



**Name:** *SERGEY BUBKA*

**Designation:** *SPEAKER (NOC REPRESENTATIVE)*

**Original language:** *ENGLISH*

**Theme:** *THE ATHLETES/THE SOCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE OF ATHLETES DURING AND AFTER ELITE COMPETITION*

**Session:** *BREAKOUT SESSION – 3 OCTOBER 2009*

---

Dear Friends,

I'm staying here as world record holder, Olympic champion and world champion and lucky enough to have many activities after I ended my career. Maybe too much as I recently recognised. But there are not many who are so lucky as me. Athletes need help that is for sure. We should consider programmes which will help them not only after their career but also during their high time. We have very good practise and experience with "Adecco" creating different programs. I think it would be useful to organize more close co-operation in each country with the worldwide known Adecco Group, the leading provider of HR solutions, that helps many athletes to get qualified help in transition from elite sport and employment after they finish their active sports career.

We know, many athletes are not seeing one or two steps ahead into the future. They are simply trying to be best possible in their sport. And that is logical. We must show the way how to integrate the needs for social integration and education into the sporting life. The folk wisdom says "Live and learn". We have to enforce the athletes to continue their study after finishing their active performance in sport; the most active can be awarded. For example they can be given the opportunity to visit IOC headquarters in Lausanne or headquarters of International Sport Federations.

We must early, for example so early as the Youth Olympic Games to start with some activities in this sense. It can be a number of seminars during the Games in Singapore (taking into consideration the age of the participants), where they can not only think about their future but also to reveal themselves.

Of course there must be individual approaches, not everything suits to everybody. Also cultural differences must be taken into account. We need to create programmes to train athletes appropriate to every age. Athletes need to feel the social stability and continuity. For that we need to urge on national level specific support for the athletes. Strategic planning for future of each individual athlete is a necessity. The question is how the Olympic movement can assist in this? From our side we may start active propaganda campaign (distribution of leaflets, booklets, placement of banners at various international competitions, at the IOC website, websites of the National Olympic Committees, visibility, creation of special reels etc.). Every athlete should have necessary information: contact phone numbers, places they can address to get complete information concerning possible employment or the opportunity to take courses on re-training or getting a new profession.

#### NOT EVERYBODY CAN HANDLE THE PRESSURE

Not everybody can handle the pressure of combining training and education or studies. We need to send experts to talk with our athletes, to explain to them and try to get answers from them. To ask questions which might be helpful for their lives. Questions maybe the athletes do not know they should ask for their future, or they fear to ask them or they simply do not think it is important to ask them. Athletes need to work systematically on their education, we know it is possible to combine solid studies with sporting career. We are responsible to do something for our athletes. Sport must give back to athletes what they gave to us in terms of their fantastic results. And more, we need to give to the public examples of how sportsmen can integrate into the normal life, how they can be successful also in their after-career period of life. We may consider the possibility to create under the higher educational institution special educational groups for athletes who finished their sports career in order to get a new profession and skills improvement or even employment of the athletes in big companies (for example, IOC and NOC sponsors in different countries).

My feeling is that also in terms of clean sport the high education and approach is highly appreciated. I think athletes who have a certain degree of education will not be so easy to be touched with cheating or other not sportsmanship behaviour. Cheats must be punished; young athletes must have healthy dreams. We need to have examples of successful athletes and also good people who know what to do in their life outside of stadium. We know that current sport takes big time from each individual athlete and so leaves not too much time for other activities in this terms. But the race is not ending, new race starts when they finish their careers. Of course we want help there, but it is better to start during the career. In this aspect we may help

by the possible allocation grants of the International Olympic Committee for continuation or completion of athletes study.

#### SOCIETY MUST HELP THE ATHLETES AT LATER STAGE

Another issue is when the athlete has some difficulties (for example in health questions) to integrate, there the whole society needs to be helpful. Athletes are winning medals and titles for their countries and the countries should protect them. They invested their all powers and health to promote the country. After all there is the time athletes will get protected for example with monthly rent etc. Athletes should also be helped by all the stakeholders in sport – international and national sports organisations, government bodies, and public and private companies. It is clear that, successful job integration starts with education. In today's world, where education is the key to success, athletes should be able to develop their athletic skills and, at the same time, develop their social and professional skills. Typical weekday for a student athlete. Trying to balance being a full-time student, a elite athlete, and to try and maintain a social life. The problem that some student athletes face especially in their first year is that they cannot figure out which aspects of being a student athlete are the most important. Like any other student, we have to have our priorities set straight, and have our own individual goals.

#### PEOPLE AROUND THE ATHLETES

The classical relation of official-coach-athlete-doctor is currently being added by new phenomenon and that is the agent. In recent years more and more sports have agents working on behalf of athletes. Preparing their competition schedules, using their marketing possibilities and advising in financial and legal issues. I also used an agent in my career. When working in positive way and mainly in favour of the athlete an agent could bring many good values. He can fill the space for which athlete or coach simply do not have time or knowledge. I would strongly recommend that each sport is giving a kind of licence to agents. We saw in the past many examples of agents not working in favour of athlete but the own. And we also can use the role of the agent to be helpful in social questions. Kind of example for the athletes concerning professional skills and right behaviour could it be too.

#### EDUCATION IS NOT AN OBSTACLE

We must persuade the athletes, coaches and officials that education is not an obstacle in their sporting careers. Life of society and sports are going very much together. Sport is helping to improve the characters of those who are participating but also those who are watching. Friendship, solidarity, fair play, excellence

all this must be promoted by our athletes to encourage positively the public. In all complexity during and after the sporting career. I must urge our athletes commission, continental and national ones to deal with this issues. We have many very good examples, why not to use former athletes who succeeded in professional life as examples in discussions and talking rounds. Partners of Olympic movement have also enough experience in training of their own employees; much of this could be shared with us. We should involve as much as we can the athletes who have finished their active sports career to the IOC and NOC programs. We have a good example of such activities in Ukraine where the NOC of Ukraine makes a lot of efforts that Olympic athletes take part in the Olympic Day, Olympic Lessons, Olympic Week, activity of the Ukrainian Academy of Sport, annual ceremony “Heroes of Sports Year” etc.