

Programme for ex-athletes aims to be the winning formula for the future of AI

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A unique, new programme designed to provide athletes with the resources and support needed to successfully transition from professional sports into a thriving career within the fast-growing data centre sector has been launched. It is the result of a partnership between [BCS](#), the specialist services provider to the digital infrastructure industry, and [JLB Search](#), a leading global search firm specialising in sport, media, and entertainment, and will be spearheaded by ex-England rugby player turned international referee Holly Wood.

The bespoke Athlete Career Transition Programme is the latest initiative by BCS to help address the growing skills shortage in the data centre sector amidst global concerns that the pace of AI adoption may be restricted by the ability of the market to deliver sufficient supply of data centres to house it, at least in part because of the lack of skilled professionals in the sector. It forms part of the company's industry leading talent development approach and successful apprentice and graduate schemes.

The new programme will see athletes at the end of their professional sporting careers provided with tailored guidance, skills mapping, and career opportunities for full time roles at BCS such as Project Management, Cost Management, Quantity Surveying, Accountancy, Business Operations, and HR. They will be supported with personalised development programmes.

Athletes that have joined BCS as part of the programme so far include Will Edwards, an ex-England rugby player who has taken a role in Cost Management; Yasmin Campell, a GB Fencer who has moved into Business Operations; Egli Kaja, a professional footballer who is now a Project Manager; and Mahima Attreya, an international swimmer who has joined the HR department.

Jim Hart, CEO at BCS said: “This unique programme reflects our lateral thinking and determination to find the next generation of senior managers for our fast-growing sector. It has really opened our eyes to this untapped pool of incredible talent which we believe has a unique skillset which enables them to thrive in business settings, such as teamwork, leadership, adaptability, resilience and discipline. We will be teaming successful candidates with the right mentors from within our business to nurture and develop them to create lasting, impactful careers.”

Holly Wood, a consultant at JLB Search, said: “This programme is close to my heart as I have seen first-hand the challenges that athletes face when moving from the world of elite sport to new professional arenas. We have had an incredible response to this programme with over 1200 applications in the first 3 months alone. BCS is absolutely the right choice of partner for us due to our shared values of integrity, diversity, and a people-first approach. Both organisations believe in the power of talent transformation, and together we will help athletes harness their unique qualities and apply them to a new career. The collaboration reflects our dedication to empowering individuals to achieve their full potential in life after sport.”