

Conference Symposium Proposal – ‘Sport in the Anthropocene’

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EASS Conference 2020, Solent University, Southampton

Since the industrial revolution, human beings have made an indelible mark on the global environment. The extraction and burning of fossil fuels, the production of non-degradable plastics, and the decimation of natural habitats such as forests, seas and rivers point to the increasing role of human activity on the ‘natural’, lived and geologic landscapes of Earth (Bonneuil and Fressoz, 2017). These crises are not simply environmental, but social, moral, cultural and political. As a result, they pose a number of questions regarding the tendencies of 21st century living (i.e consumerism, neoliberalism), the (in)adequacy of modern institutions (i.e the nation state) as well as the discourses from which these derive (science, management, ecology).

Despite some progress, scholars dedicated to addressing the relationship between sport and society have been slow to respond to this emerging agenda (Mansfield, 2009). This is somewhat surprising given sport’s unique relationship with the ‘natural’ environment as well as the manifold threats that such activities may pose with regard to resource depletion, pollution, land-use degradation and habitat loss (Millington and Wilson, 2016). Where literature has adopted this focus, the very notion of ‘nature sport’ has been left largely unproblematised, and scholars have been criticised for simply ‘*greening*’ pre-existing theories in a manner ‘closely approximating the theoretical traditions of the discipline as a whole, albeit with an eco-prefix added on’ (Stevens, 2012:580). This has led to calls for less anthropocentric (Markula, 2018) and more sustained ‘*ecocentric*’ (Brymer, 2009) analyses of sporting activity in which human *and* nonhuman agency is taken more seriously into consideration.

It is to these issues that this symposium wishes to dedicate its focus, with specific attention given to the questions posed by sporting relations with the Anthropocene and to critically examine sport and the wilderness from an ecological perspective. We welcome both empirical and/or theoretical presentations that extend our understanding of socio-environmental and material relations within sport,

and specifically encourage interdisciplinary contributions that engage with the dualisms outlined above. Appropriate topics for this special issue include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Sport and the wilderness.
- Sport, health and the Anthropocene.
- Sport in green/blue spaces
- Sport policy and contested nature(s).
- Human/non human(i.e animal) interactions in sport.
- Sport, the Anthropocene and the ‘extreme’ (i.e adventure, risk).