

School of Human Kinetics
Faculty of Health Sciences University of Ottawa
EXECUTIVE MASTERS IN SPORTS ORGANISATION MANAGEMENT



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TEAM CANADA AT WORK:
DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK FOR GAME PLAN'S WORK
EXPERIENCE PROGRAM

SHANNON GALEA

Tutored by:
Miriea Lizandra, University of Pennsylvania
Benoit Seguin, HEC



ABSTRACT

This study investigates dual career opportunities for Canada's national team athletes within Olympic and Paralympic performance streams. "Game Plan," is a collaborative initiative by the Canadian Olympic Committee (COC), Canadian Paralympic Committee (CPC), Sport Canada, and the Canadian Olympic and Paralympic Sport Institute Network (COPSIN), which aims to provide comprehensive resources for these athletes.

Game Plan is Canada's total athlete wellness program that strives to develop holistic, well-rounded individuals to excel in and out of sport through a fully integrated program where long-term personal, educational, and professional achievement does not come at the expense of athlete wellbeing. Game Plan supports athletes on and off the field of play, equips them to stay in the sport longer, perform better, and retire healthier, knowing they have the tools to prepare and be positive members of their communities at all stages of their careers.

The literature review highlights the ongoing challenges athletes face during career transitions, including issues related to identity, gaining work experience, and supportive career programs. This is a solution to the gaps identified in the literature.

This research aimed to provide an understanding of the employability skills that athletes can bring to organizations within various industries while exploring how organizations can perceive athletes as a unique asset in their talent acquisition and recruitment practices.

The study employs a mixed-methods approach, including focus groups, online surveys, and semi-structured interviews with athletes and COC/CPC marketing partners, to gather comprehensive stakeholder insights. This approach integrates qualitative and quantitative data to refine Game Plan's framework for athlete career development, ensuring it meets athletes' needs and partners' expectations. The research explores the readiness of athletes and organizations, aiming to develop a framework for work experience programs. This framework will guide companies in creating targeted pathways for talent acquisition and enhance engagement with Team Canada's partners, evolving support throughout athletes' careers.

Diverse perspectives on the readiness, the needs and gaps of program implementation were shared, which informed Game Plan with a detailed action plan and recommendations. Both organizations and athletes are eager to explore the expansion of Game Plan's Employer Network through formalized work experience programming, building on existing models. The research outlines the level of support required and the detailed roadmap to consider as implementation and capacity building will be required, contingent on demand and interest.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette étude porte sur les possibilités de double carrière pour les athlètes de l'équipe nationale du Canada au sein des filières de performance olympique et paralympique. « Plan de match », une initiative conjointe du Comité olympique canadien (COC), du Comité paralympique canadien (CPC), de Sport Canada et du Réseau des instituts canadiens du sport olympique et paralympique (RICSO), vise à fournir des ressources complètes à ces athlètes.

Plan de match est le programme canadien de mieux-être total de l'athlète qui vise à développer des personnes complètes et bien équilibrées pour exceller dans le sport et en dehors du sport grâce à un programme entièrement intégré où la réussite personnelle, éducative et professionnelle à long terme ne se fait pas au détriment du bien-être de l'athlète. Plan de match soutient les athlètes sur le terrain de jeu et en dehors, leur donne les moyens de rester plus longtemps dans le sport, d'être plus performants et de prendre leur retraite en meilleure santé, sachant qu'ils disposent des outils nécessaires pour se préparer et être des membres positifs de leur communauté à tous les stades de leur carrière.

La revue documentaire met en lumière les défis permanents auxquels les athlètes sont confrontés lors des transitions de carrière, notamment les questions liées à l'identité, à l'acquisition d'une expérience professionnelle et aux programmes de soutien à la carrière, ce qui constitue une solution aux lacunes identifiées dans les études publiées.

Cette recherche visait à faire comprendre les compétences d'employabilité que les athlètes peuvent apporter aux organisations de diverses industries, tout en explorant comment les organisations peuvent percevoir les athlètes comme un atout unique dans leurs pratiques d'acquisition et de recrutement de talents.

L'étude utilise une approche mixte, comprenant des groupes de discussion, des sondages en ligne et des entretiens semi-structurés avec des athlètes et des partenaires marketing du COC/CPC, afin de recueillir des informations complètes sur les parties prenantes. Cette approche intègre des données qualitatives et quantitatives afin d'affiner le cadre de Plan de match pour le développement de la carrière des athlètes, en veillant à ce qu'il réponde à la fois aux besoins des athlètes et aux attentes des partenaires. La recherche explore l'état de préparation des athlètes et des organisations, dans le but de développer un cadre pour les programmes d'expérience professionnelle. Ce cadre guidera les entreprises dans la création de parcours ciblés pour l'acquisition de talents et améliorera l'engagement avec les partenaires d'Équipe Canada, en faisant évoluer le soutien tout au long de la carrière des athlètes.

Diverses perspectives sur l'état de préparation, les besoins et les lacunes de la mise en œuvre des programmes ont été partagées, ce qui a permis d'élaborer un plan d'action et des recommandations détaillés. Les organismes et les athlètes sont impatients d'explorer l'expansion du réseau d'employeurs de Plan de match par le biais de programmes formels d'expérience de travail, en s'appuyant sur les modèles existants. La recherche décrit le niveau de soutien requis et la feuille de route détaillée à prendre en compte pour la mise en œuvre et le renforcement des capacités, en fonction de la demande et de l'intérêt.

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This research is dedicated to our Canadian Olympic and Paralympic athletes whose dedication and inspiration continue to shape the beautiful mosaic of sport in Canada. We are deeply grateful for your lasting impact which continues to elevate and enrich our nation's pursuit of excellence and rich legacy in sport. Thank you for the remarkable moments that will be cherished for a lifetime.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF TABLES	6
TABLE OF FIGURES	6
1. INTRODUCTION	7
1.1 Research Purpose.....	8
1.2 Research Questions	9
2. REVIEW OF EXISTING KNOWLEDGE	9
2.1 Major Empirical Findings On Dual Career Opportunities For Athletes	9
2.2 Key Concepts For Understanding Athlete Transition.....	10
2.3 Employability Programs	13
2.4 Game Plan's Existing Work Experience Programming	14
3. METHODS AND DATA COLLECTION.....	15
3.1 Methodology	15
3.2 Group A: Game Plan Eligible Athletes	15
3.3 Group B: Stakeholders – COC/CPC Marketing Partners	16
4. RESULTS.....	18
4.1 Group A – Game Plan Eligible Athletes	18
4.2 Athlete Perspectives On Game Plan's Work Experience Framework.....	22
4.3 Group B – Stakeholders: Coc/Cpc Marketing Partners.....	23
4.4 Limitations	29
5. DISCUSSION.....	30
5.1 Athlete And Stakeholder Perspectives: A Cross-Comparison	30
6. RECOMMENDATIONS	31
6.1 Current Challenges	31
6.2 Year 1-2: Foundation And Implementation:.....	32
6.3 Year 3-4: Expansion And Optimization	35
6.4 Year 5-6: Scaling And Integration.....	35
6.5 Year 7-8: Maturity And Continuous Improvement	36
6.6 Conclusion Of Recommendations	38
6.7 Additional Implications For Future Research	38
6.8 A Call To Action.....	38
6.9 Conclusion of Research	39
WORK CITED.....	40
APPENDIX	45
A: Game Plan Consultation Report (Bosshart, 2023)	45
B: Holistic Athletic Career Model (Wylleman Et Al., 2013)	45
C: Athletic Career and Retirement Context	45
D: Corporate Social Responsibility (Walker and Parent, 2010)	46

E: Athlete-Centric Modeling (Centre for Sport and Human Rights, 2024).	46
F IOC Athlete 365 Report (2023).	46
G: Game Plan Work Experience Program (W.E.P) Framework.	47
H: Athlete Survey Questions	47
I: Interviewees/ Participants of Study	48
J: Partner Outreach Guide.	48
K: Semi-Structure Interview Questions for Partners	48
L: Partnership Presentation: The Future of Work for Athletes	49
M: Top 30 Transferable Skills - Athlete Survey	49
N: Athlete Survey Comments.	49
O: Athlete Online Survey: Defining Flexible Work.	51
P: Sample Interview Transcript- P4.	51
Q: Thematic Analysis Steps.	51
R: Thematic Analysis – Coding Table (NVIVO Software).	52
S: Referenced Quotations (Partners)	53
T: Recommendations Approach – Short Term Action Plan.	58
U: Recommendations Roadmap	59
V: Team Canada at Work: Proposed Website Design.	60

TABLE OF TABLES

Table 1: Partnership Outreach Summary	17
Table 2: Partner Outreach – Questionnaire Responses Part 1 (Environmental Scan):	24
Table 3: Partner Outreach – Questionnaire Responses Part 2(Environmental Scan):	25

TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Defining an Athlete-Friendly Workplace	19
Figure 2: Defining Flexible Work.	19
Figure 3: Athlete Survey Results.	20

1. INTRODUCTION

The pursuit of excellence extends beyond the realm of high-performance sports, influencing the evolving landscape of talent acquisition in the workforce. Strategic partnerships between sports organizations and corporate entities can create transformative synergies, unlocking unprecedented opportunities. These collaborations position athletes as invaluable assets, offering unique skills and perspectives that enrich the sport and corporate environments.

Game Plan, Canada's total athlete wellness program, aims to support Olympic, Paralympic, and national team athletes on and off the field of play. The program was founded in response to the needs identified by athletes, coaches and sport system stakeholders in two key publications:

1. The 2010 Olympic Games Debrief Report, in which recommendations were put forward addressing the role of sport-life balance and post-sport career planning to optimize sport performance; and
2. The 2011 Business Report examined the status of athlete career transition support in Canada relative to other world-leading programs. Drawing from these findings, international best practices, extensive input from current and retired athletes, and identified gaps in the current service delivery, a series of recommendations were put forward to implement a world-class program addressing the unique transition needs of Canadian athletes (Game Plan, 2024).

The Canadian Olympic and Paralympic Sport Institutes Network (COPSIN) is also known as the various Canadian Sport Institutes and Centres located in major cities across Canada. Game Plan Advisors are situated within these institutes and centres as their role is to deliver Game Plan by working directly with athletes. Game Plan's primary programming pillars provide athletes support in Mental Health, Skill Development, Education, Community, Career, and Transition Resources. Career is often the most requested pillar for support by athletes.

The Career pillar of the Game Plan is designed to help athletes transition successfully into life after sports and provide an opportunity to explore careers of their interest. Currently, Game Plan's Employer Network, Career Days and Game Plan Day in Canada (a nationwide event in support of corporate partner Deloitte) offers robust support through expert coaching on essential skills such as resume writing, job shadowing and interview preparation. However, there is a need to restructure this pillar's offering to enhance its value for corporate partners by developing clear talent acquisition pathways and establishing programs that either mirror successful work experience models or gain support for their implementation.

Game Plan's Employer Network was initially designed as a job board of opportunities that ranged from volunteer, internships, part-time/full-time to flexible work and project-based work. The Employer Network facilitated connections between athletes and businesses and formally structuring a work experience program with companies was not required. Ultimately, companies recognized that providing flexible work options benefitted their access to top talent that would infuse their workforce.

Consequently, the motivation behind this research project stems from the continuation of a consultation report provided by Game Plan Advisor, Dominique Bosshart, OLY, who recently completed a case study for her master's in business administration project, which informed stakeholders with recommendations on additional research areas and recommendations for consideration. The consultation report provides foundational data to inform the Canadian Olympic Committee (COC) and Canadian Paralympic Committee (CPC) about athletes' career needs and employers' interests in engaging with Game Plan's talent acquisition pathways. This initial review was integral to deepening relationships with partners and refining the value proposition for corporate sponsorships.

From a global sport context, the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) initiative, Athlete 365 also supports athletes, on and off the field of play. As a National Olympic Committee and National Paralympic Committee, Team Canada and the Canadian Paralympic Committee, respectfully contribute to promoting the IOC's Athlete365 programs and services through Game Plan. Both programs offer domestic and international outreach of support services and initiatives that focus on athlete well-being, performance, financial literacy and career transition. Since the inception of Athlete 365 Career+, the IOC has aimed to support more than 56,000 athletes worldwide to help prepare for a career transition after sport. Whether a young athlete is considering a dual career or one nearing retirement, Athlete 365 is a global athlete wellness program that feeds into the global sport context by collaborating with National Olympic Committee's (NOCs) and National Paralympic Committee's (NPCs) through programs and resources (IOC, 2024).

In the global sports context, the International Olympic Committee's Athlete 365 initiative supports athletes on and off the field. Team Canada, as a National Olympic Committee as well as the Canadian Paralympic Committee, promotes the IOC's Athlete365 programs. Game Plan (domestic offering) and Athlete 365 (international offering), both focus on supporting athlete well-being, performance, finance, and career transition. Athlete 365 Career+ has aimed to help over 56,000 athletes worldwide prepare for life after sports. Whether a young athlete is considering a dual career, or nearing retirement, Athlete 365 collaborates with National Olympic and Paralympic Committees to offer comprehensive support and resources.

1.1 RESEARCH PURPOSE

The purpose of this research is to understand and redefine the needs of career opportunities and talent acquisition pathways available to Canadian athletes through:

Developing a framework through partnership support within athlete career opportunities – Game Plan's Work Experience Program.

This research aims to develop a framework for enhancing career support opportunities accessible to athletes through Game Plan's Employer Network (EN) and partnerships with the Canadian Olympic Committee (COC) and the Canadian Paralympic Committee (CPC). Implementing a structured approach, modeled after the RBC Olympians and Deloitte's Work Experience Programs (W.E.P), the framework will help assess partners' interest and create new employment pathways that support athletes' career journeys.

The purpose of the Employer Network and Work Experience Programming (W.E.P.) is:

- Connecting athletes with employers who value and support the skills that athletes bring to the workforce.
- Giving athletes who are ready to move into their next career post-sport the ability to attain employability skills. Supporting them with opportunities to enter the workforce.
- Finding flexible opportunities that support athletes who are still actively training and competing and helping them manage demands for their training and competition schedule
- Ensuring that whichever framework/model is considered by the employer that the appropriate capacity, training, mentorship, and sustainable programming is intact.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The below will be explored throughout this research project in order to understand the value-proposition for both stakeholders and athletes:

1. How can Game Plan better involve partners in the athlete's journey?
2. What are the necessary steps to take when developing a framework for partners to consider as part of their obligations (What is the value-add towards the agreement process?)
3. How can athletes support corporate partners' needs, and what areas of the business will be the best fit for their skill set?
4. How can Game Plan continue to evolve career opportunities and pathways for athletes via resources, tools, and platforms that are sustainable in program development and modernization?
5. What are ways to consider the monitoring and evaluating the various employment frameworks implemented with sport partners?

Answering these questions can provide Game Plan with critical insights and actionable outcomes to enhance partnerships, optimize athlete interactions and transition, and improve program development. Therefore, it can act as a value-proposition for stakeholders.

2. REVIEW OF EXISTING KNOWLEDGE

2.1 MAJOR EMPIRICAL FINDINGS ON DUAL CAREER OPPORTUNITIES FOR ATHLETES

Though the focus of this project is athlete career development, it was important to provide a broader understanding of the current landscape of career development through government agencies, institutions and additional projects led by Game Plan in this space.

Research on athlete career development primarily focuses on athletes considering a dual-career approach and their transition experiences. There are several reasons for focusing on this research, including the understanding that better support for athletes pursuing dual careers can reduce the challenges they face later in life and provide balance in their athlete journey, potentially keeping them in sport longer, healthier and happier (Game Plan, 2024; Brassard, 2023). Currently, there is limited research on athletes' experiences and employability prospects after retirement. Most existing studies concentrate on the transition out of sport rather than on their access to employment. Insights from organizations outside the Olympic and Paralympic Movements, such as companies and businesses, are crucial for gaining a comprehensive understanding of athletes' post-sport employment opportunities

This paper aims to inform Game Plan's partners and stakeholders about the importance of work experience programming for athletes. It emphasizes how early intervention and transferable skills from sports can facilitate a successful transition and harness employability skills (Rahneva, 2021). This mutually beneficial venture will enhance the athlete journey, extend sport longevity, and transform partner workforces through targeted talent acquisition pathways.

Providing a deeper understanding of the athlete's journey through sport in Canada and developing a framework supporting dual career opportunities for athletes will be important for context when understanding the landscape of sport and corporate partners (Stambulova & Ryba, 2013; Pearson & Petitpas, 1990). Game Plan (2016), an athlete wellness initiative, supports Olympic/Paralympic-level athletes who are Sport Canada carded national team members. Similar athlete-centric programs have been implemented in the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia (North & Lavalley, 2004; Lavalley et al., 1997), highlighting the importance of career transition support for elite athletes.

Game Plan Consultation Report: Employer Network Review

Dominique Bosshart's consultation report (Bosshart, 2023) offers foundational data on athletes' career needs and employers' interests in engaging with Game Plan's talent acquisition pathways. This review is crucial for strengthening relationships with partners and refining the value proposition for corporate sponsorships. The report also contributed to the development of the Work Experience Program framework, which is detailed in the methodologies section of this research (**Appendix A**). Understanding athletes' employability needs provided a basis for developing work experience models, helping partners better comprehend the challenges athletes face in acquiring workplace skills due to demanding training schedules.

