

Title: Motivation for a Dual-Career: Italian and Slovenian Student Athletes

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Aim: Italian and Slovenian systems were chosen for this study as they are examples of countries that have no structured support in place to provide educational services for elite athletes. In particular, this study aimed to investigate motivational levels towards sport and academics of dual career athletes in these countries. To achieve goals in sport and in education, individuals are required to be highly motivated. By understanding these motivations, educational and sport governing bodies could develop and provide effective support services for dual career.

Methods: A total 98 male and female student athletes took part in the study and came from a range of team and individual sports. These athletes were administered the 39 items of the Student Athletes' Motivation toward Sports and Academics (SAMSAQ-IS) questionnaire.

Results and Practical Implications: The main findings of this study showed that both male and female athletes showed equal levels of motivation for pursuing an athletic career and a vocational career. Motivation levels of Italian and Slovenian athletes were similar to those reported in previous studies by American athletes who are involved in highly structured support programs. This suggests that Italian and Slovenian athletes were just as motivated to pursue elite sport as American athletes. Furthermore, it was predicted that due to a lack

of professional opportunities for female athletes, they would have lower levels of motivation for an athletic career. But, this was not seen in this study. Currently, Italian and Slovenian academic and sport systems do not offer any additional support services for combining education with an elite sports career. However, this study goes part of the way to suggesting that a system is required. Increasing the flexibility of sport and education for dual career athletes could dramatically improve the ability of athletes to take part in educational pursuits.

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