

Abhinav Bindra addresses special session for SAI officials, calls on sports administrators to work on dual skill development programme for athletes

New Delhi, April 20: The newly-appointed Assistant Directors at the Sports Authority of India and other senior officials of SAI had a special session on Monday when they were addressed by legendary Indian shooter and India's only individual Olympic gold medallist Abhinav Bindra as well as Nandan Kamath, lawyer and managing trustee GoSports Foundation.

Addressing the newly-appointed Assistant Directors who have joined the Sports Authority of India, Bindra said that as sports administrators they need to work towards creating an alternate skill development programme for athletes to ensure their well-being in the long run. "We need to look after athletes because the very nature of sport is that more will fail than succeed. It is important that athletes have backup plans in case their sports career doesn't work out," he pointed out.

Bindra further added that sports administrators need to understand the psychology of an athlete to be able to build them up because athletes pass through different phases because of the nature of sport and the probability of failure.

For the young batch of sports administrators he had some other important tips too. "It is important to strike relationships with the experts and coaches that various federations have," he said, suggesting that they should undertake a one or two day workshop with the experts to understand processes. "An expert can give a larger overview of the various elements that go into sporting performance and that's where you will understand where performance is built and what are the various elements that go into performance and then you will start to have a better and deeper understanding of where performance is built. Results at a competition cannot be the only denominator when planning for an Olympic Games or an Asian Games," he added.

Kamath speaking on expectations from sports administrators said, "There should be a deep engagement with the process and to understand not just results but objectives and results connected with the objectives that you are seeking."

Bindra spoke at length on his experience as an athlete and also on the future of sports in India. "The one percent (of athletes) makes all the difference in sport, and as our sports ecosystem starts maturing, we need to start focussing on that one percent for all athletes," he said. Stressing on the need to build a strong talent identification and nurturing programme, he added, "Getting foundations right is important, a lot of work on that has already been started with the Khelo India programme and also emphasis placed on junior programme of different sports

Speaking about how he sees Indian Sport emerging after the current Corona pandemic subsides, Bindra said, "The post-Covid world could be a blessing in disguise for India. There may not be so much foreign exposure and this may allow India to build proper sporting infrastructure. We need to build our own coaches and our own support staff."