2.2 KEY CONCEPTS FOR UNDERSTANDING ATHLETE TRANSITION

Dual Career

Research on the "dual career" of athletes is increasingly detailed. While the term is prevalent in European literature, the phrase "student-athlete" is more common in North America, though "dual career" is now internationally recognized (Gledhill & Harwood, 2015). A student-athlete pursues both education and sports, whereas a dual career often refers to athletes balancing sports with another career, sometimes juggling multiple roles.

The rise in empirical research on dual career athletes, alongside the introduction of The EU Guidelines on Dual Careers of Athletes (2012), has heightened organizational interest. These guidelines encourage institutions to support athletes in managing both athletic and career pursuits. Many elite athletes juggle their sports with education, work, or family responsibilities, highlighting the need for support systems that help them transition from sports to the workplace.

To establish an understanding of the theoretical framework of holistic athlete development and athlete transition models (**Appendix B and C**), it was essential to gather information on conceptual models for the meaning of transition, cross-cultural perspectives, and the stages athletes experience when retiring (Stambulova & Ryba, 2013; Taylor et al., 2006; Schlossberg, 1981; Coakley, 1983). These models informed the extraction of themes from the data and contributed to the proposed framework used to create work experience programming for athletes.

Pummel et al. (2008) emphasized the importance of "educating the athlete as a whole" and the significant role of parents, peers, and coaches in motivating athletes through transitions via social support. Case studies provided insights into coping strategies, development stages, and cultural variations in transition processes (Alfermann et al., 2004). Dominique Bosshart's consultation report further segmented athletes to understand their needs, enhancing program effectiveness (Bosshart, 2023).

Additionally, studying non-athletic transitions for sports career termination provides insights into future adaptations necessary for other life events, such as education, academic pursuits, and non-sport-related retirement (Alfermann et al., 1999, 2004). Effective pre-retirement planning significantly influences the quality of adaptation to life after sport (Coakley, 1983; Pearson & Petitpas, 1990; Schlossberg, 1981). This planning can include educational and occupational opportunities and activities outside of sport.

Coakley (1983) and Harrison and Lawrence (2004) suggest that early decision-making in vocational years can guide post-sport careers. This aligns with findings from Athlete 365 and LHH reports and research on athlete perceptions of career termination from collegiate (Brown & Glastetter, 2000) and professional athletic careers.

The COC's mission to transform Canada through sport involves over 30 marketing partners, contributing approximately 70% of total quadrennial revenues. Partner campaigns have raised funds for the Canadian Olympic Foundation, supporting training, coaching, nutrition, travel, and equipment (COC, 2024). Similar to the COC, the CPC involves over 18 marketing partners, which aims to focus its efforts on transforming the power and impact of Paralympic sport through inclusive sport communities.

Career Transition

Understanding athletes' career transitions is crucial for developing comprehensive support programs. Transitions, defined as events that change one's self-perception and relationships (Schlossberg, 1981), are significant during and after sports careers. Identity plays a key role in career transitions, with athletes often evolving multiple identities (Aquilina, 2013; Stambulova et al., 2014; Sturm et al., 2011; Watt & Moore, 2001). Athletes heavily identifying with their sports role may face challenges during transitions, particularly when leaving sports, known as a foreclosed identity (Murphy et al., 1996).

Institutions should understand athletes' daily lives and provide life-skills programs to support their transitions (Jolly, 2008; Lupo et al., 2015). Despite increased resources to counter foreclosed identities, athletes still face significant transition challenges affecting their well-being (Coakley, 2006; Grove & Lavallee, 1997; Lavallee & Robinson, 2007). More research is needed on how employment during and after sports impacts these transitions.

Athlete-centered model

In "Conceptualizing Excellence: Past, Present, and Future," Patricia S. Miller and Gretchen A. Kerr examine the evolving concept of excellence in sports. They argue that excellence has traditionally been associated with performance outcomes, but there is a growing recognition of the importance of holistic development, which includes personal growth and well-being. The authors propose a framework where performance excellence coexists with personal excellence, suggesting that sport can serve as a medium for developing lifelong skills and overall well-being. They emphasize the need for developmentally appropriate practices in sports that support athletes' long-term success both on and off the field. The article calls for a balanced approach to athlete development that integrates both performance and personal growth objectives.

"The philosophy that developmentally appropriate sport can be used as a vehicle for enhancing overall well-being and the acquisition of lifelong skills. Performance excellence, therefore, co-exists in the same environment as personal excellence." (Miller and Kerr, 2010, page 141).

Work-Integrated Learning

In tertiary education systems, co-operative education models developed by Co-operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning Canada (CEWIL Canada), which is the primary organization in Canada focused on work-integrated learning (WIL) (CEWIL, 2021). This approach integrates academic learning with practical workplace experiences, forming partnerships between educational institutions, employers, and students. Since 1973, CEWIL has collaborated with the tertiary education sector nationwide to develop high-quality WIL programs. This is achieved by setting national standards, advocating for the value of WIL, and facilitating the exchange of best practices among industry professionals. These efforts support the creation of work experience programs that enhance employability and lifelong learning, which is reflective of the framework developed for Game Plan's Work Experience Program (WEP), which provides both athletes and partners with various models to explore (Appendix E). For athletes, the five WEP models for Game Plan give athletes who are actively competing, retired from sport or transitioning from sport, the best fit to where they are in the athlete journey (Appendix B).

Adopting CEWIL's WIL models provides a foundational understanding for all partners willing to be involved, ensuring alignment in the goals and processes of program implementation. For employers, the company structure, demand and programming needs will determine which model will be a best fit for their organization and talent acquisition processes. This shared framework allows Game Plan to effectively collaborate with industry experts, leveraging existing co-operative education programs that are designed to support student development in a similar manner for athletes. This approach was crucial throughout the research process, guiding the design and execution of work experience programming tailored to the needs of employers and athletes alike. It will be important to continue integrated work in this space with key stakeholders seen as pillars to such programming, such as education, government, industries and community.

Value-Proposition and Corporate Partners

In "*Toward an Integrated Framework of Corporate Social Responsibility, Responsiveness, and Citizenship in Sport*," Walker and Parent (2010) discuss the evolving role of corporate partners in sports, emphasizing their impact on athlete career development (**Appendix D**). The authors propose an integrated framework highlighting how corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives can strategically align with athlete support programs. This alignment not only benefits the athletes by providing essential resources and opportunities for career transition but also enhances the corporate partners' brand image and social impact. The article suggests that corporate partners of the COC and CPC can play a crucial role by actively participating in and contributing to the athlete journey. By embedding CSR efforts more deeply into athlete support systems, partners can ensure a more comprehensive and sustained impact on athletes' personal and professional development, ultimately fostering a more robust and supportive environment for their growth and success. In the context of sport, CSR can be coined as *Corporate Sport Citizens* where sponsors involved in the Olympic and Paralympic Movements recognize and embrace the responsibility of directly supporting the athlete's journey.

The Centre of Human Rights and Sport displays a unique model to sport, which shows how corporate sponsors and stakeholders can have an impact within this ecosystem (**Appendix E**). The sport ecosystem model from the Sport and Rights Alliance illustrates the interconnected roles of various stakeholders in sports, including athletes, families, coaches, fans, volunteers, officials, and corporate partners. By integrating corporate partners into this model, these entities can engage directly with athletes and their support networks, providing resources and support that enhance athlete development and well-being. This close involvement allows corporate partners to contribute meaningfully to athletes' career transitions and personal growth, fostering a holistic support system that benefits both the athletes and the corporate partners through shared values and objectives.

Athlete Employability and Transferable Skills

Research emphasizes the importance of athletes actively enhancing their employability during their sports careers. However, there is a lack of studies focusing on athlete employment specifically (Smith, 2023; Smismans et al., 2021). According to Ling and Hong (2014), athletes who have prospects for a career after their athletic pursuits experience less anxiety about their future, allowing them to maintain focus on their athletic performance. Sophie Brassard's findings (2023) also support this idea, suggesting that athletes who pursue education while competing benefit in a similar way. Athletes who engage in activities beyond sports can develop alternative identities, potentially enhancing their overall athletic focus, which aligns with the findings on dual careers (Grove & Lavalee, 1977; Stambulva et al., 2014).

While athletes are generally cultivating valuable life skills such as leadership, communication, and determination through their sports careers (Miller & Kerr, 2002; Paule & Gilson, 2010; Zaharia, 2022), there is limited evidence to suggest that these skills are easily transferable to a resume (Dwyer & Gellcock, 2018). The initial stages of the hiring process often rely heavily on resume evaluations to determine candidate suitability,

making it imperative for athletes with limited professional experience to effectively convey their athletic skills as job qualification (Smith, 2023; Smismans et al., 2021).

Krane and Williams (2015) explain the psychological profile of successful elite athletes and the mental skills associated with peak performance such as resilience and strategic thinking. These skillsets highlight how athletic training fosters leadership traits for high-performance characteristics which are transferable and valuable for leading organizations. In Canada, leading sport psychologists developed a framework for integrating mental performance competencies with podium performances to help guide sport leaders and practitioners in their programming and resource allocation to support athletes in their quest for excellence (Durand-Bush et al., 2022). Future research could explore how these competencies might be applied to enhance athletes' employability in the workplace.

Employers often prioritize specific qualifications or work experience when hiring, which can overshadow the unique skills elite athletes bring from their careers in sport. Beyond helping athletes articulate their skills on resumes during interviews, there is a need for a broader cultural shift in recruitment practices. Organizations should be encouraged to recognize and value the distinctive talents that elite athletes offer (Smith, 2023). This shift is essential to helping athletes with limited work experience secure employment. Institutions dedicated to supporting athletes should focus on initiatives that help athletes identify their competencies to optimize employability.

2.3 EMPLOYABILITY PROGRAMS

IOC's Athlete Career Programming – Athlete 365 Career+

The IOC provided a report on Athlete Employer Research conducted by Nielsen and LHH, which shares an overview of how companies are increasingly competing across sectors for a diminishing pool of qualified candidates. Athletes represent a valuable addition to the workforce, offering unique skills that can enhance team dynamics (**Appendix F**). However, many companies lack a clear understanding of the potential value athletes bring and have yet to develop effective recruitment strategies for this group. This lack of awareness results in missed opportunities for both athletes and businesses. To address this gap and strengthen the connection between athletes and employers, LHH, the IOC, and Nielsen Sports conducted two global surveys targeting organizations and athletes. These surveys aimed to validate and expand upon previous qualitative research, providing insights that would support the development of a data-driven consulting approach tailored specifically to employers seeking to hire athletes.

Some key findings from the report show that more than 77 percent of organizations that employ athletes see athletes' positive impact on their corporate culture. There is a high demand for top talent when thinking about athletes and the transferable skills they can bring from the field of play. Secondly, the report identifies some challenges in hiring athletes where 42 percent of organizations do not know how to focus recruitment efforts, and 55 percent mention that they never considered athletes as a target group. Similar findings were found in Bosshart's 2023 report where companies saw more of the challenges to hiring athletes or knowing where to begin rather than exploring new ways to challenge current structures in place.

Currently, the IOC's Athlete 365 Career+ programming has expanded through the development of its Athlete Career Portal, which is tailored to the athletes' journeys. The newly engaged portal offers tailored advice, workshops, learning tools, career preparation and resources to help athletes plan their career path, regardless of if they are still competing or looking to retire from sport.

2.4 GAME PLAN'S EXISTING WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAMMING

Case Studies

For additional context surrounding Game Plan's existing programming in career development, it was important to look at program models for two of its successful programs. Currently, Royal Bank of Canada and Deloitte, two partners who support Game Plan, have contributed to career development programs that allow for target acquisition processes that highlight transferable skills of athletes.

Understanding the challenges and success of program implementation helped inform the research process taken when developing the framework presented to athletes and partners. This is discussed in the methodology section of this paper. However, it is important to mention the importance of these existing programs as they played a key role in adopting Work Experience Program (W.E.P.) models for the organizations targeted in this study as well as future recommendations towards building capacity for the partners interested in similar programming? Both programs enabled interested partners involved in this study to understand the benefits of hiring athletes, the impact this type of programming can have in workforce culture and the value-proposition that supports both partners and the athletes' journey for the longer-term.

RBC Olympians

The RBC Olympians Program, which began in 2002, is a national initiative that provides elite athletes with an opportunity to gain valuable career experience alongside a flexible work schedule, to allow the time necessary to train and compete on the world stage. Athletes who participate in the program gain skills and experiences which help them to achieve success both on and off the field of play.

RBC Olympians act as community ambassadors in cities and towns across Canada — to share past experiences and Olympic accomplishments with students, communities, clients and employees. These athlete ambassadors work to champion and raise awareness about the importance of sport in daily life, inspiring the next generation to be physically active, make healthy decisions and participate in sports, no matter the level. Since its inception, nearly 200 current and retired Olympic and Paralympic athletes have participated in the RBC Olympians program, and many have become full-time RBC employees.

Deloitte Work Experience

Deloitte is committed to providing Canadian athletes with work experience opportunities to develop their professional work experience. Athletes are given a 12–16-week paid internship which is available across select Deloitte service lines and offices across Canada. For the past 6 years, the program has refined its offerings and programming by diversifying recruitment timelines and offering mentorship and coaching opportunities upon hire for onboarding within each role. Placement within Deloitte is based on athlete preference but depends on the alignment of qualifications, experience, and skillset to the business need.

Together, both programs have shaped successful transition from sport and work experience opportunities as athletes acquire new skills that prepare them for the workforce. The impact of both programs showcased the incredible leaders of tomorrow and the opportunities that are mutually beneficial to both the athletes and partners.

3. METHODS AND DATA COLLECTION

3.1 METHODOLOGY

The research design employed in this study is a mixed-methods approach. This was chosen to gain a thorough understanding of athletes' needs and readiness for work experience programs and assess the interest and support of marketing partners for career development initiatives. The study utilized four distinct methods, targeting two key stakeholder groups:

Group A: Game Plan eligible athletes were engaged through two approaches:

- 1 focus group
- 1 online survey

Group B: Stakeholders – COC/CPC marketing partners participated through two methods:

- A short online questionnaire
- 6 semi-structured interviews

The sequence of data collection methods was deliberately planned to allow time for feedback and revisions to the proposed framework shared with athletes and partners. This approach ensured that all feedback was carefully integrated while considering the athlete's journey and the overall research process.

3.2 GROUP A: GAME PLAN ELIGIBLE ATHLETES

Step 1: Focus Group:

A 45-minute focus group session took place in April 2024 during the COC's Annual Board and Session with representation from the CPC included.

- Participants: 8 athletes
- Gender: 4 male, 4 female
- Sport Pathway: 6 Olympians, 2 Paralympians
- Status: 4 Actively Competing, 4 Retired

Purpose: To socialize the project's direction and propose Game Plan's Work Experience Program Framework (**Appendix G**) within different types of work experience models. This included the ability to provide feedback for each category within the model presented which was later presented to partners during their interview process.

Step 2: Online Survey for Athletes:

An online survey (**Appendix H**) was conducted for qualitative research purposes, targeting 3,000 athletes who are eligible for Game Plan (Game Plan, 2024). The survey, which was emailed directly to these athletes, consisted of 11 questions in multiple choice and short answer formats. The responses gathered from this survey were instrumental in shaping some of the discussion questions for the interview process with marketing partners and provided a summary of the data and insights.

The athlete survey was sent through Game Plan's MailChimp account to 3,000 athletes, with an average open rate of 52%. Game Plan typically engages 1,800 athletes monthly, and 3,000 in a quadrennial. The 140

completed surveys reflect strong engagement, as this 5% response rate exceeds the usual maximum of 100 responses to program offerings and newsletters over the past six years.

3.3 GROUP B: STAKEHOLDERS – COC/CPC MARKETING PARTNERS

Sept 1: Short Online Questionnaire:

A short online questionnaire was conducted as part of the qualitative research to gather insights from marketing partners. This questionnaire gave the researcher a preliminary understanding of each company before the interview offering perspective on the company's structure and readiness to explore employment opportunities for athletes. **Participants:** Sponsorship/ HR leads from 6 companies that are a partner to the COC and CPC (**Appendix I**).

Step 2: Semi-Structured Interviews:

Selection of participants for interview: Qualitative interviews were conducted with the presence of a COC/CPC marketing lead to validate partnership-related inquiries during the discussions. Each partner was asked to include a representative from their HR department to further provide insights into talent acquisition processes and organizational structure. Both COC and CPC were given a partnership outreach manual in advance of selecting participants, which also required additional permission for participation. Marketing/Partnership leads provided a research sample based on Paris 2024 timelines internal organizational priorities as well as ensuring that the sponsor was supported by both COC/CPC to reflect Game Plan's athlete eligibility and audience. In total, 6 sponsorship and HR leads (**Appendix I**). COC/CPC Marketing Leads were present for these interviews for oversight.

