



ATHLETES SPEAKERS  
**BEST PRACTICES**



Funded by the  
European Union

## Editors

Marcos López-Flores

Grzegorz Botwina

## Acknowledgements

With the collaboration of researchers from all partner organisations, and under the coordination of the Olympic Committee of North Macedonia.



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>05. THE ATHLETES SPEAKERS PROJECT</b>	<b>24. SPORTS MEDIA &amp; COMMUNICATION SKILLS TRAINING</b>
<b>05. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>26. GLOBAL SPORTS MENTORING PROGRAM</b>
<b>06. SECTION 1 - LITERATURE BACKGROUND</b>	<b>27. COMMUNICATION TRAININGS FOR ATHLETES</b>
<b>08. SECTION 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>29. ATLETAS SPEAKERS</b>
<b>11. SECTION 2 - LIBRARY OF BEST PRACTICES</b>	<b>30. SPORT AS AN INSPIRATION</b>
<b>11. THE JIM MADDEN GPA LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME</b>	<b>32. WAOS ATHLETE CERTIFICATE</b>
<b>12. FÚTBOL, MARCA PERSONAL Y COMUNICACIÓN</b>	<b>33. SPEAKERS BUREAU</b>
<b>14. COMMUNICATION, SOCIAL NETWORKS AND DIGITAL IMAGE</b>	<b>35. SO LEARN ATHLETES</b>
<b>15. EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS</b>	<b>36. SPORTS DIPLOMACY PROGRAMME</b>
<b>17. PROFESSIONAL ATHLETE CAREER TRANSITION PROGRAMME</b>	<b>39. ATHLETE365</b>
<b>18. ATHLETE LEADERSHIP PROGRAMMES (ALPS)</b>	<b>40. ZAVOD VITAE+</b>
<b>20. THE SPORTS PSYCHOLOGY AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS TRAINING PROGRAMME</b>	<b>43. THE ATHLETE CAREER TRANSITION PROGRAMME (ACT)</b>
<b>21. LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNICATION WORKSHOP</b>	<b>44. COMMUNICATION AND WORKING RELATIONSHIPS IN SPORT AND FITNESS</b>
<b>23. EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR ATHLETES WEBINAR SERIES</b>	<b>47. ELIT-IN TRAINING AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM</b>
	<b>49. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS</b>
	<b>50. REFERENCES</b>







# THE ATHLETES SPEAKERS PROJECT

Athletes Speakers is a Project co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union. It is dedicated to enhancing athlete's communication skills. Its main objective is to develop, test and implement a tailor-made education and training programme focused on empowering athletes to find and use their voice, becoming active in the public scene by improving their communication skills.

Having good communication skills is key to create powerful relationships, powerful teams, join forces and have successful outcomes, as well as influence and convince others to act. Communication skills can be a powerful tool for athletes, helping them to improve teamwork, land partnerships and sponsorship deals and create a personal brand around them. It can also give them the power to influence others and become role models to the public, and it is a key skill for the workplace. Hence, developing communica-

tion skills is key for athlete's professional and personal development, becoming a very valuable asset for the development of a dual career.

This project is coordinated by Olympic Committee of North Macedonia, together with the participation of 6 complimentary organisations from Spain, Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Bulgaria, and Slovakia. Within the scope of the project, not only the educational programme will be developed, but also a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) to engage a higher number of stakeholders in learning and developing communication skills, and a Handbook with guidelines for sports organisations about how to implement the programme and increase the voice of athletes. The project will engage 56 active elite athletes, who are in need of support to improve their public image and recognition as role models, which primarily affects their upcoming career transition.

## INTRODUCTION

In order to create Athletes Speakers' tailored programme, the consortium has engaged in in-depth research regarding communication strategies and programmes in sport. This is a key step of the process to understand the state-of-art regarding athletes' communication skills, training, and their relationship with elite sport and employability. It also ensures that the programme's contents are updated and relevant for the target group, and that they respond to the real needs of elite athletes as identified in the literature.

With the goal to have a complete grasp of the issue at hand, the consortium has carried out two parallel reviews. First, a review of the existent scientific literature on sport and communication; and second, a grey literature review identifying and summarising best practices on the implementation of education on communication skills for athletes.

Section 1 of this document will provide a theoretical background, examining the evidence on how communication skills can be useful for athletes' lives and employability. Communication is a key aspect of relationships and a valuable asset in the workplace, and this literature review will go through analysing how

communication training can add value to Dual Career programmes.

Section 2 will review a set of best practices that have been identified by the consortium with regard to communication education. These practices have been implemented by different types of sport organisations and have a variety of approaches, modalities, targets and topics addressed. By reviewing these best practices, these section offers a deeper understanding of the level and the form of implementation of communication education in sport organisations worldwide, and the existent offer of programmes dedicated to enhancing athletes' competences in this regard.

The conclusions drafted in this report shed light into the current trends, studies and research on athlete's communication skills, the potential of good communication skills for their personal and professional development, and the level of implementation of educational programmes including communication training. These will be the pillars upon which the Athletes Speakers programme will be constructed, ensuring that it is evidence-based and complementary to other existent initiatives.

# SECTION 1:

## LITERATURE REVIEW

After the end of their sport careers, elite athletes should be allowed by the sport system to transition to a normal life in society (Stambulova et al., 2015), which includes finding employment outside their athletic career. Elite athletes face a singular barrier to access education and regular employment, due to their exigent training and time schedules, which make it very demanding for these athletes to cope with both their elite sports performance and regular education (Capranica & Millard-Stafford, 2011; Conzelmann & Nagel, 2003).

'Dual Career' refers to athletes that are seeking to combine their studies or professional careers together with their sport careers (Subijana et al., 2015). Dual career programmes are born in order to facilitate this process, allowing athletes to have further opportunities outside sports after retirement. Dual career programmes are accessible at different levels across Europe, and some gaps have been identified regarding the implementation and availability of tailored support programmes and educational opportunities (Hong et al., 2022) The pressures of high performance can cause young athletes to drop from education or invest less energy and time in favour of advancing their sports career (Henry, 2013; Parker et al., 2016). However, the pursue of education during the athletic career is a key factor for the adaptation to transitioning out of sport (Condello et al., 2019). They allow athletes to develop and understand their skills and abilities and pursue employment after their sporting careers.

Communication involves a set of soft skills that have been identified by researchers as key for modern career development. It is also an important factor to translate and enhance other soft skills in the workplace. Communication is the act of sharing information, aiming at developing understanding between sender and receiver (Martin, Stewart & Matta, 2005). Danish et al. (1993) already established that effective communication is one of the most important skills for life. It is essential for career success in the Information Age given the emphasis that today's world puts on information and how it is presented. Robles (2012) stresses that developing skills for verbal and non-verbal communication is key to enhance other soft skills toward career success. Most of the research to date related to athlete's communication focused on com-

munication between athletes or athletes and coaches or athletes with parents (Dobrescu, 2014, Pacewicz & Smith, 2023). There is also a strong body of research on communication within sport teams and its influence on performance, sporting success and wellbeing of athletes (Ecclesand & Tenenbaum, 2004, Cunningham & Eys, 2007, McLaren & Spink, 2018) However communication in sport as a field of research has not been extensively researched up until recent decade (Ishak, 2017).

