

# SENSE

AUTUMN 2016 EDITION

## WELCOME

Welcome to the latest edition of SENSE. We hope you enjoy reading about some recent achievements, activities and projects that Sport and Exercise staff and students have been engaged in. With the beginning of a new academic year almost upon us it seems an appropriate point to look back and reflect on a few of the achievements of recent graduates, celebrate a set of outstanding recent National Student survey results and look forward to welcoming new and returning students.

The National Student Survey is an important measure of undergraduate student satisfaction and Sport and Exercise at Staffordshire University has achieved a really strong set of results that show that our students are very happy with their

student experience. Highlights include a 100% overall satisfaction for BSc Physical Education and Youth Sport Coaching for the 3rd year in a row, 97% overall satisfaction for BSc Sports Therapy and 97% for BA Sports Development and Coaching. This satisfaction is not only evident in external and independent measures such as the NSS but also at our graduation which was held in July in the very picturesque Trentham estate where Sport and Exercise students received their degree awards and celebrated their individual and collective achievements. A further congratulations goes to this year's award winners within Sport & Exercise: Overall Achievement Award: Hayley Turner; Best Dissertation Award: Fiona Ridley; and Contribution to Sport and Exercise Award: Christina Cascarina.



**James Capper**  
School of Psychology,  
Sport and Exercise

## Sport and Exercise degrees at Staffordshire continue to rise up the league table for a third year in a row

The Sport and Exercise degrees at Staffordshire University have moved up the 2017 Guardian League Table for the third consecutive year running, demonstrating that Staffordshire offers some of the highest ranked Sport degrees in modern Universities in the UK, having risen 8 places to rank 13th overall in the UK.

The Guardian University Guide rates the quality of student experience rather than just research outputs, therefore it is a measure of how good the learning experience is. It uses a range of different measures in calculating table position, but is focused towards student satisfaction, teaching and employability.

**James Capper, Head of undergraduate Sport and Exercise adds** "For Sport and Exercise this is excellent news and is testament to the innovative teaching, real world placements and exceptional student support we offer here at staffs."

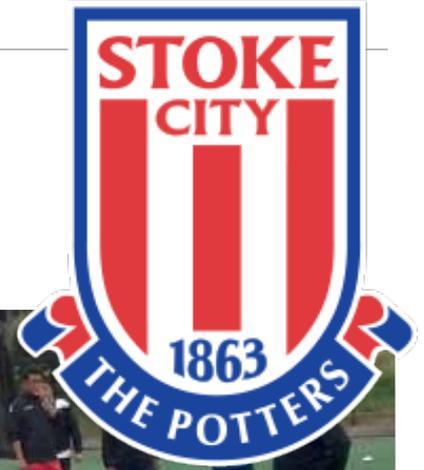
The Head of the School of Psychology, Sport and Exercise Marc Jones added "these results demonstrate that what our academic, technical and support teams provide for the student experience is magnificent. When you add this to the great research and academic enterprise we deliver it makes a fabulous first class student experience. I'm really lucky to work with some brilliant people who are innovating and pioneering in their approach to producing high caliber graduates."

Staffordshire University has invested over £30 million pound in the Science centre in 2014, the home of Psychology. In the last two years it has spent two million pounds on upgrading its sport laboratories and facilities. Staffordshire University is currently transforming its Stoke campus with a £40 million development of their Sport and Exercise Science degree here at Staffordshire University.

the guardian



# Soccer - the global game from Shanghai to Stoke-on-Trent



Noel Blake teaches football dribbling drills

In our last edition we reported how the School of Sport and Exercise had won a prestigious £350,000 British Council bid to run a three month training programme next summer for Chinese football coaches. The training programme was announced by the British Council as part of a Chinese Government initiative to grow football in China. Currently there are 5000 soccer schools in mainland China and this will grow to an incredible 50,000 by 2020. We have recently concluded this programme hosting 60 football coaches from China on a three-month study visit. As part of a working partnership with the Stoke FC community trust, the visit provided the coaches with in-depth knowledge about the UK approach to football coaching. The programme was initiated by the Federation of University Sports of China (FUSC) and the China School Sports Federation (CSSF) (who operate under the Ministry of Education), who, following a bid, selected ourselves as partners to design, deliver and manage the programme. In March 2015, China's State Council released a

plan to boost the development of football in the country, with the aim of improving national performance in football. The coaches engaged in a variety of activities, including technical skill development, coach mentoring, and physiological and psychological aspects relevant to football training utilising the Universities new 3G Astroturf and Catapult GPS monitoring system. The programme included organised visits to St George's Park, local soccer camps, and to watch Stoke City FC play at weekend fixtures. All the coaches are educated to degree level or above, and have been specially selected for the programme. Nigel Lee in the International Office was heavily involved in the management of the visitors during their stay. The end of the programme ended with the coaches travelling by open-top bus from the Britannia Stadium to King's Hall for their graduation ceremony, taking place on 15th September.



