



INTERNATIONAL  
OLYMPIC  
COMMITTEE

# ATHLETES' KIT

THE IOC ATHLETE CAREER PROGRAMME — 2014





## Foreword



**Thomas Bach**

President, International Olympic Committee

*“Combining sport with education or work has become increasingly challenging for athletes nowadays. This is where the IOC ACP can help, by providing them with training opportunities and job placements, and thus achieving both sport and life goals.”*



**Claudia Bokel**

Chairman of IOC Athletes' Commission

*“The IOC Athletes' Commission is a driving force behind ensuring that athletes have access to the right resources and tools needed to transition out of their sporting career. The IOC Athletes Career Programme has been a great success for thousands of athletes around the world. We look to continue to provide this programme to even more athletes, and have put together this online resource guide to ensure that the tools and resources are available to all athletes, no matter their country, sport or level. This online guide will continue to develop with more content so that future athletes can be even more prepared for their life after sport.”*

# Athletes' Kit

THE IOC ATHLETE CAREER PROGRAMME



The IOC Athletes' Kit is a collection of resources from the IOC Athletes' Commission written exclusively for you, the athlete. The Kit contains lots of great information, tips and worksheets designed to help you succeed both on and off the field of play. You will find resources and tips on how to make the most of the team of people around you, guidance on the three pillars of the IOC Athlete Career Programme – education, life skills and employment – and information on ethics and medical topics.

But be sure to check back soon, as it will be continuously updated with more information, resources and tips!

The Kit is designed so you that you can read and print only what you want, or the entire Kit. All chapters of the Kit can also be downloaded to your PC, smartphone or tablet, so you can take the Kit with you wherever you go!

# Athletes' Kit

THE IOC ATHLETE CAREER PROGRAMME



## Introduction

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THE IOC ATHLETE CAREER PROGRAMME

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WHO RUNS THE IOC ATHLETE CAREER PROGRAMME?

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HOW CAN I SUPPORT THE PROGRAMME OR SHARE MY STORY?

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## The IOC Athlete Career Programme

### Developing Lifelong Excellence

The IOC Athlete Career Programme, delivered in cooperation with Adecco, supports athletes while they prepare for and go through their career transition. It provides resources and training to athletes enabling them to develop their life skills and maximise their education and employment opportunities. The Athletes' Kit provides online resources to support this programme – helping athletes to develop lifelong excellence.

### The programme is delivered across three pillars

Edu **Education**   
 LSk **Life Skills**   
 Emp **Employment**

Each pillar is delivered differently based on the needs and resources that work best for every athlete. The resources related to the Education and Life Skills pillars are available in the Athletes' Kit, as well as general information on the Employment pillar. Further resources are available through your local National Olympic Committee. For further information please contact your **local NOC** or email [athletes@olympic.org](mailto:athletes@olympic.org).

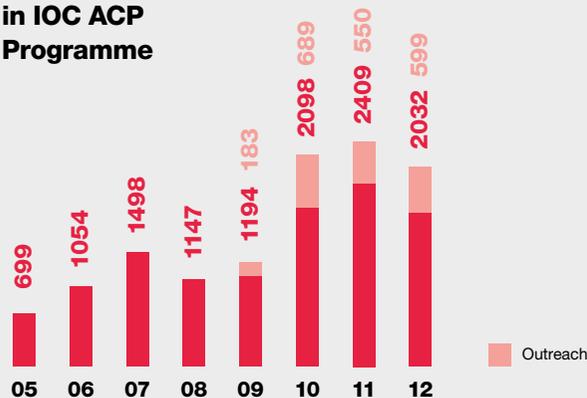
In addition to the main programme, which is run in conjunction with the local NOC, the IOC ACP also delivers the programme through workshops conducted globally. This component of the programme provides information to athletes directly through in-person training known

as "Outreach". This service is provided in countries where Adecco is not present. Adecco, with members of the IOC Athletes' Commission, has delivered Outreach training around the world, e.g. in Africa, The Americas, Asia, Europe and Oceania. The content is based on the learning and global knowledge of the IOC ACP programme which is modified to suit local conditions.

### Quick facts about the programme

- Launched in 2005, the IOC Athlete Career Programme helps elite and Olympic athletes successfully manage the difficult transition from sport to a new career through professional development and job placement support.
- The programme is currently delivered in over 30 countries through NOC's in cooperation with local Adecco organisations.
- By the end of 2012, the programme has supported more than 11,000 elite athletes from over 60 countries and five continents with training and job placements.
- Including Youth Olympic Games athletes, who participated in courses on the importance of time management and balancing sport and education, the programme has reached athletes from more than 100 countries.

Total Athlete Participation in IOC ACP Programme





# Who runs the IOC Athlete Career Programme?

The IOC Athletes' Commission

The NOC's Role

Adecco

The IOC Athlete Career Programme (ACP) is a service provided by the IOC Athletes' Commission and is run in conjunction with local National Olympic Committees around the world and Adecco, one of the world's leading providers of Human Resource (HR) solutions.

In 2002, at the first IOC International Athletes' Forum, the members identified that one of the key issues facing athletes is the successful transition to a career after sport. It was agreed that a key focus for the IOC Athletes' Commission would be to develop a programme to assist athletes to prepare more effectively for the eventual transition and to assist them when making the transition. In 2005 an agreement was signed with Adecco and the IOC ACP was launched.

Since then, the partnership with the IOC and Adecco has been renewed in 2007 and again in 2013 through 2020.

## The IOC Athletes' Commission

The IOC Athletes' Commission represents competing athletes and upholds their rights and obligations. The Commission also serves as a consultative body and as a liaison between the athletes and the IOC. The work of the Athletes' Commission involves making recommendations to the IOC's executive body for their consideration and decision.

For further information refer to the [IOC Athletes' Commission page](#).

### Quick facts

- The IOC Athletes' Commission meets once or twice a year and is composed of 12 members elected by athletes competing at the Summer and Winter Olympic Games, up to 7 members are appointed by the IOC President and 2 ex-officio members representing the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) and the World Olympians Association.
- The Chair of the IOC Athletes' Commission sits on the IOC Executive Board, and members sit on various IOC Commissions, the IPC Athletes' Council and WADA's Foundation Board and Athletes' Commission.
- Elected members are active members of their National Olympic Committee's Athletes' Commissions and are put forth by their NOC to stand for election.
- The roles of the IOC Athletes' Commission stretches widely across the organisation, including, among other activities, **being involved in:**
  - The process to evaluate candidate cities seeking to host the Olympic and



- Youth Olympic Games and monitor the organisation of each edition of the Games.
- The process to evaluate the Olympic sports programme.
- The fight against doping, including raising awareness and actively participating in initiatives to promote clean sport.
- The development and delivery of the IOC Athlete Career Programme, which is delivered in cooperation with Adecco, and supports athletes while they prepare for and go through their career transition out of sport through the provision of resources and training to athletes enabling them to develop their life skills and maximise their education and employment opportunities.
- The organisation of the International Athletes' Forum, bringing together active athletes from around the world.
- The promotion of the Olympic Values Education Programme, an initiative to encourage the dissemination of Olympic values and history among the youth of the world.
- The development of recommendations for other IOC Commissions such as Women and Sport, Sport and Environment, Sport for All, etc.

- The continual representation of athletes throughout the Olympic Movement including acting as athlete role models, and being present at the Olympic Games and Youth Olympic Games to interact with athletes.
- The publication of an Athletes' Bulletin four times a year called "**For the Record**".

The IOC Athletes' Commission is active and working for the betterment of Olympic Athletes and the Olympic Movement as a whole.

### How can I get involved in the IOC Athletes' Commission?

- You can cast your vote at the next IOC Athletes' Commission election.
- If you are interested in serving as a member of the IOC Athletes' Commission, you can stand as a candidate in the elections organised at each edition of the Olympic Games.
- You can also get involved by participating in the activities of athletes' commissions in your National Olympic Committee and International Federation.
- You can send your thoughts and comments to the IOC Athletes' Commission at [athletes@olympic.org](mailto:athletes@olympic.org).

### The NOC's role

The National Olympic Committees (NOCs) play a critical role in the IOC Athlete Career Programme (ACP) as they are the organisation responsible for delivery of the programme in their country. In order to help deliver personalised services to Olympic athletes, over 30 NOCs currently have their own Athlete Career Programme in place.

With local cooperation from Adecco, the NOCs are able to support their athletes to achieve success off the field of play. The NOC ACPs are aligned under the umbrella of the IOC ACP yet provide guidance and resources personalised for the needs of athletes in their country.

If there is no programme in your country, an NOC can work with the IOC ACP Global team to deliver career training to their athletes.

Find the contacts for participating **local NOCs**. Contact your local NOC or the IOC at [athletes@olympic.org](mailto:athletes@olympic.org) for further information on how you can be involved.

### Adecco

The origins of the IOC Athlete Career Programme (ACP) date back to the first International Athletes' Forum, held

## Athletes' Kit

### THE IOC ATHLETE CAREER PROGRAMME



in 2002. This forum identified a need for a greater focus on the problems athletes face when transitioning from a competitive career to the labour market. In parallel to this, Adecco, one of the world's leading providers of Human Resource (HR) solutions, had been placing Olympic athletes in some European countries since 1999 and was developing personalised career training workshops for professional and amateur athletes in North America.

To respond to the need identified by the IOC Athletes' Commission (IOC AC), the IOC AC joined with Adecco to develop a programme to assist athletes in their transition to life after sport. Launched in 2005, the cooperation of Adecco, with a presence in over 60 countries, with the IOC Athletes' Commission, has guaranteed that the programme has a global reach. Through Adecco's expertise and network, and the IOC's access to, and knowledge of elite athletes, the programme has developed expertise and extensive knowledge regarding the needs of elite athletes during, and post, competition.

Since 2005, agreements have been developed with over 30 National Olympic Committees (NOCs) and local Adecco organisations to introduce the IOC ACP. Over 11,000 elite athletes have so far benefited from advice provided under the programme within the Education, Life Skills and Employment pillars.

To find out more, visit the **Adecco website** .





## Why should I get involved?

Athletes, both competitive and retired who participate in the IOC Athletes' Career Programme (ACP) expand and enhance their opportunities for the future. Whether this is in anticipation of retiring from sport, or as a young athlete, the programme assists athletes to understand their assets, make informed decisions and expand their network. The earlier athletes begin to prepare to be successful for life, not just sport, the greater the likelihood is that they will enjoy a successful transition.

### Elite athletes have three specific characteristics

- 1 All will retire, and almost all will need a job after their sporting career ends.
- 2 Most have educational and work backgrounds that are different from non-athletes.
- 3 All have demonstrated that they have what it takes to be the best in the world in their sport.

This programme recognises the challenges and opportunities athletes face in achieving success in sport, and in their next career.

National Olympic Committees (NOCs) who are offering the IOC ACP are seeing great benefits for their organisations and their athletes. The programme allows the NOC to showcase its commitment towards developing well-rounded athletes, and can help to develop an inspired athlete community and connections to new partners.

The programme works with private, public and not-for-profit organisations worldwide that are looking to reinforce their values and develop their organisation through engagement with world-class athletes.

### Get involved: Athletes

Athletes who participate in the IOC Athlete Career Programme can benefit from the programme by:

- Developing an understanding of how their skills and assets as an athlete can be transferred to increase their success in an academic or workplace environment.
- Accessing resources that will position them to make informed decisions about their future.
- Creating an understanding of the value of their current sports network, extend their professional network and guide them in making the most of professional opportunities and events.



# Have other athletes benefitted from this programme?

The following athlete success stories may provide some inspiration and ideas on why you should get involved in the IOC Athlete Career Programme (ACP):

Success story 1: **Mechelle Lewis-Freeman**

Success story 2: **Keeth Smart**

### Advice from an athlete

*Claudia Bokel – What is the Athlete Career Programme and how do I get involved?*

Just as it is important to train for sport, it is equally important to prepare for the day you retire from it. Making the decision to leave sport and to transition into a new career is difficult and often comes with a lot of uncertainty. You may face a number of questions, including the following:

- How do I develop a career while I am training and competing?
- Will I be ready to enter the workforce at the end of my career?
- What can I do today that will enable me to have an easier transition into the workforce without detracting from my training?
- How can I apply my attributes as an athlete to obtain a job?
- Should I do an internship or a shadow program?

- What type of temporary job will allow me the time to continue training?
- How can I transfer my qualities developed from sport onto my “CV/résumé”?
- Will a “résumé” help me if so much of my experience is related to sport?
- Is there a market for my skills?
- How will I cope with the new environment outside sports?

Fortunately you won't have to answer all these questions on your own. To help individual athletes like you, the IOC, in collaboration with Adecco, established the IOC Athlete Career Programme (IOC ACP). This programme, created in 2005, is available now in more than 35 countries and has already benefited over 11,000 athletes, all of whom are now better prepared for a career after competitive sport. It provides guidance, tools and opportunities to assist you, the Olympic Athletes and Paralympic Athletes, to successfully manage competition and the challenges of day-to-day life while training as an active athlete and after your sporting career.

But what does the programme do? The programme can best be explained through its three pillars of focus: **Education**, **Life Skills** and **Employment**.

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In order to ensure that the programme is reaching its goals and meeting the needs of the athletes, the IOC and Adecco hold a bi-annual forum, enabling all involved parties to exchange “Best Practices”, review progress to date and to discuss ways to improve service to the athletes in the future. **Recommendations produced from the 6th IOC ACP Forum can be found here** .

It should be noted that the IOC Athlete Career Programme isn't the only thing that can get your life after sport going in the right direction. There is a lot you can do! Did you know that over 80% of all available jobs are obtained through an informal network? Building a strong network, (i.e. getting to know your current sponsors) will be a major success factor in achieving your goals in your future career. Also, did you know that as an athlete, during your training and active years, you are exposed to more opportunities than you will be at any other point in your life? Right now, people want to talk to you, you are your own best “door-opener” for building a unique and strong network. And why not start that network now? Remember: “The finishing line is just the beginning”.

For more information on the programme, go to **[www.olympic.org/athletes-space](http://www.olympic.org/athletes-space)** .





## Will I get a job?

There are no guarantees in life; similarly there is no guarantee that you will have a job as soon as your sporting career ends. After participating in this programme you will however be better prepared and understand the issues that you may be facing as you enter the job market. You will gain a better understanding of what the workplace needs from you and have a plan to work on for the future.

Athletes, both competitive and retired, who participate in the IOC Athlete Career Programme (ACP) expand their opportunities for the future. The programme will help you to:

- Understand what assets you have relevant to the job market
- Make informed decisions
- Expand your network.

### Understand your assets

The IOC ACP supports athletes in self-assessment and future planning. The programme guides athletes in understanding how their skills and assets as an athlete can be transferred to increase their excellence in an academic or workplace environment, while also providing opportunities to develop new skills. More information can be found under the **Employment** pillar.

### Make informed decisions

The IOC ACP provides athletes with the resources needed to make informed decisions. The programme provides tailored options depending on the individual athlete to ensure a complete overview of the opportunities available for an individual athlete, whether the goal is to develop new skills, take on further education, develop a new career path, or a combination of them all. More information can be found under the **Education** and **Employment** pillars.

