

A Day in the Life of a Team Manager

In the **SportTayside & Fife** area we are fortunate to have a number of high profile individuals who perform or are involved in a range of key roles in the national and international sporting arena. We invited Gina Logan from Cupar who is well known to many in sport, to give us an insight into the world of managing international teams.

Gina was the Team Manager of the Scottish Aquatics team which stunned the sporting world and their Australian hosts by winning 6 gold, 3 silver and 3 bronze medals in the pool at the Commonwealth Games in Melbourne 2006. She was also the Great Britain Team Manager for the GB Youth Swim Team at the European Youth Olympics in Finland this year, and also Team Manager for the Scottish Men's Volleyball Team in Holland this year.

She is currently Assistant General Manager for the Scottish Team who are preparing for the Commonwealth Games in Delhi, 2010, and the following is an account of some of her experiences.

Having been an athlete of mediocre ability, albeit of many disciplines, I never had the opportunity to travel overseas with any of my sports. However later in life, firstly in Hockey and latterly in Swimming, I have had numerous tours in my capacity as Team Manager.

The nitty-gritty of being a Team Manager may not appear very appealing to the more discerning sports person, as basically you are "gofer". My job involves making life stress free for the Coaches and more importantly the Players/Athletes/Swimmers, and this involves a lot of background work.

Young people going overseas for the first time can face numerous problems but the one that provides most challenges is Food - in spite of all the Nutrition talks they now receive I am constantly shocked by the bad eating habits of today's young people - only recently as Team Manager of the Great Britain Youth Olympics Swim Team, I discovered that one of my swimmers went to McDonald's every morning after training - I guess she will not be swimming in 2012!

Again coping with sharing can be a challenge - be it bedrooms or bathrooms, and untidiness can be a problem amongst groups. This often leads to discord in a team and getting room sharing correct is vital as team "gelling" is one of the most important tasks of a being a Team Manager. In Melbourne I was in charge of nineteen swimmers and one diver and during the four weeks we were there I never once heard a harsh word. It is important that athletes use their energy in a positive manner and leave negatives at home.

Success brings happiness in any group, and even for those who do not win medals, as being part of a winning team brings memories of the whole team

experience. I always say that what happened off the field is as important as what happens on it. Elite athletes must always remember how privileged they are to be selected to represent their country and it is always very sad when they abuse this. In all the years I have been a Team Manager I have had very few problems, perhaps being a Mum to five children, has given me insight into the “ways” of young people. BUT sadly this year at the Youth Olympics in Finland I had the unhappy task of reporting two of my swimmers to the Chef de Mission – they were determined to break every curfew and every dress code. Their ultimate punishment was to miss the Closing ceremony and party – which meant I had to do so too – and this involved sitting outside their bedroom door for five hours – fortunately I had my i-pod and a good book.

Such instances are rare and I have worked with some wonderful young people who I hold in great respect – I look on them as my extended family and treat them likewise.

In the challenge I have as Assistant General Team Manager for Scotland at the Commonwealth Games in Delhi, I will have to make sure that all the Scottish Team are accommodated and looked after so that they have the opportunity to fulfill their potential at what, for many, will be the pinnacle of their career.

Throughout the years I have been a Team Manager I have enjoyed making new friends from around the world – this year already I have been in Delhi preparing for 2010, in Holland with the Scottish men’s volleyball team and Finland with the GB youth swim team – all of which started many years ago from being a volunteer at my local swimming Club, and captain of my local Hockey Club.

Gina Logan

Assistant General Manager for the Scottish Team