

# **PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF RETIREMENT ON ELITE ATHLETES**

**Jantjie M Marthinus**

Dissertation presented for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
(Sport Science)  
at  
Stellenbosch University



March 2007

Promoter: Professor Justus R. Potgieter

## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it to any university for a degree.

Signature:

Jantjie Marthinus



Date:

# SUMMARY

This study was designed to gain a better understanding of the way in which the quality of the sport-career termination is quantitatively affected by athletic and non-athletic factors. A further objective of this study was to contribute and broaden the knowledge base on the athletic career-termination process and endeavour to add new information to the existent body of knowledge on the career-ending process in the world of sport. This study is a sport-specific view on South African track and field and road running athletes' retrospective views on their retirement. In line with the relevant literature, the influence of athletic (voluntariness and gradualness of sport-career termination, subjective view of athletic achievements, post-sport life planning, and athletic identity) and non-athletic factors (e.g., age, educational status) on different aspects of sport-career difficulties was investigated.

In phase 1 of the research, 104 retired track and field athletes completed an adapted version of the Cecic-Erpic's (2000) *Sports Career Termination Questionnaire II (SCTQ II)*. These athletes had been retired for no less than one year with an athletic career at national and international level and were asked to describe in retrospect their experiences and reactions to their athletic career termination.

The *SCTQII* was developed to evaluate the characteristics of the sport-career termination process, the characteristics of the active sport-career-termination transition to post-sport life, and adaptation to post-sport life.

In phase 2 of the study, 23 retired South African elite athletes were individually interviewed. An interview guide was developed which probed the sport career of the athletes in depth, from the initial start to the sport career to the process of disengaging from elite sport. The data from the interviews were content analysed.

Results from the interview study revealed that athletes originally became involved in athletics because they showed a natural ability that was superior to that of their peers. They committed themselves to a long-term relationship with athletics, with one single-minded objective—to become the best in their chosen discipline. This led to a commitment that in some cases totally dominated their lives to a level where everything else was planned around their athletic involvement.

Retirement was not part of the athletes' plans at the height of their career. According to these athletes they were taken by surprise when the reality of retirement was imminent. No career-termination programs were in place to facilitate a softer easing out of elite sport. However, the transitional process was viewed by most athletes as uncomfortable and difficult rather than as a crisis.

The questionnaire findings showed that the quality of athletic retirement was related to difficulties at the psychological, psychosocial and occupational levels. Voluntariness of retirement correlated with a number of difficulties experienced by the athletes. Athletes who had control over their decision to retire had a less difficult sport-career transition and an easier adaptation to post-sport career life.

The degree of athletic identity also had a significant effect on the quality of the retirement process and the organisation of post-sport life. Athletes with a strong athletic identity experienced more intense and more frequent difficulties during the process of retirement from sport.

Pre-retirement planning was viewed to be one of the most important factors leading to a less difficult process of adaptation. Athletes in this study indicated that they were not ready for retirement because of a lack of planning. Post-sport planning in this study focused on matters pertaining to, amongst others, education, occupational opportunities and social support systems. The educational status was significantly related to difficulties in the

occupational environment. Athletes who were better educated experienced fewer occupation-related difficulties during their post-sport life.

The results of this study indicate that the retirement process was affected by the athletes' age only as far as the subjective evaluation of adjustment to post-sport life was concerned. It can thus be concluded that the lower the age at termination of a sport career the more athletes tended to have problems with the subjective evaluation of adjustment to post-sport life.

Gradualness of the process of retirement and the planning of post-sport life were two factors to have an effect on the quality of the sport-career termination. The more gradual the retirement process, the fewer problems retiring athletes encountered in the organisation of post-sport life.

Athletes with difficult termination experiences from athletics were less satisfied with their post-sport life than those who experienced a less difficult transition. This means that sport-career termination is an important life-event which could have a significant influence on an athlete's life after retirement from competitive sport. Recommendations are put forward to alleviate potential problems associated with athletic career termination.

**Key words:** Sport-career termination, athletic retirement, post-sport life, retirement, transition, athletic identity.  
Athletics: track and field items and road running.

# OPSOMMING

Die studie was ontwerp om te bepaal tot watter mate die kwaliteit van 'n sportloopbaan beëindiging, op 'n kwantitiewe manier deur sport- en nie-sport faktore beïnvloed word. 'n Verdere doel van die studie was om 'n bydrae te lewer asook die kennis te verbreed aangaande sportloopbaanbeëindiging, asook om nuwe informasie tot die bestaande liggaam van kennis te voeg. Die studie is 'n sport-spesifieke beskouing op Suid-Afrikaanse baan en veld asook padwedloopatlete se terugskouende idees op hulle uittrede. In lyn met relevante literatuur was daar gelet op sport- (vrywilligheid en geleidelikheid van die sportloopbaan beëindiging, subjektiewe mening van sportprestasies, na-sportloopbaan beplanning en sportidentiteit) en nie-sportfaktore (bv. ouderdom, opvoedkundige status) op verskillende aspekte van sportloopbaan beëindigingsprobleme.

In fase 1 van die navorsing het 104 afgetrede baan- en veldatlete asook padatlete 'n aangepaste vertaalde weergawe van Cecić-Erpič (2000) se *Sports Career Termination Questionnaire (SCTQ II)* voltooi. Deelnemende atlete het nie minder as een jaar uitgetree nie, en was nasionale sowel as internasionale atlete. Atlete was versoek om terugskouend hul ondervinding en reaksie op hul sportloopbaan beëindiging te beskryf.

Die *SCTQ II* was ontwikkel om die eienskappe van 'n sportloopbaan beëindiging te evalueer, asook die eienskappe van die aktiewe sportloopbaan beëindiging se oorgang tot na-psigo-sosiale en die werkverwante vlak. Die vrywilligheid van uittrede het met 'n aantal probleme wat die atlete ondervind het, gekorreleer. Atlete wat beheer gehad het oor die besluit om uit te tree het minder probleme ondervind met hul sportloopbaan oorgang asook 'n makliker aanpassing tot 'n na-sportloopbaan.

Die mate waartoe atlete hulle self met atletiek vereenselwig het, het 'n beduidende effek gehad op die kwaliteit van die uittree proses en die organisering van 'n na-sport lewe. Atlete met 'n baie sterk atletiek identiteit

het meer intense en veelvuldige probleme ondervind tydens die uittree proses.

Uittree beplanning word gesien as een van die mees belangrikste faktore wat kan lei tot minder moeilike aanpassingsproses. Atlete in die studie het aangedui dat hulle nie gereed was vir aftrede nie, as gevolg daarvan het hulle in gebreke gebly om hulle uittrede te beplan. Na-sport beplanning in die studie het gefokus op sake wat betrekking het onder andere, op opvoeding, werksgeleenthede en sosiale ondersteuning. Die opvoedkundige status het beduidend gekorreleer met probleme in die werksomgewing. Atlete wat beter skoolastiese kwalifikasies behaal het, het minder werksverwante probleme ondervind.

Die resultate van die studie dui verder daarop dat die uittree proses slegs deur atlete se ouderdom geaffekteer was sover dit die subjektiewe evaluasie van aanpassing tot na-sport lewe aanbetref. Die gevolgtrekking kan dus gemaak word dat hoe laer die ouderdom by die beeëndiging van 'n sportloopbaan, hoe meer neig atlete om probleme te hê met die subjektiewe evaluasie van aanpassing tot na-sport lewe.

Geleidelikheid van die proses van uittrede en die beplanning van na-sport lewe, was twee faktore wat 'n effek gehad het op die kwaliteit van die sportloopbaan beeëndiging. Hoe meer geleidelik die proses van uittrede was, hoe minder probleme het uittredende atlete met die organisering van na-sport lewe gehad.

Atlete met moeilike uittree ondervinding uit atletiek, is minder tevrede met hul na-sport lewe in vergelyking met diegene met 'n moeilike oorgang. Dit beteken dus dat sportloopbaanbeeëndiging 'n belangrike lewensgebeurtenis is wat 'n beduidende invloed op atlete se lewe na uittrede uit mededingende sport kan uitoefen. Aanbevelings word gemaak om potensieële probleme wat betrekking het op sportloopbaan beeëndiging te verminder.

**Sleutelwoorde:** Sportuittrede, na-sport lewe, aftrede, oorgangstyd, sport-identiteit.  
Atletiek: baan- en veld items asook padwedlope.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

It is with sincere gratitude that I acknowledge the contribution of all those who assisted and encouraged me during this study.

Professor Justus Potgieter for his advice, encouragement and incisive guidance.

Dr Martin Kidd for producing the requisite software for computer aided data reduction.

Professor Edith Katzenellenbogen for her valuable advice and recommendations on the questionnaire.

Lise Wait for all her willingness and patience to do all the typing.

Dr Johan van Tonder, my friend and training partner, for his invaluable almost daily encouragement.

My wife Mercia, daughters Carla and Jancka for understanding and giving me space to work on this study.

My friends and fellow athletes who completed, distributed and collected the questionnaires.

I would like to acknowledge the financial assistance of the Division for Research Development at Stellenbosch University towards this research. Opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at, are those of the author and are not necessary to be attributed to the Division of Research Development.



## LIST OF TABLES

<i>Table 2.1</i>	Selected overview of career transition programmes	82
<i>Table 3.1</i>	Descriptive statistics of doubts and emotions at retirement	108
<i>Table 3.2</i>	Descriptive statistics of health and life-style related difficulties	109
<i>Table 3.3</i>	Descriptive statistics of psycho-social difficulties during sport-career transition	111
<i>Table 3.4</i>	Descriptive statistics of self-concept during sport-career transition	112
<i>Table 3.5</i>	Descriptive statistics of occupation-related difficulties during sport-career transition	113
<i>Table 3.6</i>	Descriptive statistics of social and emotional support expected by the transitional athlete	114
<i>Table 3.7</i>	Descriptive statistics of social and emotional support received by athletes	116
<i>Table 3.8</i>	Persons and institutions athletes would prefer to help	120
<i>Table 3.9</i>	Descriptive statistics of usefulness of retirement services after retirement	121

## LIST OF FIGURES

<i>Figure 2.1</i>	A developmental model on transitions faced by athletes at athletic, individual, psychosocial and academic/vocational level (Wylleman & Lavallee, 2003)	55
-------------------	--	----

# CONTENTS

List of Tables	ix
List of Figures	ix

## **CHAPTER ONE STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM 1**

Introduction	1
Purpose of the study	1
Significance of the study	2
Hypotheses	8
Rational of the hypotheses	9
Delimitations	11
Limitations	11
Methodology	12
Participants and procedures	13
Data collection	13
Data analysis	14



## **CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW 15**

Historical and conceptual matters	15
Daniel Levinson's Conception of adult development	18
Achievement development during adult years	18
Childhood and adolescent involvement in sport	19
Sport participation of tertiary student athletes	20
Retirement theories applied to sport	23
Transition research in disability and death	23
Thanatological theory and athletic retirement	25
Human grieving model	26
Social gerontological theory and athletic retirement	26

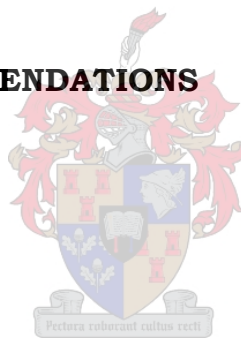
Applications	29
Termination of the athletic career as a transition	35
Causes of career termination among athletes	36
Age	36
Deselection	38
Injury	40
Free choice	41
Sport participation and transition to retirement	42
The decision to retire	46
Factors associated with retirement from sport	46
Voluntary versus involuntary retirement	51
Life-span perspective on transitions faced by athletes	54
Development of the athlete's identity	57
Identity and self-esteem	59
Response to athletic retirement	63
A proposed solution to the athlete's adaptation to retirement	66
Anticipatory socialisation	68
Pre-retirement planning	60
Pre-retirement counselling	72
Personal management skills	74
Reorientation	76
Coping skills	77
Coping models	79
Interventions with athletes in transition	80
Treatment of retirement difficulties	84
Social support systems	92
Identity and athletic retirement	94
The physical impact if retiring from elite sport	96

<b>CHAPTER THREE</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>RESEARCH PROTOCOL</b>	<b>99</b>
PART 1: QUESTIONNAIRE STUDY	99
Objectives from the questionnaire study	99
Research design	99
Method	100
Participants	100
Instruments	101
Procedure	103
Analysis	103
Results	104
Life during elite-sport career	104
Training patterns	104
Academic life	104
Earnings	104
Fame	105
Planning of sport career	105
Age of termination	105
Subjective evaluation of sport achievement	105
Antecedents and mediator factors of sport-career transition	106
Voluntariness of sport-career transition	106
Gradualness of sport career transition	107
Permanency of withdrawal from elite sport	107
General mental and emotional state during sport-career transition	107
Doubts and emotions at retirement	108
Difficulties encountered at retirement	109
Health and lifestyle difficulties	109
Psychological difficulties	110
Psycho-social difficulties	110
Self-concept difficulties	111
Occupational difficulties	112
Social and emotional support expected by transitional athletes	114

Social and emotional support received by transitional athletes	115
Organisation of post-sport life	116
Subjective evaluation of adjusting to post-sport life	117
Athletic identity	118
Counselling for retirement	119
Retirement services	120
Retrospect	121
Relationship between athletic and non-athletic factors with the quality of the sport-career termination process	122
Self-concept difficulties	122
Education	122
Voluntariness of decision to retire	122
Gradualness of the decision to retire	122
Achievement of sport-related goals	122
Athletic identity	122
Post-sport planning	123
Psycho-social difficulties	123
Education	123
Voluntariness of decision to retire	123
Gradualness of the end of a sport career	123
Achievement of sport-related goals	123
Athletic identity	124
Age at termination	124
Post-sport planning	124
Discussion	124
Occupation-related difficulties	124
Education	124
Voluntariness of the retirement decision	124
Gradualness of the end of the sport career	125
Achievement of sport-related goals	125

Athletic identity	125
Age at termination	125
Post-sport planning	125
Difficulties with the organisation of organising a post-sport life	125
Education	126
Voluntariness of decision to retire	126
Gradualness of retirement decision	126
Achievement of sport-related goals	126
Athletic identity	126
Age at termination	126
Post-sport planning	127
Discussion	127
Voluntariness of decision to retire	128
Gradualness of the retirement process	129
Evaluation of athletic goals achieved	129
Athletic identity	131
Socio-educational status	132
Age at termination of an athletic career	132
Organising life after sport	133
Planning for retirement	133
Social support during transition	136
Conclusion	136
<b>CHAPTER FOUR</b>	
<b>RESEARCH PROTOCOL</b>	<b>138</b>
PART II INTERVIEW STUDY	138
Objects of the interview study	138
Hypotheses	138
Research design	139
Participants	139
Procedures	140
Interview setting	140
Instruments	143
Interview schedule	143

Interview guide	143
Interview questions	146
Qualitative data analysis	151
Results	152
Beginning the interview	153
Initiation (training) stage	155
Maturity (performance) stage	156
Anticipation (realisation of retirement) stage	161
Discussion	166
Initiation (training) stage	167
Maturity (performance) stage	168
Anticipation (realisation of retirement) stage	170
Conclusion	173
<b>CHAPTER FIVE</b>	
<b>CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>175</b>
Conclusions	175
Recommendations	176
Final remarks	177
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>180</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>199</b>
A Covering letters	200
B Sport Career Termination Questionnaire English version	203
C Sport Career Termination Questionnaire Afrikaans version	217

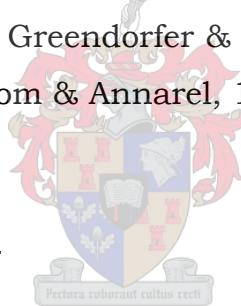


# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Over the past three decades, the sport science community has shown a growing interest in conceptualizing the sports-career termination process. Whereas earlier studies focused on the adaptation to the difficulties and trauma associated with career termination (Mihovilovic, 1968; Ogilvie & Howe, 1986; Ogilvie & Taylor, 1993; Werthner & Orlick, 1986), other research has indicated that retirement from competitive sport should rather be viewed as a life event that influences former athletes' well-being and development (Alfermann & Gross, 1997, Greendorfer & Blinde, 1985; Wylleman, De Knop, Menkehorst, Theeboom & Annarel, 1993).



### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The main aim of the study was twofold. First, to present a quantitative description of the occurrence of sport and non-sport factors involved in sports-career termination. Secondly, the study investigated the possible effect of these factors on the prevalence of psychological, psychosocial, and occupational difficulties encountered in a post sports-career life.

In the same way that retiring athletes have been ignored by the public, so they have until recently also been ignored in research. The purpose of the present research was therefore to focus on the unique experiences of former sport heroes.



## **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The study was based on the assumption that career transition trauma is a widespread phenomenon. “Whatever happened to.....?” is a common phrase that precedes comments about ex-athletes, that is, if there are any comments at all (Parker, 1994).

This investigation also reviewed several issues related to the transition from the role of athlete to the role of former athlete. Retirement may occur at any stage in an individual’s life and is, in reality, a point of transition from an activity in which there has been a commitment of time, energy and role identification. Career transition may be an especially difficult and disruptive process in terms of the age, income, and ego involvement of the athlete (Baillie & Danish, 1992).

Although the proportion of athletes who experience difficulties at retirement remains unclear, evidence of distress has been found at all levels of athletic involvement. There have been suggestions in the literature that sport-career transition may be highly related to the context of the sport setting from which the transition is made. For this reason, there may be little similarity between the retirement experiences of, for example, an Olympic swimmer and a collegiate football player (Parker, 1994).

However, there have been some accounts of successful retirement experiences as well (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994). In response to the growing concern at the popular level, there has been increasing interest in the area of athletic retirement among sport psychologists and other professionals.

A significant difficulty regarding much of the research to date in this area is a divergence between conceptual and empirical matters. Conceptual formulations are often drawn from outside of sport and

applied to athletic retirement without considering findings already reported in the sport literature on retirement (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994). These “borrowed” frameworks include:

- Sussman’s (1971) retirement model, which was supported by Hill and Lowe (1974) as being applicable to sport.
- Ball’s (1976) adaptation of “degradation” and “cooling out” concepts to sport.
- The general realm of gerontology theories applied to sport by such authors as Rosenberg (1981).
- Thanatological, or death-related theories, such as those of Glaser and Strauss (1965) and Kübler-Ross (1969), in which the “socially dying athlete” is compared to the “physically dying hospital patient”.

Much of the empirical research examining the dynamics of athletic transition is grounded in a “crisis” orientation (Sinclair & Orlick, 1993). That is, the post-active days of the athletes have been portrayed as traumatic and negative, as well as dysfunctional in terms of psychological disorders. These crises can become manifest in behaviours like alcohol or drug addiction. Werthner and Orlick (in Sinclair & Orlick, 1993), in their study of high-performance amateur athletes, found that the majority (66%) of these athletes encountered some degree of difficulty when terminating their sport careers.

Sinclair and Orlick (1993) also pointed to the fact that in contrast to this crisis orientation, several studies have taken an alternative view of the retirement process. These include studies by Coakley (1983), Blinde and Greendorfer (1985), and Greendorfer and Blinde (1985). These studies suggest that there is evidence that retiring athletes, in fact, actually experience relief from the pressures and the extreme time commitment of sport.

McPherson (1984) states that a problem-oriented perspective must be replaced by a process-orientated approach to athletic retirement. Too frequently athletic transition has been portrayed as an event that automatically causes trauma or relief rather than as initiating a transitional process that each individual perceives differently and therefore adjusts to differently. A multitude of behavioural patterns are associated with athletic transitions (Werthner & Orlick, 1986), simply because individuals bring their own perceptions of stress, personal resources, coping strategies, and socialisation experiences to this athletic-career transition (Schlossberg, 1981). It is a combination of the individual, his/her available resources, as well as the type of transition encountered, that mediates adaptive success or failure.

When assessing the state of transition experiences of high-performance athletes, Rosenberg (1980), Coakley (1983), McPherson (1984), Blinde and Greendorfer (1985) highlighted the need for research to identify the conditions and characteristics associated with these individual patterns. This should promote and understanding of why some athletes fail to negotiate the challenges of change successfully, while others take them in their stride.

More specifically, the current study investigated the reasons for retirement, the individual coping strategies, the support networks used by transitional athletes, and other variables that may impact on an athlete's adjustment process.

Drawing on previous theoretical work both within and outside of sport and current research in the area, this study examined adaptations to athletic retirement through its entire development course. When looking at the role of the elite athlete it is necessary to present research that describes some of the influences of sports participation on the development of an athlete's sense of self (Baillie & Danish, 1992)

For those who aspire to reach an elite-level in sport, it is necessary from an early age to make sport a primary, if not almost exclusive, focus of attention (Broom, 1981). With such a degree of commitment in mind, it is not surprising that retirement from sport has been described as a traumatic event that results in feelings of loss and disillusionment for the athlete (Botterill, 1981). When the foundation of self-esteem is based on sport excellence, the end of the athlete's road becomes more difficult.

It is believed that the common tendency of labelling a person "an athlete" is a major source of some of the difficulties that occur upon retirement. This identification or labelling process begins as soon as sport participation begins. This makes it almost impossible for an elite athlete to totally balance sport with other areas of life. Sport at the elite level requires an extreme level of commitment, similar to that required by a number of other demanding activities (Balaque, 1999). Bloom (1985), reviewing the characteristics of talented performers, described the elite performer as obsessed. But obsessed does not mean unidimensional. An understanding of development from early experiences in sport, through high school and college/university, is therefore essential in understanding career transition.

It is also necessary to describe research identifying some adjustment factors associated with retirement from sport. These studies suggest that regardless of the cause of termination, retirement from sport does result in a sense of loss and a period of adjustment (Crook & Robertson, 1991). There is little doubt that losses experienced in retirement force athletes to make psychological adjustments in their lives.

It is also imperative to present several gerontological theories of retirement and address their application to the sport context. This

perspective emphasizes aging and considers life satisfaction as being dependent on characteristics of the sport experience. It has been suggested that four social gerontological approaches are most appropriate for the study of retirement from sports (Greendorfer & Blinde, 1985). Rosenberg (1981) and Greendorfer and Blinde (1985), compared several gerontological theories with regard to their suitability to athletic retirement.

Despite the intuitive appeal of the social gerontology perspectives, they have been criticized as inadequate when applied to athletic retirement (Blinde & Greendorfer, 1985). Retirement is an event that occurs within an overall life history, including socialisation into the role of athlete, disengagement, and transition into new roles.

In contrast to other researchers Carp (1972) and Taylor (1972) characterize retirement as a transition or process rather than a discrete event that involves development throughout life. Theories of adjustment, and specifically of coping, found in other areas of research are useful in understanding sport retirement. Sussman (1971) with his multidimensional conceptualisation, asserts that perceptions about retirement will be influenced by the following types of factors:

1. *Individual* (e.g., motives, values, goals problem-solving skills)
2. *Situational* (e.g., circumstances of retirement, pre-retirement planning, retirement income)
3. *Structural* (e.g., social class, marital status, availability of social systems)
4. *Social* (e.g., family, friends, extended support)
5. *Boundary constraints* (e.g., societal definitions, economic cycles, employer attitudes).

Werthner and Orlick (1986) maintain that applying models traditionally associated with coping with important losses could lead to a greater understanding of sport retirement. They propose that, for an athlete, sport involvement is a living, loving relationship and that the end of the affiliation marks the loss of the relationship. They further suggest that beyond the stages of recovery usually proposed in the literature (shock, denial, anger, depression, understanding, and acceptance), there would follow a stage of personal growth. If athletes are aware of this common reaction series, they may be better prepared for the feelings they are likely to experience when leaving competitive sport.

The sport-retirement literature has also drawn upon the results of work with individuals with terminal illnesses. The face validity of this analogy between athlete role loss and personal health loss seems intuitively logical and justifiable.

At the end of their sport careers, some athletes may also experience feelings related to the long-term sacrifices that were necessary for competitive excellence. Family, career, and financial goals may have been set aside during their sporting careers. Suddenly these social costs of sports involvement become additional factors in the adjustment of retiring. Fear of the future, perceptions of inability to catch up, and doubts about finding a new, satisfying life-style may be prevalent.

It is important to note that theories must propose a process that suitably accounts for individual variations and responses. Kübler-Ross (1969) for example, specifically commented that her model includes provisions for backward relapses, forward progressions and variable timing.

All transitions are followed by a period of disruption in which old routines, assumptions, and relationships change and new ones evolve (Schlossberg, Lynch & Chickering, 1989). In sport, it seems that most organizations have not given the same attention to assisting athletes move out of the organisational structure as they have when helping them move in. Nor has any organization developed a detailed conceptualization of what is effective in assisting athletes move smoothly and quickly through the transition process. It seems prudent that future research in the area of transition from high-performance sport begins to focus on the implementation of positive interventions, not only to improve the transition experience, but to minimize the time it takes to adjust.

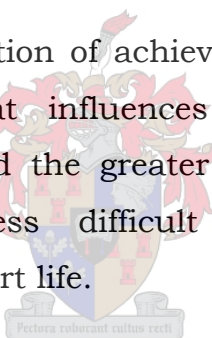
## **HYPOTHESES**

The following specific hypotheses were set for this study:

1. The voluntariness (i.e., perception of control) of sport-career termination contributes to the quality of adaptation of post-sport life. Voluntary career termination is correlated with a less difficult adaptation to post-sport life whereas involuntary retirement can lead to psychological difficulties.
2. The quality of adaptation to post-sport life is also influenced by the gradualness of the process of athletic retirement. A gradual transitional process will lead to fewer difficulties related adaptation to post-sport life.
3. Athletic identity will affect the athlete's adjustment to retirement. An athlete's commitment to his/her sport and the consequent reduction of investment in other social roles (e.g., student, partner, friend) often leads to the formation of a strong

athletic identity. This can have both positive and negative consequences when the athlete retires.

4. Pre-retirement planning for post-sport life will influence the quality of adaptation to life following a competitive sport career. This includes a variety of activities, such as continuing education, occupational endeavours, and activities related to social networks.
5. Antecedent and mediating factors that are not directly sport related, will influence the process of athletic retirement (e.g., age, educational status, and the occurrence of non-athletic transitions).
6. The subjective evaluation of achieved athletic goals is also an important factor that influences sport-career termination. Athletes who achieved the greater part of their sport-related goals, experience less difficult athletic retirement and adaptation to post-sport life.



## **RATIONALE OF THE HYPOTHESES**

The rationale underlying these hypotheses were as follow: Most athletes start training when they are young, at around the age of 16 to 17 years. From that young age athletes pursue a single minded approach to their athletic involvement. They train for hours (15-19 hours), seven days a week. A question arises as to whether these tunnel vision commitment to sport participation and with such high intensity, has an impact on the retirement experiences of elite athletes. Research has shown that adaptation to retirement is dependent, in part, on the nature and quality of the sport experiences (Kerr & Dacychyn, 2000).



Schlossberg (1981) proposed a model of adult transition which was used by researchers such as (Gorbett, 1985, Pearson & Petitpas, 1990; Swain, 1991). In Schlossberg's view, that to best understand retirement as a transition experience, one must consider the context in which it takes place, the meaning for the individual and the change in meaning over time. Taylor and Ogilvie (1994) built upon Schlossberg's model by applying it to sport and operationalizing the personal and situational factors that affect retirement and on athletes' ability to adapt to retirement.

Some of the personal factors found to facilitate adjustment to retirement from sport include the athlete's appraisal of the situation and his or her ability to meet the demands of the situation, self attitudes, and the degree of personal control the athletes perceive he or she has with respect to the end of their career (Baillie & Danish, 1992; Brewer, 1994; Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994; Werthner & Orlick, 1986). Several researchers have suggested that the most important individual determinant of adjustment to retirement is the degree to which an athlete's identity is immersed in sport, or self-worth is defined by sport (Baillie & Danish, 1992; Pearson & Petitpas, 1990; Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994).

The situational variables thought to influence adaptation to retirement include the causes of retirement or types of exit (Ogilvie & Howe, 1992; Ogilvie & Taylor, 1993; Rotella & Heyman, 1993), the nature of the sport experience including the coach-athlete relationship (Allison & Meyer, 1988; Baillie, 1993; CeciĆ-Erpiĉ, 2004; Werthner, 1986) and social support systems (Baillie & Danish, 1992; Petitpas, Danish, Mckelvain & Murphy, 1992; Sinclair & Orlick, 1993). Furthermore, Orlick and Howe (1986) stated that when an athlete is "role restricted" or in other words, when one's socialization occurs primarily in the

sport environment there is a greater likelihood of adaptation difficulties.

## **DELIMITATIONS**

The participants in this study were conveniently selected by the researcher from a small population of elite retired athletes in South Africa. As the objective of the study was to investigate the psychological effect of retirement on elite athletes, hence participants were selected on the basis of their athletic achievements and subsequent transitional experiences they went through to retirement.

## **LIMITATIONS**

This study was limited by the exclusive and sport-specific achievements of elite track and field and road running athletes.

In interpreting the findings of this investigation, several methodological issues must be considered. Three potential limitations include (a) the questionnaire format as well as the interview format and the interviews that were conducted over the telephone, (b) the potential for memory decay in retrospective recall, and (c) the fact that recall may have influenced by the success the participating athletes might have achieved.

Because of financial constraints and the different locations throughout the country in which the athletes resided, the researcher had to use a telephone interview format. This inhibited the researcher from detecting non-verbal respondent cues, but the researcher succeeded in establishing a high level of trust between himself and the respondents. Lincoln and Guba (1985) are of the opinion that trust between the investigator and investigated is one of the most important features of qualitative research.

Potential memory decay is according to Wagenaar (1986) as in Streat (1998) a limitation in any retrospective study. Aforementioned author suggests that trivial or unimportant incidents have been shown to be much more receptive to memory decay than major events like the ones that were the focus of interest. Therefore, memory decay cannot be totally ruled out as a potential limitation in this investigation.

It is also possible, that because all the athletes who participated in this investigation were at least national champions, the success they experienced may have in some way biased their recall of events. According to Gould, Jackson and Finch (1993) this is an inherent limitation of this type of investigation.

## **METHODOLOGY**

There has been a growing realisation of the potential benefits of qualitative research within sport psychology (Streat, 1998). An increasing number of research articles and presentations demonstrate this recognition (Gould et al., 1993; Kreiner-Phillips & Orlick, 1993; Parker, 1994). In addition to a quantitative approach, the current study also had a quasi-qualitative dimension with the purpose of deepening the body of knowledge, rather than to generalize. This involves one-on-one interviews with ex-athletes.

Because of the potential impact of research in qualitative research, it is vital that bias and assumptions be explored at the beginning of the research endeavour (Parker, 1994). Every reasonable effort should be made to ensure that any biases would not affect the study. The merit, goodness, or strength of qualitative research may be indicated by describing some objectives this kind of inquiry can help to achieve.

Using interviews and observational data, can promote an understanding of the process by which events and actions occur.

## **Participants and procedures**

Retired high-performance track and field athletes with national and international competitive experience served as subjects for this study. These athletes represented South Africa and other countries in various international events (e.g., Olympic Games, World Championships, World Cups, team tours) and also took part in their national track and field championships.

## **Data collection**

Participants completed an adapted version of the *Sports Career Termination Questionnaire (SCTQ) II* (Čečić-Erpič, 2000). The *SCTQ II* assesses characteristics of the sport-career termination process, evaluating the characteristics of an active sport career, sport-career termination, transition to post-sport life, and adaptation to post-sport life. It was developed on the basis of a qualitative study conducted with former elite Slovene athletes who had terminated their careers (Čečić-Erpič, 1998).

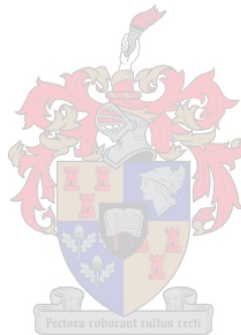
In-depth, open-ended interviewing was employed in this study. Kvale (1983) states that the interview may be the most effective and powerful technique for gaining insight into another person's experience. Parker (1994) believes that the first and major portion of the interview centres around a phenomenological interview technique. Phenomenological interviewing is characterised as an open-ended interview that is centred around one guiding question. In this case the question is "Tell me what your life has been like since you ran your last race". The goal of the phenomenological interview is to give the

participant control of the course of the interview with the intent of ascertaining what is important about an experience of the interviewee.

Each participant was presented with an identical sequence of open-ended questions. The interviews were taped-recorded and later transcribed verbatim.

## **Data analysis**

The data were systematically explored for content and meaning. This entailed breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing the data. The patterns, themes and categories originated in the data. In other words, they emerged from the data rather than being pre-determined prior to data collection and analysis.



## **Chapter Two**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **HISTORICAL AND CONCEPTUAL MATTERS**

Career termination received little attention in most countries prior to 20 years ago. This may have been due to a large extent to the fact that elite athletes were more fully intergraded into the basic fabric of society than they are now. Specifically, due to limited technology they did not receive a high level of media scrutiny (Ogilvie & Taylor, 1996).

In contrast, the schism between elite athletes and the general population has grown wider in recent years. It is quite likely that the beginning of the interest in sport retirement starts with specific requests by coaches and sport federations that were related to the adjustment problems of some athletes after retiring from top-level competitive sport. Moreover, it has to be taken into account that in modern sport some athletes have become 'media-athletes', which can increase their social significance (Torregrosa et al., 2004). In addition, (Torregrosa, Boixados, Valiente & Cruz, 2004) the current financial rewards of being an elite athlete, whether professional or 'amateur' further separate them from 'normal' people (Newman, 1989). These factors then create a lifestyle that is highly different from the one that they might have to adopt following career termination. The adaptation problems that some retiring athletes encounter, have created in some countries a 'public opinion' that retiring from elite sport is normally associated with adjustment problems in everyday life. These factors concern professionals, managers and institutions. As a consequence, an increased interest in the phenomenon of retirement from sport has emerged in different countries with different theoretical perspectives, but with comparable results (Lavallee & Wylleman, 2000; Stephan, Torregrosa & Sanchez, 2007; Wylleman, Alfermann & Lavallee, 2004).

Previous works cited vary in terms of theoretical and methodological approaches, athletes' performance levels, samples sizes and percentages of athletes reporting problems related to retirement (Seiler, Anders & Irhinger, 1998; Wylleman et al., 2004). However, at the same time, they all share the characteristic of being retrospective in that all samples are composed of athletes already retired from top-level sport.

In the recent few years, researchers have widened their field of interest from retirement to career transitions in sport. Lally (2007) re-examine the relationship between identity and athletic retirement using a longitudinal, protective design. Indirect indicators of this include the recent publication of a book providing an overview of empirical, theoretical and applied perspectives on sport career transitions (Lavalley & Wylleman, 2000), as well as the organisation of symposia and communication sessions at various congresses. Referring to theoretical perspectives on sport career transactions Ogilvie and Taylor (1993) as well as Lavalley (2000) suggest that those cited most in the literature include social gerontological, thanatological, and transition approaches. The main difference between these approaches is that whereas the first two conceptualise retirement from sport as a singular event, transition models characterize retirement as a process.

According to the model of human adaptation to transition as proposed by Schlossberg and associates (Schlossberg, 1981; Schlossberg, Waters & Goodman, 1995), a transition is an "event or non-event which results in a change in assumptions about oneself and the world and this requires a corresponding change in assumptions about oneself and the world and this requires a corresponding change in one's behaviour and relationships" (Schlossberg, 1981, p. 5). Although the onset of a transition may be linked to one identifiable event or non-event (e.g., an event that an individual had expected but which did not occur, thereby altering one's life), transitions are a process that are influenced by four major sets of factors referred as situation,

self, support, and strategic factors. Chronologically, the transition has three major parts: approaching transition (transition identification), taking stock of coping resources (potential resources, e.g., assets or liabilities derives from support, situation, self, and strategies), and taking charge of transition (strengthening resources) (Schlossberg et al., 1995).

The conceptual model of athletic retirement proposed by Ogilvie and Taylor (1993) provides a comprehensive overview of how different factors influence sport career transition (SCT). The quality of SCT is affected by causes of sport career termination, factors related to the adaptation to retirement, and available resources. Between athletic antecedent and mediating factors, that determine the quality of SCT process, the conceptual model emphasizes the voluntaries and gradualness of the sport career termination, the degree of athletic identity, the evaluation of athletic achievement, and the planning of a post-sport career life (Cecić-Erpič, 2003). The SCT process is also influenced by non-athletic transitions (i.e., the events that occur in the athlete's psychosocial life and are in essence not related to sport (Wylleman, Lavalée & Alfermann, 1990). They have an impact on SCT and on adaptation to life after retirement (Cecić-Erpič, 2000). Transition out of competitive sport is followed by an adaptation on a psychological, social, physical, and socio-economical level (Cecić-Erpič, 2000, 2002). Whereas earlier studies focused on the adaptation to the difficulties and traumatism that followed career termination (Ogilvie & Taylor, 1993) more recent research has indicated that retirement from competitive sport should be viewed as a life event that influences former athletes' well-being and development (Alfermann, 2000; Cecić-Erpič, 2000; Stambulova, 1994). SCT is comprehended as a continuing process, and at this point it is not clear whether SCT is composed of different sub-phases or types (Cecić-Erpič, 2003).



## **Daniel Levinson's Conception of adult development**

Daniel Levinson (1990) proposed an influential stage theory of adult development that can aid us in organizing our examination of adult career paths and lifestyles. The stages, which were formulated from interviews with 40 men aged 35 to 45 from four occupational groups (executives, biologist, novelists, and factory workers), describe the unfolding of what Levinson called an individual's life structure. This is an overall pattern of life that reflects the person's priorities and relationships with other people and the larger society. Environmental factors will influence the specifics of an adult's life, but the basic pattern of building, questioning, and rebuilding will still be evident under the surface. Levinson's perspectives has gained much attention as a way of conceptualizing how adults progress in their careers and how they change as individuals. This then relates to other priorities such as sport in an individuals's life structure.

Levinson (1990) theorized that this process of building a life structure and then questioning it during a transition period then continues throughout middle and later adulthood.

## **Achievement development during adult years**

Highly achievement-orientated children tend to become highly achievement-orientated adults and achievement-orientated young adults tend to remain relatively achievement orientated in middle age. The characteristics motives that we acquire in childhood and adolescence and carry into adulthood influence our decision and life outcomes.

It appears that adults' achievement-related motives are far more affected by their life situations or social contexts than by the aging process (Singelman, Shaffer, 1995). Adults of different ages are often

more alike than they are different, and people tend to retain their characteristic levels of achievement-motivation over the years, much as they retain many personality traits. There is certainly little evidence that elderly people inevitably lose their motivation to pursue important goals. Moreover, those elder adults who do have a strong sense of purpose and direction and feel they are achieving their goals enjoy greater physical and psychological well-being than those who do not (Hooker & Sigler, 1993). Throughout the life span, then, we seem to derive great satisfaction from setting and achieving goals, large and small (Sigelman & Shaffer, 1995).

### **CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENT INVOLVEMENT IN SPORT**

Initial participation in sport for most people happens on the playground, within a social rather than a competitive emphasis. Increased involvement is brought about by intrinsic factors and for some athletes, the intrinsic value of sport remains until retirement. To experience this loss upon retirement is therefore very difficult. For other athletes, early intrinsic motivators are replaced by extrinsic factors (e.g., income, prestige, expectations of privilege and opportunities), and these losses may also prove difficult. Because of the potential for the intrinsic and extrinsic value of sport to be lost at retirement, it is necessary to understand a young athlete's developing motives for continued participation in sport (Baillie & Danish, 1992).

