



Webinar on

Career Pathways In Sports & Fitness

Date: 20th December 2025, Saturday

Organised By

**Odisha School Education Programme
Authority (OSEPA), Bhubaneswar**

In Collaboration with

UNICEF Odisha

Technical Partner



**IDENTITY
FOUNDATION**

About the Collaboration:

The **Odisha School Education Programme Authority (OSEPA)**, under the **Department of School & Mass Education, Government of Odisha**, in collaboration with **UNICEF Odisha** and Identity Foundation Trust, conducts career guidance webinars for secondary school students. The purpose of these sessions is to equip students in grades 9 and 10 with the necessary knowledge and confidence to make informed career decisions. The initiative focuses on strengthening the transition from school to higher education and the world of work through structured, student-friendly career awareness and guidance activities.

About the Webinar:

As part of the career guidance initiative, the seventh (7th) session of the Career Webinar Series was organised by the Odisha School Education Programme Authority (OSEPA) on Saturday, 20th December 2025, at 10:30 a.m. via YouTube Live. The topic was “**Career Pathways in Sports and Fitness**”, attended by Grades 9-10 students and teachers statewide.

The session introduced diverse options like professional athletes, coaches, fitness trainers, sports managers, physiotherapists, and PE teachers. It covered entry routes (e.g., state academies, NSNIS diploma, SAI programmes), skills (fitness, teamwork, discipline), and preparation (district events, trials). Participants learnt eligibility, training paths, and long-term jobs—making sports a practical, exciting career beyond studies. OSEPA encouraged rural/tribal students to join local events for talent spotting, building confidence and sustainable futures in this dynamic field.

No. of schools attended the webinar session	
No. of boys attended the webinar sessions from grade 9 & 10	
No. of girls attended the webinar sessions from grade 9 & 10	
No. of students attended the webinar session from grade 9	
No. of students attended the webinar session from grade 10	
No. of students attended the webinar sessions (grade 9 & 10 combined)	

About the Resource Person:

Mr. Jayadev Mahapatra is a seasoned sports management professional with 20+ years of experience, including 10+ years in grassroots football development across Odisha, Jharkhand, and Chhattisgarh. He has led large-scale CSR and community football initiatives, impacting over 5,000+ children across 18+ rural locations. His leadership spans project implementation, training, stakeholder engagement (corporate & government), marketing, and international partnerships.

He has also worked with reputed companies like Barclays, GE Money, and Tata Motors Finance in leadership roles, handling portfolios worth thousands of crores, before fully transitioning into sports-based community engagement.



Welcome Note from the Moderator:

Mr. Jasobant Narayan Singhlal, Founder and Director of Identity Foundation Trust, moderated the 7th session of the Career Webinar Series by warmly welcoming students and teachers from various schools. He encouraged students to actively engage in the session by attentively listening to the resource person and thoughtfully absorbing the shared insights. Mr. Singhlal emphasised the importance of such sessions in helping students make informed career decisions, particularly in the field of sports. He highlighted that gaining clarity about career paths requires curiosity and active participation. To that end, he urged students to not hesitate in asking questions during the session, as open dialogue is a key part of meaningful learning. His remarks set a motivating tone for the session, aiming to inspire students to take charge of their future career choices.

What makes an individual choose a career in sports?



Students who have a passion for sports, enjoy team spirits, and possess strong leadership qualities may consider a career in sports both exciting and fulfilling. This field is ideal for individuals who prefer to stay physically active and are enthusiastic about maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Additionally, students with a keen interest in subjects like biology, psychology, and human development can also thrive in sports-related careers, as these areas are closely linked to understanding athletic performance, mental well-being, and physical growth. Those who are motivated by discipline, teamwork, and continuous self-improvement should consider exploring diverse opportunities in the sports sector, ranging from professional athletics and coaching to sports science, physical education, and sports management.

Choosing a career in sports offers a dynamic and rewarding path for individuals passionate about physical activity and personal excellence. The sports industry is rapidly growing, offering a wide range of career opportunities beyond just playing professionally, such as coaching, sports management, physiotherapy, sports journalism, and fitness training. It also provides the prestigious opportunity to represent one's state or country at various levels. A career in sports promotes both physical and mental well-being, encourages discipline and teamwork, and fosters leadership skills. Moreover, professionals in this field often play a vital role in community building and social development by inspiring others and promoting healthy lifestyles. For those who value active living and purpose-driven work, sports can be a fulfilling career choice.

