



THE journey to full registration

Susan Hunter describes her aspirations and journey so far *en route* to becoming an SENr registrant...

The power of nutrition is something that has intrigued me from an early age – not only from a health perspective, but with a focus on performance. I have been fortunate in my life to be surrounded with food and had the opportunity to observe the power of nutrition over my somewhat successful amateur athletics career.

I set out in my performance nutrition journey from an age of 14 when a sports nutritionist gave a talk at my local athletics club. Listening to this talk was a moment of clarity for me – it highlighted the importance of nutrition on my sporting performance, and fuelled my desire to research the science further.

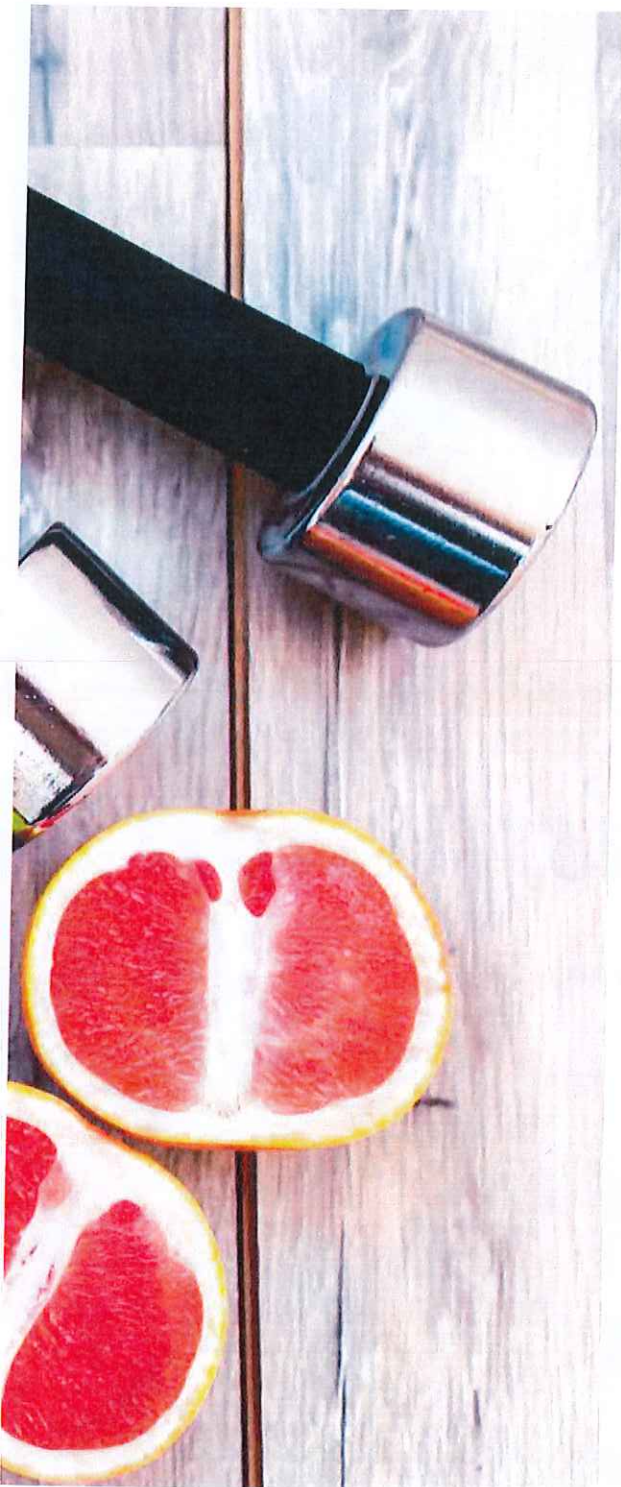
Since then, over the past decade I have devoted my spare time (and extra cash!) to improving my knowledge, experience and skills. This has

comprised two degrees (and a third on its way), numerous conferences and workshops and countless hours reading, watching and listening to new nutrition information.

The end goal is to become further involved in sports nutrition, but the route I chose was a BSc in Sports Science and a Postgraduate Diploma in Dietetics. For me, being a dietitian has provided ample opportunities, and allowed me to develop my clinical and softer skills, which are transferable to both clinical and sports nutrition.

WHERE DOES THE SENr REGISTER COME IN?

I joined SENr as a graduate registrant in the summer of 2014. I met the criteria as a graduate from my bachelors degree and PgDip in Dietetics. However, I had limited experience working with



elite athletes. My experience at this time primarily focused on a local football team and an internship I had completed with the Glasgow Warriors, a professional rugby team. This internship involved nutrition workshops, one-to-ones and educating the academy players. Therefore, given my experience to date, I was insufficient to meet the criteria for full registration.

WORKING TOWARDS FULL REGISTRATION

I was clear on the areas that I needed to develop in order to gain full registration. The accreditation criteria for

full registration has been a great guide in shaping my activities for increasing my involvement within performance sport. I was aware I required further experience working with athletes...so how did I get it?

I'd already completed an unpaid internship at a professional rugby club and kept in contact with their lead nutritionist. As a result I was invited to assist at some Scottish Rugby events and this led to my current post as the Senior Women's Nutrition Consultant. This experience with athletes has been key to my development and each day I learn something new. My role with the women has involved educating the players at a group level, one-to-ones, and ensuring our nutrition strategies are well executed during training, camps, and competitions.

I have always been a pro-CPD (Continual Professional Development) individual and recognise that this is both necessary for full accreditation, but also central to a successful career in sports nutrition. The CPD opportunities I have had over the last two years have been conscious decisions. One being the commencement of the prodigious IOC Sports Nutrition Diploma which I will hopefully complete this year. I was also successful on gaining a place on the Skills4Performance course with the English Institute of Sport (EIS). This was an intensive week with the EIS practitioners and the skills I learned are definitely shaping my practice.

TO THE FUTURE...

Over the next few months, my primary focus is the completion of my IOC Diploma and then starting to make a transition into full time sports nutrition. I am nervous about this, but I am confident that following the SENr pathway will put me in a good place.

I recognise that I still have lots to learn, both experiential and academic – but I look forward to this challenge. The beauty of nutrition is that it is always evolving and therefore we can all keep learning individually and from each other. To engage in CPD isn't a chore, it's something we can enjoy as practitioners within our teams, and by attending annual conferences such as ISENC and BDA Live. I look forward to continuing my CPD in this exciting era of sports and exercise nutrition. ●



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