Gould and Horn (1984) suggest six motives that affect sport involvement in children ages 8-19 years. They are of the opinion that children enjoy sport because of the potential for improving skills, having fun, interacting with friends, experiencing certain thrills and pleasures, achieving and maintaining a fair level of fitness, and achieving success in a desirable realm. As children move into adolescence and the pressures for sport achievement become greater, there may be a shift from internal to external motives.

Csikszentmihalyi (1975) and Nicholls (1980) maintain that internal motivation is more likely to be durable and positive.

Ogilvie and Tutko (1971) suggest that sport participation is more likely to build characters than character. Some researchers have found a negative element in sport participation, but others have found a wide base of positive effect of high school sport participation (Lawther, 1972; Schendel, 1965). It is important to note that findings are not incompatible and may reflect the specific experiences of select groups of athletes.

### **SPORT PARTICIPATION OF TERTIARY STUDENT ATHLETES**

Several studies have focused on the value that sport participation holds for the student-athlete and on the purported effect of that participation on career planning. Evidence of the possible influence of intercollegiate sport participation on the development of career options is found in the study by Kennedy and Dimick (1987) of college football and basketball players. These authors suggest that athletes in revenue-producing sport may be unprepared to take advantage of one of the most highly valued aspects of the college experience—the initiation and development of viable vocational plans (Baillie & Danish, 1992).

Use of the term transition was raised in the study of intercollegiate athletes undertaken by Greendorfer and Blinde (1985). Although the issues faced by college athletes may be substantively different from those faced by professional athletes (Lapchick & Malekoff, 1987; Ogilvie & Howe, 1982), the study by Greendorfer and Blinde (1985) pointed out a process of adjustment through which college athletes pass. In response to a retrospective questionnaire administered to more than 1 000 male and female former athletes, Greendorfer and Blinde (1985) found a trend towards the decreasing significance of sport and the increasing significance of education as athletes move through the collegiate system. Although more than 80% of the

subjects rates sport as “very” or “extremely” important in their first college year, these figures were 20% lower for the final year. Conversely, ratings of the importance of education rose from 50% of the male and 70% of the female respondents reporting “very” or “extremely” important in their first year to 70% and 80%, respectively, in their final year. Unfortunately, there are no data regarding such a shift in athletes who later may have continued sport at a professional level.

Studies by Blann (1985), Greendorfer and Blinde (1985) and Kennedy and Dimick (1987), suggest that first- and second-year student-athletes are heavily invested in the role of athlete, to the detriment of their career development. However, this shifts in the next two years as education gains significance. Similar findings were obtained by other researchers such as Castiglione (1982) and Sowa and Gressard (1983).

In a study of 38 Division-I male basketball players, Adler and Adler (1985) found that academic success became less salient as the athletes moved through university. It must be, however, noted that this was a longitudinal study that produced different results from the findings of Greendorfer and Blinde (1985). The student-athlete’s attitude towards education is important. The student-athlete who identifies himself/herself with the athletic role may be an example of premature role foreclosure (Chartrand & Lent, 1987), limiting future options and increasing the potential for distress at retirement from sport.

Greendorfer and Kleiber (1982) describe three potential results of retirement from sport:

1. Downward mobility, perception of failure, or loss of status.
2. Alcoholism or drug dependency (Hill & Lowe, 1974).
3. Emotional and psychosocial breakdowns (Hearle, 1975; McPherson, 1980; Mihovilovic, 1968).

Greendorfer and Blinde (1985) and Kleiber, Greendorfer, Blinde and Sandall (1987) found significantly lower scores on life satisfaction variables for athletes whose sport participation ended as a result of injury. This finding has been observed in other athletic populations (McPherson, 1980; Mihovilovic, 1986; Ogilvie & Howe, 1982).

The literature shows that there is a large variation in the behaviours and attitudes of athletes. An individual's sport history must be understood in order to make useful predictions regarding the quality of an athlete's retirement from competitive sport (Baillie & Danish, 1992). It is important to note that depending upon the level of involvement of athletes in sport and the time frame being examined relative to retirement, very different results may be found in studies of sport termination (Crook & Robertson, 1991). On the one hand, studies that examine high school and college/university athletes several years after their retirement from sport, typically offer support for the notion that retirement from sport does not necessarily involve trauma nor require special adjustment (Blinde & Greendorfer, 1985; Dubois, 1980; Greendorfer & Blinde, 1985; Kleiber, Greendorfer, Blinde & Sandall, 1987; Otto & Alwin, 1977; Phillips & Schafer, 1971; Snyder & Barber, 1979).

Studies that examined professional and elite athletes immediately after their retirement support the view that retirement from sport may be traumatic (Hearle, 1975; Lerch, 1982; McLaughlin, 1981; McPherson, 1980; Orlick, 1980; Svoboda & Vanek, 1981; Werthner & Orlick, 1981, 1986).

Many athletes' involvement in sport brings about a positive influence. On the other hand some athletes become overly interested in their status and uniqueness as members of an elite, privileged class. For these athletes, a significant proportion of their identity becomes closely linked to this role, and the end of a career in sport may lead to

a range of negative outcomes. It is important, however to consider the suggestion of McPherson (1980) that early identification with the athletic role is often reinforced so that the label becomes part of the individual. Giving up that label when physical skills decline is synonymous with the loss of an important attribute of the self, and, in this light the resulting issues and difficulties in role transition should not be considered unusual.

## **RETIREMENT THEORIES APPLICABLE TO SPORT**

Blinde and Greendorfer (1985) argue that the application of gerontological and thanatological theories to retirement from sport may be limiting our perspective. Retirement is an event that occurs within an overall life history, inclining socialisation into the role of the athlete, disengagement, and movement into new roles. Sport retirement is a relatively new research area, and although important differences exist between the athletic population and the traditional worker population (e.g., age at retirement, salience of the job within other life roles), it is believed that consideration of existing gerontological theories may be informative (Baillie & Danish, 1992).

Sport psychologists can draw from the fields of social gerontology—the study of the aging process and of thanatology—the study of the process of dying and death.

## **Transition research in disability and death**

The sport retirement literature has also drawn upon the results of work with individuals who have suffered disabling injury or who face terminal illnesses (Baillie & Danish, 1992). The validity of the analogy of athlete role loss and personal health loss seems acceptable. For an athlete, the loss of a career in competitive sport marks the end of the chosen profession, the decline of once-unparalleled physical skill, and

the termination of a livelihood. Depending on the degree of self-esteem the athlete derives from participation in sport, for the emotionally unprepared athlete, the loss may be as great as any disability or terminal illness (Lerch, 1982; Rosenberg, 1982).

At the end of their sport careers, some athletes may also experience feelings related to the long-term sacrifices that were necessary for competitive excellence. Family, career, and financial goals may have been set aside. Suddenly these social costs of sport involvement become additional factors in the adjustment of retiring. Fear of the future, of being unable to catch up, and of being unable to find a new, satisfying life-style may be prevalent (Baillie & Danish, 1992).

It is important to note that stage theories propose a process that suitably accounts for individual variations and responses. Kübler-Ross (1969), for example, specifically commented that her model includes provision for backward relapses, forward progressions, and variable timing.

The most notable stage theory was presented by Kübler-Ross (1969) as a result of her work and study with patients and families where a diagnosis of terminal cancer had been made. However, permutations of this particular set of stages existed in the literature prior to the work of Kübler-Ross, and others have shown modifications since the publication of her book, *On death and dying*.

Falek and Britton (1974) present a four-stage model of adjustment that they referred to as a “coping sequence”. The model is said to be applicable to a wide range of stressors, not only to a disease or terminal illness. They propose that the coping sequence is a “universal reaction to any change in the established steady state great enough to produce stress in the organism and occurs from infancy to adulthood in response to minor as well as major traumas” (p. 5). The four stages were presented as:



1. Shock and denial
2. Anxiety
3. Anger and/or guilt
4. Depression

Other authors (Kerr, 1961; Kübler-Ross, 1969; Werthner & Orlick, 1982) however included an additional stage that the four stages proposed by Falek and Britton (1974), namely a period of adjustment or acceptance that follows the stage of depression.

### **Thanatological theory and athletic retirement**

This concept, not related to biological death, focuses on how members of a group treat an individual who has recently left the group. Social death is characterized as social isolation and rejection from the former in group. In Kuypers and Bengston's (1973) social breakdown theory (cited in Rosenberg, 1981), it is assumed that external labelling becomes more likely when a role is lost. If the role label is unfavourable, social withdrawal is likely. This withdrawal and unfavourable labelling may begin a cycle, promoting further withdrawal unless a process of social reconstruction occurs when one's self concept is strengthened. Self-image may be enhanced by increased self-reliance or through some form of supportive counselling (Baillie & Danish, 1992). When termination not only shows the athlete that his/her best is now worthless but also illustrates the individual's possible social deficits, the likelihood of negative external labelling is high. However, this 'social death' approach is not universally accepted. One of the reasons for this is the obvious fact that athletic retirees continue to function in society, albeit in a different social role (Wylleman, et al., 2004).

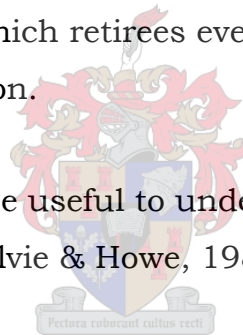


## **Human grieving model**

A more popular use of thanatology involved describing athletic retirement in the series of stages experienced when facing death is conceptualized within the framework of the human grieving model proposed by Kübler-Ross (1969), including:

1. Denial and isolation, in which athletes initially refuse to acknowledge the inevitability of their career termination.
2. Anger, inevitability in which retiring athletes become disturbed at the overall changing situation.
3. Bargaining, in which they try to negotiate for a lengthened career in sport.
4. Depression, in which they experience a distress reaction to retirement.
5. Acceptance, which retirees eventually come to accept their career transition.

This model has proven to be useful to understand the experiences of the terminated athlete (Ogilvie & Howe, 1986).



## **Social gerontological theory and athletic retirement**

Sport sociology has tended to neglect athletic retirement, most likely due to the fact that the act of retirement severs the athlete's connection with sport insofar as his/her active participation for pay is concerned. Despite the availability of alternative definitions (e.g., symptomatic age, functional age), gerontologists have typically viewed retirement in a chronological context (Rosenberg, 1981). As a consequence, very little has been applied to the younger retiree—in this case the athlete.

For the professional athlete, retirement from sport is not a conclusion, but often a major, perhaps jarring, shift in occupational status and mobility. Here retirement and aging are synonymous only within the

context of the sport itself, where athletic' "life expectancy" and productive years differ dramatically from those to which demographers, gerontologists and other social scientists commonly refer (Rosenberg, 1981).

There are parallels in the meaning of retirement for the athletes and the non-athlete. For both, retirement can have positive or negative connotations (e.g., a well-earned rest or an end to one's social usefulness). For both it is a major stress point in life, but perhaps for different reasons. It is here where the dissimilarities become manifest.

A retiring athlete at the age of 30 or 35 has most of his working life ahead of him/her. Athletic retirement does not automatically initiate the "post-productive" part of life (Rosenberg, 1981). In sport there is no mandatory retirement age which one can anticipate and plan for. Some exceptional athletes can perform at professional levels in major team sport into their forties or even fifties. But skill and strength desert others at an earlier age. Injuries can instantly end an athletic career, with no warning or time for preparation. Unlike the non-athlete, this is a major reason cited for retirement among athletes (Mihovilovic, 1968).

There are other reasons for which retirement can be a source of personal disorganizing for the athlete according to Rosenberg (1981):

1. The myth that a grateful management will ease the retiring athlete into a second career, either within or outside the sport structure. This assertion is at best anachronistic. Only the best can include post-playing-career opportunities into their contacts. These are most likely coaching, scouting, public relations or broadcasting work for the club.
2. The club tends to shield the athlete from the normal anxieties and social responsibilities of leaving home and/or school. Hotels are reserved, transportation arranged, food provided, laundry

done. Such protectiveness during the young adult years may prove detrimental when the athlete finds the sport *in loco parentis* apron strings cut.

3. The work schedule of the professional team is unlike that of other occupations. Switching from seasonal, short-hours employment to a 9-to-5 job may exacerbate adjustment problems.
4. Unlike non-athletes, the athlete (with very few exceptions) must plan for a second career. Despite the lengthy preparation for an athletic career which matches or exceeds the length of preparation for careers in the non-athletic professions, many athletes will not be able to use their developed skills for their entire working life.
5. The timing of retirement for most workers is at least somewhat under the individual's control. In any case, it can be anticipated and planned for. Injury or other factors can affect instant retirement for the athlete. This problem is made more serious by two factors:
  - The disproportionate number of retirements from sport due to injury (compared to non-sport occupations), and
  - The apparent lack of institutionalized pre-retirement counselling programmes in the professional sport structure.

Thus the retiring athlete, who faces a loss in prestige and socio-economic status, who often lacks a university degree, who is unlikely to have skills suitable for a satisfactory second career, who must alter his/her daily schedule and take on new social and family responsibilities, is a prime prospect for less-than-successful adjustment to retirement (Rosenberg, 1981).

## Applications

The question is: Which of these theories, if any, applies to the retiring professional athlete? Is there a “best” theoretical approach with which to delineate, explain and perhaps there a “best” theoretical approach with which to delineate, explain, and perhaps theories in sequence.

By recommending that older athletes step aside for the younger and by proposing a mutual and inevitable withdrawal of society, the *disengagement theory* suggests that retiring athletes heed the dictum that “youth will be saved”, accept their diminishing skills with all the implications, and relinquish a major life role. This recipe for successful adjustment to retirement has two flaws.

First, the proposed attitudes and actions violate the competitiveness and achievement-based life philosophy which have brought the athletes status, prestige and success. Thus, voluntary disengagement is unlikely.

Second, unlike the retirees described by disengagement theory, the athlete will in all likelihood replace his/her athletic role with another occupational role. Thus, the athlete is disengaging from sport but not from the norm of visible productivity. In society’s point of view he/she is not yet “out to pasture.”

The *disengagement theory* (Cummings, Dean, Newell & McCaffrey, 1960) would assume that the athlete and the sport structure mutually withdraw from one another. To the contrary, anecdotal accounts indicate that the tendency is for the athlete to try to hang on to the sport long after his/her skills have begun to deteriorate (Jordan, 1975; Kahn, 1971; Kramer, 1969). Therefore the distinction between voluntary and involuntary disengagement must be examined with regard to the athlete.

The typical successful athlete is a person who has prevailed against the odds, and has overcome adversity and “made it” in a fiercely competitive world. Such a person is not the personality type who is likely to voluntarily relinquish the sport role in favour of focusing, as disengagement theory would have it, on self-concern. There are ample indications that a great portion of athletes are involuntarily retired, often due to injury. Thus, disengagement theory would mislead, suggesting that the happy retired athlete will be the one who needs not replace the lost role, when available evidence shows this is not the case. Even when athletes retire voluntarily, it is usually not only because their skills and efforts no longer provide the rewards they once did, but also alternatives to sport beginning to look more attractive.

The engagement theory is a structural functional theory. It tells the athlete how to leave the game without making waves for the sport establishment. But it fails to adequately consider the individual consequences and, especially in the instance of the young retiree, the need to replace the loss of such a major role.

The *activity theory* (Havighurst & Albrecht, 1953) comfortably fits athletic retirement. It points to the need to replace the lost sport role. The major criticism of this approach is that the belief that as people age they are often less active but nonetheless happy and well adjusted to retirement, does not apply to the average retiring athlete; in fact it is usually the athlete who significantly decreases his/her activities who is the unsuccessful adjuster. Successful retiring athletes will find an activity or role to substitute for their athletic role.

The *continuity theory* (Atchley, 1980) has relevance for retiring athletes in two ways. First, by noting the improbability of continuity and therefore of successful adjustment—if the lost role was a major one and the remaining roles are seen as less meaningful. It suggests that the retiring athlete may be in for a difficult time: his/her athletic role

is an extremely important one and has probably been so since childhood.

Secondly, continuity provides insight into the tendency of athletes to stay in the game (e.g., minor leagues) despite their declining abilities. They may not have suitable alternative roles in which to spend time and energy. By remaining in the game, despite the demotion is better than totally losing the athletic role. This consideration of alternatives seems to lead back to the concepts and propositions of exchange theory. While one could argue that an athlete who becomes a coach, scout, or manager will find some continuity of meaningfulness, this continuity appears to be achieved by substituting one role for another.

The *social breakdown theory* (Kuypers & Bengston, 1973) is quite useful in analyzing adjustment to athletic retirement. We all rely to some degree (and most of us to quite an extent) on external validation of our self-image. Being recognized as a professional athlete possibly builds a healthy self-image and loss of that role—on which so much of one's social self was dependant—forces athletes to redefine themselves. In many cases the redefinition will be less favourable, if not outright negative. A person's athletic prowess usually dominates any consideration of personality, education, maturity, and non-sport aptitudes. Upon retiring, the typical athlete is made painfully aware of his/her now-inadequate athletic skills and his/her lack of congruence with his/her age peers, many of whom have college degrees and families and are already advancing up the career ladder. The athlete may accept this negative social redefinition and perceive it to be accurate and correct, allowing his existing skills to atrophy (e.g., not bothering to complete his/her education, not caring to enter a job training programme where she/he is noticeably older than the other trainees). One thing worse than being an ex-professional athlete is being an ex-professional athlete with no other skills and nothing to do.

Social reconstruction can play a large part here. Since the athlete depends largely on physical skills, he/she may need resocialisation into a work world where jobs are increasingly found in the tertiary (i.e., service) sector. Sport unions or associations could periodically sponsor pre-retirement clinics to inform athletes about what awaits them upon retirement and provide general strategies for “re-entering the mainstream”.

Similarly, retirement counsellors could be retained or brought in to consult with individual athletes who are nearing retirement. These and other interventions strategies could ensure that the athlete will phase out rather than drop out of sport. Mandatory pre-retirement seminars for all athletes would guarantee some preparation for even those who suffer career-ending injuries early on.

The *exchange theory* (Dowd, 1975) is best used to give athletes a perspective on what is happening, or will happen to their relationship with their sport over time. Their major asset or resource, which is their physical prowess, will inevitably deteriorate, and their ability to control their relationship with their sport will decline with it. The only question is whether this will occur suddenly, as with an injury or more gradually as ability fades with advancing age. The athlete’s power derives from his/her ability to exchange talents for meaningful rewards from his/her employer. It is paramount that the athlete understands that his/her employer has little if any personal interest in him/her. Athletes have talent—a scarce resource desired by the team. Once they lose this talent they are likely to be discarded.

It is unlikely that professional sport teams will feel any obligation to prepare their athletes for the “inevitable metathesis” (Hill & Lowe, 1974). Thus, it is the responsibility of the athletes and their agents and sport federation representatives to provide pre-retirement counselling of not only an economic but also a social, psychological



and occupational nature. This is necessary to prevent the prevalence of “socially broken down” ex-athletes (Rosenberg, 1981).

The earliest view of athletic retirement as a transition was delineated by Hill and Lowe (1974). These researchers applied Sussman’s (1971) analytic model of the sociological study of retirement to termination from sport. The model of *human adaptation to transition* was proposed by Schlossberg (1981; 1984).

A number of researchers used this model in an attempt to understand the career transition process of athletes (Baillie & Danish, 1992; Parker, 1994; Sinclair & Orlick, 1994; Swain, 1991).

As empirical findings revealed that the adjustment process to post-athletic life was mediated, among others, by the voluntariness with which athletes retired and their preparation for life after sport (Alfermann & Gross, 1997), the focus of research gradually broadened to the pre-and post-career ending phases. While transition models incorporated a wider range of influence than gerontological and thanatological models, and allowed for the possibility of both positive and negative adjustment (Crook & Robertson, 1991), they were still found to lack operational detail of the specific components related to the adjustment process among athletes (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994).

More comprehensive conceptual models of adaptation to career transition were consequently proposed (Gordon, 1995; Kerr & Dachyshyn, 2000; Ogilvie & Taylor, 1993; Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994; Taylor & Ogilvie, 1998). For example, the domain-specific model which examines the entire course of the career transition process includes:



1. Causal factors that initiate the career transition process.
2. Developmental factors related to transition adaptation.
3. Coping recourses that affect the responses to career transitions.
4. Quality of adjustment to career transition.
5. Possible treatment issues for distressful reactions to career transition.

Other conceptualizations include, among others, retirement processes among elite, female gymnasts as a transition consisting of the phases of “Retirement” (the actual withdrawal from sport), “Nowhere Land” (period of uncertainty and disorientation), and “New Beginnings” (Kerr & Dachyshyn, 2000).

During the late 1990’s attention shifted from one particular transition (i.e., the career termination), toward a more life-span perspective of the athletic involvement. This shift in perspective runs parallel with research from the fields of talent development, deliberate practice, and career development. Early work on talent develop included Bloom, (1995) identification of stages on the way talented individuals (with the fields of science, art, and sport) development. This route of talented development in sport includes the following stages:

1. The imitation stage where young athletes are introduced to organized sport and during which they are identified as talented athletes.
2. The developmental stage during which athletes become more dedicated to their sport and where the amount of training and level of specialization is increased.
3. The mastery or perfection stage in which athletes reach their highest level of athletic proficiency.

From the perspective of development of deliberate play and practice, Côté (1999) identified the stages of sampling, specializing, investment

and mastery or performance. While these perspectives could be linked to the transitions faced by athletes, Stambulova (1994; 2000) developed a stage model based upon her research on career transitions among Russian athletes. Stambulova considered the athletic career as consisting of predictable stages and transitions, namely:

1. Beginning of the sport specialization.
2. Transition to intensive training in the chosen sport.
3. Transition to high-achievement and adult sport.
4. Transition from amateur to professional sport.
5. Transition from culmination to the end of the sport career.
6. Termination of the sport career.

### **TERMINATION OF THE ATHLETIC CAREER AS A TRANSITION**

According to Orlick (1980) athletes can set up unrealistic expectations which at the end can hurt and destroy them. Athletes are sometimes brought under the impression that they are vitally important because of their rankings in the world. What happens when that ranking is taken away? The athlete may feel like a “vegetable” (Orlick, 1980).

A concern arises about a “marriage” to sport that is all-consuming. How does the athlete feel if there is a break up of this partnership? Orlick (1980, p. 272) suggests the following perception: “I’m no longer good enough to be here and without this I’m nothing”.

For many world-class athletes, sport is the only focus in their life while at the top of their career. Their lives become unbalanced for an unhealthy length of time. It is, however, important to distinguish between “the most important thing” and the “only thing” in life. Both allow you to pursue excellence, but only one allows you to do so without sacrificing the rest of your life (Orlick, 1990).

Whenever one dimension of life, such as sport or work, weighs too much for too long a period, something is out of balance when one no longer has time for play or no longer know how to play (Orlick, 1980). When sport or work dominates everything in life for too long, something suffers, such as health, family life and personal growth.

Balance is the key for athletes to keep in mind when they pursue a single-minded path to greatness. Orlick (1980, p. 168) proposes that...

*Balance implies that there is time for developing the playful side of life and time for relaxed intimacy with others, that athletes are treated as worthy and loved humans, apart from their performances; and that someone really cares when athletes are in the process of adapting to other meaningful pursuits.*

### **Causes of career termination among athletes**

The causes of termination of an athletic career are formed most frequently to be function of four factors:

1. Age
2. Deselection
3. Injury
4. Free choice

These factors can have psychological, social and physical ramifications in the career-termination process (Ogilvie & Taylor, 1993).

#### **Age**

Age, or more specifically, the decline in performance due to advancing age, is typically considered to be a primary cause of retirement. Athletes who feel their retirement was largely due to declining performance experience more subsequent difficulties with the lack of self-confidence (Sinclair & Orlick, 1993). Anecdotal accounts of former elite athletes highlight the role of age in career termination (Kahn,

1972; Kramer, 1969). Research findings by Mihovilovic (1968) on Yugoslavian professional soccer players, Weinberg and Arond (1952) on boxers and Svoboda and Vanek (1982) on Czechoslovakian national team athletes, indicate that age plays a dominant role in athletic retirement.

The athlete's ability to compete at elite level is largely a function of maintaining his/her physical capabilities at a competitive level and is therefore more influenced by a slow deterioration, which is a natural part of the maturation process. Psychological implications of ageing in sport are related to a decrease in motivation for training and competing (Werthner & Orlick, 1986), and in a change of values and priorities (Cecić-Erpič, 1998, 2000; Svoboda & Vanek, 1982). The ageing process in sport is often related to a loss of social status in the sport environment and to a decline of self-confidence in related social activities (Sinclair & Orlick, 1993). A high socio-educational status, which may influence the occupational opportunities in a post-sport career life (Cecić-Erpič, 1998), also has a significant positive influence on the quality of retirement from sport (McPherson, 1980; Svoboda & Vanek, 1982; Werthner & Orlick, 1986; Wylleman, De Knop, Menkehorst, Theeboom & Annerel, 1993).

Changes in the ability of athletes have implications for both young and older athletes. Athletes who participate in sport such as gymnastics and figure skating, have to deal with the physical changes that accompany puberty, such as height and weight gain. This leads to a situation where they find it literally impossible to execute skills that were previously a matter of routine. This often forces them into a premature conclusion of their careers.

The research findings of Stones and Kozma (1981, 1984) indicate that there exists a consistent decrement in peak performance with age. These changes appear to be primarily linear at younger ages, but increase in rapidity after age 60. With increasing age performance

deteriorates more rapidly. Ericsson (1990) suggests that the decline in best performance in the older age group is often smaller than the decline in average performance. This suggests that those individuals who are very skilled and maintain high levels of training will evidence a smaller decline or slower rate of decline than those who train less with age.

Werthner and Orlick (1986) found that as athletes become older, they may feel that they have reached their goals in sport. On the other hand, Starkes, Weir, Singh, Hodges and Kent (1999) stated that when athletes have reached Master's age, they present a uniquely motivated group of older adults. They have far greater family and work responsibilities than younger athletes, and have less access to coaches and facilities, yet they continue to devote large amounts of personal time and effort to training and maintaining high sport-commitment levels.

Athletes who feel that their retirement was largely due to declining performance experience more subsequent difficulties with lack of self-confidence and feelings of loss of status than those who did not retire for this reason (Sinclair & Orlick, 1990). When athletes no longer performed to their "normal" capabilities, they tended to attribute the weaker performance to personal failure. Not being able to compete with the same intensity may have an impact upon the sense of self. Thus, athletes who feel that they are no longer capable of maintaining their elite status may also feel that they are not capable of doing anything well.

### **Deselection**

Ogilvie and Howe (1982) stated that competitive sport, unlike other areas of life in which people may continue to function regardless of level of competence, rely on the Darwinian philosophy of "survival of the fittest". This viewpoint places great value on the individual who survives, but pays little attention to those who are deselected.

Svoboda and Vanek (1982) found that deselection is one of the harsh processes that occur at every level of competitive sport.

It is that same Darwinian philosophy that prevails throughout high school, university, elite amateur and professional sport, and the current deselection process is a natural consequence of such a philosophy (Ogilvie & Taylor, 1993). Statistics confirm the reality of attrition factors within the competitive sport world. For example, Ogilvie and Howe (1982; 1986) found that 5% of high school football players receive university scholarships and, of these only 10% have an opportunity to play in the National Football League. The average professional career span of basketball and football players is 4-5 years (Ogilvie & Howe, 1986). It is imperative that the ramifications for those who have been deselected must be looked into, particularly those who want to continue participating (Ogilvie & Taylor, 1993).

Mihovilovic (1968) conducted a study that specifically looked into the role of deselection among elite-amateur and professional athletes. He found that 7% of the Yugoslavian professional soccer players polled indicated that they were forced out by younger players. The athlete must do something else that requires a major psychological adaptation—the transition to a life where he/she is no longer an elite athlete. It is difficult to imagine the feelings experienced by a 16-year-old gymnast, realizing that she would never be the best at something again, or miss the feeling of her body mastering a complex move or feeling her speed or strength (Balaque, 1999). Add to this the fact that some of the gymnasts competing at the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta reported being distracted and sad even before the Games by realization that “this was it” and that part of their lives, a very important one since early childhood, would be over (Balaque, 1999). From this perspective, to hold out the prospect of a potential career in professional football, basketball or gymnastics as a viable option for any child could be regarded to be the height of deceit (Ogilvie & Taylor, 1993).

## Injury

American figures regarding sport injuries have indicated that between 3 to 5 million recreational and competitive athletes experience a sport-related injury (Kraus & Conroy, 1989). Andersen and Williams (1988) stated that there has been a significant increase in psychological research directed at finding more clarity into factors that cause injury. Questions that constantly appear and seeking answers are: What is the relationship between injury and other life crises? Are there injury-prone athletes? What role does injury play in the career termination of athletes (Ogilvie & Taylor, 1993)? Many researchers have suggested that injuries may result in serious distress manifested in depression, substance abuse, and suicidal tendencies (Ogilvie & Howe, 1982; Werthner & Orlick, 1986). Elkin (1981) found that career-ending injuries may cause athletes to experience identity crises, social withdrawal, fear, anxiety, and loss of self-esteem (Rotella & Heyman, 1986).

The complexity of the problem of sport injuries needs to become a focus area to answer these important questions (Duda, Smart & Tappe, 1989; Rotella & Heyman, 1986). Research has shown that injuries are a significant cause of retirement for between 14 and 32% of the athletes examined (Allison & Meyer, 1988; Hare, 1971; Mihovilovic, 1968; Svoboda & Vanek, 1982; Werthner & Orlick, 1986).

Ogilvie and Taylor (1993, p. 766) make the following observation:

*The most significant factor related to injury to elite athletes that affects career termination is that athletes perform at such a high level that even a small reduction in physical capabilities may be sufficient to make them no longer competitive at that level.*

Injuries therefore don't necessarily have to be serious to end careers. Serious injuries do occur from time to time and the seriousness as

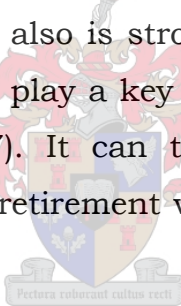


well as the time it takes to recover, contribute to the ending of a career (Feltz, 1986; Heil, 1988).

### **Free choice**

Ogilvie and Taylor (1993) mention free choice as a fourth category of causes why athletes leave competitive sport. Webb, Nasco, Riley and Headrick (1998) even dichotomise retired athletes into two categories: those whose retirement is freely chosen and those that are forced by circumstances out of their control, such as decreasing performance or injuries.

The subjective feeling of control over events is a crucial part of theories that includes social psychological theories of health and illness (Alfermann, Stambulova & Zemaityte, 2004; Seligman, 1991). The perception of control not only fosters mental health and successful development, but also is strongly correlated to heightened feeling of self-efficacy, which play a key role in behaviour change and adjustment (Bandura, 1997). It can thus be postulated that free choice as opposed to forced retirement will influence adjustment to it (Alfermann, et al., 2004).



Coakley (1983) and Blinde and Greendorfer (1985) are of the opinion that free choice is often neglected as a cause of retirement. This is certainly the most desirable of the causal factors to end a career (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994). Athletes may seek new challenges and go their own way (Werthner & Orlick, 1986). They may look for other sources of satisfaction in other areas of life or may even have a change in values (Greendorfer & Blinde, 1985; Svoboda & Vanek, 1982). Sinclair and Orlick (1993) found that the three most important reasons athletes selected for deciding to retire were the following:

1. They were tired of the lifestyle and decided that it was time to move on.
2. They had achieved their goals.
3. They had difficulties with the coaching staff



There were other reasons, but it was thought to be of lesser importance in influencing the decision to retire. Those reasons were:

1. Lack of support from family and/or friends.
2. Found a job.
3. Not selected for the team.

On a personal level, athletes may want to spend more time with family and friends, or get themselves into a new social environment (Svoboda & Vanek, 1982). Sport might also no longer provide enjoyment and fulfilment (Werthner & Orlick, 1986). There exists a body of empirical evidence that free choice is a cause for retirement among elite-amateur and professional athletes (Mihovilovic, 1968; Werthner & Orlick, 1986).

Sinclair and Orlick (1993) found that males as compared to females, tend to report both finding a job and lack of finances as important reasons for retiring.

Other causes for athletic retirement include family reasons (Mihovilovic, 1968) problems with the sport federation and coaches (Mihovilovic, 1968; Werthner & Orlick, 1968) and a lack of financial support (Werthner & Orlick, 1986).

## **SPORT PARTICIPATION AND TRANSITION TO RETIREMENT**

Transitions are inevitable and often unpredictable. Human life is characterized by these various life changes and discontinuities, or turning points (George, 1980; Schlossberg, 1984; Schlossberg et al., 1989). Transitional events include career changes, the death of a spouse, having children, moving to another city, or getting married. Every transition has the potential to be a crisis, a relief or a combination of both, depending on the individual's perception of the situation (Sinclair & Orlick, 1993).

One particular type of transition that has the potential to illuminate these complex patterns of change and stability is retirement from high-performance sport. The event of retirement, or change, is a normal consequence of elite participation. A career in sport is much shorter than most other careers or occupations, as most athletes retire, voluntary or involuntary, during their mid to late 20s or early to mid 30s. All athletes, whether they compete internationally or professionally, must eventually move from elite participation in sport into another major focus area.

Werthner and Orlick (1981) described the athlete's involvement in sport as a "living, loving relationship" and suggest that it would be difficult to lose such a relationship without experiencing a sense of loss. Baillie and Danish (1992) believed a case can be made for why the potential difficulty at retirement is one consequence of a developmental history of involvement and socialisation in sport competition. The "second" career often requires entirely different skills than those learned and perfected as an athlete and is one in which the individual rarely has the same competencies. Transitions are often said to engender identity crises and coping difficulties (Ogilvie & Howe, 1986; Orlick & Werthner 1987). As Baillie (1993, p. 403) writes "although many people seem to make the transition successfully and satisfactorily at all levels, a significant number of athletes have difficult, incomplete and traumatic retirements".

Over the past three decades, the sport-scientific community has made an effort to conceptualise the career transition process ever since a debate emerged regarding the incidence of distress experienced by retiring athletes. Several theoretical and empirical investigations have been made into athletic career termination, with various explanatory frameworks being employed to explain the phenomenon. Whereas in earlier studies the main impetus of research and practice was an assumption of adjustment difficulties and trauma that followed career

termination, nowadays a growing number of contemporary studies indicate retirement from sport as a life event that can lead to growth and development (Cecić-Erpič, 2001).

Much of the empirical research examining of the dynamics of athletic transition is grounded in a “crisis” orientation (Sinclair & Orlick, 1993). That is, the post-active days of athletes have been portrayed as traumatic and negative (Harris & Eitzen, 1971; Ogilvie & Howe, 1986), as well as dysfunctional in terms of emotional or psychological disorders which can become manifest in behaviours such as alcohol or drug addiction (Hill & Lowe, 1974; McPherson, 1977; 1980; Mihovilovic, 1968). Werthner and Orlick (1986), in their study of high-performance amateur athletes, found that the majority (66%) of these athletes encountered some difficulty in leaving their sport careers.

When considered together, these studies offer several useful points relevant to the transition from being an athlete to becoming a non-athlete. One recurring theme is that of being unprepared for retirement, either financially or emotionally (Blann & Zaichkowsky, 1986; Hearle, 1975; Mihovilovic, 1968). Related to this is the athletes’ expressed desire for changes in the process of transition, with either a more gradual, supportive retirement (Mihovilovic, 1968) or career-transition seminars (Blann & Zaichkowsky, 1986). Although Hearle (1975) found that previous participation in baseball continued to influence players, at least in their first post-major league jobs, this result was disputed by Reynolds (1981) and Lerch (1981). These authors found that the level of education, among other factors, influenced future job satisfaction among baseball and football players. As the period of time after sport participation increased, former players became more similar to the general population, with issues such as health, income, and job congruency as significant predictors of job satisfaction (Lerch, 1981; Reynolds, 1981). These studies suggest that after being socialised or accepted into sport participation, athletes seek or need a gradual process of resocialisation out of sport

and into a non-participatory environment, by means of further education (Greendorfer & Blinde, 1985) or embarking on a second career (McPherson, 1980; Mihovilovic, 1968).

Among the anecdotal reports of career issues and work with athletes, a paper by Nicholi (1987, p. 1095) raised some issues that resulted from his contact with the New England Patriots football team.

*What emotional issues does a psychiatrist encounter in a professional football team? First, one sees the full range of problems that effect many persons in the 25-35 age group-problems involving careers, broken engagements, new marriages and the control of impulses. In addition, one encounters certain problems unique to this population”.*

Nicholi (1987), in the clinical observations of the paper, noted the unusual environment in which most players have been raised, wherein parents and teachers have stretched rules to accommodate the athlete. The internal control absorbed by most adolescents is, therefore absent in most many young athletes. He wrote (p. 1096): “In one sense, athletic development has proceeded at the expense of emotional development”.

As Hill and Lowe (1974) noted; the day-to-day worries of the world are often removed from the athletes’ concern with the team. This presumably allows the athlete to focus on the contest rather than any external pressures. But when does this artificial and protected world become more damaging than helpful for the athlete?

The stunted emotional development, the general lack of development in areas other than sport, and the skewed perception of the world are liabilities that become more critical when the athlete’s role is terminated and the sense of self must be redefined. Given that up to 95% of athletes do not retire voluntary (Mihovilovic, 1968), the reality of retirement is thrust upon those most unprepared to deal with it.

## **The decision to retire**

No matter how important sporting excellence may be, it is always a short-term venture. The average life expectancy of competitors at the highest performance level is about 6 years. It is a hard climb up and a fast slide down. Sporting glory is short-lived and all athletes, including Olympic champions and professional superstars, are destined to become has-beens.

To quote from Orlick (1980, p. 169) of an athlete who had an exceptionally difficult transition.

*At the age of 16 I had a nervous breakdown and spent the following two years in and out of mental hospitals...My sport and competing was my life. One evening I had had enough and decided that the sport circus was not worth my efforts any longer. In the beginning I felt like a failure because I thought that I had given up before reaching my peak. My father, who is very ambitious, did not like to see me quit, especially because of my potential to succeed. It took me a long time to accept myself after retiring. I couldn't see daily success in everyday life. I put on weight and neglected staying in shape. It is difficult to retire because high-level competition in sport is a way of life; one has to give up everything in order to compete and travel with the team. The large step back into normal life is difficult (lack of education, no profession, no intimate relationships). On the positive side, I was a person again, not just an athlete. I had a chance to go back to school, I had more time for friends and meaningful relationships I underwent a change in values, got out of the rat race of having to be successful in order to be happy.*

Obviously, not all athletes experience such difficult retirement. Some athletes have a relatively easy transition out of elite-level competition.

## **Factors associated with retirement from sport**

Although one of the only inevitabilities in high-performance sport is that every competitor will have to terminate his/her sporting career at the elite level, some individuals experience adjustment difficulties

when faced with retirement. Coakley (1983) suggested that focusing on sport retirement as an event that occurs in isolation and inevitably leads to distress is likely to mislead research efforts. That in itself is a concern and Coakley points out that many factors, such as gender, race, age, socioeconomic status, and the existence of support systems, function to influence the adjustment process. Retirement from sport may be a difficult transition, but it is a transition that occurs among other transitions (Baillie & Danish, 1992).

