

1. Django

Coming second in the free running world championships has landed me roles in music videos, but it doesn't bring in quite enough to get by, so I'm a bike courier. That isn't ideal, but it won't make me quit, and I try to stop it getting me down. I'm always looking out for new opportunities. For instance, I'm currently working on a deal with a potential sponsor — a sportswear company called Free Spirit. That's me! I don't run on a track, I go wherever I want. I don't let any obstacles or worries about danger hold me back. Not when I'm running, nor any other time! There are too many distractions when you play sports in groups. Alone, you can concentrate on each movement, completely in tune your body and your surroundings.

2. Monica

There's still this stereotype of relaxed, supercool surfer. If only it were true! You can't be relaxed if you want to succeed, and for me, second place is as bad as last place. If I see someone doing a new trick it obsesses me. I study all their moves and work out how to copy them. I don't care how many times I fall off the board or how many bruises I get as long as I can do it perfectly in the end. It can be a lonely sport. If you're getting up at dawn every day to catch the best waves, then you don't want to go out much in the evenings. But I figure, I'm young, and all that can wait — I just want a few more trophies first!

3. Mario

My parents were initially against my taking up wheelchair rugby because it's often perceived to be dangerous. Some people even call it 'murderball'! So far I've managed to avoid any crashes on the court myself, although I've had a few near misses. I reckon if you're speedy enough you can avoid most collisions! Anyway, luckily, I managed to persuade my parents to change their minds and so I wasn't forced to give it up. Now I regularly hear them cheering in the stands — they nearly deafen me each time I score! Wheelchair rugby's so exciting it's becoming increasingly popular with spectators, which is great because that may mean more funding. Sadly, the modified chairs don't come cheap! It'd be a shame if that put anyone off the sport.

4. Gabriella

When I tell people what I do they often laugh, which drives me mad. If I hadn't trained really hard, I wouldn't be where I am today. Looks aren't enough; you've got to have talent, determination and strength. And I mean that in both ways. I work out a lot, often to the point of being completely worn out. As part of an acrobatic routine I sometimes have to carry other girls on my shoulders, and they're not as skinny as they look on TV. You also need inner strength. Cheerleading is largely an amateur sport, so you don't get paid, but that doesn't stop it from being very competitive. I have seen instances of bullying among team mates, which is just terrible. I wish it wasn't an issue; I want to feel proud of my sport.

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Which person mentions learning from observing other sportspeople?

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