



SportBusiness

# PGGR

**POSTGRADUATE  
RANKINGS 2021**

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# PGR

## POSTGRADUATE RANKINGS 2021

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#### Editor:

Adam Nelson

#### Research team:

Chris Barnes  
Mark Nervegna

#### Senior Designer:

Alex Smith

#### Published by:

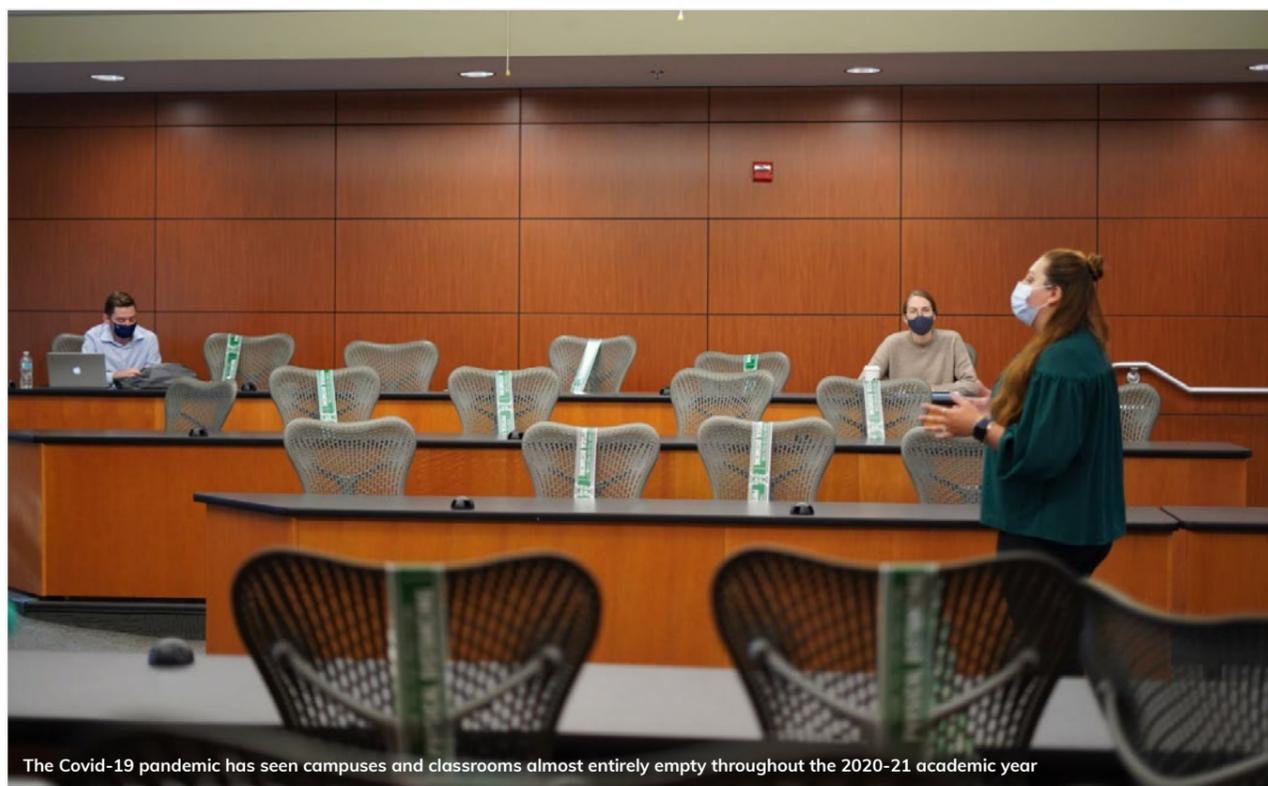
SportBusiness, a division of SBG Companies Ltd

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

#### Registered address:

Park House, 116 Park Street, London, W1K 6AF

# Welcome... to the 2021 SportBusiness Postgraduate Course Rankings



The Covid-19 pandemic has seen campuses and classrooms almost entirely empty throughout the 2020-21 academic year

It's hard to believe it's been a year since we published the last edition of these rankings. There is no question as to the dominant narrative of the 2020-21 academic year, with university campuses as well as offices across the globe sitting empty due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the world only now looking to make a tentative return to normality.

The events of the past 18 months have undoubtedly left their mark on the education sector. Several course leaders this year told us that, while applications to master's programmes have risen, there has been an increase in the number of people declining to take their places, indicative of an uncertain atmosphere in which more people are looking to continue their education or retrain but have often chosen to remain in or take up employment instead of going back to school.

That only serves to make our

task here more important, and we hope this publication can provide a helpful guide to all who are considering further education in sports management to choose the right course for them.

As it has been for 10 editions of these rankings, our goal is to provide students and course leaders alike with the most dependable and reliable ranking system for postgraduate sports management programmes around the world. That aim grows in complexity each year, as more and more courses are launched and enter the rankings and we continue to fine-tune our methodology, but it has arguably never been so difficult as this year.

Despite the challenging environment, this is, in every sense, the biggest edition of our rankings so far. We received well over 1,000 responses from graduates of courses around the world, and more applications to enter from more courses than ever before. More

than in any previous year. The top 40 represents the true cream of the crop globally, and inclusion on our list in any position is an indication of a top-quality sports management programme.

We have also produced more content than ever to contextualise the list, with a renewed focus on helping potential applicants understand the differences between the top three courses in both the US and Europe and guide them in making their decisions. For each of the leading schools, we spoke with a course leader to learn about the application process, studying on their programmes, and the post-graduation support they offer, as well as featuring profiles with alumni who have gone on to enjoy successful careers in the industry, and articles offering examples of the kinds of work and research that is carried out at these universities. We hope this provides interested parties with an overview of what

each of these courses can offer.

There are also features focusing on some unique institutions and an assessment of the impact of the pandemic through the lens of two universities, in the UK and US, while elsewhere we look back over the 10 editions of this list to date, hearing from course leaders of the three universities to have taken the coveted top spot.

## And the winners are...

Ohio University's MBA/MSA and Master of Sports Administration once again comes out in first place overall on our list. It is the eighth time in 10 years it has topped the rankings, and its lead this year is even more impressive than in previous editions, with the overwhelmingly positive responses from its 2018 alumni ensuring it was clear at the top by more than two points over the second-placed programme.

Overall, it secured scores of 100 – the maximum possible – in four separate categories (current employment, extra-curricular support, alumni network and industry networking score), something no other course achieved, while it missed out on top marks in a fifth, value for money, by just half a point. Across the board, it consistently posted scores in the 90s in every other category, with no weaknesses in either its alumni responses or its status among course leaders. Ohio was the first school in the world to launch an MA in sports management, in 1966, and its decades of experience combined with its continuous ability to modernise and keep up with sports industry trends has made it the undisputed standout school of the first ten years of the SportBusiness Postgraduate Course Rankings.

University of Massachusetts Amherst's MBA/MS Sport Management and MS Sport Management finished in second place for the second year in a row, and the fourth time in five years, having topped the table in 2019. It also claimed the Professors' Choice award for the third year in a row, with course leaders at other institutions continuing to rate the UMass research and teaching

faculty as the strongest in the world. Celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, the consistent performance of the programme at UMass is also a testament to that heritage and the depth of its alumni network.

If the top two courses are familiar faces, the third-placed course in 2021 demonstrates the ever-diversifying nature of these rankings. The University of South Florida's Vinik Sport & Entertainment Management Program has posted impressive scores before, finishing fourth in 2018 and 2019, but in going one higher this year, it becomes the first course founded since the first edition of this list was published to make the podium. Its rise has been impressive, from making its debut on the rankings in 2017 to rounding out an all-American top three just five years later. Its relatively low score in the peer review category is probably indicative only of the course's relative youth, and a stronger result there in subsequent years, as the Vinik Program continues to establish itself, could see it climb even higher.

On the other side of the pond, the Fifa Master at the International

Centre for Sport Studies once again came out the highest-ranked course in Europe, the ninth time in 10 years it has done so as the pan-continental programme continues to go from strength to strength. It finished in fourth place in the overall table, one of only two non-US courses in the top ten, and was ranked third in the peer review category, behind only Ohio and UMass. The array of sport industry expertise offered by its three universities – SDA Bocconi, De Montfort and Neuchâtel – continues to make it the most well-regarded course in Europe among fellow academicians.

The masterSport International Masters at the Universities of San Marino and Parma, meanwhile, put up an exceptionally strong performance in 2021, with the responses from its 2018 graduates not only propelling it to a third-place finish in Europe (and 12th in the overall table) but ensuring the course claimed our Graduates' Choice award, given to the programme with the highest student satisfaction scores. It was also judged to be the most valuable course in furthering its students'



Ohio campus in Athens



careers, an indication of the esteem in which both the course and its industry practitioner faculty are held in Italy. MasterSport took the maximum score of 100 in three of the alumni survey categories – extra-curricular support, alumni network and industry networking – indicating very high levels of satisfaction from its class of 2018, while its quality of teaching was also highly praised.

It was the joint-highest rising course, moving up 15 places over last year, and is part of a strong year all-round for European programmes, which provide 18 of the top 40, the highest proportion ever from the continent. While the top end of the rankings remains weighted toward American schools, European sports management education has demonstrated its growing strength by populating more and more of this list each year and may soon start to push further

into the top 20 and top 10 as the industry matures.

**Methodology**

Our rankings are based on two surveys, completed by course leaders and alumni who graduated three years prior to publication – meaning the 2021 edition is based on responses from the classes of 2018. 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.

This year, we worked more closely than ever with our advisory board, made up of eight leading names from across the sport management education sector, to understand how we could improve and fine-tune the rankings even further.

“The more collaborative the effort is, the more inclusive it is, the better the methodology is going to be,” says Scott Rosner,

academic director of the Master of Science in Sports Management at Columbia University and a member of our advisory board for the past three years. “It’s important that SportBusiness, as the only real ranking of this kind, takes this ranking very seriously, and it does. If it’s going to be effective, it needs to be inclusive of those of us who are practicing in the field to help to add a level of depth and gravitas to the rankings. It’s not a publication that is coming up with a seemingly random survey, it’s rigorous, and it needs the input of practitioners in the field.”

There are, inevitably, disagreements among the board in how the rankings should break down. “We’re always going to have debates about the weight of certain factors and what is included and what is not,” he says. “But it’s a healthy dialogue, and it’s not to do with putting our own programme in a more favourable light. The rankings are what the rankings are – we’re trying to ensure they have integrity and represent the best of what we do. It’d be great if SportBusiness listened to everything I said and made the rankings of the World According to Scott Rosner, but that’s not the way it works.”

As a result of these discussions, this year saw the introduction of a completely new category for scoring, with three points now available based on the percentage of applicants to places – an effort to reflect the demand for and exclusivity of the programmes;

important, says Rosner, “because it gives an impression of the quality of students coming into the programme and how desirable that programme is. We didn’t want to give it too much weighting, because at some point it becomes self-fulfilling – if you have the best programme in the rankings, you get more applications and are more over-subscribed – but it’s an important metric to throw into the mix alongside the existing measures.”

We also upped the weighting given to students’ current salaries, listening to feedback from our advisory board that this was an appropriate way to judge how successful time spent on a course had been in not just getting students into jobs, but getting them senior-level, well-remunerated jobs. “It’s the ultimate objective for so many of these programmes really,” explains Rosner. “We need to get them jobs where the level of compensation is commensurate with what they’re paying for the programme, which, as we know, can be a lot of money. It’s also a reflection of the quality of the job and the graduates’ standing in the industry having come through the programme.”

To allow for these changes, the number of points allocated to the course leader choice have been halved, from 10 to five, placing less emphasis on the peer review category, which our advisory board felt had grown slightly less relevant as more courses are introduced to the market and it becomes less possible to be aware of all the work being done in the sector.

**Analysis**

As part of our employability metrics, we consider alumni employment status at both six months after graduation – to get a sense of how quickly students can enter the sports industry with a degree from one of the courses – and current employment – to understand how many graduates have continued and progressed within the sports industry. That means this edition is the first to be impacted by the pandemic, as our 2020 surveys went out just as the initial wave of Covid-19 was sweeping the globe.

In 2021, alumni responses indicated the careers of sports management postgraduates are relatively resilient to the impact of the pandemic. Just seven per cent of respondents had been made redundant, while 14 per cent were furloughed (counting as being in employment for the purposes of the rankings). The majority reported their workload either stayed the same (30 per cent) or increased significantly (26 per cent). A further 17 per cent reported a decline in workload without being furloughed, while 14 per cent were promoted during the pandemic.

Another interesting data point is the boost to career chances and opportunities offered by studying on any of the courses in our top 40. Considering all the 2018 respondents, about 20 per cent of students in both North America and Europe were working in the sport industry before joining one of the programmes. At both six months and three years out from graduation, those numbers jump to over 60 per cent in the US and just under 60 per cent in Europe, underlining that the practical and theoretical knowledge taught by these courses is highly valued by sports organisations and their hiring managers.

The survey responses showed that the 2018 graduates have taken up a range of positions, demonstrating the diversity of skills learned on the programmes we rank. The highest proportion, almost a quarter, are now working in either a sales or marketing department, while operations, business development and media and communications make up the next biggest categories, with around eight per cent of the graduates saying they now work in each of those fields.

In terms of seniority, a quarter of those currently in employment are now at manager level, seven per cent are senior managers or heads of department, while nine per cent said they were in director-level roles. Ten respondents said they were now serving as chief executives. ○

**Adam Nelson,**  
SportBusiness University editor

**How the PGR score is calculated**

Number of points shown here is the maximum possible score

**STUDENT MEASURES**

Quality of teaching: **10 points**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**EMPLOYMENT**

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

Current employment status: **13 points**

**OTHERS**

Course Leader choice: **5 points**

Current salary: **5 points**

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

Percentage of female students: **3 points**

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

Percentage of international students: **3 points**

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

Work placement: **1 point**

**The advisory panel**

As ever, profound thanks go to our advisory board, whose help and input has been invaluable in defining the shape and direction of the 2021 SportBusiness Postgraduate Course Rankings.

**Steve McKelvey**  
Department chair and graduate program director at the Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management, UMass Amherst

**Mike Finkelstein**  
Executive director of Global Sports Business M.S. Program at Rutgers University

**Michele Petochi**  
Business development director, Josoor Institute

**James Strode**  
Department chair of sports administration at Ohio University

**Scott Rosner**  
Academic director of the Master of Science in Sports Management at Columbia University

**Claude Stricker**  
Executive director of the International Academy of Sport Science and Technology (AISTS)

# The top 40 Postgraduate sports business courses

Rank	Provider / Course	Total Score
1	<b>Ohio University</b> MBA/MSA and Master of Sports Administration	91.89
2	<b>University of Massachusetts Amherst, Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management</b> MBA/MS Sport Management and MS Sport Management	89.58
3	<b>University of South Florida, Muma College of Business</b> MBA/MS - Vinik Sport & Entertainment Management Program	88.01
4	<b>The International Centre for Sport Studies (CIES)</b> The FIFA Master	86.03
5	<b>Columbia University</b> MS in Sports Management	84.33
6	<b>George Washington University</b> Masters in Sports Management	84.11
7	<b>University of Oregon</b> Warsaw Sports Marketing Center, MBA in Sports Business	83.79
8	<b>AISTS - International Academy of Sport Science and Technology</b> Master of Advanced Studies in Sport Administration and Technology	83.75
9	<b>The Ohio State University</b> Master of Science in Sport Management	83.46
10	<b>University of San Francisco</b> Master of Sport Management	83.06
11	<b>University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill</b> Masters of Sport Administration	81.93
12	<b>University of Parma &amp; University of San Marino</b> MasterSport – International Masters in Strategic Management of Sports Organisations, Events and Facilities	81.32
13	<b>University of Vigo</b> Master in Business Administration of Sport	81.30
14	<b>Virginia Commonwealth University Center for Sport Leadership</b> Master of Sport Leadership	80.66
15	<b>Coventry University</b> MSc Sport Management	80.31
16	<b>University of Central Florida</b> DeVos Sport Business Management Program	79.74
17	<b>University of Ottawa</b> Masters in Human Kinetics - MHK in Sport Management	78.97
18	<b>Georgia State University</b> Masters of Science in Sport Administration	78.61
19	<b>Florida Atlantic University</b> MBA Sport Management	77.82
20	<b>University of South Carolina</b> Master of Science in Sport and Entertainment Management	77.74

Rank	Provider / Course	Total Score
21=	<b>University of Windsor</b> Master of Human Kinetics (MHK) in Sport Management	77.14
21=	<b>Real Madrid Graduate School</b> MBA in Sports Management	77.14
23	<b>University of Liverpool Management School</b> MSc Sport Business and Management	76.55
24	<b>NYU Tisch Institute for Global Sport</b> MS in Sports Business	76.07
25	<b>University of Liverpool Management School</b> MBA Football Industries	76.05
26=	<b>Russian International Olympic University</b> Master of Sports Administration	75.60
26=	<b>Bayreuth University</b> MBA Sport Management	75.60
28	<b>University of Stirling</b> MSc in Sport Management	74.63
29	<b>University of Tennessee</b> Master in Sports Management	73.69
30	<b>Temple University / School of Sport, Tourism, and Hospitality Management</b> Master of Science in Sport Business	73.66
31	<b>Seattle University</b> MBA Sport and Entertainment Management	72.81
32	<b>Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey</b> MS Global Sports Business	71.84
33	<b>Washington State University</b> M.A. in Sport Management	71.78
34	<b>University College Dublin</b> MSc Sport Management	71.61
35	<b>Sheffield Hallam University</b> MSc Sport Business Management	71.10
36	<b>AMOS</b> Master in Sport Management	70.97
37	<b>Venice Ca' Foscari University</b> Master SBS - Sports Business Strategies	70.84
38	<b>Centro Formación Fundación Valencia CF - ESBS</b> Master in International Sports Management	70.83
39	<b>Vrije Universiteit Brussel</b> Postgraduate Sports Management Course (PG SPORT)	69.58
40	<b>Loughborough University</b> MSc Sports Management	69.30

# Ohio University's Master of Sports Administration



**T**he Master of Sports Administration degree at Ohio University is now into its 55th year, having launched in 1966, and has finished in first place in eight of the 10 years since SportBusiness launched these rankings. Based out of Ohio University's College of Business in Athens, Ohio, the AECOM Center for Sports Administration offers an MBA/MSA dual-award program, combining classroom-based learning and practical experience to help educate the industry leaders of the future. Scoring highly across the board, Ohio was the only school to receive the maximum possible score in four different categories – current employment, extracurricular support, alumni

network and industry networking – while receiving impressive responses from its 2018 alumni for value for money, career value and overall usefulness.

**Jim Strode**, chair of the sports administration department, gives *SportBusiness* the rundown on the course.

### How many applicants do you receive to study on the course each year, and how many of those are successful?

We receive in the range of 150–160 applicants each year, and we interview between 35 to 50 per cent of those, and then make offers after that. For the coming year, we had 154 applicants for our MBA/MSA and MSA exclusive and are seating

30 of those. So it's very selective. We put a lot of stock in those interviews. I've been a part of some programmes where the interviews are just sort of like the rubber stamp at the end of the process, but for us it's a really important part of the process to figure out if someone is fit for Ohio. We still bring in a lot of people for interviews, and some of those are the right fit and, unfortunately, some are not.

### What are you looking for in applications and interviews? What makes a candidate a good fit for Ohio?

It's pretty holistic. Certainly, we're looking at your academic background, your success in the classroom. We get students from

your exclusive universities, from small, private liberal arts colleges, and from big state institutions. We really run the gamut when it comes to where our students come from, but they have in common academic success.

On the MBA/MSA dual degree programme, we are looking for some level of significant experience: students that have done a variety of practicum or internships. It doesn't necessarily have to be focused, it doesn't have to necessarily be that someone has decided they're working in marketing and sales and that's their route, but we do look at students who try to experience a variety of different areas because, frankly, students should still be trying to figure out what they want to be when they grow up, so finding that that balance is important. We've had some students with some pretty amazing experiences coming in – they've worked at the Fiesta Bowl every year, or they've gone to England and worked at the Premier League – which adds so much value to the classroom.

### What's the general background of your students, in terms of their career journey and where they're coming from globally?

Anecdotally speaking, most of our students are coming directly from their undergraduate-level studies. We do have a handful of students that might be in the mid- or late-20s range, but oftentimes, if students have work experience, and are maybe already in the workplace, we push those students to consider our professional master's programme, our PMSA. When it comes to where our students come from, we get students from all over North America, and we have students right now from Italy, Lebanon, the Netherlands, Germany and more. And we are targeting other areas. In the 2000s, we had a pipeline of students coming from Japan, and we are looking at Asian markets again to raise awareness about our programme to diversify our applicant pool. Most of our students are from the United States, but we do have a mix of international students as well.

### What is the size of the faculty in the department and wider teaching staff?

We have 11 full-time faculty in our department, all sports administration. Depending on the expertise area of our faculty, we may rely on special adjunct faculty to come in. By rule, though, we don't use adjuncts unless we have an absolute drastic need to fill a gap and we know that a particular person can level up our programs.

We also bring in a tonne of guest speakers. It's our USP, really. Everyone is well aware of our alumni network, and just having the ability for these folks who came through our programme over the 55 years it's been active and are now senior in the industry to come and talk to the students is a key part of our offering. Now that we all know how to use technology better than we did pre-Covid, we've really been able to tap into a segment of the population that couldn't get to Athens, Ohio to be guest speakers for us, but rather we would get them if we went to a conference, or we took our students to those locations. Now, we can pop them on the screen, and bring them into the classroom and hear from some of the more established alum.



**Jim Strode** | Chair of the sports administration department

### What are some of the key areas of expertise you have on the faculty?

Our programme has always been rooted in application-based learning. We are very big on the practitioner, very big on making sure that students understand the

industry trends, but also get that theoretical piece as well as from our academic researchers, so that they can apply and use theoretical models to be able to understand and provide real-world solutions in the sport industry. When we look at our research and tenure track faculty here, we have expertise in data analytics and machine learning in Dr Liz Wanless – we're very fortunate because we know that having a full-time faculty member who just teaches Big Data classes, not only in sport but also in general business, is imperative. We're also doing some research on consumer behaviour and branding, where Dr Melissa Davies is just entering her third year on the faculty with that as her interest area and she's moving the needle in that subject. Dr David Ridpath is known for his knowledge of collegiate athletics. And then my research is on leadership and is specific to leadership and gender and administration.

### Could you identify a USP of the program at Ohio?

The number of real-world projects that our students get is a differentiating factor. Our students are consistently being used by the industry to make presentations, make proposals, to actually do some of the work that puts the students not only in a real-world situation, but also puts them in front of potential employers. The amount of experiential learning that we provide as well is unique. We have a week in Europe, where all our students will work with Adidas or Puma or our partners at the University of Bayreuth in Germany. In January, we send our students to North Carolina to do the tours of some college athletic and professional sports facilities, including the Charlotte Motor Speedway. I'm pretty sure our students don't sleep a whole lot. They eat, drink, sleep, breathe sport in our programme. If they're not in the classroom, they're probably out on the athletic fields doing something with our athletic department, or on a trip somewhere. It's a pretty fast experience for our students.

