**ARMY ELITE SPORTS PROGRAMME (AESP)**

**ARMY ELITE ATHLETE COVENANT**

**Introduction**

1. This is the first iteration of an Army Elite Athlete Covenant to which Army Elite Athletes should refer in order to ensure they meet the expectations of the AESP. This is in effect, an agreement between each elite athlete and the Army – in return for the opportunities provided to you on the AESP, the Army expects you all to understand and appreciate your new status as a role model and potential recruiter. The purpose of this Covenant is to explain both ends of the agreement.

2. Army Elite Athletes are in an enviably privileged position; employed by the Army to fulfil military duties whilst able to pursue their sporting aspirations and maximize their athletic talent. Much is provided but much is expected and the first expectation amongst all others is the understanding of the ethos of ‘Soldier First’. In simple terms, all elite athletes must recognize and appreciate that the AESP provides opportunity to achieve personal aspirations and goals but brings with it great responsibility – grasping these opportunities means greater exposure in social media and other means to other soldiers and civilians, to your family and friends, to fellow athletes and National Governing Bodies. Whether you recognize it or not, you will be judged on your actions and others will form their opinion about you and the Army from what they read and see about you. The role you have to play therefore is one of a role model and potential recruiter for the Army. To do so, each athlete must ensure they maintain the highest of personal and professional standards, at all time, and live up to the highest values and standards that the Army expects. This document aims to provide guidance for athletes who are selected onto the AESP. The Covenant:

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| **THE COVENANT** |
| **The Army Undertakes to:** | **The Army Elite Athlete Undertakes to:** |
| To provide a funded Elite Athlete Programme for selected athletes in partnership with UK Sport (and Sport NGBs), the English Institute for Sport and the Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme | Understand what opportunities and benefits selection as an elite athlete means and provides |
| Explain the programme to selected athletes including all of the Support and Services available to Army Elite Athletes.  | Appreciate and live up to the expectations of a Soldier Athlete Role Model |

**THE ARMY’S AGREEMENT**

**The AESP**

2. The Army will provide, through the Army Sports Control Board (ASCB) funded AESP, an environment that enables selected Army personnel with sporting talent to excel. The AESP consists of three tiers of Army Elite Athletes, each with varying levels of support:

a. **Tier 1**: Athletes placed into full-time National Governing Body (NGB) World Class Programmes. This level of performance is generally managed and supported by the respective NGB but enabled by the Army by placing the individual in a Resilience Margin (ReM) PID for an extended period of time normally of 12 months.

b. **Tier 2**: Athletes who are selected for Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme (TASS) support. There are two categories: ‘TASS Regional’ where support is provided from a designated TASS Delivery Site (TDS) normally a University where a sport focuses coaching and development; TASS Army Elite Athlete Performance Centre Aldershot. The services provided by both include strength & conditioning, sports psychology, sports nutrition, lifestyle management and physiotherapy.

c. **Tier 3**: These athletes comprise of emerging talent as identified by Army Sports Secretaries or the chain of command. Selected athletes receive a financial scholarship from either BAE or the ASCB, aimed to support entry fees, equipment and subsistence requirements.

**Support and Services**

3. Army Elite Athletes are able to access varying levels of support depending on the Tier of the AESP for which they have been selected; this support and services includes:

a. **Support and Service Provided for all Army Elite Athletes:**

(1) Media and communications training. This can include social media (SM) education and interview techniques training (for the few that require it).

(2) UK Anti-Doping training and Army Compulsory Drug Testing (CDT) education.

(3) Army Sports Secretary engagement and advice.

(4) Access to the Army’s physiological testing laboratory in RMAS through the AESP Manager.

(5) Access to the High Performance Clinic at DMRC Stamford Hall after clinical referral.

b. **Support and Services Provided for all Tier 2 (TASS) Athletes:**

(1) TASS Regional:

(a) To access a TASS Delivery Site (TDS) convenient to you.

(b) Access to a minimum number of the following performance support service sessions:

* 25 x Strength & Conditioning.
* 6 x Physiotherapy sessions.
* 3 x Sport Psychology sessions.
* 3 x Sport Nutrition sessions.
* 3 x Lifestyle Management sessions.
* Access to the TASS Medical scheme.

(2) TASS Army Elite Athlete Performance Centre Aldershot: access to performance support services:

(a) Strength & Conditioning – Michael Knott.

(b) Physiotherapy – Rachel Bustin.

(c) Sport Psychology – Jo Davies.

(d) Sport Nutrition – Rachel Hobbs.

