



# Sports Neuropsychology Society

Issue 3

## SYNAPSE

Winter 2023

*An Outreach Newsletter to Keep the SNS Network Informed*

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### Letter from the President: SNS Updates



Dear SNS Members, Colleagues, and Friends,

I am pleased to welcome you to our SNS Winter Newsletter and wish to thank our SNAPP Committee and editor, Dr. Christina Kunec, for its creation. I had the honor of stepping into the role of SNS President this past May and I would like to take this opportunity to highlight just a few of our new projects, work, and activities since then.

Starting in June, we launched our first ever live virtual continuing education series and have completed three webinars as of November 2022. These have been well-attended and provide outreach and accessibility to the field of sports neuropsychology year-round, beyond our annual symposium. Our Continuing Education Coordinators, Drs. Jennifer Apps and Christopher Vaughan, are in the process of developing the protocol and platform to also offer **static online** CE, as we were approved to do so by the American Psychological Association, another of our accomplishments this year.

In May, our Executive Board appointed a Media Task Force to explore ways in which we could operationalize our outreach to educate all about our profession as well as inform the public about breaking news in concussion and sports health. As a result of this Task Force's work and report, the Board approved the formation of a formal Media Committee, chaired by Dr. Beth Pieroth, with a plan to develop our use of various media in a timely fashion and to grow our outreach. We will also be seeing enhancements to our website and members only page. I wish to thank Drs. Broshek, Didehbani, and Ransom for steering our media projects, and a shout out to Kaitlin Riegler for her social media postings. Don't forget to check out our website for Infographics and resources for the public, and for members, our Membership Only page for past

SNS webinars and a Community Outreach Power Point that can be adapted and used for public presentations.

Also, this past year, the national news circuits focused on the use of demographic norms (or what they erroneously called “race-based norms”) in neuropsychological evaluations of NFL players concerned about traumatic brain injury due to concussions. This spurred much controversy and misunderstanding of how data from reference groups are utilized in neuropsychological evaluations. To that end, SNS in partnership with the National Academy of Neuropsychology issued a statement that can be found on our website: [NAN-SNS-Demo-Norms-Statement.final\\_.pdf \(sportsneuropsychologysociety.com\)](#).

There are numerous other projects and activities, too many to mention here, on which our SNS volunteer members, chairs, and board members have tirelessly worked. I encourage you to read and explore the rest of this fine newsletter for our SNS updates.

Best wishes for a great 2023!

With gratitude,



Rosemarie Scolaro Moser, PhD, ABN, ABPP-RP  
President, Sports Neuropsychology Society

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## From the Executive Director’s Desk

**By Donna Broshek, PhD, ABPP-CN**

Since our last newsletter, SNS has been very active on a number of initiatives and tasks. The new year provides an opportunity to thank all of our members, committee chairs, and members of the Executive Board for all their work to further our mission. Notably, the Board revised and updated our mission statement this past year to emphasize our focus on athlete brain health. Our mission is to advance the field of sports neuropsychology, to generate and disseminate knowledge regarding brain health, injury, and safety as it applies to sports, and to promote the welfare of athletes at all developmental levels. As part of that mission and as noted in Dr. Moser’s letter, we are in the midst of launching new media outreach including educational SNS-branded YouTube videos that will debut this year. We have added more content to our website and will be increasingly active in both traditional and social media formats to educate the public. SNS has two fact sheets on CTE – one for athletes ([Q and A Fact Sheet for Athletes](#)) and one for health care professionals ([Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy: A Q and A Fact Sheet](#)). The Executive Board reviewed and updated the two CTE fact sheets this past year based on currently available scientific evidence with the goal of providing thoughtful education. As always, our goal is to support athletes and the benefits of sports participation and to actively emphasize athlete safety – in the short term and the future.

Our annual symposium titled “Diverse Perspectives in Athlete Brain & Mental Health” will be held in Denver, Colorado this year from May 4-6. Symposium Director, Cat McGill, and Program Chair, Mauricio Garcia-Barrera have been hard at work and already have an impressive scientific program lined up. Please mark your calendars and stay tuned for more information! I am grateful to all SNS members, including members of the Executive Board and all of those working on and chairing committees, as well as our colleagues working across multiple disciplines with the common goal of keeping athletes safe.

