

# SPORTS ADMINISTRATION

**Department website:** <https://www.sps.northwestern.edu/masters/sports-administration/>

Master's in Sports Administration students need to complete 11 courses to earn their degrees. The Sports Administration curriculum consists of eight core courses, including a capstone or thesis, and three electives. There are two specializations available: College Sports Management (<https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/sps/graduate/sports-administration/sports-administration-ma-college-sports-management-specialization/>) and Sports Analytics (<https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/sps/graduate/sports-administration/sports-administration-ma-analytics-specialization/>).

Sports is a huge economic enterprise that offers a wide range of career opportunities — but competition for sports-related jobs can be quite heavy. If you're interested in starting or advancing your career in the business of sports, you can build the skills you need in Northwestern's Master of Arts in Sports Administration (MSA) program.

MSA classes are taught by faculty members who share their insights and practical knowledge based on extensive professional experience in sports. The program offers access to team executives and professionals in areas such as operations, marketing, and sponsorship in collegiate, professional, and amateur athletics. The curriculum offers a wide range of electives to enable you to focus on your areas of interest.

## Degrees Offered

- Sports Administration, MA (<https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/sps/graduate/sports-administration/sports-administration-ma/>)
- Sports Administration, MA College Sports Management Specialization (<https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/sps/graduate/sports-administration/sports-administration-ma-college-sports-management-specialization/>)
- Sports Administration, MA Sports Analytics Specialization (<https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/sps/graduate/sports-administration/sports-administration-ma-analytics-specialization/>)

## Sports Administration Courses

### MSA 400-0 Sports in the Social Context (1 Unit)

This course introduces the tools used to research and write graduate-level papers in a framework of a critical examination of the sociology of sports in the United States and abroad. The course will also explore the history of the social phenomena that have shaped the world of sports. Students will be assigned readings that underscore how sports reflects the values of the larger society. Some of the issues include inequality in sports, commercialization and globalization of sports, the myth of the amateur athlete in big-time college sports, and behaviors deemed deviant in the world of sports. The course emphasizes writing skills, pushing students to examine their strengths and weaknesses, and helping them find effective ways to do solid research. Students will be assigned projects to demonstrate a proficiency in research and writing.

### MSA 400-DL Sport in the Social Context: Core Issues in Sports Administration (1 Unit)

This course introduces the tools used to research and write graduate-level papers in a framework of the sociology of sports in the United States and abroad. The course will also explore the history of the social phenomena that have shaped the world of sports. Assigned readings that underscore how sports reflect the values of the larger society.

Issues include inequality in sports, commercialization and globalization of sports, the myth of the amateur athlete in big-time college sports, and behaviors deemed deviant in the world of sports. The course emphasizes writing skills, pushing students to examine their strengths and weaknesses and helping them find effective ways to do research. Students will be assigned projects to demonstrate proficiency in research and writing.

### MSA 401-0 Introduction to Sports Analytics (1 Unit)

This course provides a broad introduction to data analysis and statistical methods as they relate to the sports industry. Students will learn how to use these methods to better understand and analyze issues central to sports management. Students will be introduced to quantitative and analytical third-party services that are used by sports organizations as part of a larger exploration of the business economics of sports. When students leave the course they will be able to: analyze sports organizations; analyze revenue streams and recommend new, data-driven approaches to maximize monetization opportunities; and value teams, athletes, sponsorships, and brands using quantitative analysis.

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### MSA 402-0 Fundamentals of Sports Marketing (1 Unit)

This course will provide students the necessary theoretical and practical hands-on knowledge of marketing principles and techniques as it related to the sports industry through the in-depth study of the sport marketing mix. The course also covers marketing strategies of related businesses, such as the sporting goods industry and broadcasting. Additionally, students will explore the sports marketing industry at the professional, collegiate, and amateur levels through discussion of its many facets including: market research and segmentation, advertising, branding, sponsorship, licensing, public relations and media relations.

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### MSA 403-0 Sports Organizations: Leadership Theory & Application (1 Unit)

The overall objective of this course is to develop students' understanding of the frameworks of organizations and facilitate critical analysis of organizational theories and leadership styles. Students will also become familiar with the types of organizational structures that are prevalent in the sports industry. Students will learn about structural frameworks of organizations, the relationship between people and organizations, the role diversity plays in creating a successful workplace, the role of power within an organization, the influence of leadership styles on organizations, and how to think critically about organizations to inform

your capacity as a sports professional. The coursework is intended to support students through readings, small and large group discussions, and analysis.

