**Head trauma and changing masculine narratives in the NFL**

Prof Eric Anderson (University of Winchester)

American football has long been central to the construction of masculinity in the United States. Of the multiple masculine scripts promoting professional players’ hegemonic masculine status, sacrificing one’s body for the sake of sporting glory is a key tenet. Sport journalists have traditionally used their media platform to reify this social script, an act which simultaneously promotes their own masculine capital. However, this article investigates a crack in this hegemonic system. Through a media analysis of the reporting on Aaron Rodgers’ self-withdrawal (after hitting his head) from an important National Football League (NFL) game, we argue that increasing cultural awareness as to the devastating effects of concussions, in the form of chronic traumatic encephalopathy, combined with a softening of American masculinity is beginning to permit some prominent players to distance themselves from the self-sacrifice component of sporting masculinity. Concerning concussions, we conclude major sport media are beginning to support the notion of health over a masculine warrior narrative.

**‘Taking the wind out of her sails’ Gendered media coverage of Ellen MacArthur’s World Record**

Rachael Bullingham (University of Winchester)

Using qualitative textual analysis of tabloid and broadsheet British newspapers, I demonstrate four themes of gendered coverage in the reporting of sailor, Ellen MacArthur’s record breaking voyage around the world. Four themes of gendered coverage emerge from my analysis: 1) sexualization, 2) infantilization, 3) ambivalent or extraneous commentary and 4) trivialization. Because these themes have been found in older accounts concerning the reporting of female sporting accomplishment, the results suggest that while women have sporting equality in some aspects of sport, sexism within sport reporting is still endemic.

**Mega-events and Mobility: Experiences of Labor-related Migration in Producing Olympic Games**

Dr Thomas Carter (University of Brighton)

The Olympic Games are a global spectacle that draws the attention of much of the world. To produce any Olympic Festival requires an enormous amount of labor and a diverse range of expertise. Some of those individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge have made careers of moving from location to location in preparation for Olympic Games and other sport-related mega events. This paper examines their experiences of this itinerant life, the challenges faced, and obstacles overcome to even become part of this industry. Drawing upon nearly 15 years of research on transitional sport migration, this paper shifts the focus from the visible migrants of athletes, coaches, and media personnel to these usually invisible migrants. They are essential to the production of any Olympic spectacle yet remain the labor behind the scenes of sport is most often ignored.

**An (extra)ordinary Joe: Identity politics, media narratives and the noble art**

Dr John Harris (Glasgow Caledonian University)

This paper explores the multi-layered and contested nature of identities through focusing upon the case of Joe Calzaghe. Calzaghe, ‘The Pride of Wales’, was one of the few professional boxers to have completed a fight career undefeated. Yet despite being a World Champion for more than a decade he was not universally recognized as an outstanding athlete and in some narratives was positioned as little more than an ordinary Joe. In an analysis framed by social identities research, this case offers some interesting terrain to explore the power dynamics of international boxing and the cultural politics of sporting celebrity with a particular focus on the intersections of race and nation. Calzaghe, I suggest, was (extra)ordinary because of his particular locatedness in the south Wales valleys and through the various portrayals of his hybrid identity where he was positioned as Welsh, Italian, British/English and European. The intersection of race and nation is also important here in offering a means of breaking down some of the simple delineations used to accentuate difference and highlighting the multi-layered aspects of identities in contemporary sport.

**The London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and the politics of environmental sustainability at the local level: an interpretation**

Sadie Hollins (UCLAN)

This paper offers insight into the environmental impact of the hosting of the Olympic Games on Olympic host Boroughs. The underlying aim of the research project on which this paper is based is to examine attempts made by the International Committee, and the Olympic Movement more generally, to become recognised as environmentally sustainable, with a specific focus on the ‘greening’ of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The growing public awareness of environmental issues, the popularisation of ‘sustainability’ as a key term in political discourse, along with the International Olympic Committee’s adoption of Agenda 21, has led to the showcasing of ecologically-sound and sustainably structural, and technological advancements made by host cities for the Olympic Games (Preuss, 2006). Despite this there has been a lack of research on the multifaceted relationship between sport and the environment, in particular the potentially damaging effect sporting activities and events can have on the environment (Lenskyj, 2000). This paper will offer interpretations of interviews conducted with representatives from host Borough’s 2012 Olympic Units (Greenwich, Hackney, Newham, Waltham Forest and Tower Hamlets) in the build up to the Games in 2012; it will examine their thoughts on environmental sustainability and the London Olympics, and how more specifically their Borough defines and pursues the agenda of environmental sustainability.