Simon Bradley, Stoke City, talks to the coaches about football at grassroots level in the UK.



The coaches undertake field and lab-based testing

# BRITAINS STRONGEST MAN

## visits Sport and Exercise Science Laboratories

Eddie 'The Beast' Hall visited the Sport and Exercise Science Laboratories at Staffordshire University as part of a BBC 1 documentary that aired in March 2016. Eddie, who hails from Stoke-on-Trent, and retained his title as Britain's Strongest Man for the third consecutive year.

Sport and Exercise Science staff and students put Eddie through a series of physiological tests to ascertain what it takes to be one of the world's strongest men. Eddie undertook tests to measure his resting metabolic rate, body composition, anaerobic capacity, muscular power, and muscular strength. Eddie's results were astounding and nothing like those typically seen when students perform these tests as part of him to fit inside the Bod Pod for the assessment of body composition. Instead, Sport and Exercise Physiology Lecturer, Dr Jacky Forsyth was left with the arduous task of trying to measure Eddie's body composition with a set of skinfold calipers.

Resting metabolic rate, which provides an estimate of how much energy Eddie's body needs to sustain its basic functions to stay alive, was nearly double what is typically seen in a recreationally active male and female.

Eddie's muscular strength and power were extremely high and easily surpassed what staff and students had seen during any previous sports science testing with athletes. What is even more astonishing is that these incredible results were achieved less than 3 days after Eddie's victory at the British Strongest Man



Championships. As Dr Dean Burt explains, "it can take up to 4 – 6 weeks to fully recover from a bout of strenuous exercise. Given the incredible amount of physical strain Eddie would have put his muscles through to win Britain's Strongest Man, he would have arrived for testing in a heavily muscle damaged state whereby maximal strength and power might have been reduced by as much as 30 – 40%. It is not difficult to assume that the exceptional strength and power results Eddie achieved today are only a fraction of what he can actually produce".

The gruelling afternoon of testing finished with a full-body massage from one of current undergraduate Sports Therapy students, and in fact, Eddie's current sports therapist is Thomas Hatrick, a 2015 graduate of Sports Therapy from Staffordshire University.

On Eddie's visit to the Sport and Exercise Science Laboratories, Dr Jacky Forsyth said that "the experience had provided the Sport and Exercise Science students, who assisted with the tests today, a really unique and fascinating insight into what it takes to become one of the world's strongest men".

Finally, Head of School, Dr Peter Jones, added that "we would like to thank Eddie for visiting the Sport and Exercise Science Laboratories and we very much look forward to supporting him in his future quest to become the World's Strongest Man".

Since this Eddie has gone on to and finished 3rd in the 2016 World's Strongest Man, and break his own world record holder for the deadlift (lifting a staggering 500 kg to break the record!).



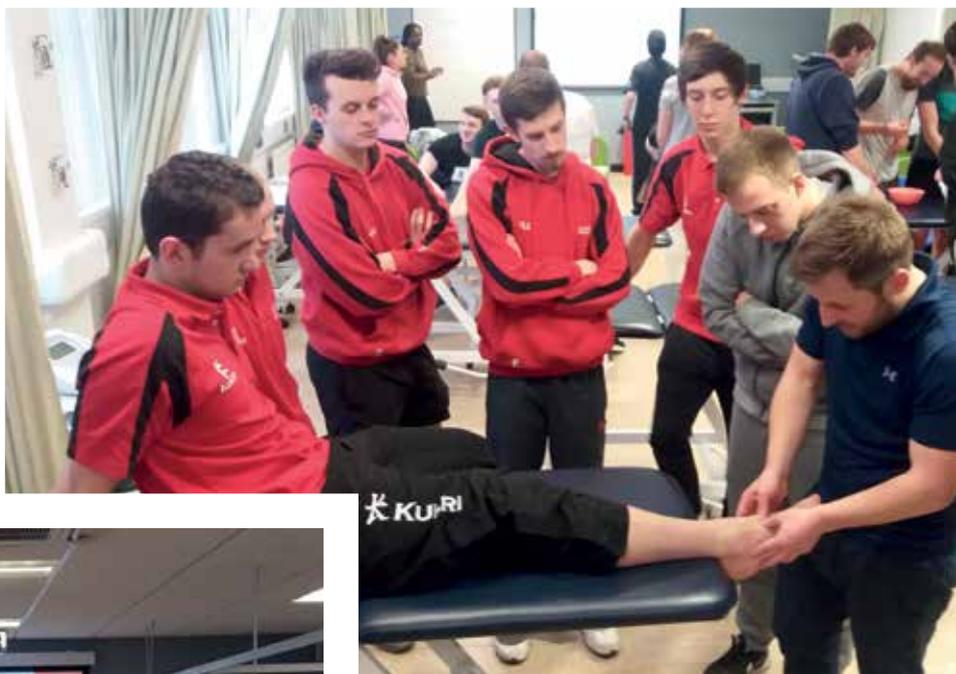
# Sports Therapy Students Enjoy Soft Tissue Masterclass

