

CAREER OPTIONS IN SPORTS

Panelists:



**David Lanys, President
The College of Sports Media**

**Claire Dias, Olympic Bronze Medalist
And Sports Entrepreneur**

**Daniel Steinfeld, Director of Finance
Toronto Argonauts**

**Paul Beirne, VP of Business Operations
Toronto FC**

**Nicole Lee, Account Executive, Corporate Marketing
National Hockey League**

**Heather Marchment, Athletic Therapist
The Sports Clinic**

**Presented by the Career Centre,
University of Toronto Mississauga**

**Sponsored by the Department of Physical
Education, Athletics and Recreation**

**Wednesday, February 11, 2009
Faculty Club**



Table of Contents

I. Career Options in Sports.....	p.3
II. Sports Careers for Graduates	p.4
III. Who Employs in the Sports Industry?	p.6
IV. Further Education Options	p.6
V. Words of Wisdom: How to Get a Job in Pro Sports	p.7
VI. How to Get Experience	p.9
VII. UTM Career Centre Services	p.12

I. Career Options in Sports

For many people, sports are an area of life that is attached to great memories. Scoring the winning goal in the championship, making the big save on a breakaway or just hanging out with the team conjures up memories of friendship, competition and personal achievements. These experiences illustrate the benefit of *teamwork, perseverance and respect* and are often a key reason why sports enthusiasts are interested in pursuing a career in the sports industry. Although the majority of these careers are not on the playing field, *these core values are built into the many careers that help bring professional sports to life* and play an important part in ensuring success in this industry.

The sports industry is *the fusing of business (often big business) and entertainment*. An amazingly high level of job satisfaction can be found in sports related careers, from the sports equipment salesperson selling bats and bowling balls to the agent insuring players and playing fields. For the sports enthusiast, their passion and interest in the sport makes them want to be involved at some level. The profession is also characterized by long hours of hard work and dedication. Outsiders often only see the glamour of sports careers but don't always consider that sports related careers may require one to work long and odd hours as well as miss personal commitments.

The sports industry continually requires an increasingly diverse group of professionals to successfully fill the *wide range of jobs* available. These careers are interdependent on one another for success and this emphasizes the teamwork that is necessary. For example, the successful football coach relies upon the ground crew, the sports information publicist, the statistician, the athletic trainer and others. The successful general manager relies upon the director of concessions, the marketing/sales manager, the sportswriters, the radio broadcaster and the team manager.

A common route to obtaining a position in the sports industry involves *integrating an existing skill or specialty with sports*. A lawyer could refocus toward becoming a sports agent. A nurse may take additional course work in athletic training to enter the profession. A computer specialist may wish to assist in the operation of the centerfield scoreboard or team website. A writer might cover a local sports team. An accountant might serve as a business manager for a college athletic department. The possibilities are limited only by one's imagination!

Although there are many different routes to obtaining a position in the sports industry *one ingredient remains critical; interpersonal skills*. Sports are a people business. You must be able to work with people, often under stress – losing streaks, deadlines, negotiations, game injuries and budget inadequacies!

II. Sports Careers for Graduates

Below is a list of potential career options for students interested in working in the sports industry. The list is categorized into various career areas, each of which contribute to the many functions that are required to produce professional and amateur sports in the

21st century. Before you begin to consider the possible career options listed below, take a moment to identify your skills, qualities, interests, experiences and values. Once you know the factors that are very important to you in your career, you can better determine which sports related careers would be the best fit . Remember, a successful career is not always based on monetary status but is rather a combination of all these elements. If you need assistance in identifying these factors or understanding how they could combine into potential career options, please book an appointment to see a Career Counsellor.

Reminder: If an occupation peaks your interest, feel free to browse through the Career Centre library to learn more about the specific occupation. Also, occupations marked with an asterisk (*) have career profiles which can be viewed using Career Cruising. UTM students can access Career Cruising by signing up for a 'job postings' account with the Career Centre Online (please ask us if you need help with this!)