**Occupying the Olympic Games: the use of social media to subvert the course of justice**

Jennifer Jones (University of the West of Scotland)

One of the long standing debates about new media culture since the early 1990s has been

whether it has disturbed the media hierarchy; a challenge should be apparent through the

dominance of mass media international sports coverage and the suspension of critique around such events (Day and Katz, 1994: 5). This question has gathered renewed focus since the rise of social media. However, it is often answered so generically as to be near impossible to verify. Thus, various responses focus on media ownership, bandwidth, audience reach, or technological association - measurements that are often addressed and recognised by established corporate media institutions. Instead, this paper focuses the debate on how citizen and social media functions as a vehicle for developing an alternative sphere through which mega events such as the Olympic Games are presented and challenged. Using the case of Vancouver and London Olympiads, It provides an overview of the opportunities that arise through participation within organized online networks which connect on the basis of shared, often conceptual ideas rather than location, occupation, or even an interest in competitive and broadcast sport. In so doing, it highlights the tension between the institutionalized practices of mainstream media and the presumed autonomy of fragmented online spaces, arguing that these ephemeral activities and communities provide important, alternative narrative and critique of the impact of mega events and contemporary culture. Yet, despite their subversive ideology, recognition from dominant media remains an objective of alternative media participation. This claim is evidenced by considering how people within online networks identify themselves and with each other and the ways in which they use media rhetoric to strengthen the authority of their position. In closing, this argument requires that future research into the transformative potential and effects of digital culture on the future of the Olympics industry must provide an understanding of who occupies these spaces of influence, the motivation to self- or co-produce media content and dominant narrative that is associated with discussion relating to alternative media contexts and sporting events.

**Transnational football fans and social media: the case of Beşiktaş**

John McManus (Green Templeton College, Oxford)

Can you be a football fan for a team in another city? Manchester United fans from the home counties have had to put up with jibes questioning their loyalty for some time now. What about fans in another country? The growth over the last decade of internet-mediated communication, and with it social media use, has turned the whole question of ‘space’, ‘place’ and ‘identity’ on its head. This paper proposes a sideways glimpse into some of the processes of constructing fandom in the twenty-first century by looking at international fans for the Turkish football team Beşiktaş. Beşiktaş are one of the most widely-followed teams in Turkey, but also have significant numbers of fans across diaspora Turkish communities in Europe. How are these individuals – many of whom do not have Turkish passports and have never been to a ‘home’ game – constructing their fanness? Based on ethnographic fieldwork – both with social media online and offline at European Cup matches – the paper teases out the issues present in the process of figuring oneself as an ‘overseas’ supporter for Beşiktaş. What happens when a fan identity and interaction that is generated online – through the social media of Twitter, Facebook pages and YouTube channels – is forced to become ‘real’ within the spectacle and ritual of a football match? Key questions include: what difficulties or tensions are present when transnational sporting and political sodalities cultivated online are forced to engage with the difference and identity of conflicting diasporic experiences? How is social media shaping individual identity and the reality of mass sporting events? How is the development of new socio-spatial arrangements affecting the articulation of political messages for Turkish diasporas?

**Social Media, Sport and Football Supporter Protests: ‘Tweeting’ Against the Enemy**

Dr Peter Millward (Durham University)

The football supporter protests that have unfolded in the early years of the twenty-first century have become important contemporary social movement for two clear reasons. First, although Byrne (1997: 62-63) noted that the size of collective action is often difficult to measure, it is reasonable to suggest that the protests at football clubs such as Liverpool and Manchester United contained protesters that could be conservatively estimated to stretch into the small hundred thousands across the globe, making them amongst the best supported forms of collective action in the world. Second, Tarrow (1994: 4) argued that many movements set out to change the conditions of the state. In light of the recognition that football contains the socio-cultural value to make it politically significant, these movements prompted the launch of a cross party ‘Football Governance’ inquiry in 2011 - highlighting their political value to create policy and legislative change. This paper will utilise Manuel Castells’ theories (2009) about the role of social networking technologies in contemporary social movement to critically analyse Manchester United supporters’ protests.