Effective communication is essential in the workplace of any industry and can be an important factor to land jobs and promotions, progressing professional careers (Ryba et al., 2015). For elite athletes of different levels of traditional education, being able to communicate effectively, have a strong presence and an assertive speech can be a game-changer to provide them with job opportunities. Moreover, training communication skills is also positive for their sporting careers. Athletes and teams with better communication are often more successful than those with poor communication skills (Camiré, Trudel, & Forneris, 2009). Good communication enhances all forms of relationships including team relationships and teamwork, and the communication of feedback and criticism in a possible way that strengthens interactions between athletes (Eliöz, 2016). Good communication skills enable athletes to better express themselves, and being part of psychological skill development, they affect performance as well as motor skills (Ahmadiet al, 2018). What is more, athletes demonstrate better listening, feedback, and communication skills than non-athletes (Nikbakhsh, Alipor, Mosavi, & Abdi, 2013). Sport spectators are also more interested in the outcomes of the activities and performance of their favourite athletes or teams than in other aspects of economic or social activities, which also strengthens the need for good communication from the sport participants (Wolfe et al., 2005).

Sport is heavily connected with media coverage, as one of the primary sources of revenue is broadcasting rights. It is due to this connection, that athletes are pressured to be present in media. In the past two decades the development of social media platforms i.e. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, made it even more necessary for the athletes to maintain their public presence. If not properly managed, this exposure can

lead to mental health issues (Faustin et al., 2022). Furthermore, athletes have an important influence on the public, given that due to their success, they become role models for their fans (Leng & Phua, 2020). The athletes are role models of many generations and are portrayed as thought leaders and influencers on social media, with millions of virtual fans for each of their pages (Goodyear & Armour, 2019). This highlights the importance of developing communication skills related to public speech and image, through which athletes can become positive influences on the sport community (Taniyev & Gordon, 2022). Furthermore, a well-constructed personal brand can help

the athlete receive sponsorship proposals and other types of offers that are positive to the development of their careers (Taniyev et al., 2022). Athletes can also build their brand through socially responsible activities outside of playing field e.g. charity work, community outreach programs, health promotion (Babiak & Wolfe, 2009).

Due to those factors, communication has been recognised by literature as a success factor for Dual Career athletes, and a facilitator of their lifestyle balance (EC, 2012).





# SECTION 2:

## BEST PRACTICES COLLECTION

### Overview

A best practice review is a valuable form of research that serves the purpose of documenting preceding practices to one that is to be developed. Collecting and reviewing these practices serves the purpose of understanding what has been done in the field, how, by who, and what were the main achievements and constraints faced by prior initiatives.

This information is translated into valuable knowledge for any organisation that is willing to develop and implement a similar initiative, by providing inspiration and insight on success factor and potential risks or difficulties.

For this review, each partner of the consortium was requested to provide a brief report of three to five best practices, meaning athlete educational programmes that include the topic of communication.

### Scope

The consortium was requested to identify established educational programmes directed to athletes of all levels. Although national programmes in each partner country were the priority focus, where these did not exist or did not reach the desired number programmes carried out in different countries at the European and Global level were also identified and studied.

Programmes selected were to be focused on teaching and improving elite athlete's communication skills (e.g., assertive and/or effective communication, speech, communication patterns). The aim was to find programmes with the capacity to empower athletes and amplify athlete's voices, as well as the promoting athletes as role models; or working towards improving athlete's future employability and post-athletic careers through better communications.

### Key Words

Athlete education, soft skills, communication skills, dual career, athlete empowerment, athlete employability.

### Results

Twenty-three best practices have been collected and analysed. Educational programmes have been presented in different formats, such as articles, webinars, online courses, onsite courses and trainings, or workshops. They were provided by a wide variety of national and international organisations and consortiums, ranging from Olympic committees and athlete

associations to other EU-funded projects.

Ten different countries are represented: Spain, Ireland, Portugal, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Slovenia, United Kingdom, Canada, United States, Australia and Mexico; and several practices are carried out by international organisations. All the selected practices are dedicated to elite athletes, whether active or retired, Paralympic or not.

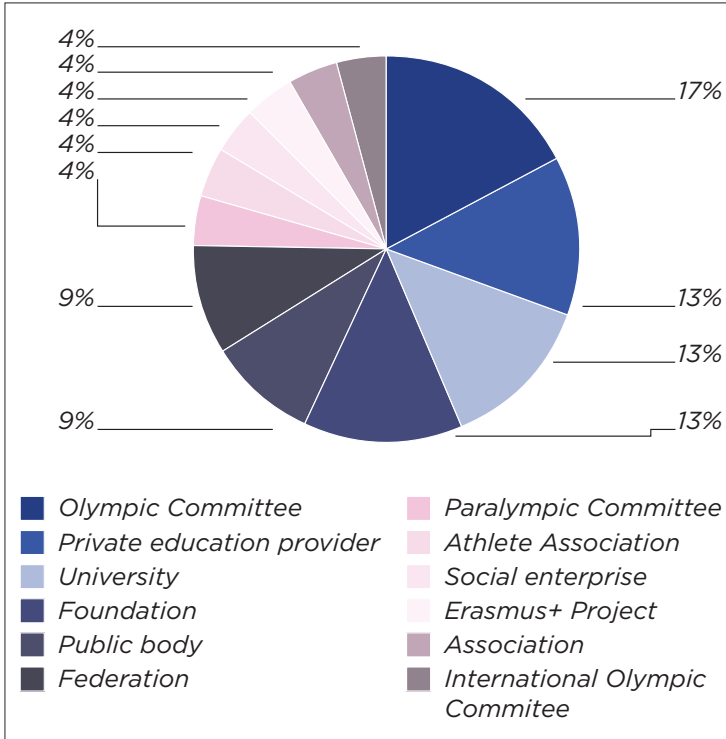
Ireland is the country from which the most practices have been identified (n=6), followed by United Kingdom (n=4) and international practices (n=4). Two come from Spain and an additional one from Slovakia, while the remaining countries are represented here by one practice each.

Regarding implementing institutions, National Olympic Committees are leading the collection (n=4), followed by private education providers (n=3), universities (n=3) and the Special Olympics Foundation (n=3). Two best practices have been sourced from public body initiatives and two from sport federations. Other organisations represented are athlete and sport associations, Paralympic Committees, social enterprises, Erasmus+ projects and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) from which at least one of these best practices has been collected.

These examples bring out the interest of showcased for communication training in English speaking countries (Ireland, UK, USA, Canada) which is not present in other European countries. It has also showcased a lack of practices in some of the partner countries of this consortium. Neither Bulgaria nor Macedonia nor the Netherlands are represented in this collection. As expected, this provides room for an important impact of the Athletes Speakers programme in partner countries, but also beyond.

