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Wednesday, June 24

Welcoming Remarks:
Dr. Gordon Anderson, Dean of Arts and Sciences (East Tennessee State University)
Dr. Jamie Dopp, SLA President (University of Victoria)

PANEL I: Head-Scratching Twosomes
Chair: Kyle Belanger (Springfield College)

Tim Morris (University of Texas at Arlington), tmorris@uta.edu
"Bullfighting Fiction for Children"

A small but well-elaborated intersection of children's literature and sport literature consists of stories about bullfighting. Unique in juvenile sport fiction, bullfighting stories resist the formula in which the protagonist prevails in a big event. Instead, two plot arcs are canonical: one in which the protagonist withdraws from bullfighting in favor of a more talented friend, and another in which the protagonist withdraws from the sport altogether, sometimes spoiling the event and saving a bull from death. In a more fantastic subgenre, the bull himself withdraws. Caught at the intersection of incommensurable ideologies, these bullfighting stories highlight the cultural problems involved in valorizing violent sports, particularly for children.

Dennis Gildea (Springfield College), dgildea@springfieldcollege.edu
"Abbott and Costello meet Frank Deford"

Throughout the short and usually happy life of *The National Sports Daily*, Frank Deford served as the editor-in-chief, and he also wrote his "At Bat" column on a regular basis. The newspaper, quite possibly the last grand experiment in print sports journalism, was launched on 31 January 1990 and ceased publication on 13 June 1991. But it was on 2 March 1990, a time when the future still looked relatively hopeful for the experiment, that Abbott and Costello met Frank Deford. One of Deford's editorial credos was that sports and the coverage of sports should be fun. Hence, he ran caricatures of the famed comedy duo on the top of the paper's "Playground" section. They were, after all, responsible for one of the funniest bits on baseball, "Who's On First." Deford's column, headlined "Abbott and Costello, you're not funny anymore," noted wryly that he had received a letter from the Beverly Hills law firm of Weinstein and Hart, which informed him that his publication was in violation of "Section 990 of the California Civil Code."

The legal representatives of Abbott and Costello Enterprises made it clear that *The National* must "cease and desist forthwith" from "utilizing the likenesses of the late Abbott and Costello." "Cease and desist forthwith. Forthwith!" Deford wrote in a satiric reply to the law firm. "And people in other countries…wonder why we make jokes comparing lawyers to laboratory rats."

This essay is a close textual analysis of Deford's columns and other coverage that appeared in *The National*. When the 1991 edition of *The Best American Sports Writing* was published, four of the pieces selected appeared first in *The National*, a paper that had to "cease and desist" publishing far too soon.

Fred Mason (University of New Brunswick), fmason@unb.ca
"Racing Ourselves to Death? Death Race and the Trajectory of Science Fiction on Sport"

The levels of violence in sports such as football and hockey in the late 1960s and early 1970s, along with wider political and social contexts, attracted the attention of contemporary science fiction writers and filmmakers. A wave of "critical SF sports stories" envisioned that the sports of near-future societies would be excessively violent, and that death would become an accepted, even necessary part of the spectacle. One film in particular, *Death Race 2000* (1975), used sarcasm, parody and excess to offer a critique of sport and society. The plot of *Death Race 2000* involved a six-car race across America, where competitors win by a combination of time and points, points being given for running over pedestrians. This film sat firmly within the B-movie realm, with Roger Corman as producer indicating its low-budget, exploitative style. In 2008, a remake of the film, simply named *Death Race* was made. Starring action hero Jason Statham and barely set in the future, this film revolved around car races where prison inmates battle each other to the death in the hopes of ultimately being released. This film lacks the criticism of 1970s science fiction sports texts, and visibly spectacularizes the violence. However, its popularity spawned two straight-to-video sequels. This paper focuses on the differences between the films, on how notions of "vehicular combat" as sport meandered across literature, film and video games in the 40 years in between, and muses upon how critical perspectives on sport can become the very thing criticized.

PANEL II: The Game Never Leaves You
Chair: Michele Schiavone (Marshall)

Matthew Tettleton (University of Colorado Boulder), matthew.tettleton@colorado.edu
"Sporting Ethos and the Soccer Fan Memoir"

In 1994, the United States hosted the FIFA World Cup, soccer's grandest spectacle. Since then, soccer in the United States has transformed from a yuppie children's activity to a legitimate sport with a substantial and growing fan base. In that time, soccer literature and popular media have spread a narrative of soccer fandom in the United States being a hobby of the bourgeois or the hipster; in short, there is a pervasive story that many

American soccer fans pursue the sport in order to appear different, more cultured, or smarter than fans of other sports.

With the narratives of the popularization and gentrification of U.S. soccer in mind, I look at two examples from the fan memoir genre: Nick Hornby's canonical *Fever Pitch* (1992) and Michael Agovino's *The Soccer Diaries* (2014). In my synthesis of these texts I observe a tendency of the memoirists to justify their fandom; that tendency points to the authors' conflicting urges towards establishing athletic bona fides and honing their intellectual voices.

I argue that authors of these soccer fan memoirs claim their right to speak about soccer by constructing a "sporting ethos" which combines authorial savvy with a "paying dues" rhetoric. In the end, what gives the soccer fan-memoirist his convincing authorial voice is a successful navigation of the athletic/intellectual divide.

Richard McGehee (University of Texas at Austin), rmcgehee@utexas.edu
"*Esse est Percipi*: The Truth About Soccer Revealed to H. Bustos Domecq"

Jorge Luis Borges and Adolfo Bioy Casares are two of Argentina's most respected authors of the 20th century. They collaborated extensively, and a number of their lighter stories used the pseudonym, H. Bustos Domecq. *Esse est Percipi* leads off the 1997 collection of Argentinean soccer stories entitled *Cuentos de Fútbol Argentino*. It recounts an adventure of Bustos Domecq when he sets about seeking the explanation to the most remarkable mystery: the disappearance of Buenos Aires' grandest soccer stadium. Bustos Domecq discovers that not only is the stadium gone, but soccer itself, as well as most other sports and important spectacles, has become an invention of television and radio production and exists only in the minds of the commentators in their studios and staged performances by actors in front of the cameras. As a faithful fan and grand supporter of his favorite club, Abasto Juniors, this revelation in truly distressful to Bustos Domecq, who nevertheless professes his continuing support for the team and its (non-existent) players.

