Sports Innovation PROTO COMP Showcase

JULY 2025

Innovation Central Brisbane
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QUT SPORT

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Innovation Central Brisbane (ICB), co-founded in 2022 by Cisco and Queensland University of Technology, is an innovation lab located at Queensland University of Technology's Gardens Point campus in the heart of Australia's next Olympic city, Brisbane.

As a founding member and the Queensland lead of Cisco's National Industry Innovation Network (NIIN), ICB is part of an Australia-wide network of Innovation Centrals providing access to a national platform of universities and industry partners enabling knowledge sharing and collaboration on digital innovation at scale.

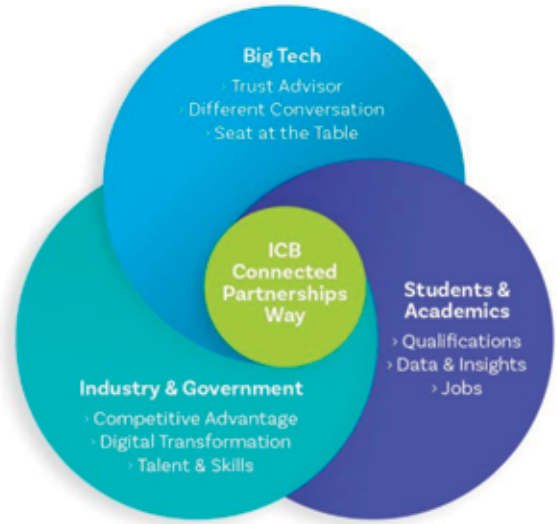
ICB's purpose is to accelerate Australia's digital transformation success and build digital skills for a thriving economy. We do this by providing space for an innovation sandpit, access to technology, talent and a global community, and expert ideation facilitation to accelerate collaboration and innovation.

At ICB, industry and government work in connected partnership with big tech, researchers and students to explore innovation opportunities, build rapid prototypes, and design technology solutions that solve real-world problems.

Gemma Alker
Director, Innovation Central Brisbane
Queensland University of Technology

INNOVATION CENTRAL BRISBANE

ACCELERATING INNOVATION THROUGH COLLABORATION



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INNOVATION CENTRAL BRISBANE WAS DELIGHTED TO PARTNER WITH **QUT SPORT** TO HOST THE SECOND QUT SPORT INNOVATION PROTOBUILD

The Semester One 2025 ProtoComp, delivered in partnership with QUT Sport, focused on driving innovation across Queensland's sport sector. Led by Innovation Central Brisbane (ICB) and QUT Sport, and supported by key industry partners including Cisco, the program challenged students to develop digital solutions that could shape the future of sport.

The ProtoComp is a three-phase innovation program that connects students with industry mentors, builds interdisciplinary teams, and supports the development of working digital prototypes designed to address real-world challenges.

ICB PROTOCOMP PROGRAM OVERVIEW

PHASE 1: HACKATHON and PITCH

A three-day ideation event where students respond to a live challenge, form teams, and pitch their solutions to an industry panel.

PHASE 2: BUILD the PROTOTYPE

An 12-week development phase where teams receive mentorship and technical support to design, test and refine their prototype ideas.

PHASE 3: SHOWCASE to GROW

A live public event where the final teams present their prototypes to an audience of industry leaders, academics, and potential investors.

QUT

SPORT

Read the
QUT Sport Strategy

Emily Rosemond OLY
Director, Sport
Queensland University of Technology

QUT SPORT

Now in its second year, the **QUT Sport Innovation** ProtoComp is demonstrating tangible impact—both in equipping QUT students with real-world experience and in uplifting the knowledge and capability of State Sporting Organisations (SSOs) across Queensland. It represents a strategic effort to foster innovation through collaboration, with a view to scale these outcomes and build shared capacity across the sector.

