

NDnomics 11 - What we can learn from Adam Smith, and Sport about Neurodivergent Excellence

Charles Freeman July 24



[Image from Loughborough University](#)

1) Summary

- Introduction to the work of Neurodiverse Sport.
- Classical Economics envisages that if perfect market conditions are maintained all resources including human capital will be used in the most efficient way possible.
- Professor Rod Nicholson in promoting the concept of Positive Dyslexia / Neurodiversity noticed that many of the positive traits associated with dyslexia and other Neurodivergent conditions map closely with the qualities identified in future skills studies as those most desired by employers.
- However, market failure appears to exist, despite having in demand skills and qualities, ND people are disadvantaged in the labour market.
- One reason for this is that most businesses do not, as classical economics suggests, seek to maximise profits by employing the best person to fulfil a task, instead they satisfice and aim to make a safe rate of return. Under these circumstances rather than always recruiting the best person, they pragmatically recruit someone who will adequately do the job, fit in and be a safe choice.
- In Sport Maximising Performance is Paramount. The ND Spikey profile means that frequently within the available talent pool, the person most prepared to dedicate themselves to be the best will be ND.
- Compared to business, the way sport identifies, recruits, nurtures, and maintains talent is relatively favourable towards ND people.

- Sport is not a rose garden for ND athletes. The pressure to succeed will often force ND athletes to seek help and discover their neurodivergence for the first time. The way in which success and self-esteem are linked can make ND athletes vulnerable to authority figures such as coaches if power is misused. Sport therefore needs to take extra care in supporting and protecting ND athletes.
- Space at the top of sport is necessarily limited, only one person can be world champion at any one time. Many ND and Neurotypical athletes will not reach the highest levels of elite sport . Support for athletes leaving competitive structures. Particularly ND athletes who may find transitions more difficult, is also a critical issue.

2) Introduction

For the last year I have had the privilege of being a director of [Neurodiverse Sport](#). The organisation was set up by former Olympic Rower Caragh McMurtry and her husband. [Caragh's story is remarkable](#), (Henson, Caragh McMurtry: Great Britain rower's neurodivergent journey, 2024).

The aim of Neurodiverse Sport is to make neuroinclusive practice standard across all levels of Sport.

Three of our guiding principles are set out below.

- **World Class Performance** - Building an understanding that World Class ND athletes are frequently excellent because they are ND, as opposed to their potential being limited by their neurodivergence.
- **Well Being** - ND people gain disproportionate physical and mental health benefits from engaging in sport and physical activity. This is borne out by my lived experience. Sport is the golden thread that got me through School, and University. It gave me my career and was the key thing that keeps my mental health regulated while I was a care giver.
- **Protection** - ND people are at disproportionate risk of exclusion from school and becoming NEET (not in employment education or training) . In extreme cases ND people can face homelessness, substance abuse and justice interventions. Engagement in sport can be a protection factor, which could help make these negative outcomes less likely. (Youth.Gov, 2024).

This blog focuses on trying to understand why, arguably disproportionately large numbers of world class athletes are ND. (See Appendix 1).

3) Adam Smith The father of Classical Economics

Adam Smith 1723-1790 (Wikipedia Adam Smith, 2024), was a key figure in the Scottish Enlightenment and a pioneer, developing thinking on the political economy. Smith sought to explain the distribution of wealth by analysing the impact of; political, environmental, social, and technological factors, rather than accepting that the way things are, was a result of the will of God.

The wealth of nations (BBC, 2015) is the first modern work that treats Economics as a comprehensive system and as an academic discipline. Smith argued against the common policy of the day whereby Governments used tariffs and controls to protect producers and economies from imports and competition.

Instead, he argued that free markets, would tend to ensure the economy would equilibrate in a way that led to the most efficient use of resources possible and that this would maximise

wealth for all. This belief that under free market conditions an invisible hand ensures the most efficient use of all resources including Labour is a cornerstone of classical economics and capitalism.

4) Positive Dyslexia / Neurodiversity

Neurodivergent people are frequently characterised as having a spikey profile. The difference between their strengths and weaknesses is abnormally large. Not infrequently strengths will rank in the top 5% or 10% in the population, but weaknesses can dip well below the average.