(e) Lifestyle Management – Luke Allen.

**THE ATHLETE’S AGREEMENT**

**The Soldier Athlete Role Model**

4. Army Elite Athletes are expected to uphold and maintain the highest levels of personal behaviour. Adherence to the Army’s Values and Standards is of fundamental importance for all Army personnel but particularly so for the Army’s Elite Athletes. Athletes are very often in the public eye whilst competing and training; they can expect to be interviewed by various media outlets and their words will be published or broadcast across both social media (SM) and local and national media platforms (magazines, newspapers, TV and radio). All Army Elite Athletes must be mindful that their behaviour and actions must not compromise themselves but also their sport and the Army. Army Elite Athletes must consider the Army’s reputation and their own reputation in the sport in which they compete. It is therefore crucial that when training, competing or traveling, Army Elite Athletes are mindful of the fact they are representing the Army and must embody The Army’s Values and Standards – in other words, you are expected to be a role model soldier athlete.

5. Those athletes selected for TASS are expected to:

a. Provide the respective TDS Team with the following:

(1) An overview of season goals, sport ambitions, athlete annual plan and competition schedule.

(2) A basic outline of work schedule, training availability and proposed TDS engagement.

(3) An introduction and contact details to the respective coach and relevant members of the athlete support network.

b. Take responsibility and engage with the various services in order to make the most of the support opportunities available through TASS. Maximising these services will enhance performance.

c. Attend review and audit meetings with the AESP Manager and TASS Coordinator. It is essential that you support the audit process as this will enable us to improve the services provided.

**Media, Communications and Engagement**

6. Army Elite Athletes are to use SM accounts to communicate sporting achievements, training activity and up-coming competitions for example. Army Elite Athletes must ensure the content of their SM posts are appropriate (see #DIGITALARMY and DIGITAL PLAYBOOK guides). When doing so tag the following:



@ArmySportsLTRY (British Army Sport)

@ArmySportASCB (British Army Sport)

@eis2win (English Institute of Sport)

@TalentedAthlete (TASS)

@Britisharmysport (British Army Sport)

@talentedathleteuk (TASS)



#BritishArmySport

7. Army Elite Athletes who receive TASS support will be included in the ‘TASS Army athlete’ Whatsapp group by the ASCB Media Officer. This will provide the means by which athletes may pass on their success stories, images, results, news and videos.

8. Army Elite Athletes may be requested to support internal and external publicity events for Army sport, TASS and the ASCB. Additionally, Army Elite Athletes may also be required to support recruitment and community engagement activities.

**Anti-Doping**

9. Army Elite Athletes are reminded to uphold the UKAD/WADA code. As part of the commitment to clean sport, Army Elite Athletes are required to complete the workshop with UKAD, respect the integrity of sport by training and competing as a clean athlete, adhere to the 100% me (<https://www.ukad.org.uk/athletes/100-me>) and be a role model for clean sport.

**Medical Treatment**

10. Army Elite Athletes may, on occasions, access medical treatment outside of the Army’s medical provision. This is acceptable and appropriate practice related to their given sport. However, Army Elite Athletes must ensure that outside civilian practitioners notify Medical Officers/Medical Centres of any treatment or diagnosis provided (therefore Army Elite Athletes must hold their unit Medical Officer/Medical Centre contact details).

**Appearance and Dress**

11. Army Elite Athletes are to wear Army endorsed and branded sports clothing whilst training and competing (when not required to wear other representative clothing). It is important the Army image is appropriately exposed at sporting events and in the training environment. You are an ambassador in your capacity as an Army Athlete and attention to your personal appearance and appropriate dress is essential.

**AESP Contacts**

12. The following personnel can be contacted as required:

a. Lt Col (Retd) Tom Scarr**:** Army Elite Sport Programme Manager – 07940734675.

b. Mr Luke Allen: TASS Coordinator - 07591 203996.

c. Mrs Claire Simpson: ASCB Media Officer - 07539 872007.

**Summary**

14. This first iteration of an Army Elite Athlete Covenant provides reference for Army Elite Athletes in order to ensure they meet the expectations of the AESP. Army Elite Athletes are privileged in being employed by the Army to fulfil military duties whilst able to pursue their sporting dreams and maximize their athletic talent. Much is provided but much is expected in terms of role modelling, being an Army ambassador and being a positive influence on recruiting and engagement. Make best use of the support services on offer and enhance your sporting performance.

Major General S A Burley CB MBE

Director Army Sport Control Board