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

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 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
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
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

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.
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.
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!

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**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)

Idea 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
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:

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