# Artificial Intelligence in Sports and Fitness: A Comprehensive Review of Performance Analytics, Injury Prevention, Training, and Fan Engagement

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### ABSTRACT

From running performance analytics and preventing injuries to revolutionizing training methods and engaging with fans, the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in sports and fitness is vast. AI-aided analytics enable tracking of subtle player movement, tactical analysis, and predictive modelling, all of which provide a competitive edge. AI identifies injury risks, improves rehabilitation, and extends the careers of athletes — via wearable technologies and biomechanical analysis systems. We are equipped with data-driven solutions driven by advancements with access to big data, improving how we care for athletes and their performance.

Artificial intelligence (AI) significance has grown in coaching and training where LIS' AI-powered virtual simulations, reinforcement learning models, and intelligent training systems offer instant feedback and real-time adaptation to optimize the learning curve. Not only does performance stand to improve when VR is combined with AI allowing for smarter decision-making in pressure situations, automated coaching systems that advise athletes on what strategies to adopt, based on historical performance data, both archived and live. Beyond the playing arena, AI is reshaping how fans engage with the game through automated content, predictive analytics for games, and sentiment analysis for more interactive experiences.

AI in sports is here to stay, but it doesn't come without a challenge — whether it be dealing with large volumes of data and the computing power needed to process that data, or the data privacy and ethical concerns. Most AI-based officiating and fair play detection & correction systems are opening up but there's a long way to go in terms

of transparency and sporting accuracy. Future research efforts will integrate AI with neuroscience and bioinformatics techniques to generate hyper-personalized training regimens tailored to an athlete's genetic and cognitive profile. API will effectively lead the integration trend of PI and AI technology in the future, innovate the AI competitive system in sports, spread to the field of fitness, promote the development and efficiency of sports science, and promote the innovation and efficiency of sports.

### Introduction

AI technologies have been gradually shaping and suddenly restructuring in many sectors for a few years now, in particular targeted industries such as sports and fitness. Traditionally, sports analytics processes have included manual data curation which is subjectively interpreted, resulting in limited insights for optimizing performance. With the advent of AI, the field has undergone a complete metamorphosis, enabling extracting meaningful information from very large datasets, thus addressing crucial questions in the area of performance enhancement, injury prevention, and individualized training strategies (Bunker and Thabtah, 2019).

Sports teams and fitness organizations also face increasing demands to improve performance, reduce injury risks, and optimize training regimens. Conventional manual approaches have struggled to unravel the complex patterns within athlete performance and biomechanics data. Hence, more and more AI algorithms (such as machine learning models, computer vision techniques, predictive analytics, etc.) are executed automatically to obtain real-time data and discover underlying patterns to support decision-making processes (Wang, Wang, & Sun, 2020). While much groundwork has been laid for more widespread AI use in sports applications (Liu et al, 2021), several hurdles like variability in data, inaccuracies in sensors, and complexities in sensor integration persist. Avoiding these challenges also speaks to the need for policies that provide strong frameworks to invest in efforts designed to mine AI's promise alongside those that recognize and work to ameliorate its limits.

## The Role of AI in Sports Today:

AI in Sports Analytics and Fitness: Transformative Improvements AI-based solutions can also perform explorations on ultra-high dimensional data recorded from wearables, video follows, and IoT devices, to provide performance metrics (Clemente, 2018) that were not feasible previously. Computer vision systems, for instance, analyse athlete movements during training to identify inefficient techniques and mitigate injury risk (Liu et al., 2021). Additionally, AI can facilitate real-time tracking of performances,

empowering coaches to respond to live data to make informed decisions when it matters most, during competitions (Wang et al., 2020).

Further, AI technologies can also assist beyond performance analysis. They are being used increasingly to help devise tailored training regimes based on an athlete's particular biomechanical and physiological characteristics. This "tuning" is particularly meaningful in the field of injury risk, as prediction models can discover pre-injury signals to predict the injury and intervene in advance (Bunker & Thabtah, 2019). Moreover, AI adds value to the fan engagement experience by providing indepth metrics and more immersive digital experiences to revolutionize the sports broadcast division (Clemente 2018).

