

Athlete Education

working paper series

The goal of the GSI Working Paper Series is to make available to all insights from thought leaders, even before those thoughts reach final form. The best case is that the papers will evoke response and improve the quality and impact of these works underway.

**Roundtable Thoughts on Athlete Education & Transition:
Collegiate and European Focus**

(Working Paper, for discussion purposes only, Published March 2019)

“Every athlete dies twice” is one of those long-existing, unattributed quotes with powerful meaning. Whenever the College Football Playoff has been won or NCAA March Madness is over, most of these college athletes are finished with an activity that has captured much of their lives. For the majority of others, the end occurs at even more inopportune moments. To be sure, there are multiple athlete transition moments worthy of exploration. These include all youth levels and various professional-level transitions. The Global Sport Institute (GSI) looks forward to being engaged in examining them all.

In March 2018, the Global Sport Institute hosted a day of events to learn more about the challenges and opportunities of athlete education. In this conversation we focused primarily on the transition from playing college sports to no longer playing and on the European models for transitioning from playing sport. We sought the expertise of industry professionals, researchers, and athlete education program developers from both the US and Europe. Four important themes evolved from the panel discussion and one-on-one conversations:

- Race
- Athlete identity
- Meaningful athlete education
- Athlete transition

Following the panel discussion and one-on-one conversation with Jacques McClendon (former student-athlete, NFL player and current Director of Player Engagement for the Los Angeles Rams), we convened a roundtable to exchange ideas and solutions. We began by identifying current barriers. This quickly introduced complexity in terms of whom to include (amateurs/student athletes and professionals; timing of degree programs during athlete careers and transitional degree programs post career) and the different types of barriers. Next, we asked how to best remove barriers. This document is a working paper and a starting point, rather than a final report. We expect to hold additional roundtables globally, seek additional insights from insiders, and host other events to investigate these topics further, including youth and professional levels. Ultimately, our final report would cover athlete education and transitions beyond those discussed herein as well as be more global and rigorous. We thank all of our roundtable panelists and participants and give a special thanks to Molly Ott (Arizona State University), Colin Williams (Ross Initiative in Sports for Equality), and Martin Carlsson-Wall (Sports and Business Centre, Stockholm School of Economics) who graciously volunteered to contribute to this working paper, but the final product, particularly any negatives, is the responsibility of GSI. In that spirit, your comments, corrections, and suggestions are all encouraged.

Here is what you will find in this working paper: a brief that draws from existing scholarship pertaining to athlete education to describe and analyze the themes that emerged during roundtable discussions, makes brief recommendations/suggestions, and offers “next steps” and topics to be touched upon at future roundtables and discussions; and, an appendix that summarizes the day’s

roundtable and development of important areas in athlete education (US) and career transition (Europe).

The Student Athlete Experience and Revenue-Generating Sports

In the United States, the term “athlete education” is often synonymous with “receiving a college degree.” Each year, approximately 150,000 athletes competing in the NCAA’s Division I and II accept a partial or full scholarship to fund the costs of taking college classes that lead to a degree. A college diploma is indisputably a valuable credential – more than a third of jobs today in the United States require at least a bachelor’s (Carnevale, Cheah & Hanson, 2015) – and the NCAA spends considerable resources ensuring athletes make adequate progress toward completing their degrees. Most college athletes do indeed graduate at the same rates (or better) compared to their non-athlete peers, although the numbers are far more troubling for Black males who play the highest profile and revenue-generating sports – football and basketball – and where they make up more than 50% of the athletes (e.g., Harper, Williams & Blackman, 2013). The common question of amateurism arises as well as a desire to maximize the educational benefits Black males should receive. Part of the issue is that basketball and football players believe that they are going to play professionally so they often have an “engulfed” athlete identity where sport is their primary life focus and they have and continue to invest a majority of their day to sport-based activities. Overinvestment makes sense and is the necessary level of commitment to be successful in their expected professional career. But this de-emphasizes the significance of academic preparation,

rigor, and completion. Moreover, this athlete identity does not prepare them for their life after the game since there is little direct transfer of skills. Thus, new ideas are needed. Young athletes must be taught that they are more than an athlete, so that their transitions are less stressful and education is more a part of their plans. And, programmatic changes are needed that better mimic good athlete learning environments and are more flexible to accommodate athletes' schedules and lifestyles.

The academic literature on the campus experiences of student-athletes was scarce until the 1980s when the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) passed several eligibility rules to address growing concerns about student-athlete learning and personal development. This focused particularly on those students playing men's basketball and football (Comeaux & Harrison, 2011). Despite them garnering publicity, fostering school pride, providing entertainment, and generating billions of dollars in revenue for the Division I (DI) institutions they attend, the NCAA's amateurism principle has prevented student-athletes from receiving compensation beyond athletic scholarships (Van Rheenen, 2012). Thus, the ethical question at the center of college sports for the last few decades has been: how do student-athletes benefit from the college¹ experience relative to their nonathlete peers? Accordingly, research investigated the challenges to student-athletes' educational success, from psychosocial and identity-related challenges (Martin, 2009; Parham, 1993; Pinkerton, Hinz, & Barrow, 1989; Sedlacek & Adams-Gaston, 1992) to various issues

¹ In the United States, college and university are used interchangeably in the context of athlete and student athlete experiences.

related to career planning, academic motivation, and post-college outcomes (Adler & Adler, 1987; Gaston-Gayles, 2004; Pascarella & Smart, 1991). This is of greatest relevance to the overwhelmingly Black basketball and football players (Harrison, Sailes, Rotich, & Bimper, 2011).

Sport as a Total Institution and the Paradox of Athlete Identity

Sociologist Erving Goffman developed the concept “total institution” to describe how an institution comes to monopolize an individual’s identity. Take the primary institution – family or home life. This is where we develop and spend the bulk of our early time; it is where we learn identity, social norms, values, and culture, and how to see the world. Home life is where we experience social relationships – rules of interaction, communication and social position. In addition, there are impacts outside of the family; our family dictates opportunities and outside relationships, it provides (or fails to provide) resources, and it teaches us how to use resources. In short, home life is its own world. Sport is another total institution. It is no longer extracurricular, it is curricular and core to identity. It is a socializing agent and sets the schedule of athletes’ lives, it is a source for relationships, it can open the door to resources, and it influences how athletes feel about themselves and fit in their social groups (Brooks et al., 2017). Building on Goffman, Adler and Adler coined the term “athlete identity” to explain how athletes fully commit to being an athlete through investing time, resources, relational energy, and focus.

