

John Boccacino:

Hello, and welcome back to the 'Cuse Conversations Podcast. I'm John Boccacino, senior internal communications specialist at Syracuse University.

Jeremy Jordan:

We thought it's a real opportunity to focus on the business and science of sport moving forward and to leverage the variance within the industry to provide opportunities for students to create thought leadership and create new knowledge in terms of the scholarship that we do.

And so year over year, sport continues to grow. We continually see new parts, new segments of the industry. Most recently, the growth of women's sport has been really significant and impactful, and it's exciting for Falk College because that's an opportunity for us to focus on a particular segment and really work with new and emerging leagues as they grow.

John Boccacino:

Well, our guest on this episode of the 'Cuse Conversations Podcast, he is Jeremy Jordan, Dean of the Falk College of Sport, who is helping to pave the way and further Falk College's national reputation as a global leader in the field of sports and applied health.

On July 1st, Syracuse University made history by launching the David B. Falk College of Sport, the first-of-its-kind research institution to focus exclusively on sports-related disciplines. Falk College now stands alone as a visionary leader at the intersection of academic excellence and industry innovation.

And Dean Jordan is kind enough to join us here on the podcast to discuss these exciting changes happening in Falk. Jeremy, thanks for making the time today.

Jeremy Jordan:

John, thanks for having me. I'm very excited to be here with you and to talk about what's happening with the Falk College of Sport.

John Boccacino:

Before we kind of dive into some of the new changes here at Falk, give our audience a little background on yourself and how you wound up here at Syracuse as the dean?

Jeremy Jordan:

Yeah. Starting my third year this fall at Syracuse University. Prior to that, I was at Temple University in Philadelphia. I had various roles, from faculty, to administration, to my last year, I was working in the provost office and really enjoyed it. I actually thought I would never leave Temple. I had been there for a long time and had strong roots there.

Saw the advertisement for the Dean of Falk College here at Syracuse University, and I knew about the university obviously, and I knew about Falk College. I had colleagues that I knew in the sport management program, so I was interested in what they were doing here. And in the leadership profile, they called out wanting to emphasize sport as part of the growth of the college, and I thought that was very interesting.

And so I was fortunate enough to be a candidate that was interviewed. And I'll never forget, I was sitting across from the chancellor as part of the interview process, and he said to me that he wanted sport to be something that differentiates Syracuse University and not just our intercollegiate athletics program, which is very important, but he talked about club sport and intramurals and an academic unit that's focused on sport education and research.

And he really felt that that was one of the things that would distinguish the university. And I remember thinking, "Boy, I don't know the next time I'm going to have a chancellor talk to me about sport being something that stands out at a university from an academic perspective."

And so I knew right then that this was probably an opportunity, if I was fortunate enough to get the offer, that I wasn't going to be able to turn down because I view this as kind of a once in my professional career to be able to launch a college that's structured in the way that Falk College is and to be able to have impact that we're going to have moving forward.

John Boccacino:

How has it gone, and what's been the most rewarding part of being the dean so far?

Jeremy Jordan:

The strength of our college and the university is what has been most rewarding for me, and that's the people. We have amazing students that are already doing incredible things and will work in the industry in very impactful leadership roles, so it's great to be able to work with them. Amazing faculty and staff in Falk College, and the things that they're doing now, and what we're going to do as we move forward with the growth of the new structure of the college.

And then I've really appreciated the university leadership. Specifically my dean colleagues from across campus, they have been very supportive of what we're doing as a college. They've been great mentors to me as a relatively new dean in how to navigate some of the challenges.

And what's been most exciting is that they are open to collaborations, things that we can do together that will be greater than what we could do on our own. And so the ability to partner with a Whitman or a Newhouse or a College of Professional Studies just helps elevate what we're able to do in Falk and hopefully creates really innovative opportunities for students at Syracuse University.

John Boccacino:

I think when you look at the whole field of sport management, we kind of led the charge with sport management and sport analytics. We've always been looking for ways to invent and innovate in this field.

