

**Title:** Walking the Line: How Young Athletes Balance Academic Studies and Sport in International Competition

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**Keywords:** dual career, student-athletes, education, school, youth athletes, Norway, social support

**Sports:** cross-country skiing, biathlon, alpine skiing, ski jumping, figure skating and Nordic skiing

**Journal:** Sport in Society

**Main theme:** Dual career support

**Secondary themes:** Role of institution

**Aims:** The aims of the study were to identify the perceived role of important stakeholders such as coaches, school, parents, federations and the NOC (National Olympic Committee) for the young athletes in the weeks leading up to the European Youth Olympic Festival, and perceived stressors during the festival.

**Method:** Participants were 26 Norwegian youth athletes, aged between 15 and 18. Data was collected through surveys, which included open ended questions where athletes were able to elaborate on some issues related to the competition and their roles as student-athletes, and observations before and during the competition.

**Results and Practical Implications:** Results highlighted how athletes wanted more flexibility with their academic workload to suit their training load, particularly around major competitions. The young athletes also note that they would like to have teacher contact even when they are away at competitions, and that having an extra year at school to fit in training commitments may also be beneficial. Athletes also expressed how their schoolwork was often an interference during major competitions, and school was often on their mind

during training, and they found the opportunities to catch up work schoolwork during competitions to be unorganised. For this age group of athletes, parents were a major supporter of their dual career, particularly in tangible and informational roles. Additionally, it is suggested that all the stakeholders (schools, NOC, federations, parents) involved in the young athletes' dual workload need more information about the pressure in athletes in both academic and sport in order to be sensitive to their needs and provide social support. Participation in major events may lead to a few weeks absence from school, and for these athletes, stress from the dual career should be considered in addition to competitive stressors in a major event. It is suggested that lifestyle management services to help the young athletes balance their dual careers may be key.

TASS have produced this lay summary. The full article is available (permissions may apply): <https://brage.bibsys.no/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11250/2451268/KristiansenSportSoc2015.pdf?sequence=1>