



A CAREER IN SPORTS SCIENCE

JULIAN LIM
PERFORMANCE MANAGER

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What made you pursue this career?

Like many coaches, I was a failed athlete riddled with injuries that kept me from competing in track and field at the highest level for Singapore. That led me down the path of learning more about sport science and how it can help myself and others in enhancing physical performance and mitigating the risk of injuries in training. I eventually landed up pursuing a career in strength and conditioning.

What are your main responsibilities?

I have been involved in high performance strength and conditioning for the past decade for elite, national and amateur level athletes. This journey has given me extensive skills and experience in the field of sport performance conditioning and research development. I have also completed my Master's degree in strength and conditioning research, investigating the effects of a unique strength training protocol to improve the sprint performance of Singapore's national track and field athletes. My postgraduate studies enabled me to gain knowledge in the area of strength and power performance monitoring. This has translated into scientific publications in peer-reviewed journals showcasing practical applications in enhancing athletic performance.

Currently, I oversee the planning and delivery of training programs for athletes looking to enhance their physical competencies to improve sports performance. These training programs also include an element of rehabilitation to ensure the athlete is physically robust to endure the demands of training and competitions, without succumbing to sport-related injuries. The programs are closely monitored with regularly physical testing and assessments to gauge an athlete's progress and adaptation to the training stimulus imposed.

What is needed to be successful in this role?

An appetite for continuous improvement is definitely needed to stay current with the best practices in high performance sports. Sports is in its infancy in the area of research and development and the training concepts you learn today is constantly upgraded and tweaked tomorrow. A sports scientist has to regularly scour academic journals and attend conferences to upgrade professionally in this industry.

What do you enjoy most about this role?

The best moments for me are to see my athletes reap the benefits of their investments in training. It is comforting to know that I have played a part (albeit a small one) in their journey to excel in their sports, with some of them representing Singapore on the world stage.

Share your advice with students who are keen to pursue a career in sports science.

Pursue a degree in sports science to lay the foundation needed to hone your expertise in this unique field. After which, zoom in on a specialisation (Strength and Conditioning, Physiology, etc.) that interests you. You could attain industry certifications or undergo graduate study programmes. At the same time, broaden your skills that are complementary to the role in areas such as rehabilitation, data analytics, etc.