And I think the change on July 1st, I want to talk about the change itself, but also what led to us being well-positioned? Because again, we've been a leader in sport management and sport analytics. What was that progress like over the last two decades that kind of culminated with the July 1st launch?

Jeremy Jordan:

I'm very grateful for the people that were here when these programs started and what they were able to build, a Diane Murphy as dean and her leadership over Falk College as these programs were created. A Michael Veley, a Dennis Deninger, a Rick Burton, a Rodney Paul, a Gina Pauline. These individuals that have been here almost from the start of when sport management and sport analytics was brought into the university and their vision on what it could be.

And so, for me, it's quite amazing to see where we're at now, that we're in this beautiful facility, that we are a focal point at the university, that we've been able to really broaden what we do in sports. So now having exercise science and nutrition and esport, we feel that we have this really broad-based approach to how we prepare our students to enter into the sport industry, but then also the research that we do and the academic programs that we have.

And so why we're viewed as a leader now, to think back where we were 20 years ago, just to me, is truly amazing. And so I feel grateful that I've been able to come into a leadership role to work with these amazing colleagues as we go to kind of what we call Falk 2.0, like what it's going to be moving forward.

John Boccacino:

There's been this perception of sport, and it's casual and it's leisure, but we take it completely. Yes, we have fun, our students have fun doing the sport research, but it really seems like this is the culmination of building the program, taking sports seriously, and showing that there are actual incredible and impactful careers that our students generate off of the field of sport.

Jeremy Jordan:

Sport continues to be one of the fastest-growing segments in the world in terms of the economy of sport, the amount of money that's involved and generated. We have a very kind of domestic view of sport. I just read an article recently that it's estimated that the NFL shared \$13 billion with its teams last year, which is amazing to think of. Those 32 teams are generating that level of revenue each year, and that's just one small piece of the larger global sport industry.

And so we thought it's a real opportunity to focus on the business and science of sport moving forward and to leverage the variance within the industry to provide opportunities for students to create thought leadership and create new knowledge in terms of the scholarship that we do.

And so year over year, sport continues to grow. We continually see new parts, new segments of the industry. Most recently, the growth of women's sport has been really significant and impactful. And it's exciting for Falk College because that's an opportunity for us to focus on a particular segment and really work with new and emerging leagues as they grow.

John Boccacino:

It's a multi-faceted approach we're going to talk about here on the podcast, but I want to pull back to working with the chancellor and with the university. How will this work in Falk perfectly align with the university's strength and commitment to applying those entrepreneurial and innovative approaches to elevating sport across the campus?

Jeremy Jordan:

Yeah. And again, we're fortunate that we have a university leadership team who sees the value in what we're doing and sees the impact it can have at the university. One of our very best partners is athletics in providing opportunities for our students to be over there and to work with teams and to help with the business operations.

So we're going to have this focused excellence in terms of the research that we do, the education we provide, and innovation. We really want to not think about what do our students need to know today? We want to prepare them for what they need to know and understand for the next 10 years so that they can be out there leading innovation in terms of technology, in terms of analytics, in terms of fan experience, in terms of research on health and human performance. We want to have this ecosystem where we have this powerful network of industry partners and alumni and others that can help us grow in these spaces as well, and so that will be really important.

I think one of the things that we connect most directly with, if you think about the strategic plan, the academic strategic plan here at Syracuse, leading with distinction, is this concept of human thriving. And that's really what we see as our opportunity through what we do for our students, what we do with research, to really help people in society thrive, because sport is an opportunity for leisure, it's an opportunity for enjoyment. In addition to the very serious business aspects and the science of it, we see that that's a way for Falk College to help contribute to the overall university priorities.

John Boccacino:

And when it comes to those priorities, I know there's different areas of academic excellence that are tied in with launching the Falk College of Sport again on July 1st. Explain for us those different areas of academic excellence and the thought process, how those will continue to further us as a leader in higher education?