Level 6 Sports Therapy students were given a soft tissue masterclass in myofascial "Rolfing" by Soft Tissue Therapist Dan Buchannon. Dan, who has been a practising soft tissue therapist for 10 years having worked with an array of elite sports teams including Bracknell Bee's Ice hockey, Reading FC, Ipswich Town FC, and most recently Derby County FC.

Dan provided students his experience and insight into the challenges facing new graduates trying to break into professional sport, before passing on his knowledge of a soft tissue technique known as "Rolfing". The technique was completely new to the students and helped enhance the skill set for these soon to be graduates. The session included some unique methods of exposing the students to the realities of the myofascial matrix through the manual dissection and manipulation of raw meat tissue, before focusing on the application of techniques applicable to restoring ankle and hamstring function as well addressing postural faults in the torso and back.

The students excelled in their willingness to learn the skills and gain an appreciation of the treatment modality. The students reported "Its been great to have someone like Dan who is currently working in elite sport come in to show us new areas in which the industry is working. Seeing some the immediate effects and responses of the rolfing has been great too, and is something I definitely want to learn more about after today."

Having just set up his own private practice (Go-Perform) in addition to his work with Derby County FC Dan finished the session with a Q&A about the important employability qualities within new graduates and discussed the importance for graduates to find their own niche area of expertise within the industry. The students further commented "hearing from Dan about the importance of networking, and the ways he has gone about building a reputation both in sport and private practice has been priceless, and has been a real eye opener for myself with just 2 months to go before we graduate".



Dan commented himself "It's been a privilege coming in and sharing what I can to the students both in terms of new techniques and helping them understand what takes for them to make their own ambitions a reality. They've all taken on board everything I asked of them, and if they can show that same working ethos as graduates they every chance of succeeding in this industry."



## Team Staffs Elite's Kate takes podium position in the National XC Championships

Sports Psychology Masters student and Team Staff Elite Scholarship athlete Kate Holt picked up a fantastic bronze medal finishing 3rd in the prestigious English National Cross Country Championships. In a tight and thrilling race all top three athletes finished within 4 seconds of each other. Kate's performance is all the more impressive as she is in her first season as a senior athlete.

Kate was understandably delighted with her performance, which follows her inclusion in the Great Edinburgh International races in January, when she represented England. Going into the race, Kate said "I was aiming for a top 10 position as I knew I was up against a strong field and it was a demanding course. I ran my own race, and didn't believe a medal was mine until the last 400m when my coach shouted that I could."

Several athletes were contesting the bronze medal position but her strength showed as she climbed the final hill and was able to pull away from the group.

Winning the bronze medal will certainly have given her confidence and sets her up well for the forthcoming track season, in what is Olympic year. Clearly a great talent, Kate is looking forward to racing over the 5,000m, a new distance for her, this summer for her club Stoke AC. After this performance a successful track season is certainly on the cards.

Kate is supported by Staffordshire University Team Staffs Elite Scholarship Programme. This provides a complete 360 degree support package to help elite sport people be their best. Team Staffs Elite Scholarships include strength and conditioning, performance testing, sports therapy and sport psychology and are open for application to any prospective and current Staffordshire University students who compete at county level or above.

# Entrepreneurialism benefitting Sports Therapist

Twelve months on from graduating in June 2015 Sports Therapy graduates Natalie Jones, Sophie Minor and Kate Highy are all reaping the benefit of the entrepreneurial, business and transferrable skills at the heart of its programme design. On completing their studies all three of these graduates took the first brave steps into the world of work by setting up their own sports therapy businesses. In a competitive market, all three have successfully developed their business drawing upon the skills and knowledge gained throughout their studies to ensure they have been able to survive the initial challenges that all new businesses face in its first year and have now begun to establish a strong reputation for their practice.