Professional Athletes

- Professional Athlete*
- Race Car Driver*

Coaching Careers

- Coach* (Professional, College, School, Volunteer)
- Diving/Swimming Instructor*
- Martial Arts Instructor*

Sports Management/Administration

- School Athletic Director
- Community Recreational Director*
- Sports Facility Maintenance Personnel

Sports Journalism

- Newspaper Sports writing
- Sports Broadcaster (Television and Radio)
- Sports Broadcast Producer
- Sports Broadcast Video Editor

Physical Education

- Fitness Instructor*
- Personal Trainer*
- Sports Instructor*
- Physical Education Teacher*

Sports Medicine

- Athletic Therapist*
- Kinesiologist*
- Sports Physician
- Orthopedist
- Osteopath
- Chiropractor
- Physical Therapist
- Prosthetist
- Sports Nutritionist

Public Relations, Marketing and Sales

- Sports Marketer*
- Sports Public Relations Specialist
- Manager, Sporting Goods Store

Additional Careers

- Sport Psychology Consultant*
- Sports Equipment Sales and Development
- Sports Photographer
- Sports Agent/Representative
- Stadium and Arena Concessionaries
- Sports Statistician
- Scout
- Sports Academicians
- Sports Cartoonist
- Sports Equipment Manager
- Sports Official*
- Sports Museum Curator

Sample Professional Team Positions

- General Manager
- Office Manager/Executive Secretary
- Field Maintenance Director
- Director of Stadium Operations
- Director of Ticket Operations
- Home/Visiting Club House Manager
- Official Scorer
- Public Address Announcer
- Scoreboard Operator
- Website Designer

III. Who Employs in the Sports Industry?

There are a variety of organizations that offer sports related careers in North America, with varying levels of sport specific knowledge required for success. Furthermore, many organizations may have operations that require specialized skills from areas of study such as business, science, law and media.

Below is a list of the types of organizations that employ people in the sports industry. Research these types of organizations to understand their organizational structures, activities, products and services, future plans and their market size! This information will help you understand their needs as an employer and the types of positions they may have to offer. You can then link this information back to your experiences and skills to understand which positions would best suit your background or to determine what experience you need to gain to obtain the positions you want.

- **Professional Teams** (eg. Toronto Argonauts)
- **Professional Sports Leagues** (eg. NHL)
- **Amateur Teams** (eg. Mississauga Majors – OHL)
- **Amateur Sports Leagues** (eg. Dixie Soccer League)
- **Community Sports Programs** (eg. City of Mississauga)
- **Sports Apparel Organizations** (eg. – Puma)
- **Sports Equipment Organizations** (eg. – CCM)
- **Sports Not For Profit Committees** (eg. - Special Olympics Canada)
- **Sports Health/Rehabilitation Organizations** (eg. – The Sports Clinic)
- **Print/Electronic/Television Media Organizations** (eg. The Score)
- **Universities/Educational Institutions** (eg. University of Toronto Varsity Blues)
- **Sports Communications Companies** (eg. SDI Marketing)
- **Sports Law/Athlete Management Firms** (eg. Newport Sports Management)
- **Fitness Centers** (eg. Goodlife Fitness)
- **Sports Training/Development Schools** (eg. John Elkin’s Hockey Goalie School)
- **Sports Retail Companies** (eg. Sporting Life)
- **Sports Research Laboratories** (eg. Gatorade Sports Science Institute)
- **Sports Museums and Historical Sites** (eg. Hockey Hall of Fame)

IV. Further Education Options

From the above information regarding potential careers and employers, one can understand that many of the occupations require a higher level of education than an undergraduate degree. The sports industry is so large and requires so many diverse competencies (business, health related, communications etc.) that a comprehensive list of further education options would be nearly impossible to create. To assist you in the educational research process, below is a sample list of further education options in Ontario that are specifically tailored towards sports related careers.

Having a specific career or area in mind makes the process of researching and evaluating further educational options easier. Bear in mind that some occupations will also require

specific skills which may be just as or more important than education, so take the time to research specific careers or areas to obtain a detailed understanding of what you're hoping to achieve and what the important educational elements are will lead to future success!

Examples of Graduate Programs/Post Graduate Diplomas and Certificates

- **Sports Management**, Durham College
- **Fitness and Lifestyle Management**, George Brown College
- **Sports and Recreation Administration**, Lambton College
- **Sporting Good Business**, Sir Sanford Fleming College
- **Exercise and Lifestyle Management**, Humber College
- **Health Promotion**, University of Toronto (St. George)
- **Psychology and Socio-Cultural Studies of Physical Activity**, Queen's University
- **Sport and Event Marketing**, George Brown College
- **Sports Journalism**, Loyalist College
- **Coaching**, York University
- **Television, Radio and New Media Broadcasting**, College of Sports Media

V. Words of Wisdom

How to get a Job in Pro Sports

Tom Van Riper

Published: Tuesday, August 12th, 2008

The Financial Post

Want to work in professional sports? Get in line. Larger staffs these days mean openings are more plentiful than they used to be, but the competition is intense. Even people with advanced degrees agree to take internships to get a foot in the door.