### Expand your network

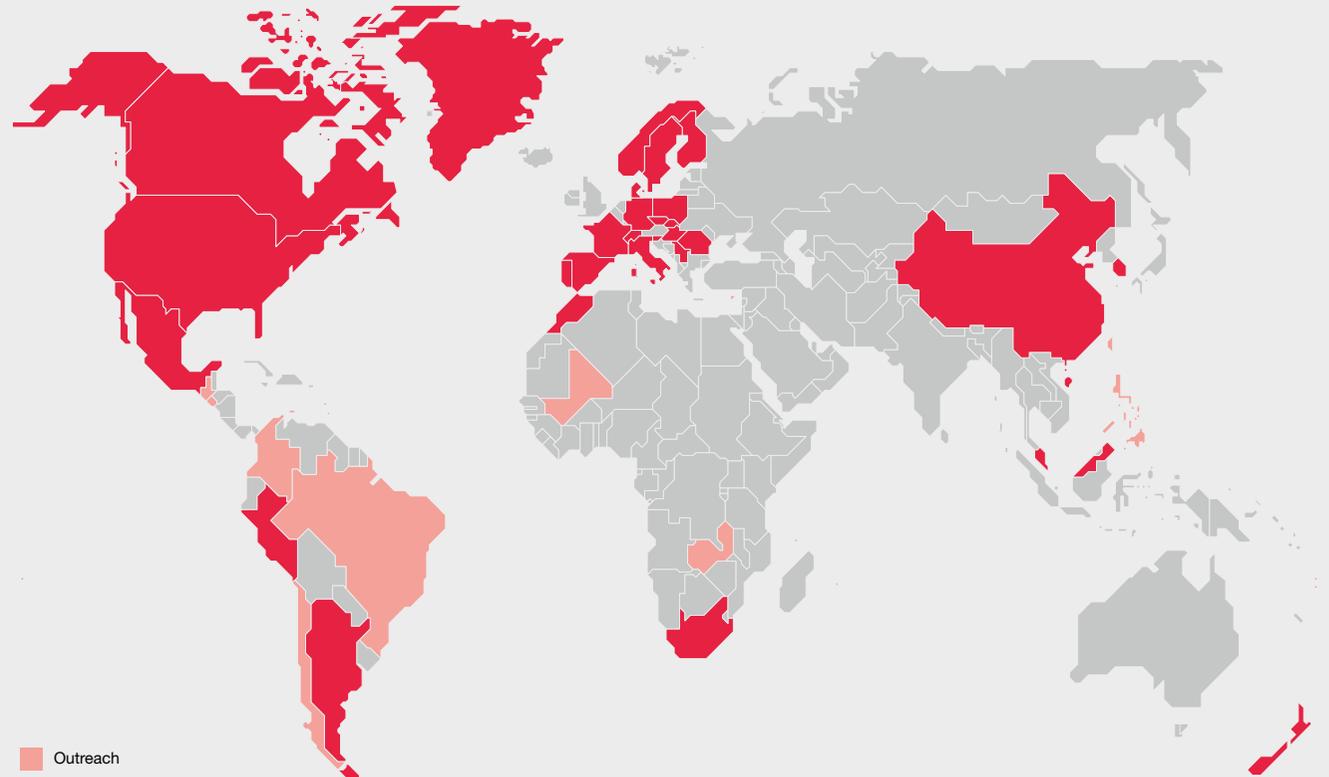
The IOC ACP focuses on building a professional network. The programme provides athletes with an understanding of their current network within the sports environment while enabling them to also expand their network and learn to make the most of professional opportunities and events. More information can be found under the **Life Skills** pillar.



### Does my NOC have a programme?

A list of all of the currently participating National Olympic Committees (NOCs) can be found on the **IOC Athlete Space website** .

If your NOC is not currently participating in the IOC Athlete Career Programme (ACP), and does not have an alternative similar programme, you can contact the IOC at **athletes@olympic.org** for other resources which can help you.





# How can I support the programme or share my story?

Would you like to support the programme or share your story with the IOC and the IOC Athlete Career Programme (ACP)? The following outlines how you can show your support for the IOC ACP.

### Athletes

You can support the programme by first using it yourself; secondly by recommending it to your team mates, friends and training partners. If you have a story to share you can contact your local NOC or the IOC to contribute to the athlete success stories.

Contact your NOC to find out more!

### National Olympic Committees (NOCs)

If you are an NOC that is not yet involved in the ACP, and you would like to be involved, contact the IOC ACP to get involved. If you have a programme in place but would like further information, or would like to contribute to the athlete success stories and updates, please contact the IOC: [athletes@olympic.org](mailto:athletes@olympic.org) .

Contact the IOC today to find out how you can bring the IOC ACP to your NOC!

### Employers

The programme works with private, public and not-for-profit organisations worldwide that are looking to reinforce their values and develop their organisation through engagement with world-class athletes. If you are interested in getting involved in this programme or if you wish to learn more about the programme or how Olympic athletes can make a positive difference to your organisation please contact [athletes@olympic.org](mailto:athletes@olympic.org) .

If you are already involved and would like to share your success story please contact the IOC Athletes' Commission: [athletes@olympic.org](mailto:athletes@olympic.org) .



**Edu**

EDUCATION

**Education**

INTRODUCTION

HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

HOW TO BALANCE SPORT AND EDUCATION



## Introduction

The Education pillar provides tools and guidance for athletes looking to excel in their educational pursuits balanced with the demands of being an elite athlete. It supports athletes by providing resources that will guide them in making informed decisions in regard to the educational opportunities available to them.

The following will help athletes to explore education options and provide advice and ideas to help balance sport and study.

*“The importance of education was instilled into me from an early age. It really helped me to achieve a lot knowing that if something happened with sport, I would still be on track for a different career. Having an education that I could come back to has given me the motivation and confidence to achieve at the top level.” — Tony Estanguet, Canoe.*

### You will learn

**How to choose the right educational institution**

**How to balance sport & education**



## How to choose the right educational institution

**What to ask your potential educational institution**

**How to build a good relationship with your educational institution**

**What options are available for flexible study**

**What to consider if you are thinking of studying abroad**

As an athlete it is very important to choose an educational institution that will work with you to achieve your aims; both for your education and your sports career. The key topics in this section will assist you to think about your needs and prepare you for discussing them with your current and potential educational institutions.

*“There’s a vital trio in the sport-education setting – you, your performance lead, and your course director. It is so important to get both to understand about the other activity, and that one activity can actually benefit the other. Choosing the right course and university can help, but building these relationships and communicating early and effectively can make all the difference in balancing sport and education.”* — Adam Pengilly, Skeleton.

### Printable worksheets

**What to ask potential educational institutions (a)**

**Deciding to study abroad (b)**

**Things to do before you relocate checklist (c)**

### Ideas for further resources and help

- Contact a counsellor at your educational institution.
- Seek further information on educational issues from your local government education department.
- Contact your NOC or Institute of Sport for further information and advice.
- Ask current or retired athletes for ideas and guidance.

### What to ask your potential educational institution

As an athlete you have specific needs and unique challenges to face when combining study and your sports training. The type of flexibility required by the student/athlete is available within existing university policy documents and frameworks. However, the availability of these support systems is not widely known. Athletes, therefore, must seek to highlight their specific requirements, and the flexibility and systems needed to create a supportive environment that is conducive to the achievement of academic excellence.

It is important to enter an institution, fully understanding if it will support your objectives to balance sport



and education, or not. As an elite athlete you need to know what is possible, rather than struggling with the unknown of a university which will not be able to support the balance needed to perform at your best.

The following questions will help you to think about your needs in relation to each of the educational institutions you are considering and guide you in obtaining the relevant information that will assist you to make the right decision.

### For each of the institutions, consider:

#### THE PROGRAMME

- Does it allow you to balance training and competition by providing flexibility with timetables, class work and assignments? For example, does it utilise online learning or other flexible learning so you can keep up with class work when you need to travel?
- Does it cater for different learning requirements and various educational abilities, whilst maintaining the highest academic standards?
- Is there a programme that supports combining your sport and education, how many students are involved in the programme and how do you relate and integrate with other

sport students, along with the mainstream students, at the educational institution?

- Is there a dedicated coordinator or person responsible within the institution that is the key point of contact to assist you and your entourage to resolve any issues that you may encounter in combining your educational and sporting pursuits?
- If your circumstances change in the near future are you able to transfer your credits that you have completed, and if so how easily within your country and internationally?
- What type of links does the educational institution have to the broader sporting community?
- Is the educational institution supported by the local government and /or community?

#### THE FACILITIES

- What type of facilities does the educational institution have access to?
- Are the facilities that are provided “fit for purpose” with regards to your training needs and located close to the educational institution?
- Do the transport options available make it possible, in a reasonable time, to access these facilities?

- Does the educational institution have access to the required expertise in terms of coaching and support services (for example biomechanics, nutrition, sports psychology, physiotherapy, etc.) if you are to be based there?
- Does the educational institution have demonstrated links with other national or international sporting authorities from which to draw expertise and advice?
- Is access available for personal coaches to use the venues and facilities?

Whilst the above is not an exhaustive list, it should provide you with some of the key areas of focus when looking to find an academic institution that will understand the unique requirements that are faced in combining an elite sporting and education career.

See also the printable worksheet **What to ask potential educational institutions (a)** .

### How to build a good relationship with your educational institution

Your needs as an athlete are different from other students within your educational institution. You may need to seek approval for time away to train or attend competitions, extra time to hand in work, or to sit exams



at another time or place. It is important that you build a good relationship with your institution. This starts with good planning and communication.

It is important to have a clear picture of your sporting commitments for the semester/year. Although this can change, early preparation can ensure that you have a clear picture of the type of support that you need from your sport, teacher or institution. The following points will also help you to develop a good relationship with your institution:

### **Be reliable**

Make sure that you deliver on your agreements as part of the support arrangement. If, for some reason, you cannot fulfil your obligations then give the institution plenty of advance notice and also offer an alternative solution.

### **Be professional**

If the support comes to an end (either through completing your education or because you need to change institution) make sure that you finish in a respectful manner with at least a thank-you letter and perhaps a signed action photo, depending on the extent of the support you have been provided with.

### **Be proactive**

Try to think about ways in which you can provide value to your institution. It will mean much more if you come up with ways to solve problems than if the institution constantly has to come up with the ideas.

### **Promote the relationship**

If you're lucky enough to get media exposure, make the most of it. Think about the people who helped you get there and remember to mention them. Make sure you keep a copy and give it to the institution in case they didn't see it. Sometimes it's also nice to write a thank-you letter or e-mail. If you get the chance to do any public speaking, it's always good to try and mention your supporters as well.

### **Keep in contact**

Keep a personalised mailing list of the people who have supported you (scholarship/sponsorship providers, teachers, etc.) and keep them updated of your progress at your major competitions. Keep your institution in mind if you can gain access to any tickets or corporate tickets at local competitions. An invitation to the event can also provide some valuable goodwill. This may also apply for sporting functions that you attend, if appropriate.

## **What options are available for flexible study**

The completion of your secondary education (college, high school, etc.) may happen at the same time as you are developing and progressing up the ranks in your sport. Many institutions now recognise that they need to be flexible in order to better cater for the needs of secondary students. As an athlete, you may require some flexibility from your institution. Below are some suggestions that you may be able to discuss and negotiate with your institution. You should discuss your needs with your institution as early as possible and have some ideas of possible options, but you should always listen to any alternatives provided by the institution themselves.

### **Extended period of time**

Some athletes prefer to spread their secondary education out over an extended period of time. This can suit some athletes, especially if they have a heavy training, competition or travel schedule. If you are interested in doing this, contact your institution, advising them of your situation and asking for their support.



### Distance education/virtual education

If you have a heavy travel component and think that it's unlikely that you'll be able to regularly attend classes, you may wish to consider options through one of the Distance Education Centres. Distance Education Centres can offer a good range of subjects through a combination of correspondence and on line courses. Below is further information in relation to a virtual/online educational platform available through the IOC:

#### IOC ATHLETE MOOC

Based on the recommendations of the Olympic Congress in 2009, the IOC Athletes' Commission has studied the best way to provide educational tools to athletes. Online education has become increasingly popular, and has proved to be very successful for athletes and coaches as it allows flexibility in combining learning and practice.

Accordingly, the IOC is exploring the potential of producing online educational content which leverages its unique ability to bring together the very best in the world, and make educational courses in sport accessible to a wider audience, thereby helping to promote the development of sport around the world.

The development of an initial version of the IOC Athlete MOOC platform includes topics such as sports science, coaching and management. This course aims to address the needs of active athletes and their entourage

members. Content will be available to browse and consume under defined subject areas, but within these areas, users will be free to consume content at their own pace and level of interest. Courses will be updated on a monthly basis with new subject areas and fresh content available continually.

The IOC Athlete MOOC platform will be launched at the Sochi 2014 Winter Olympic Games.

### Home education

Some countries have home education options with special permission from the Education Board in their country. Each country has a different system, contact your institution or Education Department for more information. This option is very challenging and requires support from your family, friends, and discipline from you.

### Special consideration

You may be eligible for special consideration so it is important, as soon as the term or semester starts, that you have a clear plan of your sporting commitments for the semester/year. Although this can change along the way, early preparation can ensure that you have a clear picture of the type of support that you may require from your sport, teacher or lecturer.

### Early entrance to university

Some universities now include programmes where a student can gain early entrance to a course. More universities are starting to implement these programmes. Make inquiries with the university of your choice to gain additional information.

### What to consider if you are thinking of studying abroad

In today's sporting world, athletes move from country to country for a number of reasons. If you are considering studying in another country, a number of factors may influence your decision. You may favour a particular country because of the sporting opportunities that exist, or it may be as a result of the educational support that can be provided to you (for example – a scholarship to attend university). In these types of scenarios, it is important that you assess the situation and address a number of issues. Some suggestions listed below may assist you in the decision making process.

Part of your decision will be weighing up the cost/benefit equation. How much will this decision cost you in terms of family, home support, money, or personal sacrifice, and how much will you gain in terms of sports development, personal development, opportunities or lifestyle? These questions will help you to weigh up



the options so that you can make the best decision for your circumstances.

### **What are you hoping to gain by studying in another country?**

- Increase your sporting opportunities.
- Develop as an athlete.
- Give yourself an opportunity to receive an offer to play professionally.
- Continue your education.
- Gain qualifications.
- Learn to manage yourself.
- Have a “life experience” and broaden your cultural horizon.
- Have financially-supported education.
- All of the above.

For further assistance in your decision making process refer to the printable worksheet **Deciding to study abroad (b)** .

### **If you decide to relocate for study**

At certain times in your sporting career, you may need to relocate from your home base to study. The printable worksheet **Things to do before you relocate checklist (c)** includes some of the issues you may face. You should also add any other issues that may be specific to you when relocating.



## How to balance sport & education

How to manage your time more effectively

How to overcome procrastination

How to make the most of your study time

How to study while travelling

There are four key skills that you need to master as an athlete if you wish to combine study or work with your commitments to your sport; time management, overcoming procrastination, active study skills and learning how to study whilst travelling. The following information will assist you to learn new skills or improve on your existing skills.

*“When focusing on simply being the best athlete you can be, it is difficult to think about anything else. Unfortunately, however, our careers as athletes will one day come to an end, and it is important that when this happens we are prepared for a future which allows us to reach other goals. In order to be prepared, we must focus on absorbing as much education and experience as possible while competing.”* — Angela Ruggiero, Ice Hockey.

*“As athletes, we are often praised for our ability to focus on a goal and achieve it. We are dedicated to our sport and disciplined in following a rigid and heavy training schedule. Unfortunately, however, this focus and dedication to our sport can often be detrimental to other aspects of our life. In order to be the best athlete possible we should try to live a balanced life. But with so much time spent on sport how can we find this balance?”* — James Tomkins, Rowing.

### Printable worksheets

**Time Management Quick Quiz (d)**

**To Do List #1 – Manage/Focus matrix (e)**

**To Do List #2 – Grouped tasks (f)**

**Creating an effective yearly planner (g)**

**Action Priority Matrix (h)**

**Mind Map (i)**

**Common Study Abbreviations for note taking (j)**

### Ideas for further resources and help

- Contact a counsellor at your educational institution.
- Research online tips and hints using the search terms “time management”, “procrastination”, or “effective study techniques”.

### How to manage your time more effectively

The following will help you to manage your time more effectively and to set goals. Time management skills are essential for effective elite athletes. Athletes who master these techniques routinely are the highest achievers, even under intense pressure, in all walks



of life, from sport to business. First, it is important to identify and concentrate on the things that matter most. This ensures that you achieve the greatest benefit with the limited amount of time available to you.

When you know how to manage your time you gain control. Rather than busily working here, there and everywhere (and not getting much done anywhere), effective time management helps you to choose what to do and when.

Try this **Time Management Quick Quiz (d)** .

When you know where you're going, you can then figure out what needs to be done, in what order. Without proper goal setting, you will not make the most of your time and could be faced with conflicting priorities. For further information on setting goals refer to the section **How to set SMART goals** .

Prioritising what needs to be done is especially important. Without it, you may work very hard, but you won't be achieving the results you desire because what you are working on is not of real importance. **There are two simple ways to improve your prioritisation skills:**

### 1 To-do list

Most athletes have a to-do list of some sort. The problem with many of these lists is they are just a collection of things that need to get done. There is no rhyme or reason to the list and, because of this, the work they do has the potential to be unstructured. So how do you work on "To-do list" tasks – top down, bottom up, easiest to hardest? Two examples of to-do lists can be found here:

**To Do List #1 – Manage/Focus matrix (e)** .

**To Do List #2 – Grouped tasks (f)** .

To work efficiently you need to work on the most important, highest value tasks. This way you won't get caught scrambling to get something critical done as the deadline approaches.

