

ARMAND A. BUZZELLI, PH.D.

Director, Sport Management Program | Assistant Professor of Sport Management
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ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

Director, Sport Management Program | Robert Morris University | June 2026-present

- Lead program planning, curriculum and outcomes assessment, student advising, industry engagement, and advisory board cultivation.
- Coordinate the Sport Management Summit and the program's 50th anniversary initiatives, including alumni engagement and scholarship fundraising.

Assistant Professor of Sport Management | Robert Morris University | 2024-present

Department of Marketing, Rockwell School of Business

- Teach undergraduate sport management courses and supervise internships, co-ops, and projects with sport organizations.

Graduate Instructor | John Carroll University | 2023-present

College of Health, Sport Leadership Program; sports promotion, marketing, and public relations.

Instructor | Seton Hill University | 2016, 2018

School of Business; graduate and undergraduate sport finance courses.

Director of Campus Recreation | Robert Morris University | Previous appointment

- Led recreation operations, staffing, assessment, and strategic planning; collaborated with Academic Affairs, Student Life, Athletics, and Residence Life.
- Helped develop facilities, recreation funding, and collegiate esports opportunities.

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Instructional Management & Leadership — Robert Morris University, 2015

M.S., Data Analytics — Robert Morris University, 2018

M.B.A., Sport Management — Robert Morris University, 2006

B.A., History/Education — Washington & Jefferson College, 2004

NCAA varsity basketball and baseball participant

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Sport participation and fan identity; esports and digital engagement; recreational sport motivation; storytelling and sport brands; student learning and engagement; applied research and decision support for sport organizations.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Robert Morris University | Undergraduate

- SPMG 3320 — Sport Coaching
- SPMG 3401 — Management Principles in Sport Management
- SPMG 3420 — Sport Event & Facility Management
- SPMG 3430 — Business of WWE
- SPMG 3050 — Business of Esports
- SPMG 2050 — Career Preparation in Sport & Entertainment
- SPMG 2010 — Introduction to Sport Management
- SPMG 4140 — Special Topics: Emerging Issues/Trends in Sport Management (Fall 2026)
- SPMG 4902/4903/4906/4913 — Internship & Co-Op Supervision

John Carroll University | Graduate

SPL 5040 — Sports Promotion, Marketing, & Public Relations

Seton Hill University | Graduate and undergraduate

SBU 551 — Financial & Economic Analysis of Sports

BU 225 — Sports Finance

SELECTED PROGRAM LEADERSHIP AND EXPERIENTIAL PROJECTS

Sport Management Summit and 50th Anniversary | 2025-2026

- Coordinate programming, industry outreach, student experiences, and networking. The 2025 Summit brought together more than 300 students, alumni, and industry professionals.
- Co-chaired the October 16, 2026 Summit and 50th anniversary celebration with Dr. Bill Sutton and Dr. David Synowka; collective fundraising raised more than \$20,000 toward the Sutton-Hardy Scholarship, with donations continuing.
- Moderated the featured conversation with Mark Cuban at the 2026 Summit.

Madden Madness and Western PA Madden Championship | 2025-2026

- Guide student planning, fundraising, marketing, operations, and streaming for esports events supporting the Ryan Shazier Fund for Spinal Rehabilitation.
- Develop the 2026 Western PA Madden Championship through the consulting course, with school fundraising campaigns and an RMU final planned for December 3, 2026.

P3R Field Day Consulting Project | 2026-2027

- Supervise student work on sponsor prospecting, budgeting, logistics, and event planning for the Field Day scheduled for April 2, 2027.

Additional applied projects

- Integrate the 2026 NFL Draft into sport event and facility management coursework; develop an interactive alumni career map and digital tools for research workflows.
- Support student-led charitable events, including the Basement Brawl toy drive benefiting the Best of the Batch Foundation.

ARTICLES APPROVED FOR PUBLICATION

Apostolopoulou, A., Buzzelli, A. A., Abdullah, I., & Clark, J. S. From Radio City to the riverfront: A study of sponsorship activation at the 2026 National Football League Draft in Pittsburgh. *Journal of Brand Strategy*. Publication approved subject to final amendments.

REFEREED JOURNAL PUBLICATIONS

Apostolopoulou, A., Buzzelli, A. A., Papadimitriou, D., & Locke, R. J. (2025). "Money in the bank" and other tales: Prized World Wrestling Entertainment possessions and their role in identity construction and self-expression. *Journal of Brand Strategy*, 14(3), 242–258.

Buzzelli, A., Locke, R., & John, R. (2024). Royal Pickles: The game destined to boost engagement in a pickleball unit. *Strategies*, 37(1), 27–29.

Buzzelli, A., Buxton, G., Fontolan, M., & Gagnon, A. (2023). Get behind the wheel: Esports and physics misconceptions. *The Physics Teacher*, 61(9), 770–772.

Buzzelli, A. A., & Draper, J. A. (2021). Are they athletes? A self-assessment of athletic identity measurement and perceived benefits of collegiate esports participants. *Recreational Sports Journal*, 45(2), 144–155.