Although Jorge Luis Borges was a supporter of Argentina's military governments of the late 1970s, which used soccer to promote nationalism and distract the people from the repression and human rights abuses of their regimes, Borges apparently detested soccer, and *Esse Est Percipi* could be viewed as a way he expressed his low opinion of the sport. With a few outstanding exceptions, such as Uruguay's Eduardo Galeano, soccer has not found admirers among Latin American and even English-language authors and other intellectuals, and occupies a minor role in literature.

Jamie Dopp (University of Victoria), jdopp@uvic.ca
"Wayne Johnston's *The Divine Ryans* and the Underworld of Religion"

Connections between hockey and religion are central to *The Divine Ryans.* The novel tells the story of Draper Doyle, a nine-year-old boy from St. John's, Newfoundland, and his attempt to make sense of the mysterious death of his father. Draper's fondest memories of his father have to do with hockey. The family are prominent Catholics and also Montreal Canadiens fans (they detest the Protestant flag-bearing Toronto Maple Leafs). Because Draper is too small to watch the end of "Hockey Night in Canada" broadcasts, his father scratches the scores for him on the cover of his child's version of Homer's *Iliad*. These scratches, it turns out, become the key clue in unraveling the mystery of Draper's father's death—and in so doing they build on a complex set of interconnections between death, religion and hockey built up over the course of the novel. This paper will attempt to clarify and explore some of these connections.

PANEL III: Creative Nonfiction

Chair: Susan Bandy (Ohio State)

Jeremy Larance (West Liberty University), jlarance@westliberty.edu

The Inaugural Class of the Sport Literature Hall of Fame:

The Natural, Bernard Malamud (1952)

End Zone, Don DeLillo (1972)

You Know Me Al, Ring Lardner (1916)

Rick Paar (Springfield College), rickpaar@comcast.net

"If You're Ever in the Bay Area"

Jack Scott was an athlete, coach, athletic director, PhD in psychology, physical therapist, writer, critic, organizer, Bill Walton's roommate, and Patty Hearst's chauffer to a farmhouse in Pennsylvania when she was on the FBI's Ten Most Wanted list. He was founder of the Institute for the Study of Sport and Society, the author of two books, and was death on racism and sexism and performance enhancing drugs in sport. His work became the foundation for "radical sports activism." This is a story about the ten days I spent at his house in Oakland, California in 1971.

PANEL IV: The Corners of Sports, Poetry, and Americana

Chair: Jeremy Larance (West Liberty University)

Ken Waldman (Nomadic Productions), ken@kenwaldman.com, with **Ira Bernstein**,

Percussive Step

Early October 2014, writer and musician Ken Waldman was in residency at Texas A&M University. Over three days, he visited four classes. The residency culminated with a roots music variety show he curated and which featured musicians (and dancers) from North Carolina, Louisiana, Texas, and California. A highlight of his visit was writing a poem for Johnny Manziel, the Heisman Trophy-winning quarterback who'd recently played for the university. Waldman not only wrote the poem, titled "Johnny Football,"

but then shared it in performance with three musicians who were also percussive dancers—Ira Bernstein from Asheville NC, and Evie Ladin and Keith Terry from Oakland CA—and six student dancers he'd met earlier during the residency. For a video of the poem and dance: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K1RnC8cRblU

At the 2015 Sports Literature Association Conference, Ken Waldman and Ira Bernstein will recreate what they did in Texas with that poem. Then Ken Waldman will read other sports poems that lend themselves to similar percussive dance treatment. He'll also play fiddle and combine the music with appropriate sports poems.

PANEL V: We Are Them, They Are Us

Chair: Phil Wedge (Kansas University)

Patrick Ridge (Arizona State), ptridge@asu.edu

"I Wanna Be Like Mike: Sport and Globalization in Almodóvar's *Carne Trémula*"

Ten years after the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE) took back control of the Spanish government, the first significant step towards democratic transition after the death of Francisco Franco, Spain hosted the Summer Olympics in Barcelona and the World's Fair in Seville, and Madrid represented the European Capital of Culture in 1992. Despite the left wing's accomplishment, the Partido Popular and José María Aznar assumed control of the government in 1996.

Up to this point, Pedro Almodóvar had avoided themes dealing with Francoism in his films. However, in the light of Aznar's right-wing government, *Live Flesh* (1997) explores various historical elements of the Francoist era and the nineties. In this way, the director offers for the first time in his career a text that conceptualizes a national political history. An aspect of particular interest is the manner in which the film presents images that allude to the country's economic transition. Although other studies have commented on the film's use of symbols such as the Kio Towers to suggest the state's supposed modernization, no investigation explores in detail the director's intentions to include references to the Summer Olympics, multinational corporations and the National Basketball Association (NBA), particularly Nike, Champion and the likes of Dream Team players such as Michael Jordan. Using the categories of Transnational Film developed by Deborah Shaw, the current study examines *Carne Trémula* (*Live Flesh*) and proposes that the incorporation of the mentioned elements reveal the heightened popularity of American professional basketball in Spain in the mid-nineties, a fact that also indicates Spain's transition to a global economy.

Joel Sronce (North Carolina), joel.sronce@gmail.com

"The Lives of Others: The Role of Sport in an Immigrant's Exterior and Interior Space in Aleksandar Hemon's *The Book of My Lives*"

A short time after Aleksandar Hemon left for Chicago early in 1992, the Yugoslav People's Army were fully deployed in Bosnia; there was shooting and sniping on the streets of Sarajevo, and war was raging in the hills above. He had accepted an invitation to a month-long visit from the American Cultural Center, and had, as he writes, "no way of knowing at the time that I'd return to my hometown only as an irreversibly displaced visitor." He wouldn't revisit Sarajevo until the spring of 1997.

Hemon witnessed from a great distance the destruction of his home; torn by guilt and fear for the lives of his parents and friends, he strove to acquire physically and metaphysically "from Chicago what I'd got from Sarajevo: a geography of the soul." The essay presents Hemon's life before and after the war, including his writing on the war itself—as it was and as he faced it from afar—focusing on the presence of sport through the text. It explores the role of soccer in developing a connection and a home with an exterior space, as well as the ability of chess to protect and arrange one's interior space against the onslaught of displacement and defeat.

