

## CAREERS IN SPORT

### **Sports Coach**

Sports coaches help individuals participating in sports to achieve their full potential. They often support professional sportspeople, sports teams, community teams or school groups, working closely to help improve performance.

Sports coaches identify needs, plan and implementing suitable training programmes. Coaching involves developing participants physical and psychological fitness providing the best possible practical conditions. Coaches must also be aware of their ethical and legal obligations to the participants.

Many instructors/coaches combine coaching with other, often full-time, jobs.

Work activities are likely to include:

- evaluating performance and providing suitable feedback;
- assessing strengths and weaknesses in a participant's performance;
- adapting to the needs and interests of the participants
- developing knowledge and understanding of fitness, injury, nutrition and sports science;
- communicating instructions using clear, simple language;
- demonstrating an activity by breaking skills down;
- encouraging participants to gain and develop skills, knowledge and techniques;
- ensuring health and safety of all participants at all times;
- inspiring and encouraging confidence in the athletes you coach;
- acting as a role model, gaining the respect and trust of participants
- liaising with other partners in performance management, such as physios and nutritionists;
- working to a high legal and ethical standard at all times, particularly in relation to issues such as child protection and health and safety requirements.
- producing personalised training programmes;
- maintaining records of client performances;
- planning and running activities for groups/individuals;

Each individual sport has its own award scheme. Coaches must hold the relevant award from the individual sport's governing body. A sports related degree can also be beneficial.

## **Sport Psychologist**

The role involves the scientific study of the psychological factors that are associated with participation in sport and exercise.

The role of sport psychologists has 2 main areas:

- helping athletes, through psychological treatment methods, to achieve optimum mental health and enhance sporting performance (involves interventions such as visualisation and relaxation);
- conducting research to understand how participation in sport and/or physical activity affects an individual's psychological health and wellbeing throughout their life.

Sport and exercise psychologists apply psychological principles in sport settings through experience gained working with athletes, coaches or sports teams as clients. They also have expert knowledge and a research base in the psychology of sport, and familiarity with the field of exercise science.

The most likely route to work as a sports psychologist is through dual involvement in sport and in relevant post graduate research.

Many sports psychologists are currently either employed as university lecturers or work as consultants with clients from both sport and business/industry.

## **Sport Development Officer**

Sports development officers aim to provide opportunities for participation in sport throughout the community. They deliver information and organise sport-related projects, classes, programmes, coaching, club development and training for those who want to participate either for fun or competitively.

Their main role is to increase participation in sport of all kinds, but sports development officers also address issues of health, crime and social inclusion, often working with organisations such as health boards, schools and sports governing bodies. They work in partnership with government bodies to deliver government initiatives relating to sport.

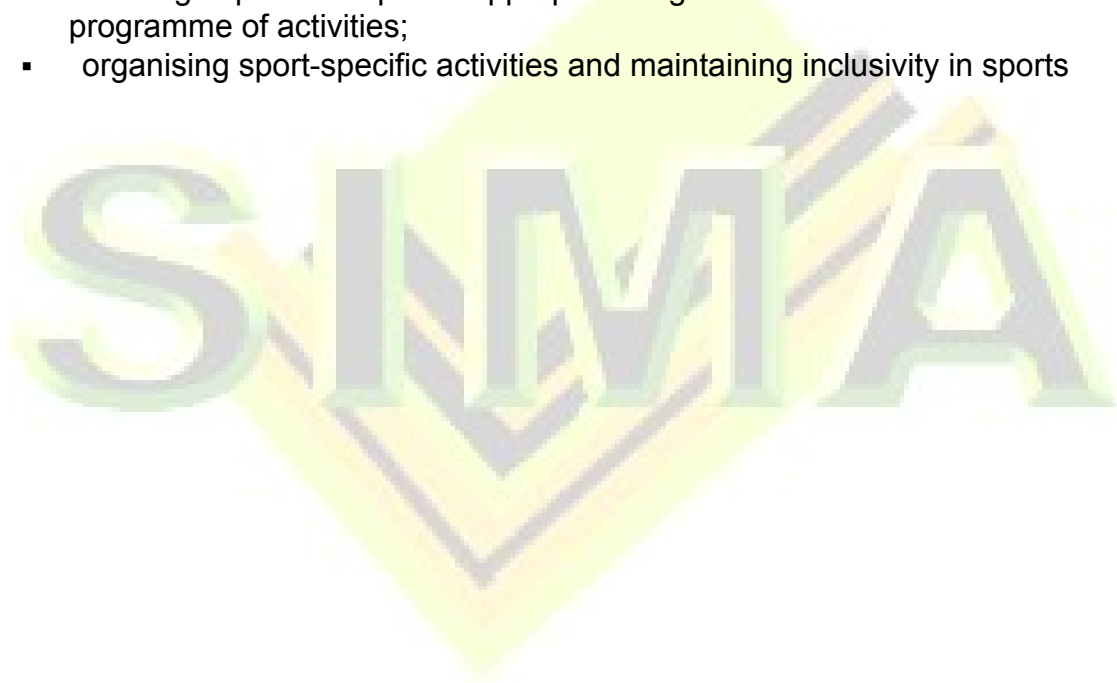
The activities that a sports development officer could become involved with include:

- identifying sport, recreation and health initiatives and overseeing strategic planning and implementation;
- coordinating, delivering and promoting relevant activities, classes and events;
- employing, training, supporting, developing and managing coaches and volunteer staff;
- raising public awareness of health and fitness issues and promoting participation in sport;
- evaluating and monitoring activities and projects using performance indicators;
- maintaining records and producing written reports;
- attending local, regional and national meetings, seminars and conferences;
- checking venues and managing facilities;
- liaising with clubs to develop best practice in coaching, youth development and issues such as child protection to manage clubs effectively;
- working in partnership with schools initiatives such as 'active schools', to encourage participation in sport and organise parental involvement;
- working with governing bodies for specific sports in relation to clubs and events;
- developing a range of partnerships with organisations and initiatives focused on health education, criminal justice and community regeneration;
- managing resources and a budget and identifying potential opportunities for external funding;
- maintaining links with county, regional and national sporting representatives;

- working within specific guidelines, e.g. equal opportunities, health and safety, child protection;
- offering coaching and supervision when appropriate.

A specialised post, such as a disability sports development officer, may also involve the following activities:

- training and educating coaches, volunteers and facilities staff - experts in disability awareness may well be called on, where appropriate;
- using information and publicity to ensure people with disabilities are more aware of the sporting opportunities available to them;
- working in partnership with appropriate organisations to deliver a programme of activities;
- organising sport-specific activities and maintaining inclusivity in sports



## **Sports Administrator**

Sports administrators have various roles and responsibilities, depending on the nature and size of the employing organisation. A sports administrator must always make effective use of available resources and may be involved in:

- planning and organising events;
- marketing and promotional activities;
- business and financial management;
- advocacy and advice;
- people management.

Sport has gained in political and social significance, with growing public awareness of its contribution to personal health and the national economy. As a result, there is increasing demand for higher quality and more diverse provision, with consequent implications for the focus of roles in the many branches of sports administration.

Specific responsibilities vary considerably according to the level of the post, the employing organisation and its context. Duties range from routine administration to managing complex projects, budgets and resources. The work frequently addresses regional, national, political and ethical agendas.

Typical work activities might include any combination of the following:

- carrying out administrative duties, using systems and processes relevant to the organisation;
- responding to enquiries and requests for information from other organisations and members of the public;
- ensuring that administrative systems and processes are effectively integrated and focused to support the delivery of key areas of service development;
- co-ordinating and supporting the activities of other staff within the organisation;
- organising meetings, training, coaching, conferences and other events;
- liaising with local sports councils, regional committees and national governing bodies;
- consulting with clients, members, the community and local sporting organisations;
- advising sports clubs on areas such as organisation, funding, promotion and regulations;
- managing budgets, controlling finance allocated for community activities and sometimes coordinating or raising sponsorship;

- undertaking or commissioning research, and collating, mapping and monitoring data;
- producing promotional literature, reports and event materials, and liaising with marketing and media organisations;
- making presentations to grant-making bodies and/or relevant authorities;
- managing and supervising staff, and sometimes running an office;
- supporting colleagues to encourage and develop sport in the local, regional, national or international community;
- serving on regional and national government think tanks and task groups;
- participating in the resolution of political and ethical issues, such as conflicts of interest between partner organisations, use of banned substances, or breaches of regulations.