### 2 Simple prioritisation

At a simple level, you can prioritise based on time constraints, on the potential probability or benefit of the task you're facing, or on the pressure you're under to complete a task.

Prioritisation is based on what you value or what you think you need to achieve. This is probably the most commonly used and rational basis for prioritisation. Whether this is based on a subjective guess at value

or a sophisticated evaluation, it often gives the most efficient results. Using a yearly or weekly planner is a good way to ensure that you are achieving what is most important to you.

Many good yearly, monthly and weekly planners are available free on the internet, from your book or stationery supplier. Use the planner to map out what you need to achieve by when and allocate time to each day/week to ensure that you achieve those aims. For more tips on how to create an effective yearly plan use the printable worksheet **Creating an effective yearly planner (g)** .

Time constraints are important when other people are depending on you to complete a task, and particularly when this task is a critical part of an important project. Here, a small amount of your own effort can go a very long way. Also, you may have to link into other people's plans or requirements. This may be your coach, family or friends or your employer. Sometimes it is very important to consider these external factors.



## Other prioritisation tools

While these simple approaches to prioritisation suit many situations, there are plenty of special cases where you'll need other prioritisation and time management tools if you're going to be truly effective. We look at some of these below:

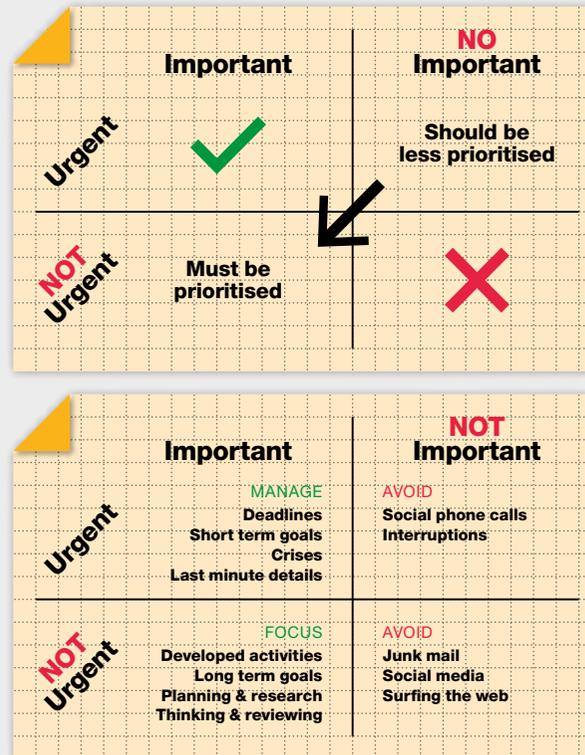
### THE ACTION PRIORITY MATRIX

This quick and simple diagramming technique asks you to plot the value of the task against the effort it will consume. By doing this, you can quickly spot the "quick wins" which will give you the greatest rewards in the shortest possible time, and avoid the "hard slogs" which soak up time for little eventual reward. An example Action Priority Matrix can be found here: **Action Priority Matrix (h)**

### THE URGENT / IMPORTANT MATRIX

Similar to the Action Priority Matrix, this technique asks you to think about whether tasks are urgent or important. Frequently, seemingly urgent tasks actually aren't that important. And often, really important activities (like working towards your life goals) just aren't that urgent. This approach helps you cut through this.

**The following is an example of the Urgent/Important Matrix:**



In this matrix you should manage those tasks that are urgent and important. Your daily and long term focus should always remain on the items in the important but not urgent box. Anything not in these two boxes should be avoided as they are generally time wasters and will distract you from the tasks that need to be achieved.

## How to overcome procrastination

The following will assist you to stay positive and set priorities. Time is always important to athletes; therefore it is very important to make the most of what time you have.

Have you ever found that you put off tackling important tasks whilst still finding time to do the more interesting or easier tasks? This is procrastination. We all do it, but some athletes believe they must turn in perfect work, which can prevent them from finishing it on time. However ultimately, the more you delay, the worse the problem becomes.

The following are a few tips to help you make the most of your time:

### A good approach is to think:

- There's no time like the present.
- The sooner I get it done, the sooner I can do what I like.
- It's less painful to do it right now rather than wait until it gets worse.

### It is important to:

- Set clear goals – Think what you need, and want, to get done



- Stay positive – Jumping to negative conclusions will make a wall of fear and make it harder to start the tasks.

### **Focus on the present and what positive steps you can take toward reaching your goals:**

- Set priorities – Draw up a list, write down the things that need to be done and rate them in terms of importance .
- Break projects down to the smallest and most manageable sub-parts; tackle the worst parts first.
- Set a goal for the next five minutes to work – often you end up doing more than five minutes work because you get into the task and lose track of time.
- Get organised by listing the tasks of the day or week realistically, check off the tasks you have completed .
- Have all materials (computer with power cable, pens, books, paper, printer ink etc.) that you need to carry out the task ready before you begin.
- Reward yourself!

## **How to make the most of your study time**

It is important to start using and practising active study methods right from the start – this way, the skills will become automatic and a normal part of your study routine. The following are some basic study guidelines and advice to help you to make the most of your time.

### **Summarise**

Summarise topics at the end of each module, topic or chapter. This will help you to think clearly about the information and gain a better understanding of the concepts involved. It will also provide you with a quick review of the information covered. When you make the summaries think about what you need to know for revision of the topic and develop a list of key points that can be stored for this purpose. If something is not clear, make a note and read further on this issue.

### **Read actively**

Most of your reading should include some additional interaction like taking notes, underlining or highlighting. You may want to think about reading quickly or “speed reading” to get an overview before you read word for word. If you have a unit or module outline, you may

find it useful to ask yourself questions that you can answer as you read.

### **Draw diagrams**

For many athletes, the use of diagrams or visual aids is a very useful tool to assist learning and remembering. The more visual something is, the more effective a learning tool it could be.

### **Use mind maps**

The use of mind maps will help you follow the theme of the work and also revise the material at a later date. Here are some tips for developing mind maps:

- The theme or main idea is written in the centre of the page with supporting points and details radiating outwards.
- This visual characteristic will help in recalling the information given in the lecture, identifying and linking the main ideas and points.
- Can be great for exam revision purposes (especially if different colours are used).

An example mind map can be found in the printable worksheet **Mind Map (i)** .



### Say things aloud

Each time you go over material, you are helping to place information in your long-term memory. Self-talk, explaining the material covered as well as talking to people including your teachers, lecturers, other people about what you are studying, will also help you to gather information and have a clearer understanding of the topic.

### Develop definition and formula cards

Put the word or formula on one side of a small card and its definition on another. This process can also be helpful for learning vocabulary.

### Do pre-reading activities

Pre-reading activities are like practice or training for your sport. It allows you to prepare and be ready to perform by bringing some knowledge of what is ahead. Have on hand a piece of paper or a notebook for information you will need (formulae, acronyms, key words and definitions). It will be useful to ask yourself questions: what, when, where, why and how to start the understanding and learning process.

### Take effective notes

When taking notes, it is important that you clearly understand what you have recorded. The following are tips to help you in note taking:

- For lectures, record the unit, the name of the lecturer, the date and title of the lecture at the top of the first page, and number and date following pages.
- For printed material, record the bibliographical details you may need later when you use the notes for your essay.

For example: The author, title, place of publication, publisher, editor and year of publication must be clearly recorded at the top of the first page. Next to each key point or direct quote, place the exact page reference.

### Use abbreviations

Use abbreviations whenever you can; it will help you keep pace with what the lecturer or teacher says. Some commonly used study abbreviations are available in the printable worksheet **Common Study Abbreviations for note taking (j)** .

### Organise your notes

To ensure that your notes are easy to understand and easy to retrieve, they should be:

- *Systematic* – use a clear layout with main and sub-headings clearly differentiated.
- *Well-spaced* for visual ease and easy recall, and set out on suitably sized paper.
- *Use one side of the paper only*; use the other side for additional information.
- *In point form*, based on key phrases and using abbreviations or your personal shorthand system.
- *Organised and structured* by using lettering, numbering, highlighting, colour coding, underlining, capitals/brackets, boxes/circles, etc.

### Review your notes after the lecture

After the lecture or lesson, it is a good idea to review your notes. Ideally 10 minutes after the lecture, but, if that's not possible, no later than that night, review and check over your notes this way:

- Make sure they make sense and are easy to understand. Organise them by using colour coding, underlining, highlighting and numbering.
- Add comments/ideas of your own.



- Write a summary to further reinforce your learning.
- Fill in any parts you have missed by talking to your classmates or lecturers.
- Follow up on information and/or references mentioned in the lecture while it is still fresh in your mind.

Organise your notes into a filing system immediately after reviewing them. Loose leaf binders or a system of file folders allows you to add additional information or ideas easily during your editing process.

### How to study while travelling

Student athletes often need to be able to combine their study commitments with their athletic commitments. Although this is not an easy task many things can be done to be as organised as possible:

#### Know your institution or university commitments

- As soon as your subjects/units/classes for the semester have been finalised, draw up your timetable and compare it with your sporting commitments. Your sporting commitments should be available from your coach or team manager.

- Get in as early as possible to ensure you get the times you need in order to make your timetable work for you.

#### When travelling get organised before you leave

- Write to your lecturers and teachers in advance. Let them know you will be away and if possible can they email you the notes, questions or work.
- Find out what service you will have for your computer while you are away and what adaptors you will need.
- Understand what your schedule is and what downtime you realistically have to complete tasks.

#### Identify clashes in times or busy times (hot spots)

- If you are forced to miss lectures or classes as a result of your sporting commitments, let the lecturers know at the earliest possible date and arrange for another option to obtain the work, e.g., a buddy to take notes, the lecturer to give you the notes and reading in advance etc.
- Planning and communication is the key to success.

- Ensure that you are aware of expectations of tutorials in terms of participation and possible assessment tasks. Many tutorials have some assessment component attached to them, whether it is in the form of an attendance mark, participation mark, or regular assessment tasks. Ensure that you address these issues and identify alternative options that may be available to you, including: a change of assessment weighting, ability to miss a small number of tutorials, availability to complete assessment tasks early/late, etc.
- With many sports, the busy time of the year quite often clashes with exam blocks and assignment tasks. It is important that you address these issues and research alternative options, which may include: sitting exams away from your institution or university, changing dates for exams, changing dates for assignments, changing the weighting of these assessment pieces to others, etc.

#### Seek assistance

- Remember you have a support team to assist you. This includes not only teachers and lecturers but also coaches, team managers, family and friends.



### **How can I get an education and work experience while competing?**

*By Angela Ruggiero*

**When focusing on simply being the best athlete you can be, it is difficult to think about anything else. Unfortunately, however, our careers as athletes will one day come to an end, and it is important that when this happens we are prepared for a future which allows us to reach other goals. In order to be prepared, we must focus on absorbing as much education and experience as possible while competing.**

This can be difficult because of the time constraints we have as athletes and the pressure we have in meeting our sporting goals. It can be hard to work or study while competing, but you can still build your experiences and education in other ways. Keep these four hints in mind while you are competing, and it will help you to better prepare for your career after sport.

#### FIND YOUR ADDED VALUE

While competing, take the time to find out about yourself and your strengths. Ask your coach, your team-mates, even your competitors what they see to be your added value. Are you a natural leader on the field? Are you quick to understand conceptual teachings? Do you enjoy speaking in front of large groups of people? Do

you pick up new languages quickly? All of these skills could be beneficial for your future, and the more aware you are of your natural capabilities and skills, the more you can build on and improve them.

Also, the more aware you are of any skills you may not have naturally, the more you can focus on improving these skills. For example, if you see that you are not very good at managing people, you could get involved in coaching at your local club to improve your management skills by managing a team or group. Or, if you notice you are not very good at negotiating, take the time to learn some negotiation techniques. These skills will help you with your current sponsorship contracts and will also help you to prepare for many different roles you could hold in the future.

#### VOLUNTEER

The best way to build your experience and education while competing is to volunteer your time. There are plenty of volunteer opportunities for an athlete – whether it is in the administration of your sport, in your local club, with a non-profit organisation, in a school, or at any events in which you are not competing. Fitting time to volunteer into your training schedule will allow you to build work experience and learn new skills. Consider reaching out to sports and non-sports entities that are willing to be flexible with an athletes' training. You can gain valuable experience and it can also give you

a chance to test out different roles so you can see what you are interested in. Do you like teaching people about your sport, or do you like being involved in the administration? Do you enjoy working in the fast-paced atmosphere of an event, or do you prefer being behind the scenes in a quiet office?

Your future career does not necessarily need to be directly connected to your sport – but by volunteering in different positions you can see what type of work you enjoy and start to see how your skills can best fit these different roles. A volunteer position could easily evolve into an internship or even a job.

#### SEEK OPPORTUNITIES

There are a lot of education scholarships and work experience positions that are unclaimed because no one knows about them. To make sure that opportunities don't pass you by you should be dedicated and creative in seeking them out. Use your position as an elite athlete to advantage. Many people want to support and be associated with Olympic athletes and will want to help if you show that you are interested and need help.

Speak to people around you to see if there are any scholarship programmes or education funding programmes through your federation or National Olympic Committee. Speak to other athletes to see how they have managed to fit in time for distance-learning education



courses or short-term training courses. Speak to your sponsors – maybe they have opportunities for training courses they would be happy for you to be involved in. When approached, people may be inspired to think of opportunities they had not considered before. Don't be afraid to seek out opportunities.

### **How can I ensure a good balance between sport and life?**

*By James Tomkins*

**As athletes, we are often praised for our ability to focus on a goal and achieve it. We are dedicated to our sport and disciplined in following a rigid and heavy training schedule. Unfortunately, however, this focus and dedication to our sport can often be detrimental to other aspects of our life. In order to be the best athlete possible we should try to live a balanced life. But with so much time spent on sport how can we find this balance? To ensure a balanced life one must first understand what it means, and then set goals in these areas and manage time appropriately to meet these goals.**

#### THE FOUR PILLARS TO A BALANCED LIFE

There are four well-known pillars to a balanced life: physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being. Athletes spend a lot of time focusing on their physical well-being,

but often overlook the importance of the other pillars. We push our physical limits and are focused on continually striving to improve our physical capabilities, and for top performance we know it is important to eat properly, sleep well, and not over-train. Athletes mentally prepare for competition, but can overlook the importance of keeping their minds stimulated, allowing time for creativity or expressions of emotion, all of which are crucial to mental well-being.

The two other aspects that should not be neglected are the pillars of social and spiritual well-being. Humans need interaction with others. We need satisfying relationships. Relationships with coaches and team-mates are important – but relationships with family and friends outside the sport are crucial as well. The final pillar is spiritual well-being. Spiritual well-being can be found in religion, but it can also be found through having self-confidence, inner understanding and a sense of values and beliefs. These four pillars all need to be balanced for optimal well-being.

#### SET GOALS

With so much focus on physical well-being, often some of the other pillars to a healthy life are neglected. The only way to ensure a balanced life is to prioritise the other pillars – mental, social and spiritual, as well.

As athletes, we are very good at setting sporting goals and planning how we are going to reach these goals. The same can also be done for the other pillars. When you sit down to set your physical goals, just spend some extra time setting goals for the other pillars. For example, for the mental pillar you can set a goal of learning a new language; social goals can be to get involved in a new social group and on the spiritual realm you can keep a diary of personal reflections.

The important thing is that the goals are realistic. You cannot ignore your time constraints as an athlete. A majority of your time will be spent on physical training and preparation. The goals you set in the other areas should not distract or harm your sporting goals. They should be something that is achievable for you in your schedule and that will add to the quality of your life, and in turn improve your performance as an athlete.

#### MANAGE YOUR TIME

Once you have set your goals, you must plan your time. You probably have clear plans for your training and competition programmes and can block out time for training sessions well in advance. Time therefore can also be planned for the other pillars. It is important to find a system that works best for you – an example could be to sit down at the beginning of every month with your training calendar and your coach and schedule in blocks of time which you will reserve for your other goals.

