

Title: Dual careers and academic achievements: Does elite sport make a difference?

Author(s): Storm, R.K., & Eske, M.

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Keywords: Dual career, student-athletes, educational performance, Denmark, elite sport

Sport(s): Mixed

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Main Theme: Impact of engaging in elite sport on academic performance

Aims: To test whether the pressure on athletes to perform in their sports affects their academic performance and to what extent a DC program can assist the athletes in obtaining academic competences.

Method: A multivariate regression approach was used. Regression modelling was used on a large and unique database on high school students and student-athletes (those accepted for enrolment in Team Denmark's youth DC program). The dataset contains 1,005 athletes from a variety of sports disciplines in the Danish high-performance program; 47 different disciplines in total. Data on all other Danish high school students who graduated from high school from 2010 to 2019 were accessed for comparison. In total, there are more than 400,000 non-athletes among the graduated students used as a comparison dataset in the regression models.

Results and Practical Implications: The main result regarding student-athletes' grades, reveals a significant effect of 0.27 grade points at the 0.01 percent level when controlled for other relevant variables. This indicates that there is a transfer of learning and expertise from engaging in elite sport to the academic context which has a positive effect on grades. No effect was found from engaging in DC programs on the students' grades. While the DC programs might not affect their academic achievements in a significantly positive way, they seem to have a positive impact on their sporting achievements without having a (connected) negative effect on their educational performance.



As a result of these findings, sport federations, elite sport organizations and people working on elite sport performance programs can promote elite sport as a potential educational performance enhancer. This potential is connected to the second implication, namely that DC programs offered to talented student-athletes can assist them in allocating more time to performing athletically. This supports the notion that DC programs are beneficial and should be promoted to all athletes in correspondence with the Danish law on elite sport.

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

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/13573322.2021.1919070?needAccess=true>