Kyle Belanger (Springfield College), kbelanger2@springfieldcollege.edu
"#LikeAGirl"

"#LikeAGirl" is a creative non-fiction presentation that takes the form of an audio essay. The presentation explores the intersection of femininity and the competitive spirit. The four interview subjects are women who compete in athletic forums typically associated with hyper-masculine athletic culture: power lifting, men's professional football, ice hockey and strongman.

Those women (Dr. Jen Welter, Summer Barnes, Taylor Hassa and Brenna McCoubrey) each acknowledge the cultural double-standards which surround women in aggressive athletic positions. However, the recent emergence of the "Like a Girl" movement appears to have begun a shift in the acceptance of women who excel in such endeavors. One of the great pioneers in North American sports, Welter (who has a PhD in Sports Psychology) is the lead source in the audio essay, was the first woman to play in a professional men's tackle football game, and is currently believed to be the first woman to hold a coaching position in the same capacity.

This presentation will consist of two connected parts. The first section is a brief visual and verbal introduction of the characters, using PowerPoint and a variety of multimedia tools to set the scene. After this introduction, a 12-minute audio essay will play weaving the voices and narratives together.

Thursday, June 25

PANEL VI: Gender Matters

Jennifer Avila (California, Riverside), jennavila5@gmail.com

"Sport, the Latina/o Literary Canon, and Visual Art: Bridging Dialogues to Cultivate New Perspectives"

I wish to examine how sport operates as a cultural text in the landscape of Latina/o and Chicana/o literature. I use the term "landscape" to emphasize that 1) this is largely unchartered territory, a vast expanse of literature that has all-too-little been explored for its gems (that must sometimes be mined from other prominent themes) of sport-inclusive subject matter, and 2) to emphasize that this undertaking is not meant to be comprehensive, nor indicate that any sort of containment can be achieved, since it is often difficult to pinpoint the exact beginning or end of a landscape. The goal of this presentation is to offer an abbreviated survey using a hybrid structure that takes into consideration both chronological and thematic organizations. What does the landscape of sport-inclusive Latina/o literature and art look like? This analysis will bridge a dialogue between both sports studies in general and Latina/o literary criticism and cultural studies to show the synergistic, mutually beneficial relationship between the two.

Susan Bandy (The Ohio State University), bandy.33@osu.edu

"The Sporting Woman in Film and Literature: Strategies of Exclusion and the Absence-Presence of the Male Athlete"

The exclusion of women from sport has been widely studied, and research has shown that through language and visual images, representations of female athletes have often misrepresented, distorted, trivialized, marginalized, and heterosexualized female athletes rather than representing them as serious, talented, and hardworking athletes. As females have become seriously engaged in sport worldwide, however, more authentic treatments of the female athlete have appeared in novels such as Jennifer Levin's *Water Dancer* (1982) and Cara Hedley's *Twenty Miles* (2007) and in films such as *The Long Run* (2000), *Girlfight (2000),* and *Million Dollar Baby* (2004). In these works, as these writers of fiction and filmmakers have begun to give more serious and authentic representations of female athletes, these athletes compete in "masculine" sports such as long distance swimming and running, ice hockey, and boxing. These "masculine" and tough women are doing only what men are supposed to be able to do and speak directly to the unease with which society confronts the women who pursue "masculine" success. The threat of their success is dealt with in some fiction and films using an emerging and interesting motif or trope in some of these representations, a more nuanced and subtle strategy of exclusion. There is gender reversal and the female athlete replaces the absent male athlete who has preceded her in the story, often accomplishing what her male counterpart cannot. She is, however, a substitute, a replacement for either a failed, aging, or absent male athlete (often deceased) who is always present in "her" story. She is competing against a ghost, so to speak, and the accomplishments or failures of her predecessor. Using the novels and films mentioned above, it is argued that the patriarchal order and ideology are contested in some of these films, but in a subtle way, there is the recuperation of conventional social order of

the dominant culture as these pertain to sexuality and certainly the view that sport remains a predominantly masculine activity.

Brian Burmeister (Ashford University), bdburmeister@gmail.com
"Pretty and Tough, in That Order: The Ultimate Fighting Championship's Eroticization of Female Athletes"

A growing area within the academic study of sports literature seeks to explore the relationships between gender, media, and sports. A common focus when examining this intersection is the media's role in (or emphasis on) sexualizing female athletes, that which Diane Ponterotto explains as the "eroticizing of the female body." To have successful careers within this context, female athletes often find themselves, as feminist scholars have pointed out, prioritizing sexual appeal over strength. The growing sport of women's mixed martial arts (MMA) has found itself inextricably paired with such sexualization. In this paper, Burmeister argues that what makes MMA particularly unique among other women's sports is that, unlike other sports in which athletes are sexualized largely at the hands of outside media and sports journalists, the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) plays a significant role in the sexual objectification of its own athletes. This organizational-level eroticization of athletes is an area that has been greatly overshadowed in critical study by examinations of gender portrayals in outside media. Within this paper, Burmeister argues that eroticizing female athletes is a marketing technique employed by the UFC. Specific emphasis is placed on an examination of portrayals of female athletes during the eighteenth season of the UFC's officially sanctioned reality show, *The Ultimate Fighter,* the first season in which female athletes were coaches and competitors.

PANEL VII: Fiction
Chair: Dennis Gildea (Springfield College)

Michele Schiavone (Marshall), schiavon@marshall.edu
"Representations and Uses of Boxer Jack Johnson"

Boxing great Jack Johnson, the first African-American heavyweight champion, was and still is more than an athlete. As someone who demanded the right to compete against whites at a time when white boxers drew the color line, he is an important figure in the history of race relations. As the embodiment of sexuality and confidence, he forced whites to see a black man who would not play along with the racial codes of the time, and is still an icon of manhood for both blacks and whites. Influencing the way black boxers were "handled" for decades, Johnson returned to national consciousness with the play *The Great White Hope*, which debuted on Broadway in 1968. Recently, Johnson has been increasingly referenced and portrayed in literature and art. This paper will explore the ways Johnson has been represented and the purposes for which he has been used in such works as the play and film *The Great White Hope* (1970), *The Original*

Johnson, a two-volume graphic novel by Trevor von Eeden, (2009, 2011), children's books, and various poems.

