



GoodSport



S R I L A N K A O L Y M P I C W E E K L Y N E W S B U L L E T I N

REVOLUTIONIZING THE SPORTS LANDSCAPE INTEGRATING SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



In the realm of sports and exercise medicine, few individuals have made as significant a contribution as Dr. Chathuranga Ranasinghe. He is a prominent figure in the field of sports and exercise medicine internationally. As a specialist, academic, and researcher, he has dedicated his career to promoting physical activity, preventing injuries, and enhancing the performance of athletes.

Recently, his outstanding contributions were recognized through prestigious awards, including the 7th Sheikh Fahad Hiroshima-Asia Sports Medicine and Science Award and his inclusion among the top 100 scientists in Asia by the Asian Scientist Magazine.

In an exclusive interview with GoodSport, Dr. Ranasinghe shared his journey and insights of the realm of sports.

We kick started the interview inquiring about his background.

He replied, “My specialty is Sports and Exercise medicine so I am a practicing consultant doctor.

At the same time, I work at the Faculty of Medicine in the University of Colombo as an academic Senior Lecturer.

Also, I am the Director of the Sports and Exercise Medicine Unit in the Faculty of Medicine.

“So that’s the background of my work.

“If I talk about my school days, I went to Ananda College. I represented school in 2 sports – Badminton and Cricket.

“And then I got selected to Faculty of Medicine – University of Colombo to study Medicine.

“And then during that time also, I did some sports and represented the university in Badminton and Cricket.

“With time, I developed the interest in sports and exercise medicine.”

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“Then I went on to do my postgraduate studies in sports and exercise medicine – first a diploma and then I went to Australia to do my PhD in Sports and Exercise Medicine.

“I returned in 2018 and now I am here working in the academic and health sectors.

I am also a part of the Medical Committee - National Olympic Committee of Sri Lanka.

Then we moved onto discussing about his field and how it's related to sports and medicine.

He answered with – “As I said earlier, Sports and Exercise Medicine is a discipline and initially it was called ‘Sports Medicine’.

But it developed to another name – ‘Exercise Medicine’, because initially sports medicine was only for athletes.

“With time, with the development of a lot of diseases like diabetes and obesity, there was a need in the world to do exercise as a form of therapy and medicine.

“Then it is dragged into the medical field with Exercise Medicine.

“Now Sports and Exercise Medicine is developing and broadening its horizons and going into different areas in medicine.

“But here we are talking mainly about Sports Medicine, which applies to athletes – professional and recreational.

So mainly what we are looking at is the total health of a sporting person – may it be a recreational or an elite athlete.

“So we look after their health and prevent them from getting diseases -

and injuries, and if they do get injuries, to quickly rehabilitate them and get back to doing their sport.

“There is an another aspect called Performance Enhancement. Before, they get into that, sport is all about improving performance. So we are involved in developing different kinds of interventions to improve an athlete's performance.

“So in this Sports and Exercise Medicine field, it is working with other specialties allied in the health field like Physiotherapy, Strength and Conditioning, Biomechanics.

“So there are a lot of other specialties also that we work closely with to improve the performance of an athlete and also to get them being healthy in order to be functioning for a long time.

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“So that’s the scope of Exercise and Sports Medicine.

“But I play another role because I am an academic in the University of Colombo, where I am a Senior Lecturer in Sports and Exercise medicine.

“So we do teach people – like Doctors, Physiotherapists, Sports Science graduates on these areas, and at the same time we conduct research - we work on different aspects to see how we can improve athletes, their fitness, maybe their recovery, etc.

“So I have these two aspects to play as a doctor and also as an academic.

Dr. Chathuranga Ranasinghe's contributions to sports medicine have not gone unnoticed.

He was awarded the 7th Sheikh Fahad Hiroshima-Asia Sports Medicine and Science Award in line with the Asian Games 2022, in October last year and was also listed among the top 100 scientists in Asia by the Asian Scientist Magazine in June 2023. So next, we went on to discuss about these occasions.

He responded, “Since I came back in 2018, I have been working with the NOC SL, the Ministry of Sport and also in the health sector.

“Every 4 years with the Asian Games, the Olympic Council of Asia, which is the authority of Olympic sport in Asia who organize the Asian Games, put up an award for Sport and Exercise Medicine.

