Management & Sports - Overcoming Obstacles

It's been nearly 20 years since the world was graced with the perfect performance of a 14 year old Romanian gymnast named Nadia. The Olympics are finally here. Check out the top 10 male and female Olympians of all time according to Ignition. And don't miss out on some great sports ads. All are open for debate of course.

Top male Olympians | Top female Olympians | Top 10 sports ads

Overcoming Obstacles

An effective manager and a great athlete share many of the same characteristics - commitment, training, desire, learning from failures, reliance on teammates and coaches, you name it. As the Bank continues to move forward in achieving greater results on the ground, we gain inspiration from others, like athletes, in knowing that we can ultimately achieve our goals, no matter the odds. Olympians such as Wilma Rudolph who overcame handicaps, show us that anything is possible. This month, we encourage you to soak in some of the fun sports content we've selected and dream a bit. Think about your favorite athlete and ask yourself what makes these people tick? What enabled Lance Armstrong to battle through cancer and later win 6 straight Tour de France races? Was he born with mountain conquering legs or was it more? Many might say it was his determination and training discipline. Others would say it was his team. How on earth did Greece overcome 150-1 odds to win the European Cup? This month's interviewee Dani Kaufman's answer, "we saw that immense individual talent is not essential: in winning, Greece showed us that magic results can happen when the whole is greater than the sum of its parts." Whatever the reasons, there are many things managers can learn from these amazing stories.

Schedule for the Olympic Games

Check out [www.athens2004.org](http://www.athens2004.org) for a full breakdown of events.
**Book Reviews**

**Peak Performance: Business Lessons from the World's Top Sports Teams**

What makes Bayern Munich, the U.S. Women's Soccer Team, the New Zealand All Blacks, and the Yankees different from the rest? Players come and go but the teams maintain a consistently high success rate—how? The simple answer is that each of these organizations has its own special magic, and a killer-edge. The strategies of these winner-take-all teams have been locked away in the boardrooms, locker rooms and pit garages. With in-depth analysis and interviews with the owners, managers, and players, the authors unearth the secret organizational and institutional ingredients that drive these teams. In so doing, they created the blueprint for developing a peak performing organization in any field.

**It's Not About the Bike: My Journey Back to Life**

People around the world have found inspiration in the story of Lance Armstrong—a world-class athlete nearly struck down by cancer, only to recover and win the Tour de France 6 straight times. Though Armstrong is a thoroughgoing Texan jock and his vocabulary is a bit on the he-man side (highest compliment to his wife: "she's a stud"), his actions will melt the most hard-bitten souls: a cancer foundation and benefit bike ride, his astonishing commitment to training that got him past countless hurdles, loyalty to the people and corporations that never gave up on him... *It's Not About the Bike* is the perfect title for this book about life, death, illness, family, setbacks, and triumphs, but not especially about the bike. --Jill Lightner --

Copies of these books are available from Dana Cazacu Ignition Book club - receive featured books each month (free).

**e-Olympics**


**Office Playground:** No time to play ball anymore? Bring the game to work and take some shots from your seat. Don't forget, sooner or later, we all need a stress ball. More...

Check out the following sites from [www.infoplease.com](http://www.infoplease.com)

**Did you know?**

Jim Wolfensohn was a member of Australia's fencing team at the 1956 Olympics, and he admits he was "soundly defeated" at the 1958 fencing world championships, where he was captain of the country's national fencing team.

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**Piece and Diplomacy**

**Brazil and Haiti Soccer Match:** This month, Brazil's legendary soccer team will kick off a bid to disarm Haiti's warring factions by playing a match where spectators will have to swap their guns for entry tickets. Brazil's Ronaldo and Ronaldinho are among superstars who may play to help Brazilian U.N. peacekeeping troops rebuild the poverty-stricken nation more..

**Pakistan vs. India - Diplomacy by other means:** Can sports really be used for diplomacy? Check out this terrific article from Sports Illustrated about the renewed cricket rivalry and India's recent visit to Pakistan. More..

**Manager's Moment**

**Dani Kaufmann**

(A.K.A "Chile" on the soccer field)

Director, World Bank Institute

What kind of sports do you participate in?

I have 4 1/2 - biking and soccer regularly, skiing and diving when I can, and my 1/2 sport is swimming - my fallback sometimes on mission. I did recently buy a portable bike to travel with. But one can find a bike in many corners of the world -- I've ridden in dozens of world cities. Imagine the thrill of biking in Beijing - you interact with people and witness city life in such a different way.

**Lessons from your sports life that influenced the way you manage and lead?**

I'll illustrate with soccer, which offers such a transparent way to learn about diversity amongst people, and to draw on the strengths of these differences and of teamwork. And it's an equalizer -- financial ability plays no role; people from all backgrounds can play. Learning about one's own and each other's reactions to the fast paced decisions we take while in play gives insights for our daily life and for the workplace.

**The greatest sport team or greatest athlete and why?**

Today: Lance Armstrong, who has shown the extent to which one can conquer immense adversity to reach the top of the mountain. Looking back about four decades: Pelé. Not only as an individual but also in the sense of the dream soccer team he played with -- Brazil in the 60's and 70's.

**Advice for a new manager when it comes to sports?**

Each of us should find our own way, our own activities. If one finds a fulfilling sport, the rest will follow -- a virtuous circle of improved health, energy and psychic being. It's never too late to start or return to sports. After smashing my knee playing soccer thirty years ago, I for a very long time I thought would never do it again. Then, not that long ago, I discovered that I still could. It has made a difference in many aspects of my life and work.

**Your favorite book about sports and leadership?**

I would rather do sports than read or passively witness others at it. Why be a spectator when you can actively participate? What a thrill is having an outdoor activity with the family, or biking to the top of a mountain, or skiing down it...and then in a quiet evening moment to read instead [The Magic Mountain](http://www.amazon.com) by Thomas Mann.