**“El Classico” and the demise of tradition in Spanish Club Football; Perspectives on shifting patterns of cultural identity**

Dr Jim O’Brien (Southampton Solent University)

This paper seeks to locate the historical, political and cultural rivalry generated by the FC Barcelona v Real Madrid match within the wider contexts of its implications for deeply embedded traditions and patterns of the folkloric roots of Spanish Club Football dating back to the latter part of the nineteenth century. It will suggest that the intense and increased mediatisation of the fixture has transformed it from its quintessential role as a definer and reflector of political and cultural tensions between Barcelona and Madrid, Catalonia and Castile, into a media saturated global megaspectacle characterised by excess, distortion and the commodification of a deeply rooted set of cultural rituals and symbols. The consequence has been to not only to change the Barcelona – Madrid axis per se, but also to alter, reduce and relegate other regional rivalries at the core of the vortex of the Spanish League to mere sideshows to the inflated global media focus on “El Classico”. The paper will argue that these developments have been to the detriment of La Liga itself in both pure football terms and in respect of the erosion of the rich tapestry which has defined the unique and specific set of subcultures shaping the lexicon of the historic mores of Spanish Club Football. This has adversely impacted on the game’s ability to present a coherent set of identities around the complex and fluctuating notions of the Spanish State and Nation. The seminal themes of the paper will consider pivotal historical moments in which “El Classico” has impacted upon the wider political and cultural landscape, whilst evaluating other arenas of centre – region conflict articulated through football before examining how these have been eclipsed by media concentration on “El Classico” – reflecting other significant changes in a mature, democratic Spain.

**Researching football supporters’ identification in Europe**

Dr David Ranc (Eccsa)

The question of whether football supporters are able to identify with the foreign players that are now present in nearly every European football club has a long been a topic of debate. This paper presents the conclusions of a research project based on three case studies in two different countries and three “sporting nations” (in Scotland, Glasgow’s Old Firm of Celtic and Rangers; in France, Paris Saint-Germain; in England, Arsenal). It argues that football supporters are by and large accepting of foreignness (especially European-ness) in their team of choice because the identity of football clubs is never set in stone but invested in a number of markers which are changing too. The paper will show how these conclusions on supporters’ identification are going to be tested and challenged in a Europe-wide research project (involving 9 institutions in 8 countries) on national team football supporters’ involvement in the creation (or not) of a European public space specific to football, both historically and currently, questioning gender construction and gendered attitudes and behaviours, relationship to the local and the global, West-East relations within Europe, how football discourse has influenced the mainstream discourse on Europe with a special focus on the relationships between football governance and the European model of sport.

**Sporting autobiographies, embodiment and identity formation: a resource for narrative inquiry**

Dr Carly Stewart (Cardiff Metropolitan University)

Published sporting autobiographies have been termed a cultural phenomenon in their own right (Freeman, 2001). In this presentation I briefly define, contextualise and situate published autobiographies as social documents where little sociological attention has been given to them more broadly, and particularly within the realm of sports studies. Firstly, I argue that culturally and methodologically, autobiographies have something unique to offer as a resource for inquiry. I posit that far more than a popular mode of entertainment they are not culturally vacant. Instead they provide a poignant and distinct resource to explore how individuals have created themselves through narrative as they display various experiences and developing selves and identities over time in relation to sport and other significant life events. Secondly, drawing upon some preliminary work that explores the formation of specific identities and body-selves in twelve sporting autobiographies of illness and one autobiography of a female boxer, I offer some insight into the reading of them for such purposes. I pay attention to them as dialogical texts of content and representation, embedded within contextual cultural narrative structures. Lastly, I consider the availability of these narratives as a resource for others to draw upon when interpreting their own experiences, re/creating selves and identities, and that they may provide a model or a cultural script for how stories in sport should be told.

