

THE DAILY DIFFERENCE

WHERE **SPORT** MAKES HEADLINES

UNIVERSITY of
STIRLING



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COMMONWEALTH GAMES
GLASGOW 2026

OFFICIAL UNIVERSITY PARTNER



ALL IN
GLASGOW 2026



Ben Higson, Head Performance Swim Coach at the University, and swimmer Angharad Evans will represent Scotland at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow.

UNIVERSITY OF STIRLING AT COMMONWEALTH GAMES 2026

STIRLING SET FOR RECORD GAMES

- > 20 ATHLETES CONFIRMED FOR GLASGOW 2026
- > OFFICIAL UNIVERSITY PARTNER OF TEAM SCOTLAND

A record number of athletes from the University of Stirling – Scotland's University for Sporting Excellence – are set to compete at this summer's Commonwealth Games in Glasgow. Seventeen swimmers, two gymnasts, a wheelchair basketball player and two coaches from the University have already been selected, matching the record representation of 20 Stirling athletes at the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games. With further selections still to be announced in the coming weeks, that milestone could yet be surpassed. It comes as the University of Stirling was confirmed as Team Scotland's Official University Partner for the Games – further cementing the close working relationship between the two organisations. In Glasgow, Stirling athletes will make up almost half of the Team Scotland swim squad. They include Duncan Scott OBE – Scotland's most decorated Olympian – and record-breaking breaststroke specialist Angharad Evans.

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SCOTLAND'S UNIVERSITY
FOR SPORTING EXCELLENCE

WHAT'S INSIDE:

HYROX SIM IS HUGE SUCCESS

Hundreds descend on campus
for major fitness event



STIRLING GRADUATE SIGNS FOR ARSENAL

Graduates secure top jobs in sport



AI-POWERED TECH HELPS ATHLETES FIND THEIR EDGE

Advanced camera system is
delivering results in the pool



SPORTS COURSES · WORLD-LEADING RESEARCH · HIGH-PERFORMANCE ATHLETES · COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION



Cutting-edge simulator tees up golf success

A new state-of-the-art indoor golf studio at the University of Stirling is enabling golf scholars to use data-driven insights to perfect their game.

Powered by Trackman, the global leader in ball flight analysis and performance tracking technology, the simulator allows Stirling golfers to play the best courses in the world from the University campus, while providing detailed analysis of their technique.

Funded through a grant from the Macleod Foundation, the Performance Golf Studio further enhances the facilities at the on-campus Golf Pavilion.

Dean Robertson, Head of Golf at the University, said: "The University of Stirling is one of the top destinations for golf scholars in the UK – with many of our alumni going on to compete in the professional game – such as Catriona Matthew OBE, Richie Ramsay and Graeme Robertson.

"Our Performance Golf Studio further elevates the excellent facilities we have here at Scotland's University for Sporting Excellence and complements our existing coaching methods, delivered here at Stirling and out on course.

"The technology allows our golfers to realistically simulate playing on some of the best courses in the world, while using data-driven insights to hone their technique."

Golf Auction: play the world's best courses

Golf fans will have the chance to secure a round at some of the world's most prestigious courses when the University's Golf Auction returns in 2026.

Past editions of the annual auction have included opportunities to play St Andrews, Gleneagles, Royal Portrush, Turnberry and Sunningdale, as well as highly exclusive courses in the United States, such as Oakmont, Indian Creek and Winged Foot.

Proceeds from the auction support the coveted high-performance golf programme at Scotland's University for Sporting Excellence – regarded as one of the most attractive destinations for student golfers in Europe.

Funds raised from previous auctions have enabled Stirling students to benefit from fantastic training and competition opportunities, in turn supporting their sporting and academic ambitions.

Don't miss the chance to book a round of a lifetime, all while supporting the next generation of golf stars. Sign up to hear about our 2026 golf auction: stir.ac.uk/aib



OPTIMISING ELITE SWIMMING PERFORMANCE

Olympic swimmers are benefiting from a major new research collaboration which deploys pioneering predictive analytics, machine learning, and applied sports science to enhance performance outcomes.

Delivered as part of an exciting partnership between the University and Aquatics GB, sports researchers are working with Stirling's elite swimmers and their coaches to optimise performance – bolstering medal hopes on the world stage.

The four-year study is led by former competitive swimmer Adham Sanoufi, who is now embedded at the National Swimming Academy at Stirling – the training base of some of the UK's top swim talent, including Olympic champions Duncan Scott, Tom Dean, Jack McMillan and Freya Anderson.

Adham is providing real-time, data-driven insights at poolside – identifying potential performance-enhancing gains; incredibly important in a sport where medals are frequently won by the slimmest of margins.

As part of his PhD, Adham is analysing technique, timing, and trends, enabled by SwimTrack technology – a bespoke, 10-camera swimming analysis system developed by Aquatics GB, the UK Sports Institute and Sheffield Hallam University.

This applied work is complemented by parallel research focused on identifying which data sets best predict performance, and he also aims to create an innovative online platform for swimmers and coaches, to support training and performance.

Adham, a Physiology and Sport Science graduate, who also has a postgraduate degree in Sport and Exercise Science and Medicine, said: "I'm creating a machine learning predictive model to identify which data sets are the strongest predictors of performance – and the goal is to develop a coach-assistance tool that can project performance or flag issues. Ultimately, I want to integrate data from strength and conditioning,

physiology, wellness, and training load into one model that helps coaches make better decisions."

Adham's insights have been welcomed by High-Performance Swim Coach Bradley Hay, who said: "The impact so far has been great. Adham's looking at patterns, trends, timings and using the camera system and computing tools for a deeper dive than we've ever had before.

"From there, it's our job to decide how those insights can steer improvements – whether mechanical, timing-related, or technical aspects like the underwater phase of the kick, for example."

The new research comes as University of Stirling swimmers enter an exciting year – with a home Commonwealth Games, and preparations for the 2028 Olympics ramping up.

Cathy Gallagher, Executive Director of Sport at the University, said: "Here at Scotland's University for Sporting Excellence, we are always innovating and looking for new ways to give our athletes the best chance to compete and succeed on the international stage. We are proud to launch this new research project and are delighted to have Adham on board."

Olly Logan, Head of Research and Innovation at Aquatics GB, said: "This showcases yet another strong example of the collaboration that exists between Stirling and Aquatics GB in our shared ambition to improve upon the existing success that has come from the centre.

"We hope to use this research, around the areas of biomechanics and data science, to help the high-performance programme to improve performances, whilst also developing research that has application across the wider Aquatics GB World Class Programme."

FROM STIRLING TO ARSENAL



When Adi Sankolli packed his bags for Scotland, he wasn't just chasing a degree – he was pursuing a future in football. The MSc Sport Management graduate from India chose the University of Stirling for one big reason: its reputation as Scotland's University for Sporting Excellence. The UK Post Study Work Visa, which allows international graduates to stay in the UK for two years, was also a significant factor in his decision.

Once on campus, Adi quickly discovered that Stirling wasn't just a place to study sport – it was a place to live it. With support from the University, he secured an internship at local football club Stirling Albion and later stepped into the voluntary role of Women's Football Development Officer at the club. It was hands on, meaningful work, and exactly the kind of experience he needed to break into the industry.

That internship turned out to be the launchpad for something much bigger. After graduating, Adi landed his dream job as a Football Development Coach at Premier League giants Arsenal. Now, he delivers coaching sessions to Arsenal's community and academy partners around the world, helping grow the club's global presence. For him, the best part of the job is simple: connecting cultures through football.

Adi credits Stirling for opening the right doors at the right time. The course connected him with industry professionals, the scholarship and support systems helped him settle into life in Scotland, and the visa gave him the opportunity to build his career after graduation.

He said: "I found my niche through the University of Stirling and was connected with the appropriate individuals to steer me in the right direction."

Looking back, he sees his time at Stirling as an investment – one that paid off in the form of a career he once dreamed about. His story is a reminder that the right environment can make all the difference.

"I found my niche through the University of Stirling and I was connected with the appropriate individuals to steer me in the right direction."

ADI SANKOLLI, MSc SPORT MANAGEMENT GRADUATE



UNIVERSITY of STIRLING SPORT

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ISB 2024

BE THE DIFFERENCE



Students (left to right): Emily Barnard, Jessica Shultz, Alex Grant and Kirsten Finnie.

GLASGOW 2026 WORK EXPERIENCE VITAL FOR STUDENTS

Final-year sports students will bolster their career prospects with placements at this summer's Commonwealth Games, thanks to an initiative designed to bridge the gap between study and working life.

With experiential learning at its heart, an innovative placement module embeds students in sports organisations, allowing them to apply their knowledge and skills, build confidence and gain first hand experience of working in a sports environment.

A partnership has been developed between the University and the Glasgow 2026 organisers to enable some of those on the module to secure placements at the Commonwealth Games; providing not only experience of the sports industry but large-scale event planning too.

The link with the Campus to Commonwealth programme was established by Craig McIntyre, Lecturer in Sport Management, whose career spans academia and the delivery of major sporting events.

