

## Have you ever wondered if joining the Sports Massage Association is worthwhile?

Don't just take my word for it when I say it is, have a read about what I have been able to do through my membership and make up your own mind.

At the end of last year, I was thrilled at the opportunity to work with a group of Chinese youth development athletes in Austria for a month. For me, being a massive winter sports fan and avid snowboarder myself when the advert for this role came along my eyes lit up. I thought it was the perfect job for me and as it turns out, it was!

During the day my role was to provide first aid cover, this mainly consisted of a lot of strapping up bruised limbs as



the athletes threw themselves off of all manner of jumps, rails and boxes as well as trying to master some flatland tricks. My previous experiences of

working within elite sport usually consist of long periods of boredom waiting for something to happen followed by brief moments of activity, this wasn't too dissimilar however it had the advantage of the beautiful backdrop from the Kitzsteinhorn glacier. A view which never got old, looking down over the valley towards Zell Am See.



After the days training we would return to the athlete's hotel where we would run a clinic for the broken and bruised to get them back on the slopes for the next day's training. Considering the athletes had very limited snowboarding experience before the training camp, going in I was expecting there to be quite a few cases of all the usual freestyle injuries, concussion, broken wrists, strains you name it I had it in mind that it was a possibility. However, we were pretty fortunate, there was only a limited number of serious injuries and a whole host of easily fixed soft tissue issues.

It was a truly remarkable opportunity to work with some amazing young athletes, one which I will not forget any time soon.



Through my membership I have also been able to work with the British Bobsleigh and Skeleton Association, helping the bobsleigh athletes through training camps in Italy, to World Cup events in Calgary Canada, Whistler Canada, Innsbruck Austria and Konigsee Germany. Closer to home I was also a part of the World Indoor Athletics Medical Team at the 2018 championship in Birmingham. All of which I would not have been able to do if I was not a member of the SMA.

So not only do you get a lot of opportunity to work within elite sport all over the globe, the SMA is always working tirelessly behind the scenes to progress our profession.

*So worthwhile?  
...every single penny!*



John Baker MSMA



THE ASSOCIATION FOR  
SOFT TISSUE THERAPISTS