Barbara Slater

Bringing the Olympics to our television screens.

Barbara Slater graduated from Birmingham with a BA in Physical Education in 1981

Why she is outstanding

As the first female Head of Sport at the BBC, former Olympic gymnast Barbara has overall responsibility for BBC Sport's coverage of the London 2012 Olympics. Her job also involves overseeing BBC Sport's move to new facilities in Manchester in 2011 and ensuring the BBC retains a broad portfolio of broadcasting rights.

In the 1970s, Barbara was in the national gymnastics team more than 20 times and was in the front row when the British team paraded at the opening ceremony of the 1976 Montreal Olympics. Achieving a first class degree at Birmingham led to further study, a Masters in Human Biology at Oxford and PGCE at Loughborough, and she seemed destined for a career in academia. But Barbara had developed an interest in television fuelled by helping ITV with gymnastics coverage production and commentary during her student years.

She joined the BBC as a trainee assistant producer and worked on natural history, news and regional programmes before moving to BBC Sport in 1983 and going on to produce, direct and edit many major sporting events, from Wimbledon to the Open Golf Championships.

Did you know?

As a teenager in Liverpool, Barbara was a diver and competed at a national level. She only became a gymnast due to the lack of diving facilities when the family moved to Birmingham.

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