

DR LEIGHTON WELLS

Sport science · technology · commercial leadership

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I combine a PhD in sport science and applied endurance coaching with more than twenty years in technology, product management and commercial leadership. My research examines training load, coaching practice and communication. My commercial work spans sports technology, startup development, marketing investment and partnerships. I bring experience working with athletes and researchers, company founders and university leaders, with a practical interest in how evidence informs products and the decisions people make with them.

TECHNOLOGY AND COMMERCIAL LEADERSHIP

Founder and Managing Director, Digitalsmith 2012–2015

COMMERCIAL CONTRIBUTION

I helped shape Catapult's OptimEye and ClearSky brands during its early growth around the 2014 ASX listing, working directly with founder and then-CEO Shaun Holthouse across brand, digital and acquisition due-diligence projects.

Digitalsmith client work · 2012–2015.

Catapult (ASX: CAT): A\$979.52m market capitalisation, 13 October 2026.

Client advisory and business leadership through sport-technology projects, including due diligence associated with a major acquisition.

Consulting, augo ag — Zurich, Switzerland 2026

Advised on features for a new training management system. Wrote an article on combining subjective and objective athlete data as part of the consulting engagement.

Founder and CEO, Pivot Summit 2015–2019

Led a regional technology and innovation event. Secured more than \$1 million in sponsorship, recruited Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak and negotiated Deakin University's major sponsorship directly with Vice-Chancellor Professor Jane den Hollander AO.

Co-founder, COO and Director, Runway 2016–2017

Co-founded a startup incubator and accelerator that raised \$1.25 million through the Victorian Government's LaunchVic program. One of three initial directors, with responsibility as Chief Operations Officer.

COMMERCIAL LEADERSHIP — CONTINUED

Marketing Director, Dexion Commercial April 2010–April 2012

Managed a \$1 million annual marketing budget and three direct reports.

Product Manager, ADP Employer Services November 2006–October 2007

Product-management responsibility carried a \$23 million annual sales target.

Earlier roles and board experience

Marketing communications and marketing roles at Varian Australia (1998–2000), GBC Scientific Equipment (2000–2002), OfficeMax (Boise, 2002–2004) and MYOB (2004–2006). Director, Crux Marketing (2007–2013); board director, Technology Geelong (2015–2017). Secured and acquitted local, state and federal grants for education and innovation programs.

SELECTED CONTRIBUTION

- Endurance research: four first-author, peer-reviewed papers on triathlon coaching, technology use and training load. The latest study examined 95 age-group triathletes over six months, using 34,731 training sessions.
- Research translation: commissioned TrainingPeaks practitioner writing and invited presentations for AusTriathlon and TrainingPeaks, connecting training-load research with coaches' day-to-day decisions.

APPLIED SPORT SCIENCE AND COACHING

Owner and Head Coach, Summit Triathlon Coaching January 2022–present; private coaching since 2009

Professional coaching for athletes in Australia and internationally, across triathlon distances up to Ironman. Work includes training prescription, programming, monitoring and athlete communication through remote coaching technology. AusTriathlon Development Coach and TrainingPeaks Level 2 Coach; more than thirty years in triathlon and seven Ironman finishes.

Research Assistant, Deakin University

2025–present, continuing through December 2026; earlier appointment in 2023

- Resistance-training and altitude study led by Dr Giselle Allsop: lifting-technique instruction and supervision, 3RM strength testing, participant recruitment, laboratory protocols, honours-student mentoring and literature/scoping-review work as an invited co-author.
- Earlier GPS sport-watch energy-expenditure accuracy research: sub-maximal VO_2 testing of recreational runners using MetaLyzer and a clinical-grade treadmill.
- Co-supervised a Master of Applied Sport Science candidate in 2025 examining menstrual-cycle symptoms and perceived performance in female triathletes.

Research methods: developing AI-assisted research workflows with source tracking, privacy controls, audit trails and mandatory human review. Current work uses a dataset of approximately 42,000 Ironman World Championship performances.

UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP AND TEACHING

UNIVERSITY TEACHING

I teach at Deakin and Victoria University, ranked #1 and #6 globally in sport science, with repeated 100% positive student feedback at both universities.

2025 ShanghaiRanking: Sport Science Schools and Departments.
Selected unit responses, 2024–2026; measures and periods below.