Still, for college students or recent grads determined to pursue a career in sports management, some entry-level jobs are more valuable than others. Working in the box office, for instance, isn't likely to get you anywhere. But proving you've got sales skills--that's another story.

Without having a network of contacts, showing a sports organization that you can sell to groups, organize events or put together media guides goes a long way toward reaching that corner office with a view of the field.

"The kids don't want sales, but that's where the jobs are," says Bernie Mullin. Starting at \$10 an hour plus commission may not appeal to a newly minted college grad, but few things draw more notice from senior management than showing you can get paying customers to the game. Sponsors, after all, pay by the eyeball.

"They need to understand it's all about butts in seats," says Mullin, who now runs the Aspire Group, an industry consultant. Those who jump into the group-sales game be warned: The competition is fierce. To qualify, some sort of sales track record, even selling sneakers in a sporting goods store, is a big help.

But if sales just aren't your thing, there are other avenues. Most clubs and leagues offer entry level slots in public relations. Writing press releases and putting together media guides is often a path to bigger things. Legendary NFL Commissioner Pete Rozelle went that route, starting out in public relations for the Los Angeles Rams. The pros' advice to undergrads: Get down to your school's Sports Information Department as a suggestion.

Another popular choice: customer service. Helping to put together special events, like pre-game stadium entertainment or off-site shindigs for sponsors, is a way to demonstrate the organization skills and attention to detail that management loves.

For finance and accounting types, the best bet is to forget sports right out of college. Most teams hire those folks from their outside auditors rather than at the entry level. Likewise, boutique investment banks specializing sports (generally team acquisition and stadium financing) tend to be small shops.

While a specialized degree in sports management carries a lot of importance, sports teams are more interested in seeing experience through internships, college athletic department work and event planning.

Also important to know going in is that sports management is not a nine-to-five job. Between travel and various starting times for games, the hours can be crazy. For the closest comparison, think of the 24/7 hotel business.

The good news is that even through a bumpy economy, the sports industry continues to thrive. Most teams and outside agencies are hiring even as other sectors of the economy cut back.

Sample Starting Jobs in Pro Sports

Group Ticket Sales Rep

This job entails hitting the telephone to drum up sales for large groups. Top performers often make \$100,000 or more annually by age 30, often moving into corporate sponsorship sales. Organizations want to see some type of sales experience in a résumé, even if it's a part-time position in a retail store.

Customer Service Rep

Many sports teams offer entry-level spots geared to helping to organize events, like special days at the stadium or off-site gatherings for sponsors. Showing you can get a band on the field at the right time or set up a hospitality tent at a nearby park demonstrates organizational skills that senior management values.

Public Relations Assistant

Entry-level PR work means helping to write press releases and organizing media guides. Openings can be had with both teams and league offices. First step: Run to your college's sports information department and volunteer for those duties. That experience is the first thing a hiring manager wants to see.

Client Service Assistant (Outside Agencies)

Outside sports agencies like IMG hire entry-level people to service corporate customers and help plan events. They'll want a candidate who is organized and shows an interest in sports.

eMarketing/Database Management

A lot of grunt work here, such as inputting data from suite guests' business cards to track who's coming to the game. But do a good job, and you could find yourself selling suites before long. And a good sales track record there can be a fast track to management.

Graduate Assistant - Sports Information Department

As with players, the college level can be a good springboard to the pros. Writing press releases and helping to put together media notes can lead to suite and sponsorship sales.

University/ College Development Rep

Starting outside the sports arena, colleges often have openings for recent grads in alumni fundraising. Many move on to athletic fundraising, a potentially visible role on the way to the athletic director's chair.

Account Associate (Outside Marketing Agency)

Some sports marketing consultants have entry-level spots that entail media tracking and monitoring, i.e. keeping and analyzing spreadsheet records of clients' media coverage. Logistics planning for vendors can also be part of the job.