Recruitment: This study utilized purposive sampling, which selects individuals based on their specific knowledge of the phenomenon being studied (Streubert Speziale & Carpenter, 2007). Partners connected to the COC, CPC, and Game Plan were invited to participate due to their alignment with the study's focus on exploring athlete career opportunities and adopting a framework for athlete work experience programming.

Contact information for identified participants was gathered, and formal email invitations were sent. Interested partners confirmed their participation and online interviews were scheduled at their convenience. Prior to the interviews, participants completed a short online questionnaire to provide an overview of their organization, reducing discussion time for general company information. Participants were then screened to ensure they met the criteria outlined in the Partner Outreach Guide (**Appendix J**) and provided verbal consent. This process ensured mutual understanding and validity for the interviews.

Purposive sampling allowed the researcher to establish a framework, identify necessary information, and find individuals willing to participate based on their relevant knowledge or experience (Etikan et al., 2016).

Table 1: Partnership Outreach Summary

NATIONAL PARTNER	CATEGORY DESCRIPTIONS	ORGANIZATIONAL LEAD
Canadian Tire Corporation	House and Home Retailer; Sporting Goods Retailer; Paint Products; Tools and Home Repair Products; Seasonal Products; Home Products; Sports and Recreational Equipment	COC/CPC
Lululemon	Official Outfitter: Apparel, Apparel-Based Accessories, Bags & Footwear	COC/CPC
Suncor (Petro-Canada)	Oil and Gas	COC/CPC
Air Canada	Airline Services	COC/CPC
Empire Company (Sobeys)	Retail and Online Grocery Delivery Service	COC/CPC
Sport Canada	Department of Canadian Heritage – Federal Arm	COC/CPC

Interview: Qualitative inquiry in sport and exercise physiology research is a widely used data collection method. (Cote et al.,1993). This study used semi-structured interview questions (**Appendix K**) to obtain detailed and diverse information from current partners of both the COC, CPC and Game Plan and to understand further a closer personal experience towards career transition within athletes (Stambulova and Alfermann, 2009 and Lally, 2004). Six (6) interviews were conducted online and with the permission of the participants, the interviews were digitally recorded for further analysis and ranged from 30-60 minutes in length. The interview guide is provided in **Appendix K** along with the Partnership Outreach Guide for departmental leads to have context to the research objective which are shared in **Appendix J**. Questions were based upon findings from the literature review, Game Plan’s Consultation Report as well as Athlete 365 Career+ Report. This method also provided further insight and reflection to the athlete career transition models proposed by Gordon and Lavallee (2004) and Taylor et al., (2005) where themes were developed from the data collected. Each interview began with the verbal consent of the respondents as well as an opportunity for concerns or questions. To begin, participants were provided context to the subject surrounding our ecosystem to further understand our audience and objectives through a presentation titled, “*The Future of Work for Athletes*,” (**Appendix L**). Participants were asked general questions regarding general information about their role within the organization and the to shed some light on the background and their interest. It was also important to address that this discussion was exploratory and that no commitment was required for any program implementation.

Coding and Transcription: Thematic analysis was conducted using NVivo software for six (6) of the interviews conducted. Audio recordings were recorded on Microsoft Teams and transcribed verbatim. Key themes and patterns were identified related to the feedback regarding work experience program and how the presented framework could support targeted talent acquisition for athletes. Additional reporting software was used to validate these themes using Ailyze software as well as Otter AI to help with interview transcriptions and data summary of the interview recordings which were reviewed and analyzed in detail for accuracy. The use of OpenAI was also used to summarize key themes from the discussions.

Validation: Triangulation was implemented by comparing focus group and interview data to ensure consistency and reliability.

Content Analysis: Open-ended responses were analyzed thematically to identify common trends and suggestions.

Comparative Analysis: Differences in responses between different athlete groups (e.g., active vs. retired, male vs. female, summer vs winter) and partnership outreach.

Procedures: Utilizing current partners in Game Plan's ecosystem was imperative towards to balance partner categories that would interest athletes and their needs, the company size and the potential interest in work experience programming.

Ethical procedures

Ethical procedures are crucial before conducting research to ensure the safety of both participants and researchers. An introductory email and consent form were provided to all participants. This outlined the research purpose and why they were being asked to participate; this is an important step as it gives the participant a background into the research you will conduct (Denscombe, 1998).

Researchers must adhere to the Data Protection Act 1998 regarding data privacy related to living, identifiable participants (Denscombe, 1998). The participants were informed that their names will not be used within the research, but the company names will be listed only for context. However, none of the discussion or questionnaire responses will be identifiable and remain anonymous. There is a risk that although the individual may be anonymous, the link with the information given and their role within their company may eventually make them identifiable to persons with knowledge of both the Olympic and Paralympic Movements.

Conclusion

The mixed-methods approach enabled a comprehensive understanding of the athletes' needs and readiness for work experience programs and the sponsors' interest in supporting these initiatives. The iterative process of validation through focus groups, surveys, and interviews ensured that the proposed framework was well-grounded in the perspectives of both athletes and marketing/partners. This methodology provides a robust basis for developing effective work experience programs tailored to the needs of athletes and supported by sponsors.

4. RESULTS

After planning key methodology phases, the next phase consisted of collecting and analyzing the data. This research provides valuable insights into the dynamics of athlete work experience programs, particularly within the context of Game Plan's initiative. This discussion integrates the data collected from athletes and stakeholders to evaluate the interest of the proposed Work Experience Framework (**Appendix G**) and to explore broader implications for athlete career transitions.

4.1 GROUP A – GAME PLAN ELIGIBLE ATHLETES

Focus Group

Game Plan's Work Experience framework was presented to the focus group for feedback and to help refine the framework, which was also given to Group B: Stakeholders – COC/CPC marketing partners. The results of this discussion were a preliminary step towards a wider survey distribution for athletes and meetings with key stakeholders. Athletes shared personal experiences regarding work commitments, training demands, and aspirations, highlighting the need for flexible work structures. Based on this input, the proposed framework was adjusted to accommodate realistic work hours and target different athlete groups effectively. Athletes from various sports identified peak competition and training periods, helping to explore potential recruitment cycles for partners.

Looking at **Figures 1 and 2** below, two additional discussion questions aimed to understand, from an athlete's perspective, what flexible work looks like while actively competing, transitioning from sport, retired or requiring accommodation/support from a D.E.I. perspective that focuses on people with disabilities.

Figure 1: Defining an Athlete-Friendly Workplace

What does an athlete-friendly workplace look like to you?

6 of 8 responded • 10 responses

Flexibility Patience Mentorship/coaching

A workplace that values the athlete experience, and helps athlete learn to use the skills they have learned through sport. Mentorship with an experienced member of the workplace.

Good onboarding, welcoming, good leadership/boss, knowing athlete mentality, we are hard workers, giving us goals works. Working with boundaries for co workers and athlete for hours for communication

opportunities to leverage soft skills/experience developed as athletes and apply them in a work setting. An understanding by employers of those skills sets and how they may apply to their industry

Providing courses or additional training for on-boarding to ensure that athletes feel equipped for success in the workplace.

Respect of the training schedules

Welcoming Trusting Trying to eliminate additional stress. (if possible) because of the stress of athlete life

Hybrid and in-person working opportunities

Athletes understanding their assets

For para-athletes, ask them what their needs may be they are the experts in understanding their needs.

Figure 2: Defining Flexible Work

****What does flexible work look like to you? How can partners support you or wish they supported you in this type of work?***

6 of 8 responded • 8 responses

Having the flexibility to choose work hours and days of the week we do come to the office

Flexible hours or workplace setting (eg work from home)

Balance between flexibility and real work responsibilities

Being able to work outside the 9-5 hours. Working from home/on the road.

Flexible work hours Accommodations surrounding competition Accommodating disabilities

Part time work with flexible hours and time to leave for extended periods for competitions and training camps abroad

Flexibility around hours to accommodate training schedules.

Flexible work hours Work load adjustment throughout the competition season Hybrid work (office hours VS at home hours)

Athlete Online Survey Results

The feedback from the athlete focus group, comprised of Game Plan eligible athletes, underscores the importance of flexibility and tailored support in work experience programs. Athletes highlighted the need for employment opportunities that accommodate their training and competition schedules, which vary significantly across sports and seasons. The focus group discussions revealed that active and retired athletes desire work experiences that provide professional development and respect the time commitments inherent in high-performance sport. This finding aligns with existing literature emphasizing athletes' challenges in balancing sport and career development (Stambulova & Alfermann, 2009; Lavallee & Robinson, 2007).

Looking at **Figure 3** below, the survey results further validated the need for flexible work arrangements. Athletes prefer roles that offer part-time or project-based work, allowing them to maintain their focus on sports while gaining valuable professional experience. This aligns with the trend toward more flexible work environments globally and suggests that the Work Experience Framework should prioritize partnerships with organizations willing to offer such flexibility. Out of 3000 eligible athletes who were provided the survey, only 94 respondents participated. It is important to note that this was viewed as successful, and an average rate practiced by athletes. Consequently, the survey results strike a good balance between the different demographics of the athlete populations: summer vs. winter, education level (most athletes have completed a university-level degree), and male vs. female.

Figure 3: Athlete Survey Results

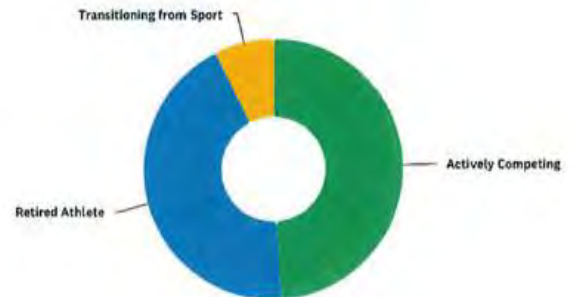
Sport Season:

Answered: 94 Skipped: 46



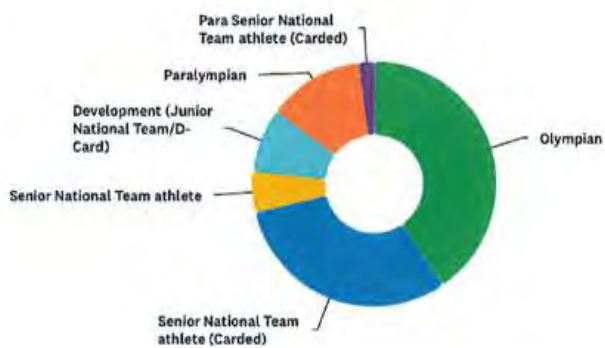
Your current status as an athlete:

Answered: 94 Skipped: 46



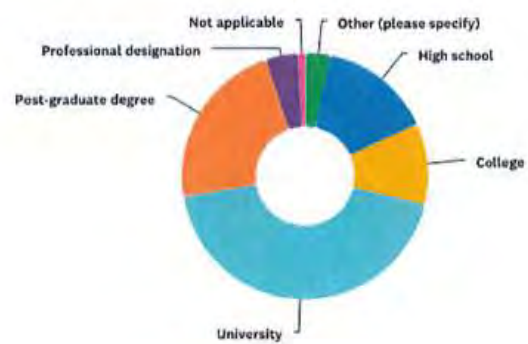
Please select your highest level of competition:

Answered: 94 Skipped: 46



Please select your highest level of education:

Answered: 94 Skipped: 46



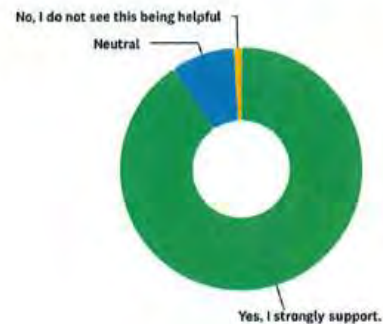
Do you feel the above model is supportive towards providing both acti...

Answered: 94 Skipped: 46



Do you support the idea of creating work experience programming for ...

Answered: 94 Skipped: 46



Athlete Perspectives on Transferable Skills

Transferable skills are crucial for athletes transitioning to the workplace. Athletes identified their top three skills to highlight for employers. **Appendix M** ranks these skills in a top 30 list, with one (1) being the most frequently mentioned and thirty (30) the least. The following list below ranks the top 10 of these 30 skills, demonstrating their alignment with athletes' needs and experiences.

1. **Communication (37 references):** Athletes emphasize the importance of clear and effective communication, especially in adapting to new work environments, and emphasize the need for managers who can engage well with them.
2. **Teamwork (27 references):** Teamwork is a natural skill for athletes and is relevant in the workplace settings. The collaborative nature of sports translates to the ability to work well in teams, where team-based projects are common.
3. **Time Management (18 references):** Athletes frequently mentioned the need for flexible work schedules that align with their training. Time management is crucial for balancing their sports commitments with work responsibilities, making this skill particularly relevant.
4. **Work Ethic (18 references):** Athletes are known for their strong work ethic, which is consistently mentioned as an essential skill. This dedication to their sport is something they seek to transfer to their careers.
5. **Adaptability/Versatility (16 references):** Adaptability is critical for athletes transitioning from sport to the workplace. They need to adjust to different job roles, industries, and workplace cultures, which require a high degree of versatility.
6. **Organization (16 references):** Organizational skills are important for athletes managing a dual career in sports and work. The ability to stay organized helps them juggle multiple responsibilities and ensures they can meet both their athletic and professional commitments.
7. **Leadership (12 references):** Leadership skills are relevant as athletes often take on leadership roles within their teams and guiding teams in the workplace.
8. **Resilience (12 references):** Resilience is key to handling the pressures of both sports and the workplace.
9. **Coachable/Receptive to Feedback (10 references):** Being coachable and open to feedback is important for athletes as they transition to new roles where they may need to learn quickly and adapt to different expectations.
10. **Discipline (10 references):** Discipline, developed through rigorous training regimes, is crucial for maintaining focus and achieving success in the workplace.

While skills like problem-solving, creativity, curiosity, and motivation were less frequently mentioned, they remain crucial in supporting the key themes of adaptability, resilience, and continuous learning—qualities essential for athletes transitioning into the workplace. These unique skills can also be highlighted to showcase the value proposition to partners.

Although the remaining skills, such as problem-solving, creativity, curiosity, and motivation, were not frequently mentioned, they are still important in supporting the broader themes of adaptability, resilience, and continuous learning that are essential for athletes transitioning to the workplace which can also be used in showcasing the value-proposition to partners by leveraging these unique skills.

4.2 ATHLETE PERSPECTIVES ON GAME PLAN'S WORK EXPERIENCE FRAMEWORK

Game Plan's Work Experience Framework was included in the survey to provide athletes an opportunity to comment and give feedback on the proposed framework. The feedback revealed valuable insights into their preferences regarding workplace integration, the need for flexible and remote working conditions, a desire for a variety of job opportunities beyond traditional corporate roles, and the need for targeted support at different stages of their careers and post-retirement (**Appendix N**).

One athlete noted, *"It was completely different to my sport environment, and it was so helpful to have a crash course in how the 'real world' works."* This highlights the need for targeted support in helping athletes navigate corporate settings. Flexibility emerged as a critical requirement, particularly for active athletes who struggle to balance work with their demanding training schedules. One athlete articulated this challenge, saying, *"My main need is finding work that is actually flexible while actively competing... Something that athletes could do on the road and at irregular work hours would be ideal."* Below is summary of key points addressed:

Workplace Integration and Adaptation: Athletes value work experiences that provide them with exposure to office settings and help them transition from the sports environment to the "real world." However, there is a need for better preparation and understanding from managers who work with athletes, as the transition can be challenging due to the stark contrast in intensity and focus between sports and many traditional jobs. Working with athlete-friendly organizations the foster support programs and excellent onboarding will need to be a consideration for employers looking to be involved in Game Plan's Work Experience Program.

Flexibility and Remote Work: Many athletes struggle to find work opportunities that align with their demanding training and competition schedules. Flexible work options, remote work, and jobs that can be done during irregular hours are highly desired. This flexibility is essential for athletes who compete year-round or who live in smaller or remote locations. Looking at **Appendix O**, athletes were given options that defined the types of flexible work they were seeking and were given (3) options to consider. Approximately 68% of athletes were looking for flexible work options that accommodated training, showing that actively competing athletes are willing to work, if organizations are willing to support non-traditional work structures.

Variety of Opportunities: Diversifying companies targeted for Game Plan's Work Experience program will enable athletes with a variety of experience from various industries. One athlete commented, *"Would be great to see some more tech-related jobs. It's a growing, and generally highly flexible environment. I think there is some opportunity here. I'd love to see more big tech companies at the Game Plan networking events."* There is a strong interest in broadening the types of work experience available, including opportunities outside of corporate settings. Athletes expressed a need for more hands-on, blue-collar jobs, tech-related positions, and roles in industries like healthcare and STEM fields. Additionally, rotational work experiences and shadowing opportunities were highlighted as beneficial for exploring different career paths.

Targeted Support for Different Stages: Athletes appreciate the inclusion of models that cater to different stages of their career, such as athletes who are still completing their education or those transitioning out of sport. There is also a call for more support for retired athletes, including specific employment opportunities and mentorship from retired-athlete professionals.

