href="#">University of Nottingham School of Law</a> Sue Arrowsmith (lead) Joshua Idoko Steve Kay Jorge Faria Lopes Carlos Sebastian Barreto Cifuentes Ke Ren Ashraf-Ul-Bari Nobel Astghik Solomanyan	<a href="#">Bayley &amp; Associates</a> Ruth Bayley  <a href="#">University of Lodz Department of European Economic Law</a> Anna Górczyńska, Izabella Sobieraj  <a href="#">Stellenbosch University Faculty of Law</a> Geo Quinot	<a href="#">National University of Public Service Faculty of Political Science and International Studies</a> Gábor Soós  <a href="#">Loughborough University School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences</a> Dr Alex Thurston

The first thing to say when it comes to international sport event procurement,” Thurston explains, “is that, surprisingly, there is little research on it. Yet, understanding international sport event procurement (ISEP) is useful for many reasons.”

Notably, while the procurement activities and objectives largely align with public sector procurement in broad terms, the ‘one off’ nature of international sport events often means host governments have little-to-no organizational memory to optimally manage them. It is therefore important to facilitate this memory wherever possible. Similarly, the ‘once in a lifetime’ context can deter potential event bidders that deem the risks involved in meeting unmovable deadlines and/or the pressures that come from international visibility, too high. This can lead to smaller pools of procurement bids submitted and not necessarily from the best suitors. Subsequently, bids with the lowest projected costs are invariably chosen over bids that offer the best value for



public finances. Yet, in the end, costs often spiral and event budgets are blown. As such, a general understanding of how potential ISEP bidders balance risks and rewards, and how ‘value’ is considered in bids has practical worth for many sport organizations. In addition, complex institutional relationships involving local organizing event committees, international federations, and national and regional governments (among others), can negatively impact procurement procedures. Therefore, knowing where the sources of procurement inefficiencies lie can help deliver international sport events on time and on budget. However, as Thurston reveals, “when the multi-faceted and nuanced factors involved in ISEP are considered together, the integrity of internationally accepted procurement practices can be compromised. Indeed, political involvement itself can result in entrenched corruption, making it difficult to address ISEP

integrity issues through standard transparency mechanisms used across the world.” To this end, an infrastructure procurement mapping study (e.g., of stadiums and swimming pools, athlete accommodation, event-related transport facilities) of 14 international sport events+ over a 10-year period highlights where possible integrity procurement issues lie, and how these risks could be mitigated. The researchers’ methodology utilized both regulatory frameworks and existing internationally accepted models and standards around procurement integrity, such as the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development’s (OECD’s) [“Recommendation of the Council on Public Procurement”](#), all of which are widely accepted as playing major roles in limiting procurement integrity risks. Understandably, the 14 international sport event studies also relied on publicly available (and generally online) documentation, but the availability of such documentation varied greatly across procurements. Thurston explains, “there was substantial information on procurement award procedures. This may have been because supplier audiences needed greater visibility of procurement decisions or simply that more attention is generically given to award procedures. Conversely, information linked to risk management, and internal controls and audits, was sparse or non-existent. However, it’s important to emphasize that while availability of information can be seen as a way to mitigate integrity risks, this doesn’t mean such ISEP practices were necessarily corrupt. Instead, it may have been that these documents were deemed unnecessary for public access, that they were not stored electronically, or that they no longer exist, which is especially likely if bespoke agencies are wound up after international sport events are concluded. However, the lack of documentation does limit our ability to interrogate potential issues at a future point in time.” That said, there were plenty

of examples of non-standard procurement practices found across events and, pertinently, the specific nuances characterizing international sport events were often used to legitimize actors’ circumventions of accepted procurement protocols. For instance, New Delhi’s ISEP involved many ‘urgent’ non-competitive procurement awards justified by the immovable event deadline, yet the origins of this ‘urgency’ most likely arose from poor event planning in the first instance. The Fina World Aquatics Championships (Budapest) also claimed ‘urgency’ for circumventing procurement rules, and even created a special law exempting much ISEP from its usual procurement laws. Indeed, six major sport-specific infrastructure contracts were awarded through a ‘restricted invitation’ approach for the Fina World Championships, which the researchers suggest presents a clear red flag for integrity risks. **International Partnership against Corruption in Sport (IPACS) Recommendations** The research team’s work facilitated the [International Partnership against Corruption in Sport \(IPACS\)](#) in making numerous recommendations for mitigating risks around international sport event procurement, including:

- International federations, governments, implementing agencies, and oversight bodies, agreeing on strategies for ensuring procurement information is publicly available. This includes ensuring procurement data – from pre-tender to post-event – is available in a standard, consistent, error-free manner and in a searchable and otherwise usable form;
- Having clear internal and external reporting lines, including clear and communicated procedures for reporting integrity suspicions, and training to help stakeholders identify potential bid rigging;

- A more strategic, proactive approach to collecting information on international sport event procurement (ISEP) by all stakeholders, including before, during, and after sport events are held;
- Fostering, and systematically applying, “open public tender” competition (e.g., public solicitation of offers and under which all interested suppliers have a right to be considered in accordance with objective criteria) in the procurement process, and as early as possible;
- Ensuring procurement bids are also valued on non-price/cost criteria (as well as a cost basis) to advance a better price/quality mix in procurement decisions;
- Ensuring adequate oversight when procurement contracts are executed so that the benefits of tendering are not undermined. This includes having internationally-accepted governance mechanisms for contract amendments, and clear processes for submitting and assessing amendment claims.

