FOUNDATION for the Royal College of Chiropractic Sport Sciences (Canada) announces their 2026 Research Awards Winners

The FOUNDATION is pleased to announce the following Awards

Dr. Rocco Guerriero Research Funding Grant	**Dr. Tracy Rowan**
Dr. Gordon Lawson Research Funding Grant	**Dr. Melissa Belchos**
Outstanding Paper Award – 1st Prize	**Dr. Cameron Borody**
Outstanding Paper Award – 2nd Prize	**Dr. Glenn Cashman**
Dr. David Gryfe Academic Achievement Scholarship Award	**Dr. Sayyid Hassan**
Bill Neilson Memorial Award of Excellence – Resident	**Dr. Madlaina Gruber**
Bill Neilson Memorial Award of Excellence – Fellow	**Dr. Janice Drover**

The following are the descriptions of the Awards and the award winners.

Research Funding Grants (2)

These grants are open to chiropractors and scientific researchers wishing to conduct sports-focused research, where at least one member of the authorship team is a Canadian Sports Fellow, Sports Sciences Resident, or Member of the Royal College of Chiropractic Sports Sciences (Canada).

Dr. Tracy Rowan

Winner of the 2026 Dr. Rocco Guerriero Research Funding Grant

Supporting Positive Youth Athlete Development Through the Responsible Implementation of Artificial Intelligence in High-Performance Youth Sport

Description

Although AI offers opportunities to provide individualized feedback, enhance decision-making, and support long-term athlete development, it also presents important challenges. Concerns surrounding data privacy, ethical use of athlete information, increased performance pressure, social comparison, and over-reliance on technology highlight the need for evidence-informed implementation strategies that prioritize athlete development alongside performance outcomes.
This study represents the first phase of a broader doctoral research program examining the responsible implementation of emerging technologies in youth sport.

Dr. Tracy Rowan Biography



Dr. Tracy Rowan is a PhD Candidate in Kinesiology and Health Science at York University, Sports Chiropractor, and healthcare educator with over 15 years of clinical experience working with athletes across recreational, collegiate, and high-performance sport. A Canadian Chiropractic Sports Specialist with extensive expertise in sports injury assessment, rehabilitation, return-to-play decision-making, and evidence-informed athlete care, Dr. Rowan is passionate about translating research into practice through interdisciplinary collaboration, mentorship, and innovative approaches to improving athlete health and performance and was the inaugural winner of the Bill Neilson Memorial Award of Excellence – Fellow category in 2025.

Dr. Melissa Belchos

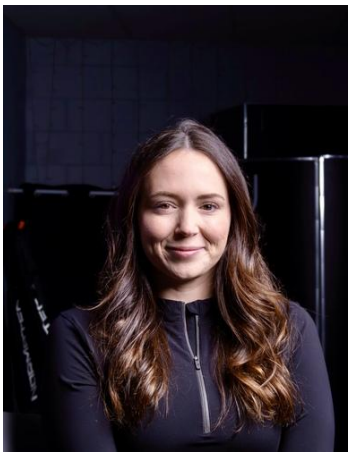
Winner of the 2026 Dr. Gordon Lawson Research Funding Grant

Defining the Sports Chiropractor: A Scoping Review Toward a Shared Operational Definition

Description

The question “What is a sports chiropractor?” is foundational to the development of sports chiropractic as a recognized component of athlete care. Despite growing involvement of sports chiropractors in recreational, high-performance, and Olympic sport, no internationally accepted definition describes the role, competencies, educational preparation, or professional identity of the sports chiropractor. Prior work has profiled ICSSP-qualified practitioners, examined chiropractic professional identity, and identified determinants of chiropractic scope of practice within single jurisdictions, but none has mapped how the sports chiropractor is defined across the literature, organizational documents, and professional frameworks. This review will provide the first comprehensive evidence map of the sports chiropractor, supporting future consensus work toward a shared operational definition, with implications for sports health care, interprofessional collaboration, education, and credentialing. It will also build international research capacity through embedded mentorship of early-career investigators.

