Top athletes and higher education: the TopSport project at the University of Trento

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Outline

- The context

- TopSport: the pillars and the 3 year test phase

- Looking ahead: what’s next
Trento and Trentino

Mountains ...

Lakes ...

History and culture ...
The University of Trento

- Started in 1962
- About 15000 students and 1000 employees (faculty + management + admin)
- 10 academic departments (but no sport department!) + 3 research centers
- Consistently among the top 5 Italian universitites in the last 10 years (1° in the last ranking from (the most important Italian financial newspaper)
Our sport facilities
The UNI.Sport project

- UNI.Sport started in 2009 – currently about 5000 members
- Three special programmes for different targets
  - TopSport → top athletes
  - UNI.Fit → improving fitness and wellbeing
  - UNI.Team → creating and supporting University teams in selected sports

Antonella Bellutti
TopSport Coordinator
2011-14
TopSport: the test phase (2011-2014)

- Defining clear objectives and an organizational model
- Identifying the main benefits offered by the programme
- Studying clear and fully transparent criteria of admission to the programme
- Writing the «contract» between the university and the athletes (rights and obligations)
- Collecting data for the second phase (to be started this year)
TopSport: objectives and organization

1. Addressing the **practical needs** of the top athletes enrolled at the University of Trento
2. Offering **relevant support** through the entire academic career
3. Giving **visibility** to the presence of top athletes in the University
4. Offering **role models** to the other students
5. Starting **cooperation** with sport federations
6. Creating **synergies** with other similar programmes in Italy and worldwide
TopSport: how it works in practice

- Degrees covered by the programme
- Criteria and rules of admission
- TopSport benefits
- TopSport organization
- The TopSport athletes
TopSport: the degrees

Corso di studio in TOPSport

Per l’anno accademico 2013-2014 sono ammessi max n° 50 posti (20 per la fascia campione e 30 per la fascia alta). Di seguito sono indicati i Dipartimenti dell’Ateneo di Trento e per ognuno di essi i corsi di studio che sono inseriti nel Programma TOPSport.


Lista corsi

Dipartimento di Economia e Management
- Corso di laurea in Gestione Aziendale
- Corso di laurea magistrale in Management

Dipartimento Facoltà di Giurisprudenza
- Corso di laurea magistrale a ciclo unico in Giurisprudenza

Dipartimento di Ingegneria Civile Ambientale e Meccanica
- Corso di laurea in Ingegneria Civile
- Corso di laurea magistrale in Ingegneria per l’Ambiente e il Territorio

Dipartimento di Ingegneria e Scienze dell’Informazione
- Corso di laurea in Informatica
- Corso di laurea in Ingegneria dell’Informazione e Organizzazione d’Impresa
- Corso di laurea in Ingegneria Elettronica e delle Telecomunicazioni
- Corso di laurea magistrale in Ingegneria delle Telecommunications

Dipartimento di Ingegneria Industriale
- Corso di laurea magistrale in Ingegneria dei Materiali
- Corso di laurea magistrale in Ingegneria Meccatronica

Dipartimento di Sociologia e Ricerca Sociale
- Corso di laurea magistrale in Gestione delle organizzazioni e del territorio

Dipartimento di Lettere e Filosofia
- Corso di laurea in Filosofia
- Corso di laurea in Lingue moderne
- Corso di laurea in Studi storici e filologico-letterari
TopSport: criteria of evaluation

Regulations

Online self-evaluation
TopSport: benefits

Levels of admission

Regulations

Online self-evaluation
The three levels of admission

1. **CHAMPIONS**
2 - 30

2. **ELITE**
30 - 50

3. **ATHLETES**
Key benefits:

- Tutorship (a faculty member + a trained student)
- Flexibility on exam dates and office hours
- Temporary housing at special rates
- Dedicated internships
- Psychological and motivational support
- UNI.Sport card for free
Key Figures (2011-12 and 2012-13)
Champions and Elite 2012-13 by sport discipline

See full list at http://www.unisport.tn.it/topsport/gli-atleti-topsport
Champions and elite 2012-13 by Department

- economia: 6
- giurispr.: 5
- ingegneria: 8
- lett&filos.: 5
- SSMMNFF: 5
- sociologia: 2
- sc.cognitive: 1
Lessons learned

- In Italy there is a strong demand for programmes like TopSport (going beyond the only model of military corps for dual career!)
- Simple benefits are by far better than nothing!
- The key to success stories is highly motivated tutors but ...
- ... using faculty members as tutors on a purely voluntary basis does not always work 😞
- A lot of internal communication is needed to improve awareness and acceptance of the programme among Faculty members and administrative personnel
What’s next?

- Complying more and more with EU guidelines for dual career initiatives (2012) → Erasmus+ can be a useful instrument

- Stimulating the creation of an Italian network of universities which have (or are committed to have) a dual career programme
  - Laising with institutions, sport federations, clubs and athletes to collect their needs and proposals
  - Working together to define common models, rules and benefit systems
- Establishing stronger liason with European and worldwide networks
An even broader vision

- Sport cuts across the University pillars and can be a powerful enabler of innovation!
- Much greater opportunities than «just» sport
- Much greater integration with the rest of academic activities
- EU is definitely going in this direction → wider funding opportunities
- Top athletes are an crucial vehicle in this direction (visibility, sponsors, performance, etc.)
THANK YOU!

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University of Trento: http://www.unitn.it/
UNI.Sport: http://www.unisport.tn.it/
TopSport: http://www.unisport.tn.it/topsport

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