

ICSC International Sports Chiro Module 10

Working at Sport Event as Chef de Mission

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Video Lesson: 19:01

Hello, everybody, and welcome to this presentation about working at sports events, seen through the eyes of a Chef De Mission. My name is Lotte Langhoff. I'm from Denmark where I also graduated from chiropractic school at University of Southern Denmark in Windsor in 2005. I'm a partner at a large interdisciplinary clinic in Haslevvej where we are currently seven chiropractors. The clinic is located within the region largest private hospital, that has more than 20 medical specialties. This, of course, gives us plenty of opportunities to work with other health care professions. As mentioned, I graduated in 2005 from chiropractic school, but that year I also received my ICSSP from FICS. A few years later, in 2010 I finished my postgraduate diploma in sports chiropractic medicine by Murdoch University in Australia.

The very same year that I received my FICS diploma, I also worked my first FICS event. This was only three weeks after I graduated. And it's safe to say that I was blown away. My very first event and one of the first things I ever did as a licensed chiropractor, was the World Games in Duisburg in Germany. I've since then, three more World Games. One in Kauhsiung in Taiwan another one in Cali in Colombia and lately Wroclaw in Poland. I am definitely planning to do more. In Wroclaw, I assisted Brian Nook in his work as Chef De Mission. I have been Chef De Mission at the two World Games that FICS has been involved in so far. Planning has already started for the third one in Catalonia in Spain in 2019. At the first one, the FICS team got to walk onto the field during the opening ceremony. That was the very first. This was a great honor indeed. In 2017 I was Chef De Mission at the Asian Indoor and Martial Arts games in Turkmenistan, which is north of Afghanistan. I would definitely never have made it to Turkmenistan if it had not been for FICS. Other than these major games, I worked at various World Cups and other national and international championships around the world.

This talk will focus on the things needed to make sports events a success for all involved with the chiropractor's, athletes, researchers, organizers, or anyone else involved. Success is important on both a professional level in our work with the athletes, but also on a more social level. Because while we absolutely need to be professional and at our best, we also need to have fun. There is no doubt that it is so much easier to have fun if everybody knows what is expected and stick to the plans made. This will avoid huge amounts of confusion and at all sports events, whether big or small, things can sometimes be both confusing and hectic. Success is dependent on the team involved, the communications, transport, schedules, the general attitude, collaboration, et cetera. But two main points that are worth repeating is that you need to be ready for changes and don't be late.

Who is on the team? When working at events with FICS teams can be anything from 2 to about 40 chiropractors. You will be working with chiropractors at all levels of experience. It could be University graduated chiropractor's like myself at one point, or doctors who have worked at numerous events for FICS. Some might be team chiropractors for professional teams back home, or they may have been working for a team or country at multiple Olympics, World Cups, et cetera.

Part of the team you may also see students and people involved in research who are aiming to publish articles about our work in International Journal. Research is ever more important for future involvement at high level sports events, and they are therefore very valuable team members. We generally try to put together a team of people with mixed levels of experience. You almost always meet multiple nationalities from a variety of different chiropractic schools and therefore with different approaches to chiropractic treatment. This is why working at games is such a great learning opportunity, no matter your previous level of experience. At no point in my years of working with FICS have I met any Prima donnas that did not want to share their knowledge and who were not

willing to learn from others. The team is not only the FICS chiropractors. When we are working at events, we are part of a much larger team. This team is everyone from support and technical staff to the medical professions. At some events, you may be the only person with any medical training at all. And at others you will find emergency staff, physiotherapists, and medical doctors and perhaps also other chiropractors working for a specific team or sport.

All these people are equally important, and we must work together. We are not there to compete with them or to prove ourselves better than them. You are not there to compete with your teammates either. We are there for the athletes only. And you must at all times do what is best for them. So, if you think someone is better equipped to handle a problem than you are, then refer the athlete or as a minimum ask for advice. Everybody will respect this and appreciate it, too, whether health care professional or athlete. Directly related to this, then you are not allowed to self-promote during games. It is, of course, OK to let people know where you work, if they ask. And they can then choose to come look you up afterwards. But patrolling the arena, handing out business cards, and acting pushy toward coaches or athletes is unacceptable. If a federation or country representative or similar approaches you and asks for further assistance, then refer the contact to the Chef De Mission. FICS will then negotiate the contract and in general make sure that you'll be involved in further events with the federation, if you wish to be.

