



# April 2024

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Football on the Brain newsletter

*Welcome to the latest edition of the Football on the Brain newsletter. This newsletter is sent every 3-4 months to Football on the Brain partner organisations and University of Oxford members who are involved in or interested in the project.*

*It is also available for download on our website.*

*Please feel free to forward it to your colleagues, or encourage them to sign up to the newsletter mailing list by emailing [hanna.smyth@ndcn.ox.ac.uk](mailto:hanna.smyth@ndcn.ox.ac.uk). In this month's edition below you will find updates about the various strands of the project, including ways to get involved and stay in touch.*



**FOOTBALL**  
ON THE BRAIN



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## Staff training for Football Beyond Borders

In January, our team members Louise Aukland (Education Lead) and Morgan Mitchell (Neuroscience PhD student) delivered training sessions in London and Manchester for Football Beyond Borders staff, on the connection between neuroscience and football.

Sessions included both classroom work and pitch practicals. Louise later ran a 1hr staff training session for Ignite using some of the resources.

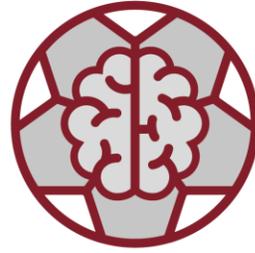
### **FBB staff feedback:**

*"I learned so much and I will be doing the activities with our young people"*

*"Allows us to work science and understanding into fun, engaging sessions"*

*"Visual and physical examples of the theory we have been working on"*





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## Oxford United in the Community primary schools tournament

Our partner Oxford United in the Community invited us to bring our football-and-neuroscience "roadshow activities" to their primary schools tournament in Oxford on a (near-freezing!) day in late November.

Throughout the day, we engaged several dozen year 5-6 students from local schools, who came to us in between their matches. This was our first time piloting the roadshow activities with students this age, so it was a great learning experience for our team too, As we continue to refine the activities.



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## 2024 Sports Engagement Ambassadors announced

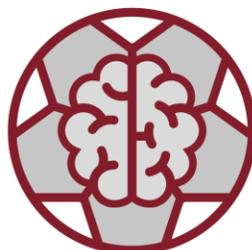
Following a successful pilot year in 2023, for 2024 we have recruited a second cohort of Sports Engagement Ambassadors. They will develop and deliver activities that connect research with various sport audiences.

Welcome to our 2024 ambassadors:

- Andrew Spires (Biology)
- Holly Jenkins (Education)
- Izabelle Lövgren (Neuroscience)
- M Garrido Davies (Biochemistry)
- RuoHan Liu (Neuroscience)

All of the ambassadors are also athletes.





# FOOTBALL ON THE BRAIN

**WHAT MAKES YOU TICK?**

Your circadian rhythm is a 24-hour body clock, orchestrated by the brain. It controls all your bodily processes!

Use the diagram to learn more about the effects of the circadian rhythm, and what that means for your football performance across the day.

SCAN THE QR CODE AND WATCH THE VIDEO TO FIND OUT MORE.

**18:00**  
HIGHEST BODY TEMPERATURE  
GREATEST CARDIOVASCULAR EFFICIENCY & MUSCLE STRENGTH  
BEST COORDINATION  
FOOTBALL PERFORMANCE IS OPTIMAL LATER IN THE DAY

**NOON**  
HIGHEST ALERTNESS & THINKING SKILLS

**06:00**  
LOWEST BODY TEMPERATURE  
ADENOSINE, a 'tiredness chemical', starts low in the morning and rises during the day as we get more tired.

**MIDNIGHT**  
SLEEP IS IMPORTANT FOR RECOVERY  
MELATONIN is a hormone that is released to promote sleep, so is high in the evening and low in the morning.

CHEMICAL CHANGES: ADENOSINE LEVELS NOW HIGH; MELATONIN RELEASE STARTS TO RISE

CHEMICAL CHANGES: MELATONIN RELEASE SLOWS AND ADENOSINE LEVELS ARE LOW

THIS IS A TYPICAL EXAMPLE FOR SOMEONE WHO WAKES UP AROUND 7AM AND GOES TO BED AROUND 10PM

PAGE 4

PAGE 5

## SheKicks magazine inserts

Did you know we have written two Football on the Brain themed inserts for SheKicks magazine, in 2022 and 2023?

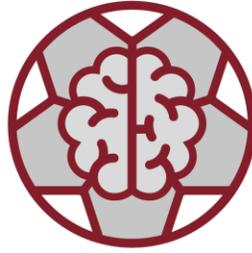
Planning for the 2024 insert, themed "Injury prevention and recovery", is now underway – it will be released later this spring.

You can download both prior inserts from our project website.