**You score very highly for student employment rates and employability in our rankings. Where do your graduates usually go on to work?**

I think it depends on the student. We've been finding many of our international students are looking to stay in the United States or in North America but, for the most part, they are not bound to a geographic area. Our students are typically looking for the best job and the best fit for them, regardless of where it is.

In terms of sector, we have a lot of students that will go on to athletic fundraising jobs, they may work for private agencies or work in some sort of revenue generation in professional sports, but we do find that a significant amount of our students will go into some sort of revenue generation area. We're also seeing more of an uptick in Big Data, in data analytics. We're certainly admitting more students that have this interest, and we're seeing more and more students going down that strategic business decision-making route.

We're definitely adjusting to the trends of what the sport industry needs; our curriculum is consistently being reviewed and tweaked. We have flexibility in some of our elective classes, so we can provide a class on sport gambling to our students, which is an area that, if you want to work in professional collegiate sport, you had better have a working understanding of the legal issues associated with that, and we're able to offer a one-credit class where our students are going to get the most up-to-date, relevant information in that particular area.

**What is the alumni network and community like? How do you continue to support graduates after they've left Ohio?**

It's the ethos of our programme. When we use this 'Ohio family' moniker, there's an expectation that when you're in the Bobcat family, you are always finding ways to be able to give back time, treasure and talent. We have just added eight new members to our alumni advisory

board, which hits our MSA and our PMSA programme, and we have subcommittees that are working for us to make sure our students are getting the best opportunities here as well as the best opportunities when they graduate. Our students each have a graduate mentor, they flip through the alumni directory to pick their mentor, and it's broken down by geography and by industry. If a student wants to seize a position with the Portland Trailblazers, we can say, 'well we've got X, Y, and Z working for the Portland Trailblazers, we're going to contact them and get you that inside track'. But of course, we always tell our students, 'we're going to tee it up for you, but you're still going to have to hit the ball, you're still going to have to sell yourself, to make sure that you're grinding and working and have the skills necessary for those positions'. But you will get those opportunities to have your resume taken off to the side if the Bobcat network is being as effective as we want it to be. ○



# NEWS, INSIGHT & DATA FOR DEVELOPING THE FUTURE LEADERS OF GLOBAL SPORT

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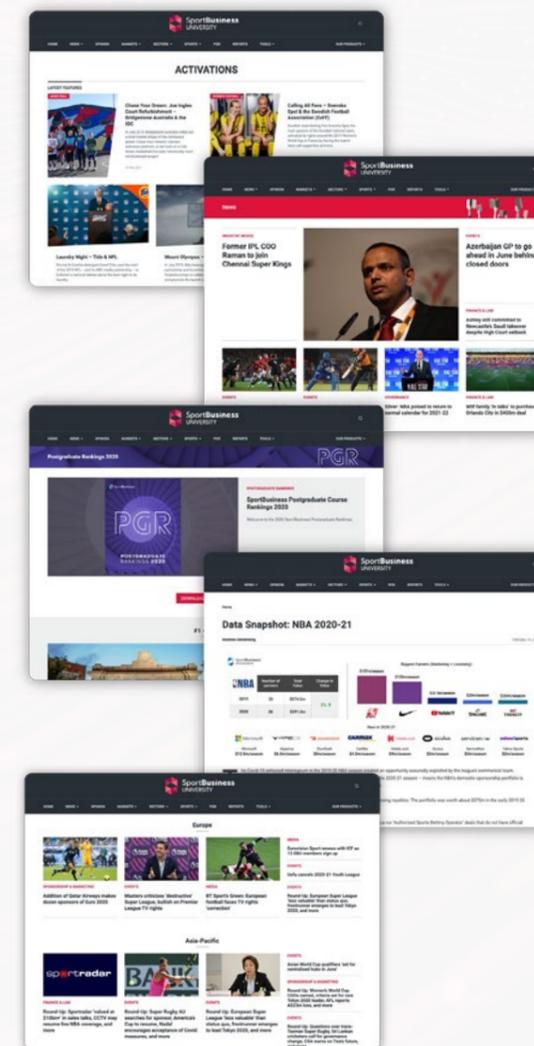
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# Derrick Hall, president and chief executive of the Arizona Diamondbacks

Derrick Hall graduated Ohio University with a Masters in Sports Administration in 1993 and was the recipient of the department's Charles R. Higgins Distinguished Alumni Award in 2006. He joined the Arizona Diamondbacks in May 2005 as senior vice-president, communications and served in numerous capacities prior to being named the team's president in 2006, adding the title of chief executive in 2009.

## What made you decide to take a postgraduate degree in sports management?

I loved baseball, wanted to have a career in baseball, but didn't know how to get started. My father called me up one day and said, 'turn on ESPN' – they were doing a feature on Ohio University, and I realised it was the place for me. Applied and made it to the interview phase, interviewed, thought I did very well. Got home, told my wife that it went well and that we were moving to Athens. A few weeks later, I received the rejection letter.

Looking back on it now, I was so green, and it was a very high pressure, in-your-face interview, and I didn't know nearly half as much as I should have. I decided to go to Miami, Florida, where they were having the winter baseball meetings, to try and do it on my own. I paid and registered to be part of a career search, so here I was in this room with 300 other people wearing bad suits trying to get a job – they would come in and post it up, and we'd all run over and try and tear down a flyer to see when you could interview in the lobby. I quickly got discouraged. I had spent all my savings to go to Florida to make this happen. I was in the lobby of the Fontainebleau Hotel, and I saw that there was an Ohio alumni reception in one of the suites that night, so I called my wife and said, 'I'm going to crash that party', which I did. I went into the alumni reception and saw [former program director at OU] Doc Higgins in the back. I walked up to him, poor guy, and asked if he remembered me. I told him 'I think you made a mistake not admitting me, and let me tell you why...' I did everything wrong in this encounter.



But he told me to come back and try again, and I did, and got in. And then it was my goal to make sure that I could get the internship with the MLB in Vero Beach. Everybody knew what my intention was, but there were a lot of us that were interested in baseball and that was really the prize of that collection of internships. Fortunately, it happened, and one thing led to another, and it started my career.

## What are the main ways Ohio helped you?

I wouldn't be where I am today without Ohio University. It was the best decision I made in my life. It was the curriculum, obviously, it was the hands-on practical experience that we got, but even more so, it was the networking. It's

a really special group, a fraternity and sorority of individuals who are like-minded but so diverse. When you look at the experience and success in so many different fields, whether it was collegiate athletics, facilities, administration, coaching, mentoring, philanthropy – there are so many different directions in which my classmates and others went. For me to be able to stay in contact with so many that were on faculty at the time, so many of my classmates and those who came before and after, is invaluable. I will never turn down an Ohio University outreach. If someone reaches out to me and asks for help or for advice or asks for an interview, I'm going to do all I can to help that individual. If he or she is looking for an extension of a contact or for me to reach out and ask if others can help that individual, then I'm going to, because I know they helped me, and it just never stops.

## What advice would you give to a student starting out on the course?

Let the system work for you. And it will. Don't focus so much on what you think you want going in; have an open mind and listen to others and learn from others. I look back and – granted I was stubborn, and I knew which direction I wanted to go, and fortunately it's worked out – I've watched so many of my classmates who pivoted and it's because of what they were learning, what they were hearing, their conversations, their classes, those hands-on approaches outside of Ohio that we were able to visit. Have an open mind and learn as much as you can to determine what you want to do, because your course could definitely change once you've been a part of it. ○

# Text data, natural language processing, and the future of Ohio University sport leaders

Dr Liz Wanless, assistant director of analytics and assistant professor of sports administration at Ohio University, on how the growth of natural language processing is changing professional sports and sports education.

The value of text data jumps off the page. Customers share their sport product sentiments on social media outlets, review their sport experiences on varied platforms, and respond to sport influencers in the public narrative. I wanted to know, however, how readily sport organizations harnessed natural language processing (NLP) to bring those insights to life. Massive text data volume requires effective analysis tools to alleviate the inefficiencies of considering text data by hand. NLP, the computer capability to recognize and reproduce the human language, offers a series of efficient algorithmic approaches.

My curiosity would lead to academic publication, a new research line, and a new direction for Ohio University sport leaders.

As I started my investigation, signs of NLP adoption in sport were easy to find. Anecdotal trade articles attributed NLP-driven chatbots (automated conversation agents) with streamlining the pre-qualification phase of the sales process (cf Conversica and the Sacramento Kings). I recognized additional uses in conversations with industry clients and collaborators. Sport analytics teams harnessed sentiment analysis to gain widespread insight to how customers felt about various product offerings, teams, and players. I wanted the full NLP adoption story. How, how quickly, and why did professional sport organizations adopt this advancement?

This unknown sent me and my research team on a fascinating data collection process and eventual study entitled "The Diffusion of Natural Language Processing in Professional Sport," a forthcoming publication in *Sport Management Review*. The paper's purpose as stated in the introduction was to "explore NLP adoption in professional sport,



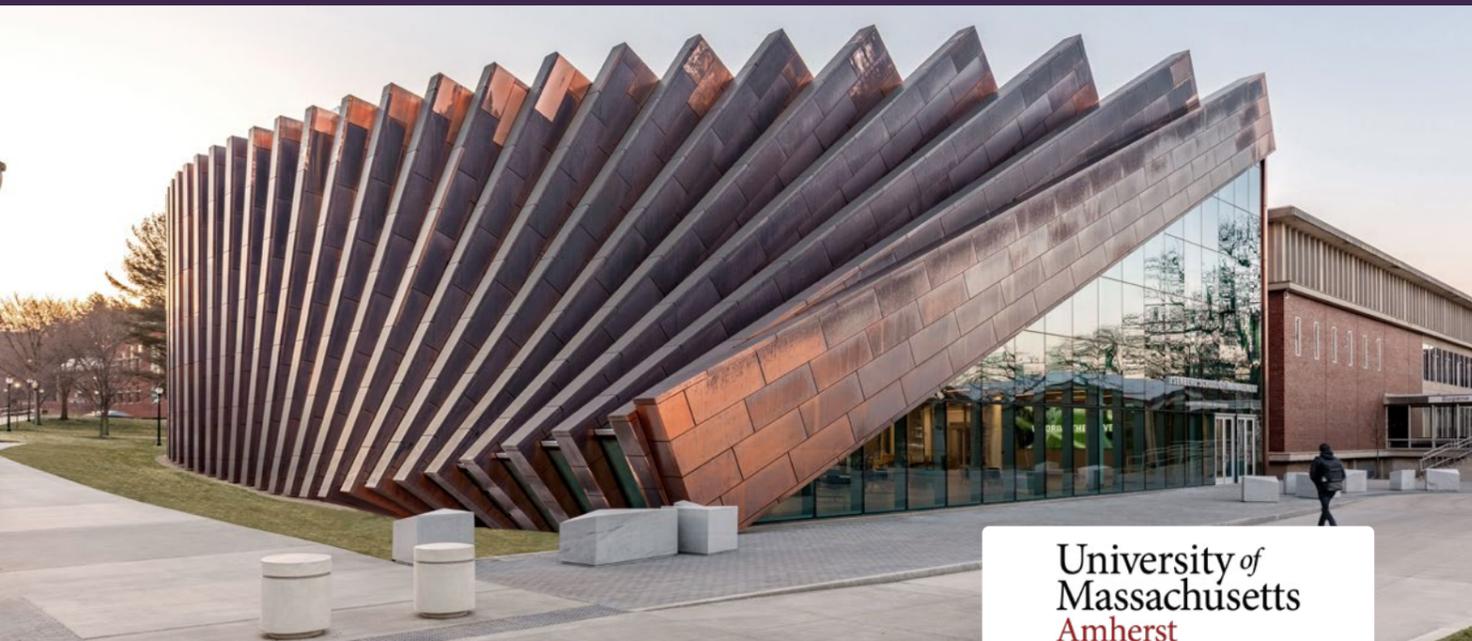
specifically the timing, mechanisms and key influences associated with NLP investment among professional sport teams." The study serves as a platform by which I now apply NLP approaches (topic modeling and beyond) to sport management research methods.

Through both quantitative (discrete Bass model application) and qualitative methods, the study revealed a taxonomy of NLP use cases for the sport industry, the pace of NLP diffusion throughout professional sport, and the influences catalyzing NLP adoption. Potential NLP uses and corresponding advantages are wider than we think and progressing through the sport industry faster than we think. Forty-eight of ninety-one (over 50%) of the participating Big Four teams adopted NLP for sport business use by March 2020; teams declared over 300 distinct NLP uses ranging from chatbots and sentiment analysis to monitoring digital conversations in real-time to automating personalized content for consumers. While many thought analytics personnel would be the dominant influential figures in NLP adoption, they were not. Respondents cited sport organization executives as the make-or-break influencers (in addition to other identified internal and external influences). The success and true utility of new-to-sport tools and applications depends not only on technical expertise, but

also the sport management personnel surrounding the analytics team. Data-driven initiatives meant to advance sport business might fail because of ineffective organizational structures, unaccepting cultures, hazy goals without clarity, over-investing in data cleaning in the short-term, underestimating analytics benefit to revenue generation in the long-run, and unproductive organization-wide facilitation. Acquiring the Lamborghini of data warehouses, for example, is only one step in a challenging process; implementing and norming that system is another huge set of hurdles. It was clear from the results of the study that an intervention for our students not only made sense but could also be a source of competitive advantage for emerging sport leaders.

The way we educate our future sport leaders changed at Ohio University. On the first Tuesday of fall classes, I stood before students in the inaugural delivery of the Sport Data Strategy and Innovation class, a new requirement for the Ohio University undergraduate sports administration program. This course represented a new direction for Ohio University's future sport leaders and a significant recognition that successful sport analytics initiatives depend not only on the technical skill of the analytics team but also on the executive's ability to strategize and organize. In the new course, students adopt the executive's vantage point as they address sport data strategy, as well as making the most effective investments in people, data, systems, and organizational structure to support sport innovation. Students will learn analytics personnel job types, skills, and responsibilities. They will synthesize strategies to promote the type of data-driven and innovative culture that supports data-driven success. ○

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



University of  
 Massachusetts  
 Amherst

**C**elebrating its 50th anniversary in the 2021-2022 academic year, the University of Massachusetts Amherst's MBA/MS Sport Management and MS Sport Management is the second-oldest course on our list and is once again ranked second in 2021, a position it has occupied for the last two years since coming out on top in 2019. Based in the university's Isenberg School of Management, the dual degree program pairs the full-time MBA with an MS in Sport Management and offers an experiential-based curriculum to give students a complete view of the sport industry.

It is also the recipient of our Professors' Choice award for the third year in a row, a sign of its standing in the sport education sector and the esteem with which fellow academicians view the course, its academic rigor, and the quality of its full-time faculty. UMass narrowly missed out on receiving the maximum score for its alumni network and for industry networking, and posted the joint-highest score in the top ten for its quality of teaching.

**Steve McKelvey**, the graduate

program director for the past 13 years, will step down at the start of the new academic term, to be replaced by **Will Norton**, who is currently a faculty lecturer and director of UMass' McCormack Center for Sport Research & Education. *SportBusiness* spoke to Steve and Will about life as a student on the course.

### How many applicants do you look at each year?

**SM:** We receive on average about 125 applications. It may not sound like a lot, but we're only accepting about 25-30 students, and we have a very high matriculation rate, so we'll end up with about 23 new faces each year. It's certainly an aspirational programme.

### What would you be looking for to get an applicant into that final 30?

**SM:** Real world work experience is one of the first components we'll look at, frankly, as much as or more so than a standardised test score or GPA. It can be work within the sport industry, or not: a lot of the applicants we get are not currently working in the sport industry, but

they have a sport background and business experience. We've also accepted applicants who have no sport-related experience or playing background but who have a strong business experience and who are looking to change careers and pivot into the sport industry.

In terms of the personal statement, it's very important to see how the applicant connects the dots from studying at UMass to what they want to do as a career. We're interested in people who can articulate a clear path and can evidence some interest in being a leader, and having a senior role in industry. Is it realistic? Do we think that we can help that person get there? How easily will this person be placeable in industry? These are all questions we're asking ourselves as we evaluate an applicant.

**WN:** As one of the only sports programmes that's based in a business school, if you're applying to our dual degree programme and you want to do the accelerated MBA, there's a quantitative lens to consider. You're going to take accelerated MBA courses that are not necessarily sports-centric.

So in that case, we look for the industry experience and also a little bit of quantitative rigor in their application, either from undergrad or from their job, that lends itself to being able to hack it in those courses. If you're applying just to the MS, you will still take sport finance, economics, and most likely analytics, but it's somewhat of a different profile candidate compared to the dual degree.

### What is the background of an average intake?

**SM:** So out of the 35 grad students, typically around 30 per cent will be international students, but it's very broad international students: for example, there may be two from India, two from China, two from UK, two from Canada, one from South America, and one from Australia. That's how we prefer it, and that's what our numbers reflect. And then geographically in the US, it's pretty well diversified. The least percentage is going to be from the West Coast, but up and down the East Coast, we're very strong, out into the Midwest. It's not just Massachusetts and Connecticut by any means.

### What can you tell us about the faculty?

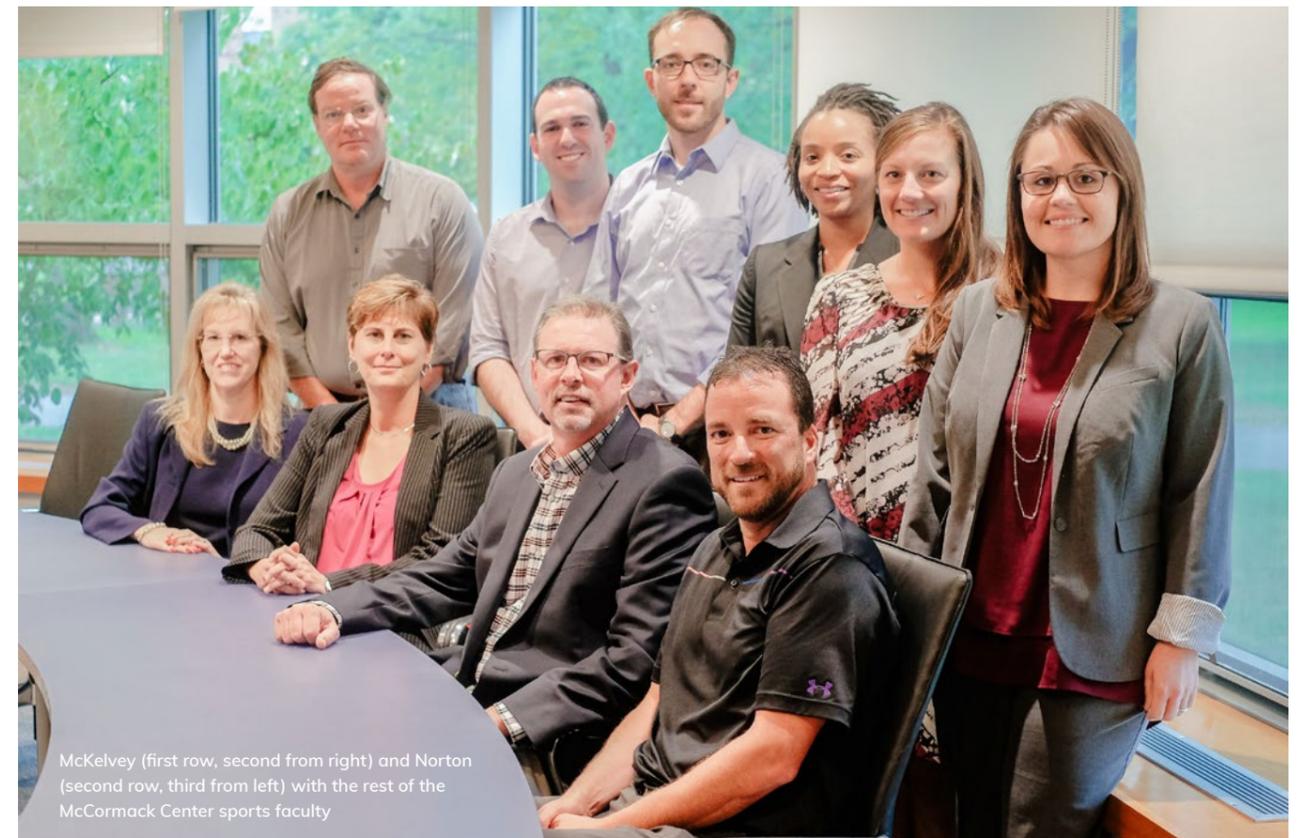
**SM:** We have 12 full-time faculty members.. We don't have a lot of adjuncts, we may have one a year. We have several of the top published academics in the space of sport marketing, consumer behavior, and fan networks; these full-time faculty are publishing in premiere, A-list sport management journals and this research drives the quality of our educational offering. We have Dr Matt Katz, Dr Liz Delia and Dr Janet Fink working in that area. We're very strong in diversity and inclusion, and leadership, between Dr Nefertiti Walker and Dr Nicole Melton. Dr Melton's recently formed LIDS (Laboratory of Inclusion and Diversity in Sport) has added to this strength. And then the third area would probably be sport law. We've historically been very good there and we have a strong reputation in the legal aspects of sport.

**WN:** I think it's important to note that Steve is a lawyer and he teaches sport law. We have an economist who teach sport economics; we had a data science professional teaching our data analytics class. It's all applied,

but there are subject matter experts in the room from a larger industry standpoint, which gives a valuable, macro view to subjects. Almost half the faculty have lived and breathed in the industry and have not just gone through a PhD straight into a teaching role. I think that that's a nice hybrid mix that we offer. Students find that they get the best of the theory and research and then also a lot of the applied, experiential elements of the programme.

### Is that what you'd identify as the standout element of studying sport management at UMass?

**SM:** Yes, historically it's been our experiential learning. It's building in the real-world projects with real-world companies. All of these involve very in-depth research, presentations, strategic thinking for clients. Some people think experience learning is having guest speakers – we do that all the time – but I'm talking about assignments that simulate full-time industry work. These demand that our students roll up their sleeves, work with a real client, and build mature student-client relationships.



McKelvey (first row, second from right) and Norton (second row, third from left) with the rest of the McCormack Center sports faculty



**WN:** Integrating with the business school, and a having a link directly into a management curriculum, it's much different than being in a school of public health, or a school of physical education or professional studies. And this being our 50th year, the intimate connection into industry with over 3,000 alums we have working in industry, I think those are differentiators that students see as a USP when they're in the programme, because they feel that connection and access and exposure.

I was recently talking to some alums and they said one of the things they appreciated about our curriculum was that they left the programme understanding some of the critical socio-historical foundations of how the sport industry has been built, marketed, and consumed. That might not help you in a pitch to a client, or it might not help you at the Super Bowl if you're activating for Pepsi, but it builds a well-rounded mindset for the students and that helps them become leaders.

**How important is the alumni network, and how do you continue to support students after graduation?**

**WN:** It's everything to me. It's what makes the UMass experience truly special. It's such a caring community of people who are really thoughtful about how they can help. If they

see evolutions in the industry that we're six months removed from in the classroom in Amherst, they will volunteer that insight and say 'this is coming, and this is what students should or could be aware of that might help set them apart.' This allows us visibility to what's occurring upstream in the industry, and gives our students an edge.

