

be world class

Performance coach's Olympic skills help businesses become world class

A sports psychologist who helped some of Britain's Beijing Olympic medallists on their way to glory is teaching businesses how to become world class competitors.

Simon Hartley of Be World Class, based in Gateshead, has worked with top athletes and sportspeople – including gold medal winning cyclist Victoria Pendleton and North East swimmer and bronze medallist, Joanne Jackson.

During his 12 years as a leading sports performance coach, Mr Hartley's clients have included premiership football clubs such as Sunderland AFC, first class county cricket clubs Yorkshire and Durham and several rugby clubs.

Now, using the formulas that have turned his clients into world class competitors, he is helping businesses achieve their potential through a series of inspiring workshops.

“A lot of my work with athletes revolves around them producing their best performance when it counts,” said Mr Hartley. “It's about being effective working in pressurised, stressful situations and being able to engineer their peak performance.

“In the business world it's about confidence; motivating and inspiring other people. But it's also about doing it your own way, because one thing that truly world class people have in common is the ability to be themselves.”

Mr Hartley gained a masters degree in sports psychology at Leeds Metropolitan University and began working with the Leeds Rhinos rugby team, Yorkshire county cricketers and England Cricket as a student. He moved to the North-East in 2000 and eventually became director of performance sport at the University of Northumbria, providing sports performance support for the Newcastle Falcons.

It was at the University of Northumbria that he worked with Olympic gold medallist Victoria Pendleton in 2001 for 12 months. The cyclist was a student at the university at the time.

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“She was just making her way on the world stage when I worked with her. She’s made massive strides during the last few years. She has a great deal of confidence now and has developed well as a person,” said Mr Hartley.

As a consultant sports psychologist, Mr Hartley fosters the talents of the North-East’s elite athletes at the English Institute of Sport’s hub in Gateshead. The North-East sportspeople he has coached include Newcastle swimmer, Chris Cook, who competed in this summer’s Olympics. Through the English Institute of Sport he has also supported Sunderland boxer Tony Jeffries, who won a bronze medal.

“In sport, I help athletes win medals and teams win championships,” said Mr Hartley. “I specialise in developing a world class mindset and approach. But during the past five years I’ve had incredible results applying my work to entrepreneurs, small and medium sized companies and corporate clients. I help them to understand the ingredients that enable peak performance to help them succeed.”

Mr Hartley’s corporate clients include global financial company, Skandia, and leading health insurance company Unum.

Mr Hartley will be running a series of six one-day workshops – one per month for six months until March 2009. Starting on September 19 at The English Institute of Sport at Gateshead International Stadium, they will cover the issues of confidence, motivation, sharpening the focus of the business and becoming world class.

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