

## Research focus

We are proud that every member of our academic staff is actively involved in research in some capacity. This research informs our teaching and helps to ensure that we remain at the cutting edge of sports and exercise science, with a number of students volunteering as participants for this work. Read about one of our recent research highlights below.

## DSES Professor recognised as leader in science



Professor Joanna Scurr has reached the final three candidates from a field of more than 200 nominees for the Women in Science and Engineering Lifetime Achievement Award. The next stage is an interview later this month. The award celebrates a woman who excels in engineering, manufacturing, technology or science, inspires other women and has made a significant contribution to her field.

## DSES researchers work with Mini



A team of scientists from DSES have recently examined the psycho-physiological responses of a group of journalists during high-speed driving as part of a Knowledge Transfer Project with Mini. The

journalists were driven once around the track in the new John Cooper Works Mini by professional stunt driver, Niki Faulkner of *Rush* and *Top Gear* fame, before being given the opportunity to drive the famous circuit themselves. Before, during and after each lap of the track, the drivers underwent a battery of tests to measure anxiety, reaction time and physiological responses to driving at speeds in excess of 150 mph and to look at differences compared to the professional driver.

Dr Chris Wagstaff said: 'It's fascinating to see how much the racing driver's data differs from the journalists. He was actually less anxious when he was behind the wheel of the car, which shows how comfortable he feels in a high-risk setting.'

## Research team makes waves at Open Water Swimming World Cup in Canada

Dr Mitch Lomax and Jane Hall have recently returned from the Open Water Swimming World Cup in Lac Saint-Jean and Lac-Mégantic, Québec, Canada. The two researchers, who are part of a team including Dr Heather Massey and Professor Mike Tipton, examined the impact of swimming 10km and 32km in open water on core body temperature in elite international swimmers. The core temperature data collected is part of a much larger study examining safe lower water temperature limits in open water swimming and supplements data they have been collecting throughout the year at open water swimming events in the UK and in the Extreme Environments Laboratory in the Department of Sport and Exercise Science. The research is funded by FINA (the world governing body for swimming), the International Olympic Committee and the International Triathlon Union.



## Contact us

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# Pulse



Issue 4

## Welcome

Welcome to the fourth issue of *Pulse*, the newsletter of the University of Portsmouth's Department of Sport and Exercise (DSES). Whether you are a current, future or former student, or you are simply interested in DSES, we extend a very warm welcome to you.

We hope that *Pulse* will keep you up to date with the many exciting and interesting projects in which our staff and students are involved. Please remember that this is your newsletter too, so if you have any projects or successes to share, or suggestions for features, please email [jo.corbett@port.ac.uk](mailto:jo.corbett@port.ac.uk). And don't forget, there is more to watch and read online at [www.port.ac.uk/sportscience](http://www.port.ac.uk/sportscience).

Best sport and exercise science department for Overall Student Satisfaction in the UK (National Student Survey 2015).

For our additional rankings success, visit [www.port.ac.uk/sportscience/highlights](http://www.port.ac.uk/sportscience/highlights).

## DSES helps potential Oscar-winning film

In the first issue of *Pulse* we told you about a visit to the DSES by the cast and crew of the disaster movie *Everest*, which has now been released. The film is based on real-life events that took place in 1996 when a freak storm hit the world's tallest mountain, leaving eight climbers dead and has been touted as a potential Oscar winner. To gain experience of the conditions that can be encountered at high altitudes, actors Jake Gyllenhaal, Josh Brolin and producer Baltasar Kormákur used our state-of-the-art Extreme Environments Laboratory.

## Successful international conference

From 28 June-3 July 2015 the University of Portsmouth hosted the 16th International Conference on Environmental Ergonomics. Over 300 international delegates attended and there were a wide variety of presentations and seminars delivered. The research presented focused on the interaction between the user and his or her physical environment; an area in which the DSES has a world-leading reputation. Local school children were also involved in the conference, where speakers visited their schools to tell them about some of the work undertaken by the conference attendees before they decorated the delegate's bags with scenes depicting humans in extreme environments. There was also a 'comprehensive' social programme culminating in a pirate-themed dinner held on HMS Warrior.



## Athena SWAN

The University was awarded an Athena SWAN Institutional Bronze Award in September 2014 in recognition of its commitment to advancing women's careers in STEM subjects. To demonstrate our commitment to diversity and equality, DSES is now in the process of applying for an Athena SWAN Departmental Bronze Award. One of the key issues we will be looking at is increasing the number of female students who apply to our undergraduate degrees. We hope that you will engage with this process and provide us with plenty of ideas.