Access and Networking: Access to work experiences is seen as limited, particularly for athletes not based in major cities like Calgary. There is a suggestion for a job board to help athletes get past the initial screening stages in hiring (something Game Plan wants to avoid given the current state of the Employer Network) and for more networking opportunities with a broader range of employers, including those in tech and academic institutions. Partnerships with organizations like the Canadian Armed Forces were also suggested.

Work-Life Balance and Career Sustainability: Athletes emphasized the importance of work options that allow them to balance their athletic careers with future job prospects. Flexible and remote work options were identified as key to sustaining their sports careers while preparing for life after retirement.

Entrepreneurial Support: Some athletes expressed interest in creating their own business and are seeking guidance on aspects like marketing, billing, and business planning.

Reach and Awareness: There is a need for more nationally available opportunities that cater to athletes in various locations across Canada, including remote work options that would enable participation regardless of where they live or train.

Overall, the survey responses suggest a strong need for flexible, diverse, and supportive work experience programs that are tailored to the unique demands and stages of athletes' careers and that Game Plan eligible athletes fully support the direction of the proposed Work Experience Framework.

4.3 GROUP B – STAKEHOLDERS: COC/CPC MARKETING PARTNERS

Step 1: Short Online Questionnaire Results:

Revisiting **Appendix I**, which shows the partners who participated in this study and completed the short online questionnaire before the semi-structured interviews, shared an overview of their organization's structure and willingness to hire athletes in a targeted talent acquisition program. This streamlined the interview process by gathering general company information before the meeting through an environmental scan. **Tables 2 and 3** below summarize the responses from each partner, with pseudonyms used to protect anonymity.

Below in **Table 2**, the results show a strong interest in targeted career programming and athlete employment among most companies, with 5 out of 6 expressing positive responses. All companies agree that athletes align with their corporate values, mission, vision, and strategic plan. Additionally, 5 out of 6 believe that employing athletes could boost overall morale within their company culture. Only one company (P2) initially expressed no interest in the questionnaire regarding a targeted career program for athletes. However, in the interview, they mentioned their willingness to consider exploring internship opportunities as a start.

Table 2: Partner Outreach – Questionnaire Responses Part 1 (Environmental Scan):

Company	Title/Role	Company size	Interest in Targeted Career Programming	Athlete Employment Program Interest	Do athletes align with hiring practices that reflect corporate values, mission, vision and strategic plan?	Do you agree that if athletes were employed at your company, they could help boost overall morale in your company culture?
P1	Senior Consultant, Talent Acquisition Design	30,000+	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
P2	Senior Manager, Global Partnerships	9,000 Domestic	No	No	Yes	No

		25,000 International				
P3	Manager	275,000	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
P4	DEI/Talent Development Team	130,000	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
P5	Lead for Succession, Mentoring and Coaching	36,000	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
P6	HR Manager, Talent Acquisition	16500	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Below in **Table 3**, all companies acknowledged the value that athletes could bring to their organization, particularly their teamwork, work ethic, and unique perspectives. They agreed that athletes possess transferable skills like discipline, focus, and resilience that would benefit the workplace as outlined in **Appendix M** where athletes identified similar transferable skills. However, partners identified several limitations to hiring athletes. The most raised concerns include the need for flexibility around work schedules to accommodate training, the importance of matching athletes' skills with job requirements, and the challenges of integrating athletes into traditional, full-time roles. Companies emphasized the importance of having detailed information on athletes' work experience, educational background, and competition schedules to successfully implement targeted career programs. While there is significant interest in utilizing athletes' transferable skills from the field of play, organizations will need to address structural and logistical challenges to make these employment opportunities feasible and easy for program implementation.

Table 3: Partner Outreach – Questionnaire Responses Part 2 (Environmental Scan):

Company	Limitations in hiring athletes	What do you think athletes could bring to your team and what would your vision be for their experience at your organization?	What information would you require in order to implement a program that targets athletes?	What functions/departments or positions would you hire for?	Do you agree that the transferable skills gained by athletes, such as discipline, focus, and resilience, can showcase their success in the workplace?	Limitations in hiring athletes
P1	It would depend on the outcome of our discovery conversation.	No response	All of the above	All of the above departments	Yes	It would depend on the outcome of our discovery conversation.
P2	We require a lot of functional training in our roles (product designers, developer, merchandising, etc.) and are more and more focused on experience when hiring. Although we love that athletes have a commitment to sport, we would need to have a better understanding of their professional experience, education, and functional background. Concerned that a focus on sport	Athletes know how to work with a team, they have a strong work ethic, and potentially global experience. They also have a direct understanding of the function/benefits of our product which would be helpful when it comes to certain roles within the organization.	- Location of athletes - Number of athletes to support - Competition schedule vs. allotted work hours - Education level of athletes - Expanded D.E.I. metrics	All of the above departments	Yes, It would need to be matched with the right skillset, education etc.	We require a lot of functional training in our roles (product designers, developer, merchandising, etc.) and are more and more focused on experience when hiring. Although we love that athletes have a commitment to sport, we would need to have a better understanding of their professional experience, education, and functional background. Concerned that a focus on sport didn't

	didn't allow for other things outside of it. If you could show the background or education of the athletes then this might support. We also require full time employees in our head office so scheduling of training, travel, etc. may be challenging. Alternatively, could have this athlete program at the store level which requires less formal education or professional background and also doesn't require the same time commitment if still competing.					allow for other things outside of it. If you could show the background or education of the athletes then this might support. We also require full time employees in our head office so scheduling of training, travel, etc. may be challenging. Alternatively, could have this athlete program at the store level which requires less formal education or professional background and also doesn't require the same time commitment if still competing.
P3	Due to the Gov't of Canada being such a large entity, there could be delays in getting athletes hired while the appropriate job fit is determined e.g. part time/flexible etc.	work ethic, organizational skills, social media/media skills, motivation to move to the next step in their lives after competition, experiences.	- Location of athletes - Competition Schedule - Education level of athletes	All of the above departments	Yes	Due to the Gov't of Canada being such a large entity, there could be delays in getting athletes hired while the appropriate job fit is determined e.g. part time/flexible etc.
P4	Schedule, proximity to stores, corporate offices. Work integrated learning requires resources and time to make happen but not insurmountable just a matter of prioritization. Need to understand different between paid and unpaid. If paid would require funding, budget and would require timelines to integrate with annual budget planning cycle. We would also need to ensure we have a tailored onboarding program and structured support resources for the experience. Need to understand if the objective is just work experience or to lead to full time employment.	We believe athletes would bring a fresh perspective to any role they are in and challenge us to think differently. Their own lived experiences would help shape the value. The vision would be to align career experience and interest to the right work experience opportunity, also understand other career path options that may have never considered.	All of the above	All of the above departments	Yes, These are core skills and traits that transfer to the work word - however the transition to the workplace is a different scenario which means the proper support to be put in place.	Schedule, proximity to stores, corporate offices. Work integrated learning requires resources and time to make happen but not insurmountable just a matter of prioritization. Need to understand different between paid and unpaid. If paid would require funding, budget and would require timelines to integrate with annual budget planning cycle. We would also need to ensure we have a tailored onboarding program and structured support resources for the experience. Need to understand if the objective is just work experience or to lead to full time employment.
P5	As per any staffing (headcount) budgetary restrictions	Unique perspective / how their lived experience has influenced their view of commitment accountability relationships strategy teamwork diversity.	All of the above	All of the above departments	Yes	As per any staffing (headcount) budgetary restrictions
P6	Our roles are structured fairly traditionally - we would have some work to do in order to think differently around the flexibility required	As Olympic sponsors it connects our external brand with the lived employee experience.	All of the above	All of the above departments	Yes	Our roles are structured fairly traditionally - we would have some work to do in order to think differently around the flexibility required

Step 2: Semi-Structured Interviews: Partnership Insights

The semi-structured interviews with stakeholders from the COC/CPC marketing partners provided critical insights into the feasibility and attractiveness of the proposed framework from an organizational perspective. Stakeholders generally expressed a strong interest in supporting athlete career development, particularly in roles that align with their organizational needs. However, they also highlighted the logistical challenges of integrating athletes into existing talent acquisition processes, particularly given the need for tailored approaches to recruitment and onboarding. See **Appendix P** for an example transcript of an interview with Partner 2 (P2).

Braun and Clarke's (2006) theoretical thematic analysis (**Appendix Q**) was used to capture the perspectives of each respondent. An open-coding approach was utilized, allowing for the development and refinement of codes during the coding process. The raw dialogue was organized into twelve (12) themes and sub-themes to enhance the understanding and interpretation of the data. When relevant, frequency analyses were performed to assess the magnitude or prevalence of specific sentiments, patterns, or themes.

Looking at **Appendix R**, the thematic analysis of interview data revealed that while many partners are open to offering flexible work arrangements, there is a need for clearer guidelines and support from the COC/CPC to facilitate these partnerships. This finding suggests that the success of the Work Experience Framework will depend on ongoing collaboration between the COC/CPC and its partners, as well as the development of resources to support partners in creating athlete-friendly work environments.

In the research process, analyzing participant responses is a critical step in understanding the perspectives and experiences of those involved in a study. This process is particularly vital in qualitative research (Braun and Clarke, 2006), where twelve (12) themes emerging from participant quotations can provide deep insights into the subject matter. In this section, a focus of the top eight (8) key themes are identified from each of the partner's interviews as well as summarized quotations provided by partners involved in supporting athletes in career development programs, specifically through Game Plan's Work Experience program. These themes help us understand the motivations, challenges, and practices of organizations in integrating athletes into their workforce which are outlined in **Appendix R**. Below is a summary outlining key sentiments shared by respondents which aligns with the themes discovered through partner's responses addressed in **Appendix S**.

1. Athletes as a Value Proposition: Organizations view athletes as valuable assets, particularly due to their unique characteristics and alignment with company values. Athletes are recognized for their leadership qualities, focus, and strong work ethic, which are attributes that businesses highly prize in the workplace. One participant emphasized this point, stating, *"I think we felt that the characteristics of an athlete are just the types of what we look for... from a core values perspective, there would be alignment"* (P1). Another participant echoed this sentiment, highlighting the specific strengths that athletes bring to a professional environment: *"So of athletes, some of those leadership qualities, focus skills areas are of course very additive..."* (P4). These insights underscore the perception of athletes as a strong value proposition for organizations.

2. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Initiatives: Companies are placing a growing emphasis on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives, with a particular focus on creating inclusive work environments that actively recruit underrepresented groups, including athletes who may encounter barriers in traditional career paths. One participant highlighted this commitment, stating, *"Our focus is really on diversity and inclusion and accessibility... not having these offerings be exclusive to certain areas"* (P2). Another participant reinforced the importance of DEI efforts by noting that the company mandates training for all employees to ensure appropriate interactions with clients who have disabilities or special needs: *"We have required training for all of our employees on appropriateness with approaching and handling... our clients with disabilities or special needs"* (P5). These quotes illustrate the companies' dedication to fostering inclusivity and breaking down barriers for diverse talent, including athletes.

3. Education and Training: There is a clear recognition of the need for specialized education and training programs to support athletes in transitioning to new careers, helping to bridge the gap between their athletic backgrounds and industry-specific requirements. One participant emphasized the importance of aligning education with athletes' interests and prior experiences, stating, *"It's... important to have people identify what's of interest to them if they've had previous education in certain areas..."* (P2). Another participant highlighted the need for more relevant and prominent educational opportunities tailored for athletes: *"I think that's something that education needs to become more relevant or brought out front for our athletes..."* (P5). These insights underline the importance of developing targeted educational initiatives to facilitate athletes' successful career transitions.

4. Flexible Work Arrangements: Flexibility in work arrangements is crucial for athletes transitioning into the workforce, as it accommodates their unique schedules and commitments. Companies are increasingly recognizing this need, offering options like short-term projects, hybrid models, and flexible hours. One participant noted the advantage of short-term projects, stating, *"If we were looking at more like that short term project Co-op Piece... that allows for more flexibility by nature..."* (P1). Another emphasized the importance of flexible work environments, particularly short-term roles like internships: *"The expectation would be like... a short-term work environment in terms of flexibility like a six-month internship..."* (P2). These perspectives highlight the growing awareness of the need for adaptable work arrangements to support athletes in their career transitions.

5. Industry Needs and Gaps: Certain industries, particularly those in technical fields such as engineering and maintenance, are currently experiencing significant skill gaps. These gaps present an opportunity to strategically align the skills of athletes with industry needs. As one participant highlighted, *"We're lacking maintenance workers, mechanics, technicians, engineers... we had to focus on the most critical areas, which was maintenance and engineering..."* (P5). This shortage underscores the urgent need for skilled professionals in these sectors. Another participant emphasized the necessity of timely recruitment, stating, *"We have to hire when we need to hire, and we need those individuals. This sounds to me more of work-integrated learning..."* (P4). This suggests that incorporating work-integrated learning programs could be a viable solution to bridge the existing skill gaps by effectively matching the specialized skills of athletes with the demands of these critical industries.

6. Onboarding and Program Implementation: Effective onboarding and program implementation are fundamental to the success of career development initiatives. Partners emphasized the need for comprehensive onboarding processes and the pivotal role of mentorship in aiding athletes' transition into the corporate environment. (P5) highlighted the significance of a structured onboarding program, stating, *"I would say a very strong onboarding program...mentoring and coaching, we have both programs to help create a buddy system."* This quote underscores the importance of mentorship and coaching in establishing a support network that facilitates a smoother transition.

Additionally, (P6) stressed the necessity of robust business support to ensure the sustainability of these programs, noting, *"The key here is just having strong business support...so that it doesn't end up being kind of the first thing that they're looking to cut."* This highlights the need for organizational commitment to maintain the continuity and effectiveness of career development programs.

In examining the integration of programs such as internships, co-ops, and early career development initiatives with opportunities for athletes, companies reveal that these efforts are influenced by various factors including budget, conditions, and company priorities. One respondent highlighted the variability of program availability, stating, *"We've got coops, internships, will programs... it depends on the year, the budget, the conditions..."* (P5). This reflects the flexible nature of these initiatives, which are adjusted based on financial and situational constraints. Additionally, the alignment of these programs with existing company cycles is crucial, as indicated by another participant: *"It really depends... if we could align it to one of our existing intakes... those are the cycles that our teamwork off already..."* (P6). This emphasizes the importance of integrating athlete opportunities within the established timelines and structures of the company's broader recruitment and development frameworks.

7. Talent Acquisition and Recruitment: Organizations are strategically aligning their recruitment efforts to better attract athletes by matching job postings with the athletes' skills and career stages. (P1) emphasized the alignment of recruitment programs with athletes' educational timelines, noting that *"...With the rotational programs in the internship co-op opportunities... they follow the post-secondary cycle."* This reflects a conscious effort by organizations to structure their internships and co-op opportunities in a way that accommodates the academic and developmental phases of athletes' careers. Another respondent (P3), highlighted the workforce needs, observing that *"There are certain areas where there are gaps and there's a need... that might be like an easier first step."* This indicates that organizations are targeting specific gaps within their workforce that athletes can effectively fill, suggesting a pragmatic approach to integrating athletes into their teams. Overall, these statements reveal a clear trend toward tailoring recruitment practices to leverage the unique strengths of athletes and support their smooth transition into the workforce.

8. Training and Development: The research findings highlight the significance of internal mentorship and development programs as essential tools for supporting athlete transitions. Participants noted the value of these programs, with one interviewee pointing out, *"We have some like internal mentorship programs... we could potentially offer access to staff members who are interested in mentorship"* (P2). This suggests that while current mentorship initiatives are beneficial, there is potential for enhancing these programs by broadening access and involvement.

Furthermore, the need for comprehensive training and awareness in these programs is emphasized. As expressed by another participant, *"Lots of training, lots of awareness and emotional intelligence investing so that people get just how hard it hurts when it's not done properly"* (P5). This partner shares the importance of investing in emotional intelligence and awareness to mitigate the challenges associated with inadequate mentorship and support. Overall, the findings suggest that while existing programs are valuable, there is an opportunity to further tailor and refine these initiatives to better address the specific needs of athletes during their transitions.

These themes highlight the multifaceted approach companies are willing to take to integrate athletes into the workforce, acknowledging both the potential value athletes bring and the challenges that need to be addressed to make these transitions successful.

4.4 LIMITATIONS

The mixed-methods approach used in this study effectively captured a comprehensive view of both athlete and stakeholder perspectives. The combination of focus groups, surveys, and interviews allowed for a rich understanding of the needs and challenges associated with athlete work experience programs. However, the study also faced several limitations that must be acknowledged.

Interview Process: The need for permissions, approvals, and internal vetting delayed the research timeline, particularly during the busy period leading up to Paris 2024. Scheduling with various stakeholder groups also posed challenges, but the approach ultimately provided rich data.

Short Online Questionnaire: A broader environmental scan of all COC and CPC partnerships could have streamlined recommendations. While six company interviews sufficed, initial data post-Paris 2024 might have expedited further research tasks.