Olympic Committees and the Special Olympics are established as the leaders in implementation of communication programmes. As associations dealing with thousands of elite athletes and para-athletes at the national level, it is in their function to promote competence development promote skills that are useful in and outside of sport. Federations and athletes' associations offer similar programmes to their athletes as part of dual career training opportunities. Nonetheless, universities and private education providers also showcase significant presence in offering opportunities for athletes in the topic of communica-

tion and media training. In the case of athletes with disabilities, communica-



**Figure 1.**  
Organisations providing best practices on communication education

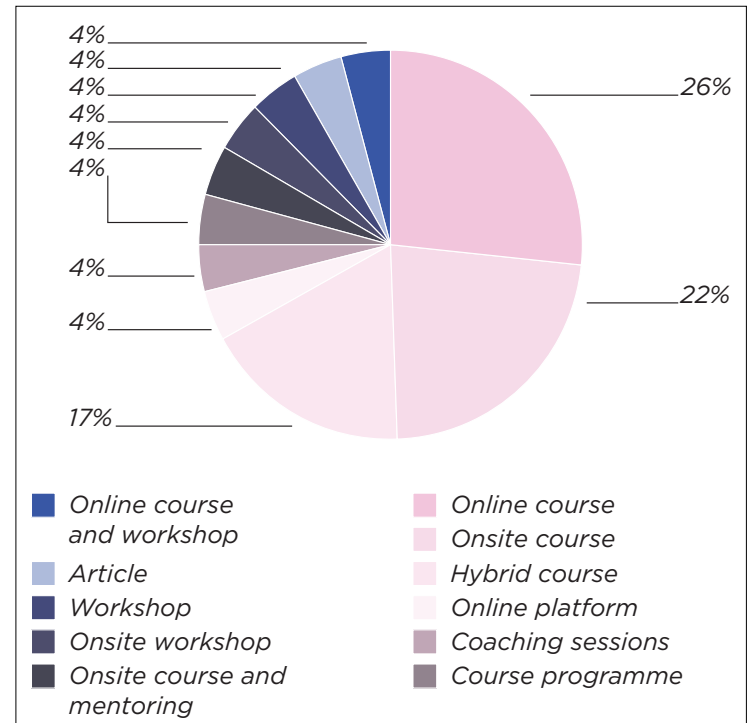
tion programmes are implemented from the point of view of empowerment. Special Olympics Ireland and Special Olympics International present each a different programme dedicated to the empowerment of grassroots and elite athletes with intellectual disabilities through communication training. These practices are designed to provide athletes with intellectual disabilities with the skills and the platform necessary to meaningfully engage with their communities, speak up on their experiences and promote inclusion. Empowerment is also a key aspect for the development of communication programmes aimed at promoting women’s role and leadership in sports, such as the Global Sports Mentoring Program by the US Centre for sport, peace and society, or the Communication, Social Networks and Digital Image course implemented by the Spanish Sports Federation for People with Physical Disabilities, which aims to empower women with disabilities through the development of communication skills.

Nonetheless, most of the practices identified were directed exclusively elite athletes without disabilities (n=12), with fewer practices exclusively targeting athletes with disabilities (n=4), two targeting both elite athletes and athletes with disabilities, and four targeting all types of athletes notwithstanding disability status or competition level. Only three practi-

es also included grassroots athletes or athletes with disabilities. Virtually all of these practices were open to athletes whether active or retired, with just a few examples being limited to active athletes (n=4) and retired athletes (n=1). In regard to gender, all practices were open to any gender except for the two previously mentioned examples that are dedicated exclusively to women.

Online courses have been the most frequent type of practice registered (n=6), with onsite courses (n=5) and hybrid courses (n=4) following behind.

Nonetheless, communication education takes a vari-



**Figure 2.**  
Practices collected by type

ety of shapes, including coaching sessions, full programmes consisting in several courses, mentoring, workshops and articles, combining in-person and online in different formats to create unique educational experiences. The observed clash between online (n=9) and onsite (n=9) practices showcase the pros and cons of each of these formats. Online practices’ popularity is observable due to their capacity provide accessible teaching and learning for elite athletes, who have tight schedules. Onsite practices have a big constraint in this regard, making them difficult to access for those who have no time or capacity to travel to the physical space where this education is provided, thus creating a difficulty on the escalation of the initiative. Nonetheless, communication education is benefited by in-person learning, because it facilitates human connection, non-verbal communication observation and the practice of public speech.



**Figure 3.**  
*Practices collected by type*

Some practices, such as the Portuguese Olympic Committee's Atletes Speakers course have switched to hybrid format after observing the constraints that the onsite format has. However, only a total of five practices collected are hybrid.

When observing the best practices, key topics addressed in these educational materials were collected and processed, in order to understand which are the most commonly included. After these processing, we can observe that the communication education for athletes is often focused on enhancing general communication skills, teaching about public speaking, enhancing the capacity to build and deliver a speech, and training athletes about media communication and personal branding. Correct language, effective communication, management of interpersonal relationships, and media training are important points in these practices. Leadership is also very present, given that good communication is a key leadership skill. More specific skills and exercises such as planning a speech, active listening and understanding, communicating needs, controlling and expressing emotions, understanding non-verbal cues and networking are

also addressed in several of these practices. All of them are interlinked and form a solid framework for the development of good communication skills. The consortium has faced difficulties to collect constraints and achievements of these practices, given the unavailability of public data and the difficulty of contacting all organisations in a limited amount of time. Nonetheless, the data that has been collected showcases positive effects on the athletes' skills and confidence in communication (n=7) and high positive satisfaction rates and reviews (n=2). Regarding the constraints, limitations to the number of participants in contrast with high demand of the course was cited, along with the time and effort required to complete the course, geographical barriers to access were the reasons cited. One of the practices faced a specific constraint related to the COVID-19 outbreak, which did not allow for the full implementation of the educational programme and was linked by the responsible organisations to an improbable adherence rate.



# LIBRARY OF BEST PRACTICES

## The Jim Madden GPA Leadership programme GPA - Gaelic Players Association

<b>Country:</b>	Ireland
<b>Type of practice:</b>	Hybrid format (Online & face to face sessions).
<b>Target:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elite Athletes</li> <li>• Active or Retired</li> <li>• All genders</li> </ul>
<b>Number of participants:</b>	Not publicly available
<b>Objective:</b>	This initiative is focused on teaching athletes' communication skills so they can share their stories in sport to children and young adults in an engaging and inspiring manner.
<b>Key topics/Modules:</b>	Leadership Masterclass, Development Centre Workshop, Personal & Interpersonal Leadership Workshops, Group Leadership Skills Workshop, Community Project
<b>Summary:</b>	The Jim Madden GPA Leadership Programme is an individually tailored 'elite athlete friendly' programme. The programme will take 12 months. This will be divided up into 7.5 'classroom' days in total with an approximately 20 additional hours of online learning per class. The online learning component of the programme will take place through Moodle. This leadership programme is designed to be highly relevant, tangible and built to help you evolve a personal leadership style. As recruiters and companies search for candidates with applicable experience and initiative, this programme is designed to help you fit that profile.
<b>Achievements:</b>	Special Purposes Certificate in Professional Leadership at Maynooth University. The Réalta Programme.
<b>More information:</b>	<a href="https://www.gaelicplayers.com/2023-jim-madden-gpa-leadership-programme/">https://www.gaelicplayers.com/2023-jim-madden-gpa-leadership-programme/</a>

## Fútbol, Marca Personal Y Comunicación

### IDE Fútbol Universitاس

<b>Country:</b>	Spain
<b>Type of practice:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online course.</li> </ul>
<b>Target:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elite Athletes</li> <li>• Active or retired</li> <li>• All genders</li> </ul>
<b>Number of participants:</b>	Not publicly available
<b>Objective:</b>	The course Football, Personal Branding and Communication deals in a practical and visual way precisely with the different elements that make up a communication plan for an elite athlete / coach.
<b>Key topics/Modules:</b>	Personal Branding, public speech, speech delivery, correct language.
<b>Summary:</b>	<p>The course Football, Personal Branding and Communication addresses in a practical and visual way precisely the different elements that make up a communication plan for an elite athlete / coach, through the study of different real cases the student will receive working tools to be very competent when carrying out a diagnosis, a positioning, or simply designing a calendar of actions with which to attract and seduce the media or social networks.</p> <p>In addition, the course offers specific training for communication management in crisis situations.</p>
<b>Main constraints:</b>	Not publicly available
<b>Achievements:</b>	Athletes improving their communication capacities and participating in many public speaking, increasing their public value.
<b>More information:</b>	<a href="https://ideuniversidad.com/curso-marca-personal/">https://ideuniversidad.com/curso-marca-personal/</a>





