

H-Sport: The Online Academic Community for the Sport Humanities

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The academic world has increasingly been relying on online communities to connect scholars residing in far-flung places across the globe. In particular, connecting with a group of individuals interested in the same field can be one of the most beneficial aspects of these networks. In the early years of the internet and email of the 1990s, H-Net began as an interdisciplinary organization in the humanities to connect scholars on specific topics via email listserves¹. Some of the earliest networks include H-Urban (Urban history), H-Women (women's history), and H-Holocaust (Holocaust/Shoah history). Some networks which might appeal to readers of *Storia dello sport - Rivista contemporanea* are H-Italy (Italian history)², H-ItalianDiaspora (Italian transnational migration, Italian postcolonial studies, Italian ethnicity in Italy and throughout the Italian *diaspora*)³ and H-Nationalism (all aspects of nationalism)⁴.

H-Sport, one of the nearly 200 networks which comprise H-Net, is the online academic network for scholars across all of the sport humanities.⁵ H-Sport began in the late 1990s as an email listserv, "Sporthist", organized by longtime International Society for the History of Physical Education and Sport (Ishpes) council member, Richard Cox. In late 2010 "Sporthist" transitioned to H-Net, becoming H-Sport, and also expanded from being simply an email listserv to a broader network for sport scholars. Since that time H-Sport has expanded its scope and continues to expand in size. As of October 2017 H-Sport has more than 1250 scholars as subscribers to the network.

Most scholars think of H-Sport as a place to share announcements about conferences, events, calls for papers, and other aspects of academic life – all of which is true. H-Sport uses tags so scholars can easily see announcements related to one of the sport scholar organizations such as Ishpes, Nassh (North American Society for Sport History), and Iaps (International Association for the Philosophy of Sport), for instance. H-Sport also has a "Call Roll", a one-stop shop for all of the recent Calls for Papers for conferences and publications are posted. H-Sport is also a place where scholars can pose questions to the broader academic community of sport scholars.

H-Sport also provides a variety of resources for sport scholars. One of the most important resources which H-Sport offers is the Journal Watch. This is a quarterly compiled list of recent articles and book reviews published in academic journals on sport topics. The Journal Watch currently covers publications in English, French, German, and Spanish and Portuguese. Due to the volume of articles published, the English-language Journal Watch is broken into sport-specific journals and non-sport journals. Particularly with the introduction of *Storia dello sport - Rivista contemporanea*, H-Sport would like to add an Italian language Journal Watch as well. Interested scholars should contact the H-Sport Editors. The work involved is not too onerous and is only needed briefly four times a year. Scholars are also welcome to send an email to the H-Sport Editors about an article published in a non-sport journal to ensure that it is included in the Journal Watch.

¹ See H-Net's website: <https://networks.h-net.org/h-net>.

² H-Italy: <https://networks.h-net.org/h-italy>.

³ H-ItalianDiaspora: <https://networks.h-net.org/h-italiandiaspora>.

⁴ H-Nationalism: <https://networks.h-net.org/h-nationalism>.

⁵ H-Sport: <https://networks.h-net.org/h-sport>.

In addition to informing scholars about recent articles, H-Sport also helps promote new books published on sport topics. Four times a year H-Sport sends out a list of recent books – both monographs and edited volumes – along with the link to the publisher so that scholars can purchase the books for themselves or recommend them to their libraries. Anytime a scholar publishes a new book they should send an email to H-Sport so that the book can be included on the New Book Announcements. Additionally, for scholars in the early stages of writing a book, H-Sport also provides a Book Publishers resource, with links to publishers in several countries who regularly publish books on sport topics. English-language publishers are divided into two categories: publishers with a sport series and publishers without a sport-specific series (but who will publish sport topics). The Book Publishers resource includes links to the publisher along with each publisher's author information page. Currently H-Sport does not have any Italian publishers listed, but H-Sport would like to include them. Anyone with experience publishing a book on a sport topic with an Italian press should please contact H-Sport so that we can add these publishers to the H-Sport list.

The Teaching Initiative on H-Sport allows scholars to share the exciting materials they use in the classroom when teaching. Scholars have submitted their syllabi for courses which focus on sport topics. Syllabi are welcome from all sport subjects which scholars might teach: history, sociology, philosophy, media, literature, policy, management, and law. The Teaching Initiative is in the process of adding a section on assignments, where scholars can share the innovative types of assignments which they have developed for their courses. Sharing examples of successful classes and assignments will help the field as a whole grow, and this is an area H-Sport is excited to see grow as classes on sport become more frequent at universities across the world.