This paper illustrates the manifold benefits of AI in the world of sports, indicating its power to improve athletic performance, reduce injury risk, and enhance the overall sporting experience. This paper reviews the most relevant studies in the literature specializing in the area of AI in sports and provides an overview of the relevant technical processes on which these technologies are based. This study specifically seeks to explore the following critical research areas:

Machine Learning and Predictive Analytics: here we analyze various supervised and unsupervised learning techniques (including neural networks and regression models) that predict specific aspects of athletic performance and competitive outcomes (Wang et al., 2020). This subtopic discusses computer vision applications of image and video processing for game motion analysis, injury diagnosis, and referee decision-making processes (Liu et al., 2021). This study is based on the analytics of publicly available data derived from sensors attached to the playing area and the performance metrics developed by a real-time monitoring system, which changes training regimens and injury prevention strategies (Clemente, 2018).

### A Literature Review on Theory and Application of AI in sports & Fitness

Playing Different Sports — The Impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on Sports and Fitness AI has started drastically altering the game of sports and fitness. Over the past decade, countless studies have highlighted how AI-driven practices can extract insights from the terabytes of data generated by athletes, clubs, and sporting events. Utilizing scant literature we provide a broad overview of the current literature on AI in sports and fitness which we categorize into five major areas - performance analytics, wearable technologies, biomechanics and injury prevention, AI in coaching and training, and fan engagement and broadcasting.

Through a critical appraisal of published works including peer-reviewed studies, case reports, and real-world applications, this review aims to underscore the promise and the pitfall of adding AI to sports.

### **Performance Analysis**

AI has transformed performance analysis with automation in player tracking, motion analysis, and predictive analytics. In the past, sports performance metrics were limited by manual data collection and subjective interpretations. Today, such a feat is achievable with powerful machine learning algorithms and computer vision techniques, which can operate in the background to keep track of players and the action on the field and make sense of it continuously. As Bunker and Thabtah (2019) demonstrated, machine learning models are capable of predicting the outcome of a game through the analysis of player position and movement or time-series patterns. Wang, Wang, and Sun (2020) also showed their applied deep learning-based object detection model for real-time tracking for an indoor game scenario and decision support during competitions. Such results imply that AI might offer finer-grained performance metrics that allow for better tactical decisions and improved athletic performance. Nonetheless, the data heterogeneity and real-time time data processing are still obstacles to the broad application in the performance analysis.

### Wearable Technologies

Wearable technologies serve as appropriate modalities to acquire real-time physiological and biomechanical data. With the use of the Internet of Things (IoT)s and smart sensors, along with other advanced wearables, we can monitor an athlete's performance constantly and use AI to digest this data correctly. The research of Clemente, (2018) has investigated how AI algorithms embedded into non-invasive small sensors (e.g. heart rate, acceleration, and joint movements generate information of the athlete's physical status in advance or during the training at the task or competition. Thus, these technologies also allow for real-time feedback and facilitate the possibility of longitudinal studies of performance enhancement and injury prevention. The integration of IoT in the sports industry has also opened up new horizons for multi-layered data analytics — offering a complete view of the athlete's performance over a prolonged period. However, there are still certain issues to overcome to support the smooth implementation of real-time sports analysis such as data accuracy, privacy issues, and smart device compatibility.

### **Biomechanics and injury prevention**

In the domain of biomechanics and injury prevention, AI is also playing a huge role in diagnosing the risk of injury and managing recovery processes. Using machine learning models and computer vision systems, they assess movement patterns and biomechanical data, then identify deviations that could lead to injuries. Thus, Liu, Chen, and Zhou (2021) showed how AI algorithms can detect small differences as they relate to movements which are often predictors of musculoskeletal injuries. Furthermore, AI-driven rehabilitation programs are being developed to customize the steps of the rehabilitation process for an injured sportsperson, ensuring that it is personalized and efficient. These initiatives highlight AI's dual function in optimizing performance while preserving athlete health. However, because of differences between people in biomechanics and the complexity of human movement, further training of these A.I. models is necessary to ensure they are accurate for diverse populations, the researchers cautioned.

### AI in Coaching & Training

Artificial intelligence (AI) in sports is a disruptive force, from training athletes and the coaching staff to analytics-based decision-making. Everything from virtual coaching systems to simulation-based training tools to support customized training, tools can be tailored specifically to an athlete, the application of AR from a coaching perspective is the most exciting time. AI and technology-powered platforms, for instance, can analyze training sessions in real-time and offer instant data-driven feedback to athletes and coaches. Works Wang et al. 2016; Wang et al.2015, 2020); in fact, these systems can even better target training loads, decrease fatigue, and avoid injury (2016; Wang et al). Moreover, VR experiences within a constructed environment enable athletes to simulate scenarios and practice strategies in a safe, repeatable environment. These interventions demonstrate how AI can create a more equitable playing field and provide access to top-tier coaching and training regimens to the broader populace. But designing effective systems with human input, and developing them, is based on good data and multidisciplinary teams pulling knowledge from sports science, computer science, and biomechanics.