## Communication, Social Networks and Digital Image

### Spanish Sports Federation for People with Physical Disabilities

<b>Country:</b>	Spain
<b>Type of practice:</b>	Online course.
<b>Target:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elite Athletes and Para-athletes</li> <li>• Active or retired</li> <li>• Female</li> </ul>
<b>Number of participants:</b>	Not publicly available
<b>Objective:</b>	It is aimed at WOMEN of any sporting status, and it is dedicated to promoting and improving their communication and digital communication skills.
<b>Key topics/Modules:</b>	communication, social networks, digital image.
<b>Summary:</b>	This course includes fourteen online modules which cover topics such as Concept of communication, Media and supports, evaluation and assessment of different social media platforms, Basic multimedia techniques.
<b>Main constraints:</b>	Not publicly available
<b>Achievements:</b>	Not publicly available.
<b>More information:</b>	<a href="https://www.feddf.es/amplia-deporte/94/7424/curso-comunicacion.html">https://www.feddf.es/amplia-deporte/94/7424/curso-comunicacion.html</a>

## Effective Communication Skills

### Careers in Sport – Liverpool John Moores University

<b>Country:</b>	United Kingdom
<b>Type of practice:</b>	Article
<b>Target:</b>	All
<b>Number of participants:</b>	Not publicly available
<b>Objective:</b>	Communication skills will no doubt see far improved employee engagement and commitment, teamwork and interdepartmental relationships improve
<b>Key topics/Modules:</b>	Listening, building rapport, Straight Talking, Non-verbal communication, Emotional control
<b>Summary:</b>	At the sports industry, communication is paramount between coaches and the athlete for example. Some coaches cannot understand why the athlete has not done what he wanted them to do! Some of the best communicators have spent many years refining their communication skills. Good communication will avoid conflict, build closer working or private relationships. It goes a long way to establishing a good decision-making process.
<b>Main constraints:</b>	Not publicly available.
<b>Achievements:</b>	Not publicly available.
<b>More information:</b>	<a href="https://www.gaelicplayers.com/2023-jim-madden-gpa-leadership-programme/">https://www.gaelicplayers.com/2023-jim-madden-gpa-leadership-programme/</a>





# Professional Athlete Career Transition Programme

## Sport Ireland Institute

<b>Country:</b>	Ireland
<b>Type of practice:</b>	Online Course
<b>Target:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elite Athletes</li> <li>• Active or retired</li> </ul>
<b>Number of participants:</b>	Not publicly available
<b>Objective:</b>	The primary goal of the programme is to equip athletes with essential skills and knowledge that will aid in their transition into professional careers after retiring from sports. By focusing on communication and networking skills, the course aims to enhance their ability to connect effectively with potential employers, colleagues, and others in their chosen professional field.
<b>Key topics/Modules:</b>	Career transition planning, communication skills, networking skills, personal branding
<b>Summary:</b>	The “Professional Athlete Career Transition Programme” is an online course developed by the Sport Ireland Institute. It’s specifically designed to prepare athletes for their professional lives post-retirement. The programme lasts for an eight-week period and is a blend of different teaching methods such as videos, readings, and live Q&A sessions with industry experts. The course is thorough, covering career planning, communication, networking, and personal branding.
<b>Main constraints:</b>	Not publicly available
<b>Achievements:</b>	The programme has proven successful in assisting many athletes in making the transition to their post-sport careers. This success is evident in the numerous positive testimonials and the number of athletes who have successfully moved into professional roles in various industries after retirement.
<b>More information:</b>	<a href="https://www.sportireland.ie/Institute/career-transition">https://www.sportireland.ie/Institute/career-transition</a> .



## Athlete Leadership Programmes (ALPs)

### Special Olympics Ireland

<b>Country:</b>	Ireland
<b>Type of practice:</b>	Onsite Course
<b>Target:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grassroot athletes</li> <li>• Elite Para-athletes</li> <li>• Grassroot Para-athletes</li> </ul>
<b>Number of participants:</b>	Not publicly available
<b>Objective:</b>	The overarching objective of the ALPs is to empower athletes with intellectual disabilities. The programme seeks to equip these athletes with vital communication and leadership skills. This empowerment enables them to demonstrate their abilities within their communities, thereby challenging stereotypes and promoting inclusivity.
<b>Key topics/Modules:</b>	Public speaking, Goal-setting, Governance, Healthy lifestyles.
<b>Summary:</b>	Special Olympics Ireland's Athlete Leadership Programmes (ALPs) is a unique initiative designed to empower athletes with intellectual disabilities by developing their communication and leadership skills. The course comprises several workshops, each focusing on a specific skill set like public speaking, goal-setting, governance, and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. What's distinctive about the ALPs is the inclusion of a mentorship component, where athletes are paired with mentors who guide them through the course, providing individualised support and feedback.
<b>Main constraints:</b>	Not publicly available.
<b>Achievements:</b>	The ALPs has achieved significant success in amplifying the voices of athletes with intellectual disabilities. By teaching them essential communication and leadership skills, the programme has enabled these athletes to contribute meaningfully to their communities. They have raised awareness about the abilities and potential of people with intellectual disabilities, promoting a more inclusive society.
<b>More information:</b>	<a href="https://www.specialolympics.ie/WHATWEDO/Athletes/Athlete_Leadership">https://www.specialolympics.ie/WHATWEDO/Athletes/Athlete_Leadership</a>



## The Sports Psychology and Communication Skills Training Programme

Irish Athletic Boxing Association (IABA)

<b>Country:</b>	Ireland
<b>Type of practice:</b>	Onsite Course
<b>Target:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elite Athletes</li> <li>• Active athletes</li> <li>• All genders</li> </ul>
<b>Number of participants:</b>	Not publicly available
<b>Objective:</b>	The programme's objective is twofold. Firstly, it aims to enhance athletes' communication skills, promoting better interpersonal interactions and leadership within their teams and the larger sports community. Secondly, the course provides athletes with psychological strategies to improve their performance in the ring, focusing on mental strength and resilience in high-pressure competitive scenarios.
<b>Key topics/Modules:</b>	Sports Psychology, Self-talk, Visualization, Communication and Leadership
<b>Summary:</b>	The IABA's Sports Psychology and Communication Skills Training Programme is a unique blend of practical exercises and lectures focusing on enhancing the psychological resilience and communication skills of its athletes. Conducted onsite at their High-Performance Unit in Dublin, the course is delivered by expert trainers, including sports psychologists and communication coaches. Over a period of six months, the athletes gain valuable insights into effective communication, leadership, and coping with high-pressure scenarios. The recruitment of participants is done internally within the IABA.
<b>Main constraints:</b>	Given that the programme is conducted onsite in Dublin, athletes located outside of Dublin may have faced logistical difficulties in attending the course. This geographical constraint could potentially limit the programme's reach to athletes who could benefit from the training but are based in other parts of Ireland.
<b>Achievements:</b>	The programme has received overwhelmingly positive feedback from the participating athletes, affirming its success. Many athletes have been able to apply the skills they learnt during their training to their competitive performances, demonstrating the programme's practical value.
<b>More information:</b>	Specific information about this particular programme isn't publicly available online. Therefore, for more detailed or specific information, contacting the Irish Athletic Boxing Association directly would be recommended. They could provide further insights into the course structure, future offerings, and how interested athletes can get involved.