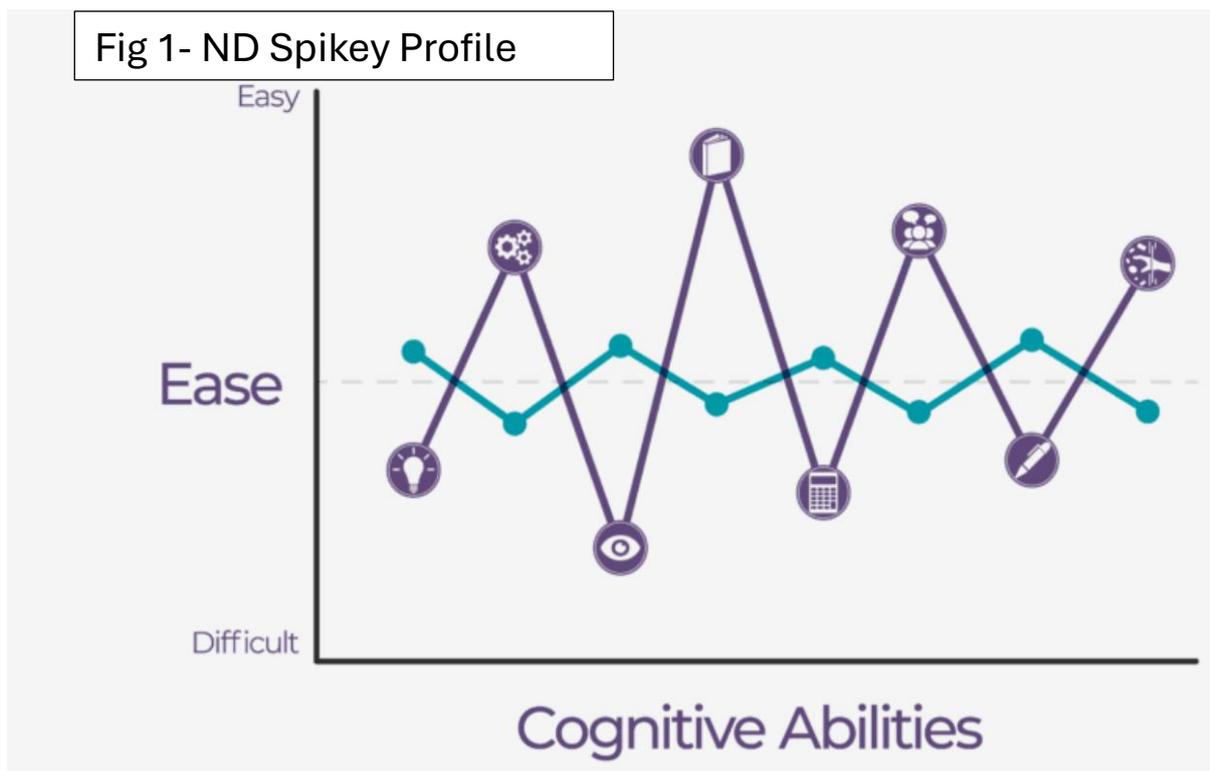


Diagram developed by Nancy Doyle, of Genius Within, Posted on the Genius within website (Doyle, 2024)

In proclaiming Positive Dyslexia (Nicholson R. , 2015) Professor Rod Nicholson noticed that the skills employers most need, appeared to closely match the strengths often associated with dyslexia or other neurodivergent conditions. (Note at the time the concept of positive dyslexia was developed the term neurodiversity was in less frequent use). Given the growing acceptance of co-occurrence, I am linking Professor Nicholson's concept to all neurodivergent conditions (Foundation, 2024).

“The distinctive skills of dyslexic people are the ones employers are actually trying to train in their talent management classes.” - Professor Rod Nicolson (Nicholson P. R., 2021).

