



## An Approach Towards the Formation of Athletics Club in Adigrat University, Ethiopia

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### Abstract

*The purpose of this paper is to explore the way in which the Adigrat University is interested in promoting sports and community services too. The University has three years of age and it has long journey ahead towards excellence in academics and sport arena as well. This is the fourth University in a row which has initiated and developed its own athletics club out of 33 Universities in Ethiopia. The University authorities have taken keen interest to promote National Athletics and pave path to budding athletes in different capacities of its surroundings. It's a well known fact that Ethiopians fixed the foot path strongly in distance races especially Long in International arena. The prime objective of this club is to produce such a talented athletes who can represent their Region and Nation in National and International Competitions. The scientific and systematic sport training would be given and opt them right direction in terms of achieving top performances. The sport training environment has its own demographic and biological merits viz. an elevation of 2457 meters above from sea level, obviously which favors for endurance athletes and also the existed region produces many Olympians like Gebrezgabiher Gebremariam (10000m), Hagos Gebrehiwot (5000m), Dejen Gebremeskel (5000m), Abeba Aregawi (1500m) and other athletes like Yemane (1500), Atsedu (5000, 10000), Meresa, Gebretsadk, Werknesh (10000), Afera, Goytotom, Gudaf and the athletic legend Muruts Yifter (5000, 10000) is also from next to Adigrat. The team of experts from Department of Sports Science hunted the potentials by conducting the general and event specific tests in different Woredas of the region. The higher officials from Ethiopian National Athletics Federation and Tigray Region Athletics Federation were extended their hands additionally to launch the Athletics club in Adigrat. The Adigrat University withstands its strength and interest in sports by producing good and talented athletes for Nation and International too in future.*

**Keywords:** Ethiopia, Athletics, Sports Training, Scientific and Systematic.

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### Introduction

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### Ethiopia in Athletics

The history of Marathon, middle and long distances speaks a lot about Africa and specially Ethiopians gives shine and shape for those events. Obviously, it is a fact that other countries tend to give least importance to these events due to the dominations of Ethiopia and Kenya. In the second part of the 20-th century, many of Ethiopia's proudest moments had begun when the legendary **Abebe Bikila** won a major international athletics competition, followed by **Mamo Wolde** run the race of his life to bring the Gold medal to this country. **Derartu Tulu** whose victory lap in Barcelona in 1992 made proud of Ethiopia's green, yellow and red flew high and tall in beautiful Barcelona. The strong as steel Ethiopian queen by the name




of **Fatuma Roba** to lead the race almost unchallenged all the way which made her winner in all major women marathon races across the Globe.

The Lion himself - **Haile Gebre Selassie** (also known as **Emperor Gabe** by his fans around the world). Ethiopians call him "Jegnaw" (Fearless Hero). Haile is a man declared by the world press as the best long-distance runner that has ever lived on the planet. This is a man who breaks and makes 5-6 records in a single year in distances varying from 2 miles to 5K, 10K and the Marathon. **Kenenisa Bekele**, seems poised to take Ethiopian athletics and dominance in long distance running to newer heights. Many champions yet to fix their success footpaths in future.

### National Governing Body



### Achievements of Ethiopia in International Competitions

Games/ Championships	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
	21	7	16	<b>44</b>
	20	18	17	<b>55</b>
	19	14	15	<b>48</b>

<b>Team Championships (Men)</b> 	8	13	7	<b>28</b>
<b>Team Championship (Women)</b> 	10	11	1	<b>22</b>
<b>IAAF Short Race (Men)</b> 	5	2	3	<b>10</b>
<b>IAAF Short Race (Women)</b> 	4	4	3	<b>11</b>
<b>Team Championship (Men)</b> 	2	4	3	<b>9</b>
<b>Team Championship (Women)</b> 	5	4	-	<b>9</b>
				<b>236</b>

### Reasons to start Athletics club in Adigrat

The University higher authorities having keen interest to start of Athletics club in the university and also have serious concern about the community services too. Moreover, the environment itself favors for training purposes. Adigrat town and its surrounding are located in a place of highlands with an elevation of 2457 meters above from sea level which is good for runners especially Long distance athletes and these region produces enormous elite athletes who brought laurels to Ethiopia. Obviously, Ethiopians are strong in middle and long distance races in the world wide. These are the foremost reasons to have an athletic club in Adigrat University.

### Mission and Vision of Athletics Club

The club would creates professionalism among athletes, develops recreation, wellness, community connections and talented youth athlete's potentials of our university and Nation. Athletics club would produce elite runners who will represent Nation in International Competitions. The vision of our club envisages producing elite runners who will represent in international arena. It will inspire to be a centre of excellence for talented elite athletes.

