

Career Opportunities in the World of Sports

Arti S

During the past few months we have many good news coming in about our country's achievements in sports. At the Commonwealth Games 2022 held in August, India finished with 61 medals in all, consisting of 22 gold, 16 silver and 23 bronze medals. India bettered its best-ever performances consistently in the last three out of four Olympic events, with the highest ever medal tally of seven at Tokyo Games. There was a time when Indian Hockey team, year after year proved its mettle with unparalleled success. In cricket also we have delivered superlative performance under the captaincy of legends like Sunil Gavaskar, Mohinder Amarnath, Kapil Dev and more recently Sachin Tendulkar, M S Dhoni, Virat Kohli. Many more names can be added to this list. Among the top women Indian sports-women we may count P.T. Usha, Mary Kom, P V Sindhu and Mithali Raj among others. These and many more such sports



personalities inspire our youth to enter the fascinating world of sports.

India's position in sports has come a long way from what it has been a decade or so. Hard work and persistence of our sports-persons, backed by the efforts of government and private sector is reflecting in our country's medal tally. However we are still away from becoming a sporting nation in true sense. The good thing is, our young generation is more inclined towards fitness and

sports which bodes well for India's future in sports.

Importance of sports can be gauged from the fact that now sports form integral part of school curriculum. Many of the successful players had started their sporting journey from their school days. Sports has a contribution in

shaping one's personality. It teaches us patience, respecting our opponents, to win with humility and to lose with grace. This is one discipline that not only builds character but also reveals it.

Institutional efforts for promotion of sports

Promotion of sports requires support from all corners. In India there is an institutional mechanism for this.

Role of Sports Authority of India: Sports Authority of India (SAI) is the apex body for promotion of sports in the country. It caters to budding talents in sports belonging to different age groups for participating at national and international level. Its regional centres are located at Bengaluru, Bhopal, Gandhinagar, Kolkata,

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Chandigarh, Guwahati, Imphal, Lucknow, Mumbai and Sonapat. There are 23 SAI Centres of Excellence (NCOE), 66 SAI Training Centres (STCs) and 30 Extension Centres of these STCs where young boys and girls undergo training in sports. These have residential as well as non-residential programmes. At a time more than 9000 young people are enrolled in all the above. At NCOE scientific tools such as anthropometry, biometry, biomechanics, performance analysis, physiotherapy, psychology, strength and conditioning are used to evaluate and enhance performance of the players. There are Talent Identification and Development Committees in various disciplines (of sports) to select/weed out candidates from NCOEs. It should be noted that at a particular centre, training in selected discipline/s only is available. Once a candidate decides her area of interest, she should approach those centres where facility of training in that sport is available.

For almost every major sport, a promoting body exists in our country. Information regarding their vision and mission, activities and facilities offered by them is available from website of these organisations which include Athletic Federation of India, Badminton Association of India, All India Football Federation, All India Tennis Association etc. There are associations/federations for other games like archery, weightlifting, boxing, cycling, hockey, cricket, golf, judo, kabaddi, gymnastics, billiards, golf, swimming, handball etc.

Other government and private sector organisations have been trying for promotion of sports through various means. Indian Railways have Railway Sports Promotion Board which is involved in promotion of sports at national and international level. The board works in coordination with 33 Railway Sports Association and National Sports Federations for specific sports. Industry giant Tata Group is well-known for its support to cause of sports. Tata Steel has been one of the foremost corporate promoters of Indian sports – having built academies for football, archery, athletics, hockey and climbing. Many other government, public and private sector companies have been supporting sports persons and sports events through sponsorship etc.

Job opportunities for sportspersons in government and public sector organisations

For sportspersons there is a provision of five percent reservation in jobs in government and public sector undertakings. These opportunities are open to players with strong credentials and achievements. For example, in railways to become eligible for a sports quota job in group C, the candidate should have represented country in International Championship or represented state unit or equivalent in junior/senior championship and should've achieved at least 3rd position or should have represented an university in All India Inter University Championship and obtained at least 2nd position or represented state or equivalent unit and obtained 1st position. Those having represented district or equivalent unit in junior/senior state championship can apply for group 'D' positions.

Let us explore the options for those who are passionate about sports and want to make a career in this domain.

Athlete/Sportsperson: This is one of the most obvious professions in sports. A sportsperson is a professional who plays any of the games from athletics to cricket, basketball, football, etc. These players compete in individual or team competitions. These are trained professionals

who work hard, keep themselves fit and participate in any sports with sportsman's spirit.

The skills that a sports person require, are- discipline, hard work, focus, determination, physical stamina. If you are a student you can make a beginning by joining your school/institutes team and grow with improved performance. By joining Sports Authority of India or other organisations training programmes and working hard, your prospects will become better. Some of you may thus get to participate in state/national level championships and ultimately at Asian/Olympic games.

Admission can also be sought in state government establishments or private academies for particular sports (like Pullela Gopichand Badminton Academy at Hyderabad).

Sports Teacher: This in a way is the simplest of careers related to sports. Sports is also taught as a discipline in educational institutes. Most educational institutes appoint sports or physical education teachers. There are various qualifications (Diploma/Bachelor/Masters in Physical Education) which makes a person eligible to apply for the position as a sports teacher. Sports universities / colleges and many other universities/colleges offer such courses. The major duties of a sports teacher involves training students in various sports, organise sports events, fitness sessions etc.

Sports Management: We know sport is a big business all over the world, even otherwise all large scale sports events need to be suitably managed. Management has many disciplines of which sports management is one which involves planning, supervising and organising different sporting events, both international and domestic and dealing with all the business-related matters, sports clubs, athletes, sportspersons, sports venues, and sports events.