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**MSA 404-0 Sports Business: Finance, Accounting and Economics (1 Unit)**

This course covers financial management and managerial economics as they relate to the sports industry. The focus will be on understanding accounting and finance vocabulary, using financial information to analyze the performance of sports organizations, developing budgets for an organization or department, explaining salary cap logistics/impact, understanding tax implications and stadium financing options – all to make better organizational decisions.

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**MSA 405-0 Legal and Ethical Issues in Sports Management (1 Unit)**

This course introduces the theories and concepts of applied ethics by focusing on legal questions, race and gender issues, public relations, budgeting, recruiting (in the collegiate context), evaluations, personnel, exploitation, and athletic reform in both the corporate and collegiate sport industries. Awareness of legal implications for the industry reduces the probability of litigation.

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**MSA 406-0 Sports Public Relations and Crisis Communication (1 Unit)**

This course examines the implications and mitigation of crisis and risk in the sports industry, with emphasis placed on managing public relations. Students develop the tools necessary to identify organizational vulnerabilities and to design and implement crisis strategies and communications to prevent these situations, and manage the situations effectively, should they occur. The course pays particular attention to public relations strategies for communication with internal and external constituencies.

**MSA 406-DL Sports Public Relations and Crisis Communication (1 Unit)**

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**MSA 407-0 Sports Labor Relations and Negotiation (1 Unit)**

This course focuses on the legal issues of labor relations and negotiations as they relate to the sports industry. Focus on the major professional team sport leagues, with some international Olympic issues. Legal areas of contracts, antitrust law, labor law, arbitration, collective bargaining, and agency issues.

**MSA 412-0 Fundamentals of Sponsorship for Sports Marketers and Administrators (1 Unit)**

This course is a deep dive into sponsorship and its impact on corporate marketers and the sports organizations they partner with. Topics explored include how brands select what to sponsor, how they design marketing communications and promotional programs that drive engagement with their target markets, and how they measure success. Additionally, students will examine how sponsorships are packaged, proposed, negotiated and agreed upon; what the benefits are to sports properties beyond direct revenue; and contractual and legal issues surrounding sponsorship.

**MSA 413-0 Advertising Project: Sports Brand Management (1 Unit)**

Concepts presented in this course include positioning, targeting, brand building and measurement, and how advertising, PR and experiential marketing are used to drive brand equity. Based on lectures, guest speakers, readings, classroom and homework exercises, case studies, and a major group project, the course is designed to present students with a practical, hands-on opportunity to work on current issues facing actual sports-industry businesses. The major small group project involves students collaborating in a consulting role with industry professionals from assigned "client companies". The project requires students to meet with their client and with their student-group members outside of class hours to ensure a well-delivered final product.

**MSA 421-DL The Business of Esports (1 Unit)**

In this course, students will become familiar will learn the various elements unique to the esports ecosystem including understanding different game genres, examination of the publisher's role in esports, different competitive structures, and the organization of professional teams and players. Students will examine the potential for growth and risks in the esports industry. The course will discuss differences between traditional sports and esports, the culture of esports including streaming, media platforms, inclusivity, online toxicity and sportsmanship, and scholastic esports.

**MSA 424-DL Event Management for Sports (1 Unit)**

This course addresses major trends and successful business practices in event management. Students will learn the unique characteristics of sporting and sports marketing events, manage event planning to improve profitability, identify and prioritize event goals and objectives, create proposals and agreements for event stakeholders, systematically analyze potential risks and threats to events, and choose appropriate solutions by using efficient event planning methods. Students will be evaluated on their grasp of event management at a macro level and a micro level comprehension of effective planning protocols. Students will examine case studies of sporting events to better understand the unique technical implementation aspects of events and the nuanced planning of those technical considerations.

**MSA 441-0 Complexities of Management and Marketing in the Olympic Movement (1 Unit)**

Students will analyze the actions of the International Olympic (IOC) Committee and study the bidding process for Olympic games to understand the global business dynamics of the Olympic marketing industry and the "Olympic Movement." Topics will include an examination of the global infrastructure and organization of the Olympic Movement; the Olympic charter and IOC goals; case study presentation on a TOP Olympic sponsor; and a general overview of a host city's obligations and opportunities regarding construction of venues, government support and participation, infrastructure, marketing, security, and more.

