

MIXED
ABILITY
WEEK **22**

CONFERENCE HOSTED BY



INTERNATIONAL
MIXED ABILITY
SPORTS



THE FUTURE OF MIXED ABILITY: FOR SPORT AND BEYOND!

WEDNESDAY 8TH JUNE
MARDYKE PAVILION, UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK

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FOREWORD

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MORGAN BUCKLEY
CHAIRMAN, IMART 2022

AGENDA

10:30 - 10:45 **WELCOME ADDRESS**
Martino Corazzo IMAS & Alan Craughwell MASI

10:45 - 11:05 **SPORTS, SDG'S AND HUMAN RIGHTS**
Catherine Carty – Unesco Chair

11:05 - 11:25 **SUSTAINABILITY - SPORT POST COVID**
Dr Jen Dyer – Nifty Sustainability

11:25 - 11:45 **INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT AND MA ROLL OUT**
Kelly Kasper – Abilities Centre Canada

11:45 - 12:00 **HEALTH INEQUALITIES AND RISK**
Dr Mark Purvis – NHS Education UK

12:00 - 13:00 LUNCH & NETWORKING

13:00 - 13:20 **MIXED ABILITY RUGBY - NGB**
Annamaire Huges – IRFU

13:20 - 13:40 **PHYSICAL LITERACY - HOLISTIC APPROACH AND MA ALIGNMENT**
Nigel Green – Physical Literacy

13:40 - 14:00 **BE A GOOD COACH - MA SPORT PSYCHOLOGY**
Fabian Sainz Modinos – INICO Salamanca

14:00 - 14:20 **FAIRNESS FOR DISABLED PEOPLE IN SPORT AND ACTIVITY:
CHANGING THE GAME THROUGH A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH**
Barry Horne – Activity Alliance UK

14:20 - 14:30 **CLOSING ADDRESS**
Michael O'Mullan – O'Flynn Exham
Martino Corazzo IMAS & Alan Craughwell MASI



International Mixed Ability Sports (IMAS) is a not-for-profit organisation who advocate and advance the Mixed Ability model around the world.

Mixed Ability stemmed from the lack of opportunity for disabled people to take part in mainstream rugby, without being separated, classified, or identified, these were our earliest champions and continue to be the spokespeople for Mixed Ability sports. Building on the experience of the first English and Italian Mixed Ability rugby teams, IMAS was established in 2014 **with the vision of radically changing the way we think of, join in, and enjoy sports, leading to a fairer and more equal society.**

Co-production is at the heart of what we do. Since its inception, IMAS has worked with an ever-growing group of trainers from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities who have overcome barriers to participation and are therefore 'experts by experience'. These IMAS educators co-create all the Mixed Ability educational resources and co-deliver training to community sports clubs as well as organisations across the sports, healthcare, educational and private sectors focusing on inclusion, diversity, and the operationalisation of our model.

Over the years, Mixed Ability has grown beyond rugby and disability, becoming a social movement within grassroots sports, actively promoting equal rights and social inclusion through self-advocacy, practical participation, and a sense of belonging and membership to a group, team, or community club.

Mixed Ability aim to provide a safe, welcoming, and non-judgmental environment, emphasising regular, frequent, and sustainable activities, self-determination, club membership and opportunities for social interaction for everyone.

Currently, almost 20 disciplines have adopted or are trialling the Mixed Ability model, from rowing to basketball, football, and swimming in more than 15 countries. Internationally, IMAS operates directly or through partnerships across Europe, Canada, and South America, with new projects starting soon in Central Africa.

IMAS's vision is encompassed by the Mixed Ability Manifesto that has been signed by hundreds of individuals and organisations from grassroots communities to national and international bodies such as, England Rugby, Down España, Abilities Centre and the Activity Alliance. Amongst our partners and funders, we can count the European Commission, Sport England, the Universities of Leeds, Loughborough, Salamanca, A Coruña and Turin, as well as several sports NGBs such as England Boxing, British Rowing, the Irish and Italian Rugby Football Unions.