The world economic forum future of Jobs report seeks to identify the top skills demanded by employers. (World Economic Forum, 2023). In Table 1 I have matched these skills with the strengths of Neurodivergent People identified through the

neurodiversity in business, neurodiversity at work survey. (Almuth McDowall, 2024) and the reframed traits of ND people suggested by Doyle and McDowall in their book Neurodiversity Coaching (Almuth McDowall, 2024).

Table 1 - Comparisons of skills required by employers and neurodivergent strengths

Top 10 Skills Identified by world economic forum	Strengths Identified by ND people in Neurodiversity at work survey - Neurodiversity in Business cited in Doyle and McDowall	Reframed traits associated With neurotype from Doyle and McDowall
1) Analytical Thinking	Innovative thinking 76% (problem solving)	Autism - Follows process, likely to analyse systems, spot errors and develop insight.
2) Creative Thinking	Creativity 81% Visual Reasoning 59%	Dyslexia - Abstract and Visual, Reasoning Skill. Providing an ability to visualise solutions to problems. Dyspraxia - sees the whole, rather than just the parts.
3) Resilience flexibility and agility	Entrepreneurship 48% (taking control of one's own development)	Some ND people , acquire resilience due to needing to overcome obstacles at school, home, and work (This is not explicitly cited by Doyle and McDowall).
4) Motivation self-awareness	Hyperfocus 79% (ability to get stuff done)	ADHD - Hyperfocus - likely to deliver when under pressure
5) Curiosity and lifelong learning		
6) Technological literacy		
7) Dependability and attention to detail	Detail Processing 70%	ADHD - Alert and likely to spot detail. Autism - attention to detail.
8) Empathy and active listening	Authenticity 65%	Tic Disorders - Build rapport quickly.
9) Leadership and Social Influence		
10) Quality control		Autism - Follows process, likely to analyse systems, spot errors and develop insight.

5) Market Failure, and Nonprofit Maximising Businesses

Given that ND people frequently have highly sought after skills and traits, and these are increasingly in short supply, the question arises why do ND people so often struggle in the labour market? [See NDnomics 2](#) (Freeman, Neurodiversity and Economics 2 - Employment and Unemployment, 2023).

In terms of classical economics, the answer is market failure (Wikipedia Market Failure, 2024). Market failure is said to occur when a market fails to operate efficiently, leading to a loss in economic value. With regard to neurodivergent talent, the labour market is failing to value the skills of ND people in the same way it values the skills of non-neurodivergent people. This might be occurring for one or more of the following reasons.

- **The Labour Market is not Perfect** - In classical economics it is argued that the forces of competition, will ensure businesses efficiently utilise resources. it would therefore be assumed that neurodivergent talent would be utilised if the market was working effectively.

The labour market is however not a perfect market. Classical Economics suggests that the following conditions need to be in place if perfect competition is to occur. (Wikipedia perfect competition)

- Businesses seek to Maximise Profits.
- All Payers have access to perfect information. For example, everyone knows how much everyone else is paid.
- Businesses cannot set wages by themselves (employees negotiate wages with employers, both with equal power to set a market level wage).
- All workers are the same.
- There are no barriers to enter or leave the market e.g., the cost of training.
- Employers have plenty of choice regarding workers to employ and workers can choose jobs with several different employers.

These conditions never apply in a real labour market. The market alone inevitably fails to automatically utilise all available talent.

- **Businesses don't maximise profits** - Because perfect competition is not taking place, and businesses do not have access to the information required to make fully rational decisions, it is almost impossible for a business to act in

accordance with the theoretic model suggested by classical economics and maximise profits.

Instead, most businesses attempt a pragmatic strategy based on Satisficing. (Wikipedia satisficing , 2024). A business which Satisfices will endeavour to make a target level of profit, rather than the most possible. While the theoretical perfect market would force a business to employ the best person to do a job, if the business satisfices, they just need to employ someone good enough to enable them to hit their targets, rather than employing the person with the best skills related to the job task. It may be pragmatic to employ, a safe pair of hands who is low risk, someone who is flexible, someone who fits in and will get on with the rest of the team, someone the boss likes, or a family member.