External Stakeholder Involvement: Including interviews with companies outside the COC/CPC partner network could have enriched market research, providing broader industry perspectives relevant to athlete career interests.

5. DISCUSSION

This study on athlete career opportunities provides valuable insights from both athletes (Group A) and stakeholders from COC/CPC marketing partners (Group B). This discussion integrates the data collected from both athletes and stakeholders to evaluate Game Plan's Work Experience Framework and to explore broader implications for athlete career transitions.

Analysis from the short online questionnaire and semi-structured interviews indicated a strong interest in targeting athletes for career development. Most companies expressed enthusiasm for targeted career programming, recognizing that athletes' skills align well with their corporate values, missions, and strategic plans. Specifically, five out of six organizations showed positive interest in developing athlete employment programs, suggesting that athletes could enhance company morale and culture. However, one company (P2) did not share this enthusiasm, citing concerns about the match between athletes' sport-focused backgrounds and the company's specific needs, particularly in roles requiring extensive functional training and full-time commitments. This participant highlighted the importance of detailed information about athletes' professional experience and education to effectively align their skills with job requirements.

From the semi-structured interviews, several key themes emerged (**Appendix R**). Organizations recognize athletes as valuable assets due to their leadership, discipline, and strong work ethic, which align with corporate values. There is also a significant focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), with companies aiming to create inclusive environments that support underrepresented groups, specifically para-athletes or individuals who identify with a disability. The need for tailored education and training programs to bridge the gap between athletes' previous experiences and industry-specific requirements was emphasized, alongside the importance of flexible work arrangements to accommodate athletes' unique schedules and commitments.

Challenges identified include the need for clear guidelines and support for integrating athletes into existing recruitment processes, as well as logistical issues such as accommodating training schedules and aligning job roles with athletes' skills. Effective onboarding and mentorship programs were highlighted as a crucial component to programming structure and implementation to help foster successful transitions, with participants noting the need for robust support systems and tailored onboarding processes.

The study suggests that while there is a strong interest in leveraging athletes' skills, organizations must address structural and logistical challenges to implement effective career programs. Future research should explore the long-term outcomes of athletes in such programs and consider broadening the scope to include more diverse industry perspectives. The study concludes that ongoing collaboration and adaptation will be key to implementing athlete work experience programs as capacity to support the program implementation will be modeled.

Lastly, the semi-structured interviews also emphasized the importance of flexibility, career transition support, inclusivity, partnerships, and work-integrated learning frameworks. Below is a discussion on the key themes identified by athletes and partners in shaping strategies for career transition and workforce development through targeted career programming.

5.1 ATHLETE AND STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES: A CROSS-COMPARISON

A cross-comparison of athlete perspectives and stakeholder insights reveals an understanding of the needs and opportunities for integrating athletes into professional settings. Both groups emphasize the importance of transferable skills, flexibility, tailored education and training, and effective onboarding.

These insights collectively support the development of work experience programs that address the unique needs of athletes and align with organizational goals. Key components for integrating athletes into

professional environments through Game Plan's Work Experience Program Framework and considerations for program implementation.

Flexibility became evident as a vital component for athletes transitioning into the workforce. The need for flexible work hours, part-time opportunities, remote work options, and adaptable schedules was consistently highlighted. Athletes require work arrangements that accommodate their demanding training and competition schedules. This flexibility is essential, not only for current athletes, but also for those transitioning out of their careers in sport, enabling them to maintain a balance between their athletic commitments and career development. Partners also recognized the need for flexible work arrangements, such as short-term projects or project-based work. Both athletes and partners see flexibility as an essential factor in building a targeted athlete work experience program. Although it may not align with the current internal structure within an organization, additional considerations for program implementation and recruiting will need to address this concern. To effectively manage this, ongoing collaboration between COC/CPC and its partners is essential to support the creation of athlete-friendly work environments and to facilitate these career programs.

Insights on Framework Validation

Game Plan's Work Experience Framework gave athletes a voice throughout the research process before approaching partners about the reality of what hours of work could be considered within each model type. The framework incorporated athlete feedback on feasible work hours before engaging with partners. Athletes indicated that those actively competing could only commit to 12-15 hours weekly during the competitive season. While some partners could support this, others could not, due to existing program structures and recruitment cycles. The framework serves as a starting point for organizations to plan and implement programs, with ongoing trials helping to align partner needs with athletes' demands.

Lastly, partners and athletes both highlight the need for targeted **education and training programs** to close the gap between their sport experiences and industry requirements. Partners emphasize the importance of aligning education pursuits with athletes' career aspirations and work experience, while also showing a strong interest in supporting athlete career development, particularly in roles that align with their organization needs.

Establishing Game Plan's Work Experience Program framework provided critical insights and actionable outcomes to enhance partnerships, optimize athlete transitions, and offer recommendations for improving program development and implementation. Understanding the needs and demands of both athletes and partners will be crucial to maximizing the value-proposition created through partnership support that supports the athlete's journey.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

GAME PLAN'S WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM: TEAM CANADA AT WORK ROADMAP: 2024-2028+

6.1 CURRENT CHALLENGES

The Game Plan Employer Network connects current and retired Olympic, Paralympic, and National Team athletes to purposeful, flexible work experiences. Our goal is to expose athletes to opportunities with athlete-friendly companies. We offer internships, job shadows, and full-time/part-time work options for career-building program opportunities. Currently, two partners of the COC, Deloitte and RBC, provide specific athlete-oriented employment programs.

Athletes struggle to prioritize financial stability for their well-being. Active and retired athletes are seeking flexible work with various employers/ sectors. The Employer Network currently features companies offering work options that are very limited in number and in variety.

To implement targeted career opportunities that are athlete-friendly, below are critical factors to consider in the planning and execution of this initiative with key stakeholders:

- **Organizational buy-in:** Both the Canadian Olympic and Paralympic Committees, who are included in Game Plan's Steering Committee along with Sport Canada (Governmental arm) and the Canadian Olympic and Paralympic Sport Institutes (COPSIN)
- **System buy-in:** Constituents (athletes, coaches, HPDs, National Federations)
- **Stakeholder Engagement and Ecosystem:** Governmental agencies,
- Educational institutions, diverse industries, and community are critical to operationalizing this expansive initiative.
- **Quarterly Check-ins:** These will be important to assess the athletes' demand and interest in such programming and ensure that partners benefit from the implementation of high-quality talent acquisition pathways that this programming synergizes. Check-ins will also be used to validate the direction for potential growth and evaluate any required modifications to each partner's designed customized program and structure.

It is important to note that some of the recommendations shared below consider components of Bosshart's 2023 consultation report (**Appendix A**) as part of continuing the ongoing work for Game Plan in its career development space. Bosshart discussed a vision similar to the researcher's objectives, which informed similar timelines for proposed visionary planning and implementation that correlate to the results and data analysis. The short-term recommendations (**Appendix T**), designed for quick wins with minimal funding, can be executed within 1-3 years. The long-term recommendations are more aspirational, achievable over 4-8 years (**Appendix U**), and focus on building capacity and momentum. Core recommendations include:

6.2 YEAR 1-2: FOUNDATION AND IMPLEMENTATION:

- Organizational Buy-in
- Recruitment and Engagement
- Program Implementation and Launch

ORGANIZATIONAL BUY-IN

1. Engage Stakeholders:

- **COC/CPC Marketing and Partnership departments:** Host a collaboration meeting to assess the next steps, sharing details of the research outcomes, desired outputs, and interest.
- Establishing a clear mission and vision.
- Consider requesting additional environmental scans of both organizations' partner families which would go beyond the six (6) targeted companies.
- **COC, CPC, Sport Canada, COPSIN:** Host initial meetings to ensure the direction of new initiatives within Game Plan's career bucket for alignment and buy-in.
- **COC/CPC Athlete Commissions:** Include athletes in similar information meetings to share results, outcomes, and additional feedback for consideration.

2. Framework Development

- **Role Definitions:** Clearly outline roles and responsibilities for capacity within the COC/CPC teams and partner organizations.
 - Clearly outline potential add-ons for partner agreements and clearly define commercial affairs guidelines for marketing and promoting new initiatives.
 - Integration and protocols that support the developed framework for Athlete Engagement Protocols.
 - **COC/CPC Athlete Commissions:** Include athletes in similar information meetings to share results, outcomes, and additional feedback for consideration.
 - **Onboarding manuals:** Create comprehensive manuals for athletes and employers (partners).
 - Non-partner companies require guidelines for inclusion in this initiative.
3. **Communication Strategy:** Ensure partners and constituents understand the ongoing efforts to build, design and deploy the tools and resources through various digital mediums – i.e., website, social media, and newsletters (See **Appendix V** for the proposed website design, which includes tools and resources for “*Team Canada at Work*”. This has not yet been implemented or launched for viewing).
- **Organizational**
 - Ensure both COC/CPC Marketing Partnership teams know about the program structure and cross-functional collaboration.
 - Clearly define roles and facilitate relationship management
 - **Partnerships/ Other industries involved**
 - Ensure the onboarding manual is implemented for companies to have for an understanding of our audience, types of work and athlete expectations/code of conduct. This is also not limited to reciprocating these efforts for athletes as an onboarding manual will be important to outline expectations and work experience terms.
 - **Athlete engagement and protocols**
 - Commercial Affairs and Marketing and Partnerships to consider reassessing agreements currently in place and the marketing rights made available to partners for storytelling
 - Defining clear boundaries for both employers and athletes on working relationship
 - Clearly outline protocols for athlete storytelling during Games-time
 - Implementing and revisiting the COC and CPC’s Athlete Engagement Protocol and partnership integration components when marketing athlete’s stories/experiences.
 - **Website Revamp**
 - This component is complete; however, it will require revisions after discussing the details of promotional plans and materials with COC/CPC marketing and partnership teams. This will have heavy implications on the commercial affair’s criteria agreed upon.

RECRUITMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

Engagement Strategy: Utilize Game Plan's marquee programs and events to leverage work experience opportunities. In-person regional and national events will help facilitate the launch of this new strand of programming. It will be crucial to have athlete buy-in first and foremost. For partnership engagement, it will be imperative for Game Plan to play a significant role in working more closely with COC/CPC marketing and partnership teams to further integrate cross-functionally.

- **Target Partners:** Current and potential partners of focus and companies with athlete-friendly environments
- **Diversity in Sectors:** Include various industries to match athlete interests (There may need to be discussions surrounding the benefit of non-partners given the level of already engaged companies in this space who are willing to support athletes and their desire to access top talent.
- Ongoing training, education and support before, during and after the project

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION AND LAUNCH

1. Pilot Programs:

- **Partner with Deloitte and RBC:** Expand existing programs and onboard additional partners through an intake and onboarding process. Details surrounding the program structure to agree upon.
- **Launch events:**
 - Utilize regional and national events through Game Plan to introduce the program to system stakeholders and athletes. This could be considered a "soft launch."
 - COC/CPC Partnership Summit involvement – "Hard launch" where Game Plan, COC, CPC and COPSIN collaborate on key messaging and purpose for this newly launched initiative. Support from current athlete testimonials in this space will be imperative.

2. Career Readiness Tools

- Workshops and Resources: See below for a detailed list of resources for consideration for both athletes and employers

3. Tools and Processes for Consideration

- **Athlete and Partner Onboarding Manuals**
- **Athlete "Career Readiness" Tools:**
 - Career resources for preparation
 - Connecting with a Game Plan Advisor
 - Resume writing workshops
 - Domestic Programming Integrations: Game Plan's Transition Resources:
 - Success After Sports
 - Quatre Chemin
 - International Program Integrations:
 - Athlete 365's Explore Your Future" and "Train for Transition"
 - Interview Preparation
- **Employer "Readiness" Support**
 - Liaise with Game Plan Advisors for support in the talent acquisition process
 - Athletes must be Game Plan eligible athletes to apply to ensure carded athletes are participating in anything partner-led
 - Employers to consider internal orientations at their company for onboarding experience. Feedback from previous programs suggests mentorship opportunities with internal champions who can share a path forward/connect

6.3 YEAR 3-4: EXPANSION AND OPTIMIZATION

- Program Expansion
- Quality Assurance

PROGRAM EXPANSION:

1. Increase Partner Pool

- **New Partnerships:** Add more companies from diverse sectors
- **International Collaborations:** Integrate with programs like Athlete 365 Career + portal. Encourage and deepen digital integrations between Game Plan and Athlete 365 platforms.

2. Enhance Marketing and Communication Strategy

- **Regular Updates:** Maintain continuous communication with all stakeholders through newsletters and social media
- **Explore Database Management:** Tracking and reporting through Salesforce. Explore ways to gather data on athlete-readiness through Sport Canada AAP reporting by identifying employability skills, training and education with more depth.
 - Salesforce integration through Game Plan's Yearly Training Plan (YTP) initiative.
- **Success Stories:** Share athlete testimonials and stories to motivate and attract more participants and partners.

QUALITY ASSURANCE:

1. Monitor and Evaluate

- **Quarterly Check-ins:** Regularly assess program demand and partner satisfaction. Implement an "Auditing" mechanism to ensure key contacts are in place for communication. Explore Salesforce database and CRM enhancements for this component.

2. Adjust Frameworks

- **Feedback Implementation:** Program modernization and evolution based on feedback from athletes, partners and Game Plan's Steering Committee
- **Resource Updates:** Continuously improve tools and resources for athletes and employers

6.4 YEAR 5-6: SCALING AND INTEGRATION

- System-wide integration
- Engagement Outreach

SYSTEM-WIDE INTEGRATION

1. Comprehensive Support Systems

- **Integrated Platforms:** Increase depth of Salesforce tracking and reporting of program progress and stakeholder engagement
- **Enhanced Support:** Provide continuous training, mentorship and support for athletes and partners
- **Advisor Tools/Professional Development:** Ensuring that Game Plan Advisors remain as a crucial touchpoint and support for helping athletes through career exploration workshops, counselling and resourcing.

- **Education Network Expansion and Integration:** Exploring ways to integrate Sport Canada Athletes Assistance Programs and tuition credits towards targeted institutions and industries. Identifying key players within Game Plan's Education Network and its partnership with Smith School of Business, will enhance the integration of education and career preparedness.

2. Policy Development

- **Formal Agreements:** Establish clear guidelines and responsibilities for all stakeholders
- **Sustainability Measures:** Ensure the program's long-term viability through sustainable practices and funding
- **Governmental Support:** Incentivizing businesses to support athlete employability opportunities through tax credits.
- **Research Committee:** This project will be used as a baseline to help conduct future research in this space. Knowing that there have been gaps in this research process regarding literature that focuses on athlete employability skills and employment success rates in correlation to education and training.

ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH:

1. Broaden Outreach

- **New Industries:** Expand into more sectors to diversify opportunities.
- **Global Partnerships:** Foster international collaborations for broader career pathways

2. Community Building

- **Events and Workshops:** Organize regular events to maintain engagement and build a supportive community
- **Digital Platforms:** Enhance online platforms for better communication and resource sharing

6.5 YEAR 7-8: MATURITY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

- Long-Term Sustainability
- Consolidation and Future Planning:

LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY

1. Ongoing Evaluation:

- **Annual Reviews:** Conduct comprehensive annual evaluations to assess program impact and make necessary adjustments.
- **Market Research:** Continuously gather data on athlete needs and industry trends to keep the program relevant.

2. Advanced Training:

- **Leadership Development:** Offer advanced training programs for athletes in leadership and management roles.
- **Specialized Career Paths:** Develop specialized career pathways tailored to different athlete skill sets and interests.

CONSOLIDATION AND FUTURE PLANNING

1. Strengthen Relationships:

- **Partner Engagement:** Deepen relationships with existing partners and continue to add new ones.
- **Athlete Networks:** Build a robust network of athlete alums to mentor and support current participants.

2. Future Vision:

- **Innovative Approaches:** Stay ahead by integrating new technologies and methodologies.
- **Strategic Planning:** Develop long-term strategies to adapt to evolving athlete and market needs.

These short and long-term goals are aspirations and achievable if continuous demand and buy-in at all levels is accepted. Below are the desired outcomes which correlate to the research purpose and objectives:

- **Improved involvement in the athlete journey:**
 - Enhanced engagement strategies.
 - Strengthened relationships with partners.
 - More integrated support systems for athletes.
- **Developing a framework to reinforce program impact for partners:**
 - Clear guidelines for partner responsibilities.
 - Streamlined agreement processes.
 - Increased value for both partners and the organization.
 - Auditing system to track the progress of program implementation and operationalize database management to reflect key program contacts
- **Aligning athlete employability skills with company needs:**
 - Optimal utilization of athlete skills within the organization.
 - Identification of roles and departments best suited for athletes.
 - Increased athlete satisfaction and retention.
- **Evolving career opportunities for athletes:**
 - Continuous improvement of career development programs.
 - Sustainable resources and tools for athlete growth.
 - Adaptable and modernized career pathways.
- **Monitoring and evaluating Work Experience Program (W.E.P.) frameworks:**
 - Effective assessment of implemented frameworks.
 - Data-driven improvements in partnership programs via database management within Salesforce
 - Enhanced accountability and performance tracking.
 - Ongoing market research of athlete needs and feedback for improvement

6.6 CONCLUSION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

This operationalized plan aims to enhance athlete career opportunities through a structured, flexible, and sustainable approach. Game Plan can significantly impact athlete career transitions and organizational effectiveness by fostering strong partnerships, providing continuous support, and regularly evaluating and adapting programs. These outcomes collectively contribute to a more effective and collaborative environment, benefiting athletes and organizational stakeholders.

