

Title: “Sport has Always been First for Me but All my Free Time is Spent Doing Homework” - Dual Career Styles in Late Adolescence

Author(s): Ryba, T.V., Stambulova, N.B., Selänne, H., Aunola, K., & Nurmi, J-E.

Year: 2017

Keywords: N/A

Sport(s): Mixed

Journal: Psychology of Sport and Exercise

Main Theme: Career construction

Secondary Theme(s): Identity

Aims: This study examined how and to what extent adolescent Finnish athletes narrate and integrate significant life events in sport and education into their identities and future narratives in order to delineate the different styles of athletes’ career construction.

Method: This study used a longitudinal qualitative design. Ten female and eight male, elite junior athletes, aged 15-16 at baseline, participated in individual conversational interviews. The resulting interview data were analysed using narrative analysis

Results and Practical Implications: Thirteen of 18 adolescent athletes drew primarily on the performance narrative plot to construct their life story and five of 18 athletes could not project into the future beyond their athletic selves. Three styles of athletes’ career construction were identified. Employing musical terminology as a metaphor, the contrapuntal style entwines sport and education as harmonically related life-themes; monophonic style draws on a prominent athletic life-theme; and dissonant style is underpinned by discord of sport and education. They did not detect direct associations between narrative types (performance, discovery and relational) and career construction styles. Exploration of the future and possible selves are critical for developing meaningful (dis)continuity of a dual career pathway from adolescence to adulthood. The study

concludes that dual career discourse is gaining traction in directing young athletes' future thinking; however, a broader repertoire of exemplary success stories which allow athletes to imagine achieving excellence in diverse ways would enable them to channel action. Coaches, teachers, school counsellors, and sport psychology service providers are encouraged to take seriously small-talks and chit-chats in their everyday encounters with young athletes as a means for prompting meaning-making and probing the boundaries of their imagined futures.

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

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1469029217300596>