An extensive body of research has studied how athletes develop athlete identity. We know there are multidimensional and interacting biological, kinesiological, psychological, sociological, and cultural influences on athletes’ talent development (Côté & Vierimaa, 2014). Genetic and

physiological characteristics are important factors (Ford et al, 2011), but innate attributes alone do not lead to long-term sport success. Athletes who aspire to the top echelon of their sport must dedicate considerable time to learning and refining their skills to be successful on the playing field. Early on, they will spend between 2-5 hours practicing per week. Their time commitment increases to 25-30 hours of practice as they participate in more intense competitions and approach elite levels (Côté, Baker, & Abernethy, 2007). As a reference, American college athletes will spend a median of 37 hours per week in-season on sport-related activities, with football players in the NCAA's highest profile league, the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS), dedicating a median of 44 hours weekly (NCAA, 2016).

The Gloried Self and the Challenges of Balancing Athlete and Student Identities

According to Gecas and Burke (1995), identity comprises "who or what one is" and "the various meanings attached to oneself by self and others" (p. 42). Self-identity refers to how one views oneself while social identity refers to how the self is viewed by others. Athletic identity, if understood as a social role (Astle, 1986), encompasses the obligations (behavioral, affective, cognitive, and social) associated with identifying with said role (Brewer, Van Raalte, & Linder, 1993). Student-athletes are a unique college population for whom success entails putting in hard work, showing dedication, and performing in the classroom as well as on the field and court (Simons, Rheezen, and Covington, 1999). Beyond balancing the academic and social demands that their non-athlete peers do, they must also manage a bevy of exhaustive athletic demands

including traveling, practicing, and competing (Watt & Moore, 2001). Athletes in Division I (the NCAA's most competitive, lucrative, and popular level) receive elevated levels of social reinforcement for their athletic prowess, and often disproportionately develop their athletic identities. When their sports are in season, for example, student-athletes typically miss several classes and endure bodily injury and fatigue due to sport related activities (Wolverton, 2008). Even keeping track of the NCAA's and athletic conferences' complex set of eligibility rules and requirements can be time-consuming and arduous. Hence, being an athlete is at the center of both their self-identity and social identity.

Adler and Adler (1987, 1989, 1991) have provided much theoretical insight into the ways in which DI student-athletes balance their social, academic, and athletic roles. In one study, Adler & Adler (1987) use four years of participant observation to examine conflicts between and the changing salience of social, academic, and athletic roles of players on a major college basketball team at a private, medium-size, predominantly White university. Drawing on identity theory to analyze their data, they found: (1) the “overwhelmingly demanding athletic role,” (2) the prioritization of athletics over academics, (3) the resulting “frustrations and failures in the academic realm,” and (4) the lack of positive reinforcement in the academic sphere conflate to cause conflict between players’ various roles (p. 452). To resolve these conflicts, athletes reconstructed the identity salience of their academic role by realigning, reducing, or in some cases, dropping it entirely.

In a later study, Adler and Adler (1989) identified a new form of self-identity, the glorified self. A public persona that differs from the athlete's private persona. "The glorified self" arises "when individuals become the focus of intense interpersonal and media attention, leading to their achieving celebrity" and is caused "in part by the treatment of individuals' selves as objects by others" (p. 229). Glorified in the media for their athletic prowess, and resultantly "treated with awe and respect" by large numbers of people (p. 301), student-athletes' concept of self is heavily influenced by the daily face-to-face interactions with others on campus in which they are expected to live up to this media created persona (Adler & Adler, 1989). Thus, as social and academic roles are unrecognized, devalued, and undermined, the immense privileging of athletic roles transforms athletes' identities and self-conceptions, increases their commitment to these roles, and eventually leads to the "glorified self" as the dominant master status (Adler & Adler, 1989).

From a longitudinal study of a DI men's basketball program, Adler and Adler (1991) discovered how student-athletes privilege their athletic role as practices, games, and travel engulf their time and ultimately their identities. Role Engulfment theory posits that sport is the predominant, and sometimes exclusive, venue for student-athlete engagement. As they primarily live, eat, socialize, and take classes with teammates and other athletes, student-athletes are afforded limited opportunities to engage with non-athletic peers. Resultantly, they are socialized into a peer subculture that discourages exerting effort in academic activities, distracts them from studying, and compels them to disassociate with other students who could provide greater

academic role modeling. Essentially, the very nature of their athletic commitment vastly undermines their ability to fully integrate into the larger campus community and be academically successful.

Identity Foreclosure

The athlete identity speaks to both how athletes see themselves and are seen by others. And this is significant in encouraging deeper pursuit of sport but doing so at early ages also often leads to what scholars label as identity foreclosure: “a commitment to an identity before one has meaningfully explored other options or engaged in exploratory behavior, such as career exploration, talent development, or joining social clubs or interest groups” (Beamon, 2012, p. 196). Identity foreclosure is especially common when individuals approach elite levels. A study of American college sports by Potuto and O’Hanlon (2006) found that 62% of athletes identified more with being an athlete than as a student. The NCAA refers to this group as “student-athletes,” but given the data on how the individuals see themselves – not to mention the politicized history behind this particular phrase (Staurowsky & Sack, 2005) – “athlete-student” might be more appropriate. Regardless of terminology, that a notable proportion see their college-going identities as more “athlete” centric rather than “student” centric is problematic.