For the various games and sports events to be a success, it is absolutely vital that we are able to communicate. This is especially true at large events that may involve up to 40 chiropractors and often also support staff from the organizing committee. These could be drivers, technicians, hotel staff, et cetera. If you are selected for an event, communication will start long before the actual event. For this purpose, we normally use email to pass on information to the selected chiropractors. It is so important that you read all these emails carefully because they may contain a request for various information. This information could be anything from passport and flight details, clothing size, dietary wishes, et cetera. Sometimes a deadline for providing this information can be very short and failure to reply on time can ultimately cost you your seat at the game. This is, for example, if we don't have the information needed to complete your accreditation on time.

In the emails you will also find all the practical information that you need. This could be information about hotels, event dates, venues, et cetera. We know from experience that this information is sometimes not available until quite late in the process. But we'll, of course, make sure that it gets to you as soon as possible. We are aware that you will need this information for your planning of time away from the clinic, flight times, et cetera. But things can change, and sometimes they will change multiple times and with next to no notice. Please be prepared for this. During the actual games you will still receive emails, but we tend to use social media apps quite a lot. This could be WhatsApp, Messenger, Facebook, etc., and this will be used for the daily ongoing communication from us to you and back. We generally set up two accounts one that is for work-related messages only and another one for the more social stuff.

Using the social media apps can sometimes be a challenge though because depending on your location there may not be any internet connection at all. This could be a general problem for the region of the country that you are in or perhaps just because your treatment area is in an area where there is no Wi-Fi. Or it could even be like the Asian games in Turkmenistan, where all social apps were blocked by the government itself. Especially at the larger events, we generally have a meeting every evening where we talk about what is happened at the various venues and let everyone know when and where they are to be working the next day. These meetings are important, and they are mandatory. The only accepted reason not to attend is when competition at your venue of the day did not finish in time for you to make it back. In that case, make sure that someone lets you know what was discussed during the meeting.

Sometimes there will be hand-outs worth reading or information posted in the hotel lobby or at other relevant locations. At the various venues we always try to have at least one person with a working phone. But again, that depends on the region, countries, and this may not always be possible. Why this much talk about communication? Because things change constantly. We need to be able to adapt accordingly. Communication helps to avoid unpleasant surprises and makes everything so much more fun and rewarding for everyone involved.

Then there is transport. For the most part, you need to arrange your own transport to the event, but once you are there, any work-related transport will be taken care of by the organizers. There is one main thing when it comes to transport, and it is simple. Do not be late. If transport has been arranged from the hotel to the venue, then you must be there on time, every time. It is a logistical nightmare to arrange transport of 40 people to a dozen different venues spread out all over the city. If one car or bus gets delayed, then the entire schedule may collapse. For that same reason, if you decide to make your own way to the venue, you must let us know so that we do not waste time waiting for you. If you should miss your transport, it is your own responsibility, at own cost, to make it to the venue as soon as absolutely possible.

While at the games, you are of course, very much allowed to have fun, and I am sure you will have fun, and we encourage you to have fun. But we need you to be ready and fit for work the next day, no matter how early your shift might start. No shows are not acceptable, and it may lead to accreditation being pulled. This has happened before, and it may happen again, so this is not something to be taken lightly. The transport available at an event is whatever we have been able to get the organizers to provide for us. Over the years, this has been every single means of transport you can imagine, cars, trucks, buses, public transport, private chauffeurs, free taxis, bicycles, or our own two feet. Sometimes we get everything we need, and at other times, it has been far from ideal.

When the transport situation is not ideal, be aware that this could mean that you end up at your venue long before the competition starts, or that you get picked up long after everyone else has left. Just remember, we have not arranged this to annoy you, but because it was the only way to make things work. Most of the time there will be only the one transport to and from your venue that day. You must make sure that you bring everything you need. This includes tables, provisions, iceboxes, paperwork, and perhaps even a lunch pack. If you do run out of something, let us know. We thrive to visit the different venues daily, and we will try to bring you what you need. Then one last thing on transport, again, you must be ready for things to change, so keep your channels of communication open.

