

Maximising my potential - Kareena Marshall

Hi there, my name is Kareena Marshall. I am a former pupil of the Glasgow School of Sport. I am now a qualified physiotherapist and a member of the Scottish senior hockey team. I would like to talk to you about how the school of sport helped me maximise my potential. Just recently I achieved one of my biggest goals and went to the Commonwealth Games in Dehli.

The school of sport caught the eye of my brother first and after just one year I noticed the huge opportunity to get a head start and excel in sport that was available by being part of the school. It was a huge decision for me to make as I was very concerned about my academic opportunities if I came to the school. So I did my research first and contacted the universities I was interested in attending. They were all accepting of the reduced curriculum. It was a daunting step to move to a new school but I was made welcome and quickly fitted into Bellahouston academy.

So when I came to the school I actually trained as a badminton player, as yes I am now a Scottish hockey player. I think that is why I can talk about what the school has to offer as a whole athlete. I like to think that I had the potential to make it in sport, and with the skills I picked up at the school I was able to transfer that talent to a slightly different route than the one I started on.

The school thrives on the fact they can offer top class sports specific training in excellent training facilities. But it isn't just these skills that give you the edge. The kids will be able to agree with me here that the hour long conditioning sessions, where your legs are swimming in lactic acid and your thinking of every possible excuse to get out of it. That is what makes you! That is what separates a good athlete from a world class athlete, those that will go that extra mile. And here at the school you are being urged to take that step by some of the most experienced high quality coaches in the country. And as the quote goes "success really does breeds success" and it definitely inspired me to give everything I had. The coaches here aren't only teachers in sport but they are your friends and always there to guide you in the right direction.

The school not only enhanced my skills as an athlete but also developed certain life skills which I still find invaluable today. I am an expert in time management, juggling my career and all my sporting commitments. I also gained a huge amount of confidence, which I know might be a bit of a surprise to some but I wasn't always this outgoing and able to stand here and talk in front of so many people. But I think the most important skill I learned was discipline. You are given a greater amount of responsibility as a pupil here and the emphasis is put on you to prioritise your life, which unfortunately means sacrificing some things, but you know you'll reap the benefits later.

I took these skills forward when I went on to study at Glasgow Caledonian University to be a physiotherapist. Fortunately Caledonian recognise the challenges of being a student athlete and I was awarded a sports bursary and had lines of support available when I was struggling to keep on top of everything. However I know this isn't always the case and I definitely felt this is where my experience at the school really stepped in. I now sit on its Pathways committee with people from the school, varying sports and further education hoping to develop the opportunities available for elite performers, and generally raising awareness that we do need the help at times.

I am obviously hoping to continue my success on the hockey pitch but I also hope that I can pass down my experiences to some of the sports stars of the future. I think the biggest thing I want to emphasise to you, is that the school of sport is a legacy you're left with. Not

only do you leave a very skilled performer and athlete but also a well- rounded, confident and capable individual ready to tackle whatever life throws at you. So work hard and if you have the right approach and attitude let the school help maximise your potential and you could all achieve some of your biggest goals!

My goal now is to play in front of a home crowd at 2014 – how awesome would that be!!