

The Professional Career Military vs. Professional Sportswoman

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Introduction

- Describe some challenges and rewards facing women who juggle both sport and military careers
- Unique challenge, still new territory for women
- Difficult decisions must often be made
- Benefits outweigh the challenges
- Many different stories, all unique, no “classic profile”

Piazza Armerina – Sicily

- Built between 330 and 360 AD
- Likely belonged to wealthy Roman politician
- Mosaics with scenes of daily life
- Including women athletes!



Today's Women -- Writing History

- More women are making career of the military
 - Most career fields now open to women
- More women are having a sport career
 - Women staying in sport longer
 - More opportunity and funding: professional leagues, media coverage, sponsorships
 - Title IX, providing equal opportunity for sport in high school and universities
 - More socially acceptable to be a sportswoman
- Women doing both and also having families
- Paving the way for next generation

All agree – a great opportunity

- To be a professional soldier
 - Serve their country
- To be a role model
 - Military Colleagues
 - Women
 - Children, especially girls
- To be a competitor in their sport
- To improve health and wellness
- To improve themselves as a person



Challenges— same as for men

- No specific career path for sport in the U.S.
 - WCAP
- Balancing sport and military career is a juggling act
 - More difficult as you get more senior in rank
 - Command support is critical
 - Must still meet wickets for advancement in community
 - Must balance military deployments, ship board duty
 - Often level of competition is sacrificed for job
 - More difficult when you have a family
 - Co-location with military spouse
- One alone is challenging --both is quite a task

With some unique challenges...

- Family— a whole new level of family planning
 - Plan pregnancies
 - Around deployment schedules
 - Around training/competition schedules
 - May delay or forgo having children
 - Women still the primary caregiver for children
 - Childcare considerations for deployments, training and competitions
 - Transport of children



Unique Challenges (cont.)

- Take time off from work when kids are sick
- Be active in children's school and PTA
- Care for aging parents
- Manage the household
 - Cooking
 - Cleaning
 - Shopping
 - Finances/ Pay the bills



Most agree -- You CAN do it all

- But, it is a juggling act
- Requires
 - Discipline, dedication
 - Hard work and persistence
 - Sacrifice and tough decisions on priorities
- Must have solid support from...
 - Command
 - Coworkers
 - Family
 - Spouse



How to juggle it all

- Develop unique solutions to make things work for you and your family
- Incorporate sport into your lifestyle, may become your recreation or transportation
- Sharing responsibilities for childcare and housework is critical,
- Spouse may take on less traditional role of “house husband”
- Find a balance that works for you (military career vs. sport vs. family)



Unexpected benefits

- Sport promotes women in the military
 - Shows the strength of women
 - Sport is source of camaraderie and credibility in military– especially in physically demanding units
- Motivates others in Command and in the community
 - Health and fitness
 - Mentor programs -- daughters of military members
 - Guest speaker
 - Coaching
 - Recruitment
- Good facilities, good opportunities



Conclusion

- A true juggling act performed by dedicated and talented individuals
- No “right” way to do it, each athlete has an individual idea of balance and how to best achieve it
- Huge benefits across the board

