Making the connection: women, sport and leadership

A background in sport can improve a woman’s leadership potential and help her land a job, according to women executives surveyed by the EY Women Athletes Business Network and espnW. Just what is it about sport participation that can help speed girls and women down the path to success?

The respondents

- 49% are C-suite executives
- 51% hold other management positions
- 52% of the C-suite women played at university level or above
- 94% played sport

Does sport help? A resounding “hurrah”

- 74% of respondents say a background in sport can help accelerate a woman’s career
- 61% of respondents say sporting involvement has contributed to their own career success

The top three leadership skills developed by sport

1. The ability to see projects through completion
2. Motivational skills
3. Team-building

Why athletes are fit for jobs

Two out of three respondents say a candidate’s background in sport would be a positive influence when making a hiring decision.

Candidates with a sport background are thought to have the following traits:

1. Strong work ethic
2. Team players
3. Determined

“It’s OK to want to win

Three out of four respondents say that being described as “competitive” is considered an asset to their leadership style.

“Sport teaches intangible leadership skills that can’t be taught in the classroom.”

Beth Brooke-Marciniak
Global Vice Chair, Public Policy, EY, a US Title IX basketball scholarship recipient and one of the World’s 100 Most Powerful Women, according to Forbes

Want to learn what the EY Women Athletes Business Network is doing to harness the leadership potential of women athletes? Visit www.ey.com/womenathletesnetwork or follow us on Twitter @EYWomenAthletes.