Sociologists have long studied the complex issues related to national identity and nationalism. These issues became increased in significance during the last quarter of 20th century, especially in connection with the collapse of socialist regimes in Europe. Sociologists of sport have observed that sport is a particular reflection of society; following that observation, we are studying the connection between national identity and sport in Slovenian and Croatian society. The goal of this paper is to describe and analyze the case of biathlete Jakov Fak within a process of building and shaping national identity in post-socialist societies. Jakov Fak is a Croatian-born Slovenian biathlete. As a member of the Croatian biathlon team, Fak won a bronze medal at the World Championship in 2009 and another bronze at the 2010 Winter Olympics. In 2010, Fak announced that he would move to the Slovenian biathlon team and has represented Slovenia since the beginning of the 2010/2011 season. In this paper we deal with media representations of this case. We use multiple qualitative methods, including semi-structured interviews with high-performance athletes, as well as content analysis and discourse analysis of media coverage and documents.

There is an identified need in sport scholarship to better explore sociological phenomena occurring on social media. Social capital, which assesses the intangible resources of community, shared values and trust, has been deployed in social media research to gauge the durable benefit for participants and society from the online interactions. However, there is no known scale to measure the generation of social capital from interactions through hashtags on Twitter. This study involved developing a social capital scale for Twitter, with items modified from previous scales created for Facebook. Three dimensions were identified and through factor analysis and further testing indicated evidence of reliability and validity. Then a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted on a dataset of tweets reflecting different types of hashtags - one connected to a calendar event, and two different “organic” hashtags that emerged in connection to issues in sport. The resulting scale suggests a way to quantify the social engagement benefit drawn from interaction through Twitter hashtags, and compare engagement levels between different hashtag types. It can also speak to the “Publicly Engaged” theme of NASSS, by providing deeper understanding of motivations and outcomes of sport and social media engagement. This scale could also be used in non-sport settings, as it is believed to be the first instrument developed to measure levels of social capital through Twitter hashtag use, in any field.

Tim Henman OBE (1974-) was a former professional tennis player. Born into a thoroughly well-off, middle-class tennis-playing family, Henman’s rise to British number-one and a world top-ten player in the late-1990s reflected an important socio-political juncture in British history: the rise of Tony Blair’s New Labour (from 1997), ongoing devolution for Scotland (Scottish Devolution Referendum, 1997; Scotland Act, 1998) and Wales (Wales Referendum, 1997; Government of Wales Act, 1998), and a cultural re-evaluation of English and British identity. Constructed by the British media throughout his career as quintessentially English, through his appearance, demeanour, ostensible personality and even playing style, Henman was presented as a likeable and relatable, boy-next-door, southern-English, middle-class
up-and-coming hero. Toward the end of his career, however, as Henman had apparently failed to live up
to the expectations of winning Wimbledon – and being the first British male since Fred Perry in 1936 to do
so – dominant media narratives shifted to depict Henman as a (again, quintessentially English) plucky but
sad loser. This presentation will analyse newspaper reports about Henman in leading British broadsheets
throughout his career, to gauge how his constructed identity shifted in relation to his on-court
successes/failures, and in the broader context of developments in English national identity.

**4B Drew Brown, University of Houston**

*Blathlete: Black-Identity Development among Black Male Student-Athletes*

In this presentation, I examine the development process of Black male student-athletes’ “Black identity”
using William Cross’ theory, “Nigrescence.” Black identity is defined as 1) socio-political consciousness,
2) cultural awareness, and 3) racial connectedness. One of the major aspects of this presentation is the
use of Michael Tillotson’s theory of “Agency Reduction Formation” to show how race-neutral “sports
culture” discouraged Black student-athletes from developing a racial consciousness or engaging in
political resistance, which often leave them apathetic to racial injustice. I argue that sports culture
functions in a way that encourages Black male athletes to relinquish their “Black identity” in exchange for
an “athletic identity,” reducing their Black identity development (BID). Lastly, through the works of Kevin
Coakley and Daudi Azibo, I examine the various stages of Nigrescence and find it to be inadequate in
addressing the under-development of Black male-athletes’ African cultural identity. Overall, this
examination shows the systemic racism that pervades the sports world and diminishes Black identity
development.

**4B L. Julius Hanks II, Indiana University; Mary L. Priester, Indiana University Purdue University,
Indianapolis; Chase M.L. Smith, University of Southern Indiana & Gary Sailes, Indiana University**

*Game Ready, Prepared for the Future?*

The number of participants in high school sports reached an all-time high in 2014-15 with a total of 7.8
million (NFHS, 2015). Scholars have suggested that participation in extracurricular activities improves
attendance, attrition rates, behavior, and academic achievement (Black, 2002; Fredricks & Eccles, 2006;
Fujita 2006; Holloway, 2002; Nelson & Gordon-Larsen, 2006). Unfortunately, there still exists a
disproportion of African American students who are labeled as at-risk. Previous studies have focused
largely on African American students who have attended predominantly White colleges and universities
(Hawkins, 2013; Hodge, 2015; Sailes, 1993). A dearth of research exists in regards to investigating
African American students’ perspective as it relates to their experiences as a high school student-athlete
and its impact on current college preparation and experiences. The proposed case study will utilize semi-
structured interviews with recent student-athlete graduates of a predominantly White Midwestern high
school. The purpose of this research is to examine how the participation in high school athletics at a
predominantly White high school has impacted African American students’ college experience. Critical
race theory will serve as a lens to examine the existing power structures that exist in interscholastic sport
and education from the students’ perspective.