Through Sport at QUT, we're uniquely positioned to challenge conventional thinking and drive new approaches across all levels of sport—playing a strategic role in bridging cross-sector strategies with applied operations, while also demonstrating significant engagement through its sport and recreation programs, with over 45,000 participants involved quarterly. Leveraging the University's strengths across data science, sport and exercise science, health, business, design, and creative practice, the ProtoComp draws on cross-disciplinary capability to respond to the evolving needs of the sport ecosystem.

Emerging from a pioneering series of innovation workshops and hackathons, ProtoComp connects sport industry partners, government, and higher education in a dynamic and solutions-focused environment. The initiative has already produced multiple prototypes with real-world potential—each addressing practical challenges faced by sports organisations and practitioners.

The QUT Sport Innovation Showcase further amplifies this work, providing a platform to share ideas, test concepts, and build partnerships that extend the reach and impact of the ProtoComp.

Together, these efforts position QUT as a national leader in sports innovation—committed to advancing sport through practical outcomes, knowledge exchange, and sector-wide collaboration.

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HOW MIGHT WE CREATE A SMARTER, MORE INCLUSIVE, AND SUSTAINABLE SPORTING EXPERIENCE THAT ENHANCES PERFORMANCE, EVENT OPERATIONS, AND SPECTATOR ENGAGEMENT WHILE ENSURING LASTING REGIONAL IMPACT?

HACKATHON

The first phase of the QUT Sport Innovation ProtoComp, the **Hackathon**, brought together students from all six QUT faculties for a high-energy weekend of collaboration and creativity. With a bold provocation delivered by Olympian and QUT Director of Sport, Emily Rosemond, students were challenged to reimagine the future of sport in the lead-up to Brisbane 2032.

Working in cross-disciplinary teams, students tackled themes including inclusive access to sport, automation of operations, and volunteer engagement. Over three days, they ideated, refined concepts, and presented their solutions to an industry judging panel. Standout guest mentor Peter Laurie energised the weekend with a dynamic session on startup thinking.

Nine teams pitched on Sunday afternoon, with four selected to progress into ProtoBuild, the twelve-week second phase of the program. Each team received project funding to develop a working digital prototype, with support from Innovation Central Brisbane, QUT Sport, and industry mentors.

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Vibhor Pandey

Design Thinking Facilitator, Innovation Central Brisbane,
Queensland University of Technology

PROTOBUILD

In the twelve-week **ProtoBuild** of the QUT Sport Innovation ProtoComp, four student teams, equipped with project budgets, collaborated intensively to bring their digital prototypes to life. Meeting weekly, the teams fostered a dynamic environment of creativity and innovation. Guided by design thinking expert Vibhor Pandey, participants honed both entrepreneurial and technical skills. The teams also received invaluable mentorship from industry mentors, refining their prototypes and addressing technical challenges.

The interdisciplinary nature of the teams was key to their success, blending diverse perspectives to tackle complex challenges. The program encouraged innovation and built a strong community of forward-thinking individuals, laying the foundation for a future where their prototypes could significantly influence the technological landscape of sport.

As the weeks progressed, the participants' dedication and teamwork were evident in the evolution of their projects. The hands-on experience and mentorship allowed them to refine their ideas and develop practical solutions. The QUT Sport Innovation ProtoComp demonstrates the power of interdisciplinary collaboration in driving technological advancements and fostering a culture of continuous learning and improvement.

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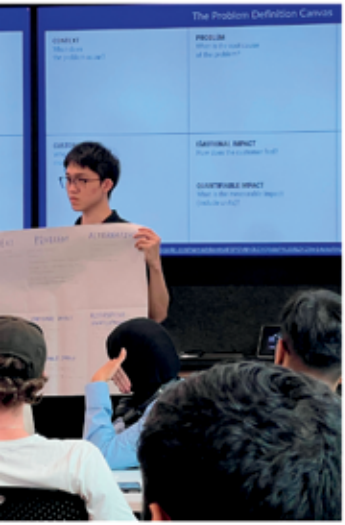
The Problem Definition Canvas


CONNECT TO
GAMIFICATION/REWARDS
UTRITION FOR ATHLETES
R/AR SPORT
LD LEGACY
MODULAR


Anchor Partner
rivernet
Innovation

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RYME ATHLETICS AUTOMATION SOLUTION

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Ryme Athletics Automation Solution is a system that efficiently manages athletics events, consisting of two parts that can be used together or independently. First, our wearable chips allow races to be timed accurately and automatically, using simple technologies like Bluetooth or RFID. Additionally, we offer a software platform to manage all other aspects of events: organising races and heats, monitoring timing systems, showing results and tracking athletes' progress.

