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Rethinking SCHOOLS for ASPIRING ATHLETES



APRIL
11

4:00 pm to 7:00 pm
Solaris Sports World
Mayur Colony, Pune 38

WHAT WILL WE DISCUSS?

Schools were designed for a particular kind of child - one whose primary focus is standardised academic learning, delivered at a fixed pace and within a fixed structure. The **aspiring athlete, however, develops along two parallel tracks - intellectual and athletic - each placing competing demands on time, energy, recovery, and attention.**

This panel explores a fundamental question: **who is school really for?** Must children conform to the system, or should schools adapt to diverse learners like athletes?

Can we imagine schools that account for athletes' schedules, cognitive load, and the deep learning embedded in sport, supporting their autonomy, identity, recovery, and resilience?

At the very least, can we critically examine current schooling systems and identify where meaningful change is needed?

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

ATHLETE PARENTS who believe that their child's sporting ambitions should get deeper institutional support and want to fact-check their expectations and options

**PLEASE DON'T BRING YOUR KIDS.
They are the subject, not the audience!**

ABOUT OUR PANELISTS



Sanand Mitra

*International Gold Medalist Archer
Former India Captain of Archery team and Coach*

...will bring the lived truth of an elite athlete

Sanand is a respected figure in the sports industry and academia. An **international gold-medalist archer** and **accomplished coach**, he has spent over two decades establishing centres of excellence in archery across the country. His expertise spans **sports technology, policy, diplomacy, performance analytics, and athlete management**. As Managing Director of the SporTech Innovation Lab, he works to integrate AI and technology into sports ecosystems and **is advising on India's potential 2036 Olympic bid** in alignment with national education policies. Honoured with several accolades, including the **Sportsman of the Decade award** and even a road named after him, Mitra continues to advocate for sustainable sports growth through collaboration among policymakers, industry leaders, and academia.



Prajakta Panchal

Learning in-charge at PRAkruti Learning Center

www.prakrutilearningcenter.com

... will bring the evidence of a different school model

Prajakta has spent over a **decade working with children, parents, teachers, and education systems across Maharashtra**. Her work bridges learning and life; from designing **meaningful learning experiences to improving teaching practices and school leadership**. As the Learning In-Charge at Prakruti Learning Center - a Pune-based microschool that balances formal schooling with alternative learning approaches - Prajakta **leads curriculum design** and oversees the learning processes for students. Her work involves integrating **experiential learning, reflective practices, and student-centred pedagogy** into everyday schooling. Alongside her role at Prakruti, she also supports other organisations as an educational consultant, helping them **rethink curriculum, teacher development, and learning frameworks** to make education more relevant, inclusive, and holistic for young learners.



Dr. Dinesh Nehete

*Parenting Coach & Counsellor
Founder of En-Reach Learning
www.enreach.org*

... will be the voice of the child and the conscience of the panel

Dr. Dinesh Nehete is a **parenting expert and counsellor** with a unique interdisciplinary background spanning **science, psychology, and education**. After a distinguished career in **technology and research**, he transitioned to working in the field of **child development and parenting**, driven by a deep commitment to supporting families and educators. As the founder of the En-Reach Foundation, he has **worked extensively with parents, teachers, and schools across Maharashtra**, guiding over **25,000 parents and thousands of educators**. His work focuses on building emotionally resilient, independent children by empowering the adults who support them, through structured **parenting programs, workshops, and long-term mentoring initiatives**.



Darsshan Wagh

Sports Scientist,
High-performance Expert

www.darshanwagh.in

... will bring the science of athlete physiology

Darsshan Wagh is a seasoned **sports scientist, high-performance expert** and founder-director of **ADOPT Sports - a grassroots sports NGO** where his team brings tribal and rural sporting talent into the mainstream. With over **28 years of experience**, he has worked with a diverse range of **elite athletes - both able-bodied and para**. He has led high-performance projects at various institutions including **Army Sports Institute, Army Para Node, Paraplegic Rehabilitation Center** where many athletes have improved their game under his guidance. His mission today is to **create a new dynamic in Indian Sports** by fostering collaboration and cross-learning, building capacity and infusing accountability into the system - all with a single aim of giving India's best athletes the best chance at bringing home the Gold.



Dr. Geeta Muthya

Sports Psychologist

... will unfold the inner world of a young athlete

Dr. Geeta V. Muthya is an **experienced psychologist and educator** with over 25 years of work in the field of education and student development. She has extensive experience in sports psychology, having played a key role in **setting up initiatives like Kreedakul at Jnana Prabodhini and designing & conducting Mental Training sessions for competitive athletes**. Dr. Muthya has also taught Sports Psychology and guidance and counseling at institutions such as Savitribai Phule Pune University and Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth. She has also served as a school counselor at Blue Ridge Public School. Her work focuses on **student wellbeing, mental training for athletes**, and supporting children in managing academic and psychological challenges.



Pinaze Dubash (PhD)

Board Chair, Sportech
Innovation Lab Pvt. Ltd.

PANEL MODERATOR

Pinaze Dubash (PhD) is an **educationist, entrepreneur and founder** with over two decades of experience at the intersection of education and sport. A doctoral scholar in Education and alumna of **IIM Calcutta's Educational Leadership Programme**, she is the Board Chair at Sportech Innovation Lab — India's emerging sports technology infrastructure company — and founded EduVarsity, India's teacher community and professional intelligence platform for Indian educators. Her work spans **institutional leadership, teacher training, learning disabilities research and grassroots sport**. As moderator, she will draw on this **dual foundation to surface dissonance, press for specificity and translate the perspectives in the room into actionable clarity**.

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