

It's not  
every four  
years; it's  
everyday!



NEWSLETTER

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 2021



The Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics 2020 were the flavour of August as the Indian contingent came back home with a historic medal haul. It served as the perfect background for kicking off our ambitious initiative; to begin conversations and exchange ideas on how to move towards building a peaceful and more inclusive world by leveraging the values of Olympics.

One of our own athletes also shone at the Games, making us immensely proud with her display of grit and determination.

At a time when some of the leading athletes in the world brought mental health issues in the limelight, our team also worked with vigour to ensure our mental wellness initiative took further steps towards normalising conversations at the

grassroots. This edition of the newsletter also contains a special article on the need for mental wellness by Sanjana Kiran (Head Sport Psychologist, ABFT).

September was the month of new launches as we kicked off a new initiative aiming to empower women through sports. It was followed by the inauguration of a new physiotherapy clinic in Bhubaneswar on World Physiotherapy Day.

The month ended on a special note, as we (and the world) celebrated the 39th birthday of our founder, the very understated Mr. Abhinav Bindra. We, at the ABFT, are glad to have someone so inspiring to look up to as we undertake the many challenges that lie ahead.



# Olympic Values Education

## An opportunity to empower Young Indians

The foundation launched a monthly webinar series based on Olympism and its values, with an aim to bring together prominent historians, thought leaders and experienced academicians from all across the world to discuss and synergise the various ways through which the world can adopt these values (Excellence, Friendship, and Respect) and address sustainable development goals through sport.

The first episode was titled *'Olympic movement in the post-Covid era and its implications for civil society'* and was successfully hosted on 23rd August.

In the second episode, which was held on 24th September, our panelists focused on

### *'Olympic Values Education - An opportunity to empower Young Indians'*

Expanding further on the theme of Olympism, the succeeding episodes will focus on topics such as 'The role of athletes and coaches in promoting the Olympic movement', 'Sports for inclusivity (socio-economic segment, disabled population and refugees)', 'Sports for gender equity in society', 'Olympism and youth development' and 'Sports for sustainable development'.

