

Title: Dual careers of athletes during COVID-19 lockdown

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Keywords: dual career; covid pandemic

Sport(s): 49 different sports (individual: 63.4%, team: 36.6%) at regional (17.5%), national (43.3%), and international (39.2%) levels

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Main Theme: Coping

Aims: The study aimed to investigate the student-athletes' abilities to face academic, sport, and social challenges during the coronavirus pandemic 2019 (COVID-19) and corresponding lockdown

Method: Athletes were asked to fill out an online survey of 32 questions. The survey included their personal demographic characteristics (e.g., age, gender), sport and university engagement, support and dual-career benefits, physical activity, sitting time, and the time deemed necessary to recover. The survey was circulated across European countries and included responses from Italian (55.1%), followed by Romanian (14.0%), Spanish (11.9%), Latvian (6.9%), Portuguese (6.3%), Slovenian (2.4%), Finnish (1.9%), Kazakhstani (0.9%), Croat (0.2%), Serbian (0.2%), and British (0.2%) athletes.

Results and Practical Implications: During the pandemic, student-athletes maintained a more active lifestyle compared to the general population. This could support the importance of engaging in competitive sport in individuals leading active lifestyles. Understandable, the results showed that athlete's ability to train had been impacted by the COVID pandemic, with countries that experiences more severe lockdown protocols (e.g., Italy, Portugal, Spain, and United Kingdom) experienced more likely to be training from home. The quantity and quality of the athlete's training during this time could therefore have been negatively effected. Practitioners should consider supporting athlete to gradually return to training to avoid injuries or poor performance. The results showed that during the lockdown, differences in the athlete's ability to train were shown between individual and team sports. With team sport being more impacted by lockdown restrictions. However, team sport athletes stated that they had received more support from coaches than their individual sport athlete counterparts. Interestingly, university students described using their dual career to cope with the pandemic. This group also found benefits of online programs and education for managing their

demands. Therefore, the continuation of e-learning as a solution to academic flexibility should be maintained going forward.

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