

Title: Psychology of Athletes' Dual Careers: A State-of-the-Art Critical Review of the European Discourse

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Sports: Various

Journal: Psychology of Sport and Exercise

Main Theme: Research

Secondary Theme: Dual career support

Aims: The aim of the article was to provide a review of current dual career research conducted within Europe (between 2015-18) and provide research gaps and future challenges. The article recognised that a number of research papers on the topic of dual careers have been conducted in North America, Asia, Australia, New Zealand, but the foci was on papers on dual careers in a European context.

Method: To explore the position of dual career papers within a European context, the authors used 9 review papers that have explored dual career research.

Results and Practical Implications: The results of the review highlight that the large majority of literature on dual careers in Europe has focused on combining sport and education, with only two papers looking at sport and other aspects such as work. In addition, researchers have tended to use elite junior and senior level athletes as participants over professional athletes. There has also been a trend in recent dual career literature to explore the experiences of athletes' significant others (e.g., coaches, teachers, parents, friends, support staff members), alongside a growth in the use of qualitative and longitudinal data collection methods to explore new areas of dual careers. In addition, the holistic athletic career model was used in the majority of studies, with only limited use of other theoretical frameworks.

Furthermore, the review identified that there are currently no papers on dual career at the primary school level, and instead the focus is on athletes at the secondary and university level. Dual career studies have also regularly reported the demands and transitions that athletes will experience from a holistic perspective and the barriers they experience to achieving a balance in their dual career. Finally, the authors propose some areas that dual career researchers should focus on in the future. These include exploring dual careers within different contexts, wellbeing and mental health in dual careers athletes, dual careers in late specialisation sports, experiences of para athletes undertaking dual careers and distance learning options for dual careers.

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