



MEMBER EXCLUSIVE, MODERN MARKETING

Ally highlights bootstrapped Olympic athletes gunning for gold in a new campaign

Ally launched a national campaign called The Unsponsored featuring athletes with little to no financial backing. Ally also donated \$250,000 to three athletes to help them along their journeys to being the best in their sport.

SHEHZIL ZAHID | AUGUST 12, 2021



Early July, Ally kicked off a national campaign called The Unsponsored featuring three promising hopefuls gunning for a spot in the next Olympics. Ally will showcase the three athletes in docu-style videos that share their stories, and provide \$250,000 in funding for training equipment, coach fees and more.

Ally's chief marketing and public relations officer Andrea Brimmer says that Ally is constantly looking for ways to be an ally to those who need support to achieve their goals. A cultural touchstone like the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo, Japan was the perfect opportunity to extend help to the little guy who hasn't quite made it yet.

The Unsponsored | Trailer

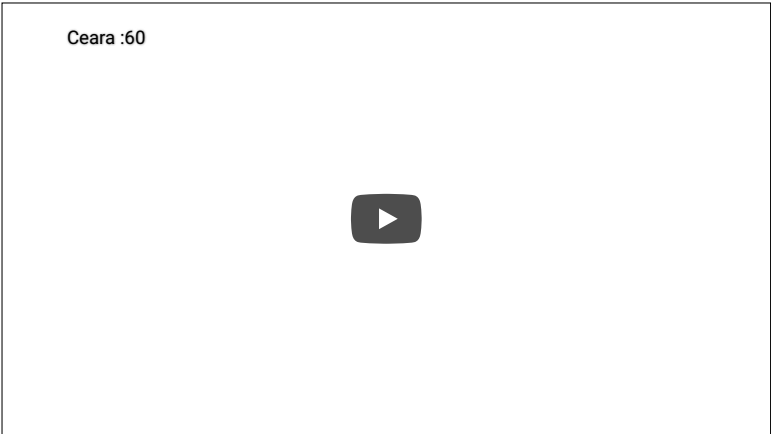
Source: YouTube

"It is clear that each and every one of those athletes [at the Olympics] had some form of help on their journey to the top," says Brimmer. "And it's important for us to support those who are training hard at home to achieve their dreams."

Brimmer was a college athlete, having spent four years on the soccer team at Michigan State. Her experience gave her insight into the obstacles athletes overcome to compete on the world stage. Depending on the sport, training to be the best can cost tens of thousands of dollars, and many have little to no financial support. Ally wanted to capitalize on this insight, highlighting unsponsored athletes in a campaign that offers the chosen athletes a lump sum donation totaling \$250,000.

Ceara Gray, one of the athletes featured in Ally's campaign, is a 24-year-old gymnast turned weightlifter who's working as an assistant coach for a college in Georgia. She says that she pays \$300 in coach and gym fees monthly. Competing can be especially costly, with a \$125 entry fee added on top of hotel and travel costs. That's not even accounting for

Ally highlights bootstrapped Olympic athletes gunning for gold in a new campaign – Tearsheet investment in equipment — Gray can't afford her own barbell (\$1200) and often uses others' — and physical therapy. Basic necessities like groceries, supplements, rent, student loans, and health insurance add on top of her expenses. Many athletes work one or more full-time jobs to fuel the cost of living their dreams.



“We wanted to shine a light on that sacrifice in a way that made sense for our brand as an ally when it comes to helping people with their money,” says Brimmer.

Ally’s internal marketing and communications teams worked with Anomaly, Ally’s creative agency, to orchestrate a social and digital blitz of user-generated content from a variety of unsponsored athletes. The campaign included social media takeovers on Reddit and the Bleacher Report. Ally also released 30- and 60-second docustyle videos featuring the stories of three unsponsored athletes on their social media channels, in addition to a national TV spot on NBC, YouTube and Hulu.

To find the three athletes, Ally scoured GoFundMe pages before taking some time to learn more about each athlete. Eventually, they landed Joshua Hartman, a 23-year-old cyclist, Sarah Sellers, a 30-year-old marathon runner who placed second in the 2018 Boston Marathon, and Gray. Brimmer says Ally was drawn to each person for their discipline and inspiring stories.

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Gray says the funding from Ally has been a godsend. She’s been able to pay her coach’s fees and pay for competitions without putting a dent in her account. She’s also bought a new pair of weightlifting shoes (\$200) after wearing her old ones out.

“It feels like there is a weight off my shoulders. It means everything to me,” says Gray. “I have never had financial support for what I do, and it takes away a lot of stress. I have been waiting for this moment for years.”

Brimmer says that in the future, Ally highlight the Unsponsored in other industries as well, like music and the arts.

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