Marketing Analyst (Outside Marketing Firm)

College grads with strong analytical skills are put to work reviewing sports sponsorships, helping advertisers determine whether they're getting sufficient bang for their buck. The job includes measuring market research results used to determine how well a sponsorship is helping a brand resonate with the public.

Researcher (Television)

Want to get into the media side of sports? Networks selectively hire researchers for events like the Olympics to interview athletes and coaches, write bios and compile statistics for on-camera hosts.

VI. How to Get Experience

A great way to learn more about the sports industry and build a network of contacts is to start early and seek relevant summer, part-time and volunteer opportunities. Remember that relevant work can come in a variety of industries and to keep your focus

on opportunities that build the relevant skills that recruiters will seek! Don't discount jobs like working at a hockey school, golf course, life guarding, indoor sport facility and retail sport jobs to gain transferable skills that are helpful in your work search, as well as experience working in the sports environment. Here are some samples from the U of T Job Postings, available through the UT Mississauga Career Centre web site:

Position Advertised

Service: Summer Employment Service

Position Title: Sports League Assistant

Skills:

- Communication
- Data Management
- Interpersonal
- Organizational

Part-time/Full-time: Full-time

Position Duration: Summer

Position Description:

Not So Pro Sports™ is a sport and social club based out of Toronto, with approximately 15,000 active members. We cater to active adults in their 20's, 30's and 40's. We offer co-ed sports leagues, various tournaments, organized weekend trips & socials.

Job Summary:

This position consists of administrative duties for the sports leagues as well as providing support to other departments.

Job functions:

- Data entry – league scores
- Preparing schedules, score records and other documents for league use
- Answer telephone inquiries related to sports leagues
- Customer Service
- Respond to e-mail inquiries related to sports leagues
- May be required to provide on-site assistance at league locations
- Maintaining sports equipment inventory
- Assist with social events planning
- Pick up and delivery of sports equipment on occasion
- Providing administrative support to League Manager
- Miscellaneous administrative tasks
- Provide administrative support for other office duties when needed

Skill/Ability/Knowledge Requirements:

- Must have a valid drivers license (own car is an asset)
- Strong organizational and administrative skills
- Excellent Microsoft Office skills (including Excel, Outlook and Word)
- Strong ability to prioritize and multi-task
- Excellent communication skills (verbal and written)
- Strong customer service skills
- Must be positive, energetic, and able to work both independently and as a team player
- An interest in sports and recreation is beneficial

Discipline:

- ANY Discipline

Working @ UTM – The Work Study Program

The Work-Study program provides OSAP eligible U of T students with an opportunity to work on campus during the academic year and gain academic/career related experience. Work study positions are advertised on the U of T job postings system beginning after Labour Day. Previous postings relating to sports have included:

- 1. Aquatic or Fitness Assistants - RAWC**
- 2. Sports League Commissioners – RAWC**
- 3. Web and Marketing Assistant – RAWC**
- 4. Program Assistants – RAWC**
- 5. Peer Health Promoter – UTM Health and Counselling Centre**

Work Study Academic/Career Related Position Information

Work-Study Position: League commissioner

Skills:

- Analytical
- Communication
- Data Management
- Interpersonal
- Management & Leadership
- Event management or sports administration

Number of Vacancies: 2

Position Description:

Organize schedule and run a campus recreation league, in either women's, men's or coed sport. (Assisted by the program coordinator)
Organize league, Liaise with team captains and trouble shoot any problems.

Centre for Physical Education
3359 Mississauga Road
Room 065 The RAWC
Mississauga ON
L5L 1C6

Hours of work available/week: 12

Web Links and Resources

Check out our web links below to get connected with resources that can help you get some valuable experience.

Cosmosportsjobs.com

Cosmosportsjobs.com is a Canadian website that covers a variety of sports, specifically geared towards matching individuals with a passion for a career in sports, with companies within the industry seeking qualified employees.

CanadianSport.ca

Canadian Sport is Canada's sport information resource centre which retrieves, disseminates and communicates Canadian sport research to sporting communities around the world. Visit their job board to see many student opportunities in Canadian sports organizations!

City of Mississauga – Summer Student 2009, Sports Job Opportunities Aid **<http://www.mississauga.ca/file/COM/2009SportsJobAid.pdf>**

This resource is dedicated to communicating the available sport related jobs that the City of Mississauga offers to students in the summer months.