Jeremy Jordan:

Yeah. Again, we're taking a broad-based view of sports, so sometimes when people hear the word sport, they think of the games, and so that's an element of what we do, professional sport, collegiate sport, high school sport, community sport. But it's sport more broadly in terms of human performance, in terms of wellness, and so we're wanting to have opportunity to develop impact and grow impact in all of those areas.

So I think of them as buckets. We have four buckets that aren't standalone. They're connected in many ways, but the first one is the business of sport. Obviously, we want to continue to drive innovation around what we do in sport from a business perspective, whether it be revenue generation, whether it be college athletics and the changes that are happening right now, whether it be fan experience or how we utilize data for decision-making. We want to be on the forefront of impacting the business of sport.

The second area is human performance across the lifespan. So this could be elite athletes, so Olympians, college athletes, professional athletes in this idea of exercise science, human performance, and nutrition on how we elevate performance. But it also could be old people like me who still want to get out there and be active and do things and understanding how the body works and how we can have optimal performance, even for someone who's a recreational athlete, so it's the whole spectrum of human performance that we want to impact.

And then sport tech and innovation. This kind of goes back to the concept of what students need to know, not necessarily right now, but 10 years from now in terms of how we're going to utilize technology, how we're going to be innovative in the things that we do.

An example of that that is very popular, some people might think it's silly, but it's actually amazing to watch the growth of this particular team, and that's the Savannah Bananas and how they've innovated baseball. I encourage people to just, even if you don't like baseball, take a few minutes and watch a Savannah Bananas game on TV and what they've done to innovate the game to make it more enjoyable for the fans. I mean, that's an example of how sport continues to grow.

And then lastly, community sport and wellness, or sport for good, is this opportunity to use sport as a population-level intervention. How do we improve people's lives? How do we improve communities using sport as a tool to engage and to promote change?

John Boccacino:

You'll be happy to know, Jeremy, with the Savannah Bananas, Biko Skala, their broadcaster, is a proud Syracuse alum, class of 2018. And you're right. I mean, the way that they blend entertainment with baseball, and who would've thought that watching somebody on stilts try to hit a ball or the center fielder doing the back flips? I mean, it's so cool to watch.

And that's sports entertainment, but it's also, you're right, innovation, and the fact that we're keeping an eye on those trends here at Falk. What are some of those collaborations across campus that are really fueling this change?

Jeremy Jordan:

My philosophy is that through these partnerships, we can create more impactful programs than maybe what Falk could do on its own. So a recent example is that working with Whitman and Newhouse and our College of Professional Studies colleagues, Syracuse has become the educational provider for multiple

professional leagues, so the NHL, Major League Baseball Players Association. We're finalizing an agreement with a couple of other professional sport leagues.

Meaning that staff and athletes, either current or former, have the opportunity to continue their education through Syracuse, whether it's degree completion, whether it's a graduate program, whether it's a certificate, whether it's some other kind of professional development. It's just a way for these athletes as they transition out of sport to have new opportunities. That's great. I mean, if it just stopped there, that's still a really important thing in the alignment that Syracuse can have with these known entities like Major League Baseball and the NHL. It's very important in terms of brand elevation.

But this is going to create opportunities for our students to go have experiential learning opportunities with these leagues and teams. It's going to contribute to thought leadership and thought partnership by working with these leagues to discuss critical issues in sport at the time.

And so that's an example of a partnership, kind of the one-university approach where if we do this as a group, as a collective, we have the opportunity to create new products that we can put out into the market. And again, that wouldn't happen if we didn't have our partners across campus. And so hopefully, Falk College is viewed as a key contributor and a key partner as we grow what we do as a university.

John Boccacino:

What I really enjoy about this, Jeremy, is it's a two-way street, these partnerships. Yes, our students get those immersive internships, but with the MLB Association partnership, you're having retired players or people with MLB who are taking advantage of our faculty and the expertise to go back to school to complete their degrees.