While not an exhaustive list, IPACS’ recommendations are expected to go a long way to help identify red flags for international sport event procurement integrity risks, and ultimately reduce the likelihood of ISEP corruption. Even so, lead researcher, Sue Arrowsmith, also believes [open contracting](#), where all data and documents are disclosed at all stages of the contracting process, is a missed, forward-looking, opportunity, which would further mitigate procurement integrity risks. Thurston concludes, “Sue’s thoughts just go to show we’re at the beginning of this journey so while we hope this *SportBusiness* piece provides food for thought for international sport event procurement stakeholders, we also know there is still so much work to do in this space.” ○



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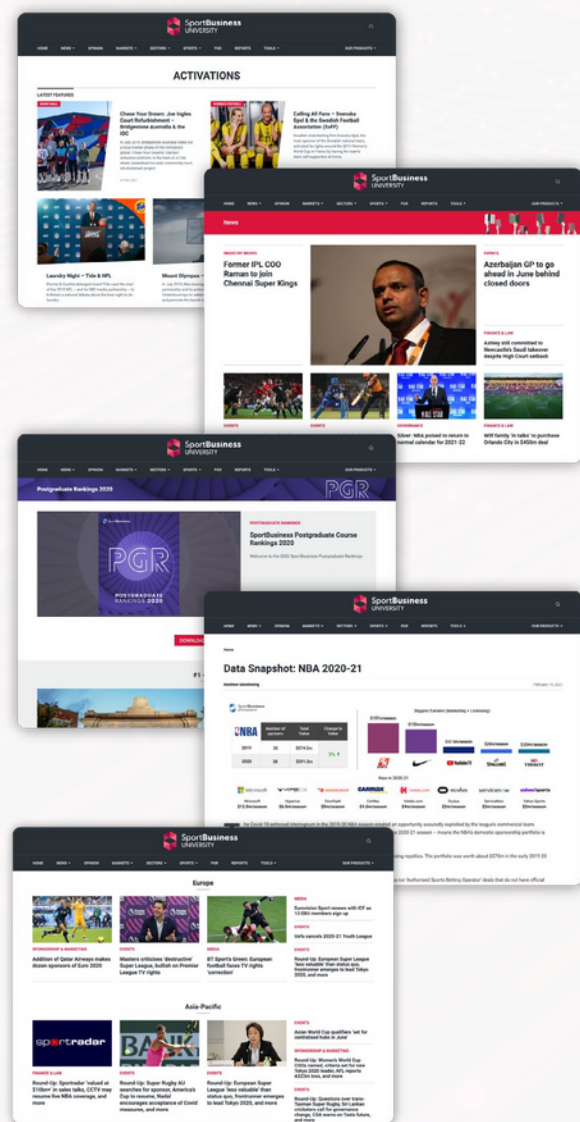
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# Network Connection: How universities are supporting students in developing meaningful industry and alumni relationships



For students, the importance of networking and relationship building while studying for a postgraduate degree can be critical to their prospects beyond graduation. To paraphrase one course leader's recent summation, in an industry such as sport which is relatively small and highly inter-connected, connections can be key to success and those who haven't actively built a network can struggle as a result.

The benefits of networking may seem obvious, but it is more complex than just a case of sending out a few requests on LinkedIn accompanied by generic introductory greetings. Guiding students towards meaningful network building is an aspect that many institutions have invested significant time and resource in, and this is reflected in the scores some have achieved in the networking-related metrics within the Postgraduate Rankings survey. It is perhaps reflective of the importance of these measures that the top courses globally have generally excelled in these areas.

Programmes were scored on aspects such as Industry Network, Alumni Network and related measures such as Professional Mentorship/Advocacy. *SportBusiness* spoke to some of the organisations

that scored best on these metrics to understand how they met students' needs in these areas.

The highest overall scorer on the Industry Network measure was the University of South Florida's Vinik Sport & Entertainment Management Programme. In terms of networking, the importance of this is instilled in students from the start of the programme, with guidance on the subject beginning with orientation. Course professor Dr Janelle Wells, told *SportBusiness*: "Networking is relationship building and the key is to invest in relationships. Relationships are an investment, so yes, it takes work, it takes intentionality, and it takes authenticity.