Student-Athlete Experiences and Outcomes in Contemporary College Sports

Academic Preparation and Stereotyping

Many studies have found that relative to their peers, student-athletes are less prepared for the academic rigor of college, particularly those who are highly committed to their sport (Bowen & Levin, 2003; Purdy, Eitzen, & Hufnagel, 1985; Shulman & Bowen, 2001). This is interesting because when they enter college with similar background characteristics, the differences in academic performance are minimal (Aries, McCarthy, Salovey, & Banaji, 2004; Pascarella & Smart, 1991; Stuart, 1985). Research examining the impact of participation in university athletics finds it may negatively influence the student learning for specific populations (McBride & Reed, 1998). For example, men on revenue-generating sports teams are not experiencing cognitive benefits to the extent other college males are (Gaston-Gayles, 2009). Men's basketball and football are the only sports in which participants scored lower in reading comprehension and mathematics than non-athletes and athletes in other sports (Pascarella, Bohr, Nora, and Terenzini, 1995). They also consistently scored lower on other cognitive development measures such as critical thinking and scientific reasoning. Another aspect of lower student-athlete academic performances are also often subject to the pervasive "dumb jock" stereotype. According to Engstrom, Sedlacek, & McEwen (1995), both revenue and non-revenue athletes are subject to their professor's prejudicial attitudes and stereotyping. Perhaps most detrimentally, Leach and Conners (1984) suggest professors may hold more negative attitudes toward college athletes than any other postsecondary stakeholders. This is magnified in high profile basketball and football programs where their athletic

achievement is associated with less academic interest, motivation, and preparation. Thus, student-athletes are generally assumed academically inept and incapable of performing well in the classroom, and are stigmatized by peers, administrators, alumni, and faculty (Howard-Hamilton & Watt, 2001) and regularly encounter low expectations, skepticism, and surprise when they earn As on assignments (Engstrom & Sedlacek, 1993). This is particularly troubling as Comeaux and Harrison (2007) report positive, supporting and encouraging interactions with faculty are especially critical for the academic success of athletes in revenue-generating programs.

Student Engagement and Missed Opportunities

Student engagement is the quality of efforts students give to academic study inside and outside the classroom that contribute to desired outcomes (Astin, 1993; Kuh, Schuh, Whitt, & Associates, 1991; Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005). It ranges from reading, writing, studying for and attending class to interacting with peers, staff, and faculty as well as participating in student groups and organizations and other curricular and cocurricular activities (Gaston-Gayles, 2015). Ideally, postsecondary education supports and provides a rich environment for participation in these productive activities (Kuh et al., 1991). However, DI institutions with high profile athletic programs persistently fail to do so (Overly, 2005). As athletes prioritize their sport-related role, they have a greater number of missed opportunities than non-student athletes and often make sacrifices that lead to professional disadvantages when they eventually retire from competition (Adler & Adler, 1991; Williams, 2015). NCAA-level athletes have not been able to have jobs while on scholarship

until recently, and have customized student engagement that is primarily designed to keep them eligible. They may feel the need to recuperate, feel like an outsider when around other students, and/or feel unprepared. For a significant percentage of the students, athletics is the main reason they were unable to spend more time on academics. Even when motivated and aware, student athletes generally don't have the time nor connections to find, feel comfortable, and utilize extra academic experiences. Their time commitment does not slow during off-seasons. Instead, most athletes spend as much time (or more) on their sport during the off-season to improve while the typical NCAA athlete, across all Divisions and sports, would prefer to spend more time on academics (NCAA, 2016). One of many examples of missed academic opportunities is study abroad, which is associated with improved communication skills, understanding of moral and ethical issues, and academic performance (Luo & Jamieson-Drake, 2015). Only ten percent of Division I and II athletes have participated in a study abroad program at some point during college, but unfortunately, 33% of those attending Division I schools and 22% at Division II say they would like to participate but cannot because of their athletic commitments (NCAA, 2016). Other examples of missed opportunities for student athletes include classes that meet during practice times, majors with requirements that interfere with sport, and professional internships that require regular time commitments to learning in actual workplace settings. Approximately 30% of FBS football athletes would like to get internship experience but cite scheduling as their main obstacle to fitting "extracurriculars" (non-sport related activities) into their schedules (NCAA, 2016). Fittingly, the literature on DI student-athletes, routinely argues that the problematic academic,

psychosocial, and career development outcomes they experience are a function of the institutions' inability to engage them in activities beyond sports (Comeaux & Harrison, 2011; Gaston-Gayles, 2009, 2015; Gaston-Gayles & Hu, 2009a, 2009b; Martin, 2009).

Graduation Rates and Challenges for Revenue-Generating Programs

The rate at which student-athletes graduate is the most commonly used metric to assess whether or not athletic programs are meeting the academic ideals of higher education. Since the NCAA began collecting graduation rates in 1983, student-athletes' graduation rates have steadily increased (Zimbalist, 1999). By 1998, student-athletes (58 percent) were graduating at rates higher than their nonathlete peers (56 percent) (NCAA, 2000). Of the students who began college in 2004, 65 percent of the athletes graduated by 2010 as opposed to 63 percent of the general population (NCAA, 2011). However, disaggregating the data by sport, race, gender, and division reveals longstanding and pervasive inequities, namely in revenue-generating DI programs (Harper, Williams, & Blackman, 2013). While the NCAA's graduation success rate indicates over 80 percent of student-athletes who entered college between 1999 and 2003 have graduated within six years (Sander, 2010), women's graduation rates are typically higher than those of their male counterparts ,and Division II (DII) and Division III (DIII) schools typically graduate more students than DI schools (NCAA, 2011). Finally, despite the overall increases in graduation rates, athletes in the revenue-generating sports of football and basketball are graduating at lower rates than any other collegiate athletes (NCAA, 2000; Zimbalist, 1999).