Fred Shero, former coach of the Philadelphia Flyers hockey team, was quoted by Hill and Lowe (1974, p. 13) as suggesting that the athlete retires “only to find that he is ten years behind times...that it is seeing one’s counterparts ten to twelve years ahead in their careers which lead to depression and possible self-destruction”.

McLaughlin (1981) wrote a two-part series on amateur athletes and their retirement experiences which included extensive interviews with several top Canadian athletes. He concluded that retirement is a “difficult experience, one that triggers varying degrees of emotional and physical stress” (p. 14). He encouraged coaches and athletes to be aware of the outside world, and for athletes to attempt to maintain some form of balance in their lives. Orlick (1980, p. 272) stated “the challenge is not only in pursuing excellence but in doing so without destroying the rest of your life”.

Ogilvie and Howe (1982), in a paper entitled “Career Crises in Sport” presented several case studies of both professional and amateur athletes, and stated that regardless of the cause of termination each individual faces a period of adjustment during the transition from athlete to ex-athlete. They also proposed that the transition process follows a predictable course consisting of several stages: shock and numbness, denial, anger, resentment and depression.

Specifically several studies of high school athletes indicate that, compared to non-athletes, the athletes are more likely to attend college, obtain under-graduate degrees, achieve greater occupational status, and even higher incomes (Otto & Alvin, 1977; Phillips & Schafer, 1971). Sands (1978), in a study of outstanding male scholastic athletes, found too that the importance of sport to these athletes declines after high school and they defined their sport participation as a passing phase of life. Sands (1978) concludes that these athletes departure from high school and sport was not accompanied by trauma or identity crises.

Less clear findings were reported from research involving collegiate athletes. Snyder and Baber (1979) found that there were no differences between former athletes and non-athletes in terms of life satisfaction or attitudes towards work. As a result, their results do not support the argument that disengagement from collegiate sport is stressful for athletes.

Sussman (1971) also believes that professional athletes do not experience difficulties because they know that their sport careers would be short and they prepared appropriately. He further asserts that most professional athletes are assured of second occupations upon retirement. Other researchers, both within and outside of sport, draw similar conclusions. Authors outside of sport, such as Atchley (1980) and George (1980) suggest that retirement seems to have little influence on personal adjustment and self-identity, and most people possess the necessary coping skills to overcome any problems that may arise.

Sussman's (1971) model presents a range of factors whose interplay will affect an individual's retirement. The variables include individual factors such as life-style, needs, goals, problem-solving skills, personal values, situational and structural variables such as circumstances of retirement, pre-retirement preparation, retirement



income; and boundary constraints such as societal definition and professional organizational postures. These variables, he contends, will influence the perception of the situation and the choice of options, use of previous experiences, and anticipatory behaviours. The perception, then, results in the utilisation (or non-utilisation) of linking systems, including voluntary organisations, friendship groups and work systems.

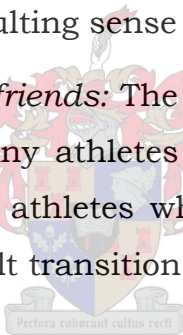
The model can be applied to career transition of an athlete but serves only to describe the factors, without making any predictions for ease of transition or developmental outcomes.

Werthner and Orlick (1986) used open-ended interviews to study the transition of 28 Canadian Olympians. Analysis of the transcripts of the interviews suggested that seven factors appeared to have “an important role in determining the value of transition out of sport for a great number of athletes” (Werthner & Orlick, 1986, p. 351). While acknowledging very distinct individual differences, the authors describe the following seven common factors:

1. *New focus*: If an athlete had something concrete and challenging to turn to as his sport career came to an end, it helped redirect all the energy that had been challenged into a sport career and in many cases helped to ease the transition to a new life.
2. *Sense of accomplishment*: The feeling of having accomplished all that they set out to achieve in their sport career was an important factor in helping athletes ease out of sport. Thus, a sense of accomplishment, or lack of, was certainly an important factor in determining the ease or difficulty of the transition phase for some athletes.
3. *Coaches*: The lack of good coaching on other coaching difficulties, generally led athletes to leave their sport with a sense of bitterness. A close relationship with a coach was often link to achieving goals and enjoying success.



4. *Injuries/heath problems:* These played an important role in some athletes' lives and were usually a negative factor in determining when and how an individual's sport career was to end.
5. *Politics/sport-association problems:* A number of athletes felt that their sport association was responsible for their coaching problems, such as good coaches leaving the sport or being eliminated as national coaches. Without their coaches they were unable and/or unwilling to continue to train and commit themselves. These factors had a negative impact on the transition of athletes.
6. *Finances:* Financial hardship, that was brought about by the lack of funding and the cost of continued training and preparation contributed to the decision of several athletes to retire, often with a resulting sense of bitterness.
7. *Support of family and friends:* The support of family and friends was mentioned by many athletes as being a positive factor in their transition. Some athletes who did not find such support spoke of a more difficult transition process.



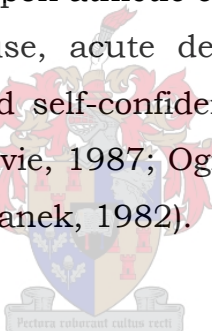
Werthner and Orlick (1986, p. 360) found that most of the athletes remembered their lives as elite athletes in positive and enjoyable terms and that most reported experiencing difficulty in their “transitions from international athlete to ordinary citizen”.

The three rating scales for life satisfaction, feelings of self-confidence and a sense of personal control allowed for an overall picture of the athletes' lives during three important stages as an athlete, in transition and at the time of interview. The results of the Werthner and Orlick (1986) study show that the ratings for both life and self-confidence followed a similar pattern—high rating in the transition phase and high ratings again at the end of interview.

In their summary of these results, the authors recommend that the “coaches and athletes be made aware of and taught how to ease the transition out of high performance sport” (Werthner & Orlick, 1986, p. 361).

A conceptualisation of the process that athletes go through has been made to explain what the athletes go through as their careers come to an end. Efforts have been made to look outside the sport area as a foundation for developing explanatory models for the athletic population (Hill & Lowe, 1974; Rosenberg, 1981).

Other studies also expressed concern for the number of athletes who experience traumatic effect upon athletic career termination, including alcohol and substance abuse, acute depression, eating disorders, identity confusion, decreased self-confidence, and attempted suicide (Blinde & Stratta, 1992; Ogilvie, 1987; Ogilvie & Howe, 1981; Sinclair & Orlick, 1993; Svoboda & Vanek, 1982).



### **Voluntary versus involuntary retirement**

The degree of voluntariness (i.e., perception of control) of sport career termination significantly contributes to the quality of adaptation to post-sport life (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994) and is comprehended as both an antecedent factor (Ogilvie & Taylor, 1993; Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994) and mediating factor (Alfermann, 2000; Wylleman et al., 1993). Research shows that voluntary career termination is correlated with a less difficult adaptation to post-sport life (Alfermann, 2000; Alfermann & Gross, 1997; CeciĆ-Erpič, 1998, 1999, 2000; McPherson, 1980; Werthner & Orlick, 1986).

Involuntary retirement can lead to psychological difficulties such as lower self-control (Svoboda & Vanek, 1982; Werthner & Orlick, 1986),

lower self-respect (Crook & Robertson, 1991), and more frequent feelings of anger, anxiety, and depression (Alfermann & Gross, 1997). The quality of adaptation to post-sport life is also influenced by the gradualness of the process of athletic retirement (Ogilvie & Taylor, 1993). It is an antecedent factor which is closely connected to the degree of voluntariness of sport career termination, and consequently to post-sport life planning. A gradual transitional process may lead to fewer difficulties related to adaptation to post-sport life (Werthner & Orlick, 1986).

Apart from the intrapersonal factors, there are personal, social and environmental variables that may influence athletes' adaptation to retirement. These factors may be viewed as potential stressors whose presence will likely exacerbate the primary adaptive factors (Coakley, 1983). Involuntary retirement can be defined as externally imposed retirement over which the athlete has no control (Lerch, 1984). Athletes may be forced to retire for a variety of reasons: injury, cut from the team, problems with the team or family commitments (Mihovilovic, 1968). Athletes who are forced to retire tend to be more resistant to and less well prepared than those who retire voluntarily (Andrews, 1981; McPherson, 1980). Involuntary retirement could also relate to lower self-esteem (Reynolds, 1981; Svoboda & Vanek, 1982; Werthner and Orlick, 1986), lower self-respect (Crook & Robertson, 1991), and more frequently feelings of anger, anxiety and depression (Alfermann & Gross, 1977). The quality of the adaptation to post-sport life is also influenced by the gradualness of the process of athletic retirement (Ogilvie & Taylor, 1993). It is an antecedent factor which is closely connected to the degree of voluntariness of sport career termination, and consequently to post-sport life (Cecić-Erpič, Wylleman & Zupančič, 2004).

Griffiths (1982) found that athletes who are forced to retire may also experience socioeconomic status issues will influence the adaptation

process (Weinberg & Arond, 1952). Athletes who are financially dependent on their sport participation and possess few skills to earn a living outside of sport or have limited financial resources to fall back on will likely perceive retirement as more threatening and may, as a result, experience distress (Lerch, 1981; McPherson, 1980; Werthner & Orlick, 1986).

Data obtained to date show quite clearly that an involuntary retirement may have complicating or even devastating consequences for the adjustment process shortly after career termination (Blinde & Stratta, 1992). This can be especially true if retirement is regarded as an “off-time” event due to the externally determined causes (Blinde & Stratta, 1992; Pearson & Petitpas, 1990). A subjective feeling of control thus seems to facilitate the transition to post-career life. In addition, it may also contribute to differences in the quality of life (Alfermann, Stambulova & Zemaityte, 2004).

It has also been argued that minority status (Blinde & Greendorfer, 1985; Hill & Lowe, 1974) and gender (Coakley, 1983) will affect the adaptation process due to what are perceived as fewer post-athletic career opportunities (Hearle, 1975; Hill & Lowe, 1974).

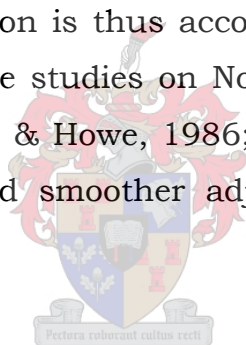
The health of athletes at the time of retirement will further contribute to the quality of the adaptation (Gorbett, 1985; Hill & Lowe, 1974). Athletes with chronic disabilities incurred during athletic careers may, as a result of the injuries, have limited choices in their post-athletic careers.

It is clear that several factors are involved in athletes' response to retirement. It is thus safe to suggest that no single factors will guarantee an early adjustment or condemn an athlete to a difficult transition (Werthner & Orlick, 1986). Coakley (1983) asserts that these are problems faced by any retiring person with a similar background and that sport is simply the setting in which the

difficulties occur. Crook & Roberson (1991) suggest that only by examining the complex interaction of these factors will an understanding of the athlete's response to retirement be achieved.

It is, however, important to note that retirement from high-performance sport is an experience that either brings distress or relief (Blinde & Greendorfer, 1984, Coakley 1983; Ogilvie & Howe, 1986; Werthner & Orlick, 1986). The extent of these emotions and the athletes' perceptions about these changes will dictate the quality of adaptation they experience as a function of their retirement (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994). There are, however, a number of factors that make individuals, including athletes, more vulnerable to difficulties in the transition process (Rosenkoetter, 1985).

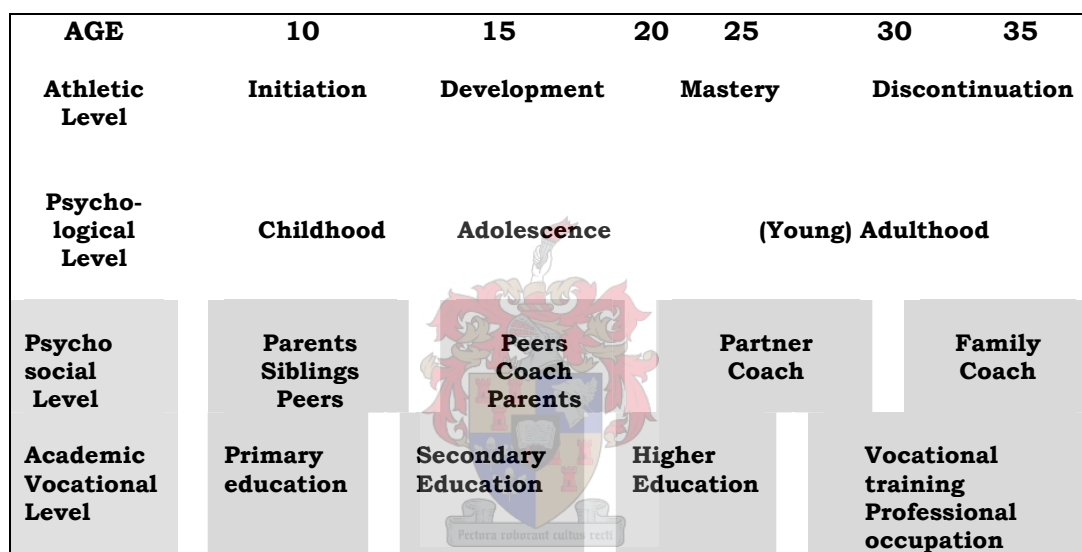
Voluntary career termination is thus according to CeciĆ-Erpić (1999) and results obtained in the studies on North American elite athletes (Hill & Lowe, 1974; Ogilvie & Howe, 1986; Werthner & Orlick, 1986), associated with easier and smoother adjustment to post-sport life period.



## **LIFE-SPAN PERSPECTIVE ON TRANSITIONS FACED BY ATHLETES**

As research findings confirm that athletes encounter different stages and transitions throughout their athletic career, a more holistic approach to the study of transitions faced by athletes was advocated by Wylleman et al. (1999). While this approach should take a beginning-to-end or life-span perspective, spanning the athletic and post-athletic career, it was also deemed important that those transitions faced by athletes in other domains of development should be included. The rationale for this latter point was based on research findings showing the strong concurrent, interactive and reciprocal nature of transitions occurring in the athletic career (athletic

transitions) and those transitions occurring in other domains of athletes' lives (e.g., academic, psychosocial, professional), (Petitpas, Champagne, Chartrand, Danish & Murphy, 1997; Wylleman, De Knop, Ewing & Cummings, 2000). Using research data on the career development of pupil athletes, student athletes, professional and elite athletes, and of former Olympians, Wylleman and Lavallee (2003) presented a developmental model which includes normative transitions faced by athletes at athletic, individual, psychosocial, and academic/vocational level (See Figure 2.1).



*Figure 2.1* A developmental model on transitions faced by athletes at athletic, individual, psychosocial and academic/vocational level (Wylleman & Lavallee, 2003).

The top layer represents the stages and transitions athletes face in their athletic development including the three stages identified by Bloom (1985) and a discontinuation stage added reflecting the transitions out of competitive sport as a process which could have a relatively long duration. The second layer reflects the developmental stages and transitions occurring at psychological level, including childhood, adolescence, and (young) adulthood. The third layer is representative of the changes which occur in the athlete's psychosocial development relative to her/his athletic involvement, including the athletic family, peer relationships, coach-athlete

relationships, marital relationships and other interpersonal relationships significant to athletes. The final layer reflects the stages and transitions at academic and vocational level, including the transition into primary education/elementary school, the stage of secondary/high school education, the transition into higher education (college/university) and finally the transition into vocational training and/or a professional occupation (which may, however, also occur at an earlier age).

This model underlines not only the interactive nature of transitions in different domains of life of athletes, but also that non-athletic transitions may affect the development of athletes' sport career. While ages are tentative, this model illustrates, for example that the athletic transition from initiation to development stage, runs parallel with the transition from primary to secondary level. This academic transition has in fact been linked to the occurrence of attrition in (competitive) youth sport (Van Reusel, De Knop, De Martelaer, Impens, Roelandt, Teirlinck & Wylleman, 1992). As pupils change educational levels, they generally also disperse to different schools, thus breaking up friendship networks which were a primary source of initiation of sport participation among youth. In another example of the interactive nature of athletic and non-athletic transitions faced by talented athletes, this model also shows that as young talented athletes try to transmit into the mastery of perfection stage in their athletic career—where athletes need to perform to their highest level, as consistent and for long as possible.

They also have to cope with transitional changes at psychological level (from adolescence into young adulthood), at psychosocial level (development of temporary/stable relationships with a partner), and at academic or vocational level (transiting into higher education or into a professional occupation). Of course, not all athletes' sport career will span all the stages. In fact many young (talented) athletes may already



have dropped out during the development or the beginning of their perfection stage.

While this developmental model does not include non-normative transitions (e.g., a season-ending injury, a change of personal coach, or an unanticipated transfer to another team) or those transitions which were expected or hoped for but which did not happen—labelled non-events (e.g., not making the Olympic team) (Schlossberg, 1984). This also impacts the quality of athletes' participation in competitive sport. It should provide sport psychologists with a framework to reflect upon the developmental, interactive and interdependent nature of transitions and stages faced by an athlete.

### **Development of the athlete's identity**

To begin an analysis of the influences of sport participation across the life span of an athlete it is necessary to first describe research on the effects of early involvement in sport. The label of athlete is a major source of some of the difficulties that occur upon retirement and that this identification begins as soon as sport participation begins.

The high status that sport holds in society is undeniable. For the most famous athletes who serve as role models and heroes, to the Olympic victor hoisting his/her nation's flag, to the neighbourhood athlete, sport permeates many levels of our consciousness (Nelson, 1982; Repucci, 1987). Many youngsters experience the attraction of wanting to be a sport hero and to hold the status associated with that role.

Sport provides many role models for children and adolescents (Repucci, 1987). As role models athletes are expected to act on as well off the field, court, ice, track or other venues as they do during the performance. This is an added pressure for some athletes as their identity becomes more and more defined by sport participation



(McPherson, 1980; Snyder & Spreitzer, 1978). Although the status of sport provides heroes and models for the populace, the notoriety pushes many athletes into well-defined, narrowly-based roles.

The process of identifying oneself as an athlete may begin early, with good intentions. For the young participant, at all levels of sport, the physical activity, teamwork, and competition have important implications for social, physical, and personal development (Danish, Petitpas, & Hale 1990). Developmentally, the major task for the adolescent is the acquisition of a sense of autonomy, achievement, and initiative (Newman & Newman, 1979).

Sport participation contributes to the development of physical abilities that in turn, result in more effective peer and family interaction (Nelson, 1983). Leadership skills can be enhanced by sport participation because athletically talented children are more likely to be seen as leaders (Ambron & Brodzinsky, 1979). Early participation may, therefore, lead to accomplishing certain developmental tasks and, at the same time to a heightened status or sense of self (McPherson, 1980). In sum, athletically gifted children are viewed differently and may be treated differently.

Many authors have written on the specific influences sport participation may have on the development of the self-esteem or self-concept in young players. Among the findings are the following:

1. Individuals who acquire a new physical skill, show increases in self-concept (Koocher, 1971).
2. Individuals with higher levels of athletic competence show enhanced level of self-concept (Kay, Felker & Varoz, 1972).
3. Fitness training is often interpreted by the participant as a measure of success and a growth in competency and can serve

to enhance self-esteem (Duke, Johnson & Norwicki, 1977; Sonström, 1982).

## **Identity and self-esteem**

Athletic identity, which is defined as “the degree to which an individual identifies with the athletic role” (Brewer, Van Raalte & Linder, 1993, p. 237), is one of the fundamental psychological issues that influence and determine adaptation to post-sport life (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994). An athlete’s commitment to sport and consequent reduction of investment in other social roles, leads to the formation of a strong athletic identity (McPherson, 1980), which can have both positive and negative consequences for participants in sport. It has a positive influence on sport achievements (Danish, Petitpas & Hale, 1993; Werthner & Orlick, 1986), exercise adherence, and athletic performance (Brewer et al., 1993). Other researchers have found evidence to suggest that individuals with a strong athletic identity risk experiencing difficulties after sport career termination (Blinde & Greendorfer, 1985; CeciĆ-Erpić, 1998; Pearson & Petitpas, 1990; Werthner & Orlick, 1986). A strong athletic identity also influences the occurrence of difficulties, i.e., development of post-sport occupational identity (Brewer et al., 1993), and the duration of emotional and social adjustment to post-sport life (Grove, Lavalley & Gordon, 1997).

Arviko (1976), one of the few researchers to address this issue specifically, found that former professional baseball players who had a substantial number of social roles during their competitive careers were better adjusted. Parker (1994) found support in her study for the suggestions of Ball (1976) and Greendorfer and Blinde (1985) that the transition experience is probably highly related to the specific sport setting and the institutional context of the setting.

Most fundamentally of the psychological issues that influence adaptation to retirement is the degree to which athletes define their self-worth in terms of their participation and achievement in sport (Blinde & Greendorfer, 1985; Ogilvie & Howe, 1982; Svoboda & Vanek, 1982). Athletes normally develop an extremely narrow identity, with their self-worth almost dependant on their ability and success as an athlete (Botterill, 1982). Without the impact from their sport, these athletes have little to support their sense of self-worth (Pearson & Petitpas, 1990). Their dependence on sport worth occurs when athletes are rewarded for their success in sport, often to the exclusion of other facets of their personalities (Lanning, 1982; Ogilvie & Howe, 1981). With this orientation, the retiring athlete is likely to experience an identity crisis (Broom, 1981).

Athletes who are disproportionately interested in their sport participation may be characterised as “unidimensional” people, in which their self-concept does not extend beyond the limits of their sport (Coakley, 1983; Ogilvie & Howe, 1982). The narrowness of the athlete’s self-concept makes him/her psychologically vulnerable to any fluctuation or decline in athletic performance. These athletes often have provided themselves with other activities that can bring them similar ego-gratification (McPherson, 1980). Athletes who have other alternatives whereby they can achieve self-esteem do not suffer the same degree of loss of personal integration that occurs in the athlete whose whole existence has been based on athletic success (Harris & Eitzen, 1979). Without sport to help define themselves, athletes in this situation typically experience retirement as something very important that is lost and can never be recovered (Werthner & Orlick, 1986). The finality of this loss is hard to bear and this is a great threat to a healthy adaptation to athletic retirement.

Athletic identity is one of the important factors that influence adaptation to sport career termination and post-sport life (Ogilvie & Taylor, 1993). Athletic identity has been defined as “the degree to

which the individual identifies with the athletic role” (Brewer, Van Raalte & Linder, 1993, p. 237), and is comprehended in the framework of multidimensional self-concept. An athlete’s commitment to sport and the consequent reduction of other social roles e.g., student, partner and friend, often leads to the formation of a strong athletic identity (McPherson, 1980), which can have both positive and negative consequences for the athlete. The results of several studies show that strong athletic identity has a positive impact on sport achievements (Danish et al., 1993; Werthner & Orlick, 1986), exercise adherence, and athletic performance (Brewer et al., 1993).

Researchers have found evidence to suggest that individuals with strong athletic identities risk experiencing difficulties after sport-career termination (Blinde & Greendorfer, 1985; CeciĆ-Erpiĉ, 1998; Gordon, 1995; Pearson & Petitpas, 1990, Werthner & Orlick, 1986). According to these studies, a strong athletic identity influences the occurrence of difficulties in different aspects of sport-career termination and adaptation to post-sport life. The results of these studies show that athletes who do not perceive themselves exclusively in terms of the athletic role adapt to post-sport life more easily and less traumatically than athletes with strong athletic identities (CeciĆ-Erpiĉ, 2001).

Athletes who invest heavily in sport, and whose self-concept does not extend beyond the limits of their sport, often experience sport-career termination as an identity loss (Allison & Meyer, 1988; CeciĆ-Erpiĉ, 1998; 2000). Because of their early commitment to sport, which may lead to identity foreclosure (Murphy, Petitpas & Brewer, 1996) athletes experience difficulties adapting to social roles unrelated to sport (e.g., educational. vocational role).

Athletes with strong athletic identities experience more difficulties in developing a post-sport vocational identity, and less frequently explore career options and plan post-sport life than athletes with lower athletic

identities (Brewer, Van Raalte & Petitpas, 1993). Athletic identity at the time of retirement is also positively correlated with the degree of emotional and social adjustment required, as well as the amount of time required to adjust emotionally and socially to post-sport life (Grove, Lavalley & Gordon, 1997).

The results of these studies show a relationship between a strong athletic identity and difficulties during sport career termination and adaptation to post-sport life. It should be pointed out that the reduction in athletic identity, which usually follows sport career termination, and the commitment to non-athletic social roles do not guarantee an untraumatic and smooth transition to post-sport life (Brewer, Van Raalte & Petitpas, 1993; Murphy, Petitpas & Brewer, 1996).

In her study, CeciĆ-Erpiĉ (2001) found that respondents who identified mostly with their athletic role during active sport career experienced more psychological difficulties during retirement from competitive sport than athletes with lower athletic identities. They experience more negative emotions during the process of career transition, and more often experiences doubts over their decision to retire from elite competitive sport. They also had more difficulties with self-concept, lack of self-esteem, lack of self control, and lack of self-respect. Another finding of the CeciĆ-Erpiĉ (2001) study is that athletic identity during an active sport career also influences the evaluation of voluntariness of sport career termination. Athletes who strongly identified themselves with their athletic role more often terminated their career involuntarily than other athletes. According to this and the aforementioned studies, a strong athletic identity during active sport career is connected with more intense, and more frequent psychological difficulties during the process of sport career termination and adaptation to post sport life (CeciĆ-Erpiĉ, 2001).

## **Response to athletic retirement**

The event of retirement, or change, is a normal consequence of elite participation. A career in sport is much shorter than most other careers or occupations, as most athletes retire, voluntarily or involuntarily, during their mid to late twenties (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994). Consequently, this transition happens, at an age where it can lead to an identity crisis and coping difficulties (Orlick & Werthner, 1987).

Along with a growing interest in the scientific investigation of sport-career-transition research has been the study of the influence of various, mainly sport-related, factors on the quality of the transition process (Cecić-Erpič, et al., 2004). Although directed at athletic factors, a conceptual model of athletic retirement has been proposed by Taylor and Ogilvie (1994, 1998), as well as Taylor (1993). This provides a comprehensive overview of how these factors influence sport-career termination. The quality of sport-career transition is affected by causes of sport career termination, factors related to the adaptation to retirement, and available resources (Cecić-Erpič et al., 2004). Among athletic antecedent and mediating factors that determine the factors that determine the quality of the sport career termination process, the conceptual model emphasizes the voluntariness and gradualness of the sport career termination, the degree of athletic identity, the evaluation of athletic achievements, and the planning of a post-sport career life.

When athletes are faced with the end of their careers they are confronted by a range of psychological, social, financial, and occupational changes. The extent of these changes and the athletes' perceptions about these changes will dictate the quality of the adaptation they experience as a function of the retirement (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994).

To support the position that athletic career termination has an adverse effect, an investigation of retired professional baseball players revealed that 50% of the athletes experienced regret, sadness, and shock during the transition process (Hearle, 1975). Other researchers have reported the presence of negative effect, maladjustment, and additional markers of life dissatisfaction, such as grief (Danish, 1986), identity-loss-induced negative affect (Allison & Meyer, 1988; Brewer, Van Raalte & Linder, 1993), separation and loneliness (Lewis-Griffith, 1982), fear and anxiety (Rotella, 1984), and psychological difficulties (Greendorfer & Kleiber, 1982; McPherson, 1984).

In contrast, no differences between athletes and non-athletes with respect to career and psychological development, which affect readiness for athletic-career termination, were found when potential confounding variables such as age, race and socioeconomic status were controlled (Blann, 1985; Perna, Zaichkowsky & Bocknek, 1996). Moreover, several researchers describe positive recreations to athletic retirement or depict it as a normative process without undue emotional upheaval. For example, Curtis and Ennis (1988) found a higher life-satisfaction rating among former athletes (60%) compared to a control group of non-athletes (48%). In a retrospective survey of former Big Ten starting and non-starting athletes, Greendorfer and Blinde (1985) pointed out that more than 90% of the students looked forward to life after college, and that 50% were quite satisfied with their lives at the time of their sport-career termination.

However, while this claim is made in the literature, the critical question remains what is the athlete's actual experience. Concepts have been drawn from the literature dealing with loss and applied to athlete retirement to explain the athlete's experience. The stages of dying (Lerch, 1982; Ogilvie & Howe, 1981) and stages related to coping with grief (Wehlage, 1980; Werthner & Orlick, 1981) both concepts of Kübler-Ross (1969) have been used to describe athlete's response to retirement as a progression through stages related to shock or



numbness, denial, anger/ depression and understanding/acceptance (Crook & Robertson, 1991).

There is an impressive body of evidence that losses experienced in retirement force athletes to make psychosocial adjustments in their lives. The adjustment required related to how athletes, once retired, will...

- resolve their loss
- identify and evaluate who they are and
- replace their involvement (physical and emotional) in the athletic role.

The extent to which these adjustments will lead to problems, appears to be largely dependent on each athlete's emotional and physical commitment to sport (Crook & Robertson, 1991). While extreme cases involving suicide and crime, receive the most publicity, the majority of athletes appear to exhibit adjustment problems in the form of short-term denial, outburst of anger, overindulgence in drugs and alcohol or immobilising depression (Ogilvie & Howe, 1981; Wehlage, 1980). Thus, athletes' responses to retirement vary (Baillie & Danish, 1992; Blinde & Stratta, 1992; McPherson, 1980; Werthner & Orlick, 1981).

The athlete's response to retirement involves inter-related factors of a complex nature (Ogilvie & Howe, 1981; Svoboda & Vanek, 1982). These factors, which play a part in both the decision to retire and in each individual's ability to cope with and accept that decision, make it difficult to generalise retirement responses. While the sport-retirement literature does not clearly define or measure factors related to psychosocial adjustment it is possible to identify several factors that appear to be related to athletes' success in adjusting to retirement (Crook & Robertson, 1991). These include:

- Anticipatory socialisation.
- Identity and self-esteem.



- Personal management skills.
- Social support systems.
- Voluntary versus involuntary retirement.

Other factors that may also be important in retirement are value conflicts, health, and financial status.

### **A proposed solution to the athlete's adaptation to retirement**

Athletes are often put in a situation of making the adjustments to the end of their careers isolated from other people (Gorbett, 1985). They may have to deal with it by themselves. The interpersonal support system of family and close friends may be present, but often athletes do not have the support of their professional team or university in making this transition (Schlossberg, 1981).

Gorbett (1985) proposed a pre-retirement counselling programme for athletes. This programme should commence at the university or even possibly in high school. This is where a fair number of athletes who devoted eight to ten years to an athletic career may see it terminated due to injury or by the fact that they are not good enough to continue onward in their career. This may be a stunning revelation for athletes, but one which has to be confronted so they can get on with their lives. Sowa and Gressard (1981) point out the lack of vocational maturity regarding career-decision tasks among college athletes as compared to non-athletes. If an athlete lacks adequate career decision-making skills, then it may be predicted that some athletes will have career adjustment problems after their collegiate careers are over. Perhaps these career adjustment problems will precipitate socio-psychological problems. This is conjecture, but it highlights the need for some type of pre-retirement counselling for athletes to prepare them for the transition.

A pre-retirement counselling programme might consist of the following for athletes according to Gorbett (1985): It could be jointly programmed with the academic advisor's office, and the university's counselling department could provide the counselling services. Who would be referred for counselling? It seems ideal candidates would be those athletes with injuries that are career threatening or ending, and third and fourth year athletes facing the end of their careers. Of course, the programme must be flexible enough to include any athlete regardless of study year. The referrals could include those athletes whose grades may be deficient and whose career plans are not clear. Specific behaviours the counsellor could look for would be verbalisations of self-doubt, isolative behaviours indicating lack of interpersonal support, and lack of integrating one's education with some definite career goals. Any of these behaviours may indicate potential adjustment problems.

The goal of counselling would be to develop problem-solving, decision-making, and self-assessment skills for the purpose of developing internal support systems (e.g., more positive self-image) and external support systems (e.g., increased positive family or peer relationships). Self-image can be developed through self-strategies of reinforcement, self-relaxation and cognitive restructuring of negative self-statements.

It would seem that to be facilitative the programme should be based on a group model. Schlossberg (1980) and Manion (1976) were of the opinion that interpersonal support is very important during a transitional stage. The goal of the group would be to be supportive of each other, but also learn problem-solving, decision-making, and self-diagnostic skills within the group process. These skills can be taught didactically and experientially in the group (Manion, 1976). As trust develops in the group, the athlete's feelings of isolation dissipate as he/she finds that other fellow athletes share the same types of feelings. (e.g., anger, resentment) and experiences.

Sport industries and institutions need to support their athletes. While people may scoff at the idea because they perceive today's athletes as pampered, it still remains the sport establishment's responsibility to provide help for athletes who are undergoing a transition to the ex-athlete role.

## **Anticipatory socialisation**

While retirement represents one of the few certainties in an athletic career, athletes often fail to anticipate and prepare for it (Crook & Robertson, 1991). Lack of anticipatory socialisation or preparation for life after sport is a major factor affecting an athlete's retirement adjustment.

Failure to prepare for retirement from sport arises for a variety of reasons. In North America, there is a reluctance to discuss retirement while athletes are actively competing (Crook & Robertson, 1991). Coaches, in particular, are resistant to athlete involvement in other career-related areas, fearing that it will distract from their concentration on sport (Hill & Lowe, 1974; Ogilvie & Howe, 1981). Athletes themselves may also avoid thinking about retirement, considering such thoughts to be similar to defeating the purpose or admitting failure (McLaughlin, 1981). The reluctance to anticipate retirement may also be related to fear (Orlick, 1980). For individuals who have spent the majority of their lives as athletes in a sport environment, entering unprepared into the real world, where their athletic talents will be of little use, could potentially be very frightening (Andrews, 1981).

Reluctance to anticipate and plan for retirement is exaggerated further by the singular commitment required in sport (McLaughlin, 1981). The commitment in time and energy that sport requires makes it difficult not to neglect other aspects of life (Crook & Robertson, 1991).

This emphasis on sport is often at the expense of education and career preparation, a sacrifice that may return to haunt the retired athlete as a barrier to employment and other personal satisfactions (Rosenberg, 1979). Thus, athletes who fail to anticipate are often inadequately prepared for a post-sport career. These athletes have few career options and lack direction and goals (Crook & Robertson, 1991). These athletes often experience anger frustration and loss of self-esteem because they are forced to start at the bottom of the field, years behind their peers.

Taylor and Ogilvie (1994) are of the opinion that the presence and quality of the factors related to adaptation to retirement will depend in large measure on developmental experiences of athletes that occurred since the inception of their athletic careers. Self-perceptions and interpersonal skills will influence the nature of the athletes' adaptation to retirement.

The often single-minded pursuit of excellence that accompanies elite sport participation has potential psychological and social dangers (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994). The personal investment in and the pursuit of elite athletic success, through a worthy goal, may lead to a restricted development.

Though there is substantial evidence demonstrating the debilitating effects of deselection upon self-esteem among young athletes (Scanlan, 1985; Smith, Smoll & Curtis, 1979), little consideration has been given to changing this process in a healthier direction. Most organised sport programmes still appear to place the highest priority on winning.

It is important that the indoctrination of a more holistic approach to sport development begins early in the life of an athlete (Pearson & Petitpas, 1990). Botterill (1982) suggests that athletes who neglect other career alternatives are particularly prone to retirement trauma.

The first step in the prevention process is to engender in parents and coaches involved in youth sport a belief that long-term personal and social development is more important than short-term athletic success (Ogilvie, 1987).

It has been further argued that high school and college athletic programmes restrict opportunities for personal and social growth such as the development of self and social identities, social roles and behaviours, and social support systems (Remer, Tongate & Watson, 1978; Schafer, 1971). Early interaction in the areas will decrease the likelihood that the factor related to the quality of the adaptation in retirement will contribute to distress due to retirement later in their lives.

### **Pre-retirement planning**

By more clearly identifying factors related to successful retirement, pre-retirement counselling programmes could be designed to prevent or alleviate adjustment problems (Crook & Robertson, 1991). Pre-retirement programmes could emphasise the fact that a career in sport will be relatively short and that by planning in advance, retirement problems could be decreased or avoided. Of the available resources that are being discussed, pre-retirement planning appears to have the broadest influence on the extent of the adaptation to retirement (Schlossberg, 1981). Pre-retirement planning could attempt to identify and assist the athlete who is dependent on sport for his/her self-concept and identity, reinforcement in interest and people outside of sport, develop and encourage active decision making by the athlete during his/her career. It can also include a variety of activities including continuing education, occupational and investment endeavours, and social networking (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994).

Pre-retirement planning may significantly affect most of the factors that are related to the adaptation process. As for the tertiary factors, socioeconomic status, financial dependency on the sport, and post-active occupational potential would be positively influenced (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994). Substantial research in involving both elite amateur and professional athletes support this position (Arviko, 1976; Hearle, 1975; Lerch, 1981).

A common theme from the literature on retirement outside of sport is the resistance on the part of individuals to plan for their lives after the end of their careers (Avery & Jablin, 1988; Chartraud & Lent, 1987; Rowen & Wilks, 1987). This form of denial of the inevitable will have serious, potentially negative, and long-term implications for the athletes. A wide range of difficulties have been reported due to athletes' resistance to pre-retirement planning (Hare, 1971; Svobada & Vanek, 1982; Weinberg & Arond, 1952; Werthner & Orlick, 1986). As a consequence, any acknowledgement or consideration that their athletic careers might end, would be a source of significant anxiety, thus wanting avoidance of the issue altogether (Ogilvie & Taylor, 1993).

As suggested by Coakley (1983), retirement from sport is not an inevitable source of stress, identity crises or adjusted problems. However, it is also true as suggested by Lavalley, Nesti, Barkoles, Cockerill and Edge (2000) and Ungerleider (1997) that some countries have started to develop programmes to counsel active athletes in transition from top level competitive sport to the workplace (Gordon, 1995). This is a position already assumed in Australia and the United Kingdom where national career and educational programmes have been developed (Anderson & Flanagan, 2001).

## **Pre-retirement counselling**

The use of pre-retirement programmes, although mostly company-based has emerged. They are an adjunct service of a community counselling programme which is geared toward helping the individual prepare for retirement (Gorbett, 1985). The preparation may entail developing new skills such as problem solving or recourse development within a group counselling model (Manion, 1976). It may also involve individual personal counselling, resource identification, and planning (Kleiber & Thompson, 1980).

The philosophy of a pre-retirement counselling approach is based on the fact that positive actions taken before retirement will prevent or minimise social and emotional deprivations in retirement and old age (Gorbett, 1985). Business leaders see this service as good for business, because it shows a concern for the worker. In their view the recognition and help given to loyal, long-term employees is a way to express a proper social responsibility by easing out older workers in a positive manner (Manion, 1976). This type of counselling can be one of the best ways to ensure positive adjustment after retirement.

The characteristics of the transition are based on whether the emotion exhibited is positive or negative, whether change is voluntary or involuntary, whether transition comes gradually or suddenly, and the degrees of stress associated with these variables. When athletes retire they undergo a role change which they perceive as a loss instead of a gain, and as a result they experience negative emotion. This may be compounded by the fact that the transition is of an involuntary nature. These conditions may interact to increase the athlete's degree of stress.