## Fan Engagement & Broadcasting

The AI has also quickly encroached on the domain of fan engagement, and broadcasting. AI-powered potential analytics design predictive insights and individualized material, consequently influencing an enhanced experience of the contents. Among them, the automatic summary generation which implements deep learning algorithms to capture important moments of sports events provides viewers with dynamic and attractive highlights (Clemente, 2018). And tools for analyzing sentiment are used to gauge how fans are feeling about their teams on social media, allowing broadcasters to tailor programming in real-time. This way, the sports universe was revolutionized, making it the sole coverage of a stadium in a new dynamic. That being said, using AI in this context isn't straightforward - questions surrounding algorithmic transparency and the need for real-time processing are active research areas.

### AI techniques and technologies used in sports and fitness

Artificial intelligence (AI) is at the core of the sports and fitness industry revolution with its data-intensive, decision-enhancing systems. In this section, we will take an indepth view of five main areas that have been greatly affected since the time AI methods took off: Machine Learning & Deep Learning, Computer Vision, Natural Language Processing (NLP), Reinforcement Learning, Edge AI & IoT. These technologies find their subsections that details their methodologies, technical foundations, and comparative advantages.

### 1. Data Preprocessing. Machine Learning + Deep Learning

Many aspects of AI applications in sports analytics are based on machine learning and deep learning. Application of machine learning e.g., Convolutional neural networks (CNNs) are applied to video frames to track players and extract spatial features from frames (Bunker & Thabtah, 2019). Real-time Traffic Classification Preprocessing RNN (LSTM) LSTM is a special case of RNN, and can be trained on temporal sequences, so this would be the appropriate architecture for classifying incoming streams of performance data, where the temporal order of events is important (Wang, Wang, & Sun, 2020). Self-attention mechanisms allow the model to pay closer attention to important parts of long sequences making the transformer a very powerful architecture for both sequential and spatial data. These techniques are not mutually exclusive; more recently, hybrid models that incorporate CNNs into RNNs, or even transformers, have gained popularity for predicting player performance as well as game outcomes. CNNs, for example, are very effective for spatial features, whilst RNNs and transformers give insight into the temporal development of sports, and together they form a comprehensive analytical structure.

#### 2. Computer Vision in Sports

Computer vision applications are key to modern sports analytics, used especially for motion tracking, player detection, and for improving referee decision-

making. First, advances in deep learning-based object detection algorithms, such as YOLO (You Only Look Once) and Faster R-CNN, have made it possible to analyze video feeds in real-time. They can identify and track players, the ball, and other objects of interest simultaneously (Liu, Chen, & Zhou, 2021). Tracking the smallest details in an athlete's posture and trajectory that make massive differences to performance peaking and injury prevention is exactly how modern computer vision systems deliver super accurate in-depth motion analysis. Deep learning has taken the wheel to overtake traditional image processing methods because they are much more efficient and adaptable to changing surroundings. Computer vision and AI are also used in a more dynamic role as part of a decision-support system during a live game, helping referees with instant plug-and-play replays, and objective analysis of disputed plays.

#### 3. Natural Language Processing — NLP

Natural Language Processing: There will continue to be a growing interest in natural language processing in the fitness and sports domain because it can revolutionize how information is communicated and understood. With NLP capabilities, AI systems can provide instant sports commentary, text-driven fan engagement through chatbots, or personalized coaching suggestions. Broadcasters can even measure fan responses and guickly adapt their content on the fly during live events through sentiment analysis and other techniques. High-performance natural language processing (NLP) models, especially ones based on transformer architectures like BERT and GPT, have demonstrated great success in tasks that require complex context understanding, which makes them ideal candidates for producing engaging and precise sports text (Clemente, 2018). These models are finding applications in bot-based coaching applications to provide tailored training suggestions, answer athlete queries and analytics, and assess performances based on historical inputs. The use of NLP in sports analytics not only improves the fan experience there, but also provides athletes and coaches with guidance through deep analysis of huge unstructured bodies of textual knowledge.