Sports as an Early Career Option:

The resource person mentioned during the conversation that numerous sporting events are held at the

district, state, and national levels by various sports associations. Nonetheless, a very small percentage of students from government schools typically take part. Students are thus never given the opportunity to pursue a long-term career in the sports industry. If OSEPA

coordinates with various sports associations, at least at the district and state levels, and aligns its event calendar with theirs, he suggested that the government system can make it possible. The same message can then be conveyed to schools and students, encouraging maximum participation. This makes it possible to find genuine talent even in the state's rural areas. Additionally, he said that if students are exposed to sports as early as possible, they will be able to recognise their strengths and weaknesses and tailor their career choices accordingly.



Sports and Sports Science:

Sports Science is an interdisciplinary field that focuses on understanding how the human body responds to physical activity and exercise. It draws knowledge from areas such as exercise physiology, biomechanics, sports psychology, nutrition, and injury rehabilitation to enhance athletic performance, prevent injuries, and promote overall health and well-being.

For example, exercise physiologists analyse how the body reacts to different levels of physical stress, helping athletes train more efficiently. Bio-mechanists study body movements and mechanics to improve performance and reduce injury risk. Sports psychologists work on athletes' mental health, focus, and motivation to help them perform under pressure. Sports nutritionists create diet plans



tailored to optimise performance and recovery, while rehabilitation specialists assist in post-injury recovery using scientifically backed therapies.

Careers in sports science are not limited to professional sports. Opportunities exist in fitness and wellness centres, sports teams, rehabilitation clinics, research institutions, and educational settings. Individuals can work as performance analysts, strength and conditioning coaches, athletic trainers, or researchers. This field is ideal for those passionate about health, human biology, and helping others achieve their physical potential, making it a valuable and growing career path.

Physical Education & Academia:

Students in Odisha who are interested in building a career in sports have multiple academic pathways to choose from. One of the most common undergraduate programmes is Bachelor of Physical Education (B.P.Ed.), which focuses on physical fitness, sports training, and teaching methodologies. Students can also pursue a B.Sc. in Sports Science, which covers a more scientific approach to sports, including anatomy, exercise physiology, biomechanics, and sports psychology.



Several universities and institutes in Odisha offer these courses, such as Utkal University, Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT), and National Sports University campuses, where available. In addition to degree programmes, there are certificate and diploma courses in areas like fitness training, strength and conditioning, sports coaching, and sports nutrition, offered by recognised training academies and sports institutes.

Some integrated programmes combine sports science with physical education, offering students both theoretical knowledge and practical experience. These programmes are suitable for students who aspire to become coaches, fitness experts, trainers, sports scientists, or even physical education teachers. With the growing focus on sports development in the state, career prospects in this sector are expanding rapidly.

The Government College of Physical Education (GCPE) in Bhubaneswar, founded in 1957 and affiliated with Utkal University, provides a 2-year B.P.Ed. (Bachelor of Physical Education) programme with 100 seats and an M.P.Ed. programme with 40 seats, both recognised by NCTE and UGC. GCPE offers cutting-edge facilities—a library, gymnasium, laboratories, classrooms, and access to Kalinga Stadium—for hands-on training. Government College of Physical Education, Sambalpur (Kulundi) offers a 2-year B.P.Ed. course with 50 seats under Sambalpur University and is recognised by NCTE and UGC. Other government institutions, such as Tigiria College in Cuttack and Baliapal College in Balasore, offer B.P.Ed. and C.P.Ed. (Certificate in Physical Education) programmes with limited enrolment capacity.

Roadmap to being a Sports Coach:

Becoming a professional sports coach involves a structured process that combines passion, hands-on experience, formal education, and certifications. The journey typically begins with selecting a specific



sport and actively participating in it to gain foundational knowledge and practical understanding. Candidates aspiring to become coaches must have passed at least the 12th standard and possess a strong background in physical fitness and sports.

Pursuing a degree in Physical Education (B.P.Ed. / M.P.Ed.) or specialised Sports Coaching programs provides a solid academic base. Certifications such as the NSNIS (Netaji Subhas National Institute of Sports) Diploma in Coaching are widely recognised and often mandatory for formal coaching positions. Additionally, sport-specific licences and certifications offered by national sports federations or the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) can enhance professional credentials.

Hands-on exposure through internships or assistant coaching roles in state sports bodies, national federations, or elite training academies is crucial for real-world experience. Knowledge of sports nutrition, CPR, and first aid is highly recommended to ensure athlete safety and well-being.

Overall, a combination of education, certification, and practical exposure equips aspiring coaches with the skills and credentials necessary to build a long-term career in sports coaching across schools, clubs, academies, or national-level teams.

Opportunities for Sports Professionals:

A career in sports offers diverse employment opportunities across both government and private sectors. Government organisations such as the Sports Authority of India (SAI), Indian Railways, the armed forces, and state and central police departments actively recruit talented athletes and sports professionals through sports quotas. These positions often provide stable job opportunities with benefits, along with

the chance to continue sports participation and representation at various levels.