Scott Peterson (Wright State University), scott.peterson@wright.edu
"Finding Ella"

This story dramatizes a key event in the one-year career of female sports journalist Ella Black, who crossed all lines of social decorum to report on baseball as one of the Pittsburgh correspondents for the *Sporting Life* in 1890. In June of that year, Black traveled to Brooklyn where she met Henry Chadwick, the Father of Baseball and attended a Brooklyn Bridegrooms game at Washington Park. The story will read between the lines of the few facts that we have about this pioneer sportswriter and seek to shed some light on the mystery of her disappearance from the baseball scene at the end of the year.

PANEL VIII: Hemingway and the Sea, Naturally
Chair: Richard McGehee (University of Texas at Austin)

Hank Garfield (University of Maine), hwgarfield@gmail.com
"Madmen on the Water: The Golden Globe Singlehanded Sailboat Race of 1968-69 and Robert Stone's *Outerbridge Reach*"

Today, the sport of single-handed yacht racing is big business and cutting-edge technology. In the late 1960s it was neither. In 1968, nine men set out from England in small boats to race each other around the world, alone, without stopping. Their navigational tools were charts and sextants and ship-to-shore radios; there was no way for the outside world to know where a sailor was aside from his own daily reports. Only one of the nine completed the race. The man who led most of the way around the world abruptly decided to veer off and go to Tahiti instead. Another sailor's boat sank in a storm. But the most tragic story of the race was Donald Crowhurst, who broke down at sea, anchored his boat in South America, and began reporting faked updates of his progress. His descent into madness and finally suicide is chronicled, along with stories of the other eight competitors, in *A Voyage for Madmen*, by Peter Nichols, published in 2001.

Crowhurst's story is the basis for the breakdown of Owen Browne, the protagonist of Robert Stone's 1993 novel *Outerbridge Reach*. In the acknowledgements, Stone says only that "an episode" in the novel "was suggested by an incident that actually occurred during a circumnavigation race in the mid-1960s."

Stone set the book in the 1993 present, and had to adapt the story to preserve plausibility, given nearly 30 years of advances in navigational technology. The advances have continued, to the point where neither Crowhurst's deception nor Browne's would

be possible today. But their stories – one fact, one fiction – provide a history lesson, and an illuminating illustration of a skilled author shaping subject material to his needs.

H.R. Stoneback (SUNY New Paltz), hrs714@gmail.com
"Fever and Glory: Or, A Meditation (and Performance) of Sport Songs—From Franklin Field & Penn to Frankie Laine, and—Did I Forget to Mention Hemingway?"

Having accepted the invitation to speak at the special session devoted to Don Johnson, I pondered the possibility of attending this conference without giving a paper. I thought perhaps, after more than three decades of presenting papers at SLA, I had exhausted all my topics—and I was determined not to deal with Hemingway again, as in almost every paper for thirty-some years. Then I thought—since I am currently writing the *Stoney & Sparrow Songbook* (including 50 of my songs and the stories behind the songs)—about *Sport Songs*, a subject I have never heard addressed.

For the purposes of this paper, *Sport Songs* means both the songs that are sung *at* sporting events and the songs that have been written *about* sporting events. The trail I will follow begins at America's oldest football stadium, Franklin Field at the University of Pennsylvania, where I saw my first football games as a very young boy. One of the things that I loved at those Penn games was the ritual singing of *Drink a Highball at Nightfall*. The story of that song will be examined here.

By one of those quirks of synchronicity, this Penn tradition led me to songs *about* sport. One of my favorite songs at the time I was often at the legendary Franklin Field was Frankie Laine's hit song, *The Kid's Last Fight*. The images and themes of this song—perhaps indebted to Hemingway—will be examined, along with certain details about the songwriter, one Bob Merrill (a friend of my father, who was also a singer-songwriter). That research led me to Bimini and Natty Saunders who wrote another boxing song, "Big Fat Slob," which plays a role in Hemingway's novel *Islands in the Stream*. Thus Hemingway sneaked into this paper, bringing even more sport-song fever and glory.

Matt Nickel (Misericordia University), mattcnickel@gmail.com
"Nick Adams, Jake Barnes, and Colonel Cantwell: Hemingway's Sportsmen Sketches"

Hemingway's indebtedness to Ivan Turgenev was acknowledged by Hemingway himself in numerous letters and interviews throughout his lifetime. The young Hemingway even named Turgenev in 1925 "the greatest writer there ever was" (*Selected Letters* 179). Indeed, the stories that make up *In Our Time* (1925) seem to follow the form of Turgenev's *A Sportman's Sketches*, and the final story, "Big Two-Hearted River" certainly contains, as Edmund Wilson noted, "wood and water" reminiscent of "the transcriptions by Turgenev" (216-17).

After he became an accomplished writer, Hemingway boasted to William Faulkner how he had "Beat Turgenieff . . . soundly and for time" (*Selected Letters* 624). He was fond of

telling others the same. And Turgenev is clearly present throughout much of his writing. One of the most poignant and explicit scenes occurs in *The Sun Also Rises* just after the fishing interlude when Jake Barnes reads *A Sportman's Sketches* to relieve his own drunkenness on the night before the explosion of the fiesta of San Fermín in Pamplona. What alleviates the "feeling of pressure in [Jake's] head" is the way Turgenev's "country became very clear" (147). H. R. Stoneback emphasizes how it is "Turgenev's country" that "matters most, that loosens the pressure," and it is Turgenev's rendering of the natural world that becomes "the meditative landscape formula that informs the writing of country, of landscape, and of cityscape throughout *The Sun Also Rises* (237). Writing country becomes necessary to writing sport in *The Sun Also Rises* and throughout Hemingway's other works. We are not told in the published text exactly what "two pages" Jake "rereads" in "one of the stories in 'A Sportsman's Sketches'" (147), but Stoneback reveals that Hemingway originally included more in the manuscript: "one about a hunter, and another about 'two men fishing'" (qtd. in Stoneback 237; *Facsimile* 2:396).

A close look at the stories Jake reads as noted in the manuscript may reveal how Hemingway drew from Turgenev's pattern of country and sport, weaving the two, framing his intense action scenes—fishing, hunting, even bullfighting—with meditative and sacred landscapes. This essay will examine the ways in which Turgenev's country and sportsmen inform Hemingway's landscapes and characters, in *The Sun Also Rises*, "Big Two-Hearted River," and *Across the River and into the Trees*.