- **Discrimination and Regulation** - If a business is not forced by competition to always employ the best person for a job, space is created which may allow unfair discrimination to occur. Discrimination is the process of making unfair or prejudicial distinctions between people based on the groups, classes, or other categories to which they belong or are perceived to belong. (Wikipedia Discrimination , 2024)

Within the context of classical economics Market Failure is a justifiable reason for government intervention. Employment discrimination is a clear example of market failure. In the UK, the Equalities Act 2010 (Human Rights Commission, 2021) strives to protect people with protected characteristics from discrimination. The nine protected characteristics are:-

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Neurodivergent people are given some protection by this legislation as neurodivergence can fall within the Governments definition of disability. However, while legal protection can act as a stick, leading to possible sanctions against bad employers, it does not necessarily provide an incentive to encourage employers to be enthusiastic about employing ND talent.

Furthermore, taking an employer to tribunal for an alleged breach of anti-discrimination legislation can be stressful, risky, and expensive. Employees (particularly if they are not represented by a union) are likely to have to pay for representation at an employment tribunal. If they lose, they may have to pay not only their costs but also those of the employer. Cases can take well over a year to reach tribunal. Many employers string out cases to increase pressure on the employee. Taking legal action is very emotionally demanding particularly as ND people may already be prone to anxiety and depression.

- **Neurodivergent People come with weaknesses as well as strengths**

Neurodivergent people display a wider than average gap between the things which they are good at and the things they are bad at. This is inherent within the profile (see Fig 1). Rational employers need to take into consideration the weaknesses as well as the strengths. In some business situations these will be seen to be hard to accommodate or present a significant risk to business operation.

Government intervention can help level the playing field. In the United Kingdom, the access to work scheme is designed to help businesses, make reasonable adjustment. Such adjustments might include altering the physical work environment (changing lighting to reduce sensory overload), allowing flexible working, providing assistive technology, facilitating the development of coping strategies through coaching, assisting with travel to work and in some circumstances the provision of support workers.

The UK labour force contains around 35m economically active people, including 5.4 million people with disabilities. (Powell, 2024). However, only 49 000 people (1% of people with disabilities) (HM Government , 2023) receive support through access to work. It is also interesting to note that the ONS statistic for people with disabilities, only partially reflects the 15%-20% of the labour force (4.5 to 6 million people) who are Neurodivergent. Many ND people do not identify as having a disability, do not disclose and do not seek support in the workplace.

Given that a very small percentage of ND people (less than 1%), use the access to work scheme, and that it is highly risky and potentially expensive for an ND person to take action against an employer using anti-discrimination legislation. Government intervention is arguably insufficient to address the pay gap, job security gap and employment gap between ND people and the rest of the population ([See NDnomics Blog 2](#)).

6) Recognition is growing that a large number of elite athletes are Neurodivergent, many either undiagnosed or not disclosing their diagnosis

In recent years, an increasingly large number of elite athletes have disclosed their neurodivergence. (See Appendix 1- List of Neurodivergent Athletes Compiled by Neurodiverse Sport). Many others have not disclosed or been diagnosed. It should be noted that in sport as in many aspects of life, there are significant barriers to disclosing a diagnosis.

- An athlete may be frightened to reveal a diagnosis in case they get thrown off a team. [Note Greg Halfords experience with Roy Keane](#) described in his article about his largely positive experience with Neil Warnock, when he came out as an autistic premier league footballer. (Ransom, 2024).

- Disclosing a diagnosis may be perceived as revealing a weakness that could help a rival. Possibly even leading to behaviours rivals might consider give them an advantage.
- The negativity associated with deficit based diagnostic criteria, can prevent an athlete from focusing on the positive attributes which make them world class. Likewise negative perceptions of neurodiversity may lead coaches to under estimate the potential of a neurodivergent athlete.
- Many athletes maximise performance when they are in a “flow state” (Grant, 2023), and act on autopilot. Being conscious of one’s neurodivergence and possibly the trauma it caused at home or at school, can take you out of the flow state and reduce performance.