“It is called the Sheikh Fahad Hiroshima Sports Medicine and Science Award.

“There are 45 countries in Asia who do Olympic Sport, and from all those countries, one individual from each country is nominated from the respective National Olympic body.

“So it is a competitive type of an activity where all these applicants are reviewed by the Hiroshima Sports Association in Japan and then, they competitively award one person.

“ Now Sports and Exercise Medicine is developing and broadening its horizons and going into different areas in medicine. mainly what we are looking at is the total health of a sporting person – may it be a recreational or an elite athlete. So we look after their health and prevent them from getting diseases and injuries, and if they do get injuries, to quickly rehabilitate them and get back to doing their sport ”

“So last year, in line with the Hangzhou 2022 Asian Games, the award was advertised and I was fortunate to be nominated from the National Olympic Committee of Sri Lanka – for which, I would like to thank the President and the committee for that.

“This award is given mainly for your research and the contribution you have made to the system and to the region - basically for the impact that you have made.

“So, I was assessed under these criteria and was able to win this award. Last year in Cambodia at their general assembly, they presented the award.

“We were fortunate since this was the first time a South Asian received such an award and I was very humbled and very thankful for all the people who helped.

“Then every year, the Asian Scientist Magazine, which is one of the well-recognized magazines in Asia based in Singapore, list the top 100 most impactful scientists in Asia from all the disciplines.

“So in that group, I was listed with another 4 Sri Lankans from different other fields and that was published in June 2023.

“That was a very humbling occasion and I would say a very happy occasion to me.

“And also I feel, in our system in Sri Lanka – we are at a very challenging time now where everybody is trying to leave the country with no hope.

“So occasions like these, they give hope and shows promise in our country.”

We wrapped up by discussing his view into the future of the Sports and the intersection of Sports, Science, Medicine and Technology.

Dr. Ranasinghe initially shed light on the expanding horizons of Sport and Exercise medicine.

He noted that while Sri Lanka currently stand relatively behind in the field, there is immense potential for growth.

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By developing the discipline and bringing in graduates and undergraduates from various allied fields, such as sports medicine, science, and engineering, Sri Lanka can establish a robust framework for advancing sports medicine and enhancing athletic performance.

To propel the field forward, Dr. Ranasinghe stressed the significance of collaboration.

By fostering partnerships between experts from diverse disciplines, the potential for breakthroughs in athlete performance, injury prevention, and recovery can be maximized.

This collaborative approach would allow for a comprehensive and multidimensional understanding of the interplay between physical activity, medicine, and -

performance optimization.

He also highlighted the critical roles of sports science and engineering in advancing sports medicine.

These disciplines provide essential tools and techniques to assess and enhance an athlete's performance.

Sports science explores various aspects of training, biomechanics, and physiology, while biomedical engineering focuses on developing innovative technologies and interventions to aid in injury prevention and rehabilitation.

By integrating these fields into the realm of sports medicine, Sri Lanka can harness the power of cutting-edge research and practical applications to elevate the performance and well-being of its athletes.

By nurturing a new generation of professionals with specialized knowledge and skills, Sri Lanka can foster a sustainable ecosystem for sports medicine.

These programs would not only equip individuals to contribute to research and innovation but also provide vital resources for athletes to receive comprehensive care and support throughout their sporting journeys.

This holistic approach will undoubtedly support athletes in reaching new levels of excellence while ensuring their long-term health and well-being.

The future holds immense promise for the field, and with concerted efforts, Sri Lanka can cultivate a vibrant sports medicine landscape that benefits athletes and the entire nation alike.

ASIAN SCIENTIST 100

THE ASIAN SCIENTIST 100

Every year since 2016, Asian Scientist Magazine compiles a list of Asia's most outstanding researchers.

Now into its eighth edition, the Asian Scientist 100 list celebrates the success of the region's best and brightest, highlighting their achievements across a range of scientific disciplines.

To be acknowledged on this list, the honouree must have received a national or international prize in the preceding year for his or her research. Alternatively, he or she must have made a significant scientific discovery or provided leadership in academia or industry.



Chathuranga Ranasinghe

University of Colombo
Sri Lanka

Ranasinghe received the 7th Sheikh Fahad Hiroshima-Asia Sports Medicine and Science Award in 2022. This award is given once in four years to a medical expert from Asia for their contribution to sports medicine.