<https://footballonthebrain.uk/resources>



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ON THE BRAIN

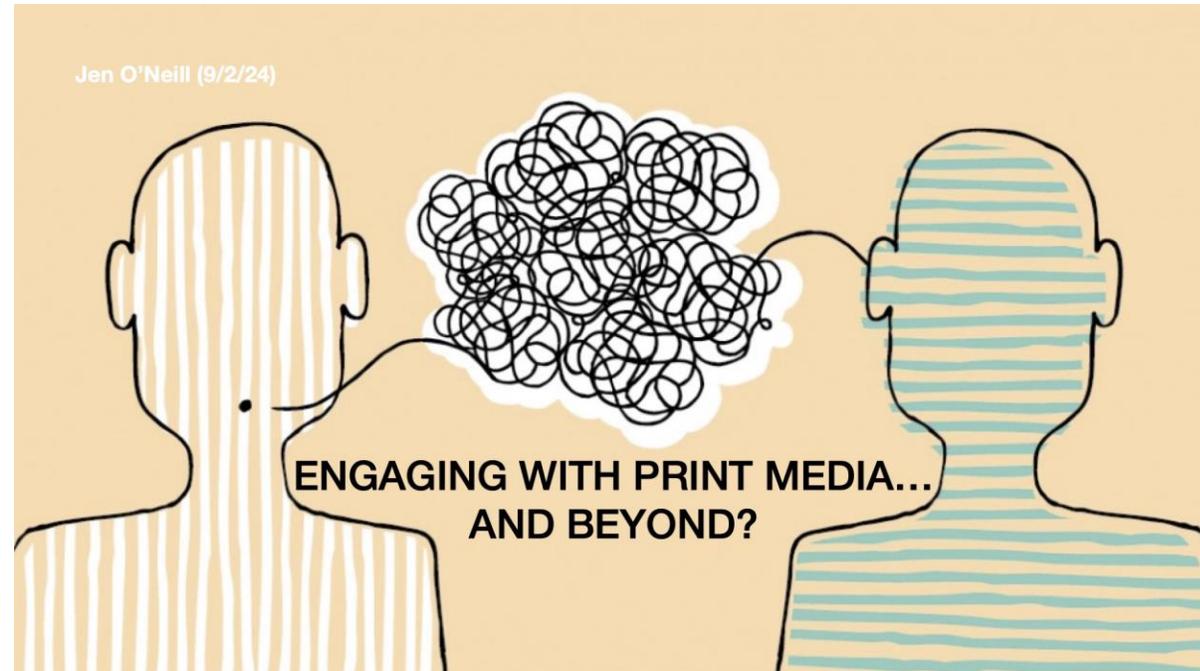


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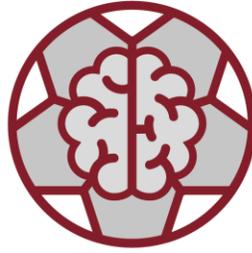
## Ambassador training with Jen O'Neill

On 9 February we welcomed Jen O'Neill from SheKicks magazine to our research centre at the University of Oxford, where she delivered a very thorough and interactive training session for our Engagement Ambassadors on “Engaging with print media and beyond”.

She covered practical tips including the “chain of promotion”, teaching the Ambassadors how to “start small and then amplify”. Thanks Jen for such a helpful session!



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## Partner meeting – 23 April

Representatives from all Football on the Brain partner organisations have been invited to attend a partner meeting on 23 April at the University of Oxford, to mark the halfway point of the project.

The event will feature project updates, pitch practicals, MRI scanner demos and discussion groups on future plans for the project and its legacy.

**FOOTBALL ON THE BRAIN  
PARTNER MEETING**

10AM-12PM PRESENTATIONS & PITCH PRACTICALS

12 -1:30PM LUNCH AND MRI SCANNER DEMOS

1:30-2:45PM DISCUSSION GROUPS ON FUTURE PLANS

2:45-3:00PM WRAP-UP AND DEPARTURE

**TUESDAY 23 APRIL 2024**  
10AM-3PM



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## **Come see us at the Bannister Miles Fair on Monday 6 May!**

Football on the Brain will be an exhibitor at the Bannister Miles Fair in Oxford on the upcoming Bank Holiday Monday. The Fair and associated events will be "celebrating the 70th anniversary of Sir Roger Bannister running the first sub-four-minute mile. This will take place at the venue where it all began, Iffley Road in 1954."

4000 attendees are expected and other activities include a Community Mile, a pop-up museum, and track races.

<https://www.bannistermiles.org.uk/> for more info and tickets



Image via <https://www.bannistermiles.org.uk/>



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## Keep in touch

The Football on the Brain website tracks all strands of the project, has blog posts about related topics and links to resources the project has developed. You can now read the [latest post](#), with more info about the 2024 Sports Engagement Ambassadors.

You can also follow along with the latest updates on Twitter and Instagram (@FootballOnBrain). We are always open to suggestions (or submissions) from project partners for the blog, so please do get in touch with [hanna.smyth@ndcn.ox.ac.uk](mailto:hanna.smyth@ndcn.ox.ac.uk) if you have an idea. The next edition of this newsletter will be sent in early summer 2024.



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