



Marketing Athletic Experience on a Resume

As an athlete at Illinois State University you have developed a number of transferable skills that can be applied not only in competition, but also to the workplace. For example, as an athlete, you have demonstrated the following skills:

- Teamwork and communication
- Drive and self-motivation
- A high energy and competitive spirit
- Commitment and dedication
- Leadership ability
- Time management and the ability to multi-task
- Willingness to accept responsibility
- Problem solving and conflict resolution
- As a student athlete, you've also shown:
 - A willingness to "go the extra mile"
 - An ability to communicate in a team environment
 - A competitive spirit that can drive you in the workplace
 - A work ethic that will set you above most other candidates
 - An ability to manage your time (balancing practices, training, and traveling with your academic course load)

On a resume, you can document your athletic experience in the same way you would describe your academic achievement, campus involvement or work experience. Simply focus on your accomplishments. Consider what your role was on the team and what you accomplished as a part of that team. Highlight skills that are transferable to your career interests on your resume to demonstrate how you have the qualifications required for the position for which you are applying.

CLASSIFYING ATHLETIC EXPERIENCE ON A RESUME

To highlight your experience and skills as an athlete, list your athletic experience under a section header called "Athletics" or "Related Experience" and include a few short bullet points highlighting your achievements both in and out of competition. For example:

ATHLETICS

Illinois State University Football Team

<Insert Year>

- Varsity Letter Recipient, **<Insert Year>**
- Defensive Player of the Year, **<Insert Year>**
- 1st Team All Missouri Valley Conference, **<Insert Year>**

RELATED EXPERIENCE

Illinois State University Football Team

<Insert Year>

- Provided leadership as the team captain for the <Insert Year> season
- Organized formal and informal meetings to open and improve communication among team members
- Received Missouri Valley All-Conference Award for outstanding performance
- 1 of 4 finalists for the <Insert Year> Doug Collins Illinois State University Male Student Athlete of the Year

Be sure that when describing your athletic experience your word choices are ones that are clear to employers and reflect your ability to produce results or outcomes. For example, a statement like, “we went from a poor team to a really good team,” might be better phrased as “started the season with two losses and became the first team All Missouri Valley Conference in 2012.” Using words that are specific rather than general will better articulate and give context to your experience and the skills you may bring to the job.

Marketing Athletic Experience in an Interview

In most interview situations, questions of candidates are generally open-ended and behavioral in nature. This allows you as the candidate to show your ability to analyze situations, offer solutions, make decisions, take on leadership roles, and show your creativity. To showcase your skills, abilities, and career goals, consider the kinds of questions you might be asked and try to identify how you would answer such questions. The following questions are a few that if answered strategically, could give you the opportunity to market your athletic involvement to employers during an interview.

GENERAL INTERVIEWING QUESTIONS

- Tell me about yourself.
- What have you learned from being involved in athletics at Illinois State?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?

LEADERSHIP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- How do you motivate people?
- Describe a leadership position you've held. Why did you dedicate time to it?
- What are some of the challenges you've experienced as a leader?
- Describe your leadership style.

Answering the questions you may be asked is more than providing a yes or no answer, or giving general information. Instead, be more strategic with your answers by utilizing the “STAR” method to showcase your skills and abilities.

S = SITUATION DESCRIBE THE SITUATION.

T = TASK DESCRIBE THE TASK YOU NEEDED TO ACCOMPLISH.

A = ACTION DESCRIBE THE ACTION/BEHAVIOR YOU TOOK AND WHY.

R = RESULTS DESCRIBE THE RESULTS/OUTCOMES OF YOUR ACTIONS.

- Describe a time when you set a goal. How did you go about accomplishing it?
- Tell me about a time when you were in a team or group environment. What is your style when participating in teams or groups?
- Describe a time when you had to use your problem solving skills.

SAMPLE 1:

Tell me about a time when team morale and motivation were at a low. What did you do to try to rebuild team spirit?

(Situation) “Mid-season I began to notice that the energy and morale of our team dropped. Teammates weren’t excited to be at practices, we weren’t giving our all during our games, and some teammates were not getting along.”

(Task) “My success as an athlete thrives off the energy of others. So, I decided that something needed to be done for us to make it to the end of the season. As a senior team member I knew the younger members looked to me for leadership. I decided to exercise my leadership abilities to try to help the team out of a slump.”

(Action) “I talked with the coaches to express my concern and to brainstorm ideas on what we might do to boost morale. After one of our practices I asked if the team members could stick around for ten extra minutes. I facilitated a conversation regarding our low energy and morale and told them I wanted us to start to have fun again playing our sport. After that conversation, some other teammates and myself planned Friday morning breakfasts after practice, played motivating music during warm-ups, and took turns planning social events outside of practice.”

(Result) “By making practices more than just practice and by spending time off the court together, we really got to know one another and felt connected to each other, in turn motivating us to succeed and support one another with great energy during games.”

SAMPLE 2:

Tell me about a time when a team member wasn't pulling his or her weight.

(Situation) "One of my teammates consistently came to practices late, did not bring the equipment needed for practices, and even missed a game."

(Task) "Part of being on a team is working together utilizing one another's strengths and being supportive. I became frustrated with my teammate because he wasn't supporting or helping the team. I decided I would talk to him about my frustration and concerns rather than simply be angry."

(Action) "I approached him after practice indicating I wanted to sit down and talk with him. I was careful to not use language that made me sound overly aggressive or angry; I wanted to find out why he was all of a sudden disconnected from the team and not contributing. As our conversation progressed I found out some of his frustration as a team member and encouraged him to talk with our coaches."

(Result) "The conversation went well, I think he appreciated that I talked with him instead of just getting mad. He seemed to understand how his lack of commitment and energy affected the team as a whole. After our conversation I noticed that he was on time to most practices and increased his effort level during workouts and games."

Finally, when you played on a team you followed some basic rules of the game. Consider your job interview as a competition where the best player/candidate wins. Use these analogies to help you succeed:

1. Please the Coach - Like you did with your coaches, listen carefully to the interviewer's description of the position, and match your skills and experiences to the interviewer's needs through the responses you give.
2. Play the Play - Use specific examples to illustrate the skills and qualifications you have to offer an employer.
3. Share Your Skills - Be sure the interviewer knows them before you are done. Now is the time to toot your own horn and make fans.
4. Practice - Participate in a mock interview at the Career Center or use InterviewStream, an online interviewing tool available on the Career Center website to help you practice.

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