# Blazing saddles in Beijing: newspaper representations of the Team GB Olympic Track Cycling Team

Dr Jason Tuck (University of Winchester)

This research investigates the media coverage of the highly successful ‘Team GB’ Track Cycling Team during the 2008 Beijing Olympics. The specific focus here is to explore how both the team and individual cyclists were represented through a range of gender and national identities by British daily national newspapers. A theoretical framework is developed here that utilises figurational sociological and cultural studies approaches to identities, the nation and representation. This framework is tested using evidence derived from a combination of content and semiotic analysis. Whilst there is a large body of previous work on the significance of both gender identity and national identity, the interconnections between these identities, and the politics at play between them, have been less comprehensively studied in the context of media-sport. The findings here provide interesting evidence pointing towards the co-existence of both traditional and non-traditional representations of gender and the nation. This analysis of the specific identity politics constructed within media-sport to tell stories of national sporting success in the velodrome provides a useful lens through which to observe the dynamic and gendered nation in Olympic sport.

**Biographies**

**Professor Eric Anderson** is an American sociologist at the University of Winchester, England. He is known for his research on sport, masculinities, sexualities and homophobia. He has been published in dozens of academic journals and is regularly featured in the popular press. His work shows an increasingly positive relationship between gay male athletes and sport, as well as a growing movement of young heterosexual men’s masculinity becoming softer and more inclusive. Professor Anderson also researches matters related to men’s monogamy and the function of cheating, men's improving recognition of bisexuality, and the increased acceptance of young heterosexual men kissing.

**Rachael Bullingham** is a PhD student at the University of Winchester. Her research interests include the portrayal of women in the media and homophobia within women’s sport. In addition to her studies, Rachael is also a tutor in Physical Education at the University of Gloucestershire and she also teaches Physical Education at a large secondary comprehensive school.

**Dr. Thomas Carter** currently teaches at the Chelsea School of Sport at the University of Brighton. He has conducted ethnographic research in Havana, Cuba since 1995 on the interstices of sport and identity in Cuba. His award winning ethnography on Cuban baseball, *The Quality of Home Runs* (Duke U Press, 2008) addresses various contemporary contexts of Cuban sport. His ethnography on the experiences on transnational sports professionals, *In Foreign Fields* (Pluto Press, 2011), examines issues related to transnational labor migration within global sport industries. His research continues to focus on the experiential politics of identity and mobility within global sport.

**Dr John Harris** is Senior Lecturer in Sport & Event Management. Prior to taking up his position at GCU he was an Associate Professor in the School of Foundations, Leadership & Administration at Kent State University, USA.  Harris has also worked at universities in England and Wales and served as an external examiner at all levels from foundation degrees through to doctoral theses.  He is author of Rugby Union and Globalization and co-editor (with Prof. Andrew Parker) of Sport and Social Identities (both Palgrave Macmillan).

**Sadie Hollins** is a PhD student within the School of Sport, Tourism and The Outdoors at the University of Central Lancashire. She received a Postgraduate Certificate in Sociology from City University, London and a BSc (Hons) in Sports Science from Brunel University, London. Hollins was awarded a studentship in order to pursue research on ‘The Greening of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games’ which began in April 2010. Her main research interests include discovering the historical relationship between the Olympic Movement and the environment, and how it is influencing current practices with respect to mega-sports events and environmental sustainability. Additionally, she aims to unravel the true environmental impact of hosting the London Olympics on local residents and businesses.

**Jennifer Jones** is a PhD Research Associate within the Creative Futures Research Centre at the University of the West of Scotland and a Visiting Lecturer within the Media School at Birmingham City University. She is working on projects closely tied to the Vancouver 2010 and London 2012 Olympic Games, in the context of emerging media landscapes and changing labour practices within the creative industries. She specializes in new media methods for data capture, collection and archiving, in particular around social media and mega-events, whilst focusing on the continuous link between digital practice and theory. Jennifer is the coordinator for #media2012, a national citizen media network for London 2012, web editor and staff writer for “Culture @ the Olympics,” a hybrid academic magazine which covers ‘anything but sport’ relating to the Olympic movement.