We've got alums who'll come to us and say 'we've got five jobs coming and we'd love to take a look at the best and brightest of the programme today', and that's the type of feeder system I think that shows the commitment to the network. And when students get that rope given to them and when they enter industry, they are chomping at the bit to give

back in the same way that a mentor gave back to them.

**SM:** There's a tremendous sense of pride in being a UMass sport management graduate, so there's a really strong sense of wanting to give back. I routinely get alumni who send me job postings. We have a very active alumni LinkedIn group with around 1,500 members, and we regularly post jobs there that alumni have sent us. To give you an example, in May, we posted 27 jobs, at all levels. We have alums that are constantly sending us job postings, looking to hire our students. And so I think that that kind of speaks to how highly people who have been through the programme think of the programme. ○



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# Heidi Pellerano, chief commercial officer at Concacaf

Heidi Pellerano took UMass' MS in Sport Management in 1997-98, and afterwards joined the WNBA as coordinator of communications and eventually player personnel. Across a 20-year career in sport since graduating, Heidi also worked at Russell Athletic, OnSport and Wasserman before being appointed chief commercial officer at Concacaf, the governing body for soccer in North America, in 2019.

## When did you decide that you wanted to study sport management?

I was a career switcher. I was an electrical engineer, but in 1997 I started to have second thoughts about my career pathways in engineering and began to explore other options. The one thing I was always passionate about was sports. I started to figure out whether there were opportunities for me to take my skills into a different industry that I was more passionate about. That's how I was introduced to these sports management programmes. I felt that was a great opportunity because it meant that people would know I was serious, that if you're making that commitment not only in time, but financially, to get that level of education, then that would signal to the world that I was not just a bored engineer who loves sports, but that I was really committed to finding a long-term career in the industry.

## Why did you choose UMass?

When I visited UMass and when I went through my interview, there was something about the support system that they offered. I think they 'got' me. It was the first time I felt it wasn't crazy for an engineer to want to switch to a career in sports, because prior to that everywhere else I had been looked at me like I had two heads. The things I was told through that process were scary and discouraging, but UMass was the first time I actually felt they got it – they actually saw that I could add value to the industry and wanted me. After I finished my interview, I was walking out and one of the professors approached me and said, 'you're fantastic. You're the type of person we need in our programme, that diversity of thought, that different



perspective, so we want you to come here. And we'll go ahead and help you even economically to make sure that you choose us if you become my teaching assistant.' To me that meant the world, because again it finally validated what I was thinking and feeling.

## What the main ways it prepared you for your career in sports?

When you don't work in this industry, what you don't understand is that even though this industry is big, it's also very small. When you're on the outside looking in, it's really hard to find a way in. UMass not only validated me but gave me the resources and tools to navigate the industry. A lot of my rationale for going to the school was because I knew I would have to do an internship, so I would get a first role in the industry and get more experience that will prove that I deserve to be in the industry. What I was surprised by is how much support they gave us to find that internship. It wasn't like, 'okay, good luck to you.' There was support to get the internship and a lot of advice throughout the process. That was the real difference maker, to be able to have that network of support within the programme and after the programme. And I have stayed part of the UMass family. I do

a lot of mentorships because I felt that when I was going through it. It's about paying it forward. I don't care how busy I am, I don't care if I'm drowning, I will always make time, because somebody made time for me.

## What advice would you offer to someone who's starting the course this year?

The first thing is that networking is really important. Again, it's a big industry but it's really small. Everybody's connected – it's not the Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon, it's the Three Degrees of the Sport Industry. It's crazy how you say something and within two names, you're already connected to another person.

I would also advise people to be open to possibilities. This is an industry that it's evolving so fast. I remember when I started, having an MBA was frowned upon a little bit. Now, with the emergence of data and insights in everything, suddenly, having that kind of background is taken a lot more seriously. Then you have everything that's going on with the digital revolution. So a lot of times people come in and say, 'I'll never do a ticketing job'... Why not? You'd be amazed at what you can learn in terms of hustle and creativity if you have a ticketing job. So that's the part that I always tell people: you need to look at your career in totality. If you look up CEOs in most corporations, what has made them CEOs is that they probably worked in most departments and in different organisations; they've been in sales, they've been in marketing, they've been in operations, etc. Those are the people that make it to the top. You might not aspire to be a CEO, but the more you touch across different organisations and different roles, the better you will be at your job. ○

# The conflict and cash of rivalries

Dr B. David Tyler, co-founder of the Know Rivalry Project at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and Northern Kentucky University, explains how the project aims to measure and dissect the risks and revenue of sporting rivalry.

**Y**ankees suck! Yankees suck! Yankees suck!" If you have ever attended a Major League Baseball game at Fenway Park in Boston, you have probably heard this chant from Boston Red Sox fans, even when the opponent is not the New York Yankees. Why do some opponents produce such fan fervour, while others are practically ignored? Answering this question is important because the clubs, leagues and brands that leverage rivalry effectively see returns in increased ticket sales, broadcast viewership and brand affinity. For example, Heineken has served as the title sponsor of Rivalry Week in Major League Soccer since 2015. When first introduced, MLS fans questioned the authenticity of some of the 'rivalries' (or derbies) included in Heineken Rivalry Week. The league astutely adjusted the programming and presentation and has since maximized Rivalry Week's exposure and fan acceptance.

Based on over 30,000 sports fan surveys, research from the Know Rivalry Project is helping illuminate a path toward responsible and strategic resolution of this dilemma. The Project emphasizes faculty-student-professional collaboration to measure sport fan feelings and behaviours toward their favourite team's opponents. The Project's website, KnowRivalry.com, displays fan survey results for teams across the United States, Canada and India, and the survey data collection now includes 50 sport leagues across six continents.

As a foundation, three basic tenets of rivalry emerge from the research – rivalry is nonexclusive, continuous in scale, and bidirectional.

1. Nonexclusive: Fans perceive multiple rivals, typically three or four
2. Continuous in scale: Rivalry intensity varies among rivals



3. Bidirectional: Opposing fans rarely share equivalent perceptions of the rivalry

These tenets are illustrated by the Project's compilation of the Top 10 most intense and unbalanced rivalries in each studied league, where fans of each club are given 100 rivalry points to allocate across their favourite team's opponents. The most intense rivalries are measured by aggregating the average points assigned by each team's fans to the opponent within a rivalry dyad. The most unbalanced rivalries are indicated by the disparity between rivalry points within a dyad, where one team's fans are focused on a particular opponent whose fans do not reciprocate the perception of rivalry. To address the question of why certain opponents rise to the level of rival, while others fail to attract such focused attention from fans, consider three categories of ingredients that commonly formulate fans' perception of rivalry: the conflict conditions, strong similarities, and deep differences associated with two particular clubs.

Each category contains several elements of rivalry:

### Conflict Conditions

- Consistency: Frequent or recurring competition between the opponents
- Conspicuous Moments: Specific incidents – positive or negative – between competitors
- Conspicuous Characters: Extraordinary individuals (performers, personalities, legacies)

- Competitiveness: Comparable success (recent/historic) or uncertainty of outcome

### Strong Similarities

- Spatial Proximity: Competitors are located close to each other
- Synonymous values/appearance: Shared values/appearance between opponents or supporters
- Shared Supply Pool: Competition for labour talent and resources

### Deep Differences

- Dominance: One competitor aspires to overcome the historical success or dominance of the other
- Disparate values/appearance: Conflicting values/appearance between opponents or supporters
- Discrimination by authority: Perceived preferential treatment by competition regulators

By considering how these ingredients mix within an existing rivalry or new match-up of opponents, sports marketers and administrators can compose strategic promotional campaigns that achieve dual organisational goals:

1. Maintain authenticity with fans
2. Spark a rivalry fire that does not denigrate opponents

Smart rivalry strategy starts by accurately measuring your target audience's perceptions of their favourite club and its opponents. While in some cases the top rival is apparent, the ingredients that mix to fuel the rivalry are often dynamic and less transparent. Furthermore, the intensity and salient elements of secondary and tertiary rivalries can be more challenging to accurately assess, but the knowledge is just as vital to marketing authenticity. The most intense rivalries in sport often involve the most valuable franchises. Through discerning the antecedents and consequences of rivalry, organisations and scholars can better understand that connection and responsibly foster exciting rivalries. Stay tuned as the Know Rivalry Project continues. ○

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## Juliana Correa, Senior Brand Manager at FIFA and FIFA Master Alumna

ADVERTISING FEATURE

The Brazilian-Portuguese Juliana Correa trailed a diverse and rich path until getting to FIFA, where she currently works as Senior Brand Manager. Before working in sports, she studied Business and Hotel Management but soon realised that the hotel industry wasn't for her. She then started working in banking and specialised in marketing, through a masters' degree, and after four years, decided to change industries again. That's when she enrolled in the 8th edition of FIFA Master (2007-08). "That was a pivotal moment in my career", Juliana says. "My objective was not only to enter the sport industry, but also work on a global level", she explains.

After graduation, she leveraged on her previous marketing experience, land a job with Adidas, at their headquarters, in Germany, which in turn, opened doors for her at AIBA, the International Boxing Federation, and FIBA, the International Basketball Federation. "During the seven years I have spent at FIBA, I have solidified my career in sports, being able to experience different areas in marketing, such as licensing, sponsorship rights and brand management", she says.

Since joining FIFA, in 2017, Juliana has been responsible for the FIFA Events brands, in special the FIFA World Cup. "This entails the development of each tournament brand, from strategic positioning and visual identity development to the brand implementation across different touchpoints (promotional activities, event dressing, trophy tours, etc.)", she clarifies. Read more of the interview with Juliana Correa:

### What is the thing that you love about your job?

Delivering sports events is really something special. Seeing the event coming to life, after years of preparations, and how this impacts different stakeholders (from players to fans) and brings the team together is a really unique experience. I also like to work in a very international environment, dealing with different cultures, which makes each project very unique.

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

That is a difficult one. I believe every single event I had the chance to be part of was a great achievement. Highlights would be the FIBA Basketball World Cup Spain 2014, the FIFA World Cup Russia 2018 and in special the FIFA Women's World Cup France 2019, which was definitely a big game changer for

not only women's football, but for women's sports.

Sport is viewed as a men-driven industry. What are the particular challenges of being a woman working in sport? Is the environment for women improving?

It is a very male driving environment and women working on this industry definitely need to be resilient and ready to work harder in order to have the same recognition as men. Unfortunately, a lot of sexist behaviours and comments are widely accepted as normal. There are efforts to change but this is a long road to go. Until we have women in very high positions, not only on the administration side, but on the political bodies, such Executive Committees and Councils, the women point of view will hardly be perceived.

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

The FIFA Master was fundamental for my career in sports. I believe I could still have made my transition to sports in a different way, but I feel it would have been a much longer journey to what I have achieved so far.

### Are you still in touch with classmates or other alumni? How important is that network for you?

Yes, I'm still in contact with many of my classmates and some of my closest friends currently come from the alumni network. Going through the course is a unique experience and only those who have done it, can understand it. It's amazing how alumni create an instant bond and predisposition to help fellow alumni. The network is definitely the strongest asset of the course, especially after you've done it.

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

Don't focus only on the immediate opportunities, but think where they can lead you in the future. Use the network that the course provides wisely. Focus to actually get to know who the fellow alumni are and not simply what they do.



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



**T**he University of South Florida began offering its Vinik Sport & Entertainment Management Program in 2012 and is celebrating its 10th intake in the 2021–22 academic year. The course has enjoyed a rapid ascent up our rankings, finishing fourth in 2018 and 2019 and finally breaking into the top three this year.

The University of South Florida began offering its Vinik Sport & Entertainment Management Program in 2012, and is celebrating its 10th intake in the 2021–22 academic year. The course has enjoyed a rapid ascent up our rankings, finishing in fourth place in 2018 and 2019 before breaking the top three this year.

Established by and named after the Vinik family, owners of the back-to-back NHL Stanley Cup champions the Tampa Bay Lightning, USF offers the programme as a dual-award MBA/MS, giving its students a rounded approach to studying the business of sport, as well as benefiting from the school's location, with the NFL's Buccaneers and the MLB's Rays also based in the city. Alumni surveys showed the school's strengths in employment after six months and post-graduation job support, where it posted the second-highest scores in

the top 40.

**Michelle Harrolle**, who took over as director of the Vinik Sport & Entertainment Management Program in 2019, talks *SportBusiness* through the application process and the strengths of the programme.

### How many applications do you usually receive, and how many of them are accepted? Has this been affected by the pandemic?

This past year was an increase. During both Covid years, we've had 100–120 applicants. We accept 35 to 40 of those, and then we end up with a class of about 32.

Applications went up a little bit for us, year over year, but we're a younger programme, so we're still brand recognition is still growing. The age of the program really helps in terms of every year incremental increases in applications.

### What do you like to see in applications?

We take a very holistic approach when reviewing applications. We also interview every student, and it's not so much that there's specific criteria we're looking for. We're more looking at, are we going to be able to help you be successful in whatever career path

you want to go down? If you want to be in media, broadcasting, we're not a great fit for you. If you want to be a general manager, we're not a good fit for you. We need to be sure people are coming here for the right reasons and that we can help achieve their goals.

We're also looking for diversity in terms of experiences, because we don't want everyone interested in sales, we don't want everyone interested in analytics, and we don't want everyone interested in marketing. Likewise, in terms of geography: we don't want everyone from Florida, we don't want everyone from Montana. We want a diverse group, in terms of their backgrounds, experiences, interests, and what they bring to the VSEM Family

And then, most importantly, are you a good person? Do you think of others? That's become really important to us over the past year. So we've changed our interview questions this past year, and the two that we added were: Since the pandemic was declared, what have you learned about yourself? And how have you used these lessons to serve others? Those individuals who lived through a pandemic and lived through the social injustice and racial injustice that we've had specifically

in the United States, have they improved themselves? The students who cannot answer that are not a great fit for us.

### Do you take steps to ensure that diversity and advertise the course to people from minority ethnic or underprivileged backgrounds?

We do, intentionally. For example, we recruit at universities that are historically black colleges and universities. In the past, we have taken recruiting trips with our African-American alumni to help us recruit from their undergraduate alma mater. Additionally, when you look at our website, you can see what our students look like, you can see the surface-level diversity within the cohort or across the cohorts, and you can read about the deeper-level diversity weaved throughout website, which is extremely important for students to not only see someone who looks like them, but be reminded that they belong in our programme. We've had students come to us and say, 'we looked at your cohort to see if we would fit in.'

To reach prospective students, we do virtual recruitment, particularly engaging people who may not be able to afford to travel to us – which is another component; our cohort is diverse in terms of socio-economic status as well.

What was most interesting for me, in my second year as the director, I had two women students in interviews who said they applied to USF because there was a female director. I think that shows how diversity can become a virtuous circle.

### What is the size and make-up of the faculty on the Vinik Program?

We have four full-time faculty – two women, two men – and we have four adjuncts who are sports-specific, who teach classes like social media and law. And then we have the general MBA faculty because our students take four classes with the MBA faculty who are from the university's college of business.

What's really cool is all of our faculty do research in different areas and are able to bring their research and practice to the classroom. So Dr Wells focuses on organisational behaviour and gender equity in

sports. Dr Mondello researches finance and analytics. Dr Greenhalgh studies and teaches sponsorship. I do consumer behaviour and fandom, and then we all collaborate on projects. That's really exciting for us because that covers most of business. It's great for our students, as well. When Dr Wells teaches her organizational behaviour class, she's really bringing her own research perspective along with the research of others. Dr Mondello, when he teaches finance analytics, he has that background. Our law professor is a lawyer. Overall, the majority of our faculty either are practitioners or have been at some point in their career, which is an added value for our students.



### Is there a particular area where you think the programme is unique?

I think for us it's about opportunities. I would say 95 per cent of our classes are hands-on experiential-based learning. In our marketing class, you are working with the NFL's San Francisco 49ers, you are working with United Soccer League, you are creating your proposal. Pre-Covid, our students worked with alum in the UK on a Global project for Harlequins. Every class touches a corporate partner who we're working with to help our content, help to develop our curriculum so that it's very hands-on. And it's across the board, all of our classes are that way.

Another thing is opportunity in the Tampa Bay area, to use Tampa as our classroom. You have an opportunity to work with the Lightning – we have several alumni and one recent grad in the parade for the back-to-back Stanley Cup winners, the alumna specifically worked with the Lightning this past year while getting

her Master's and then she was offered a full-time job there. That is very unique to Tampa Bay; there's just so many opportunities to work in sports. We have a student who is working with Feld Entertainment [based in nearby Ellenton] who worked there while going to school. We have a student working with United Soccer League [headquartered in Tampa]. We have student working for the NBA G-League. We even have several students working for the Super Bowl champions.

### Where do your graduates usually go on to work?

The current students are getting jobs and they're getting jobs everywhere. What's nice is probably 25 per cent are getting remote work. They're working with companies like SponsorUnited and they can work remotely, or they're doing data analytics and can work remotely.

There's also students who are getting jobs at teams – the Tampa Bay Lightning took one on, another just got a job at the 76ers. But it's all across the US. We have students just this year who have taken jobs in Seattle, New York City, Charlotte, Washington DC. We do have people that want to stay in Tampa Bay, and you would expect that, but it's a low percentage, and we encourage them to go out and work across the US and internationally because that's better for us, and it is an opportunity for them to grow.

### What kind of support do you offer to students after they've left, and what is the alumni network like?

I have every single alumni's phone number on my cell. I can text every single one of them and say, 'how are you doing today', and they will respond back. That relationship is instrumental, not only with the programme and the faculty, but with each other. This past year, all of our incoming first-year students were given alumni mentors.

And we have alumni reaching out when they're looking for job placements. They are coming to us to see if we have anyone available, and usually what's so sad is I have to say, 'I'm sorry, they're all placed! You're too late, you gotta speak to me in January, February.' ◉

## Philicia Douglas, director of sales at the Birmingham Squadron

Philicia Douglas is an alum of the University of South Florida's Vinik Sport & Entertainment Management Program, which she graduated in 2015. She joined the Miami Dolphins as an intern that year, later becoming manager of inside sales for the New Orleans Saints and New Orleans Pelicans. In 2021, she was appointed as director of sales for the Birmingham Squadron, the Pelicans' G-League Affiliate team, which is set to launch next year.



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

I wanted to be a journalist, so I went to school for journalism and then when I came out of school with no job, I was completely confused on what I wanted to do. I'm from Orlando, so I went to Universal Studios and did a job engraving leather bracelets after college. And I was just like, 'this sucks. I cannot believe this is what I'm doing right now, after college, I gotta do more with my life'. Being from Orlando, Tampa is not that far, and I saw an ad for the USF programme, and I thought, 'this could be it'. So I took a day off of work and I drove over there. I was not a good student in school – I was okay, but I wasn't the stellar student where they would look at my application and go 'oh my God!' But I am good in person, so I drove there, walked into the office and told them I was interested in the programme, and that was how it started. Had I not driven over there and talked to them in person, I don't know if I would have got in, because of my scores. But they gave me a chance and I promised then that if they gave me a chance, I wouldn't let them down.

USF has said it tries to create a

### space for diversity and helping people of colour and women into a sport industry that is still largely dominated by white men. Did you feel that support?

They not only supported it, they emphasised it. They're advocates for it. [Vinik Program director] Dr Harrolle don't play no games. I remember one day I walked in and I said, 'hey, did you see that girl on the news?' And she was like, 'excuse me, she's a woman. You need to make sure that if you're gonna say "woman" it's "woman", "man" it's "man"'. They emphasise it; they want to make sure that there's equality and inclusivity. Even in their curriculum, they're very intentional about what they're teaching. They pump up the guys, too, it's like: 'you need to help the gals, you all need to encourage them. If you're in a boardroom and you see all white males in that boardroom and no females, you should look around and be like, what's going on?'

### What was it about the course at USF that stood out to you?

The fact that you get an MBA and a Master's in sport entertainment management – that was huge, that I would receive two qualifications where other schools I was looking at were offering them as separate courses. And the fact that they place you in organisation, they connect you with an organisation and give you that foot up into your first connections and roles in the industry. The way they emphasised and advertised all this up front was very well done, so I knew exactly what to expect and what I was going to gain from going to USF.

### How did you time there set you up for your current role?

I wouldn't be here without that programme, 110 per cent fact, I know that. The networking opportunities it's given me are crazy. [Former programme director] Dr Sutton and Dr Harrolle placed me with the Miami Dolphins [for an internship], but not only that, I had so many other networking opportunities with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, Tampa Bay Lightning, and I still talk to the people from the Lightning and Bucs to this day. Dr Sutton connected me with Deno Anagnost, the vice-president of ticket sales with the Bucs, and he's the one who first said to me that I should try sales.

I think one of the issues in our industry is knowledge. A lot of people just don't know what they don't know. And I didn't know about any of the ways you could be involved in sports, I thought the only way to be in sports was either to play it professionally or to be a journalist. I had no idea about all the other avenues of sports, I didn't even know about ticket sales at all. I learned that through the course. I didn't know about partnerships. I didn't know about marketing. They exposed me to all those parts of the business.

### What advice would you offer to a new student starting at USF this year?

Be open. I was actually very closed off to doing sales. I said 'no, I'm not doing that, I don't want to do it' – because I didn't know what sales was! I thought that it was a person in the box office selling tickets. But then when I was open and I sat down with Deno and I listened to what sales really is, I realised this not what I thought it would be at all. So just be open, keep your options open and be prepared to learn about things you don't know you didn't know. ○

## Universities are rising to the challenge of educating first generation of esports leaders

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.

Every major professional sports league has a breakout moment. With the Fifa World Cup, perhaps it was the Brazil v Italy World Cup final match at USA 94? Or the Italy v Brazil – 1982 match? For the NBA, might this have been with expansion into China in the 1970s? Wimbledon? Maybe it was Arthur Ashe upsetting Jimmy Connors in 1975.

Now, the Fifa World Cup is one of the largest sporting events in the world, NBA is incredibly popular across the globe, and Wimbledon is one of the most iconic sporting competitions on the planet. What major event will shift the sport industry again?

We are now seeing another evolution of sports, and it is likely to be the next 'Big League', in real time: the emergence of esports, not just as a trend among young people around the world, but as a multi-billion-dollar business that could globally eclipse all other sports within a decade or two.

Esports grew as much as 15 per cent in 2020 while the world was struggling through a pandemic. Professional gamers now average an annual income of \$500,000. Nearly eight of every ten esports viewers are under 35, so the future looks bright for leagues, competitions, and viewership – all of which promise lucrative opportunities for not just the players, but also for managers, event coordinators, accountants, marketers and other front-office personnel, who are just beginning to see the potential of this enormous movement.

To be successful, esports needs more than just talented gamers. It needs determined, creative and data-driven business professionals to guide them toward success. Universities around the world, including the University of South Florida, are

beginning to offer programs via which students learn the complexities of the esports business to ultimately thrive in this new industry.

The rapid growth of esports offers universities a chance to get in on the ground floor by offering cutting-edge education, so students can seamlessly enter organizations ready for success.