Career Preparation and Transition Outcomes

As a function of the prioritization of athletic over academic and professional development, a percentage of Black male revenue athletes depart from college less developed and prepared for life than when they entered. Touted as a priceless opportunity to procure an education and a job, surprisingly little is known about the ways in which participation in college athletics impacts students' ability to actualize career aspirations (Brewer, Van Raalte, & Linder, 1993). The scant research suggests Division I student-athletes are most likely to experience unhealthy transitions out of sports. As they end their sport careers and adjust to post-sport life, revenue athletes report career transition difficulties and negative emotions, from feelings of loss and identity crises to distress (Baillie, 1992; Kerr & Dacyshyn, 2000; McKenna & Thomas, 2007; Park, Lavallee, & Tod, 2013). Athletes endure a host of psychological and mental health related issues such as fear of success, identity conflict, social isolation, and career anxiety (Pinkerton, Hinz, & Barrow, 1989). Those with the strongest athletic identities at the time of sport retirement experience the greatest loss of identity (Kerr & Dacyshyn, 2000; Lally, 2007) and need more time to adjust to life without it (Grove, Lavallee, & Gordon, 1997; Warriner & Lavallee, 2008). A short study of men's masculinity, race, and athlete identity suggests that Black men have stronger athletic identities than their White male counterparts and therefore experience greater rates of role engulfment and identity foreclosure (Messner, 1998). Their transitions are exacerbated when their careers end after college and they don't have employment plans (Perna, Ahlgren, & Zaichkowsky, 1999).

Conclusion: Re-Conceptualizing Athlete Education

Athlete Education

A persistent theme that emerged from our day's events was the critical importance of broadening our default conceptualization of "athlete education" (particularly in the U.S.), to encompass all sport/post-sport experiences, skill development, and transitions – before, during, and after an athlete's participation in higher education. A college diploma is indisputably a valuable credential since more than a third of jobs today require at least a bachelor's (Carnevale, Cheah & Hanson, 2015) and the NCAA spends considerable resources ensuring athletes make adequate progress toward completing their degrees. While a considerable proportion of college students aspire to play their sport professionally, very few secure paid employment as an athlete. Fewer than two percent of all college men's basketball and football players will play at the professional level (Coakley, 2009). The other 98% need to be prepared to procure and perform jobs outside their sport, as the vast majority of them will never play sports so competitively again (Martin, 2009). In college football, 64% of FBS players and 50% of FCS players believe it is at least somewhat likely that they will become a professional athlete in their sport, but in 2017, only 1.6% were drafted by an NFL team (NCAA, 2016; NCAA, 2018). Even for those who make it, a professional sport contract is no guarantee of lifelong economic security. Economists estimate between 15-40% of NFL players will declare bankruptcy within 25 years after retirement from the game (Carlson, Kim, Lusardi, & Camerer, 2015). Approximately 20% of athletes experience psychological, psychosocial, and/or vocational difficulties when retiring from sport, and those who have

experienced identity foreclosure are at particular risk (Kerr & Dacyshyn, 2000; Lally, 2007).

Negative consequences can include depression, alcohol or drug use, criminal behavior, eating disorders, and attempted suicide. To combat these negative outcomes, collegiate athletic departments and professional organizations are dedicating more time, emphasis, and resources to athlete education, personal and professional development, and transition.

Skill Building Programs and Identity Expansion To Improve Athlete Transition

There is a lot of room to improve athlete education, particularly as it pertains to job readiness. From a practice-based standpoint, skill building is the dominant trend. Transferable job skills and social skills to develop alternative social supports and integration are needed for a post-sport career. Research shows that early exposure and steering to other identities and aspirations mitigates transition anxiety (Ott, 2015). There are several academic success programs for athletes that are used by university athletic departments to achieve optimal sport-academics-life balance and improve athlete transition. They vary in terms of theoretical underpinnings and some are gender specific or culturally relevant or geared toward job preparation and life after sport (Harrison & Boyd, 2007; Anderson & Morris, 2000). One of the most well-known national initiatives is the NCAA's CHAMPS (Challenging Athletics Minds for Personal Success)/Life Skills program. Established in 1994 under the direction of then-NCAA director Cedric Dempsey, CHAMPS/Life Skills was designed to advance athletes' commitments and abilities around five dimensions: academic excellence, athletic excellence, personal development, career development, and a

commitment to service (Carodine, Almond, & Gratto, 2001). The NCAA provides its 1,200 members with financial resources, instructional materials, and other supports, but implementation of CHAMPS/Life Skills was primarily the responsibility of individual schools. Around 20% of NCAA member schools have formal courses designed for athletes with life skill components (Weight & Huml, 2016), but administrators, coaches, staff, and athletes' support of CHAMPS/Life Skills specifically (and its resulting effectiveness) vary considerably from campus to campus. Recently, the NCAA has partnered with the National Association of Academic and Student-Athlete Development Professionals (N4A) who will manage development and life skills programming for all NCAA athletes. A broader movement needs to include promoting multiple identities and for athletes to have greater "sport-academics-life balance." As youth begin to develop their athlete identity, they need to be exposed to social and cultural messaging that prizes and encourages other positive identity possibilities – since this is how athlete identity takes hold. In all educational settings, an individual's academic-related successes should be recognized and emphasized at least proportional to his or her athletic accomplishments.

In sum, there is a pressing need to identify best practice programs, interventions, and other efforts that promote balanced identity and prepare athletes for life after sport. These are also topics that would benefit from more research, especially at the U.S. college level, to better understand what is working, what is not, and differences in experiences and outcomes according to race, gender, sports, level of competition, and program/university characteristics. Although some research has been conducted on U.S. college athlete transitions and post-sport careers after

graduation (e.g., Understanding Life Outcomes of Former NCAA Student-Athletes report conducted by the Gallup organization on behalf of the NCAA in 2016), most are descriptive and cross-sectional and do not disaggregate outcomes according to detailed sociodemographic or sport differences. This research has supported one-size-fits-all interventions. More research is needed to understand the particular needs of athlete groups (gendered, racial, classed, academic preparation, different learning abilities, etc...). Customized programs that consider strengths, challenges, and resource needs can then be developed with a greater awareness of athlete profiles.. Studies of former college athletes are critical (those who feel that they have successfully transitioned and those who feel that they have not), which could answer most questions and identify low-hanging fruit for immediate positive effect.