6.7 ADDITIONAL IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

To deepen the strategic vision of the planning and implementation of targeted work experience programming, research should be conducted with organizations, outside of the COC/CPC partner family that have an interest in supporting athletes in their career development. This could include corporate and non-corporate industries within the Olympic and Paralympic sponsor family, agents, and career development organizations, to understand from their perspective, how and why they are interested/already supporting in this area.

The limited research conducted on employment opportunities, specifically on perspectives of athletes and employers, leaves a gap in structuring a clear direction towards trialing/ piloting customized programming for interested companies. More research is needed on athlete employability skills/transferable skills. It is evident that athletes still face challenges with transition out of elite sport as seen in the literature review and that financial stability in high-performance sport is a challenge.

The findings from this study have important implications for developing and implementing work experience programs for athletes. The need for flexibility and tailored support is clear, and the success of such programs will depend on the willingness of organizations to adapt their work structures to accommodate the unique needs of athletes.

Future research should explore the long-term outcomes of athletes participating in such programs, including their career progression and overall satisfaction with post-sport careers. Additionally, expanding the research to include a broader range of stakeholders, including organizations outside the COC/CPC ecosystem, could provide further insights into the potential for cross-industry partnerships in supporting athlete career transitions. The project concludes with a detailed outline of short and long-term recommendations for implementing *Game Plan's Work Experience Framework: Team Canada at Work*.

This study provides a robust foundation for developing work experience programs tailored to the needs of athletes. The iterative validation process through focus groups, surveys, and interviews ensured that the proposed Game Plan Work Experience Framework is well-grounded in the perspectives of both athletes and stakeholders. Moving forward, the success of this framework will depend on ongoing collaboration and the ability to adapt to the evolving needs of athletes as they transition from sport to new career opportunities.

6.8 A CALL TO ACTION

It is imperative that Game Plan continues to deepen its work in the space for the welfare of its athletes. Creating athlete-centric programming that encourages partners to be involved more closely in the athlete's journey will enable athletes to transition more smoothly into their post-competitive careers. By fostering stronger partnerships, Game Plan can ensure that athletes have access to meaningful work experiences and career opportunities that align with their skills, values, and long-term goals. This collaboration will benefit the athletes and enhance the program's overall impact and reach, ultimately contributing to a more sustainable and supportive ecosystem for athlete development. Now is the time for all stakeholders—partners, sponsors,

and the broader community—to commit to this vision and take actionable steps towards creating a brighter future for Canadian athletes.

6.9 CONCLUSION OF RESEARCH

The quest for excellence in high-performance sports parallels its impact on talent acquisition in the workforce. The future of work for athletes through Game Plan's Work Experience program, supported by corporate partners, embodies a transformative opportunity that will create synergies between elite athletes and the corporate world and various industries seeking top talent. By leveraging the unique skills of Canadian Olympic, Paralympic and national team athletes, this initiative promises to change the landscape on how athletes transition from their careers in sport to the workforce.

This research project highlights the critical need for expanding Game Plan's current Employer Network through targeted employability programs. **"Team Canada at Work"** (yet to be formally named), stands at the forefront of addressing the need for athlete career development tools and resources, offering a structured framework that aligns athletes' skills, education and industry requirements. Modeled after successful initiatives like RBC Olympians and Deloitte's Work Experience programs, Team Canada at Work is ready to create meaningful connections between athletes and employers.

With the support of partners, implementing this program will not only facilitate smooth career transitions for athletes, but also infuse organizations with highly sought-after talent. Athletes possess unique attributes – such as leadership, teamwork, resilience and adaptability – that are invaluable assets capable of shaping an organization's workforce culture and driving its success. The Canadian Olympic Committee is putting this theory into practice by becoming an Olympian-led organization, where 10 Team Canada Olympians who are part of Canada's strong legacy in sport are current employees playing a pivotal role in strengthening our success as an organization within the Olympic Movement.

The anticipated impact of ***Game Plan's Work Experience Program: Team Canada at Work*** extends beyond the field of play and the remarkable success stories of our athletes and their legacy to Canada. This proposed framework represents a strategic step forward in valuing the integration of athletes into the workforce, ensuring their contributions continue to enhance Canada's sporting legacy. At the same time, it enables organizations to deepen their role as Corporate Sport Citizens, while cultivating innovation and excellence. Ultimately, this framework is not only about supporting athlete career development – it's about shaping the future of work for athletes, where the Olympic and Paralympic values go far beyond the field of play, enriching the fabric of our society.

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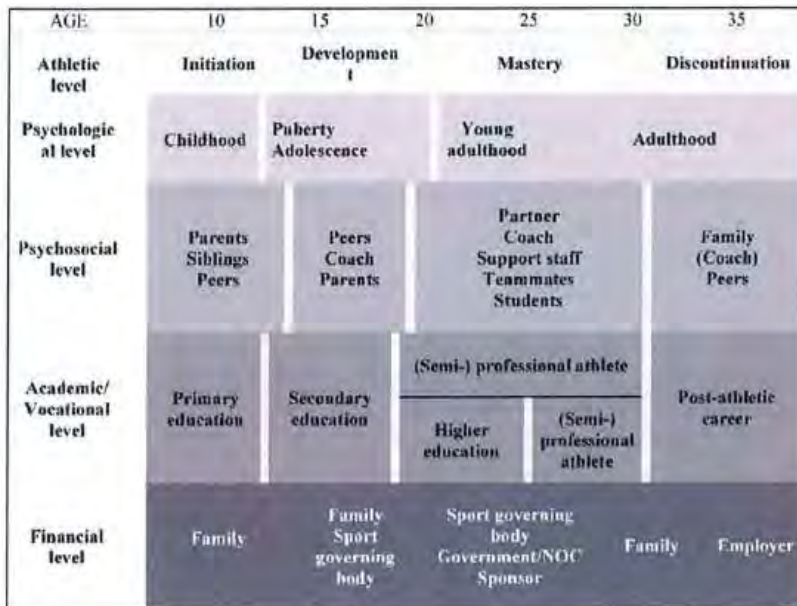
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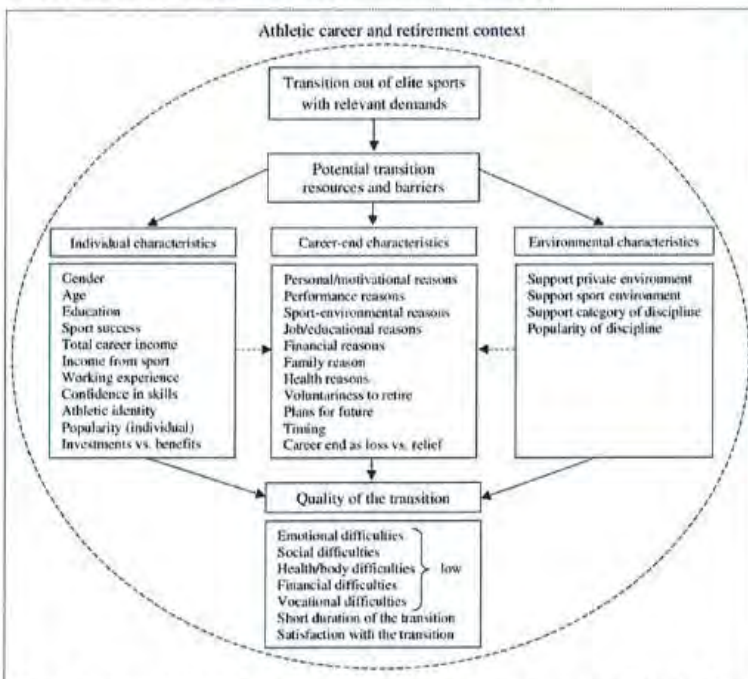
APPENDIX

A: Game Plan Consultation Report Bosshart, D. (2023). *Unpublished MBA Dissertation*. Smith School of Business, Kingston, Canada. Retrieved from: [Consultation Report](#)

B: Holistic Athletic Career Model (Wylleman et al., 2013)

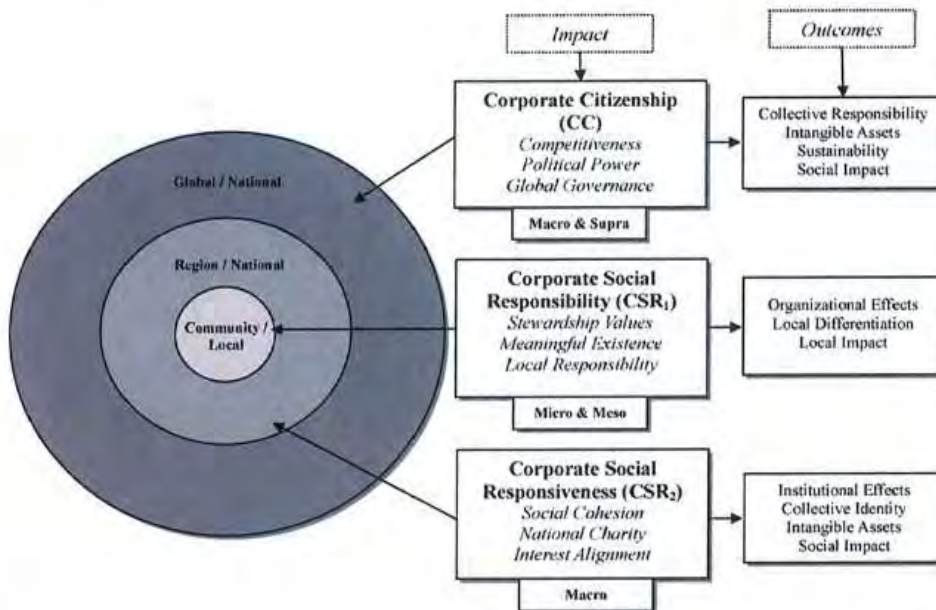


C: Athletic Career and Retirement Context



Working model of factors contributing to the quality of the transition out of elite sports.

D: Corporate Social Responsibility (Walker and Parent, 2010).



E: Athlete-Centric Modeling (Centre for Sport and Human Rights, 2024).

Sports Ecosystem

- People and communities whose human rights must be protected and respected.
- States and government bodies that have a duty to promote, protect, and fulfil human rights.
- Institutions and business actors who have a responsibility to respect human rights.



F: IOC (2023) LHH and IOC Athlete Career Development: Link: [Athlete 365 Report](#)

G: Game Plan Work Experience Program (W.E.P) Framework

MODEL IMPLEMENTATION						
GAME PLAN WORK EXPERIENCE MODELS						
W.E.P. MODEL	PURPOSE	TARGET GROUP	TERM OF ROLE	HRS/WK	RECRUITMENT	SCHEDULE TYPE
MODEL 1 INTERNSHIP/CO-OP	Career Exploration opportunities through short-term work and mentorship support	Actively Competing Retired Athletes	4-6 months	FT- 30-40h/week PT- 15-30h/week	1-2 Intakes semi-annually Rolling starts and ongoing Competition Season Peaks TBD for increase/decrease in hours: • Summer Sport Peak (April- September) • Winter Sport Peak (October- March)	• Remote • Hybrid • Flexible • In-office
MODEL 2 ROTATIONAL WORK EXPERIENCE	Rotating jobs can help athletes gain knowledge and skills in several roles and figure out which is most comfortable for them to fully pursue. Potential for active athletes who are taking a break from training. Difficult for an active athlete to consider this WEP	Retired Athletes	1 year (various roles/quarter)	FT- 30-40h/week PT- 15-30h/week	1-2 Intakes semi-annually 1 year, 18 month or 2 years Understanding part-time, full-time or casual work hours which are to be agreed upon athlete/employer	• Remote • Hybrid • Flexible • In-office
MODEL 3 PROJECT BASED WORK	Short-term sprint work which is defined contractually by athlete/employer. Casual working hours that must not exceed 80 working days. Flex work is part-time hours completing for part of the day and remaining hours can be completed	Actively Competing Retired Athletes	Fixed Term Open-ended	FT- 30-40h/week PT- 15-30h/week Casual Worker and flexible hours	1-4 intakes Ongoing intakes as needed Competition Season Peaks TBD for increase/decrease in hours: • Summer Sport Peak (April- September) • Winter Sport Peak (October- March)	• Remote • Hybrid • Flexible • In-office
MODEL 4 FULL TIME/PART TIME	For athletes to deepen their career explorations post-sport career. Active athletes may approach this seasonally with employer through contract/ fixed term basis	Actively Competing Retired Athletes	Open-ended Fixed Term	FT- 30-40h/week PT- 15-30h/week	1-2 Intakes/year minimum Competition Season Peaks TBD for increase/decrease in hours: • Summer Sport Peak (April- September) • Winter Sport Peak (October- March)	• Remote • Hybrid • Flexible • In-office
MODEL 5: BUILD YOUR TEAM [CUSTOMIZED]	We are looking to further collaborate with your company to learn more about existing programming that your organization may have internally. Our team is willing to help facilitate the creation of your very own athlete-friendly work experience program.	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	• Remote • Hybrid • Flexible • In-office

H: Athlete Survey Questions

SURVEY QUESTIONS	
1	Please select your language.
2	How do you identify?
3	Your status as an athlete.
4	Your highest level of competition
5	Your highest level of education
6	Sport season
7	Flexible work can be defined in many ways. Reading the statements below, which one best reflects what flexible work means to you (Check up to 3 options)
8	If you were interviewing for your dream job tomorrow, list 3 transferrable skills you would bring to the organization.
9	Do you support the idea of creating work experience programming for athletes like yourself?
10	Do you feel the above model is supportive towards providing both active and retired athletes work experience opportunities?
11	Your feedback is important to our team in assuring that athlete-centric programming remains a priority to Game Plan. Please provide additional feedback regarding the above Work Experience Framework.

I: Interviewee/ Participants of Study

INTERVIEWEE	ROLE/CATEGORY	COMPANY ID
P1	Senior Consultant, Talent Acquisition Design	1
P2	Senior Manager, Global Partnerships	2
P3	Manager, Athlete Assistance Program	3
P4	Manager, Sponsorships + Diversity Equity and Inclusion, HR and Business Process Manager	4
P5	Succession and Organizational Coach	5
P6	Manager, Talent Acquisition + Marketing Advisor	6

J: Partner Outreach Guide

K: Semi-Structured Interview Questions for Partners

	INTERVIEW QUESTION
1	Based on our discussion and the survey you completed, why may your team be interest in exploring a targeted career program that hires Team Canada athletes?
2	What is your understanding of a high degree of job flexibility? a) What does it mean to you and what are your organization's corporate policies? b) What does it mean when you offer flexible work? c) Note: Please expand on equity within your organization regarding optics within the company once flexible work terms are defined. What does fairness/special permissions look like in your company culture?
3	Does your company currently implement internship/co-ops or other work experience opportunities? Please share other existing programs that could be considered as a framework for us to consider.
4	What recruitment cycles and time periods does your organization follow? Understanding business needs and internal offering/cycles. Please consider the following types of work: a) Internship/Co-ops b) Part-Time/Full-Time c) Project-Based Work d) Rotational Work Experience
5	Do you think that including Para athletes in work experience schemes would help draw positive attention to your organization as a diverse employer? What programs do you have in place to accommodate employees with disabilities?'
6	Given the current economic climate and potential challenges with hiring freezes, how does your organization navigate these obstacles if it correlates to how you would ensure your support remains as a priority, despite these potential challenges.
7	How do you foresee work experience programming and its implementation for capacity and resourcing internally at your organization? Based on the models explained here today, what would your company support or see as a best fit for your organization?
8	Have we addressed all the information required to support your team in implementing a program that provides athlete recruitment pathway? What else might you need to justify that athletes are a valuable option for hiring?

