9A Evan Frederick, University of Louisville & Nicholas Schlereth, University of New Mexico
“‘Just Another Black Athlete Causing Problems’: An Analysis of Facebook Comments Surrounding the Missouri Football Players’ Protest”

The University of Missouri encountered a unique situation last fall, when students protested against the school’s lack of response to racist incidents on campus. Heightened tensions resulted in the school’s football team engaging in the protest. When the football team joined the protest, it caught national attention as ESPN began covering the event. This coverage highlighted the demands of the players who stated that they would not play their upcoming game until the school took action against university administrators. Social media provide an outlet for individuals to put their voice on display. With that said, this study analyzed user comments on the University of Missouri’s Athletic Department Facebook page during the timeframe of this particular protest. Preliminary results revealed that users commented more on the actions of the athletes, displaying racially charged overtones. The comments are analyzed and discussed in order to shed light on how individuals perceive the protest behaviors of college athletes.

9A Ryan King-White, Towson University
“Sport in the Neoliberal University: Profit, Politics, and Pedagogy”

This presentation will provide an outline for a broader 12-point project on several issues plaguing NCAA sport. Despite its small sample size it will provide a general outline for how most problems and solutions in college athletics are playing out. At the institutional level we critically evaluate how Penn State, Wisconsin, Maryland, and Spelman have dealt with being a part of the development of sport in the NCAA. Next the project moves to the level of the athlete and delves into the way(s) athletes are used and use the system. In most, if not all, cases, the power of the institution wins out. Finally, this project takes a turn into some less observed aspects of intercollegiate sport – using Title IX as a means to cut teams, extorting families to keep programming, outsourcing recruiting, and consulting. In all, this book project looks to open up dialogue between administrators and faculty about the current state of intercollegiate athletics.

9A Danyel Reiche, American University of Beirut
“Why is ‘Sport and Politics’ a Niche Issue in U.S. Academia?”

Sport has impacted the political landscape in the United States, but it remains a niche issue in U.S. academia. While the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport (NASSS) was formed in 1978, there is no American Society for the Politics of Sport. The International Review for the Sociology of Sport (IRSS) celebrated in 2015 its 50th anniversary; the Sociology Of Sport Journal (SSJ) dates back to 1984. However, there is no journal in the U.S. dedicated to the politics of sport. The presentation seeks to explain why working on the politics of sport remains a niche issue in U.S. academia (different from the UK, for example, where the Political Studies Association (PSA) has a “Sport and Politics” specialist group and where the “International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics” was established in 2009). This might have something to do with the different ways that sport is organized in the U.S compared with other sport powerhouses such as Australia, China, Germany, Norway, and the UK, where much more governmental involvement into the sport sector is happening on a federal level.

9A Robbie Matz, University of Georgia & Jepkorir Rose Chepyator-Thomson, University of Georgia
“Examination of Major League Soccer Clubs’ Impact on Communities Through Corporate Social Responsibility”
Sport organizations promote social and economic development through a variety of activities. Increasingly, corporate social responsibility (CSR) is used as a method to instill beneficial changes to diverse persons residing in underserved local or global communities. This study aims to understand the extent to which Major League Soccer (MLS) clubs impact communities through CSR initiatives such as involvement in youth sport, education, and regional nonprofits. Driving factors for clubs’ involvement in these areas include societal and economic implications. The globalization of MLS clubs has also influenced how clubs engage in CSR. Data collection, through empirical analysis, focused on CSR activities employed by the clubs as documented on their websites and news articles. Data analysis involved all 20 current MLS clubs, as well as clubs scheduled to join the league between 2017-2018.

9A Patrick Tutka, Niagara University; Dylan Williams, University of Alabama & Mark Slavich, Virginia Commonwealth University
"The Potential Impact for Boycotts to Reshape College Athletics"

Following successful boycotts from student-athletes at Grambling State University and the University of Missouri (Yan & Stapleton, 2015; Zirin, 2013), college athletes may have found a successful path to realigning the power structure of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and intercollegiate athletics overall. In general, boycotts emerge when individuals abstain from a particular product or service due to an egregious act perpetrated by a boycotted entity (John & Klein, 2003). Within the sport world, boycotts are prominent as social issues impact the decisions of sport entities. The most well-known sport boycotts include the decisions by United States and Soviet Union officials to boycott the 1980 and 1984 Olympic Summer games in Moscow and Los Angeles respectively (Redihan, 2015; Sarantakes, 2009). However, boycotts outside of sports experience limited success, serving as a ceremonial statement of disagreement opposed to having any significant impact. Regardless, boycotts legitimize problems for several groups that otherwise lack a voice to determine change (Mertig & Dunlap, 2001; Rowley, 1997). The purpose of this study is to examine the actions taken by Grambling State and Missouri boycotters to determine if their actions could further the goals of improved student-athlete experiences on college campuses.