To thrive within the esports landscape, organizations must be authentic. Esports and gaming fans can spot a fake a mile away, and brands wanting to get into the space need savvy business executives to succeed. Thus, we must educate the sport and entertainment industry, ranging from the traditional sport vice-presidents, chief executives and chief revenue officers, all the way down to the entry-level college graduates.

We at the USF's Vinik Sport & Entertainment Management (VSEM) Program have embraced this growing industry segment and staged two esports summits – one in-person and one virtual – to business professionals and students who want to get into the field. And in 2019, we hosted the first esports activation within a PGA Tour, the Valspar Championship. Uniquely, this activation was 100 per cent student-led and executed.

As with any new market segment, the opportunity for research is endless. Our VSEM faculty are beginning to examine esports through understanding the negative environment of gaming for women gamers. Not surprisingly, we found that the environment is extremely toxic and not improving as quickly as it should. Next, we are looking to understand the hiring practices of the esports industry and job market comparison between traditional sports and esports, to assist our students with job placement within



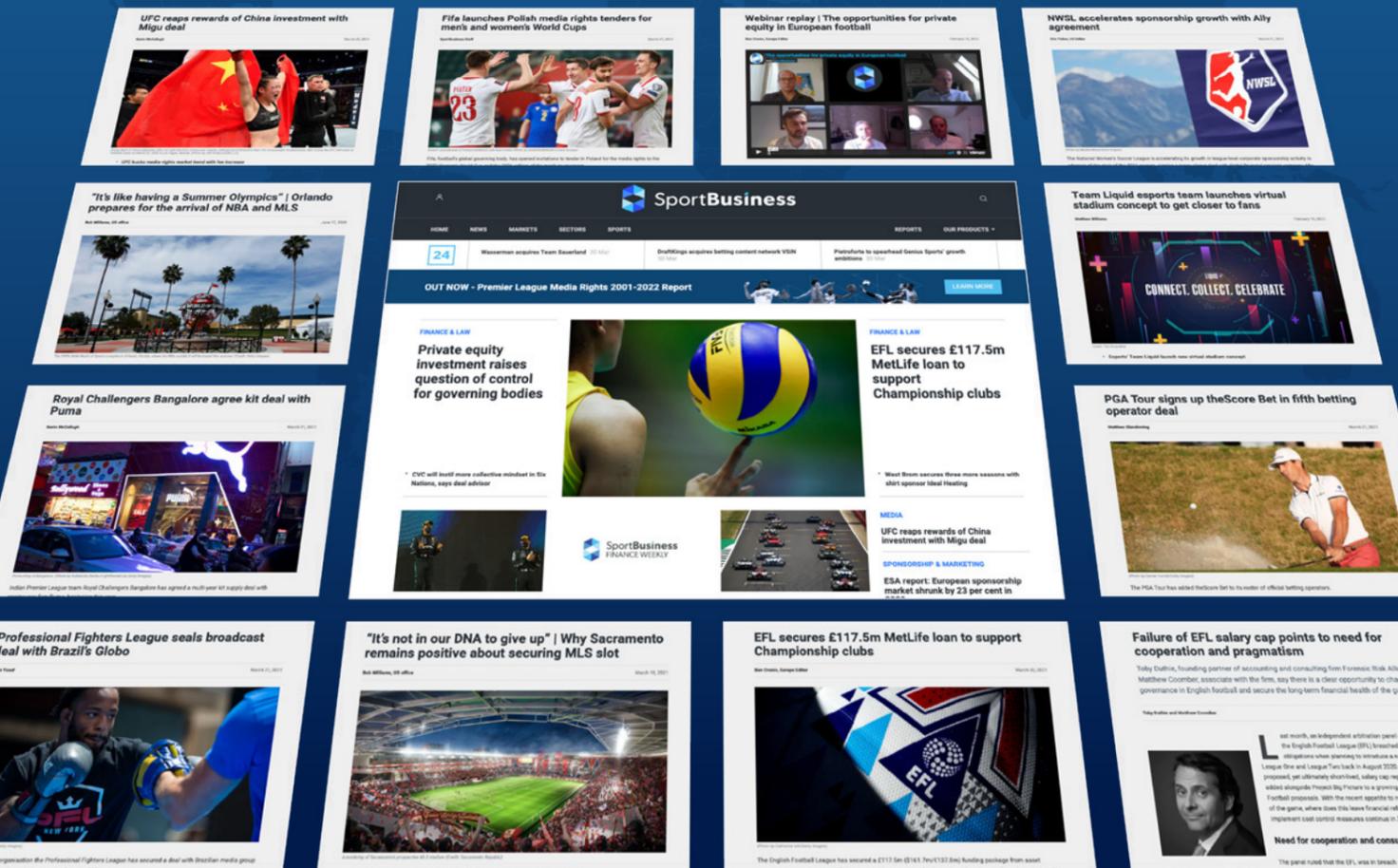
this industry segment.

While hands-on experiences are vital to a student's education, the curriculum surrounding that knowledge must be grounded in theory and practice. As such, we are building courses that offer an understanding of the business of esports while providing experiential learning. This year our students are producing an esports tournament and we are hosting one of the first university esports jobs fairs.

And this summer we hosted the first ever Summer Virtual Esports Camp for both gamers and their parents. Within most industries, parents possess vastly more knowledge than their children. However, in esports and gaming, the gamers, their children, hold all the knowledge and most parents are clueless as to the opportunities.

We, like many other business colleges around the nation and world, are poised to unleash savvy managers and executives into the esports landscape, ready to innovate and create paths that will result in permanence within this growing entertainment and sporting segment. If you are not on board now and learning as much as you can about the esports industry, we suggest you run as fast as you can to catch up to this speeding train. ○

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## The Fifa Master celebrates 20 years of success



Students from the 21st edition of the FIFA Master during a visit to Fifa headquarters in June 2021



The Fifa Master, which took its first cohort in the year 2000, is operated by the International Center for Sport Studies (CIES) in Switzerland, but is run as a pan-European course, with candidates studying at De Montfort University in Leicester, SDA Bocconi School of Management in Milan and the University of Neuchâtel in Switzerland during their year on the programme. Graduates receive a diploma jointly awarded by all three institutions.

This year, it has once again come out as the top European sports management course in our rankings, as it has in nine of the 10 editions of this list to date. It is also one of only three courses to top the rankings, which it also achieved in 2014. Its 2018 graduating class ranked the course highly for both its alumni network and industry networking opportunities, while fellow course leaders gave the Fifa Master the third-highest score available, demonstrating the reputation it has built for itself in its first 20 years.

Denis Oswald, director of CIES,

speaks to *SportBusiness* about the application process, studying on the Fifa Master, and post-graduation life.

### How many applications do you receive each year?

Over the last ten years, it has varied, but we regularly get anywhere from 150 to 220 completed applications, and a total of around 600 candidates creating application profiles.

### How many of those applications are successful? What's an average class intake at your university?

In order to maintain the highest level of education, we want to preserve the interaction with the teaching staff and also among the students themselves. So while we interview around 65-75 candidates each year who we believe have the potential to succeed, we can only offer a maximum of 32 places. It is encouraging to see many candidates reapply after an initial application or even interview and be offered a place in a future edition. This shows us that more and more candidates

are preparing their applications early on – we even had one woman recently who had identified the Fifa Master as her future while still in high school and prepared everything for years to apply to us.

### How have applications been affected by Covid?

Surprisingly, and thankfully, they haven't. It did seem logical to expect a drop, so we were bracing ourselves for one. Intriguingly, while the number of overall application profiles decreased, we actually had a higher number of submitted applications for 2021-22 than for 2020-21 and the highest ever number of user profiles created. We have, however, seen Covid continue the trend in increased scholarship requests.

### What do you look for in applicants? Is it all around academic achievement or do you have other criteria?

Without question we look for candidates with strong academics. Given that we are focused on sport at the global level, we expect our

students to be open-minded and curious as well as intellectually sharp and internationally-oriented. We want well-rounded applicants who are hungry to learn and ask questions. Obviously, prior work in sport will help students draw on their experience during the learning journey. Being a team player is also essential, since much of the year is dedicated to group work.

#### What is the background of your students?

Our students literally come from all four corners of the world and we have students with diverse academic backgrounds – interdisciplinary learning is at the core of our programme – and all sports from fencing and biathlon to football and basketball. The age range is consistently between 25-32 years old, with regularly a few younger students who have demonstrated maturity, as well as a handful of more experienced individuals looking to go back to school for a year.

#### What kind of grants or stipends are available to students?

We have a number of scholarships available each year, a small number of which are restricted to certain geographical areas. We generally divide our scholarships to help as many students as possible. We are constantly trying to find more support, but for 2021-22 we are excited that more than half our students will be receiving some form of financial aid.

#### What is the size of your faculty?

Our faculty is spread across three universities and currently includes 24 full-time academic staff and, last year, we invited 36 guest lecturers from other universities (one-third of whom were women). We have two to three dedicated scientific directors for each of our three taught modules. Throughout the year we also invite many guest industry speakers to the classroom or meet them on field visits to sports organisations. We had 117 last year. Covid has actually helped us broaden our reach, with more round tables or speakers from across the world. For example, last spring we had a virtual visit to CAF in Cairo, and their top staff spent a day

online with the class sharing their experience about African football.

#### Tell us about some of the areas of expertise you have on your faculty. Where do you stand out in terms of teaching strength?

At each of our universities, our staff have traditionally been leaders in their fields in the humanities, management, and law. Whether it is the study of Olympic history or football diplomacy at De Montfort, leadership and managerial culture through SDA Bocconi's Sport Knowledge Center, or anti-doping and arbitration at the University of Neuchâtel, our staff are at the forefront of both theory and practice.

#### Is there a particular USP for your institution? Do you have a focus on an area you don't see many others working in across the sector?

We have an international focus and we place value on interdisciplinary learning. From our student body to the content of the classes, our programme has always been centred on understanding sport as an international phenomenon. We know other programmes have international partnerships or visits abroad, but spending one year studying at three completely different universities while moving through three different countries with a truly global cohort of students is pretty unique.

#### Where do your graduates usually go on to work?

In recent years, a number of have taken jobs in the International Federation hub in Switzerland, with nearly 50 working at Fifa. Many others choose to work across the

globe for a few years and then return to their home country to work in sport there.

#### What about in terms of sector?

Most of our graduates work in international or national sporting organisations as well as clubs, teams, and agencies. In particular, we have a high number working in the international federation and global event sector. We also have a growing number of entrepreneurs as well who have started a host of businesses in various sectors of the sports industry.

#### How do you support your alumni? How strong is your alumni network?

We prefer to speak about our Fifa Master alumni as a "community" rather than just network. A network is simply a set of links, whereas a community is a living, breathing entity. The CIES communications staff work closely with the Fifa Master alumni, and we have vibrant communication channels like regional WhatsApp/messaging groups or subgroups for specific interests, such as a dedicated sports law group or even a budding group for alumni in academia or doing sports-related PhDs. The community gathers most often around sports events – we had our last major one pre-Covid at the Women's World Cup in France – to discuss alumni association matters, share updates or job openings, create new opportunities, and also just kindle old friendships. CIES and the universities remain close to the alumni association which has a seat on the course's executive board and many alumni are involved in university activities giving back to the course. ○

## Jair Bertoni, director of member associations for the Americas at Fifa

Jair Bertoni completed the Fifa Master in 2005 and afterwards went on to work for the European Professional Football Leagues for almost a decade. He left that role to found his own company, 4Goal Consulting, and in 2016, joined Fifa as director of member associations for the Americas.

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

I'm an Argentinean national and was in Argentina working in sport marketing. At that time, back in 2003, I was eager to learn more in a professional environment about the development of sport, because the industry in Argentina was pretty new in terms of the professionalisation of the business of sport. I thought that a Master in sports management was a great opportunity to learn from an environment that would provide me with the necessary knowledge to continue growing in my career. I came across the Fifa Master and decided to give it a shot; it seemed like a great development in terms of sport, especially as a Master promoted by Fifa. As an Argentinean, coming from such a strong footballing country, Fifa is like a dream employer, so that connection was important. And I was attracted to the idea of learning more from around the globe, with it being an international Master, and I really wanted to increase my knowledge and my skills with the idea, which I'm now accomplishing, and to bring a lot of that knowledge back into the region.

#### How did you hear about the Fifa Master and why did you choose that course in particular?

I was attending a couple of courses in Argentina on sports management and in one of the courses there was a professor from CIES who put on a lecture open to the general public. I participated in the lecture and they explained a bit about this Master. I found out that one of my Argentinian colleagues had done the course and finished in 2004, one year before I started. I contacted her and she recommended that I apply, and provided me with a good insight about the strength of the

alumni network and explained all the activities and lectures that they had and the professionals involved, and it was definitely something that I was looking for. Because it is promoted by Fifa, I was attracted to the football component, but eventually, I saw that there were also a lot of other sports involved in the Master and I actually got more enthusiastic about that, because then I would have a wider perspective on sport.

#### How did that perspective help you get started in your career?

It's giving you a very broad look at the theoretical aspects of sport. Having the possibility to review the three key pillars of management, law and humanities was hugely important. I was not so knowledgeable about the legal side but the role of humanities especially is a very positive element, because as a sport manager, you are not only involved with one single task. You need to be fully aware about the context of sport, the history of sport, the legal framework of sport. So having the Master before I started those steps in my professional career here in Europe was very positive in order to understand the different components.

I would also say that the quality of the organisations that you visit, getting to understand how they work from the inside, gives you a flavour both in terms of the managerial side but also the culture of the organisation and how you could fit into it. It was a tremendous opportunity as well to share a space with colleagues from other parts of the world, to understand how sport is framed in other parts of the world. It gives you a lot of very broad cultural awareness in sport and that is important because it's not only about marketing, finance, development or event management, but it's also



about having this 360-degree view, locally and globally.

#### Does the alumni network you mentioned continue to support you, or do you support other alumni?

I always say this is the strongest point of the of the Master. I was very keen on the Master because it changed my life professionally but also personally, accomplishing my dreams to work in Europe, to work in football, so I tend always to go back to my fellow colleagues in the region where I come from – South America, Central America, Latin America – to promote the Master, tell them what they should expect when they do the Master, especially the positive social side of it, sharing space with people from different cultures, learning not only about sport but about cultures in general.

The biggest thing I tell them is the support that the CIES gives you after you finish in terms of looking for the right job opportunity, as well the networking if you want to start your own initiative, your own project. No matter where you go in sport, you always meet different people who have studied the Fifa Master and I think that gives us all something in common, of having had this great experience. ○



A gathering of the FIFA Master Alumni Association in Lyon, France during the 2019 Fifa Women's World Cup.

## Sport during wartime

Matthew Taylor, Professor of History at the International Centre for Sports History and Culture at De Montfort University, Leicester, discusses the research behind his book, *Sport and the Home Front*. Published in 2020, the book was shortlisted for the North American Society of Sports History monograph of the year and the British Society of Sports History Aberdare Prize for best book of the year.

As an historian of sport, I have always been fascinated by how and why sport has survived at times of national and international crisis. My first academic publication, completed back in 1995 while I was writing my PhD on the history of professional football in England, focused on the so-called 'people's game' during the Second World War. Around a decade ago, I was ready for a new research project and the history of sport in Britain during wartime seemed as vital as ever. In developing the project, I found that while sport and war have frequently been linked metaphorically, by politicians, journalists and writers such as George Orwell, there had been little research on the precise role and significance of sport during wartime for governments, communities and individuals.

My research took me to dozens of archives across the UK. At the National Archives in London I explored the files of government departments who decided how much organised sport could be safely played, examined the value of physical activity for war workers, and balanced the space available for sport against the need for food production and military training. The records of governing bodies and clubs revealed the strategies developed for 'carrying on' at a time when members were often scattered across the country and the continent. In the BBC Written Archives, I was able to trace the central role allocated to sports broadcasting in the development of the new Forces radio network – designed to cater for men listening in military barracks but proved popular to all sections of the population.

One of my main aims was to examine the individual impact of



war on sporting lives. Here I found the diaries in the collections of Mass Observation and the Imperial War Museum invaluable. Although sport was sometimes dismissed as frivolous at a time of national crisis, these personal sources showed what it meant in the lives of so many people. Playing tennis or watching cricket may have been an ordinary pastime but during wartime it became crucial for the morale of the population and therefore vital for the war effort. At the heart of these accounts was the tension inherent in the idea of sport and 'play' at a time of war and between the clashing notions of sport as normality and exceptionality, routine and disruption and the everyday and the extraordinary.

After almost ten years of research, in June 2020 my book *Sport and the Home Front: Wartime Britain at Play, 1939-45* was published by Routledge. Across seven chapters, it examines government attitudes to sport; the financial and logistical difficulties faced by sports clubs; problems of access to and control of sports spaces; the connections between work, fitness and sport; the role of sport in everyday wartime

life; radio broadcasting of wartime sport; and the myriad associations between sport, war and the nation.

As Covid-19 took hold across the world in 2020, my research was applied to explore the parallels between the treatment of sport in the war and the pandemic by *The Times* and BBC Sport Online among others. Indeed the significance of the past in informing and aiding our understanding of the present was as evident in 1939 as in 2020. Government departments and sports associations frequently drew on previous decisions and precedence, the experience of the First World War offering models to be copied as well as lessons to learn.

My hope is that in the long-term this research will encourage more work on the social and cultural history of sport during wartime, adding to our knowledge of periods that are much discussed but often mythologised. I would also be delighted if the book found its way into the hands of sports administrators and policy-makers, reassuring them, perhaps, that the past was every bit as complex and contested as the present. ○

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**#2 in Europe**

# AISTS's Master of Advanced Studies in Sport Administration and Technology



The International Academy of Sport Science and Technology (AISTS) in Lausanne, Switzerland was founded in 2000 by an association of eight institutions, including the International Olympic Committee, with a goal of responding to the growing need for specialised technical and practical knowledge across the sporting world. It has been a fixture in our rankings in across all ten editions and has finished as the second-best course in Europe for each of the past two years. In the overall list, it moved up one place in 2021, from ninth to eighth.

Its international appeal is reflected in our survey results, which show all but one of the students in 2018 came from outside Switzerland, while its strongest scores were largely in the employment and usefulness categories, with alumni reporting that being an AISTS graduate has had a highly positive impact on their career.

SportBusiness spoke to **Claude Stricker**, executive director of the academy, to get his perspective on the student experience and hear how the course has developed over the years.

## How many applications do you receive each year for people to study at AISTS?

It's between 80 and 90 after the first screening, when we look only at the ones that really meet the requirements, which means a university degree and proof that the English language is mastered. In an international programme, you have all kinds of variation. We need to be a bit flexible because we know that it's also part of international sport to have all different backgrounds and different languages around the table. But still, everything here is in English, so it's important to have a good understanding, especially with the teamwork. All the teaching is in English anyway and all the production, projects, reports, interviews, collection of data et cetera. In general, we take around 40 students per year.

The problem has been that with Covid-19, you have cancellations after people have been accepted. People might have no job or want to change their career and be in the mind to use the time to reskill, but then if they get a job offer or have a perception that the sport economy is not that great, they might change their decision.

That's the big change we've noticed with the pandemic.

## What makes a successful applicant?

We look for some form of sport in their experience. It can be, for instance, an athlete that might have been at a very high level, competing for their national teams or in international events. We might have someone 23, 24-years-old who has a Bachelor's degree, but with this experience in sport, we can consider their application.

If it's someone has no professional or athletic experience in sport, then we look at professional experience in a non-sport sector, and if you only have a Bachelor's degree, it needs to be a minimum of five years working experience. If the person has a master's degree, which is given after four-and-a-half or five years of study, then we don't need so much professional experience, maybe one or two years is okay, because the criteria to enter a Master of Advanced Studies in Switzerland is a master's degree.

## What's the background of your students?

It's quite diverse. You will have a people who have graduated in very different areas – psychology, the arts, engineering, business, sport science. It's quite diverse academically. In terms of work experience, same thing – I would say we don't necessarily have a domination of one sector over another sector. It's quite diversified between hospitality, tourism, law, marketing, science, arts and so on. What we like is to have people who bring this experience from their own country as well. It's always good to have all the specificity of different parts of the world around the table, and we have always 20 or 25 nationalities represented. It's quite impressive. We like candidates who have been exposed to multicultural environments, so they adapt well here. If you have a young student who has never been out of their country or never exposed to other cultures, they might need a bit more adaptation.

## What can you tell me about the faculty and the teaching model at AISTS?

We are not like a normal school. It varies year to year, but we have between 100 and 140 invited lecturers who are professors in their own universities or professors in our founding schools around here in Lausanne, as well as guest speaker from the industry. So if you count everyone, we have over 100, depending on the year.

Then we have over 10 permanent full-time staff in the group here, to be in class with the students, supervise their projects, provide them all the support they need on the academic side. We have some people who also hold a professors' chair in another school but, beside myself and two others who have PhDs, it's mainly people specialised in education who provide the support to the academic lecturers and to the students in coordinating their different projects and exams.

## What are the areas of expertise or focuses of the curriculum?

We are developing on the sport technology side. Everything related to digital innovation is going to be something important for us in the coming edition. We have a new

staff member with an engineering background starting in August, who has over 10 years of experience in sports sector. So on that path, we definitely put a focus on digital innovation, impact on sport, innovation processing and new business models, the transformation of the industry.

We also have a part related to finance, so business of sports, finance for people without a financial background, working with our close faculty. We will develop this part in the near future, both inside our organisation and with our guest lecturers.

So I would say digital innovation, sport technology, and also financial, budgeting, planning, and performance analysis, are the real focus for us now.



Claude Stricker | executive director of AISTS

## What make AISTS stand out on the marketplace?

It remains the value proposition we offer from the start, which is a balance between our five central sciences: medical science, technology, business management, law and sociology. Of course, we have a bit more focus on the management and business side, but still we have, for instance, three full weeks on sport medicine. The idea is to have professional sport physicians, sport physiologists, sharing their expertise with the class. It is useful for future managers to understand the health issues, understand how to organise a good medical service in sports events, but it can be also linked to when you plan for sustainability or legacy, or when you are working

in a federation and you want to understand what you can do better in terms of athlete health and safety. It's the 360-degree view across these five sciences, taught by experts, that make our course different than the standard MBA-type of course where you would focus mainly on the business and management aspect.

## Where do your graduates tend to go on to work?

It remains the case that a good half go on to work in sports associations or confederations, International Federations in the region here, so IOC, Uefa, Fifa and so on. Then I would say a second sector that is growing for us is agencies or other sport industry companies who are providing infrastructure, organising events et cetera. Then after that it is very mixed. There are quite a few from last year who are now at the International Testing Agency in Lausanne working in anti-doping and integrity.

## Is there a strong community of AISTS alumni?

Yes, there is. First, there is a natural community which is formed because these people have been together so much during one year with a lot of things going on, so friendships have developed. That's bit less with Covid, unfortunately, but in a normal year they bond and keep in contact, so there is the natural year-by-year, peer-group network that is built when you spend nine months together working on a project that is quite intense and strong.