WHAT MAKES YOUR IDEA UNIQUE?

This product is valuable because it solves three limitations of existing solutions, which we keep as basic design principles. The first one is cost-effectiveness, where our goal is to make a simple solution that is affordable for smaller clubs with limited funding. Another one is ease of use for inexperienced users, both in terms of the device and the software. Finally, our chips allow athletes to be automatically identified as they cross the finish line, improving efficiency.

WHO IS YOUR PRODUCT FOR? WHY DO WE NEED IT?

Our product is designed to serve mostly small and medium athletics clubs, because it addresses key challenges in the everyday operations of community athletics like the lack of funding, or the use of equipment that is not user-friendly or that requires manual operation. This solution also benefits athletes, who will enjoy a seamless experience during events while also being able to easily track their results.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE HIGHLIGHT OF YOUR PROJECT SO FAR?

The hardest -but also most rewarding- part of the project so far has definitely been talking to potential customers and industry experts. These interviews were intimidating and difficult to organise. However, it was surprising to see that many people were willing to help, and that their reaction to our idea was positive and encouraging. They not only provided us with valuable and applicable insights, but also motivated us to keep working on something that will improve the world of athletics!

WHAT'S NEXT FOR YOUR PROJECT?

At this stage, we have a basic working prototype valid in limited cases. Over the next weeks, we'll focus on two routes: gathering feedback from club directors, event operators, volunteers, and athletes to iterate rapidly; and developing the product to improve timing accuracy, enable offline software use, and include field events like throwing or jumping in athletics competitions.

RYME ATHLETICS

NATALIA LOPEZ
BACHELOR OF BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING

JACOB KELLY-O'BRIEN
BACHELOR OF ENGINEERING (HONOURS)
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (MECHATRONICS AND PHYSICS)

NIKITA BUKHTOIAROV
BACHELOR OF COMPUTER SCIENCE AND FINANCE

PRANAV DEV
BACHELOR OF CREATIVE ARTS (ANIMATION)

Model of an arm band with a pouch to hold a small battery, with the chip and sound sensor on top.

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GAMIFIED SOCIAL SPORTS APP

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Our mobile app helps young sports lovers (16-19) build genuine connections through interactive mini-games, gradually unlocking profiles and interests. After bonding digitally, we encourage them to meet offline and play their favourite sports together.

WHAT MAKES YOUR IDEA UNIQUE?

We uniquely blend social matching, interactive games, and real-world sports meetups. Unlike Strava (mainly focusing on sports), Roblox (mainly focusing on games), or Tinder (mainly focusing on connecting with other people), our app uses games to gradually build trust, eliminate awkwardness, and sustain engagement beyond initial connections, helping friendships thrive offline through sports.

WHO IS YOUR PRODUCT FOR? WHY DO WE NEED IT?

Our app targets sports-loving teens (particularly from 16-19 years old) facing loneliness and disconnection, particularly post-pandemic. By connecting them safely with like-minded peers, we help build real friendships that move from screens to sports fields, boosting social confidence, motivation, and overall well-being.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE HIGHLIGHT OF YOUR PROJECT SO FAR?

Our breakthrough emerged from the early setbacks of our original prototype idea. Feedback from our mentor, Mr. Vib, showed our idea lacked engagement, which is a "Mouse Trap." Adding mini games turned our simple matchmaking into a unique mix of social connection, gaming, and real-life sports, inspiring our team to develop something innovative and truly special.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR YOUR PROJECT?

