



How does 'On Camp with Kelly' impact on performance? What does the programme actually do?

In order to discover how 'On Camp with Kelly' (OCWK) impacts on performance, Dr Anna Waters, a BPS Chartered Sport Psychologist from Chrianna Consultants, conducted interviews with OCWK athletes. Athletes interviewed included those who took part in the first OCWK educational camp in 2004 and athletes currently classified as OCWK Gold athletes. Qualitative analyses were conducted on the interview transcripts, which resulted in finding six key benefits of the programme.

OCWK athletes reported that, as a result of these six steps, they felt more confident, had higher self-belief, better race knowledge, felt well prepared for senior major championships and recovered from injury more quickly. The athletes reported that these factors had an important impact on performance.

The Six Step Mentoring Model

The Six Steps of 'On Camp with Kelly'

- 1. Kelly's Mentoring** - continuous individual support from Kelly
- 2. Support** - OCWK team, financial, medical, sport science
- 3. Preparation** - experience of major senior championships, race specific preparation, London 2012
- 4. Education** - sport science workshops, race knowledge, media training, life skills
- 5. Long Term Regular Contact** - programme and Kelly in regular contact with athletes, maintained over several years
- 6. Injury Management** - medical support, rehabilitation training tips

The Six Steps lead to:

Increased:

- ✓ Confidence
- ✓ Self belief
- ✓ Race knowledge
- ✓ Race experience
- ✓ Race preparation
- ✓ Motivation
- ✓ Concentration
- ✓ Persistence
- ✓ Competitiveness
- Athletes feeling prepared for 'the big stage'
- Improved anxiety management
- Ability to block out distractions
- Mental resiliency
- Faster recovery from injury
- Development of the person as well as the athlete

Which results in:

Improved Performance

Within each of the six steps, there are also sub-factors. These are areas within each of the six steps that the athletes highlighted as important benefits of the programme.

Six Steps of 'On Camp with Kelly' Expanded

Steps	Areas within each step (sub-factors)
1. Kelly's Mentoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Dedication ➤ Relationship with each athlete ➤ Belief (in each athlete) ➤ Understanding each athlete ➤ Advice ➤ Kelly's experience ➤ 'Superstar not superhuman' ➤ Training support
2. Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ General ➤ Financial ➤ Medical ➤ Sport science ➤ Peer group ➤ Whole person (not just sport)
3. Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Major senior championships experience ➤ Race organisation ➤ Playing out scenarios ➤ No stone unturned ➤ London 2012
4. Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Workshops ➤ Experience ➤ Life skills ➤ Race knowledge ➤ Sport science ➤ Media training
5. Long Term Regular Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Dependable ➤ Knowledgeable ➤ Willingness to help
6. Injury Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Medical advice ➤ Rehab Training Tips

Kelly's Mentoring

Dedication

This sub-factor sums up the athletes talking about how busy Kelly is, yet she still always makes time for each of them. The athletes feel like she is always thinking of them, taking an interest and following their progress. The athletes talked about Kelly being someone they can lean back on and who supports them wholeheartedly, no matter how busy she is. The athletes described how they feel that Kelly is always there in the background for them, as and when they need her.

Relationship with each athlete

This is an important sub-factor and describes how the relationship Kelly develops with each athlete is extremely important to enable the mentoring to be effective. All the athletes described how important it was that they had known Kelly since they were 16/17 years old and how she had gone through so many key life events with them over the years. This led to her knowing and understanding the athletes really well. All athletes felt a bit star struck when they first got to know her, but over time they had developed a really good relationship with Kelly and felt comfortable talking to her about anything. For most of the athletes this was a key benefit of the programme and something that takes time, years even, to establish.

Belief

The athletes highlighted how important Kelly's belief in each of their capabilities is. The athletes discussed how powerful, motivating and inspiring it is to always know that she believes in each of them and is behind them supporting them.

Understanding each athlete

This sub-factor ties in with the relationship with each athlete, but was about the fact Kelly really takes the time to get to know each athlete, takes an interest in what they are doing and encourages each of the athletes. The athletes talked about how Kelly really knows each of them and knows how to speak to them individually to advise and get the best out of them.

Advice

All the athletes talked about how key Kelly's advice to each of them is. They all felt she was able to give just the right advice that they needed, without trying to take away from their coach's role. The athletes found it useful to bounce ideas and training programmes off Kelly and get feedback from her. The athletes also mentioned gaining advice on preparation for major championships based on Kelly's personal reflections.

Kelly's experiences

All the athletes commented on how invaluable it was to hear about and learn from Kelly's unique experiences. In particular the athletes gained a lot from trips away with Kelly and hearing her talk about what she did and how she prepared herself. All athletes discussed the fact that Kelly has 'been there and done it all' and can empathise with the athletes and provide the most appropriate advice.

'Superstar not superhuman'

This sub-factor describes how all the athletes found once they got to know Kelly they realised she is just a normal human being, who has achieved an incredible amount through hard work, as well as talent. For many of the athletes this has made their dreams more achievable, since they realise that Kelly is a normal human being who has excelled. They have learned to understand some of the struggles she went through to achieve what she did and the athletes believe this gives them confidence in their ability to persevere and achieve their goals.

Training support

The athletes all get a lot of motivation and inspiration from having training sessions with Kelly. In particular they discussed when she helps them finish a tough session, her understanding of what they are going through and the interest she takes in their training.

Support

General support

This sub-factor relates to the athletes discussing the programme providing a whole support system around them. The athletes highlighted the benefits of being able to depend on the support network that OCWK provides.