## Leadership and Communication Workshop

### Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA)

<b>Country:</b>	Ireland
<b>Type of practice:</b>	Onsite workshop
<b>Target:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active Athletes</li> <li>• Grassroot athletes</li> <li>• Elite Athletes</li> </ul>
<b>Number of participants:</b>	Not publicly available
<b>Objective:</b>	The main objective of the Leadership and Communication Workshop is to enhance the leadership skills of athletes, and their ability to communicate effectively. This is with a specific focus on improving team interactions and promoting positive engagement with the broader community. The program recognises the key role that athletes play in their communities and aims to empower them with the necessary skills to fulfil this role effectively.
<b>Key topics/Modules:</b>	Team communication, Leadership skills, Community engagement
<b>Summary:</b>	The Leadership and Communication Workshops are hosted by the Gaelic Athletic Association across Ireland. These workshops provide athletes with an opportunity to engage in team-based activities, listen to lectures from experienced speakers, and participate in practical exercises designed to enhance their leadership and communication skills. The controlled environment of the workshops enables athletes to practice their newly learned skills, receive immediate feedback, and make improvements in real time.
<b>Main constraints:</b>	Not publicly available.
<b>Achievements:</b>	Workshops have successfully improved communication within teams and promoted positive engagement within local communities. Participants have reportedly benefited greatly, developing improved leadership abilities and more effective communication skills.
<b>More information:</b>	<a href="https://learning.gaa.ie/leader">https://learning.gaa.ie/leader</a>





# Effective Communication Skills for Athletes Webinar Series

## Paralympics Ireland

<b>Country:</b>	Ireland
<b>Type of practice:</b>	Online practice
<b>Target:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active athletes</li> <li>• Elite Para-athletes</li> </ul>
<b>Number of participants:</b>	Not publicly available
<b>Objective:</b>	The main objective of the webinar series is to help athletes develop effective communication skills. These skills are particularly important for athletes who often have to interact with the media, make public speeches, and engage in interpersonal communication as part of their roles as public figures and team members.
<b>Key topics/Modules:</b>	Media Training, Public Speaking, Interpersonal Communication
<b>Summary:</b>	Paralympics Ireland has created a webinar series that focuses on enhancing athletes' communication skills. This series gives athletes the opportunity to learn and develop skills for effective media interaction, public speaking, and interpersonal communication. The online nature of the webinars makes them highly accessible, and athletes can access the content from anywhere in Ireland.
<b>Main constraints:</b>	While the online format offers the advantage of wide accessibility, it also presents some constraints. One significant limitation is the lack of real-time, face-to-face interaction which is often valuable for developing and refining communication skills. Participants may not have as many opportunities to practise and receive feedback on their communication skills compared to those participating in onsite workshops.
<b>Achievements:</b>	Despite these constraints, the webinar series has been beneficial for many athletes. Participants have reported increased confidence in their public speaking skills and their ability to interact effectively with the media.
<b>More information:</b>	<a href="https://www.paralympics.ie/News">https://www.paralympics.ie/News</a>



## Sports Media & Communication Skills Training

### Open Dawes Training

<b>Country:</b>	United Kingdom
<b>Type of practice:</b>	Public courses, individual courses and mentoring
<b>Target:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All kinds of athletes</li> <li>• Other: Teams interested in training their representatives</li> </ul>
<b>Number of participants:</b>	10 per public course, total unknown.
<b>Objective:</b>	The Communication Program for Athletes seems that offers an opportunity to unlock the power of communication, enabling athletes to foster meaningful connections with the media, sponsors, fans, and teams. Through this program, athletes will be able to elevate their communication skills to new heights, ultimately enhancing their overall athletic career and achievements
<b>Key topics/Modules:</b>	public speaking, presentation of sponsorship/partnership proposition, understanding emotions, managing nerves, public speech.
<b>Summary:</b>	The program's core objective is to enhance and refine athletes' communication style and skills. It emphasizes the importance of presenting oneself in the best possible manner during interactions. It is crucial to note that sponsors and the media are not only attracted to exceptional sporting abilities but also seek out athletes who excel as communicators.
<b>Main constraints:</b>	Not publicly available.
<b>Achievements:</b>	Not publicly available
<b>More information:</b>	<a href="https://www.opendawestraining.co.uk/sports-media-training">https://www.opendawestraining.co.uk/sports-media-training</a>



## Global Sports Mentoring Program

### Centre for sport, peace and society

<b>Country:</b>	United States
<b>Type of practice:</b>	Onsite training
<b>Target:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Female athletes</li> <li>• Active or retired</li> </ul>
<b>Number of participants:</b>	16 per edition
<b>Objective:</b>	This international leadership program aims to empower girls and women's leadership skills including communication skills. The program provides training on public speaking and the power of storytelling that helps build stronger relations with the audience and various stakeholders.
<b>Key topics/Modules:</b>	Public speaking, storytelling and building up a personal brand.
<b>Summary:</b>	The Global Sports Mentoring Program (GSMP) is a professional development exchange that pairs international leaders with American executives in the sports sector for a mentorship that promotes inclusion and gender equality. Igniting the power of public-private partnerships, the State Department and ESPN/espnW joined forces to create the espnW GSMP in a shared effort to level the playing field for women. As part of this leadership program, training on communication skills is provided. Duration is typically 1-2 months during which participants must reside in the United States.
<b>Main constraints:</b>	Not publicly available
<b>Achievements:</b>	Not publicly available
<b>More information:</b>	<a href="https://globalsportsmentoring.org">https://globalsportsmentoring.org</a>



## Communication Trainings For Athletes

### Media Goals

<b>Country:</b>	Australia
<b>Type of practice:</b>	Onsite training
<b>Target:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All kinds of athletes</li> </ul>
<b>Number of participants:</b>	Not publicly available
<b>Objective:</b>	The objective of the communication program is to enhance communication skills so athletes can feel comfortable in front of the camera, microphone, computer or colleagues.
<b>Key topics/Modules:</b>	basic media and communication training, on-camera technique, finding your individual story, social media, expert and play-by-play commentary, podcasting, personal branding, crisis management and networking
<b>Summary:</b>	The communication program will guide its participants and help them around getting in front of camera, helping avoid the jargon, coach to build confidence in interviews, help with the communication strategy and help to ensure with the social media page. The program is developed and implemented by experienced broadcasters, journalists and interviewers.
<b>Main constraints:</b>	Not publicly available.
<b>Achievements:</b>	Not publicly available
<b>More information:</b>	<a href="https://mediagoals.com.au">https://mediagoals.com.au</a>