**MSA 445-0 Entrepreneurship in the Sports Industry (1 Unit)**

Entrepreneurial companies are disrupting the sports industry. From big data to wearable technology to mobile/social media, new companies are growing quickly to solve pressing challenges for leagues, teams, events, and athletes. This course is designed to help prepare students for a career path in sports entrepreneurship. More specifically, having a big idea is the start of launching a new venture. Building businesses requires raising capital, hiring the right people, acquiring customers, implementing strategy, and communicating to internal and external audiences. By the end of this class, students will have the framework in place to start their own company in the sports industry. Recommended prior course: MSA 404-0 or MSA 404-DL.

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**MSA 451-0 Information Technology in Sports (1 Unit)**

The Technology of Sport provides an interactive tour of technology, related products/services that form technical solutions, and the current and future state of technology as it relates to sports. MSA 451 goes beyond the what of technology, and explores the how highlighting technological impacts on the sports business landscape. Students will learn the terms and tools that comprise technology, specifically those most applicable to the sports industry and within a sports business setting. The course will evaluate student's comprehension of technological concepts, implementation of those concepts, and tangible business enhancements. A midterm examination and a final project are used to advance students' application of these technological skills.

**MSA 451-DL The Technology of Sport (1 Unit)**

MSA 451 provides an interactive tour of technology, related products/services that form technical solutions, and the current and future state of technology related to sports. MSA 451 goes beyond the what of technology, and explores the how, highlighting technological impacts on the sports business landscape. Students will learn the terms and tools that comprise technology, specifically those most applicable to the sports industry and within a sports business setting. The course will evaluate students' comprehension of technological concepts, implement those concepts, and tangible business enhancements. A midterm examination and a final project are used to advance students' application of these technological skills.

**MSA 453-0 College Sports Management - Internal Affairs (1 Unit)**

College athletic departments exist within a larger university ecosystem and regulatory environment that present unique challenges and opportunities. Students will examine the core tenets of sport management that address the day-to-day internal workings of a collegiate athletic department. The course will take an in-depth look at administrative leadership and college athletics within a university and its governance structure. Students will examine the challenges that present themselves across multiple departments and the management relationships that need to be developed among coaches, administrators, and student-athletes. Relevant topics include intellectual property rights, federal and NCAA requirements, budgeting issues, and multi-faceted student-athlete support.

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**MSA 454-0 College Sports Management - External Affairs (1 Unit)**

College athletic departments engage many external stakeholders as they address revenue demands and the financial sustainability of their programs. Students will examine the core tenets of sport management related to the outward-facing responsibilities of a collegiate athletic department. The course will take an in-depth look at the day-to-day challenges that present themselves across the multiple revenue generating aspects of collegiate athletics, including corporate sponsorships, ticket sales, marketing, fundraising, and other public facing areas such as athletics communications, facilities, and crowd management.

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**MSA 455-0 NCAA Compliance (1 Unit)**

NCAA rules and infractions can seem mysterious and arbitrary, given the way they are covered by the media. The NCAA has rules and processes that affect the daily workings of any NCAA institutions, particularly Division I. This course provides students with a working knowledge of NCAA compliance issues by examining and applying the bylaws of the NCAA (with a focus on Division I). Students will examine case studies to gain experience in applying this knowledge to everyday NCAA issues. Enforcement procedures, waivers processes, and the evolution of the NCAA rules will be examined as well. This course will offer valuable insights into career paths in NCAA compliance, college administration, and how the world of college sports really works.

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#### **MSA 457-0 Front Office Operations (1 Unit)**

This class will provide students with a working knowledge of the issues facing sports teams and organizations. This will include both for-profit and not-for-profit organizations. Students will apply critical thinking and analysis to the various stakeholders' interest in the business and operations of sports teams and organizations. This will include teams, leagues, municipalities, financial institutions, fans, corporations and other related companies that do business with the aforementioned entities. The class will utilize real life examples of organizational structures, actual team financials, economic models and discussion.

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#### **MSA 458-DL Digital Media in Sports (1 Unit)**

This course will examine the impact of new technology on the business of sports, focusing on topics such as Over-the-Top (OTT) video distribution, social media, fantasy sports, eSports, data & analytics, stadium technology, digital advertising, and youth & amateur sports, among other subjects. In addition to covering the major leagues and media companies, the course will also provide insight into entrepreneurial ventures and start-ups that are reshaping the sports landscape.