Key Takeaways: The Student-Athlete Paradox

Condensed

1. Beyond balancing the academic and social demands their non-athlete peers do, student-athletes must also manage exhaustive athletic demands including traveling, practicing, and competing. The glorification of these athletic responsibilities coupled with difficulty and a lack of positive reinforcement within the academic sphere conflate to cause a prioritization of their roles as athletes over their roles as students.
2. The very nature of their athletic commitment vastly undermines students' ability to fully integrate into the larger campus community and be academically successful, especially for Black male student athletes. Though student-athletes maintain higher graduation rates than their peers who do not play college sports overall, disaggregating the data reveals athletes in the revenue-generating sports of football and basketball are graduating at lower rates than any other collegiate athletes.
3. A function of the prioritization of athletic over academic and professional development, some revenue athletes depart from college less prepared for life transitions than when they entered. Though surprisingly little is known about the ways in which participation in intercollegiate athletics impacts students' ability to actualize career aspirations, the scant research suggests Division I student-athletes are most likely to experience unhealthy transitions out of sports.

Super Condensed

1. Beyond balancing the academic and social demands that their non-athlete peers do, student-athletes must also manage exhaustive athletic demands including traveling, practicing, and competing.
2. The very nature of their athletic commitment vastly undermines their ability to fully integrate into the larger campus community and be academically successful, especially for Black male student-athletes.
3. A function of the prioritization of athletic over academic and professional development, some revenue athletes depart from college less prepared for life transitions than when they entered.

Questions for practitioners who work with college athletes

- How can we make the college experience for athletes even more aligned with that of the general student body? What innovative solutions (e.g. short-term, virtual) are available to facilitate participation in learning experiences that college students benefit from but are challenging for athletes to access (e.g., study abroad, internships, service learning)?
- Are college athlete development interventions best approached from a local design, global design, or somewhere in between? What is the comparative effectiveness of micro-level solutions that attend to sport, sociodemographic and/or cultural differences within the athlete population as well as contextual and environmental differences that are particular to programs/schools, versus population-level approaches such as CHAMPS/Life Skills?
- How can we better promote a collaborative culture (e.g. Big East Rookie Seminar) rather than competitive culture around solutions to support athlete career development?

Questions for researchers

- Related to GSI conversations about identity: How, why, and to what extent does identity foreclosure affect U.S. college athletes' college experiences and how does that in turn affect their post-sport career outcomes? How do sport contexts, national contexts, and different educational settings mediate college athletes' identification with their sport, with academics, and with other aspects of their selves?
- Related to GSI conversations about educational outcomes and transitions: How do U.S. college athletes' experiences transitioning out of sport and their associated career outcomes differ for athletes participating in revenue-generating sports in the highest profile college programs (i.e. FBS Power 5) compared to athletes participating in other sports and schools? What are the differences in athletes' post-college outcomes according to race and gender? How does the impact of participating in college sports on former athletes' careers and other life outcomes change over time? What types of innovations or interventions are most effective in preparing college athletes for successful transitions?

Europe's Dual Career Challenges

Shifting contexts from the United States to Europe and amateur to professional, there is one major difference that changes the landscape of understanding and promoting athlete education. With few exceptions, European countries do not link education and athletics so the structural process for becoming an elite athlete differs greatly. Instead of combining high school or college levels with athletics, European athletics is organized primarily within local sport clubs. Many early childhood sport clubs are non-for-profit entities, which then are turned into for-profit entities as revenues increase (especially notable for male soccer and hockey clubs). Still, similar to the U.S., European countries also face challenges with athlete identity, meaningful athlete education, and athlete transition. The biggest difference between the European and U.S. model seems to be that European athletes are primarily athletes and do not have to manage dual (and partly conflicting) identities. Some European athletes, especially in less commercially developed sports, have jobs and/or go to college in parallel to their elite careers.

The Holistic Athletic Career Model – Extending Perspectives in Time and Space

Research on athlete transitions began in earnest with European researchers in the 1970s to cope with the possible traumatic experience faced by professional athletes at the termination of their careers. The concept of transition broadened in the 1990s sparking the current, more holistic approach to athlete transition. Illustrated in figure 1, Wylleman and Lavellee (2004) proposed a

holistic model that identified five different themes between an athlete's career from the age of 10 through the age of 35:

- Athletic level
- Psychological level
- Psychosocial level
- Academic/vocational level
- Financial level

This approach has opened the door for athlete transition interventions and life-skill programs. For example, the EU Guidelines on Dual Careers of Athletes were launched in 2012 (focusing on 15-28 year olds) and more recently, Sweden launched specific national guidelines for dual career development (the first European country to do so). New research is integrating the holistic model with cultural sport psychology to meet the challenges of athletes from marginalized populations (see Stambulova & Ryba, 2014). Wylleman & Stambulova (2015) state that future research will need to be more interdisciplinary and we will need to push for greater acceptance of national and international guidelines for dual career development.