"Understand that networking is an ongoing process, not an isolated event, so let's help our students build foundational skills.

Our students' success comes from consistently leveraging faculty and programme contacts, making new intentional contacts, and following up to stay in touch deepens the relationship."

In order to provide students with the opportunities to develop their skills in this area, events such as networking dinners are held, while class trips are centred on relationship building. An example of this was the 2022 trip to Las Vegas, during which the students visited organisations such as Encore Beach Club, Caesars, UFC, Dolby, Allegiant Stadium, HyperX and the programme partnered with Women in Sports and Events (WISE), to coordinate a networking event.

Dr Wells added: "We create the opportunities to sharpen their skills, and most importantly, practise their networking skills



in a supportive and collaborative environment. We recognise not everyone is comfortable meeting new people or taking the initiative to introduce themselves, or know how to add value to a relationship, so we help students gain the confidence through our PowerPlacement curriculum.

“Partners from across the world constantly applaud our students’ appreciation and ability to do the simple yet meaningful things such as initiate conversation, send a personal thank you note, or have an agenda for an informational interview.”

Emphasis is also placed on creating opportunities for students to interact directly with industry leaders and put networking skills into practice at Columbia University. The flagship event in this sense is ‘Elevator Pitch Perfect’, which sees students provided with the chance to present their scenario-based ‘Elevator Pitch’.

Columbia University’s Laurajean Holmgren, deputy programme director, sports management, indicates that the industry figures involved in the event see real value in it and welcome the opportunity to network with students, stating: “There are some industry leaders that have been really keen to come back the following year, loving the opportunity to help students in a creative way, because they feel like they’re truly giving back. For students, the purpose is to learn different styles of interacting and networking. What I say to you, I might need to tailor it differently to someone else, because we have different shared connections. That event is one that from the industry leader standpoint, it’d viewed as something that is really valuable.”

### **Alumni Networks can be central to mentorship**

The Vinik Sport and Entertainment Management Programme also scores highly on the Professional Mentorship/Advocacy measure, an aspect the course leaders place a high level of focus on, particularly leveraging its alumni network for this purpose.

Both peer and professional mentors are provided to students

throughout the course. The professional mentors are comprised of the alumni network and aligned to students based on the suitability of factors such as profession, career experience and lived experience. This is even taken further with students assigned an alumni mentor for specific projects within classes.

For the organisers of the MBA/MSA Sports Administration degree at Ohio University, there is a lot of emphasis placed on its ‘Ohio Family’ moniker, referring to its community and alumni network. This is given additional substance by the results of this year’s survey, which sees the programme top the Alumni Network metric with a near-perfect score of 99.29.

An aspect of the course which leverages the alumni network particularly strongly is the ‘Executive Mentor Programme’. This sees incoming students offered the opportunity to peruse the course’s alumni directory and select five names that they would like to approach to be their executive mentor for their next two years of study. The course leaders also look to enhance this opportunity for its students by inviting a number of the current executive mentors to campus in the autumn to interact with the current candidates, also awarding one of the group with an ‘Executive Mentor of the Year’ prize. Executive director of Ohio University’s Center for Sports Administration, Matt Cacciato said: “We see the executive mentor programme as something that is incredibly unique, it allows people upon entering the programme to align with those that are in the field, in roles that are matched to their interests. It has proved to be incredibly valuable. Students and their mentors develop relationships over their two years in the programme, communicating on a regular basis and meeting in person.”

The weight carried by the ‘Ohio Family’ moniker is perhaps best exemplified by the fact the current executive chair of its 19-strong Alumni Advisory board went through the programme and met his wife in the process. The couple now have two children who both graduated from the programme and are now

working within the sports industry.

On how the strength and depth of the alumni network developed, Cacciato said: “As the programme and the size of the classes grew, and the prominence of our earlier alumni and their careers developed, they naturally look back to their experience and they stay in touch with their classmates. We aid that with the publishing of alumni data and also hold alumni events in cities across the country, at various conferences and larger sporting events.

“For instance, around our men’s and women’s collegiate basketball tournaments, with the support of our sponsor, we organise structured alumni receptions that gather our graduates from multiple years. In Minneapolis last year, for our women’s Final Four event, we had a gentleman who graduated in 1971, who’s been present in the Minneapolis market for a long time, meeting graduates from just the previous year, so it literally was a 50-year span of graduates that were represented there.”

Overall global leaders UMass also flourished in the Alumni Network, Industry Network and Professional Mentorship/Advocacy metrics, topping the last of the three listed worldwide.

Will Norton, graduate program director and senior lecturer, Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management, UMass, detailed the course leaders’ approach to networking and how interaction with industry is woven into its curriculum: “Who you know is important, but it’s equally important who knows you. This two-sided exchange is promoted via experiential learning coursework that gives students the ability to create industry-level deliverables to our more than 3,000 alums working in sports today.