**3000+** individuals impacted through the first two episodes

KNOWLEDGE PARTNER



SPORTS EDUCATION PARTNER

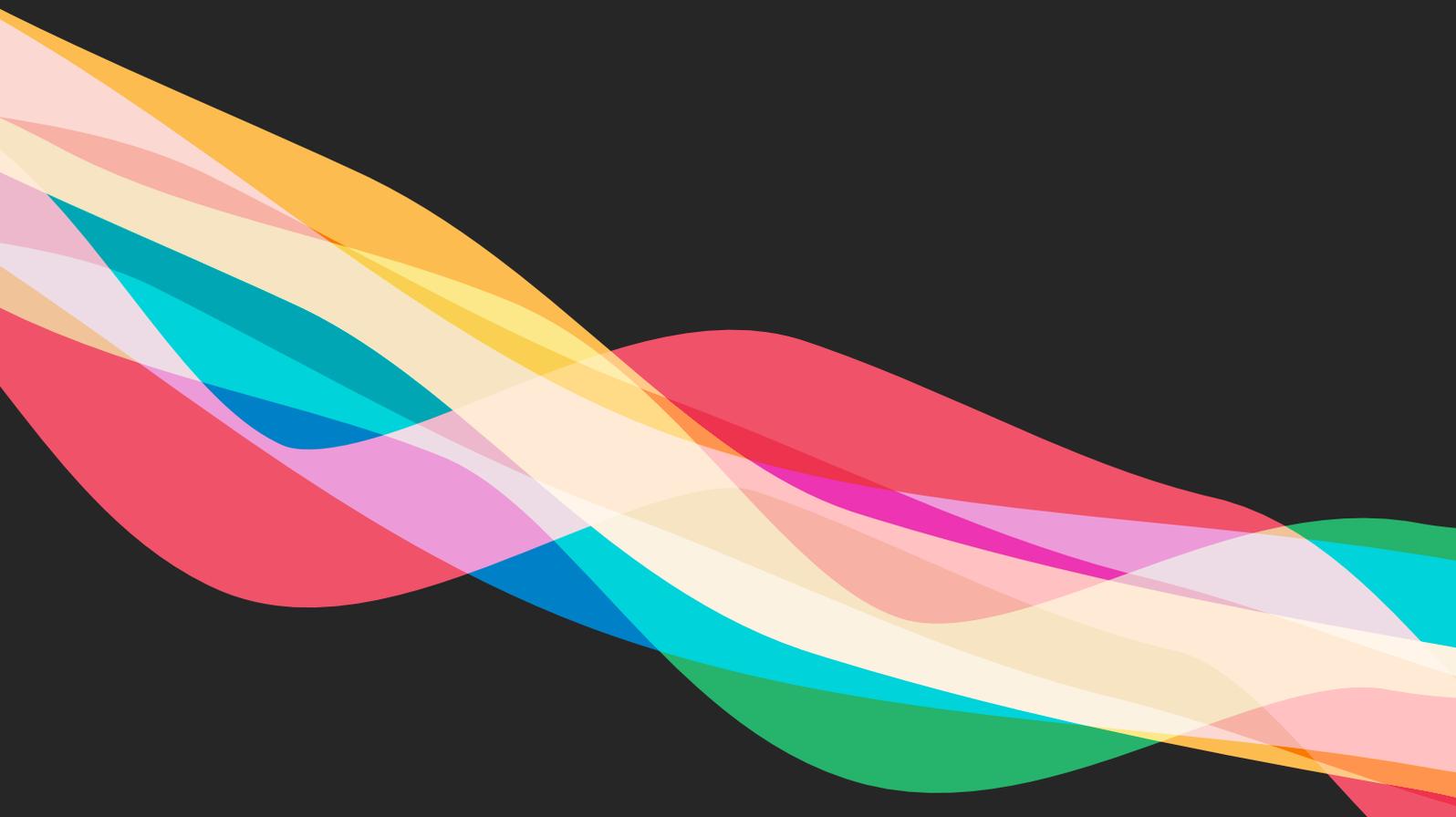


EDUCATION PARTNER



MEDIA PARTNER





Learning does not mean memorizing facts, learning is about changing. The important thing is to make sure that students who are not very sure of themselves, have low confidence or are not very sporty at some point realize that their physical and mental health is closely linked. Children who are physically active have better performance at school. They are calmer, confident, and have a low risk of depression; this is key to changing the way a young person thinks about themselves. Teachers and schools are the change-makers who we rely on to deliver a certain programme or do a certain activity, but at the end of the day, it is up to us to be that change.

**- Xenia Kourgouzova**

In the context of poverty, sports for many citizens is a luxury. So I think the time has really come for a whole new spectrum, for NGOs to fill that gap, to just have this vocal advocacy. What about those elements that make us better people every day? While toolkits and the learning resources are important and a massive help, the really tough thing is for educators to live and practice those values. The most important thing is to shift the north star itself, ie., what is the purpose of education? Not just what is the academic content our kids need to pass exams but what kind of humans we want our them to become, what are the values we want them to muster?

**- Shaheen Mistri**

The three values of Olympics – friendship, excellence and respect – gain even more relevance now for us as a society, as we continue to learn and live with the reality that our outdoor activities are restricted in the midst of the ongoing pandemic. The current situation can adversely affect our collective growth, especially amongst children as they might be going through a tough phase impacting their learning, health and well-being, and overall personal development. Through this series of monthly webinars, the ABFT intends to discuss and explore ways through which we can equip ourselves better for the future through the power of Olympism and Sports.

**- Abhinav A. Bindra**

# Abhinav Bindra Foundation is all set to launch Sport4Her program

Women playing at a recreational, professional, or national level in sports are redefining what they can achieve. The Sport4Her program is designed with a holistic approach using sport as a vehicle for development. 14 female athletes have enrolled for the program which will focus on components including, Leadership development, Mental wellness, Female Athlete Network, and High-Performance training, health & Nutrition

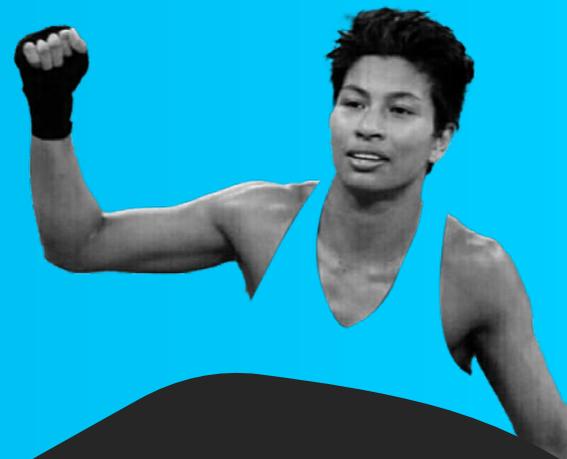
## Leadership Development

- i) To break gender stereotypes
- ii) Encourage participation in sports and active recreation
- iii) Improve self-esteem
- iv) Personality Development

## Mental Wellness

- i) Psychological Safety (APS)
- ii) Self Awareness (ASA)
- iii) Mental Resilience (AMR)
- iv) Mental Health Recognition and Referral (MHRR)

# 4 Sport her



## Female Athlete Network

- i) Female experts from the sporting ecosystem to mentor athletes
- ii) The female network of athletes creating opportunities for girls and women to participate in sports and encouraging and supporting their lifetime appreciation of and participation in sport.