Next, we're launching a pilot in Australia, partnering with local sports clubs to ensure we're building what teens truly need. We're prioritising safety with features like real-name verification and exploring Web 3.0 for secure data. In the future, we aim to enhance gameplay with AR/VR. Our freemium model includes premium features but keeps the core free and accessible. Long term, we'll seek partnerships to grow globally, helping teens everywhere find their sports tribe and stay active.

TEAM ENDEAVOURS

KAI XUAN LIM
BACHELOR OF BUSINESS (ECONOMICS)

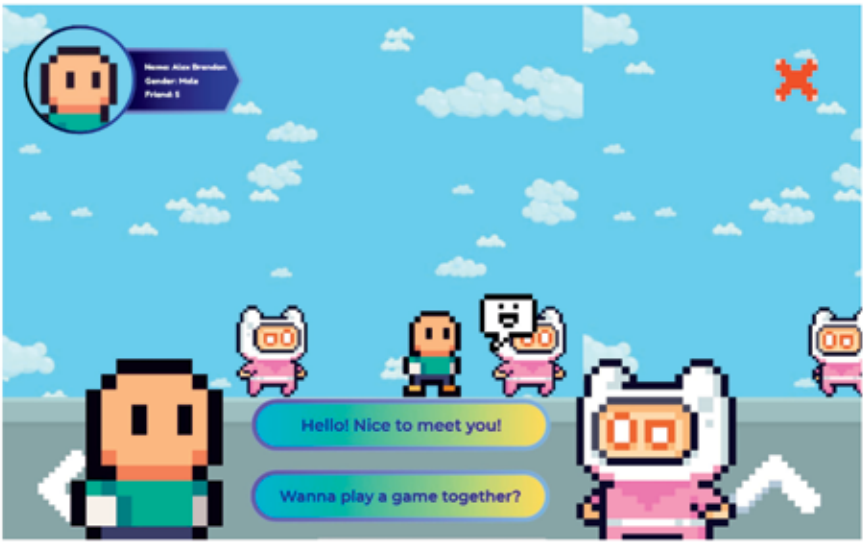
ANG KHAI MAH
BACHELOR OF DATA SCIENCE

HAO KANG NYO
BACHELOR OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (COMPUTER SCIENCE)

LAP HERNG WONG
BACHELOR OF GAMES AND INTERACTIVE ENVIRONMENTS (GAME DESIGN)

ZHAN HONG YOW
BACHELOR OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (INFORMATION SYSTEM)

ZI HIMM LIM
BACHELOR OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (COMPUTER SCIENCE)



Gamified Social Sports App Interface

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SPORTLINK - BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN VOLUNTEERING AND SPORTING NEEDS

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

SportLink is a youth-focused digital platform that connects young people with volunteer opportunities at local sports events. In returning for volunterring, they earn reward points that can be redeemed for free event tickets, public transport, or sport registration fees. This reduces financial barriers and build a more inclusive sporting community, while helping grassroots clubs fill essential volunteer roles.

WHAT MAKES YOUR IDEA UNIQUE?

We flip the traditional volunteering model by turning it into a rewarding experience tailored for youth. SportLink combines gamified incentives with social impact to enable access to support while increasing engagement. We'll be the first to offer an automated resume generator that helps youth based on their previous experience to support their career advancement. It's practical, community-driven, and builds on the momentum of programs like Queensland's Get Started.

WHO IS YOUR PRODUCT FOR? WHY DO WE NEED IT?

SportLink is for young people especially those from low socio-economic backgrounds, who want to participate in sport but face financial or access barriers. It's also for grassroots sporting clubs that struggle to find reliable volunteers. In today's sports landscape, there's a need for inclusive, sustainable solutions that engage youth and strengthen community participation.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE HIGHLIGHT OF YOUR PROJECT SO FAR?

A standout moment was testing our paper prototype with real young volunteers. Their enthusiasm confirmed our core idea and led to valuable feedback that helped us refine both the reward system and platform design. It was a big boost in confidence and direction.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR YOUR PROJECT?