(Photo: University of Colombo)

NOC SL STRATEGIC PLAN - WITH A VIEW TO COMPILING THE NEXT DECADE OF SPORTS EXCELLENCE



The task heads of the programme were consultant Professor Emmanuel Bayle while the team was headed by the NOC SL Secretary General Maxwell de Silva and Professor B.L.H. Perera.

Now the Strategic Plan of the National Olympic Committee of Sri Lanka will be for the next ten years, to be precise 2032.”

The programme chief said how they are aiming to reach their set goal. One cannot reach the desired goal haphazardly.

He explained “First of all what we have done as a team is to study where we stand today.

“From that point onwards we have drawn up a plan, for the year 2032 and that will be reached at various levels.

“In that regard initially, we have studied our strengths in our sporting system which is a prerequisite.

“The NOC SL as an apex body should get the feelings of other sports systems through various means.

“It is a sports community in general – the Athletes, federations and even the Ministry of Sports.

The think pad of the National Olympic Committee of Sri Lanka has pondered and reached a holistic juncture where they could visualize their situation ten years hence. The task at hand has been described as the NOC SL Strategic Plan Development.

The Lankan Olympic task team has been at this for the past few months with 360-degree visualization and have tried to plug in all aspects of how they are hoping to achieve this arduous task.

Explaining what and how they achieved this phase of the programme, Prof. B.L.H. Perera said “The Strategic Plan is a plan that any organisation or country may compile very ambitiously.

The National Olympic Committee of Sri Lanka set up this strategic plan to reach certain levels for the future.

Yet, without a plan, we cannot achieve this on a yearly basis and make a real forecast.

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“We are connected by means like funding, advising and providing leadership for sports. We have looked at where are perched strength-wise. We have listed what our strengths are.

“In the same way, we have probed into what our operational weaknesses also and likewise, in the same manner, we have accessed, the opportunities and the threats. How do we intend to grab things and move forwards? What are the threats and understand how to move forward within?”

The programme was completed through sheer research. The committee interviewed all major federations and sport institutions such as the Sri Lanka Anti-Doping Agency, and the Institute of Sport Medicine Unit, others and arrived at conclusions about how they operate.

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Professor B.L.H. Perera

In that manner, they get a full understanding of how things do work. Even the Ministry of Sports was analyzed.

He went on to explain that they also probed the sub-organisations. They are not very close to the NOC SL's system, but, within the scope.

He said “We conducted a seminar for them. In that seminar, we did a very thorough investigation on four points – the strengths, the weaknesses, opportunities and threats like before.

“Gathering all this information, we have now drafted the general frame and it would help us to move forward.

“The general framework with five main pillars.”

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“It’s called the main frame of strategic thinking.

“For instance, one of the pillars could be described as NOC and we are a very closed organisation at present.



“If we are hoping to open the doors, the NOC should open up for other persons and organisations to work with us.

“The next will be using sport as a vehicle to seek answers to various questions like – working with tourism, education, health and any other industry outside sport.



“Likewise, we have selected five solid pillars.

“Those are the pillars that will hold our strategic plan for the future.

“These pillars are the orientations.

“We are setting up a direction of where we are planning to arrive at.



“That is 2032!

“Under the pillars, there are 21 sub-orientations.

“We have identified certain elements and they have been bisected into several parts.



“Under the 21 sub-orientations, we have actions and objectives.

“Under one sub-orientation, there may be 10-15 action plans.

“It is likely, to begin with, a concept of centres for excellence and then develop more of them to cover all districts and a timeline will be imposed.”



Finally, Prof B.L.H. Perera explained that this was a composite plan aiming to develop the sports community through the next decade.



NEW IOC MENTAL HEALTH ACTION PLAN TO FURTHER FOCUS ON WELL-BEING OF ATHLETES AND PROMOTING PSYCHOLOGICALLY SAFE ENVIRONMENTS

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has developed a new Mental Health Action Plan that takes a wider approach to supporting the protection and promotion of athlete mental well-being



There is no health without good mental health Key targets for 2026

The Mental Health Action Plan emphasises the importance of recognising that athletes' mental health needs are as important for their performance and well-being as their physical health needs, and that good mental health means much more than the absence of a mental health symptom or disorder.

