

Title: A Meta-Synthesis of Elite Athletes Experiences in Dual Career Development

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Keywords: dual career; elite athletes; career development; meta-synthesis; qualitative methods

Sport(s): Mixed

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Main theme: Benefits of a Dual Career

Secondary theme(s): Personal Characteristics

Aims: The aim of this article was to summarise a number of other articles that give us information on dual career development.

Method: This study collected and analysed articles that give us non-numerical (qualitative) data on dual career development. The researchers do this by systematically searching for all the available articles on dual career development and selecting the most appropriate ones according to a set criteria list. They then found common patterns and themes between the results of the research articles they selected. All the information taken from the research articles was taken directly from the dual career athlete, rather than others who might be involved in a dual career, like coaches or parents. In total, there were 107 elite dual career athletes from nine studies.

Results and Practical Implications: The nine articles that were analysed for patterns and themes showed that dual career development is a particularly complex area to investigate. However, the results did show that a dual career is manageable when it is planned for in advance and there are certain measures put in place to make sure that the individual's athletic commitments are able to fit in with their educational or vocational commitments. These measures could include: effective coping strategies of the individual and a positive

attitude to the dual career from the individual and those around them. Some of the themes that arose from the study include: issues associated with the individual embarking on a dual career (involving psychological, physical and emotional impact on the individuals); interpersonal issues or issues associated with the dual career individual's relationship with certain people involved in their support (for example, their families, their teachers or their coaches); and external issues involving the practical side of their support, perhaps there is certain conditions they must meet for support and their sporting or academic environment. Therefore, schools, universities, sports clubs and national governing bodies should also look into their role in supporting a dual career.

TASS have produced this lay summary. The full article is available (permissions may apply):
<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17461391.2014.940557?needAccess=true>