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Familiar with in-depth research, with a passion for history, sports and science.

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Submission Title *

From Sweat Moppers to Toy Car Gophers Could You Do These Sports Jobs?

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Submission Summary *

Plain crazy or plain brilliant, these unusual jobs in sports might just be the unsung heroes

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A summary of the article/review (to be used as additional blurb).

Submission Content *

[Featured Image - Alex Batchelor] Photo by Alex Batchelor (https://unsplash.com/@abatch16) on Unsplash (https://unsplash.com) It might be messy, dangerous or just plain fun, meet some of the strangest jobs in sports. Remote Control Gophers You're a world class athlete who can throw a javelin, discus, hammer and shot put, really, really, far, but no one ever learnt to bring it back, and none of the games come with a Beethoven sized dog to retrieve and return. Faced with this conundrum, and needing the games to keep up with all the tight scheduling, the Olympics committee hired a fleet of remote-control cars to gopher the high-flung equipment back to their starting positions. These fast wheeled toys, have now expanded their role since first appearing in the 2012 London Olympics to other avenues of sport, such as football's Euro 2020, and the most recent Olympics in Japan where they carried rugby balls too. Just what can't these cars do! Partnered with human hands, these cars have been increasing whizzing about in recent years, although new reports suggest artificial intelligence has partnered up with some. In 2019, the International Olympics Committee announced that Tokyo's "Field Support Robots... will determine the optimal path to follow when retrieving items such as hammers or javelins thrown by athletes, guiding staff along paths that avoid obstacles. This will help reduce both the amount of time needed to retrieve items and the amount of human support required at events" - more can be read here: https://olympics.com/ioc/news/new-robots-unveiled-for-tokyo-2020-games So, if you want a chance at this role you might have to get in their fast, or otherwise avoid hitting the ground at all and just get those minds twitching in how you can improve the partnership between AI and sports. [Image 1 - Photo by Andrew Thomas (https://www.flickr.com/photos/atom-uk/) London Olympics 2012: Remote controlled Minis are used to return the javelins! (https://www.flickr.com/photos/58613084@N02/7751270656) (CC BY-SA 2.0)] NFL Uniform Inspectors The National Football League (NFL) is an organisation known for its upholding of rules, and a position which portrays this to perfection is that of a Uniform Inspector. Their role, to ensure no player has stepped outside of the designated uniform with a design of their own, whether it's fashionable additions such as a diamond watch or eye-catching cleats. The argument remains that it could cause an unfair advantage - with the watch dazzling the eyes of the quarterback. Aside from fashion misdemeanours, there's the more serious infractions - not wearing the required knee and thigh pads for example. It might be restrictive, hot or uncomfortable but the uniform is also there to protect. Same with many other features (from helmets to shoes) that at times, players and teams, have tried alter. Then there's the issue of sponsors who pay huge amounts to have their logos and brands advertised, therefore if a player wears something not endorsed by them, and maybe with a competitor's logo, there could be an uproar. To save them from this the rule is simple - hide the logo. Required for both training, and at official games, these inspectors have their hands full. But luckily, they also have the power to carry them out - having the authority to pull a player off the field at any reasonable stop of play. What's more there's also penalties from lost yards and to the player's own back pocket - with fines being issued. Qualifications for such a position? Apparently, you have to be a former player. Afterall, they have eagle eyes, know what's allowed, and well, they're probably tough enough to go up to a 250-pound man and tell him he's just not in fashion with the team. [Image 2 - Photo by Deon A. Webster (https://unsplash.com/@reelivid) on Unsplash (https://unsplash.com)] Get-Back-Coach Following viral exposure back in 2017, this little-known role has shot to the headlines of NFL sports humour. But what's the requirement of a Get-Back-Coach? To make sure the team's head coach (in particular), supporting staff and players don't go over the line and onto the field. At any and all times of a game, the get-back-coach must be ready to pounce at the staff/player before they crucially step over the line and into the eyesight of the annoyed referees. This rare position in sport, isn't an official job title, but instead it's assigned as an additional role. In the case of the 2017 viral sensation, Ted Rath, was at the time LA Rams 'Head Strength and Conditioning Coach' which certainly came in handy, and might be why other coaches of the same title, have found themselves with this additional honour of bearhugging their colleagues from the field. However, as the role isn't often publicly labelled - it's a bit of a Where's Wally in spotting them on the field. The clues to finding them; their stalker like movements, the matching quick step with their target, and close proximity - being only a pace behind - allowing them to grab, guide and redirect when necessary. Maybe we could all do with one of these coach's? [YOUTUBE VIDEO] Mop Boys Hot, bothered and sweaty - it's just not nice. But for some, the more sweat, the more work, the greater the pay, and the closer to the game you are. Here comes the role of "Mop Boys" and they are here to tackle the sweat, hands-on. Under the glamour of arena lights, a crowded arena and athletes at the top of their game, it's not surprise that basketball players sweat - a lot! And it's up to the National Basketball Association to tackle the issue, and not because they have a fear of body odour, at least not that I know of. Instead, a sweat puddle or drip, can cause a player to lose that winning shot, slam dunk or worse, damage their million-dollar insured body with a slip or a trip. To reduce this risk, mop boys remain at the court's side to mop any spillage sweat or drink. Rushing onto the court at half-time, time-outs, penalties or falls. The more experienced they become at tackling a streak of sweat or any slippery spot, the more money they gain, with the average salary for 2 years' experience as a mop boy being \$80,000 (as of 2023). But no worries if you're sweat averse, there's also the role of towel boy, waterboy and ball boy to apply for as well. [Image 3 Photo by Kenny Eliason (https://unsplash.com/@neonbrand) on Unsplash (https://unsplash.com)] Now you've come to know about these roles, why not try your hand at one, or perhaps there's a more unusual job to be had.

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