#### 4. Reinforcement Learning

A related, but distinct, approach is known as reinforcement learning (RL), and it's having a similar impact on sports strategy and decision-making. Reinforcement Learning (RL) algorithms (eg, Q-learning, deep reinforcement learning (DRL)) are very powerful methods in intro edge environments where decisions are taken sequentially with the uncertainty involved. In the sports domain, RL has

been used for developing game tactics, optimizing training plans, and simulating competitive contexts in which teams can consider a wide diversity of tactical options in the simulation (Wang et al., 2020). It has shown high-performance learning paradigms and is especially useful when the decision-making process of the agent is complex, as in the case of a game, where the agent must learn in real-time effective policies through trial and error. RL is a powerful learning tool which in return has enormous computational complexity and time to learn, and being in a domain like sports, the ratio of similarity between any two game conditions is quite small, therefore its implementation in this domain can be useful for simulating the game state and for adapting in-game strategies.

#### 5. Edge AI & IoT in Sports

Sports apps based on Edge AI & Internet of Things (IoT) process data in real time. Modern IoT-based wearable devices with sensors are capable of collecting highfrequency data, such as data from sensors for acceleration, heart rate, and biomechanical movements. Edge AI refers to the deployment of computing resources closer to the point where data are generated, reducing latency and enabling the instant analysis of data and the execution of actions (Clemente, 2018).

It is particularly important in sports, where dynamic input can significantly impact improvement and injury prevention. Not only this, but cloud computing also adds value to these systems and it facilitates collecting many datasets over long periods of time which can be aggregated and analyzed to reveal better insights on long-term performance trends. The edge AI with IoT allows continuous monitoring and instant notifications, enhancing the effectiveness of training programs and injury management protocols.

#### 6. AI Virtuoso

There are other challenges in the growing AI in sports, and fitness. One significant worry is about data quality and availability. High-quality data are necessary to train robust AI models, but data collected in the sports domain are often dirty, noisy, incomplete, and inconsistent (Wang, Wang, & Sun, 2020). Additionally, privacy policies must be implemented as private physiological or biometric information from athletes is gathered. For analysts, the debate between collection and upholding privacy gets in the way of being able to aggregate and analyze data on a scale — while strict regulations may even be necessary to protect privacy, there's no denying the practicality of such systems.

Computational costs are another significant challenge. AI applications in sports such as real-time performance tracking and predictive analysis require tremendous computation power. Deep learning algorithms applied to high-resolution video data for motion tracking can have relatively higher latencies due to computational requirements. For example, real-time decision-support systems designed for real-game use are frequently affected by timeliness challenges that limit their practical implementation (Bunker & Thabtah, 2019). Such high computational requirements require costly hardware and maintenance that some smaller sports organizations may not afford.

The AI-based systems have the unique capability to inadvertently reinforce and magnify this historic bias in the data. More attributed to these unfair implementations of certain techniques such as selecting athletes etc, especially athletic talent cancelling many potential athletes out. Poor decision making by AI — e.g., underestimating a player's performance or injury risk — could have serious repercussions for an athlete's career and team cohesion (Clemente, 2018). Some AIs are so opaque — commonly known as "black boxes" — that the use of these technologies for high-stakes decision-making becomes even further complicated and encourages unethical practices.

These barriers to adoption also inhibit broader implementation of AI in sports. They are going to rely on the older ways of doing it according to most traditional sports analysts and coaching staff members. Adopting AI is not just a question of technical investments, but requires a culture shift within sports organizations. More specifically, many teams have been reluctant to apply AI in their decision-making processes because of the uncertainty of long-term reliability and overdependence on technology (Liu, Chen, & Zhou, 2021). Furthermore, adopting these technologies may necessitate working knowledge from multiple fields and these proficiencies are usually rare in the traditional sports ecosystem.

These obstacles have also been observed in practice, exemplified here by the hesitant adoption of AI-based performance analysis by professional soccer clubs. Challenges included a lot of bad interoperability between devices in terms of data and algorithmic recommendations being questioned by coaches. Addressing these challenges will require continued improvements around data management, compute efficiency, and ethical AI, but also greater buy-in from the sports sector.

### **Conclusion and Research Directions**

#### • AI-Driven Injury Prediction and Rehabilitation

Sports and fitness are already experiencing a changing landscape due to AI, and over the next 10 years, transformative developments in AI in sports and fitness will continue. New trends focus on enhancing athlete well-being, training precision, gameplay accuracy, and personalized performance advancement which are both being audited and applied.