While most sport scholars know about the major collections related to sport history, such as the Avery Brundage Collection at the University of Illinois (with a few microfilmed copies held elsewhere) or archives of the International Olympic Committee or Fifa which are housed at those organizations' headquarters, many other collections related to the history of sport exist across the globe. Some of these collections might be held at national, regional, or local archives, whereas others are located at university archives. It can be challenging for scholars to find the archival materials which might be of immense value to their project but which are hidden away in a collection listed under the name of the individual whose papers have been donated. The H-Sport Archive Project helps to publicize collections related to sport which could be hidden gems for scholars working on a variety of subjects. Each quarter the list of new collections posted to the Archive Project are shared via email to all H-Sport subscribers, and the list of all collections is easily searchable on H-Sport. Collections are organized geographically (US and Canada, Latin America, Europe, and Australasia) and well as topically (Olympics, football / soccer, baseball, journalism, and physical education and recreation). Collections with extensive photographs are also noted as such. H-Sport hopes that the Archive Project can assist with the expansion of the sport history field in Italy, and particularly with the study of Italian sport history. Any scholar interested in contributing to the Archive Project should contact the H-Sport Editors. Guidance and support is provided to help locate collections, which will be of interest to sport scholars as well.

Along with H-Net as a whole, H-Sport also provides significant support for graduate students. Twice a year H-Sport updates its list of Theses and Dissertations in Progress. Any graduate students working on a project related to the sport humanities should email H-Sport to be included in this list; individuals should also email H-Sport when the project has been completed and the degree awarded since it is always a great joy to celebrate the success of everyone in the field! The Theses and Dissertations in Progress list for both masters and doctoral degrees, along with the list of completed projects, is valuable to see what new research is being done by the future of the field. In addition to the support which H-Sport provides to graduate students in the field, H-Net also has a network that is just for

graduate students in the humanities: H-Grad⁶. This network promotes activities and opportunities specifically for graduate students, along with advice and guidance for surviving graduate school.

H-Sport is on social media as well! Everyone can follow H-Sport on Twitter at @HNet_Sport to easily see what has been posted to H-Sport and elsewhere, what other sport scholars are saying on social media, and for fun such as #ShelfieSunday, where scholars post pictures of the sport books on their shelves to share what they have been reading lately or the books most influential to them.

As part of the broader H-Net, H-Sport also promotes the resources which H-Net provides to all of its networks. H-Net has a Job Guide which is free for anyone to access to see academic job postings. There is a cost for institutions to submit a position to the Job Guide, but the cost is quite reasonable compared to other academic job posting sites, and this money goes to supporting H-Net's behind the scenes costs. Several lists also conduct book reviews, which are cross-posted to H-Sport when they are relevant. H-Sport itself does not send out books to be reviewed, but books on sport history are occasionally reviewed on other lists and the H-Sport Editors make sure those are shared with H-Sport subscribers. Lastly, H-Net offers a way to share an academic announcement (such as the launching of *Storia dello sport - Rivista contemporanea* as a new journal) to all H-Net lists. The editors of each list determine which announcements shared with all of H-Net are relevant to their subscribers, but all announcements are publicly available so people can search all of the announcements not specific to any specific list.

The H-Sport community as a whole provides valuable contributions, without which the network would not be able to provide as many resources for the benefit of sport scholars across the globe. The H-Sport Advisory Board and Editorial Team work behind the scenes to develop new ideas and turn them into an online reality for the field. With this new and growing community of scholars in Italy working on sport topics, H-Sport hopes that it can also be a valuable resource for scholars in Italy both new and familiar to the sport humanities field. H-Sport often has calls for new volunteers to get involved, and with this relationship with *Storia dello sport - Rivista contemporanea*, H-Sport hopes to expand its connections with the field as it expands in Italy and the Italian language.

Just to reiterate – H-Sport wants to include more Italian scholars as part of its team, including for the following:

- Journal Watch (small commitment once every three months)
- Archive Project (small commitment once every three months)

H-Sport would also like to receive emails from anyone and everyone who can provide information on the following areas:

- new books published on sport topics
- publishers in Italy who will publish books on sport topics
- graduate students' thesis and dissertation projects
- teaching materials
- announcements related to events, conferences, workshops, and publications, particularly calls for participants and contributors

For any of these contributions, please contact H-Sport at editorial-sport@mail.h-net.msu.edu. H-Sport looks forward to working with the academic community in Italy to promote the study of sport.

⁶ H-Grade: <https://networks.h-net.org/h-grad>.