PANEL IX: The Great American Pastime

Chair: Don Johnson (East Tennessee State University)

Will Bishop (Baker University), williambishop@fac.bakeru.edu

"'It's Hard Not to Be Romantic About Baseball': Narrative Change, Narrative Tradition, and the Business Side of Baseball in Recent Films"

The publication of Michael Lewis's bestseller, *Moneyball* (2003)—an account of Billy Beane's revolutionary use of statistical analysis as general manager of Major League Baseball's Oakland Athletics—has influenced how baseball is understood and consumed in numerous ways. Perhaps somewhat overlooked is its influence on baseball film. Since the release of the Oscar-nominated film adaptation of *Moneyball* in 2011, every major baseball-themed movie has born its influence in a crucial way: each gives significant focus to the business side of baseball. Following the lead of *Moneyball*'s focus on general manager Beane, 2012's *Trouble with the Curve* stars an aging Major League scout, and the recent *Million Dollar Arm* (2014) is based on the story of sports agent J.B. Bernstein. Even 2013's *42*—a "biopic" of Hall of Famer and pioneer of racial integration, Jackie Robinson—gives significant narrative attention and screen time to Brooklyn Dodgers president Branch Rickey. This trend suggests a shift in the way baseball is perceived, with greater attention to the role of innovation in the business and strategizing that take place off the field, baring the influence of not just *Moneyball*, but

perhaps also the relatively recent advent of fantasy sports, and greater media attention to the challenge posed by inequality of MLB team payrolls. But even as the focus of recent cinematic baseball narratives has changed, in many ways these movies hold to themes and narrative structures central to the tradition of baseball film, most notably, the struggle and eventual triumph of an unlikely underdog.

Thomas Alan Holmes (East Tennessee State University), holmest@mail.etsu.edu
"August Wilson's *Fences*: Running Foul of Generational Boundaries"

Troy Maxson, the protagonist of August Wilson's *Fences*, insulates himself from hurtful self-realization though baseball analogies while denying his son the opportunity to play organized sport. While Maxson has suffered disappointment in his pursuit of playing big-league professional baseball, the game appeals to his desire for personal liberty: baseball relies on overcome boundaries and limitless time. Cory, Troy's son, has the opportunity to take a university football scholarship that Troy opposes. Troy suspects his son will find only limitation in accepting the scholarship, becoming a victim of racism. Ironically, Cory has talent that may lead to his opportunity to escape Maxson's blue-collar drudgery. Football, unlike baseball, relies on careful management of time and taking victory by staking out new territory; Cory's success in football, especially in an amenable political climate, would underscore Troy's own failure as a baseball player. Troy's inability to earn the loving respect from his family stems from his attempting to fence them in while he dreams of personal freedom, escaping his responsibilities as husband and father, but returning home. If Cory can succeed within finite time and space, Troy's failure will seem greater.

Mark Baumgartner (East Tennessee State University), baumgartnerm@etsu.edu
"Grace on the Diamond: Baseball and Dislocation in the Short Fiction of Andre Dubus"

The proposed conference presentation will focus on two baseball stories by influential short fiction writer, Andre Dubus: "The Pitcher" and "After the Game." These stories, written several years apart, visit the career of pitcher Billy Wells at two very different points in his life. "The Pitcher" looks at Wells' early success as a top prospect with a Creole League team in Lafayette, LA as juxtaposed with his failing marriage. "After the Game" picks up his career seven years later in 1962 when Wells is a starting pitcher for the Boston Red Sox. The plot of the story details a surreal postgame incident in which a Dominican ball player appears to suddenly freeze in the locker room, and stands motionless for several long minutes until he is carried out by medical technicians. Dubus' choice of these two seemingly unrelated events in Wells' career subtly highlights several key themes found throughout his fiction: adultery, race relations, failures of communication, and, most notably, conflicting ideas of grace in life, sports and art. Andre Dubus (not to be confused with his son, writer Andre Dubus III) is much beloved as one of the finest storywriters of his generation, and has often been compared to Anton Chekhov. His work has appeared in several renowned collections, as well as *The New Yorker* and *Playboy*. Although baseball writing represents a relatively small part of

his career, scattered across a few stories and nonfiction essays, I feel Dubus' work represents a significant contribution to the genre.

Eric Scribner (Wichita State University), ericscrib13@gmail.com
"The Men Higher Up"

This article explores a Kansas basketball team from McPherson that won the first-ever Olympic basketball competition at the 1936 Berlin Olympics. Although all but forgotten since their international prowess, the McPherson Globe Refiners' story demands further attention. Led by former Wichita University coach, Gene Johnson, the Refiners emerged as a dominant team in the highly competitive Missouri Valley Conference of the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU). But the team didn't just wear the Globe Refinery company name on their uniforms; they worked full-time at the refinery in McPherson, Kansas during the Great Depression. This hard-working mentality translated to success on the court as the Refiners ran away from teams with a blistering fast break and took the game of basketball to new heights, literally. In addition to winning games in America's Midwest, the Globe Refiners also became known as "The Tallest Team in the World," with their players' heights averaging six feet, five inches. In April 1936, these Midwesterners competed in the Olympic Qualifying Tryout in New York City at Madison Square Garden. Comprised mostly of farm boys from Kansas and Texas, the Globe Refiners emerged as perhaps the flashiest, most exciting team in the world. The Universals—a Hollywood team filled with former UCLA players well-known for a more traditional, methodical strategy—tested the Globe Refiners' disruptive approach to the game in a game that would determine who would represent the United States at the 1936 Berlin Olympics.

I felt that taking the reader inside the locker room and onto the court with the team would be a unique and effective way to discover this team's accomplishments, culture, and, ultimately, importance for basketball's current global success. The historical fiction portion is thus written with certain narrative discretion, but still relies wholly upon factual information about the games, players, and coaches.