L: Partnership Presentation: The Future of Work for Athletes

M: Top 30 Transferable Skills (Athlete Survey)

THEMES	SOURCES	THEMES	SOURCES
Communication	37	Goal-oriented	7
Teamwork	27	Detail-oriented	6
Time Management	18	Dedication	6
Work Ethic	18	Performance Under Pressure	6
Adaptability/Versatility	16	Committed	5
Organization	16	Creativity	5
Leadership	12	Focus	5
Resilience	12	Motivation	5
Coachable/Receptive to Feedback	10	Curiosity	4
Discipline	10	Excellence	4
Hard Worker	9	Perseverance	4
Interpersonal/Relationship	9	Efficiency	3
Analytical	8	Integrity	3
Collaborative	8	Intrinsic Motivation	3
Problem Solving	7	Passion	3

N: Athlete Survey Comments:

- "The biggest learning I had as a retired athlete in the RBC Olympians program was working in an office setting. It was completely different to my sport environment and it was so helpful to have a crash course in how the "real world" works and how to operate effectively in that environment."
- 1. "My main need is finding work that is actually flexible while actively competing. I wasn't able to do the Deloitte Work Experience because the time commitment was too much, and didn't fit with training and competition. Something that athletes could do on the road and could do at irregular work hours would be ideal and extremely beneficial"
- 2. "Some sports competition season is all year round (my sport). There is no off-season. Just a heads up for when trying to make a framework for career paths."
- 3. "In my experience, I knew within the first couple weeks that an internship I was in was not a fit and I was being underutilized/mismanaged and I went on for months with high anxiety because it was such a dramatically 'boring' role compared to the intensity of sport. Of course a new job requires some patience but I feel it's just as important for the points of contact (ie managers of us athletes) to receive some training on how to handle us, how we generally communicate, what we might respond to, etc. Obviously we're not the only ones with a work ethic but transitioning into a role, for me personally, that required an ounce of the energy and focus I was used to was very quickly a very negative place for me..."
- 5. "Perhaps a job board where companies post for positions that we can apply for. We don't always check off all the list and aren't selected for the interview phase given our lack of in-office experience. Helping us get to the interview process would be very helpful. Thanks!"
- 6. "I like the different models present to address the different stages the athlete is at in their career path (i.e. still in university or just completed) rather than just an internship, as the "intern" label connotes student/beginner. I think it would be beneficial to incorporate a coaching / continuous learning aspect to the models so the athlete is able to improve their skills in "real-

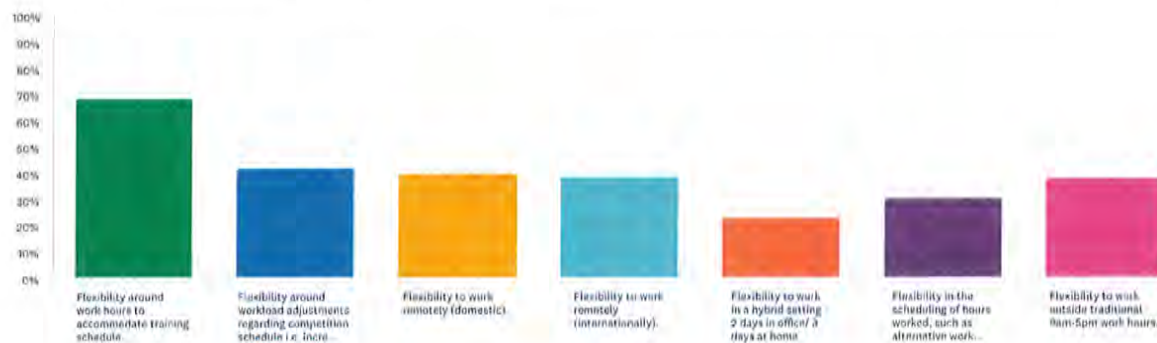
- time" which are relevant to the work. This might come from an individual on the work team they are on or through Game Plan support. It will also be crucial for all the models to require the athlete to do purposeful work and an opportunity to add value to the organization. This is necessary to ensure the corporation benefits but the athlete can meaningfully use the experience when transitioning to a full time career with that organization or another one. Finally, I understand it will be difficult, but it is important to have more than one corporation involved in the program."
7. "Would be great to see some more tech related jobs. Its a growing, and generally highly flexible environment. I think there is some opportunity here. I'd love to see more big tech companies at the Game Plan networking events as well."
 8. "In order to have high level Canadian athletes reach their full potential I think it's essential to have work options available. Otherwise, it simply does not make much sense in life to continue pursuing your sport into your prime. I have been working full time in the government now since retiring from my sport and recently returned to sport from retirement because I know have a full time job that supports me competing for my national team and I think with this balance I've never been a better and more focused athlete because now I can fully train and compete without the worry of my future and money. I wish this for more athletes in Canada and wish that it was more normalized by sporting organizations and also jobs. I think flexible hours and options for full time telework are by far the best options."
 9. "Well Done !"
 10. "More opportunities for students in engineering or other STEM disciplines."
 11. "More opportunities available nationally, helping transitioning athletes in every major city."
 12. "Broaden the types of employers game plan is working with to give athletes more work experience options, and make it feasible for athletes in smaller centres to still be able to use this resource, possibly through more remote work options"
 13. "I would love some help creating my own side hustle. How to market, how to bill how to do the taxes how to create a business plan."
 14. "I think there should be increased opportunities for retired athletes who have started experiencing the realities of the "real world". Increased opportunities could include a certain amount of employment opportunities for retired athletes. Alternatively, ensuring the active athletes have equal opportunities to access the work opportunities."
 15. "Love it!"
 16. "I like the career options, however as a young retired athlete, I ran into the issue of not understanding or knowing how to access these opportunities. Also, at a point when I was looking into these, there wasn't a lot of opportunities for athletes not in major cities. Maybe I wasn't looking in the correct place, but it Edmonton there wasn't a lot of job connections or networking opportunities."
 17. "I find a lot of work experience and internship opportunities only really exist for people looking to to experience in a corporate setting or "white collar" jobs. I'm not sure how it would work but having opportunities in more hands on "blue collar" employment as well may appeal to a larger group of athletes."
 18. "I think this is a beneficial framework. I think the most significant part for accessibility is the options of remote, hybrid, flexible and in-office. This gives all types of lifestyles/ target groups the opportunities they might need to make this work within scheduling."
 19. " Rotational Work Experience options seems like something that could be offered to active athletes as well especially earlier in a quad. RBC Olympian Program models this with their in office roles, 10-15 hours/week."
 20. "Biggest thing is to ensure that there are opportunities that also allow for individuals who don't have a degree to try out some areas of work... Especially coming out of the transition from sport, you can feel super lost and not ready to take the plunge in to a certain level of education yet... so testing and trying jobs would allow athletes to find their 'next passion.'"
 21. "I didn't know that this framework existed but it's good to see the different options. I'm specifically interested in medical, physical sciences, and health care, and I feel like there aren't as many opportunities for that."
 22. "I like the different options in the framework. It looks like hours would be quite flexible in all the categories."
 23. "I just want to know more I think, and for me as an athlete in college I would need remote work during the peak season of my sport which is summertime, like a part time remote opportunity something like that and from May-august instead of April-September since I'm in the states for school."
 24. "Framework provides clear possible options/models for type of work (project/ full time/ part time/ etc.)"
 25. "I think it would be nice if there were transitioning programs for athletes to go back and find some work in their respective sport, either through provincial or national sport organizations. Creating even temporary interning positions may help athletes return to sport, in a coaching or sport administrative context, and help the next generation of athletes with their experiences."
 26. "Work experience and employer opportunities / connections is essential and an asset for future career. However, as an active athlete it is difficult to take advantage of these opportunities as realistically, I need more money to compete than a part time job will supply me."
 27. "Creating a network of retired-athlete professionals would be incredible. This would allow mentorship outside of sport through workplace connections."
 28. "As athletes live and train in various small towns and cities across the country (and sometimes internationally) partners who are able to offer remote opportunities will increase their talent pool of athletes who are available to work. Relocation and commutes increase the difficulty for busy athletes and retired athletes working with tight budgets."
 29. "It would be great if you could somehow partner with academic institutions to combine the work experiences with academic credit. This would capture athletes who are going to school while competing and they don't have to chose between work experience and progressing in their academic credits. Said another way, combining work experiences with school would be more manageable and not "another thing" that is on the athlete's plate."

30. "I wonder if partnering with the Canadian Armed Forces has merit. There are opportunities for athletes to train as soldiers in the reserves, after retirement, there are many deployment opportunities. Additionally, there are soldiers who are aging out or injured and looking for meaningful work with employers. Creating one large database of employers who like working with athletes and soldiers (who have a lot in common) would create more opportunities especially in less urban centers"
31. "I can be reached at alexa@alexaloo.com if you would like some connections to explore this idea further."
32. "Looking at the proposed WEP, it looks like there is a solid variety of options available to meet different needs. I think an area that may need consideration is athletes outside of the Calgary area. If you aren't based in Calgary then a lot of the options may not be feasible."
33. "Teaching and facilitating SHADOWING would be incredibly valuable. One of my friends is 5 years into work they got educated for and hate and are like "I didn't know it would be like this." So a shadow stream where you try try try things and check out things you are interested in could be cool. That same friend perceived game plan at that time to be all about corporate Calgary and I was like no it's about YOUR transition and you gotta use the resources. Another friend refused to even do the core values session with me so I guess those are examples I just have to let go. I love this program and even your openness to this feedback is a testament to your dedication to serving us athletes! Thank you!"

O: Athlete Online Survey: Defining Flexible Work

Flexible work can be defined in many ways. Reading the statements below, which one best reflects what flexible work means to you (Check up to 3 options...)

Answered: 94 Skipped: 48



GAME PLAN WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM - PROGRAMME D'EXPERIENCE PROFESSIONNELLE DE PLAN DE MATCH

Y @

P: Sample Interview Transcript - P4

Q: Thematic Analysis Steps

- Braun and Clarke's (2006) Six Phase Framework
 - Phase 1: Become familiar with the data
 - Phase 2: Generate Initial Codes
 - Phase 3: Search for Themes
 - Phase 4: Review Themes
 - Phase 5: Define Themes
 - Phase 6: Write Up

R: Thematic Analysis – Coding Table (NVIVO Software)

THEME	SUB-THEMES	SOURCES	REFERENCES
Athletes as a Value Proposition	Brand Ambassadors, performance under pressure, health and wellness advocacy, networking and relationships	6	11
D.E.I. Initiatives	Accommodations for disabilities, focus and commitment to D.E.I. programming, Accessibility and underrepresented groups, impact measurement, innovation and best practices, employee engagement and feedback, inclusive workplace culture, equal opportunity, diverse hiring practices	6	27
Education and Training	Higher-education, career transition programs, mentorship, coaching, networking, online-learning and certifications	4	6
Flexible Work	Hybrid working policy, support network, employer perceptions, corporate culture	6	19
Industry Needs/Gaps	Skill alignment, recruitment and training, sector specific gaps, workplace adaptation, economic impact	6	14
Limitations	Challenges with scheduling, lack of work experience, rigid work schedules, skillset and educational gaps, transition difficulties	2	4
Onboarding	Orientation programs, mentorship/buddy programs, technology and tools, cross-functional exposure, performance evaluation, networking opportunities, training and development	1	2
Program Outreach, Implementation and Affirmation	Communication strategy, program outreach, implementation and affirmation. Pilot programs, resource allocation, partnership development, digital outreach and engagement, success stories, feedback mechanisms, impact assessment and research (monitoring and evaluation), stakeholder involvement	6	53
Talent Acquisition and Recruitment	Transferable skills, Training and Development, recruitment challenges, cycles, metrics and evaluation. Recruitment strategies, D.E.I., Role/Fit	6	34
Training and Development	Skill development – technical skills, soft skills, digital literacy, career transition programs, workplace integration, learning and development	2	4
Transferable Skills	Athlete transition, Value-Proposition, Leadership, teamwork, communication, time management, Work ethic, adaptability, organization, coachable, receptive to feedback discipline and resilience	4	15
Workplace Culture & Policies	Flexible work arrangements, inclusive workplace practices, career development programs, performance evaluation and recognition, workplace adaptations for athletes.	4	10

S: Referenced Quotations (Partners) – Please refer to Appendix I for Partner Identifiers

THEME	QUOTATIONS
Athletes as a Value Proposition	1. "I think we felt that the characteristics of an athlete are just the types of what we look for and our teams and in our talents. So we thought we'd truthfully just felt that there was alignment there. We just felt like from a core values perspective, there would be alignment. And what we believe in as an organization and the values of athletes." P1 2. "The areas of opportunity within our business are really focused on those like tactical skills." P2 3. "We've looked at, you know, of course, all of the DEI programs that bring in people who are underrepresented and again similar that, you know, these people have talent that maybe not being properly tapped into to create a a smoother pathway for them." P3 4. "So of athletes, some of those leadership qualities, focus skills areas are of course very additive to considering, umm, individuals from this area." P4
D.E I. Initiatives	1. "Our focus is really on like diversity and inclusion and like accessibility and like not having these offerings be exclusive to certain areas." P2 2. "All of the DEI programs that bring in people who are underrepresented and again similar that, you know, these people have talent that maybe not being properly tapped into to create a smoother pathway for them. We then get very targeted within targeted audiences going out there and creating splashy, tractive ways of bringing in women into pilots and engineering programs because they go, again, I find it's still astounding that they don't think that they could succeed in those in those areas within the business. So, there's targets within targets within targets as we know." P5 3. "We have required training for all of our employees on appropriateness with approaching and handling and helping and supporting our clients with disabilities or special needs. We really make sure that people feel well versed in understanding why you need to be an advocate for people you know that are underrepresented. We have an office of accommodation specifically designed to support people who either were mobile and suddenly became immobile because of an accident, and we have to accommodate them so you know, we have a very dedicated group of people just making sure we do take care of these things." P5
Education and Training	1. "And I think it's, you know you want to have people also identify what's of interest to them if they've had previous education in certain areas, if they have developed an interest based on some of their own athlete experience." P2 2. "And then of course, you've just talked about coops and Wills absolutely over the years I've seen this definitive need that a person coming from one, let's call it one journey in their life. So I call the academic journey one thing and then the industrial journey, which is you come into a a job like at 2, there's this massive gap." P5 3. "I think that's something that that education needs to become a come more relevant or brought out front for our athletes because they're there might be some athletes that have it. But to your point, it's just knowing what everyone's needs are in this piece." P5
Flexible Work	1. "I think it depends truthfully on. The area of the business that we're looking at, I would say, from a corporate lens. Most of our functional areas have gone to a a true hybrid where we're in office two days a week. And there are some exceptions there based on geography today and I feel like there's maybe some tension around that already. I feel like in a corporate in a corporate space it might be trickier if it was like a full-time ongoing assignment, but if we were looking at more like that short term project Co-op Piece I think obviously that allows for more flexibility by nature where it's a targeted period of time or a targeted project. So I I think that removes some of the challenges potentially that said if because we support retail." P1 2. "The recruitment as well, if there was ever interest in like working in a sport, tech store or a marks store, I think just by design, those retail opportunities just have more built in flexibility just given the nature of their operational hours and the type of work they do. So I think those spaces would probably have increased flexibility. I feel like the store route might be something to look at and explore. But yeah, I don't if that answers your question. I feel like the corporate level it will be harder outside of those like." P1 3. "Short term contractual stance and then retail just by the nature of what it is, I think there's just, yeah, more flexibility like innately there by having longer operating hours and and having " 4. "I don't think we would be doing remote work in this type of opportunity and in terms of like being actually in the office, it's a requirement to be in the office three days a week." P2 5. "So those would be the expectations, and I think at a level that it would be at corporate, the expectation would be like also full time for a period of time. It wouldn't be like you work two days a week or three days a week at the corporate level, I think even our internships. The only time that we have anything that's short term is we have a thing called the store support program where store we have people from stores that are educators who currently work at 2 and are full-time educators who three days a week, they work in the store and then two days a week they work at the office and they're still hourly employees. So those people would have to still like work at 11. I don't think we would give that option as like a part time solution in this and it kind of scenario. I think the expectation