The characteristics of the pre- and post-transition period, involve the environment providing the interpersonal and the institutional support needed for the transition. The interpersonal report may come from



intimate relationships, the family unit, or a network of friends. For example, group affiliation is viewed as a necessary behaviour that survivors of Nazi concentration camps shared in extremely stressful times (Dimsdale, 1976). This affiliation provided the support to overcome the physical and emotional obstacles provided by this oppressive environment. This is also applicable to the retiring athlete.

The third factor involved in successful adjustment concerns the characteristics of the individual. This includes one's sense of psychosocial competence, one's gender, age, state of health, race, socioeconomic status, value orientation, and previous experience with a transition. The maintenance of a positive self-image is important if one is to adjust to any transition that may elicit stress (Dimsdale, 1976, Gorbett, 1985). Ogilvie and Howe (1982, p. 174) state that "the more closely identified the athlete is with his or her sport, the more traumatic will be the crises of identity upon termination".

Several approaches to pre-retirement counselling have been proposed. Manion (1976) describes four approaches to pre-retirement counselling. They are coping, prescriptive, educational, and involvement in a group.

The coping approach proposes how one might cope with the problems of more time and less money while the perspective approach is geared to a set formula to follow when retirement occurs. The third category is an educational approach dealing with positive retirement cases and situations. The idea is that the individual can learn from objectively discussing retirement cases and situations. The fourth approach uses a T-group model that includes the sponsor and is designed to generate and resolve questions about the individual's life in retirement and his/her resources, relationships and personal needs. This takes place with one's peer group in a group setting.



Manion (1976) feels that the group process, integrated with an educational approach, is the most facilitative of all approaches. The participants can learn skills in life planning and action-taking didactically while also experientially learning and practising communication and interpersonal skills within the group process. Group support for learning these skills is strongly provided by the process itself.

Kleiber and Thompson (1980, p. 12) propose a Rogerian non-directive approach to pre-retirement counselling. "Such an approach allows the individual to explore interests, potentials and values in a non-judgmental atmosphere while at the same time promoting a greater sense of personal control". They also recommend the counselling technique of fantasy. Since pre-retirement counselling is future orientated, it is important to be able to fantasise about the future. By projecting oneself into the future one can then evaluate that future view and its implications for current plans.

Pre-retirement counselling programmes consist of some individual counselling, but the bulk of the work takes place in groups (Kleiber & Thompson, 1980, Manion, 1976). Schlossberg (1981) emphasise the importance of interpersonal support. The group can provide this support for people ready to make a transition.

## **Personal management skills**

Developmental theories emphasise the role of personal control and autonomy in identity formation (Chickering, 1969; Erikson, 1963). However, the gymnasts in Kerr and Dacyshyn's (2000) study perceived a lack of personal control throughout their athletic careers and their retirement transitions. Gymnasts who had dictator-like coaches who yelled at, disempowered and controlled them were clearly angry over what they had endured as athletes.

This study of Kerr and Dacyshyn (2000) confirms the work of others who have found that the coach-athlete relationship has a profound effect on the transition process (McGown & Rail, 1994; Werthner & Orlick, 1986). Those who left because of conflict or difficulties with the coach had longer, more difficult transitions (Kerr & Dacyshyn, 2000). Werthner and Orlick (1986) also found that 64% of the former Olympian athletes they studied felt they had little sense of personal control over their lives during their sport career. They found that in the transition phase, “there were a number of athletes who had no idea what they should be doing and as result rated their sense of personal control lower than as an athlete” (p. 359). The gymnasts in the study of Kerr and Dacyshyn (2000) felt very little control over their lives during their careers, and one would think that retirement would evoke a sense of being in control of their lives. The athletes found that the opposite was true; the lack of power and control that these athletes experienced throughout their careers seemed to have a negative effect on their perceptions of control throughout the transition process. Athletes when at the peak of their careers and their lives are extremely structured at school, training and competing consumes all of their time. Few decisions need to be made by athletes themselves. Once these extended controls are removed, they feel lost and do not know what to do with themselves or their time (Kerr & Dacyshyn, 2000).

A significant contribution to the quality of the adaptation is the degree of perceived control that athletes have with respect to the end of their careers (Blinde & Stratta, 1992; McPherson, 1980). Botterill (1981) suggests that involvement in sport often produces dependence rather than independence or self-reliance. Sport may inadvertently counteract development of a sense of personal control and responsibility by doing everything for the athlete (Werthner & Orlick, 1986). Sport administrators and coaches make decisions on behalf of the athletes. The athletes are afforded little or no input with regard to

the training they do and the competitions they must attend. Thus the athletes' experience, dominated by the coach and administrator decisions, discipline, and schedules, may leave them vulnerable in terms of the self-management skills that are important in alternate career decisions.

Without a sense of personal control and poor decision-making skills to direct themselves, athletes are often ill prepared to manage the transition out of sport. To remedy this authors suggest that active athletes must be part of decision making processes, and this could result in a greater opportunity to develop more skills to cope in the world outside of sport (Botterill, 1981; Broom, 1981; Werthner & Orlick, 1981).

This issue has not been addressed extensively in the sport literature, but there exist considerable research from the areas of clinical, social, and physiological psychology that demonstrates that perceptions of control are related to many areas of human functioning including sense of self-competence (White, 1959), the interpretation of self (Kelly, 1967) and other information. In addition, perceptions of control may influence individuals' feelings of helplessness (Friedlander, 1984; 1985), motivation (Wood & Bandura, 1989), physiological changes (Tache & Selye, 1985) and self-confidence (Bandura & Adams, 1977).

## **Reorientation**

An important step in the progression of athletes from "Nowhere land" to "New beginnings" involves spending some time in retrospection, analysing and deconstructing their sport experiences.

It has been suggested that transitions can be an opportunity for personal growth as they lead to a search for meaning and result in new insights (Bridges, 1980). Many retired athletes describe their transition experiences as a time of thinking and analysing. They

deconstruct past experiences and look at them in a different light, which often leads to a new insight or understanding. The doctrines of elite sport are questioned which they are internalised and accepted as truth.

## **Coping skills**

During retirement, athletes are faced with dramatic changes in their personal, social and occupational lives. These changes will affect athletes cognitively, emotionally, and behaviourally. The quality of the adaptation to retirement experience by athletes will depend largely on the manner in which they address these changes (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994). The availability of effective coping skills may facilitate this process and reduce the likelihood of difficulties.

At a cognitive level, retiring athletes must alter their perceptions related to the adaptation process, especially with respect to self-identity, perceptions of control, and social identity (Bandura, 1977). In particular, athletes may use cognitive restructuring (Lazarus, 1972) and mental imagery (Smith, 1980) to re-orient thinking in a more positive direction. They can also embark on self-structured training (Meichenbaum, 1977) to improve attention and problem-solving, and goal-setting to provide direction and motivation in their post-athletic careers (Bruning & Frew, 1987).

Similarly, relevant techniques could be used to deal with emotional and/or physiological stressors. Specifically, retiring athletes could employ anger and anxiety strategies such as time-out, relaxation training, health, exercise and nutritional counselling to alleviate these difficulties (Bruning & Frew, 1987).

Kreiner-Philips and Orlick (1993) proposed a set of guidelines for performers to follow and to enjoy life more:

*1. Stay in control of your life*

- Set priorities for your time and activities.
- Take care of your own needs and needs of your loved one first (e.g. needs rest, relaxation, proper nutrition, physical activity, and simple joys).
- Keep things in perspective.

*2. Set a plan for dealing with demands*

- Expect additional demands and create a system for dealing with them.
- Decide how many demands you can handle.
- Establish times when you are not available for any external demands and stick to it.
- Approach demands that you want to accept as opportunities.
- Find a trusted person to act as a screen or buffer to take calls, deal with arrangements.
- Accept a reasonable number of demands that are important for you, and let others go.

*3. Respect the patterns that allowed you to excel*

- Remember the basics about how you got there.
- Reflect on what allows you to excel (e.g., hard work, adequate rest, staying positive, believing in yourself, accepting new challenges, being well prepared mentally and physically, and enjoying what you are doing).

#### *4. Plan strategies for dealing with distractions*

- Focus on what you want and on what you can control.
- Let the demands you have faced help prepare you for the demands you will face.
- Draw from the wisdom of others in planning your path (e.g., other athletes, relevant readings, mental training consultants).

### **Coping models**

The frameworks for understanding retirement was also adapted from Rusbult's (1980) investment model. Scanlan, Simons, Carpenter and Keeler (1990) developed a sport commitment model. As delineated in the model, commitment to sport is a function of four components:

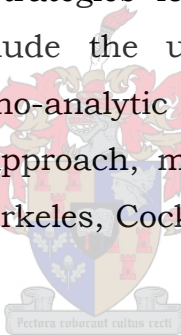
1. The athlete's enjoyment of sport participation.
2. The perceived attractiveness of the best available alternative to participating.
3. The amount invested in playing (in terms of expenditures and missed rewards).
4. Any constraints to remain involved.

The greater the perceived enjoyment, the less attractive the alternatives and the greater the investment, the more difficult it will be for an athlete to retire from sport. However, when the constraints become so great, the alternatives become more positive, or the missed rewards of participation negligible, then retirement becomes easier (Baillie & Danish, 1992).

## **INTERVENTIONS WITH ATHLETES IN TRANSITION**

As the awareness of the importance of career termination increased over the years, so has the need for interventions with athletes in transition (Wylleman et al., 2004). The phenomenon of difficulties in athletic retirement from sport can be best understood as a complex interaction of stressors (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994).

In view of the possible traumatic experience of the termination of an athletic career suggested in earlier research, a number of traditional therapeutic approaches, including cognitive restructuring, stress management and emotional expression, have been recommended as techniques to facilitate post-retirement adjustment among elite athletes (Gordon, 1995; Ogilvie & Taylor, 1993; Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994). Other intervention strategies for practitioners working with athletes in transition, include the use of projective techniques (Bardaxoglou, 1997), a psycho-analytic approach (Chamalidis, 1995), an information-processing approach, monitoring, and an existential approach (Lavalley, Nesti, Borkeles, Cockerill & Edge, 2000; Wylleman et al., 1999).



One avenue for working with athletes in transition has been account-making, which is the act of explaining, describing and emotionally reacting to problematic or influential life events (Grove, Lavalley, Gordon & Harvey, 1998; Lavalley, Gordon & Grove, 1997). This technique is used with athletes to confront their career-transition experiences mentally by thinking about it, putting it aside, cognitively constructing the various components of the transition (e.g., its nature, why it happened, how one feels about it, and what it means for the future), and then coming back again and reviewing the analysis. This 'account' is then partially confided to close others whose reaction may help or hinder the individual in dealing with career-transition experience.

Several sport psychologists have recommended former athletes to rhetorically work-through any retirement-related difficulties (Parker, 1994; Werthner & Orlick, 1986; Wylleman et al., 1993).

Whenever individual counselling is proposed to athletes in transition, it should assist them in coping with developments in the self identity, changes in the available emotional and social support, the enhancement of coping skills, and the development of a sense of control (Murphy, 1995). The counselling process needs to emphasize the qualities which the retiring or retired athlete possesses and which are transferable and put to good use in other settings, for example, commitment and communication skills. Lavalley and Andersen (2000) suggest that when considering interventions in working with athletes, post-transition attention should be focused on voluntariness of termination and loss of control, degree of identification with athletic role, extent of foreclosure on non-sport areas, availability of coping resources, previous transitions experience, continued sport-related involvement, post-sporting career planning, understanding and use of transferable skills, achievement of sport-related goals, access to career-transition support services, and new focus after retirement.

Building upon the transitional approach, career transitions and athlete life skill programmes have been developed which were initially geared toward providing support to athletes making transition from an athletic career to life after retirement (Andersen & Morris, 2000).

Table 2.1 presents a number of career development programmes developed by growing bodies and sport institutes around the world to assists individuals in developing a professional career outside of sport, as well as achieving their sport-related goals.



Table 2.1 Selected overview of career transition programmes.

<b>Programme</b>	<b>Institution</b>	<b>Country</b>
Athlete Career and Education (ACE) Programme	Australian Institute of Sport	Australia
Athlete Career Education (ACE UK) programme	UK Sport Institute	UK
British Athlete Lifestyle	University of Strathclyde	Scotland
Assessment Needs in Career and Education (BALANCE) Programme		
Career Assistance Programme for Athletes	US Olympic Committee	USA
Making the Jump Programme	Advisory Resource Centre for Athlete	USA
Olympic Athlete Career Centre (National Sport Centre)	Olympic Athlete Career Center	Canada
Olympic Job Opportunities Programme	Australian Olympic Committee	Australia
Study and Talent Education Programme (STEP)	Vrije Universiteit Brussels	Belgium
The Retiring Athlete	Dutch Olympic Committee	Netherlands Wales
Wales Lifestyle Management Programme	Sport Council for Wales	Wales
“Whole-istic”	American College Athletics	USA
Women’s Sport Foundation Athletic Service	Women’s Sport Foundation USA	

Note: The Olympic Athlete Career Centre (National Sport Centre) offers the following: *New beginnings: Transition from high-performance sport; Self-directed career-planning guide; Athlete registered retirement from sport plan; and The shadow program.*

These programmes are generally aimed at developing social, educational and work-related skills in elite athletes and generally focus on lifestyle management and the development of transferable skills that can assist individuals in making the transition from life in sport into a post-sport career including commitment, goal setting, time management, repeated practice, and disciplined preparations (Andersen & Morris, 2000; Lavalley, Gorely, Lavalley & Wylleman, 2001; Wylleman et al., 1999).

There are significant organizational obstacles present in these interventions (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994). The major obstacle here is the limited participation of sport psychologists at the elite level, where problems are most likely to occur. Also, the team psychologist typically associated with national governing bodies, collegiate teams, or professional organizations, rarely have the opportunity to develop an extended relationship with team members. This limited contact rarely presents an opportunity for the sport psychologist and athletes to discuss issues related to retirement. The fact that retired athletes are no longer part of a sport organization, treatment of the athlete may no longer be within the job description of the organization's psychologist (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994).

It is important that the indoctrination of a more holistic approach to sport development begins early in the life of the athlete (Pearson & Petitpas, 1990). This perspective relies on a primary prevention model that emphasises preventing problems prior to their occurrence (Ogilvie & Taylor, 1993). Considerable research indicates that primary preventative measures are a useful and efficient means of allocating resources. As a consequence, the first step in the prevention process is to engender in parents and coaches involved in youth sport a belief that long-term personal and social development is more important than long-term athletic success (Ogilvie, 1987).

Remer, Tongate and Watson (1987) as well as Schafer (1971) argue that high school and college athletic programmes restrict opportunities for personal and social growth. Significant issues in this area include the development of self- and social identities, social roles and behaviour, and social support systems. Early interventions in these areas will decrease the likelihood that the factors leading to crises in career termination will contribute to distress due to career termination later in life (Ogilvie & Taylor, 1993).

It is also important to emphasise that these two issues—sport participation and development—are not mutually exclusive. Sport participation, may in fact, become a vehicle through which general life skills may be learned (Scanlan, Stein & Ravizza, 1989). In addition, sport may be the foundation upon which children may develop the ability to take psychological and social risks in other areas of their lives. Thus, a healthy sport environment may assist athletes to become more fully integrated personally and socially, thereby enabling them to function in a more diverse variety of situations (Ogilvie, Taylor, 1993). Crook (1986, p. 28) after looking at several factors that previous literature reviews have consistently show as being related to problems in the career transition of athletes, states the following:

*It is also important to consider the elements present in the sport environment that lead to the development of behaviours that become maladaptive prior to retirement (e.g., neglect of education/career, sport dependent self concept, narrow interest). If such behaviors could be identified and corrected while the athlete was still active, many of the problems associated with retirement could be reduced.*

## **TREATMENT OF RETIREMENT DIFFICULTIES**

The need for pre-retirement counselling programmes is evident. Crook (1986) advocated a behavioural-counselling approach to permit the athlete to examine and change behaviours that are part of a poor

adjustment retirement. The characteristics of sport participation may have led to the maladaptive behaviours. Now the counsellor's role is to modify these behaviors. The reinforcing function of competitive sport may be extinguished, but the behaviours will initially persist. Behaviour modification and cognitive restructuring are seen as techniques to assist the athlete in learning to cope with a new life-style (Crook, 1986). The reinforcing effects of sport have also contributed to self-esteem. Decision-making skills need to be enhanced, possibly through the establishment of well-defined goals. The counsellor does not necessarily want to be setting up goals, but those targets may assist in decision-making processes (Baillie & Danish, 1992).

The goal is to adapt their perception about themselves and their world to their new roles in a way that will be maximally functional (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994). The sport psychologist may assist retiring athletes in identifying desirable non-sport identities and experiencing feelings of value and self-worth in this new personal conception. Sport psychologists may aid athletes in working through any emotional distress they may experience during retirement.

It is important that any therapeutic intervention keeps in mind the range and variety of responses to retirement. Although group seminars may be cost effective with respect to career issues, individual counselling allows for identification of each retiree's needs (Baillie & Danish, 1992). It may also provide a more secure environment for athlete to air his/her concerns. The athlete can then be encouraged to share these private thoughts with peers. These meetings may provide the athletes with the opportunity to express feelings of doubt, concern, or frustration relative to the end of their careers (Gorbett, 1985).

Sport psychologists may on a manifest level help the athletes cope with the stress of the termination process (Gorbett, 1985). Authors

such as Kübler-Ross (1969) and Werthner and Orlick (1982), have highlighted the value of the denial. Although maladaptive denial blocks the individual from participating in rehabilitative therapy, adaptive denial allows for gradual learning. Adaptive denial is present in the individual who still views the disability as transient but who is willing to undergo physical therapy a way of accelerating the return to normalcy (Baillie & Danish, 1992). The fact that the individual is willing to try, allows for an opportunity to experience success and gain self-worth and even, for some, self-efficiency.

In the same way, an athlete can deny impending retirement but still be encouraged to make plans on a “just-in-case” basis. If the plans include educational advancement or career training, then the athlete will be in a better state of preparedness when the retirement does occur. This may occur without the athlete having necessarily planned it and may be of real value in team career seminars. Even the youngest member of the team, who perceives the end as far off, will be encouraged to make plans and will be more ready for retirement (Baillie & Danish, 1992). Also, the professional may help the athletes to explore ways of broadening their social identity and role repertoire, thus taking on new, non-sport identities and experiencing feelings of value and self-worth in this new personal conception (Ogilvie & Taylor, 1993).

Additionally, athletes may be encouraged to expand their social support to individuals and groups outside of the sport arena (Ogilvie & Howe, 1982). This goal may be accomplished by having athletes explore ways of broadening their social identity and role repertoire (Ogilvie & Howe, 1982). Wolff and Lester (1989) propose a three-stage therapeutic process comprised of listening/confrontation, cognitive therapy, and vocational guidance to aid athletes in coping with their loss of self-identity and assist them in establishing a new identity. Outside of sport Roskin (1982) found that the implementation of a

package of cognitive, affective, and social support interventions within didactic and small group settings significantly reduced depression and anxiety among a high-stress group of individuals composed partly of retirees.

On the issue of peer support, Reynolds (1981) found that the support of significant others had its greatest effect on job satisfaction when the job was of low status or low congruency. Reynolds (1981: 135) commented: “positive support for the jobs from close friends and relations is more important to the former athlete when he has been disadvantaged in his education and family background or when he has been unable to choose the most desirable job”.

Svobada and Vanek (1982) studied the ability of their sample of Czechoslovakian national team members to cope with the practical and psychological stress of adjustment to their new professions. Their results indicated that 30% were able to meet the new demands immediately and 58% were able to adjust within three years. However, psychological adjustment took much longer: 34% adapted fairly quickly, but 17% had not adjusted at all. These researchers also explored the predominant means of coping with career termination. They found that social support was the most important factor. Specifically, 37% emphasized the role of their family most often, followed by colleagues in their new profession (12%), friends (8%) and the coach (3%).

Baillie and Danish (1992) also stated that the support of others is probably one of the most important single factors in the adjusted process. Kübler-Ross (1969) noted patients need to express their feelings and not be told to keep it inside or to look on the bright side. Family, friends, team mates and professional counselors must provide an ongoing and positive group for the retiring athlete. From this external evaluation a positive internal image may be fostered. The athlete must be joined affectively and cognitively (Siller, 1969). The

progression through the stages of transition must be at a rate and sequence established by the retiree. Peers and others must provide the support required to accept the new sense of self, the new identity, and the new life-style (Baillie & Danish, 1992).

Athletes often acknowledge their unwillingness to plan for retirement (Blann & Zaichkowsky, 1986) but are responsive to and appreciative of efforts to structure post-sport career development. The provision of such programmes seems warranted by the findings of several researchers (e.g., Ogilvie & Howe, 1982; Werthner & Orlick, 1986).

Former elite athletes might be seen as a good investment in society. They are young people who did a good job and succeeded in situations of social evaluation and competition. They are used to working hard and can be a good resource for society in a case of successful adaptation after sport career termination. Neglecting assistance to them is a waste of human resources (Alfermann et al., 2004).

Parker (1994) found that former athletes have a lot to say and perhaps have no one to tell. These unresolved feelings and emotions, coupled with the lack of a safe form of expression, are potentially harmful to the mental health of these individuals. Transitional athletes need to be afforded the opportunity to vent and clarify their feelings about their sport careers without fear of reprisals.

It is suggested that, in addition to allowing athletes to “talk about”, they might benefit from group sessions, as U.S. Olympians did (Petitpas, Danish, McKelvain & Murphy, 1990). These Olympians spoke of the relief they felt that other athletes had similar transitional experiences, and that they were not alone. Reality therapy, as outlined by Glasser (1965) might be a useful technique with this population. Reality therapy stresses growth through reclaiming personal control and personal responsibility for actions. It also depends heavily on goal



setting and goal meeting, concepts with which athletes are very familiar.

Thomas and Ermler (1988, p. 139) discuss the obligations of the coach in the coach-athlete relationship, and they noted that coaches often act with the athletes' best interests at heart but get the wrong results: They observe:

*The coach and the other managers in the athletic establishment have traditionally remained the autocratic center of the athlete's world. Retaining the knowledge, control, and ultimate responsibility for the athlete's world is often justified in order to achieve outcome objectives. It is the sincere often altruistic belief of the coaching establishment that a favour is being done for the athlete of whom they have charge by taking care of the details, making the decisions, and literally spoiling the athlete so that his or her full attention can be directed to the quest for athletic excellence.*

The results of the study of Parker (1994) indicate that athletes do not necessarily want to get their own way or to get special treatment. A very strong premium was placed by the athletes on honesty from their coaches and on getting information to athletes, in that it helps to cultivate their personal anatomy. Thomas and Ermler (1988, p. 147) explained that "not giving the athletes information or not taking time to explain that is happening or what the options are robs the individual of anatomy". Unfortunately, coaches are usually hired and fired based on wins and losses, not on cultivation communication and relationships with their players and providing for their anatomy (Parker, 1994).

Studies by Baillie (1990), Swain (1989), and Werthner and Orlick (1986) dealt only with a select group of world ranked, internationally elite athletes or with anecdotes from a small number of professional athletes. That is, athletes who are at the top of their profession tend to have dedicated a very large portion of their lives to training and competing. This commitment in terms of time and personal energies



contributes to an imbalance of other activities in their lives. Unfortunately, this sport only identity may leave some athletes with few skills other than those perfected as an athlete and the resulting lack of options can lead to adjustment difficulty (Sinclair & Orlick, 1993).

In their study Sinclair & Orlick (1993) found that half of the individuals (100 athletes) stated that after retiring they spent 1-3 hours per week mentally preparing for this new focus or interest, much as they can done in sport (e.g., setting short- and long-term goals, preparing plans to achieve their goals, or imaging successful performance). An additional 36 athletes indicated that they spent 4-6 hours a week on similar types of mental preparation for their new focus, once they had left sport.

This successful transfer of mental-training skills may have been a factor influencing the relative smoothness of transfer for athletes. Teaching transfer skills along with positive interventions upon retirement would likely enable more athletes to make the transition from competent athlete to component person/performer in another domain more quickly and smoothly (Sinclair & Orlick, 1993).

All transitions are followed by a period of disruption in which old routines, assumptions, and relationships change and new ones evolve (Schlossberg et al., 1989). In sport, it appears that most organizations have not paid the same attention to helping athletes move out of the organizational structure as they have to helping them move in. Nor has any organisation developed a detailed conceptualization of what is effective in helping athletes move smoothly and quickly through the transition process (Sinclair & Orlick, 1993).

Several recommendations for intervention, or strategies for change are proposed by Sinclair and Orlick (1993).

1. *Continue financial support (e.g., one year after retirement)*

This would be beneficial to athletes because they would be able to continue their education uninterrupted, or find suitable employment.

2. *Offer seminars dealing with adjustment issues*

Athletes would be informed what emotions to expect, when to expect them, and for how long; what coping strategies are most effective; and from whom to seek support. Former high-performance athletes would be a useful resource for sharing knowledge and participating in such seminars. These exchanges would have to occur when close to retirement or upon retirement, as many athletes are not mentally ready for serious discussion of retirement issues while still actively competing.

3. *Provide a practical resources center for athletes*

An athlete resource centre capable of directing or connecting athletes to the desired service should be operable. This center could coordinate and provide seminars, workshops, mental training consultation, and relevant readings (e.g., Orlick 1990; Orlick & Werthner, 1987) to interested athletes.

4. *Provide opportunities to contribute in the sport system*

Former athletes are a valuable resource in terms of their specific sport knowledge with respect to skill, technique, strategy, physiological, and mental training. Their expertise is invaluable to continued coaching departments and national sport organisations. People and organisations should seek out former athletes for coaching positions or other roles that would benefit from their experience.

5. *Encourage national sport organizations to maintain contact with retired athletes*

Retirement does not necessarily diminish athletes' interest in their sport or their desire to be involved in some capacity. National sport organizations should continue contact with their

former athletes by such simple means as newsletters, invitations to organizations to organizations-related functions, or requests for inputs or assistance from athletes.

6. *Continue to implement mental skills training programmes for athletes*

Discuss the ways in which these same mental readying and focusing skills can be applied.

7. *Act upon athletes' recommendations*

Seminars should be held for retiring high-performance athletes.

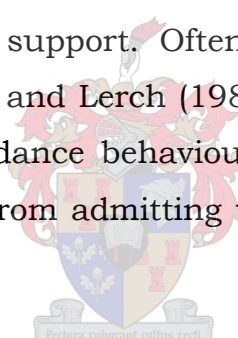
## **SOCIAL SUPPORT SYSTEMS**

Studies by Arviko (1976), Hearle (1975), Mihovilovic (1968) and Werthner and Orlick (1986) indicate that athletes with a broad-based social identity that includes family, friends, educational, and occupational components demonstrated better adaptation following retirement. It has been argued that the diversity of an athlete's social identity will affect the quality of the adaptation to retirement (Gorbett, 1985). Researchers have associated retirement with a loss of status and social identity (Pollack, 1956). Many athletes define themselves in terms of their popular status, though his recognition is typically short-lived (McPherson, 1980). As a result many retired athletes question their self-worth and feel the need to regain the lost public esteem.

As a result of their restricted social identity and the absence of their alternative social support systems, retired athletes may feel isolated, lonely, and unsustained socially (Greendorfer & Blinde, 1985; McPherson, 1980). Mihovilovic (1968) also demonstrates that social support is an important part of the career-termination process. In his study of Yugoslavian soccer players, 34% of the respondents said that their friendships ended after they retired and 32% of the respondents indicated that their circle of friends diminished following career

termination. Reynolds (1981) reported that, among a sample of retired professional football players, those who received support from close friends and relatives demonstrated the highest level of satisfaction in their current jobs.

Due to their intense emotional and physical commitment to sport, athletes may fail to develop relationships outside of their sport and family systems that may prove valuable when confronted with retirement stress (Coakley, 1983). The vast majority of the friends, acquaintances and other associates are found in the sport environment and their social activities revolve primarily around their athletic life (Botterill, 1990; Svoboda & Vanek, 1982). Support from sport often disappears once athletes retire (Crook & Robertson, 1991). Retired athletes may also find that former coaches and team mates are no longer sources of support. Often team mates avoid retired athletes. Rosenberg (1982) and Lerch (1982) use the concept of social death to explain this avoidance behaviour, which is used to protect those who are still active from admitting the uncertainty of their own careers.



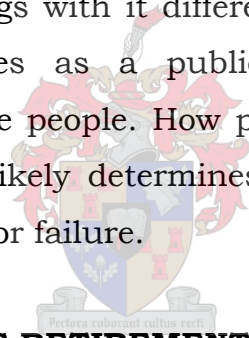
Family members who have enjoyed participation in and identification with the fame and prestige associated with the athlete, may also be affected by retirement. They may not support the athlete's decision to retire (Griffith, 1982; Ogilvie & Howe, 1982). Family members are often unable to meet the retired athlete's need for support and understanding because they must deal with their own sense of loss. Retired athletes may also lack the social skills to develop new support systems (McLaughlin, 1981). This often results in a sense of isolation, being neglected, and alone in their efforts to adjust to retirement.

Although winning may be the ultimate goal for high-performance athletes, it may also turn out to be their biggest stumbling block for future success (Kreiner-Phillips & Orlick, 1993). There are numerous accounts of athletes who have won "the big one", never to have won

again. Autobiographies written by high profile people (e.g., athletes, coaches, musicians) sometimes address the stressful side of success. Podborski (1987, p. 113), winner of the overall World Cup downhill skiing title, writes:

*You've got to watch the star-trip syndrome. You read in the papers that you're great, people start telling you you're great, and you start thinking you're great. So if you start believing it you're dead meat. You've got to separate the media personality from the reality.*

Lucrative endorsements have also meant increased pressure on the athletes. No longer is it just the skier skiing down the mountain, but it's also a bank, a restaurant chain, or a sport store (Chapman & Starkman, 1988). According to Kreiner-Phillips and Orlick (1993) it appears that success brings with it different expectations, additional demands, conflicting roles as a public and private individual, notoriety, at least for some people. How people deal with these roles and additional demands likely determines the extent to which they experience future success or failure.



## **IDENTITY AND ATHLETIC RETIREMENT**

A study by Lally (2007) re-examine the issue of identity during athletic retirement. The results indicated the participants, with one exception, smoothly navigated through the retirement transition. They did not experience an identity crises following sport career termination, consistent with earlier work suggesting athletic retirement is one of many of life transitions (Perna, Ahlgren & Zaichkowsky, 1999; Perna Zaichkowsky & Bocknek, 1996). Sport career termination did prompt participants to explore neglected, abandoned, or entirely novel identity dimensions, but they flourished in this opportunity for self-exploration.

One of the main compelling findings of Lally's (2007) study was that the athletes proactively decreased the prominence of their athletic identities as retirement approached. They consciously elected to shift the athlete role from its central to a subordinate status in their identity hierarchies and explore other available roles. Further, this shift away from the athletic identity and exploration of other available identities prior to retirement and redirection of self into graduate studies and full-time employment immediately upon retirement precluded a major identity crises or loss of identity.

This self guarding of one's identity prior to disengagement reflects the dynamic and relational nature of identity, and although it has not emerged specifically in the athletic retirement literature, this management of identity as self-protection has been documented in literature before. Brewer et al. (1999), in their study of identity loss, found male student athletes reduced their identification with the athlete role following disappointing seasons. Grove, Fish and Eklund (2004) found no change in AIMS scores at two periods prior to team selection, yet a significant decrease in AIMS scores among female athletes when they were not selected to state all-star teams. Diminishing the athlete identity may not automatically translate into lesser athletic performance as many coaches and athletes fear (Petitpas, Danish, Mckelvain & Murphy, 1990). As suggested in a paper by Miller and Kerr (2002b) it may be that devoting oneself to both personal and athletic pursuits rather than sacrificing one in favour of the other actually fosters excellence in both. If supported additional research as suggested by Lally (2007) her finding may challenge the widespread belief that excellence in sport requires one's complete devotion at the expense of identity development and age-appropriate role experimentation.

## **THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF RETIRING FROM ELITE SPORT**

In their study as assessment of the relation between the perception of bodily changes after retirement from elite sport and physical self and global self-esteem, in retired elite athletes, Stephan et al., (2007) made the following findings: Difficulties experienced by retired athletes with their body were negatively related to global self-esteem, physical self-worth, perceived physical condition, sports competence, and bodily attractiveness. These results complement previous research, showing that global self-esteem and physical self-perceptions decrease during transition out of elite sport (Stephan, Bilard, Ninot & Delingnières, 2003a). This decrement could be a response to athlete's bodily transformations such as weight gain or loss of muscular mass (Koukouris, 1991), degradation of physical competencies (Drahota & Eitzen, 1998), and somatic symptoms (Stephan & Bilard, 2003). The perception of bodily losses after years of invested time and effort is assumed to be particularly stressful and threatening of self-esteem (Stephan et al., 2003a). The relation between difficulties experienced with the body and global self-esteem failed to reach significance when physical self-worth was considered this result is a first attempt to identify the mechanisms through which difficulties experienced after retirement from elite sport (i.e., the perception of bodily difficulties) impact on global self-esteem. It additionally supports the role of the physical self-worth as a superordinate construct (Van de Vliet, et al., 2002). If retired athletes experience substantial difficulties with their bodies, it decreases the feeling of pride, satisfaction, happiness and confidence with regard to their physical selves (Stephan et al., 2007).

In a study by Stambulova, Stephan & Jäphag (2007) on a cross-national comparison of elite French and Swedish athletes, it showed that Swedish athletes reported about twice longer duration of transition than French athletes. That has however changed after all,



nowadays, former Swedish elite athletes maintain higher athletic identity and feel more satisfied with their professional choice, professional success and life in general compared with their French counterparts.

Considering the common and the two nationally specific patterns of the transition to the post-career from the point of career transition models, it is possible to conclude that the study of Stambulova et al. (2007) clearly supports a view of the transition as a process with pre-conditions, coping and related factors, and outcomes/long-term consequences (e.g. Perna et al., 1999; Perna et al., 1996; Stambulova, 2003; Wylleman et al., 2004). It also demonstrates that the transition process is multidimensional (with changes in several spheres of life), multilevel (with changes on various psychological levels – from emotional reactions to personal identities) and multifactor (with a number of factors interplayed, including national identity). Stambulova et al., (2007) concluded that their study supports the important role of coping strategies in the transition and showed that athletes use a combination of various strategies that might reflect a really dynamic character of the transition process (Alfermann, 2000; Alfermann et al. 2004; Grove et al., 1997; Lavalley & Wylleman, 2000).

The cultural tradition makes rather natural for former elite Swedish athletes to keep their athletic identities after termination in sport, and, on the other hand, place an additional responsibility on them to achieve Swedish living standards, which are among the highest in West Europe. Sandemose (1934) related the so-called “Jante-Raw” as a key for understanding Swedish mentality. It postulates an importance “to be within the standard” (not much higher than a majority of people but not lower) as a basis for personal satisfaction and self-esteem. Elite Swedish athletes need more time to start a professional career outside sports and a high living standard, but they



feel satisfied with their professional choice/success, and life in general.

In contrast, former elite French athletes were confronted with a radical change in their social recognition after athletic career termination (Stephan et al., 2003b). They were forced to replace their athletic identities by new professional identities (e.g. coach's) that might speed up the process of the transition (Lavallee et al., 1997) but not always lead to satisfaction with their professional choice/career and current life.

Athletes in transition should be considered with a specific cultural context. Social macro-and meso-factors are nationally/culturally specific and might work as resources and also barriers in the transition to the post-career (Alfermann et al., 2004; Stambulova et al., 2007).



# **CHAPTER THREE**

## **RESEARCH PROTOCOL**

### **PART 1: QUESTIONNAIRE STUDY**

#### **OBJECTIVES OF QUESTIONNAIRE STUDY**

The focus of this study was to explore the transition experiences of high performance athletes. More specifically this study investigated the way in which the quality of sport career termination process is affected by athletic and non-athletic factors. Influence of athletic (voluntariness and gradualness of sport career termination, subjective evaluation of athletic achievements, post-sport life planning and athletic identity) and non-athletic factors (age, educational status) on different aspects of sport career difficulties is presented.

#### **RESEARCH DESIGN**

From a historical perspective, two research paradigms have been used to examine psychological factors associated with transitions of elite athletes out of high-performance athletics. The first (Chapter three) involved a quantitative approach in which athletes complete a questionnaire and the responses are statistically analysed.

Secondly (Chapter four), an interview guide was developed which focused on the sport career depth, from the initial start of the athletics career to the process of disengaging from elite sports. The responses of the athletes were then content analysed.

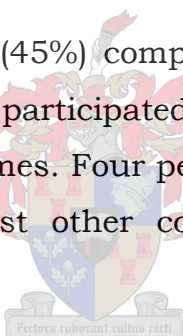
## **METHOD**

### **PARTICIPANTS**

Similar to past research (e.g. Alfermann, et al., 2004), the sampling criteria for participating in the current study were the following: to be a former athlete who, in the past, had competed at international level (e.g. Olympic Games, World and/or African and South African Championships), and retired from, competitive sport no less than 1 year before this study was carried out.

This part of the study involved 104 former South African elite athletes. Participants were selected on the basis of their level of achievement in track and field competitions which was limited to those athletes who were ranked among the world, international or national participants.

The majority of the sample (45%) competed in the World Track and Field Championships; 42% participated at national level, while 9% took part in the Olympic Games. Four percent represented the African Team that competed against other continents in track and field competitions.



The total sample for this study consisted of 67 male and 37 female athletes. The mean age of the sample was 41.62 years (SD = 10.94). These athletes had been retired an average of 8.43 years (SD = 6.96). This means that the participants in this sample had not recently terminated their athletic career but also experienced life after retirement. The athletes in this sample competed for an average of 16.18 years (SD = 7.64) at all levels. They had been members of a provincial team for an average of 10.46 years (SD = 6.75) and members of a national team for an average of 5.28 years (SD = 4.63). For these athletes, sport was a top priority commitment for an average of 10.57 years (SD = 7.16), ending a career which was up to 28 years in duration (M = 8.43; SD = 6.96).

Most (59%) of the subjects in the sample were married or living with a partner; 19% were single; 14% were separated, divorced or widowed and 8% were involved in a partner relationship but living alone. The majority (58%) of the participants had children.

A total of 3% obtained a doctorate; 11% a master's degree; and 44% had a bachelor's degree. A total of 22% had a tertiary diploma; 19% had a high school certificate; 2% had a technical school diploma. At the time of investigation 20% of the sample reported that they were still studying and 47% had taken an educational or training programme, e.g., coaching certificates.

Sixty-two percent of the retired athletes in this sample still competed in track and field as veterans or participated in minor leagues.

## **INSTRUMENTS**

Athletes were presented with the Sports Career termination Questionnaire II (SCTQ II). The SCTQ II has been satisfactorily used in the past (e.g. CeciĆ-Erpiĉ; 2000). The questionnaire reproduced the same factorial structure of their predecessors (CeciĆ-Erpiĉ, 2000; 2001) and processed the same hierarchical properties.

The SCTQ II assessed characteristics of the sport career termination process, evaluating the characteristics of active sport career, sport career termination, transition to post-sport life, and adaptation to post-sport life. The SCTQ II was developed on the basis of a qualitative pilot study conducted with former elite Slovene athletes who had terminated their careers on average seven years ago (CeciĆ-Erpiĉ, 1998).

In accordance with construct validity, items were combined into eight scales and four composite variables. Scales were combined into the Total Scale of Difficulties During Sport Career Termination.