He said: "Having contributed to several major sporting events, I am passionate about inspiring our students to engage in this dynamic environment.

We recognise the importance of bridging the gap between academia and industry, and offering our students the opportunity to undertake placements as part of their course – providing valuable experience while enhancing their employability and professional networks."

The programme will see students embark on 10-week placements across a variety of functional areas at Glasgow 2026. Following their placement, many students will continue to support Games delivery having already secured paid employment with the organisers.

For students, the impact is already clear. Emily Barnard, a BA (Hons) Sport Business Management student, said the placement has given her a crucial edge.

"Going straight out into the world of work can be daunting but this placement has allowed me to build my teamwork, communication and time management skills while also giving me the perfect opportunity to network and gain valuable

advice from professionals that work in the industry," she said.

"By developing these transferable skills, my employability has been enhanced as well as my ambitions of working within the sport events industry in the future."

Kirsten Finnie, studying a BA (Hons) Sport Development and Coaching, said the key to getting the most out of a placement is simple: say yes.

"My advice to students who are going to undertake a placement would be... if someone says, do you want to come and sit in on this meeting, or do you want to come along to this venue tour, just say yes.

"You won't regret it and it's going to give you so much experience. My placement has given me invaluable insight into the world of sporting events and the opportunities that this industry can give you."

The Campus to Commonwealth programme is part of Glasgow 2026's All In campaign – a Scotland-wide movement which invites communities, universities,

schools, sports clubs, cultural organisations and local businesses to play their part in the Games.

As the countdown to the Games continues, Stirling students aren't just watching from the sidelines – they're helping shape the event, while gaining career-defining experience that will stay with them long after the final medal is awarded in Glasgow.

"We recognise the importance of bridging the gap between academia and industry."

CRAIG MCINTYRE, LECTURER IN SPORT MANAGEMENT



“The preservation and promotion of Scotland’s sporting heritage is one of the key activities of the University Archives.”

KARL MAGEE, ARCHIVIST AT UNIVERSITY OF STIRLING

Stirling leads the way in preserving Scotland’s sporting heritage

The University Archives preserves and promotes Scotland’s sporting heritage through the development and care of our sporting collections, and the provision of advice and support to sporting clubs and organisations across the country.

At the core of our sporting heritage collections sits the Commonwealth Games Scotland Archive which preserves a detailed record of almost a century of international sporting competition.

In 2014, Professor Richard Haynes, and University of Stirling Archivist, Karl Magee, researched and curated an exhibition called *Hosts and Champions* which was displayed in Glasgow as part of the Culture 2014 programme which accompanied the Commonwealth Games.

Professor Haynes said: “We wanted local communities to enjoy and reminisce on some of Scotland’s great sporting achievements at the Games, as both hosts and champions.”

Hosts and Champions was later developed and expanded into a touring exhibition which brought the story of Scotland’s contribution to the Commonwealth Games to communities across Scotland.

The University Archives continues to highlight Team Scotland’s long and proud history of sporting achievement – and will create a new archive display at Scotland House during the Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games.

And Professor Haynes continues to research Scotland’s sporting heritage as co-ordinator of the Sport and Culture Research Group (SCRG), which boasts partnerships with dozens of organisations, including Commonwealth Games Scotland, the Scottish Football Museum, the Scottish Football Supporters Association, the National Library of Scotland, the National

Galleries Scotland, the National Museum of Scotland and The Bill McLaren Foundation.

Karl Magee, Archivist at the University of Stirling, who is an active member of the SCRG, said: “The preservation and promotion of Scotland’s sporting heritage is one of the key activities of the University Archives, supporting Stirling’s place as Scotland’s University for Sporting Excellence.”

A separate exhibition, *The Friendly Games*, created by students on the Exhibition Interpretation and Design course, is displayed in the University Library, highlighting the emotions that shape the Commonwealth Games and how sport has become a place for unity, representation and shared experiences.

Stirling on track for record Commonwealth Games

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

They will be joined on the team by Ollie Carter, Evie Davis, Sam Downie, Dean Fearn, Lucy Grieve, Lucy Hope, Keanna MacInnes, Holly McGill, Katie Shanahan and George Smith. Stirling student Evan Jones, who trains in Manchester, is also on the team.

Stirling swimming coaches Ben Higson and Bradley Hay have also been selected to lead Team Scotland. In addition, Olympic champions Tom Dean, Freya Anderson (both England) and Jack McMillan (Northern Ireland) will represent their respective countries, as will Peter Allen (Isle of Man).

Artistic gymnasts Cameron Lynn and Crystelle Lake, and wheelchair basketball player Shayne Humphries, have also been selected to represent Team Scotland.

Crystelle, who is in the fourth year of her Sport Development and Coaching degree, will be making her Team Scotland debut in Glasgow, having overcome the disappointment of missing the Birmingham Games, which she had been nominated for, due to injury.

She said: “I’m incredibly proud and grateful for the opportunity to represent Scotland in Glasgow. To come back and have the chance to compete on home soil, in front of a Scottish crowd, makes it even more special.”

Trinidad and Tobago judoka Gabriella Wood is also hopeful of sealing a spot at the

Games. Last year, she met King Charles as she helped launch the Commonwealth Sport King’s Baton Relay. Speaking at the time, she said: “Being part of this historic moment fills me with immense pride – not just as an athlete, but as a representative of my University, my sport, and my country.”

David Bond, Director of Performance Sport at the University, said: “We are shaping up for an incredible summer of sport here at the University of Stirling. We are excited to see what our athletes can achieve and wish them all the best for Glasgow 2026.”



Artistic gymnasts Cameron Lynn and Crystelle Lake.



Judoka Gabriella Wood.



Gold medal-winning swimmers Jack McMillan (left) and Duncan Scott.



Triathletes (left to right): Tom Williamson, Millie Breese and Alex Robin.

National Triathlon Centre delivering medals on world stage

The National Triathlon Centre at the University of Stirling nurtures and develops leading talent in the sport – and its athletes consistently medal on the international stage.

Triathlon scholars Alex Robin and Millie Breese won gold medals with Great Britain at the 2025 World Championships in Wollongong, Australia. The duo – along with teammates Bethany Cook and Oliver Conway – finished ahead of the Netherlands in the Mixed Under-23 Junior Relay. Alex, who is studying a BSc Economics, also won an individual silver in the Junior event.

The success gave Alex a springboard heading into 2026 – where he secured a spot at the World Triathlon Cup in Haikou, China. Putting in an impressive performance at his first World Cup event,

Alex finished in 12th place – just 37 seconds behind the race winner.

In other recent successes, Millie was crowned champion in the third event on the British Super Series calendar, Isla Hedley won the Under-23 category of the World Triathlon Cross Championships and took bronze in the XTERRA European Championship, and Tom Williamson secured his first ever podium finish in the World Paratriathlon Series – taking silver in Italy.

The National Triathlon Centre, led by former triathlete and alumnus Marc Austin, has been functioning since 2000 and was relaunched in March 2023 as a partnership between Stirling – Scotland's University for Sporting Excellence, British Triathlon and Triathlon Scotland.

WELCOME TO THE MEDAL FACTORY

With its athletes regularly medalling on the international stage, leadership from highly respected coaches and support staff, and state-of-the-art facilities, the University's high-performance swim programme is regarded as one of the best in the world.

Olympic gold medallists and world champions – including Duncan Scott, Tom Dean and Jack McMillan – are among the talented contingent based at the National Swimming Academy under the tutelage of coaches Ben Higson and Bradley Hay.

After returning from the Olympics in Paris with two gold and a silver medal, Stirling swimmers have enjoyed a sustained period of success.

At the 2025 World Aquatics Championships in Singapore, Duncan, Jack and Tom won gold in the Men's 4x200m Freestyle Relay, alongside Matthew Richards, James Guy and Evan Jones. The group later received the Swimming Athlete of the Year accolade at the Aquatics GB Awards, where Ben Higson was also crowned Swimming Coach of the Year.

Just a few months later, Stirling's medal collection continued to swell with athletes winning two golds and three silvers at the European Aquatics Short Course Championships, before completing a stunning 28-medal haul at the British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS) Long Course Championships in early 2026.

And as Commonwealth Games preparations ramp up ahead of an exciting

summer of sport, Stirling's swimmers put in top performances at the 2026 Aquatics GB Championships, returning with 18 medals – eight golds, four silvers and six bronzes.

Duncan, Angharad Evans and Keanna MacInnes all won two gold medals each, while there was one each for Katie Shanahan and Sam Downie. Notably, Angharad made history as she broke two British records as she stormed to the 100m and 200m Breaststroke titles and Keanna set a new Scottish record in the 100m Butterfly.

University of Stirling Director of Performance Sport, David Bond said: "It's been another hugely successful Aquatics GB Championships with our athletes putting in some fantastic performances across the board.

"Ben Higson and the team have done a superb job preparing the group and the results are a reflection of the quality and detail of their coaching and how it brings the best out of our athletes.

"With arguably our strongest ever squad of swimmers, the programme continues to go from strength to strength and we're really excited to see what they can achieve at the Commonwealth Games and European Championships in the summer."