Then we have the Alumni Association, which hosts events and offers different services, where we provide a lot of support. For instance, during Covid we organised panel sessions, inviting the alumni to speak and share their career development. We also provide quite a lot of career development support, we have a professional career coach who is there for the alumni and for the class as well and so any alumni who is changing roles or looking for another job can be in contact with a career coach and receive free advice, information about whatever openings, even support to prepare for interviews. That's a very in-demand service. ○

# Hisham Shehabi, co-founder and chief operating officer of N3XT Sports

A former Olympic swimmer, Hisham Shehabi took the Master of Advanced Studies in Sport Administration and Technology at AISTS in 2014-15. While studying he began an internship with the International Olympic Committee, going on to work there in various roles for four years, before leaving to found his own company, N3XT Sports, a strategic consulting agency focusing on digital innovation in the Olympic movement.

## When and why did you decide to study a sport business postgraduate degree?

I started in 2014. I decided to do it because I was exposed to an international sports certificate back in Bahrain in 2012, and that opened my eyes to the world of sports that existed beyond my small country. I got curious about the international sports scene and thought I'd like to get a career in it. I used to be a swimmer for Bahrain – I swam in the Olympics in 2004 and I'd always been around sports. I started my career in investment banking and public policy, but I volunteered a lot of my time in sports and thought, if I enjoy volunteering all of time my for it, I think I would probably like to spend my career doing it as well, which is how I ended up kind of doing that certificate in Bahrain, being exposed to the world of sports, and then choosing to go to AISTS to pursue the degree.

## What was it about the offering at AISTS that appealed to you and made you want to apply?

That fact that it was such a diverse offering – there were areas such as law, technology, sociology that I was not exposed to before, so I liked the diversity of the programme. It being in Switzerland, in Lausanne, also appealed to me, because it was not only the seat of the IOC but of all these other Federations as well. So those were the two main things that attracted me there. In retrospect, the alumni network is also a really good one, and a lot of people that I currently work with are actually from the programme, even though we didn't do the programme at the same time. I have a few different collaborators I work with now, a few experts



*“Being exposed to the whole Olympic Movement really helped me, because that's what I work on now.”*

on digital and a few consultants that came from AISTS as well. We're always launching these small collaborations with different alumni.

## And how would you say that it helped to prepare you for working in the sport industry?

It's helped with the network, first and foremost. Not just AISTS itself, but also being in Lausanne. Because I was there doing AISTS, I got to also interact with that wider network. Being exposed to the whole Olympic Movement really helped me, because that's what I work on now, my business is based on digital transformation within the Olympic movement. Obviously, the IOC had a big role in defining

this path for me, but AISTS was the launchpad for that.

## How does being an alum continue to impact your life and work?

I was part of the Alumni Association a few years ago because I was trying to strengthen the network and services to alumni, and so that got me closer to the programme of administration. I have kept in touch with the career counsellor, who I ask for candidates, and try to place them in the company, whether it's in freelance roles or full-time positions that we create at the company. We've had a good stream of candidates apply. We actually have one open at the moment, for a senior consultant, and I've interviewed a few from AISTS that made the shortlist.

## What would you tell someone who is just about to embark on the course?

First, I hope it's not remote and that they get to experience as much of Lausanne as possible! And then I would say, be active in the programme, be proactive. Reaching out and being part of different activities that AISTS does, but also things that are happening in and around Lausanne and tapping into the network out there. I think the programme has done a good job in terms of connecting local alumni, those based in Lausanne, with the class. I would really recommend make the most of those interactions and to strengthen and focus there. Because we are in an industry that's built on networks, and who you know, and what you know about them, so I think even if the person starting today is going back to their home country afterward, having that link to Switzerland is critical. ○

# Social value creation through mega sports events

Three AISTS students from the 2021 edition of the course – Yasmeen Shabsough, Martim Ramoa and Yoko Yamagishi – discuss their master's research project, carried out in collaboration with professional services firm Arup.

Social value is becoming increasingly important as governments and cities shift their focus into the wider outcomes and legacies of their activities. This shift in attitude, from outputs to outcomes, has meant that governments and investors are requiring evidence on how the project or programme will deliver social equity and inclusion. Increasingly, this is even a legal requirement, as it in now is in the UK and New Zealand. Major events offer huge opportunities to make a significant and long-lasting difference both in sport and to the lives of citizens.

The current Covid-19 crisis is presenting challenges for all and everyone is having to come to terms with the “new normal”. Governments and cities are having to review and re-allocate their funding needs and budgets, and the economic impact over the longer term will be significant. For major events to be viable, and palatable to citizens and their elected officials, they will have to deliver much more in terms of outcomes, and in areas that previously may not have been considered.

With this background, professional services firm Arup, which specialises in engineering, design and project management, was interested to understand this new model in more detail and was seeking research to be undertaken to explore how social value can be delivered through major events, against Covid-19 and a new normal. Thus, as a part of the AISTS Master of Advanced Studies in Sport Administration and Technology's Client Team Project, a collaborative research project between Arup and AISTS, “Building a social value legacy through mega sports events”, was launched and developed.

The collaboration began in November 2020 and the team



delivered a written report and an oral presentation at the end of June 2021. The project was delivered by Nic Merridew, director of Arup's Host Cities team and Laetitia Lucy, senior consultant, as the project's clients, and three students from AISTS as researchers and supervised by Nalain Naidoo, head of business development at AISTS. Team Arup was deeply involved in the delivery of the project, from having online meetings with the students every two weeks to discuss the delivery of the project, to providing interview opportunities with people from different host cities' local governments.

The aim of the research was to create a playbook with recommendations on how to create social value from major events, to be used by host cities and communities. Alongside the rich data collected from academic literature, published documents and reports from previous mega sports events, the team also conducted 21 interviews with top-level professionals who have been involved in hosting mega events, especially in the area of social value and legacy development. The interview participants came from various agencies and sports associations, including the International Olympic Committee, Commonwealth Games Federation, and local governments which have hosted or will host mega sports events. The analysis of the interview

participants' experience and knowledge enriched the scope of the project further.

One of the major takeaways of this project was that when developing the strategy for social value legacy, it is important to understand the needs and issues of the cities and communities, and to respond to them throughout all three stages which event organizers often experience when hosting the events: (I) the planning and/or bidding phase, (II) the implementation phase, and (III) post-event phase.

In addition, it was highlighted that host cities and organizers should plan ahead the strategy, especially the five levers which should be actively sustained throughout the three stages for the successful creation of social value legacy, and the levers are: (a) Legacy Foundation, (b) Funding, (c) Partnership, (d) Initiatives and (e) Measurement. In order to assist this planning and decision making, four fundamental pillars were proposed: (1) Sports Participation, Health and Well-being, (2) Economic Growth, Employment and Innovation, (3) Urban Development and Environmental Sustainability, and (4) Social and Cultural Inclusion, allowing to holistically reach different areas and needs of local communities. Another significant conclusion is that organizers should be aware of the dynamism of the world around them, especially in this post-pandemic world that is now beginning. The challenges that Covid-19 brought to communities should be embedded into the strategy of the social value legacy.

In conclusion, the research findings and recommendations will support cities, government bodies and event agencies around the world to understand, and implement the creation of a social value legacy arising from mega sports events. ○



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#3 IN EUROPE – MASTERSPORT



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



The masterSport programme was launched in 1996 by a group of senior Italian sports executives seeking to establish a sports education offering that allowed students to learn directly from high-profile practitioners. With joint bases in the University of San Marino and University of Parma, the course has been a staple in the European top 10 since the start of our rankings, with its third-placed finish this year matching its achievement from 2019.

It also takes our prestigious Graduates' Choice award this year, with its class of 2018 offering overwhelmingly positive responses about their experience on the course, and was the highest-rated school in the top 40 for value in furthering graduates' careers. It secured the maximum possible score in three separate categories – extra-curricular support, alumni network and industry networking – and was third-best for employment after six months, an indication of how the programme is viewed in its native Italy, with graduates securing work quickly after leaving the course.

Marco Brunelli, head of masterSport since its inception, as well as secretary general of the Italian Football Federation (FIGC), spoke to SportBusiness about the history of the course, the impact of the Covid-19

pandemic, and the promise it makes to its students.

**Tell us about the application process for the masterSport.**

It depends on the specific circumstances of each year, but having 25 places available, we receive at least double that in applications. In our record year we had more than 100 but, on average, over the last 10 years, we have had between 50 and 60 applications for 25 seats available.

We also have a few people who can attend the course without receiving their degree certificate, because they just attend a single module to sit in some of the lessons, but without being formally registered as students. So in the end we are between 25 and 30.

We are mainly looking at people with strong academic credentials, who are motivated. Our course is mainly receptive to younger students, who are coming to us after a three- or four-year bachelor degree. So it's difficult to find people who have very strong or deep-rooted professional experiences.

But we look for a mix of elements, and we do want to see some experiences which give us the idea that they are really and concretely interested in the sporting world and in their professional development in this field. That can be experience

as a player at a certain level, or experience as officials or organisers of small events, or having made a final academic thesis or project with specific reference to sporting issues. These are considered as preferred elements which complete the profile of our ideal applicant. But the main evaluation is based on the academic records so far, because people are 24, 25 years old without much professional experience.

**Are your students mainly coming from within Italy, or do you get some from further afield?**

We teach and work in Italian, so they are basically all Italians, from all regions of the country. Usually every year out of the 25 students, there are a couple of people from other countries, often because they are already here for work or studying. We had a Japanese student who had studied in Italy, a Brazilian who had started studying in Italy, however it is not so common that someone comes to Italy from abroad specifically for the masterSport course. As far as their academic backgrounds, they usually come from a legal, economic or business environment.

**Your teaching model is based around bringing practitioners into the classroom. What can you tell us about that?**

We have a permanent faculty which is made of around 10 people each year who are academics, professors, who have regular courses in other universities and come to teach a module in our master.

But the main characteristic of the course from the beginning, 25 years ago, has been that we wanted to bring into the classroom the concrete experiences of people working in sport – with concrete professional experiences who are able to teach concrete stories. People who have done significant things in the field of management in sport and are able to speak about that and to teach and to interact and to share their experiences with students. This was helped by the fact that the founders of the course, myself and some friends, also already had regular jobs in the field of sport, so we could bring that added value to the classroom immediately, and rely on that personal network of people who we would meet every day for professional reasons and who can easily come to give a lecture, because they know us and we have credibility from our regular jobs.

So when we say to a top manager of a sporting organisation, a club, federation or company that we also run a university course and we would like them to give a lecture or to interact with our students or to disseminate their knowledge, generally speaking, they are absolutely available because they know us, nowadays they know the course and they consider it an outstanding one, and above all they consider us to be credible people. So when we invite them, they accept.

This course is made of a few academics, which are necessary of the because of the theory, the fundamentals of the different matters. But a huge number are guest speakers. Over a one-year course, we host 80 or 90 people directly from the industry. This is really appreciated by our students, because after studying at a traditional university, they meet with people discussing concrete experiences. Then there is the final phase project work, a placement within an organisation, and this completes their academic background with a close link to their professional life, which should hopefully start

immediately after the end of the course.

### Where do their professional lives start?

Mainly they work in sports organisations in Italy. But after 25 years – which means more than 500 students have completed the course – when I am traveling internationally I meet many graduates from the course. I met one of my previous students, who was working for the International Handball Federation in Qatar when it was organising the World Cup there. We have a graduate who went on to work in Hong Kong. There are several former students who are looking for work internationally, and there are people working in Italy but with organisations that have a strong international approach. Our students interact at the international level so much.

### How did the pandemic affect the operation of the course this year and last?

We were surprised that Covid didn't really affect the number of applications. It's been steady for the past two years and we have just gone to open applications for the next edition, they will be open from September until December and we expect the regular number of applications for 2022 as well.

What has been affected has been the way of developing the course for the master, because it seems that a year or more ago we were obliged to move or to cancel the lessons and the lectures in person and we had to move to a different model. We are really proud that we were the first university in the Italian system to move from the old way to the new system. We were very quick to move to a digital platform to host our lessons and to interact with our students, so we practically didn't

lose a single week, because we were able to shift immediately when Covid happened. We were very creative. We introduced new formats, new kinds of lessons, invited people who were never able to be involved in the past but now were involved thanks to these new technologies. But also we were creative in terms of finding, as soon as it was possible, ways to host the lessons in open spaces. We moved to have lessons on the terraces of a stadium instead, or in a park. So we were very innovative in these respects.

### How do you continue to support your alumni after graduation?

We can get in touch with each one immediately if we need, because we still receive requests from companies who are hiring. Not just looking for people who have just completed the course, but also more skilled people, because sometimes companies ask for former students with a little bit of a professional career already. We keep a file of where everyone is and what they are doing now in case something becomes relevant so we can pass them on and propose some names and help our alumni.

There is an alumni network that exists informally. Since the very beginning, the network was created more than 20 years ago by the alumni themselves, for themselves. It is very very interesting because it is not a formal association, not supported by an organisation. But I think due to the fact that is a spontaneous one, something the students created for themselves, it works very well. When one of the former students has an opportunity or knows somebody who is looking for someone, they contact their former masterSport colleagues. We hear stories of people getting opportunities for new jobs through the alumni network sometimes many years after they have finished the masterSport. ○



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## Paolo Arsillo, director of the Vivo Azzurro fan group at the Italian Football Federation (FIGC)

Paolo Arsillo attended the MasterSport international master's in strategic management of sports organisations, events and facilities in 2003, and joined the Italian Football Federation (FIGC) the following year. He currently heads up the official Italian national team fan club, Vivo Azzurro.

### Why did you decide to study on the MasterSport programme?

I took my first degree on communication in Rome, where I was born. I've always had a great passion for sports. During university, I studied communications, but in the last two years I took part in a students' forum that organised some meetings on football and the business side of sport. This was the first experience that I had with the sports industry, and it helped me deepen my knowledge relating to communication and marketing about sports. As part of my degree, I did my thesis about sports marketing, specifically about the marketing of the motorcycle federation in Italy.

My goal was to take a postgraduate master's degree on this because my dream to work in sport was the same dream as lots of other people, so I wanted to do something to stand out. During my research, I found the MasterSport in San Marino and Emilia Romagna, and when I attended it was run with Bologna University; now it is with University of Parma, and San Marino is still the main school.

I attended the course in 2003-04, 18 years ago, and at that time, there wasn't a lot of postgraduate courses dedicated to sports available in Italy. I chose MasterSport because it looked like the most professional one. The curriculum, the different items that they taught, it looked like the best one for me. So I made the request, I went there to take the test, and had to move from Rome to spend six months of my life in San Marino.

### How do you feel the course prepared you for your current role with the FIGC?

The stress of MasterSport was to make the students understand that



working in sports management is not only driven by passion, but has to also come with a great deal of preparation in terms of academic and professional matters. This is the most important thing that I learned from the course. The quality of the teachers and the professors that we had, and their ability to talk around a lot of things about sports in general – economic matters, financial matters, historical and sociological matters – that, from my point of view, is one of the most important things, because I came from a sociological university and I really appreciated this approach that they took to sport. It's important to understand the sociological basis of sport in order to create economic opportunities and to manage them successfully.

### Have you remained a part of the alumni network?

Networking is very important. The first network that I had in the industry was with the course mates I had 18 years ago, because we had the opportunity to live together as well as study together. There were people coming from all parts of Italy – from the north, south and the centre, and we spent six months together, not only studying but also socializing. This was the first network that the MasterSport created for us. I still have calls with lots of them to this day, because they also work in football, but also for leisure still, we are still friends. And the MasterSport keeps making that network bigger and bigger, because it's not just the students of a particular course, but all the students who attend before me and after me. When I hear from someone who is coming into our federation that they went to San Marino, it's a pleasure for me because I see myself when I was younger, with the same passion and the same dream. But it is also a way to speak the same language about the approach to sport matters.

### How would you advise someone who is hoping to take the MasterSport course?

All the students that approach this program are driven by passion for sports, so my advice is to try to be able to exploit the treasure and rewards that the MasterSport can give you in order to increase your professional competence and knowledge. Try to match your passion with the knowledge that the MasterSport can give to each student, because this is certainly the best course we have to offer in Italy and probably one of the best in Europe too. ○

## Stadiums of the future: A competitive factor for Italian football

Marco Brunelli is the founder and director of the MasterSport International Masters in Strategic Management of Sports Organisations, Events and Facilities, which is based in the Universities of San Marino and Parma. Here, he presents an extract from an article on the underdevelopment of Italian stadium infrastructure and its impact on the wider sports landscape in the country.

It is widely believed that the backwardness of sport facilities in general, and of stadiums in particular, is one of the main reasons why the Italian football system is less competitive in comparable social, economic, demographic and cultural terms.

Think, for example, of the infrastructural level reached by sport facilities in some European countries such as Switzerland, France, Germany and England and, to a different degree, Spain and Portugal. One could think, with good reason, that an actual "stadium factor" as a new paradigm of reference may play a strategic role in the process of modernisation and rehabilitation of the Italian system of sport infrastructure within the now undelayable effort to fill a dramatically evident infrastructural gap.

Within the European context, sport infrastructures are considered as strategic elements for the promotion of policies aimed at the improvement and implementation of the cultural and entertainment offering directed at a wide audience (well beyond that of football fans). On the other side, they are considered as indispensable factors in the achievement of economic viability levels for football clubs.

The explanation for the negative peculiarity of the Italian situation is that, while the quantity and quality of the TV offerings have grown over the last decade (while remaining in line with or even surpassing that of other countries), other European countries have also developed their infrastructures with an increase in terms of quantity and quality of services to the audience, activities, functions and entertainment for different social groups (families



among others), and hyper-technological arenas.

In Italy, the dramatic increase of broadcasting rights gave football clubs the means to operate without feeling the need to launch a systematic intervention on their facilities. This, in addition to the public ownership of nearly all Italian sport facilities, has created a sort of still unresolved political-economic short-circuit on a decision-making level. Other European countries have focused on stronger policies aimed at "serving the audience" with an increasingly diversified and multi-faceted entertainment offer tailored on different socio-cultural targets. On one side, this has basically allowed to address the requirements of all user groups and, on the other side, to maximise the profits coming from sources other than football.

This is precisely the paradox – on one side, the interest and passion for football has never been stronger in Italy (there is no other country in the entire world where football has a higher following and mass-media influence – just think of the extraordinary spin-off associated with the publishing business). Such interest is transversally shared by the most diverse social groups and, precisely for this reason,

potentially expresses a requirement for just as diverse services. On the other side in Italy, stadiums – and more in general sport and leisure facilities – are in such a condition that they cannot satisfy, if not in minimal and insignificant ways, the users' "hunger" for facilities and services associated with the football phenomenon.

The current gap between the football system in Italy and in other European countries is likely to grow wider. Without a modernisation plan for the huge real estate heritage represented by stadiums, Italian football is bound to lose further ground, as broadcasting rights – after a decade of exponential increases – are likely to stabilise. Therefore, new infrastructure will play a key role in boosting clubs' commercial revenues.

Fans are deeply involved in everything concerning their football clubs and the brand loyalty of a customer-fan is unimaginable in any other kind of company. If the loyalty of customers is a primary goal for other companies, in football such a result is sure and has been taken for granted since the beginning. If, in a first phase, broadcasting companies tried to bring the stadium experience into every home, now, on the contrary, stadiums – in the rest of Europe – are trying to incorporate the experience of television.

The stadium embodies the physical materialisation of a global experience. In the near future Italy will hopefully excel once again in the architecture of sport infrastructure as it did at the beginning of last century. ○

*This is an edited extract from an article which originally appeared in the volume Sport Architecture: Design Construction Management of Sport Infrastructure, published by Lettara Ventidue.*

# Josoor Institute aims to provide a long-term educational legacy from Qatar's World Cup



Afraa Al Noaimi | Executive director of the Josoor Institute

With that in mind we tailor-made the programme to their needs, interests, and designed the learning experience with international evidence, always linked to the local context. This is an audience to whom a unique, personalized, premium experience is important.

“With that in mind we designed the programme stressing certain components and de-emphasizing others we might focus on elsewhere. The theoretical part is presented as the background, and priority is given to hands-on experiences from the MENA Region and other relevant international organisations. The delegates want to be engaged, they want to do exercises and be practical. The model is no longer a one-way lecture where the professor shows the international best practices in sports and events industries and the audience just listens. As a matter of fact, each year we’re creating a tailor-made programme – it’s never off-the-shelf. But it’s my philosophy that if we are able to deliver something that is tailored for the target audience, then the impact will be higher, and the relationship will be longer.”

The collaboration should be an exchange between Josoor Institute and SDA Bocconi, he says, rather than a one-way transference of knowledge, and this requires a modern set of educational skills. “We want to give light to the investments that Qatar is making, and to be a facilitator of an understanding of the ecosystem around Qatar, not just show up for a

week every few months, teach and leave. We want to learn about the culture of our delegates and be part of the legacy the project will leave behind.”

That willingness to embed itself into the culture is another reason Ruta feels SDA Bocconi was a good fit for Josoor Institute. He adds that there are already strong connections between Italy – particularly Milan, where Bocconi’s main campus is located – and Doha. “In Milan, we are preparing to host the Winter Olympics in 2026, we are one of the main football cities in Europe, it is a very sport-oriented, event-oriented city, with a focus on design, luxury, and wealth-creation,” he says. “These are all basically the same fields where Qatar wants to invest, so we like to say we are building a bridge between Milan and Doha.”

### Legacy a key driver

While Josoor Institute was established to provide Qatari nationals and residents with the skills necessary for organising and delivering the World Cup, Al Noaimi says that legacy has always been a primary motivator for the development of the curriculum, with an eye on establishing Qatar as a strong candidate to host future major events beyond 2022. This, Al Noaimi believes, can be a central pillar of the legacy left by the World Cup.

“We are trying to equip our people with knowledge and skills that are relevant in this domain and are widely applicable beyond 2022,” she says. “When you think of these skills, we’re building a base that just didn’t exist here before. Now it exists. And we know that a lot of future events are going to happen here – it could be the Asian Games, maybe one day the Olympics – so it’s about continuing to form a population that can sustain the industry that is emerging here. We want to make sure that people are employable for future events, on other projects for other organisations, not just with the World Cup in mind.”

Ruta echoes Al Noaimi’s belief that the education and training provided by Josoor Institute is one of the crucial components in

ensuring a lasting, and positive, legacy from 2022.

“Organising an event as incredible as the World Cup, in the Middle East for the first time, I think that is by definition going to leave a legacy,” he says. “What we can help to control is how positive that legacy is, and I strongly believe that the more you invest in human capital, the more you increase the likelihood of a positive legacy.”

“It’s not 100 per cent sure, but the more people you ensure will be able to keep working in this area, ensuring the facilities keep being used and building on the reputation and image of the World Cup, the stronger that legacy is. Without the human capital, the risk is that these facilities, technologies and resources that have been invested in will easily become obsolete and not leveraged. So, I think it is very ingenious of Qatar and the SC to establish something like this in order to ensure those skills and competencies endure.”

