

Matt Furber

BSc(Hons) Sport and Exercise Science,
2006

Senior Scientist, GSK Human Performance
Lab and National Trainer, UK Anti-Doping



Research and performance

Working at the GSK Human Performance Lab means that Matt Furber has the best of both worlds – operating within a corporate environment whilst also being able to carry out first-class research, which has a real impact upon elite athletes.

'The main aspects of my job are to work with our elite partners to provide world-class science support to help develop their performance. The other significant contributor to my work is Research and Development. At the GSK HPL we undertake a range of research programmes focusing in metabolism, respiratory, pain, cognition, recovery and body composition amongst others. Currently I'm working on three main projects: one is looking at a novel method to enhance muscle glycogen pre-exercise, the second is a muscle biopsy and stool analysis study to look more holistically at the impact of high-protein diets on performance and health, and the third is an advisory role on a GSK project based in India.'

The elite partners that Matt and the GSK HPL support are some of the top names in the sporting world, including Jenson Button, Ali and Jonny Brownlee, Chris Froome, England Rugby and Rory McIlroy, to name a few.

However, Matt's work means that time is often at a premium. *'With the nature of working in high-performance sport there is expectation to deliver, and deliver fast. However with the range and quality of athletes that we work with it is important to consider the needs of each individual to ensure to best possible support.'*

Career path

Matt initially worked as a fitness instructor and personal trainer. However, within a year of graduating he was offered a role with Lucozade's Sport Science team as a Sport Scientist, which provided a great introduction to the industry – including exposure to a number of world-class athletes and major events.

After two and a half years Matt returned to the University of Hertfordshire to begin his PhD, alongside lecturing and managing the Human Performance Centre at UH. This also allowed Matt to set up his own Sport Science company, undertaking a range of consultancy work. *'After being at UH for three and a half years, I returned to industry to my current role at the GSK HPL. Working in the commercial environment is very different to the academic environment, however, it's equally challenging and rewarding.'*

Words of advice

Matt stresses that this is a difficult industry to work in. *'It is not easy building a career in Sport Science, but those that are dedicated and driven will succeed, and the hard work will pay off. Without my degree in sport science, I would not be doing the job I have now.'*

He stresses the importance of gaining as much experience as possible, to help you stand out to potential employers. *'Opportunities will arise during your degree programme; it could be to help complete research, work with a local team or start blogging – do as much as you can, as it is things like this that will make you stand out.'*



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