Athletes like other members of the population are often not aware of their neurodivergence. Only approximately 20% of people with Dyslexia or ADHD are diagnosed while at school. (BBC, 2019) (WebMD, 2022). Often diagnosis only occurs when a barrier is hit, and the reasons why the individual appears not to be achieving at school or in work or as an athlete come under scrutiny. This was the case with both Caragh McMurtry, and Greg Halford. (Henson, Caragh McMurtry: Great Britain rower's neurodivergent journey, 2024).

A good example of a sport with a high level of disclosure is formula 1. Three of the Eleven UK world champions have disclosed as being dyslexic. This is a significantly higher incidence than in the general population. The British Dyslexia Association estimates that about 10% of the population are dyslexic (British Dyslexia Association , 2024). Most don’t disclose until after they have finished their career.

UK Formula 1 Champions		
Name	Years	Disclosed Neurodivergent
Mike Hawthorne	1958	No
Graham Hill	1962, 68	No
Jim Clark	1963, 65	No
John Surtees	1964	No
Jackie Stewart	1969, 71,73	Yes F1: Jackie Stewart on a life with dyslexia and his unrelenting push for safety in motorsport The Independent
James Hunt	1976	No
Nigel Mansell	1992	Yes Why Dyslexia is no bar to F1 champions (motorsport.com)
Damian Hill	1996	No
Lewis Hamilton	2008, 14,15,17,18,19,20	Yes 'I didn't realise I was dyslexic until I was 17': Lewis Hamilton talks about struggling at school (motorsport.co.uk)
Jenson Button	2009	No But has spoken about anxiety , actively supports neurodivergent talent in motorsport.

Lando Norris	2025	No public disclosure , fan speculation.
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7) Why the emphasis on maximising performance creates an environment where ND athletes can frequently achieve excellence

Sport is not a perfect market. The barriers to entry into elite sport are considerable. Relatively few people have the opportunity to maximise their sporting talent. Barriers including cost in time and money, access to facilities, the lack of provision in some schools and sadly still on occasions social attitudes. These barriers, prevent many athletes with potential from achieving their dreams.

Although progress is being made there are still many inequalities in sport at both the elite and participation levels. Most olympic athletes come from a relatively narrow social stratum. (Diversity within the Olympic movement in the UK , 2020).

However, unlike businesses, athletes and sports teams need to maximise performance in order to succeed. While a “satisfactory” rate of return (perhaps 15%), will keep many investors happy, you cannot be a world champion or win an Olympic Gold by satisficing. This creates an opportunity for neurodivergent athletes.

Like business sport has over the past 50 years attempted to adopt an increasingly analytical and inclusive approach to identifying, nurturing, and retaining talent. However, because the focus in sport is on excellence in a narrow field rather than flexibility and risk reduction as in the case in many businesses, the talent system in sport will often act to favour ND people when in management and professions it often works to sift ND people out.

While the example of formula 1 shows ND people may be overrepresented in elite sport (data is not yet available across all sports to confirm this). In middle management and professional jobs ND people are significantly underrepresented. (Logan, 2009).

In the following section I will explore how in sport the identification, recruitment, nurturing and sustaining of talent, can work in favour of Elite ND athletes.

- **Talent Identification**

Sport through Talent Identification programmes, seeks to identify people with particular, characteristics that are likely to enable them to succeed and be the best. (Sport England, 2024) . Business on the other hand is pragmatically seeking people who are good enough, will be flexible, fit in and be a safe pair of hands. This is because investors want to manage risk.

The peaks in the ND spikey profile (see Fig 1) can be as high as the highest levels of attainment in the general population. In Formula 1 peaks associated with spatial perception and hyperfocus, will help a driver pick a racing line, and maintain intense concentration for the duration of a race. While these characteristics will be found across the general population, they may be relatively abundant in some sections of the ND community.

Other characteristics for example lung capacity, height and strength, which are key predictors of elite athletic performance are equally distributed in neurodivergent and neurotypical communities. The peak in the ND community will be as high as in any other community. When this is coupled with factors such as a high level of motivation to show self-worth, (Alexander-Passe, 2016) and relatively low opportunity cost. The talent pool able to achieve excellence and willing to make the necessary sacrifices is likely to be disproportionately ND.