Sessional Academic, Victoria University 2025 and 2026

Full unit-chair responsibilities for SSC2000 Sport Coaching Systems and Technology (Semester 2, Block 4, 2025) and AHE3114 Sport Physiology (Block 3, 2026): unit news, student support, all marking, self-moderation and grade release.

Contributed to unit-content development in both units. For SSC2000, proposed and delivered an endurance sport technology session based on my research, including a practical TrainingPeaks training-week exercise. SSC2000's 2025 Student Evaluation of Teaching responses were 100% "strongly agree" across all items.

Teaching Fellow, Deakin University Teaching at Deakin since 2022

Practical classes, seminars and marking across all three trimesters. Teaching delivered across eight units:

- HSE103 Exercise Prescription and Delivery; HSE302 Exercise Programming.
- HSE105 Principles of Sport Coaching; HSE204 Motor Learning and Skill Acquisition.
- HSE208 Integrated Human Physiology; HSE304 Physiology of Sport Performance.
- HBS109 Introduction to Anatomy and Physiology; HSE104 Research Methods and Data Analysis in Exercise and Sport.

Additional marking in HSE102 Functional Human Anatomy, HSE110 Muscle Biology for Exercise Science and HSE727 Time and Motion Analysis of Sport Performance. Provided additional teaching cover in HSE304 and HSE103; allocated all Waurn Ponds HSE304 AT1–4 marking in T2 2024. Engaged for two HSE208 intensive classes and marking in November–December 2026.

Recent evaluations recorded 100% agree or strongly agree to "This teacher provided a quality learning experience for me in this unit": HBS109 and HSE105 in T1 2026, and HSE208 in T3 2025. Earlier evaluations recorded 100% student satisfaction in HSE302 (2024 and 2025) and HSE103 (2025).

RESEARCH TRANSLATION

External contribution: presented doctoral research at ECSS, Rimini, July 2025; invited presentations at the TrainingPeaks University/AusTriathlon coaching workshop and High Performance Day in December 2024 and an AusTriathlon national webinar in February 2025. Wrote the commissioned TrainingPeaks Coach Blog article Age-Group Triathlon Training Load: What 34,731 Training Sessions Reveal. Regularly invited to peer review for the International Sport Coaching Journal, International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching, Frontiers in Sports and Active Living and Frontiers in Physiology.

EDUCATION

PhD, Sport Science, Deakin University Completed December 2025; graduated February 2026.

Thesis: Triathlon Coaching Practices: Optimising Training Load Processes and Communication.
Submitted in just over three years, with three peer-reviewed papers published during candidature;
independently examined by Professor Stephen Seiler, University of Agder.

INDEPENDENT DOCTORAL ASSESSMENT

"I conclude that this thesis is an original scientific contribution that meets or exceeds international standards for the Doctor of Philosophy in sport science. I recommend its approval without reservation."

Professor Stephen Seiler · University of Agder

Independent doctoral examiner · July 2025

Master of Applied Sport Science, Deakin University · 2022

Graduate Certificate of International Business, Deakin University · 2000

Graduate Certificate of Computing, Deakin University · 1999

Bachelor of Science (Biology), Deakin University · 1998

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

1. Wells, L. A., Hoffmann, S. M., Bruce, L., Kremer, P., & Dwyer, D. B. (2026). Training load and intensity in triathlon: objective differences between sex, age, race distance preference and training phase across a cohort of 95 age-group triathletes over six months. *Frontiers in Sports and Active Living*, 8. doi:10.3389/fspor.2026.1798702
2. Wells, L. A., Kremer, P., Bruce, L., Hoffmann, S. M., & Dwyer, D. B. (2026). An interpretive exploration of Australian triathlon coaching practices: working toward optimal training load practice within real-world contexts. *International Sport Coaching Journal*, 13(1), 58–69. doi:10.1123/iscj.2024-0093
3. Wells, L. A., Bruce, L., Hoffmann, S. M., Kremer, P., & Dwyer, D. B. (2025). Differences between Australian triathlon coaching practices and evidence-based training load management recommendations. *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*, 20(1), 92–101. doi:10.1177/17479541241305677
4. Wells, L., Konoval, T., & Bruce, L. (2023). An examination of how and why triathlon coaches use a suite of technologies in their practice. *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*, 18(3), 687–694. doi:10.1177/17479541221144129