

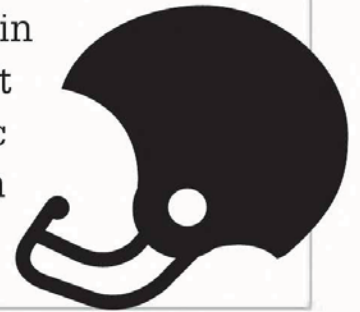


PROFESSIONAL ATHLETE

JOB DESCRIPTION

With the talent to be paid to practice their sport, professional athletes compete to achieve individual and team success and to entertain fans.

They work hard at training to stay in peak physical condition and perfect their skills. As well as their athletic duties, many professionals perform educational or charity work.



SALARY

Low-earning professional ★★★★★

Top-earning professional ★★★★★

INDUSTRY PROFILE

Extremely competitive, varied industry • Limited opportunities to reach highest level • Work may be part-time • Lucrative profession with international fame and wealth for successful athletes

AT A GLANCE



YOUR INTERESTS Competitive sport • Physical Education (PE) • Fitness • Health and nutrition • Business and marketing • Anatomy • Biology



ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS There are no minimum entry requirements to be a sportsperson, other than talent and dedication to a sport.



LIFESTYLE Hours of work may be long and irregular, with some form of training taking place most days. Competitions may occur on weekends and evenings.



LOCATION Sports professionals train and compete indoors and outdoors. Competitive events sometimes require national and international travel.



THE REALITIES Success can make this a highly rewarding and satisfying career, but many professional athletes have to supplement their income with other jobs.

▼ RELATED CAREERS

- ▶ **PERSONAL TRAINER** *see pp. 300–301*
- ▶ **COMMUNITY SPORTS LEADER** Encourages public participation and access to sports and physical activity. Community sports leaders may work with specific groups, such as young or disabled people.
- ▶ **PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHER** Teaches a range of sports to young people at a school or college, promoting the benefits of physical activity and encouraging and developing sporting potential.
- ▶ **SPORTS PHYSICAL THERAPIST** Works with people with sports- or exercise-related injuries, improving their physical capabilities, providing advice on how to avoid further injury, and administering treatment to aid recovery. Sports physical therapists also diagnose injuries and recommend treatment programs using non-traditional methods of treatment, such as massage, heat treatment, or hydrotherapy.

CAREER PATHS

There is no defined career path for professional athletes, but most naturally talented individuals achieve some success as children, before working with coaches at college or amateur level. Early retirement is common due to the physical demands of professional sports, and many ex-athletes move into media or management.

AMATEUR You can hone your sporting talent by competing at amateur or college level. Participating in national and international events will increase your chances of being spotted by a talent scout.

PROFESSIONAL ATHLETE

As a professional athlete, your competitive career is likely to be short in duration. Many professionals diversify into areas such as business ownership or commentary in the later years of their careers, or study for qualifications in coaching.



COACH Trains promising competitors or sports teams. This specialized area requires additional qualifications, which sportspeople can study for during their playing careers.



MANAGER Works with professional, school, or college sportspeople to manage teams, resources, and training. Managers may also direct an organization's athletics program or manage sports facilities.



SPORTS AGENT Represents a professional sports person in the negotiation of contracts and sponsorships, and often handles their public relations and finances.



SPORTS JOURNALIST

Specializes in a particular sport, using their insight and industry contacts to conduct interviews, attend sporting events, and compile reports for television, radio, Internet, or print media.



SPORTS COMMENTATOR

Provides live commentary and analysis for sports events that are broadcast on television, radio, or the Internet. This job is open to sports personalities with media presentation skills.

SKILLS GUIDE



Absolute dedication to improve and maintain individual athletic skill and physical fitness.



The ability to employ competitive tactics and strategies for gaining an advantage over competitors.



Strong team-working skills to be part of a competitive or coaching set-up, especially in team sports.



Physical strength, endurance, and fitness to maintain performance throughout a sports event.



Good hand-eye coordination and rapid reflexes to excel in competitive sports.