## High-performance training, health & nutrition

- i) Regular Assessments & Rehabilitation
- ii) Curated sessions on Menstrual health, nutritional deficiencies (vitamin D, zinc, calcium, magnesium, and B vitamins)
- iii) Female Athlete Triad
- iv) Sports Specific Assessments, Rehabilitation, Performance enhancement, Nutritional consultations

# STEAM Scholarship PROGRAMME

AUGUST

**224** Sessions Conducted



**35** Athletes trained



SEPTEMBER

**236** Sessions Conducted

**32** Athletes trained

## Palak Kohli STEAMS ahead

STEAM Scholarship athlete Palak Kohli, who earlier became the youngest para badminton player to qualify for the Paralympics, put up a brave show while making her debut in the Games at Tokyo. After bowing out early against more experienced players in the women's singles and women's doubles categories, she almost clinched a Bronze medal in the mixed doubles category. Partnering with Gold medalist (men's singles) Pramod Bhagat, Palak's mental resilience and skill sets shone as the pair lost a close semi-final match to Japan's Daisuke Fujihara and Akiko Sugino.

Only 18 years of age, Palak might well be a serious medal contender for India by the time Paris Olympics 2024 arrives. We wish her all the best and hope she continues to work as hard as she has done to come so far so early in her career.



## Vidith S. Shankar

Vidith (Swimmer) won 3 gold medals in 50m, 100m and 200m breaststroke, and created a state meet and national record in the 100m as well as 200m breaststroke for his particular age category. Additionally, he also bagged one silver and three bronze in various events.



## Anushka Patil

Another swimmer under the STEAM Scholarship programme, won the gold medal in 400m freestyle and the bronze medal in 200m breaststroke, category 1.



# Athlete Mental Wellness - Training the Trainers of Odisha

The 'Train the Trainers' program, which was launched in July in collaboration with the Sports and Youth Services Department (DSYS), Government of Odisha, continued through the months of August and September. Curated and hosted by Sanjana Kiran (Head of Sports Psychology at ABFT, the 10-week long (20 session hours in total) virtual training initiative involved 5 psychologists who were nominated by the DSYS Odisha.

## The program aims to:

- Indigenize the Athlete Mental Wellness Program in terms of cultural values and traditional contexts to co-create a unique "ABF-Odisha Athlete Mental Wellness Program".
- Cater to the learning needs of Odisha athletes at the grassroots and developmental level by providing the AMW program in Odia.
- Ensure sustainability of the AMW program by empowering local sports psychologists with skill sets to continue the athlete mental wellness conversations for the growing athlete population of Odisha.

Currently, the program is at stage 5. So far, we have utilized 16 session hours of the program duration. With only 4 session hours to go, we have concluded that an additional 10 session hours are required to deliver a completely effective and efficient program as per our commitment.

*To reach the above objectives, the following steps have been started:*



### Stage 1

In-depth conversations on the mental wellness and mental resilience needs of Odisha grassroots and developmental/intermediate athletes.



### Stage 2

Brainstorming on the psychological areas that need to be addressed keeping in mind cultural and traditional sensitivities.



### Stage 3

Confirmation of workshop topics.



### Stage 4

Brainstorming effective and efficient approaches in the construction and delivery of workshop material.

### Stage 5

The ABFT-Odisha Athlete Mental Wellness Program curation of workshop material (powerpoint slides and program delivery manual) that can be delivered online and/or offline as deemed fit.