## Atletas Speakers

### Portuguese Olympic Committee

<b>Country:</b>	Portugal
<b>Type of practice:</b>	Hybrid Course
<b>Target:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elite Athletes</li> <li>• Active &amp; retired</li> <li>• All genders</li> </ul>
<b>Number of participants:</b>	7 per edition, in a total of 35 participants.
<b>Objective:</b>	Organisation of information, public speech, speech delivery, correct language.
<b>Key topics/Modules:</b>	Media Training, Public Speaking, Interpersonal Communication
<b>Summary:</b>	<p>This activity is organised by the Portuguese Olympic Committee in collaboration with expert trainers on the matter of communication. It is composed by two in-person sessions for all participants together and five online individual sessions, leading to the creation and delivery of a final speech. The first session (2h) takes place in person and is meant to introduce the course working methodology and plan. This is followed by five 1h sessions with each participant athlete, introducing the following: message organisation, storytelling, final speech planning, delivery, final speech rehearsal. Then, a final 2h session takes place in person, where the athletes delivered their final speeches and received feedback and proposals from the trainers.</p> <p>The programme is led by professional speaker and communication trainer Carla Rocha has had several editions since its start in 2017.</p>
<b>Main constraints:</b>	The fact that the number of participants per edition is limited and that in the past the course was divided in 7 presential meetings. This creates a big constrain for athletes that have a very busy schedule and makes it almost impossible for the the ones outside of the region were the course is taking place. In this last edition the course became hybrid, but it's still not asynchronous.
<b>Achievements:</b>	Athletes improving their communication capacities and participating in many public speaking, increasing their public value.
<b>More information:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://comiteolimpicoportugal.pt/formacao-e-desenvolvimento/atletas-speakers/">https://comiteolimpicoportugal.pt/formacao-e-desenvolvimento/atletas-speakers/</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://conpaas.einzeln.net/services/mediaservice/api/media/c3fbf1e7aee142ed104d457abed4598fcc5b5c4e">https://conpaas.einzeln.net/services/mediaservice/api/media/c3fbf1e7aee142ed104d457abed4598fcc5b5c4e</a></li> </ul>

## Sport as an Inspiration

### Mexican Olympic Committee

<b>Country:</b>	Mexico
<b>Type of practice:</b>	Workshop
<b>Target:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elite Athletes</li> <li>• Active &amp; retired</li> <li>• All genders</li> </ul>
<b>Number of participants:</b>	25 participants.
<b>Objective:</b>	This initiative is focused on teaching athletes' communication skills so they can share their stories in sport to children and young adults in an engaging and inspiring manner.
<b>Key topics/Modules:</b>	Speech delivery, correct language.
<b>Summary:</b>	<p>The program involves a series of workshops and public presentation and communication skills trainings, taught by experts in public speaking and communication. Athletes learn to structure speeches, use body language techniques, deal with nervousness, and engage the audience. In addition, athletes are encouraged to reflect on their own life and overcoming stories, identifying key moments in which they faced challenges and how they managed to overcome them. The idea is that these stories can inspire other people, not just in the sporting realm, but in their lives in general.</p> <p>The project also aims to promote values such as respect, honesty and teamwork, as well as emphasize the importance of a healthy and active lifestyle. Olympic athletes are seen as role models, and the initiative seeks to harness that influence to promote positive and inspiring messages.</p>
<b>Main constraints:</b>	Not publicly available.
<b>Achievements:</b>	Not publicly available
<b>More information:</b>	<a href="https://olympians.org/best-practices/mexican-olympians-train-to-be-professional-speakers/?id=1742">https://olympians.org/best-practices/mexican-olympians-train-to-be-professional-speakers/?id=1742</a>





## WAOs Athlete Certificate

### World Academy of Sport's

<b>Country:</b>	International
<b>Type of practice:</b>	Hybrid Course
<b>Target:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elite Athletes</li> <li>• Active and retired</li> <li>• All genders</li> </ul>
<b>Number of participants:</b>	Not publicly available.
<b>Objective:</b>	This initiative is focused on training Olympians to become paid motivational speakers and benefit from the World Academy of Sport's Global Sports Industry Educational Pathway
<b>Key topics/Modules:</b>	Values and integrity in sport, health and well-being, speech delivery, correct language.
<b>Summary:</b>	This course includes five online modules which cover topics such as support team and relationships, values and integrity in sport, health and wellbeing (including mental health), social media and the media, and the overall journey as an athlete. It provides internationally-recognised educational and experiential opportunities for career transition and to help turning the passion for sport into a profession in sport business, management, training or education. The Certificate is a standardised and globally-recognised certified course which provides a detailed understanding of what it takes to be an athlete and will provide the tools necessary to be able to be competitive at all levels of sport. Olympians will also be trained as motivational speakers for businesses, helping those businesses to understand and benefit from the successful practices of sport such as talent identification and recruitment, high performance team development and team leadership.
<b>Main constraints:</b>	Not publicly available.
<b>Achievements:</b>	Not publicly available.
<b>More information:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://olympians.org/news/1712/new-learning-and-earning-opportunities-for-olympians/">https://olympians.org/news/1712/new-learning-and-earning-opportunities-for-olympians/</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://istudy.sport/waosathletecertificate">https://istudy.sport/waosathletecertificate</a></li> </ul>

## Speakers Bureau Special Olympics

<b>Country:</b>	International
<b>Type of practice:</b>	Specific Training
<b>Target:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elite Para-athletes</li> <li>• Grassroot Para-athletes</li> <li>• All genders</li> </ul>
<b>Number of participants:</b>	Not publicly available.
<b>Objective:</b>	The Special Olympics Speakers Bureau is a practice that aims to empower athletes with intellectual disabilities by providing them with opportunities to speak publicly about their experiences and challenges.
<b>Key topics/Modules:</b>	Speech delivery, correct language.
<b>Summary:</b>	The Speakers Bureau program helps athletes develop their communication and public speaking skills, as well as their self-confidence, which can lead to increased opportunities for personal growth and success. Through the Speakers Bureau program, athletes are trained to share their stories and to inspire others by speaking at local, national, and international events. The program also provides them with a platform to advocate for the inclusion and acceptance of people with intellectual disabilities, helping to break down stigmas and stereotypes.
<b>Main constraints:</b>	Not publicly available.
<b>Achievements:</b>	Not publicly available
<b>More information:</b>	<a href="https://www.specialolympics.org/about/speakers-bureau">https://www.specialolympics.org/about/speakers-bureau</a>





## SO Learn Athletes

### Special Olympics of Canada

<b>Country:</b>	Canada
<b>Type of practice:</b>	Training Programme
<b>Target:</b>	Elite Para-athletes
<b>Number of participants:</b>	Not publicly available.
<b>Objective:</b>	The SO Learn programme is offered by the Special Olympics Canada that provides athletes with the opportunity to develop life skills, overall well-being and achieve personal development.
<b>Key topics/Modules:</b>	Athlete leadership, public speaking, skill development
<b>Summary:</b>	<p>The SO Learn program offers a variety of courses and resources that are tailored to the needs of each athlete. The courses cover a wide range of topics, including overall well-being, public speaking, management, digital skills and leadership. These courses are designed to help athletes acquire practical skills that they can use in their daily lives, both on and off the field.</p> <p>In addition to the courses, the SO Learn program also offers athletes the opportunity to participate in experiential learning activities, such as workshops and clinics. These activities are designed to help athletes develop their sports-specific skills, learn from experienced coaches and athletes, and build social connections with other athletes.</p>
<b>Main constraints:</b>	Not publicly available.
<b>Achievements:</b>	Not publicly available.
<b>More information:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://solearn.ca/course/index.php?categoryid=72">https://solearn.ca/course/index.php?categoryid=72</a></li> </ul>