Among characteristics of the sports career termination process were: it assess voluntariness (1 item; 5-point Likert-type scale: 1 = not voluntary at all; 5 = completely voluntary) and gradualness of the termination (1 item; 5-point Likert-type scale: 1 = not at all; 5 = a lot), one's subjective evaluation of athletic achievements (1 item; 5-point Likert type scale: 1 = not at all; 5 = completely), and degree of post-sport life planning (1 item; 5 = point Likert-type scale; 1 = not at all; 5 = a lot).

Three scales of the SCTQ II assessed the degree to which athletes encountered difficulties during the process of sport career termination:

- Personal
- Psychosocial
- Occupational



These three scales together with social and emotional support during sport career transition scale were combined in a total scale of sport career transition difficulty. The higher total score indicated more intense and more frequent difficulties experienced during the process of retirement from active sport participation.

Organization for post-sport life scale assessed the perceived quality of athletes' adaptation to post-sport life. The SCTQ II also included the scale of athletic identity, which assesses the degree to which participants identified with the athletic role during their active sports career. It is based upon the Athletic Identity Measurement Scale (AIMS), developed by Brewer et al. (1993). Items are rated on 5-point

Likert-type scales (1 = completely agree; 5-point Likert-type scales (1 = completely agree; 5 = completely disagree) Prevalence of athletic identity, which was assessed retrospectively, is indicated by lower values. The questionnaire processes satisfactory internal reliability (Cecić-Erpič, 2000).

## **PROCEDURE**

The list and addresses of retired athletes were obtained from athletic coaches and athletic clubs. All athletes were located in South Africa. Questionnaire packages were sent, each containing inventories to be completed, an informed consent form, and a letter detailing the general purpose of the study and detailed information on how to respond, a stamped self-addressed envelope to return the questionnaire was also provided. A deadline to send back the postal package was proposed to athletes who were informed that anonymity would be preserved.

Another ethical issue included in the covering letter was that participation was completely voluntary. The process produced 104 completed questionnaires out of a total of 120 questionnaires that were distributed. This was an exceptional response rate of 87%.

## **ANALYSIS**

The Pearson correlations were computed identity relations between ordinal measures. Cronbach alpha values were calculated to determine the reliability of the items measuring the various constructs. This is a summary measure to the inter-correlations between the items. Different groups (e.g. male/female) were compared using one-way ANOVA.

## **RESULTS**

### **LIFE DURING ELITE-SPORT CAREER**

#### **Training patterns**

On the question of time and commitment demanded by training sessions the subjects reported that they trained an average of approximately 9 training sessions (SD = 4.09) per week with each session lasting an average of approximately 105 minutes (SD = 0.54).

#### **Academic life**

The majority (73%) of the sample indicated that they were students during their elite sport career. They were mainly studying at tertiary institutions (92%). Most (69%) of these subjects were full-time students. It is worth noting that 84% of the participants did not terminate their studies as a result of their sport commitments.

#### **Earnings**

Subjects were requested to indicate on a 5-point Likert-type scale how much they earned during their sporting careers, ranging from 1 (*very little*) to 5 (*a lot*). The perception among respondents were that they earned a little (M= 2.39; SD = 1.48). A large percentage (82%) indicated that they did not earn enough in sport to enjoy a comfortable post-sport life (e.g., to purchase an apartment/house or to start a business).

The majority 61% of the athletes indicated that they did not depend financially on sport after their sport career. Only 26% was on the other hand depended on sport to support them financially (M = 2.47).

## **Fame**

On the question on how famous they perceived themselves to have been during their elite sport career, the majority of athletes indicated on a 5-point scale that they were very well known during their elite sport career ( $M = 3.18$ ;  $SD = 1.23$ ). Seventy six percent of the sample indicated that they enjoyed a privileged status among their peers due to their sport involvement. However, respondents felt that because of their strong commitment to sport, they neglected other important non-sport aspects of life ( $M = 3.31$ ;  $SD = 1.27$ ).

## **Planning of a sport career**

Probing whether the respondents thought about their post-sport careers during their active sport involvement on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*a lot*), a large number (37%) of respondents placed themselves on “2”, indicating that they did not think about the end of their sport careers. Respondents were also requested to indicate on a 1 to 5 scale the extent of their post-sport life planning. A large group (39%) placed themselves on “2”, indicating very little planning. Twenty four percent placed themselves on a “4” indicating a fair amount of planning.

## **Age of termination**

The largest group (23%) of the respondents terminated their elite sport careers between the ages of 25 and 30 years. The second most athletes (21%) terminated their athletic careers between the ages of 35 and 40 years ( $M = 33$ ;  $SD = 9$ ).

## **SUBJECTIVE EVALUATION OF SPORT ACHIEVEMENT**

Upon retirement from high performance sport, 34% of the athletes were of the opinion that they had not achieved all of their sport-related goals and 32% indicated that they have achieved all their sport



related goals and 34% of the athletes were undecided on that matter ( $M = 2.97$ ). This is an indication that the athletes in this sample did not achieve all their athletic goals.

### **ANTECEDENT AND MEDIATING FACTORS OF SPORT-CAREER TRANSITION**

Athletes rated the factors that had the most influence on their decision to retire as follow on a 1-to-5 intensity scale:

1. Growing tired of the lifestyle of an athlete (e.g. travelling/stress) ( $M = 3.34$ )
2. Having achieved most major goals in their sport ( $M = 3.12$ )
3. Age ( $M = 2.99$ )
4. Unsatisfactory performances ( $M = 2.93$ )

The factors in their opinion that had the least influence on their decision to retire on a scale of 1 tot 5, were:

1. Changes in the athletic equipment ( $M = 1.29$ )
2. Changes in overall techniques in executing the movements ( $M = 1.33$ )
3. Changes in the competition regulations ( $M = 1.4$ )
4. Pressure from parents ( $M = 1.61$ )

### **VOLUNTARINESS OF SPORT-CAREER TRANSITION**

Upon retirement from high performance sport 54% of the athletes perceived their decision to retire as completely voluntary, whereas 38% evaluated their retirement from sport as not voluntary and 12% was not sure how voluntary their transition out of elite sport was ( $M = 3.46$ ,  $SD = 1.48$ ).

## **GRADUALNESS OF SPORT-CAREER TRANSITION**

The majority of the subjects (44%) was of the opinion that the end of their sport was rather abrupt, 30% felt that it happened gradually and 24% was not sure how it did come about ( $M = 2.73$ ,  $SD = 1.27$ ). It seems that they did not recognize the signs of the inevitable retirement.

On the question at what level of their performance did they end their sport career, the subjects reported as follows:

1. Declining performance (67%)
2. At the peak of sport career (16%) and
3. Performance on an upward curve at time of retirement (16%)

## **PERMANENCY OF WITHDRAWAL FROM ELITE SPORT**

At the time of the study more than half (57%) of the sample indicated that they were sure that their withdrawal from elite sport was permanent, 12% felt that their withdrawal was temporary, whereas 31% felt that they were unsure about the finality of their exit out of elite sport and that it remained an unresolved issue at this stage.

## **GENERAL MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL STATE DURING SPORT-CAREER TRANSITION**

Former athletes who terminated their career involuntarily experienced more frequent and more severe difficulties than those who retired voluntarily. Those who retired involuntarily coped with more frequent and severe psychological difficulties, such as feelings of incompetence in activities other than sport, lack of self-confidence, low self-esteem and self-respect. Furthermore they experience more frequent and severe occupational difficulties, and difficulties with organizing their

post-sport life. They evaluated their adaptation to post-sport life as more negative than those athletes whose decision to retire from sports was perceived as voluntary.

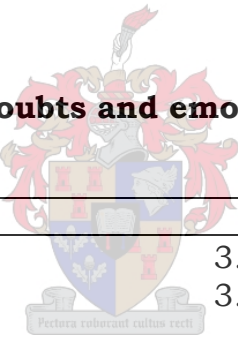
### **Doubts and emotions at retirement**

During the early months of the transition phase, the athletes faced various personal concerns (See Table 4.1). Using the 1-to-5 intensity scale, they rated their problems at retirement as follows:

1. Sadness
2. Dissatisfaction with the situation
3. Inability to reconcile themselves with the end of their sport
4. Fear of an uncertain future

*Table 3.1*

#### **Descriptive statistics of doubts and emotions at retirement**



<i>Variable</i>	<i>M</i>
Sadness	3.12
Dissatisfaction	3.05
Could not reconcile with the end of their sport	2.98
Fear of an uncertain future	2.72

Note: Based on rating on a 5-point scale:  
1 = *not at all*, 5 = *a lot*.

The withdrawal from elite sport changed the athletes' life considerably after retirement. The majority (59%) felt that they had a change in the way their life was going at that stage, 19% felt that their life had not changed at all, whereas 21% of the sample was undecided on that matter. Forty percent could not say whether the change was very negative or very positive.

## DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED AT RETIREMENT

### Health and lifestyle-related difficulties

During the early months of transition, the athletes faced various personal concerns (Table 4.2). Athletes found detraining difficulties to be the biggest stumbling block to overcome after retirement ( $M = 3.85$ ). The reason for this is because the athletes were used to a strenuous training programme and suddenly, they were not bound to a strict training programme.

Table 3.2

#### **Descriptive statistics of health and life-style related difficulties**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>M</i>
Detraining difficulties	3.85
Weight problems	2.83
Health problems (injuries etc.)	2.59
Alcohol abuse	2.19
Drug abuse	1.63

Note: Based on ratings on a 5-point scale  
1 = posed no problems, 5 = posed great problems

Other athletes were very concerned with their weight following a drastic reduction in the intensity and amount of training after retirement ( $M = 2.83$ ), and also a significant amount of the sample struggled with injuries and other health related injuries that ended their elite athletic careers ( $M = 2.59$ ). Higher values indicate a greater frequency and intensity of health and lifestyle related difficulties. Those issues that appeared not to be a problem for most athletes at the time were alcohol abuse ( $M = 2.19$ ) and drug abuse ( $M = 1.63$ ).

Cečić-Erpič, et al. (2004) state that the type of difficulties that influence sport retirement determine the quality of the sport-career termination process. Analysis revealed that former South African elite athletes perceived to have experienced on average most difficulties in

the area of self-concept ( $M = 17.71$ ;  $SD = 8.82$ ), followed by psycho-social difficulties ( $M = 12.73$ ;  $SD = 4.79$ ) and occupation-related difficulties ( $M = 8.64$ ;  $SD = 5.37$ ).

The majority of participants were confronted with high levels of difficulties as indicated by high mean scores.

### **Psychological difficulties**

This section covers three subsections that interpret difficulties with the subjects' self-concept, psycho-social difficulties, and occupational difficulties during their sport-career transition. It also measures the doubts and emotions that may have accompanied the subjects' retirement from sport (See Table 4.3). The inter-correlations between the items in each of the three sub-sections were found to be significant as shown by the Cronbach's alpha for each sub-section. This serves as an indication of the content validity of a collection of questions. The Cronbach's alpha for this factor was 0.82.

### **Psycho-social difficulties**

This is a 5-item section, which is scored by summing up the responses on a 5-point Likert-type scale (See Table 4.3).

The subjects were asked to rate to what extent they did or did not face these psycho-social difficulties at or after the end of their active sport involvement: loneliness, lack of desired social contacts with significant others from sports environment, missing of a social perspective of sport (e.g. social activities) and of the lifestyle of an elite athlete, difficulties with establishing personal contacts with people outside of the sport environment, difficulties in the relationship with significant others (e.g. partners or parents). The Cronbach's alpha for this section was 0.83. Higher values indicate a greater frequency and intensity of

psychosocial difficulties during their sport-career transition (See Table 4.3).

Analysis revealed that former elite athletes in this sample perceived most difficulties at the psycho-social level ( $M = 12.73$ ;  $SD = 4.79$ ). Athletes reported missing the lifestyle of an athlete, sport-related activities and friends from the sport environment. They also experienced difficulties with their parents and problems establishing social contacts (See Table 4.3).

*Table 3.3*

**Descriptive statistics of psycho-social difficulties during sport-career transition**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>M</i>
Missing the lifestyle of an athlete	3.05
Missing sport related activities	2.95
Missing friends from the world of sport environment	2.71
Difficulties in establishing social contacts	2.39
Relationship difficulties with one's partner	1.60

Note: based on ratings on 5-point scale:  
1 = *posed no problems*, 5 = *posed great problems*.

### **Self-concept difficulties**

This section consists of 8 items that refer to difficulties with self-concept during retirement namely: lack of self-confidence, self-control, low self-esteem, self-worth, feelings of underachievement in sport related goals, feelings of incompetence in activities other than sport, difficulties with planning one's future, and a fear of uncertain future. The Cronbach's alpha for this section was 0.89.

The subjects were asked to rate on a 5-point Likert-type scale to what extent they did or did not face these difficulties at or after the end of their own active sport involvement. Higher values indicate a greater frequency and intensity of difficulties with the subjects' self-concept during their sport-career transition.

Table 3.4

**Descriptive statistics of self-concept during sport-career transition**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>M</i>
Feelings of underachievement in sport-related goals	2.87
Difficulties with planning one's future	2.47
Lowered self-confidence	2.39
Low self-esteem	2.35
Lowered self-worth	2.35
Fear of an uncertain future	2.35
Feelings of incompetence in activities other than sport	2.26
Lack of self control	2.19

Note: Based on rating on 5-point scale:

1 = *posed no problems*, 5 = *posed great problems*.

Analysis revealed that former elite athletes perceived to have experienced on average most difficulties with their self-concept ( $M = 17.71$ ,  $SD = 8.82$ ).

The issues that appeared to be the problem for most athletes at this time were:

1. Feeling of underachievement in sport related goals ( $M = 2.87$ )
2. Difficulties with planning one's future ( $M = 2.47$ )
3. Lowered self-confidence ( $M = 2.39$ ).

This confirms the findings of other research that found that athletes who invest heavily into sport, and whose self-concept does not extend beyond the limits of their sport often experience sport-career termination as an identity loss (Allison & Meyer, 1988; Cećić-Erpič, 1998; 2000).

### **Occupational difficulties**

This section is composed of 4 items with responses on a 5-point Likert-type scale. The subjects are asked to rate to what extent they did not face these occupational-related difficulties at or after the end

of their active sport involvement. The items refer to a lack of occupation-specific knowledge, to difficulties with finding work difficulties with the adjustment to the requirements of the new occupation and to financial difficulties ( $M = 8.64$ ;  $SD = 5.37$ ). The Cronbach alpha for this section was 0.94.

Athletes tended to report:

1. Lack professional knowledge after their lengthy spell in athletics ( $M = 2.19$ )
2. Financial difficulties ( $M = 2.17$ )
3. Difficulties adjusting to the requirements of their occupation ( $M = 2.12$ ).

Table 3.5

**Descriptive statistics of occupation-related difficulties during sport-career transition**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>M</i>
Lack of professional knowledge	2.19
Financial difficulties	2.17
Problems with finding a job	2.17
Difficulties with adjustment to the requirements of your occupation	2.12

Note: Based on ratings on 5-point scale:  
 1 = posed no problems, 5 = posed great problems.

The degree of difficulty experienced during the sport-career termination process was not influenced by the athletes' age at the time of the career end. However, current educational status had a significant effect on the occurrence of occupational difficulties, which refer to problems with finding a job, financial difficulties, difficulties with adaptation to occupational requirements, and lack of professional knowledge. The latter was found to be the biggest stumbling block because athletes had not professional work experience which is always a prerequisite when employers consider applications for a job.



Because many of the athletes had earned very little during their professional sport careers, they consequently experienced financial difficulties.

### **Social and emotional support expected by the transitional athlete**

Athletes rated the support they expected (e.g., emotional, financial, etc.) from people and organizations around them. Those individuals, groups or organizations from whom the athletes expected support at transition from elite sport were: partners (girlfriend, boyfriend, spouse), parents, and friends.

Other groups or persons from whom the athletes expected the least support were: the sport psychologist, the Olympic committee and the national sport association (See Table 3.6)

It is also interesting to note that athletes also had expected very little support from the coaching staff ( $M = 1.95$ ) and their team mates ( $M = 1.95$ ). This scenario explains why former elite athletes do not tend to return to their former clubs to assist with the sport in general.

*Table 3.6*

#### **Descriptive statistics of social and emotional support expected by the transitional athlete**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>M</i>
Partner (girlfriend, boyfriend, spouse)	2.61
Parents	2.35
Friends	2.15
Other family members	2.10
Coaching staff	1.95
Team mates	1.95
National Sport Association	1.84
Olympic Committee	1.60
Sport psychologist	1.57

Note: Based on ratings on 5-point scale:  
1 = none, 3 = little, 5 = a lot

## **Social and emotional support received by transitional athletes**

This section comprises items that refer to the social and emotional support athletes received from significant others as well as from institutions in their sport-career transition. This section investigated the support offered to retiring athletes by their partners, parents, other family members, team mates, friends, national sports associations, coaching staff, the Olympic Committee, sports psychologists, other sports experts. The items were answered on a 5-point Likert-type scale, where responses range from *no support*, *little support* to *a lot of support* ( $M = 19.80$ ,  $SD\ 7.88$ ). The Cronbach' alpha for this section was 0.87.

During the retirement stages athletes received a significant amount of support from the following significant others in their lives, such as partners (girlfriend, boyfriend, spouse), parents, and friends (See Table 3.7).

It is also significant to note that institutional groups provided the least support at the transitional stages of athletes out of elite sport, namely the Olympic committee, the sport psychologist and the national association (See Table 3.7).

What is alarming about these statistics is that it is clear that the athletes rated the support of coaches in the retirement process as low ( $M = 2.07$ ). The national sport association ( $M = 1.53$ ) and the Olympic committee ( $M = 1.14$ ) are almost completely absent with regard to support of the former athletic heroes when they retire from elite sport.

Table 3.7

**Descriptive statistics of social and emotional support received by athletes**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>M</i>
Partner (girlfriend, boyfriend, spouse)	3.06
Parents	2.81
Friends	2.68
Other family members	2.62
Team mates	2.37
Coaching Staff	2.07
National sport association	1.53
Sport psychologist	1.49
Olympic Committee	1.41

Note: Based on ratings on 5-point scale:  
1 = *none*, 3 = *little*, 5 = *a lot*.

**ORGANISATION OF POST-SPORT LIFE**

This section comprised 8 items, 3 of which formed a further subscale, i.e., subjective evaluation of the athlete's adjustment to post sport life. All items are answered on a 5-point Likert-type scale. They refer to the time needed for the subjects' adjustment to post-sport life, the activities they engaged in after sport-career termination, subjects' satisfaction with their post-sport life, and the comparison of importance between the active athletic and the post-sport life. The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.63. The higher values indicate, a greater frequency and intensity of difficulties of organising a satisfactory post-sport life ( $M = 19.65$ ,  $SD = 4.7$ ).

In terms of the athletes' perception of how long it took them to feel completely adjusted to the new demands and social roles outside elite sport, the majority of athletes (26%) indicated it took them 1 to 3 years to fully adjust to retirement, 22% of the athletes took 7 to 11 months, 16 % took 0 to 2 months, 12% took 3 years and more, 9% took 3 to 6 months and 14% of the athletes at the time of the study did not feel fully adjusted to life outside elite sport.

On the question of how they would describe their general attitude towards retirement from sport at that point, 46% indicated that they were very positive about retirement, 28% were very negative about retirement and 26% of the athletes were undecided on the matter ( $M = 3.31$ ). The majority (76%) of the athletes had some activity to become involved in right away after retirement (e.g. job, school, relationship, hobby etc.). The majority of the athletes (36%) indicated that they missed sport and the lifestyle of an athlete, 29% indicated that they do not miss it at all and 30% of the athletes were undecided ( $M = 3.13$ ). Almost all the athletes (89%) indicated that they missed sport after a while (e.g., they thought about their sport career, achievements, the people from the world of sport, etc.). The majority (90%) of the sample indicated that they are still in one way or another involved in sport. Forty percent of the sample of retired athletes were involved in coaching, while 25% served as officials at track and field meetings.

### **Subjective evaluation of adjustment to post-sport life**

This is a 3 item section with answers on a 5-point Likert type scale. The items aimed at a general evaluation of sports career termination and of the subjects' satisfaction with their post-sport life as well as at an evaluation of the subjects' adjustment to the post-sport life itself. The Cronbach's alpha from this section was 0.91. Higher values indicate a more negative evaluation of the post-sport life in general and of the subjects' adjustment to it ( $M = 7.42$ ,  $SD = 3.39$ ).

Participants' organization of life after having terminated their sport career was, on average, perceived to be relatively unproblematic. These athletes evaluated the process of adaptation as positive and were furthermore satisfied with their post-sport life, successfully coping with its demands. A relatively smooth adaptation to post-sport life was manifested when athletes compared their active sports career with their post sport life.

On the question of public reputation after retirement 74% of the respondents indicated that they still enjoy public reputation and that their post-sport life compared with their active sport career is much less important for their personality ( $M = 2.80$ ). This is an indication that they considered their post-sport life as more important than their former elite sport career. Only 6% of respondents were not satisfied with their current post-sport career life ( $M = 3.61$ ). Respondents indicated that in general only 6% cope with adjustment to post-sport life very unsuccessfully ( $M = 3.60$ ) but 28% showed that the role of a former elite athlete is very important to them ( $M = 2.73$ ). However 31% of the respondents felt that sport is not the most important aspect of their life ( $M = 2.72$ ).

### **ATHLETIC IDENTITY**

The section is composed of 7 items with responses on a 5-point Likert-type scale. It measures the strengths and exclusiveness of the subjects' identification with the athletic role during their active sport career. The scale comprises items that refer to the athletic role in the subjects' identity during their active sports career, to the sport-related goals, the importance of sport, and to the subjects' commitment to sport. Some of the items are similar to those included in the *Athletic Identity Measurement Scale* developed by Brewer et al. (1993).

It is believed that a strong athletic identity influences the occurrence of difficulties in developing a post-sport occupational identity and the prevalence of emotional and social adjustment problems to post-sport life (Grove, Lavalley & Gordon, 1997). These authors propose that the degree of athletic identity and its prevalence over other social roles has also a significant effect on the quality of retirement processes from sport. It is thus showed in their study that athletes showed strong athletic identities. They could experience more intense difficulties

during sport-career termination and adaptation to post-sport life than athletes with lower athletic identities.

Because of their total commitment to sport most athletes felt that they have neglected important aspects of life that were not related to sport ( $M = 3.31$ ). Most athletes also indicated that due to their sport commitment they also missed events and activities that were not related to sport ( $M = 3.61$ ). They also very rarely engaged in social activities during their sport career ( $M = 2.63$ ). Most of the athletes' friends were also from the world of sport ( $M = 3.62$ ).

Cronbach's alpha for this section was 0.64. Athletic identity had a significant effect on the degree of difficulties experienced in this study. Participants who during active sport involvement identified mostly with their athletic role, perceived to have experienced more difficulties than those athletes who identified less with the role of an athlete. A strong identification with the athlete identity was related to more severe and frequent psychological difficulties, as well as with more difficulties in organizing their post-sport-career life.



## **COUNSELLING FOR RETIREMENT**

When asked if the respondents expected any psychological problems after retirement from sport, the majority of the respondents (77%) indicated that they did not expect any problems. The remaining section of the sample indicated that they expected problems e.g., loss of self-esteem, problems with finding happiness in life, adjustment to retirement, adjustment to reduced fame, sadness, depression, loss of identity and also a failure with no purpose. This is indicative of high-performance athletes who could not make a smooth exit out of elite sport on a psychological level.

## RETIREMENT SERVICES

When retired athletes had hard and stressful times after retirement, they indicated as follows (Table 4.8) , whom they would turn for help.

*Table 3.8*

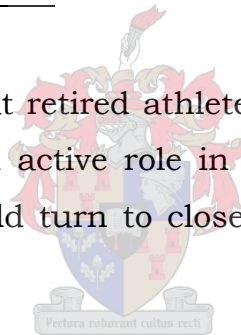
**Persons and institutions  
athletes would prefer to help**

---

Coach	36%
Close friends	36%
Sport psychologist	35%
Parents	33%
Counsellor / Therapist	21%
No-one	19%
Sport expert	16%
Siblings	13%
Physician	5%

---

It is significant to note that retired athletes would try to involve their former coaches to play an active role in their transition out of elite sport. Also, that they would turn to close friends and a psychologist for help.



Upon retirement from high performance sport the athletes indicated how useful they would find the services to help them after retirement (See Table 4.9). Athletes found the following services most useful during and after the transition phase of retirement: Finding a new career or area of interest, assistance in how to transfer mental skills to new career or area of interest, and information on work and education opportunities. The potential services for dealing with retirement that were either not used or viewed as not helpful included: Assistance in finding a place to live, financial counselling, and workshops with other retired athletes to share and learn from each other's experience.

Table 3.9

**Descriptive statistics of usefulness of retirement services after retirement**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>M</i>
Help in finding a new career or area of interest	3.57
Help in learning how to transfer your mental skills	3.47
Information on work and educational opportunities	3.37
Help in building your confidence in post-sport life	3.35
Information on how other athletes have dealt with retirement	3.31
Assistance guidance with medical and healthcare	2.28
Psychological and dietary detraining programme	3.24
Workshops with other retired athletes to share and learn from each others' experience	3.24
Financial counselling	3.16
Assistance in finding a place to live	3.01

Note: Based on ratings on 5-point scale:

1= *not useful*, 5 = *very useful*

**RETROSPECT**

When asked to rate the most important things the respondents gained from sport, they responded as follows when ranking them from the most important to the least important:

1. Fitness
2. Friendship
3. Fame
4. Financial gains
5. Other (e.g., commitment, discipline, self-esteem, perseverance, faith in yourself and family, opportunities, organized lifestyle, dealing with disappointment and enjoyment.

In response to a question of whether the retired athletes would recommend their children to enter into a similar career, 61% of the respondents stated that they would recommend their children to pursue a similar sport career, 23% responded with a “no” and 16% were uncertain whether or not to expose their children to the demands on an elite-career in track and field.



## **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATHLETIC AND NON-ATHLETIC FACTORS WITH THE QUALITY OF THE SPORT-CAREER TERMINATION PROCESS**

### **Self-concept difficulties**

#### **Education**

Investigating the relationship between education and self-concept problems at retirement, a weak but significant negative correlation ( $r = -.22$ ;  $p = .03$ ) was found. This implies that higher qualified respondents tend to have fewer self-concept problems when they retire.

#### **Voluntariness of the decision to retire**

A negative relationship was found ( $r = -.46$ ;  $p < .01$ ) between self-concept problems at retirement. The more voluntary the retirement decision to retire the less self-concept problems the athletes encountered at retirement.

#### **Gradualness of decision to retire**

No significant relationship was found between the gradualness of the decision to retire and self-concept problems encountered at retirement ( $r = -.10$ ;  $p = .33$ ).

#### **Achievement of sport related goals**

No a conclusive relationship was found between self-concept problems at retirement and the perception of the achievement of sport-related goals prior to retirement ( $r = -.12$ ;  $p = .26$ ).

#### **Athletic Identity**

A significant relationship ( $r = .46$ ;  $p < .01$ ) was found between athletic identity and self-concept problems at retirement. This means that the stronger the retiring person's athletic identity, the more self-concept problems he/she are expected to encounter at retirement.

### **Post-sport life planning**

A weak negative correlation ( $r = -.31$ ;  $p < .01$ ) was found between self-concept problems at retirement and post-sport life planning. This implies that planning for retirement could have some positive influence on maintaining a healthy self-concept when ending a sport career.

## **Psycho-social difficulties**

### **Education**

A significant albeit weak relationship ( $r = -.22$ ;  $p = .03$ ) was found between level of education and psycho-social difficulties occurring at retirement. More psycho-social problems are encountered by retiring athletes of a lower academic status.

### **Voluntariness of the decision to retire**

A negative relationship ( $r = -.41$ ;  $p < .01$ ) was found between the voluntariness of the retirement decision and psycho-social difficulties encountered at career termination. The more voluntary the athlete's decision to retire, the less likely he/she is to have psycho-social difficulties at retirement.

### **Gradualness of the end of a sport career**

No significant relationship ( $r = -.05$ ;  $p = .64$ ) was found between the prevalence of psycho-social difficulties at retirement and the gradualness of the termination of a sport career.

### **Achievement of sport-related goals**

No significant relationship ( $r = .11$ ;  $p = .26$ ) was found between the athletes' perception of the achievement of their sporting goals and the prevalence of psycho-social problems at retirement.

### **Athletic identity**

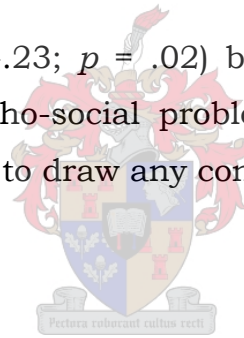
The relationship between athletic identity and the occurrence of psycho-social difficulties at retirement yielded a positive correlation ( $r = .52$ ;  $p < .01$ ). This implies that the stronger a person's athletic identity, the more likely he/she is to encounter psycho-social difficulties at retirement.

### **Age at termination**

A significant but weak relationship ( $r = .24$ ;  $p = .02$ ) was found between age at which the athletes terminated their careers and the experience of psycho-social problems at retirement. However, the low correlation makes any speculation about the effect of age in this regard tenuous.

### **Post-sport life planning**

A weak relationship ( $r = -.23$ ;  $p = .02$ ) between post-sport planning and the presence of psycho-social problems at retirement was not robust enough from which to draw any conclusions.



## **Discussion**

### **Occupation-related difficulties**

#### **Education**

No significant relationship ( $r = -.13$ ;  $p = .20$ ) was found between educational status and occupation-related difficulties at retirement from elite sport. This is a surprising finding.

#### **Voluntariness of the retirement decision**

A negative correlation ( $r = -.41$ ;  $p < .01$ ) was also found between the occupation-related difficulties and the voluntariness to end a sport career. This means that non-voluntary disengagement from sport led to more occupation-related difficulties in post-sport life.

### **Gradualness of the end of the sport career**

No significant relationship ( $r = -.15$ ;  $p = .14$ ) was found between occupation-related difficulties and the gradualness of the end the sport career.

### **Achievement of sport-related goals**

The does not seem to be a significant relationship between occupation-related difficulties and whether the respondents had achieved all their sport related goals ( $r = -.12$ ;  $p = .24$ ).

### **Athletic identity**

A positive relationship ( $r = .46$ ;  $p < .01$ ) was found between the degree of athletic identity and the occurrence of occupation-related difficulties at retirement. In other words, the stronger a person's athletic identity the more likely he/she is to encounter occupation-related difficulties at retirement.

### **Age at termination**

A weak relationship ( $r = .41$ ;  $p < .01$ ) was found between occupation-related difficulties and the age at termination of the athletic career. This implies that the older the athlete at retirement, the more occupation-related difficulties he/she should expect at career termination.

### **Post-sport life planning**

A weak correlation ( $r = -.23$ ;  $p = .03$ ) was found between occupation-related difficulties and post-sport planning. This implies that lack of post-sport planning could make the retiring athlete vulnerable.

### **Difficulties with the organisation of post-sport life**

#### **Education**

No significant relationship was found ( $r = -.10$ ;  $p = .38$ ) between educational status and difficulties encountered with the organisation of post-sport life.

### **Voluntariness of decision to retire**

A significant negative relationship ( $r = -.45$ ;  $p < .01$ ) was found between degree of voluntariness of retirement and difficulties encountered with the organisation of post-sport life. In other words the more voluntary the decision to retire, the fewer difficulties could be expected when organising a post-sport life.

### **Gradualness of the retirement decision**

A weak negative relationship ( $r = -.23$ ;  $p = .03$ ) was found between difficulties in organising post-sport life and the gradualness of the retirement decision. This means that the more gradual the retirement decision the fewer difficulties will be encountered by the athlete when organizing an after-sport life.

### **Achievement of sport-related goals**

No significant relationship ( $r = -.19$ ;  $p = .07$ ) was found between the athlete achieving his/her athletic goals and difficulties experienced in his/her organization of life after sport.

### **Athletic identity**

A significant relationship ( $r = .41$ ;  $p < .01$ ) was found between degree of athletic identity and difficulties encountered by the athlete when organising his/her post-sport life. The stronger the athletic identity the more problems the athlete is expected to encounter in this regard.

### **Age at termination**

A weak relationship ( $r = .30$ ;  $p < .01$ ) was found between the age of disengagement from elite sport and the occurrence of difficulties in organising life after sport. The older the retiring athlete, the more likely that he/she will encounter difficulties in the organization of post-sport life.

## **Post-sport life planning**

A significant negative relationship ( $r = -.40$ ;  $p < .01$ ) was found between post-sport planning and problems encountered in organising a post-sport life. In other words, a lack of planning is likely to lead to more difficulties in organising life after sport.

## **DISCUSSION**

The purpose of administering the questionnaire was to take a retrospective view with South African athletes to study their perceptions of the quality and experiences of their sport-termination process. More specifically this investigation attempted to contribute to the existing knowledge by explicitly investigating the way in which the quality of the sport-career termination process is affected by athletic factors as well as non-athletic factors. The influence of athletic factors (e.g., voluntariness and gradualness of sport-career termination, subjective evaluation of athletic achievements, post-sport life planning and athletic identity) and non-sport athletic factors (e.g., age and educational status) on different aspects of career difficulties were investigated.

The quality of sport retirement, focused on termination difficulties which are encountered on the physiological, psycho-social and occupational level as well as problems experienced with organising post-sport life.

The factors that initiate and influence retirement could affect the quality of adaptation after disengaging from elite sport.

## **Voluntariness of decision to retire**

Voluntariness of retirement, was found to have a significantly affect on the quality of retirement from an athletic career. It correlated with different difficulties that athletes experience at retirement. Respondents in this study showed that a greater perception of control over the decision to retire leads to a less difficult sport-career transition and smoother transition to post-sport career life. Respondents who terminated their careers voluntary were more satisfied with their lives than those who had a forced exit out of elite sport.

The implication of this is that athletes who terminated their careers out of free will, describe their lives as close to ideal. They further were of the opinion that they have achieved important goals in their lives that they have better life conditions than athletes who terminated careers involuntarily. Those respondents who were involuntarily forced by external factors experienced more psychological difficulties (e.g., lower self-respect, lower self-control, more frequent feelings of anger and anxiety and depression) than voluntary retirees. These findings were corroborated by the findings of other studies (e.g., Alfermann, 2000; Cečić-Erpič, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001; Cecic-Erpic, Wylleman & Zupancic, 2004, 2004; Hill & Lowe, 1974; McPherson, 1980; Ogilvie & Howe, 1986; Werthner & Orlick, 1986).

The conclusions of previous research (Koukouris, 1994; Ogilvie & Taylor, 1993) using a retrospective approach similar to this study, indicated that the main reasons explaining the retirement decision are related to the push dimension (e.g., injury, increased age, lack of financial support). Researchers who investigated the reasons for retirement (e.g., Alfermann, et al., 2004; Crook & Robertson, 1991; Sinclair & Orlick, 1993) demonstrated that athletes who are pushed to

retire are those who have the most difficulty adapting to the post-sport-career life.

### **Gradualness of the retirement process**

The results of this study indicated that although a large percentage (44%) reported that the end of their careers was rather abrupt, it had no significant relationship with the quality of their transition from sport. For example the relationship between gradualness of retirement and difficulties experienced in organising a post sport life was weak ( $r = -0.23$ ).

### **Evaluation of athletic goals achieved**

Subjective evaluation of the achievement of athletic goals was one of the less studied mediating factors associated with sport-career termination. Werthner and Orlick (1986) suggest that athletes who achieve the greater part to their goals related to sport, experienced a less difficult athletic retirement and adaptation to post-sport life.

The results of this investigation regarding the achievement of athletic goals indicated that there were a number of athletes who felt that they had achieved their goals. In contrast, those who did not achieve their athletic goals experienced retirement more traumatic. These findings were consistent with the results obtained in several empirical studies (e.g., Alfermann, 2000; CeciĆ-Erpić, 2001; Ogilvie & Taylor, 1993; Wylleman, Lavalley & Alfermann, 1999).

Athletes who had been achievers in sport, emphasised their sporting achievements in sport also mentioned that these achievements had a positive effect on their life in adulthood. According to Levinson's theory (1978) adjustments to various life demands is a very important



characteristic of life in adulthood. Sport provides an environment for learning to adapt as well as other important life skills (Cecić Erpič, 1999). The results of this investigation were similar to the findings of other studies (e.g., Greendorfer & Blinde, 1985; Coakley, 1983; Gorbett, 1985) that did not comprehend sport-career termination necessarily as a negative event.

Achievement in sport, according to Cečić-Erpič (1999), has the potential to influence one's sense of satisfaction with different social roles. Former elite athletes regarded themselves as members of social groups to which they redirect their interest. Results of the study of Cecic-Erpic (1999) on subjective well-being, showed that adaptation to and participation as part of a group are common to the world of sport as well as the world outside sport.

Levinson (1978) stated that transition can be relatively smooth and without overt disruption or sense of crisis. A relatively trouble-free transition was characteristic for individuals who had modified their life in certain respects, but relying on past experiences, thereby eliminating the need to make major changes. No differences were found in this regard between males and females on the following reasons for retirement:

1. Finding a job
2. Committed themselves to their family
3. Wanted to devote more time to their partner relationship and
4. Financial difficulties

The results from this study also indicated that the positive adjustment to retirement from high-performance sport was also directly related to achieving one's sport-related goals. Athletes who believed that they have accomplished what they had set out to do in sport (e.g., achieved a specific performance, time or goal) and retired both with satisfaction and on their own terms, tended to adjusted with greater ease

(Werthner & Orlick, 1996). These respondents experienced a smooth transition and a sense of accomplishment.

## **Athletic identity**

Athletic Identity had an important influence on one's evaluation of sport-career termination and adaptation to post-sport life. The results of this study showed that athletes with strong athletic identities experienced more frequent and more intense difficulties during sport-career termination and adaptation to post-sport life than athletes with lower athletic identities.

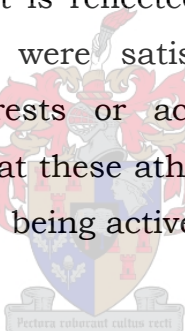
Respondents who identified strongly with their athletic role had more difficulties planning their post-sport future and more frequently experienced anxiety over an uncertain future of their post-sport life. They felt less competent in non-sport environments such as in the educational and occupational milieus. They also had more difficulties organising post-sport life and more frequently evaluated their sport-career termination as negative. Their social and emotional adaptation to post-sport life took a longer period of time. Athletes with strong athletic identities more often missed sport itself, sport activity, and sport-related people after termination than athletes who identified with more multiple social roles.

The findings of this investigation were consistent with the results of several empirical studies (e.g., CeciĆ-Erpiĉ, 1998, 1999; Ogilvie & Taylor, 1993; Pearson & Petitpas, 1990; Taylor and Ogilvie 1994; Werthner & Orlick, 1986). These studies concluded that a strong athletic identity has an important impact on the nature of career termination and adaptation to post-sport life.

## **Socio-educational status**

It was concluded from the results of this study that with regard to socio-educational status, athletes with higher educational qualifications experienced fewer difficulties with transitions out of elite sport. This phenomenon was largely due to the fact that they had more occupational opportunities and this had an influence on the quality of the transition from sport (Wylleman et al., 1999).