The Opportunity Cost of a choice is the value of the next best alternative. (Wikipedia - Opportunity Cost). An athlete who is good at everything at school will have a wide range of career choices. Teachers and Parents will frequently encourage them to follow a safe professional career, rather than risk years of high investment in sport coaching, low income, and the high prospect of failure, which inevitably characterise the pathway to success in elite sport.

The ND athlete on the other hand, will have more limited career options and the prospect of a safe job are far from guaranteed. The prospect of following their passion and doing something that gives them a sense of self-worth becomes a more rational choice. Particularly as when threshold such as regional or university team representation are crossed, career opportunities in coaching, sport therapy or sport development open up.

When their career as an elite athlete finishes, ND athletes may find making the transition into a new career more challenging than Neurotypical athletes. ND people typically find transitions challenging. (NHS Dorset Neurodiversity Hub , 2024) Helping with transitions is therefore an area where clubs and governing bodies may need to explore how they could best offer greater levels of support to ND athletes.

- **Recruitment and Progression**

Within Business recruitment very often relies on proxy evidence such as school or university exam results, and Interviews. These are not always good predictors of actual performance. Progression often requires success in a job utilising one skillset, opening a door to a more senior, supervisory or management job which utilises a different skillset. This approach has tended not to favour ND people. ND people are often not good at writing written applications or talking about their skills at interview. They are frequently much better at proving their worth by doing a task.

Sport by contrast tends to recruit to squads and teams, on the basis of playing performance and data which very closely correlates to future performance. Progression is driven by competitive results. Caragh McMurtry's pathway into rowing was through Project Oarsome (British Rowing, 2020). The objective of project Oarsome was to widen the participation base for rowing within state schools (Evaluation, 2003). The programme attracted school level athletes who, were achieving some level of success in other sports but had potential to develop their talent in Rowing. Caragh's progression to team GB was driven by her success first in club rowing, then in junior teams. The very transparent link between success at one level in sport and progression to the next level, tends to be helpful for ND athletes.

It should be stressed that progression pathways in sport as with every aspect of life are not perfectly transparent. Coaches will frequently make subjective judgements about who should be in a team. Anyone who has ever listened to a football phonein will know, everyone has a different opinion about who should be in the England line up. The use of analytics has however helped make selection more objective. Coaches are also subject to conscious and unconscious bias. In many sports rowing included, regional coaches have very often worked for public schools and in the past public school athletes have tended to dominate teams. Project Oarsome was an example of an initiative designed to overcome this bias.

- **Nurturing and developing talent**

In Sport talent is the product. The athlete is not separated from the product of their labour. (Freeman, Neurodiversity and Economics 4 - Karl Marx and The Alienation of Labour, 2023)). The success of the team or athlete is the sole objective. Nurturing and Developing Talent is therefore the core business activity. In for example Formula 1, the teams will seek to assemble the best technology, the best strategists, and the best talent in order to win the championship. Market forces drive a convergence, the best drivers tend to end up at the best teams with access to the most investment. The competitive structure of the sport ensures all the team have a rich pool of developing talent on which to draw.

In Business human resources are very often seen as one of a range of resources which can be deployed in order to produce a product or deliver a service. The objective is making a return for investors. Staff are often seen as being a cog in a machine (Morgan, 1986), the worker is substantially separated from the product of their labour. Businesses will frequently hire and fire staff with the skills they require, rather than develop their own talent. Industry often outsources talent development to governments, who funds schools colleges and universities. A misalignment between what industry needs and what education provides can therefore occur. Furthermore, continued professional development rather than being part of the day job is often an additional responsibility for workers completed in spare time.

Sport will often use a personalised athlete centred development system to develop talent. The coach surrounds the athlete with all the support services they need to succeed. These may include nutrition, strength and conditioning, physiotherapy, sport psychology, and access to facilities. The coach will also agree with the athlete the training and competition schedule they need so they can achieve their targets. Depending on the stage the athlete has reached, the development plan will be funded by the athlete or their family, the governing body or association, a club, or a university. (For example, many athletes will seek sport scholarships at US universities).