So can you talk a little bit about how those types of partnerships kind of come to be and how, again, it's not just students going off to better themselves? It's a two-way street. It's reciprocal.

Jeremy Jordan:

Yeah. These partnerships that we've been able to form, number one, I think it's the brand of Syracuse, the academic brand of Syracuse. People know about it. And when these leagues had the opportunity to have Syracuse as their educational partner, the strength of our brand really was inviting to them, and it resonated with their leadership and with the players, so that's the first thing.

It comes about because I think you get in a room with individuals and you try to understand what they want to accomplish, and you think about, "Okay, does Syracuse have the ability to meet those needs and to deliver the products or the programs that they want?" And, "How can we leverage that to grow what we're able to do for our students and our faculty?"

And so honestly, at Syracuse, we have this amazing network of alumni, we have this amazing network of industry partners. Falk College has an advisory board, which is a who's who in the sport industry, and so their willingness to open doors for us. I've been in these types of situations before, but never with the brand of a Syracuse behind me. And so I feel like it doesn't make it easier, but it definitely opens up a lot more doors for us, so we're excited to continue that work.

John Boccacino:

And I mentioned off the jump, the fact that we are continuing our trailblazing history by being the first institution focused on research like we are to open up this college of sport again as of July 1st. What are some examples you're proud of when it comes to research opportunities that are currently available to Falk students and also our proud faculty members?

Jeremy Jordan:

I think of our currency in Falk College are the assets that we have. Obviously, it's student outcomes, which we've talked a little bit about, but it's the amazing faculty that we have and the knowledge creation that they're producing.

And what I appreciate about our faculty as well and the scholarship that they engage with is that it creates new knowledge for the academy, so the disciplines that we serve, exercise science, nutrition, sport analytics, so forth. But it also is industry-relevant, and so our faculty work very hard to make sure that the research that they create, they're able to translate it to application, to policy, and practice. And so I think that that helps position Falk College as well as a leader in research because not only are we driving new knowledge within the academy, we're translating for industry application.

And so I'm excited about a recent project that will start here soon. It's a collaboration between Hendricks Chapel and Falk College of Sport, where we're going to be looking at the next three years, this idea of character development and teamwork through fan engagement. So people that observe sport, attend sporting events, are they able to learn any lessons around character, around teamwork that they can apply in their daily life?

And so there's a long line of research about character development and sport participation, but we're trying to extend it to not just participation, but observation, and so it's unique in that sense. And so that's a funded project that will start here soon, and I'm grateful that Falk College will be able to work with Hendricks Chapel and in Newhouse as well.

We have faculty that are doing research around prevention of injuries from falling for both, again, all age groups, but older adults, you know? How do we help people in terms of overall wellness and quality of life? We have a faculty member who's doing research on when someone is injured, can they use visualization to not lose muscle mass? And so think about the application for athletes in that sense. Someone who's prevented from training, can they still maintain a level of muscle mass and strength through visualization? And then so, again, kind of innovative approach to injury prevention and recovery.

We have faculty members, Lindsey Darvin, who's doing a lot of work on gender equity in sport and sport leadership and is viewed as a leader in that space. Jessica Garay is doing work on the impact of nutrition in athletic performance. And a really fun kind of outcome that we saw this spring was a student, a senior sport management student, who was a member of the women's soccer team here at Syracuse, became the first female winner of the research award at the MIT Sloan Sport Analytics Conference. That it's the most prestigious sport analytics conference in the world. It's been around for 19 years.

She worked with two faculty members from Falk, Justin Ehrlich and Shane Sanders. It's impactful that that's the first time that Syracuse has won that award, and they get over 7000 applications to compete in this research competition, and they pick seven who get to present. Ava Uribe is her name. She was the first woman to ever win. And so we're just so proud of our faculty and our students, and it's just an example of what's happening now, but what's to come in terms of the research that we do.