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## SNS Annual Symposium Spotlight

**By Christina B Kunec, PsyD**

The Sports Neuropsychology Society’s 10<sup>th</sup> annual Concussion Symposium was held in person April 21<sup>st</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> in Dallas, Texas. One hundred ninety-one individuals joined the meeting over the course of two days. Multiple disciplines were represented including psychologists, physicians, athletic trainers, physical therapists, and nurse practitioners.

The day began with Dr. Kathleen Bell’s talk on Concussion, TBI, and the Autonomic Nervous System. Other topics included saliva microRNA (Dr. Steve Hicks) and the clinical diagnosis of CTE in living individuals (Dr. Grant Iverson). Dr. Munro Cullum’s Presidential Address was on Risk Factors for Later-in-Life Dementia and Dr. Margot Putukian gave the Keynote Address on Recognition and Sideline Assessment of sport related concussion. Afternoon talks included Dr. Gary Solomon’s Distinguished Career Award Presentation as well as Dr. Donna Broshek’s review of the past 10 years of SNS. The second day began with presentations on horseback riding, rodeo, and concussion (Dr. Alissa Wicklund and Dr. Stephanie Bajo). Other topics included sleep (Dr. Marla Shapiro), race-based norms (Dr. Marc Norman), ethical leadership (Dr. Kimberly Peer), using media to grow one’s practice (Dr. Beth Pieroth), and comparison of sport-related concussion and civilian mTBI (Dr. Benjamin Brett).

Alena Sorensen and Bindal Makwana Mehmel received poster awards for their research titled, “Experiences of Adversity and Validity of Baseline Concussion Testing” and “Preliminary Evidence for the Vestibular/Ocular Motor Screening-Child for Patients with Concussion (ages 5-9),” respectively.

The Dissertation Award was presented to Dr. Tahnae Tarkenton Allen; and Dr. Michael McCrea was the recipient of the 2022 Distinguished Career Award (both pictured below). Thank you to everyone who participated in and attended our symposium!



Dr. Tahnae Tarkenton Allen



Dr. Michael McCrea

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**Save the Date!**  
**11th Annual Concussion Symposium: Denver, CO**  
**May 4-6, 2023**

**Hilton Denver Inverness**





**Congratulations to our new 2022 SNS Fellows:  
An Outstanding Achievement**

*Neal McGrath PhD Danielle Ransom, PsyD  
Maegan Sady, PhD Marla Shapiro PhD*

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**We are pleased to feature the  
SNS Member Spotlight on *Dr. Jennifer Apps!***

**By Pauline Prince, PhD, ABN**

Dr. Jennifer Apps is a licensed psychologist in Wisconsin where she is employed as the Director of the Neuropsychology Concussion Clinic at the Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin. In her current role, she wears many hats: Associate Professor, Pediatric Neuropsychologist, Vice-Chair for Faculty Development and Assistant Director of Research. Dr. Apps is the recipient of numerous awards including the Medical College of Wisconsin’s 2021-22 Outstanding Medical Student Teacher. She has been a member of SNS since 2019 and currently serves as the Co-Chair for the Continuing Education Committee. Dr. Apps is extensively published and has contributed to the field of sports neuropsychology through multiple professional organizations and mentorship opportunities. In her spare time, she volunteers in her community to include the Girl Scouts, local youth hockey clubs, and various school events.



Dr. Apps was kind enough to answer some questions for us.

**How did you find your way into this profession?**



*I was lucky enough to work with one of SNS’s leaders, Dr Munro Cullum, and volunteer at the time as a student working on the NHL Concussion Study. While neither he nor I realized it at the time, that experience shaped how my career would later develop. It was after several other experiences, both clinically and*

*in research, that I realized my passion for sports neuropsychology. Fortunately, I was lucky to be in an environment where I could help develop the clinical programming for this area. I will always be someone who does many different things in my career, but my clinical work in sports concussion continues to be what I enjoy the most!*

**What do you do for fun?**

*I have an amazingly fun husband and two children, and we love having adventures as a family. We juggle lots of sports, including ice hockey (where I also coach), karate, soccer, and golf. We also love to cook, camp, and travel. Since we're so busy, we all also truly appreciate our quiet movie nights at home with the dog!*