Lorna McClymont

A Stirling foundation for a bright future in golf

As one of Europe's leading university golf programmes, University of Stirling athletes enjoy regular success nationally and internationally and go on to compete at the highest level of the game.

Catriona Matthew OBE, Richie Ramsay and Graeme Robertson are among the great and the good to emerge from the long-established high-performance programme at Stirling, which has produced 10 Curtis Cup players, four Walker Cup players and multiple amateur champions and professional tour winners. Notably, more than 100 of the University's golf scholars have gone on to represent their nation.

Lorna McClymont is at the vanguard of recent success stories. Having turned down opportunities to relocate to a training base in the United States in favour of a scholarship at Stirling, Lorna has recently turned professional. Crediting the University's support and the world-class coaching delivered by Head of Golf Dean Robertson, Lorna capped her time at Stirling by securing a spot on the professional Ladies European Tour, where she has already secured a top 10 finish in an LET event during her first season.

In the past year, Stirling golfers have enjoyed success at the top of the amateur game too. Among those is Ross Laird, who won the prestigious Arnold Palmer Cup – a Ryder Cup-style team competition where the best international amateur golfers take on their American counterparts. Ross competed for Team International in 2025, beating the United States 35-25 at the exclusive Congaree Golf Club in South Carolina. Stirling's George Cannon will compete at the 2026 Arnold Palmer Cup.

Grace Bowen also enjoyed a stunning victory at the Helen Holm Scottish Women's Open Championship 2026 at Royal Troon – and, in doing so, secured an invite to a Ladies European Tour event.



Dean Robertson

Head of Golf to lead GB and Ireland into Walker Cup

University of Stirling Head of Golf, Dean Robertson, will lead Great Britain and Ireland (GB&I) into this year's Walker Cup contest against the United States, from 5-6 September.

Dean was reappointed Captain of GB&I after taking charge of the team for the first time at the 50th edition of the Walker Cup, held at Cypress Point Club in California in 2025.

GB&I eventually lost to their American counterparts, however, Dean's meticulous work behind the scenes, along with the strong rapport developed with the players, saw him secure his second stint as Captain at Lahinch Golf Club, County Clare, Ireland. This year's event takes place 5-6 September.

Dean, who has led the high-performance golf programme at the University since 2010, said: "I am proud to accept the honour of captaining Great Britain and Ireland again in the Walker Cup.

"Leading a talented group of players at Cypress Point was a huge privilege and I am committed to captaining the team with drive and determination over the iconic links of Lahinch. The focus will be to build on our previous performance with the goal of winning back the Walker Cup."

Organised by the R&A and the United States Golf Association, the Walker Cup began in 1922. Selection to play in the historic match is often regarded as the highlight of an amateur's career – many of whom go on to turn professional. Tiger Woods, Rory McIlroy, Phil Mickleson and Dustin Johnson are among the top professionals to have played in the competition.

As an amateur, Dean won the Scottish Youths Amateur Open Championship in 1991, the Scottish Amateur Stroke Play Championship in 1992, and the Scottish Amateur Championship in 1993 and he competed at the 1993 Walker Cup.

As a professional, Dean won the European Tour's Italian Open in 1999 and the Scottish PGA Championship in 2006. He also competed in The Open Championship on four occasions.

Stirling skier selected as Paralympics GB flagbearer

Three-times Winter Paralympian Scott Meenagh was recognised for his exceptional contribution to British Para Nordic skiing as he was selected as Team GB flagbearer at Milano Cortina 2026.

The 36-year-old – who graduated from the University of Stirling in 2025 – was chosen to carry the Union Flag at the opening ceremony of his third and final Paralympic Games.

It is just recognition for Scott – a former British Army soldier who took up para sports after losing both legs while serving in Afghanistan at the age of 21.

An inspiration to his fellow athletes and students alike, Scott competed in rowing at an international level – captaining the British Army at the Invictus Games – before taking up Para Nordic skiing. He became the first Brit to feature at a Winter Paralympics in the sport and built the national governing body himself – all while completing a BA (Hons) History.

During his time at the University, the father-of-two has achieved top 10 finishes in World Cup events, including a bronze medal in the Biathlon Pursuit in Sweden, finishing third in the standings overall.

He has also been an important advocate in promoting alternative routes into higher education, featuring in national campaigns.

Reflecting on his selection as flagbearer, Scott said: "It's remarkable. I try really hard every day to represent my sport, myself and my country in the best way I can; I try to do that in my behaviours and express that in my performance, so now to have that little bit of recognition – I'm a bit speechless. I'm so excited now to be on the biggest stage and to go out there and represent my sport."

"I try really hard every day to represent my sport, myself and my country in the best way I can."

SCOTT MEENAGH, PARA NORDIC SKIER

Graduate curlers win silver at Winter Olympics



Bobby Lammie

Two graduate sports scholars from the University of Stirling won silver medals at the Winter Olympics in Italy.

Curlers Bobby Lammie and Kyle Waddell were part of the Team GB rink that reached the final of the men's competition at Milano Cortina 2026. They competed alongside Bruce Mouat, Hammy McMillan and Grant Hardie. Despite their brilliant performance on the ice, they were narrowly edged out 9-6 by Canada and returned home with silver medals.

Bobby, who graduated with a BSc (Hons) Sport and Exercise Science, and Kyle, a graduate in MSc Sports Coaching, were both scholars at Stirling and, along with their Team GB teammates, continue to use the University as a training base today.

Prior to the Games, the curlers were visited in Stirling by the Duke and Duchess of Rothesay.

At this year's Winter Olympics, the University was also represented by former scholars Sophie Jackson and Hugh Nibloe in curling and Scott Meenagh in para-Nordic skiing. Honorary graduate Eve Muirhead OBE was selected as Team GB's Chef de Mission.



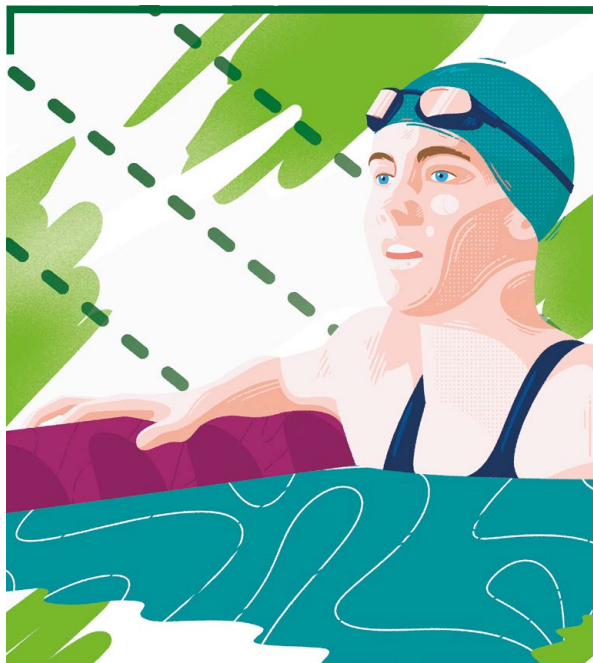
Scott Meenagh

ONCE TEAM STIRLING, ALWAYS TEAM STIRLING

From record-breaking athletes to influential leaders in sport, our university has honoured those whose impact extends far beyond competition. Their achievements, and their connection to the University, continue to inspire future generations.



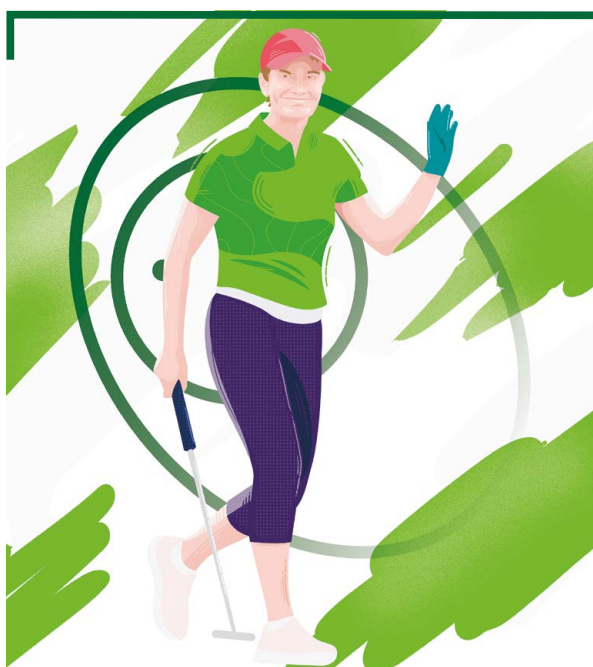
ALAN SHEARER, FOOTBALL
Premier League Record Goalscorer
Honorary Graduate