The personalised athlete centred approach will often work well for both diagnosed and undiagnosed ND athletes. The relationship between the athlete and the coach is however crucial. On occasions the desire of the athlete to succeed, together with the power of the coach to control progression can lead to toxicity and even abuse. The story of Simone Biles provides an interesting example (Mercer, 2021)

It is often suggested that the key to reducing the wastage of ND talent in education and in the workplace is to adopt a personalised approach (Kirby, 2024) . However, this is far

from standard practice. Very often it is the ND person who has to take ownership of developing their own coping strategies.

- **Sustaining Talent, Lifestyle and retaining Competitiveness**

The lifestyle of an elite athlete is not for everyone. Jude Kelly when working on the cultural Olympiad drew attention to parallels between the training of elite athletes in sport and the conservatoire culture in classical music and dance. Hours of practice, and strict discipline. In both cases the financial rewards for all but the exceptional few who become the best, are very low.

Practice makes perfect. Gladwell's 10 000-hour rule, although not strictly correct may for some ND people contain a grain of truth. (Bradley, 2012) While many athletes find doing what they term the garbage yardage tedious, for some ND athletes practice is a form of therapy. Sam Smith former British number one tennis player describes how practice gave her a sense of calm (Rae, 2024). Many ND athletes consider doing sport, training, and competing to be their safe space. For an ND person being able to do the thing they are passionate about, good at and makes them feel safe, is often worth considerable sacrifice.

Business on the other hand frequently expects employees to achieve a work life balance. Indeed, it is unhealthy when this is not the case. It is often said you should work to live, rather than live to work . This divide between what you do to earn and what you do for fulfilment can be difficult for ND people. Frequently ND people get much of their happiness from doing what they are passionate about and want to turn their passion into their job.

A key feature in the stories of Caragh McMurtry, Greg Halford and Sam Smith which I have discussed in this blog is that in all cases a crisis occurred in their career as an athlete. In Greg's case this led to him disclosing his diagnosis to his manager Neil Warnock who was supportive. In Caragh's case it first led to misdiagnosis, before eventually psychologists at the UK Sport institute intervened. When she got the correct diagnosis and support, her performance was raised and she competed in the Olympic boat. In Sam's case her then undiagnosed autism led to her needing to take a break from her career. When she got the right support, she was able to return to competition and achieved her career highest ranking.

Sport pushes elite athletes to the limit. Very frequently it will therefore force ND athletes into a position where possibly for the first time they become aware of their neurodivergence and need to seek help. Learning how to respond is a relatively new challenge for sport.

Both in sport and in business the best leaders have instinctively known how to support ND people and got the best out of their teams. The challenge going forward is to build awareness and support capacity, so that the correct response becomes routine and automatic. This is a theme picked up by Ludmilla Praslova in her book the Canary Code. (Praslova L. N., 2024) (Praslova L. , 2024). Ludmilla goes on to argue that ND people in business and in society in general, including sport will often be the first people to be affected by toxicity. Hence when things go wrong for ND people, it is vital to listen. If the

issues are not dealt with early, they will impact on a much wider group, not just the ND community.

8) Conclusions

Many athletes competing in the Olympics and other world class sporting events will be ND. These athletes frequently achieve excellence because they are ND, rather than being held back by their neurodivergence.

The way in which sport identifies, recruits, nurtures and develops talent is in many ways more favourable to ND people than the approaches adopted by business. This is because sport is primarily focused on maximising performance, while business is aiming to achieve target levels of return to investors while minimising risk.

Relatively few athletes will disclose while they are competing. Disclosure is not always safe. Frequently ND athletes will not discover they are neurodivergent until they hit a crisis or barrier. When they are empowered to understand their differences and gain the correct support, they frequently achieve even higher levels of performance.