Coaching Association of Canada – Coaching Internship Program **<http://www.coach.ca/eng/grants/internships.cfm>**

Through this project, the Coaching Association of Canada (CAC) is offering subsidies of \$12,000 to enable sport organizations to hire young professionals for coaching positions leading to permanent full-time employment.

Workinsports.com

WorkInSports.com is an American all sports based website with a comprehensive listing of jobs and internships in the sports industry.

Sportbusiness.com

Learn more about the business side of sports with this internationally recognized website. The site includes a job board with many international opportunities.

***Reminder:** Most professional, semi-professional and amateur sports leagues have an official job posting board on their website that includes an internship section for students. For example, check out the National Hockey League's official job posting website at <http://hockeyjobs.nhl.com/teamwork/jobs/default.cfm>. Also, don't forget about every league's teams. Most teams hire interns through their website's job posting board!

VII. UT Mississauga Career Centre Services

Resume and Cover Letter Toolkit, Workshops, Resume Critiques

Whether you're just beginning the process of building your resume or want to tweak it for an attractive job posting, the UTM Career Centre can help! Take a look at our resume toolkit online, attend a resume and cover letter workshop or book an individual appointment for a resume critique with one of our professional staff.

Career Counselling

Are you unsure about your career direction or unsure about how your academic program relates to career opportunities? Come in and book an individual appointment with one of our career counsellors.

Extern Job Shadowing Program

Want to get to know more about an occupation? Apply for the Extern Job Shadowing Program and job shadow an industry professional for 1-5 days. To learn more information, come in and ask one of our Career Assistants or go to our website under “Explore Careers.”

Alumni Career Connections Program

Learn from the experts - UT Mississauga alumni who have recently been in your shoes. This is your opportunity to gather valuable, industry-specific information from a professional through an informational interview or informal one-on-one mentoring. Learn more at http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/careers/alumni_connections.html

Career Resource Library

Information about careers and career planning, professional schools, effective work search methods, employer directories, Information Interview Contacts, Work/Study Abroad information, and more are available at the Career Centre in SE3094. Computers are available for student use through which you can access web sites, job postings and Career Cruising, a Canadian electronic career guide.

Job Postings Online Account

Sign up to view job postings through the Career Centre website and get access to work opportunities for summer, volunteer and part-time positions. Full-time listings are available for graduating students and recent graduates (see below). Included in your account is access to events sign up for all three campuses (UTM, UTSC and St. George), Career Cruising, Goinglobal and much more!

Graduating Students Employment Service

GSES is a program designed to help students find full-time employment upon graduation. GSES runs from September to March every year and gives students in their final year of study a chance to connect with recruiters from a wide range of industries. Attend a GSES Orientation by signing up through our events calendar on the UTM Career Centre website.

Recent Graduate Employment Service

Recent graduates can register for RGES and access it up to 2 years following their convocation date. RGES allows new and recent graduates access to immediate full-time work opportunities. Attend an RGES Orientation by signing up through our events calendar on the UTM Career Centre website.

Summer Job Fair

The Summer Job Fair (held in early to mid January each year) gives UTM students an opportunity to speak with representatives from various organizations about a wide range of summer job positions. Keep up to date with which organizations will be attending the event and use this opportunity to speak directly with employers about the positions available in their organizations.

Career Expo

Take the opportunity to network with professionals in a wide range of organizations about typical career paths available in their fields. Learn what skills, experience and education are desired and get a head start on obtaining your ideal career. This fair is held in late October each year.

Professional Schools Fair

This fair (held in early October) provides students an opportunity to speak with representatives from programs such as law, dentistry, medicine, physiotherapy, education, business, social work, graduate studies and college post-graduate studies. Find out about admission requirements, types of programs, application deadlines and more.

Get Experience Fair

The Get Experience Fair (held in late September) is a great opportunity for you to gain relevant experience in part-time or volunteer opportunities, help out in a beneficial cause and/or explore a wide range of valuable experiences that will help you as you work towards your career goals.

UT Mississauga Career Centre E-Mail Newsletter

Don't forget to sign up for our e-mail newsletter and keep informed about upcoming events, career fairs, job postings and more!

...and many, many more! Take twenty minutes and go to the UTM Career Centre website to take a look through some of the services and resources we offer. There's sure to be something that will help you work towards your goal of a sports related career.