Financial support

All of the athletes were very grateful for the financial support that they receive from OCWK. It allows many of them to be able to go warm weather training, enter races and enabled some of them to concentrate on training without having to try and work as well.

Medical support

All of the athletes described the big impact on their performance as a result of all the medical support they receive. With Kelly's contacts and the medical team that is part of OCWK, they are able to see the right people to get the best treatment.

Sport Science support

The athletes appreciated the sport science support they get through OCWK and felt that they are well supported in this area.

Peer Group support

Several of the athletes interviewed described how they benefited from peer support from fellow OCWK athletes. They found it motivating and inspiring to train with the other athletes and have the support of the other athletes, both in day to day training and living and competition environments.

Support of the whole person

The athletes all discussed how important it is that OCWK supports them as a person and not just an athlete. The athletes described how over the years, support from OCWK in life skills and around their life off the track has, in turn, had a big impact on their performance on the track.

Preparation

Major championships experience

This is one of the biggest sub-factors to emerge from the athlete interviews. All the athletes interviewed talked about how useful the trips and camps had been where they had attended a major championship with Kelly. The experience of going and getting backstage passes at a Commonwealth Games and World Championships and having Kelly there talking them through how to prepare and what to expect, are unique invaluable experiences. These experiences will prove to be invaluable preparation for all OCWK athletes and, in particular, those OCWK athletes who are selected for London 2012. Some of the OCWK athletes had since been to a major international championship and had felt well prepared and were not overwhelmed by the experience. The athletes stated that they believe this was down to the preparation they had done with OCWK.

Race organisation

This sub-factor describes how the athletes felt that OCWK had helped them to be well prepared for racing. For example: helped with their warm-ups, how to pack to go to a championships, and all areas specifically around competing.

Playing out scenarios

This sub-factor relates to the camps and OCWK get-togethers where the athletes have played out scenarios of situations that have happened to Kelly. The athletes have learned to cope with the situation, should it arise for them in the future. The athletes all found these experiences invaluable.

No stone unturned

All of the athletes interviewed believed that OCWK has prepared them to be able to compete at the highest level. A number of athletes described OCWK's attention to detail in preparing them as athletes as 'leaving no stone unturned'.

London 2012

All the athletes felt that OCWK has prepared them well for London 2012 and they believe that OCWK will continue to support them in the build up to and during the Olympic Games. All the athletes believed that they had an advantage over other athletes by being part of OCWK, in particular in their preparation to be able to compete at the highest level.

Education

Workshops

All the athletes discussed how much they had learned and the positive impact the workshops had had on their performances. The athletes highlighted that the workshops had all served to build up an excellent foundation of knowledge that helped them to be able to perform at their best. The athletes appreciated the workshops that were provided that related to matters off the track, as well as directly sports related.

Experience

One of the biggest areas of learning came from just experiencing situations and events as part of camps and trips. The athletes all highlighted how travelling to major competitions with Kelly, provided them with a unique learning experience. To actually go and experience what a major championship is like and have Kelly talking through how she coped with all the different situations and aspects of preparation and performance will have provided the athletes with the best possible preparation for competing at this level themselves.

Life skills

This sub-factor describes the athletes stating that OCWK provided them with valuable life skills experience and learning, as well as skills directly related to their performance. All the athletes felt that the skills they learned through OCWK were transferable to their everyday life. Importantly, the athletes appreciated that OCWK also helped them with their lives outside of athletics, which in turn had a positive impact on their performance. All athletes believed that OCWK had helped them develop as people as well as athletes.

Race knowledge

This sub-factor relates to the athletes learning a great deal of race knowledge through the workshops, experience of world class racing and through Kelly's experiences. The athletes interviewed believed that they were well prepared and had developed excellent race knowledge through the programme.

Sport science

The athletes all discussed benefitting and learning from the sport science team at OCWK. In particular, they had learned a lot about nutrition, psychology, core conditioning, all of which had a positive impact on their performance.

Media training

A number of the athletes mentioned how just going on camps with Kelly they were constantly surrounded by the media and had learned from the beginning how to deal with the media and through watching how Kelly dealt with it. The athletes who went to the Commonwealth Games in Delhi had also benefitted from specific media training and Kelly has personally helping them with media training.

Regular Contact

Dependable

This was the biggest sub-factor under regular contact and relates to the athletes describing how OCWK is always there for them. If they ever need anything they are confident OCWK will be able to help them, or point them in the right direction of someone who can help. The athletes described how the programme keeps in touch with each of them and following each athlete's progress. All athletes felt comfortable in being able to contact OCWK any time if they needed anything. In essence, this sub-factor depicts the continuous on-going support that OCWK provides to athletes.

Knowledgeable

All the athletes mentioned how everybody at OCWK is always keen to help and knowledgeable in their area. If the athletes need advice they are confident that they will be able to gain it from OCWK.

Willingness to help

All of the athletes interviewed discussed how everybody at OCWK is always keen to help and will go out of their way to assist the athletes. In particular, the athletes acknowledged that OCWK is very helpful when things are not going well and will go out of their way to help get the athletes back on track.

Injury Management

Medical advice

All of the athletes interviewed had benefitted from medical advice as part of being on the programme. This was a very important benefit for most of the athletes and had an important impact on their performance. Athletes felt that being part of the programme gave them access to top medical professionals that they would otherwise not have access to. In turn, this assisted in their recovery from injury and enabled them to get back into normal training more quickly.

Rehabilitation training tips

A number of the athletes discussed how useful it had been to gain rehabilitation training tips from Kelly herself. Kelly suffered from numerous injuries during her career and is able to be empathetic with athletes when they are injured and also offer really useful practical advice on rehabilitation training.