#### • Advanced Virtual Reality Training Simulations

One area that looks promising is AI injury prediction and rehabilitation. This correlatinglarge-scale data from wearables, motion capture systems, and historical injury data serves as input into sophisticated machine learning algorithms capable of predicting potential injury (Wang, Wang, & Sun, 2020). Future systems are expected to incorporate real-time physiological and biomechanical data along with comprehensive athlete profiles so that interventions may be instituted pre-emptively and rehabilitation protocols tailored to individual needs. Such individualized risk evaluations could dramatically hasten rehab, lengthening athletic careers by preventing the causative chain that ends in injury.

#### AI in Fair Play Detection and Officiating

Another exciting development is the use of artificial intelligence technology in advanced virtual reality (VR) training simulations. AI-driven VR environments create more realistic training scenarios and athletes can train versatility in these environments without any risk to injuries. Such systems can adjust simulated parameters in real-time based on the athlete's performance, providing immediate feedback and optimizing training intensity. The expectation is warranted as VR technology incorporates biometric data and adaptive learning models to compile progressively complex, scenario-driven training regimens that improve decision-making and reaction times in a real-world competitive environment (Clemente, 2018).

#### • Personalized Training Through AI and Bioinformatics

AI for the detection of fair play and AI-assisted refereeing thus form a key space for innovation in sports governance. Next-generation AI systems trained on real-time video analytics, sensor data, and deep learning will be able to automatically provide insights into whether a foul, an offside position, and other infractions have taken place. These systems claim that they will make officiating more objective and accurate, reducing the possibility of human error and bias. However, low-latency processing and transparency in the decision-making process are key technical challenges that researchers continue to address (Liu, Chen, & Zhou, 2021).

#### • Transformative Impact of AI in Sports Science

Tied in with this, the convergence between AI bioinformatics and neuroscience is going to completely change how we do our training personalized. By combining data on genetics with physiology and neurocognitive performance, A.I. systems can formulate super-customized training programs that cater to that athlete's biological fingerprint. It is this set of parameters that serves as the engine of that process, providing greater throughput of training loads, recovery strategies, and ultimately performance outputs leading to advances in sports science (Bunker & Thabtah, 2019) Such an integration could open a new frontier in athlete development, one in which data-driven breakthroughs shape everything from nutrition and sleep management to cognitive training.

### • Future Directions and Challenges in AI Sports Applications

So, the next decade will no doubt bring some upping of AI-based sports technologies. From enhanced injury prediction and immersive VR training to impartial officiating and individualized performance strategies — all this will transform the boundaries of sports science. Such applications not only have the potential for improving level performance models but also for raising the bar for protection and fairness in sports.

### • AI's Expanding Role in Sports Innovation

AI is transforming the landscape of sports and fitness, from performance analytics and injury prevention to training optimization and fan engagement. Through the performance update, AI can help teams, by analyzing the level of players through computer vision, improving tools and tactics, and combining deep learning and deep learning algorithms to generate data in response to fair strategy (Wang, Wang, & Sun, 2020). Likewise, AI-based wearable technologies and biomechanical analytics systems are reaching new heights of injury prevention by tracking hazards before thresholding off to serious injury and improving athlete career duration and rehabilitation cats (Bunker & Thabtah, 2019).

#### • Integrating AI Across Sports Ecosystems

Artificial Intelligence plays a crucial role in the evolution of sports training and coaching, solidifying models of reinforcement learning while building intelligent training systems to act as virtual simulations with personalized feedback, adaptive strategies, etc. Cutting-edge technologies, such as virtual reality (VR) and AI-driven analytics, are transforming the way that athletes train, enabling them to experience real-time feedback within high-pressure situations and spaces to enhance their decision-making ability (Clemente, 2018). Al' does not stop only at the crispy, professional sports arena, but helps improve fan engagement through automating content generation, predictive analytics to predict game scores, and the nascent field of sentiment analysis to create more immersive experiences for audiences around the world (Liu, Chen, & Zhou, 2021).

#### • Ethical and Technical Considerations for AI Advancements

Notwithstanding these innovations, AI in sports remains an emerging field with hundreds of unexplored potentials. There are some potentially provocative implications in future studies of applying AI to a high level of generalization. Furthermore, the underlying systems and processes associated with officiating and fair play detection using AI must see further advancements to ensure that they are transparent and accurate. On the other side, the ways of conjoining sports science and AI within the fields of high-performance sports studies are part of a wider recognition that the scope must be increasingly inter- and multidisciplinary. Advances in AI research and innovation are making sure that in the near future, sports and fitness will never be the same.

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