### Committees

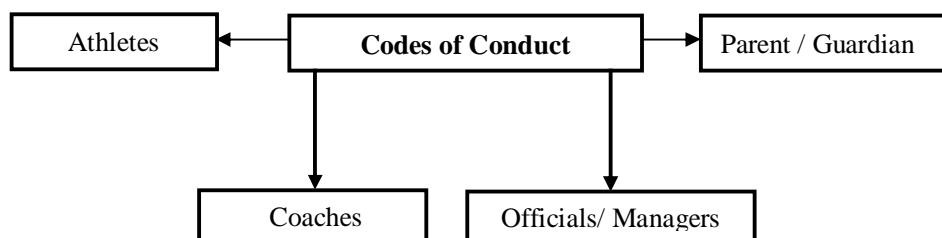
The head of the club leads the activities of the club smoothly and effectively. The technical committee plays a major role in athletes training arena, sports wears, training materials and etc. Additionally, the logistics committee manages and supports Athletes' food, transport, medical services, follow up daily the athletes food service regularly, follow up the medical process of athletes in case of injury. The committee is responsible to prepare and follow up sport suits which are necessary for training and competition.

### Codes of Conduct

The athletic program will serve as an educational means through which the athlete may develop his/her physical, mental, emotional, intellectual and social characteristics to his/her fullest extent. It shall provide well-planned and well-balanced interscholastic athletic activities for as many athletes as possible, consistent with available facilities, personnel, and financial support. The athletic program will provide an opportunity for the loyalty of the parents, patrons, and friends of the University to be developed, strengthened, united, or renewed. The athletic program will provide coaches who are knowledgeable, qualified, and are sincerely interested in developing the athlete to their fullest potential and our intention is that to bring laurels to our Club, University, Region and Country. It has a big

potential of future athletes where Adigrat University will be the heart of athletics for the community through

scientific and systematic training and also bring a role model.



### Eligibility Criteria of Athletes

The athletes must be a citizen of Ethiopia and who willingly to sign a contract agreement with the University Athletic club. They must be physically and mentally strong to adopt a strenuous training and must prove a good race record in competition/s organized by the university and also fulfill the prior records at zonal, regional and/or levels may be useful to prequalify to become a member of the club.

### Talent Identification and Deduction

The talent deduction, identification and development of potentials are not an easy task. It is complex in nature and ongoing processes still. The empirical thought of research on talent identification started in 1928 and still the experts' working on these issues. These procedures must be based on as complex and as holistic scientific criteria as possible. There are different talent identification models applied in sports science and practices, e.g. TIPS – Talent, Intelligence, Personality, Skill or TABS – Technique, Attitude, Balance, Speed (Williams & Reilly, 2000; Bomp, 1994; Brewer, Balson & Davies, 1995; Kluka, 1999) to assess the most suitable candidates for different sports. However, the accuracy and reliability of all these models

is still a problem to overcome. Recently, expert models have been used for a more accurate talent assessment and prediction of potential competitive success; they are based on artificial intelligence methods and offer researchers a more complex approach to the problem (Ulaga, Čoh & Jošt, 2006; Leskošek, Bohanec, Rajkovič & Šturm, 1992; Tomažin, Čoh & Škof, 2001).

### Selection Procedures

Based on the understanding of expert's views and rational ideas and researches on Talent identification, the Department of Sports Science proceeded for further actions on finding talents. The team was seriously concern and believed that talent appears to depend on genetics, anthropometry, physiology, opportunity, environment and encouragement. The team of experts from Department of sports science hunted the potentials in different woredas (9) of eastern Tigray region. The teams were divided in to two groups and preceded in different woredas of Eastern Tigray. The athletes were informed by the concern sport and youth offices of each woredas regarding the purpose, date and venue of the tests and competitions.

### General and Event Specific Tests

General Fitness & Event Specific Tests															
Category	Age	Height	Weight	LUL	LLL	BMI	Training Years	50 mts	1min. sit up	12'/ 9' run	800/ 1500	3000/ 5000	HRBR	HRAR	Vo2 Max
Men/ Boys	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Women/ Girls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

LUL- Length of Upper limb, LLL –Length of lower limb, BMI- Body Mass index, HRBR- Heart rate before race, HRAR- Heart rate after race

The General fitness tests conducted in different woredas by our teams and based on the observation and evaluation of general fitness tests, the selected athletes of all the places were called for the event specific tests which were conducted in Adigrat. The higher Officials from Ethiopian Athletics Federation, Tigray Regional Athletics Federation, The president and Vice President of the University, the Officials from Sport Offices of Adigrat, Wukro and other Woredas were observed and agreed to launch the Athletics Club in our University. The panel discussion was held with higher officials about the progression, implementation and functioning of the Club. The athletics club concentrates on middle and long distance events with small numbers initially and also will work on other events and size of athletes in future.

### **Rights and Benefits of athletes**

The club adopts systematic and scientific training based on the needs and demands of athletes. It provides sportswear and personal accessories for training and competition for athletes and coaches. Athletes are given rights and freedom to give feedbacks and suggestions in order to progress of the club development and to avoid shortcomings at all angles. They can avail necessary medical treatment for injuries during training or competition and who will be taken most care in terms of nutritional aspects (4 days special food & 3 days normal food). The athletes get monthly incentives from 200 to 500 Birr depending on their category and level of competence. Athletes may be awarded scholarships in the programs of the university provided to fulfill the entrance requirements set by the MoE (Ministry of Education) or/and the University.

### **Conclusion**

The scientific structures, systematic programmes, assessment and evaluation of athletes

would be followed and monitoring of each and every athlete could be done periodically in terms of progression, any modification or any development of a plan if it's needed. The club will have its own identity in the near future by producing well talented athletes and also would be an asset for National team in various International Championships / Games.

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