

**AFTER THE OLYMPIC GAMES,
ATHLETES DETERMINE “WHAT’S NEXT”**
Those with new focus and goals experience easier transition

MADISON, WI – February 2010 – For athletes who have spent years preparing for their moment at the Olympic Games, life after the big event can be a time of uncertainty.

While some athletes will walk away with a Gold Medal in their hand, others try to recover from falling short of their dream. Regardless of the outcome, each athlete experiences a transition as they try to determine what to do next with their life.

“Many Olympians suffer a post-Olympic let-down after the Games,” said Sean McCann, Ph.D., Past President of the Association for Applied Sport Psychology and a sport psychologist for the U.S. Olympic Committee. “It is difficult adjusting to life after the Olympic Games.”

Though some athletes do have lucrative endorsement deals waiting, many more who have devoted the same amount of time and energy into pursuing their sports careers do not.

Those who fare best are the ones who have a new focus that will challenge them. It may be a new sport, a new career or plans to attend college. The key is to keep the athletes focused and goal-oriented. Those who have the most difficulty adjusting are the athletes who wait until after the Olympic Games to think about their future.

According to McCann, whether or not an athlete returns home with a medal has relatively little impact on post-Games adjustment. “The most difficult situation is if an athlete is a medal favorite and does not succeed,” said McCann. “The reality that talent and opportunity don’t guarantee success has led some athletes to lose hope and have difficulty moving on. The best advice is to wait some time before making a decision to quit until the pain of losing is less of a factor in making an important decision.”

It can even be beneficial to look at what choices other athletes have made and the successes that followed, so that all options can be examined.

AASP

The Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP) promotes the ethical practice, science and advocacy of sport and exercise psychology. Founded in 1986, AASP is an international, multidisciplinary, professional organization that offers certification to qualified professionals who practice sport and exercise psychology. With more than 1,200 members in 28 countries, AASP is a worldwide leader, sharing research and resources with the public via its Web site, www.appliedsportpsych.org.

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