

**Title:** Preparing Elite Athletes for the Career After the Career - The Functions of Mentoring Programmes

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**Sport(s):** Mixed

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**Main Theme:** Mentoring

**Secondary Theme(s):** Support systems

**Aims:** The purpose of this research was to identify important functions of a mentoring programme in Germany targeted at elite athletes and how they facilitate the transition phase from sporting career to professional career.

**Method:** An online survey was conducted to collect information about the perceptions of the mentees participating in the mentoring programme offered by the German Sport Aid Foundation. The Mentor Role Instrument (Ragins and McFarlin, 1990) was employed. The scale was adapted to the sporting context and was assessed by means of principal component analysis (PCA) and validated with confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) with data collected from  $n=80$  (for the PCA) and  $n=197$  (for the CFA) elite athletes taking part in a mentoring programme. Data were collected in 2015, 2016 and 2017 using the same questionnaire. They did not, however, consider the longitudinal data due to a too small sample size. Each annual mentee's response was considered as a single entry.

**Results and Practical Implications:** The results reveal that mentors fulfil the functions of a benefactor, counsellor, supportive friend, role model and accepting partner. The overall functions of the mentoring relationship had a significant positive impact on satisfaction with the support in transitioning into a professional career. In addition, athletes seem to value

being accepted as an equal partner by their mentors. This reflects the special relationship between athletes and their mentors which is different to typical leader–subordinate relationships in professional mentoring programmes. A key implication is that mentoring is a well-received instrument in supporting athletes with the transition phase.

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

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17430437.2019.1613375>