**John McManus** is a PhD student in Social Anthropology at the University of Oxford, where he works at the Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS). His research focuses on migration and popular culture, especially sport, music and social media, and in particular the countries of Turkey and Iran. His PhD thesis revolves around the mapping of transnational sporting networks (both online and off) across Turkish diaspora communities in Europe. He graduated with an MPhil in Middle Eastern Studies from Oxford University and holds an undergraduate degree in English Literature and History from Sheffield University.

**Professor Andy Miah (@andymiah)**is Director of the Creative Futures Research Centre (<http://creativefutur.es>) and Chair of Ethics and Emerging Technologies in the Faculty of Business & Creative Industries at the University of the West of Scotland. He is Global Director for the Centre for Policy and Emerging Technologies, Fellow of the Institute for Ethics and Emerging Technologies and Fellow of FACT, Liverpool. His latest book is titled 'The Olympics: The Basics' (2012) <http://OlympicsBasics.eu> More information about his work can be found here <http://www.andymiah.net>

**Dr Peter Millward** is a Lecturer in Applied Social Science at Durham University. Peter has published widely in areas relating to sociological dimensions of contemporary football fandom, the political economy of sport and issues pertaining to cultural racism/cosmopolitanism amongst football fans. His second monograph, *The Global* *Football League* (Palgrave), looks at transnational networks connected to the English Premier League, and focuses upon issues such as ‘foreign’ ownership of clubs and supporter protest movements.

**Dr Jim O’Brien** is currently Senior Lecturer in Journalism and Sports Journalism at Southampton Solent University, developing and coordinating the academic curriculum in Sports Journalism at undergraduate and postgraduate level. He has previously worked and taught extensively in Higher Education in The Netherlands, Spain, Greece and The United States, teaching Political Science, European Studies and Media and Cultural Studies. His research interests and activities have included International Education, Political Communication and The History, Politics and Culture of Spanish and Italian Football. He is currently engaged in writing a study of Spanish Football entitled “La Furia Espanola; Football, Politics and the Media in Spain.”, to be published by Intellect Books early next year. (111 words)

**Dr David Ranc** works on political issues (including nationalism, xenophobia, identity, identification) pertaining to  football supporters, of both clubs and national teams, in Europe. After a BA in History (Paris X Nanterre), an MA in Public administration (Sciences-Po, Paris), an MPhil in European Studies (Cambridge), David did a PhD in International Studies at Cambridge in 2007. David is currently Project Manager at the Centre for European Integration and Assistant Professor in European studies at *ESSCA, school of management* in Angers, France.

**Dr Carly Stewart**

Dr Carly Stewart is a Senior Lecturer in socio-cultural studies in the Cardiff School of Sport, Cardiff Metropolitan University where she is the programme director of the MA Sport Body and Society degree. Her research interests primarily concern sporting autobiographies, embodiment and narrative identity formation in sport and physical culture. Carly also has a keen interest in narrative methodologies and exploring alternative forms of representation.

**Dr Jason Tuck** is a Principal Lecturer in the Sociology of Sport and the Head of the Department of Sports Studies at the University of Winchester. The majority of Jason’s research has focused on the development of a figurational sociological framework through which to explore sport and national identity. His work has been published in the *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* and the *Irish Journal of Sociology*, and in edited collections such as *Sport and the Irish* (2005) and *Sport and Migration* (2011). His current research interests are based around sport, the media, national identity and ‘Team GB’.

**Kath Woodward** is Professor of Sociology and Head of Department of Sociology at the Open University and works on gendered racialised identities in sport. She is a member of the ESRC centre CReSC and has published extensively  on feminist theory, embodied sporting practices, masculinities in boxing and the politics of diversity in sport. She has recently completed an AHRC  project on Sport Across Diasporas at the BBC World Service.  Her most recent publications are Gender (Policy Press, 2011) Planet Sport (Routledge, 2012) and Sex, Power and the Games (Palgrave, 2012).