**What advice can you give to students who are interested in pursuing sports neuropsychology?**

*I think the most valuable advice to any young professional is to stay open to new opportunities. You never know exactly where your career will take you, and sometimes where you are in the moment may feel off-track. Take time to reflect on what you can learn from each experience. Even times in your career that feel frustrating or like a poor fit still offer you a chance to build skills and grow as a person. That experience will serve you well as you persist in moving towards ultimately practicing in the area that you are most passionate about.*

**Thank you, Dr. Apps for allowing us to feature you in our  
Member Spotlight!**

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**SNS Member Accomplishments**

**By Victoria C. Merritt, PhD**



SNS members continue to accomplish great things! Below we highlight recent member news as well as research publications and books by our talented members. Topics of recently published research are wide-ranging and include concussion recovery/return to play, cognitive functioning, and post-concussive symptoms, with populations spanning from adolescents to professional athletes. Happy reading!

**Member News:**

- Dr. Munro Cullum was named the 2022 recipient of the Reitan Clinical Excellence Award by the National Academy of Neuropsychology for his significant contributions to the clinical practice of neuropsychology.

- Dr. Christian LoBue received the 2022 Early Career Award recipient by the National Academy of Neuropsychology for substantial early career contributions to the field of neuropsychology.
- Dr. Victoria Merritt was named the 2022 Early Career Service Award recipient by the National Academy of Neuropsychology for substantial early career service to NAN and the field in general.
- Dr. Summer Ott was recently elected by her peers to serve as Faculty Senate Chair-Elect for 2022-2023 and as Chair in 2023-2024 at the McGovern Medical School UTHealth Houston. The Faculty Senate, with 167 senate representatives, is responsible for the governance of all matters related to the mission and academics of the Medical School that includes over 1600 Faculty members.
- Dr. August M. Price completed his fellowship at the Children's Health Andrews Institute in Plano, TX and started a new position as the Concussion Program Director at Bellapianta Orthopaedics & Sports Medicine in Montclair, NJ.
- Dr. Douglas P. Terry became board certified in July 2022.

### **Research Publications & Books:**

- Alexander, A., Hattrup N., Gerkin, R., & Pardini, J. (2022). Gaze Stability in Youth Athletes: A Normative Observational Study. *Journal of Vestibular Research*. doi: 10.3233/VES-210111.
- Arbogast, K., Caccese, J., Buckley, T., McIntosh, A., Henderson, K., Stemper, B., Solomon, G., Broglio, S., Funk, J., & Crandall, J. Consensus Head Acceleration Measurement Practices (CHAMP): Origins, Methods, Transparency and Disclosure. *Annals of Biomechanical Engineering*, in press.
- Broshek, D.K., Pardini, J.E., & Herring, S.A. (2022). Persisting Symptoms After Concussion: Time for a Paradigm Shift. *PM&R: The Journal of Injury, Function and Rehabilitation*. doi: 10.1002/pmrj.12884.

- Cools, M., Zuckerman, S., Herzog, M., Mack, C., Lee, R., Solomon, G., & Sills, A. Same-Season Repeat Concussions in the National Football League: Trends from 2015 through 2019. *World Neurosurgery*, in press.
- Dalby, J.T., Maclean, A.M., & Nesca, M. (2022). *Psychological Evaluations after Motor Vehicle Accidents: A Practitioner's Guide*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Fink, S. J., Riegler, K. E., Guty, E. T., Echemendia, R. J., Arnett, P. A., & Merritt, V. C. (2022). A pilot study examining BDNF Val66Met polymorphism and biological sex: Relationships with baseline cognitive functioning in adolescent athletes, *Applied Neuropsychology: Child*. doi: 10.1080/21622965.2022.2131431.
- Inclan, P.M., Chang, P.S., Kuhn, A.W., Mack, C.D., Solomon, G.S., Sills, A.K., Cardenas, J., Matava, M.J. Validity of Research Based on Publicly-Obtained Data in Sports Medicine: A Quantitative Assessment of Concussions in the National Football League. *Sports Health*, in press.
- Jaffee, M.S., Broshek, D. K., & Svingos, A. M. (2023). *Navigating the Challenges of Concussion*. Oxford University Press.
- Mack, C., Herzog, M., Solomon, G., Putukian, M., Lee, R., Matava, M., Cardenas, J., Theodore, N., & Sills A. Return to Full Participation following Concussion in the National Football League, 2015 through 2020. *Clinical Journal of Sport Medicine*, in press.
- Mucha, A, Pardini, JE, Herring, SA, Murphy, J, Elbin, RJ, Bauer, RM, Schmidt, JD, Resch, JE, & Broshek, DK. (2022). Persisting symptoms after concussion: Consideration for active treatment. *PM&R*. [doi.org/10.1002/pmrj.12931](https://doi.org/10.1002/pmrj.12931).
- Ott, S., Cheema, K. Schatz, P. et al (2022). Information seeking behaviors and attitudes of wives of former football players regarding chronic traumatic encephalopathy, *Applied Neuropsychology: Adult*, DOI: 10.1080/23279095.2022.2145892.
- Riegler, K. E., Fink, S. J., Guty, E. T., Echemendia, R. J., Arnett, P. A., & Merritt, V. C. APOE & BDNF polymorphisms interact to affect memory performance at baseline in adolescent athletes, *Child Neuropsychology*, in press.