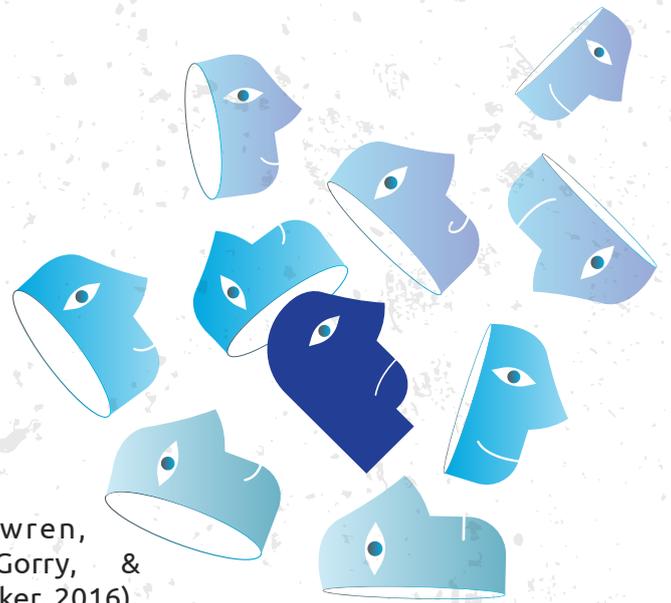
# Why Mental Wellness for athletes?

Mental ill-health is a potential pitfall for all athletes and coaches during their sporting journeys! The past couple of years have witnessed shocking revelations of mental illnesses by top sportspersons, as well as a spike in the number of athletes displaying mental ill-health symptoms. Rigours of Talent Identification, in terms of too-early or too-late; the blow of being weeded-out; outcome achievement orientation; objectification of athletes for performance outcomes; win-at-all-cost attitudes; athlete commitments due to entrapment rather than enjoyment; lack of athlete mental health awareness from self and others; etc, can lead to athletes living robotic lives and rendering themselves medal-making machines to feed the sports ecosystem's never satiating hunger for glory. Mental health of athletes has been a largely neglected area of care and concern despite the known fact that athletic journeys can be traumatic due to the rigours of training and competitions. One in every four-to-five young people aged between 16–24 experiences a mental disorder (Cannon, Coughlan, Clarke, Harley, & Kelleher, 2013; Kessler et al., 2007). Athletes experience mental ill-health such as anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress, sleep disorders etc (Rice et al., 2019; Gouttebarga et al., 2019 ) because of considerable overlap in the years of active elite competition and the primary ages of onset for most mental disorders (Allen & Hopkins, 2015; Kessler, Berglund, Demler, Jin, Merikangas, & Walters, 2005; Rice, Purcell, De Silva,

Mawren, McGorry, & Parker, 2016).

Coach mental well-being is a largely ignored aspect too. Research findings have shed light on the negative impact of experiences through coaching journeys on coach well-being (Didymus, 2017; Fletcher, & Scott, 2010; Norris, Didymus, & Kaiseler, 2017; Olusoga, Butt, Hays, & Maynard, 2009). Creating a positive learning experience that promotes the development of athletes' life skills, especially at the developmental level of sports participation is one of the many responsibilities of a coach (Camiré, Trudel, & Forneris, 2012). Basically, providing a psychologically safe environment for the athlete is key to unleash their best potential and promote holistic well-being. However, a compromised coach's mental health can retard this responsibility. As coaches have a direct influence on athletes' participation (Ortín, Maestre, & García-de-Alcaraz, 2016), a coach-athlete relationship can influence the athlete's motivation in sport (Duda & Balaguer, 2007). Therefore, it is imperative that coaches are mentally healthy and possess the skills to support mental health athletes (Mazzer & Rickwood, 2015).

This calls for the sports ecosystem to be humane towards athletes and coaches, keep athletes and coaches centre stage, and promote athlete and coach welfare beyond sports performances. There is a need for truly athlete-centric, coach-led systems where athletes are treated with human dignity first. When all athletes are holistically healthy and happy giving their best performances, they also exit the system healthy and happy; and give back the same



feelings to the next generations. On the same breath, there is also a need to create a sporting world, where coaches are treated with human dignity first, where they are holistically healthy and happy in facilitating the best potential of athletes and give back the same feeling to the athletes which can impact athlete mental wellbeing positively.

Mental Wellness is a step before performance psychology and leads to wellbeing and peak performance. The Indian Sporting Ecosystem needs a revolution in its approach to Mental Wellness, in order to help athletes and coaches meet the challenges of High-Performance Sport. The ABF Athlete & Coach Mental Wellness initiative celebrates athletes & coaches as humans first. To this end, our mission is to create awareness of the challenges and the importance of Mental Wellness, its impact on High Performance and holistic well-being, facilitate empowerment, and foster an attitude-shift of the sports ecosystem

towards athlete and coach mental wellness. The ABF Athlete and Coach Mental Wellness Program is geared at educating and empowering athletes and coaches, as well as the entire sports ecosystems, towards their mental well-being. Key conversations in our program include: Psychological safety from the sports ecosystem that lends support in creating a sporting world, where athletes and coaches are treated with human dignity first; Self-awareness on the merit of living holistic lives and one's own responsibility towards their mental health; Mental Resilience skills that can assist athletes and coaches in coping with the traumas of training and competition and work towards being their best; and Recognition of 'red flags'/'signs & symptoms' that tell athletes, coaches and the sports ecosystem, that something is not okay mentally, and the next steps towards diagnosis and treatment.