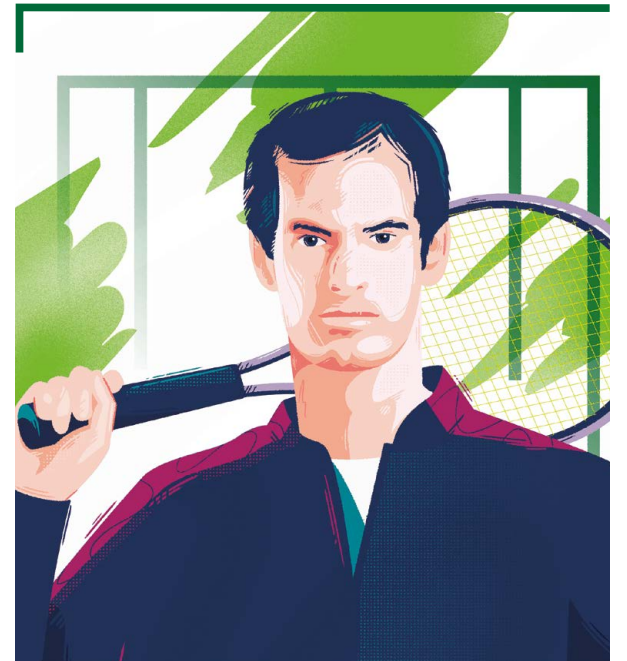
KATHLEEN DAWSON, SWIMMING
Olympic and European Championship Gold Medallist
Alumna



LILIAN THURAM, FOOTBALL
Fifa World Cup, European Championship and 3 x SERIE A Titles
Honorary Graduate



CATRIONA MATTHEW, GOLF
LPGA Tour, Ladies European Tour, Women's British Open
and Solheim Cup Winner
Alumna and Honorary Graduate



SIR ANDY MURRAY, TENNIS
US Open, Olympic and Wimbledon Champion
Honorary Graduate



EVE MUIRHEAD, CURLING
Olympic, World Championship, European Championship
and World Junior Championship Gold Medallist
Honorary Graduate



ROSS MURDOCH, SWIMMING
Commonwealth, World Championship and
European Championship Medallist
Alumnus



Golf memories shared in intergenerational project

Academics and students are delivering intergenerational golf sessions using the University's state-of-the-art Performance Golf Studio.

Supported by the University's Head of Golf, Dean Robertson, the research team is using the immersive simulator – powered by Trackman – to encourage senior golfers to share memories of playing landmark courses, such as the Old Course in St Andrews.

As well as involving local golfers, the project has participants from Florida, who join sessions remotely.

Professor Richard Haynes, who is leading the study, said: "The aim of this project is to collaborate with elite student golfers and golf reminiscence groups in the UK and US to explore the value and meaning of golfing places. It will help us understand how memories in golf are retrieved and shared across generations."

The team believes the initiative has the potential for global reach. The project is funded by the University's Centre for the Sciences of Place and Memory.

From first dips to Olympic dreams

The University is renowned for driving Olympians towards their dreams in the pool – but it's also a place where all swimmers are supported to master the vital life skill.

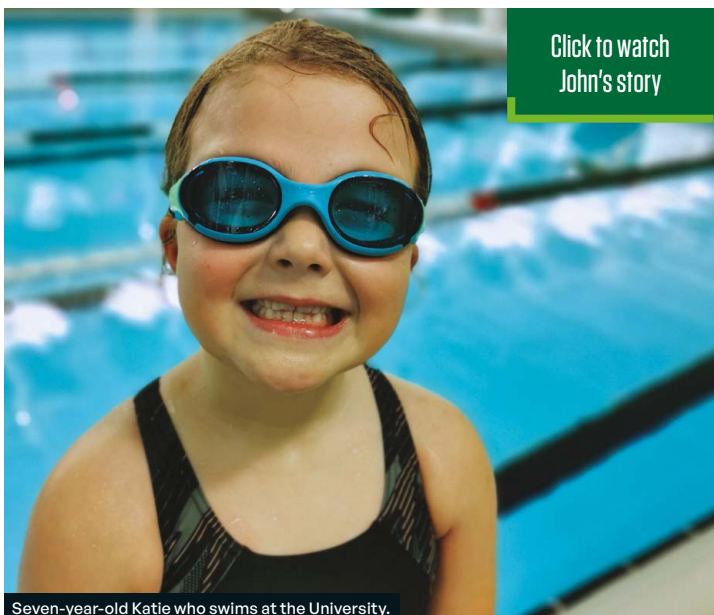
With 600 swimmers – aged from three to 75 – on its weekly Learn to Swim programme, Stirling is the perfect environment for people of all abilities to progress in the pool.

More than 5,700 lessons take place every year – spanning non-swimmers to advanced swimmers and everyone in between – and are delivered by coaches who are also Stirling students.

John, 72, a member of the adult beginners class, said: "I'd been a poor swimmer for a long time and I felt I had to do something about it."

"Coming to a university swimming facility was the best opportunity I had to improve my swimming. This place is incredibly professional, and I appreciate that is because they're trying to develop elite athletes but they're also developing beginners like me."

Seven-year-old Katie also swims at the University. She said: "I love it here, the teachers are friendly and the classes are really fun."



Click to watch
John's story

Seven-year-old Katie who swims at the University.



HUNDREDS TURN OUT FOR MAJOR HYROX SIM

Demonstrating strength, endurance and mental fortitude, hundreds of participants and spectators descended on the University for its sold-out Hyrox simulation event.

Over the past four years, Hyrox – which combines both running and functional workout stations – has exploded into the world's largest mass-participation fitness race. And, as Scotland's University for Sporting Excellence, Stirling has played a key role in its growth across the central belt of Scotland.

Stirling's popular Hyrox simulation recently took place at the state-of-the-art Sports Centre – acting as a key warm up event for a major competition which took place at the Scottish Event Campus in Glasgow.

More than 230 athletes and fitness enthusiasts from across the UK took part in the gruelling challenge on campus – with the event also attracting hundreds of spectators. Designed to replicate the globally popular Hyrox format, it saw participants complete eight one kilometre runs interspersed with eight different functional workout stations. From sled pushes and rows to burpees and wall balls, the two-day event tested athletes of all levels in an inclusive and supportive environment.

Among the competitors was Gary Ralston, a former national newspaper journalist and member of the University's Hyrox training club.

Supported by the University and fellow club members, Gary, who is going through his own personal cancer journey, used the event as part of a broader

charity challenge which has raised a staggering £46,000 for a local Stirlingshire hospice.

Gary's story reflects the broader attraction of the event beyond fitness, with organisers praising the community aspect. "It's not just about competition," they said. "It's about community, personal goals, and supporting meaningful causes."

A notable feature of this year's event was a new partnership with long-established, respected local business Graham's The Family Dairy. Graham's ensured competitors were refuelled with their popular Protein range in their post-session recovery.

Cathy Gallagher, Executive Director of Sport at Stirling, welcomed the new partnership. She said: "Having Graham's The Family Dairy on board adds real value for our participants. It's important to us that we support local businesses while also enhancing the experience for everyone taking part."

The next Hyrox simulation dates have been confirmed for Saturday 29 and Sunday 30 August 2026, and, given the rapid sell-out of the latest edition, participants are encouraged to register early to secure their place. As interest in functional fitness continues to rise, the University event is quickly establishing itself as a key fixture in the sporting calendar.

Book today at stir.ac.uk/hyroxsim



COMMUNITY MEMBERSHIPS

- Gym
- Swim
- Fitness classes
- Personalised support

JOIN US TODAY:
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BE THE DIFFERENCE



The race which began with a £1 bet

It all started with a simple bet. Back in 1971, a lecturer put down a £1 wager that no one could run from campus to the summit of the imposing Dumyat hill, overlooking campus, and back in under an hour. Just days later, the challenge was accomplished with three

minutes to spare – and a Stirling tradition was born.

Fast-forward five decades, and the University's annual Dumyat Hill Race has cemented its reputation as a cornerstone of Scotland's hill running calendar.

Each year, around 450 competitors take on the challenging 8km route. Runners work their way across a demanding 418-metre ascent and descent over the rough and rocky terrain of the iconic hill. The event regularly sells out, drawing runners of all abilities – from elite athletes chasing course records to first-time participants simply embracing the challenge.

But Dumyat is more than just a race – it's a celebration of community. Runners come together every May to create an

atmosphere that blends competition with camaraderie. For many, it has become an annual tradition – an alumni touchpoint as much as a sporting event.

"Decades after it was established, the Dumyat Hill Race continues to bring together students, staff, alumni, athletes and the wider community with the core message of health and wellbeing at its heart," said Cathy Gallagher, Executive Director of Sport at Stirling.

"We are proud to have reached our 50th anniversary – and look forward to another 50 years of success."

From a £1 bet to a 50-year legacy, the Dumyat Hill Race is proof that at Stirling, great sporting stories don't just happen. They endure.

"The Dumyat Hill Race continues to bring together students, staff, alumni, athletes and the wider community with the core message of health and wellbeing at its heart."

CATHY GALLAGHER,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF SPORT

Mo power: Stirling students raise £52,000 for men's health



When sport, hard work and community collide at the University of Stirling, special things happen – as was illustrated by a record-breaking fundraising effort by big-hearted students during the Movember 2025 campaign. Smashing their £40,000 target, the students secured platinum status with Stirling ranked first in Scotland and ninth in the UK in the Big Moustache on Campus Challenge.