“We run three-month long consulting practicums for our second-year MBA/MS students, which allows for tremendous growth and on-the-job training. We take real-world industry challenges and create independent studies from them. Our graduate mentor programme is a tried-and-true networking platform, from which career-long connections are made.”

### **Alumni steps up in response to pandemic**

Across the institutions mentioned above, in-person visits and events seem to be central to the support provided to students in regards to networking. This raises the question, how have course leaders mitigated the impact of the pandemic in recent years and retained the same level of opportunity for its students when it comes to networking and mentorship?

Norton says: “While live events and physical get togethers were certainly put on hold for a time, we activated our alumni network during the pandemic, first putting an “All Call” out on LinkedIn, asking alums to step up for students in need. We were able to match students with a variety of mentors during the remote semester and bring them closer to sports industry stakeholders to ask questions about an uncertain future hiring period. Many alums stepped up and offered remote projects, internships, and shadowing opportunities to create networking as a practice.”

The theme of alumni stepping up and recognising the need to redouble efforts to support current students in the circumstances was also present at Ohio University, not just in regards to the pandemic, but in relation to wider societal issues.

Cacciato added: “Our alumni

knew that our inability to get out and travel could hamper the programme and stepped up proactively in a lot of areas. Even away from the classroom and looking at some of the challenges that we saw in the summer of 2020 with racial and social injustice, our black alumni stepped up proactively. They collected and organised themselves and came to us as a group and said, ‘How can we help? How can we better assist you in helping students understand some of the some of the challenges, how can we reach across racial lines, gender lines, and make this a more meaningful and ultimately rewarding conversation for the Ohio family?’

The aforementioned Elevator Pitch Perfect event held by Columbia University has been held digitally three times since the onset of the pandemic and the course’s leaders actually saw benefit in some of the scenarios and features prompted by the event taking place in a virtual context. Holmgren explains: “On virtual meeting software, the use of breakout rooms and the chat feature was really interesting. It allowed us and students to think about the different mediums that exist to communicate and how we could leverage them. Many of our faculty remarked that our students had great conversations through the chat feature, so we promoted that

as a way of building a brief personal branding statement for students to introduce themselves in that context.

“We definitely used the breakout rooms. When we brought in people from the industry, we put them in breakout rooms with students for 10 minutes. They loved that interaction. You’re seeing the faces, you’re seeing the names and they become really ingrained in the mind.”

Ultimately, the array of perspectives presented above underlines the importance some of the most prominent institutions in sports management education at the postgraduate level place on supporting students with developing industry relationships, leveraging alumni networks and on providing meaningful mentorship opportunities to candidates. As Norton summarised: “The dynamic pace of sport management forms an incredibly close-knit community, and accessing that family unit is one of the primary selling points we talk to prospective students about.

“Postgraduate study is a chance to lean in to the sports family, and build your own inner circle that will support the rest of your career. The world of sports is small, and networking with prominent industry leaders can often help secure a distinct leg up in entry-level and mid-level management roles.” ○



Students during the Vinik Sport & Entertainment Management trip to Las Vegas in 2022



# Top of the Class

## Average Salary

Rank	University	Salary (\$)
1	The University of Liverpool Management School - football	210,271
2	Columbia University	135,132
3	The International Centre for Sport Studies (CIES)	94,181
4	Johan Cruyff Institute - Online	85,657
5	University of Bayreuth	83,447
6	University of Oregon	82,690
7	Rutgers University	81,540
8	Real Madrid Graduate School	79,516
9	University College Dublin	77,859
10	AISTS - International Academy of Sport Sciences and Technology	77,547

## Graduates’ Choice

Rank	University	Score
1	University of Massachusetts Amherst, Isenberg School of Management	95.20
2	University of South Florida	94.25
3	George Washington University	93.33
4	Ohio University	93.17
5	University of Parma & University of San Marino	93.15
6	University of South Carolina	89.67
7	The Ohio State University	89.05
8	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	88.15
9	VCU	86.91
10	Florida Atlantic University	86.76

