

# GSSI Diversity in Sport Science 2023 Award Winners



**Xavier Thompson**

University of Virginia

Xavier Thompson is a Ph.D. candidate in kinesiology at the University of Virginia (UVA), specializing in sports medicine with a focus on reducing secondary ACL injuries. He obtained a B.S. in Athletic Training from The Ohio State University and an M.S. in Athletic Training from the University of Kentucky. As an athletic trainer and educator, Xavier has diverse experience across different sports settings and academic levels. His current research is focused on how muscle function and neural properties change following ACL injuries.

His career is driven by a passion for improving clinical practices in sports injuries, aiming to blend research with practical applications as a future professor. Outside of academia, he enjoys running and coaching youth sports, further integrating his commitment to physical well-being and community engagement.



**Kelly Elliott**

Texas Tech University

Kelly is a first-year master's student in Kinesiology with a concentration in Human Performance at Texas Tech University. She recently graduated with her bachelor's degree in Kinesiology summa cum laude from Texas Tech. Additionally, she is a graduate researcher at the Sports Performance Lab and has been involved with research for about two years. Her research interests include thermoregulatory mechanisms, such as heat acclimation training, hydration strategies, athlete monitoring, and recovery, all in an attempt to optimize athletic performance. Outside of academics, Kelly enjoys working out, playing volleyball, cooking, and spending time with her friends.



**Michael Torres**

University of Wyoming

Michael is a first-year master's student in Kinesiology at the University of Wyoming, as well as a first generation college graduate from California State University of San Bernardino, where he received his Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology - emphasis in Exercise Science. He's also the first person from San Juan Chámagua, Guerrero, Mexico to enter a master's program. Michael's thesis research aims to investigate the relationship between hydration and muscle hypertrophy while training at high altitudes. Additionally, he serves as a Student Managing Editor for the International Journal of Exercise Science. Outside of school, Michael enjoys hiking, sports, museums, video games, food, and traveling.



**Leticia Cherpe de Souza**

Baylor University

Leticia is a doctoral student at Baylor University. Her research interest involves the dietary intake of student-athletes and the impact of diet and supplementation on body composition, recovery, and athletic performance. Leticia completed her undergraduate and M.Sc. degree at Baylor University and became a registered dietitian in 2022. During her studies, she competed as a D1 student-athlete (track and field) and later worked with different sports teams as a performance nutrition student-worker and as a graduate research assistant. She was born in Brazil and after competing at the Olympics in Rio 2016, moved to the US to pursue excellence in academics and athletics. With a professional athlete background, her interest involves supporting athletes from all backgrounds in recovering from training and supporting overall health and athletic performance.