

Book Review: The Athlete's Guide to Sponsorship

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THE ATHLETE'S GUIDE TO SPONSORSHIP

Jennifer Drury & Cheri Elliott

[Boulder, CO: Velo Press 1996]

xv/ 148 pages

ISBN: 1-884737-45-5: \$14.95

The Athlete's Guide to Sponsorship is an overview of how to find an individual, team, or event sponsor. Ms. Drury has written an extremely simplified and detailed synopsis of the procedure one must follow in searching for that "perfect" sponsor.

The book begins with a much needed background on the definition of sponsorship. Due to the fact that all athletes are not equally qualified, there are different types of sponsorships for the varying levels of athletes. Chapter 1 contains an easy-to-follow chart to refer to in determining what type of sponsorships one should seek.

Chapter 2 goes into great detail regarding the step-by-step process to follow when seeking sponsorships. Despite the much needed and relevant advice in chapter 2, it is written with great simplicity. The step-by-step descriptions seem more relevant for a person who has never before given thought to seeking sponsorships. For instance, the author goes so far as to list the type of envelopes one should utilize when mailing sponsorship proposals. However, the authors did provide helpful examples of resumes and cover letters for a novice athlete to reference. Finally, this chapter includes some handy "tips" on how to save money while creating your sponsorship proposal.

Chapters 3 through 5 hit upon the ins and outs of sponsorship. Chapter 3 opens with examples of what an athlete might do in order to impress a potential sponsor. The list contains many innovative ways an athlete can offer their services to a sponsor. For example, the author includes working at the sponsor's main office or becoming a masseuse for the team.

Advice from "real" sponsors of what to do or note to do when seeking sponsorship is given in chapter 4. A beginning athlete seeking sponsorship should find this information quite valuable. From the "do's and the don'ts," the authors move on to the heart of the matter, negotiating the deal. Chapter 4 contains the most useful information in the book. Not only do the authors detail their knowledge, they advise athletes to read other books on how to negotiate. Acknowledging the simplicity of the book, this information may be invaluable to one without experience in negotiation.

Chapter 6 introduces the legal aspects behind contracts and negotiation. The author properly put a disclaimer on this chapter so that a reader knows that this book is not intended to be legal advice. Still, a sample agreement is contained in the appendix to provide a beginner with a solid stepping stone in getting their sponsorship agreement.

Understanding that not all athletes will be successful in obtaining sponsorship agreements, the book contains alternatives to sponsorship in chapter 7. Besides sponsorships, other possibilities include pro deals, "B" teams or farm teams, on-site sponsorship programs, and newspaper and magazine classifieds. Overall, it is a resourceful list of creative ideas for the athlete who might not be successful with sponsorship from the beginning.

The last half of the book is devoted to sponsorships and marketing. The author presents three useful and insightful chapters ranging from marketing a sports team to marketing a sporting event. The objectives behind marketing a sports team are different than an individual sponsorship proposal. Thus, chapter 9 includes another step-by-step process in how to achieve your goals in marketing a sports team. The two processes are similar but it was beneficial to devote a separate chapter to the marketing aspects.

The book's advice regarding the media focused on the best ways to get the media's attention and how to promote yourself in the best light possible. Specifically, the process begins with establishing your media network. This may include simply using a local news station, or for the more advanced athlete, national or international media. An appendix is included to assist persons using the book to find their "correct" media network. Information regarding media packets and press releases is also provided. Additionally, a sample press release and newsletter are included in the appendix of the book.

The authors wrote this book for a beginning athlete. It is not recommended for athletes who are familiar with sponsorship procedures. The author provides a clear and concise writing about sponsorship but it does not include much more than the tip of the iceberg. Overall, it is a must read for any new athlete considering sponsorship. The book provides a start to finish synopsis for the beginning athlete to get them started on the road to sponsorship.

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