Reflecting back on their studies Sophie stated "The business proposal assessment we had to complete has helped me massively in setting up my "Sophie Minor Sports Injury and Rehabilitation Clinic" based in Blythe Bridge. I've been able to use the materials acquired in the module and my 3-year plan in



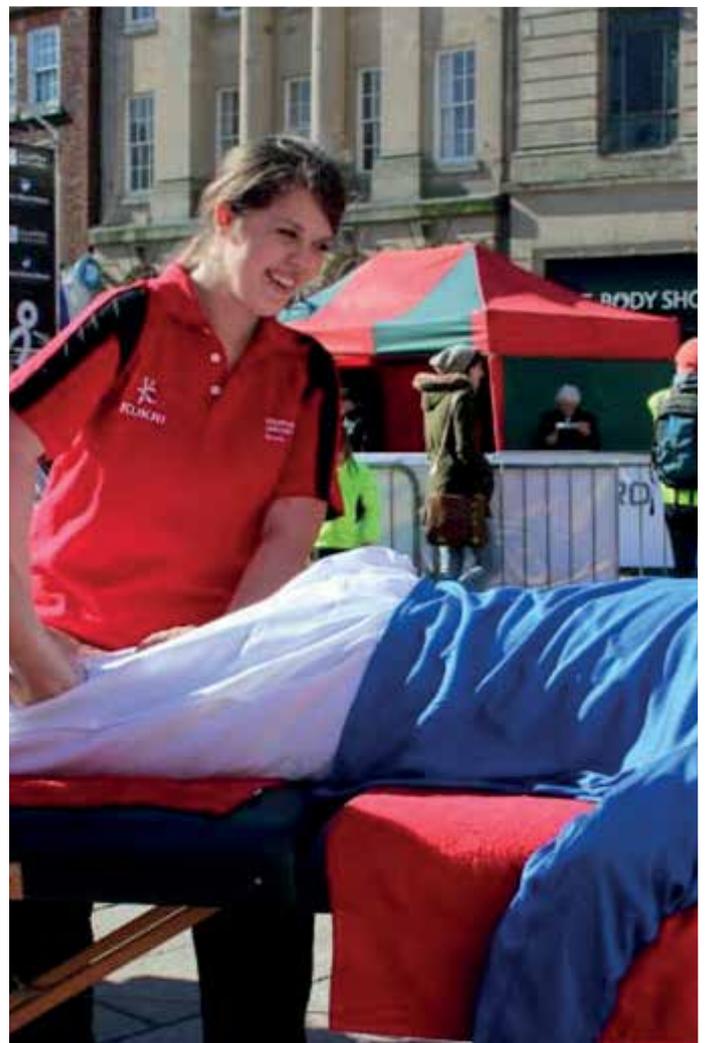
almost identical to that which I submitted for my assessment, allowing me to put my knowledge into practice".

Adding further to this Natalie stated that "Having to complete the work placement module really helped to confirm to me which path of sports therapy I wanted to follow, and gave me a really insight into how to effectively use my time during appointment, and being able to develop communication skills with patients. From this module it became an easy decision to base my "Natalie's Sports Therapy and Massage" business out of LS Health Club in Stafford. I know love being in a working environment that I feel comfortable in and having a positive impact on people's lives".

All three of these graduates have utilised the increasing importance of online and social media marketing of their businesses and describe the importance the role of this in generating the initial client base. Natalie said "A lot of behind the scenes work is needed to simply get clients through the door such as advertising, of which word of mouth is highly underrated.

It's also become abundantly clear to never stop studying or stop learning about lesser known conditions." While Sophie added "The hardest thing was drawing people's attention to my business to allow my reputation to build; therefore I put on a new offer each month to gain this attention. This has worked really well and I now notice that word of mouth is the best form of advertisement which has brought many people into my clinic."

To illustrate the impact that Staffs students are now having further afield that Staffordshire, Kate Highy has successfully overseen the growth of her own Sports Therapy business in Windsor. Similar to Natalie and Sophie, Kate has shown how the development of her understanding of the role that social media can play in driving new businesses by using her Kate Highy Sports Therapist Facebook page to promote her practice and drive new custom. Kate said "It's been great being able to set up my business and make an income to fit around my life. The hardest part was having belief in myself and being brave enough to make the first steps, but the confidence I gained from being out on placement during my course, and gaining that understanding of the financial aspects of running a business helped give me that confidence. Now each time my client leaves feeling improved from before their treatment just boosts my confidence further".



