

WASSERMAN'S COLLECTIVE LAUNCHES THINK TANK DEDICATED TO ADVANCING WOMEN IN SPORTS

First-of-its-kind initiative partners academic institutions, brands, properties, and media companies to share data, insights and information to drive real action toward a world of parity

Los Angeles, CA (September 21, 2020) – The Collective, Wasserman's women-focused division, is launching The Collective Think Tank: a global consortium of some of today's greatest academic minds and industry leaders focused on gender parity and improving diversity. A first of its kind, this group will share data, insights and information to promote more opportunity for women to succeed in sports. The Collective Think Tank's focus will be on cultivating partnerships between universities and researchers, as well as brands, properties and media companies to educate and create solution-based strategies for industry-changing activations, campaigns and platforms.

On the heels of The Collective's one-year anniversary, The Think Tank will research the inequities of women in sports to garner insights that inform new approaches that will change the future. The group will publish ongoing thought leadership across a multitude of topics that affect women in sports to raise awareness of issues among fans, consumers and participants.

The Collective Think Tank will launch this fall with ten research projects focused on the many facets of a woman's fandom (consumption, purchasing power, effects of social justice) and how women who work in the business of sport are represented (sexism, lived experiences of underrepresented women). Several of those projects will be led by students, the future generation of sports marketers, while the balance will be led by the expertise of faculty academics. These efforts will be complemented by a series of white papers, starting next week with *The New Power Players: How Gen Z and Millennial Women are Poised for Dominance*, followed by a look into women sports fans in partnership with espnW in October.

The group is jointly led by Thayer Lavielle, EVP, The Collective, and Shelley Pisarra, EVP, Wasserman Global Insights and Strategies. "The opportunity to partner with some of the world's leading experts in the field is a privilege. To provide data and insights, coupled with the participation of brands, properties and media partners who can provide actionable solutions to these insights, is exciting beyond belief," says Lavielle. "Ultimately, with this group, we aim to better the ecosystem for the many women who participate therein."

Comprising 10 university partners, listed below, The Collective Think Tank spans the globe. The entity will also work in concert with brand partners such as AT&T, Concacaf, espnW, EVERFI, Nationwide, and Royal Bank of Canada (RBC), who support research around the women's sports landscape. Wasserman's representation of over 160 of the world's most elite women in sports means The Collective Think Tank can also draw upon their seasons of experience, where needed.

"Women in sports – as participants, fans and consumers – currently face inequities ranging from a lack of exposure, to limited access and pay, and everything in between. Our goal with the Think Tank is to uncover the underlying basis for these inequities and address them head-on to set women on a clearer path to parity," said Pisarra. "We want to look at all angles of the industry and, by tapping into an incredible group of academic experts, we feel confident we can make a tangible, positive change."

"The Collective Think Tank represents the first time women sport scholars have come together along with industry experts to work on challenges collectively by using the strengths each group brings to

create a stronger, more formidable, organized voice for the advancement of women's sport, valuing women as consumers and athletes," said Nancy Lough, Professor & Co-Director, Sport Research & Innovation Initiative at University of Nevada, Las Vegas, speaking on behalf of the group of academics.

Launched in July of 2019, The Collective has already partnered with brands including AT&T, Orreco/FitrWoman, Snow Monkey, Concacaf and the International Cricket Council, while serving insights across a multitude of other clients. Additionally, The Collective has acted as a connection point between women athletes and the many brands with which they are partners.

PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

Ohio University College of Business

Ted Rogers School of Management at Ryerson University (Canada)

University of Oregon

University of Nevada, Las Vegas: Sport Research & Innovation Initiative

Gordon S. Lang School of Business and Economics at the University of Guelph (Canada)

University of Massachusetts Amherst: Isenberg School of Management

University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

University of South Florida: Muma College of Business

Sports Business Club at the University St. Gallen (Switzerland)

Dr. Jacqueline McDowell, Associate Professor of Sport Management, George Mason University:
School of Sport, Recreation and Tourism Management

ABOUT WASSERMAN

Wasserman is a partner to the world's most iconic brands, properties and talent in their endeavors across sports, entertainment and culture. Our purpose is to transform the businesses and careers of clients. Founded in 2002 and headquartered in Los Angeles, Wasserman operates globally in more than 20 cities, including London, New York, Toronto, Raleigh, Carlsbad, The Hague, Portland and Shanghai. Learn more at [TeamWass.com](https://www.teamwass.com) and follow us on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

ADDENDUM: ADDITIONAL QUOTES

If we aren't collectively focused on the future, we will fail as an industry. It's our obligation as professors, researchers, mentors and leaders in the sport and entertainment field to stop doing what's been done before. It's time to embrace the change we see coming and empower our students to think differently. The Collective Think Tank is an avenue for the best in the field to tackle this immense challenge together. None of us can create change by doing it on our own.

Many professors tout industry experiences as being essential learning tools; however, many students still lack access and opportunities to engage in real-world learning to help in their success. By collaborating with industry experts at Wasserman, leading sport and entertainment properties and other world-class education institutions, we will not only open up new opportunities for students, but challenge them to creatively solve pressing issues for women in sport. We're molding and shaping our future leaders ... change starts now for both female and male students.

Danielle Kushner Smith

Teaching Assistant Professor | University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill

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The AECOM Center for Sports Administration is a global leader in sport business education that has more than 50 years of history preparing the next generation of sport leaders. With Wasserman establishing The Collective Think Tank, the OHIO team of faculty and students are thrilled to collaborate with other leading institutions and Wasserman industry experts to take on projects and initiatives that move the sport industry forward, focusing on elevating female athletes, consumers, and executives.

All of the Wasserman Student Research Fellows are being tasked with contributing to the projects being conducted by The Collective Think Tank. They are expected to take calculated risks, make meaningful contributions, and be part of the projects from start to finish. Providing their work to Wasserman and the Faculty Research Fellows pushes them to further develop their professionalism, and expectations are high from all involved.

Heather Lawrence

Professor, Sports Administration | Ohio University

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The culture of sports and entertainment is shifting. Traditional content delivery models are evolving in response to changing consumer behaviors and the next generation of sports fans is not only more diverse than ever, they have been groomed to expect equality. The Collective Think Tank is an innovative initiative that will provide thought leadership in sport by bridging the gap between academia and industry. This is an opportunity to develop collaborative, solutions-based research that can be leveraged to guide the world of sport forward and give women's sport the spotlight it deserves.

This partnership will provide students with invaluable learning opportunities that will enable them to work on real-world challenges in sport. The Collective Think Tank will provide students with access to industry leaders and allow them to be on the forefront of research that will foster systemic change.

Dr. Katie Lebel

Sport Business Professor | Ted Rogers School of Management, Ryerson University

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By studying the business of women's sport over time, I've realized the moral imperative used to support women's sport as a socially just effort is no longer sufficient. Initially, Title IX created awareness and increased sport participation. Today, the imperative must be an economically based value proposition.

Women's sport and women consumers have attained a new level of status and are now situated as a force to be reckoned with. These are arguments driving a new model that we are working to create, test and validate as the way forward for women's sports and women athletes.

Dr. Nancy Lough

Professor & Co-Director, Sport Research & Innovation Initiative | University of Nevada, Las Vegas

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Gender equality is good business. Research shows that organizations with women in the C-Suite perform better, and there is evidence that gender equality, particularly in education and employment, contributes to overall economic growth. Therefore, the Collective Think Tank and its focus on gender equality in sport and entertainment has the opportunity to make a substantial contribution, I am keen to be involved in the coming transformation.

At the University of Guelph and the Lang School of Business and Economics, student engagement is fundamental to learning and research. At U of G, we are committed to focusing on the "whole student," and providing our graduates with the tools and skills to make a difference in our ever-changing world – the Collective Think Tank experience will do just that by providing Lang students with the opportunity to tackle real world issues and contribute to changing the sport industry.