Athletes who had diverse options after retirement such as employment possibilities, other non-sport interests or relationships, were better equipped to negotiate a smooth transition than athletes who had no options outside the world of sport (Schlossberg, 1984; Sinclair & Orlick, 1993; Werthner & Orlick, 1986). This issue of options being a positive factor in adjustment is reflected in this study in that high-performance athletes who were satisfied with their lives after retirement had other interests or activities to move into upon retirement. It would seem that these athletes maintained some degree of balance in their lives while being active participants in athletics.



## **Age at termination of an athletic career**

The findings of this investigation indicated that that age is a significant factor in the decision to retire. This reason for retirement could also be categorized as involuntary retirement. The athletes who experienced decline in their psychological capabilities with increasing age were not able to live up to the physical demands of rigorous training and competing and were forced to retire.

Athletes who felt that their retirement was largely due to declining performance experienced more subsequent difficulties with lack of self-confidence and feelings of loss of status than those who did not retire for this reason. When athletes no longer performed to their “normal” capabilities, they tend to attribute poorer performance to

personal failure. Not being able to compete with the same intensity or skill level may have been perceived as a breakdown in overall ability and, thus may have impacted upon the sense of self. Athletes who felt that they are no longer capable of maintaining their elite status may also feel that they are not capable of doing anything well. It also had psychological negative implications (e.g., decline in self-worth, self control and self-confidence). They also experienced a decrease in motivation. It also had an influence on their social status in the sport environment in that it naturally declined and that in itself influences the self-confidence and the related social activities of retiring athletes.

### **Organising life after sport**

Participants' organisation of life after having terminated their sport career was, generally, perceived to be relatively unproblematic. Most respondents evaluated the process of adaptation as positive and were satisfied with their post-sport life, successfully coping with its demands.

A smooth adaptation to post-sport life was experienced also when respondents compared their active sport career with their post-sport life, which showed that they considered their post-sport life as more important than their former elite sport career.

### **Planning for retirement**

In accordance with the findings of Taylor and Ogilvie (1998), planned retirement contributes to a better and more positive adaptation to life after sport than unplanned retirement. Planned retirement was associated with fewer negative emotional reactions to sport-career termination, shorter duration of the transitional period, lesser use of distraction strategies and higher current life satisfaction (Alfermann et al., 2004).

It can be interpreted that athletes, who planned retirement in advance, do not waste their energy on wrong directions, and were able to mobilise and use their resources more effectively than athletes who did not plan their retirement. It could also be argued that athletes who planned retirement had a higher level of readiness for career termination.

The results in this study showed that athletes were not ready for retirement because the majority did not think about the end of their sport career during their active sport involvement. Athletes also reported that they did not start planning their post-sport life during their sport career. According Alfermann et al. (2004) the term “readiness” is not considered, by the existing transition models of (e.g., Lavalley, 2000; Schlossberg, 1981; Sinclair & Orlick, 1993; Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994). Originally, readiness was regarded as an antecedent of performance enhancement. Recently, Hanin (2000) suggested a structure of a psychobiosocial state that consists of several components. If Hanin’s structure is applied to the state of readiness for athletic retirement, which is a long-term dynamic state, it is possible to identify the following seven components:

1. *Cognitive readiness* (retirement planning, acceptance of the fact of sport-career termination, feeling of control over situation etc.).
2. *Affective readiness* (positive emotional reactions to athletic retirement, positive view of retirement etc.).
3. *Motivational readiness* (high motivation of a new professional career, new life interests, changes in the subjective scale of values etc.);
4. *Somatic readiness* (keeping good health conditions having enough energy to start a new life etc.).

5. *Behavioural readiness* (changes in the life style, including daily regimen, family etc.).
6. *Operational readiness* (vocational training, using positive psychological effect of the sport career, like knowledge, skills and qualities in the new life etc.).
7. *Communicative readiness* (changes in the social network). All factors influencing formation and dynamics of the state of readiness positively to the transition to post-career might be considered as transition resources' (e.g., retirement planning, opportune and voluntary retirement, health improvement after sport-career termination etc.).

All factors that have a negative impact upon the state of readiness (e.g., unplanned, involuntary, too early or too late retirement, health deterioration, lack of vocational training, unemployment etc.), might become transition barriers (Alfermann et al., 2004).

Readiness for the sport-career transition can be defined as a psychobiosocial state of the athlete providing a positive (smooth) transition from sport to life afterwards by means of effective mobilization of the transition resources needed as well as of avoidance or coping with transition barriers. The level of readiness to the transitions might be characterized by an individual balance of transition resources and transition barriers in all seven components of the state of readiness. Positive transition implies effective usage of the transition resources and avoidance of or coping with the transition barriers.

Bringing the results into consideration with the above-mentioned components of the state of readiness, this study suggests that the minority of the athletes who planned retirement in advance had greater degree of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural readiness for

their sport-career transition than athletes who did not plan their retirement.

### **Social support during transition**

The majority (77%) of athletes in this questionnaire study reported that they did not expect any psychological problems after retirement from sport. Athletes also reported that if they were to experience stressful times after retirement, they would consult the following significant people in their lives:

1. Coaches (36%)
2. Close friends (36%)
3. Sport psychologists (35%)
4. Parents (33%)

The results in this study suggest that the athletes put a great deal of trust in their coaches. They also rely on them on a psychological level. Close friends are there for moral support. Many athletes felt that they would consult a professional sport psychologist. This finding could be interpreted that athletes are beginning to appreciate the possible contribution of a professional sport psychologist. This finding also sends an important message to the profession of applied sport psychological with regard to the growing debate on certification procedures and who possesses the credibility and expertise to develop and refine mental training and transition skills for athletes.

### **Conclusion**

Findings from previous research (e.g., Blinde & Greendorfer, 1985; Coakley, 1983; Ogilvie & Howe, 1986; Werthner & Orlick, 1986) indicate that retirement from high-performance sport is an experience perceived as either a crisis or as a relief in the lives of former athletes. While virtually all individuals experience adjustments to some degree following any transition (Coakley, 1983; George, 1980; Schlossberg,

1984) the current study reveals that adjustment to retirement from high-performance sport may not be as distressing or liberating as previously suggested. This supports the opinions of Sinclair and Orlick (1993).

The majority of athletes in this study were of the opinion that retirement had changed their lives in a positive way, felt positive about retirement in general, felt satisfied about their sport career and their achievements, had a positive attitude towards the people from the world of sport. The fact that 74% of the athletes felt that they still enjoy public admiration because of their sport career is a positive psychological boost for athletes. Alfermann et al. (2004), found that Russian and Lithuanian athletes still considered sport as a means for upward mobility. This is why athletes have a strong commitment to sport and a strong athletic identity. Keeping a strong athletic identity after the sport career, might be considered a defence mechanism to maintain high self-esteem in spite of some obvious difficulties associated with post-career adaptation.

The majority of athletes also felt that they consider their current post-sport life much less seriously than was the case with their lives as athletes during their active sport career. The athletes also generally cope adequately with adjusting to post-sport life. The majority also did not experience significant psychological problems after retirement. It is also very significant that 61% of athletes would recommend their children to follow a career similar to theirs, while 16% of the athletes were uncertain whether or not to recommend their children to follow in their footsteps.



# **CHAPTER FOUR**

## **RESEARCH PROTOCOL**

### **PART II: INTERVIEW STUDY**

#### **THE OBJECTIVES OF THE INTERVIEW STUDY**

The current study was, to the best of the researcher's knowledge the first to study the psychological effects of retirement on elite athletes in South-Africa. In view of both results and previous research (Cecić-Erpič, 2000; Torregrosa, Boixadós, Valiente, Cruz, 2004) it seemed necessary to consider the political dispensation as well as the current interests of sports federation and government departments view on retirement as a factor to include in existing models (e.g. Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994). In addition to social, financial and occupational changes, responsibility of national government and other institutions such as universities should be considered as factors affecting adaptation to the "new life" after retiring from elite sport. Despite its correlational nature, this result confirmed the multidimensionality of transition out of elite sport (Baillie & Danish, 1992; Stephan et al., 2007).

#### **Hypotheses**

Based on previous research (Cecić Erpič, 2000), it was hypothesized that an involuntary and abrupt sport career termination, a lower evaluation of sports achievements, the lack of a post-sport life planning, and a low athletic identity would lead to a more difficult sport career termination process. Furthermore, it was assumed that athletes who were older at the time of retirement from sport were less educated and had to cope with a more difficult sport career termination process.

## **RESEARCH DESIGN**

The purpose of this research was to gain insight into the experiences of former elite athletes upon exiting their elite athletic environment as participants. Because this was a qualitative study, the objective was to enrich and deepen the body of knowledge, but not to generalize or make predictions.

The athletes' data was, therefore, collected through the use of semi-structured qualitative interviews and subsequently subjected to interpretive phenomenological analysis, which aims to explore in detail the athletes view of the topic under investigation (Smith, Jarman & Osborn, 1999).

### **Participants**

Twenty three (18 male and 5 female) former elite, retired athletes were interviewed and the information was content analysed. The majority of the sample (19) resided in the Western Cape region of the Republic of South Africa and were among the best track and field athletes South Africa has produced. The remaining four athletes who resided elsewhere were interviewed telephonically.

All twenty three athletes had competed in the National (South African) Track and Field Championships. This was a minimum criterion for inclusion in this study. Sixteen of them were national champions, 5 were national record holders, while 7 were members of a national team that competed internationally. One won a silver medal at the Olympic Games, while two won medals at World Championship events. One athlete was a world record holder at some stage. Six athletes were members of the exclusive sub-4 minute milers club. Two of the athletes won gold medals at the prestigious Two Oceans Marathon as well as the famous Comrades marathon.

## **Procedures**

The researcher obtained the contact details of the athletes through friends and their clubs. As a former international athlete, the researcher was personally acquainted with most of the athletes personally as they were his contemporaries at the peak of his and their athletic careers. At the time of the interviews the respondents were between 31 and 46 years of age and had been retired for different lengths of time, ranging from one year to 10 years.

## **Interview setting**

All participants contacted showed their enthusiastic interest in participating. In-depth interviews were conducted by the researcher to collect information on the participants' thoughts, feelings, and opinions regarding their experiences during their careers and throughout their transition. The researcher believed that it was important to interview participants who had achieved a "number one" status (Kreiner-Philips & Orlick, 1993), because the demands placed on "the winner" are often greater than for the second or third finisher. Participants were contacted by phone and asked if they were interested in participating in the study. All those who were contacted agreed to participate in a confidential interview. Then a convenient time and location was arranged for the interview. Interviews were mostly conducted at competition venues or at the athletes' homes. Four of the interviews were conducted over the phone because of the respondents lived out of town, in other cities and provinces. The remaining interviews were conducted face-to-face. Several studies showed that self-disclosure and interview responses do not vary between telephone and face-to-face interviews (Bermack, 1989).

The researcher conducted all interviews personally in order to maximize consistency. The participants were given no inducements for

their involvement in the study and were advised that they could withdraw at anytime and that their participation was voluntarily.

Before arranging the interview, participants were given an information briefing indicating the areas they would be required to expand on and how their data would be recorded and analysed. They were then prior to their interview, given a chance to object or give their verbal consent to continue with the interview. The consent was a conformation that their confidentiality would so be protected except on their confidentiality would be protected except on their disclosure of any harmful or illegal activities. The participants were also informed that they could stop the interview and remove their data at any time without explaining a reason. Participants were made aware that a copy of their transcript would be available to them and that they could request the removal of their data. Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed that credibility should be used in qualitative studies to establish what is common known as 'internal validity' in qualitative studies. These researchers have proposed that credibility can be established through member checks, whereby participants are shown transcripts and conceptualizations so that they can indicate their agreement or disagreement with the way they have been represented. The researcher therefore decided to show the transcript to five participants to read for any discrepancies, to subsequently improve the validity of data collection and the initial stages of analysis.

Participants were encouraged to speak freely about their personal experiences before, during and after their exit from elite sport. At the same time they were told that the questions were open-ended and therefore they could expand upon their answers, giving as much detail as possible.

The duration of the interviews ranged from 30 minutes to 45 minutes. Each interview was transcribed verbatim and the interviewer checked

the transcription prior to analysis. The research team for any given interview included the participant and the researcher. The researcher was completely comfortable in the elite athlete context.

The researcher acquainted himself with the necessary skills in interview techniques, for example:

- Handling the audio taping equipment in such a way to allow the interviewer and player to remain focused on their conversation.
- Closely monitoring the interview to ensure that nothing was omitted.

The researcher chose this method for several reasons. Researchers studying athletic retirement have encouraged the use of qualitative work (Grove et al., 1997; Kerr & Dacychyn, 2000). Concomitant with the growing interest in career transitions, sport psychology research is dealing with the issue of both quantitative and qualitative methods. This is also true in research on career transitions where qualitative approaches using scales and statistical analysis (Stambulova, 2007) consist with qualitative approaches using textual data and content analysis (Koukouris, 2000; Swain, 1991; Torregrosa, Boixadós, Valiente & Cruz, 2001).

The specific phenomenon of study was retirement from elite South African athlete who have retired, and one of the main research intentions was to add retrospective view of retired athletes to the existent body of knowledge from a group of elite athletes who had to struggle through a political system that prevented them from realizing their dream.... of being the best in the world.

The potential impact of the researcher in qualitative research must always be kept in mind (Parker, 1994). It was thus vital that biases and assumptions be explored at the beginning of the research process. This exploration involved an acknowledgement of a guiding

interpretive world view and consisted of bracketing interviews, as suggested by Seidman (1991) to further clarifying existing presumptions. The researcher was very aware not to lead the participants in any directions, particularly toward areas in which the researcher had expressed a bias. The researcher thus felt that every reasonable effort was made to insure that his biases would not affect the study.

## **INSTRUMENTS**

### **Interview schedule**

A structured in-depth interview schedule was designed to elicit qualitative information about each athlete's life, from his/her own experience. The interview schedule elicited the following information:

- The athlete's life in early childhood and adulthood. This was used to determine the characteristics of subject's life as a young athlete and adult.
- The athlete's sport-career termination and the subsequent characteristics of his/her retirement from sport.

The interview investigated the athlete's active sports career and life as an athlete, his/her identity during the active sports career, the termination of his/her sport career, feelings associated with retirement, organization of a post-sport life, current identity and desired psychological counselling during the sport retirement.

### **Interview guide**

An interview guide based on the guidelines of Torregrosa, Boixadós, Valiente and Cruz (2004) was developed which focused in-dept on the sport career, from the initial beginnings of the athlete's career to the process of disengaging from elite sports. The objective was to add a

prospective view of retirement to the existing research in career transition based on retrospective data.

The Interview guide consisted of a series of planned questions organized into a number interrelated sections.

1. Beginning the interview. Introductory remarks and demographics
2. Initiation (training) stage
3. Maturity (performance) stage
4. Anticipation (realisation of retirement) stage
5. Interview conclusion
6. Evaluation and summary

At the commencement of the interview the participants were informed that the interviewer was interested in the overall experience as an elite athlete, both on and off the running track. They were also told that they must think back in time about their athletic experiences, and that they must try to recall their exact feelings and their achievements. They were free to take as long as they want to.

Each participant was asked the identical sequence of questions that appeared in the interview guide and standardisation of rules for the interview prior to commencing the interview to ensure that responses from all participants were equal in accordance with the recommendations of Scanlan, Stein, and Ravizza (1991). When the interviewee did not fully understand what was asked, a clarification process was used to have the athlete repeat and clarify the idea mentioned. In addition, an elaboration process was used in the interview in order to fully understand what the athletes were saying and to elicit further ideas. These predetermined general probes were utilized in an attempt to minimize bias by ensuring that all questions were asked in a similar manner.

Prior to the main study, a semi-structured interview was carried out by the researcher on a 32 year old male who had been retired from competitive athletics for three years. An interview guide was initially developed that was underpinned by the extent research on sport career termination, and based on a predetermined schedule of open-ended questions and standardized questions. While a predetermined schedule was employed so that the same information was gathered from each participant as efficiently as possible, standardized questions ensured that each interview was sensitive to individual differences (Patton, 1990). The pilot study lasted for 50 minutes and highlighted in which the interview guide could be improved by making slight changes to the order and wording of certain questions. The researcher also became aware that alternative questions would be needed depending on whether the participant had experienced a challenging retirement or not. A range of standardized questions were needed to stimulate an appropriate depth of discourse during the main study (Kvale, 1996).

Subsequent questions focussed on whether retirement difficulties were associated with an internalization of the sport ethic and also whether a lack of contain concerning the athletes' coach and or sport club and other support structures and their decision to retire led to career transition difficulties. Other questions also paid a close attention to the participants' experiences and sense of direction directly after retiring. The final questions tried to summarize participants' experiences and identify the factors that determined whether their transition was smooth or challenging. These final questions were also used to establish whether the participants' experiences were still affecting them or whether their retirement had truly come to an end.



## **Interview questions**

### *Section 1: Beginning the interview*

Considerable effort was expended early in the interview establishes the right ambience, engages the participant, and develops a collaborative partnership. Elaboration of the interview purpose and procedures, including an explanation of how the athlete and interviewer must work side by side to elicit the athlete's personal retirement picture takes place during this time. This process began by briefing the athlete on the purpose of the project and on the principles, emphasizes the voluntary nature of the participation and the guarantee of confidentiality and anonymity. The background questions, shown below, serve a methodological as well as an informational function.

1. How old were you when you began your athletic career?
2. What got you into running to begin with?
3. Did you have an athletic hero?
4. Who was he/she and what made him/her a hero to you?
5. What was the most important thing that has kept you running all these years?
6. What did you find most enjoyable about running?
7. How long did you run at an elite level?

Methodologically, the above-mentioned questions facilitated rapport and conversation, and they allowed a check on the participant's consistency because some of the data obtained here were later repeated in other sections of the interview.

Furthermore, the last questions began with the transition of the athlete from thinking about his/her general athletic participation at younger ages and lower competition levels, to focusing directly on his/her elite level experience. According to Scanlan, Stein and Ravizza

(1989) this bonding process keeps the elite level/transition discussion centered on the elite level of participation and continues in the next section.

### *Section 2: Initiation (training) stage*

This section achieved several outcomes critical to the overall success of the interview. Firstly, it continued the bonding process begun by the last question of the previous section to focus on the participant's commitment to sport. Secondly, it continued the creation of a productive ambience and further develops the participant and interviewer partnership. Thirdly, it enabled agreement on a precise definition of transition out of elite sport.

A proactive ambience plays a central role in the interview and very direct steps are taken to obtain the interest and engagement of the participants. Complete disclosure of each step of the interview allows everyone to know exactly what will be done in advance and eliminates any sense of deception. The bond between the participant and interviewer enhances both the meaningfulness of the experience for the athlete and the quality of the data for the researcher. The following interview statements and questions were used:

1. It's clear that you made a long-term commitment to sport and have achieved a high level. At what age did you begin your competitive sport career and how successful was it in the initial stages?
2. By choosing sport, you made some commitment. What was your main goal when you began participating in sport?
3. By commitment to sport we mean "Your desire and determination to keep doing what you do best, and that is keep

on winning.” Were results important to you in the beginning stages and why?

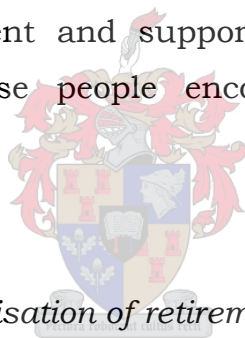
4. Considering everything, things both on and off the field: How much did you enjoy doing sport? (1-7 Likert scale).
5. What valuable opportunities did you have taking part in sport?

### *Section 3: Maturity (performance) stage*

This section refers to the participant’s actual performance phase. A phase in his/her athletic career where all the significant performances took place and where he/she was on top of the world. Participants were told that the purpose of this study was to shed light on how success affects world-class athletes and the subsequent fading away out of elite sport. The following questions were included in this section:

1. Think back to your first championship win (or other appropriate big win). How did you feel, and what were you thinking about prior to that contest? How were you focused during the performance?
2. After that win did you begin to think about any other goals? If yes, what sort of goals?
3. Did your life change in any way after your first big win? If yes, in what way? Did you experience any additional demands? If yes, what sort of demands? What was most stressful?
4. Were you prepared to deal with these additional demands? How did you deal with them? What did you find most effective? Did you have any assistance in preparing yourself to cope with them?

5. Do you have any suggestions that might help other athletes who will face a similar situation, to help them better prepare and cope with becoming or remaining a champion?
6. Did you have any non-sport identities? What would be helpful for the athlete to broaden their social identity/social support?
7. Investing personal resources: What have you invested that you can't recover if you leave sport?
8. Did you feel a sense of obligation to keep competing because of the expectations of other people? Whose expectations are most important to you? What expectations did these people have?
9. Did you feel encouragement and support from other people? Whose encouragement and support were most important to you? How did these people encourage and support your participation?



#### *Section 4: Anticipation (realisation of retirement) stage*

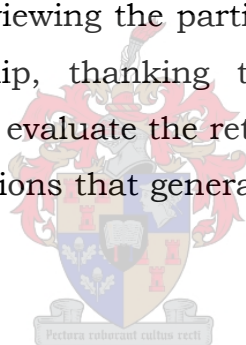
The following questions formed part of this section:

1. Are you viewed as a former athlete, who made a good investment in society, who did a good job by working hard? Describe how you are being viewed by the public?
2. Would you say that there was an unwillingness on your side to plan for retirement?
3. Was there any structure in place to help you with your post-sport-career development? If yes, describe it.
4. Do you feel that you have a lot to say, but no one to tell about your unresolved feelings/emotions about retirement?

5. Were there any unresolved feelings that were harmful to your mental well-being? How did you vent your frustration?
6. Did you have any support from your peers, close friends, club or federations? Did you share your private thoughts with your peers?
7. Describe your emotional distress, if any. Were there any therapeutic interventions?
8. What was your coach's role/obligations in your career termination?

#### *Section 5: Conclusion*

The interview ended by reviewing the participant's retirement picture, reinforcing the partnership, thanking the athlete, providing the opportunity for him/her to evaluate the retirement construction of the interview and asking questions that generally taper off the intensity of the interview.



#### *Section 6: Evaluation and summary*

After the interview the researcher wrote an appraisal of the interview. This write-up included issues such as general impressions and evaluation of the interview, comments on the athlete's career, the interviewer's consistency and interaction, any problems or abnormalities encountered, insights gained, and anything else that would help put the interview in perspective.

## **Qualitative data analysis**

The data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously. The researcher began content analysis of the data immediately after conducting and transcribing the first interview following procedures established in the literature (Côté, Salmela, Baria & Russell, 1993; Côté, Salmela & Russell, 1995; Miller & Kerr, 2002a).

Completing a preliminary analysis of one interview before beginning the next increased the researcher's familiarity with the data as they were being collected and allowed the researcher to probe relevant themes in subsequent interviews. This ensured the data were rich and germane. It also allowed the researcher to test emerging ideas with the athletes, what qualitative theorist have referred to as "participant checking" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Rose & Jevne, 1993). Participant checking allows the researcher to ensure the narrative he/she develops is participant driven and resonates with those whom it claims to portray. The results presented here are the researcher's interpretation of the participant's self-reports and inviting them to critique the researchers work contributes to its accuracy. Other researchers have used multiple codes as a means of checking their data and quote inter-rater reliability figures as evidence of the accuracy of their findings (Gould, Jackson & Finch, 1993; Hayishi 1996; Weiss, Smith & Theeboom, 1996). However, use of interpretational work has been criticized as having positivistic undertones incongruent with the qualitative paradigm (Heron, 1996; Smith, 1989; Sparkes, 1998b).

## RESULTS

The approach for data analysis was firstly to list each subject's responses for each question. These responses were then read and reread in order to establish common groupings of responses for each major question.

The results were based upon content analysis of interview transcripts. Supportive interview quotations are presented throughout to illustrate the basis upon which categories were formulated, and to help the reader gain a better understanding of individual athletes' perspectives.

Torregrosa, Boixadós, Valiente and Cruz (2004) identified three stages of the retirement process, namely:

1. Initiation: training stage (No image of retirement)
2. Maturity: performance stage (Vague image of retirement)
3. Anticipation: realization of retirement stage (Clear image of retirement)

These three stages are subsequently ruled by different criteria and goals, leading to different perceptions of retirement. These three stages were used as framework for the interview protocol.

All the respondents welcomed the opportunity to talk about their experiences in athletics and were pleased that someone was interested in their well-being since leaving athletics. One of the top achievers who did not experience a very difficult transition, said afterwards that our conversation was part of her strategy to work through her transition. What follows is a description of the respondents and an overview of the general nature of the respondents' transition.

## Beginning the interview

The interviews with most of the athletes showed that they initiated their sports career at a young age—at primary school. Their main reason why they chose track and field was because they were naturally gifted and wanted to pursue the life style of an athlete and improve their performances. They had childhood heroes who inspired them to follow in their footsteps and became great athletes themselves. Some of them had a very high work ethic and motivation. A number of the athletes did not specialized in their chosen item but did a variety of sports before because they were versatile and talented.

For some athletes results were not important in the beginning stages they only engaged in athletic for fun and fitness. They only realized that they were good at a later stage. The majority of respondents were results-driven right from the start. One respondent said the following to show how important results were to him:

*I had this vision to literally run myself out of poverty, from little known to a star in South African athletics.*



Another athlete describes his commitment to his sport in the following way:

*I gave my life to athletics the same way I gave my life to the Lord. I planned my life around athletics. I firstly looked at my training schedule and then I decided when to eat and sleep. To achieve at that level is to become totally self centered and to worry only about one thing. My self-confidence also depended on that.*



Some athletes also alluded to the fact that track and field is a sport that requires a hundred percent commitment and that a half-hearted commitment will serve no purpose.

The duration the athletes' career at the elite level ranged from 9 years to 15 years, with an average of almost 12 years. Overall, the content analysis indicated that the athletes had no image of retirement.

One champion athlete said:

*...because I was good...to be a winner became part of who I was and it also gave me an identity. At the time I did not think about it in that way, but it in that way, but it was just a natural way of thinking. I liked the competition, the atmosphere and the success.*

Another athlete said.

*I think there were different things... Firstly there was the need to run fast and to see how good you were. Later I became involved on different levels in athletics which kept me in the sport. "If I did not like athletics I would have left the sport at a young age because I don't think athletics is the best sport to keep you going for a long time if you are not good in it."*

In this stage most of the athletes outlined the reasons why they stayed in the sport for a long time. They firstly indicated that fitness was a key element and they liked the life style of an elite athlete. It is also an Olympic sport with a strong history and that they strived to achieve the one goal many young and hopeful athletes dream of and that it is to represent their country in international competitions. They also had long-term goals to improve their running time. They also believed that

sport is also good for discipline because it is an individual sport it builds self-confidence and self-development.

They also believed that the excitement and adrenaline rush associated with sport, can become an obsession over time. These are the opinions of both male and female participants.

One athlete said:

*I had friends...success kept me there. I gained a lot of self-confidence. I also gained a lot of self development out of it. I often wonder what it would be like to have competed internationally and how I would change my focus.*

The most enjoyable experiences that the participants found are easy to identify. For example, it is easy to monitor one's progression in track and field. One can determine one's own success and it is very satisfying to receive an Olympic or any other major championship medal. Participants also mentioned the fact that they have made friendships that will last for many years. They also enjoyed the fact that their achievements were acknowledged by the public. They also savoured the moments when they achieved their personal bests.

### **Initiation (training) stage**

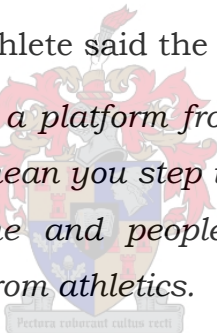
This is a period characterized by intense dedication both in a quantitative and in qualitative way. In this section of the interview all the participants reported that they had achieved one of the main objectives of becoming an elite-level athlete, namely to compete at national or international level.

On a Likert-scale ranging from 1 to 7 on sport enjoyment, most of the athletes gave themselves a score of 6 or 7. One of the best achievers in South African athletics said the following:

*It was like a fantastic dream that I had. All those highlights together just gave me this fantastic picture of a fantastic time in my life. I really have to sit and reflect back, then I remember the disappointments, I remember how I lost, the injuries, but I really have to dig deep.*

Valuable opportunities that participants enjoyed because of their involvement in athletics were travelling, acquiring people skills, obtaining study grants, work opportunities, meeting friends for life, learning about different cultures in the South African and international context. One athlete said the following:

*I think I now have a platform from which I can do amazing things. I mean you step in everywhere and mention your name and people listen. I gained unbelievably a lot from athletics.*



## **Maturity (performance) stage**

The initiating-training stage was followed by the participant's actual performance phase where the elite athlete is totally dedicated to achieve his/her objective in sport i.e. the highest level of competition that the athlete's given talent permits. All the participants interviewed had achieved one of the main objectives of competing at a national championships organized by the International Amateur Athletics Federation (IAAF).

Most participants were totally focused on their sport and had confidence in what they were doing. One athlete said:

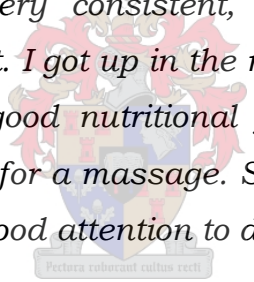
*Athletics is a sport of confidence and one learns the value of planning and what gives confidence.*

The participants who felt the pressure to achieve was driven by their own desire to be the best.

*I placed the pressure on myself...I started counting my victories. I was very outspoken and in that way people didn't put me under pressure, and I liked statistics to see how many races I could go unbeaten. I only felt the pressure when I could not produce the same results as before.*

Another participant said that she was very focused:

*It was one of my strong points over my very long career. I was very consistent, and tried to do everything perfect. I got up in the mornings, took my pulse rate, ate good nutritional food, got a good nights rest, went for a massage. So my strong point was that I gave good attention to detail.*



Sometimes the pressures can get to participants despite the fact that they try to pay attention to every detail. One participant dreamed about her famous competitions, planned her races and her race tactics in finest detail, but when it mattered the most, she failed...

*Pressure? There was pressure if I think back now. You arrive at a place. You go for the press conference. It is the political questions. It wasn't necessary the running pressure. And when you are the favourite like I was in 1993 to win the World Championships over 10 000 metres, that year the pressures of running got to me. I lost and the next*

*day you realize that you messed it up totally after training and preparing hard.*

Most participants were not prepared for this additional pressure. They felt it got to them somehow.

*As an athlete you must know that you must be aware of the fact that it could be your last race, your final season. As an athlete you think that your season is forever. You don't realize that you are, near the end of your career...that in three years time you are going to be too old to compete at an elite level. In hindsight you realize that when you were in the best shape of your life you ran conservatively and rather went for a place result instead of a fast time. I would tell the young athletes to forget about everything especially the pressure and run every race as if it is your last race.*

On the question on what advice would champion participants give to young and promising athletes they responded in different ways. The athletes' responses could best be summed up in the following manner:

Running is a combination of consistency, discipline, clever training methods, physiological potential, emotional strength, perseverance, and support structures. The participants also felt that you must plan your sport enjoy it and do cross-training.

According to one athlete:

*"You must get yourself into an environment where you feel secure, and that they must take ownership of the sport that they love. Work ethic is also important; work hard, be modest in your achievement but take pride in what you have achieved."*

At this point concern about life after sport becomes evident. Most of the interviewed participants had other identities which are not related to sport. Most participants combined academic work with their sport and could follow a career in their chosen field of study. The participants also had a strong family support structure and other hobbies to assist them in the career-transition process. One participant said the following:

*I believe that I am a great person, even thou you take away the sport from me. I sometimes feel that people only view me as a runner, but I am more than that. On the other hand it gives me a platform from where I can achieve a lot because I worked hard for it.*

Investing personal resources in the sport which is not easy to recover or lost when the image of retirement is becoming a real possibility and could pose a problem. It is especially significant when athletes look back and take stock of how their achievements weigh up against what they have put into sport. Most of the interviewed athletes felt that they have invested a lot of time into their sport. They could have used the time doing something else. One athlete felt that he had made financial sacrifices for his sport but it was a good investment.

*I put in a lot of money. I remember the day that I stopped running at the age of 36 years of age, I basically had not a cent behind my name. But what I got out of it was the investment, because guys who are multi-millionaires cannot buy what I had. I know the feeling when the crowd stands up when I ran a victory lap That you cannot buy.*

Another respondent said:

*I got a lot more back than what I had put in. It is a relative cheap sport. All you need is a pair of running shoes and a lot of guts. I mean the returns and enjoyment, the people and places—everything. I had obviously no regrets, absolutely not.*

This is still a stage where retirement is a possibility but unclear. Many athletes are aware that they will have to retire but they are still undecided. There is always the sense of obligation to keep running because of the expectations of other people. It becomes a matter of who's expectations are more important to the athlete. Most of the athletes who were interviewed were of the opinion that they felt the pressure from themselves as well as from the other people. One participant said:

*I kept on running for five years longer than I had anticipated, or maybe what my level of motivation was. At that stage it was all about finances. The international scene had just opened for us.*

Another participant put it the following way:

*Why do you want to stop now? You can still win a lot of races. I hesitated because I didn't want to stop running for all the wrong reasons. I stopped because I wanted to stop running, so it was a very calculated decision.*

In this stage no differences were found between the response of male and female participants. Participants attributed their retirement to injuries, decline in their performances at an elite level, personal problems, difficulties to combine the life of an elite athlete with a full time professional work outside sport. A participant pointed to that aspect in the following manner:

*The one factor is that it was a career shift from professional athlete, and secondly the friends I had in sport disappeared and I couldn't keep up the standard.*

At the time of realization that there was a slight chance of retirement and that this problem took over, it is the amount of support that pulled the participants through. Most participants interviewed felt that they could only rely on the support of their coaches, family and close friends. Support from their clubs, federation and sponsors did not exist. They kept on believing in themselves and self-motivation played a big role.

### **Anticipation (realisation of retirement) stage**

This stage was found to be the realization of retirement stage when athletes had to look back at their careers and how they had to come to terms with their transition out of elite sport. This stage is also characterized by the unresolved feelings and emotional reactions about retirement. Generally speaking their withdrawal from elite sport evoked negative emotional reactions and the success of their transition depends on whether they received support from sources they see as their emotional support structures. The differentiating factor in this stage is the clean image of retirement from elite sports. On reflection of their view of how the public see them as former athletes they generally felt that they are respected as former athletes who made a good investment in society by working hard and set an example for the young ones.

The majority of the participants indicated that there was an unwillingness on their part to retire. Some felt that they had some “unfinished business”. They still had this dream of running faster times, earn more money from athletics and securing a sponsorships or two. One participant declared:



*I really didn't want to retire You suddenly realize that you have to stop. You must find a job, pursue further studies and that it strikes you that the only thing you are good at is running and than you keep on running for maybe a year or two longer. When you are really forced to stop running, you have a problem and that is what happened to me. I stop running and had nothing to do and had to start thinking what to do.*

One participant admitted to have consulted a therapist after retirement. Most of the other participants said that they did not know of services where retired athletes could go when experiencing difficulties with transitions out of elite sports. One said that it was not necessary to consult with a therapist because...

*I was one hundred percent sure. It was a calculated decision. It was never difficult for me. Maybe there will come a time when I will miss professional therapist, because it was not necessary in my case, but I know of a lot of guys who did not go to consult a therapist. My wife for example struggled to make that change and she struggles even now to make that transition between the two.*

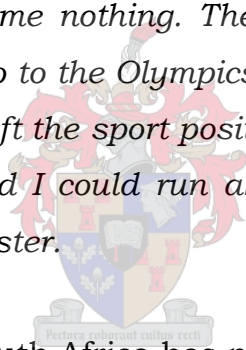
Besides individual differences referring to the way in which retirement is seen and, as a consequence the way in which participants cope with it, there is a difference in the content of the interviews as a function of professionalism or amateurism of the individual athlete. Professional participants allow for a more gradual and planned transition, especially the best paid participants. That is due to the fact that they have a more supportive structure around them. Amateur high-performance athletes have in most cases only their own discretion and that of their close friends and families to help them make a decision.

Most of the participants did not make it clear that there were unresolved issues around their sport. They did not feel the need to say a lot because there was no-one to tell about their unresolved emotions about retirement. One disgruntled participant complained:

*My only unresolved issue is probably the thing that opponents used banned substances. I have encountered that in South Africa and also abroad. That was probably the only thing that I had to make peace with”.*

Another participant said the following:

*The world owes me nothing. The country was not fair. I could not go to the Olympics. It was not in my power. I think I left the sport positively. If there was not Apartheid and I could run abroad. Yes, then I could have run faster.*



One of the best athletes South Africa has produced, said:

*I think the mere fact that I am taking part in this study, is precisely the idea to talk about retirement. I do not want to cling to something of the previous 25 years. I am now on a new path. I want to talk about golf. It was a very self-centered, self absorbing experience”.*

One athlete said that feeling of loss was harmful to his mental health. His only regret is that he did not reach his full potential that he showed when he was a young athlete. Another athlete said that he did not feel any harmful repercussions because of his exit from elite sport:

*Maybe it depends on your earnings out of the sport. When you stand to lose a lot financially than it might be difficult. Also, if you are somebody for the limelight. The only answer is to work out a plan which is worthwhile to you and find something to generate as much worth for yourself out of it.*

Some participants who were real heroes showed concern about what is going to happen when...

*The lights will turn-off, and I'll turn back and no-one is going to be there.*

One participant said:

*Other sports are getting much more opportunities and support, e.g. job opportunities. Athletics is the step-child of sport in South Africa. When you are finished you are done. Everybody forgets about you. But it also depends on your profile.*



Coaches do not seem to play a large part in the retirement decisions of athletes. There also appears to be a natural fade away. One participant said:

*Retirement is often not a planned move It depends on your performance, injuries or if you are dropped out of the team. I think if you are in a position to plan your retirement there might be a place for the coach in that decision. There might be an unwillingness of coaches to talk about retirement. Somebody from outside would be more objective about retirement.*

How participants responded to concept of “from hero to zero”, is expressed by one athlete who said the following:

*You cannot be balanced. You must work very hard, focus, otherwise you don't stand a chance. You cannot be the balanced athlete and at the same time the best in the world. Something is gonna give. You cannot be the perfect family man, the world record holder and have the best body in the business. But as long as you know it is only a phase, where you only focus on your sport. You are going to make sacrifices in the process, but it must be calculated sacrifices. I think there is a space left in a typical day of a professional athlete where he or she can engage in self development and invest a little in the future”.*

*Everybody wants to be the everlasting athlete. Everyone likes to hear the cheers of the crowd in their ears, but I think it is a greater commitment of you stay positive and in that manner inspire everybody around you with a positive attitude and accept that the strong and fiery young generation are the new kids on the block”.*

In summary all twenty three participants described their transitions as relatively easy. However, participants experienced both positive and negative emotions throughout their transitions. All of them described missing some elements of their involvement in sport and expressed feelings of loss of control, discrimination and frustration. A number of participants felt that they could have made a lot more money, ran faster times and were denied the ultimate competition, the Olympic Games, because of the political system of the country at the time. On the positive side, most of the participants felt a sense of freedom from

their rigid schedules and relief from stresses and demands of being an elite athlete.

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings of the individual interviews were supported by suggestions of Ball (1976) and Greendorfer and Blinde (1985) that the transition experience is probably highly related to the specific sport setting and the institutional context of the setting. This study addressed the transitional experiences of elite athletes and the conclusion is that the level of accomplishment of goals set out by the athlete played an important role to the quality of the adaptation to a normal life after high performance sport.

