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