PANEL X: Poetry (at Depot Street Brewery, Jonesborough, TN)
Chair: Jamie Dopp (University of Victoria)

Danny Caine (Kansas University), danny.w.caine@ku.edu
Matt Nickel (Misericordia University), mattcnickel@gmail.com
Bruce Pratt (University of Maine), obdriveway@aol.com
H.R. Stoneback (SUNY New Paultz), hrs714@gmail.com

Friday, June 26

PANEL XI: Battle of the Poets Laureate
Chair: Joyce Duncan (East Tennessee State University)

Ron Smith, Poet Laureate of Virginia (St. Christopher's School), smithjron@aol.com
Joseph Bathanti, Former Poet Laureate of North Carolina (Appalachian State)

PANEL XII: Special Session—SLA Lifetime Achievement Award: Don Johnson
Chair: Ron Smith (St. Christopher's School)

Susan Bandy (The Ohio State University)
Richard Crepeau (University of Central Florida)
H.R. Stoneback (SUNY-New Paultz)

PANEL XIII: Rugby, Flies, and Foxes
Chair: Mark Baumgartner (East Tennessee State University)

Cory Willard (University of Nebraska-Lincoln), coryglenwillard@gmail.com
"On Fly Fishing and Rhetoric: Ethos, Experience, and Fly Fishing's Rhetorical Proofs"

"People who have no meaningful way to grasp regional and global environmental problems cannot easily tell what information is distorted, when, and to what degree." – Anne H. Ehrlich and Paul R. Ehrlich in *Betrayal of Science and Reason: How Anti-Environmental Rhetoric Threatens Our Future*

This presentation shall employ an ecocritical, visual, and narrative approach to interpreting cultural engagements with place as communicated through the discourse and artistry of fly fishing. I intend to explore how fly fishing becomes a galvanizing force that creates and sustains social communities and environmental stewardship, while also insisting that fly fishing itself is an artistic and rhetorical act with its own discourse, rituals, and social practices. Literary and cultural critics have not adequately explored how commitments to place and practice, when mediated by ethical practices of fly fishing, can create forms of social cohesion, environmental stewardship, and political action informed by a sense of ethos and ecological religion, such as in the effort to prevent drilling in the Sacred Headwaters area of British Columbia and the current struggle to protect Bristol Bay, Alaska.

With that in mind, using a combination of literature and rhetorical theory—combined with my own narrative scholarship and experiences—I will highlight the rhetorical proofs provided by the understanding and pursuit of fly fishing while also putting forth a critical analysis of fly fishing that is immersed in the relationships between place, ecology, and the social and political nuances of environmentalism and the fly fishing community.

Phil Wedge (Kansas University), pwedge@ku.edu
"Sassoon's Fox-Hunting Man: The Sporting Character in *The Memoirs of George Sherston*"

Much has been made of the autobiographical nature of Siegfried Sassoon's trilogy of novels about the fox-hunting/cricket and golf-playing George Sherston, whose notions of self and country change in experiencing the horrors of World War I. But it seems to me that critics have given too much attention to the autobiographical side of Sassoon's sporting character, George Sherston, and not explored enough how Sherston's sporting experiences influence his response to the war, sometimes in ways quite different from the responses Sassoon himself recorded in his war journals. Despite these journals often providing the narrative structure and descriptive details for war scenes in the novels, close comparison of Sassoon's journals and the novels derived from them shows Sassoon carefully crafting George Sherston as a fictional sporting type different from himself. Not simply the "alter ego" of Sassoon, as biographer Max Egremont has described him, not simply the "sensitive but mindless athlete" Paul Fussell has described him as either, George Sherston evolves from a fairly timid boy who gains confidence and self-assurance through fox-hunting and cricket to an officer in the war who still has a love for sport that allows him at times to escape the physical and mental strains of that war experience.

Thomas Bauer (University of Limoges), bauer.thomas@orange.fr
"Rugby, Modernity and Controversy: *Le P'tit Parigot* (1926) by René Le Somptier"

The history of sport literature has enjoyed renewed interest over the last few years, with a noticeable increase in the number of Anglo-Saxon works and the revival of French research. Fiction is a means of expression through which it becomes possible to apprehend idea diffusion processes and discern the construction processes of collective imaginaries. From this point of view, we will revisit the history of rugby through the prism of a cine-novel, *Le P'tit Parigot* (1926), which was presented as a serial in the French newspaper *L'Intransigeant* and broadcast in six episodes in movie theatres. It depicts the misfortunes of Georges Grigny-Latour, also known as the 'P'tit Parigot', son of an academician and captain of the French rugby football team. This sport serial is an historical source of precious and useful information for approaching rugby representations of the time. This paper seeks rather to characterize the ambiguous identity of the sport during the Roaring Twenties, an identity which is torn between a Parisian spirit cultivating the idea of rugby as the inheritance of Anglo-Saxon values, and a provincial vision using it as a means of territorial expression.

Saturday, June 27

PANEL XIV: The Sweet Science
Chair: Bruce Pratt (University of Maine)

Rus Bradburd (New Mexico State), coachrus@hotmail.com
"Satire is a Big Bat — a reading from the novel-in-progress, *Big Time*"

Big Time is set at the fictional Coors State University in 2020. The beer company has just paid eighty million dollars to rename the school, but insists on one stipulation: all budgetary allotments support the football and basketball programs. The school's president quickly restructures the university – funding is cut to academic departments to move money over to athletics. Academic departments, in order to survive, must raise their own funds. In desperation, the each department works at the football and basketball games. For example: the History Department runs the concessions stands. The English Department writes, prints, and sells game programs. The Math department does the statistics. Criminal Justice professors are the ushers (and, as the fastest growing and largest department, they act as a security force for athletics). Art students do face paintings before games and design other memorabilia. The Classics department has been cut, but the professors won't leave: they live in Homerville, a modest tent city.

The book's two heroes are both History professors. Eugene Burnside and Peter Duncan were 1960s radicals who are now fed up with Coors State. Burnside errs on the side of caution, but the radical Duncan wants the revolution to start now. They see their Rosa Parks-type figurehead in Coors State's new poetry professor, Layla Silliman. These three professors reach out to two of the football players who have been their students. Can the three professors convince the two football stars to spearhead the cause? When a riot ensues after Layla Silliman's poetry reading on campus, the school is turned on its ear, just weeks before the big Bowl Game.

Big Time uses satire to examine the role of sports at our universities.