## Athletes' Kit

THE IOC ATHLETE CAREER PROGRAMME



It is important to be flexible with your planning, but also strict. Your goals should be as important in all areas to ensure that you reach them. It is also important sometimes to be spontaneous. Often friends and family will not fully understand your dedication to your sport and will feel neglected. It is important to try to fit into their schedules as well and to talk and be honest with them.

### BALANCE BUILDS A BETTER ATHLETE AND A BETTER LIFE

By practicing the same dedication you show to your sport to the other pillars of your life you will ensure a balanced life. When you have all four pillars in place and in harmony, not only will you be better prepared for life after sport, but your performance in sport will be improved as well. This balance will make you a more well-rounded athlete with a greater perspective of yourself, your competitors and your own performance.





## Life Skills

INTRODUCTION

HOW TO SPEAK TO THE MEDIA

HOW TO BE A GOOD PUBLIC SPEAKER

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS

HOW TO SET SMART GOALS

HOW TO NETWORK EFFECTIVELY

HOW TO MANAGE YOUR FINANCES



## Introduction

The Life Skills pillar focuses on personal skill development. It assists athletes in understanding how their skills as a sportsperson can be valuable in other areas of their lives, and provides resources focused on the development of new life skills that can be beneficial for their development as an athlete and in their life beyond sport.

Regardless of where an athlete is in their career, life skills play an important role in driving self-confidence, both on and off the field of play.

*“I really wish I had understood earlier how important life skills can be in all areas of my life. I hope that all athletes will take advantage of the materials available through the IOC ACP and benefit from them across all aspects of their life and not just in the sporting context.” — Amadou Dia Ba, Athletics.*

*“Sport taught me essential things I did not learn at school and I always valued the impact it had in my life. The materials in the IOC ACP will guide you in the process of using your talent in sport to develop precious life skills. It’s important to take the time to think about how your talent in sport and the skills you develop as an athlete can be transferred to other areas of life.” — Stefan Holm, Athletics.*

### You will learn

**How to speak to the media**

**How to be a good public speaker**

**How to improve your problem solving skills**

**How to set SMART goals**

**How to network effectively**

**How to manage your finances**



## How to speak to the media

### How to prepare for a media interview

### How to project a positive image using the media

### How to handle uncomfortable moments with the media

The following resources will assist you to deal with your media commitments in a professional and friendly manner. By using these tips you will not only present a professional and mature image but you will also make the most of any media opportunities to develop a positive image of yourself.

*"It is easy to be caught off-guard by the media. Whether you are fighting through the mixed zone or you answer an unexpected phone call, it is best to always be prepared. How you react and what you say in these brief moments may have more impact than what you say during a well planned interview. So, how can you best prepare yourself to handle the media more effectively? My experience has taught me to be prepared, be honest, and learn from those around me." — Danka Bartekova, Shooting.*

### Printable worksheets

#### Media preparation #1 (k)

#### Media preparation #2 (l)

### Ideas for further resources and help

- Contact your NOC, Institute of sport or your athletes' commission to see if they have media specialists who can train you.
- Look for media or communication courses at an Open University or community college.
- Find taped interviews on-line of your favourite athletes and watch how they deal with the media.

### How to prepare for a media interview

The biggest trick for a successful media interview is to be prepared! No matter what the circumstances and situation, it is always possible to be prepared for an interview – whether it is scheduled far in advance or pops up unexpectedly. You should always be ready.

To prepare, ask yourself, the following questions, either far in advance, or in a few quick seconds before you start asking questions if the interview is unexpected. If you don't know the answers, try to find out before you start talking:

- Who is the interviewer? What media source are they from and why are they interested in talking to me?



- How will this interview be seen – print, TV, radio, etc.?
- Which audiences will I reach through this interview?
- What does this audience know or think about me and my sport?
- What are some likely questions? Have I done something of interest, or is my sport, team or country facing any issues?
- What is the main message I want to get across?

To help you prepare, use the printable worksheet **Media preparation #1 (k)** .

For any interview, it is important to have a main message. Something that is important to you as an athlete that you would like to share with the world. It is not only about answering questions that the media has, but also sharing your own message about yourself, your sport, your country or any other subject that is important to you.

For developing a more complete message try the printable worksheet **Media preparation #2 (l)** .

Once you are prepared and have your message, follow these tips to make sure the interview is a success for you!

- 1** First, answer the question that is asked, but then always use a bridge to end your answer with your key message.
- 2** Keep your answers short and clear.
- 3** Use proof to back up any claims – for example, rather than just saying “I’m in my best shape for this competition”, you can say “I’m in my best shape for this competition, because I have been working on new methods of training with my coach and have been working with a nutritionist.”

### Exercises for preparing and practicing:

- Using the printable worksheets **Media preparation #1 (k)** and **Media preparation #2 (l)** , write out some scenarios specific to you and your sport.
- Go over them with a coach, training partner or friend to seek feedback on your responses.
- If possible do this in conjunction with your training so that as you finish a session the person will ask you the questions, this will most closely mirror an actual situation.

## How to project a positive image using the media

We all want to project a good image to the public and how we are portrayed in the media can affect our public image.

### The following tips may be useful to ensure that you are in control of your public image:

- Mind your body language, use an open posture and direct your attention to the journalist, smile.
- Show your emotions; excitement and joy will be infectious and make your personable, if you are disappointed or frustrated it is ok to show these emotions as well, as long as they are not shown as anger.
- Always be positive when talking about your competitors, the competition or your team mates.
- If challenged on an issue during the competition, use vague comments like “I’m not sure what happened there but I am sure the officials will let us know if there was something wrong”.
- Always stay calm and be polite even if the interviewer provokes you.
- If at all possible do not answer “no comment” or “off the record”.



- Give more than one word answers even if this is the correct answer to the question, elaborate and expand your answer – one word answers give the journalist nothing to work with and comes across as very closed.
- If there is a misleading assertion in a question, correct it immediately at the start of **your answer:**
  - **Example question:** “Even though your preparation was interrupted, you were still able to win easily.”
  - **Answer:** “My preparation was not ideal but I have a fantastic support team to assist me. I thought the competition today was of a high standard.”
- Beware of trying to fill any gaps if the journalist goes silent. Avoid saying something just to fill the silence; you are likely to end up saying more than you planned.

### How to handle uncomfortable moments with the media

While most interviews, press conferences and appearances will be professional and civil, there may be times when interacting with the media becomes uncomfortable. Even though a situation may get uncomfortable, there are some strategies you can use to ease the

tension and steer the conversation in a more positive direction.

The key to any uncomfortable moment with the media is staying calm, polite and professional. By doing so, you deflect the tension, establish a clear boundary and take the conversation in a more comfortable direction. You also develop credibility as someone the media respects, while building a positive image as an athlete who stays professional under pressure.

**Stay calm.** When you feel that a question makes you uncomfortable, take a moment to think and not overreact. By overreacting, you may give the journalist a new story to report.

**It's OK to say, “I don't know”.** You should never comment on something about which you are not informed. Don't feel pressured to answer a question just because it is asked. Politely ask for more information. If you don't feel like you have all the facts, or if you feel like the interviewer is leading you down an uncomfortable line of questioning, feel free to say (politely and calmly) that you don't have enough information to make a well-informed comment. If it's about a teammate, you can say that you don't comment on others, and if it's about your personal life, you can say that you only comment on your professional career, not your private life.

**Trust your intuition.** If a line of questioning is making you uncomfortable, trust the way you are feeling. It may

be that you don't have enough information or that the questioning is entering an aspect of your life that you prefer to keep private. While you are a public figure and commenting to the media will be part of your career, you can set reasonable boundaries that you expect the media to respect.

### How can I best prepare to handle the media?

*By Danka Bartekova*

**It is easy to be caught off-guard by the media. Whether you are fighting through the mixed zone or you answer an unexpected phone call, it is best to always be prepared. How you react and what you say in these brief moments may have more impact than what you say during a well planned interview. So, how can you best prepare yourself to handle the media more effectively? My experience has taught me to be prepared, be honest, and learn from those around me.**

### BE PREPARED

As an athlete you should always be ready to speak to the media. Being approached by the media can be good news. No matter what the occasion you can always have something to say – so why not be prepared and make this something good!



Be prepared with a key message. This key message can be your opinion on a certain issue, or something that you want people to know about you that makes you different or unique. Key messages should be well prepared in advance and well thought through. Depending on the situation, you should always have one or two key things you want to convey. No matter what question is asked, if you have a key message that is strong and clear you can formulate it into an answer.

Once you have your key messages in mind, prepare a list of possible questions that the media could ask you. These are questions they may ask you in the lead-up to or right after a competition, or even if they run into you casually at a non-sporting event. Keeping your key message in mind, develop clear answers to all of these questions. This list – often referred to as “Q&A” (Questions & Answers) – can act as a safety net, enabling you to never feel like you are caught off-guard. Instead you will always be prepared with well thought through answers.

You can also feed the media with your messages via digital media platforms. Familiarise yourself with platforms such as Facebook, blogs, Twitter, LinkedIn etc. and create profiles with the ones that you feel suit you best. You can then use these tools to feed the media with stories about you and get your message across clearly, without even having to speak to media directly. Just remember, however, that once something

goes online it is very difficult to control and can easily be picked up by the media – including items that may not be positive for you.

If you need advice on what you could be saying or to get context on current issues, the various governing bodies of your sport can also help. Contact your National Olympic Committee and it will tell you what its position (or the International Olympic Committee’s position) is on certain issues. With this information you can then develop your own clear stance on the subject.

### BE HONEST

The best way to generate respect with the media and the public is to say what you know – and to admit what you don’t know. If the media asks a question that you don’t know the answer to, don’t be afraid to admit that you don’t know. It is better to stick to what you know and are prepared to talk about.

You should, however, try to stay informed about things that are happening in your sport or sport in general so that you are well prepared to comment on current issues or debates. Always answer honestly “based on the information I currently have available”. This approach goes a long way in building credibility and establishing yourself as someone who can take on tough questions, anytime, anyplace. Always stress that this is your idea, opinion or view, to avoid the media generalising

your comment and using it as the view of the team or fellow athletes. But again, try to prepare these topics in advance so that you are never taken off-guard. If you are unsure of how to address an anticipated question ask someone who understands the problem, for example, your coach or other team members.

### LEARN FROM THOSE AROUND YOU

The best way to learn is to watch other people when they are approached by the media. Watch your fellow competitors after a competition – how do they react to the media? Who is well prepared and who isn’t? Try to see who you can learn from. Watch athletes or other public figures in other sports as well and see how they react.

Also, ask your National or International Federation, your National Olympic Committee, or even your sponsors about opportunities for media training. The better you are at communicating with the media, the more exposure the sport gets. Having athletes who are interested in improving their skills is always of interest to the stakeholders of the sport.

### MAKING THE RIGHT IMPRESSION!

Being prepared, being honest and learning from others will help you to always feel prepared to face the media. It will also enable you to create a lasting and positive

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impression no matter what the situation. It will also be likely to impress the media and get their attention, making you a focal point for further exposure in the future – which is good news for you and for your sport.





## How to be a good public speaker

How to develop your story

How to keep the audience's attention

How to deliver a great speech

How to prepare properly

Public speaking is something everyone can do and just about everyone can improve on. It is a learned skill that needs proper preparation and practice. This section will help you to get your message across in a professional and inspirational way.

*“As elite athletes we are often called upon, formally or spontaneously, to share our stories with diverse audiences. The experiences of being an elite athlete, taking part in the Olympic Games, living in the Olympic Village, and being part of the global sports community exemplify the Olympic ideals of fair play, respect and universality. Each and every journey is unique. The opportunity to communicate the magic of each athlete's journey is one which can leave a lasting impact on individuals, communities and the world.”* — Kirsty Coventry, Swimming.

*“As an athlete, you may not choose to be a role model, but given the visibility and contribution that sport makes in society today, you may not have a choice. I suggest you embrace this opportunity. At one point in our lives we were all aspiring athletes who looked up to a role model who may have been a fellow athlete, a coach or perhaps a family member. We looked up to them because they were a positive force in our life and it is important to remember this for ourselves.”* — Alexander Popov, Swimming.

### Printable worksheets

**Creating your story (m)**

**You try it! (n)**

**From traditional to high impact presentation slides (o)**

**Presentation equipment checklist (p)**

### Ideas for further resources and help

- Watch online videos of athletes presenting.
- Contact your NOC, local Institute of Sport or Athletes' Commission representative for advice.
- Try an Open University, community college, or other educational institution near you for presentation or speech giving classes.
- Join a **Toastmasters club**.

### How to develop your story

Whether you have been asked to give a speech or if you are also expected to prepare a presentation to go with it, a lot of the preparation is similar. Below you will find a number of ideas to help you to structure and prepare the speech with further ideas and information available in the worksheets section.



To start with, **think about your audience**; are they young children or a group of business people. Each audience will be seeking something different from you and should be addressed in a different manner.

Secondly, **think about what the expectations are**. The people arranging the presentation should be able to advise you on the topic and format. Ask them for guidance on what the audience will be expecting. This should give you some ideas for what you want to present to them.

Then, you can **develop your story**. Many of the best presentations tell a story, that is, the presentation is structured like you might tell a story to someone. The basic story line is something like this: a likable hero, comes across a problem, resolves it and comes out the winner. There's a moment where the audience clearly gets it and their perspective shifts as they understand your message. Presentations are generally more successful when the substance, or story being told in the presentation, is good. What is important is the idea, the story, and the passion of the speaker.

To make notes on your own story use the printable worksheet **Creating your story (m)** .

For some ideas and inspiration for stories from fellow athletes, **watch their videos** .

Now that you have an outline of your story, draft each point onto separate sticky notes and make sure that they follow a good rhythm and logical sequence. The rhythm of the presentation is important as most people expect a start, beginning and conclusion. Watch some presentations online or have someone watch you to see if you can spot the rhythm of the presentation and what the key message is.

To note a presentation use the printable worksheet **You try it! (n)** .

### How to keep the audience's attention

Imagine for a moment, the speaker comes to the podium and at the same time he or she starts to speak, an endless stream of fancy, smart-animated slides starts being projected on a screen literally repeating more or less what the speaker is saying. The result is that you don't listen to the speaker and you will sometimes find yourself being ahead of the speaker reading the slides. You can do it better with these few hints!

#### Try to position yourself to the left side of the screen (from the audience's view)

Our minds (in the western part of the world) read from left to right – as you are doing now – reading this text.

It is much more pleasant for an audience to read that way when you present and stand to the left side (from the audience's view) of the screen and then make a reference to something on the screen to the right. In Arab-speaking countries you must consider changing sides even if your slides are not in Arabic.

#### Help the audience to focus their attention

Don't compete with yourself for the attention of your audience! Where do you want them to focus their attention? On you and what you say or on the slides you show? They can't do both at the same time. So the basic rhythm must be: first you say something, then you direct the audience's attention to the screen, then you give them time to read/watch and then you direct the audience's attention to you, etc.

#### More graphics, less text

If you speak in a clear and consistent way, you must assume that the audience can hear and understand you, so why should you project on a screen what you are saying? That does not add any value to your presentation and it will only make the audience less attentive to what you are saying. Slides are excellent for showing graphics, statistics, drawing, photos, etc. – not for repeating what you are saying. See examples of traditional slide formats that have been turned into high impact slides can be found in the printable worksheet **From traditional to high impact presentation slides (o)** .



### Use the slides as your cue cards

If it is boring to hear a speaker using an endless stream of slides, it is even more boring if such a speaker also reads from a script. A great advantage of using presentation slides is that they can serve as your cue cards on what the next important point is (see the printable worksheet **From traditional to high impact presentation slides (o)** for further information) and they can also help you to stay in tune with and at the same pace as that of the audience. If you want to use slides for your presentation then you don't need to use a script as well.

### Try without!

The most brilliant and charismatic speakers don't use slides, they don't need to. Sometimes you might need to show statistics or graphics but why don't you set yourself the target that, let's say every third time you make a formal presentation, you will not use slides. You can maybe use a white-board or a flip-chart, but break the rhythm and avoid becoming a slave of slides. Your audience will be amazed and will start to listen to you!

## How to deliver a great speech

Nothing strikes more fear into the hearts of many athletes than having to give a presentation or speech in front of a crowd, no matter the size of the audience.

Taking the time to learn some public speaking tips can go a long way when it comes to calming your nerves. The following covers three simple things you can do to prepare for your public speaking engagement and ensure that you deliver a smooth presentation.

