



STUDENT ATHLETES & Career Development

The Student Athlete: ahead of the competition

Traits which keep student athletes ahead of the game:

As a college athlete, you've developed valuable skills, dedicated time to practice and gained experience in competitive events. You'll want to help employers see your experiences as predictors of your success in the workplace.

Highlight them in your resume, cover letters and interviews. See our [Guide to Writing Cover Letters, CVs and Resumes](#) for examples.

Marketable Skills to Highlight:

- Results oriented
- Understands time management
- Understands the value of teamwork
- Coachable
- Handles pressure well
- Always striving to improve
- Great discipline
- Strong work ethic
- Good communication skills
- Punctual
- Focused
- Competitive nature
- Confident
- Dedicated
- Knows how to execute a game plan

Your career game plan:

Know yourself. Think about your accomplishments. What are your skills, interests, values? What aspects of your athletic activities do you enjoy most? Are there aspects you'd like to avoid after college? What are the reasons you play the sport that you play or joined the team you joined? How would your coaches and teammates describe you? You can talk with a career counselor about these questions and explore where your answers might lead.

Networking with an athlete's advantage:

Networking is important for all people in all careers – it's just plain good sportsmanship to connect with and help others. As an athlete, you have a network readily available within your team. Use the Online Alumni Directory (try searching for your sport in the Interests and Mentoring sections), and LinkedIn in addition to reaching out to former teammates and coaches. Coaches keep in touch with many former players and could connect you with people in careers of interest to you. Visit the Career Services website for more resources on networking.

Testing the waters: Internships and Externships

As you know, every skill must be developed through practice. Internships and Externships are an excellent way to build skills and experiences. Given the pandemic, opportunities will likely be remote but you should explore ways to learn more about possible careers by gaining some experience. Many employers are able to

offer project based learning opportunities to students all done virtually. Start your search by making an appointment with a Career Counselor or by talking to a Career Peer Advisor. Also, reach out to your network to connect with potential employers and check out our Internship Guide for more search advice.

Is it the off-season?

Know if there are cycles or set schedules of hiring for the types of internships and jobs which interest you. For example, many large companies do their hiring in the fall. If you play a fall sport think about how to plan ahead and manage your time. Some other industries also have set timelines, while some are hiring continuously throughout the year. Likewise, know graduate school applications deadlines and how they'll coincide with your sport(s). Many graduate school applications are due in December.

Going the extra mile:

Get involved in your sport beyond the field, such as SAAC, TopSoccer, Special Olympics, or other community service. Try to position yourself in a leadership role in one of these groups or within your team. And, of course, you may be involved in groups unrelated to your sport which will give you an opportunity for leadership and breadth of experiences. It's all good experience to help you develop a career game plan and hone your skills.

Advice from a former Swarthmore student athlete

I refereed rugby at a national level and it has been very beneficial for my career. It turns out that after convincing 30 angry rugby players to listen to you, managing a group does not seem very intimidating. Plus the decisiveness and ability to withstand criticism and continue to perform, while at the same time having a good relationship with the players and taking in feedback is great practice for high pressure work situations.

David Pope '89, intercollegiate and intramural athlete

At the job interview:

A majority of your time outside the classroom has been spent in athletics. Be sure to articulate clearly how your experiences as an athlete will transfer to the position for which you're interviewing. You have strong transferable skills that make you an excellent employee. But remember you are a talented engineer or political scientist or artist who is also an athlete.



Swarthmore College
CAREER SERVICES

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