Guided by the principles of human rights, equity, evidence-based practice and working collaboratively, the Mental Health Action Plan is a comprehensive strategy that will serve as a roadmap for the IOC to promote mental well-being across its four spheres of responsibility – the IOC as an organisation, the IOC as the owner of the Olympic Games, the IOC as the leader of the Olympic Movement, and Olympism in society.

Across the four spheres, there are five thematic focus areas, with corresponding key objectives and actions, to be achieved by the end of 2026:

1. Culture and leadership

Demonstrating leadership in the field by championing a policy environment that recognises the importance of mental health and well-being.

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2. Measurement and research

Contributing towards more thorough and reliable mental health epidemiology in elite athletes and under-researched groups, with attention to cross-cultural differences – recognising that evidence-based approaches are critical for impactful initiatives.

3. Reduce prevalence and improve well-being

Encompassing the continued development of expert-led tailored tools and initiatives to improve mental health literacy, reduce stigma, build mental resilience and reduce sport-specific stressors that impact mental health and well-being.

“The Mental Health Action Plan signals the IOC’s intent to integrate expert-led support for athletes’ well-being across multiple IOC programmes”

4. Improve care

Encouraging the fostering of psychologically safe athletic environments which reduce the barriers to help seeking, including through supporting early recognition of when further support may be needed, and establishing pathways to care.

5. Improve access to sport

Promoting and supporting the mental health benefits that people and communities experience through accessing sport and Olympism in Society, especially in resource-limited settings, contributing to Olympism365.



Athletes’ well-being remains a top priority for the IOC

The focus on the protection and promotion of elite athlete mental health commenced in 2019 with the publication of the IOC Consensus Statement on mental health in elite athletes and the set-up of the IOC Mental Health Working Group.

More recently, Recommendation 5 of Olympic Agenda 2020+5 calls for increased mental health support for elite athletes and their entourages.

Additionally, Recommendation 10 looks beyond the Olympic Games, at the use of sport to create a better, healthier world by contributing to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This has helped to significantly increase the resources available through Athlete365, including the dedicated #MentallyFit section and the IOC Mental Health in Elite Athletes Toolkit.

Such resources, in addition to the Certificate and Diploma in Mental Health in Elite Sport, remain vitally important in helping provide leadership to the Olympic Movement in this area and in raising awareness among National Olympic Committees and International Federations.

The Mental Health Action Plan signals the IOC’s intent to integrate expert-led support for athletes’ well-being across multiple IOC programmes, working on complementary topics such as gender equality and safeguarding, with the support of Olympic Solidarity.

The plan also draws on the principles of Olympism³⁶⁵, the IOC’s strategy aimed at strengthening the role of sport as an enabler of the UN SDGs, with particular emphasis on encouraging even more partnerships with organisations around the world that aim to bring individuals and communities together to experience the immense mental benefits of physical activity and sport.

BALI WITHDRAWS FROM COMMITMENT TO HOST 2023 ANOC WORLD BEACH GAMES



2ND ANOC WORLD
BEACH GAMES
BALI 2023

OFFICIAL STATEMENT

ANOC is very disappointed by the KOI's actions which will deny athletes from 100 qualified NOCs from fulfilling their ambitions of competing at the Games.

ANOC offers its sincere apologies to these NOCs, athletes and the International Federations (IFs) who have been committed partners of the event, and to the fans around the world.

While there have been challenges in the Games preparations, as at any major multi-sport event, ANOC had been regularly assured by the KOI that solutions would be found and the Games would go ahead as planned.

It is with great surprise and extreme disappointment that ANOC has learnt that the Indonesian Olympic Committee (KOI) has withdrawn from its commitment to host the ANOC World Beach Games and the ANOC General Assembly in August 2023.

With the Games scheduled to take place in one month, the decision at such late notice prevents ANOC from being able to find an alternative host and so there is no option -

but to cancel this year's edition of the Games in Bali in August as well as the ANOC General Assembly.

Regarding the ANOC General Assembly, a decision will be taken in the coming weeks regarding a new location and dates.

The KOI stated the decision was taken after the budget was not released by the Government of the country and there is now not time to deliver the Games.

ANOC and the KOI met for weekly coordination meetings, as recently as last week, and at no point did the KOI indicate there were any issues that would lead to such an outcome.

ANOC's immediate priority is to ensure the athletes are supported and the NOCs and IFs are compensated as best as possible in light of the Games cancellation.

anocolympic.org