### Speak on a topic that is familiar to you

One way to guarantee success when speaking publicly is to give speeches only on topics that you are familiar with – especially your sports performances. You should think carefully about the topics you wish to share with your audience. The topic should ideally be something that you not only know about in depth, but you need to be sincerely interested in it. Your enhanced knowledge and passion for the topic will convey sincerity and excitement to your audience and keep them engaged. Research who will be in your audience and pitch your presentation to their level.

### Practice your speech as often as you can

Hearing yourself speak out loud can be awkward, but the simple act of practising your speech will help you avoid potential stumbles when you give your speech live. Be sure to also focus on your breathing and eliminating as many “hmms” as you can. Practicing your speech a number of times will help to make sure that your live presentation goes as smoothly as possible.

### Find your comfort zone

When you have a choice, find a position that is most comfortable for you. Some people are much more comfortable standing behind a podium, some are more comfortable being able to move around and engage more with the audience. Are you more comfortable standing or sitting? Find your comfort zone and try to stick with it so that you can be comfortable and speak with ease.

If you follow these three public speaking tips, you are sure to be viewed as a great public speaker by your audience.

Know your topic inside out, practise out loud before your public speaking date, and try to stick to a format where you are most comfortable. No longer will you have to let public speaking strike fear into your heart when somebody asks you to give a speech to a small or large audience.

## How to prepare properly

No matter how much experience you have in giving public speeches, you must create a speech outline before giving a presentation, just like creating a training programme for your sport. This isn't to say that public speakers actually refer to the outlines while giving a speech, but they are fully aware of the outline that they



took the time to create. Creating an outline for your speech guarantees that you are prepared to deliver a speech that will ensure that you get the message across effectively.

Preparation is not the only reason to create a speech outline before giving a speech. Keeping your audience engaged is another important reason to create an outline. From an audience's perspective, there is nothing worse than listening to continuous ramblings from an unstructured presenter. When you take the time to prepare an outline for your upcoming speech, it will flow well, stay on track, and keep your audience on their toes, wanting to know what you're going to say next.

### Use your speech outline

A speech outline is a good idea, even for seasoned public speakers. It helps you to be prepared, keep to the point and flow from one topic to the next with ease, whilst keeping a good tempo to your speech. These are key components of being perceived as a successful and engaging public speaker.

### Video your practice

As with your sport, recording and reviewing yourself will provide you with the fastest improvements in your public speaking. While this exercise will undoubtedly be your least favourite, it is the most effective and will provide the fastest improvements.

### Warm up your mouth

Practice tongue twisters before giving your speech. You may think that sounds silly. After all, what do tongue twisters have to do with public speaking? Of all the public speaking exercises that exist, only by practising tongue twisters out loud can you improve your diction in a short period of time. If nobody can clearly understand what you're saying, you can expect your audience to quickly tune you out and ignore what you have to say, no matter how useful or important your presentation is.

### Relax

Relaxation can be achieved with purposeful breathing. Before going on stage, inhale deeply through your mouth and exhale very slowly through your nose. Breathing in this manner will help you to relax and calm your nerves. When you're relaxed, you appear very confident to your audience while simultaneously appearing as though you're a complete natural when it comes to speaking in front of groups of people. You can also use other relaxation exercises that you already use before your sports competition and are familiar with.

### Be prepared for questions

Nothing can ruin a good presentation more than after it is over and you are asked a question and stumble to find the answer. As an athlete you may be asked many questions that are completely off topic from the presentation. Be prepared for these questions which

may range from your career, personal life or training methods to some recent sports news or issues. Listen to each question, take a moment to think, and then provide a short, to the point, answer.

### Prepare your equipment

As any athlete knows, being well prepared and ensuring that your equipment is in order helps you to stay relaxed and concentrate on the race. Similarly, do what you can to ensure that there are no surprises or last minute problems that will destroy the good work that you have done. The printable worksheet **Presentation equipment checklist (p)** will help you to ensure that you are prepared, organised and relaxed for your presentation.

Remember that most people fear public speaking and the fact that you are doing what they fear will automatically put you in a positive light. Prepare properly and you are sure to shine.

### How can I prepare to share my experiences?

*By Kirsty Coventry*

**As elite athletes we are often called upon, formally or spontaneously, to share our stories with diverse audiences. The experiences of being an elite athlete, taking part in the Olympic Games, living in the Olympic Village, and being part of the global sports**



**community exemplify the Olympic ideals of fair play, respect and universality. Each and every journey is unique. The opportunity to communicate the magic of each athlete's journey is one which can leave a lasting impact on individuals, communities and the world.**

To build a compelling and unique story, we should remember the powerful connections all elite athletes naturally share; things like our ability to overcome obstacles and focus on goals with tenacity and perseverance all make powerful and interesting presentation topics. The Olympic Motto (Citius, Altius, Fortius) and the Athlete's Oath (drug free sport, sportsmanship, and fair play) all provide inspiration for great presentation topics as well.

Even with a clear topic, however, our heads can become filled with so many messages and stories we would like to share during a presentation. All of these messages, however, become difficult to remember, especially when you are a little nervous. To make presenting easier, all you need to remember are the **5 "Cs"** for presenting effectively; five easy-to-remember words that will help you to give better presentations.

### CLARITY

First of all, you need to be clear with the message you want to deliver. The first question an audience will

ask is "what's in this for me?", so make sure that you understand your audience and be clear on the two or three things you want to tell them. Introduce these points at the beginning of your presentation so that your audience can follow you clearly. Then speak at a high enough volume. Though seemingly straightforward, that is very often the obstacle that hinders the ability to get a message across to an audience. You are passionate about what you are doing on the field; try to be as passionate about how you convey your stories. You can use a lot of personal stories as examples, but be sure the message is clear and that you are not simply preaching to the audience.

### CONSISTENCY

Find your style and stick to it. Everyone has a certain style of presenting that he or she is comfortable with, and if you can be comfortable with yourself during a presentation, it will help you to have the confidence to present better. Consistency also means not surprising your audience too much with big variations in style (moving quickly between humour and gravity, etc.). Humour, especially at your own expense, can be a great way to connect to your audience, but only use it if you are comfortable with it and it is consistent with your message. Having these consistencies will not only allow you to be comfortable with yourself, but also help your audience to be comfortable with you so they can connect with you.

### CONCISENESS

Brevity with completeness is the key here. It means focusing on speaking about the main ideas you want to convey; anything more is usually a distraction. Along with that, it is important to avoid the temptation to use too many anecdotes or jokes that are not critically useful in helping to convey your key message. To optimise conciseness further, remove redundant words and phrases from your speech, avoid repeating things unnecessarily and keep your sentences short and simple. The more concise you make your messages, the easier it will be for you to deliver the presentation as well. It is best that you don't read your remarks rather, focus on making eye contact with the audience. The more concise the better!

### CONTROL

When you are given the floor to make a presentation, you are given the time and attention of the audience. Hence there is a duty to be in charge and control the situation to make sure that the time entrusted to you and the situation is well managed. Therefore, it is important that you deliver a controlled presentation which is acceptable to the social norms and cultural sensitivities of your audience. As an elite athlete you should try and always avoid controversial issues. Control the audience so that it is a generally conducive environment for a



presentation, and finally, control the time so that the programme you are a part of can run as scheduled.

### CONFIDENCE

Isn't it ironic how athletes who are used to performing athletically in front of large crowds can get so nervous when speaking to a small group? It is because public speaking is one of the most difficult things for anyone to do. However, it is difficult to try to listen to someone who is speaking without confidence, let alone be convinced by what they have to say. The first step is to prepare well and know the subject matter that you are going to present and then you will be able to show that you know what you are talking about during the presentation. To start off on a good foot you can bring a pre-printed introduction so the host can introduce you the way you wish and in a manner that makes you feel confident as you take the stage.

Keeping these five hints in mind will allow you to share your stories in a more powerful way. Build a strong presentation that tells your story with passion and conviction and support this by demonstrating clarity, consistency, conciseness, control and confidence in your presentation. We work hard as elite athletes and can all be proud of our stories of triumph and defeat – share these stories with the world to educate, entertain, inspire and motivate others to reach for their goals. And don't forget to bring lots of photos for autographing

and a pen just in case. Remember, you are a star for every audience!

### **What is my role?**

*By Alexander Popov*

**It can be said that a role model is someone who possesses the qualities one would like to have and also someone who affects people in a way that makes them want to be a better person. With this in mind, given the dedication and passion that athletes show towards their ultimate goals, it is of no surprise that so many athletes are seen as role models within present day society. As an athlete, you may not choose to be a role model, but given the visibility and contribution which sport makes in society today, you may not have a choice. I suggest you embrace this opportunity. At one point in our lives we were all aspiring athletes who looked up to a role model who may have been a fellow athlete, a coach or perhaps a family member. We looked up to them because they were a positive force in our life and it is important to remember this for ourselves.**

### POSITIVE ATTITUDE

In sport, as in life, there are moments when you win and moments when you lose. While it's not always easy

to do, it's important to demonstrate sportsmanship no matter what the outcome is. You will certainly remember your losses and your victories, but your fellow competitors, your fans and spectators will remember your actions and words in both of these situations. Your attitude in a losing situation can leave more of a legacy than a victory. Compassion you show for a competitor can leave more of a legacy than a world record. Leave a positive impression that will have others saying to themselves, "what would he or she do in this situation?"

### LEAD BY EXAMPLE

People often speak about "leading by example", but what does it really mean? Athletes, perhaps more than any other professionals, understand the value of leadership and how it can inspire an individual to reach greater heights and achieve results. Athletes often speak about that one moment of brilliance, that one achievement or that one individual who inspired them in their careers. You have the opportunity to be that individual and to create that moment. Leading by example also means to talk the talk and walk the walk. By this, I mean ensuring that your actions and decisions reflect the person who you are and, as importantly, that you are a positive role model for others. It is also important to remember that leading by example is more than being perfect. It is about how you deal with moments of imperfection.



### GIVING BACK

Success as a professional athlete often comes with additional attention and admiration. More and more athletes have used their heightened profile and success to raise both money and awareness for a variety of social causes. There are various examples of athletes becoming involved in charitable organisations and events. Whether it is something which is close to your heart or a particularly prevalent issue within society, it provides an athlete with the opportunity to give something back. There are many associations actively seeking high profile personalities such as athletes to increase the profile of their cause, so if there is an issue which you feel passionately about, find out more and use your unique role in society to make a difference. Volunteerism is another good way to give back to your community. Many organisations are always looking for a helping hand and would most certainly welcome the involvement of someone who through their presence and involvement might also encourage others to volunteer.

### IN THE WORK ENVIRONMENT

The fame that you achieve as a top athlete can help build your name into a brand outside the world of sports; and sometimes in the world of sports. There are many wide-ranging opportunities for athletes to develop their own careers and brands. There are many examples

of athletes who have gone on to become successful businessmen and women, thus inspiring other people to follow in their footsteps. Some have become involved in sports consultancy, representing athletes, coaching and media work. The same characteristics that brought you success as an athlete can also be applied within your future work environment.



## How to improve your problem solving skills

### How to use the SWOT analysis tool

### How to use the “5 Whys” tool

There are a number of well researched tools available that assist in solving problems and two of the key ones are explained in this section. Some tools are specific to an industry or type of work and many are specifically related to business and resolving business related problems.

*“The biggest thing with problems is knowing where to start. These simple tips really help to break it down to the most basic level, demystifying the whole problem solving process. Enjoy!” – Saku Koivu, Ice Hockey.*

### Printable worksheets

#### Conducting a SWOT Analysis (q)

#### Ideas for further resources and help

- Contact a local or online Open University, or community college for problem solving courses.
- Research other online problem solving tools using the search term “problem solving tools”.

### How to use the SWOT analysis tool

SWOT Analysis is a powerful technique for understanding your strengths and weaknesses, and for looking at the opportunities and threats you face. This tool is

quite general in nature and will primarily assist you to make decisions about your future, your career direction and life choices. Used in a personal context, it can be useful in developing your career in a way that makes the most of your talents, abilities and opportunities.

What makes a SWOT Analysis particularly powerful is that, with a little thought, it can help you uncover opportunities that you are well placed to take advantage of. It also helps you understand your weaknesses, so you can manage and eliminate threats that may otherwise catch you out.

To carry out a SWOT Analysis (see the printable worksheet **Conducting a SWOT Analysis (q)** ), write down answers to the following questions:

#### Strengths

- What advantages (for example, skills, education or connections) do you have that many others don't have?
- What do you do better than others you know?
- What personal resources do you have access to?
- What do other people (and your coach in particular) see as your strengths?

Consider this from your own perspective, and from the point of view of the people around you. And don't be modest; be as objective as you can. If you are



having any difficulty with this, try writing down a list of your characteristics. Some of these will hopefully be strengths!

### Weaknesses

- What could you improve?
- What should you avoid?
- What things are the people around you likely to see as weaknesses?

Again, consider this from a personal and external basis: do other people perceive weaknesses that you do not see? Do others consistently out-perform you in key areas? It is best to be realistic now, and face any unpleasant truths as soon as possible.

### Opportunities

- Where are the good opportunities facing you?
- What are the interesting trends you are aware of?

Useful opportunities can come from such things as:

- Changes in government policy related to your field.
- Changes in social patterns, population profiles, life style, etc.
- Local events.

A useful approach to looking at opportunities is also to look at your strengths and ask yourself whether these open up any opportunities. Alternatively, look at your weaknesses and ask yourself whether you could open up opportunities by eliminating them.

### Threats

- What obstacles do you face?
- What are the people around you doing?
- Is your job (or the demand for the things you do) changing?
- Is changing technology threatening your position?
- Could any of your weaknesses seriously threaten you?

Carrying out this analysis will often be illuminating – both in terms of pointing out what needs to be done, and in putting problems into perspective.

### Key points

A SWOT Analysis matrix is a framework for analysing your strengths and weaknesses, and the opportunities and threats you face. This will help you to focus on your strengths, minimise weaknesses and threats, and take the greatest possible advantage of available opportunities.

## How to use the “5 Whys” tool

The “5 Whys” is a simple problem-solving technique that helps athletes to get to the base problem quickly. The “5 Whys” strategy involves looking at any problem and asking: “Why?” and “What caused this problem?”

Very often, the answer to the first “why” will prompt another “why” and the answer to the second “why” will prompt another and so on; hence the name the “5 Whys” strategy.

### Benefits of the “5 Whys” include

- Helping to quickly determine the base cause of a problem.
- Easy to learn and apply.

### How to use the “5 Whys”

When looking to solve a problem, start with the end result and work backwards (reverse engineering), continually asking: Why?

This will need to be repeated over and over until the base cause of the problem becomes apparent.

The “5 Whys” process consists of simple techniques that can help you quickly get to the bottom of a problem. But that is all it is, and the more complex things get,



the more likely it is to lead you down a false trail. If it doesn't quickly give you an answer that's obviously right, then you may need more sophisticated problem-solving techniques.

The following is an example of the "5 Whys" analysis as an effective problem-solving technique:

**1 Why is my coach unhappy?**

Because I did not arrive at training when I said I would.

**2 Why was I unable to meet the agreed timeline or schedule for training?**

School took much longer than I thought it would.

**3 Why did it take so much longer?**

Because I was talking to friends.

**4 Why did I underestimate the time talking to friends?**

Because I did not realise the time and did not have training on my mind.

**5 Why didn't you have training on your mind?**

Because I was not motivated and wanted to catch up with friends.

The next step in this case might be to discuss why you are not motivated at the moment and, together with your coach, develop some new goals.

The "5 Whys" strategy is so elementary in nature, it can be adapted quickly and applied to almost any problem. Bear in mind, however, that if it doesn't prompt an intuitive answer, other problem-solving techniques may need to be applied.



## How to set SMART goals

### What are SMART goals

### How to keep a balance

Goal-setting is like a map – the big-picture goal is the destination, short-term goals are steps you take to get there. Goals should be straightforward and emphasise what you want to happen. Goal-setting will give you direction and help with your motivation, as well as increasing your satisfaction and self-confidence in your performance. The map will help you track your development towards reaching your full potential.

*“Goal setting is such an important part of training and preparing for competition that whether you realise it or not you are probably setting SMART goals all the time. The difference is that now you know you are, and you can ensure that you continue to set them properly.”* — Yang Yang, Badminton.

### Printable worksheets

### Finding the balance (r)

### Ideas for further research and help

- Contact a local or online Open University, or community college.
- Research other online goal setting tools using the search term “setting goals”.