The interview data suggested that participants used the interview to reflect back on their past career. A great deal of the interview time was used to reflect on their entry into their chosen sport, their success and the times that they enjoyed, while actively involved at an elite level. Participants also spent time discussing their coaches, athletic organizations and federations and their feelings about perceived injustices, and missed opportunities. The participants did dwell on the current state of affairs in their lives, because they were given the chance to set the tone of the interview. The studies of Hearle (1975), Werthner and Orlick (1986), and Blinde and Stratta (1991) supported the findings in this study that the participant's' thoughts are mainly past-oriented and that they are harbouring unfinished or unresolved business.

Ferrando (1996) in his research gave a descriptive part of athletes' psychological profiles which were related to transitions out of elite sports. A grounded theory approach has shown to be a perfect

approach to a research field. The use of content analysis and the complementarity of results together with information provided by studies of researches in other contexts and with other populations, have generated valid and transferable knowledge referring elite level athletes (Torregrosa et al., 2004).

The three stages of these interviews are conceptualized as periods of positions related to retirement. It's development base is comparable with the holistic perspective on career transitions presented by Wylleman et al. (2001) associating different stages with different life spheres. The three stages according to Torregrosa et al., (2004) could be employed as a counseling tool when working with elite athletes in reference to retirement from sport.

### **Initiation (training) stage**

The content analysis revealed that for participants in this stage, they did not have the slightest idea of retirement. They had only this one dream to become top level athletes and show an upward curve in their performance. The fact that there was no image of retirement during this developing stage, was perfectly normal and they also had no guarantee whether they are going to become elite athletes.

The main objective of the participants in this stage was to become a champion athlete and to have progression. The participants also indicated that results were important, because they need to attain a certain level of standard but they also enjoyed the exposure to top level competition. These results corroborate that of Torregrosa et al. (2004). Track and field as such falls under the category of long-cycle sports and results are not the key to advancement in the sport. No consistent differences have been found either between the results of the interviews in male and female participants' interviews.

## **Maturity (performance) stage**

During this stage every bit of energy was being pumped into the participants' career. Participants succeeded or fail in their quest to become the greatest that they can achieve. Participants received most dedication, often at the expense of other activities in life. During this stage most participants have combined their elite sport career with work or studies. Only a selected few were fortunate to be elite professional athletes. The fact that the participants combined their elite careers with other work or sport activities would help them with the career-transition process.

Retirement crossed the minds of most participants during this stage. In most cases that ideas were not mentioned or discussed in any way because it is perceived to distract the participant's attention from the single minded view of performing at an elite level. The image of retirement remains at this stage an unclear image. Optimism helped to keep the participants going. They were aware of the possibility of retirement but kept pushing those thoughts out of their subconscious minds.

The available literature outlines that the must retirement is seen as a process instead of a particular moment, the smarter it is. This study suggest that the image of retirement is that athletes gradually build towards a climax, where they ultimately will exit and the specific sport setting and the institutional context in which the transitional experiences take place (Ball, 1976; Greendorfer & Blinde, 1985). That statement was found to be in agreement with the study of Stambulova and Stephan (2005) who demonstrated with a cross-national comparison, both the similarities and some important differences between Swedish and French athletes in transition. Both Swedish and French sport systems do not provide former elite athletes with certain

privileges, and athletes have to rely mainly on themselves in their post-sport adaptation. The researches also found that the Swedish athletes plan retirement more often and look more resourceful. They retire mainly because of achieving their sporting goals, and therefore accept retirement more positively and accept it. On the other hand it is reported that French athletes retire mainly because of health related reasons which result in less positive emotional reactions on retirement and less effective coping strategies during the transitional period. Swedish athletes keep high athletic identity longer than French athletes and that might extent their adaptation process. Swedish cultural traditions and also the Swedish mentality “No hurry if high quality standard is important,” also explain that difference. Stambulova and Stephan (2005) also reported in their study that living standards are high in Sweden and personal satisfaction relates to the so called “Jante-Law” (Sandemose, 1934) that postulates on importance “to be within the standard” (not much higher than majority of people than majority of people but also not lower).

Coakley (1983) is of the opinion that transition out of elite sport is not an inevitable source of stress, identity crises or adjustment problems. Ungerleider (1997) and Lavalley et al. (2000) found that some athletes need strategies to assist them with the transition from sport to work or any other meaningful activity. Some countries have already implemented programmes to counsel active athletes in transition from high-level performance competitive sports to the workplace and elsewhere (Gordon, 1995). Australia and the United Kingdom where national career and education progress have been developed (North & Lavalley, 2004; Anderson & Flanagan, 2001), and it is also developing in other countries.



### **Anticipation (realisation of retirement) stage**

The third and final stage was found to be the anticipation-realisation of retirement stage. The results confirmed previous studies (e.g. Alfermann et al., 2004; Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994) that retirement planning is an important resource for effective coping athletic retirement. Athletes during this stage felt the inevitable stagnation and decrement of performance. In general, dedication to sport decreases in terms of the time sport is in training. This was according to the athletes as a result of their age and also injuries and recovery time after training sessions and races.

Sport career and sport achievements could influence one's sense of achievement, important goals and satisfaction with different social roles. Former top athletes comprehend themselves as members of social groups to which they adapt their interests. Adaptation to group's interests and cooperation was also characteristics for winning and achieving other goals in sport settings. Winning and achieving goals on other fields was also characteristic for subjects who are retirement athletes. These results showed that active and long term sport career had an impact on one's perception of own subjective well-being.

During this stage the participants had a clear image of retirement from elite sport. Many of the participants returned to the previously neglected part of them and that is the more social part of themselves and also family and friends. Some athletes tried to combine sport with some kind of hobby which is related to sports in most cases. It is clear from the results that the length of the adjustment process depended on how active the participants were after an elite athletic career. The least difficult included those participants who were active after elite sport career. Besides individual differences referring to the way in which retirement was seen, and as a consequence, the way in which

the athletes coped with it, there was a difference in content of the interviews as a function of what level the sports was practised—on a elite professional or on an elite amateur level. The elite athletes on the level of the elite amateur level experienced a more difficult transition out of elite sport. Some of them caught up in the mean stream current of a closed elite semi-professional set-up in South Africa where the sport was isolated from the international arena. During this period of isolation participants had given their best and were the heroes of the world they found themselves in. Consequently they got the feeling of untouchable heroes in that context. Those participants who did not make contingency plans or qualified themselves for a job and life after elite sport got themselves into a situation where they could not bid the sport good-bye. If they did that, they could slide down the banister of life with the splinters inevitably showing in the wrong direction. Those participants had a very difficult period of transition because they missed the cheers of the crowd in their ears. Female participants in this stage talked about their personal lives as a cause of importance more for retirement, more often than male participants, and the pressure of maternity and becoming “too old” is also often expressed. Some of the participants participating in all elite sport raised the concern about what was going to happen when “lights will turn-off...and I’ll turn back and no-one is going to be there”. Also the notion that an athlete could fall from ‘a hero to zero’, was a great concern for the elite athlete and the effect it would have on the quality of the transition out of elite sport.

The retrospective view is a very relevant and is still an interesting field of inquiry, because after retirement athletes have a rationalisation of the process of transition. But, employing a retrospective approach different moments and positions of the athletes in the sportive cycle can be studied to better understand how they cope with transitions in sport. Torregrosa et al. (2004) proposed both approaches prospective and retrospective when counseling athletes in transition. The aim of

this counseling should be, as proposed by Coakley (1983) as a role transition through which a person disengages from one set of activities to develop or expand other activities and relationships. Torregrosa and Mimbrero, (2000) and Torregrosa et al. (2001), proposed that in the case of top-level Olympic Spanish athletes the transition after top level competitions should be conceptualized as a relocation in sport instead of a retirement from sport because most of the elite athletes follow a professional career in sport as coaches, managers, officials, media commentators, or by studying sport (human movement studies, medicine, business, psychology).

The word politics surfaced several times in the interviews in all of the 23 participants, describing the political situation in South Africa before 1994. there were several passages where athletes did not specifically used the word politics, but still spoke of how the situation denied them of participating in Olympic Games and international competitions. Athletes spoke about the political situation and some of them bear heavy personal grudges against the government of the day at that time. Some of them still feel that they could have conquered the world given the perceived talent they had and the quality of performances they have achieved.

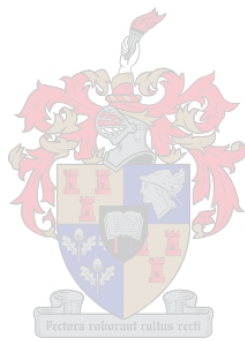
Participants perceived that coaches and athletic departments did not take enough responsibility when their performance was not good enough anymore and their retirement was eminent. In their eyes, coaches could have been more involved in the retirement decision. Instead participants described the coach's attitude and that of the athletic department and federation as non-caring. The coaches were the people who were on the athletes' minds, more so than probably even their parents or anyone else. The coaches and the athletic federations' involvement in the transitions process need to be improved.

Participants also reflected on their hopes and expectations about professional athletes. While most dreamed about professional sport career growing up, some tempered those dreams with reality. Others did not. For some participants was a means to an end. The inaccessibility of a professional career in the certain time frame was not done to the athletes, but due to something external – politics. If anything tempered their professional dreams, it was awareness of this uncontrollable circumstance.

It is also significant to note that the negative feelings of most of the participants in this study had about particularly the athletic administration and indicating the lack of support for the transitional athlete. The blame that they are casting toward the administrators is similar to the report of Hallinan and Snyder (1988) and Blinde and Stratta (1991). It is however not similar to Phase 2 of the Kubler-Ross's (1969) stages of death and dying. Thus it is not a phase of the thanatological theory where negative emotions lead to a feeling of death and dying. All but one of the athletes indicated that they made plans or engaged in alternative activities such as studies to engage in upon their exit out of athletics. One participant indicated that he felt that he has nothing outside the sport athletics in which he has excelled in and made a name for himself. But nobody gave the impression that they compared their transition to a social death.

## **Conclusion**

In this study it was clear that the unresolved issues were about being denied of competing at an international level for most participants at the height of their careers and the views of the athletic administration. The feelings of powerlessness of the participants in that situation in “provide a strong case for the importance of the sport contexts on exit experiences, regardless of whether the end of the sport career was viewed with relief or anxiety” (Parker, 1994, p. 392).



## **CHAPTER FIVE**

# **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The findings of this study corroborate the conclusion of Cećić-Erpič et al. (2004) that the understanding of the sport-career termination process, which incorporates athletic and non-athletic factors, presents a complex and multifaceted phenomenon.

Sport is still considered to be a vehicle for upward social mobility and that is one reason why many athletes have a strong commitment to acquiring a solid athletic identity. Athletes inevitably develop a desire to prolong their sport career as long as possible in order to reap the benefits of being an elite and well known athlete. This may in turn lead to difficulties in their readiness for transition to a post-sport life.

It can be concluded from the findings of this investigation that South African sport authorities do not assist athletes adequately for their retirement. This apparent lack of commitment also hampers the athlete's own efforts in the planning of his/her retirement from sport

From a unique South African context a common feature in the sport system was the long period when local athletes were excluded from international participation. However, the change in the political system and re-entry into the international sport arena led to the development of local sport to a professional level. This has implications for the athlete disengaging from such an environment. A few decades ago the situation, and the seriousness of retiring, were completely different.

Despite the apparent professional advances in local sport, the problem in South African sport system is a lack of financial support and employment to former athletes at all levels. The present situation with

South African sport is that sport federations struggle to get funding for their high-performance centers to prepare the athletes for major championships. Therefore retirement issues of athletes are not a very high priority of sport bodies.

The former elite athlete is a special kind of citizen that must be viewed as a good investment for a particular society. He/she is accustomed to working hard and could be seen as a good resource of a society if he/she could make a successful adaptation after sport-career termination. Letting retired athletes fend for themselves can be seen as a waste of a valuable human resource.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

On the basis of the findings of this investigation, the following recommendations for future directions:

1. This study focused exclusively on an individual sport, namely track and field. The question arises whether the conclusions drawn from the results also apply to other sport codes. Research is recommended to be conducted on team sports and other individual sport codes.
2. There exists a clear need among athletes for support from their sport federations. Future research should be directed towards identification of the role these federations should play in the career development of athletes and their subsequent transition from elite sport.
3. Based on the results of this study the question of readiness of the athletes to retirement arises. Future research could assess the readiness of athletes in all sport codes for retirement and the related programmes that could be implemented to help them through that process.

4. Further research is needed to investigate cross-cultural and race differences and similarities in athletic retirement and post-career adaptation.
5. There is a noticeable lack of career assistance research programmes based on theoretical concepts or modules in South Africa. More effort should be made generally to design a systematic programme of research in this regard. Existing relevant conceptual models could drive empirical questions.
6. No measure of transition success was included. A multiple regression could be conducted in future research to determine those factors that contributed most to a successful transition from sport.

## **FINAL REMARKS**

A growing number of publications and congress symposia on the topic of career transition is not only an indication of growing interest from the sport psychology discipline, it is a reflection of the developments that have taken place in the study career transition over the past three decades.

A first major development has been the shift in perspective in the conceptualisation of career transition faced by athletes. The focus of researchers was originally on one transition (career termination). This focus has recently been broadened to a life-span perspective including different life domains relevant to athletes. This particular approach has put the emphasis on the role and influence of 'non-athletic' transitions at psychological, psychosocial, academic and vocational levels. Researchers have also broadened their attention from identifying causes and consequences of career-ending transition to the identification of specific psychological factors related to the quality of



career transitions, for example, athletic identity, transferable skills, transition-related skills.

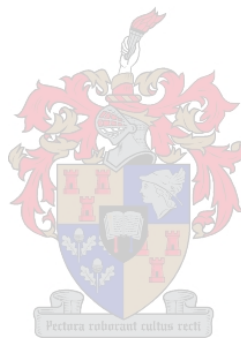
Finally, the focus of interest has shifted from the development of career termination and post-career programmes to the evaluation in intervention strategies and career-transition programmes and services.

What is the way forward? At a conceptual level there is a need to extend our knowledge on sport-related retirement. The results of this study provided a perspective on the retirement of the elite/professional athletes, but research has never been linked to the occurrence of disengagement in youth sport. This phenomenon is prevalent in the South African sport where talented young athletes people are pushed to the limit at school level.

These young participants are in most cases unable to make the shift from youth to senior level sport. Dropping out at this level could be more difficult to cope with than retirement at the end of a sporting career. Dropping out could be seen as a premature or off-time career termination at a developmentally atypical point in life when the athlete did not reach his/her full potential. Retirement, on the other hand, is generally seen as an on-time event after a long-term career.

The existing body of knowledge and the results of this study, which are based on a sport-specific population, could be used as a reference to acquire knowledge about the subject of transition and retirement in sport. Professionals working with athletes could assist them in structuring optional transition experiences throughout their career. This will include, the opportunity to take a new approach to the phenomenon of drop-out in youth sport from a transitional perspective and formulate concrete interventions for talented youth athletes contemplating quitting sport.

This study confirmed that in the world of sport there are inevitable sources of stress, and it is therefore important to include in career-transition programmes experts who can assist athletes with their career transition. Such experts could be found in the fields of sports science, sports medicine, sport physiotherapy, financial management and human resources. It is also important to acknowledge the role that significant others, including coaches and managers, can play.



## REFERENCES

- Adler, P. & Adler, P.A. (1985). From idealism to pragmatism detachment: The academic performance of college athletes. *Sociology of Education*, 58, 241-250.
- Alfermann, D. & Gross, A. (1997). Coping with career termination: It all depends on freedom of choice. In R. Lidor & M. Bar-Eli (Eds.). *Proceedings of the ninth world congress on sport psychology* (pp. 65-67). Netanya, Israel: Wingate Institute for Physical Education and Sport.
- Alfermann, D. (1995). Career transitions of elite athletes: Drop-out and retirement. In R. Van Fraechem-Raway & Y. Vanden Auweele (Eds.). *Proceedings of the ninth European congress of sport psychology*, 828-833. Brussels: European Federation of Sports Psychology.
- Alfermann, D. (2000). Causes and consequences of sport career termination. In D. Lavalley & P. Wylleman (Eds.). *Career transitions in sport: International perspectives* (pp. 45-58). Morgantown, WV: Fitness Information Technology.
- Alfermann, D., Stambulova, N. & Zemaityte, A. (2004). Reactions to sport career termination: A cross-national comparison of German, Lithuanian and Russian athletes. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 5, 61-75.
- Allison, M.T. & Meyer, C. (1988). Career problems and retirement among elite athletes. The female tennis professional. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 5, 212-222.
- Ambros, S.R. & Brodzinsky, D. (1979). *Lifespan human development*. New York: Rinehart & Winston.
- Andersen, D. & Morris, T. (2000). Athlete lifestyle programs. In D. Lavalley & P. Wylleman (Eds.). *Career transitions in sport: International perspectives* (pp. 59-80). Morgantown, WV: Fitness Information Technology.
- Andersen, M.B. & Williams, J.M. (1988). A model of stress and athletic injury: Prediction and prevention. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 10, 294-306.
- Anderson, D. & Flanagan, J. (2001). The athlete career education program. In A. Papaivannon, M. Goudas and Y. Theodorakis (Eds.). *In the dawn of the new millennium. Proceedings of the 10<sup>th</sup> world congress of sport psychology*, 3, 16.
- Andrews, D.S. (1981). Socializing agents and career contingencies affecting the elite player during his active and post active occupational review. *Arena Review*, 5, 54-63.

- Arviko, I. (1976). *Factors influencing the job and life satisfaction of retired baseball players*. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Waterloo, Ontario.
- Atchley, R.C. (1980). *The social forces in later life*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Avery, C.M. & Jablin, F.M. (1988). Retirement preparation programs and organizational communication. *Communication Education*, 37, 68-80.
- Baillie, P. (1990). *Career transition in elite and professional athletes: Three case studies of preparation for and adjustment to retirement from competitive sports*. Unpublished master's thesis. Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond.
- Baillie, P.F. & Danish, S.J. (1992). Understanding the career transition of athletes. *The Sport Psychologist*, 6, 77-98.
- Baillie, P.F. (1993). Understanding retirement from sports: Therapeutic ideas for helping athletes in transition. *The Counselling Psychologist*, 21, 339-410.
- Balague, G. (1999). Understanding identity, value and meaning when working with elite athletes. *The Sport Psychologist*, 13, 89-98.
- Ball, D. (1976). Failure in sport. *American Sociological Review*, 41, 726-739.
- Bandura, A. & Adams, N.E. (1977). Analysis of self-efficacy theory of behavioral change. *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, 1, 287-308.
- Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behaviour change. *Psychological Review*, 84, 191-215.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York: Freeman.
- Bardaxoglou, N. (1997). Mental strategies used after the life line inventory. In R. Lidor & M. Bar-Eli (Eds.). *Innovations in sport psychology: Linking theory and practice. Proceedings of the ninth world congress on sport psychology, Part II*, 97-99). Netanya, Israel: Wingate Institute for Physical Education and Sport.
- Bermack, E. (1989). Effect of telephone and face to face communication on rated extent of self disclosure by female college students. *Psychological Reports*, 65, 259-267.
- Blann, W. & Zaichkovsky, L. (1986). *Career/life transition needs of National Hockey League players*. Report prepared for the National Hockey League Players' Association, U.S.A.
- Blann, W. (1985). Intercollegiate athletic competition and students' educational and career plans. *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 26, 115-116.

- Blinde, E. & Stratta, T.M. (1992). The sport career death of college athletes: Involuntary and unanticipated sport exits. *Journal of Sport Behavior*, 15, 3-20.
- Blinde, E.M. & Greendorfer, S.L. (1985). A reconceptualization of the process of leaving the role of competitive athlete. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 20, 87-94.
- Bloom, B.S. (1985). *Developing talent in young people*. New York: Ballantine.
- Botterill, C. (1981). What "endings" tell us about "beginnings". In T. Orlick, J. Partington & J. Salmela (Eds.). *Proceedings of the fifth world congress of sport psychology*, 164-165. Ottawa: Fitness and Amateur Sport.
- Botterill, C. (1982). What "endings" tell us about beginnings. In T. Orlick, J. Partington & J. Salmela (Eds.). *Mental Training for coaches and athletes* (pp. 164-166). Ottawa: Coaching Association of Canada.
- Brewer, B.W., Van Raalte, J.C. & Linder, D.E. (1993). Athletic identity: Hercules' muscles or Achilles heel? *International Journal of Sport Psychology*, 24, 237-254.
- Brewer, B.W., Van Raalte, J.L. & Petitpas, A.J. (2000). Self-identity issues in sport career transitions. In D. Lavalley & P. Wylleman (Eds.). *Career transitions in sport: International perspectives* (pp. 29-43). Morgantown, WV: Fitness Information Technology.
- Bridges, W. (1980). *Transitions: Making sense of life's changes*. Reading, MA: Addison Wesley.
- Broom, E.F. (1981). Detraining and retirement from high level competition: A reaction to "Retirement from high level competition" and "Career crisis in sport". In T. Orlick, J. Partington & J. Salmela (Eds.). *Mental training for coaches and athletes* (pp. 183-188). Ottawa: Fitness and Amateur Sport.
- Bruning, N.S. & Frew, D.R. (1987). Effects of exercise, relaxation and management skills on physiological stress indicators: A field experiment. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 72, 515-521.
- Carp, F.M. (1972). Retirement as a transitional life stage. In F.M. Carp (Ed.). *Retirement* (pp. 1-27). New York: Behavioural Publications.
- Castiglione, S.S. (1982). *A comparison of college athletes' and non-athletes student development. Academic achievement, work values, and needs-pressure variables*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Pennsylvania State University.
- Cecić-Erpič, S. (1998). *Spremljanje razvoja življenjskih struktur in življenjskega zadovoljstva v zgodnji odraslosti: primerjava med bivšimi vrhunskimi športniki in nešportniki (following the development of life structures and life satisfaction: comparison*

- between former top athletes and non-athletes). Unpublished master thesis, University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana.
- Cecić-Erpič, S. (2000). *Konec vrhunske športne kariere in napoved prilagoditve na poštportno življenje (Elite sports career transition and prediction of the adaptation to post-sport life)*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Ljubljana: University of Ljubljana.
- Cecić-Erpič, S. (2001). Differences between traumatic and non-traumatic sport career termination. In J. Mester, G. King, H. Struder, E. Tsolakidis & A. Osterburg (Eds.). *Perspectives and profiles – 6<sup>th</sup> Annual congress of the European College of Sport Science*. Cologne: Sport und Buch Strauss.
- Cecić-Erpič, S. (2002). Sports career termination process: The effect of athletic and non-athletic factors. In D. Milanovic & F. Prot (Eds.). *Proceedings of the Third International Scientific Conference on Kinesiology* (pp. 753-756). Zareb: Faculty of Kinesiology.
- Cecić-Erpič, S. (2003). Sports career transition phase: an entity or sum of sub-phase? In R. Stelter (Ed.). *New approaches to exercise and sport psychology. 9<sup>th</sup> European congress of sport psychology. Collection of articles-CD-ROM*. Copenhagen: FEPSAC.
- Cecić-Erpič, S., Wylleman, P. & Zupančič, M. (2004). The effect of athletic and non-athletic factors on the sports career termination process. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 5, 45-59.
- Chamalidis, P. (1995). Career transitions of male champions. In R. Vanfraechem-Raway & Y Vanden Auweele (Eds.). *Proceedings of the Ninth European congress of sport psychology*, 841-848.
- Chapman, C. & Starkman, R. (1988). *On the edge: The inside story of the Canadian women's ski team*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart.
- Chartrand, J.M. & Lent, R.W. (1987). Sports counselling: Enhancing the development of the student-athlete. *Journal of Counselling and Development*, 66, 164-167.
- Chickering, A. (1969). *Education and identity*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Coakley, J. (1983). Leaving competitive sport: Retirement or rebirth. *Quest*, 35, 1-11.
- Corbin, J. & Strauss, A. (1990). Grounded theory research: procedures, canons, and evaluative criteria. *Qualitative Sociology*, 13, 3-21.
- Côté, J. (1999). The influence of the family in the development of talent in sports. *The Sport Psychologist*, 13, 395-417.



- Côté, J., Salmela, J. & Russell, S. (1995). The knowledge of high-performance gymnastic coaches: Methodological framework. *The Sport Psychologist*, 9, 65-75.
- Côté, J., Salmela, J., Baria, A. & Russell, S. (1993). The knowledge of high-performane gymnastic coaches: Methodological framework. *The Sport Psychologist*, 9, 65-75.
- Crook, J. (1986). *Retirement from elite sport: Implications for counselling*. Unpublished Master;s thesis. Edmonton: University of Alberta.
- Crook, J.M. & Robertson, S.E. (1991). Transitions out of elite sport. *International Journal of Sport Psychology*, 22, 115-127.
- Csikszentimihalyi, M. (1975). *Beyond boredom and anxiety*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Cummings, E., Dean, L.R., Newell, D.S. & McCaffrey, I. (1960). Disengagement—A tentative theory of aging. *Sociometry*, 13, 23.
- Curtis, J. & Ennis, R (1988). Negative consequences of leaving competitive sport: Comparative findings for former elite hockey players. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 5, 87-106.
- Danish, S.J., Petitpas, A.J. & Hale, B.D. (1990). Sport as a context for developing competence. In T. Gullota, G. Adams & R. Monteymar (Eds.). *Adolescent development: Interpersonal competence* (pp. 169-194). Elmsford, NY: Plenum.
- Danish, S.J. (1986). Psychological aspects in the care and treatment of athletic injuries. In P.E. Vinger & E.F. Horner (Eds.). *Sports injuries: The unthwarted epidemic* (pp. 345-353). Boston, MA: Wright.
- Danish, S.J., Petitpas, A.J. & Hale, B.D. (1993). Life development interventions for athletes. *The Counselling Psychologist*, 21, 352-385.
- Dougherty, J. (1976). Race and Sport: A follow-up study. *Sport Sociology Bulletin*, 5, 1-12.
- Dowd, J.J. (1975). Ageing as an exchange: A preface to theory. *Journal of Gerontology*, 30, 584-594.
- Dubois, P.E. (1980). The occupational attainment of former college athletes: A comparative study. *International Review of Sport Psychology*, 2, 93-107.
- Duda, J.L., Smart, A.E. & Tappe, M.K. (1989). Prediction of adherence in rehabilitation of athletic injuries. *Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology*, 11, 318-335.
- Duke, M., Johnson, T.C. & Norwicki, S. Jr. (1977). Effect of sport fitness camp experiences on locus of control orientation in children ages 6-14. *Research Quarterly*, 48, 280-283.

- Elkin, D. (1981). *The hurried child*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Ericsson, K.A. (1990). Peak performance and age: An examination of peak performance in sports. In P.B. Baltes & M.M. Baltes (Eds.). *Successful aging: Perspectives from the behavioral sciences* (pp. 164-195). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Erikson, E.H. (1963). *Childhood and society*. New York: Norton.
- Erikson, E.H. (1968). *Identity: Youth and crisis*. New York: Norton.
- Falek, A. & Britton, S. (1974). Phases in coping: The hypotheses and its implications. *Social Biology*, 21, 1-7.
- Feldman, D.C. (1994). The decision to retire early: A review and conceptualization. *Academy of Management Review*, 19, 285-311.
- Feltz, D.L. (1986). The psychology of sports injuries. In E.F. Vinger & P.F. Hoerner (Eds.). *Sports injuries. The unthwarted epidemic* (pp. 336-344). Littleton, MA: PSG.
- Fernandez, A., Stephan, Y. & Fouquerean, E. (2006). Assessing reasons for sports career termination: Development of the Athletics Retirement Decision Inventory (ARDI). *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 7, 407-421.
- Ferrando, G.M. (1996). Los Deportistas Olimpicos Espanoles; Un perfil sociologico [Spanish Olympic Athletes: a Sociological profile]. *Serie de Investigacion en Ciencias del Deporte*, Vol. 7. Los Deportistas Olimpicos CSD Espanoles.
- Friedlander, S. (1984-1985). Learned helplessness in children: perception of control and counsel attributions. *Imagination, Cognition and Personality*, 4, 99-116.
- George, L.K. (1980). *Role transition in later life*. Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Glaser, B. & Strauss, A. (1965). *Awareness of dying*. New York: Aldine.
- Glasser, W. (1965). *Reality therapy: A new approach to psychiatry*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Gorbett, F.J. (1985). Psycho-social adjustment of athletes to retirement. In L.K. Bunker, R.I. Rotella & A. Reilly (Eds.). *Sport psychology: Psychological considerations in maximizing sport performance* (pp. 288-294). Ithaca, NY: Movement Publications.
- Gordon, S. (1995). Career transitions in competitive sport. In T. Morris & J. Summers (Eds.). *Sport psychology: Theory, applications and issues* (pp. 474-501). Brisbane: Jacaranda Wiley.
- Gould, D. & Horn, T.S. (1984). Participation motivation in young athletes. In J.M. Silva & R.S. Weinberg (Eds.). *Psychological foundations in sport* (pp. 359-370). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.



- Gould, D., Jackson, S.A. & Finch, L. (1993). Life at the top: The experiences of U.S. national champion figure skaters. *The Sport Psychologist*, 7, 353-374.
- Gould, D., Weiss, M. & Weinberg, R. (1981). Psychological characteristics of successful and nonsuccessfull Big Ten Wrestlers. *Journal of Sport Psychology*, 3, 69-81.
- Greendorfer, S.L. & Blinde, E.M. (1985). Retirement from inter-collegiate sport: Theoretical and empirical considerations. *Society of Sport Journal*, 2, 101-110.
- Greendorfer, S.L. & Kleiber, D.A. (1982). *Sport retirement as social death: The college athlete*. Paper presented at the Third Annual Conference of the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport, Toronto.
- Griffiths, L.L. (1982). Life after sports. *Women's Sport*, 4, 10.
- Grove, J., Lavalley, D., Gordon, S. & Harvey J. (1998). Account-making: A model for understanding and resolving distressful reactions to retirement from sport. *The Sport Psychologist*, 12, 52-67.
- Grove, J.R., Fish, M. & Eklund, R. (2004). Changes in athletic identity following team selection: Self-perception versus self - enhancement. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 16, 75-81.
- Grove, J.R., Lavalley, D. & Gordon, S. (1997). Coping with retirement from sport: The influence of athletic identity. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 9, 191-203.
- Hallinan, C. & Snyder, E. (1988). Forced engagement and the college athletes. *Arena Review*, 11, 28.34.
- Hanin, Y.L. (2000). Individual zones of optimal functioning (IZOF) model: emotion-performance relationships in sport. In Y.L. Hanin (Ed.). *Emotions in sport* (pp. 65-89). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Hare, N. (1971). The study of the black fighter. *The Black Scholar*, 3, 2-9.
- Harris, D.S. & Eitzen, D.S. (1971). The consequences of failure in sport. *Urban Life*, 7, 177-188.
- Havighurst, R.J. & Albrecht, R. (1953). *Older people*. New York: Longmans Green.
- Hayishi, C.T. (1996). Achievement motivation among Anglo-American and Hawaiian male physical activity participants: Individual differences and contextual factors. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 18, 194-215.
- Hearle, R.K. Jnr. (1975). Career patterns and career contingencies of professional baseball players: An occupational analysis. In D.W.

- Ball & J.W. Loy (Eds.). *Sport and social order* (pp. 461-519). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Heil, J. (1988). *Early identification and intervention with injured athletes at risk for failed rehabilitation*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for the Advancement of Applied Sport Psychology, Nashua, NH.
- Heron, J. (1986). *Co-operative enquiry*. London: Sage.
- Highlen, P.S. & Bennet, B.B. (1979). Psychological characteristics of successful and unsuccessful elite wrestlers: An exploratory study. *Journal of Sport Psychology*, 1, 123-137.
- Highlen, P.S. & Bennett, B.B. (1983). Elite divers and wrestlers: A comparison between open- and closed-skill athletes. *Journal of Sport Psychology*, 5, 390-409.
- Hill, P. & Lowe, B. (1974). Inevitable metathesis of the retiring athlete. *International Review of Sport Sociology*, 4, 5-32.
- Hooker, K. Siegler, I.C. (1993). Life goals, satisfaction, and self-rated health: Preliminary findings. *Experimental Ageing Research*, 19, 97-110.
- Kahn, R. (1972). *The boys of summer*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Kay, R.S., Felker, D.W. & Varoz, R.O. (1972). Sports interest and abilities as contributors to self-concept in junior high school boys. *Research Quarterly*, 43, 208-245.
- Kelly, H.H. (1967). Attribution in social psychology. In D. Levine (Ed.). *Nebraska symposium on motivation*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Kennedy, S.R. & Dimick, K.M. (1987). Career maturity and professional sports expectations of college football and basketball players. *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 28, 293-297.
- Kerr, G. & Dachyshyn, A. (2000). The retirement experiences of elite, female gymnasts. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 12, 115-133.
- Kerr, N. (1961). Understanding the process of adjustment to disability. *Journal of Rehabilitation*, 27, 16-18.
- Kleiber, D. & Thompson, S. (1980). Leisure behavior and adjustment to retirement: Implications for pre-retirement educations. *Therapeutic Recreation Journal*, 14, 5-17.
- Kleiber, D.A., Greendorfer, S.L., Blinde, E. & Sandall, D. (1987). Quality of exit from university sports and subsequent life satisfaction. *Journal of Sport Sociology*, 4, 28-36.
- Koocher, G.P. (1971). Swimming competence and personality change. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 18, 275-278.

- Koukouris, K. (1991). Quantitative aspects of the disengagement process of advanced and elite Greek male athletes from organized competitive sport. *Journal of Sport Behavior*, 14, 227-246.
- Koukouris, K. (1994). Constructed case studies: Athletes' perspectives of disengaging from organised competitive sport. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 11, 114-139.
- Kramer, J. (1969). *Farewell to football*. New York: World Books.
- Kraus, J.F. & Conroy, C. (1989). Morality and morbidity from injuries in sport and recreation. *Annual Review of Public Health*, 5, 163-192.
- Kreiner-Phillips, K. & Orlick, T. (1993). Winning after winning: The psychology of ongoing excellence. *The Sport Psychologist*, 7, 31-48.
- Kübler-Ross, E. (1969). *On death and dying*. New York: MacMillan.
- Kuypers, J.A. & Bengston, V.L. (1973). Social breakdown and competence: A model of normal aging. *Human Development*, 16, 81-120.
- Kvale, S. (1983). The qualitative research interview: A phenomenological and a hermeneutical mode of understanding. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, 14, 171-196.
- Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lally, P. (2007) Identity and athletic retirement: A prospective study. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 8, 85-99.
- Lanning, J. (1982). The privileged few: Special counselling needs of athletes. *Journal of Sport Psychology*, 4, 19-23.
- Lapchick, R.L. & Malekoff, R. (1987). *On the mark: Putting the student back in student-athlete*. Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath.
- Lavallee, D. & Anderson, M.B. (2000). Leaving sport: Easing career transitions. In M.B. Andersen (Ed.). *Doing sport psychology* (pp. 249-260). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Lavallee, D. & Wylleman, P. (2000). *Career transitions in sport. International perspectives*. Morgantown, WV: Fitness Information Technology.
- Lavallee, D. (2000). Theoretical perspectives on career transitions in sport. In D. Lavallee & P. Wylleman (Eds.). *Career transition in sport. International Perspectives* (pp. 1-27). Morgantown, WV: Fitness Information Technology.
- Lavallee, D., Gordon, S. & Grove J.R. (1997). Retirement from sport and the loss of athletic identity. *Journal of Personal and Interpersonal Loss*, 2, 129-147.

- Lavallee, D., Grove, J.R. & Gordon, S. (1997). The causes of career termination from sport and their relationship to post-retirement adjustment among elite-amateur athletes in Australia. *Australian Psychologist*, 32, 131-135.
- Lavallee, D., Nesti, M., Borkoles, E., Cockerill, I. & Edge, A. (2000). Intervention strategies for athletes in transition. In D. Lavallee & P. Wylleman (Eds.). *Career transitions in sport. International perspectives* (pp. 111-130). Morgantown, WV: Fitness Information Technology.
- Lavallee, D., Wylleman, P. & Sinclair, D. (2000). Career transitions in sport: An annotated bibliography. In D. Lavallee and P. Wylleman (Eds.). *Career transitions in sport. International perspectives* (pp. 207-258). Morgantown, WV: Fitness Information Technology.
- Lavallee, D., Gorely, T., Lavellee, R.M. & Wylleman, P. (2001). Career development programs for athletes. In W. Patton & M. McMahon (Eds.). *Career development programs: Preparation for lifelong career decision making* (pp. 125-133). Cumberwell: Australian Council for Educational Research.
- Lawther, J.D. (1972). *Sports psychology*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Lazarus, A. (1972). *Behaviour theory and beyond*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Leonard, W. M. (1977). Stacking and performance differentials of whites, blacks, and latins in professional baseball. *Review of Sport and Leisure*, 2, 77-106.
- Lerch, S.H. (1981). The adjustment to retirement of professional baseball players. In S.L. Greendorfer & A. Yiannakis (Eds.). *Sociology of sport: Diverse perspectives* (pp. 138-148). West Point, NY: Leisure Press.
- Lerch, S.H. (1982). Athlete retirement as social death. In N. Therberge & P. Donnelly (Eds.). *Sport and the sociological imagination* (pp. 259-272). Fort Worth, TX: Texas Christian University Press.
- Lerch, S.H. (1982). *Athletic retirement as social death: An overview*. Paper presented at the Third Annual Meeting of NASSS, Toronto.
- Lerch, S.H. (1984). The adjustment of athletes to career ending injuries. *Arena Review*, 8, 54-65.
- Levinson, D.J. (1978). *The seasons of a man's life*. New York: Knopf.
- Levinson, D.J. (1990). A theory of life structure development in adulthood. In C.N. Alexander & E.J. Langer (Eds.). *Higher stages of human development: Perspectives on adult growth*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Lewis-Griffith, L. (1982). Athletic injuries can be a pain in the head too. *Women Sports*, 4, 44.
- Lincoln, Y.S. & Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Mahoney, M.J. & Avenier, M. (1977). Psychology of the elite athlete: An exploratory study. *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, 1, 135-142.
- Manion, U.V. (1976). Preretirement counselling: The need for a new approach. *Personnel and Guidance Journal*, 55, 119-121.
- McLaughlin, P. (1981). Retirement: Athlete in transition. *Champion*, 5, 15-16.
- McPherson, B.D. (1980). Retirement from professional sport: The process and problems of occupational and psychological adjustment. *Sociological Symposium*, 30, 126-143.
- McPherson, B.D. (1984). Sport participation across the life cycle: A review of the literature and suggestions for future research. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 1, 213-230.
- Meichenbaum, D. (1977). *Cognitive behaviour modification*. New York: Plenum.
- Meyers A.W., Cooke, C.J., Cullen, J. & Liles, L. (1979). Psychological aspects of athletic competitors: A replication across sports. *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, 3, 361-366.
- Mihovilovic, M. (1968). The status of former sportsmen. *International Review of Sports Psychology*, 3, 73-93.
- Miles, M.B. & Huberman, A.M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Miller, P.S. & Kerr, G. (2002b). Conceptualizing excellence: Past, present and future. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 14, 140-153.
- Miller, P.S. & Kerr, G. (2002b). Conceptualizing excellence: Past, present and future. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 14, 140-153.
- Mischel, W. (1968). *Personality and assessment*. New York: Wiley.
- Moormann, P.P. (1994). *Figure skating performance: A psychological study*. Dissertation. University of Leiden, The Netherlands.
- Mullet, E., Dej, V., Lemaire, I., Raiff P. & Barthorpe, J. (2000). Studying, working and living in another EU country: French youth's point of view. *European Psychologist*, 5, 216-227.
- Murphy, S.M. (1995). Transition in competitive sport: Maximizing individual potential. In S.M. Murphy (Ed.) *Sport psychology interventions* (pp. 331-346). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Murphy, S.M., Petitpas, A.J. & Brewer, B.W. (1996). Identify foreclosure, athletic identity and career maturity in intercollegiate athletes. *The Sport Psychologist*, 10, 239-246.