John Boccacino:

We have also been raising the bar for women, getting access to sport opportunities, sport research. Explain a little bit what we're doing to try to raise up and attract and bring in that next? And we obviously want all great student researchers to come, but specifically focusing on women in sports?

Jeremy Jordan:

One of the things that we've done recently working with the Chancellor's Office and Candace Campbell Jackson is that Syracuse has a partnership with an organization called Women Leaders in Sport, which is the premier professional development organization for women who want to work and do work in sport in leadership roles. We're their only academic partner, and so we're very excited for that.

What that's allowed us to do is to provide opportunity for our students and our faculty and staff to access resources that women leaders puts out there. And I encourage the audience, again, go to women leaders in sport and look at the organization and the amazing work that they do and the programming that they have. We're now able to offer that to our students, so as they go through their academic experience, they can engage with the professional development opportunities and the networking opportunities and the mentorship. We take a group of students every year to the convention. This year, we'll be in Kansas City, and it's really impactful.

This is a priority for us because I already mentioned that women's sport is one of the fastest-growing areas in sport, in the larger sport industry, yet the number of women who are in leadership roles still is low, and it's definitely not where it wants to be. And quite honestly, we're looking at ways to attract more women to our program, especially those that want to work in the sport industry.

And what experiences, what unique experiences can Syracuse provide that will kind of launch their careers once they're done, and how can we engage them with our faculty from a research perspective that will be impactful to that particular industry? And so we have a commitment to develop all of our students to assume leadership roles in some aspect of the sport industry moving forward, but we also are trying to create a very unique experience and pathway for women who want to work in sport.

John Boccacino:

And that's really, if you're listening to the podcast and you're a prospective student, what would you say to that next generation who wants to get into sport management, sport analytics? Why Falk?

Jeremy Jordan:

Yeah, because I think we're going to be able to provide opportunities through our partnerships, through our academic programs, through the faculty that we have that I don't want to say won't be available elsewhere, but will be very unique, and I think you would want to take advantage of that.

And the other great thing is that this is not just a Falk commitment. It's a commitment across campus, it's a commitment with our industry partners, it's a commitment with our advisory board, so it's not just a few of us in Falk that think this is good idea and something we should pursue. It is supported, and people are engaging in this process really at a high level. And I'm grateful for everyone who sees the need and the opportunity and, again, a way for us to distinguish Syracuse University because of what we do for our students and that is different from maybe the other programs that you would be looking at.

John Boccacino:

I want to circle back to speaking of partnerships. You mentioned athletics, and I'd be remiss if we didn't give them a vine, especially with alumnus, John Wildhack, being the athletic director. Take us through some of those partnerships with Syracuse University Athletics and how those are, again, mutually beneficial for both our students and faculty and also those in athletics?

Jeremy Jordan:

So from day one, John Wildhack, who's a member of our board, has said, "Let me know how you want to partner. What can we do to work together?" And he saw the value in having Falk continue to be involved and to grow that engagement. We have over 100 of our students that work in athletics in some capacity, teams with business units to help with their daily operations. We've been able to place over 70 of our sport analytics students in data analyst roles with teams.

Rodney Paul, who's the chair of sport analytics, likes to tell the story that one of the first teams we worked with was men's soccer, and I believe that's one of the teams that recently won a national championship, and so while we don't always say causation, we definitely want to say correlation. And so

it's just an example of we have these amazing students with a high level of skill and expertise that can go into an organization, whether it be Syracuse Athletics, or the UFL, or the professional basketball team in Japan, and provide data and information that impacts what those organizations are able to do.

Sometimes when we think about internships, we think of it just benefiting the student, right? That it's about them getting experience, and the organization is doing us a favor to provide opportunities for our students to develop. I always tell the organizations, as soon as you get our students working for you, you're going to see the value and you're going to come back to us and want more of our students to get involved. And that's what we've seen with athletics is that we start with one team, and then it grows, and then it grows.

