

Title: A Lifespan Perspective on the Dual Career of Elite Male Athletes

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Keywords: Dual career, career transition, developmental model, holistic approach, elite sport.

Sport(s): Mixed

Main Theme: Benefits of a Dual Career

Secondary Theme(s): Transitions

Aims: This study aimed to explore the development of elite male athletes across all aspects of their lives. To do this, the study investigated their athletic, psychological, psychosocial, and academic/vocational features of their lives. Psychological, psychosocial and academic/vocational features of a person live have been shown to interact with athletic development. Therefore, it is important we understand the challenges athletes face in these areas. This study also explores the transitions these athletes experience in each of these domains throughout their life. This topic is of particular importance because athletic success and post-sport career wellbeing strongly depends on the individual's ability to cope with transitions.

Method: Nine male participants were selected because they had a successful sports career lasting over 20 years, but were now retired. By selecting participants that fit these criteria, the study could analyse the whole development of a successful elite male athlete.

Results and Practical Implications: The results of this study tended to focus on athletic development, but some of the results give us insights into the factors that aid or hinder a dual career: First, participants described entering a national training centre or high level training environment as more difficult to combine with education or vocation. Second, have a dual career was described as facilitative to progress in their athletic careers and in

developing an identity outside of sport. However, a dual career was seen as an additional distraction around the time of a major sporting event (e.g. an Olympic games). A dual career was also identified as aiding the individual's decision to retire from sport. The results of this study suggest that dual careers have benefits for not only post-sport life but also exemplifies how non-athletic components of life can act to support an athletic career, since none of the successful elite athletes described having been exclusively focused on sport.

TASS have produced this lay summary. The full article is available (permissions may apply):
<http://www.pasap.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Lifespan-2014.pdf>