The institution of Josoor itself, as well as the learning it has imparted, can also be a part of that legacy, Al Noaimi hopes. “If you think about legacy, it’s not just that you’ve taught 500 people about sport management, given training to 1,000 volunteers,” she says. “You want to establish something which is going to last for the long-term, and what is going to last? Hopefully that can be Josoor Institute as a body that will continue to deliver and facilitate programmes, not just here in Qatar but across the Middle East and North Africa region; and



Professor Dino Ruta | Professor of practice at SDA Bocconi and academic director of Josoor's diploma,

The Josoor Institute was established in 2013 as the educational arm of Qatar’s World Cup 2022 organising committee, with a goal of securing a long-term dividend from that event by significantly boosting the country’s capacity to host major events. *SportBusiness* spoke with major stakeholders to discuss how it is working to secure that legacy, and their ambitions for Josoor’s future.

The benefits of securing hosting rights for the World Cup,” H.E. Hassan Al Thawadi, secretary general of Qatar’s Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy (SC), tells *SportBusiness*, “don’t stop with the lifting of the cup in December 2022.” One of the main legacy projects of the SC, he says, “has to do with human capital: with strengthening the skillset of the population here so that they can perpetuate the impact of the tournament itself. That’s why Josoor Institute started.”

Since its inception, Josoor Institute has been educating the executives who work in the SC and are responsible for organising the World Cup itself, giving them the skills to not only make that event a success but to continue to make a major impact in the sports industry in Qatar and the wider Arab region for years to come.

The institute’s flagship

programmes are two diploma in sports and major events management, offered in collaboration with Milan’s SDA Bocconi School of Management, which has been a partner of Josoor Institute since 2018, while the first three editions of the programme ran alongside Georgetown University in Qatar, Leeds Beckett University and the University of Liverpool. An average diploma cohort is made up roughly 35 per cent Qatari nationals, 35 per cent other nationalities who grew up in Qatar or are long-term residents, and 30 per cent from elsewhere. By spring 2022, the diploma will have been awarded to nearly 500 sports and events professionals.

“In the eight years of Josoor Institute’s existence, more than 5,400 delegates will have passed through our diploma or other courses and events, with 100 different nationalities represented as of 2021,” says Afraa Al Noaimi,

executive director of the Josoor Institute. “The delegates’ engagement and satisfaction rates have been overwhelmingly positive so far, and a significant number of delegates have been women, which for a traditionally male-driven sector is remarkable.”

### Hands-on teaching style

Professor Dino Ruta, professor of practice at SDA Bocconi and academic director of Josoor’s diploma, is one of the key figures involved in devising the nature of the curriculum and teaching methods at the institute. He tells *SportBusiness* that Bocconi was originally engaged by Josoor Institute because of its specialist Sport Knowledge Center, also associated with the FIFA Master, and deep background in the sport and events sectors. “Josoor’s delegates have specific expectations and ways of learning and engaging with the instructors and their peers.

on the longer term even beyond that.”

While the initial focus is on the legacy Josoor Institute can help Qatar achieve off the back of hosting the World Cup, there is a long-term goal to use the event to boost the sports and major events industries across the region. Al Noaimi notes that a common language and culture across the Arab world – a region of over half a billion people – gives it an advantage when it comes to trans-national collaboration. “If you go from Oman to Morocco, there are several thousand professionals who are already active in the sport industry or are keen to get active or to study in it,” she says. “That’s an incredibly powerful human and professional network we have where we have barely scratched the surface.”

The online capabilities, further enhanced due to necessity over the past 18 months when the pandemic forced much of its teaching to go remote, will help Josoor Institute expand its offering around the region and to people who otherwise may not be able to afford to study on the programme.

“We cannot expect to sell a \$10,000 programme to a Tunisian student, but we can certainly develop content, which could be primarily online, or maybe a hybrid model, for an audience of people that may not get the chance to work for PSG, Zenit or Concacaf, but who may end up successfully



managing teams from their local league, for example, or facilitate sport and event activities at city or regional level,” Al Noaimi says. “That’s very intriguing to us because it’s a mix of productive job creation and also capacity building in the industry at a local level, with a good economic impact and a good social impact. So long-term, the wider region is a very important chapter for us.”

Al Noaimi also sees the potential for Josoor Institute to evolve beyond its current role as the education and training arm of the SC and says she is excited by the idea of releasing the moorings and being subjected “to the toughness of the market, but also the discipline and opportunities of the market, especially as Qatar and the MENA region are increasingly on the

radar as a major sports and events cluster.”

“We’re a government initiative at the moment, but like everything, we’ve got to be sustainable. We could decide to consider our task completed as the cup gets lifted, but we actually aim to continue to step up the ability of Qatar as an events host, treasuring this unprecedented and truly amazing journey of 2022 and its people and content into an education and training platform that would stay relevant and sustainable. Then, rather than our focus on the World Cup, where we already have an in-built base of alumni in the SC, we have to start coming up with products and experiences that are relevant and interesting to the market at large. That’s where I think the really interesting future starts.” ○



Hassan Al Thawadi | Secretary General of the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy



# The year universities went remote



Last year, *SportBusiness* spoke with Columbia University’s Scott Rosner and Brunel University London’s Vassil Girginov about how the first few months of the Covid-19 outbreak had affected campus life. This year, we checked in with them again to find out about the effects of an entire year under the pandemic, and how they assess its likely long-term impact.

Even with the pandemic a few months old by September of last year, and some parts of the world showing ultimately ill-fated signs of edging towards normality, adjusting to the new reality was an understandably difficult task at the start of the 2020-21 academic year.

In both the UK and the US, campuses were ghost towns for almost all of the year, with teaching, assessments and pastoral care all conducted remotely. “This year has been challenging in ways we could obviously never have anticipated,” Rosner, academic director of the sport management program at Columbia University, tells *SportBusiness*. “The initial adjustment period was abrupt, and we adjusted quite well early on. But then it was a year of constant adjustments and fine-tuning, constant learning about what was working and what wasn’t working in terms of how we delivered what our students were paying for.”

Girginov, reader in sport management at Brunel University London, says that those final few months of the 2019-20 academic year were a different matter and didn’t provide much in the way of preparation for the shock of a full year of managing under the pandemic. “At that time, when lockdowns first started, we were almost finished with the second semester’s teaching and students were about to start working on dissertations and examinations,” he says. “Coming back in September to a life where everything was being handled remotely for an entire year was very different.”

While there was a chance that students may have been able to return to campus at some point, Rosner says that Columbia took the decision very early to keep classrooms closed for the full year in order to maintain consistency and ensure safety for students and teachers alike, and to focus on

providing the best remote education it could.

“Once we’d got past that initial shock to the system in early 2020 and made sure we could still teach most of our courses without really skipping a beat, our thoughts very quickly became, how can we not just get through this, but how can we actually thrive during this time?”

While the lessons themselves were relatively painless to take online, the biggest impact on the quality of the students’ experiences was created by the fact that “everything has to be far more structured now”, says Rosner. What was lost was “those informal conversations that occur before lessons start and after they end, the non-teaching-related chats where you really get to know your students”.

To that end, Columbia instigated mandatory 20-minute sessions between faculty members and students in the first few weeks of the new semester just to get to know

one another outside of the very structured, formalised Zoom lessons. This was so successful, Rosner says, that it will be maintained even into the new year when the university intends to return to traditional in-person teaching. “It was amazing, because now it’s not just the students who want to get to know you, it’s everybody, so we’re able to forge a much improved relationship with each other as faculty and students. It was universally applauded, so much so that we’re keeping it going forward, so that’s been a real positive takeaway for us.”

Attempting to replicate other

non-curricular elements of university life proved trickier, however, with faculty so keen to attempt to provide value for the students that “we ended up over-compensating”, says Rosner. “We wanted make sure that the students felt like they were getting everything they wanted out of the programme, so we scheduled a lot of stuff, we had virtual activities pretty much every week from September through to mid-November, we were meeting with them virtually with a high degree of frequency. We overwhelmed them. In November they came to us and said, ‘we really

appreciate what you’re doing, but can we dial it back a bit please? You’re not giving us enough time to do our homework!’ I think a key learning from this is that Zoom fatigue is a very real thing.”

Girginov says that while Brunel staff largely succeeded in designing and delivering “interactive, engaging sessions” and received broadly positive feedback from students to the experience they had under difficult circumstances, “there is a general agreement among students that they’re fed up of staring at their laptops as opposed to mingling with fellow students”.

**Future impact**

Despite that, Brunel is only taking tentative steps towards a return to pre-pandemic conditions and will adopt a ‘hybrid’ approach for 2021-22, says Girginov, with lessons taking place “more or less 50-50 in person and virtually.” The British government lifted all restrictions in July, but Girginov says Brunel is being more cautious regarding the ongoing pandemic, and has worked hard to “put in place new policies at the university to safeguard and protect students, going beyond the call of duty to ensure that students and their learning are not going to be



Columbia’s Rosner pictured teaching while wearing a mask



Students wear masks while sitting outside the Columbia campus

negatively impacted by Covid-related factors”.

This will involve being more flexible on deadlines and redesigning some elements of the campus to improve social distancing, while the most work has gone into restructuring the weekly routines by academic year. “A huge amount of work has gone into that area,” Girginov says. “To ensure social distancing, we can’t have full classrooms, and obviously we only have a limited number of rooms, so as you can imagine, we’ve had to redress the whole system of timetabling.”

He is hopeful of a swift return to fully in-person teaching, particularly for the sports management courses, because it is “a very practical activity”. While conceptual, analytical and theoretical skills can be taught remotely, “at the end of the day, learning about management comes down to whether you can actually do some hands-on management or not”, Girginov says. “You need to be able to plan, implement, deliver, control evaluate...and the context for all this is absolutely critical. The problem with online learning is that you can use as many case studies as you like, but students won’t be leaving getting a real sense of the context.”

Some positives have been drawn from the situation, however – the ability to really sharpen those analytical skills and focus on the increasingly digital, technology-led work being done at sporting organisations. The 2020-21 graduates, Girginov says, will be

better prepared than any previous class “for the challenges of a digital and social world, those specific skills that they’ll need to unpack the newer modes of delivering communications. So there have been some gains, but unfortunately sports management is a very practical activity and you really need to have a hands-on approach.”

Columbia, meanwhile, has announced that it will return to fully campus-based learning for all students who are able to. It is, Rosner believes, the sensible approach for a course whose location is a huge part of its appeal. “We’re based in New York City, and that’s one of the key strengths of our programme. We want be in-person as much as we can, we want our students in the heart of the city, and they largely want be here as well. It’s one of the big reasons why our students do very well historically on the job placement and salary piece of the *SportBusiness* rankings, and we’d be foolish not to cater to it.”

He adds, however, that one of the accommodations made for the pandemic is likely to stick around. “We’re in a fantastic location where students can take advantage of being in this marketplace, and we want to keep bringing fantastic guest speakers into the classroom and have them physically present as much as possible,” he says. “However, we also now know that we can bring in a fantastic speaker who is in Europe or on the West Coast or in New Zealand, and we’ll definitely try and keep doing that and maintain that flexibility.” ○

# How Loughborough builds sport into the fabric of university life



Loughborough University has entered the SportBusiness Postgraduate Course Rankings for the first time. Dr Peter Dickenson, part of the MSc Sport Management programme, explains why the university has made sport one of its 'strategic pillars', and how its Loughborough-based programme reaps the benefits of its campus environment, where sport is all around.

Few educational institutions carve out a specialisation quite as Loughborough has with sport.

Since becoming a university in 1966, Loughborough has become the destination for sport-related education in the UK, where its name is synonymous with the subject, and it has been ranked the best institution in the world for sport-related studies five years in a row by the QS World University Rankings.

At both the 2016 Paralympics and the 2018 Commonwealth Games, Loughborough students and alumni would have finished 10th in the medal tables, had they been a country. They would have finished 17th at the 2016 Olympics.

It is a university steeped in sport, from its 440-acre site in Loughborough (which has hosted several major sport organisations and events) to its satellite campus in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in London.

This year, however, marks its

first entry into the SportBusiness Postgraduate Course Rankings, where its MSc Sports Management finished 40th overall, cracked the top 20 in Europe and posted a particularly impressive score in the peer review category: a marker of its reputation in the sector among fellow academics and researchers. Having joined the process late in the day, with just a few weeks left for survey submissions, it is an impressive debut performance.

Entering the rankings this year was an important step for the university because "the world's becoming flatter, it's becoming smaller and more globalised, and we should be letting the world know about the work we do", Peter Dickenson, a lecturer on Loughborough's MSc Sport Management, tells *SportBusiness*. "The people who already know us know what we're about, and that's great. But we're increasingly aware that there are a lot of people out there who don't know us, and

sometimes can't even pronounce 'Loughborough'. We've cemented our position with those who know, and now it's about leveraging the individual facets that we've put together, particularly around the sport management side of things, which is obviously what these rankings are about, as opposed to the sport science and physical education side.

"For us, it's a great opportunity to get our name out for people, institutions, and markets who don't know us so well. At the same time, we see the institutions that are on the list, and we know that we're up there among them, so it's important for us to be seen to be among them."

## Sport as a strategic pillar

The MSc Sport Management programme that features in this year's ranking sits within Loughborough's School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences, but Dickenson says the culture of

sport and sporting achievement permeates the university as a whole, which has recently made sport one of its key strategic pillars.

"What this means is that even in non-sport academic subjects, there's interest in sport and they're starting to think about sport more and more," he explains. "You could imagine that in computer science, for example, there'll be some students (and academics) working on optimisation, but in the back of their mind they'll also be thinking about how this can be applied to the sport ecosystem. Sport's not all we do, but it is a fundamental part of who we are, and we see our sport management degree at Loughborough as being at the forefront of this."

The culture of sport is pervasive not only academically but also in the university's successful sports teams – which themselves present valuable volunteering opportunities for sport management students – and in Loughborough offering itself as a home, temporary or permanent, for major sporting bodies.

"Something our Loughborough-based MSc Sport Management programme is able to offer which is unique, certainly outside of North America, is that the learning takes place on our campus-based university, one of the biggest single campuses in Europe, where we're also home to partners of all kinds

from across sport," Dickenson says. Recently, the UK Anti-Doping agency moved its headquarters to the university's main campus, while the England and Wales Cricket Board has its National Cricket Performance Centre on the site. In 2018, Loughborough hosted five matches of the Uefa European Under-17 Championship. Meanwhile, the university owns four women's elite sport franchises (in cricket, cycling, netball, and rugby), which not only puts women's sport in the limelight – something of which the university is particularly proud – but also provides students with even greater opportunities to gain valuable experience interning or volunteering at sport's sharp end.

This is a significant value-add for the sport programmes and boosts the university's commitment to marrying its research-led academic side to experiential learning.

"We're starting to work more and more closely with partners in the industry," Dickenson says, "integrating a necessary blend of academia and practice, and that creates a virtuous circle whereby the practical side complements the academic side. It also means we can offer great opportunities to get involved in sport management from a volunteering perspective and a development perspective, and then bring that back into the classroom, taking the academic

learning and applying it to some of the practical management perspectives – and vice versa, of course. Our world-leading 'Loughborough Sport' function is a fantastic lever for this. Its motto is 'Where History Begins' and I couldn't agree more with that."

He adds that as well as the major sporting governing bodies and federations on the Loughborough campus, Loughborough's reputation internationally has helped it become a "launchpad" for businesses looking for an entry point into the European market. Dickenson points to work with Plae, a gym flooring specialist that used Loughborough's facilities as a "test bed" before a wider European launch, and Technogym, which collaborated with Loughborough to create a Centre of Excellence for athletes on campus, as examples of sport-related companies using the university's reputation to help position their own products.

"Ultimately, these relationships all help to create a culture where, when you're on campus, sport is all around you," he says.

## International ecosystem – and alumni network

It also points to the international approach Loughborough takes toward sport – crucial, Dickenson says, in an increasingly globalised industry. "Although it was the



Loughborough men's football team vs Wolves Academy



Loughborough University hosted five matches at the Uefa European U17 Championships 2018

Loughborough-based masters that we entered into the rankings, as an institution we really have an ecosystem that stretches around the world,” he says. Securing the second campus in London in 2013 was a huge step, giving Loughborough a presence in an international hub city, on the site of the 2012 Olympics, and with it the opportunity to reach even further afield, boosting the university’s appeal to international students interested in a city university experience.

“We’re obviously not as old as Oxford or Cambridge, we weren’t founded 1000 years ago, but we’re certainly up there with them in the national rankings,” Dickenson says. “One of the biggest things for us is finding ways to get our name out there for organisations and institutions and markets that

perhaps hadn’t come across us before, especially internationally”. Rankings are one way of achieving this, as is expansion into London, but a more concrete way is the fielding of Loughborough graduates at major sport bodies around the world, helping to spread the word about its offering.

“It’d be highly surprising if you spoke to a major sport organisation, not just in the UK but around the world, and didn’t find that Loughborough alumni were working there, had worked there, or have some direct connection there,” Dickenson says. “If you just look at the 2018 cohort who filled out the surveys for these rankings: we’ve got people in the US at the New Jersey Devils, in the UK with WMP Creative and CSM Sport and Entertainment, people working on the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics,

people who’ve been involved in women’s cricket in Pakistan, people in India working in sports media organisations and the pro kabaddi league, people working at the International Paralympics Committee at the Tokyo Games... Even just from the 2018 class, we’ve got so many people in fantastic positions across the globe.

“We’re proud of our academic offering, we’re proud to be a leader in the sector and in terms of the academic knowledge we produce and disseminate, the most important thing is that we hope we pass that pride on to our students such that when they do go around the world and start to get into high positions, they remember what they learned from Loughborough and that starts to spread our reputation even further.”



The kitting out of the ParalympicsGB team ahead of this year’s Tokyo Games

# Ten editions and counting...



To mark the milestone of the 10th annual edition of this publication, SportBusiness casts an eye back over the evolution of the sector in the time since we launched, and speaks to programme directors of the three courses to have topped the list about the impact and importance of the rankings.

This edition of the *SportBusiness Postgraduate Course Rankings* marks the 10th since we launched the initiative in 2012, and while both the industry and the education sector have witnessed dramatic changes in that decade, the thinking behind and need for this project has remained largely the same.

The rankings were initially undertaken at a time when the number of sports management courses offered by universities had been proliferating, and we intended it as a guide to help students and graduates thinking about a career in sports management to pick their way through the increasingly crowded landscape. The industry itself was rapidly expanding, and with that, the requirement for ever more specialised and tailored knowledge and skillsets was growing, too. More and more traditional universities and colleges were recognising the

need to offer education in this area, while specialist institutions devoted exclusively to the teaching of sports management, often with the backing of major organisations such as Fifa and the IOC or clubs like Real Madrid and Valencia, had also begun to spring up.

While the sports management departments at our top two courses this year, at Ohio University and the University of Massachusetts Amherst, are both now half-century old, having been founded in the mid 1960s and early 1970s respectively, a significant proportion of the courses we list in 2021 were not even in operation at the turn of the century. The number one and two courses in Europe – the Fifa Master at CIES and AISTS’s Master of Advanced Studies – both launched in 2000, while the University of Florida’s Vinik Sport & Entertainment Management Program, third in the table, did not

take its first students until 2012, the same year we started the rankings.

Even over the 10 instalments of this list, the sector has seen considerable growth. In 2017, we expanded the rankings from a top 25 to a top 40, a reflection of both the increased number of entries we were receiving each year, as well as a marker of the growth in the all-round quality of the courses, with those ranked between 30 and 40 still representing some of the best sport business education on offer and making it impossible to leave them unmentioned. We are not ruling out further expansion to a top 50 in the near future, such is now the range of quality courses on offer around the world – particularly with an eye on the Asian market, where the sports and leisure industry is growing and universities are beginning to respond.

The SportBusiness Postgraduate Course Rankings remain the only



Former Olympian Colin Jackson presents CIES director Denis Oswald with the award in 2014

dedicated, global list of its kind, the only international rankings to focus exclusively on postgraduate sports management courses and to have a criteria and methodology grounded in the practices particular to sports management. While the first 10 years so far have been dominated by a handful of courses – Ohio has been named the global leader in all but two years; CIES the best in Europe nine times out of 10 – the 2021 edition shows signs that the landscape is changing. USF’s rise to its highest placement to date, after first crashing the top five in 2018, demonstrates that the Vinik Program is here to stay, while the 18 European courses in this year’s top 40 represents a record high, and shows the continued improvements that have been made on this side of the Atlantic.

To celebrate our landmark, *SportBusiness* spoke with major figures at the three schools to have topped our list in the first ten years – UMass Amherst’s Steve McKelvey; Ohio University’s Jim Strode; and

Denis Oswald of CIES – about the gap in the market the rankings have filled; the impact they have had since their inception; and what it means to finish in first.

**Devil in the detail**

“The rankings probably came along at the right time,” says McKelvey. “We were seeing a very quick evolution of the sector and a spike in the number of programmes, and the industry needed something to be able to sort through all these programmes claiming to have ‘the best faculty’, ‘the best alumni network’, ‘the best career support’, just as part of their marketing. It was important to have something that could really put a legitimate stamp of quality on some of these programmes.”

That legitimacy was only possible thanks to the unique methodology we devised and have been fine-tuning ever since with the help of input from our advisory board each year, which in 2021 included both McKelvey and Strode.

“As someone who has now had that input into the direction of the rankings and has been able to take a look at the measures and the levers that go into coming up with the final metric, I think what is unique is the level of detail that goes into these rankings,” says Strode. “It’s not just focused on outcome data or on one particular measure of success. We’re looking at a variety of different metrics, including the academic research that’s going on at our institutions as well as the application-based, practitioner-focused instruction. What’s unique about the rankings is that, when you look underneath the hood and at how things are measured, it’s tremendously detailed and statistically sound.”

Oswald, a veteran of the sector who has been in his role as director of CIES since 2000 and has been involved in every edition of the Fifa Master to date, says that there was a gap in the market for a rankings in 2012, “and *SportBusiness* filled it by setting up well-thought-out criteria, which is not always the case in this type of exercise. That’s why the rankings remain a point of reference after 10 years”.

*SportBusiness* has always “been very receptive to input throughout the years in terms of fine-tuning the rankings instrument to be as accurate and as sound as it can be”, McKelvey adds. “Particularly when it comes to teasing out the nuances between different types of programmes. While there is an overall winner, the criteria rewards courses that do different things well and recognises that there is more than one way to be a top-quality course.”

**Point of pride**

Course leaders and faculty are, of course, always aware of the quality that is on offer. But Oswald admits that there is validation in having the hard work done on campuses “confirmed and recognised independently, based on robust criteria”.

He adds: “It helps us to increase the visibility of the Fifa Master among students, the sport industry and other course leaders. When we attend major sports conventions

now, the Fifa Master brand is better known.” Oswald also believes that the existence of the rankings themselves has helped to confer a broader legitimacy onto the sports education sector, “helping to open up what we do to the academic world and show them the rise of sports management”.

McKelvey agrees that being named number one in the world in 2019 was “a nice point of validation for our faculty and staff who worked so hard to deliver a quality programme. To get that recognition from an arbiter of grad programmes was important internally and externally”, but adds that the most important marker is the pride with which graduates and alumni of the course view its success. “Anecdotally, I know that it’s such a source of pride for our students and our alums, and that’s critically important for us because it extends their willingness to give back to the programme. I know from conversations that our success in these rankings, our students’ sense of pride at having graduated from such a successful course, really helps their willingness to give back.”

