



## The Winning Leap -prospective career opportunities for dietician in sports Sector

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**Abstract:** *Western countries give prominence for sports. In fact, sport is their first priority. London Olympics had a tag line- "Inspire a Generation" which meant sports have to be the primary agenda for youth development. But in India sports has been always a secondary option. Whether funding or career support, sporting activities never has been people's first priority. The ever growing family responsibilities, professional environment, the governmental support, the academic pressures etc hamper people from taking sporting as their foremost preference. But there are several options in sports sector with the globalization sports sector has opened up several opportunities. There is demand for personal trainers, dieticians, nutritionists, physio - therapists, gymnasts, etc .This paper examines the importance of sport dietician as a career & this paper considers the strategies for making sports dietician a primary profession.*

**Keywords:** *sports dietician, future of sports dieticians in India, growth strategies dieticians*

**Introduction:** Sports as a national priority can make careers of millions of youth aspirants. These days' sports as a medium of professional opportunity are becoming very vivid. Sports sector is looking for opportunities to youngsters not only as a player of the game but also as an integral part of the sporting event. ( Report on World Development Indicators Participation In Education World Bank Report 2014).The Indian sports players do not have access to world class resources, training, and preparation support & career opportunities. (Stephen Robson -Strategic sports development, 2013).

### **The concept of diet & a dietician-**

These days sports has become more professional with each player is conscious about his health & nutrition issues. Dieticians are trained service men to provide professional services relating to health & diet . They work individually,

through groups, or through community. sports nutrition is now an emerging area in sports sector . He improves the eating habits of the athletes players by providing a variety of tools & resources. Areas such as Optimal nutrition for exercise , training , fatigue from exercise, weight management ,hydration, immunity, supplemental food drinks needs to be monitored by a dietician .

**Role of a dietician in sports-** There are ample opportunities for dietician in a sporting sector. He can assisting & analyses the dietary requirements of sports persons( Stephen Robson - Strategic sports development 2013). There have been several issues which a dietician can manage in sports. A dietary practices body composition & energy balance of sports persons are looked after by a dietician. This will enhance sports performances. He can provide information to sports persons on healthy



BMI maintenance. Eating foods from all of the food groups (grains, fruits, vegetables, proteins, and dairy) each day to meet nutritional needs. Balancing nutrient-rich foods with small amounts of other foods, such as sweets or fast foods is necessary hence a dietician is necessary for a player.

1. A dietician can direct the sports persons in issues relating to optimal nutrition for exercise, training, competition from exercise, weight management ,hydration, immunity, supplemental food drinks etc.
2. A dietician can guide & counsel sports persons on achieving / maintaining a balanced level of body mass (BM) , body fat , muscle mass , etc that is consistent with good health good performance
3. A dietician can steer sports persons towards personalized meal plans to promote short & long term goals for athletic performance & good health
4. A dietician can guide sports persons towards developing awareness about diet needs of each sport & hydration protocols of each sport according to standard requirements .
5. A dietician can address nutritional challenges of the sports persons such as food allergies, bone mineral disturbances, gastro intestinal, iron depletion, etc. A dietician can make the sports persons to stay away from these disorders which hampers his performance. Protein supplements have not been shown to enhance muscle development, strength, or endurance. Using amino acid supplements will not increase muscle mass or decrease body fat. Excess protein is either burned for energy, converted to fat, or excreted. A dietician can address the nutritional challenges to sporting performances, such as food allergies, bone mineral disturbances, gastrointestinal disturbances, iron depletion, and iron-deficiency anemia.
6. A dietician can provide medical nutrition therapy, to help manage or treat medical conditions.
7. A dietician can counsel athletes on optimal nutrition for recovery from illness or injury. This timely counseling will assist the player to enhance his performance.
8. A dietician can Co-ordinate nutritional care as a member of multidisciplinary sports medical /sports science teams.
9. A dietician can provide liaison with in- and out-patient programs for conditions such as disordered eating.
10. A dietician can evaluate nutritional supplements, including herbal supplements, for legality, safety, quality, and efficacy; monitors use of appropriate supplementation.
11. A dietician can collaborate with the individual's family, physician, coach, and other health professionals, as appropriate.
12. A dietician can document nutrition services provided and evaluate the effectiveness of nutrition strategies towards meeting desired outcomes using the Nutrition Care Process.
13. A dietician can educates and mentors dietetic interns and others as appropriate who can find job in sports industry / film industry / food industry / agro processing industry etc.



**Challenges:** Thus a sports dietician works as manager, coordinator & evaluator of diet requirements of a sports person. But there are several challenges attached to this profession.

1. A dietician might be targeted for a sports persons under performance
2. There are chances that a team's failure in a prestigious event is accused towards a dietician's responsibility. Issues relating to , pre workout supplements , fat burners, stimulant free fat burners , carbohydrate management , fat control needs to be looked after by dieticians .
3. Rugged sport events such as football, base ball , Kabaddi etc causes injuries to players . Several players respond to medical ailments very quickly while several of them recover lately. This period of recovery is often related to a dietician's failure to reciprocate.
4. Sports always recommends success, hence a player is hailed for his success from everybody but his failure catches immediate criticism. A dietician needs to be alert in such situations. (The report of the National sports authority of India 2014).
5. Physical & nutritional requirements of Sport persons vary from person to person. Hence a dietician has to be very clear in his choice of counseling.

**Roles of a dietician :** Above all , sports dietician is considered an integral part of the sporting activity because he has multiple roles to play such as  
**AS a Nutrition educationist** - A dietician can guide and administer nutrition policies and procedures. A dietician can

develop plenty of resources to support educational efforts. As a dietician he can guide Educates in food selection in a grocery store , during a play tour, or for a food storage and food preparation in sports hostels & sports colleges. (Stephen Robson -Strategic sports development 2013).

**As a catering educationist-** A dietician can co-ordinate / manage quantity food production and distribution such as developing and managing training table menus and catering. A dietician can coordinate nutrition for domestic and / or international travel, for example, catering, hotels, airlines, competition, for individuals and teams. A dietician can manages budgets for purchasing and distribution of nutritional supplements. A dietician can develop and deliver nutrition education for food service personnel.

**As a Health educationist** - These days sports players are very much health conscious& they are aware of the responsibilities of a personal dietician. As a dietician delivers nutrition education presentations, demonstrations, or events on various topics related to nutrition for performance , players are interested to hire one as a personal or team dietician.He can suggest appropriate pre- game , during, and post-exercise fluids and snacks for individual training, team practice & competition & provides individual nutrition counseling as needed. besides he also serve as a nutrition resource for coaches, teachers, trainers, food service personnel, and parents.

**Conclusion:** Along with variety if sports sector, there is a growing demand for dieticians in Sports. Sports has been marketed through various channels &sports players have millions of fan



following. Hence s sportsman has to be fit & fine in every match he plays. A sports man needs to be trendy as well as a hero in every sense .But in India, sports dieticians are yet to become a fashionable accessory for sports men. But globalization has left a lasting impact on sporting professions & a dietician has become a necessary accompaniment to sports persons. Indian youth aspirants can use this professional opportunity & join hands in augmenting sport growth. A consolidated effort through academic institutions, NGOs, Public private - partnerships etc a comprehensive policy of making sport dietician an integral part of Indian sporting sector.

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