And so now, again, to have 70 of our students working with our athletic teams over there, and now we're starting to work with club sport teams, and how do we help them have even greater impact and outcomes and be even more competitive? Because I don't think I'm divulging a secret. The chancellor has said that he wants us to have the most successful club sport program in the company, or in the country. And so we see an opportunity at Falk College to engage with those teams and that group like we do with athletics.

John Boccacino:

What could be coming down the future with partnerships with athletics on campus?

Jeremy Jordan:

So what we want to do is, and working with one of our faculty members, Sue Edson, is we're building a structure where we would take, for example, an exercise science student, an analytics student, a sport management student, a nutrition student, and we put them in a work team, and they work together to support student athletes and teams.

Because if you think about the real world, that's how it functions, right? The analyst doesn't just kind of operate on their own, and the strength and conditioning coach doesn't operate on their own, and the nutritionists operate on their own. They have to work together to understand how their separate areas are connected to drive performance.

And so we think the next evolution, and it's really important in Falk College, is that you're not a sport management student or a sport analytics student only. You're also learning about exercise science, you're learning about nutrition, you're learning how these areas intersect and how if we work together and understand how they intersect, we can have even greater outcomes and impact.

And so we look for every opportunity we can now to put our students from our different academic programs together. They're doing immersion trips together, they're doing internships together. We're having guest speakers that can come in and talk to multiple areas of the college. And so again, we think one of the unique aspects of Falk College of Sport is the integration of our programs, not just that we have these programs.

John Boccacino:

And when it comes to the expertise for these programs too, yes, we have incredible faculty on campus, but you also have a very distinguished and impressive board of advisors and collection of alumni that really work across all facets of sport. How does this connected network really help advance the goals and mission of the college?

Jeremy Jordan:

Yeah. So I think there's three areas we want to focus on. We want to create a sport-centric unique student experience, and so that requires us to do things within Falk College in terms of our academic programs and the experience and professional development we offer our students, but it also requires us to create

these really meaningful industry partnerships that provide opportunities for students, and our advisory board is key in that.

The other thing we want to do is to continue to elevate the research that we do and the impact that it has. So we have a staff member, Francesco Rivero, who works on corporate partnerships, and part of his goal is to bring back to our faculty opportunities to engage in research that is industry-relevant, industry-facing. So that's another area that our advisory board helps us with in their network to open up those opportunities.

And then lastly, we continue to look for new partners. We're not satisfied. We have an amazing group of partners, but we want to continue to grow and to diversify who works with us, and so that's another area. No one has a Rolodex anymore, but our advisory board members open up their Rolodex for us and say, "You know what? You should go have a conversation with this person or this organization or this team because I think they would be a great partner for you."

So those are really the three areas that they help with, and like every other school and college here, they also help us think about ways to develop or to generate resources to support all the amazing things we want to do as a college for our students and for our faculty and staff. So corporate philanthropy, other donors that may be interested in what we're doing and want to support it, our advisory board helps with that as well.

John Boccacino:

I know that we've talked about cutting-edge and innovation, and when it comes to higher ed, one of the hot-button topics has been artificial intelligence. What role do you think artificial intelligence plays and will continue to play for the Falk College of Sport moving forward?

Jeremy Jordan:

Yeah. So we view it as a tool that we want to make sure our students know how to use effectively, and obviously from a research perspective, it's going to change how we do research, it's going to change maybe the type of research that we do. But it's a tool, right? It's not a replacement that's going to eliminate opportunities, but our students get immersed with AI and how it could be used within their segment of the sport industry.

So I think it's going to continue to evolve and change, obviously, in the application of AI, in terms of what we're doing as a college, but also what's happening in the industry will continue to also evolve, and I think ultimately creating greater efficiencies, thinking about the fan experience, and maybe how that's going to change how we consume sport or how the techniques we have around human performance and training and nutrition and the access to resources through AI is also going to change.

So I think it's impactful. So our goal is to bring in people that have expertise in this area that can help us learn what we should be doing and also help our students understand how to use it as a tool.