Strode says the rankings have helped the wider Ohio University to attract students and strengthen its overall reputation, not simply that of its Master of Sports Administration. “Out of the whole of our college of business, we have the most undergraduates coming here to major in sports management. That’s because of what they know about OU, and the rankings definitely come into play there and have helped us to build up a reputation as the destination for anyone who wants a career in sports.”

Being able to point to the course’s success in the rankings is not only meaningful as an external show of strength, but internally within the Ohio University ecosystem, says Strode. “It’s pretty common for our university leaders to point to these rankings, they take tremendous pride in our sports administration department as a result of our performances in the rankings,” he says. “We’re really excited at the moment because

Hugh Sherman, the former dean of the college of business, has just assumed a two-year contract as president of Ohio University. He really understands sport and he’s already been extolling the pride he and the university has in having an internationally-recognised sports administration programme in its ranks.”

**Widening appeal**

For *SportBusiness* and the course leaders alike, the greatest validation is to hear students have turned to the rankings to help them decide which courses to apply for – that, after all, is why we started doing this in 2012. “We have heard feedback from students who were encouraged to take the Fifa Master because of the rankings,” says Oswald. “We are happy to hear this, because it means that the rankings are not only taken seriously by the sport industry and by academics, but by the people who are interested in the industry and want to enter it. Being consistently placed in the top positions has helped us to attract the best students and reinforce our leading position.”

Strode concurs, and says that the rankings have been a particular benefit to boosting

Ohio University’s international appeal. “We’ve always had global reach, we’ve always reached internationally,” he says, “but we know for a fact that our placement on the rankings has driven awareness in the UK and Europe in particular, and that’s paid dividends, because we’ve been able to bolster our reach with tremendously talented intentional students who may otherwise not have been aware that we offered this, or certainly of the quality of our offering in sports management.”

McKelvey concedes that the rankings alone are unlikely to convince someone to move across the USA or even move countries just to study. “But it does help us to stand out that little bit more,” he says. “It serves as a useful tool for people who are applying, just to give them another metric in their equation about the quality of programmes. There are strong programmes in all different regions of this country and increasingly internationally, but the rankings offer a way to delineate the top 10 per cent of programmes from those in the next 10 or 20 per cent. It really represents the cream of the academic crop.”



# A decade of success, but only the start



The end of 2021 marks a decade of unparalleled success for the ESA Diploma, sports marketing's premier training qualification based in the UK. Founded in 2012 with 36 candidates signing up for its inaugural course, the Diploma has just rounded off its tenth edition with its largest-ever intake of over 100 students from 14 different countries. It will mark its first decade having qualified nearly 600 industry professionals, all of whom are able to practise in the industry with a sense of considerable accomplishment and with, perhaps more importantly, their knowledge and confidence greatly enhanced and enriched by the experience.

The infographic on the right, based on its first nine years, shows just how effective and far-reaching the Diploma has been in reaching all areas of the industry, initially in the UK, but increasingly internationally.

Course director Peter Raymond is definitive about what he considers the proudest achievement of the Diploma to date. "My biggest thrill is knowing that a large proportion of our students each year come to the Diploma having had it enthusiastically recommended by colleagues, contacts or friends," he says. "Each year we refine the course in line with comments from the students and I'm confident we've now got the perfect mix of elements to ensure a rich learning experience. The fact that so many of



our students tell their businesses and colleagues how much they enjoyed and benefitted from their time with us is undoubtedly what I'm proudest about."

The European Sponsorship Association has the onerous responsibility of representing all businesses that operate in the commercial sector of sports marketing across Europe and has, as one of its primary objectives, an ambition to inspire and educate its stakeholders. A decade ago, it faced up to the fact that the sponsorship industry had no training qualification by choosing a challenging and immersive distance learning qualification to plug this yawning gap.

Chairman Andy Westlake takes up the story: "We wanted to put in place a learning experience that educated its students about all aspects of our ever-evolving industry and which was challenging enough for them to feel proud about achieving. We think we've got a course that suits all levels of experience, is equally valid irrespective of which part of the industry you're from, and that guarantees to improve the

performance level of whoever takes it. We're confident we've created something unique, something unavailable anywhere else in the world."

The Diploma comprises a mixture of learning stimuli from comprehensive study notes, an assessment protocol based on written assignments, a course project and live learning seminars involving industry-leading experts who willingly give up their time to help educate the next generation. There are several other elements to encourage networking, knowledge-sharing and social interaction. "We've also got several course sponsors who greatly add to the whole Diploma experience," Raymond explains. "Our great friends at *SportBusiness* and *Activative* share our passion for education and generously give access to their online content throughout the course which is a tremendous bonus for the students. We have partnered with *SportBusiness* since the first edition of the Diploma, and being able to give our students access to the depth and breadth of their resources on sponsorship and the wider industry is invaluable.

"We think we offer our students a multi-layered experience to set them up for a successful and fulfilling career, whether that is based on academic achievement or a fulfilling grounding that prepares them for improved workplace contribution. Either way,

what we offer is incredibly valuable to their overall personal development."

Like several other online learning initiatives, the pandemic brought some unexpected enhancements to the Diploma programme. "It made us concentrate on our digital assets and, as a result, our seminar programme for this year's course has greatly benefitted," says Raymond. "For example, we've had seminar presenters from across the world – three from the US, one each from New Zealand, Denmark and Ireland – embracing an unprecedented level of global industry knowledge, which has been incredibly inspiring for this year's students. It's also enabled us to have face-to-face tutorials with students wherever they happen to be, which has been extremely rewarding for their learning experience."

Certainly, Diploma alumni speak glowingly about their experiences. David Adams, head of commercial partnerships at the Professional Golfers Association, who took the Diploma in its first year in 2012 when he was working in the commercial team at Arsenal FC, says: "I believe the ESA Diploma is a mark of excellence and one that has helped me navigate my career in sports marketing & sponsorship."

Stuart Milne, who gained a Distinction in the Diploma in 2015, when he was commercial partnerships manager at the British Universities

& Colleges Sport (he has since risen to Head of Partner Services at the Aston Martin Cognizant Formula One Team), adds: "The ESA Diploma was the trampoline for my career in the sports marketing industry, providing me with an educational foundation fused with incredible networking opportunities that have opened many doors since. Six years on I still find myself reverting back to the course material and have wholeheartedly recommended the diploma to many colleagues over the years."

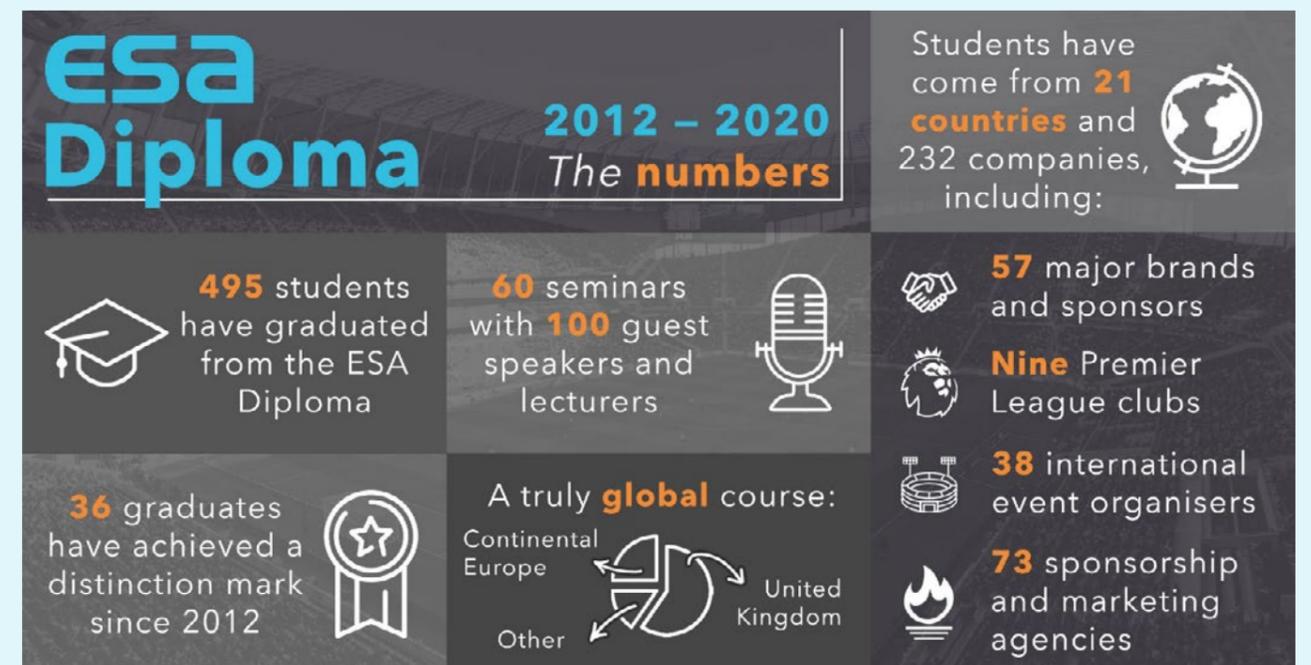
Kevin Smit, one of the Diploma's international students who gained a Distinction in 2018 and is currently Sponsorship Manager (Regions) for ASB Bank in New Zealand (where among a varied portfolio he manages the bank's sponsorship of the All Blacks), also speaks enthusiastically of the course: "The coursework provides a large breadth of knowledge relevant to today's competitive landscape and exposed me to a diverse array of subject matter experts who brought with them a high level of experience and commercial acumen," he says. "I really enjoyed the opportunity to meet peers from across the globe and hear how their experiences translated to our course lessons. Ultimately the experience contributed to accelerating my career development and my progression into a senior role within my organisation."

Finally, Michelle Gouly, head

of partnerships at the City Football Group, adds: "I completed the ESA Diploma in 2013 and found it an incredibly insightful and rewarding experience, not only improving my knowledge and opening my eyes to the breadth of the sponsorship industry but giving me a significant confidence boost as I took the next steps in my career."

"In addition, the course piqued my interest in cause and purpose partnerships, an interest I've since pursued and have the privilege of working on day-to-day as part of my current role as Head of Foundation Partnerships at City Football Group. It's been exciting to see the diploma go from strength to strength over the last decade and I wouldn't hesitate to recommend it to anyone seeking to start or further their career in sponsorship."

After a decade of continual growth and evolution complacency is not something that occurs to Raymond. "We're approaching our second decade with even more vigour and are preparing to re-launch the whole Diploma package. We've already started preparing to completely update the course notes to reflect the many ongoing changes in the sports marketing environment and look forward to welcoming anyone from around the world who is keen to advance their career by taking the transformative Diploma challenge."



# Top of the Class

## Average Salary

Rank	Provider	Salary (\$)
1	Columbia University	100,778
2	University of Oregon, Lundquist College of Business, Warsaw Sports Marketing Center	96,789
3	Real Madrid Graduate School	95,233
4	University of Bayreuth	90,598
5	The International Centre for Sport Studies (CIES)	90,583
6	AISTS	86,034
7	University of Liverpool Management School - Football Industries MBA	83,300
8	New York University Tisch Institute for Global Sport	68,048
9	University of Massachusetts Amherst, Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management	67,546
10	George Washington University	67,021

## Graduates' Choice Based on student satisfaction score\*

Rank	Provider	Score
1	University of Parma - University of Republic of San Marino	98.46
2	Ohio University	98.29
3	University of Massachusetts Amherst, Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management	97.32
4=	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	97.22
4=	George Washington University	97.22
6	University of South Florida, Muma College of Business	97.01
7	University of San Francisco	94.67
8	University of Central Florida	94.37
9	Virginia Commonwealth University Center for Sport Leadership	93.79
10	University of Vigo	93.58

\* The student satisfaction score is the aggregated total of the following six measures: Quality of teaching, support in finding a job in the industry, quality of extra-curricular support, opportunities to connect with the alumni network, ability to network with industry executives and value for money provided by the masters program.

## Peer review

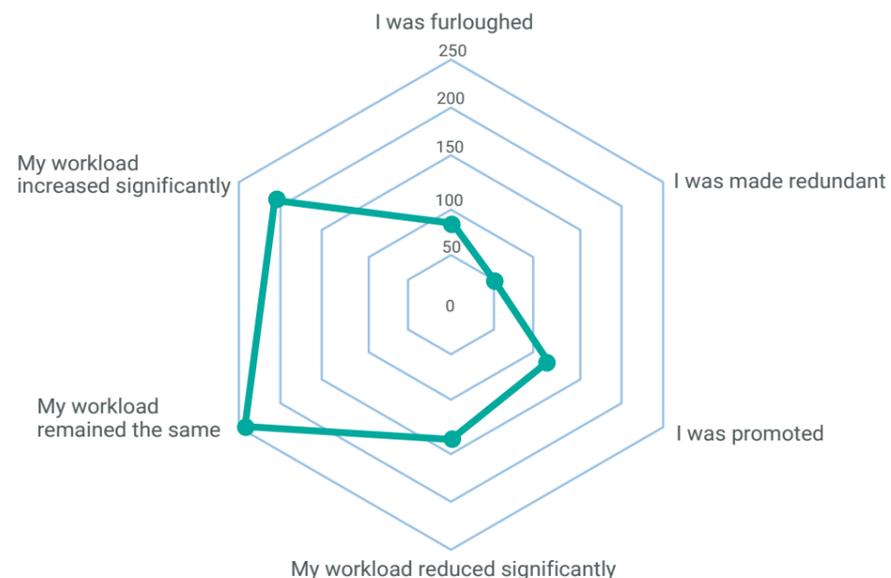
Rank	Provider
1	University of Massachusetts Amherst, Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management
2	Ohio University
3	The International Centre for Sport Studies (CIES)
4	University of Oregon, Lundquist College of Business, Warsaw Sports Marketing Center
5	Columbia University
6	University of South Florida, Muma College of Business
7	AISTS
8	Real Madrid Graduate School
9	University of South Carolina
10	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

## Most valuable in furthering career Based on career value score

Rank	Provider	Score
1	University of Parma - University of Republic of San Marino	97.50
2	Ohio University	95.65
3	University of Vigo	94.67
4	Russian International Olympic University	89.41
5-	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	88.89
5-	George Washington University	88.89
7	University of Massachusetts Amherst, Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management	87.78
8	University of South Florida, Muma College of Business	86.67
9	University of Stirling	85.00
10	Virginia Commonwealth University Center for Sport Leadership	83.75

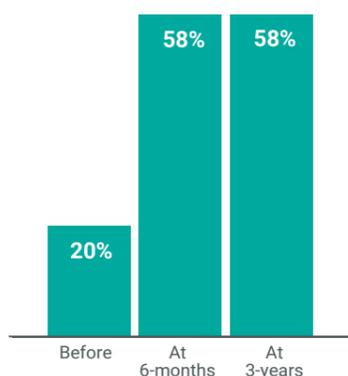
# Employment data

## Covid impact

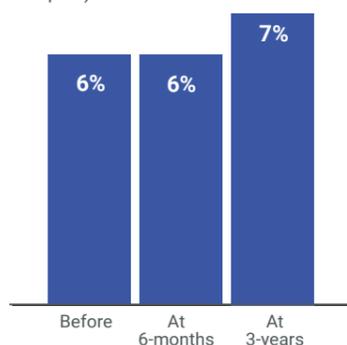


## Employment status

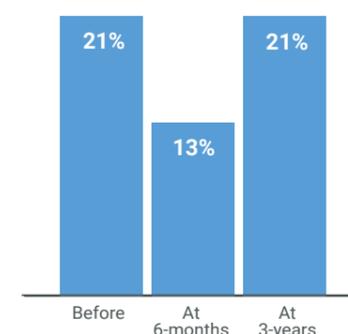
Full-time employment in the sports industry



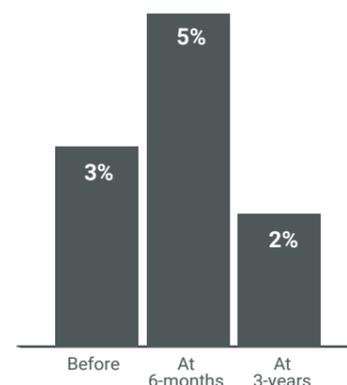
Full-time employment in a non sports industry company but your work is connected to sport (e.g. the marketing department of a major sponsor, working in a legal firm but specializing in sport)



Full-time or self employed outside the sports industry



Unemployed

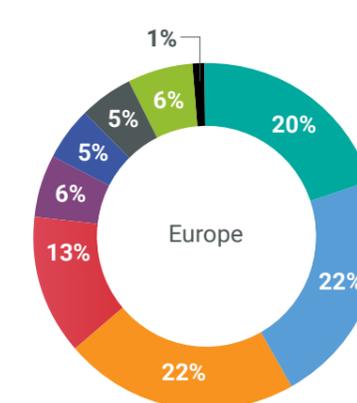
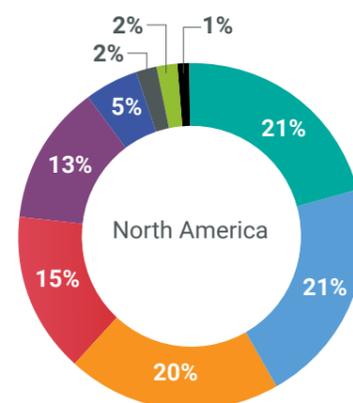


## Ideal employer

Ideal employer	Count
NCAA and/or NCAA University	80
NBA and/or NBA Team	65
EPL and/or EPL Club	51
NFL and/or NFL Team	44
IOC	26
LaLiga and/or LaLiga Club	26
Nike	23
Self-employed	21
Agency	20
Fifa	20

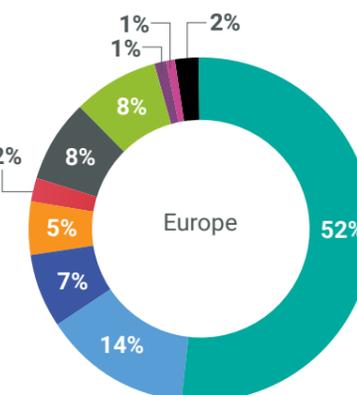
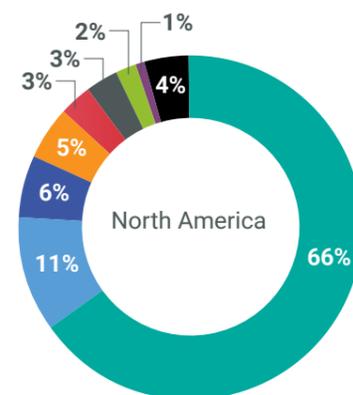
# Career Prospects | Sports Masters Graduates

## Employment status before beginning course



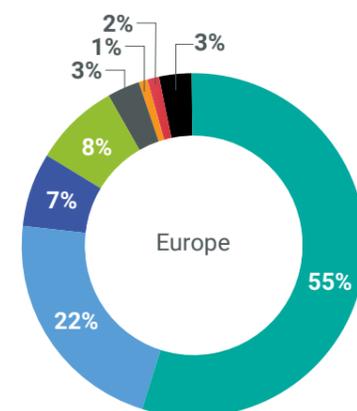
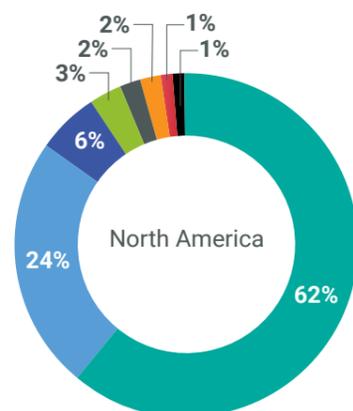
- Full-time employment in the sports industry
- Full-time or self employed outside the sports industry
- Student - other course
- Student - undergraduate sports course
- Part time employment
- Full-time employment in a non sports industry company but connected to sport (e.g. the marketing department of a major sponsor, working in a legal firm but specializing in sport)
- Unemployed
- Self employment within the sports industry
- Other

## Employment status six months after graduation



- Full-time employment in the sports industry
- Full-time or self employed outside the sports industry
- Full-time employment in a non sports industry company but your work connected to sport (e.g. the marketing department of a major sponsor, working in a legal firm but specializing in sport)
- Internship within the sports industry that did not lead to a full-time position in the same company
- Internship within the sports industry that led to a full-time position with the same company
- Unemployed
- Self employment within the sports industry
- Enrolled on a full-time sports-related PhD program
- Enrolled on a full-time non-sports academic program
- Other

## Current employment status



- Full-time employment in the sports industry
- Full or self employed outside the sports industry
- Full-time employment in a non sports industry company but connected to sport (e.g. the marketing department of a major sponsor, working in a legal firm but specializing in sport)
- Self employment within the sports industry
- Unemployed
- Part-time employment outside the sports industry
- Enrolled on a full-time sports-related PhD program
- Other

