Although the editors of SSJ usually work quietly behind the scene to give voice to the contributing authors, with the change of editorship we have decided to address the readership more openly through a brief editorial. In this editorial, Pirkko Markula, the past editor of SSJ, would like to introduce a new series of articles on the state of the sociology of sport initiated during her time as the editor. Michael Atkinson will then share his thoughts about sociology of sport and introduce his new editorial team.

The idea to solicit papers examining the state of the field stemmed from recent discussions at NASSS regarding the status of sport sociology, particularly in the United States, but also from a couple of recent submissions to SSJ where the authors suggested new directions for our field. These submissions prompted some of the reviewers to call for a broader discussion around this topic. In addition, I received several suggestions to provide space for more “discussion” papers in SSJ as it serves also as the journal for our association, NASSS. The editorial board of SSJ supported the idea and thus, this new series that we title, “For the Sociology of Sport,” begins this year with the goal of including one paper on the state of sociology of sport at the end of each issue. We are continuing to solicit papers for the series based on the following themes identified by the editorial board:

1. Scholarship in sport sociology: How can good quality research advance sport sociology as a field? What is the role of theory in advancing sport sociological research?
2. Inter/trans/anti-disciplinarity: Where does reaching out to other disciplines take the field of sport sociology? What is the role of sociology in current sport sociology?
3. Sport sociology and communities outside of academia: What are the impacts, interventions, or applications of sport sociology? How do sport sociologists “create” public policy?
4. Dissemination of sport sociological research knowledge: Have we been effective in disseminating our research knowledge through journals, through teaching, through the media, through organizations, through other channels?
5. New directions for sport sociology: What direction(s) should sport sociology take to remain a vibrant scholarly field?

In this issue we present the first article in this series titled, “For a Sociology of Sport” by Alan Bairner. We also welcome suggestions for papers that might fall outside of the above themes, but inside the broad remit of sport sociology as a field. While the content of these papers is rather open, they should provide an analytical discussion framed with social theory rather than a description of a possible “problem.” Because all submissions for SSJ must go through a reviewing process, these papers will be subject to the same procedure. Authors interested in submitting to the series should contact the editor of SSJ, Michael Atkinson (ssj.editors@gmail.com).
I would like to thank all the authors, reviewers, the associate editors Michael Giardina, Richard Pringle and Jim Denison, the editorial assistant Marianne Clark, the members of SSJ board, and Brian Moore and Greg Reed from the SSJ editorial team at Human Kinetics for making my time as editor such a rewarding experience. I would also like to thank the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation at the University of Alberta for the financial support that made it possible for me to hold the position as the editor. I am delighted to welcome the new editorial team and wish them a productive and enjoyable time with SSJ.

Pirkko Markula,
Past Editor, Sociology of Sport Journal

I have accepted the Editorship of the Sociology Sport Journal with great enthusiasm and optimism. I owe a great deal to our past Editor, Pirkko Markula, for her incredible dedication to and vision for an SSJ that matters. Pirkko, her Associate Editor team (Richard Pringle and Michael Giardina), Editorial Board members, and the production staff are due heartfelt congratulations from all in the sociology of sport community for their collectively reflexive and thoughtful stewardship of our journal. I am very pleased that Michael Giardina has agreed to extend his stay as Associate Editor on my new Editorial team. I am equally happy that Kim Schimmel has joined the ranks as an Associate Editor. Kim and Michael are simply first-rate colleagues, thinkers, and global ambassadors for the sociology of sport. Over the next three years, we hope to help direct the SSJ to new horizons while remembering and celebrating our community’s rich sociological past.

There can be no doubt that the sociology of sport finds itself at a crossroads. In North America and elsewhere, the sociology of sport faces aggressive criticism as an outdated, decorative sub-sociological discipline; a research field producing tremendous critical inquiry, but little theoretical innovation or translatability beyond our disparate research acts. Further still, the sociology of sport struggles to receive legitimation from, and foster important connections with, the parent discipline. It battles to retain its future within increasingly kinesiological or sports-science dominated Faculties, and its experts are frequently ignored in burgeoning public debates about physical cultural politics and policies. Nevertheless, research on and theorizing about the deep and meaningful connection between physical cultures (i.e., sport, physical activity, leisure, play, dance, etc.) and the structures of social life has never been more vibrant. But if the sociology of sport is to remain relevant (and, indeed, discover new relevance) within academic and public spaces, it must undoubtedly change in both intended and unintended manners over the years to come. We must become more conscious, tactical, and theoretically driven public sociologists of sport who strive to enlighten the social and cultural grounds upon which people “play” in a thousand and one forms. To this end, the imperative for our journal to be the leading proponent of a reinvigorated and socially active sociology of sport must be underlined and punctuated wherever and whenever possible. We should venture with great
vigor and enthusiasm into new substantive areas, theoretical dialogues, academic spaces, and public debates. We must be relentless in efforts to draw new voices into sociology of sport practices and discourses and to reach out, with our minds, voices and hands, into uncharted trans/interdisciplinary spaces as impassioned advocates for the sociology of sport.

Michael Atkinson
Editor, Sociology of Sport Journal