Richard McGehee (University of Texas at Austin), rmcgehee@utexas.edu
"Vicente Leñero's *Pelearán diez rounds* [They'll Fight Ten Rounds]"

Vicente Leñero is an important Mexican writer. The second version of his one-act play, *Pelearán diez rounds* [They'll Fight Ten Rounds] was first staged in 1989 and appeared as a film in 1991. All of the action takes place within a Mexico City boxing ring and adjacent areas. The first scene opens with Bobby lying face-down on the canvas. His manager arrives from one of the corridors, climbs into the ring, and begins to scold him. The manager is planning a strategy of bringing Bobby back to boxing prominence after a few years in retirement. The plan includes an upcoming match, which the opponent has agreed to lose. Unexpectedly, Bobby's wife, María, appears in the gym. María has been living in a mental institution in California, and she's come to see Bobby to demand that he not renew his career, endangering his health. They argue and she produces a pistol and threatens to kill herself if he goes ahead with his next fight. He takes the gun away from her and she leaves. When the manager returns to the ring, Bobby tells him what happened and gives him the gun for safekeeping. The manager criticizes María, tries to build Bobby's enthusiasm for a future championship, and then sends him off to spend the night in a hotel. María returns, looking for Bobby, and talks with the manager. He tries to convince her to not oppose Bobby's return to the ring, finally gives up, and returns the gun to her. Later, during the fight, María fires shots from her place among

the spectators. The final scene repeats the initial one, with the manager standing disgustedly over a fallen Bobby. The play could be seen as distinctly critical of professional boxing.

James Holzmeister (Columbus Technical College), jholzmeister@columbustech.edu
"Interpreting an Instance of Boxing in Mid-Victorian Literature: George Borrow's *Lavengro*"

In the mid-Victorian era, professional boxing was both illegal and socially maligned in England, persisting in the popular imagination as an anachronistic holdover from a previous era. It was into this cultural context that George Borrow projected a sprawling, idiosyncratic novel, *Lavengro* (1851), that just happens to be rife with references to and depictions of professional boxing. Generally unpopular with Victorian readers, the work has also proven equally problematic for subsequent literary critics. Despite the fact that it may be very un-Victorian, *Lavengro* nonetheless depicts a side of English life that was extant in the mid-Victorian era, a reality the Victorian novel rarely examines, but does acknowledge. *Lavengro*'s world is that from which Emily Bronte's Heathcliff emerges and into which George Eliot's Maggie Tulliver dreams of escape, an ancillary realm of existence seemingly at odds with the conventions of Victorianism. Given the larger history and cultural context of English professional boxing, it is possible to view Borrow's use of sport within the novel as an attempt to delineate both the identity and ideology of this marginalized area of English life and an aspect of nineteenth century culture that has been decidedly absent from our considerations of the Victorian era. Rather than an outlier or oddity, this paper will argue that critical inquiry of Borrow's use of boxing in *Lavengro* allows for the reconciliation of the novel with the larger body of Victorian literature thus demonstrating its relevance for our understanding of both the past and present character of English society.

PANEL XV: Fame, Sport, and the Narrative Ripples
Chair: Matthew Tettleton (University of Colorado Boulder)

Angie Abdou (Athabasca University), aabdou@athabascau.ca
"Olympic Athletes Versus Parkour Artists: A Consideration of Sport, Art, and Celebrity Culture in Timothy Taylor's *The Blue Light Project*"

Timothy Taylor's *The Blue Light Project* is an intense and compelling exploration of contemporary existence. It is a novel packed with the energy of urban life: hostage-takings, reality TV gone wrong, parkour, drug addiction, street art, explosions, corrupt journalists, disillusioned Olympians, resilient children, and a brother who appears to have dropped out of it all. With profound insight, Taylor critiques our society's obsession with celebrity, an obsession intrinsically connected to sport. He also explores the role art, in its many forms, plays in today's world. Parkour exists as a bridge between these two worlds of sport and art.

Early in the novel Eve Latour, an Olympic athlete much lauded for her heroic completion of a race under the harshest of circumstances, claims "Finishing is just what you do. I imagine it takes more courage to quit." This message applies to a variety of "races," and Taylor asks readers to pause and consider our society's current trajectories rather than blindly staying the course.

My paper focuses on the juxtaposition Taylor creates between Olympic athletes and parkour artists, and I offer a consideration of the ways in which the novel critiques our society's obsession with fame. Drawing on Herzog, Taylor laments our culture's dearth of adequate images, a lack that is tied, within this novel, to our obsession with sport heroes. Does extreme sport – as represented by parkour in this novel – offer an escape from these limitations and pitfalls of mainstream sport? Is it, thereby, a more "authentic" endeavor? Can parkour create a bridge between the artistic world and the athletic one? If so, what does that kind of artistic-athletic endeavor offer the trouble world as represented by Timothy Taylor?

Charmayne Mulligan (Davenport University), cmulligan@davenport.edu
"More Questions than Answers: An Examination of *The Players' Tribune*"

The Players' Tribune, created by Derek Jeter in 2014, purports to be "a new media platform that will present the voices of professional athletes" in an "unfiltered" way where athletes can "speak their mind." As Derek Jeter says, "Everyone is a reporter now." In reviewing articles from The Tribune, it is evident that this medium combines elements of newswriting, essay, auto/biography, narrative and personal reflection. Critics have challenged whether the articles written by the athletes are indeed their own, given the publishing practices of The Tribune. Do these practices, however, negate the individualistic expression and the authenticity of the authors' voices? Is it marketing and public relations or a legitimate form of artistic expression? Is it biography, autobiography, or by some accounts, fiction? How are the athletes using this from to construct their own public sphere or blend the discourses of their public and private selves? Are players attracted to it because they feel an absence of their stories or voices in traditional media? Is it devalued because it is personal rather than professional writing? In a time of social media, sound bites, quick clips, and microblogging, and media and commercial ventures so intertwined it is hard to tell what is authentic writing and what is advertising, is this a new form of authentic artist expression without filter, commercialization or agent interference? This paper will explore these questions and examine how *The Players' Tribune* may be considered in light of existing literary genres and theoretical perspectives.

Tristan Ireson-Howells (Canterbury Christ Church University), tmi1@cant.ac.uk
"Field of Dreams: Childhood, Memory, and the Athlete"

Norman Mailer's description of Mohammed Ali in *The Fight* (1975) recognizes the childlike psychology of the elite sports star. In describing Ali, Mailer comments that

"[L]ike artists, it is hard for them not to see the finished professional as a separate creature from the child that created him" (56-57). American sports literature has recognized this thematic trend through the athlete's association with the freedom of relived childhood. For the athlete the play and nostalgic reverie associated with childhood, that the fans also vicariously craves, is never lost as the sportsman continues to live out their childhood fantasies through their professional lives.

In *The Invention of Solitude* (1982) Paul Auster comments that sports stars are "being paid to remain children" (124). America's fascination with the sportsman is connected to the image of the athlete in eternal play, like Peter Pan never growing up. It is therefore appropriate that America's most iconic professional player was nicknamed "Babe".