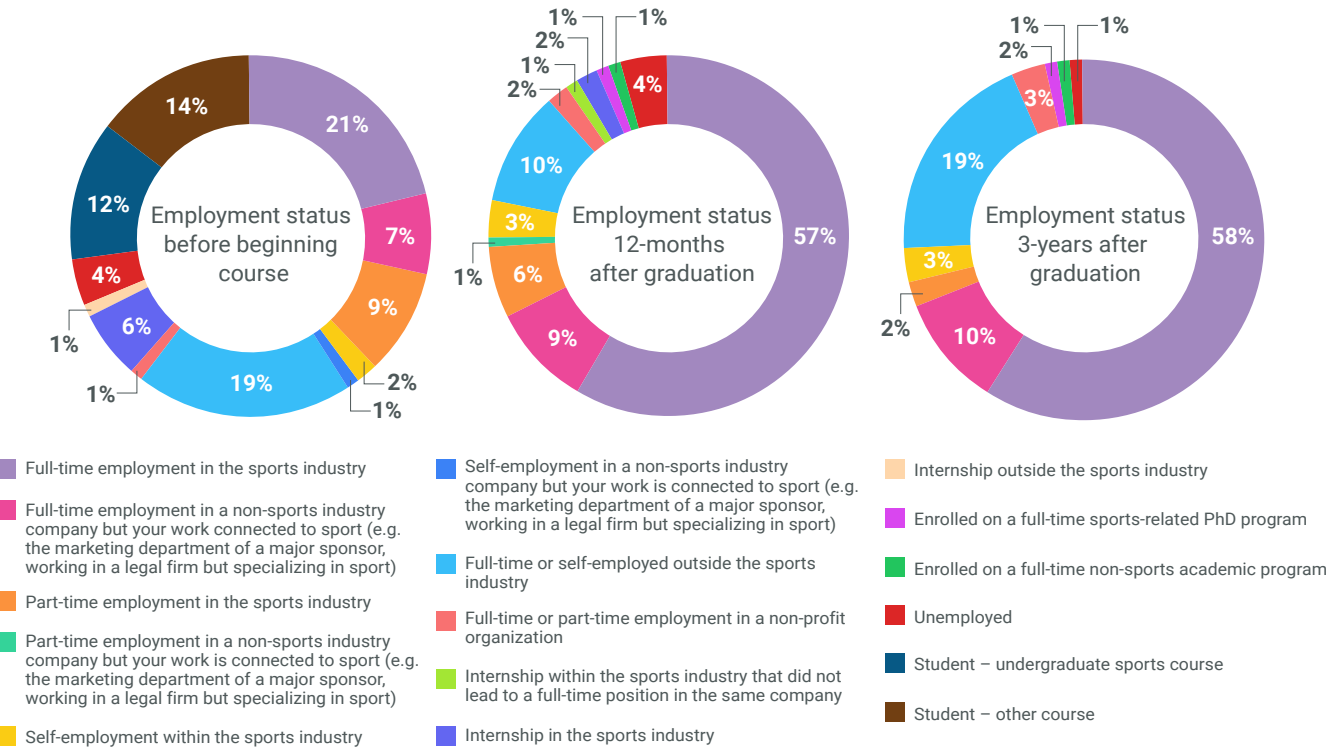
*\*The student satisfaction score is the aggregated total of the following six measures: quality of faculty, quality of curriculum, job support, extracurricular initiatives, alumni network, industry network, return on investment (ROI), diversity, equity, and inclusion score and professional mentorship/advocacy provided by the masters program.*

## Peer review \*Based on ‘peer review’ score

Rank	University
1	Ohio University
2	University of Massachusetts Amherst, Isenberg School of Management
3	The International Centre for Sport Studies (CIES)
4	University of South Florida
5	Real Madrid Graduate School
6	University of Oregon
7	University of South Carolina
8	Columbia University
9	University of Central Florida
10	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