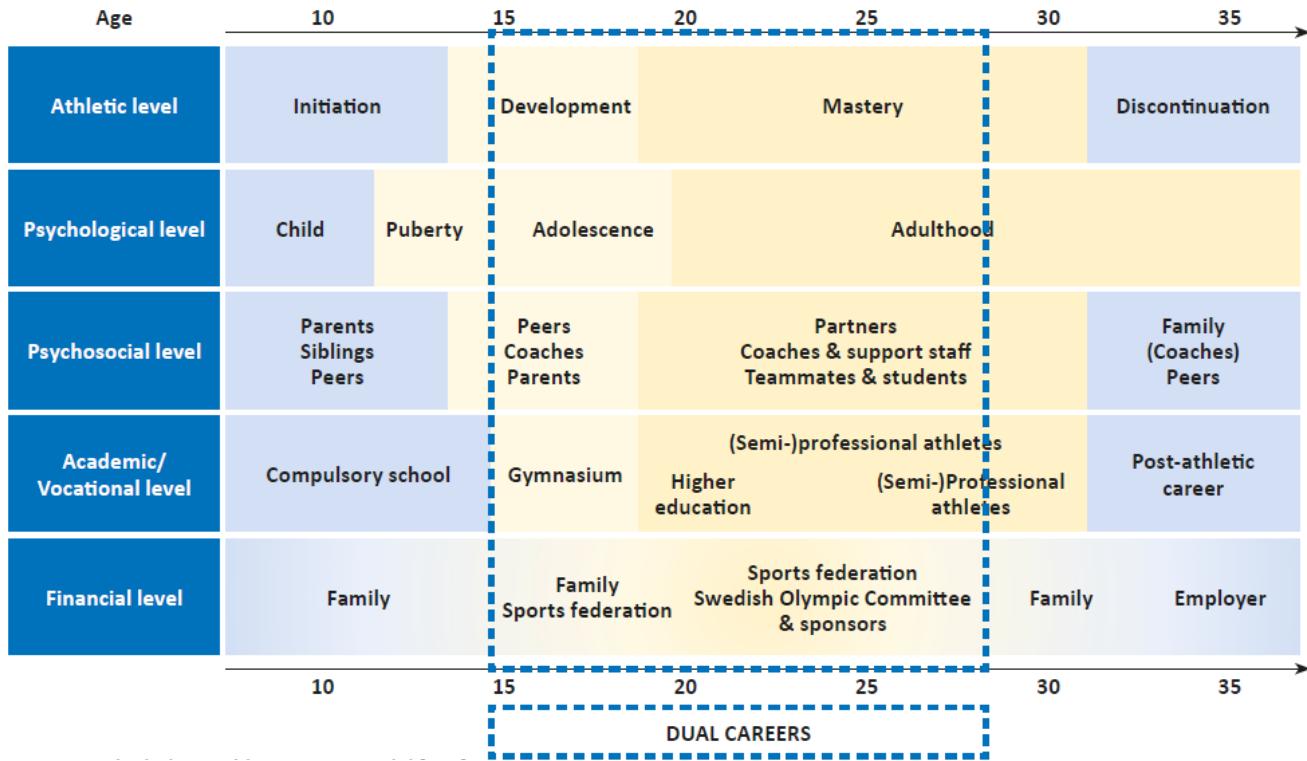
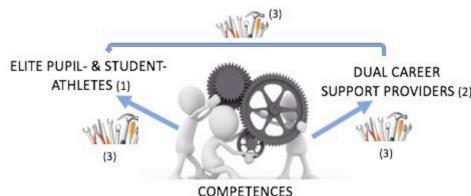


Figure 1: The holistic athletic career model (adopted from the Swedish National Guidelines For Elite Athlete's Dual Careers, p.7).

As Figure 1 shows, the dual career focus from 15 to 28 years is of particular interest which overlaps with the US. However, when one digs deeper, one can see clear differences, especially with revenue-generating U.S. college athletes. The European holistic model emphasizes the importance of preparing for athlete transition and this is not limited to formal or connected with formal education. Rather, depending on individual preferences (and competence), the European model focuses on both academic and vocational/practical training. Furthermore, there is an explicit financial perspective to ensure that the athlete's individual financial situation (as well as the club he/she competes for) is considered. The U.S. college model with its scholarship funding has a financial

perspective, but this does not explicitly consider the individual financial situation of each athlete-student. Because elite European athletes are not student-athletes they do not face tension between being an athlete and emerging oneself into the “college experience.” Still, since many athletes in Europe experience identity foreclosure and problems with athlete transition, more resources have been invested into understanding how dual career management can be facilitated.

The GEES Handbook and Competencies needed for Dual Career Management



The Gold in Education and Elite Sport (GEES) research project was an EU-funded project between 2015 and 2016 that involved 40 researchers from 17 different institutions across Europe. The project produced the GEES “Handbook for Dual Career Support Providers.” Focusing on both athletes and the dual career support providers, the research project conducted surveys to understand which competences were needed to successfully manage dual career development. Based on 3,247 completed surveys, the researchers identified four main competency areas: dual career management, career planning, social, and self-regulation and resilience (See Figure 2).

| | |
|---|---|
| DC Management competences | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-discipline to manage the demands of your study and sport combination • Ability to use your time efficiently • Dedication to succeed in both sport and study • Ability to plan conscientiously in advance • Ability to prioritize what needs to be done • Willingness to make sacrifices and choices to succeed in sport and study • Ability to make your own responsible choices with regard to your study and sport career • Clear understanding of what it takes to succeed in sport and study • Ability to create individualized routines (for sport and study) • Belief that study and sport can positively complement each other |
| Self-regulation and resilience competences | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belief in your own ability to overcome the challenges in sport and study • Assertiveness (being self-assured and acting with confidence) • Ability to cope with stress in sport and study • Ability to regulate emotions in different situations • Ability to use setbacks in sport and/or study as a positive stimulus • Ability to focus on here and now, without being distracted • Being patient about the progression of your sport and study career • Perseverance during challenging times and in the face of setbacks • Ability to negotiate (in order to stand up for your own interests) • Awareness of your strengths, weaknesses and capabilities • Ability to critically evaluate and modify your goals when needed • Ability to set realistic goals in sport and study |
| Social competences | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking advice to the right people at the right time • Eagerness to listen and learn from others and past experiences • Ability to maintain relations with important others • Ability to make social contacts with peers in study and sport • Ability to collaborate with support staff in study and sport • Ability to resolve conflicts • Understanding the importance of rest and recuperation • Ability to adapt well to new situations • Ability to put sport and study performances in perspective |
| Career planning competences | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being prepared for the unexpected and having back up plans • Ability to be flexible and change plans if necessary • Being curious to explore career plans outside elite sport • Vision of where you want to go in life after your dual career • Having knowledge about your career options in study and sport |
| Other competences | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to spend and manage your own money • Ability to live independently with competent life skills |

Figure 2: Dual career competences identified in GEES project (GEES handbook, p.236)



From the list of competencies, the research team then developed different instruments that athletes and dual career support providers could use and guidance on how to use each instrument (See Figure 3 below).