## Sky Sports were honoured to meet the worlds most gifted sports scientist at Staffs

Pupils were welcomed to the sports science facilities in Brindley building during the spring for a series of three workshops in a collaboration between the University and The Kings School, Kidsgrove. Former undergraduate and PE teacher at the school, Dan Dawson, has forged links with Sky Sports who provide a mentor in the shape of former England goalkeeper, Rachel Brown-Finnis, a veteran of top flight women's football for more than 18 years. The workshops, spread over several weeks, focussed on Sports Nutrition, Sports Psychology and Exercise Physiology and were delivered by Senior Lecturers, Andy Bloomer and Matt Slater with support from the faculty technical team.

In the Sports Nutrition session, pupils assessed their diet and compared their nutrient intakes with those recommended for their age and activity levels. In the Sports Psychology session, they were exposed to challenging situations to see how they would react under pressure and whether that reaction was favourable for sports performance. Finally, in the Exercise Physiology session, pupils conducted basic fitness tests to see how they compared to athletes of similar standing and also gained an insight in to what it would take to be an elite sports person.



The university's sports science facilities boast cutting-edge equipment to facilitate undergraduate learning but all those involved agree, it also provides an exciting experience for the pupils to take part in sports science support work and gain an awareness of what they might learn should they decide to study at university on a sport and exercise award.

## MSc Applied Sport and Exercise Psychology student wins BASES conference award

MSc Applied Sport and Exercise Psychology student Niall Falls in collaboration with Associate Professor of Applied Performance Psychology Dr Jamie Baker presented Niall's research investigating "Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing for Prospective Imagery in Golfers" at the British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences Conference (BASES) Annual Conference, and was awarded the Sportesse Sport and Exercise Science Award for the best free communication Psychology presentation at the meeting.

Niall states that "In my role as an NHS Psychiatrist has exposed me to the sharp end of working with troubled individuals; my own involvement in sport as competitor and coach meant that applying clinical skills in the sport and performance arena seemed a logical step. The distance learning course MSc Applied Sport and Exercise Psychology delivered by the Staffordshire University tested me intellectually, whilst clear goal setting and the quality of materials, support and supervision kept me engaged with the course throughout."

The MSc thesis explored the use of Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing in prospective imagery in golfers. This trauma therapy has shown powerful effects in clinical use, and has the potential to be useful in sport. To test this, a single case design explored the effects and social validity of this intervention in four golfers experiencing troubling prospective imagery. All reported three EMDR sessions to be acceptable and helpful. Impact of negative imagery was reduced in three of the four, with associated benefits to cognitive and somatic anxiety in two. Niall added further that "The opportunity to present at a meeting of this calibre cannot be recommended highly enough, and for this work to be recognised through such a prestigious award was an immense honour."

# MA By Applied Research in Sport and Exercise

The MA by Applied Research in Sport and Exercise can be designed by you to meet your career and research aspirations.

## Key features

The course consist of five modules which you can tailor for your study, research and career needs. These are:

- A subject specific or negotiated module of your choice
- Publishing, Presenting and Exhibiting
- Applied Experience
- Issues, Ethics, and Methods in Research
- Independent Major project

[STAFFS.AC.UK/POSTGRADUATE](http://STAFFS.AC.UK/POSTGRADUATE)

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## Open day Dates

Open Days are a great way to find out more about the courses you are interested in and to see what university life will be like.

Come and see us at one of our next open days.

**Saturday 17 September 2016**

**Saturday 16 October 2016**

**Saturday 26 November 2016**

## Have a Story?

We are always looking to share news from the School of Psychology, Sport and Exercise from students and staff.

If you have a story you would like to share please email:

[psemarketing@staffs.ac.uk](mailto:psemarketing@staffs.ac.uk)



## Join the conversation

We have a number of Twitter accounts within Sport and Exercise that you can follow to join in the conversation.

Sports Science Clinic  
Sports Therapy

[@peakcondition](https://twitter.com/peakcondition)  
[@SUSTClinic](https://twitter.com/SUSTClinic)

Sport and Exercise  
Sport & Exercise Psychology

[@StaffsUniSport](https://twitter.com/StaffsUniSport)  
[@SEPsychStaffs](https://twitter.com/SEPsychStaffs)