Dr. Melissa Belchos Biography



Dr. Belchos graduated *summa cum laude* from the Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College and attained her Sports Sciences Fellowship in 2022. In her practice, she has supported elite athletes at every level—from varsity programs to the NHL and CFL. But her impact extends far beyond the clinic. As an Assistant Professor at CMCC, she is actively mentoring the next generation of practitioners. Furthermore, as a key investigator on this current project, she is driving international professional standards on a landmark global scoping review with FICS, aiming to establish the world's first standardized framework for sports chiropractic competencies**.**

Outstanding Paper Awards (2)

These Awards are open to all members (Fellows, Residents, General Members) of the RCCSS(C) and are meant to recognize and assist with knowledge transfer of a published work judged to have an excellent contribution to sports-focused research.

Dr. Cameron Borody

First Place Winner of the 2026 Outstanding Paper Award

Attitudes towards chiropractic: an analysis of written comments from a survey of Canadian Sport and Exercise Medicine physicians

Description

This study analyzes the attitudes of Canadian sports physicians (CSPs) toward chiropractors (DCs). While initial quantitative data showed CSPs held similar views to general practitioners, a deeper analysis revealed that positive attitudes significantly increase with direct collaboration and structured clinical training, such as mandatory placements. Written feedback from 40% of respondents identified the perceived professional variability within chiropractic as the primary reason for cautious, balanced survey scores. Ultimately, the findings demonstrate that interprofessional education and clinical exposure are critical drivers for successfully integrating chiropractic care into mainstream sports medicine.

Dr. Cameron Borody Biography



After earning an undergraduate degree in Science at the University of Winnipeg, Dr. Borody went on to complete the Doctor of Chiropractic program at the Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College, graduating in 2001, and attained his Fellowship with the RCCSS(C) in 2004. Dr. Borody is currently a Resource Clinician and Assistant Professor at CMCC. He is a member of the IST for Volleyball Canada (beach) and was the medical lead for the Toronto 6ix of the Premier Hockey Federation. He maintains an active practice at the Cleveland Clinic Canada and is engaged in multiple research projects. His most recent passion is coaching both of his sons' minor hockey teams.

Dr. Glenn Cashman

Second Place Winner of the 2026 Outstanding Paper Award

The Effect of Hip Abductor or External Rotator Strength on Knee Valgus Kinematics in Healthy Subjects. A Systematic Review with Partial Meta-Analysis.

Description

This comprehensive systematic review and meta-analysis challenges a foundational assumption in sports biomechanics: that weak hip abductors and external rotators cause increased dynamic knee valgus and subsequent injury risk. Evaluating 22 papers, the study revealed that the overwhelming majority found no significant correlation or group differences linking hip strength to knee kinematics, and no partial meta-analyses achieved statistical significance. Recently accepted by The Knee journal, this groundbreaking work explicitly dismantles this decades-old clinical paradigm. By providing a scientifically grounded alternative framework, the paper urges sports medicine professionals to critically re-evaluate unverified biomechanical models, fundamentally altering how movement is interpreted, how injuries are investigated, and how future rehabilitation programs are designed.

Dr. Glenn Cashman Biography



Dr. Glenn Cashman is a prominent Canadian sports chiropractor, researcher, and educator who has been practicing since 1996. He holds a Doctor of Chiropractic and a Master's degree in Rehabilitation Science from the University of British Columbia, alongside a Fellowship with the Royal College of Chiropractic Sports Sciences (Canada). With over two decades of experience, Dr. Cashman served as a team chiropractor for the NHL's Vancouver Canucks and the WHL's Vancouver Giants. Today, he treats elite athletes and the public using full-body biomechanical assessments, soft-tissue therapies, and targeted rehabilitation to optimize movement and recovery.

Academic Achievement Scholarship Awards

These scholarships are open to members of the Royal College of Chiropractic Sports Sciences (Canada) [RCCSS(C)] who have recently conducted scholarly written requirements as part of their Canadian Chiropractic Sports Sciences Residency Program (SSRP).

Dr. Sayyid Hassan

Winner of the 2026 Dr. David Gryfe Academic Achievement Scholarship Award

The association between injury and sleep quality among adult athletes: A systematic review.

Description

This systematic review examined whether poor sleep increases the risk of injury in competitive adult athletes. Synthesizing five low-risk studies, researchers found mixed evidence regarding this relationship: two studies linked poor sleep to a higher injury incidence, while three found no significant correlation. Notably, the impact of sleep was most pronounced regarding concussions and recent musculoskeletal pain, demonstrating that sleep quality closely interacts with specific injury types and timing. Because of varied methodologies and inconsistent injury definitions, drawing definitive conclusions remains difficult. Ultimately, the review recommends that sports healthcare providers integrate sleep screening into athlete baseline evaluations and rehabilitation programs, viewing sleep as a critical, modifiable factor to improve recovery, manage pain, and support overall well-being..

