

KPMG Today - Business Unit News

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On Top of the World

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This summer, many KPMG people took time away from the office to travel and enjoy their favorite hobbies. But while most of us worked up a sweat on the beach or the golf course, two KPMG professionals engaged in some serious international competition. Here, find out how these world-class athletes spent their summer vacations.

Mike Leveille

Senior Associate, New York

When did you start playing lacrosse?

I've been on the field for as long as I can remember. I grew up in Albany, New York, and my father – a former player – established the first youth lacrosse program there. He immediately got me and my older brother involved, and it became a lifelong passion for both of us.

You played lacrosse at Syracuse University, historically the No. 1 program in the country.

Yes. I'm so proud to have been a part of the Syracuse tradition, and I learned so much during my four years there.

My junior year was a tough one for our program. Our win-loss record was 5-8, making it just about the worst season the school had ever seen. Instead of letting it bring us down, we used the experience to drive us and went on to win the national championship my senior year. We learned not to take success for granted, and it's taught me to be patient and understand that life has its ups and downs.

In July, you took a six-week sabbatical from KPMG to compete as a member of the U.S. team in the World Lacrosse Championships in England. What was that experience like?

Since graduating, I've been a member of Major League Lacrosse, which means I travel to a different city each weekend during the summer and have an opportunity to play with my brother and some of my former teammates and rivals. Still, since we all have day jobs, we aren't able to practice much during the week and build the kind of camaraderie I became accustomed to growing up.



Being on the U.S. team this summer really felt like being on a college team – we got to know each other at training camp, spent time sightseeing together in England, and developed a really strong bond.

How did it go on the field?

There were about 30 countries represented in England. Canada was the incumbent champion after winning four years ago, but we were the favorites going into this year's tournament. We played Canada in a preliminary round and lost by a goal, then ended up meeting them again in the final game and pulling out the win. It felt really good to achieve the goal we set out for ourselves and to be able to live up to what was expected of us.

It was also great to see how the sport is growing around the world. When we played Japan, we were beating them pretty handily throughout the game, but they played hard and never gave up. When they scored their only goal of the game, they celebrated as if they had won the whole championship. It was really inspiring to see that kind of raw passion and enthusiasm, and it makes me excited about the future of the sport.

Meredith Ramsey

Manager, Dallas

You are a CrossFit competitor. What is CrossFit?

CrossFit is a strength and conditioning program that combines weightlifting, metabolic conditioning, and gymnastics to encourage overall physical fitness. It's used by trainers all over the world, and the main philosophy behind it is to prepare you for any and all physical tasks you might encounter in your everyday life.

As a CrossFit athlete, my workouts never involve isolated movements like bicep curls. Instead, they combine elements such as running, jumping rope, rowing, and lifting

heavy objects. Because of my smaller frame, I struggle with some of the Olympic-level lifting, but I make up for it with tasks that focus on cardio endurance, speed, agility, and the movement of body weight.

How did you discover CrossFit?

I grew up playing volleyball, running track, and playing basketball. After graduating college and starting work at KPMG, I joined a gym to stay in shape and found out through a friend of mine about CrossFit. It sounded really cool and different and it fit perfectly into my schedule. With the warm-up, workout, and cool down, I am in and out of the gym in an hour.

I went for my first CrossFit workout in August 2008, and after 10 minutes I was more exhausted than I had ever been in my life. I literally collapsed on the ground – but I was completely hooked.

When did you begin competing?

My gym hosted a local competition about a year ago and I decided to enter fairly spontaneously. Before then, I didn't know CrossFit was a competitive sport. After a few more local competitions, I entered the sectional qualifying meet for the 2010 CrossFit Games. The sectional competition was held in Oklahoma, and I finished ninth out of about 40 female participants.

When I was given the option to join a team for the regional competition, I couldn't turn it down. My background is in team sports, and I missed that dynamic. My gym assembled a team of six people, and we finished third at regionals, qualifying us for the Games in July.

What happened there?

The Games were awesome. It was a three-day competition in California that involved four physical challenge events – none of which were announced until an hour before they began. One workout consisted of intervals of dead lift at 175 lbs., one-legged squats, and rowing, ending with each team member finding the maximum amount of weight they could lift from shoulders to overhead.

Seventy-five teams from around the world participated, and we finished 25th. There were cameras filming us throughout the competition, and the footage was streamed live on the Internet. It was really cool to know that a lot of my co-workers in the Dallas office were watching, and in between events they would e-mail me words of encouragement.

Is that how you were selected to make your TV commercial debut?

Not exactly. In June, one of my coaches received an e-mail from a casting agent. It was an open call for athletes to appear in a commercial for Russell Athletics. They had nearly 400 people audition, and I couldn't believe I was picked. The commercial started airing this month on ESPN. If you blink you might miss me, but it's been fun to get my five seconds of fame!



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