

Scott Dixon: Funding a Biathlon Dream

18.05.2016, Salzburg  / IBU/MD

Tips for Success

Funding is not a huge issue for many of the best biathletes in the world. Their income comes from a variety of sources including prize money, institutional support (government, federation, military or NOC) and sponsor support. Many nations practice an “all inclusive” system, where the federation government or Sports Ministry of Sport pays for camps, travel expenses, and team staff.

However, without those resources and no prize money, funding a season of travel and training with very limited federation support and no government support is more than a challenge; it is an uphill battle.

Yet Great Britain's 21-year-old Scott Dixon has found a way to make it on his own; finding a sponsor to fund his training and travel. Dixon recently shared his tips for successful self funding.



Tip Number One

"Get away from your parents; try to make it without their financial support."

When Dixon left school and made commitment to biathlon, he decided asking his parents for support was not an option. Instead of the "family bank," he looked for alternative funding to fuel his biathlon career.

At the same time, he turned to his parents for inspiration. Father and Eurosport commentator Mike Dixon is a retired British biathlete is one of very few athletes to have competed at six Olympic Games. Scott commented, "When I was younger, it was not easy to put aside my dad's achievements and make my own way. Now I have come to realize that everything I have achieved is the result of parents' support."

Tip Number Two

"It's like applying for a job that everybody wants. You have to keep writing to these people."

"I wrote a letter requesting funding to ten British companies and individuals. I got response from some people, and understandably enough, some said they were not able to help. "

After several refusals, he got a positive response from the owner of Hever Castle and Gardens, who had supported his father. Situated in the county of Kent, the 13th century castle, now a tourist destination was once the home of Henry VIII's wife Anne Boleyn, the mother of Elizabeth I. The letter led to a personal meeting.

"I explained what my plans and hopes are. The castle owner liked it; we started a contract, and I have been sponsored by him since that day."

Tip Number Three

"Think wisely who you pick: local companies; think about people who might be actually interested in sport who would be able to invest. And don't give up on it, keep asking and stay committed."

Before contacting potential sponsors, Dixon defined the criteria. "I chose companies and individuals who would be open to support the sport of biathlon; I contacted only people who I thought would be open to the idea to support me; I never asked for too much."

Tip Number Four

"Make sure you tell people what your goals are; unless your goals are high, people do not want to support you."

Despite tough competition on the World Cup circuit, Dixon set the bar high, a key to finding a sponsor.

"I want to go to Olympics. I think it is very unsatisfying when you go to the event just to compete. I would like to achieve something so that when I look back at my career I can be proud of it. For me this would be being in top 10, which is an incredibly high standard."

At the moment, the younger Dixon is using his funding to train in Lillehammer, Norway, which seems to be the right place to achieve his goals. "Even though Norway is a very expensive place to live, conditions here are exceptional. You don't have to pay to use the shooting range, and the standard of English is fantastic. You can train with so many different people; I think it is one of the best places in the world for biathlon."



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