

A Month of Gratitude: Celebrating Support at a Spectacular Event



The DSA team joins the guest speakers on stage.

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As we head into the end of 2023, we are overwhelmed by the support the Data Science Alliance received this past year—especially at our recent Data Science in Sports event.

A Month of Gratitude: Celebrating Support at Two Spectacular Events

By Kallyn Hobmann

It was an electrifying night on November 9 as DSA transformed Snapdragon Stadium into a hub for sports fans and data enthusiasts. Attendees came together at our Data Science in Sports event to learn how analytics and athletics collide, especially as the use of artificial intelligence (AI) increases.

The event kicked off with a VIP reception inside the stadium's locker room. Usually filled with athletes preparing for a big game, it was instead filled with leaders from both the data science and sports realms. New connections were made, and insightful conversations were enjoyed over food and drinks with our esteemed guest speakers as they prepared for the panel.

Upon exiting the locker room, attendees promptly found themselves in a crowd buzzing with enthusiasm. Event sponsors Booz Allen Hamilton, Procopio, Tagboard, and UC San Diego's Halicioğlu Data Science Institute graciously shared their time with us that night, setting up vibrant booths alongside DSA where curious attendees could network and learn more about each organization. Data science permeates all industries, and the excitement surrounding the booths represented DSA's belief that everyone can learn how data is used for good.



The guest speakers discuss data science in sports.

At the start of the program, **Shannon Bahrke**, 2x Olympic Medalist, TEDx & Extraordinary Performance Keynote Speaker, Founder & CIO at Team Empower Hour, Ski Champion at Deer Valley Resort; **Adam Esquer**, VP of Baseball Research and Development at San Diego Padres; **Christine Chalk**, SVP of Strategy at Tagboard; and **Dylan Dahlquist**, Human Performance Lead Scientist at Booz Allen Hamilton, each took to the stage. They spoke about their career paths and how data has allowed them to make an impact in the sports industry.

Bahrke served as our keynote speaker, giving the audience an invigorating presentation on how data empowered her to strategically perform her best while staying safe and healthy. She provided a firsthand look at what it's like to be an Olympic athlete, narrating a video of one of her moguls runs with in-depth details on what she was thinking and feeling during it. Her voice was filled with energy and confidence. She said she knew she'd be successful because of the data her team used to analyze her past competitions and determine the optimal path for her training.

Following her speech, panel moderator **Dr. Brad Voytek**, professor of Cognitive Science, Neuroscience, and Data Science at UC San Diego, joined the speakers for a lively discussion. They discussed the latest technology and platforms utilizing data and AI to enhance fan engagement while keeping teams and coaches well-informed. With a background in broadcast news, Chalk spoke on the changes she has seen in media production and consumption over the years. She told us how data allows companies like Tagboard to create engaging content and tell stories that resonate with fans—one example being the graphics shown during a NFL game that provide real-time updates and keep fans informed.

The panelists also talked about the interesting ways the humanity of sports intersects with science and how balancing the two can maintain an exciting industry that people are passionate about worldwide. Esquer told San Diego Padres fans how their favorite baseball team utilizes data to change their game. Dahlquist spoke on how data science can be used to create training programs for multidisciplinary teams. For example, Booz Allen Hamilton sponsored the inaugural DoD Warrior Games in San Diego this past June. The organization shared human performance insights with the warrior athletes, helping celebrate and empower our veterans.



The DSA team poses with keynote speaker Shannon Bahrke.

The evening ended with more meaningful networking, attendees getting one-on-one time with guest speakers, and learning more about how data is used in the sports industry. They even had the chance to hold Bahrke's silver medal and take selfies.

Then, the fun continued as we announced our raffle basket winners. The winning attendees were thrilled to claim their prizes, all donated by generous community partners, including a baseball signed by Padres pitcher Blake Snell and a jersey signed by SD Loyal's Landon Donovan. The crowd cheered for each winning ticket, adding to the overwhelming sense of unity and support throughout the evening. This event embodied DSA's belief that data can benefit all industries and that bringing together like-minded people is essential to foster a responsible data science (RDS) ecosystem further.

As we approach the end of the year, we are deeply touched by how much the community has helped us accomplish over the past 11 months. We are truly grateful for our volunteers, members, donors, interns, event attendees, and everyone else supporting the RDS movement. We have much more to do in 2024—stay tuned!