

Title: Dual Career Pathways of Transnational Athletes

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Secondary theme(s): Benefits of Dual Career

Aims: The aim of this article is to explore the experiences of dual career (DC) athletes whose athletic and non-athletic pursuits have extended over international borders. This means that the individuals in question are experiencing simultaneous educational, athletic and cultural transitions. The study explored athletes that moved within the European Union (EU) and athletes that moved from the EU to the U.S.A, to seek the benefits of America's collegiate scholarship system.

Method: Fifteen athletes, who met the criteria of having a DC across international borders, were interviewed and asked to draw a timeline of the major events and themes in their journey.

Results and Practical Implications: The study found that the lack of sporting opportunities in their home country often influenced the individual's decision to migrate. EU athletes could migrate to pursue their athletic careers whilst still maintaining their basic studies through or in their home country. Whereas, EU athletes who migrated to the U.S.A, did so to combine their sport and education through the American collegiate system. There were two main advantages to the system described by athletes, firstly receiving a free education

and secondly as a springboard to professional sport. However, some individuals were driven towards migrating to the U.S.A for reasons such as “life experiences”, rather than free education. The individual’s experiences could be shaped by: the national sport organizations and support resources for athlete development; the feasibility of a professional athletic career; the national educational systems and DC support; the availability of athletic scholarships; language barriers in various settings; the availability of EU student exchange agreements and the availability of distance learning or flexibility in a course. This study presents accessing an organised DC pathway, such as the American collegiate system as preferable for a number of reasons. Firstly, having organised DC pathway, which combines sport and studies allowed athletes to focus on their pursuits, rather than the organisation of their DC pursuits for themselves. Secondly, an organised pathway often provides the individual with incentives to maintain a balance between sport and education. The final benefit is the access to DC support services that an organised pathway provides. Therefore, the study promotes the development of Europe-wide dual career policy and mobility network.

TASS have produced this lay summary. The full article is available (permissions may apply): https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263285507_Dual_Career_Pathways_of_Transnational_Athletes