- Wilmoth, K., Brett, B.L., Emmert, N.A., Cook, C.M., Schaffert, J., Caze II, T., Kotsonis, T., Cusick, M., Solomon, G. Resch, J.E., Cullum, M.D., Nelson, L.D., & McCrea, M. (2022). Psychometric Properties of Computerized Cognitive Tools and Standard Neuropsychological Tests Used to Assess Sport Concussion: A Systematic Review. *Neuropsychology Review*. doi: 10.1007/s11065-022-09553-4.
- Wilmoth, K., Tan, A., Tarkenton, T., Rossetti, H. C., Hynan, L. S., Didehbani, N., Miller, S., Bell, K., & Cullum, C. M. (2022). Concussion Recovery Time Predicted by Early Psychological Symptoms in Middle and High School Athletes. *Journal of Clinical and Experimental Neuropsychology*, 44(4), 251–257. doi: 10.1080/13803395.2022.2118676.

**Thanks and congratulations to all our members for their hard work furthering the science of sport-related concussion!**

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## SNS Committee Updates

**By Dawn Levine, PhD**



Most recently, Sports Neuropsychology Action & Professional Practice (SNAPP) Committee, chaired by Dr. Summer Ott, has been working on increasing social media presence through the Board’s newly formed Media Task Force. Additionally, the Legislative and Advocacy subcommittee continues to monitor bills involving concussion including those excluding Neuropsychology, such as recent bill in MA. Strategies for highlighting and increasing awareness of sports neuropsychology remains a priority and is part of the impetus for the new Media Committee, chaired by Dr. Beth Pieroth. SNAPP is also looking into billing practices being promoted by large organizations and potentially using it as an opportunity to educate members about proper billing for our services. Finally, a follow up survey will be coming out in the next few months to see how satisfied members are that their concerns/needs were addressed after our original survey, so look for that.

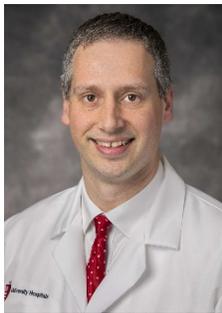
The Education Committee, co-chaired by Drs. Kate Higgins and Lindy Fields, and SNAPP have also developed webinars for CE credits, the most recent which occurred in November, with a cultural diversity webinar slated for Spring 2023. In addition, the Executive Board established the ACPP Committee, chaired by Drs. Sonia Mosch and Russ Bauer, to set forth the standards

of advanced clinical practice in sports neuropsychology. See the section below on this new ACP designation.

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## **International Neuropsychology Society (INS) Sports Neuropsychology Special Interest Group (SIG)**

**By Christopher Bailey, PhD  
SNS President-Elect**



The purpose of the INS Sports Neuropsychology SIG is to provide a forum for INS members with interest in the brain health and welfare of athletes to come together and discuss recent research and professional issues as well as to improve international communication and outreach around sports neuropsychology. This group is a natural fit for SNS members that are also INS members and should work to encourage further collaboration and interaction between the two organizations. The SIG was started in February 2020 and was originally chaired by Drs. Donna Broshek and Gerhard Mueller and the leadership was recently transitioned to Drs. Chris Bailey and Wolfgang Kringler.

The COVID-19 pandemic and associated virtual INS meetings significantly interrupted SIG activities in recent years, but the SIG met in February 2023 at INS in San Diego. A portion of that meeting was spent comparing and contrasting international concussion management methods and sports concussion resources, including sports neuropsychology organizations such as SNS (North America) and the GSNP (Germany).

