

**Title:** Goal motives and well-being in student athletes: A person-centered approach

**Author(s):** Healy, L C., Ntoumanis, N., & Arthur, C. A.

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**Keywords:** goal pursuit, self-concordance, dual career, multiple goals, latent profile analysis

**Sport(s):** mixed, including team and individual

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**Main Theme:** Motivation

**Secondary Theme(s):** Goal Setting

**Aims:** This study examines how the motivation for multiple academic and sporting goals relates to well-being. Previous research would suggest that more autonomous motives (i.e., pursuing goals for the enjoyment of that activity) would be associated with better wellbeing.

**Method:** A total of 362 student athletes in British universities took part in a survey on motivations, wellbeing and physical health. The student-athletes came from a range of team and individual sports. In terms of their level of competition, the study included athlete who competed at university, county, regional, national and international levels of competition.

**Results and Practical Implications:** Student athletes that were motivated by enjoyment in both their sporting and academic goals showed the highest wellbeing scores. Student athletes with the lowest wellbeing scores were more likely to be motivated by external rewards (e.g., achieving medals or recognition). However, student-athletes that were motivated by enjoyment in at least one of their goals (sporting or academic) still showed positive wellbeing scores. Therefore, to support and promote positive well-being within student-athletes, it is important for practitioners to encourage them to pursue their goals based on enjoyment rather than on obtaining rewards, avoiding punishment or to gain the approval of others. The study also suggests that having some goals that are motivated by

external rewards is not wholly detrimental to the persons wellbeing, if this is also combined with goals that are motivated by enjoyment. The findings also showed that athletes from individual sports were more likely to showed goal motivations that were the most optimal for well-being. Taking this into consideration, it could be beneficial to focus goal motivation interventions on team sport athletes, including developing positive team cultures towards goals of enjoyment in team sports.

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

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