## Sports Diplomacy Programme

### Slovak Olympic and Sports Committee & Czech Olympic Committee

<b>Country:</b>	Slovakia & Czech
<b>Type of practice:</b>	Hybrid Course
<b>Target:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elite Athletes and Para-athletes</li> <li>• Active &amp; retired</li> <li>• All genders</li> <li>• Other: university students who pay for the course</li> </ul>
<b>Number of participants:</b>	20 participants each year combined from SOSK and COC
<b>Objective:</b>	The main objective of the programme is to strengthen the representation of the Czech and Slovak sport movement in international sport organisations and to succeed in promoting its interests in these structures. Equally important is its intention to train participants to be able to contribute positively to the development of their own organisations, and to become excellent and effective representatives of these organisations within international sport structures.
<b>Key topics/Modules:</b>	Finance and management, marketing, communication, international sport movement, negotiations, diplomatic protocol etc.
<b>Summary:</b>	<p>In 2016 Slovak Olympic and Sports Committee partnered with Czech Olympic Committee, Prague University of Economics and Business and other institutional partners to launch the very first professional education and training programme on Sport Diplomacy.</p> <p>The course includes blocks about communication and negotiation together with diplomatic protocol which all plays a role in how people communicate and how they are portrayed and viewed within the community and public.</p> <p>No material is available to public. The course is officially accredited with “Master of Public Administration”</p>
<b>Main constraints:</b>	The main constraint is the high demand on participants/students time.
<b>Achievements:</b>	Athletes and former athletes get a educated in many different aspects that are needed for work within the national/international sports community as an official/diplomat.
<b>More information:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://www.olympic.sk/clanok/sosv-v-spolupraci-s-ceskym-olympijskym-vyborom-spusta-vyber-kandidatov-do-iii-rocnika">https://www.olympic.sk/clanok/sosv-v-spolupraci-s-ceskym-olympijskym-vyborom-spusta-vyber-kandidatov-do-iii-rocnika</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://www.olympic.sk/clanok/sov-v-spolupraci-s-ceskym-olympijskym-vyborom-hlada-kandidatov-do-vzdelavacieho-programu">https://www.olympic.sk/clanok/sov-v-spolupraci-s-ceskym-olympijskym-vyborom-hlada-kandidatov-do-vzdelavacieho-programu</a></li> </ul>





## **Athlete365**

### International Olympic Committee

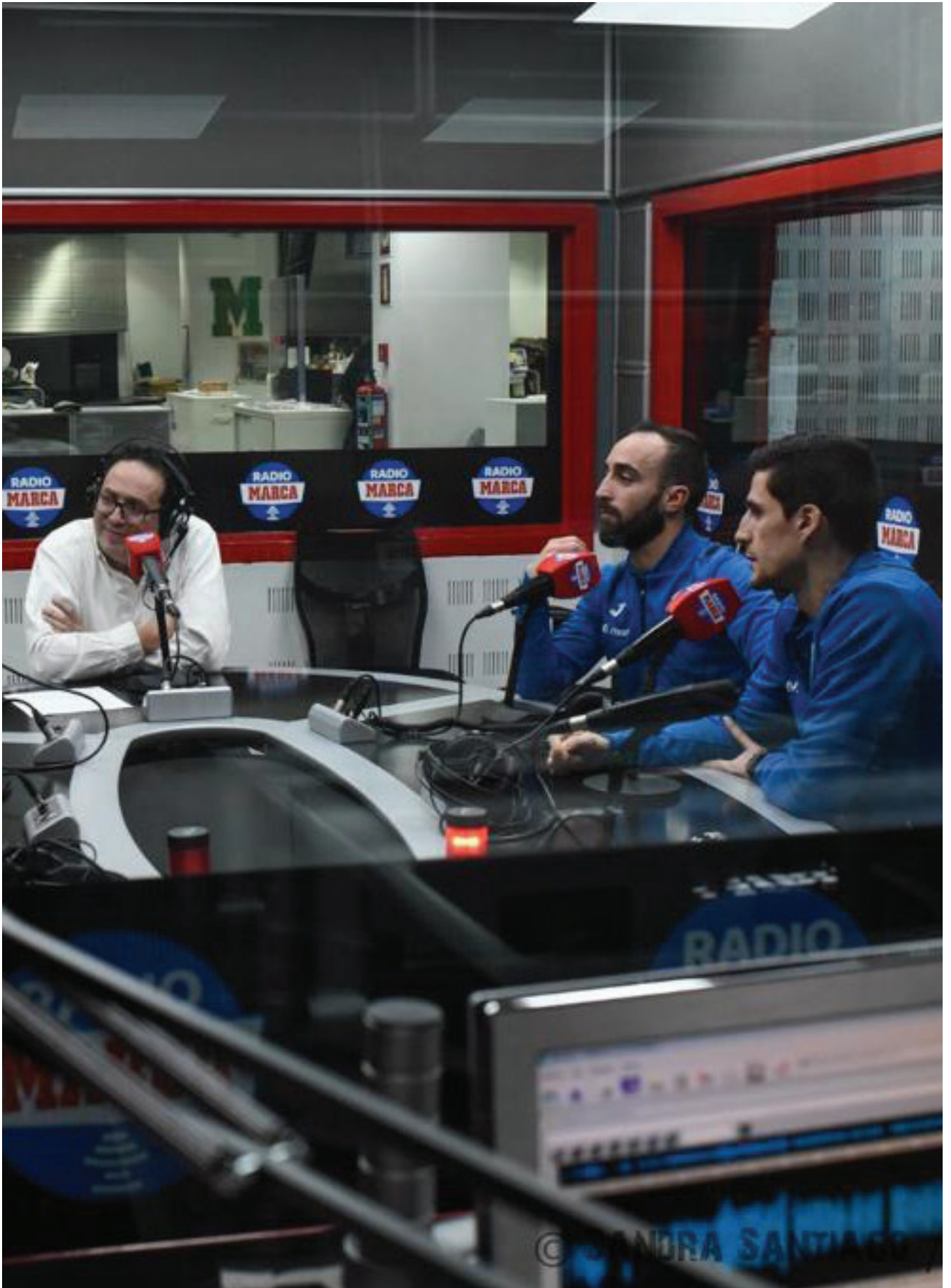
<b>Country:</b>	International
<b>Type of practice:</b>	Online platform
<b>Target:</b>	All kinds of athletes
<b>Number of participants:</b>	Not publicly available.
<b>Objective:</b>	Promoting empowerment, education and life skills, health and well-being, career transition, athlete representation and voice.
<b>Key topics/Modules:</b>	effective communication, teamwork, goal setting, and decision making, social media, personal branding
<b>Summary:</b>	Overall, the Athlete 365 program strives to support athletes throughout their sporting journey, from development to retirement, by focusing on their holistic well-being, personal growth, and successful transition into life beyond sports.
<b>Main constraints:</b>	Mainly in English and not available in other languages
<b>Achievements:</b>	Not publicly available.
<b>More information:</b>	<a href="https://olympics.com/athlete365/dual-career/">https://olympics.com/athlete365/dual-career/</a>