## What are SMART goals

Have you ever felt like the next Olympics, the next World Championships, the next National championships etc. are a long way away and you can see little motivation in going for a 5 am run today? Then you might need to set clearer goals. Think about what you want to achieve in life (the big picture or the long term aim) and then break this down to small or short term goals. This will help you to see the big picture but also to maintain motivation for each of the steps that you need to take to get there.

As an athlete, you will need to know where you are heading. A way to help you remember the make-up of effective goal-setting is to use SMART goals:

**Specific:** Smart objectives are objectives which specify exactly what they want to achieve – they are measurable, achievable, relevant and time-related.

**Measurable:** By establishing measurable objectives you should be able – at any time during the project – to measure whether you are meeting them or not.

**Achievable:** You can achieve almost any objective you set when you plan your steps wisely and establish a time frame that allows you to carry out those steps.

**Relevant:** To be relevant, an objective is one which you are both willing and able to work on. It can be both high and realistic; you are the only one who can decide just



how high your objective should be. But be sure that every objective represents substantial progress.

**Time-related:** An objective should be grounded within a time frame. With no time frame tied to it there's no sense of urgency.

Everyone will benefit from setting SMART goals both on and off the sporting arena.

### How to keep a balance

When the time pressure in life increases, we tend to let some things slip. At times, this happens without even noticing, things soon become major issues and everything starts to become too much.

It is vital as an elite athlete to look ahead and plan your day, week, month or year. It is also imperative that you stay positive and be realistic about what you can achieve. It is also important to:

- Know your own capabilities and the areas you need to work on for development.
- Understand expectations and the benefits of teamwork.
- See the people around you as helpers, guides or mentors.

We may not all agree that things need to be done the same way, that one way has more advantages than another, but what we can do is change the way we think and behave in response to our ever-changing environments.

This process starts with the active choice to take control of our lives, and identify what is important to us. To help you to assess your priorities use the printable worksheet **Finding the balance (r)**.

Now you have identified areas that may need attention, you can adjust your plan to change your balance.



# How to network effectively

What is networking

What different networks exist

How can I prepare for networking

If online networking is good

Have you ever heard the following expression: “80% of jobs are never advertised”? Believe it or not, it’s actually true. 70-80% of jobs openings are filled by a pre-selected candidate, which makes a formal job posting unnecessary. So how can you compete in the job market when so many jobs are filled without a formal application process? The secret is networking.

### Effective networking can help you to:

- Get a job
- Get a sponsor
- Get some great new tips or ideas
- Meet people and make new friends.

Basic networking requires little effort and is not complicated. With the right attitude and approach, you can create a network that supports your personal and professional success for years to come. So how can you start building a network or growing a network you already have in place?

*“I didn’t have a problem meeting people. The trouble was, I never did any follow up or kept in contact with people on a regular basis. When I thought about a person it was usually only when I needed help. I realised I was not making the most of my network.”* — Yumilka Ruiza Luaces, Volleyball.

### Printable worksheets

#### Creating a 30-second Elevator Speech (s)

#### Ideas for further research and help

- Contact a local or online Open University, or community college.
- Research other online tools using the search term “networking”.

## What is networking

Networking is the art of meeting people and building relationships. It’s not just contacting everyone you know when you are looking for a new job and asking if they know of any job openings. Networking starts long before a job search and is an activity you may already do more than you realise.

### Whether you know it or not, you are networking when you:

- Attend professional meetings or conferences.
- Talk to athletes, coaches, trainers from other areas or sports.
- Strike up a conversation with someone while waiting in line at the grocery store.



- Develop a social media presence:
  - Set up a profile on social networking websites (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.)
  - Follow people you would like to know more about.
  - Post messages and updates on what you are doing on the various sites you use. See also the **social media guidelines for Olympic athletes** for further information.
  - Talk to spectators/fans after the game.

While networking is very common and occurs in almost every social outing, there are some misconceptions about what networking actually is. To clarify, here is a short list of some of those misconceptions. **Networking isn't:**

- **Making cold-calls to people you don't know.** It's talking to people you do know and asking them to introduce you to others.
- **Carefully choreographing meetings and greeting people insincerely.** Networking is much more effective when done more casually.
- **Just for your benefit.** Networking is a two-way street and must benefit both persons to be truly effective. So, when you ask your network for help, be prepared to return the favour.

## What different networks exist

On a daily basis, you experience many different interactions with colleagues, friends and even strangers, and these interactions present unique opportunities for networking. Here are four types of networks that define different types of relationships used in the networking process:

- 1 Personal networks.** These include family, friends and close associates. You usually choose these types of networks through mutual interests or connections. Personal networks are more social than other types of networks and are based on an exchange of help and support.
- 2 Organisational networks.** These include project groups, committees and councils. These networks are focused on whom you need to know to achieve objectives within a specific time frame. They are typically based on power, knowledge and influence.
- 3 Professional networks.** These networks are comprised of colleagues and peers. Professional networks are based on common professional interests. They can be internal or external, meaning they can exist within a place of business or outside the office as part of an industry in general. For example, your current training

team would be an internal professional network, whereas your National or International Federation would be an external professional network.

- 4 Strategic networks.** These include external contacts and connections. Strategic networks can be established by making alliances with individuals from social, political, civic, or religious organisations or other groups with whom you may have regular contact.

Regardless of what area you are in now, and what career you want to have after sport, it is important to have a diverse network across many areas, industries and countries. You never know when you might need an introduction or help from these areas.

You may have already started thinking about how you can expand each of the four networks described above – new groups you could join, meetings and conferences you'd like to attend, new people you'd like to talk to, etc. However, it is important to remember that the people you already know could be the most influential people in your network.

Regardless of whether you are planning to meet new people to expand your networks or talk to the people you know to see how they can help you achieve your goals, you still need to understand what to communicate to maximise your networking efforts. This is where preparation is the key.



### How can I prepare for networking

An important skill for effective networking is the ability to clearly and succinctly articulate who you are, what you offer, and what you are looking for. By stating your goals/needs clearly, people in your network can offer more specific advice or connect you with others in their network who may be able to provide specialised knowledge or support. For example, “I am looking for a new sprint coach”, is specific.

#### Quick tips

- Introduce yourself confidently and explain clearly what you are doing or seeking (generally or at this specific event).
- Create and practice a 30-Second Elevator Speech with the printable worksheet **Creating a 30-Second Elevator Speech (s)** .
- Have a business card. You do not need to be employed or have a private company, a simple card with your private details, phone number and blog or website (if you have one) is all you need.
- Ask for their business card or contact details, or give them yours, and ask them to get in contact.
- If you can collect 8 cards a month, in 12 months you will have nearly 100 extra contacts in your network.

### If online networking is good

With the growing popularity and influence of online social networking, the Internet can be a great way to keep in contact with your network. A blog site, a monthly email, Twitter, Facebook or LinkedIn keep your online community up to date in relation to what you are doing.

The Internet is a simple and effective way to keep in touch with people. If you write 8 items a month (this can be a combination of blog posts, emails, etc.) you can keep all of your contacts up to date on what you are doing. Then as you refine your objectives and need some help, advice, or contacts, you will have many people on your team who know you, have been following what you are doing and will support you. As you have kept in touch they will not feel like they only hear from you when you need something and will understand what you have been doing. For 1 or 2 hours of your time per month it is a good investment.

However, is the Internet a good place to begin informal relationships? One benefit to online networking is that it eliminates the need for face-to-face interaction, which can alleviate some of the anxiety of making new connections. It is also possible to create some two way conversations that turn into great networking opportunities. However, be aware of the limitations of this sort of networking, it is largely superficial and does not, of itself, create a strong connection.

Be proactive and start today. If you wait six months, or a year, that is 50 to 100 lost contacts for your team.

For further information in relation to social media, see the **Guidelines for Olympic Athletes** .



## How to manage your finances

**How to develop a financial plan**

**How to make a budget**

**How to understand your tax obligations**

**How to protect your finances**

Many athletes have cited the lack of financial stability as an area of stress in their lives, both whilst training and competing and when they retire from sport. In some cases this has caused athletes to retire early from their sport and seek full time employment in order to secure a more stable financial position immediately, and for their future. This topic will assist you to understand your financial position and help you to understand what you need to know to manage your finances better.

As an athlete it is important to understand that your financial management is different in many respects from other people. The following points help to illustrate why.

### Generally elite athletes often have:

- Short careers in sport, therefore the income earned needs to be spread further to cover career gaps.
- A public image that can make you susceptible to scams.
- Little experience in financial management.
- Unpredictable income due to the threat of injury or de-selection.
- Unfinished or no educational qualifications.

It is therefore important to have a good structure in place and a sound understanding of your finances as this can reduce stress and the financial pressures

associated with your performance. The information provided is general and different sports, disciplines and countries, will have different issues that need to be addressed. It is important to understand this and plan according to your individual situation.

*“Understanding your finances will give you peace of mind. Leaving them to sort themselves out WILL lead to mess and probably a lot of extra cost and time to sort it out. Understanding your finances is your job not someone else’s.”* — Todd Nicholson, Ice Hockey.

### Printable worksheets

**Budget Planner Calculator (t)**

### Ideas for further research and help

- Contact a local accountant or financial advisor.
- Contact your NOC for further information.
- Talk to senior team mates/athletes to seek their advice.

## How to develop a financial plan

An athlete’s career has a life span. We all know there are limits on how long you can be a full time athlete. Depending on your sport this can vary, but it is important



to understand there is life beyond your athletic career and it is important to plan ahead. This includes continuing your education and planning for your future income during your career.

Remember your career can come to a sudden end. Many athletes are unfortunately forced in to retirement through injury or missed selection. How would you cope with this sudden change? Do you have good support around you and do you have a clear understanding of your finances? It can be important to have a clear view of all parts of your career; this includes your financial situation. Once you understand your situation it can become less daunting.

### Independent advice

Setting up your finances and seeking professional advice can be very worthwhile. There are many financial and tax options available and a professional advisor is best placed to find what suits your individual situation. Professional advice can also save you money in the long run as they will know exactly what you are able to claim as a tax deduction and how best to manage this. Their fees are generally an allowable tax deduction as well.

Seeking independent financial advice is recommended so that a financial solution can be found that is tailored to your individual circumstances. Ask fellow athletes, your coach, and your local/national sporting federation

to help guide you to find an appropriate accountant or financial advisor. If possible they should have previous experience in working with athletes.

It is recommended to keep your financial advisor separate, and independent, from other members of your team, for example, your family, friends and agent, etc. A financial planner can help you with the following areas:

- Investing – shares, property, business
- Loans
- Pension plans
- Retirement planning
- Budgeting
- Insurances
- Savings
- Etc.

### Ask questions

If there is something you do not understand, remember to ask questions. It is better to ask and be sure about something than to find out that you have not understood further down the track. There are many opportunities and options for your money and you should always have your finances under your own control. In order to communicate on the right level with agents, planners, and financial institutions it is important to be fully informed of your own financial matters, goals and expectations now and in the future.

## How to make a budget

In order to ensure that you are in a good financial position as you transition out of sport you will need to plan. The following general information is provided to assist you in understanding where to start and to highlight key elements to consider in your planning. Specifically, this topic covers how to make a budget, and provides basic information in relation to income and expenses.

In order to put together a good and accurate budget it is important to understand your income, your expenses and what tax needs to be paid. Depending on your income, there are different ways to plan a budget; some examples are provided below.

### Know your income and then plan how you spend it

If you know what your income is going to be, planning your budget and knowing how much you can allocate to different expenses is all part of good financial management. You may have to cut back on certain areas, or you may be able to afford to spend more in certain areas, or invest. The key is to understand what you can afford and also to plan for the future. For further information on income see the section **Understanding different income**.



### Know your expenses and then plan how you will raise the money to cover costs

If you know how much it will cost to pay for your living and sporting costs that are required for you to perform at your best, then you can look for sponsorship, funding or work opportunities to fit with your requirements. Knowing your budget also gives you a good understanding of where you may be able to cut costs, or areas where it may be beneficial to spend more (e.g. insurance) if you receive extra income. For further information on income see the section **Understanding different expenses**.

It is always good to look ahead and know what income and expenses are coming in the future. It is important to have a good understanding of your finances so you are able to deal with all situations. For example, planning and understanding how you would manage financially in the event of an injury or in the event that you sign a lucrative sponsorship deal. An important part of budgeting is working out how much you can save and thinking about your eventual retirement and transition out of full time sport.

Do you know your weekly/monthly or yearly expenses? To help you to calculate this, use the printable worksheet **Budget Planner Calculator (t)**.

The following areas provide information on the two key elements of a budget; income and expenses.

### Understanding different income

As an athlete you can be exposed to different types and sources of income. Outlined below are some of the key income streams you may come across.

#### DIFFERENT TYPES OF INCOME/REMUNERATION

**Salary/wages:** a fixed sum of money paid in compensation for services provided, paid to an athlete on a regular basis as defined by a contract.

**Signing bonus:** a sum of money paid to a new athlete by a club as an incentive to join that club. Signing bonuses are often given as a way of making a compensation package more attractive e.g., if the annual salary is lower than they wanted. Signing bonuses are often used in professional sports.

**Performance bonus:** these are mostly linked to contracts with a team or a sponsor. A form of additional compensation paid as a reward for achieving specific performances or hitting pre-determined goals (game wins, placing or time/score specific). A performance bonus is compensation beyond normal wages and is typically awarded after a performance appraisal completed over a specific period of time.

**Sponsorship:** monetary payment, services or other support from a company or entity, with the expectation that by aligning themselves with you or your team they

will gain influence in the market place, for example, through improved recognition of their brand or name.

**VIK (value in kind):** mostly linked to a sponsorship contract and refers to a situation when you might receive a product or service instead of money. VIK can include things like receiving a car, watch, prizes, equipment, etc.

**Appearance fee:** a payment received by an athlete for attending events, for example, competition events or promotional events.

**Prize money:** a payment made in appreciation to athletes and/or teams for results at competitions, usually paid by event organisers.

**Scholarship:** financial or other support that can be received from different entities e.g., sport-federations, educational institutions, National Olympic Committees, governments or other organisations. These are often paid directly to you, or on your behalf, to supplement your education or training expenses. A scholarship may support you with tuition or coaching fees, accommodation, transport costs, books or equipment, etc.

**Government grants:** financial support which is usually paid directly to you through government departments.

Earning income from several different sources places you in a unique situation in relation to accounting, filing



tax returns and social security contributions. Knowing if your income is subject to tax, social security and/or other contributions depends on your individual circumstances. You should contact your National Olympic Committee or a local accountant or tax advisor to determine if you are deemed to be carrying out a trade or profession and therefore be subject to income tax. See also the next section on **How to understand your tax obligations**.

### Understanding different expenses

Expenses are classified as anything where money is being paid out. As an athlete your expenses can be divided into a number of different categories. For tax purposes, it is important to know which of your expenses can be claimed back as a tax deduction and to make sure you keep a record of all relevant receipts for these.

#### Living expenses

Include all the costs associated with everyday living:

- Rent/Mortgage
- Education/School
- Nutrition/Food
- Bills: Electricity/Water/Gas/Internet
- Clothes
- Hairdresser/Personal Care/Hygiene
- Doctor/Dentist/Optometrlist
- Car/Transport

- Entertainment
- Holidays
- Taxes
- Phone
- Social security contributions
- Insurances
- Gifts
- Etc.

#### Training/competition expenses

Include things you pay in order to perform as an athlete:

- Coaching fees
- Training facilities
- Physiotherapy
- Massage
- Supplements
- Competition entry fees
- Travel – Flights and Accommodation
- Equipment
- Etc.

Most training expenses can be classified as tax deductions, but there is often a fine line between training costs and living costs. Each athlete's circumstance is unique; it is important for you to seek professional advice on your individual situation and find out what you are, and are not, able to claim as a tax deduction. See also the next section on **How to understand your tax obligations**.

### How to understand your tax obligations

Taxation or tax, is a financial charge or other levy imposed upon a taxpayer (an individual or legal entity) by a government. Tax is collected by governments to use for funding the running of the government and government services. Failure to pay your taxes is usually punishable by law. Paying your taxes late will often incur a fine. Depending on the legislation of your country taxes can include:

- Personal income tax, based on the person's yearly income.
- Corporate tax based on the yearly profit the company makes.
- Value Added Tax (VAT), or similar tax on purchased goods and services.
- Capital gains taxes and other taxes.