# Career Growth

## Employment status





Employment data

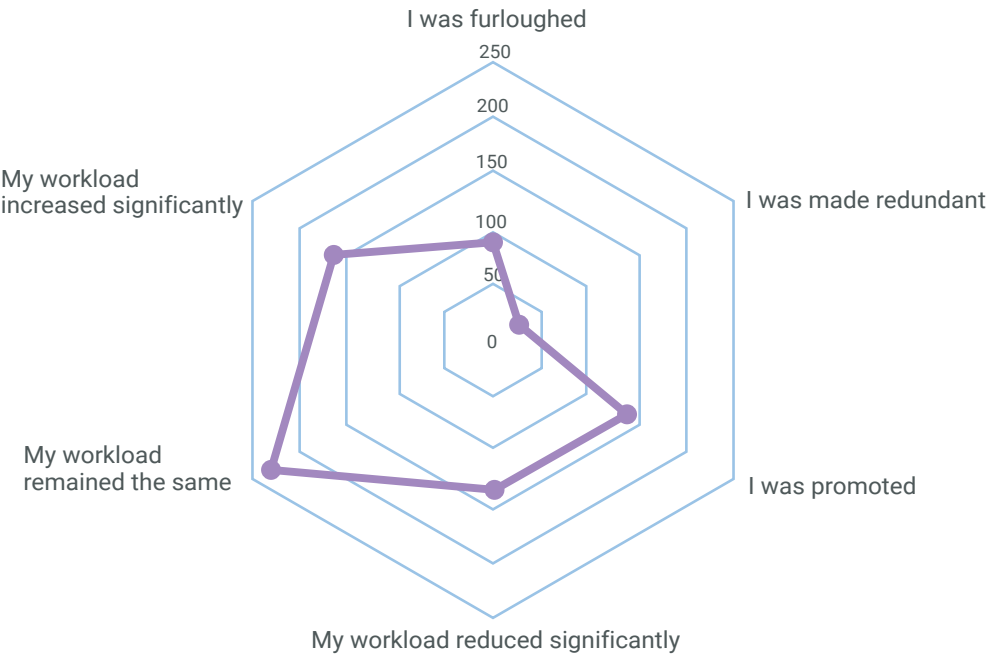
Ideal Employer

Rank	Employer	Count
1	NBA and/or NBA Team	67
2	NCCA and/or NCAA University	64
3	NFL and/or NFL Team	50
4	English Premier League and/or English Premier League club	32
5	Spanish LaLiga and/or Spanish LaLiga club	22
6	FIFA	20
7	MLB and/or MLB Team	19
8	Self-employed	18
9	Nike	13
10	Formula One and/or Formula One team	12
11	IOC	10
11	NHL and/or NHL Team	10
12	Italian Serie A and/or Italian Serie A club	8
12	National Olympic Committee	8
13	French Ligue 1 and/or French Ligue 1 club	7
13	PGA Tour	7
14	MLS and/or MLS club	6
14	ATP	6
15	Red Bull	5
15	UCI and/or UCI team	5

Career Advancement \*Based on 'career advancement' score

Rank	University	Score
1	University of Parma & University of San Marino	93.06
2	George Washington University	91.67
3	University of Massachusetts Amherst, Isenberg School of Management	90.35
4	University of Vigo (Spain)	90.00
5	Ohio University	88.10
6	University of Central Florida	87.78
7	VCU	84.26
8	University of South Florida	83.33
9	ESBS European Sport Business School - Formación Valencia CF	83.33
10	University of Bayreuth	83.33