### Sanjana Kiran

*Head of Sport Psychology at ABFT, Dr. Sanjana Kiran is a High-Performance expert in the field of Performance Psychology. She is also a Senior Sport Psychologist to elite international athletes and elite coaches in preparation for major games (Olympics, World Championships) and other competitions. A torch-bearer for the Athlete Psychological Safety Campaign and an ambassador of Athlete Mental Wellness, she was also the mind coach for the Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) team in IPL 2021.*

## India's National Rugby Coaches Embrace Athlete Mental Wellness



Sanjana Kiran also conducted an introductory Athlete Mental Wellness session for India's National Rugby coaching and management staff. Among the attendees were actor, former Indian

Rugby player and current Rugby India Board member Rahul Bose, Head Coach of the Indian National Rugby teams Hendrik Botha, Rugby 7s coach of the Under-18 Girls team Ludwiche Van Deventer, and CEO of Rugby India Nasser Hussain.

This was a needs analysis session explaining the dangers of mental health on high-performance athletes and how the current Indian sporting setup needs to learn the required skill sets to handle it. Mental health and resilience are key to perform at the highest level and the session was another step in our aim to spread awareness about the topic in the Indian sporting ecosystem

## Events & Activites



### Indian Army officer preparing for Tokyo Paralympics 2020

Para-athlete Havildar Soman Rana visited our high-performance training centre in Pune before participating in the Tokyo Paralympics 2020. The 38-year-old Rana had qualified for the seated shot put in the F-57 category and finished 4th in the competition. We are proud to have been a part of his high performance training journey and preparations for the event.



### India's National Rugby Team & Under-18 Girls' Rugby Team

The ABFT hosted India's Under-18 Girls' Rugby team led by Coach Mr. Ludwiche Deventer & Training-Education Manager Mr. Sourojit Ghosh. The sessions were aimed at helping the athletes fasten their recovery & rehabilitation process, which can lead to enhancement in their performance.

### Australian High Commissioner

Honorable Australian High Commissioner to India Barry O'Farrell AO along with other dignitaries visited our ABTP Bhubaneswar facility, where Centre Head Pradeep Pillay demonstrated the sports science technology used to assist athletes for sports performance enhancement



### Mr. Farhan Ali

Mr. Farhan Ali, one of the best Tennis Coaches in Bhubaneswar, visited our high-performance facility. During this visit, he along with his team of senior national & international level students were acquainted with the sports science technology equipped in the center and were briefed about the impact of such a data-driven approach on the performance of sportspersons!





## World Physiotherapy Day

On the occasion of the World Physiotherapy Day, the ABSMARI team in collaboration with the Sunshine Hospital organized an event honoring the physiotherapists. The event activities included a fitness session for Bhubaneswar Cycling and Adventure Club - BCAC, an interactive session between ABSMARI faculties and hospital staff, and a physiotherapy health camp.

This was followed by the key event of the day as Hon'ble Minister, Dept. of Health and Family Welfare Shri Naba Kisore Das Ji inaugurated the ABSMARI Physiotherapy Speciality Clinic by cutting the ribbon in the presence of the Directors of Sunshine Hospital.

## ABSMARI- Admissions for the Second batch have begun

Our inaugural batch of students have completed their first term, and admissions for the second batch have begun in full flow

**Admissions Open**



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### CPSFI

The foundation, in partnership with Cerebral Palsy Sports Federation of India, will be assisting in the training of para athlete Kartik Murali Krishna for the Asian Para Games 2022, China. The high-performance sessions will be held in our Bengaluru centre, with an aim to achieve peak fitness levels using our sports science technology.

### Sleep Moksha

We conducted a special follow-up session around the concept of Sleep Science and its optimization for our STEAM athletes, who continued to benefit from the expertise of Dr. Monika Sharma, Behavioral Sleep Medicine Consultant at the Foundation.



## Your contribution to this cause can benefit the Indian Sport Ecosystem

as these additional resources would help us in increased diligence in the implementation of our programs across the eco-system, be it directly in the training of athletes, or in the long term benefits of Educating the support staff of an athlete.

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