John Boccacino:

I know we just launched the college on July 1st, so I think people would pardon you if you weren't always forward-thinking, but I know your wheels are turning when it comes to being the dean of ways to continue progressing and advancing Falk. To that regard, what's down the road? What are some goals you want to see with the college to continue to advance us?

Jeremy Jordan:

We want to continue to grow our global impact. We are developing a partnership with Oldham in England through some of our faculty members, which we think will kind of address the four areas of excellence we're pursuing that we talked about earlier.

So how do we grow global opportunities and connections is one. I think as sport, and again, sport broadly used in quotations, continues to evolve, how do we create innovative academic programs and new academic programs that best position our students not just to be successful in what they do in sport, but to be leaders in sport?

And so we're thinking about how the industry's evolving and what that means for us in terms of our degree programs, the other curricular opportunities we provide to our students. And then we are in the process of working on a research center that's focused on sport, which we think will be a platform to engage at an even higher level with both industry partners and foundations that are interested in understanding things differently, creating new knowledge, translational knowledge, and so those are some of the things that we're working on right now.

John Boccacino:

You have an extensive career as a researcher in sports, in sport management, and sports analytics. How did you get started researching sport, wanting to get involved on this field?

Jeremy Jordan:

My experience is very similar probably to a lot of our students and faculty. Sport was pretty important to me growing up. I knew pretty early on that I was never going to get paid to be a professional athlete, and so once I accepted that, then it was like, "Well, how do I stay involved?"

And so my goal out of college, I was going to be a high school AD and coach, and I did that for a little while. And that, it was great, but it wasn't the fulfillment I was looking for, and I was really interested in the broader industry and especially from an educational perspective, and so I went back and did a PhD in sport management and started in the academic track.

And then I got really interested from a research perspective on the impact of sport events and participation in sport events, so we did a lot of work on running events, and I think our findings are not necessarily unique to running, but that was just the context that we did. Understanding the impact of hosting these large events on communities, so how does it bring new money into the community that supports the economics of the community, to how it changes people's attitudes and behaviors that participate?

Which has led to what we're going to do as Falk College with the partnership with Hendricks Chapel and that grant. We're really going to understand students' psychological attachment to Syracuse Athletics, and we're going to segment them based on how connected they are, how important Syracuse Athletics is to them, and how that maybe changes or drives attitude and behavior.

And so I guess more broadly, I've been interested throughout my academic career on the impact of sport. I've used sport as something that's very powerful that can be very impactful, and so how do we learn more about that process?

John Boccacino:

What was that moment that you realized the power of sport as a fan? Was it you watching a favorite team growing up that really connected the dots that it's more than just wins and losses? This is a powerful method of connecting?

Jeremy Jordan:

Yeah. I mean, it creates community, you know? If you go to a sporting event, you'll see people that have like interests and experiences that probably wouldn't have those opportunities if they weren't at that sporting event. And I joked the other day is when's the last time you did face painting to go to the grocery store, you know?

Sport brings things out in us, both good and bad. I mean, there's a lot of things about sport that are not positive, but it just is something that a large portion of society, I don't want to overstate this, but they have an interest in sport, and it builds community, and it gives people a common interest.

And then just I guess on the other end of the spectrum, seeing how sport, especially with youth, changes their trajectory in terms of how they think about academics, how they think about citizenship, how they think about their community. We've had a number of studies that have shown that participation in sport drives some of those positive outcomes.

And it's more of not just the sporting activity. It's not that they play basketball, but they're part of this group that has this common kind of focus and experience.

John Boccacino:

Jeremy, thank you for making the time, for pulling back the curtain, and for having a really candid conversation about an exciting and emerging trend taking place here on campus.

Jeremy Jordan:

John, I appreciate the opportunity. Thank you.

John Boccacino:

Thanks for checking out the latest installment of the 'Cuse Conversations Podcast. My name is John Boccacino, signing off for the 'Cuse Conversations Podcast.