Dr. Ann Pegoraro

Lang Chair in Sport Management | University of Guelph

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The power of female consumers and sports fans has never been stronger. And the role of women as fans and sport gatekeepers will only become more prominent in a post-COVID 19 world. Quite simply, if brands across all sectors don't maintain a timely, robust and nuanced understanding of female consumers, those businesses won't thrive. The Collective Think Tank will be a tool for relevance and growth among female athletes, consumers and business leaders.

It is exciting to see a prominent industry leader make a definitive statement about the power of women as fans, consumers and leaders. The success of The Collective Think Tank lays bare what we know: critically understanding the wants and needs of women and serving them authentically is not only the right thing to do; it is good business.

Whitney Wagoner

Director, Warsaw Sports Marketing Center | University of Oregon

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At the UMass Amherst's Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management, in the Isenberg School of Management, we are committed to experiential learning and a curriculum rooted in diversity, equity, and inclusion. Being a part of The Collective Think Tank allows us to leverage the power of multiple institutions and researchers, in our efforts to produce industry-changing research and insights on the economic power and influence of women in sports.

As a Black woman, who studies culture and sexism in sport, I know that the full potential of women is not being realized by sport culture, which traditionally has: not welcomed women as fans, neglected women as powerful consumers, and obstructed the path of women leaders. However, times are changing, and sport culture is evolving. The Collective Think Tank is leading the way towards realizing the full significance of women in sport, and I am excited to be a part of this movement.

Nefertiti A. Walker, PhD

Vice Chancellor, CDO, and Professor | University of Massachusetts Amherst

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Being at the forefront of culture and civic change, sport is one of the most powerful, popular, and unifying social institutions in the world; yet, the promise of sport remains unfulfilled for girls and women, so today I'm excited to collaborate with my esteemed colleagues and thought leaders to help change this narrative for and with the next generation.

Students of today are the leaders of tomorrow, so it is important for us to create a culture of learning that will inspire and empower future generations. Through our collective effort, students, practitioners, and scholars have a unique opportunity to engage in an iterative, design-based research process where we can learn from and with one another.

Janelle E. Wells, Ph.D.

Associate Professor | University of South Florida

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As the sport industry and sport business modelling is changing, it is crucially important to continue to support and promote the rich breadth and scope of the opportunities and most solid footprint of the female sport market. The Think Tank is without a doubt positioned to be a leader in forming the thought-leadership and action in this space, and I'm so pleased to be invited to the group.

I'm thrilled to be included in this leading North American initiative in this regard, which will be a lightning rod in bringing together thought leaders and key stakeholders in advancing the important female agenda in sport.

Dr. Cherie L. Bradish

Professor, Founder | Future of Sport Lab

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The Collective Think Tank is an important collaborative initiative that brings together voices from academia and the sports industry to amplify research and teaching efforts pertaining to women in sport. Issues facing women in sport—especially women with marginalized identities—tend to be relegated in conversations about sport. Hence, as a scholar who focuses on the experiences of women in athletic leadership and coaching, I am excited to join The Collective Think Tank to provide George Mason University students with opportunities to solve pressing issues facing women in sport and to broaden the reach and impact of my scholarly products.

Dr. Jacqueline McDowell

Associate Professor of Sport Management | George Mason University: School of Sport, Recreation and Tourism Management

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We need to think differently to make sure that sports with its values and visions remain dynamic, as sports itself and the world around it changes. By bridging the gap between academic knowledge and business through a tour de force of collaborative and intergenerational effort, the Collective Think Tank excels in promoting topics and ideas that matters.

Alma Antonia Botten

Student Research Fellow | Sports Business Club at the University of St. Gallen

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Our collaboration with the Collective Think Tank represents an incredible opportunity for our students, as it prepares young, bright minds for a career in the sports industry. And, like the Collective, we are convinced that the future will be shaped by a tour de force of collaborative, intergenerational effort.

Enya Dietze

Student Research Fellow | Sports Business Club at the University of St. Gallen