## Zavod Vitae+

### Olympic Committee of Slovenia

<b>Country:</b>	Slovenia
<b>Type of practice:</b>	Coaching sessions
<b>Target:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elite Athletes</li> <li>• Retired</li> <li>• All genders</li> </ul>
<b>Number of participants:</b>	Not publicly available
<b>Objective:</b>	Empower sportsmen and women to design and pursue new career paths and explore new opportunities using a coaching programme based on choice theory, assisted by experienced psychologists.
<b>Key topics/Modules:</b>	Goal setting, decision making, thinking outside the box, seeking balance, understanding one's needs and potential.
<b>Summary:</b>	The Vitae+ Institute is a project aimed at providing coaching and counselling services for athletes after their sporting careers. The institute collaborates with the Slovenian Olympic Committee-Athletes Association (OKS-ZŠZ) in the Career Centre for Athletes to support athletes in their personal development and transition to life after sports. Athletes spend around 10 hours over a 5-6 month period with a coach/expert from the institute. The institute works with selected athletes from a list provided by OKS-ZŠZ, providing them with guidance from relevant experts to help them explore employment opportunities and develop their professional careers post-retirement. The collaboration between OKS-ZŠZ and the Vitae+ Institute aims to assist up to 10 athletes annually in the first year.
<b>Main constraints:</b>	Not publicly available.
<b>Achievements:</b>	Not publicly available.
<b>More information:</b>	<a href="http://vitae.si/en/program-2/">http://vitae.si/en/program-2/</a>





## The Athlete Career Transition programme (ACT)

Curriculo Solutions – Approved by the Institute of Leadership & Management

<b>Country:</b>	United Kingdom
<b>Type of practice:</b>	Online platform
<b>Target:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elite Athletes</li> <li>• Active</li> </ul>
<b>Number of participants:</b>	Not publicly available.
<b>Objective:</b>	Building Career Pathways, Communicate Effectively, Identify Strengths & Potential of athletes
<b>Key topics/Modules:</b>	Teamwork, aligning personal ambition and employer needs, effective communication, building a personal brand, interviews, career planning.
<b>Summary:</b>	The course explores longer-term thinking around career management skills, builds understanding of the need to plan your career while considering exactly what employers look for in the context of skills for work, builds communication skills, help the participants to identify barriers to effective communication, supports the participants to develop their understanding of interview skills and techniques and helps the participants to create a career plan.
<b>Main constraints:</b>	Not publicly available.
<b>Achievements:</b>	Not publicly available.
<b>More information:</b>	<a href="https://www.curriculosolutions.com/athlete-career-transition">https://www.curriculosolutions.com/athlete-career-transition</a>

## Communication and working relationships in sport and fitness

The Open University; UK Coaching

<b>Country:</b>	United Kingdom
<b>Type of practice:</b>	Online course
<b>Target:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elite Athletes</li> <li>• All genders</li> <li>• Other: coaches</li> </ul>
<b>Number of participants:</b>	Not publicly available
<b>Objective:</b>	To recognise the importance of effective communication in the sector in benefitting sport and fitness participants' experiences, evaluate own communication skills, demonstrate an awareness of being able to build and sustain working relationships, use observational skills and new knowledge to interpret work interactions and relationships.
<b>Key topics/Modules:</b>	The purposes of communication, effective communication, connecting with others, identifying bullying, power and communication.
<b>Summary:</b>	Participants in this course have the opportunity to enhance their communication skills by adapting their approach to different situations and individuals. Through engaging video examples, participants can gain valuable insights by immersing themselves in others' perspectives. The course utilizes film clips to demonstrate both effective and ineffective communication, encompassing verbal and non-verbal behaviour. It features interactive quizzes and grants a badge after finalisation.
<b>Main constraints:</b>	Not publicly available.
<b>Achievements:</b>	The course allows the participants to assess its effectiveness, by letting them write a short review based on their experiences. Most of the reviews are very positive.
<b>More information:</b>	<a href="https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/communication-and-working-relationships-sport-and-fitness/content-section-overview?active-tab=description-tab">https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/communication-and-working-relationships-sport-and-fitness/content-section-overview?active-tab=description-tab</a>





## ELIT-IN Training and Educational Program

### ERASMUS+ Project “INTEGRATION OF ELITE ATHLETES INTO THE LABOR MARKET”

<b>Country:</b>	International
<b>Type of practice:</b>	Online course + thematic workshops
<b>Target:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elite Athletes</li> <li>• All genders</li> </ul>
<b>Number of participants:</b>	94
<b>Objective:</b>	Promoting changes in the attitudes and behaviours of the elite athletes who participate, with respect to their possible soft skills learning and their transference to the labour market in parallel or after their sportive career finished.
<b>Key topics/Modules:</b>	Communication, entrepreneurship, problem-solving, work ethics, negotiation, teamwork, time management
<b>Summary:</b>	The Elite-in training program is a three-month online program designed for elite athletes, aimed at helping them identify and optimize their transferable skills acquired through sports, master social skills for practical application, and facilitate their transition into the labour market. It provides online tools and resources, catering to the athletes' schedules and needs.
<b>Main constraints:</b>	the adherence rate, while good, was not excellent. The course took place during the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and the final workshops were impossible to conduct face-to-face, missing on valuable feedback from the participants.
<b>Achievements:</b>	Satisfaction rates among athletes regarding the courses have been consistently high, demonstrating their positive experience and engagement with the material provided
<b>More information:</b>	<a href="https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/project-result-content/43c0ef96-fbe4-458c-afee-e5ab358ea784/ELIT-in%20Final%20Report%20Training%20Program%20IO4.pdf">https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/project-result-content/43c0ef96-fbe4-458c-afee-e5ab358ea784/ELIT-in%20Final%20Report%20Training%20Program%20IO4.pdf</a>







# FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

This document has identified a total of 23 best practices on communication education and training. These practices suppose opportunities to enhance athlete's soft skills on communication and contribute to the development of Dual Career paths.

Good communication is closely related with the improvement of other soft skills, such as teamwork and leadership, that can be very valuable for athletes on both their sporting careers and their career out of sport. Good communication skills help athletes feel more empowered to tell their stories, become role models, and advocate for social causes in and outside of sport. Personal branding and communication often go hand in hand, given that being a good communicator allows athletes to be able to present themselves in a positive light, propose and manage sponsorship deals, and land jobs and promotions.

Thus, communication training is present in the educational programmes offered by several National Olympic Committees, sport organisations and associations, nonetheless, programmes on communication for athletes are a fairly new phenomenon with a lot of potential to be explored.

From the best practice review, the consortium has identified the main topics addressed and methodologies used in existing educational programmes on communication. This information is key to understand what are the most important issues that athletes face regarding communication, the specific skills that need to be trained, and the formats that have been most successful in providing a positive and effective educational experience for athletes, bearing in mind the physical and time constraints that they can face due to their demanding schedules.

Topics such as correct preparation and delivery of public speech, effective communication, personal branding, active listening, management of interpersonal relationships, preparing or presenting an offer should be addressed in a communication course targeting athletes, given that they have a direct impact on the development of useful skills in and out of sports, boosting the capacity of athletes to communicate assertively with their team, to lead, and to present themselves to the public and employers.

Allowing for flexibility has been identified as a key factor for the success of a programme due to this

main constraint. Online courses provide geographical flexible, and asynchronous learning can help athletes with different schedules carry on with the course and improve adherence rates. Nonetheless, it would be preferable to maintain the factor of human contact to enhance learning. Facilitating access to a large number of athletes is also a positive path to undertake, given the scarcity of communication programmes and the limitations in term of number of learners accepted in the different courses and programmes.

The results of this research, and the information collected on the best practices regarding communication programmes provide key insights for the shaping of the Athletes Speakers course regarding what issues to address and why, and the pros and cons of different formats as well as potential constraints that should be worked on to enhance the course's success.

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