# Postgraduate Report 2020 the complete data

Rank	Programme provider	Programme	Class Size 2017/18	No of Graduates 2018	Class size 2020/21	Re-sponse rate	Course duration (months)	Work placement	Average age (years)	Over-sub-scription	Female stu-dents	Interna-tional students	Female teaching staff	Interna-tional teaching staff	Employ-ment at 6 months score	Current employ-ment score	Quality of teaching score	Job support score	Extra-curricular support score	Alumni network score	Industry net-working score	Value for money score	Career value score	Useful-ness score	Fre-quency score	Peer review score	Total score
1	Ohio University	MBA/MSA and Master of Sports Administration	27	27	24	85%	11-22	Yes	23	229%	49.0%	4.2%	44.4%	5.6%	93.48	100.00	96.44	95.07	100.00	100.00	100.00	99.49	95.65	90.58	95.03	90.00	91.89
2	University of Massachusetts Amherst, Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management	MBA/MS Sport Management and MS Sport Management	22	21	23	86%	12-21	Yes	26	317%	44.0%	13.0%	46.2%	0.0%	88.89	77.78	97.40	94.90	96.85	99.35	98.70	96.57	87.78	86.11	92.06	100.00	89.58
3	University of South Florida, Muma College of Business	MBA/MS - Vinik Sport & Entertainment Management Program	28	28	30	64%	22	Yes	24	243%	50.0%	3.3%	50.0%	25.0%	97.22	86.11	94.25	97.50	94.72	99.35	99.35	97.40	86.67	81.48	91.27	50.00	88.01
4	The International Centre for Sport Studies (CIES)	The FIFA Master	32	32	25	75%	10	Yes	29	512%	52.0%	86.0%	25.0%	33.3%	87.50	87.50	90.42	74.45	82.50	97.08	91.04	88.05	80.00	68.75	67.86	80.00	86.03
5	Columbia University	MS in Sports Management	74	76	69	32%	12-16	Yes	26	206%	26.1%	20.3%	0.0%	0.0%	97.92	100.00	91.59	79.37	80.13	90.07	93.19	82.08	79.13	75.00	78.57	60.00	84.33
6	George Washington University	Masters in Sports Management	20	16	35	56%	16-21	Yes	25	209%	45.7%	8.6%	66.7%	0.0%	88.89	83.33	97.40	93.70	97.40	100.00	100.00	94.80	88.89	85.19	85.71	20.00	84.11
7	University of Oregon	Warsaw Sports Marketing Center, MBA in Sports Business	22	22	25	77%	21	Yes	28	188%	32.0%	12.0%	37.5%	16.7%	88.24	85.29	89.31	88.72	85.78	99.31	99.31	86.47	80.00	74.51	80.67	70.00	83.79
8	AISTS - International Academy of Sport Science and Technology	Master of Advanced Studies in Sport Administration and Technology	40	40	27	35%	15	Yes	29	244%	44.4%	96.3%	50.0%	87.5%	89.29	92.86	87.97	90.00	84.40	91.54	86.67	84.16	80.00	73.81	65.31	40.00	83.75
9	The Ohio State University	Master of Science in Sport Management	24	24	31	58%	12-24	Yes	23	152%	54.8%	9.7%	50.0%	0.0%	92.86	96.43	96.66	86.79	90.59	94.99	95.11	92.74	80.00	83.33	82.65	10.00	83.46
10	University of San Francisco	Master of Sport Management	104	100	108	37%	23	Yes	25	132%	37.0%	16.7%	20.0%	40.0%	86.49	81.08	96.52	93.55	90.99	97.52	96.89	90.69	75.14	74.54	80.56	20.00	83.06
11	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Masters of Sport Administration	10	10	13	90%	22	Yes	23	262%	53.8%	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%	83.33	72.22	98.70	92.40	100.00	95.00	97.40	100.00	88.89	88.89	85.71	30.00	81.93
12	University of Parma & University of San Marino	International Masters in Strategic Management of Sports Organisations, Events and Facilities	25	25	25	64%	12	Yes	26	276%	28.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	96.88	87.50	97.92	97.81	100.00	100.00	100.00	95.73	97.50	96.88	99.11	20.00	81.32
13	University of Vigo	Master in Business Administration of Sport	18	18	25	83%	9	Yes	25	52%	28.0%	28.0%	44.4%	2.2%	86.67	93.33	99.22	79.89	89.44	97.66	93.88	97.78	94.67	88.89	88.78	0.00	81.30
14	Virginia Commonwealth University Center for Sport Leadership	Master of Sport Leadership	31	28	36	57%	12	Yes	22	314%	55.6%	8.3%	25.0%	25.0%	93.75	93.75	97.81	93.64	95.61	93.85	93.12	87.49	83.75	85.42	86.61	0.00	80.66
15	Coventry University	MSc Sport Management	45	40	29	50%	12-24	Yes	25	1093%	13.8%	82.8%	33.3%	50.0%	75.00	90.00	94.83	76.99	88.41	86.00	87.92	90.66	81.00	78.33	82.86	20.00	80.31
16	University of Central Florida	DeVos Sport Business Management Program	30	30	21	73%	21	Yes	24	143%	42.9%	4.8%	20.0%	10.0%	79.55	84.09	94.62	92.42	93.33	93.78	95.83	95.83	79.09	74.24	87.01	10.00	79.74
17	University of Ottawa	Masters in Human Kinetics - MHK in Sport Management	16	16	18	56%	12	Yes	23	289%	61.1%	0.0%	50.0%	25.0%	94.44	94.44	95.61	70.85	69.39	94.15	98.54	80.61	80.00	77.08	92.86	10.00	78.97
18	Georgia State University	Masters of Science in Sport Administration	71	47	45	51%	24	Yes	25	233%	44.4%	13.3%	66.7%	33.3%	95.83	93.75	91.04	76.67	84.65	86.52	86.03	82.92	80.00	75.69	82.14	10.00	78.61
19	Florida Atlantic University	MBA Sport Management	82	24	55	67%	23	Yes	24	489%	27.3%	0.0%	31.6%	35.1%	81.25	71.88	96.34	89.48	86.78	85.52	88.03	85.00	82.50	82.29	82.14	0.00	77.82
20	University of South Carolina	Master of Science in Sport and Entertainment Management	38	35	39	77%	15	Yes	24	174%	41.0%	41.0%	20.8%	16.7%	77.78	74.07	91.41	79.26	83.51	80.19	85.55	84.75	75.56	70.37	74.60	40.00	77.74
21=	University of Windsor	Master of Human Kinetics (MHK) in Sport Management	11	9	11	89%	16-24	Yes	24	236%	36.4%	0.0%	42.9%	0.0%	81.25	75.00	98.54	82.50	92.91	84.78	91.45	95.84	80.00	81.25	85.71	10.00	77.14
21=	Real Madrid Graduate School	MBA in Sports Management	44	44	58	39%	9	Yes	27	0%	n/a	13.8%	n/a	n/a	94.12	97.06	89.41	76.26	77.05	84.31	84.21	81.95	83.53	82.35	88.24	40.00	77.14
23	University of Liverpool Management School	MSc Sport Business and Management	30	25	81	64%	12	No	24	617%	18.5%	76.5%	33.3%	33.3%	62.50	81.25	97.92	81.35	86.13	87.59	93.53	89.48	82.50	79.17	87.50	0.00	76.55
24	NYU Tisch Institute for Global Sport	MS in Sports Business	52	49	56	24%	12-16	Yes	27	284%	25.0%	35.7%	33.3%	0.0%	83.33	70.83	96.10	73.47	81.39	87.78	90.13	78.89	68.33	63.89	61.90	10.00	76.07
25	University of Liverpool Management School	MBA Football Industries	20	17	22	35%	12	No	35	509%	40.9%	54.5%	20.0%	40.0%	66.67	75.00	86.95	57.22	74.45	86.65	92.20	80.27	60.00	69.44	66.67	30.00	76.05
26=	Russian International Olympic University	Master of Sports Administration	51	43	53	40%	10	Yes	31	183%	41.5%	30.2%	22.2%	0.0%	78.13	84.38	95.98	71.19	86.66	91.76	78.32	87.93	89.41	85.29	84.87	20.00	75.60
26=	Bayreuth University	MBA Sport Management	36	40	32	35%	24	No	29	475%	18.8%	6.3%	12.5%	0.0%	85.71	85.71	96.66	73.94	78.81	96.66	94.28	89.04	61.43	67.86	74.49	0.00	75.60
28	University of Stirling	MSc in Sport Management	55	52	83	23%	12	Yes	26	435%	18.1%	54.2%	37.5%	50.0%	79.17	75.00	94.30	71.26	82.63	77.64	81.24	86.94	85.00	72.22	73.81	10.00	74.63
29	University of Tennessee	Master in Sports Management	27	29	22	83%	20	Yes	22	255%	40.9%	0.0%	25.0%	25.0%	79.17	77.08	92.91	78.18	82.98	92.35	87.63	89.65	75.00	70.83	77.98	0.00	73.69
30	Temple University / School of Sport, Tourism, and Hospitality Management	Master of Science in Sport Business	40	55	55	49%	21	Yes	25	131%	29.1%	18.2%	36.4%	9.1%	87.04	83.33	88.32	76.23	77.28	82.34	82.77	77.59	69.63	64.20	70.37	10.00	73.66
31	Seattle University	MBA Sport and Entertainment Management	15	15	14	40%	24	Yes	23	171%	35.7%	14.3%	100.0%	0.0%	83.33	75.00	92.50	86.95	86.65	88.60	90.55	82.22	80.00	72.22	85.71	0.00	72.81
32	Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey	MS Global Sports Business	27	23	29	48%	16	Yes	25	55%	34.5%	3.4%	16.7%	0.0%	77.27	81.82	83.47	73.34	75.30	84.69	96.81	79.70	74.55	68.18	80.00	0.00	71.84
33	Washington State University	M.A. in Sport Management	13	16	7	44%	21	No	26	243%	57.1%	14.3%	20.0%	40.0%	92.86	78.57	90.55	56.95	77.22	56.95	65.55	75.27	76.67	66.67	78.57	0.00	71.78
34	University College Dublin	MSc Sport Management	25	24	27	42%	12	No	31	163%	25.9%	18.5%	25.0%	25.0%	75.00	75.00	92.98	72.83	71.50	88.16	86.99	82.49	76.00	65.00	70.00	10.00	71.61
35	Sheffield Hallam University	MSc Sport Business Management	37	36	56	33%	12	Yes	27	120%	25.0%	44.6%	50.0%	0.0%	79.17	66.67	93.33	70.98	73.63	79.03	78.33	85.56	68.33	61.11	64.29	10.00	71.10
36	AMOS	Master in Sport Management	152	138	448	44%	24	Yes	21	7%	48.2%	5.4%	35.4%	12.5%	86.89	90.98	86.31	72.38	75.00	70.00	79.62	76.58	73.11	71.39	79.76	10.00	70.97
37	Venice Ca' Foscari University	Master SBS - Sports Business Strategies	38	38	34	32%	12	Yes	24	24%	29.4%	0.0%	n/a	n/a	79.17	87.50	88.60	88.03	85.98	84.30	94.15	81.66	81.67	68.06	73.81	0.00	70.84
38	Centro Formación Fundación Valencia CF - ESBS	Master in International Sports Management	16	16	99	94%	9	Yes	27	167%	19.2%	70.7%	15.0%	17.5%	76.67	83.33	90.88	62.23	82.23	82.77	81.89	83.88	82.67	70.00	77.14	10.00	70.83
39	Vrije Universiteit Brussel	Postgraduate Sports Management Course (PG SPORT)	56	56	62	20%	8	Yes	23	32%	24.2%	4.8%	20.0%	7.5%	85.00	81.82	80.75	82.87	78.33	89.99	86.80	76.95	70.91	65.15	62.34	0.00	69.58
40	Loughborough University	MSc Sports Management	72	67	91	34%	12	No	24	607%	33.0%	80.9%	22.2%	38.9%	80.43	82.61	86.87	53.19	72.10	70.37	62.90	72.17	66.96	60.14	63.35	30.00	69.30

# Top 20 North American Courses

Rank	Programme provider	Programme	Class Size 2017/18	No of Graduates 2018	Class size 2020/21	Re-sponse rate	Course duration (months)	Work placement	Average age (years)	Over-sub-scription	Female stu-dents	Interna-tional students	Female teaching staff	Interna-tional teaching staff	Employ-ment at 6 months score	Current employ-ment score	Quality of teaching score	Job support score	Extra-curricular support score	Alumni network score	Industry net-working score	Value for money score	Career value score	Useful-ness score	Fre-quency score	Peer review score	Total score
1	Ohio University	MBA/MSA and Master of Sports Administration	27	27	24	85%	11-22	Yes	23	229%	49.0%	4.2%	44.4%	5.6%	93.48	100.00	96.44	95.07	100.00	100.00	100.00	99.49	95.65	90.58	95.03	90.00	91.89
2	University of Massachusetts Amherst, Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management	MBA/MS Sport Management and MS Sport Management	22	21	23	86%	12-21	Yes	26	317%	44.0%	13.0%	46.2%	0.0%	88.89	77.78	97.40	94.90	96.85	99.35	98.70	96.57	87.78	86.11	92.06	100.00	89.58
3	University of South Florida, Muma College of Business	MBA/MS - Vinik Sport & Entertainment Management Program	28	28	30	64%	22	Yes	24	243%	50.0%	3.3%	50.0%	25.0%	97.22	86.11	94.25	97.50	94.72	99.35	99.35	97.40	86.67	81.48	91.27	50.00	88.01
4	Columbia University	MS in Sports Management	74	76	69	32%	12-16	Yes	26	206%	26.1%	20.3%	0.0%	0.0%	97.92	100.00	91.59	79.37	80.13	90.07	93.19	82.08	79.13	75.00	78.57	60.00	84.33
5	George Washington University	Masters in Sports Management	20	16	35	56%	16-21	Yes	25	209%	45.7%	8.6%	66.7%	0.0%	88.89	83.33	97.40	93.70	97.40	100.00	100.00	94.80	88.89	85.19	85.71	20.00	84.11
6	University of Oregon	Warsaw Sports Marketing Center, MBA in Sports Business	22	22	25	77%	21	Yes	28	188%	32.0%	12.0%	37.5%	16.7%	88.24	85.29	89.31	88.72	85.78	99.31	99.31	86.47	80.00	74.51	80.67	70.00	83.79
7	The Ohio State University	Master of Science in Sport Management	24	24	31	58%	12-24	Yes	23	152%	54.8%	9.7%	50.0%	0.0%	92.86	96.43	96.66	86.79	90.59	94.99	95.11	92.74	80.00	83.33	82.65	10.00	83.46
8	University of San Francisco	Master of Sport Management	104	100	108	37%	23	Yes	25	132%	37.0%	16.7%	20.0%	40.0%	86.49	81.08	96.52	93.55	90.99	97.52	96.89	90.69	75.14	74.54	80.56	20.00	83.06
9	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Masters of Sport Administration	10	10	13	90%	22	Yes	23	262%	53.8%	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%	83.33	72.22	98.70	92.40	100.00	95.00	97.40	100.00	88.89	88.89	85.71	30.00	81.93
10	Virginia Commonwealth University Center for Sport Leadership	Master of Sport Leadership	31	28	36	57%	12	Yes	22	314%	55.6%	8.3%	25.0%	25.0%	93.75	93.75	97.81	93.64	95.61	93.85	93.12	87.49	83.75	85.42	86.61	0.00	80.66
11	University of Central Florida	DeVos Sport Business Management Program	30	30	21	73%	21	Yes	24	143%	42.9%	4.8%	20.0%	10.0%	79.55	84.09	94.62	92.42	93.33	93.78	95.83	95.83	79.09	74.24	87.01	10.00	79.74
12	University of Ottawa	Masters in Human Kinetics - MHK in Sport Management	16	16	18	56%	12	Yes	23	289%	61.1%	0.0%	50.0%	25.0%	94.44	94.44	95.61	70.85	69.39	94.15	98.54	80.61	80.00	77.08	92.86	10.00	78.97
13	Georgia State University	Masters of Science in Sport Administration	71	47	45	51%	24	Yes	25	233%	44.4%	13.3%	66.7%	33.3%	95.83	93.75	91.04	76.67	84.65	86.52	86.03	82.92	80.00	75.69	82.14	10.00	78.61
14	Florida Atlantic University	MBA Sport Management	82	24	55	67%	23	Yes	24	489%	27.3%	0.0%	31.6%	35.1%	81.25	71.88	96.34	89.48	86.78	85.52	88.03	85.00	82.50	82.29	82.14	0.00	77.82
15	University of South Carolina	Master of Science in Sport and Entertainment Management	38	35	39	77%	15	Yes	24	174%	41.0%	41.0%	20.8%	16.7%	77.78	74.07	91.41	79.26	83.51	80.19	85.55	84.75	75.56	70.37	74.60	40.00	77.74
16	University of Windsor	Master of Human Kinetics (MHK) in Sport Management	11	9	11	89%	16-24	Yes	24	236%	36.4%	0.0%	42.9%	0.0%	81.25	75.00	98.54	82.50	92.91	84.78	91.45	95.84	80.00	81.25	85.71	10.00	77.14
17	NYU Tisch Institute for Global Sport	MS in Sports Business	52	49	56	24%	12-16	Yes	27	284%	25.0%	35.7%	33.3%	0.0%	83.33	70.83	96.10	73.47	81.39	87.78	90.13	78.89	68.33	63.89	61.90	10.00	76.07
18	University of Tennessee	Master in Sports Management	27	29	22	83%	20	Yes	22	255%	40.9%	0.0%	25.0%	25.0%	79.17	77.08	92.91	78.18	82.98	92.35	87.63	89.65	75.00	70.83	77.98	0.00	73.69
19	Temple University, School of Sport, Tourism, and Hospitality Management	Master of Science in Sport Business	40	55	55	49%	21	Yes	25	131%	29.1%	18.2%	36.4%	9.1%	87.04	83.33	88.32	76.23	77.28	82.34	82.77	77.59	69.63	64.20	70.37	10.00	73.66
20	Seattle University	MBA Sport and Entertainment Management	15	15	14	40%	24	Yes	23	171%	35.7%	14.3%	100.0%	0.0%	83.33	75.00	92.50	86.95	86.65	88.60	90.55	82.22	80.00	72.22	85.71	0.00	72.81

# Top 20 European Courses

Rank	Programme provider	Programme	Class Size 2017/18	No of Graduates 2018	Class size 2020/21	Re-sponse rate	Course duration (months)	Work placement	Average age (years)	Over-subscription	Female students	International students	Female teaching staff	International teaching staff	Employment at 6 months score	Current employment score	Quality of teaching score	Job support score	Extra-curricular support score	Alumni network score	Industry networking score	Value for money score	Career value score	Usefulness score	Frequency score	Peer review score	Total score
1	The International Centre for Sport Studies (CIES)	The FIFA Master	32	32	25	75%	10	Yes	29	512%	52.0%	86.0%	25.0%	33.3%	87.50	87.50	90.42	74.45	82.50	97.08	91.04	88.05	80.00	68.75	67.86	80.00	86.03
2	AISTS - International Academy of Sport Science and Technology	Master of Advanced Studies in Sport Administration and Technology	40	40	27	35%	15	Yes	29	244%	44.4%	96.3%	50.0%	87.5%	89.29	92.86	87.97	90.00	84.40	91.54	86.67	84.16	80.00	73.81	65.31	40.00	83.75
3	University of Parma & University of San Marino	MasterSport – International Masters in Strategic Management of Sports Organisations, Events and Facilities	25	25	25	64%	12	Yes	26	276%	28.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	96.88	87.50	97.92	97.81	100.00	100.00	100.00	95.73	97.50	96.88	99.11	20.00	81.32
4	University of Vigo	Master in Business Administration of Sport	18	18	25	83%	9	Yes	25	52%	28.0%	28.0%	44.4%	2.2%	86.67	93.33	99.22	79.89	89.44	97.66	93.88	97.78	94.67	88.89	88.78	0.00	81.30
5	Coventry University	MSc Sport Management	45	40	29	50%	12-24	Yes	25	1093%	13.8%	82.8%	33.3%	50.0%	75.00	90.00	94.83	76.99	88.41	86.00	87.92	90.66	81.00	78.33	82.86	20.00	80.31
6	Real Madrid Graduate School	MBA in Sports Management	44	44	58	39%	9	Yes	27	0%	n/a	13.8%	n/a	n/a	94.12	97.06	89.41	76.26	77.05	84.31	84.21	81.95	83.53	82.35	88.24	40.00	77.14
7	University of Liverpool Management School	MSc Sport Business and Management	30	25	81	64%	12	No	24	617%	18.5%	76.5%	33.3%	33.3%	62.50	81.25	97.92	81.35	86.13	87.59	93.53	89.48	82.50	79.17	87.50	0.00	76.55
8	University of Liverpool Management School	MBA Football Industries	20	17	22	35%	12	No	35	509%	40.9%	54.5%	20.0%	40.0%	66.67	75.00	86.95	57.22	74.45	86.65	92.20	80.27	60.00	69.44	66.67	30.00	76.05
9=	Russian International Olympic University	Master of Sports Administration	51	43	53	40%	10	Yes	31	183%	41.5%	30.2%	22.2%	0.0%	78.13	84.38	95.98	71.19	86.66	91.76	78.32	87.93	89.41	85.29	84.87	20.00	75.60
9=	Bayreuth University	MBA Sport Management	36	40	32	35%	24	No	29	475%	18.8%	6.3%	12.5%	0.0%	85.71	85.71	96.66	73.94	78.81	96.66	94.28	89.04	61.43	67.86	74.49	0.00	75.60
11	University of Stirling	MSc in Sport Management	55	52	83	23%	12	Yes	26	435%	18.1%	54.2%	37.5%	50.0%	79.17	75.00	94.30	71.26	82.63	77.64	81.24	86.94	85.00	72.22	73.81	10.00	74.63
12	University College Dublin	MSc Sport Management	25	24	27	42%	12	No	31	163%	25.9%	18.5%	25.0%	25.0%	75.00	75.00	92.98	72.83	71.50	88.16	86.99	82.49	76.00	65.00	70.00	10.00	71.61
13	Sheffield Hallam University	MSc Sport Business Management	37	36	56	33%	12	Yes	27	120%	25.0%	44.6%	50.0%	0.0%	79.17	66.67	93.33	70.98	73.63	79.03	78.33	85.56	68.33	61.11	64.29	10.00	71.10
14	AMOS	Master in Sport Management	152	138	448	44%	24	Yes	21	7%	48.2%	5.4%	35.4%	12.5%	86.89	90.98	86.31	72.38	75.00	70.00	79.62	76.58	73.11	71.39	79.76	10.00	70.97
15	Venice Ca' Foscari University	Master SBS - Sports Business Strategies	38	38	34	32%	12	Yes	24	24%	29.4%	0.0%	n/a	n/a	79.17	87.50	88.60	88.03	85.98	84.30	94.15	81.66	81.67	68.06	73.81	0.00	70.84
16	Centro Formación Fundación Valencia CF - ESBS	Master in International Sports Management	16	16	99	94%	9	Yes	27	167%	19.2%	70.7%	15.0%	17.5%	76.67	83.33	90.88	62.23	82.23	82.77	81.89	83.88	82.67	70.00	77.14	10.00	70.83
17	Vrije Universiteit Brussel	Postgraduate Sports Management Course (PG SPORT)	56	56	62	20%	8	Yes	23	32%	24.2%	4.8%	20.0%	7.5%	85.00	81.82	80.75	82.87	78.33	89.99	86.80	76.95	70.91	65.15	62.34	0.00	69.58
18	Loughborough University	MSc Sports Management	72	67	91	34%	12	No	24	607%	33.0%	80.9%	22.2%	38.9%	80.43	82.61	86.87	53.19	72.10	70.37	62.90	72.17	66.96	60.14	63.35	30.00	69.30
19	Northumbria University	MSc International Sport Management	24	23	31	26%	12	No	22	265%	35.5%	38.7%	38.5%	30.8%	70.00	58.33	98.05	60.00	81.38	77.48	78.62	94.15	76.67	66.67	61.90	0.00	68.42
20	Johan Cruyff Institute	Master in Sport Management	150	129	151	19%	10-13	Yes	30	25%	19.9%	74.2%	16.3%	22.4%	72.92	76.09	84.64	63.54	72.57	81.18	80.69	73.95	63.33	63.89	63.10	20.00	67.02

# Online Programmes

1	Ohio University	Professional Master of Sports Administration	26	26	26	23%	21	No	32	n/a	30.8%	3.8%	42.9%	0.0%	100.00	91.67	98.05	86.12	87.66	94.45	98.05	89.72	76.67	69.44	73.81	0.00	79.23
2	Unisport Management School	MBA Sports Management	38	38	40	45%	13	Yes	28	25%	31.0%	42.0%	0.0%	0.0%	79.41	85.29	90.83	83.43	84.21	85.93	78.54	89.06	75.00	72.92	78.57	0.00	75.13



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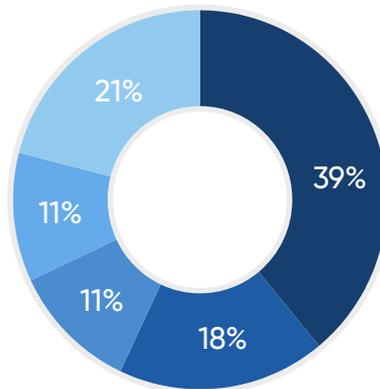
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