Our network of Mixed Ability trainers has educated thousands of coaches, sports clubs and governing bodies, ensuring that everyone, of any ability and life experience, is welcomed, valued and included as an equal into grassroots sports and competitions around the world.

If you want to know more, please visit www.mixedabilitiesports.org





RICHARD PHILPOTT
MA PARTICIPANT

Munster rugby and Spurs fan, Richard has been active in sport all his life with his local Special Olympics football team the Ballincollig Gunners. Having watched his cousins play rugby he always wanted to give it ago but felt he may not have been able to do so because of who he was.

Eight years ago, after attending a meeting about Mixed Ability rugby in Sunday's Well RFC he began his own journey in rugby.

As captain of the Sunday's Well Rebels side for IMART 22, Richard is a presenter with Mixed Ability Sports Ireland and is looking forward to sharing his experiences and the impact his involvement with mixed ability sport has had on him. His goal for the future is to encourage more people to get involved in mixed ability and for more sports in Ireland to have a mixed ability offering.



SAM (SAMUEL) PROWSE
MA PARTICIPANT

Sam works for Hertfordshire County Council adult disability service as an expert by experience advisor. Working alongside many different departments within the council as well as external organisations such as the Local Government Association UK, he has been involved in redesigning services, supporting choice and control for adults living with a Learning Disability and Autism to have a fulfilled life as possible.

As a strong advocate for civil rights and social action Sam has been able to couple this with his passion for sport through his work as a presenter with IMAS. His proudest moment in sport has been being able to pull on his team's jersey alongside his brother with their mixed ability rugby team the Letchworth Bravehearts.



MARIE HEALY
MA PARTICIPANT

Having watched her male peers enjoy and flourish through mixed ability sport Marie set about setting up Ireland's very first women's mixed ability rugby team. With help of her friend Ruby they roped in their Keywork Ciara to ensure that it was not just the men that had all the fun. Ballincollig Trailblazers was born.

Her sense of fun and her love for getting stuck into the tackles in rugby has seen her team grow they will compete in the first women's Mixed Ability Rugby tournament at IMART this year.

Outside of rugby Marie is an avid GAA fan and works in a busy Cork city centre restaurant as well as has been an occasional farmer. Her passion is to encourage women of all abilities to get involved in sport and she feels mixed ability offers that fun space to do so.



CATHERINE CARTY

**UNESCO CHAIR PROJECT MANAGER,
MUNSTER TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY MTU**

Catherine Carty is Manager of the UNESCO Chair in 'Transforming the lives of People with Disabilities their Families and Communities in Physical Education, Sport, Fitness & Recreation' at the Institute of Technology Tralee, Ireland. The work of the Chair ranges from policy to practice and has a global remit. The Chair has opened doors and created an opportunity to change the global

landscape as it addresses disability inclusion in and through sport. The UNESCO Chair under Catherine's leadership coordinates a global consortium advancing the inclusive specific policy actions of the Kazan Action Plan, this has representation from UN agencies, Multilateral agencies, State Parties, Sports Bodies, Academic Networks, NGOs and Civil Society Organisations, including UNESCO, UNDESA, UN Women, UNICEF, WHO, ILO, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the International Olympic Committee, Paralympic Committee, Special Olympics International, Deaf Olympics and more. Under this action the world first set of reporting tools and templates on sport and human rights has been developed and the support of UN treaty bodies and state parties on the use of these tools has been leveraged. These tools demonstrate how realising human rights through sport - open access to other rights for people with disabilities.

Catherine sits on the 2020 WHO Guidelines Development Group, where she Chairs the Disability subgroup for the new guidelines for Physical Activity. Catherine has also worked with WHO on the monitoring mechanism for the Global Action Plan on Physical Activity. In addition, Catherine sits on the steering committee, advisory group and technical committee working on Measuring the Contribution of Sport, Physical Education and Physical Activity to the Sustainable Development Goals. She is also on the Advisory Council of the Centre for Sport and Human Rights and the steering committee for UNESCO's global Survey on Physical Education. Catherine is research active and is currently supervising a Masters by Research project looking at how Multilateral Development Bank products can be leveraged in the area of sport. By invitation of the Asian Development Bank she has delivered sessions at the Banks forum on Non-Communicable Diseases in Manila as well as at the World Urban Forum in Bangkok.