Here is how you can get involved:

- 1) Any SNS members who are also members of INS are welcome to join the SIG. Also, please reach out to students, colleagues, and other INS members that you believe would be interested in joining the SIG even if they are not SNS members. Anyone interested in joining should reach out to Dr. Bailey directly ([christopher.bailey3@uhhospitals.org](mailto:christopher.bailey3@uhhospitals.org)) and he will add their information to the Google group. Students, clinicians, academics, educators – all with an interest in the brain health of athletes are welcome! We are particularly interested in reaching our colleagues outside of North America or in places where sports neuropsychology resources may be less available. Our goal is to increase the reach of sports neuropsychology so that we can all benefit from collegial interaction with a diverse membership around these topics.
- 2) There are also opportunities to get more involved in the SIG, including the potential for future involvement in the broader INS SIG committee, helping to plan our Sports Neuropsychology SIG meetings and events, and assisting in identifying initiatives that would be of interest to SIG members. If you are interested in becoming more active and are already a SIG member, please reach out to Dr. Bailey as well.

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## CTE in the News

In late October 2022, the NIH National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) updated their website and made the following statement: “**Chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE)** is a delayed neurodegenerative disorder that was initially identified in postmortem brains and, *research-to-date suggests*, is caused *in part* by repeated traumatic brain injuries” (italics added). SNS recognizes that there remains much about CTE that is not yet fully understood and that the development of this condition is likely related to multiple factors (including repeated head trauma). SNS regularly reviews the current state of the scientific literature to offer sound information on this and other topics pertinent to the health and safety of athletes. Interested readers can find more information in the July 2022 update to the SNS CTE Q&A Fact Sheet (available [here](#)).

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## Advanced Clinical Practice Proficiency Certificate

Last year the SNS Executive Board approved the qualification of expertise in sports neuropsychology as a specific subspecialty of neuropsychology and approved the designation of Advanced Clinical Practice Proficiency (ACPP). Requirements for eligibility, achievement, and maintenance of the ACPP designation are in development. The Executive Board and the ACPP Committee are now working together to devise a plan for implementation of the application process, credentials review, and other logistics.

The intent is to help the public identify our special expertise, and to support clinicians in their practice of sports neuropsychology. We hope to make the application process for this designation a smooth, collaborative, and supportive one for those who choose to attain it. We will keep you informed of developments. Stay tuned!

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## Student Section: Year One of the SNS Student Committee

**By Kaitlin Riegler, MS, Chair**



For the SNS Student Committee, our first year has been a busy one! We hosted the first ever student social at this year’s Symposium in Dallas, Texas and students had the opportunity to connect with each other as well as post-doctoral fellowship directors. We’ve continued to host our popular Coffee Chat series and have featured a variety of Coffee Chat guests including: Jonathan French, Victoria Merritt, Melissa Womble, Chris Bailey, and Mark Barisa. We also hosted an International Sports Neuropsychology Coffee Chat with Sarah Jäckle, a representative from the German Society for Sports-Neuropsychology, an affiliate of the SNS. We want to thank all of these guests for volunteering their time to connect with SNS

student members! In October, the Student Committee hosted SNS's first ever Student Town Hall meeting to receive feedback and input from the next generation of sports neuropsychologists. This event was a huge success, and our passionate group of student members generated some excellent ideas that the student committee is looking forward to implementing! See below for the upcoming programming we have planned.

Upcoming Student Activities:

- Coffee Chat Series
- Student Resources Section of SNS Website
- Student Social events at the May Symposium

If you are interested in learning more about becoming involved in a leadership position within the SNS Student Committee please reach out to Nathan Kegel (kegelne@upmc.edu) and Lisa Manderino ([LMManderino@gmail.com](mailto:LMManderino@gmail.com))!

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Find SNS Resources, Publications, and Handy Infographics here: [Resources and Publications – Sports Neuropsychology Society](#)

The SYNAPSE Newsletter is a collaboration of the SNS Executive Board and SNS Committees and is created by the Sports Neuropsychology Action and Professional Practice (SNAPP) Committee  
SNAPP Chair: Summer Ott, PsyD.

**SYNAPSE Editor:** Christina B Kunec, PsyD

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