# Student success

## Award winners

At the end of each academic year the DSES makes a number of awards to students who have excelled in a variety of areas. This year's award winners were:

- **Claire Francis** (outstanding academic achievement (MSc), sponsored by John Wiley)
- **Ricky Wilson** (outstanding academic achievement (BSc), sponsored by the Great South Run)
- **Max Simms** (best Sport and Exercise Science (BSc) project, sponsored by Cranlea)
- **Matthew Wigg** (best Sports Development (BSc) project, sponsored by Parkwood Community Centre)
- **Christine McBride** (best MSc project, sponsored by Jenny Golden)
- **James Wheeler** (most improved student, sponsored by Human Kinetics)
- **Alice Usen** (outstanding contribution to the Department, sponsored by DSES)
- **Natasha Connor** (contribution to community sport, sponsored by Sport and Recreation)



## Student wins prize at international conference

DSES PhD Student Matt Maley had a few very busy days over the summer. First, Matt successfully defended his PhD thesis, which examined why particular ethnic groups experience an increased susceptibility to cold injuries, including non-freezing cold injury. However, there was no time for celebration as the following morning he co-chaired a session on 'Cold' at the International Conference on Environmental Ergonomics, before presenting his own work on 'Skin blood flow responses to locally applied acetylcholine in Caucasian and African descent individuals with and without cyclooxygenase inhibition'. Matt then won a prize from the conference committee for the quality of his presentation.



# Alumni update

The Department of Sport and Exercise Science at the University of Portsmouth has a strong employment record and we are proud of the successes of our ex-students. In this regular feature we catch up with one of our alumni to find out what they have done since leaving the University of Portsmouth.

**Name:** Graham Keen  
**Courses Studied:** BSc (Hons) Sports Development  
**Job:** Community Sport Relationship Manager, Sport England



**Typical day:** There is no typical day! The diversity of the relationships I manage leads to a lot of variety, but one constant is communication. Trying to grow sports participation with differing priorities and agendas is a challenge and, to do it effectively, you need to understand the system you work in (e.g. national governing bodies, local authorities), but also the thing you trying to change, which in our case is people's behaviour towards sport and physical activity.

**Best thing about your job:** The opportunity to innovate and be creative. Sports participation strategies often go in cycles, but every now and then there are great ideas that break the mould. This year we launched the successful 'This Girl Can' Campaign.' We also launched 'City of Football' to get more people playing the game so that we can share best practice across the nation and unlock the demand for football that is at the heart of many communities.

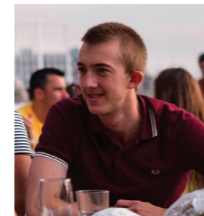
**How did you get to where you are now?** I started by working for a County Sports Partnership (CSP) in Hertfordshire. I then spent six to seven years moving between different CSPs, each time progressing into a new role which exposed me to new areas of work and building a wider network of relationships (county, regional and national).

**Advice you would give to DSES students wanting to pursue a similar career:** Try and experience a broad part of the sector early in your career, whether that be sport in schools, community, talent, specific national governing bodies. Don't go too narrow too early.

**Best memory of your time at Portsmouth:** I have fond memories of living on Langstone campus. More recently my best memory was coming back for the Portsmouth City of Football assessment visit.

## Student profile

**Name:** Liam Colley  
**Course:** BSc (Hons) Sport and Exercise Science (Level 6)



**What did you do before starting at the University of Portsmouth?** I studied a BTEC in Sports Science at South Downs College. I found the physiology unit really interesting and as a consequence I applied for university courses with a strong physiology focus.

**Why did you choose to study at Portsmouth?** I chose the University of Portsmouth mainly because the laboratory facilities looked amazing and I had heard really good things about the University, especially the Department of Sport and Exercise Science.

**What's your favourite thing about being a student at Portsmouth?** I have been given the opportunity to spend a large amount of time in the laboratories and have worked on my own research project and assisted on others. As a result of this, I was able to attend the International Conference on Environmental Ergonomics, which was a great opportunity to meet some of the leaders in this field. It has been hard work, but it is rewarding if you're willing to put the work in.

**What do you hope to do when you finish your studies?** The research I have been involved in has really fired my enthusiasm. When I graduate I am hoping to go on and do a research Master's in environmental physiology and would love to continue working in this area.

# NSS and league table success

According to the results from the National Student Survey 2015, 100 per cent of the BSc (Hons) Sport and Exercise Science students and 100 per cent of BSc (Hons) Sports Development students in the DSES at the University of Portsmouth were satisfied with their course. This result means that DSES leads the UK for student satisfaction in the sports science area.