The University's ethos is to make a difference – and this was truly embodied by almost 800 students from 75 sports clubs and societies, who raised an astonishing £52,264 as part of the global charity effort.

Movember works to improve men's wellbeing by tackling mental health and suicide prevention, prostate cancer and testicular cancer. Funds raised through Movember support research and programmes designed to improve how men are reached, supported and treated, helping them live happier, healthier, longer lives.

During the campaign, a packed calendar of student-led events brought the campus community together. Behind the scenes,

a dedicated committee – including student ambassadors Patrick Chung and Archie MacColl-Smith – worked across clubs and societies to drive momentum and participation.

"Working alongside Archie and the committee has been fantastic, making this record-breaking year possible. Movember truly united our community at Stirling," Patrick said.

That sense of shared purpose was echoed across campus, with strong support from staff and student leaders helping teams to push beyond expectations.

"Thank you to everyone who supported us," Archie added. "While changing men's health won't happen overnight, movements like this make a real difference."

Sports Union President Laura Shaw praised the collective effort, noting the strong sense of community and the support from staff in helping teams achieve their goals.

Movember at Stirling is a powerful example of what happens when sport, community and cause come together – creating impact far beyond campus.

SHAPING THE FUTURE OF SPORT THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

The University of Stirling is Scotland's University for Sporting Excellence – a prestigious designation from the Scottish Government which recognises our unrivalled contribution to sports performance, recreational sport, research and education.

Through the powerful and inspirational combination of sport, research and education, the University is delivering medals on the world stage, improving the health and wellbeing of the nation, and producing the next generation of leaders in sport.

This work is underpinned by the

strength of the impactful partnerships the University holds across Scottish and UK sport.

Partners include Scottish Swimming, Aquatics GB, Triathlon Scotland, Tennis Scotland, the Lawn Tennis Association, Scottish Athletics, Commonwealth Games Scotland, Stirling County Rugby Club and The Mackay Clinic.

These partnerships strengthen our leadership in performance sport, present new opportunities for our researchers, and provide our students and staff with access to industry experts, networking opportunities and practical experiences.

NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS BASED ON CAMPUS



Scottish
Swimming

NATIONAL SWIMMING ACADEMY



TRIATHLON
SCOTLAND

NATIONAL TRIATHLON CENTRE



Tennis
SCOTLAND

NATIONAL TENNIS CENTRE



commonwealth
games
SCOTLAND



sports
scotland
institute of sport

high performance expertise

Stirling colleagues start the 2026 Race for Life after cancer journey

Two inspirational staff members diagnosed with breast cancer within months of each other launched Race for Life on campus.

Professor Jayne Donaldson and Cathy Gallagher, both senior leaders in sport, health and wellbeing at the University, leaned on each other for support during treatment for the disease. Now cancer free, the pair were official starters of the 2026 Cancer Research UK's Race for Life Stirling, which set off from the University's Sports Centre.

Jayne, Deputy Principal (Health and Wellbeing) and Executive Dean of the Faculty of Health, Sport and Society, and Cathy, Executive Director of Sport, were both diagnosed in 2024.

Cathy said: "Cancer is indiscriminate. This was a journey we each had to go on, and I won't pretend it's been easy. But we're

pragmatic and we focused on getting the best treatment to help us recover. We were able to be there for each other, and the University has been phenomenal, helping us to get back to jobs which we love."

Jayne, who was diagnosed after a routine mammogram, was clear on the message she wants people to hear. She said: "Listen to the medical, nursing and radiography staff and take things one step at a time."

"It will take a while to build back your energy levels after treatment, but you will get there. Early detection of cancer is key. A routine mammogram saved my life. If you are invited to have a mammogram, please consider going to the appointment."

The Race for Life raises millions for life-saving research every year, and events are open to all ages and abilities.



Get your three stripes on: strengthening our sporting identity



The University of Stirling has unveiled a new Adidas kit range, creating a consistent look across its sporting community and further strengthening its identity as Scotland's University for Sporting Excellence.

The collection has been introduced for sports staff, high-performance athletes, sports club members, and the School of Sport, with a wider range also available to students, staff, and the local community.

More than just a new kit, the range helps bring the Stirling Sport community together under a shared identity, fostering a sense of pride, belonging, and team spirit.

Debra Crighton, Business Development Manager at University of Stirling Sport, said: "The new kit has provided a fantastic opportunity to strengthen our sporting identity and create a greater sense of connection across our community. Having everyone represented in the same distinctive range helps build pride in being part of Stirling Sport and reinforces our shared commitment to excellence."

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“There’s some really exciting things you can do, particularly within women’s sport... we’re riding this wave of increased interest to really build something special.”

JAMES SWANSON, SENIOR MARKETING MANAGER, WOMEN’S RUGBY WORLD CUP STIRLING GRADUATE

CAMPUS TO WORLD CUP: STIRLING GRADUATE AT HEART OF WOMEN’S RUGBY

When James Swanson walked across the University of Stirling campus as a Marketing undergraduate, he already knew he wanted a career that blended creativity with purpose. What he didn’t yet know was that this path would eventually lead him to one of the biggest sporting events on the planet: the Women’s Rugby World Cup 2025.

Today, James is the tournament’s Senior Marketing Manager, helping steer the messaging, momentum and international reach of what was the biggest Women’s Rugby World Cup to date. It’s a role that sits at the crossroads of his passions: sport, equality, inclusion and global scale marketing. And for James, that combination is exactly where he feels most at home.

James describes his job as a mix of strategy, creativity and momentum building. Women’s sport, he says, is in a moment of extraordinary growth, and being part of that surge is something he finds exciting.

He said: “There’s some really exciting things you can do, particularly within women’s sport. We’re riding this wave of increased interest to build something special.”

His journey to this point has been anything but linear. Since graduating in 2014 with a BA (Hons) Marketing, James has worked across a wide range of roles in sport and entertainment – experiences he calls “a privilege” for the variety and perspective they’ve given him. But the thread running through all of them has been his commitment to promoting diversity and inclusion in sport.

That passion was already taking shape during his time at Stirling. His dissertation on female athlete endorsement authenticity in tennis won the award for Best Marketing Dissertation, and he later helped launch a learning disability tennis programme that went on to be endorsed by Tennis Scotland. He credits Stirling’s broad, dynamic Marketing degree for giving him the foundation to explore so many different areas of the industry.

He said the course covered a rich tapestry of topics, a mix that helped him build the confidence and curiosity needed to carve out a global career.

Now, as he helps lead marketing for a world-class tournament, James is doing

exactly what he set out to do: using his skills to elevate women’s sport and champion inclusion on the international stage. It’s a career built on passion, purpose and a willingness to follow opportunities wherever they lead. His story is a reminder that careers don’t always follow straight lines – sometimes passion, persistence and having the courage to say yes to unexpected opportunities can shape your future.

For students looking to blend their values with their ambitions, James’ story is a reminder that the right degree – underpinned by a positive and driven attitude – can take you further than you ever imagined.



Scotland rugby ace Finn Russell receives Honorary Doctorate from Stirling

Scotland rugby star Finn Russell has received an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Stirling.

Finn, who has captained his country and been selected for the British and Irish Lions, was recognised for his outstanding contribution to sport in Scotland, particularly rugby.

Finn grew up close to the University, in Bridge of Allan, where his rugby journey began at Wallace High School, before going on to play for Glasgow Warriors, Racing 92 and Bath, and represent his country.

As an international, Finn has been part of Scotland’s squad for the Rugby World Cup in 2015, 2019 and 2023, and the Six Nations. He has been selected for three British and Irish Lions tours in 2017, 2021 and 2025.



Hometown tribute for Scottish football great Billy Bremner



Billy Bremner

Sports heritage is a focus area at the University – and researchers are at the forefront of a national campaign to memorialise the late Scottish football hero Billy Bremner.

Bremner grew up in the Raploch area of Stirling and, with partners, the University has played a key role in ensuring his contribution is recognised at the heart of the community.

Bremner is regarded as one of football's greatest midfielders. He captained Leeds United from 1965 through the most successful period in the club's history, winning two League Championships and an FA Cup. He also represented Scotland 54 times, captaining the 1974 World Cup team.

His significance to Leeds United is commemorated by a statue outside the team's Elland Road stadium, while in Scotland no such tribute exists.

As part of a national campaign to memorialise Bremner, the University has played a key role in delivering an exhibition and unveiling a commemorative plaque at the footballer's childhood home in Raploch. The plaque unveiling in 2024 was attended by his former teammates Eddie Gray and Jimmy Bone.

The campaign has attracted national media coverage and has received political support, including an Early Day Motion at Westminster.

Professor of Media Sport at the University of Stirling, Richard Haynes, said: "This project continues to be a journey of discovery about Billy Bremner's sporting career and what it means to others in both



Jimmy Bone (left) and Eddie Gray in 2024

Leeds and Scotland.

"The partnerships between supporter groups, the local community and a range of regional agencies, including our own contribution from the University, provide an example of the power of sport to bring disparate communities together and use our cultural heritage to promote common values

and aspirations across the generations."