Covid impact





# Top 15 North American Courses

Rank	University	Program	Region	Class size 2018/19	2019 graduates	Class size 2021/22	Re-sponse rate	Course duration (months)	Average age (years)	Accept-ance rate	Female: Male student ratio (%)	Inter-nation-al:Na-tional student ratio (%)	Female: Male faculty ratio (%)	Inter-nation-al:Na-tional faculty ratio (%)	Work place-ment	Mentor-ship	Avg. salary (int\$)	Employ-ment at 12 months	Current employ-ment	Quality of faculty	Quality of curricu-lum	Job support	Extracur-ricular in-itiatives	Alumni network	Industry network	Return on in-vestment (ROI)	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	Profes-sional mentor-ship/ad-vocacy	Career advance-ment	Skills applica-bility	Skills fre-quency	Peer review	Total score
1	University of Massachusetts Amherst, Isenberg School of Management	Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management MBA/MS Sport Management	North America	21	21	22	95%	12-21	25	17%	55:45	23:77	50:50	0:100	YES	YES	72,898	93.68	90.53	98.95	94.74	92.63	93.68	98.95	97.89	88.42	93.68	97.89	90.35	90.35	80.70	90.00	89.35
2	Ohio University	Dual MBA/MSA Program	North America	29	29	35	97%	22	23	27%	46:54	11:89	45:55	18:82	YES	YES	58,191	96.43	98.57	92.14	90.00	91.43	99.29	99.29	98.57	92.14	80.00	95.71	88.10	76.79	89.88	100.00	88.51
3	University of South Florida	Vinik Sport & Entertainment Management MBA/MS	North America	24	24	27	71%	22	24	31%	44:56	19:81	50:50	25:75	YES	YES	66,882	97.65	80.00	92.94	92.94	92.94	98.82	92.94	98.82	88.24	95.29	95.29	83.33	81.37	80.39	70.00	86.11
4	University of South Carolina	Master of Sport and Entertainment Management	North America	22	22	49	77%	15	25	45%	43:57	55:45	21:79	17:83	YES	YES	49,206	95.29	90.59	98.82	89.41	91.76	83.53	88.24	95.29	82.35	83.53	94.12	72.55	81.37	81.37	50.00	82.76
5	George Washington University	MS/MBA in Sport Management	North America	20	4	35	100%	18-22	25	44%	40:60	23:77	60:40	0:100	YES	YES	57,500	80.00	90.00	95.00	95.00	90.00	95.00	90.00	95.00	95.00	90.00	95.00	91.67	100.00	100.00	20.00	82.35
6	Columbia University	Master of Science in Sports Management	North America	77	22	84	58%	12-16	26	28%	40:60	32:68	30:70	3:97	YES	YES	135,132	90.22	91.56	89.78	82.22	71.11	74.09	81.33	88.44	72.00	74.67	78.22	80.74	74.44	82.96	40.00	80.15
7	University of Central Florida	DeVos Sport Business Management Program	North America	30	30	20	50%	17	25	36%	65:35	10:90	27:73	13:87	YES	YES	67,925	98.67	90.67	86.67	78.67	78.67	84.00	82.67	92.00	82.67	98.67	84.00	87.78	73.33	74.44	30.00	79.20
8	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Masters of Sport Administration	North America	10	9	12	100%	22	24	19%	67:33	0:100	43:57	0:100	YES	YES	50,733	82.22	93.33	95.56	91.11	82.22	88.89	80.00	97.78	95.56	84.44	77.78	77.78	94.44	96.30	30.00	78.97
9	The Ohio State University	MS in Kinesiology (Sport Management)	North America	26	17	40	82%	12-21	23	33%	40:60	5:95	50:50	0:100	YES	YES	56,308	92.86	82.86	97.14	88.57	85.71	94.29	88.57	88.57	82.86	85.71	90.00	72.62	82.14	80.95	20.00	78.80
10	Florida Atlantic University	MBA in Sport Management	North America	120	45	37	53%	23	24	13%	49:51	11:89	46:54	22:78	YES	YES	73,982	87.50	81.67	94.17	89.17	85.83	85.00	88.33	90.00	78.33	83.33	86.67	76.39	77.78	84.03	-	78.61
11	University of Oregon	Masters in Business Administration	North America	20	20	28	65%	21	27	24%	32:68	39:61	20:80	30:70	YES	YES	82,690	89.23	86.15	72.31	72.31	73.85	80.00	90.77	93.85	73.85	63.08	75.38	79.49	70.51	76.92	60.00	77.73
12	VCU	Center for Sport Leadership	North America	41	41	42	44%	12-16	23	31%	52:48	14:86	33:67	33:67	YES	YES	56,117	83.33	82.22	87.78	90.00	90.00	84.44	88.89	91.11	83.33	83.33	83.33	84.26	76.85	70.37	20.00	77.59
13	University of Windsor	Master of Human Kinetics in Sport Management	North America	9	11	9	64%	16-24	23	25%	33:67	22:78	33:67	0:100	YES	YES	53,670	82.86	91.43	97.14	91.43	82.86	91.43	85.71	97.14	91.43	65.71	74.29	73.81	73.81	76.19	10.00	76.66
14	University of San Francisco	Master of Science in Sport Management	North America	109	102	97	45%	23	26	40%	32:68	16:84	29:71	13:87	YES	YES	74,565	80.00	88.26	89.57	87.39	87.11	78.70	87.83	89.78	81.74	78.70	83.91	81.52	79.35	77.17	10.00	76.27
15	Georgia State University	Master of Science in Sport Administration	North America	40	28	38	54%	24	24	25%	66:34	8:92	33:67	33:67	YES	YES	64,667	84.00	90.67	88.00	89.33	81.33	80.00	78.67	89.33	78.67	86.67	84.00	68.89	73.33	71.11	20.00	75.82