Catherine has coordinated IT Tralee sessions in the UN Geneva, UNESCO Paris, UN New York and has spoken at the World Conference of Sports Ministers, the World Urban Forum, the Convention on the Rights of Persons With Disabilities Conference of State Parties, the Human Rights Social Forum, the African Regional Meeting on Kazan Action Plan Implementation and many other events across 5 continents over the last year. In 2019, Catherine, on behalf of her team, was the proud recipient of the America Chamber of Commerce Ireland/ Royal Irish Academy Research Innovation Award for Higher Education, for the UNESCO Chair project UFIT (Universal Fitness Innovation and Transformation). The Chair has opened doors and put IT Tralee on a very global map, Catherine is keen to leverage the opportunity that presents to level the playing field for all our benefit.



DR. JEN DYER

NIFTY SUSTAINABILITY

Dr. Jen Dyer is an Associate Professor in Sustainability at the University of Leeds, UK.

Jen's research focuses on inclusion and social justice and, as such, she has been delighted to be researching the Mixed Ability model from many different angles since 2014.

Jen's research always involves interactive, creative and accessible methods and a diverse range of stakeholder groups and participants in order to increase the relevance and impact of her findings.

Jen is a member of the Centre for Disability Studies and sits on the IMAS Mixed Ability Forum. She has also had the pleasure of taking part in a multitude of Mixed Ability activities over the years!



DR MARK PURVIS

FORMER DIRECTOR FOR POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION & HEAD OF SCHOOL OF PRIMARY CARE FOR YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER

Mark worked in the NHS as a General Practitioner in Bradford, Yorkshire, for almost forty years. He was a Trainer, Training Programme Director and GP Appraiser. In 2007 Mark took up the post of GP Director for Postgraduate Medical Education and Head of School of Primary Care for Yorkshire and the Humber, responsible for training the primary care workforce for a population of over 5 million people.

Mark worked for over a decade in this post where his interests included inter-professional learning, patient safety and workforce development across organisational boundaries.

Mark played rugby for a local grassroots rugby club, Baildon, before serving as Director of Rugby and Honorary Medical Officer for the club. Mark's first involvement with the Mixed Ability movement came in 2012 when his club played a fixture against Bumble Bees Barbarians Rugby Club. Through this Mark volunteered to help provide medical support for the first International Mixed Ability Rugby Tournament in Bradford in 2015, becoming the IMAS Medical Ambassador thereafter.

Mark took early retirement from the NHS and has served as Non Executive Director of IMAS from 2018. In this capacity Mark has guided IMAS to deliver training to the UK healthcare workforce from undergraduate to postgraduate level. This training has included workshops, blended learning and placement opportunities for physiotherapy, occupational therapy and medical students.

In 2018 Mark was the recipient of the President's Medal, awarded by the President of the Royal College of General Practitioners for contribution to General Practice. The citation referred to Mark's work on inclusion with IMAS.

Mark has experienced the benefits of participation in Mixed Ability Sports including: rugby, swimming, boxing, running, cricket, kin-ball, rowing, dance and tennis. Mark believes that we must take an asset based approach to inclusion in sports and frame risk in the context of the benefits of exercise, autonomy, capacity and consent.

ABILITIES CENTRE

Abilities Centre is a Canadian not-for-profit organization committed to building inclusive and accessible communities. Using our multi-award winning, fully accessible 125,000 square foot facility in Whitby, Ontario as an inclusion incubator, we develop evidence-based programs and services that can be scaled locally, provincially, nationally and globally.

Abilities Centre enhances the quality of life and citizenship for people of all ages and abilities by providing inclusive programs and services of the highest quality and value. We support members of the community, no matter their ability, age or background, to improve their quality of life by positively impacting health & wellbeing, social inclusion and economic participation.