Then there is schedules. Schedules are really, really important because these are the ones that will tell you everything you need to know about when to work, where to work, who to work with, how to get there. It is no surprise that you must be on time, and you must be ready for changes, and if you think that schedules changes often and in weird ways, then please remember that a lot of the information used to make the schedules may not be available to us until the very last minute.

Multidisciplinary events, we often ask the doctors to let us know if they would like to work at certain sports, certain venues or work with certain other doctors. Asking this is not a promise that they will happen. But it is a promise that we will make it happen if we can, but when we select the teams for certain sports, there are many different things to consider, and it will not be possible to fulfill everybody's wishes. But throughout the games, your welcome and to make requests and we will see what we can do. Sports chiropractors being who they are, we hardly ever have problems with attitude and mindset.

99.9 percent of the time I have only ever met doctors who were positive and fully focused and doing what is best for the athletes, and of course, this is what we need. There is no doubt that working at games can be frustrating at times. But this is part of the fun and part of the challenge.

One of the hardest challenges can be working with the other health care professional present since they may not look at things the same way you do. They may not even know what a chiropractor is and what we can do. But no matter how much you disagree, you must still be professional. Do not argue. Do not be visibly upset. Stay calm at all times and explain your point of view to the people involved. Please always remember that you represent our profession. Oftentimes you will work in countries that has no tradition or knowledge of chiropractic, and in some countries, we may not even be legally allowed to practice at the event without a special permission from the authorities. Because of this, and a multitude of other reasons of course, we need to show everyone else involved that chiropractic medicine is a safe and efficient form of treatment. That it is carried out by knowledgeable health care professionals that are willing to cooperate and do not come barging in trying to be heroes and take over everything.

If you do have issues with someone or something, please talk to the Chef De Mission and we will handle things from there. Being professional is also about how you look and act in general. Because again, you represent our profession and you represent FICS. By all means do go and have fun but please no drunken escapades in a FICS uniform, showing up the next day dirty, hangover, and unfit for work. Most of what there is to say about collaboration has already been said. But most of it is also worth repeating. We need to work together. No matter your level of experience, we all have something worthwhile to offer in both a professional and on a social level. We are there for the athletes, not to bolster your ego or to show other health care professionals and/or your colleagues how awesome you are. Do your job. Do it well. and do it with a smile and willingness to cooperate and share your knowledge. Both athletes and professionals will start going to you all on their own. The staff at the venues and other vendor arenas are important, too.

Remember that most of them will be volunteers just like you. They are the ones that help you find your treatment area at the venue; they will help you with tons of practical stuff. It can be small, but important stuff like getting chairs, dustbins, find a freezer for ice, putting up signs, bringing lunchboxes and drinking water and 100 other little things that will make everything nicer, easier, and more efficient. When arriving at a new arena, go find the venue manager and let him or her know that you are there and what you need and who you are. Just do not expect him or any other volunteers to be there for you only. They all have a gazillion other things to do, so give them a fair chance. On the other hand, if there are things that you need and that you know is a part of what should be provided for you, then inform the Chef De Mission, and we will take it from there.

So why get a sports chiropractic certificate? A certificate opens so many doors, and this is both on a professional, personal, and on a social level. Working as a sports chiropractor is so much fun, and when I signed up for my first seminar with FICS, I never imagined that it would take me to so many places to meet so many people. I now literally have friends all over the world in both a chiropractor profession and within the world of sports. I have seen places that I have never even heard of and I have worked sideline to a multitude of sports. Some of these sports were well known, and some were brand new to me. But no matter which sport or country, the number of smiles and helpful people that I have met is absolutely dumbfounding.

No matter if the sports discipline is big and well known or tiny niche sport only played in a few countries, the people involved are full of enthusiasm and love of their sport. They will be ever grateful for you to volunteer your time and experience to help them achieve their goals, so every event, whether big or small is a treasure trove of new and old friends spiced up with professional, social, and cultural experiences.

What more can you wish for?

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