

Porsche Chats: Peter Bol on motivation, high-performance, and overcoming adversity

28/10/2024 The Olympic star visited the recently-renovated Porsche Cars Australia head office to provide PCA Staff with a comprehensive view of his mindset as a professional athlete – and the ways in which you can gain the tools to overcome challenges while still performing at peak performance, no matter your industry.

To many, Peter Bol is the quintessential successful Australian. He's ambitious, driven and hard-working.

Born in Sudan, Peter and his family moved to Australia in 2004, arriving in Toowoomba before settling in Perth. A high school basketball scholarship signalled his future in sport, which took a life-changing turn when a teacher suggested he try middle-distance running.

Just like that, on one sunny winter's day, Peter's athletics career was born. Registering for his local high-school's 800-metre relay race, he was hooked. While he may have been a latecomer to running–he was

16 when he ran his first race—it was his dedication, motivation and ultimate vision for success that would see him race on a global stage just five years later, at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro.

Yet, no story is ever that simple; Peter has faced many a hurdle which has ultimately made him the athlete he is today. His story might be bigger than him, but his experiences are universally shared.

They include endless hours of training, overcoming injuries, and a network of family, friends, coaches, and athletes who have supported him every step of the way.

One of Peter's biggest steps was moving to Melbourne to train with Justin Rinaldi, the elite middle-distance athletics coach known for his physical preparation, tactical acumen and race strategy. Rinaldi's training and Peter's remarkable work ethic combined to make him Australia's fastest 800-metre runner, a three-time Olympian and a Commonwealth Games silver medal winner.

Daniel Schmollinger: Peter, thank you for joining us today. As someone who has achieved great success in athletics, what do you believe is the key to consistently performing at a high level?

Peter Bol: You need to be able to set a goal, you need the right habits, and your habits absolutely have to reflect your goal.

Habits are super important because, with habits, you can set so many different goals. For me, waking up every single morning ready to go and being consistent in training are important. But the goal is always critical; it's there for the times you lack motivation, and it reminds you to get back to your habits.

DS: In your experience, how important is mindset in achieving peak performance, and how can we cultivate a winning mindset in our daily work?

PB: Mindset is critical. As an 800 runner, I've got a big team that includes a mindset coach.

It all starts the day before. Speaking about habits for an athlete, sleep and nutrition are probably the most important. If you can do everything to correctly support these habits, you can wake up the next morning rested and well fuelled. And you'll have fewer doubts *and* the right mindset.

DS: What role does goal setting play in your training, and how can setting goals improve our performance as a team?

PB:I started the process of goal setting really early. My first goal was just to try to be the best. But you must be able to set really specific goals. They need to be smart, they need to be measurable, they've got to be time-framed.

Goal setting drives the consistency needed to get out of bed each day and do the training that will get me closer to accomplishing what I'm after.

DS: Can you share a specific challenge you faced during your career and how you overcame it? What lessons can we apply to overcome our own challenges at work?

PB: We go through so many different challenges as athletes. The key is to make sure you have strategies in place to deal with challenges.

Resilience is central in all of this. One constant goal is to continue becoming more resilient and I have five different ways to achieve this.

Number one is to connect. Knowing who you are and connecting with people around you is vital.

Stay active. Even through my most challenging times I stay active because health is important.

Set goals. Goals keep you firmly in place and get you through those times when motivation is low.

Speak to people when you're faced with a challenge. Communication is critical to overcoming obstacles, whether they're at work or at home.

And let yourself 'go through' different challenges. Overcoming them helps you in the future if they pop up again.

DS: Teamwork is crucial in both athletics and business. I'm assuming you have quite the team around you!? How do you build and maintain a strong team dynamic, and how can we strengthen our collaboration?

PB:I've got a big team. It includes a coach, a nutritionist, a physiotherapist, and a mindset coach.

But there's more to it than my team. I also train with my competitors because it lets me know where I'm at.

The key to a successful team is realising you can't succeed on your own. That might sound obvious but ambitious people can overlook the power of a team. Communicate openly, implement what your team suggests, and look to each other for support. That's how you win as a team.

DS: What strategies do you use to stay motivated during periods of low performance or setbacks?

PB: If you find your motivation is falling, pause and wait for when you start 'reinflating' again.

I have so many different strategies for periods like this. I see a physio, I see a massage therapist, and I rest and sleep a lot. I need to make sure I'm eating and sleeping correctly.

I journal and reflect a lot. These are part of high performance. After every single race I compete in, whether it's good or bad, I write three positive things and three things I can do better.

DS: How do you balance rigorous training with recovery and mental well-being, and how can we apply this balance to our work lives?

PB: Balancing the intensity of training, competition or work with a healthy mental well-being is a matter of trying different things to see what works best for you as an individual.

I rely on a few important tools. One is breathing. When you're focusing on your breath, it brings you back to the present moment.

I also journal. It lets me see how my focus has changed and how my performance has developed.

I read a lot. It keeps me present and prevents distraction.

And I write down my values. I do this every year. I focus on the top three and I make sure I dedicate the most time to these. Whatever your values are, write them down.

DS: What advice do you have for maintaining focus and discipline, especially when working towards long-term projects?

PB: For me, it's all about planning.

My goal is to make the Olympic team and win, but it's possible to get sick on the day and miss out on making the team. The way to work around something like this is with short-term goals and long-term goals.

Short-term, I plan my week ahead every Sunday.

Longer-term, I'm looking towards the next four years and the Los Angeles Olympics in 2028. But I'm looking at it with small steps.

Every year there's a goal in place for the bigger picture. I'm also looking at the National Championships in April next year. I'm looking at the World Championships in Japan.

In terms of discipline, I've also got a high work ethic and it's driven by passion.

And finally, I don't give up. I made the Australian Olympic team after five years. And my campaign at the Rio Olympics was successful. If I gave up on any setbacks or challenging times, I wouldn't be here today.

DS: Looking ahead, what are your future goals and aspirations, and how do you plan to achieve them? How can our team adopt a similar approach to future goals?

PB:I want to take a leadership role and help Australian sport. I also want to make it more diverse.

The Olympics will be in Brisbane in 2032, which is a cool project to work on.

Outside of sport I'm trying to do more for my community. When I was at school I got the opportunity to run and I was able to make so many differences in people's lives. And I want to continue to do that outside of my sport, as well.

For Porsche, the same rules of high performance apply. High performers always make their way to the top. And along the way, it's important to recognise how much value and joy you can bring to other people.

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

Consumption data

Taycan Turbo S Cross Turismo (Predecessor model)

Taycan Turbo Cross Turismo (Predecessor model)

Taycan with Performance Battery (Predecessor model)

Taycan 4 Cross Turismo (Predecessor model)

Taycan 4S Cross Turismo (Predecessor model)

*Further information on the official fuel consumption and the official specific CO_2 emissions of new passenger cars can be found in the "Leitfaden über den Kraftstoffverbrauch, die CO_2-Emissionen und den Stromverbrauch neuer Personenkraftwagen" (Fuel Consumption, CO_2Emissions and Electricity Consumption Guide for New Passenger Cars), which is available free of charge at all sales outlets and from DAT (Deutsche Automobil Treuhand GmbH, Helmuth-Hirth-Str. 1, 73760 Ostfildern-Scharnhausen, www.dat.de).

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