Partners on the project include the Scottish Football Supporters Association, Leeds United Supporters Group, Stirling Council, Raploch Community Council and Leeds City Council.



Allan Dell

British and Irish Lion leads a new era in rugby at Stirling

A new era beckons for rugby at the University of Stirling with an ex-Scotland international and British and Irish Lion at the helm of an exciting, innovative partnership.

Allan Dell – who has 34 caps for the Scottish national team – has been appointed to the lead role in a new collaboration between the University and Stirling County Rugby Club which aims to bolster the region's prowess in both men's and women's rugby.

The partnership's ambition is to attract talented young players to the city, while supporting the University to reach new heights in the student game.

Having also played for Edinburgh and London Irish, Allan's appointment brings extensive high-performance knowledge and experience to the role.

Working in collaboration with the coaching staff, performance consultant Allan is strengthening links between the University and Stirling County, and with existing Scottish Rugby pathways; overseeing and supporting the development of the men's and women's teams, and their coaching staff; enhancing player recruitment; and focusing on resource, including fundraising and sponsorship opportunities.

Allan said: "I'm very excited for this challenge and to build the rugby programme here at the University of Stirling – there's a lot of ambition and a lot of potential. I think we could be successful in rivalling some of the big institutions in the UK when it comes to rugby.

"The facilities here are incredible, and we've seen what our swimming, golf and football programmes have achieved – there's nothing stopping us getting to that high-performance level in rugby."

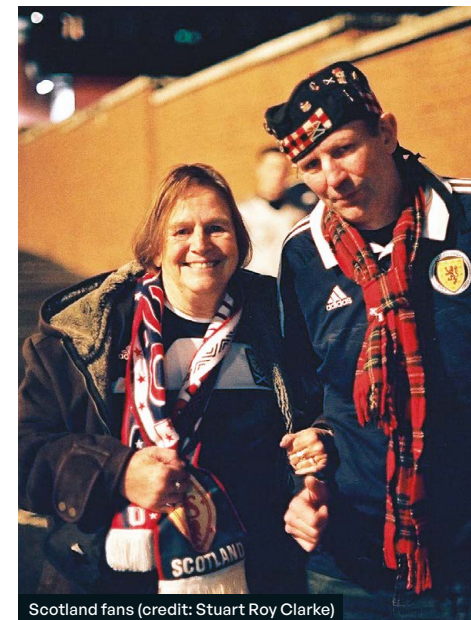
2026 World Cup fans take centre stage in student project

Stirling academics are working on a project with celebrated photographer Stuart Roy Clarke, who is developing a new collection focused on football fans in Scotland.

The collection – which will include images of those who follow the national team on big screens during the 2026 World Cup – will be held in the University Archives and could be exhibited on campus in the future.

Stuart is sharing his expertise on photography and journalism with Stirling students, and Film and Media students are producing a short documentary on his travels across the country.

Titled 'It's in the Water', the project is funded by Scottish Water and is a partnership with the Scottish Football Supporters Association.



Scotland fans (credit: Stuart Roy Clarke)

Rugby's greatest storyteller Bill McLaren's archive preserved by Stirling



Bill McLaren

University of Stirling experts are preserving historical records and material belonging to the late Scottish rugby commentator, Bill McLaren.

The University Archives is using state-of-the-art technology to digitise a unique collection of documents relating to the legendary sports broadcaster, who was known as the voice of rugby.

Over a broadcasting career that spanned four decades, he was the oracle of knowledge about the game, spending many hours compiling information about players, teams and famous matches.

The project is supported by the Bill McLaren Foundation and led by University Archivist Karl Magee and Professor Richard Haynes.

Ross Cameron, Chair of the Bill McLaren Foundation, said: "Digitisation brings so many benefits. Not only does it securely preserve the collection for posterity, but it provides online access for rugby fans and scholars throughout the world."

The team at Stirling are now working with the Foundation to develop ideas and seek funding for an educational resource which uses the digital collection.



The global sports industry is forecast to grow by more than 7% annually over the next five years.

PWC, 2026



STIRLING IS A WINNING CHOICE FOR SPORT STUDENTS

A leader in sports education, the University of Stirling is a magnet for students looking to obtain a qualification that will take them to the top of the global sports industry.

More students than ever before are choosing Stirling – Scotland's University for Sporting Excellence – as a destination to pursue their career ambitions within sport.

With world-class sports facilities, vastly experienced academics and impactful industry partnerships designed to enrich the learning experience, Stirling provides the perfect environment for educating and developing the future leaders of sport.

Equipped with their Stirling degree, graduates go on to work at the highest levels in sport, including at English Premier League football clubs, governing bodies and major sportswear brands.

Enjoying incredible growth over the last five years, the University's sports portfolio is among the most popular in the UK. Stirling offers four dedicated undergraduate degrees: Sport Development and Coaching, Sport and Exercise Science, Sport Business Management, and Psychology of Sport.

The University's flexible and modern portfolio also enables students to bolster their career options by combining sport

with other subjects such as Accountancy, Business, Journalism, Marketing or Secondary Education.

The postgraduate offering has also experienced significant growth. Responding to strong market demand, an MSc Physiotherapy was recently launched – proving so popular it had to close early to applications – and more sport-related Masters courses are on the way. These include highly anticipated Sport Business Analytics, which joins an existing portfolio comprising Sport Management, Psychology of Sport, and an online Sport Performance Coaching degree.

From FIFA to Formula 1: world sport leaders take the stage at Stirling

Leaders from the world of sport – including from FIFA, Formula 1 and the Commonwealth Games – shared expert insights at the University's first ever International Events Symposium.

The event was organised to connect students with global industry leaders, align with the national workforce strategy and create tangible pathways into major events, including placement and employment opportunities.

The symposium brought together more than 350 attendees from across Scotland, including 250 students and 100 industry professionals, creating an inclusive space where education, industry and policy intersect, and enabling the showcasing of real career journeys and practical insight.

With delegates from the Scottish Football Association and VisitScotland also among those to present, students heard first hand about the twists, leaps and lucky breaks that shaped the careers of those operating at the top of major sports and events organisations – and were inspired to see themselves as future leaders.

The event was firmly rooted in Scotland's National Events Strategy,

supporting skills development, inclusion and long-term workforce growth.

The event was recently shortlisted at The Herald Education Awards 2026 in the Enhancing Student Learning category.

Event organiser Craig McIntyre, Lecturer in Sport Management, said: "This recognition epitomises the values of our

symposium as a student-centred event designed to inspire, educate, and support the next generation of events professionals."

The Symposium returns on Thursday, 29 October 2026 and includes speakers from the Tour de France and UCI World Championships.



Scotland's scholarship programme delivered from Stirling

As Scotland's University for Sporting Excellence, Stirling coordinates the national sports scholarship programme Winning Students 100.

The programme provides athletes across the country with the opportunity to pursue a dual career by balancing their sporting ambitions with their academic studies at higher or further education institutions in Scotland.

Athletes are eligible to apply to the programme if they compete in Olympic, Paralympic or Commonwealth sports, with successful candidates receiving up to £3,000 of funding and academic flexibility to help balance their education and sports commitments.

Cathy Gallagher, Executive Director of Sport at Stirling and Chair of the Winning Students 100 Advisory Board, said: "Winning Students 100 is a bold and forward-thinking investment in the future of Scottish sport and education. The programme positions Scotland as a true pioneer, delivering a comprehensive support system that empowers athletes to achieve their full potential.

"This dual focus on academic and sporting excellence has made Winning Students 100 a powerful platform for success. By working closely with sportscotland, the Scottish Funding Council, partner institutions, and national governing bodies, we ensure that the programme continues to deliver value to students, parents, institutions, and funders alike. Together, we are shaping the future of Scottish sport and education."

Winning Students 100 is a three-way partnership between sportscotland, The Scottish Funding Council and Scotland's tertiary education sector.

"Winning Students 100 is a bold and forward-thinking investment in the future of Scottish sports and education."

CATHY GALLAGHER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF SPORT, UNIVERSITY OF STIRLING

Scotland to Singapore: Stirling takes sport education worldwide

Through our transnational education partnerships, we are taking a Stirling education to the world – sharing our expertise and leadership in sport with our global network.

Partnerships in Singapore and China offer students the opportunity to blend study with the global business of sport.

At the Singapore Institute of Management (SIM), students can tap into Stirling's sport education without leaving Southeast Asia, with Sport and Marketing a recent addition to the portfolio. The degree combines sport with business-focused learning, giving students the skills to work in everything from sports marketing to club management. It is a chance for students in Singapore to access a UK-designed curriculum shaped by Scotland's University for Sporting Excellence and longstanding expertise in sport.

Thanks to a partnership between SIM and Sports Singapore, student-athletes

can access scholarships to study Stirling programmes, supporting high-performance athletes to cope with the dual demands of sport and education effectively.

In China, Stirling's partnership with Chengdu University is opening doors for students interested in sport development, coaching and management.