THEME	QUOTATIONS
	would be like it would be a short-term work environment in terms of flexibility like a six-month internship with the expectation that people would be in the office." P2 6. "I think that there's a couple of types of work, like the casual and the I contract. Usually those are like 90 day, 90 days in a year, and so you can only work up to 90 days in a year. P3 7. But they're usually like helping or supporting something that you can work, you know, two days, two days, and then you get to a period where you need to work five days because it's a. It's a peak in your project and then you can go back down so the manager can spread those days across an entire year, which sounds crazy because it's only three months." P3 8. "Certainly, the early career side of it might be an opportunity just given what I'm looking at, what you've focused on here around scheduling." P4 9. "Maintain the talent pipeline, as you said, make decisions about who could stay and who would need to go. It was horrific, but it led to something quite unique, which was a hybrid work program, and we didn't have that pre pandemic. So you said at about the about your work that we have a policy now that is 2 days specifically, Tuesdays and Wednesdays to create that Harmony Community collaborative spirit." P5 10. "So it's Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and then the third day is your choice. Umm, so that is the current what we would call the hybrid model we we toyed with the idea of base it, base it on branch or leader who might say my team really finds it more productive to be Mondays and Thursdays or something." P5 11. "I'd like a student or internship program and see if that gives us a bit of a leg into this this sort of program and then where we go from there also, who knows, we may change our some of our stance on flexibility, but that's where we're at right now and just from my own, I guess assumptions about what this would look like." P6
Industry Needs-Gaps	1. "Yeah. So truthfully, with our Co-op programs in particular, we have seen, we want to keep the program up and running and active, but we've definitely seen, like, numbers of hires be less unfortunately. So, I would, I would hope that if we were to move forward and commit like we would commit, but I would expect that our Co-op roles like there might be reduced. Numbers of opportunities potentially." P1 2. "We only heard this in more in the recent budget or just before about downsizing the government and that just may be from attrition as people retire as people leave, they may not refill certain positions or they may not fill them as indeterminate, they may fill them for certain terms. You know, there could be ebbs and flows in like a procurement thing if there's less budget to do less projects, that team may not have to analyze as many contract negotiations because we wouldn't have the money to run surveys or videos are like whatever it is. So it's kind of that's just more my common sense thought from a government perspective and it's bigger longer term probably than a company who is seeing really sharp ups and downs maybe in their revenues or year to year because of what they do or the services they provide or the things that people stop purchasing from them. P3 3. "I think the most important thing here is to identify where the best opportunities. What would be available if we think about running a business as all businesses are run, you know we do have to hire when we need to hire, we need to hire the areas that are needed but we need those individuals. So those types of things are going to be really specific to what job postings are there and what we're able to you know, how we can satisfy hiring that right candidate for the position. This sounds to me more of work integrated learning, so again, maybe that fits in more along the lines of that early careers program or that career development program outside of the sort of traditional you know, you go into a job posting, you apply for it because obviously this is not going be compatible with the scheduling and the demands of athletes and where they're at and how it aligns with their interests too." P4 4. "We're lacking maintenance workers, mechanics, technicians, engineers. Not only that, we're lacking women in engineering. And then the STEM programs and all those things. We had to focus on the most critical areas, which was maintenance and engineering, and so the head count allowance for P5 was smaller than some other years. You know, even when we were making decisions during the pandemic about who, who can we keep in some situations, we said we want to keep people who remember and understand our culture, who can retain that historical knowledge." P5 5. "Yeah, you know every I'll say every situation is a little bit different. But for example, when we first went into COVID early spring 2020, we cancelled our student intake for that round because we were just figuring out how to work remotely. Kind of reviews of headcount and challenges. We tried to maintain our student programs or some of those specialized programs. I think the key here is just having strong business support. So from the business units and the leaders to have a really strong support for the program as well. And I believe in it so that it doesn't end up being kind of the first thing that that they're looking to cut when they have that opportunity. Umm, I think you know, if we get the right business support behind it and then belief you know why we would do this program, I don't think that would be a challenge. I just I've seen in cases where we don't have that strong alignment between the business leaders and the program intent that sometimes they they think that that's an easy thing to to drop." P6 6. "I think this kind of comes back to what we were just talking about in terms of getting the business alignment and sponsorship, so that they're, you know that they're creating the roles for that, so that they're like understanding

THEME	QUOTATIONS
Limitations	and supporting the right structure for that. I mean from a recruitment perspective, like it's something that we could manage, but I think the real key is the support from the business leaders who are going to have these positions reporting to them." P6 1. "I think that's where there's been hesitancy to approach this type of model because there are few of these athletes, I think have that skillset, yeah But then what comes up for us? Because we're truly a global company. Is that like? Yes, we're giving an opportunity Team Canada athletes, but we have ambassadors from all over the world who compete for their various organizations who do different things and like we're not necessarily offering that opportunity to them. So, it becomes like an inclusivity conversation as well in terms of like access and availability. I think as being like a truly global company that's just has like larger implications than just being able to do something in Canada." P2 2. "I think we've got some structural limitations on our side. Flexibility is one of them. We've recently moved to five days in the office and although we talk about some flexibility, I think you know when I read through the presentation and no surprise around hybrid or remote work and the priority that and obviously the flexibility that comes along with those, those are things that were more challenged to offer." P6
Onboarding	1. "I would say a very strong onboarding program. So when the like any employee that shows up, we're still working on different ways of approaching onboarding for even regular folk talent that come into P5. But let's say athletic onboarding program because you know what? Maybe we would want a former athlete to be a part of developing the on boarding program because they understand the mentality of an athlete and saying this is how you should address it. Mentoring and coaching, we have both programs to help create a buddy system." P5
Program Outreach, Implementation and Affirmation	1. "The next question, does your company currently implement internships or coops or other work experience opportunities currently? And if there's existing programs that already exist, such as a framework for us to consider, feel free to share here. We've got coops, internships, will programs, umm, uh. And again, I was part of those startups. So we've, you know, grad hire programs, you name it. It depends on the year, the budget, the conditions you know so you know, one year we could have like hundreds of interns, because every branch would say, oh, you're telling us we have a budget headcount for internships." P5
Talent Acquisition and Recruitment	1. "With the rotational programs in the internship coop opportunities, we generally just follow the post-secondary cycle. So really go by semester and mirror what's happening with the educational institutions. All the rotational programs that we have right now are geared to that early career talent, so they that's why they follow that." P1 2. "And what I would share is I think there's also opportunity to like to make sure these postings or these opportunities are available and like if we didn't do a custom just for athletes, it would be like the knowledge or like the knowing that it's even an option I think is so much of it. As a worst case could very easily like send a like these postings are going to be coming up in the next month. This is the expectation. If you want to let your athletes know that these are opportunities within Rueda, and I think that would be something we could easily again have as a lift. And then when I look at like part time educator like obviously leading into holiday as when we like do a big hiring opportunity with people who can like even test and learn for like a two-month period or something like that. So I think from like the stores perspective like October is a big push for hiring leading into holiday season and obviously dependent on the athlete schedule and everything that they have." P2 3. "If we have opportunities, obviously we can look at that way more easier and this and this is where it's more the thing that's harder is that I'm sure that another department would be happy to hire an athlete with certain attributes and and skills and whatnot and from an HR perspective and a programming. There's like 565 different career type positions that you could have in the government, like everything from you know procurement and HR and And the other thing I was just gonna say was gonna say with that. There are certain areas where there are gaps and there's a need and that might be like an easier first step is to go, hey, there's a big need in procurement if there's people interested in that, we can help and. I don't think other than those programs that we've talked about like summer students, I think that the rest of the stuff is usually on business needs or when someone leaves and they need to fill a position or when heavy work comes up and they need extra support, they might hire a contractor, casual person. So I really think that would be just my perception, but I've only ever worked at sport, so I've never worked at another department, so that would be my perception that when they need help they go and get extra or if there's if there's budget money that like we have a lot of programs where there's sun setting, budget, money and so there's money to help hire to run programs. So I'd say that I'd say that there's still challenges and it's slow. The hiring process can be really slow, but I think the intention is there to get people into the positions on the programs that need the support or that have the the support and the have the the budget to go with it." P3 4. "What their situations are, what skills they're looking to develop, what skills they are bringing and the maturity curve of where they are with their own careers as elite athletes. So I'd say probably around those early career programs would be around the summer programs. So in our corporate offices, typically we would be looking at full time employment. Also, contract based full-time employment, part time and full time are often in our

THEME	QUOTATIONS
	frontline areas, so our store operations and our warehouse and ecommerce operations. But again, those would be probably more aligned to those areas of the business project-based work. We, in my experience, typically we haven't done project-based work unless we're working with a third-party vendor contract contractor. Umm, but not so much in terms of that corporate office employment or store operations or warehouse. How are you developing? How you are changing the job to be able to align better with the skills and needs of individuals and in terms of the accommodations process, that's an area that we're focusing on to, umm, create a more seamless pathway. P4 5. "I think the most important thing here is to identify where the best opportunities. Uh, you know, would be would be available if we think about running a business as all businesses are run, you know we do have you know we've got to hire when we need to hire we need to hire the areas that are ohm but we need those individuals. So those types of things are going to be really specific to what job postings are there and what we're able to you know, how we can satisfy hiring that right candidate for the position. This sounds to me more of work integrated learning, so again, maybe that fits in more along the lines of that early careers program or that career development program outside of the sort of traditional you know, you go into a job posting, you apply for it because obviously this is not going to be compatible with the scheduling and the demands of athletes and where they're at. But again, if you know where is that, where is that athlete in their cycle? There may be more opportunities to explore developing those skills because we know that if those are, they're gonna be opportunities that they can apply for. If they're looking for full time kind of transitioning out, for example, so it really depends on a bunch of those different things, we'd have to learn a little bit more. think you know, just again going back to. You know that the way the athlete programs work or there's certainly the commitments that that athletes have, we really want to look at something that provides and uh, some shorter-term skills development or at least exposure into certain areas of the business. I think again, going back to that early careers area, that's probably more compatible. We'd really just need to see what is that talent pool. And I'm, you know, and I think about that last question in my around, you know making a commitment, but they're just a a bunch of things that we would still need to understand. I mean, depending on that maturity level, the skills level that that's present to the interests, it's also the the factor of thinking through there is it's a different ecosystem working in a workplace and you know you're you're bringing these incredible skills and talent." P4 6. "I even answer the question, primarily it's seeing the links between talent that's built from other experiences, not just pure one on one recruiting that you just go out into the wherever and look for your next hire." P5 7. For the most part our programs are in partnerships with schools or they're like university coops. So often they mirror they semester structure. However, there are some programs that have a slightly different timeline, even through schools that might have a different like a trimester setup instead of semesters, or it just really depends. I think we would have some ability to think of think differently in that space in terms of managing work, it absolutely would be easiest if we could align it to one of our existing intakes. So just because that is, those are the cycles that our teamwork off already and we do a fairly high volume of student and coop recruitment. P6
Training and Development	1. "I would also say that we have some like internal mentorship programs that we offer for our staff internally already. We have like internal; we call it like the practice of leadership like personal and professional development programs and things like that. And so where I could see as potentially not offering like a large scale program that would prioritize athletes. What I think we could potentially offer at is like a lower left is like access to. And staff members who are interested in mentorship, access to these like offerings that we could do like a quarterly offering." P2 2. "So lots of training, lots of of awareness and and emotional intelligence investing so that people get just how hard it hurts when it's not done properly or the concern, you know, for someone who says I'm really not sure when I get off the aircraft, if my wheelchairs waiting for me and if it is, if it's damaged, you have just damaged a part of my body." P5 3. "I would say a very strong onboarding program. When the like any employee that shows up, we're still working on different ways of approaching onboarding for even regular folk talent that come into P5. But let's say athletic onboarding program because you know what? Maybe we would want a former athlete to be a part of developing the on boarding program because they understand the mentality of an athlete and saying this is how you should address it." P5
Transferable Skills	1. "I don't know if it would come to a point where it's like only an athlete could fill this spot that's gonna come up in fisheries and oceans. So I'm just saying that right or pure procurement Canada, we we have to pick it athlete, we're only gonna pick an athlete and then out of the athletes apply there's still it doesn't it doesn't matter, but there's still gonna look for some basic skills or the person selling themselves that they're able and interested to do this job right. How are they selling themselves? How can they show me that they attention to detail and like they still have to sell themselves and have some sort of like hopefully they worked in high school at something and you know, maybe it was like the local Golf Club fixing the greens, but at least they, you know, you know, like, yeah, like. And another piece that you're advisors, I'm sure they already talked about, but even is even just doing

THEME	QUOTATIONS
	getting volunteer hours with organizations and I don't know be the you know like I'm the Treasurer on my daughter's brownies group. So they're, you know, like even if you're not getting paid for it, they have to think of all the potential volunteer experiences they've had the public speaking experiences they've had all that type of stuff is, like, important." P3 2. "But again, if you know where is that, where is that athlete in their cycle? There may be more opportunities to explore developing those skills because we know that if those are, they're going be opportunities that they can apply for. If they're looking for full time kind of transitioning out, for example, so it really depends on a bunch of those different things, we'd have to learn a little bit more. And I think it's, you know you want to have people also identify what's of interest to them if they've had previous education in certain areas, if they have a, you know, developed an interest based on some of their own athlete experience. And what's really interesting? Yeah, it there are a lot of things. And what I think about is that and this is just a very basic level knowledge, but an athlete from day one will have that network surrounding their development, their mental well-being, their physical well-being, all of that stuff, the training and that's the to carrying that on for years and it's a valuable option for hiring. I think it's more figuring out how we can fit that into our structure, as in like what we've talked about that we are fairly traditional. How do we how do we think about that differently and how do we challenge some of our own paradigms around things like flexibility or things like different transferable skills?" P4 3. "These people are trained, are disciplined, so I equate it to the military again. You know they have skills that they acquired. They've learned things as a result of their life experiences and to be able to tap into that. But then mold it into a successful transition for an employee within our industry, it makes perfect sense then you said that a large percentage of them have postsecondary degrees. I would say I primarily hire attitude over aptitude any day. So, you know you can build the aptitude over time. But like the behavioral traits that are that are ingrained in athletes and the military, right, those things that there's on one side, I know we might get to this later, but on one side, we're building your business objectives as an individual in a company, but you're also building your building your professional objectives, which are your competencies. They have to represent they have to show respect and diligence. Those things just sort of marry very nicely with. Well, that's the kind of qualities I would like to see a person have when they walk into the door at Air Canada, even with their degree or whatever they're bringing is there, you know their technical skill or knowledge." P5
Workplace Culture and Policies	1. So those would be the expectations and I think at a level that it would be at corporate, the expectation would be like also full time for a period of time. It wouldn't be like you work two days a week or three days a week. Kind of thing like at the corporate level, I think even our internships. The only time that we have anything that's short term is we have a thing called the store support program where store we have people from stores that are educators who currently work at lemon and are full-time educators who three days a week, they work in the store and then two days a week they work at the office and they're still hourly employees. So those people would have to still like work at 11. I don't think we would give that option as like a part time solution in this and it kind of scenario. So I think the expectation would be like it would be a short term work environment in terms of flexibility like a six month internship with the expectation that people would be in the office. P2 2. "But again, if you know where is that, where is that athlete in their cycle? There may be more opportunities to explore developing those skills because we know that if those are, they're gonna be opportunities that they can apply for. If they're looking for full time kind of transitioning out, for example, so it really depends on a bunch of those different things, we'd have to learn a little bit more." P4 3. "So, there are policies around flexible workplace and so if we even go down to the core of being in the office, you know, we have a policy that allows for flexible work with a three day into the office. I'm sure around the organization, but there are definitely corporate policies. I think in terms of, yeah, we'd have to kind of understand who those candidates are, Can we move, you know, beyond what our corporate policies and that is a question I can't really answer, but I would say that there are policies in place. So, they would have to be considered." P4 4. "How are they going to fit with the corporate culture, which is just as important, right? Wellness programs and we invested a ton especially during and post pandemic on how you make yourself feel well mentally, physically, financially we cover all the bases." P5 5. "But everything is regulated by the contract, the collective agreement, and so Shannon is the most senior employee in that department but doesn't really want it. So those would be the expectations, and I think at a level that it would be at corporate, the expectation would be like also full time for a period of time." So I think the expectation would be like it would be a short-term work environment in terms of flexibility like a six-month internship with the expectation that people would be in the office. P5

T: Recommendations Approach – Short Term Action Plan

ACTIVITIES/ACTION ITEMS	LEAD	MATERIALS	TIME
Share athlete insights, readiness and feedback regarding career opportunities they are seeking. Survey additional partners who did not participate in the study so that all levels of partnerships have been given a chance to explore opportunities in hiring athletes.	Project Lead	MEMOS Data Collection – Ongoing Research and Development	September-December 2024
- Share results of Partner Outreach with COC/CPC Marketing and Partnerships Teams and Game Plan Steering Committee. - Present Results of MEMOS project in a org-wide call for both Canadian Olympic and Paralympic Committees	Project Lead	Data Collection Summary and Results	October 2024
- Revisit insights with partners to customize work experience program - Align with Commercial Affairs team on agreements and rights for programming and storytelling/promotion of athlete experiences - Discuss internal dates for launching the promotion of applications	COC/CPC	Summarize feedback provided within the interviews and address action items for partners. Provide metrics on current WEP Insights would include exploring the following: - Outlining flexible work for athletes x sponsor working models - Explore which model fits their business needs from Game Plan's WEP framework - Intakes and recruitment cycles timelines - Points of contact for talent acquisition process - Onboarding programming for both athletes and employers - Promotion Plan (Terms and conditions TBD via COC/CPC Commercial Affairs teams.	October-December 2024
Prepare website roll-out and materials for promotion	Deloitte	Revisit work plan with Deloitte	January 2025
Revisit terms and conditions with COC/CPC marketing partner leads	Project Lead	Clearly outline the objects of Game Plan's Work Experience Program "Team Canada at Work." Integrating into COC/CPC's partner work to identify values alignment and impact of athlete-centred programming. Contractual guidelines to be considered or socialized to help facilitate some guiding principals	February 2025
Partnership Summit event to help kick-off career opportunities and internal program integrations	COC/CPC	Help mobilize and kick-off the launch of GP Work Experience Program "Team Canada at Work." This is an opportunity for Game Plan to be leveraged and prioritized differently within the organization's project workflow with partnerships.	March 2025

U: Recommendations Roadmap

	YEAR 1				YEAR 2		YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5+
TASK	0-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	0-12	7-12	0-12	0-12	0-12
Foundation and Implementation									
Organizational-Buy-in									
Communication/Engagement						Ongoing			
Program Implementation and Tools						Ongoing			
Expansion and Optimization									
Program Expansion									
Quality Assurance									
Scaling and Integration									
System-Wide Integration									
Engagement Outreach									

V: Team Canada at Work: Proposed Website Designs (*Program to be formally named*)

