

November 2023

Football on the Brain newsletter

Welcome to the latest edition of the Football on the Brain newsletter. This newsletter is sent every ~3 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, for anyone interested in the project.

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. 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.



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Football Beyond Borders tournament

Our partner Football Beyond Borders invited us to bring our football-and-neuroscience "roadshow activities" to their summer residential tournament in July.

Throughout the day, we engaged 100+ teenagers from the boys' and girls' tournaments. This was the first time we'd tested the roadshow activities outdoors and at such a large scale, providing us with a great opportunity to adapt and develop them further.

We enjoyed speaking to the players about their football and neuroscience questions, and hope to return next year!



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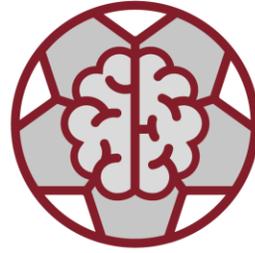
'Meeting Minds' alumni event

In September, we brought a 14-person team to the University of Oxford's alumni weekend. Following football neuroscience talks by Heidi Johansen-Berg, Holly Bridge, Louise Aukland, and Morgan Mitchell, audience members tried out our "roadshow activities", games combining football and neuroscience.

Thanks to the players from the Oxford University Association Football Club who also joined us in delivering this session.



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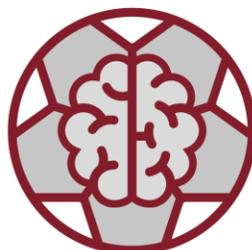
SDG Impact Lab x FotB visit

On 2 November, we were delighted to host 29 year 8 students from Greyfriars school in Oxford, as part of the Oxford Sport Leaders Programme coordinated by the university's SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) Impact Lab.

The students participated in a hands-on mix of football and neuroscience activities and talks, including an MRI scanner demo at our research centre.



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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.

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

MIDNIGHT
LOWEST BODY TEMPERATURE
SLEEP IS IMPORTANT FOR RECOVERY

06:00
CHEMICAL CHANGES: MELATONIN RELEASE SLOWS AND ADENOSINE LEVELS ARE LOW

NOON
HIGHEST ALERTNESS & THINKING SKILLS

Melatonin is a hormone that is released to promote sleep, so is high in the evening and low in the morning.

Adenosine, a 'tiredness chemical', starts low in the morning and rises during the day as we get more tired.

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

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

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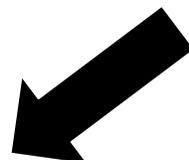
SheKicks magazine inserts

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

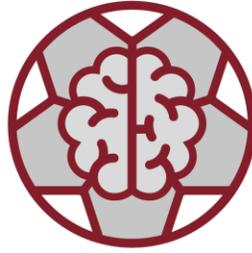
The latest insert was released this past summer, and is all about time zones, jet lag, and circadian rhythm (to coincide with the Women's World Cup matches).

You can download both inserts from our project website.

<https://footballonthebrain.uk/resources>



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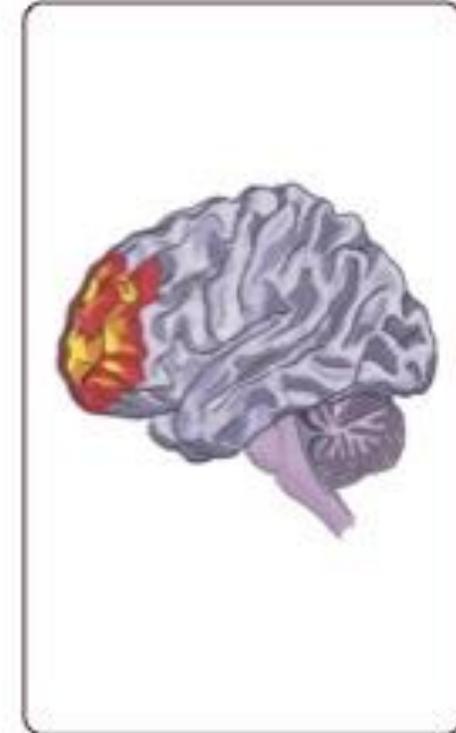
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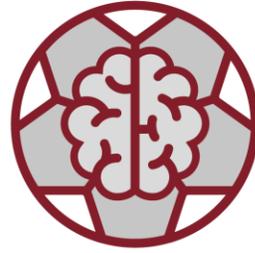
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'Football Snap' card game

In summer 2023, our new educational card game 'Football Snap' finished production. With cards depicting football actions and the corresponding brain areas that are activated, the cards can be used to play the traditional card game 'snap', or used as a memory game.

The cards will be used in our Football on the Brain roadshow activities with a variety of audiences, and are also suitable for classroom settings.





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Now recruiting – 2024 Sports Engagement Ambassadors

Applications opened on 1 November (deadline 30 November) for our 2024 cohort of Sports Engagement Ambassadors. Building on the success of our first cohort in 2023, the 2024 Ambassadors will explore ways to engage a variety of audiences with research through their chosen sport.

The 2023 Ambassadors contributed to nearly every strand of Football on the Brain activities – including the SheKicks magazine insert, youth module for Ignite Sport, and roadshow events – and the project has benefited immensely from their expertise and enthusiasm.

Applications are open to researchers (including students) at the University of Oxford with interest or experience in a sport.

Apply via the QR code on the right



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New: Football on the Brain trailer video

September 2023 saw the premiere of our new trailer video. Skillfully shot and edited by our collaborators Youth Beyond Borders, the video provides a quick and high-energy glimpse into the range of activities currently undertaken by Football on the Brain.

<https://vimeo.com/878361956>



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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 on ACL injury in women's football](#).

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 if you have an idea. The next edition of this newsletter will be sent in February 2024.



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