What ties all of this together is Stirling's ongoing commitment to reviewing and strengthening its sport course portfolio – not just at home, but across its international partnerships too. As global interest in sport careers grows, the University is ensuring its courses stay relevant, forward thinking and aligned with industry needs.

From Scotland to Singapore and Chengdu, Stirling's sporting footprint is widening – and for students around the world, that means more opportunities to study sport with a university that truly knows the field.



Diyanah Aqidah Blinte Muhammad Dian Khudhairi, an international taekwondo athlete, who juggled earning a Sports Studies and Marketing degree with her training schedule as she represented Singapore at the World Poomsae Championships and Southeast Asian Games.



Anne Broadhurst

“I worked with so many people... it really helped my confidence and communication skills.”

ANNE BROADHURST, STIRLING GRADUATE

MAKING A DIFFERENCE AND BUILDING EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

[Click to watch Anne's story](#)

Sports students at Stirling are making a real difference in local communities while enhancing their own career prospects thanks to placement opportunities.

One major success has seen undergraduates join and provide support to Bailliefields Community Hub, near Falkirk, which is a real lifeline for local people. As the charitable arm of Bailliefields Cricket Club, the award-winning hub runs everything from dementia support groups to accessible exercise sessions – all aimed at boosting wellbeing and tackling social isolation.

The Hub is a recipient of the King's Award for Voluntary Service, the highest honour a UK volunteer group can achieve.

Across 2025 and 2026, the Hub hosted five students from a variety of sports courses to undertake their placement, involving them in everything from event planning and social media to community strategy and inclusive sport projects supporting people with dementia and disabilities.

Anne Broadhurst was one of those to accept a placement with the Hub – a place

she describes as the perfect environment to learn and grow. She said: “I worked with so many different people – from coaching cricket to running multi-sport programmes in rural areas. It really helped my confidence and communication skills.”

Following her graduation, Anne was employed as the Hub's Community Sport and Health Officer and credits her placement for helping her secure her “dream job”.

Trustee Stephen Sutton said: “Anne's enthusiasm and empathy stood out straight away. As trustees, we quickly agreed she was someone we wanted to employ.”

Fourth-year Sport Business Management student Cameron Noble used his placement at the Hub to create its new five-year strategy – a major project that's given him valuable experience and industry connections. His advice to future students: make the most of your placement, because the benefits last long after it ends.

Stephen added: “Placements don't just build skills – they help students make a real difference in their community.”



Dr Alban Dickson

CALL FOR MENTAL HEALTH HELP FOR YOUNG FOOTBALLERS

Every professional football club in Scotland should have mandatory psychological support for their academy players, according to an expert at the University of Stirling. More than one million children in the UK play organised football, with around 10,000 in football academies – but fewer than 200 will become professional players.

Dr Alban Dickson, Lecturer in Sport Psychology at the University of Stirling, insists improved mental health support for released academy footballers is needed now more than ever. He has joined a call by the British Psychological Society (BPS) for mandated support across all academies of professional clubs in Scotland.

Dr Dickson, a BPS Chartered member who has worked extensively in SPFL academies, said: “Enhancing the resilience of players within the academy setup should be the number one aim. From the moment a contract is signed, it is imperative to work closely with parents to set realistic goals from the outset, before later having conversations around career transitions. This proactive approach has proven effective in preparing players for life beyond the academy.

“Embedding psychological best practices and teaching essential life skills is vital. Not only does this help shape well-rounded individuals, but they can also contribute directly to improved performances on the pitch.”

With sustained investment into mental health, football clubs have the potential

to support academy players after their release. One club leading the way is Heart of Midlothian, which embeds psychological support throughout its academy.

Chair of the BPS's Division of Sport and Exercise Psychology Stephen Smith said: “Many academy footballers have spent most of their young lives, putting in thousands of hours of training, chasing a dream only for it to be cut short when released from their contract.

“There’s a postcode lottery for support when academy footballers are released. Coordinated investment from the Scottish FA, SPFL and PFA Scotland would go a long way to helping lower league clubs grow their psychological workforce and give the players the support they need.”

“Embedding psychological best practices and teaching essential life skills is vital.”

DR ALBAN DICKSON, LECTURER IN SPORT PSYCHOLOGY



Beyond the whistle: how referees and penalty takers are redefining modern football

Economics experts from the University of Stirling Business School lead impactful sports research – providing important insights into sports rules and the way matches are played.

Dr Carl Singleton, Senior Lecturer in Economics and Course Director of Stirling's new MSc Sport Business Analytics, explores sports economics and prediction markets.

In one of his latest studies, he found that football referees allow more unexplained stoppage time in matches, especially when results are on a knife edge.

Along with researchers at University College Cork, Dr Singleton analysed decisions made about additional time – also known as stoppage or injury time – across the 64 matches of the 2022 World Cup in Qatar and the 51 matches played at Euro 2024 in Germany.

The research revealed referees allowed play to go on for as much as two unexplained minutes, on average, in the second half of games – findings that call into question sporting fairness and the training of referees. The team found referee behaviour may not be entirely objective, especially in their research around the World Cup games, where a one goal increase in the margin between teams at 90 minutes would on average reduce added time by around a minute.

A separate, award-winning study into penalty kicks in football, in collaboration with the University of Reading and Syracuse University, found that professional footballers trade off the chance of scoring a goal with the possibility of missing the target, to save face.

The research, which is based on game theory, studied 536 penalty kicks from the UEFA Champions League and Europa League. It reveals that those taking a penalty kick are sometimes sacrificing the most effective strategic shot placement and instead prioritising their credibility and perceived performance and skill.



Dr Carl Singleton



Lord Jack McConnell, University of Stirling students and children from local primaries.

Students lead anti-sectarianism initiative

Students played a key role in delivering an event for local schoolchildren, which was supported by University Chancellor and former First Minister, Lord Jack McConnell.

The partnership between the University and anti-sectarianism charity Nil by Mouth saw more than 100 pupils from local schools participate in sport activities on campus.

The event is the culmination of a year's activity by the national charity, which saw it deliver a range of educational workshops helping young people better understand issues around sectarianism and identity, connect across their community and enhance key employment and life skills.

Stirling students led on the planning and delivery of the event, securing support from the University and sponsorship for transport, ensuring the whole day was free of charge.

Pupils took part in a range of activities designed to test their reflexes and teamwork, including a game which saw them try to score penalty kicks whilst blindfolded.

Students Nabil Gadi and Hamza Khalid organised the event as part of their credit-bearing work placement of their MSc Sport Management course. This is a 30-hour work placement designed to give them the opportunity to develop the skills and attributes required to be successful in sport

and related industries. They were supported by student volunteer Abigael Wiseman.

Nil by Mouth Director Dave Scott said: "We are incredibly grateful to the students and the University for providing us with this opportunity to bring the schools together in such a vibrant way. We are also pleased to have Lord McConnell along to show him how the work he set in train while in political office is continuing and thriving twenty years later."

"For a small charity like ours to have this level of support from a major Scottish institution like the University of Stirling is a massive boost."



Professor Stuart Galloway (left) and Professor Anna Whittaker.

Game-changing sport research centre launched

The University has launched a new centre for sports research and innovation to address national and global challenges in health, wellbeing, inclusion, and sporting performance.

Already internationally recognised for its contributions to sport, health, and exercise science, Stirling will build on its societal impact through targeted research funding, consultancy projects, and strategic partnerships.

The Centre for Research and Innovation in Sport (CRIS) is co-led by Professor of Behavioural Medicine, Anna Whittaker, and Professor of Exercise Physiology, Stuart Galloway, supported by a steering group of Stirling academics.

Professor Whittaker said: "The benefits of exercise, sport and physical activity for society, the economy and for health are well known. This centre will bring together experts in these areas with the goal of collaborating on mission-led interdisciplinary research and funding bids within sport, across the University, and with external partners to solve real-world challenges."

To achieve this, the University will align its work with several major strategic frameworks, including the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) priorities, and national strategies from the Scottish Government, sportscotland, and UK Sport.

The Centre also aims to create a critical mass of researchers and postgraduate students to tackle urgent challenges in the sport and public health sectors.

Professor Galloway said: "By positioning CRIS at the intersection of sport, health, and social change, we will lead transformative research that not only advances academic knowledge but also contributes to sport, health, and exercise science for the benefit of our elite athletes, and people, communities and organisations locally and globally."

SCOTLAND'S UNIVERSITY
for SPORTING EXCELLENCE



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STIRLING

BE THE DIFFERENCE



Graeme Matheson

“Students build their own coaching community which helps them develop a closer network of friends beyond those they meet in their courses and sports.”

GRAEME MATHESON, TENNIS DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

TENNIS COACHING PROGRAMME PUTS STUDENTS CENTRE COURT

The University's community tennis programme is led by a talented army of students – who deliver engaging coaching sessions while enhancing their career prospects by developing their own skills and experience.

led by Tennis Development Officer, Graeme Matheson, the University's community programme is built around 20 student coaches who deliver sessions for students, staff and local people.

“Students build their own coaching community which helps them develop a closer network of friends beyond those they meet in their courses and sports,” explained Graeme.

