

News release



26 October 2011



MENTORING ESSENTIAL FOR ATHLETICS SUCCESS **Learning Life Skills from Top GB Athletes**

A new study released today by the Aviva-sponsored 'On Camp with Kelly' initiative has revealed that long term mentoring makes a measurable difference to athletic performance.

The first ever study to investigate the benefits of an educational mentoring programme found that 80% of the athletes mentored by Dame Kelly Holmes through the 'On Camp with Kelly' initiative, with the support of Aviva, had better performance results than their counterparts.

In addition, qualitative research by Dr Anna Waters, a leading sport psychologist, found six key ways in which 'On Camp with Kelly' has been supporting athletes since 2004 and contributing to their success. From this Dr Waters identified a **six step mentoring model** that has a direct impact on athlete performance and could provide a template for future sports mentoring programmes and a legacy post London 2012.

The six steps include one-to-one mentoring from Dame Kelly, support, preparation, education, long term regular contact and injury management. The research revealed that they lead to improvements in athletes' confidence, self belief, race knowledge, motivation, concentration, persistence and competitiveness, which results in improved performance.

The benefits of this six step mentoring process have been demonstrated by the recent success of 'On Camp with Kelly' athlete Hannah England who won a silver medal in the 1500m at the 2011 IAAF World Championships.

Hannah said: “The support and education I have received from the Aviva-sponsored ‘On Camp with Kelly’ initiative has been crucial in helping me to achieve success in senior competition. For a mentor to be effective you need to know them well and I have developed that relationship with Kelly over the last seven years. The support of Kelly and ‘On Camp with Kelly’ will be crucial in the build up to London 2012. Kelly has been there and done it herself and she knows exactly what you need to hear.”

Dr Waters has also extrapolated the six step athletics mentoring model into real life skills and developed a corresponding version for health and fitness suitable for all ages and abilities.

Dame Kelly Holmes said: “Developing athletes of the future, with Aviva’s support, is a passion of mine. Through a long term successful mentoring programme we can develop the kind of talent in the UK that can compete with and beat the best in the world.

“Effective mentoring can open up new ideas and bring the best out of people. Everyone has obstacles to overcome at some point in life, whether they be sports orientated or personal, and one way of achieving this is through this mentoring model.”

Gerri Carr, Senior Sponsorship Manager, Aviva UK, said: “It’s great to see how our investment in ‘On Camp with Kelly’ is helping pave the way for potential champions on the world stage. It is clear that Kelly’s mentoring model is working, providing an essential part of athletes’ development and making a difference to performances. We have been dedicated to supporting British athletes through our longstanding partnership with UK Athletics and we are proud to see success as the ‘On Camp with Kelly’ athletes progress through the Aviva GB&NI Team.”

Further details of this encouraging set of research results can be found on www.ontcampwithkelly.co.uk

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Notes to Editors

About the research

'On Camp with Kelly' (OCWK) commissioned BPS Chartered Sport Psychologist Dr Anna Waters to carry out a research project on the impact of the initiative on athletes' performance.

Mentoring has become popular in business, organisations and academic settings. Mentoring youth programmes have become increasingly widespread and there is some evidence to support the benefits of these programmes. Performances of OCWK athletes suggest that the programme is working, but how does it impact on performance?

In order to discover how the athletes believe the programme has impacted on their performance Dr Waters conducted a number of interviews. Athletes interviewed included those who took part in the first OCWK educational camp in 2004 and athletes currently classified as OCWK Gold athletes.

Qualitative analyses were conducted on the interview transcripts, which resulted in finding six key benefits of the programme. These six benefits were developed in the mentoring model as the six steps of the model. Athletes reported that, as a result of these six steps, they felt more confident, had higher self-belief, better race knowledge, felt well prepared for senior major championships and recovered from injury more quickly. The athletes reported that, in turn, these factors had an important impact on their performance.

'On Camp with Kelly'

'On Camp with Kelly' (OCWK) was started by double Olympic champion Dame Kelly Holmes in January 2004 and with support and sponsorship from Aviva has grown from strength to strength. Over 60 athletes have been involved in the initiative to date.

Dame Kelly set up OCWK because she wanted to help retain talented young female middle distance athletes in the sport and assist them to make the transition from junior to senior ranks. Her vision of OCWK was that it should be an educational development programme so that the athletes who are part of it gain life experiences as well as learn what it takes to become a world class athlete. Since 2008 some talented young male athletes have also been involved in the initiative.

Eight girls were given the opportunity to participate in the first OCWK camp in South Africa in October 2004, funded by Aviva, and since then there have been regular Get-Togethers, a training camp in Spain, educational camps at the Commonwealth Games in Melbourne in 2006 and Delhi in 2010 and at the Aviva GB Team Preparation Camp in Portugal and the IAAF World Championships in Berlin in 2009. OCWK athletes also have the opportunity to race in international meetings across the UK and Europe and benefit from mentoring from Dame Kelly as well as medical and financial support funded by Aviva.

For more information about 'On Camp with Kelly' visit www.oncampwithkelly.co.uk.

Aviva

Aviva has been supporting British athletes since 1999 and is helping pave the way for their success by hosting six world class athletics events on home soil – the Aviva Series, supporting the Aviva GB & NI junior, senior and Paralympics teams as they prepare for all major championships. Through the Aviva Athletics Academy, we are also providing the opportunity for the next generation to get involved in athletics.

For more information, please see: www.aviva.co.uk/athletics.

Follow us on twitter: www.twitter.com/avivaathletics.

For imagery and broadcast-standard video, please visit: aviva.digitalnewsagency.com.

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We are the UK's largest insurer with 19 million customers and one in three households has a relationship with us. Our combination of life, health and general insurance is unique in its scale and breadth in the UK market. Customers can choose to buy our products through intermediaries, our corporate partners or from Aviva direct and we have become the partner of choice for many of the UK's biggest organisations.

We are ranked as one of the UK's top ten most valuable brands and Aviva Plc are in the top 10% of socially responsible companies globally in the Dow Jones Sustainability World Index. In 2010 we invested £4.3m into our communities in the UK, which included 1,500 Aviva volunteers giving 24,000 hours for good causes. In addition, our employees gave £600,000 through fundraising and donating. Read our corporate responsibility report at www.aviva.com/2010cr.

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**based on gross worldwide premiums at 31 December 2009.*

***at 31 December 2010.*

For more information about Aviva's support of athletics please contact Steph Burke at Hill & Knowlton on 0207 413 3000 or sburke@hillandknowlton.com

