

Real Athletes Persevere

A Program of the USOC

To the athlete:

Thank you for agreeing to deliver Real Athletes Persevere, an educational program that emphasizes Olympic ideals and values. With your outstanding background and accomplishments, we know that your presentation will be a source of motivation and inspiration for the attendees and that you will make a positive difference in their lives. Please consider the age and makeup of your audience and take a few moments to review the following materials as you prepare:

To the Host or Organization:

Thank you for participating in the USOC's educational program—Real Athletes Persevere. We are confident the Olympian, Paralympian or elite athlete who will present at your event will motivate and encourage participants to consider their behavior both on and off the field of play, and we are confident that you find this experience worthwhile. Please take a few moments to review the materials, and support the athlete's presentation, as needed.

To the athlete and host:

Olympians, Paralympians and hopefuls have varied degrees of public speaking proficiencies, and some athletes would prefer to have a discussion with a moderator and the audience rather than deliver a solo presentation. To assist those athletes preferring the discussion approach and to still provide a memorable appearance, the USOC created some standard questions the host can ask the athlete in a question and answer interview situation, still covering the topic of Perseverance and/or other topics of interest for the host organization and its constituents. For these questions, please go to page three.

If you have any questions about the program or presentation, please contact Adam Andrasko at 719-866-2270 or Adam.Andrasko@usoc.org.

PRESENTATION OUTLINE (30 - 40 minutes)

The event host and athlete/presenter should work together to set a mutually agreeable agenda for the event with appropriate time frames. The following is an example of a 30-40 minute presentation.

Athlete arrives at event site 20 minutes early to meet event contact and check to be sure audio/visual equipment is set up and working properly.

- I. Introduction (5 minutes)
 - a. Event host offers introduction.
 - b. Introduce yourself, even if event host initially introduces you.
 - c. Thank everyone for having you and give brief overview of why you are there, referencing the celebration of Olympic Day and to discuss Perseverance.

- II. Your Personal Experience (10 minutes)
 - a. Discuss how you became involved with your sport and how you ascended to the elite level. If necessary, give some background on your sport and the Olympic/Paralympic Movement.
 - b. Provide the audience with some of your highlighted accomplishments and discuss the honor that comes with representing the United States on the world's sport stages (Olympic/Paralympic Games, World Championships, etc.)
 - c. Express gratitude for the support of fellow Americans like those here today.
 - d. Encourage people to pursue their passion, dreams and goals in whatever they do, and state how you're an example of how those dreams can come true. Transition to perseverance topic.

- III. Highlights on Perseverance (10 minutes)
 - a. Explain that to reach the pinnacle of success at the Olympic or Paralympic Games, to succeed in life, or to reach one's goals, one must persevere. Perseverance is the determination to keep going when you feel like giving up.
 - b. Give your personal experience as it relates to training for the Olympic Games, Paralympic Games, World Championships, etc. and what it means to you to persevere. Share your goals and what you believe it takes to achieve them.
 - c. If desired and if time permits, Introduce stories of other athletes who have persevered under different circumstances (see page 4):
 1. Olympic wrestler TC Dantzler
 2. Paralympic swimmer Melissa Stockwell
 3. Olympic speedskater Dan Jansen.
 - d. Explain that athletes are training now for Sochi 2014 and Rio de Janeiro 2016.

- IV. Questions and Answers (10 minutes)
 - a. Repeat all questions so that everyone can hear.
 - b. Ask the event host to help you watch the time.

- V. Conclusion and flag presentation (10 minutes)
 - a. Offer concluding remarks - encourage the students to persevere to attain their dreams.
 - b. Thank the host and audience and present flag to host organization on behalf of the United States Olympic Committee and the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Teams.

QUESTION & ANSWER INTERVIEW FORMAT BETWEEN EVENT HOST & ATHLETE

The following questions may be asked of the athlete by the event host:

1. Please tell us a little about yourself, your sport and your sport accomplishments?
2. How did you get into your sport and what did it take to make you an elite athlete?
3. Why is the celebration of Olympic Day and the Olympic Movement important?
4. What does it feel like to represent the United States on the world's athletic stages? How does it feel to wear the USA on your uniform?
5. Why is perseverance such an important concept in sports and life today?
6. Was there ever a time you thought about giving up on your sport and your pursuits to qualify for an Olympic/Paralympic Team? What was the situation and what did you do to persevere?
7. What are some of the best examples of perseverance that you have seen or know of? (Athlete can use some of the stories listed on page 4).
8. How has being an athlete and persevering to accomplish your sport dreams helped you in life?
9. We always hear about athletes being caught doping, or using illegal substances to better their performances. Why do you think it's important to compete clean, and why it is such an important topic within the Olympic Movement?
10. What recommendations would you have for those in the audience today when it comes to perseverance, whether in sport, life, or whatever action they engage in?
11. If someone wants to become an Olympian or Paralympian, what do they need to do? What advice do you have for them?
12. Who was a mentor/role model for you and why?
13. When are the next Olympic and Paralympic Games – Summer and Winter?

Answer: 2016 – Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 2018 – PyeongChang, South Korea

14. How can we as Americans continue to support Team USA and the Olympic Movement?

Answer: There are a variety of things that you can find on www.teamusa.org

15. What's next for you?

The event host can add their own questions and/or not ask all of the above questions. Following this interview between the host and athlete, please allow the audience to ask questions.

ATHLETE EXAMPLES OF PERSEVERANCE

TC Dantzler

TC Dantzler took 12 years to finally qualify for the U.S. Olympic Team at age 37. TC played sports growing up in Harvey, Illinois, which is a city just south of Chicago. He earned high school letters in football, baseball, track and wrestling, and he went to the state wrestling tournament where he was runner-up. But, TC trained from 1996 to 2006 before he won his first U.S. National title in wrestling. That's a long time. In 2008, he qualified for the Olympic Games in Beijing, and he became an Olympian. He says he's not a fast learner, but he sure works hard. TC never gives up - he perseveres.

Melissa Stockwell

Melissa Stockwell enrolled in ROTC in college, and after graduation she entered the U.S. Army and was sent to Baghdad, Iraq. Just one month later in April 2004, she was hit by a roadside bomb and lost her leg. She thought her dream to be an Olympian was over. But after retiring from the Army, she began training as a disabled athlete for the Paralympic swim team (explain what Paralympic Games is, if necessary), and, Melissa competed at the 2008 Paralympic Games in Beijing. Through determination and perseverance, she was able to see her dream come true. Today, she lives and trains in Chicago in the sport of triathlon and hopes to compete again in 2012.

Dan Jansen

Dan Jansen is a four-time Olympian in the winter sport of speedskating with one of the greatest stories of perseverance of all time. He skated well in most competitions, but not at the Olympic Games. At his first Olympic Winter Games, he finished 16th in one race and fourth in another. Four years later, he learned just hours before his race that his sister died of leukemia. He fell twice that day and didn't finish either race. It was heart-breaking. But four years later, he tried again, and this time he finished fourth in one race and 26th in another. How frustrating! Finally, in 1994 at the Olympic Winter Games in Lillehammer, Norway, he took 8th place in a 500-meter race. Dan had one race left, and with the cameras and crowds watching him and holding their breath, he won gold in a 1,000-meter race. Dan Jansen finally did it.