| CODE | TITLE | TYPE OF INSTRUMENT | SOURCE |
|-------|---|------------------------|---|
| DCA1 | Information collection interview | Data collection/intake | Carrière sportive, Projet de vie, 2006. |
| DCA2 | Initial diagnostic interview | Data collection/intake | Centre d'Alt Rendiment (CAR), Spain |
| DCA3 | My experiences – My competences | Data collection/intake | Carrière sportive, Projet de vie, 2006. |
| DCA4 | My life history | Data collection/intake | Carrière sportive, Projet de vie, 2006. |
| DCA5 | My personnal commitment contract | Data collection/intake | Carrière sportive, Projet de vie, 2006. |
| DCA6 | What is a plan? | Intervention | Carrière sportive, Projet de vie, 2006. |
| DCA7 | GROW Coaching Methodology* | Intervention | Sport Vlaanderen, Belgium |
| DCA8 | Integrated week planning* | Intervention | Sport Vlaanderen, Belgium |
| DCA9 | Balancing sport and education* | Intervention | Sport Vlaanderen, Belgium |
| DCA10 | Transferability of competences | Intervention | VUB, Belgium |
| DCA11 | Life Wheel* | Intervention | Eriksson & Wallgren (2015) Umeå University, Sweden. |
| DCA12 | Manage all your days* | Intervention | Eriksson (2015) Umeå University, Sweden |
| DCA13 | Setting out the framework | Intervention | Viviane BONVIN - INSEP |
| DCA14 | Long Term Timeline* | Intervention | Sport Vlaanderen, Belgium |
| DCA15 | Competence development plan | Intervention | Centre d'Alt Rendiment (CAR), Spain |
| DCA16 | My priorities | Intervention | Carrière sportive, Projet de vie, 2006. |
| DCA17 | Short Satisfaction and Competence Follow-up (SSCF)* | Monitoring/evaluation | VUB, Belgium |
| DCA18 | Choosing my plans | Mix of types | Carrière sportive, Projet de vie, 2006. |
| DCA19 | Athlete Lifestyle Map | Mix of types | TASS, UK |
| DCA20 | The Holistic Athlete Career model | Mix of types | Wylleman, Reints & De Knop, 2013 |
| DCA21 | Competence Profiling* | Mix of types | Sport Vlaanderen, Belgium |
| DCSP1 | Stakeholders involved overview* | Monitoring/ evaluation | Sport Vlaanderen, Belgium |
| DCSP2 | Competence profiling* | Mix of types | VUB, Belgium |
| DCSP3 | Scenario Checklist | Mix of types | Sport Vlaanderen, Belgium |

Figure 3: GEES instruments to facilitate dual career management (GEES handbook, p.149).

From Research to Practice: Role of Player Associations

The movement for athlete dual career support continues. In 2014, two years after “the EU guidelines on dual careers of athletes,” the EU sponsored a project called “Improving Dual Career Support for Players – Best Practice, Good Governance Innovative Ideas for Player Associations”. The final report pushed for player associations to place greater emphasis on dual career support and personal development managers to be given specialized training as support providers. Most recently, in 2017, the World Players Association (85,000 professional players from 100 player

associations in 60 countries) met in Paris and proposed a standard for “Development, Wellbeing, Transition and Retirement” with three main purposes: (1) to act as a tool for player associations; (2) to provide a global benchmark; and (3) to elevate the profession of the player development manager. The standard, based on the evolving holistic approach, recognized there were varied needs and promoted individual assessments of athletes (see Figure 4 below).



Figure 4: Individual assessment tool developed by the European Elite Athletes Association.

Concluding Remarks

It seems the academic research and the more practically oriented player associations' work share many similarities. They emphasize the athlete as an individual rather than a "pure" player and that there are many elements surrounding the athlete that are important when it comes to dual career development. Furthermore, both streams emphasize the importance of dedicated staff (dual career support providers or personal development managers), to help the individual athlete. Player associations have both the contact with athletes and political power to implement significant change but the GEES handbook and the underlying research from the sport psychology community is much more thorough in understanding and articulating what is needed. More importantly, the approaches are not mutually exclusive. Future collaboration has begun and would most likely be beneficial for both parties since they complement each other - the player associations have the marketing and distribution channels while the sport psychology researchers have both practical and academic experience.

Concluding Remarks: What can we learn and what are outstanding questions?

Concern for the elite athlete and their post-sports career transition and outcomes is great around the globe. Regardless of sport and global location, elite sport participation is a wholly different phenomenon than recreation, and therefore the effects and needs are different. U.S. scholars have focused on athlete motivation and the structures that (1) get in the way of athlete education and (2) lead to less than optimal athlete outcomes. While sport is generally lauded for its prosocial benefits, there is mounting research and evidence to suggest there can be a downside, namely identity foreclosure and arrested identity development. In general, individuals are warned not to overspecialize or overplay since balance is essential to long-term health, social integration, and personal satisfaction. In Europe, scholars and industry professionals have done extensive studies on what athletes need. Together, research has answered: what is the problem; how did it come about and how it continues; and what is needed. The Global Sport Institute's next goal for understanding athlete education is: (1) to gather more data and best practices for athlete education and transition globally; (2) survey youth programs and interventions that expose youth to identity options and effectively promote and develop youths' multiple identities; (3) better understand the groups within groups (i.e. intersectional groups such as underresourced, Latinx, Black, Asian and Indigenous women or disabled men of color, etc...); and (4) customize needs for these specific populations. We should do so collectively, working across sports and continents, sharing knowledge to have the greatest impact.

Recommended Next Steps

We recommend additional meetings similar to the event held in Washington, D.C. in March 2018. There are at least two discussions needed: one meeting should engage scholars in Europe with an emphasis on best practices and programmatic needs and examples, and the other meeting needs to include a thoughtful and varied group of athletes across ages, sports, and backgrounds to be sure we have captured as many perspectives as possible. We have already begun to discuss the European meeting possibility with colleagues at the University of Loughborough (U.K.).