# Top 15 European Courses

1	The International Centre for Sport Studies (CIES)	International Master (MA) in Management, Law and Humanities of Sport – The 'FIFA Master'	Europe	28	28	32	93%	10	29	17%	47:53	63:37	30:70	40:60	YES	YES	94,181	87.69	90.00	86.92	80.00	73.85	83.08	93.85	93.85	82.31	87.69	81.54	80.13	69.87	73.08	80.00	84.79
2	University of Parma & University of San Marino	International Masters in Strategic Management of Sports Organisations, Events and Facilities	Europe	25	25	25	48%	12	26	43%	24:76	4:96	17:83	10:90	YES	YES	42,111	91.67	88.33	93.33	93.33	90.00	95.00	95.00	98.33	93.33	90.00	90.00	93.06	77.78	90.28	20.00	77.93
3	ESBS European Sport Business School - Formación Valencia CF	Master in International Sports Management	Europe	44	42	99	57%	9	27	24%	20:80	83:17	18:82	26:74	YES	YES	55,183	83.33	95.83	86.67	86.67	79.17	86.67	80.83	85.83	85.83	85.83	84.17	83.33	87.50	84.03	-	75.90
4	University of Bayreuth	MBA Sportmanagement	Europe	18	16	30	19%	24	27	33%	30:70	7:93	19:81	9:91	YES	NO	83,447	93.33	100.00	93.33	86.67	80.00	66.67	100.00	86.67	93.33	66.67	73.33	83.33	83.33	100.00	-	75.60
5	University of Vigo (Spain)	Master in Business Administration of Sport	Europe	20	19	25	79%	9	26	78%	20:80	24:76	50:50	5:95	YES	YES	38,843	90.67	86.67	81.33	90.67	85.33	80.00	74.67	84.00	89.33	89.33	85.33	90.00	86.67	76.67	10.00	73.47
6	Ca' Foscari University - Venice	Master in Sport Business Strategies - Master SBS	Europe	36	36	34	8%	12	24	61%	15:85	0:100	59:41	8:92	YES	YES	56,592	80.00	100.00	86.67	80.00	80.00	86.67	86.67	93.33	80.00	86.67	86.67	72.22	61.11	83.33	10.00	72.63
7	University College Dublin	MSc in Sport Management	Europe	27	24	27	29%	12-24	30	30%	26:74	7:93	20:80	40:60	YES	YES	77,859	85.71	82.86	88.57	80.00	80.00	77.14	71.43	80.00	77.14	80.00	82.86	76.19	80.95	64.29	-	72.37
8	AMOS Sport Business School	Master in Sport Management	Europe	115	74	142	81%	24	21	82%	40:60	33:67	42:58	25:75	YES	YES	46,870	85.67	85.33	76.67	79.66	75.67	75.67	73.33	80.67	73.33	70.33	78.67	76.11	73.89	75.28	10.00	72.12
9	Real Madrid Graduate School	MBA in Sports Management	Europe	40	38	40	45%	10	31	37%	33:67	87:13	24:76	35:65	YES	YES	79,516	80.00	83.53	81.18	80.00	67.06	71.76	68.24	77.65	64.71	70.59	67.06	74.51	71.57	58.82	70.00	71.88
10	The University of Liverpool Management School - football	Football Industries MBA	Europe	22	24	16	17%	12	29	17%	13:87	100:0	25:75	33:67	YES	YES	210,271	90.00	90.00	85.00	85.00	50.00	75.00	75.00	90.00	60.00	80.00	60.00	62.50	79.17	50.00	-	69.95
11	The University of Liverpool Management School	MSc Sports Business and Management	Europe	50	50	72	36%	12	24	14%	18:82	82:18	33:67	33:67	YES	YES	49,497	88.89	81.11	84.44	82.22	56.67	74.44	67.78	74.44	70.00	78.89	74.44	77.78	63.89	64.81	30.00	69.87
12	Loughborough University (School of Sport, Exercise, and Health Sciences)	Sport Management	Europe	78	76	80	38%	12-24	24	12%	18:82	85:15	30:70	33:67	YES	YES	50,632	87.59	89.66	82.07	73.79	60.00	78.62	68.28	62.76	63.45	71.72	72.41	68.97	75.86	60.34	30.00	69.70
13	Global Institute of Sport	MSc International Sports Management	Europe	10	10	12	20%	12	24	27%	17:83	33:67	42:58	33:67	YES	NO	73,421	100.00	100.00	70.00	60.00	60.00	80.00	60.00	80.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	66.67	66.67	50.00	-	69.00
14	Vrije Universiteit Brussel / University of Brussels	Postgraduate Course in Sports Management	Europe	56	56	62	25%	8	23	79%	13:87	3:97	67:33	33:67	YES	YES	50,166	92.86	88.57	78.57	78.57	77.14	81.43	82.86	81.43	68.57	68.57	78.57	67.86	63.10	61.90	-	68.41
15	AISTS - International Academy of Sport Sciences and Technology	Master of Advanced Studies in Sport Administration and Technology	Europe	35	34	24	47%	15	32	27%	38:62	96:4	20:80	70:23	YES	YES	77,547	77.50	83.75	78.75	75.00	70.00	78.75	70.00	72.50	66.25	73.75	67.50	72.92	67.71	56.25	30.00	68.11

# Online Programmes

1	Unisport Management School	Online - MBA Sport Management	Europe	40	40	40	23%	13	29	77%	25:75	30:70	20:80	0:100	YES	NO	48,755	88.89	93.33	86.67	82.22	68.89	85.00	82.22	66.67	82.22	82.22	80.00	74.07	75.93	87.04	-	71.39
2	Johan Cruyff Institute - Online	Online - Master in Sport Management	Europe	28	28	34	50%	13	31	92%	29:71	68:32	18:82	51:49	YES	YES	85,657	80.00	88.57	83.08	81.43	74.29	71.43	75.71	61.43	74.29	80.00	81.43	76.19	75.00	64.29	-	71.05
3	University of Cincinnati	Online - Master of Science in Sport Administration	North America	39	33	111	55%	12	28	85%	34:66	0:100	25:75	0:100	YES	YES	59,888	83.33	75.56	88.89	77.78	60.00	73.33	64.44	73.33	60.00	74.44	72.22	64.81	75.00	61.11	-	63.98
4	Indiana State University	Online - Sport Management M.S.	North America	21	5	20	100%	12-20	24	57%	20:80	0:100	40:60	0:100	YES	NO	56,200	60.00	68.00	68.00	72.00	56.00	64.00	44.00	40.00	56.00	52.00	60.00	66.67	73.33	56.67	10.00	53.76





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