Press Release

Over 500 athletes at the Lillehammer Youth Olympic Games trained for life and career challenges by the IOC and Adecco

The Athlete Career Programme’s interactive games and mentoring develop young athletes’ life skills for success beyond sports

Zurich, Switzerland, February 22, 2016: Adecco Group, the world’s leading provider of HR solutions, in cooperation with the International Olympic Committee Athlete Career Programme (IOC ACP), reached more than 500 young athletes during the Lillehammer Youth Olympic Games (YOG). Athletes aged between 15 and 18 from 71 nations received dedicated coaching sessions to help them improve their life-skills, succeed on the field of play and prepare for their career after sport.

Few people remember that athletes’ careers are generally short. Elite athletes inspire and amaze thousands of fans across the world, but it is unusual for them to stay in competition after the age of 30. Still, all of them invest the majority of their time and resources to train and race, with little left to prepare for life beyond competition. To make sure these talented individuals can secure their success beyond sport and transfer their skills from the track to their subsequent careers, preparation and planning have to start at an early age. This is where the IOC Athlete Career Programme in cooperation with Adecco Group comes in to play, making sure athletes can maximize their educational and employment opportunities and become champions for life.

In Lillehammer, as part of the Compete, Learn & Share experience, the IOC and Adecco delivered educational modules through two digital games. ‘Balance Your Act’ offered counselling on the value of a supportive network, while ‘Act on Your Time’ guided youngsters in time management to combine sports, education and eventually a job. A dedicated workshop, delivered by the Norwegian ACP team for coaches and athletes, addressed how to cope financially with dual careers and the challenges in the transition from junior to master’s level. The workshop also underlined the role of coaches as ‘trainers for life’ who focus on building complete persons alongside great athletes. Additionally, the YOG athletes benefitted from ‘Sport Up Your Life’, a specially designed online quiz to help them learn about the wide range of careers in sport and direct them about those best matching their talents and interests.

The modules were delivered by the IOC and Adecco ACP teams, with the support of members of the IOC Athletes’ Commission and 15 Athlete Role Models (ARMs). The ARMs included famous Olympic and World champions, who acted as mentors and offered the young athletes advice by sharing their stories.

Claudia Bokel, IOC Athlete’s Commission Chair and Chair of the IOC ACP Steering Committee said: “It is always great to do sports. Even more so when you are still young and can be really focussed on it. But there’s always a life after competition – at least 30 years or more – which you need to fill with something equally rewarding. The best way to ensure that is, of course, through education.”

Mark De Smedt, Adecco Group Chief Human Resources Officer and member of the IOC ACP Steering Committee commented: “The 500 athletes who attended the ACP space will leave Lillehammer with higher awareness, guidance and the tools they need to face the challenges of combining sport, education and a dual-career. Developing great champions in life is the ultimate goal of the Youth Olympics. It is our passion to contribute to this purpose by sharing our expertise with youngsters at an early stage. As a partner to the Lillehammer YOG and through the great work of hundreds of Adecco colleagues and associates we show our ACP engagement in all its dimensions”.

Christine Nesbitt, a Canadian Olympic and eight-time World Champion in speed skating and one of the Athlete Role Models during the Lillehammer YOG summarised: “Having competed in high-level sport, I learned a lot about prioritising and scheduling. Priorities are different for each of us, but it was great to see how I was able to provide some guidance and knowledge to young athletes who struggle to effectively time-manage their days and duties”. 
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In 2018, the IOC ACP and Adecco will continue their cooperation to prepare young champions for life at the third Summer Youth Olympics in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Download picture Compete, Learn & Share workshop for coaches and athletes
Download picture of ARM Christine Nesbitt during the Compete, Learn & Share experience
Download picture Balance Your Act

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YOG youtube channel: https://www.youtube.com/user/YouthOlympics
Hashtags: #iLoveYOG, @lillehammer2016, #mysportmylife, #IOCACP,@AdeccoGroup

About IOC Adecco ACP
Since 2005 and 2007 respectively, the Adecco Group has been working with the International Olympic Committee and the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) to support elite Olympic and Paralympic athletes in their transition from sport to the labour market through career training and job placement. More than 28,000 athletes from over 185 countries have been involved in both Programmes since 2005.

Agreements between National Olympic and Paralympic Committees and Adecco organisations have been in place since the global launch in 35 countries on five continents.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
The Lillehammer Youth Olympics involved 71 nations. Beyond the host country, most participants were from nations with winter sports traditions. But the Games also include states such as South Africa, East Timor, Nepal, Kenya, Libya, Cyprus and Jamaica. Almost 1,100 athletes aged 15-18 competed in seven sports, 15 disciplines (such as alpine- and cross country skiing, speed skating) and 70 events. Uniquely to the Youth Olympics, such events are particularly inclusive, at times involving mixed gender and mixed teams.

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About the Adecco Group
The Adecco Group, based in Zurich, Switzerland, is the world’s leading provider of HR solutions. With more than 32,000 FTE employees and around 5,100 branches in over 60 countries and territories around the world, Adecco Group offers a wide variety of services, connecting around 700,000 associates with our clients every day. The services offered fall into the broad categories of temporary staffing, permanent placement, career transition and talent development, as well as outsourcing and consulting. The Adecco Group is a Fortune Global 500 company.
Adecco S.A. is registered in Switzerland (ISIN: CH0012138605) and listed on the SIX Swiss Exchange (ADEN).

About the International Olympic Committee
The International Olympic Committee (IOC), created in 1894, is a non-governmental organisation with volunteer members who represent its work around the world, and an administrative staff based in
Lausanne, Switzerland. The vision of the IOC is to contribute to building a better world through sport. In addition to ensuring the regular celebration of the Olympic Games, the IOC also oversees a wide range of programmes and projects that aim to educate youth through sport, promote Olympism in society and to lead and support the Olympic Movement.