

# Former athletes finish first in race for top jobs

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Whether you were a quarterback or point guard, past participation in competitive team sports marks you as a winner in the competition for better jobs, according to a new Cornell University study.

"Participation in competitive youth sports 'spills over' to occupationally advantageous traits that persist across a person's life," says Kevin M. Kniffin, postdoctoral research associate at Cornell's Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management and lead researcher.

Research by Kniffin and his co-authors, published online this week in the *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, shows that people who played a varsity high school sport are expected to be more self-confident, have more self-respect, and demonstrate more [leadership](#) than people who were part of other extracurricular activities.

Former varsity athletes also reported significantly higher prosocial volunteerism and charitable activities. Also, many ex-jock octogenarians parlayed 65-year-old [leadership skills](#) into successful management careers – some at the highest level.

"In our study of late-career workers, those who earned a varsity letter more than 50 years ago do demonstrate these characteristics more than others – plus, they donate time and money more frequently than others and possessed great prosocial behavior in their 70s, 80s, and 90s," said Kniffin.

**More information:** [foodpsychology.cornell.edu/op/sports\\_at\\_work](http://foodpsychology.cornell.edu/op/sports_at_work)

Provided by Cornell University

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