As a community hub, research lab and inclusion incubator, we engage over 100,000 visitors each year in local and regional evidence-based programs, lead research and advocacy on inclusion issues, and develop innovative frameworks for programs that are replicable and scalable to communities across Canada. Abilities Centre is committed to building accessible and inclusive communities through programs and services in the areas of education, employment, sport, recreation & leisure, research and life skills.

Our local and national reach and impact of our programs is an example of our model of accessibility and inclusion in action, providing a framework and foundation for improving approaches and outcomes for community engagement and participation. Beyond our regional services, we are delivering programs that are innovative, scalable, and transferable to other communities across Canada.

In February 2020, Abilities Centre signed a partnership with International Mixed Ability Sports (IMAS) to become the exclusive developers and delivery agents of Mixed Ability Sport in Canada. Through collaborative work with Rugby Ontario and the Oshawa Vikings over the past 3 years, our team is proud to become the first Canadian team to participate in IMART. Through the international conference: 'The Future of Mixed Ability: for Sport and beyond!', Abilities Centre team will be represented by:



Stuart McReynolds, President & CEO

Kelly Kasper, Director, Sport & Recreation

Jessica Cunha, Senior Coordinator, Mixed Ability Sport

Mikaeli Cavell, Research Supervisor

Elliot Smith, Athlete and Inclusion in Sport team member

Sheldon Gaboury, Athlete and Inclusion in Sport team member



ANNEMARIE HUGHES

IRFU

Fabian is a psychologist specialised in the field of disabilities, and currently member of INICO (Instituto por la Integración en la Comunidad), at the University of Salamanca – Spain.

He teaches 'Psychology of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities' at IES Abroad Foundation, in Salamanca, and holds extensive experience in the sport sector. As a sport psychologist, he works with both grassroots and professional teams, providing psychological counsel to athletes, coaches,

and families across a wide range of disciplines such as football, taekwondo, archery, gymnastics, and basketball. He also provides sport psychology training to coaches and referees in the of Castilla y León football federation.

In 2018 he joined the research team investigating the impact of Mixed Ability rugby across Europe, funded by the Erasmus+ Sport project (MIXAR) and, more recently, has decided to actively support the Spanish-based IMAS Europe in order to spread the concept, values and activities of Mixed Ability sports.

FABIAN SAINZ MODINOS

INICO

Fabian is a psychologist specialised in the field of disabilities, and currently member of INICO (Instituto por la Integración en la Comunidad), at the University of Salamanca – Spain.

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NIGEL GREEN

LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY



Nigel Green is currently a physical education and physical literacy consultant having been a Senior Lecturer in Physical Education at Liverpool John Moores University. He taught physical education in four secondary schools for 29 years prior to this, during this time he led three departments, a faculty (including PE, Art, Music, Dance and Drama) and a networked community. Nigel has been involved in training teachers and providing professional development for over thirty years, in

the UK and more recently in India, Brazil, Taiwan and other countries worldwide. As Chair of the International Physical Literacy Association and Vice Chair of the North Western Counties Physical Education Association, Nigel demonstrates a commitment and passion to promote and support the development of physical education and physical literacy worldwide. He has written articles, delivered CPD, organised and presented at workshops, webinars and conferences on physical literacy and physical education. Nigel is editor of the Research Matters section of the AfPE journal, Physical Education Matters and is currently working with schools, organisations and governments both in the UK and across the world.

BARRY HORNE

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF ACTIVITY ALLIANCE



Barry Horne is the Chief Executive of Activity Alliance, the National charity which works to get more disabled people active across England. With a vision to achieve "Fairness for disabled people in sport and activity", the organisation's twin objectives are to change attitudes towards disabled people in sport and activity and to embed inclusive practice into organisations. Barry has led the transformation, significant growth, and increased impact of the organisation he joined in

2010 (then named the English Federation of Disability Sport).

Barry's former role was as a Corporate Director in a large City Council but has worked in a range of roles including as Chief Executive of the East Midlands Regional Assembly and Regional Local Government Association.

