

Title: Factors Impacting Carded Athletes Readiness for Dual Careers

Author(s): Ryan, C.

Year: 2015

Keywords: New Zealand, Dual Careers, Athlete Development, Athlete Carding

Sport(s): Basketball, cricket, cycling, field hockey, lawn bowls, rowing, rugby, and squash

Journal: Psychology of Sport and Exercise

Main Theme: Identity

Secondary Theme(s): Expectations, Role of Institution, Career Planning

Aims: The aim of the study was to examine carded athletes' experiences of the support system in New Zealand and to consider whether Sport and Recreation New Zealand's (SPARC) vision of a holistic athlete was becoming a reality. Of particular interest was the factors influencing carded athletes' ability to engage in careers outside of their elite sports involvement.

Method: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with seventeen carded athletes (male=7, female=10) from basketball, cricket, cycling, field hockey, lawn bowls, rowing, rugby, and squash. There was also collected follow-up interviews six months after the initial interview. **Results and Practical Implications:** Results were analysed inductively, and modified into narratives of athletes' individual and collective experiences within the carding programme.

Three themes were found to impact the athletes' ability to undertake dual careers (1) lifestyle conflicts resulting from elite sports involvement, (2) athlete career stage, and (3) the sports environment and the influence of others (e.g. coaches, managers). Lifestyle conflicts were impacted by the notion that the athletes were entrenched in a sporting lifestyle, which consumed most of their lives since an early age. Sporting obligations act as constraints on time and freedom to undertake dual careers. All athletes had intentions of maintaining

some form of life or career outside sport, however athletes who had not yet met their performance goals believed that the only way to reach said goals was to prioritise sporting commitments above all else. This might lead to some athletes being very one-dimensional. Athlete career stage related to the finding that those still pursuing performance goals appeared reluctant to pursue any form of dual career. Early career athletes often put their sport before anything else because of a desire to fit into a new and exciting sporting world. Newcomers can also feel indebted for their selection in such a way that they are willing to forego almost anything to be part of the elite sports environment. In contrast, more experienced athletes who have met their performance goals adopt a more holistic view of life, since they believe that sacrificing life balance is not advantageous. Key individuals in the sporting environment strongly influence whether athletes will pursue dual careers. Both National Sporting Organisations (NSO) and coaches address the expectation of the level of commitment required. Here, coaches and NSOs more often than not acted unsupportive. Athletes often understand it as an unspoken pressure to put sport ahead of all else.

TASS have produced this lay summary. The full article is available (permissions may apply):

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S146902921500045X>