Research Needed

There is always a need for research and there is little reason to add to the un-ending list. But, there are a few areas that stand out to the scholars who have authored this working paper:

- A comparison of gender and race in student-athlete academic and social experiences, in classrooms and in the campus community, and transitions
- Augmenting career development and the range of outcomes for former elite athletes
- Identifying competencies in the US contexts and clearly articulating how athletes may use transferable skills
- Understanding optimal athletic-academic-life balance
- Programmatic solutions, including family and community-based interventions
- Transitions from all other sport levels

APPENDIX

Workshop Notes on Barriers and Solutions

Barriers

Group A: Martin Carlsson-Wall (SSE), Bahati Jones (NFL Trust), Arthur McAfee (NFL), Alejandro Danois (theshadowleague.com), Curtis Holloman (formerly with the NCAA)

- Individual Barriers
 - Professional identity away from sport
 - Identity - not identifying themselves as "academics"
 - Goal visualization - it may be difficult to see the result of an education
 - Transition from rigid structure to self-reliance and motivation
 - Scared of not being good enough
 - Exploration opportunities
 - Attention span- education requires concentration for at least several minutes. If you are not used to this, it may be a problem
 - Sole focus has been on sport
 - Come to play ball, not be a "student-athlete" - lack of preparedness for career/transition
 - Short window to perform at a high level
 - Response to criticism
 - Buzz/spotlight education can be boring and with no instant gratification
 - Lack of information
- Resource Barriers
 - Once eligibility is exhausted financial barriers increase for those with limited resources
 - Money - not having enough money for education and/or being able to be without a job while studying
 - Resource distribution
- Organizational Barriers
 - Coaches/advisors steering towards "easier" majors
 - Expectation beyond the SA or athlete
 - A collective mind frame, developed over years of life revolving around the game - opening that up, broadening the vision
 - Pushback from organization to be better educated
 - Time limitations while engaged in sport
- Environment & Politics Barriers

- Negative peer influences for those unsure of direction
- 1200 member institutions, 1200 ways of doing it.
- Going back to environments and support systems that don't value the pursuit of higher education

Group B: Amy Perko (Knight Commission), Molly Ott (ASU), Collin Williams (RISE), Robert Larsson (SSE), Jacques McClendon (L.A. Rams)

- Time Constraints
 - Transcript Retrieval
 - Time Constraints/Time Demands/Lack of Time/Time Management/Time/Schedule/Scheduling/Schedule - NCAA Survey, 37 hours per week in sport, 44 hours per week in FBS football
- Incentive Structures in College Sports (ex. eligibility policies, payouts and coach contracts and bonuses)
 - \$Money connected to winning
 - Commercialization of the enterprise
- Finding Purpose & Roles
 - Role engulfment
 - Student athlete not fully integrated on campus, athlete-student not student-athlete
 - No real social life - Not enough value on time away from academics and athletics
- Career Development
 - Lack of mentors focused on career development
 - Lack of focus on academic career development
- Academic Culture
 - Traditional academic culture/Bias against customized programs for athletes (not rigorous enough, not academic)
- Transferable Skills
 - Need help identifying transferable skills
 - Internship opportunities
 - How do you form and maintain business relationships?
 - Inability to connect sport skill attributes (work ethic, teamwork, perseverance, leadership) to skills employers seek
- Lack of Preparedness
 - Academic underrepresentation (k-12 and higher ed)
 - 1st generation college students preparedness
 - Recruited but underprepared for academic rigor

- Lack of Cultural Competency
- Perception of Ability, Desire, Aptitude
 - Subjects of interests
 - “Dumb jock” stereotypes & low expectations
 - Lack of exposure to career options
 - 2nd career steps/path

Solutions

Group A: Martin Carlsson-Wall (SSE), Bahati Jones (NFL Trust), Arthur McAfee (NFL), Alejandro Danois (theshadowleague.com), Curtis Holloman (formerly with the NCAA)

- Policy
 - Systems requiring coaches and administration to be more responsible
- Education and information
 - Educational infrastructure on the grassroots sports level
 - Universal programming
 - Consistent programming for all
 - Parent/family engagement around the sports/education interplay
 - Education for families prior to college
- Application
 - Systematic collaboration with TV shows (i.e. Ballers)
 - Communication network
 - Create and identify role models
 - Show how “second career” concept wins games and makes money
 - Build global benchmark program (must be fact-based)
 - Lifetime scholarship
 - Build the brand of “two career guy”

Group B: Amy Perko (Knight Commission), Molly Ott (ASU), Collin Williams (RISE), Robert Larsson (SSE), Jacques McClendon (LA Rams)

- Supplemental Learning
 - High school student-athlete summit with successful retired athletes
 - Roles models from sports
- Nontraditional models of degree programs – graduate and undergraduate
 - Lifetime scholarships: extend the shelf life of academic eligibility post-athletics

- More hybrid education options
- Customized curriculum for revenue athletes
- Customized curriculum for elite athletes
- Accountability
 - Accountability and transparency around outcomes and experiences (research-based)
- Collaborative Culture over Competitive Culture
 - More shared resources among institutions directed toward career development (e.g. Big East Rookie Seminar)
- More Athlete Advocates Involved in Governance (independent directors)
- Change Economics
 - Different structure for elite FBS football
- Professional Development
 - Exit boot camps
 - Post-graduation internship programs (college)
 - Cohort learning
 - Skill-based and competency based non-degree programs/courses
 - Academic boot camps (summer and pre-enroll)
 - College summer cohort immersion experience

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Further Resources

In addition to the references cited in text, additional resources about key topics discussed here are available through the following organizations/websites:

- Scholar-Baller Program. <http://scholarballer.org>
- National Association of Academic and Student-Athlete Development Professionals (N4A). <https://nacda.com/index.aspx?path=nfoura>
- Black Student-Athlete Summit. <http://diversity.utexas.edu/Blackstudentathletesummit>
- Professor Paul Wylleman's website: <http://www.vub.ac.be/SBMA/paul-wylleman>
- Professor Natalia Stambulova's website:
<http://www.hh.se/english/aboutthewebsite/staffathalmstaduniversity.4042.html?url=-1708965309%2F19%2Fhhstaff%2Fen%2Fdetail.lasso%3Fdo%3Dstart%26groupmember%3Da886f411-ed0b-4594-a184-fed967857973&sv.url=12.6c5a541a1541d0fe3efdcf42>
- Information about the Gold in Education and Elite Sport (GEES) project
<https://www.windestheim.com/research/education/sportrelated-educational-theory/research-and-projects/gold-in-education-and-elite-sport/>
- GEES final symposium in Brussels (Dec 2016) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=df-TqXOYnNw>
- Website of the new EU project coordinated from Liverpool www.dualcareers.eu