The high-quality educational experience offered by the DSES is further emphasised in the latest *Guardian* University Guide league tables where the DSES is ranked the sixth best sport and exercise science department in the UK, and *the Times* and *Sunday Times* University Guides, where it is ranked the ninth best sport and exercise science department in the UK. Head of Department Richard Thelwell commented: 'These excellent results clearly show that the University of Portsmouth is one of the best places to study sports-related courses in the UK, and are a clear reflection of the high-quality educational experience that we deliver and the fantastic achievements of our students.'

## Professional Doctorates

The Department of Sport and Exercise Science has recently introduced a new Professional Doctorate qualification which is an alternative pathway to a doctorate qualification. It consists of a rigorous programme of advanced study and research, designed specifically to meet the needs of commerce, industry and professional groups and is the professionally oriented counterpart to the more theoretical PhD. It enables the study of a specific subject to the same depth as PhD students, whilst applying the learning to your professional practice, and is ideal to do whilst in full-time work. Across many organisations such as professional bodies for sport, exercise and health or the NHS, a Professional Doctorate is now viewed as a necessary academic qualification for attaining higher-level posts. If you are interested in finding out more about the Professional Doctorate, please contact [science.admissions@port.ac.uk](mailto:science.admissions@port.ac.uk).

## Coaching opportunities

If you are a DSES student who is interested in coaching and volunteering opportunities, you might be interested in Sport and Recreation's Sports Development programmes, which deliver activities to both the University community and young people in local schools, colleges and sports clubs. Bursaries are available to help with gaining coaching and officiating qualifications and coaching placements are provided in schools, colleges and community sports clubs. Street dance, football and disability coaching are just a few examples of the opportunities on offer. The Football Referee Hub trains and mentors new officials and Activator roles are available if you want to work with students and engage them in physical activity. If you would like to receive information and opportunities please join Sports Volunteering Hub at [sportsvolunteers.port.ac.uk](mailto:sportsvolunteers.port.ac.uk) and if you have any queries, please contact Zoe. Monk@port.ac.uk.

## Sandwich courses

The DSES is now offering sandwich courses for students on the BSc (Hons) Exercise and Fitness Management, BSc (Hons) Sports Development and BSc (Hons) Sport and Exercise Science. These new sandwich courses give students the option of spending a year gaining industry experience or studying abroad between the second and third year of their studies. If you are a DSES alumnus who is working in a relevant industry and would be able to accommodate a sandwich year student, please contact [mitch.lomax@port.ac.uk](mailto:mitch.lomax@port.ac.uk).

# High-quality teaching

## Staff profile

**Name:** Dr Jo Corbett  
**Title:** Principal Lecturer in Exercise Physiology



**What's your background?** I was a keen athlete at school. To increase my understanding of the best ways to train I read Astrand and Rodahl's classic '*Textbook of Work Physiology*'. From then on I was hooked on exercise physiology and, as I was good at science, pursuing a career in exercise physiology seemed a logical choice and so I studied these topics to PhD level.

**What are your teaching duties?** I teach on and coordinate Introduction to Sport and Exercise Physiology, Physiological Approaches to Training and Assessment, and Applied Sports Physiology. I also supervise two PhD students.

**What are your research interests?** Unsurprisingly, given my background, I retain an interest in all things related to endurance exercise. More recently I have moved into the environmental physiology domain, which is enjoying a resurgence with the realisation that the responses of fit and healthy individuals to extreme environmental stress can provide insights into other pathological conditions.

**What advice would you give students to help prepare for a career in sports science?** Have a genuine interest in the discipline, get a good grounding in the basic sciences, read as much as you can and be prepared to work hard!

**What's the best thing about DSES?** The variety. On any day I could be teaching anyone from school to PhD level, working with recreational athletes or Olympic champions, or collecting data for studies that could benefit anyone from an elite athlete to someone with a serious medical condition.

## New staff to join DSES

We will soon be welcoming Dr Tim Exell to the Department of Sport and Exercise Science from Cardiff Metropolitan University. Tim, who will lecture in the area of rehabilitation science, completed his PhD investigating biomechanical asymmetry in sprint running. He has also worked as a research fellow at the University of Southampton investigating novel technologies in stroke rehabilitation. His current research interests build on his PhD work, as well as covering biomechanical asymmetry in gymnastics, training transfer in sprint running and the development of methods including marker-less motion capture technologies.