#### **MSA 460-0 Deviance and Violence in Sports (1 Unit)**

This course examines the social and cultural meaning of deviance and violence in sport. Drawing from social science, legal cases, popular media, and contemporary events, students learn the various definitions of deviance and violence, as well as explore the ways in which the government, athletic associations, and players themselves manage, regulate, and perpetuate these behaviors. Topics include the prevalence of violence both on and off-field, the use of performance-enhancing drugs, extreme weight loss, and gambling.

#### **MSA 460-DL Deviance and Violence in Sports (1 Unit)**

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#### **MSA 463-0 Globalization in Sports (1 Unit)**

The intent of this course is to develop the student's understanding of the global impact of sport. The overall objective is to examine the ways in which sport has developed internationally and influences culture, economics, nationalism, and social values. The class will aggressively dissect various aspects of international sports such as governing bodies,

events, ethnic relations, marketing/sponsorships, media evolution, and agency. This course will attempt to give students the ability to process, analyze, and articulate the expansion of sport on a global level.

#### **MSA 463-DL Globalization of Sport (1 Unit)**

This course will examine the role of sport in a global world. From the massive amounts of data collected to political conflicts generated by mega-events, this course will give students the ability to process, analyze, and articulate the expansion of sport on a global level. By examining how sport has developed internationally and influenced culture, economics, nationalism, and social values, students will be able to discuss and draw connections between the business of sport, cultural and political impact, and historical traditions to predict future trends and increase cultural and societal understanding as it relates to sport. Issues of race and cultural identity, and gender (including transgender), and sexuality in sports will be examined.

#### **MSA 490-0 Special Topics (1 Unit)**

This class will be offered periodically to address special topics in Sports Administration. Please check the MSA website for specific topics.

#### **MSA 498-0 Capstone Class (1 Unit)**

The capstone project course is the culmination of the MSA program and demonstrates a student's mastery of the curriculum and a firm understanding of the fundamental principles that guide the diverse field of sports administration. Students may choose this course to fulfill their capstone requirement. Students should have completed 9 of 11 courses in the program, with all core courses completed.

#### **MSA 498-DL Capstone (1 Unit)**

The capstone project course is the culmination of the MSA program and demonstrates a student's mastery of the curriculum and a firm understanding of the fundamental principles that guide the diverse field of sports administration. Students may choose this course to fulfill their capstone requirement. Students should have completed 9 of 11 courses in the program, with all core courses completed.

#### **MSA 499-0 Independent Study (1 Unit)**

An independent study is a customized course of study undertaken by a single student under the guidance of an instructor. Independent studies are comparable in their demands to other graduate-level courses. Please see the SPS Graduate Student Handbook and your academic advisor for more information about independent study registration.

#### **MSA 579-0 Practicum in Sports Administration (1 Unit)**

This course will provide a framework for the development of your professional skills throughout the internship. Students will become familiar with a variety of techniques in networking, professionalism, and problem-solving in order to get the most out of their work experience. Students will share their experiences with classmates throughout the course in order to provide a framework for discussion and learning. As the experience in the internship is the most valuable piece of the class and where most of your energy, knowledge, and motivation will be expended, this class will not hold in-person class meetings, but will require weekly assignments, online class participation, as well as a final paper.

#### **MSA 579-DL Practicum In Sports Admin (1 Unit)**

This course will provide a framework for the development of your professional skills throughout the internship. Students will become familiar with a variety of techniques in networking, professionalism, and problem-solving in order to get the most out of their work experience. Students will share their experiences with classmates throughout the course in order to provide a framework for discussion and learning. As the experience in the internship is the most valuable piece of the class and where most of your energy, knowledge, and motivation will



be expended, this class will not hold in-person class meetings, but will require weekly assignments, online class participation, as well as a final paper.

**MSA 590-0 Thesis Research (1 Unit)**

Instead of the Capstone class, students may elect to complete a thesis. This final project is meant to represent the culmination of students' experience in the program and must demonstrate mastery of the curriculum and the ability to conduct sustained independent research and analysis. The project may be applied or may be a traditional scholarly paper; in both cases a manuscript following program-specific guidelines is required. Students must submit a proposal and secure a first reader to register for the thesis course; for further details, students are advised to review the student handbook and contact their academic advisor.