Tax rates vary, depending on where you are living, how much you are earning and how your situation is qualified depending on the tax law (i.e., salaried worker, independent, freelance worker, other).

#### Athletes and tax

Athletes may or may not be subject to paying tax. The income of an athlete who is profiting from their sport



(making a living out of what they do) is generally fully taxable. Athletes with other forms of income outside of sport can fall into a complex middle ground. It is very important to understand the specific rules and tax laws for your country and make sure you follow these as your career progresses and your circumstances change.

In almost all countries prize money and appearance fees (part of the athlete's income) are subject to income tax. Professional athletes participating in an event abroad are subject to the withholding tax in the hosting (organising) country. Organisers who pay appearance and prize money have special regulations concerning remuneration calculations, deductions and the payment of fees. You are responsible for ensuring that the appropriate taxes are paid and you should therefore consult the organiser or the organising federation for further information. Ask the organisers if tax will be paid before you receive it and whether you are required to pay tax. Your country of residence also has its own tax and financial regulations which need to be understood, as in some cases you may need to also pay tax on this income in your own country.

### Tax deductions

If your income is taxable it also means you may be eligible to claim tax deductions. Tax deductions are usually allowable for any costs incurred by you to produce your income, for example, as an athlete, your training and competition expenses would normally qualify as a tax

deduction. Again this is very specific to local tax laws, and you will need to obtain local advice.

Often you can reduce your taxable income by offsetting it against your sporting expenses. For example:

$$\text{your income} - \text{your tax deductions} = \text{your taxable income.}$$

### Keeping records

For anything that is a tax deduction you will need to keep a record of it so that you can claim it. Keep all receipts and records of your expenses in one place for each financial year so you are able to claim them as a tax deduction.

### Independent advice

Financial advice and accounting is typically a tax deduction, so getting professional advice is generally worth the cost. Ask fellow athletes, your coach, and your local/national sporting federation to help guide you to find an appropriate accountant or financial advisor. If possible they should have previous experience in working with athletes.

It is recommended to keep your financial advisor separate, and independent, from other members of your team, for example, your family, friends and agent, etc.

## How to protect your finances

In order to protect yourself from unexpected financial problems, it is necessary to insure yourself against the unexpected. Your need for risk protection and prevention will change often as you progress through your career and you should therefore review your insurance each year. The following will assist you to understand some of the different types of insurances:

**Illness and Injury (Health) insurance:** not having health insurance when you are suffering from a serious illness or accident could result in a huge financial burden. Often this insurance, in whole or in part, is paid by your employer, so be certain to consult your contract. If it is not covered it is recommended that you take out your own health insurance.

**Disability insurance:** in the event you should become disabled, this insurance will provide you with a stable monthly income.

**Loss of income insurance:** this insurance is customarily very expensive and should be discussed with your club or your employer.

**Theft insurance:** this type of insurance is usually taken out for your property (rented or owned) or vehicle and will cover you for losses incurred as a result of theft.

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**Third party liability insurance:** covers damage or injury you might cause to someone else (a third party).

**Travel insurance:** for medical costs abroad, for evacuation in the case of an emergency, lost luggage and equipment, etc. The selection of the suitable travel insurance can help you avoid unexpected costs when you travel.

**Retirement insurance:** solutions can be offered in order to, for example, face up to a gap in your old age pension and still be able to retain your usual life style at retirement age.





# Emp

EMPLOYMENT

## Employment

INTRODUCTION

HOW TO DISCOVER WHO YOU ARE

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE TRANSITION

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE WORKPLACE



## Introduction

The Employment pillar guides athletes in identifying where their interests and skills lie and how to make the transition from world-class competition to the workplace. In this pillar the focus is on supporting athletes to begin to identify their own abilities and to improve their potential opportunities for jobs, internships or training placements.

Taking the first step into the labour market and launching a career is not an easy process for anyone. It takes a lot of planning, preparation, and work. Even with this focus, there are additional factors that can impact your ability to obtain a job, e.g., economic growth, level of unemployment, etc. Elite athletes also often have less time to spend preparing for a career due to their commitments to training, developing their sport expertise, and competing on an international level. However, time invested early on will significantly increase your chances for a positive transition.

Some areas to focus on are outlined in this pillar. Starting with discovering who you are and what you are interested in, the Employment pillar helps athletes to evaluate careers that may best align with who they are, both in sport and beyond. The subsequent topics cover long-term career interests, what tools, skills and support team athletes will need, and what career options are available.

*“As an athlete is it important to feel confident about your future so that you can focus on the present and perform at your best. The IOC ACP will give you some tips on how to build your future off the field and will help you to feel more confident about your options.” — Rebecca Scott, Cross-Country Skiing.*

### You will learn

**How to discover who you are**

**How to prepare for the transition**

**How to prepare for the workplace**



## How to discover who you are

**How to review your key interests and motivation**

**How to translate current attitudes and skills to the workplace**

One of the most difficult tasks for an elite athlete is to start to think about who you are, and in this process start to consider who you might become after your sporting career. The following material will assist you to explore firstly what interests you and how you are motivated, and secondly, to review your attitude and skills that you have gained as an athlete and see how these can be translated into the workplace. This will enable you to develop a picture of where you are now, and where you could be in the future.

*“When you are so focused on training every day you can lose track of who you are and what makes you unique. However, to be successful, I realised how important it was to discover my true interests. The IOC ACP will assist you in finding out more about yourself and your motivation for your future off the field.” — Pedro Yang, Badminton.*

### Printable worksheets

**Career Interests & Motivation Quick Quiz (u)**

**Career Transitions (v)**

**Practicing Behavioural Interview Questions (w)**

### Ideas for further resources and help

- Contact your NOC or Institute of Sport for further information and advice.

- Contact your school/university career advisor.
- Contact your local unemployment office.
- Contact your local Adecco office or **athletes@adecco.com**

## How to review your key interests and motivation

As an elite athlete, your key priority is always on your sports development and performance. What happens when you retire though is that you may discover that you are behind everyone else in terms of your career planning and development for a life after sport. It is also important to know that if you wait until you retire from sport and then start to think of what is next it can be quite challenging. The earlier you start to think about your eventual retirement from sport, and devote time to your second career, the better prepared you will be.

The first thing to consider is what you want to do. As an elite athlete people may expect that you want to stay in the sport industry. This may be the case, but there are also many other options available. The following may help you to develop an idea of what you are interested in and what suits you best. Through identifying passions, motivators and interests, it will be more interesting for you to plan for a future that integrates a career in sport, and an alternative long term career option.



### What are you interested in?

One of the first challenges in moving into the labour market is to understand what your interests are and how you can identify a job that aligns with those interests. To do this look within yourself, and search for the things that interest you most, and for athletes this does not stop at “sport”. Try this quick Interests & Motivation quiz to start to reflect on what your interests are. A printable worksheet **Career Interests & Motivation Quick Quiz (u)** is available.

If you are still not sure what it is you want to do, there are a number of career suitability tests available on the Internet which can help you to determine what your interests and motivators are. Try search terms like career and interest test, personality test, career aptitude test. You can also consult a career counselor at your school or local unemployment office.

### Find out more

Now that you have thought about your interests, the next question is what skills, qualifications, knowledge and/or experience do you need for this career? There are many things you can do to research the career you are interested in.

### INVESTIGATE

**What is involved?** Look for job ads in the career of your choice. Review different levels of the role from entry level to senior positions. Make a note of what skills, experience and education are required.

**Who hires and why?** Research companies that hire people for this career. If you have any contacts in these companies, or in this career, ask if they have time to meet with you for coffee to discuss what skills and experience you need.

**Can I give it a try?** Ask if you can spend a day shadowing someone in the position to find out what they do on a daily basis. If you don't have any contacts in this area, ask your network if they have any contacts who could help you.

**What does it take to succeed?** Make a list of what you need to succeed in this career and review it to see if you are still interested in this career path.

**What is my plan?** When you are clear about what you want to do, and what you need to do to get there, add these requirements to your goals and start working towards achieving them.

**Do I have contacts who can help?** Build a team who can support you outside of sport, a network that you can feel comfortable speaking with on employment options, challenges, and strategies for success.

### Do you need more education?

### Do you need work experience?

### Do you need contacts?

The earlier you know what you want to do, the more effective you will be in achieving it.

## How to translate current attitudes and skills to the workplace?

There are many qualities that athletes will naturally be perceived to have. People will always view top athletes as dedicated and motivated. Athletes are seen as being able to perform well under pressure and are naturally very driven. While technical skills and abilities are important, potential employers will arguably be more interested in your personality and character. When approaching a new career, all of these qualities and attributes will help you – but it is best to have an understanding of what other qualities you possess as an individual. By taking the time to build your portfolio of skills and experiences during your sporting career, you will be best prepared for a challenging and fulfilling future.

The impression you create in the first few minutes of meeting someone is very likely to determine their perception of you, whether this is in an interview, at an event, or when a fan meets you on the street. It is not just that

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you smile and stand up straight, but it is important to pay attention to how you speak. Creating an impression that you are interested in the person speaking is very important. Develop empathy with the person by listening to them first before answering, and answering their questions in a way that resonates with them.

When looking for work, both your CV and the interview will create a lasting impression. In both, you should use professional business language. Athletes generally have a number of traits and skills that are highly sought after in the job market. However, many athletes can have trouble translating who they are and what they do into language that business people are familiar with.

To help you to translate your attitude/traits and skills into business terms you can use the printable worksheet **Career Transitions (v)** . This worksheet is designed to assist you to understand what it is that you do now and how you can translate this into language that a potential employer will understand. You can also use this sheet to assess what skills you have now and what skills you may still need to develop.

For further information on interviews see the section **How to prepare for interviews** .





## How to prepare for the transition

What to expect when you retire from sport

What you need to do to prepare well for the eventual transition

Not many athletes land their dream job immediately after the finish of their sporting career. Planning ahead for your transition from your sporting career will not only help you to prepare for your next step, it will also enable you to realistically assess your opportunities and will ensure that you are in the best position to capitalise on them. The following information will help you to think through these issues and start to plan ahead.

*“From the beginning, every athlete knows at the back of their mind that their athletic career will not last forever. It doesn't matter how good you are; one day you will no longer be good enough. Being an athlete is fantastic, but most of us end up retiring at a very young age. Sometimes this decision is made far earlier than we want due to unforeseen injuries or accidents.”* — Barbara Kendall, Windsurfing.

### Ideas for further resources and help

- Contact your NOC or Institute of Sport for further information and advice.
- Seek out local retired athletes to learn from their experience.

### What to expect when you retire from sport

By Barbara Kendall

From the beginning, every athlete knows at the back of their mind that their athletic career will not last forever. It doesn't matter how good you are; one day you will no longer be good enough. Being an athlete is fantastic, but most of us end up retiring at a very young age. Sometimes this decision is made far earlier than we want due to unforeseen injuries or accidents. The following four key foundations of wellbeing can be affected by this significant change:

#### Emotionally

When you do finish your sporting career you can find that your mind is experiencing a range of emotions. You demanded so much of yourself for such a long time that once it has come to an end, you are left confused and at a loss. To prepare for this make the most of those around you, including former athletes, who will have experienced many of the same emotions and will be able to offer advice and guidance.

#### Socially

It takes an enormous amount of hard work and sacrifice to reach the elite level. Constant training and focusing everything on one goal often means that top athletes are unfortunately relatively isolated from mainstream society. When you retire from your sporting career, you can find it difficult to integrate back into normal life. To



combat these potential feelings of isolation focus on setting new goals and working towards those goals, this new life will naturally draw you into new social circles, embrace these new opportunities. For further information see the section **How to set SMART goals** .

### Financially

Think and prepare financially for some time off. You can prepare for this yourself or ask a financial advisor to assist you. Either way, don't wait until you retire, you should plan, or seek advice, early on in your career to allow for some time when you might not be earning a lot of money, and specifically you may need to plan to give yourself time off when you retire from sport. For further information see the section **How to manage your finances** .

### Physically

Given that your body will have adjusted to a high level of training, it will most certainly feel the effects when you stop training at that level. You may experience a period of fatigue, or you may start to notice a difference in your physique. All of these effects are normal and should be expected. Plan a transition phase adjusting your nutrition and exercise over a period of time to help you with the change.

### HOW CAN I PLAN FOR THE TRANSITION?

Any time of your career is a good time to think about the following topics, but they can be especially helpful as you start to think about moving on from your sporting career.

#### Take time to discover what interests and motivates you

As an athlete, you are taught what it takes to succeed: to be goal-oriented and to work hard. These lessons can be applied to most areas in life – especially in a work environment. However, everyone is built differently, and different people are suited for different types of work. Discovering what you are best at takes time. Try different kinds of work, along the way, you may discover hidden talents!

To succeed in sports, strong motivation is needed. It is this motivation that convinces you to do one more set, and stay in control until the winning moment of the final competition. That same motivation is needed in finding a career after retirement. Identify your other motivating factors. For further information see the section **How to review your key interests and motivation** .

#### Skills & attitude

It is important to start planning for your post-sports career before you reach the retirement point. This is especially true if you want to work in a field that requires specific skills or academic coursework. If you want to

be an engineer – a career which requires many years of study – it would be wise to start preparations well before you retire. You will be surprised at how easy it is to find great programmes on the internet, or ask your network to see if anyone has already completed similar coursework.

As in sports, the chances of success without necessary skills and training are very slim. You have to compete in the junior championships in order to be prepared for the Olympic Games. The same goes for non-athletic work, be prepared to start in entry level positions. For more information see the section **How to translate current attitudes and skills to the workplace** .

#### Networking

As an athlete, you have many opportunities to meet many interesting and influential people at competitions and through social events. Therefore seize these opportunities and step forward and engage in a conversation with the people you meet. Talk to them about where they are from, what they do, and the organisations they are affiliated with. Get their contact information and try to keep in touch regularly. For more information see the section **How to network effectively** .

Always be spontaneous, motivated and eager for more. This is what comes naturally, and will be the key in determining how you go forward. The spirit of the Olympic Games is not on the competition field, but inside each of us.



## What you need to do to prepare well for the eventual transition

On the field, you make the decision, you run the race, and you have a team around you to support your efforts. Who is your team when you decide to retire from competition?

For a successful transition into the labour market there are some key aspects that an elite athlete should know, understand, and engage in, while active in their sport career to strengthen their chance for a positive transition. Some questions you should ask yourself are:

- 1 Do I know what career I want to pursue and can I speak intelligently about this field?
- 2 Do I have a game plan that will increase my odds of entering into the labour market in this field?
- 3 Have I created a team and network that will help me access this industry?
- 4 Do I have the right tools to gain access such as a CV/resume and interviewing knowledge?

While there are common themes you should know and understand there are also local standards and practices that are unique to each country and region when entering the job market. The following tips are general and aim to strengthen your transition opportunities, however local knowledge will also need to be

developed. For further information contact your **local National Olympic Committee** .

One major difference between an athletic career and your next career is that in sport you know your goal and you know who can help you obtain your best performance. In business the objective may not be as clear, however the process of building a team can follow the same process. The following may assist you in your preparation:

### Understand yourself

Develop an initial understanding of yourself and have some direction planned relating to what you want to do after sport. Do not be afraid to be vague early on and continue to refine your objective. This will provide the basis for positive conversations as you build your team. See also the section **How to discover who you are** .

### Set objectives

Set an objective to speak to a certain number of new people each month who can help you refine your goals and narrow your objective. See also the section **How to set SMART goals** .

### Listen

When you speak to people ask questions and listen more than you speak. Talking about your performance will make you feel good, but how much will you learn in the conversation? You want to gain value!

### Network

The strategy of building and maintaining a strong team for your sporting career should also apply for your next career. Speak to a wide range of people; you never know who can be a valued member of your team. A diverse team will provide greater feedback and support. Think of the old saying that “A stitch in time saves nine”; similarly, a good contact made now could be worth nine after you retire. If you can find eight new contacts a month you will have nearly one hundred in a year. See also the section **How to network effectively** .

### Keep in touch

Stay in touch with your contacts. If you write eight emails a month (1-2 hours a month) you can keep all of your contacts up to date on what you are doing. Then, as you refine your objectives and need some help, advice, or other contacts, you will have many people on your team who know you and support you. Apart from email, social networking tools such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn can all be helpful in keeping in contact with your network.

