6B Matthew Adamson, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
“The Medicalization of Physical Activity in Multiple Sclerosis”

Recent years have seen a surge of research related to Physical Activity (PA) and multiple sclerosis (MS), with an accompanying medicalization (and moralization) of PA behaviors in this population. Wheatley (2005) argues that risk discourse establishing physical inactivity as a risk factor for disease is integral to the process of medicalizing PA. However, physical inactivity has not been implicated in the onset or progression of MS, and this paper explores the dynamics of the moralization of PA within that context. This paper explores MS as a unique context with important possibilities for both avoiding and exacerbating the problems of medicalizing PA. MS is characterized by unpredictable disease onset and progression stemming from factors such as genetics and disease type, some still poorly understood. Rapid onset of disability, as well as the nature of disability (cognitive, motor, and/or psychological), can be difficult for patients to cope with. Because of this ambiguity, moralization effects that place blame on the individual would be very detrimental. However, MS also provides a unique context in which the utilization of PA can become a resource for empowerment for those affected and can provide new contexts for renegotiating the orientations to the disease and the medical frame.

6B Sa Wu, China Institute of Sport Science
“Disability Sport in Sport Academic Research in China”

Scholars in the academic discipline of sport business should fulfill the role of constructing and transmitting knowledge pertaining to sport for people with disabilities through the dissemination of publications on topics relating to disability sport in scholarly journal. A content analysis of 16 core sport academic journals between 2006 to 2015 in China was conducted relative to sports, physical activity, recreation and leisure for individuals with disabilities. The purpose of this study was to provide a description analysis of the extent to which the sport business academic research is addressing the area of disability sport in China. Altogether 248 articles related to disability sport were coded in the following content categories in the Microsoft Excel: journal demographics, disability sport industry subsegment, type of research methodology, type of study subjects, demographics of study subjects, disability focus of article and disability sport focus of article. The study suggests that sport scholars do not identify the field of disability sport, leisure, recreation, and physical activity for persons with a disability as part of the sport industry. The results provide empirical evidence that the discipline of sport industry is falling short in providing literature representative of people with disabilities in China.

6B Mary Beth Schubauer, University of New Mexico
“Comparing Paralympic Games Literature to Universal Design Principles”

The Paralympic Games have served as the pinnacle for those with disabilities competing in various sports arenas. Sport has been seen as a grounds for activism, from Tommie Smith and Juan Carlos raising their fists as an act of civil resistance during the 1968 Olympics, to the more current human rights protests we see from spectators today in Rio. Throughout the world, there are barriers to access for people with disabilities. Universal design principles are utilized to mediate those barriers when designing new facilities for use by both Paralympians and Olympians. This examination will explore if the International Paralympic Committee has acted as an agent for aspects of universal design for not only its participants, but also any disabled person. Under the lens of Crip Theory, and using grounded theory methods, the authors will code literature produced by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) to see what themes emerge. These themes will then be compared with the principles for universal design to see if the IPG are working
as an agent towards universal design. Universal design issues affect disabled individuals every day, and we submit that the IPC should back UD proposals proactively if they are not already doing so.

6B James Brighton, Canterbury Christchurch University
“Wheelchair Bodybuilding: Challenging Ableism or Reproducing Normalcy?”

Bodybuilding competitions that celebrate the construction of the ‘perfect’ muscular physique are now widespread in contemporary culture and have been subject to in depth academic analyses (e.g. Klein, 1993; Monaghan, 2001). To date however, there is little investigation into wheelchair bodybuilding or attempt to reveal the lived experiences of disabled bodybuilders. This could in part be explained by how in contrast to the ‘perfected’ muscular body that has long been synonymous with strength, control, success, and sexual allure (Dutton, 1995), the disabled body has been positioned under medico-tragedy stereotypes as weak, uncontrollable, ugly, monstrous, and asexual and deemed ‘imperfect’. For some therefore, disabled people engaging in muscle-building practices relative to normative standards of bodily perfectionism appear anathema. Against this backdrop, I draw on the corporeal experiences of Duke (pseudonym), a male wheelchair bodybuilder in his thirties in order to explore how disabled people aspire to normative notions of physical perfectionism. In doing so, I examine if disabled bodybuilding challenges ableism or continues to promote normalcy. In illuminating these tensions, I allude to the dilemmas that wheelchair bodybuilding faces in becoming more publicly engaged and how disabled people may be able to challenge contemporary tyrannies of body perfectionism and normalcy.