Barry's early career was in the community and voluntary sector and he is delighted to be heading up a National charity, which plays such a vital role. He is passionate about helping more people to understand the critical role which active recreation can play in improving disabled people's lives.

A HISTORY OF MIXED ABILITY

It's long been the established 'norm' that if disabled people want to become involved in sports, they should be separated into alternative or adapted provision, competing, and exercising with similarly disabled peers. In this sense, sport has been a reflection of the wider exclusion disabled people and other groups face in society.

Amongst all sports, though, rugby has always had a more inclusive culture



Amongst all sports, though, rugby has always had a more inclusive culture, perhaps because players of all shapes, sizes and skills have a very specific role and function within a team, and the emphasis is placed on shared core values and mutual support, underpinned by a strong social element.

In the heartland of Wales, over twenty-five years ago, adults with physical and learning disabilities were already playing full contact rugby with their friends, family and staff from social care groups, because here, the fact of playing rugby was a normal occurrence. Those experiences of the Swansea Gladiators and Llanelli Warriors, kickstarted the growth of Mixed Ability rugby in England. Specialist tutors and rugby coaches Mark Goodwin and Martino Corazza began to work with disabled rugby players in the classroom to co-produce guides, educational resources, and promotional materials for community rugby clubs across Europe. Building on their background in teaching, education, and social care, and the growth of new teams like the Bumble Bees in England and Chivasso Rugby in Italy, International Mixed Ability Rugby (IMAS) was born.

2015 represented the tipping point, with the model and its roll out supported by England Rugby in the lead up to 2015 Rugby World Cup. In the same year IMAS organised the first International Mixed Ability Rugby Tournament in Bradford, harnessing the benefits of a growing interest and an extensive network. The event saw the participation of 400 players from 10 different

countries, showcasing a new route to inclusion. IMART raised awareness about Mixed Ability to a global stage. With Rugby World Magazine reporting that these 'new' players were "just another team" within community clubs, signalling the right of disabled people to be included in the rugby family as equals, to enjoy the same mainstream full contact version of the game.

The success of the first world tournament led to IMAS being awarded funding from Sport England to replicate the model across 7 additional sports with its impact being evaluated by the University of Leeds and Loughborough. Simultaneously, with support from Europe through Erasmus+, IMAS were able to run trials in different sports and transfer and share learning on the continent.

The continuous expansion of the activities and the increasing focus on sport as a vehicle for social change led to the establishment of Mixed Ability Sports Ireland (MAS) and IMAS Europe, as well as to the creation of several strategic partnerships with organisations like the Activity Alliance in England and Abilities Centre in Canada promoting the message to a wider audience.



2022 sees us celebrating the biggest Mixed Ability event to date, the 3rd International Mixed Ability Rugby Tournament

2022 sees us celebrating the biggest Mixed Ability event to date, the 3rd International Mixed Ability Rugby Tournament hosted by Sundays Well RFC and jointly coordinated with Mixed Ability Sports Ireland. This is your opportunity to watch the rapidly developing clubs in Argentina and other South American countries, the first MA teams evolving out of Canada, or the inaugural International Mixed Ability Regatta! Enjoy sport for all, enjoy inclusion, this is Mixed Ability.

"I supported my local team for years. They would not let me play, they thought I would get hurt. Of course we get hurt, it's part of the game!"

– Anthony Brooke
Bumble Bees RUFC founder



ANTHONY BROOKE



BRIAN ROGAN

"Mixed Ability Rugby to me is being part of team, as a family and getting stuck in on the pitch with my cousin beside me."

– Brian Rogan
Malone Tornadoes

"I never thought I would get back playing sport, but mixed ability has given me that chance again."

– Ciara Ahern Ballincollig
Trail blazers



CIARA AHERN BALLINCOLLIG

THE IMPACTS OF MIXED ABILITY

(Research conducted by University of Leeds, University of Loughborough, University of Salamanca, Nifty Sustainability)

THE MA MODEL

Peer education underpins the whole process. Resources are co-developed and training is co-delivered by participants who have benefited from playing MA sports themselves. This ensures realistic role models are present highlighting their diverse backgrounds and the range of barriers that have been overcome for them to participate in sport.