Dr. Sayyid Hassan Biography



Dr. Sayyid Hassan is a Chiropractic Sport Sciences Resident and Resource Clinical Faculty member at the Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College (CMCC). His academic and clinical portfolio focuses heavily on evidence-informed musculoskeletal care, sports medical coverage, and regional rehabilitation. An early career researcher, Dr. Hassan was recognized by the Foundation for the Royal College of Chiropractic Sports Sciences (Canada) for his work in their Scientific Poster Competition. Alongside instructing future clinicians in human gross anatomy, neuroanatomy, and clinical skills at CMCC, he maintains an active private practice in the Etobicoke and Mississauga areas.

Bill Neilson Memorial Awards of Excellence

- **Resident**
- **Fellow**

These awards are meant to recognize the outstanding achievement conducted by chiropractic students, RCCSS(C) Sports Residents, and RCCSS(C) Fellows. In addition, these awards are granted to deserving candidates who, through their actions, exemplified the characteristics of Mr. Bill Neilson, long time Executive Administrator to the RCCSS(C) as well as to The **FOUNDATION**.

Dr. Madlaina Gruber

Winner of the 2026 Bill Neilson Memorial Award of Excellence – Resident category



Dr. Maddy Gruber-White has extensive background knowledge in athletic, rehabilitative exercise, and biomechanics, having graduated from Brock University with her Bachelors of Kinesiology before pursuing her Doctor of Chiropractic degree from New York Chiropractic College. Her childhood background of competitive downhill skiing coupled with her knowledge gained in school gives her deeper insight into the needs of athletes.

Dr. Gruber-White is currently pursuing her Sports Sciences Fellowship with the Royal College of Chiropractic Sports Sciences (Canada). She is actively involved in treating university and high school athletes as the team chiropractor for the UBC Women's JV Rugby Team, UBC Women's Tennis Team and as the Sports Therapist of a local high school.

As stated by Dr. Clark Konczak, "She is a well rounded sports chiropractor with consistent excellence in research, peer-education/presenting/speaking and plays critical roles in the highest level sporting events. She sets the standard for involvement and collaboration in our profession."

Dr. Janice Drover

Winner of the 2026 Bill Neilson Memorial Award of Excellence – Fellow category



Dr. Janice Drover, BSc, DC, FRCCSS(C) is a Sports Chiropractor from St. John's, NL and the only Chiropractic Sports Specialist in Newfoundland and Labrador. With over 25 years of experience, she holds a degree in Human Kinetics from the University of Ottawa and a Doctor of Chiropractic from the Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College. In 2003 she became a Fellow of the Royal College of Chiropractic Sports Sciences (Canada).

Dr. Drover treats athletes, dancers, performers, and active individuals using techniques such as diversified adjustments, Active Release Technique, Graston Technique®, taping, bracing, and exercise therapy.

She has extensive experience in elite sport, serving on Team Canada's Health Services team at major international events including the 2018 Commonwealth Games, 2019 & 2023 Pan Am Games, and the Tokyo 2021 and Paris 2024 Olympic Games. She has also worked with organizations such as Canada Soccers' Mens National Team, the St. John's Edge, and the Newfoundland Growlers, and has supported elite curling teams including Team Gushue at the 2023 Tim Hortons Brier and World Curling Championships and Team Dunstone at the 2025 Montana's Brier, GSOC Tahoe, the 2025 Curling Canada Olympic Trials, and the 2026 Montana's Brier and World Championships. Dr. Drover was also the Medical Services Lead and Co-Chief Therapist for the 2025 Canada Summer Games in St. John's, Newfoundland. As noted by one of the nominators, "she worked tirelessly at the event to ensure that it ran as smoothly as possible. She was immensely hospitable to all of the therapists and practitioners ensuring they had everything they needed to support the athletes."

A Past President of the Royal College of Chiropractic Sports Sciences (Canada), Dr. Drover continues to contribute to sport chiropractic leadership as Chair of the Games Committee for the RCCSS(C) and as the Canadian Executive Committee Representative for the International Federation of Sports Chiropractic (FICS).