Buzzelli, A. A., & Draper, J. A. (2020). Examining the motivation and perceived benefits of pickleball participation in older adults. *Journal of Aging and Physical Activity*, 28(2), 180–186.

Young, C. H., Buxton, G., Young, K., & Buzzelli, A. (2017). Field day at the rec: Working out with physics. *The Physics Teacher*, 55(3), 155–158.

Buzzelli, A. (2017). "It made me want to be that spark": A case study of the experiences of college student group exercise instructors. *Recreational Sports Journal*, 41(2), 144–155.

Draper, J., Buzzelli, A., & Holdan, E. (2016). The pattern of Twitter usage in an accelerated, cohort-based doctoral program. *International Journal of Doctoral Studies*, 11, 163–183.

Buzzelli, A. (2016). Developing learning outcomes for a collaborative event: Highlighting a recreational soccer tournament designed to connect international and domestic students. *Recreational Sports Journal*, 40(1), 82–91.

Buzzelli, A., Holdan, G., McCarthy, J., & Rota, D. (2016). Utilizing Twitter for concept learning. *International Journal of Information Communication and Technology Education*, 12(1), 69–82.

Buzzelli, A., Bissell, J., & Holdan, G. (2015). Analyzing Twitter's impact on student engagement in college instruction. *International Journal of Instructional Technology and Distance Education*, 12(2), 3–14.

REFEREED BOOK CHAPTER

Buzzelli, A. A., Apostolopoulou, A., & Clark, J. (2025). Esports and Digital Technology. In *Technology, Sport and Recreation*. Routledge.

BOOK REVIEW

Buzzelli, A. (2014). Review of *Social Media for Educators*. *International Journal of Information Communication and Technology Education*, 10(2), 84–85.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE AND ONGOING WORK

Esports Identity & Digital Engagement | 2018-present

Study identity, motivation, perceived benefits, and psychosocial outcomes among collegiate esports participants. Research informed the development of RMU's esports program.

Recreational Sport Participation & Motivation | 2016-present

Conduct quantitative research on perceived benefits and motivations among adult recreation participants, including pickleball players.

Student Engagement & Campus Recreation Assessment | 2010-present

Develop assessment approaches for student engagement, belonging, learning outcomes, and program improvement.

Doctoral Research | Robert Morris University | 2011-2014

Conducted mixed-methods research on microblogging, distributed practice, concept retention, and student learning; designed instruments and performed content analysis.

Current projects | Work in progress

Collaborative research on the 2026 NFL Draft in Pittsburgh; NFT fan research; and an analysis of Logan Paul's influencer persona in WWE with an honors student researcher.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Buzzelli, A., Apostolopoulou, A., & Locke, R. J. (2025, November). *Sportelling: Adapting WWE's storytelling blueprint for emerging sports leagues*. Sport, Entertainment and Venues Tomorrow (SEVT) Conference, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC.

Buzzelli, A., Draper, J., Apostolopoulou, A., & Clark, J. (2024, February). *Exploring motivation and perceived benefits of pickleball play in female participants*. Applied Sport Management Conference, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Buzzelli, A. (2021, March). *Show them your worth: Using an evidence-based approach to demonstrate value*. 4th Annual NAECAD Coaches and Directors Clinic (virtual).

Buzzelli, A. (2019, February). *Club sports as a revenue generator: Adapting the Docking Model for sports clubs at a tuition-dependent institution*. NIRSA Conference, Boston, MA.

PROFESSIONAL AND UNIVERSITY SERVICE

- IK Start USA Advisory Council, 2026-present; support student engagement with sport industry projects.
- University committee service has included Middle States Accreditation, Title IX, Strategic Planning, and Facility Planning.
- Mentor students in internships and industry projects; develop community partnerships and collaborate with the Academic Media Center on experiential learning.

HONORS AND AWARDS

Outstanding Faculty Award — RMU Athletics, 2026
Colonial Choice Awards

SELECTED MEDIA APPEARANCES AND COVERAGE

WTAE | October 2026

Interview with Ryan Recker on RMU's Sport Management program and 50th anniversary. [Watch feature.](#)

Featured Conversation with Mark Cuban | October 16, 2026

Moderator, RMU Sport Management Summit. [View event post.](#)

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette | December 2025

"A spine of steel: RMU students help to raise awareness for Shazier foundation." Coverage of the student-organized Madden Madness event. [Read article.](#)

2025 RMU Sport Management Summit | October 2025

Television interview during the Summit; event coverage and institutional recap. [Read RMU recap.](#)

Italian Impact Weekly | Episode 27

Guest appearance with Rocky Romano; hosted by Steve Mancini. [Listen to episode.](#)

Campus Rec Magazine | May 2021

"Armand Buzzelli of Robert Morris University." Career interview on campus recreation leadership, facilities, and student learning. [Read interview.](#)

Pittsburgh Knights | October 2020

Panel participant, Women in Esports Roundtable. [View appearance coverage.](#)

EdTech Magazine | October 2020

"Digital Athletes: Universities Win Big With Esports." Commentary on technology and student engagement in collegiate esports. [Read article.](#)