A managerial career in sports is possible with a Bachelor or Master's qualification in management. However by pursuing a course dedicated to sports management, you've better credentials. You may look for a career in sports marketing, sports media, sports apparel, celebrity endorsement, event management etc. etc.

Sports Coach: You might have heard many accomplished players talking about the role of their coaches in their achievement and expressing their gratitude to their coaches. Coaches mean a lot to the players whom they train and coach. A sports coach or trainer provide training and guidance to players in a particular sport. A coach dedicates his/her time to bring up the potential of his/her disciple (player) and sincerely tries to make the disciple(s) the best player(s) in the world. He or she teaches them tips and tricks to excel in the game. Coaches work from full time to part-time and might work as a coach side by side with any other job they might be doing. Though a qualification to work as a sports coach may be obtained, it's a skill based role and one requires to be aware of the finer points of the game and compete with high order social skills, motivational skills, organising skills. Patience is also a virtue in this role. Most of the times, sportspersons become sports coaches after completing their journey as athletes.

Sports and Fitness Nutritionist: A sports person needs to be fit and have proper nutrition to perform well during practice and actual performance. Sports and/or fitness nutritionist is a professional who advises athletes on nutrition and dietetics. The professional is concerned with athletes taking proper nutrition and exercise. As far as expertise of these professionals is concerned, they need to

have in-depth knowledge of nutrients, be aware of sports performance in various areas, and most importantly the medical history of their clients. They should be able to explain complex terms and things related to fitness/nutrition, in a simple manner.

Sports Physiotherapist: In sports tiredness and injuries are common. A sports physiotherapy professional helps athletes overcome tiredness and prevent injuries. By making assessment of individual cases, a physiotherapist creates a recovery or treatment strategy/plan, and provides therapy accordingly. The expertise of a physiotherapy professional lies in providing instant treatment as well as long term medication/exercise. A sports physiotherapist manipulates the body parts of the athletes by way of therapy, massages, physical exercise, etc.

Umpire/Referee: Every game has its own rules and way of playing and somebody has to see that these are followed meticulously. An umpire or referee is a person who keeps a close eye on a sports match and passes on instructions to the players as and when needed. She needs to know the game well, has to be fair, clear communicator and assertive to do well in the role of an umpire/referee. Here also an ex player is more likely to perform the job of an umpire or referee.

Sports Journalist: Look at big newspapers, you'll find exclusive pages for reporting of sports events. There are exclusive magazines devoted to sports and in the same way there are sports channels on television. If you want to work in media and also have serious interest in sports, this may be the career for you. In some cases a sports journalist is solely responsible for covering one professional sports team, whereas in others she may be required to produce stories on a variety of local, university and/or professional teams and events.

Main duty of a sports journalist may be interviewing and profiling athletes, while some of them may focus on game/tournament highlights and results. A sports journalist career over a time may also see a transition into a public relations role at an university or with a professional team, which involves marketing/advertising and communication skills along with journalistic abilities. Though a formal degree/diploma may prove to be an added advantage, many successful journalists have no such qualification.

Sports Commentator: Sportspersons may play for their own happiness and satisfaction but all big tournaments and events are followed by a large number of sports enthusiasts often called fans. For their benefit commentary of such events is aired over radio and satellite channels. Those who provide professional commentary of sports matches are called commentators. A commentator may or may not have been a player of the game but should know the game well. With pleasant voice, good tonal quality, an eye for detail and sense of humour and of course passion for the sport one can choose to be a sports commentator for one or more sports. In many case commentators also play an off-field role after the game in reviewing games and discussing performances. A commentator may or may not be a former player.

Courses: There are a number of Sports Universities in country offering specialised courses which may help you to work in the area of sports. Some of these are profiled below:

Lakshmibai National Institute of Physical Education, Gwalior Offers Postgraduate Diploma in Sports Coaching (in either of Athletics, Basketball, Volleyball, Football, Kabaddi, Judo, Hockey, Handball, Wrestling)/Fitness Management, M.A.(Sports Psychology/ Journalism/ Management), M.Sc. Sports Biomechanics Exercise Physiology

Tamil Nadu Physical Education and Sports University, Chennai offers B.Sc. / M.Sc. (Sports Coaching), BBA/MBA (Sports Management), M.Tech (Sports Technology) M.Sc. (Sports Psychology and Sociology/Psychology), B.Sc./M.Sc. (Sports Biomechanics and Kinesiology), B.Sc./M.Sc. (Exercise Physiology & Nutrition)

Sri Sri Aniruddhdeva Sports University, Chhabua, Assam offers Postgraduate Diploma in Sports Coaching (Athletics/ Football)

Maharaja Bhupinder Singh Sports University, Patiala offers Bachelor/Master of Physical Education and Sports, Bachelor of Sports Science

At Swarnim Gujarat Sports University, Gandhinagar you can undergo BBA/MBA (Sports Management, Event Management with Specialisation in Sports B.Sc.in Sports Coaching, Masters in Journalism and Mass Communication (Sports Journalism), Postgraduate Diploma in Sports Journalism/Disability Sports/ Kayaking and Canoeing/Sports Nutrition/ Adventure Sports Administration/Sports Coaching (Kho-Kho)/Sports Management

Netaji Subhash National Institute of Sports, Patiala is the academic wing of SAI. It has courses in sports coaching and sports medicine.

Lakshmibai National College of Physical Education, Thiruvananthapuram: This institute also comes under SAI and is affiliated to University of Kerala. It offers Bachelor of Physical Education, Master of Physical Education and Sports, M.Phil and Ph.D in Physical Education

Soon more universities viz. International Sports University, Pune; Delhi Sports University; Major Dhyan Chand Sports University, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana Sports University, Sonapat are expected to offer more courses in the field of sports.

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