### Be proactive

Be proactive and start today. If you wait six months, or a year, that is 50 to 100 lost contacts for your team.



## How to prepare for the workplace

How to write a professional CV

How to prepare for interviews

What different job types are available

Every athlete needs to have a professional Curriculum Vitae (CV) or resume. Whether you are planning for your career post-sport, or seeking funding or sponsorship, a professional CV is a “must have” asset and a valuable resource. However, a professional CV is only one step in the whole process of discovering your ideal future career and getting your dream job.

*“The IOC Athlete Career Programme provided me with fantastic insights and guided me in asking the questions I needed to ask myself. I might have got there in the end on my own, but it would have taken a lot longer.”* — Claudia Bokel, Fencing.

### Printable worksheets

**Career Interests & Motivation Quick Quiz (u)**

**Career Transitions (v)**

**Practicing Behavioural Interview Questions (w)**

**Example Athlete CV – Before ACP (x)**

**Example Athlete CV – After ACP (y)**

### Ideas for further research and help

- Contact your NOC or Institute of Sport for further information and advice.
- Contact your local Adecco office or **athletes@adecco.com**
- See also other online resources at the Adecco career centre: **www.adeccowaytowork.com**

### How to write a professional CV

Every athlete should have a well written CV (curriculum vitae) or resume. Whether it is for use in funding applications or to provide to potential sponsors or employers, a professional CV is an important tool for any athlete. Specifically, when applying for jobs it is crucial that you have a well written CV. Simply put, it is a snapshot of who you are; what you’ve done; and where you want to go. The structure of CVs differs around the world, and a structure that is typical in some regions and countries can be very different to other countries or regions. Therefore, the following are general guidelines only and you should ask a local contact to help you with the specifics of CV writing in your area.

There are some common attributes athletes may want to consider when drafting a professional CV. What is typical for many athletes is that their backgrounds



are different to others in the workplace. One area to consider as an athlete is that other candidates may have more work experience than you. However, this is a matter of perspective. You need to look at what makes you special on the field of play and assess its usefulness in the labour market and be able to translate these skills and attributes to the workplace.

Below are some tips to consider in developing the content of your professional CV. If you are developing a CV specifically for sponsors and funding you should adjust your basic CV to suit that audience.

### Accomplishments

Reflect on what you have done and can do. Include accomplishments that will support your objective in your career. Some people may not recognise how your accomplishments on the field of play translate to a business environment. Think about a few of your top accomplishments and include them under the Achievements section of your CV, for example, National team athlete (2010 – present). Then, think about what it took to be successful and include these things in the skills section of your CV, for example, perseverance, drive, positive attitude. For further assistance with how to translate your current attitude and skills as an athlete to match professional skills sought by employers see the section **How to translate current attitudes & skills to the workplace** and the associated printable worksheet **Career Transitions (v)**.

### Be clear and concise

Include important information like who you are, and where you went to school, but this is not the place for your life story. Your CV/resume should reflect your value in the labour market now, and in the future, and should not go beyond 1-2 pages.

### Consistency

Be consistent from the beginning to the end of your CV. Check format, punctuation, spelling and line spacing to ensure that you are consistent throughout.

### Cover letter

Say which job you're applying for and where you saw the opening. Or if you are just contacting a company in case a position becomes available in the future, explain why you are sending your CV to them. Include information on why you are the right person for the role! Highlight relevant skills or experience from your CV to show that you are a good fit for the role. To do this, be sure you read the job posting carefully. And be enthusiastic!

Structure your cover letter in a logical sequence and take time to review it. Be concise and include relevant information. In general, 10-12 lines are enough. Don't bore recruiters before they read your CV! Double check it – spelling and grammar mistakes really don't make a good impression.

### Feedback

You are coached by experts and you know how to accept feedback on what is needed for you to win. Do the same in the development of your CV. Share drafts with people who are experienced in your chosen career direction, and ask for honest and direct feedback. You want people who will help you achieve your desired goals in business, just as you have in sport.

### Quality

You will be judged on the quality of your CV, so make sure there are no errors! Proofread your final CV and have other people proofread it for you and give you their opinion and feedback.

### Use what you have

Add some photos of you in action in your sport so that employers see what you have done. This is especially important for a CV prepared for sponsors as they will be able to see the crowd and feel the excitement of the event.

### Take time

A good CV will take at least a few weeks to a few months to prepare. Your cover letter should not be rushed as you will not produce a good letter and all the work done on your CV will be wasted. Take the time to research good CVs and cover letters, prepare your drafts and then revise them a number of times with the



input of various people in your network. Once your CV is developed, review and update it at least every year.

See the printable worksheets **Example Athlete CV – Before ACP (x)** and **Example Athlete CV – After ACP (y)** for a former elite athlete.

### How to prepare for interviews

In sport, when you are training, you can reflect on your performance and change and improve it; if you make a mistake you can do it again. However, when you are in competition during the race, what you do is final and cannot be done again. The same is true for an interview.

When you are in the interview, you are competing and your game must be on. You should practice (train) for an interview and anticipate what will be asked, just as you prepare your competition on the field of play. Below are a few things to consider when preparing for an interview.

#### BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

- Research: the industry, the company, the interviewer and even the competition.
- Develop a list of questions to help you evaluate if you want the job, or write a list of

positives and negatives to ensure that the positives outweigh the possible downsides.

- Develop a list of athletic and other accomplishments and how they relate to the job. People like to know that you get things done and how that can be applied to their needs. As an athlete, you may have to translate your accomplishments into something that the business world understands. See also the section **How to translate current attitudes & skills to the workplace** and the associated printable worksheet **Career Transitions (v)**.
- Practice answering behavioural interview questions, use the printable worksheet **Practicing Behavioural Interview Questions (w)**. You can also use the terminology from the printable worksheet **Career Transitions (v)** to help you phrase your attitude and skills in a way that resonates with employers.
- Know your CV (resume), the person who interviews you will base the interview on this.

#### DURING THE INTERVIEW

- Relax as much as you can.
- Listen carefully to what is asked and look for opportunities that you can take advantage of to show that you are the right person for the job.

- Include accomplishments in your responses that support what is needed.
- Be aware of non-verbal cues by the interviewer and yourself (e.g. clothing, grooming, posture, interest, smiling, eye contact, etc.).

#### WHAT YOU SAY IS ONLY PART OF THE INTERVIEW

- Uncover as much information as possible about the position before going into detail about your background so you can present value to the interviewer.
- Always respond in a positive tone and do not speak of previous employers in a negative tone.
- Ask questions; make sure you know about the company and the job.

#### AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- Summarise key points and assess how you think you did and why.
- Ask for feedback if you have the opportunity.
- Ask what the next steps are.
- Arrange for a specific date and time for your next contact with them.
- Send follow-up/thank-you letters immediately.



## What different job types are available?

All athletes will retire, and most athletes take on a second career after retirement. What type of work experience you have at that time will improve your chances of achieving your “non-sporting” life goals.

There are hundreds of industries and job types for you to consider. Below are examples of some types of job structures that are available in the workplace:

Type of work	Comment
Full-time job	Most time-consuming and typically the highest salary.
Part-time job	More flexible, lower salary.
Internship	Typically for a set period of time, usually seasonal and used for the exposure you can gain to a career or job type.
Trainee/apprentice	Lower pay, usually limited, but offering the ability to learn a new trade or skill.
Shadow	Unpaid opportunity to shadow an employee in a company to learn about a job. Not standard and usually for a very short period of time e.g. 1 day – 1 week.

When evaluating what you want to pursue, know what objective you want to achieve by working. Understanding your objectives early on in your career is important. Do you need to optimise cash flow to support your training? Then maybe you have to take a job that is not your first choice. Are you starting over as a thirty year old? To start with you may have to accept a job that may not be prestigious, yet pays the bills or starts you on a path that will help to you to achieve your ultimate goals.

Work experience of many kinds can help you to be more successful in the long term, and fitting it into what you can handle whilst still training will make the experience more rewarding.

### What do I want to do?

There are thousands of possible jobs and careers. Understanding what drives you, what interests you and what you are good at will help you set your direction on both where you may want your career to be and where you do not want it to be.

To help you to assess what your current skills are and what you are interested in try this printable worksheet **Career Interests & Motivation Quick Quiz (u)** . The quiz reviews both your current skills and interests because both can be important factors in your decision. Sometimes it is interesting to do something you are

good at even if you are not interested in it because it can provide the best financial return. At other times it is important to do what you like and address the challenge of skill because you could be doing it for a long time.

As an athlete you may face this decision on skill vs. like, and sometimes to chase your dream as an athlete you may have to set a priority and take a job that you may not like, at other times if you are focused and dedicated you can choose a job that is interesting to you and strengthens your skills or experience in your chosen career.

### Find out more

- Many different roles are available in every industry. An internet search of “list of roles in XX industry” will help you to review the various roles available and provide you with definitions and what requirements are needed for each role.
- If you need more ideas on types of careers search the internet for terms like “list of careers”.
- If you need more ideas on what suits you best search the internet for terms like “personality career test”, “career suitability test”, and “what do you want to do when you grow up” – all of these will help you to think about what it is you enjoy doing in life.



## Printable worksheets

Edu

WHAT TO ASK POTENTIAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS (A)

DECIDING TO STUDY ABROAD (B)

THINGS TO DO BEFORE YOU RELOCATE CHECKLIST (C)

TIME MANAGEMENT QUICK QUIZ (D)

TO DO LIST #1 – MANAGE / FOCUS MATRIX (E)

TO DO LIST #2 – GROUPED TASKS (F)

CREATING AN EFFECTIVE YEARLY PLANNER (G)

ACTION PRIORITY MATRIX (H)

MIND MAP (I)

COMMON STUDY ABBREVIATIONS FOR NOTE TAKING (J)

## Printable worksheets

LSk

MEDIA PREPARATION #1 (K)

MEDIA PREPARATION #2 (L)

CREATING YOUR STORY (M)

YOU TRY IT! (N)

FROM TRADITIONAL TO HIGH IMPACT PRESENTATION SLIDES (O)

PRESENTATION EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST (P)

CONDUCTING A SWOT ANALYSIS (Q)

FINDING THE BALANCE (R)

CREATING A 30-SECOND ELEVATOR SPEECH (S)

BUDGET PLANNER CALCULATOR (T)

## Printable worksheets

Emp

CAREER INTERESTS & MOTIVATION QUICK QUIZ (U)

CAREER TRANSITIONS (V)

PRACTICING BEHAVIOURAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (W)

EXAMPLE ATHLETE CV – BEFORE ACP (X)

EXAMPLE ATHLETE CV – AFTER ACP (Y)



### What to ask potential educational institutions (a)

The following non-exhaustive list covers things to consider when selecting an Educational Institution. It should provide you with some of the key focus areas that you should consider when combining the unique requirements of an elite sporting and educational career.

**Download the worksheet**



### Deciding to study abroad (b)

There are three activities in the worksheet which will help you to fully consider the option of studying abroad.

**Download the worksheet**



### Things to do before you relocate checklist (c)

At certain times in your sporting career, you may need to relocate from your home base to study. The checklist below includes some of the issues you may face. You should also add any other issues that may be specific to you when relocating.

**Download the worksheet**







### Creating an effective yearly planner (g)

Prioritisation is based on what you value or what you think you need to achieve. This is probably the most commonly used and rational basis for prioritisation. Whether this is based on a subjective guess at value or a sophisticated evaluation, it often gives the most efficient results. Using a yearly or weekly planner is a good way to ensure that you are achieving what is most important to you.

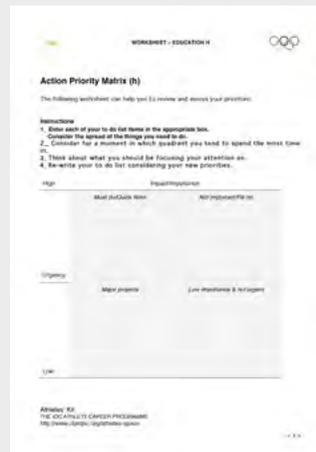
**Download the worksheet**



### Action Priority Matrix (h)

The following worksheet can help you to review and assess your priorities.

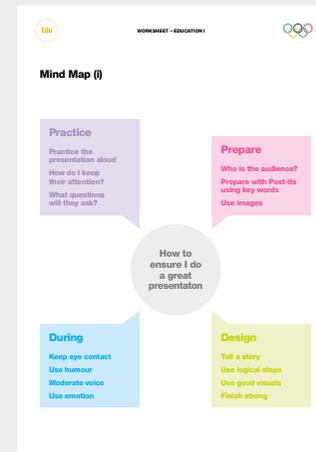
**Download the worksheet**



### Mind Map (i)

How to ensure I do a great presentation.

**Download the worksheet**







### Creating your story (m)

The following worksheet will assist you to prepare your own story. By answering the questions in the worksheet you will already have developed the main basis for the presentation.

**Download the worksheet**



### You try it! (n)

The following Worksheet is designed to help you to think about the rhythm and progression of the presentation. Watch some presentations from YouTube or TED Talks take notes and see if you can fill in the grid.

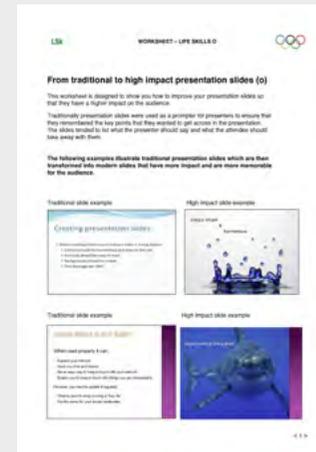
**Download the worksheet**



### Presentation slides (o)

This worksheet is designed to show you how to improve your presentation slides so that they have a higher impact on the audience.

**Download the worksheet**





### Presentation equipment checklist (p)

The following checklist will assist you to ensure that you are organised and stay relaxed before a presentation. Also remember to arrive with time to spare in order to deal with any unforeseen technical or other issues.

**Download the worksheet**



### Conducting a SWOT Analysis (q)

The following worksheet should be used to prepare your own personal SWOT analysis. SWOT refers to Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.

**Download the worksheet**



### Finding the balance (r)

Sport, career, education, money, health, family, friends and others, as well as, 'Me' time are all important areas of the life of an athlete. In order to ensure that all areas work effectively it is important that there is some balance between all of these areas. To assist you to assess you own balance please try the following quick assessment.

**Download the worksheet**





### Creating a 30-second Elevator Speech (s)

A 30-second elevator speech is a short “pitch” or sound-bite designed to pique the interest of a group, company or individual. It is a brief description of yourself, the skills and experience you offer, and any special or unique information related to your interests which can be expressed easily in 30 seconds, the amount of time you would have if you were on an elevator with someone.

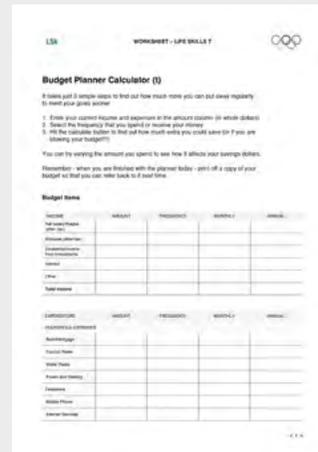
**Download the worksheet**



### Budget Planner Calculator (t)

It takes just 3 simple steps to find out how much more you can put away regularly to meet your goals sooner.

**Download the worksheet**



### Career Interests & Motivation Quick Quiz (u)

One of the first challenges in moving into the labour market is to understand what your interests are and how you can identify a job that aligns with those interests. To do this look within yourself and search for the things that interest you most. The following Interests & Motivation quiz will help you to start thinking about what your interests are.

**Download the worksheet**



# Athletes' Kit

## THE IOC ATHLETE CAREER PROGRAMME



### Career Transitions (v)

Athletes generally have some of the traits and skills that are highly sought after in the job market. However, many athletes can have trouble translating who they are and what they do into language that business people are familiar with. This worksheet is designed to assist you to understand what it is that you do now and how you can translate this into language that a potential employer will understand.

**Download the worksheet**

### Practicing Behavioural Interview Questions (w)

In order to ensure that you are well prepared for an interview you should practice answering behaviour based interview questions.

**Download the worksheet**

### Example Athlete CV – Before ACP (x)

**Download the worksheet**



# Athletes' Kit

THE IOC ATHLETE CAREER PROGRAMME



## Example Athlete CV – After ACP (y)

Download the worksheet