Advocacy



Co-production

Peer education



SPORT

Individual participant benefits



- + Physical wellbeing
- + Social networks
- + Friendship
- + Personal development

Club-level benefits



- + Increased membership numbers and diversity
- + Perception shifts around social difference and ability
- + Inclusive club environment

Community-level benefits



- + Healthier, happier and more inclusive communities through increased participation in sport
- + Breaking down barriers to participation in sport

Bradford Amateur Rowing Club (BARC)

BARC was the first rowing club to embrace Mixed Ability rowing as part of the Mixed Ability Sports Development Programme (MASDP) led by IMAS and funded by Sport England. The club is known for being friendly and welcoming, but wanted to become more inclusive and better represent the community.

Despite early concerns around risk and worries about communication with disabled participants, IMAS supported BARC to gradually develop a strong Mixed Ability rowing squad. At the club-level, this has resulted in a more accessible club culture, improved communication and an additional welcoming space for those who

are struggling to participate in other rowing squads. There was also ample evidence of perception shifts around disability:

"I'll be honest and say I was expecting [the Mixed Ability beginners] to be slower to get to this level. One thing I wasn't sure about was how good their coordination and balance would be. And with both of them their balance is superb which makes a huge difference. As I've got to know them, I can see they spend every day being very active - probably much more so than an adult with a desk job."

Member of the BARC Mixed Ability rowing squad

HEALTH

Since 2019 IMAS has been providing experiential opportunities for healthcare students and practitioners including social workers, physiotherapy students and medical students. Impacts of these learning opportunities have been tracked across practitioner cohorts and include:

- A greater understanding and application of healthcare concepts such as the social model of disability, assets-based and patient-centred approaches and social prescribing
- An insight into individual experiences and impacts of disability, particularly related to accessing health care.
- Challenging perceptions of disability and how access to physical activity can be a valuable and effective healthcare option.

"[I'm] more aware of inequalities and disadvantages within the community and able to communicate better with people. Also having an idea of the options that are out there in the community to support patients."

Emma, 3rd Year Medical Student, Sheffield University

"My placement provided a unique opportunity I wouldn't have normally got in my training... [I've gained a] better awareness of the issues people with disabilities face in society and healthcare and what I can do to help that situation"

Daniel, 3rd Year Sheffield University Medical Student

WIDER SOCIETAL IMPACT

As a result of the above activities the Mixed Ability model is having fundamental impacts on society.

- shifts in perceptions of dis/ability
- raised awareness of potential barriers to participation
- enhanced communication

THE MIXED ABILITY MODEL: CONTRIBUTING TO THE SDGs AND A MORE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

The 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represent an urgent call for action and are at the core of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. There are clear links between IMAS work and the SDGs. Exploring these links is important given the SDGs represent a useful and well-recognised framing for how IMAS contributes to a more sustainable future!

There are five SDGs with which IMAS' work interacts directly:



Mixed Ability Sports Ireland was founded in 2021 by Alan Craughwell to lead the way in promoting the Mixed Ability model on the island of Ireland. Since starting his journey with Mixed Ability 9 years ago, Alan was the key driver behind the formation of Ireland's first Mixed Ability rugby team at Sunday's Well Rebels.

Alan has an extensive knowledge of disability and social care and has been a key player in the European growth of the Mixed Ability movement working with International Mixed Ability Sports (IMAS) through some EU funded projects. Current Chair of the Irish Rugby Football Union Disability Rugby Working Group and Director of IMART Cork, he has also played a pivotal role in securing Ireland as the host for the 3rd International Mixed Ability Rugby Tournament and looks forward to extending the famous Irish welcome the largest Mixed Ability event to date this June.

As Managing Director of Mixed Ability Sports Ireland, Alan is responsible for developing the Mixed Ability Model across multiple sports and sectors, whilst also playing a key role in contributing to overall global development with International Mixed Ability Sports (IMAS).



ALAN CRAUGHWELL
MIXED ABILITY SPORTS IRELAND

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