We're currently finalising high-fidelity wireframes and heading into MVP development. Next, we'll pilot SportLink with a test group to validate usability and impact. With continued feedback, we aim to scale the platform and partner with local clubs, councils, and sporting bodies to create long-term community value.

SPORTLINK

WENG YAN WONG
MASTER OF DATA SCIENCE

LINH PHAM
MASTER OF DATA SCIENCE

COREY MCSWEENEY
BACHELOR OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (COMPUTER SCIENCE)

Initial MVP Landing Page of SportLink Website

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SPORT WHEELCHAIR SIMULATOR CONSOLE WITH VR INTEGRATION

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Our sport wheelchair simulator is a physical system designed to replicate the feel and movement of real sports wheelchairs. It uses sensors to track how fast and in what direction the user pushes the wheels, this is then transmitted to a VR headset, where the player will be immersed in a virtual sport environment. As the user pushes the wheels in real life, their in-game avatar moves accordingly.

WHAT MAKES YOUR IDEA UNIQUE?

Our product is essentially the first of its kind and offers a more compact, affordable, portable and visually appealing alternative to any existing solutions on the market. Its standout feature is versatility and it's ability to be used in a wide range of applications, from physical therapy and athlete development to inclusive education and immersive gaming, making it impactful across the health, sport, education and entertainment sectors.

WHO IS YOUR PRODUCT FOR? WHY DO WE NEED IT?

Many wheelchair users face huge barriers to playing sports due to the high cost of specialised equipment, often exceeding $18,000 per chair per sport. Our simulator aims to change that by offering a cost-effective, platform that replicates the feel of various sport-specific wheelchairs in one system. By removing financial and logistical hurdles, we're making wheelchair sports more accessible and inclusive for athletes, schools, and organisations.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE HIGHLIGHT OF YOUR PROJECT SO FAR?

One of the highlights of this journey was trying the simulator with VR integration for the very first time. It was an incredible moment - seeing and feeling the potential come to life after so many hours of hard work and problem-solving. It was such an exciting and meaningful experience to see our idea transform into something tangible, that we truly believe could become a real product - one that has the potential to benefit countless individuals in a space that's so often overlooked.

REVRLUTION

KAILAH RUSHTON
BACHELOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

LONG LE
BACHELOR OF INDUSTRIAL DESIGN
BACHELOR OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERING (HONOURS)

WHAT'S NEXT FOR YOUR PROJECT?

Right now, we're taking things one step at a time - learning as much as we can and making the most of every part of this process. Our current focus is on completing the prototype and ensuring it's strong enough to clearly demonstrate both our concept and its potential impact. From there, we'll take any offers, opportunities or proposals that come our way and use them to shape the future direction of the project.

Sport wheelchair simulator console with VR integration

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THANK YOU

The 2025 Sport Innovation ProtoComp brought together the curiosity and creativity of QUT students with the experience and insights of industry mentors to explore the future of sport. Over 12 weeks, students embraced real-world challenges and worked side-by-side with experts across the sport sector to develop meaningful digital solutions.

We're incredibly grateful to the many industry professionals who generously contributed their time, ideas, and encouragement throughout the Hackathon, and weekly sessions. Your presence and mentorship made a lasting impact.

A special acknowledgement Peter Laurie, whose engaging mentorship session inspired fresh thinking and energised the cohort as they developed their ideas . We also extend our thanks to Richard McInnes from the Australian Sports Commission, who joined our judging panel during the Hackathon and offered invaluable insights and encouragement to the student teams.

Thank you to our founding partner Cisco, in particular Queensland Regional Manager Terry Weber for his involvement in the hackathon, and to Chris Davis, CEO of Little Athletics Queensland for his involvement in the hackathon, and generous and invaluable industry mentoring throughout the build phase.

Finally, our sincere thanks to QUT Sport for their continued partnership and collaboration in making this program possible - your support helps create powerful opportunities for students to innovate, connect, and grow.

DELIVERED IN PROUD PARTNERSHIP

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