In the private sector, opportunities are rapidly expanding. Fitness chains, sports academies, professional sports teams, educational institutions (schools and colleges), and corporate wellness programmes regularly seek qualified sports professionals. These roles include coaching, athletic training, fitness consultation, and sports administration. In addition, event management companies involved in organising sports tournaments and media houses focusing on sports journalism and broadcasting also hire professionals with a background in sports.

The field of sports science is especially promising, with roles such as sports scientist, exercise physiologist, strength and conditioning coach, bio-mechanist, sports psychologist, physical education (PE) instructor, sports nutritionist, and academic researcher. These professionals are in demand in both performance and rehabilitation settings, helping athletes reach their peak potential and recover effectively from injuries.



Salaries in sports science and related fields vary based on the role, qualifications, and experience. On average, professionals can expect to earn between ₹2.5 lakh and ₹10 lakh per annum. With further specialisation and experience, particularly in high-performance sports or international settings, earnings can increase significantly, making it a rewarding and impactful career choice.

Sports management & Available Career Opportunities:

Sports Management is a dynamic and evolving field that deals with the business, organisational, and administrative aspects of sports. It plays a crucial role in ensuring the smooth functioning of sports teams, leagues, events, and athletes' careers. This domain includes a wide range of responsibilities, such

as team management, event planning, sponsorship handling, brand promotion, public relations, and athlete representation.

Key roles in this field of sports management include sports team manager, event coordinator, sports marketing executive, public relations officer, sports agent, and sponsorship manager. These professionals work closely with athletes, sports organisations, corporate sponsors, and media houses to



promote and grow the business side of sports. To build a career in sports management, students from any academic stream (Arts, Science, or Commerce) can pursue undergraduate or postgraduate degrees. Popular courses include BBA, BA, B. Sc, MBA, M. Sc, and PG Diploma in Sports Management.

In terms of career prospects, sports management offers excellent growth opportunities. Professionals can earn between ₹3 lakh and ₹15 lakh per annum, depending on their role, experience, and the scale of the organisation. The industry's rapid growth, fuelled by the commercialisation of sports, increasing sponsorships, and professional leagues, makes sports management a lucrative and impactful career option for passionate individuals.

Conclusion:

Sports as a career is gaining significant momentum in Odisha, with the state emerging as a national leader in sports development and infrastructure. For students in Classes 9 and 10 who are passionate about fitness, team spirit, competition, and leadership, sports offer a wide range of career pathways beyond just being an athlete. Fields like sports science, physical education, fitness training, physiotherapy, coaching, sports journalism, and sports management are rapidly expanding.



Odisha's government initiatives, such as the establishment of sports hostels, training centres, Khelo India programmes, and partnerships with national sports bodies, have opened new avenues for youth to access quality training and career-building opportunities. Students can pursue academic courses like B.P.Ed., B.Sc. in Sports Science, or diplomas in fitness and coaching from reputed institutions within and outside Odisha.

With growing demand, strong state support, and professional guidance, a career in sports is now a viable and exciting option for Odisha's youth looking to turn their passion into a profession.

Attendance Details:

Districts	Schools Count	Class IX		Class X	
		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Angul	77	2044	1923	1805	1890
Balasore	7	191	173	165	164
Bargarh	16	421	399	407	406
Bhadrak	50	903	1120	724	711
Bolangir	13	342	440	274	361
Boudh	4	166	133	120	115
Cuttack	64	1123	1061	875	847
Deogarh	16	245	309	188	276
Dhenkanal	37	781	848	718	754
Gajapati	5	96	57	63	74
Ganjam	19	659	547	586	515
Jagatsinghpur	67	1267	1323	1160	1148
Jajpur	10	186	199	198	223
Jharsuguda	12	273	165	255	154
Kalahandi	1	67	46	31	69
Kandhamal	3	81	59	67	66
Kendrapara	15	242	274	184	210
Keonjhar	19	259	379	244	336
Khordha	46	1211	1304	986	971
Koraput	41	937	1230	966	1128
Malkangiri	32	1087	865	1022	775
Mayurbhanj	29	544	554	429	541
Nabarangapur	7	119	241	82	184
Nayagarh	103	2112	2052	1758	1742
Nuapada	18	420	449	376	447
Puri	7	146	125	106	84
Rayagada	22	433	322	366	290
Sambalpur	20	321	502	314	443
Sonepur	8	182	324	167	293
Sundargarh	13	353	398	306	360
Total	781	17211	17821	14942	15577
Class-wise Total		35,032		30,519	
Gender-wise Total		32,153		33,398	
Grand Total		65,551			

Photos from the Ground:

