

## EDITORIAL

### Embracing the Future: Transitioning to a Completely Open-Access Platform

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In the dynamic and ever-evolving field of academic publishing, change is not merely inevitable but essential. This sector, characterised by rapid advancements and a continuous influx of new knowledge, requires ongoing adaptation to maintain the dissemination of high-quality, relevant, and timely information. Integrating digital platforms, open-access models, and advanced analytical tools is crucial for expanding accessibility and enhancing research integrity. Embracing these diverse perspectives, innovative peer review processes, and sustainable practices ensures that academic publishing can effectively support and reflect the global research community's needs and challenges.

We are thrilled to announce a new and significant milestone in the history of *International Sports Studies* (ISS): the transition from a subscription-based model (with an open-access option) to a fully open-access publishing platform. This progressive step marks the beginning of a new chapter focused on inclusiveness, accessibility, and scholarly collaboration in knowledge dissemination. Our valued readership will now have unlimited access to numerous high-quality articles.

The traditional subscription model has been the backbone of academic publishing for decades, providing a sustainable mechanism for maintaining the highest standards of quality and rigour in journals. However, it also created barriers to access,

leaving researchers, students, and practitioners—especially those from underfunded institutions or developing nations—on the periphery of cutting-edge research, limited by paywalls and subscription fees. This affects individuals and hampers global progress in knowledge generation and innovation. This move by the ISS journal echoes the broader trends toward open science worldwide, emphasising transparency, replicability, and public engagement in scientific research. Open access facilitates extensive collaboration and research innovation, increasing visibility and reach. Unrestricted downloading and citing open-access articles is one way that their content can be made accessible to more people.

Our decision to switch to an open-access format stems from our commitment to supporting the learning process. We view research as a common good that should not be confined within the walls of well-resourced institutions. Our goal is to eliminate financial barriers that hinder the equal distribution of information, enabling anyone to access, replicate, or modify the results we publish with proper attribution. This change reflects our belief in the capacity of all researchers to contribute meaningfully to knowledge production. However, this transition presents intrinsic challenges. Sustaining a journal with rigorous peer review standards under an open-access model requires careful planning and support. To

address this, we have adopted a socialised Article Processing Charge (APC) system to supplement submissions with an end-to-end scholarly publishing platform and other editorial software and services. The APC model ensures we can continue to provide high-quality editorial services now and in the future.

Recognising the financial constraints many scholars face, particularly those from underprivileged countries, we have implemented a substantial discount system. This scheme offers discounts based on membership in the *International Society for Comparative Physical Education and Sport* (ISCPES) and location in low-income regions. Additionally, we are actively seeking grants and other funding opportunities to sustain our open-access initiative.

As this transformative journey begins, we aim to engage with you all—readers, authors, and reviewers—actively. Your

support, feedback, and engagement are invaluable to our mission of making scholarly knowledge a global public good. Together, we can overcome barriers to learning and foster an inclusive, vibrant, and innovative research environment, uniting the global academic community for a common purpose.

In conclusion, we extend our heartfelt thanks to the ISS editorial team, whose volunteer service has been crucial to this transition. We also appreciate our esteemed reviewers collaborating with us to help authors craft their manuscripts into publishable material. This teamwork is a testament to our shared effort to build knowledge and nurture an open and collaborative scholarly ecology. We are excited about the multiple advantages that open access brings, and your contribution is immense.

Welcome to the new era of *International Sports Studies*: open, accessible, and dedicated to the free flow of knowledge!

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