



UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL MARCH 11, 2024, AT 9:00 AM ET

Media only: Laura Havel (202) 633-3312; havell@si.edu

Media website: <http://newsdesk.si.edu>

Smithsonian Sports Invention Exhibition Will Have People Rethinking Their Game

***“Change Your Game”/“Cambia tu juego” Opens March 15
at the National Museum of American History***

Invention and technology can make the difference between victory and defeat as well as expand who can participate in sports. “Change Your Game”/“Cambia tu juego,” presented by the Smithsonian’s Lemelson Center for the Study of Invention and Innovation will open March 15. The 3,500-square-foot, family friendly, interactive exhibition in the Jerome and Dorothy Lemelson Hall of Invention at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History will explore the dynamic role of invention and technology in sports from an unexpected perspective: who invents for sports and why?

The bilingual exhibition spotlights how the motivations of diverse inventors, athletes and technologists have changed how historical and contemporary sports are played. It will invite visitors to see themselves as inventive problem solvers who can become “game changers” in their daily lives.

Sports have universal appeal contributing to physical health, social connections, cultural identity, personal development and even national unity. Every sport and every player is mediated by numerous inventions, and this exhibition takes a look at who invented the technology that makes game play possible, such as the Jogbra sports bra, Gatorade sports drink or the high-speed photo finish camera. Understanding the inventive processes, motivations, inspirations and creativity that propel sports inventors to change their games aims to activate visitor’s own “inventive identity,” and inspire confidence to develop creative solutions in sports, school, at home and in any other contexts.

“Every individual has the capacity to be inventive and to develop creative solutions—in sports and in other areas of everyday life,” said Anthea M. Hartig, the museum’s Elizabeth MacMillan Director. “As visitors to ‘Change Your Game’ learn from a diverse array of sports inventors and come

to understand their motivations, we hope they will begin to see their own potential to be a game changer.”

More than 60 sports technology objects from the nation’s collection will be on view in the new exhibition, including Crash Cloud foam pads and a football helmet prototype, invented by former NFL cornerback Shawn Springs, who founded the startup Windpact to develop safer football helmets after air bags and car seats helped his family survive a harrowing automobile accident; a 3D-printed wheelchair racing glove prototype, invented by wheelchair marathoner Arielle Rausin, who learned such printing techniques to create a new racing glove to reduce impact and fatigue; an Osmometer used by Dr. Robert Cade, whose team of scientists invented Gatorade to prevent dehydration among football players at the University of Florida; and the 1977 prototype Jogbra, invented by Lisa Lindahl, Hinda Schreiber Miller and Polly Palmer Smith, which better enabled millions of women to participate in sports.

“Change Your Game” will include six areas of exploration: a **Starting Line** that introduces the exhibition, four Motivation Zones, each highlighting a core inspiration for invention in sports—achieving a **Competitive Edge**, promoting **Health and Safety**, facilitating **Fairness and Accuracy**, and enhancing the **Fun and Accessibility** of sports to diverse participants—and finally, an **End Zone**. Several hands-on, interactive activities throughout the exhibition challenge visitors to engage directly and creatively in the inventive process while considering the broader impacts of those innovations inside and outside sports. The exhibition and its activities aim to provide people of all ages the opportunity to learn STEM-related content and skills as well as practice 21st-century skills such as collaboration, creativity, problem-solving, risk-taking and critical thinking, which support the development of inventiveness.

Change Your Game Public Programs

Over the course of the exhibition’s five-year run, the Lemelson Center will offer—in collaboration with numerous strategic partners—a nationwide invention challenge; hands-on STEAM-focused interactive learning activities; an online design and build platform for students to explore invention virtually; asynchronous classroom distance-learning material; and a number of special events both at the center and across the country where the exhibition and its ethos and content will come to life.

One of the premier elements of the public programming suite is the center’s “Innovative Lives” series, which brings audiences of all ages and backgrounds face-to-face with diverse inventors and innovation leaders to engage in a public conversation about their pioneering work and careers. In

2024, the series will focus on inventors featured in the exhibition and/or from areas where sports, innovation and invention meet. The 2024 “Innovative Lives” schedule (subject to change) is as follows:

- **March 27**—Shawn Springs, former NFL professional football player for the Washington Commanders 2004–2009 and now CEO of Windpact, a high-tech foam materials technology company
- **April 3**—Arielle Rausin, elite wheelchair marathoner and inventor of 3D-printed gloves for chair racing, and her coach Adam Bleakney
- **May 1**—Doug DeAngelis, inventor-entrepreneur behind the FinishLynx photo-finish camera and other officiating innovations
- **June 5**—Speaker to be determined

All programs and associated lesson plans, activities and materials will be free and additional materials will be distributed nationwide through the Lemelson Center/Smithsonian Institution networks and other outlets. Educators and institutions interested in partnerships with the center for programming in their communities may contact Laura Havel at havell@si.edu.

“Change Your Game”/“Cambia tu juego” has been made possible through the support of the National Science Foundation, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, The Lemelson Foundation, Nike, Patrick J. McGovern Foundation, SHÖ Foundation, ConocoPhillips and the Hopper-Dean Family Fund. Additional support from the museum’s community partners was provided by the Girl Scouts of the Nation’s Capital, YMCA of Metropolitan Washington and Access Smithsonian.

About the Lemelson Center

The Smithsonian’s Lemelson Center engages, educates and empowers the public to participate in technological, economic and social change. The center undertakes historical research, develops educational initiatives, creates exhibitions and hosts public programming to advance new perspectives on invention and innovation and to foster interactions between the public and inventors. The Lemelson Hall of Invention and Innovation, featuring the Draper Spark!Lab and “Change Your Game”/“Cambia tu juego,” is a signature part of the National Museum of American History’s 45,000-square-foot space centered on the theme of innovation. For more information, visit [the center’s website](https://www.si.edu/lemelson). For Smithsonian information, the public may call (202) 633-1000.

#