Sport will often be the safe place for ND athletes. It will give them a sense of self-esteem. Practice and training may even act as therapy. However because succeeding and being part of the team or squad can become overwhelmingly important to an ND athlete, sport can make them vulnerable. The self-imposed desire to improve, can lead to hyperfocus driven overtraining and injuries. The constant pressure of competition can cause burnout and meltdowns. Furthermore the ND athletes perception of a power imbalance with the critical gatekeepers in the selection process (such as coaches, team managers and other officials), can lead to ND athletes feeling pressurised to do things they don't feel comfortable about and even abuse.

ND Excellence is not confined to sport. ND people are achieving amazing things in almost every aspect of life. Marcia Brissett Baileys book, *Black Brilliant and Dyslexic*, neurodivergent heroes tell their stories, provides several examples of everyday excellence. (Brissett-Bailey, 2023)

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Appendix 1 - Famous ND Athletes who have publicly disclosed

Neurodiverse Sport 2023

Surname	First Name	Sport	Condition	Country
Adams	Nicola	Boxing	ADHD	UK
Applegate	Jessica Jane	Swimming	Autism	UK
Biles	Simone	Gymnastics	ADHD	USA
Brannigan	Michael	Paralympic Track and Field	Autism	USA
Campion	David	Snowboarding	Autistic	Australia
Carter	Michelle	Shot Put	ADHD, Dyslexia	USA
Catchpole	Jordan	Paralympic Swimming	Autism	UK
Clark	Breanna	Running	Autism	USA
Delsaux	Ulysse	NASCAR Euro driver	Autism	France
Dis Bray	Tommy	Running	Autism	Canada
Ehrlich	Emily	Skateboarding	Autism	USA
Eisenreich	Jim	Baseball	Tourette's, Autism	USA
Ford	Polly	Wild Swimming	Autism	UK
Genge	Ellis	Rugby	Dyspraxia	UK
Gittens	Tyra	Athletics	ADHD	Trinidad and Tobago
Goodhew	Duncan	Swimming	Dyslexia	UK
Halford	Greg	Football	Autism	UK
Hamilton	Lewis	Formula One	Dyslexia	UK
Harris	Curtis	American Football	Epilepsy	UK
Haskell	James	Rugby	ADHD	UK
Hodgetts	Todd	Paralympic Shot Put	Autism	Tasmania
Holness	Sam	Athletics	Autism	UK
Hope	Sarah	Wheelchair basketball	Autism	UK
Howard	John	MMA Fighting	Autism	USA
Johnson	Magic	Basketball	Dyslexic	USA
Joseph	Kofi	Basketball	ADHD	UK
Kreek	Adam	Rowing Men's 8	ADHD	Canada
Lanni	Anthony	Basketball	Autism	USA
Llorens	Lisa	Paralympic athletics	Autism	Australia

Logan	Kenny	Rugby	Dyslexia	UK
Marzo	Clay	Surfing	Autism	Hawaii
McCann	Molly	MMA Fighting	ADHD	USA
McClellan	James	Football	Autism	UK
McElwain	Jason	Basketball	Autism	USA
McKenzie	Ashley	Judo	ADHD	UK
Middleton-Patel	Safia	Women's football	Autism	UK
Mirttil	Israel	Running	Autism	USA
Morgan	Chris	Rowing	Autism	Australian
Naismith	Stephen	Football	Dyslexia	UK
O'Neill	Jacques	Rugby	ADHD	UK
Pennant	Jermaine	Football	ADHD	UK
Phelps	Michael	Swimming	ADHD	USA
Rai	Jiya	Swimming	Autism	Sri Lanka
Redgrave	Steven	Rowing	Dyslexia	UK
Rousey	Ronda	MMA Fighting	Apraxia	USA
Seidel	Molly	Running	ADHD	USA
Smith	Louis	Gymnast	ADHD	UK
Smith	Sam	Tennis	Autism	UK
Thomas III	J.T.	American Football	ADHD	USA
Tracey	Adelle	Athletics	Dyslexia	Jamaica
Tunca	Tuna	Swimming	Autism	Turkey
Verdasco	Fernando	Tennis	ADHD	Spain
Watson	Bubba	Golf	ADHD	USA
Wilson	Sean	Football	Dyslexia	UK
Yankey	Rachel	Football	Dyslexia	UK