The paradox of sport is that it both protects and inhibits. The athlete is sheltered from the reality outside the game undermining their development in an extended state of enforced immaturity and infantilism. So if the sports world is a nostalgic connection to youth it is also a symbolic prison, which stunts emotional growth. The walls of the baseball field serves as a metaphor for the edenic purity of the sport's arena both containing the sportsman and fans in sanctuary while shielding a dangerous world beyond the lush grass and fantasy of myth, ritual and performance.

PANEL XVI: A Cultural Full-Court Press

Chair: Cory Willard (University of Nebraska-Lincoln)

Jeremy Larance (West Liberty University), jlarance@westliberty.edu

"The Rhetoric and Meaning of Basketball in the Golden Age of Hip Hop"

Throughout the 1980s and into the early 1990s, rap music dominated the landscape of popular music, dramatically affecting the nation's perception of young black culture. Among the many recurring themes and sub-cultures of that era, basketball played a pivotal role in the mythification of "authentic" black masculinity. Although the aesthetics of basketball (movement, sound, drama, etc.) made it a natural subject for rap lyrics, the observable and stereotypical associations between basketball and black culture also played an undeniable role in the repetitive references to basketball in rap throughout the 80s and 90s. In my presentation, I will explore this issue by examining some of the more significant examples of recurring images and themes, including references to rhythm, fame, and success.

Donald Risker (Webster University), riskerdc@webster.edu

"What's Queer About Running? Queering a Queer Novel: The Consequences of Literary Theory and a Wonder Called Fish"

Patricia Nell Warren's *The Front Runner* has continued to inspire gays and lesbians since its publication in 1974. Seen largely as a declaration of the aspirations of gay love, *The*

Front Runner has enjoyed a privileged place, indeed singular place, in gay literature. Held to be the first love for love's sake gay novel, rather than sex for sex's sake, generations of gay men and some gay women claimed that *The Front Runner* confirmed their legitimate, though tacit yearning for a lifetime partner.

Queer theory has been applied to literature and to cultural criticism, and has multiple historical and contemporary aims. The first of these comes from the late 70s and the late 80s when the critic read for evidence of latent, potential or hidden identities and reveals them in ways unanticipated by the writer. The critic is encouraged to give acute attention to the coming out narrative. The second phase of queer theory from the late 80s to present invites the critic to read texts with great specificity (historical criticism), giving attention to what pleases the characters, what they do, and what they want. A final aim of Queer theory is to expose incoherencies in the supposedly stable definitions of male and female sexuality. But what questions are raised when Queer theory is turned on itself to explicate and critique a queer novel? This paper focuses queer theory on the competitive running episodes of *The Front Runner* to answer the question, "Is there really something queer about running?"

Stefanie Rene Torres (Kansas University), stefanietorres@ku.edu
"The 21st Century's Literary Tourist: The Sports Fan"

Literary tourism came as an attempted connection between consumer and author with the goal of feeling closer to that originator physically and emotionally. Though literary tourism saw its uprising in the eighteenth century, the practice of visiting people and places based on known authors/books saw a marked change in the form of meeting the author personally when texts were not as widely disseminated. The twentieth and twenty-first century have seen creations like Harry Potter World in Orlando, Florida take literary tourism a step further. In this paper, I argue that though the text inspires people to seek out these tourist adventures, literary tourism is now shifting to include tourism that sparks an individual to write or reflect in writing what connections s/he made with a place, especially with respect to sports, making the tourist the author. This evolution of tourism is still happening with the increasing popularity of sports stadium tours around the world; as people feel the desire to become closer to their sports idols, much like literary tourists hope to become closer to the author and the text, they visit the spaces where their idols play, which allows the sports fan to produce a text, not only in the same way a guidebook might have looked for the literary tourist, but memoirs, poetry, and fiction that reflects on their experience. Sports tourism acts as the opposite of literary tourism in that the text is produced from the experience, rather than serving as the inspiration for seeking out place.

PANEL XVII: Creative Nonfiction

Chair: Scott Peterson (Wright State University)

Jeff Lajoie (Salmon Press Media Group, NH), lajoie.jeff@gmail.com
"Small Towns, Big Problems: The Plight of the Local Sportswriter"

It's early Sunday morning in rural New Hampshire. A quick trip to the grocery store around the corner for last minute breakfast items seems painless. But in the checkout line, you're greeted in a scolding tone.

"Hey Jeff, why weren't there any girls' tennis photos in the paper this week?"

Therein lies the rub.

The best part of the job can also in turn become your worst nightmare. As a local sportswriter (extremely local, in my case), you are oftentimes the face of your company to the community at large. But with the good (developing close sources, extensive knowledge of the community that you cover) most certainly comes the bad (accessibility to your private life to the public in which you cover). There are no boundaries in a small town. The people you see professionally will most certainly be the people you see personally.

So how does one balance the positives and (potential) negatives that come with working for the media in a place where everyone knows each other's business? It's a juggling act, but one that can prove fruitful when developed properly over time. This paper will explain the life of a local sportswriter in small town U.S.A.

Jon Billman (Northern Michigan University), jonbillman@hotmail.com
"Gone Running, The Distance Runner and the Serial Killer"

On July 24, 1997, 24-year-old Olympic Marathon hopeful Amy Wroe Bechtel drove up the Loop Road above her adopted town of Lander, Wyoming to go for a training run. She planned to scout a course for a dirt-road hill 10k race that she planned to host in the fall. She parked her white Toyota on the Shoshone National Forest and disappeared. Her husband, Steve Bechtel, a professional rock climber returned from a climb and became worried when his new bride didn't return home for dinner. He called friends, then called authorities. At one in the morning his friend Todd Skinner found the Toyota. At daylight a massive search and rescue operation began that lasted two weeks; the off-the-mountain search lasted months, even years. Amy Wroe Bechtel is still missing. Foul play is suspected. Until recently, law enforcement focused their energies and attentions on Steve Bechtel. New findings say they were mistaken, that the culprit may in fact be the Great Basin Serial Killer.

My wife Hilary and I were living in Wyoming at the time. I followed the case closely and traveled to Lander that fall to participate in an awareness 10k held on the course Amy had mapped out. I've spent the last two years researching and writing a feature story

that updates Amy's cold case for *Runner's World* magazine that will run in Fall, 2015.

Closing Remarks:
Don Johnson, East Tennessee State University