

BALANCING THE MILITARY CAREER AND SPORTS

Introduction

1. Just as in anything in life, being a military officer too, it is necessary to strike a balance between work and play. But when it comes to balancing a Military career with playing competitive sports, meaning, sports at National and higher level, balancing between your Military tasks and competitive sports becomes absolutely necessary.

2. In this paper I have focused on this subject based on some of the experiences I have had in my 21years Military career and have balanced between competitive sports, sports administration and performance of Military tasks.

The Aim

3. The Aim of writing this paper is to look at how best one could strike a balance between Military tasks and Playing Competitive sports and to understand the necessary requirements that a Military Officer should possess to do so.

Military Career and Sports balance

4. Majority of military Officers in the world over have joined the Military highlighting their capabilities in academics and sports. At grass root level, the recruits who have had a balance between studies and sports have had a better chance of securing recruitment than a person possessing only academic qualifications. Therefore, even at grass root level we could see that a balance between sports and work or studies is of paramount importance for a military officer.

4. It is fact required to take note that all military Officers who do sports at a higher level cannot continue to do so and move the in the ladder as a Military Officer just by being a sportsman. This is due to the fact that you join the Military to a specific trade or a branch/ regiment in which there are professional activity which each person needs to perform and is trained to perform when necessary. If you are

incompetent to perform your branch duties for which you joined while doing sports, you will be at a disadvantage and be a misfit in your section/ regiment/ branch. When one hangs up his boots they will be rated in the military as an incompetent Officer in his/her profession.

5. Now since we have some idea of the necessity to balance between Military carrier and Sports, we must look at as to why we need to do so? In this context we should first try to understand why sports are played in the Military?

- a. To maintain physical fitness.
- b. To build team spirit to work as a team in the battle field.
- c. To develop fellowship in the sports field which becomes important in battle.
- d. Condition one's mind to cope with stress and pressure.
- e. Build up the image of your respective defence force within the county which becomes a marketing tool for recruitment.
- f. To get rid of battle fatigue and to be mentally conditioned with relief from stressful situations.

6. We looked at why sports are played in the Military, now it is necessary to see some of the fundamental requirements to strike a balance between Military Tasks and sports. As such in the study that I have carried out, it has been revealed that a person cannot get even closer to balancing between the two if the following prioritization is not done proper.

- a. It is required to prioritize your work area together with the sport that you are involved in and identify what is necessary to be done in each area to exist or to be at the level of skill that you are already in, in your respective areas of Military Tasks and Spots.
- b. Do what is possible to be done in each area to develop in your career and in sports.

c. When what is necessary and what is possible has been done, you will have time to look to perform or to reach the impossible.

7. Having said that, we need to look at the requirements that are required to help you in prioritizing your area in duty and play. It is quite straight forward, you need to sharpen your axe and the chainsaw. I mean, I like to compare the Military carrier with a chainsaw and a sports carrier with an Axe. Both equipment are used by a wood chopper. If you want to cut more trees using both equipment, you need to sharpen them from time to time. In that context I like to come to a conclusion that in the same way a wood chopper sharpens his axe to be able to cut more trees, if you need to balance between a service career and competitive sports, you need to sharpen your skills in both areas. If you do not sharpen your skills you will be stagnating with no development.

8. When it comes to developing skills in the sports that you play, it has to be done while playing it and when in the verge of retirement it becomes necessary to develop area like sports administration, coaching or in the field of referee/ judging to be able to fit into the sport that you have loved playing after your retirement.

9. Having understood the requirement for the need to be with development that takes place in both areas, now I like to highlight the fundamental requirements and characteristics of a person who could balance both.

Characteristics of a Total quality personality

- a. Person with character.
- b. Person with Integrity.
- c. People with good values.
- d. People with positive attitude.

10. It has been quite evident in my study that success of a Military Officer who balances both tasks has always depended upon the quality of that individual. Success of a person who balances the two depends on the foundation he has had in both areas.

11. Foundation to success regardless of what your profession and sport, is your attitude.

12. While my focus is tilted towards positive attitude, now we will look at the attributes that are required for a person to balance between Military tasks and Sports.

Attribute that are required to balance between Military tasks and Competitive Sports

- a. Solid foundation in each area and being a Total Quality Person.
- b. Knowledge.
- c. Core Competency.
- d. Commitment and focus.
- e. Eliminate Procrastination.
- f. Prioritization of each area(Military task, Sports)
 - i. What is necessary?
 - ii. What is possible?
 - iii. What is impossible?
- g. Identifying opportunity- look at the bigger picture without being narrow minded.
- h. Mental and physical fitness.
- i. Courage and being able to decide what should be done than wonder what needs to be done.
- j. Leadership, ability to convince people, a credible personality.
- k. Time management.
- l. Do things differently.
- m. Positive attitude.

13. Out of the above attributes that I have specified, I have Identified “Attitude” as the most important of them all which in my study was found as the fundamental requirement to cope up with any situation in performance of Military tasks and Sports.

14. In my study it was revealed that there are factors that affect the attitude of a person when trying to balance between Military tasks and sports which are:

- a. Environment.
- b. Experience.
- c. Education.

Environment- Home, workplace, sporting culture and environment, background.

Experience- Our behavior changes according to our experiences in Sports and in performing Military tasks.

Education- Depending on the foundation a person has had and the scope of his/her education in sports and Military tasks, a persons attitude will change.

15. In a positive environment a marginal performers output increases and in a negative environment a good performers output will decrease. To balance between Military tasks and Sports one must also be aware that there are certain things which you cannot be changed. So what do we do about it? This is something that one has to think of and handle very carefully and has to understand that, to strike a balance, you should not upset any area. Especially the process that is involved in each area and needs to be diplomatic in handling issues pertaining to that, as at this point, you have to understand that how ever much you try, there are certain things that cannot be changed. What you must do is 'do not go to change them, but you can change the way you deal with it. What we must remember is that one cannot change the direction of the wind, but you can certainly change the way you deal with it by setting the sails accordingly to reach your goals and objectives'.

How do you build a positive attitude to enable you to balance between Military tasks and Sports

- a. Change focus and look for the positive.
- b. Make a habit of attending to matters without postponing activities in each area.
- c. Develop an attitude of Gratitude.
- d. Get into a continuous learning process in both areas.
- e. Build a positive self esteem (givers, thinkers, and achievers)
- f. Stay away from negative influence.
- g. Learn to like the things that need to be done.
- h. Always have a glance at your wrist watch to be able to within timelines.
- i. Start your day with on a positive note.

Conclusion

16. In my study on this subject, it was found that, while all other attributes and factors contribute for a Military Officer to balance between Military tasks and sports, all of them will get you closer to achieving your goals and objectives, it is the attitude that will get you there and will help you to accomplish them.

‘The last stone of the foundation to success in the field of sports and Military tasks, regardless of what your field and sport, is your attitude’