Crucially, coaching opportunities aren't limited to those studying sport – enabling students from across the University to come together through a shared purpose and gain real world experience alongside their degrees. Students are also able to gain coaching, officiating and leadership qualifications through the Tennis Development Programme.

Participants in the programme follow their coaches' university journeys closely – cheering on their academic and sports achievements with a sense of pride that

goes well beyond the baseline.

Graeme recalls one session that was almost entirely taken over by a participant-led question and answer session with a student coach about his dissertation topic and plans for after graduation.

“It took the best part of ten minutes to wind down the conversation and get them back on court,” he laughed. “But it's a perfect example of our participants being interested in the students themselves, not just their coaching expertise.”

The programme received wider recognition when Stirling was nominated for University of the Year at the Tennis Scotland Awards 2026 – a nod to the collective effort across participation, performance and workforce development.

“It's extremely rewarding to see our students develop and deliver a growing programme that people want to be part of and ultimately keep playing tennis.”

Deacon Blue musician Dougie Vipond trades drumkit for trainers at 50th parkrun

Scottish musician, broadcaster and Stirling honorary graduate Dougie Vipond has celebrated his 50th parkrun with friends and fellow runners at the University of Stirling.

The Deacon Blue drummer and BBC Landward presenter is a regular at the weekly five-kilometre run around the 330-acre parkland campus.

Launched in 2019, the University parkrun has quickly become a huge draw for hundreds of people of all ages and abilities, locally and beyond – playing a key role in the community's health, fitness and wellbeing. The event takes place every Saturday at 9:30am – offering participants a scenic route round the loch.

Celebrating his 50th event, Dougie said: “To complete my 50th parkrun at the University of Stirling is a huge personal achievement for me. Living just down the road from here, I am biased – but, for me, there is no better parkrun – the scenery is stunning, there is a fantastic sense of community and such a positive culture around sports, health and wellbeing.”

One of the defining features of the Stirling parkrun is its strong community spirit. It is entirely run by volunteers, whose enthusiasm and dedication ensure that the event is welcoming, safe, and well organised each week. This was recognised recently when the

University of Stirling Parkrun was shortlisted for the prestigious Lord Provost Award, as part of the Stirlingshire Inspire Volunteering Awards.

Participants can choose to run, jog, or walk, making it accessible to a wide range of people regardless of fitness levels. In recent years, participation has continued to grow, with research highlighting a surge in attendance driven by the introduction of parkwalkers, encouraging even more people to take part.

Parkrun at Stirling not only promotes physical health but also fosters community spirit, inclusivity, and a shared sense of achievement.

“The scenery is stunning, there is a fantastic sense of community and such a positive culture around sports, health and wellbeing.”

DOUGIE VIPOND



Dougie Vipond with his wife, Fiona.



2026 winners of the Scottish Student Sport Basketball Cup.

Finding your team: the impact of sport on student life

Sport is a fundamental part of everyday life at Stirling. In fact, it's where the University experience really comes alive for a lot of our students.

Each year, around 2,700 students get involved in club sport – with 50 teams offering something for every interest and ability. Whether it's competing at an elevated level, staying active for fun or trying something completely new, there's a place for everyone.

But it's not just about what happens on the pitch or in the pool.

Joining a sports club is one of the easiest ways to meet people, build confidence and feel part of a community from day one. It's where friendships are formed, routines are built, and shared experiences turn into lasting connections.

Over the last year, Stirling has seen the introduction of new clubs including Ice Skating, Karate and Flag Football. These

additions reflect the evolving interests of students and Stirling's commitment to making sport as inclusive and accessible as possible.

Stirling students also benefit from outstanding on-campus facilities, alongside the chance to represent Stirling in competitions across the UK through British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS). For many, this balance of competition, teamwork and travel becomes a defining part of their time at university.

Off the field, club sport brings a vibrant social scene. From themed socials and the Sports Bazaar to the much-anticipated Sports Ball which attracts around 750 students, there are plenty of opportunities to celebrate, connect and unwind. This sense of community is central to the University's ethos. At Stirling, sport isn't just something you do – it's something you're part of.

Bringing generations together through sport

At the University of Stirling, sport is about more than just performance. It's about connection – and that's exactly what underpins the Active Community Through Interactive Operations and Networking (ACTION) programme.

Designed to support older adults, ACTION creates inclusive opportunities for people to stay active, social and engaged through a range of accessible sport and physical activity sessions. From gentle exercise classes to group activities, the programme helps improve physical health while tackling social isolation – a growing challenge for many older people.

But what makes ACTION truly unique is its intergenerational approach.

Students play a central role in delivering sessions, which enables them to build meaningful relationships with participants and gain hands-on experience

in community sport.

The programme also builds technology into its activities by teaching older adults how to use social media and AI-based software for everyday tasks.

While older adults benefit from increased activity and connection, students also develop empathy, communication skills and a deeper understanding of sport's role in public health. The impact goes beyond the sessions themselves. ACTION is helping to build a more connected, active community – one where sport becomes a shared language across generations.

Above all else, the programme is a powerful example of how sport can be used with purpose. Sport at Stirling isn't just about developing world-class athletes; it brings generations together making a lasting difference in people's lives.



Stirling students making a difference in Zambia

The power of sport extends far beyond the pitch – and the life-changing Volunteer Zambia programme is an initiative that underlines the University's commitment to make a difference in all that it does.

Run by a partnership of the UK's leading sports universities, Volunteer Zambia works with local non-governmental organisation Sport in Action to give young people in the African country easier access to sports, in support of their health and wellbeing.

Each year, selected students take part in an eight-week international sports development placement in Zambia, working directly with local communities to deliver coaching, education and engagement initiatives. It's an opportunity to use sport as a tool for social impact – supporting young people, promoting wellbeing and helping to build sustainable community programmes.

The project's motto is "run in the community, by the community, for the community" and it has the ultimate goal of giving young Zambians self-development opportunities through values like participation, opportunity for leadership and access to education.

There is a positive impact for the student participants too. Those who volunteer in the programme return with far more than international experience – they develop leadership, communication and cultural awareness skills that simply can't be finessed in a lecture theatre. Volunteers can apply what they've learned, step outside their comfort zone, and make a meaningful difference on the global stage.

"It proved to me that we can make a difference, no matter how big or small," explains past participant Elliott Rousen. "We can have a huge impact on people's lives, and it doesn't take much."

For those involved, it's not just a placement – it's a defining experience that shapes careers, perspectives and futures.





Liam Hignett

TENNIS TEAM SECURES FOURTH UK TITLE OF THE SEASON

The University of Stirling has made history in UK student tennis with its men winning all four major competitions in the 2025/26 season.

In a UK first, the Men's First Tennis Team has dominated at the top of British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS) over the past 12 months – winning the National Championship, National League, Doubles and Individual Championships.

Sports scholars Liam Hignett, Nemanja Malesevic, Rob Cowley, Cameron Fryer and Kyle McKay sealed the quadruple with an impressive 4-0 win over the University of Nottingham to lift the coveted National Championship trophy.

Captain Liam – who won Player of the Match – paid tribute to coach Scott MacAulay and the facilities and support available at the University of Stirling.

He said: "I think we've got it right – the atmosphere is brilliant, we all get on well and Scott is a great leader. I think this is the first time that one university has taken all four men's titles in the same season – and that's testament to the hard work, leadership and facilities with which the University provides us."

Scott, Lead Tennis Coach, said: "We've had a fantastic year – winning all four titles in the same academic year. These guys have shown great dedication to the programme, training every day, in the gym five days a week, playing national and international

events away from student competition too. They have put in hard work and dedication and now are reaping the rewards – I'm sure they'll be celebrating." Scott was recently awarded the Tennis Scotland Coach of the Year in recognition of his leadership, impact and success.

Meanwhile, tennis scholar Anna McBride continued her phenomenal run

at the Australian Open's Intellectual Disability Championships in early 2026 – winning her fourth singles title in a row and her third doubles title in four years.

She said: "This event continues to be a real highlight of my year – competing at such a prestigious event, alongside so many talented athletes, is always incredibly special and inspiring."



Shayne Humphries

Gold for wheelchair basketballer at BUCS

Stirling sports scholar Shayne Humphries has won the British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS) Mixed Wheelchair Basketball Championships for the second year in a row.

Shayne – who won silver with GB Students at the 2025 FISU World University Games – plays with Lothian Phoenix in British Wheelchair Basketball's Premier League and in the International Wheelchair Basketball Federation's EuroCup.

At university level, he trains at Stirling but competes for the University of Nottingham, with BUCS permitting players to compete for other universities due to the infancy of the sport in the programme.

In the BUCS Mixed Wheelchair Basketball Championship Final 2026, Shayne played a key role as his side beat Loughborough 66-58 to retain the trophy.

Speaking after the victory, Shayne said: "I'm buzzing and really proud of what we've achieved across the season."

"The facilities and support I've had access to at Stirling has been really helpful in my development overall."

Meanwhile, in other major BUCS successes in 2025/26, the Men's First Football Team won their fifth Premier North title in six years and Ryan Martin won the 1,500-metre event at the BUCS Indoor Championships.

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