- Nelson, E. (1983). How the myth of the dumb jock becomes fact: A developmental view for counsellors. *Counselling and Values*, 176-185.
- Nelson, J. (1982). Sport in America: New directions and new potentials. *National Forum*, 5-6.
- Newman, B. & Newman, P. (1979). *Development through life*. Homewood, IL: Dorsey Press.
- Newman, B. (1989). Striking the lode. *Sports Illustrated (Special Issue)* (282-285).
- Nicholi, A.M. (1987). Psychiatric consultation in professional football. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 316, 1095-1100.
- Nicholls, J. (1980). The development of the concept of difficulty. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, 26, 271-281.
- Nitch, J.R. (1997). Empirical research in sport psychology: A critical review of the laboratory-field controversy. *European Yearbook of Sport Psychology*, 1, 1-28.
- North, J. & Lavalley, D. (2000). An investigation of potential users of career transition services in the United Kingdom. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 5, 77-84.
- Ogilvie, B.C. & Howe, M. (1981). Career crisis in sport. In T. Orlick, J. Partington, & J. Salmela (Eds.). *Mental training for coaches and athletes*. Ottawa: Fitness and Amateur Sport.
- Ogilvie, B.C. & Howe, M. (1982). Career crisis in sport. In T. Orlick, J.T. Partington & J.H. Salmela (Eds.). *Proceedings of the fifth world congress of sport psychology* (pp. 176-183). Ottawa: Coaching Association of Canada.
- Ogilvie, B.C. (1987). Counselling for sports career termination. In J.R. May & M.J. Asken (Eds.). *Sports psychology: The psychological health of the athlete* (pp. 213-230). New York: PMA.
- Ogilvie, B.C., & Tutko, T. (1971). Sport: If you want to build character, try something else. *Psychology Today*, 5, 61-63.
- Orlick T. (1980). *In pursuit of excellence*. Ottawa: Coaching Association of Canada.
- Orlick, T. & Werthner, P. (1987). *Athletes in transition*. Ottawa: Coaching Association of Canada.
- Orlick, T. & Partington, J. (1988). Mental links to excellence. *The Sport Psychologist*, 2, 105-130.
- Orlick, T. (1990). *In pursuit of excellence*. Champaign, IL: Leisure Press.
- Otto, L.B. & Alwin, D.F. (1977). Athletics, aspirations, and attainments. *Sociology of Education*, 42, 102-113.

- Parker, K.B. (1994). "Has bees" and "Wanna-bees": Transition experiences of former major college football players. *The Sport Psychologist*, 8, 387-395.
- Patton, M. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. Newburg Park, CA: Sage.
- Patton, M.Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Perna, F.M., Zaichkowsky, L. & Bocknek, G. (1996). The association of mentoring with psychosocial development among male athletes at termination of college career. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 8, 76-88.
- Petitpas, A., Danish S., McKelvain, R. & Murphy, S.M. (1990). *A career assistance program for elite athletes*. Paper presented at the annual meetings of the Association for the Advancement of Applied Sport Psychology, San Antonio, Texas.
- Petitpas, A., Danish, S., McKelvain, R. & Murphy, S. (1988). *A career assistance program for elite athletes*. Colorado Springs, CO: US Olympic committee.
- Petitpas, A.J., Champagne, D., Chartrand, J., Danish, S. & Murphy, S. (1997). *Athletes guide to career planning. Keys to success from playing field to professional life*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Podbroski, S. (1987). *Podbroski*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart.
- Pollack, O. (1956). *The social aspects of retirement*. Homewood, IL: Richard D. Irvin.
- Remer, R., Tongate, R.A. & Watson, J. (1978). Athletics: Counselling for the overprivileged minority. *The Personnel and Guidance Journal*, 56, 622-629.
- Repucci, N.D. (1987). Prevention and ecology: Teenage pregnant, child sexual abuse and organized youth sports. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 15, 1-22.
- Reynolds, J.M. (1981). The effects of sports retirement on the job satisfaction of the former football player. In S.L. Greendorfer & A. Yiannakis (Eds.). *Sociology of sport: Diverse perspectives* (pp. 127-137). West Point, NY: Leisure Press.
- Rose, J. & Jevne, R.F.J. (1993). Psychosocial processes associated ith athletic injuries. *The Sport Psychologist*, 7, 309-328.
- Rosenberg, E. (1979). Social disorganizational aspects of professional sports careers. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 4, 14-25.
- Rosenberg, E. (1980). Sport as work: Characteristics and career patterns. *Sociological Symposium*, 30, 39-61.
- Rosenberg, E. (1981). Gerontological theory and athletic retirement. In S.L. Greendorfer & A. Yiannakis (Eds.). *Sociology of sport:*

- Diverse\_perspectives* (pp. 118-127). West Point, NY: Leisure Press.
- Rosenberg, E. (1981). Sociology of Sport: diverse perspectives: *1<sup>st</sup> Annual NASS Conference proceedings*. S.L. Greendorfer (Ed.). North American Society for the Sociology of Sport Conference.
- Rosenberg, E. (1982). *Athletic retirement as social death: Concepts and perspectives*. Paper presented at the Third Annual Meeting of NASSS. Toronto.
- Rosenkoetter, M.M. (1985). Is your older client ready for a role change after retirement? *Journal of Gerontological Nursing*, 11, 21-24.
- Roskin, M. (1982). Coping with life changes. A preventative social work approach. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 10, 331-340.
- Rotella, R.J. & Heyman, S.R. (1986). Stress, injury, and the psychological rehabilitation of athletes. In J.M. Williams (Ed.). *Applied sport psychology: Personal growth to peak performance* (pp. 343-364). Palo Alto, CA: Mayfield.
- Rowen, R.B. & Wilks, S. (1987). Pre-retirement planning: Quality of life issue for retirement. *Employee Assistance Quarterly*, 2, 45-56.
- Rusbult, C.E. (1980). Commitment and satisfaction in romantic associations: A test of the investment model. *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 16, 172-186.
- Sandemose, A. (1934). En flykting korsar sitt spar [A fugative crosses his tracks], Tiden, Stockholm.
- Sandemose, A. (1934). *En flykting korsar sitt spar. [A fugitive crosses his tracks]*. Stockholm: Tiden
- Sands, R. (1978). A socio-psychological investigation of the effects of role discontinuity on outstanding high school athletes. *Journal of Sport Behavior*, 1, 174-185.
- Scanlan, T.K. (1985). Sources of stress in youth athletics. In M.R. Weiss & D. Gould (Eds.). *Sports for children and youth* (pp. 75-89).ampaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Scanlan, T.K., Carpenter, P.J., Schmidt, G.W., Simons, J.P. & Keeler, B. (1993). An introduction to the Sport Commitment Model. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 15, 1-15.
- Scanlan, T.K., Russel, D.G., Wilson, N.C. & Scanlan, L.A. (2003). Project on Elite Athlete Commitment (PEAK): 1. Introduction and Methodology. *Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology*, 25, 360-376.
- Scanlan, T.K., Simons, J.P., Carpenter, P.J. & Keeler, B. (1990). *Stage of involvement and commitment to a youth sport program*. Paper



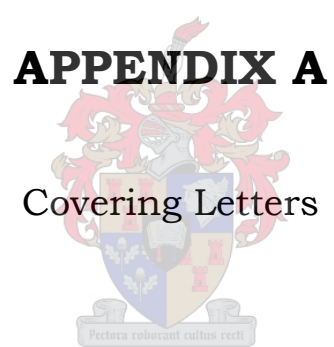
- presented at the meeting of the Association for the Advancement of Applied Sport Psychology, San Antonio.
- Scanlan, T.K., Stein, G.L. & Ravizza, K. (1989). An in-depth study of former elite figure skaters: II. Sources of enjoyment. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 11, 65-83.
- Schafer, W. (1971). *Sport socialisation and the school*. Paper presented at the Third International Symposium on the Sociology of Sport, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada.
- Schendel, J.S. (1965). Psychological differences between athletes and non-participants in athletics at the educational levels. *Research Quarterly*, 36, 52-67.
- Schlossberg, N.K., Lynch, A.O. & Chickering A.W. (1989). *Improving higher education environments for adults*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Schlossberg, N.K. (1984). *Counselling adults in transition: Linking practice with theory*. New York: Springer.
- Schlossberg, N.K., Waters, E.B. & Goodman, J. (1995). *Counselling adults in transition: Linking practice with theory*. New York: Springer.
- Seidman, I.E. (1991). *Interviewing as qualitative research*. Teachers College Press, New York.
- Seiler, R., Anders, G. & Irlinger, P. (1998). *Das Leben nach dem Spritzensport – La vie après la sport de haut niveau [Life after elite level sport]*, INSEP, Paris.
- Seligman, M.E.P. (1991). *Learned optimism*. New York: Knopf.
- Shafer, W. (1971). *Sport socialisation and the school*. Paper presented at the Third International Symposium on the Sociology of Sport, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada.
- Shultz, K.S., Morton, K.R. & Weckerle, J.R. (1998). The influence of push and pull factors on involuntary early retirees' retirement decision and adjustment. *Journal of vocational Behaviour*, 53, 45-57.
- Sigelman, C.K. & Schaffer, D.R. (1995). *Life-span human development*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Siller, J. (1969). Psychological situation of the disabled with spinal cord injuries. *Rehabilitation Literature*, 30, 290-296.
- Sinclair, D.A. & Orlick, T. (1993). Positive transitions for high-performance sport. *The Sport Psychologist*, 7, 138-150.
- Sinclair, D.A. & Orlick, T. (1994). The effects of transition on high performance sport. In D. Hackfort (Ed.). *Psycho-social issues and interventions in elite sports* (pp. 29-55). Frankfurt: Lang.

- Smith, J. (1989). The nature of social and educational enquiry: Empiricism Versus Interpretation. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Smith, J.A., Jarman, M. & Osborn, M. (1999). Doing interpretive phenomenological analysis. In M. Murray & K. Chamberlain (Eds.). *Qualitative health psychology: Theories and methods* (pp. 218-240). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Smith, R.E. (1980). A cognitive-effective approach to stress management training for athletes. In C. Dadeau, W. Halliwell, K. Newell & G. Roberts (Eds.). *Psychology of motor behaviour and sports* (pp. 55-77). Champaign. IL: Human Kinetics.
- Smith, R.E., Smoll, F.L. & Curtis, B. (1979). Coach effectiveness training: A cognitive-behavior approach to enhancing relationships skills in youth sports coaches. *Journal of Sport Psychology* 1, 59-75.
- Snyder, E.E. & Barber, L.A. (1979). A profile of former collegiate athletes and nonathletes: Leisure activities, attitudes towards work, and aspects of satisfaction with life. *Journal of Sport Behavior*, 2, 211-219.
- Sonstrom, R.J. (1982). Exercise and self-esteem: Recommendations for expository research. *Quest*, 33, 124-139.
- Sowa, C.J. & Gressard, C.F. (1983). Athletic participation: Its relationship to student development. *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 24, 236-239.
- Sparkes, A.C. (1998a). Validity in qualitative inquiry and the problem of criteria: Implications for sport psychology. *The Sport Psychologist*, 12, 363-386.
- Spear, A. & Meyer, J.W. (1988). Types of elderly residential mobility and their determinants. *Journal of Gerontology*, 43, 574-581.
- Stambulova, N. & Stephan, Y. (2005). *Athletic Retirement of Elite Swedish and French Athletes. Paper presented at the 11<sup>th</sup> ISSP congress on sport psychology*, Sydney, Australia.
- Stambulova, N. (2003). Symptoms of a crisis-transition: A grounded theory study. In N. Hassmen (Ed.). *SIPF yearbook 2003*. Örebro University Press, Örebro.
- Stambulova, N., Stephan, Y. & Jäphag, U. (2007). Athletic retirement: A cross-national comparison of elite French and Swedish athletes. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 8, 101-118.
- Stambulova, N.B. (1994). Developmental sports career investigations in Russia: A post-Perestroika analysis. *The Sport Psychologist*, 9, 221-237.
- Stambulova, N.B. (1995). Career transitions of Russian athletes. In R. Vanfraechem-Rayway & Y. Vanden Auweele. *Proceedings of the ninth European congress on sport psychology, Part II*, (pp. 867-873). Brussels.

- Stambulova, N.B. (2000). Athletes' crises: A developmental perspective. *International Journal of Sport Psychology* 31, 584-601.
- Starkes, J.L., Weir, P.L., Singh, P., Hodges, N.J. & Kerr, T. (1999). Aging and the retention of sport expertise. *International Journal of Sport Psychology*, 30, 283-301.
- Stephan, Y., Torregrosa, M. & Sanchez, X. (2007). The body matters: Psychological impact of retiring from elite sport. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 8, 73-83.
- Stones, M.J. & Kozma, A. (1981). Adult age trends in athletic performances. *Experimental Aging Research*, 17, 269-280.
- Strauss, A. (1987). *Qualitative analysis*. NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Strean, W.B. (1998). Possibilities for qualitative research in sport psychology. *The Sport Psychologist*, 12, 333-343.
- Sussman, M. (1971). An analytic model for the sociological study of retirement. In F.M. Carp (Ed.). *Retirement* (pp. 29-71). New York: Behavioural Publications.
- Svoboda, B. & Vanek, M. (1981). Retirement from high level competition. In T. Orlick, J. Partington & J. Salmela (Eds.). *Mental training for coaches and athletes* (pp. 166-175). Ottawa: Fitness and Amateur Sport.
- Svoboda, B. & Vanek, M. (1982). Retirement from high-level competition. In T. Orlick, J.T. Partington & J.H. Salmela (Eds.). *Proceedings of the fifth world congress of sport psychology* (pp. 166-175). Ottawa: Coaching Association of Canada.
- Swain, D.A. (1989). *The experience of withdrawing from professional sport*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Vancouver: University of British Columbia.
- Swain, D.A. (1991). Withdrawal from sport and Schlossberg's model of transitions. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 8, 152-160.
- Szinovacz, M.E. (1987). Preferred retirement satisfaction in women. *International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, 24, 301-317.
- Tache, J. & Selye, H. (1985). On stress and coping mechanisms. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing*, 7, 3-24.
- Taylor, C. (1972). Development conceptions and the retirement process. In F.M. Carp (Ed.). *Retirement* (pp. 77-113). New York: Behavioural Publications.
- Taylor, J. & Ogilvie, B.C. (1998). Career transition among elite athletes: Is there life after sports? In J.M. Williams (Ed.). *Applied sport psychology: Personal growth to peak performance* (pp. 429-444). Mountain View, CA: Mayfield.

- Thomas, C.E. & Ermler, K.L. (1988). Institutional obligations in the athletic retirement process. *Quest*, 40, 137-150.
- Torregrosa, M. & Mimbreno, J. (2000). Perfiles profesionales de deportistas Olimpicos [Professional profiles of Olympic athletes]. In Estudios de investigacion becados por la Fundacion Barcelona Olimpica (pp. 10-68). Barcelona: Quality Press.
- Torregrosa, M., Boixados, M., Valiente, L. & Cruz, L. (2004). Elite athletes' image of retirement: The way to relocation in sport. *Journal of Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 5, 35-43.
- Torregrosa, M., Boixados, M., Valiente, L. & Cruz, J. (2001). Retirement from elite sports in Spain: Do active Olympic athletes think about it? In A. Papaivannon, M. Goudas and Y. Theodorakis (Eds.). *In the dawn of the millennium. Proceedings of the 10 world congress of sport psychology*, 5, 161-163.
- Ungerleider, S. (1997). Olympic athletes' transition from sport to workplace. *Perceptual and Motor skills*, 84, 1287-1295.
- Van de Vliet, P., Knapen, J., Onghena, P., Fox, K., Van Coppenolle, H. & David, A. (2002). Assessment of physical self-perceptions in normal Flemish adults versus depressed psychiatric patients. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 32, 855-863.
- Van Reusel, B., De Knop, P., Martelaer, K., Impens, G., Roelandt, F., Teirlinck, P. & Wylleman, P. (1992). *Fysieke fitheid en sportbeoefening van de Vlaamse jeugd. Participate en drop out: een onderzoek waar jongeren van 12 tot 18 jaar in sportverenigingen. Physical fitness and sport participation of Flemish youth. Participation and drop out: a study on 12-18 year old youths in sports clubs*. Brussels, Interuniversitair Onderzoekscentrum voor Sportbeleid, 4, 43.
- Wagenaar, W.A. (1986). My memory; A study of autobiographical memory over six years. *Cognitive Psychology*, 18, 225-252.
- Webb, W.M., Nasco, S.A., Riley, S.Q. & Headrick, B. (1998). Athlete identity and reactions to retirement from sports. *Journal of Sport Behavior* 21, 338-362.
- Wehlage, D.F. (1980). Managing the emotional reaction to loss in athletics. *Athletic Training*, 15, 144-146.
- Weinberg, K. & Arond, H. (1952). The occupational culture of the boxer. *American Journal of Sociology*, 57, 460-469.
- Weiss, M.R., Smith, A.L. & Theeboom, M (1996). "That's what friends are for": Children's and teenagers' perceptions of peer relationships in the sport domain. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 18, 347-379.
- Werthner, P. & Orlick, T. (1981). Transition from sport: Coping with the end. In T. Orlick, J. Partington, & J. Salmela (Eds.). *Mental*

- training for coaches and athletes* (pp. 188-192). Ottawa: Fitness and Amateur Sport.
- Werthner, P. & Orlick, T. (1986). Retirement experiences of successful Olympic athletes. *International Journal of Sport Psychology*, 17, 337-363.
- White, R.W. (1959). Motivation revisited: The concept of competence. *Physiological Review*, 66, 297-333.
- Williams, J. (1986). Psychological characteristics of peak performance. In J.M. Williams (Eds.). *Applied sport psychology: Personal growth to peak performance* (pp.123-132). Palo Alto, CA: Mayfield.
- Wolff, P. & Lester, D. (1989). A theoretical basis for counselling the retired professional athlete. *Psychological Reports*, 64, 1043-1046.
- Wood, R. & Bandura, A. (1989). Social cognitive theory of organizational management. *Academy of Management Review*, 14, 361-384.
- Wylleman, P. & Lavalley, D. (2003). A developmental perspective on transitions faced by athletes. In M. Weiss (Ed). *Developmental sport psychology* (pp. 507-527). Morgantown, WV: Fitness Information Technology.
- Wylleman, P., Alfermann, D. & Lavalley, D. (2004). Career transitions in sport. European perspectives. *Psychology of Sport & Exercise*, 5, 7-20.
- Wylleman, P., De Knop, P., Ewing, M. & Cummings, S.P. (2000). Transitions in youth sport: a developmental perspective on parental involvement. In D. Lavalley & P. Wylleman, (Eds.). *Career transitions in sport: International perspectives* (pp. 143-160). Morgantown, WV: Fitness Information Technology.
- Wylleman, P., De Knop, P., Menkehorst, H., Theeboom, M. & Annerel, J. (1993). Career termination and social integration among elite athletes. In S. Serpa, J. Alves, V. Ferreira & A. Paula-Brito (Eds.). *Proceedings of the eighth world congress of sport psychology*, 902-905. Lisbon: Universidade Tecnica de Lisboa.
- Wylleman, P., Lavalley, D. & Alfermann, D. (Eds). (1999). *Career transitions in competitive sports. FEPSAC Monography series*. Lund, Sweden: European Federation of Sport Psychology.



## **APPENDIX A**

### Covering Letters



14 Pennylane  
Blaauwklippen Village  
Stellenbosch  
7600

1 August 2005

Dear Athlete

I am doing research on *The Effect of Retirement on Elite Athletes* for a Ph.D. degree in Sport Science at Stellenbosch University.

I was an international athlete who went through the process of transition out of elite sport and experienced certain emotions. The termination of an elite sport-career is an interesting new field of study.

Although your involvement with this project should require very little of your time, it nevertheless means that you will have to provide me with information which I will treat as confidential. In return for your valuable time and valued information I plan to provide you with interesting feedback that may be of use as an athlete in transition to retirement or one that is already in retirement.

I shall therefore appreciate if you would complete and return the enclosed questionnaire to me.

I thank you in anticipation for your assistance.

Regards

Jantjie Marthinus

Phone 021- 880 2625  
083 473 5007

Pennylane 14  
Blaauwklippen Village  
STELLENBOSCH  
7600

1 Augustus 2005

Beste Atleet

Ek is tans besig met 'n Ph.D. graad in Sportwetenskap aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch. Die titel van my verhandeling is *Die Effek van Aftrede op Elite Atlete*.

Ek het ook as internasionale atleet deur die proses van aftrede uit elite sport gegaan en daarmee sekere emosies ervaar. Die transisie van sportdeelnemers uit elite sport is 'n interessante area wat heelwat belangstelling uit alle oorde ontlok.

Hoewel jou deelname aan die projek min tyd behoort te verg, sal dit nogtans beteken dat jy inligting aan my moet verskaf, wat as baie vertroulik hanteer sal word. In ruil vir jou kosbare tyd en waardevolle inligting beoog ek om interessante terugvoering te verskaf wat vir jou as afgetrede atleet van nut kan wees.

Ek sal dit kan waardeer indien jy dus die ingeslote vraelys sal voltooi en aan my terugstuur.

By voorbaat dankie vir jou hulp.

Die uwe

Jantjie Marthinus

Telefoon 021- 880 2625  
083 473 5007



## **APPENDIX B**

### **Sport Career Termination Questionnaire (English Version)**



# Sport Career Termination Questionnaire

(Adapted version of the SCTQ II)

**Name:**

This questionnaire deals with the course of your sport career termination and adjustment to post-sport life. If you are still active in sport (e.g., competing in minor or amateur leagues) consider the questions as referring to your elite-sport career, which has already ended.

## Instructions

You will be required to answer the majority of questionnaire items by **circling the number** that best represents your opinion on the statement in question.

**Example:** *I started planning my post-sport life during my sports career.*

**1** means 'I strongly disagree' and **5** 'I strongly agree'.

So, if you completely agree with the statement, you will circle **5**.



In the case of questions with **checkbox answers**, check the **one** that applies.

When completing **specific details** in the space provided, please **print** where applicable to ensure legibility.

- Please respond to every statement.
- Make sure you always choose one response unless specifically advised otherwise.
- It is essential that your answers are sincere.
- Your answers will be kept strictly confidential.

I appreciate your willingness to participate.

Jantjie Marthinus  
Phone 021 880 2625 or 083 473 5007

## Biographical Information

1. Main sport: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female
3. Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Years
4. Marital status:  
☐ Single ☐ Married/living together  
☐ Separated/divorced/widowed ☐ Partner relationship but living alone
5. Do you have children? ☐ Yes ☐ No  
If "yes", how many children? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Current occupation: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Highest level of completed education:  
☐ Primary school ☐ Tertiary (post-school) Diploma  
☐ Technical school ☐ Bachelor's degree  
☐ High school ☐ Master's degree  
☐ Doctoral degree
- Are you still studying? ☐ Yes ☐ No  
If "yes", please specify \_\_\_\_\_
8. Have you taken any educational or training programmes (e.g., coaching certificate programme/course)? ☐ Yes ☐ No  
If "yes", which? \_\_\_\_\_
9. How many years did you compete in your sport (all levels)? \_\_\_\_\_ Years

10. For how many years were you a member of a:  
 (a) Provincial team? \_\_\_\_ Years                      (b) National team? \_\_\_\_ Years
11. For how many years was sport your top-priority commitment? \_\_\_\_ Years
12. Approximately how many training sessions per week did you have at the height of your elite sports career? \_\_\_\_ Sessions  
 Approximately how long was the average training session? \_\_\_\_ Hours
13. At which level did you compete at the peak of your career?
- ☐ Olympic Games                      ☐ World Cup events
- ☐ World championships                      ☐ National championships

## Life During Your Elite-Sport Career

1. Did you study during your elite-sport career? If "yes", at what level?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no <input type="checkbox"/> School <input type="checkbox"/> Tertiary
2. What was your schooling status at that time?  <input type="checkbox"/> Did not study <input type="checkbox"/> Full-time study <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time study	
3. Did you stop studying as a result of your sport commitment?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
4. During your elite career, were you married or involved in a close relationship?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
5. In your opinion, how much have you earned with your sports involvement?	very little                      a lot 1   2   3   4   5
6. Have you earned enough in sport to ensure yourself a comfortable post-sport life (e.g., to buy an apartment, a house, to start your own business)?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
7. How famous were you during your elite sport career?	publicly unknown                      very well known 1   2   3   4   5

8.	Did you enjoy a privileged status among your peers due to your sport involvement?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no
9.	Did you enjoy a privileged status among adults due to your sport involvement?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no
		<input type="checkbox"/> uncertain	
10.	Because of your total commitment to sport, did you neglect other important aspects of life that were not related to sport?	very little 1 2 3 4 5	a lot
11.	Because of your total commitment to sport, did you miss some important events and activities that were not related to sport?	not at all 1 2 3 4 5	a lot
12.	How often did you engaged in social activities during your elite sports career?	very rarely 1 2 3 4 5	Often
13.	How many friends did you have during your elite sports career?	very few 1 2 3 4 5	many
		<i>Circle the number that best reflects your opinion</i>	
14.	During your elite sports career, were most of your friends from the world of sport?	not at all 1 2 3 4 5	a lot
15.	What was your relationship with your family like during your elite sports career?	very bad 1 2 3 4 5	very good
16.	Did your parents offer you support during your sports career?	very little 1 2 3 4 5	a lot
17.	In your opinion, how much did your parents invest financially in your sports career?	very little 1 2 3 4 5	a lot
18.1	An education	a lot lower 1 2 3 4 5	much higher
18.2	Life experiences	a lot fewer 1 2 3 4 5	many more
18.3	Friends	a lot fewer 1 2 3 4 5	many more
18.4	An experience with partner relationships	a lot fewer 1 2 3 4 5	many more
18.5	Work/professional experiences	a lot fewer 1 2 3 4 5	many more
18.6	Relationship with parents	much worse better 1 2 3 4 5	much
18.7	Difficulty in starting a professional career	much less 1 2 3 4 5	much more

18.8	Financial situation	much worse better	1	2	3	4	5	much
19.	Did you think about the end of your sport career already during your active sports involvement?	not at all	1	2	3	4	5	a lot
20.	Did you start planning your post-sport life during your sports career?	not at all	1	2	3	4	5	a lot
21.	During your sports career, did you think of yourself mostly as an athlete?	not at all	1	2	3	4	5	a lot
22.	During your sports career, were most of your goals related to sport?	not at all	1	2	3	4	5	a lot
23.	During your sports career, was sport the most important aspect of your life?	not at all	1	2	3	4	5	a lot
24.	During your sports career, did other people see you primarily as an athlete?	not at all	1	2	3	4	5	a lot

## Sport Career Termination

25. Which year did you first start thinking about ending your sports career?  
\_\_\_\_\_ year

Comments:

26. Which year did you terminate your active sports \_\_\_\_\_ Year  
career?

27. At what time of the season did you terminate your sport career?

☐ At the end of the season ☐ Before the start of a new season

☐ During preparation period ☐ During the season

<p>28. How strongly did each of the following factors influence your decision to terminate your sports career? Using the 1-to-5 intensity scale, indicate the influence each factor had on your decision to end your sports career.</p>	<p><i>Circle the number that best reflects your option.</i>  <i>Numbers range between:</i>  <b>1</b> = no influence at all  <b>5</b> = very strong influence</p>					
	No influence at all	Very strong influence				
28.1 You achieved most major goals in your sport	1	2	3	4	5	
28.2 You grew tired of the lifestyle of an athlete (e.g., traveling/stress)	1	2	3	4	5	
28.3 You were offered an opportunity outside your sport career (e.g., job offer/an educational opportunity)	1	2	3	4	5	
28.4 You committed yourself to school/study	1	2	3	4	5	
28.5 You found a job	1	2	3	4	5	
28.6 You committed yourself to your family	1	2	3	4	5	
28.7 You wanted to devote more time to your partner relationship	1	2	3	4	5	
28.8 You had problems with coaching staff	1	2	3	4	5	
28.9 You had problems with the sports federation	1	2	3	4	5	
28.10 You suffered an injury or other health problems	1	2	3	4	5	
28.11 You were in a poor relationship with team mates	1	2	3	4	5	
28.12 You had financial difficulties	1	2	3	4	5	
28.13 You had poor working and training conditions	1	2	3	4	5	
28.14 You did not qualify for the national team/competition	1	2	3	4	5	
28.15 Your age	1	2	3	4	5	
28.16 Changes in competition regulations	1	2	3	4	5	
28.17 Changes in techniques	1	2	3	4	5	
28.18 Changes in equipment	1	2	3	4	5	
28.19 Unsatisfactory performance	1	2	3	4	5	
28.20 Lack of support from family	1	2	3	4	5	
28.21 Lack of support from friends	1	2	3	4	5	
28.22 Pressure from parents	1	2	3	4	5	

28.23 Other: _____	1 2 3 4 5												
29. From the above, choose the <b>three</b> factors that had the <u>strongest influence</u> on your decision to end your sport career?	Provide the number of the three factors. _____ _____												
30. How voluntary was your decision to end your sport career?	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>not voluntary at all</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>completely voluntary</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	not voluntary at all					completely voluntary	1	2	3	4	5	
not voluntary at all					completely voluntary								
1	2	3	4	5									
31. Did the end of your sport career come about gradually?	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>not at all</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>a lot</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	not at all					a lot	1	2	3	4	5	
not at all					a lot								
1	2	3	4	5									
32. What was the level of your performance when you decided to end your sport career?													
<input type="checkbox"/> my performance was improving <input type="checkbox"/> my performance was declining  <input type="checkbox"/> I was at the peak of my sport career													

## General Mental and Emotional State During Sport Career Transition



33. Is your withdrawal from elite sport (as a competitor):													
<input type="checkbox"/> permanent <input type="checkbox"/> temporary <input type="checkbox"/> unresolved													
34. Did you have doubts about your decision to end your sport career?	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>not at all</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>a lot</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	not at all					a lot	1	2	3	4	5	
not at all					a lot								
1	2	3	4	5									
35. Below is a list of emotional states that may have accompanied your retirement from sport. Using the 1-to-5 intensity scale, indicate which number best reflects the absence/presence of each of them.	<i>Circle the number that best reflects your opinion. Numbers range between:</i> <b>1</b> = not at all <b>5</b> = a lot												
35.1 Dissatisfaction	1 2 3 4 5												
35.2 Could not reconcile myself to the end of my sport career	1 2 3 4 5												
35.3 Sadness	1 2 3 4 5												
35.4 Fear of an uncertain future	1 2 3 4 5												



35.5	Relief	1	2	3	4	5
35.6	Other	1	2	3	4	5
36.	How much has retirement from sport changed your life?	not at all				a lot
		1	2	3	4	5
37.	How was the change generally?	very negative				very positive
		1	2	3	4	5
38.	Below is a list of problems which elite athletes are often faced with after retirement from sport. Using the 1-to-5 intensity scale, indicate the magnitude of each problem as it applied to you at the close of your elite-sport career.	<p><i>Circle the number that best reflects your opinion.</i></p> <p><i>Numbers range between:</i></p> <p><b>1 = no problem at all</b></p> <p><b>5 = great problem</b></p>				
38.1	Health problems (injuries, etc.)	Posed no problems				Posed great problems
		1	2	3	4	5
38.2	Detraining difficulties					
		1	2	3	4	5
38.3	Weight problems					
		1	2	3	4	5
38.4	Alcohol abuse	Posed no problems				Posed great problems
		1	2	3	4	5
38.5	Drug abuse					
		1	2	3	4	5
38.6	Missing friends from the world of sport environment					
		1	2	3	4	5
38.7	Missing sport-related social activities					
		1	2	3	4	5
38.8	Difficulties in establishing social contacts					
		1	2	3	4	5
38.9	Missing the lifestyle of an athlete					
		1	2	3	4	5
38.10	Feelings of underachievement in sport-related goals					
		1	2	3	4	5
38.11	Loss of status of a public figure					
		1	2	3	4	5
38.12	Loss of public admiration					
		1	2	3	4	5
38.13	Financial difficulties					
		1	2	3	4	5
38.14	Problems with finding a job					
		1	2	3	4	5
38.15	Difficulties with adjustment to the requirements of your occupation					
		1	2	3	4	5
38.16	Difficulties with adjustment to regular school/study					
		1	2	3	4	5
38.17	Feelings of incompetence in activities other than sport					
		1	2	3	4	5

38.18 Lack of professional knowledge	1	2	3	4	5
38.19 Work/school/study pressure	1	2	3	4	5
38.20 Difficulties with planning one's future	1	2	3	4	5
38.21 Lowered self-confidence	1	2	3	4	5
38.22 Lowered self-worth	1	2	3	4	5
38.23 Lack of self-control	1	2	3	4	5
38.24 Relationship difficulties with parents/family	1	2	3	4	5
38.25 Relationship difficulties with one's partner	1	2	3	4	5
38.26 Relationship difficulties with one's coach	1	2	3	4	5
38.27 Relationship difficulties with one's sport association	1	2	3	4	5
38.28 Relationship difficulties with one's sport club	1	2	3	4	5
38.29 Low self-esteem	1	2	3	4	5
38.30 Fear of an uncertain future	1	2	3	4	5
38.31 Other: <hr/>	1	2	3	4	5
39. Have you achieved all of your sport-related goals?	not at all                      completely 1   2   3   4   5				
40. To what extent did you depend on sport financially at the end of sport career?	not at all                      completely 1   2   3   4   5				
41. After your retirement from sport, how much support (e.g., emotional, financial, etc.) did you <b>receive</b> from the following:	none      little      a lot 1   2   3   4   5				
41.1 Partner (girlfriend, boyfriend, spouse)	1	2	3	4	5
41.2 Parents	1	2	3	4	5
41.3 Other family members	1	2	3	4	5
41.4 Teammates	1	2	3	4	5
41.5 Friends	1	2	3	4	5
41.6 National sport association	1	2	3	4	5
41.7 Coaching staff	1	2	3	4	5
41.8 Olympic Committee	1	2	3	4	5
41.9 Sports psychologist	1	2	3	4	5

41.10 Other:	1 2 3 4 5
_____	
42. After your retirement from sport, how much support (e.g., emotional, financial, etc.) did you <b>expect</b> from the following:	none little a lot
42.1 Partner (girlfriend, boyfriend, spouse)	1 2 3 4 5
42.2 Parents	1 2 3 4 5
42.3 Other family members	1 2 3 4 5
42.4 Team mates	1 2 3 4 5
42.5 Friends	1 2 3 4 5
42.6 National sport association	1 2 3 4 5
42.7 Coaching staff	1 2 3 4 5
42.8 Olympic Committee	1 2 3 4 5
42.9 Sport psychologist	1 2 3 4 5
42.10 Other:	1 2 3 4 5
_____	
43. How long did it take before you felt completely adjusted to the new demands and social roles outside elite-sport?	
<input type="checkbox"/> 0-2 months <input type="checkbox"/> 3-6 months <input type="checkbox"/> 7-11 months <input type="checkbox"/> 1-3 years <input type="checkbox"/> 3+ years <input type="checkbox"/> not adjusted completely yet	
44. How would you describe your general attitude to retirement form sport at this point?	very negative    very positive 1 2 3 4 5
45. Immediately after retiring form sport, did you have some activity to become involved in right away? (e.g., job, school, relationship, hobby, etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
46. To what extent did you miss sport and the lifestyle of an athlete after you ended your career?	not at all    very much 1 2 3 4 5
47. Did you feel after a while that you miss sport (e.g. you thought about your sports career, achievements, the people from the world of sport, etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no

Comments:

---

48. Are you still active in sport? If “no” continue with Q49.  
If “yes”, what do you do?
- a) I work professionally in sport as coach. ☐ yes ☐ no
- b) I work professionally in sport as manager. ☐ yes ☐ no
- c) I work professionally in sport as counsellor. ☐ yes ☐ no
- d) I work professionally in sport as referee/official. ☐ yes ☐ no
- e) I work in sport as a volunteer (e.g. part-time coaching, etc.). Specify: ☐ yes ☐ no
- f) I compete in a minor league. ☐ yes ☐ no
- g) I compete in a local amateur league, a veterans’ league, etc. ☐ yes ☐ no
49. Do you still enjoy public reputation because of your sports career? ☐ yes ☐ no
50. How does your current post-sport life compare with your active sport career in terms of its importance for your personality? ☐ much less important ☐ much more important  
1 2 3 4 5
51. In general, how satisfied are you with your post-sport life? ☐ very dissatisfied ☐ very satisfied  
1 2 3 4 5
52. In general, how do you cope with the adjustment to post-sport life? ☐ very unsuccessfully ☐ very successfully  
1 2 3 4 5
53. How important is the role of a former elite athlete for you? ☐ very important ☐ very unimportant  
1 2 3 4 5
54. Is sport still the most important aspect of your life? ☐ completely agree ☐ completely disagree  
1 2 3 4 5

## Counselling For Retiring

<p>55. Did you expect any psychological problems after your retirement from sport?</p> <p style="text-align: right;"> <input type="checkbox"/> yes             <input type="checkbox"/> no           </p> <p>If “yes”, what kind of problems did you expect?</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">Specify: _____</p>																																																								
<p>56. If you were having hard and stressful times after retirement, who, if anyone, would you turn to for help? <i>Check all that apply.</i></p> <div style="display: flex; flex-wrap: wrap;"> <div style="width: 50%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> sport psychologist         </div> <div style="width: 50%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> other sport-related expert (e.g., sport manager, physical therapist, etc.)         </div> <div style="width: 50%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> counsellor/therapist         </div> <div style="width: 50%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> coach         </div> <div style="width: 50%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> parents         </div> <div style="width: 50%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> close friends         </div> <div style="width: 50%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> physician         </div> <div style="width: 50%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> siblings         </div> <div style="width: 50%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> no one         </div> </div>																																																								
<p>57. How useful would you find the following services after sport retirement?</p>	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 60%;"></th> <th style="width: 10%; text-align: center;">not useful</th> <th style="width: 10%;"></th> <th style="width: 10%; text-align: center;">very useful</th> <th style="width: 10%;"></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>57.1 Help in finding a new career or area of interest</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>57.2 Help in learning how to transfer your mental skills to a new career or area of interest</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>57.3 Help in building your confidence in post-sport life</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>57.4 Information on work and educational opportunities</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>57.5 Financial counselling</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>57.6 Assistance in finding a place to live</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>57.7 Assistance/guidance with medical and health care</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>57.8 Physiological and dietary detraining programme</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>57.9 Information on how other athletes have dealt with retirement</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>57.10 Workshops with other retired athletes to share and learn from each other’s experience</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4 5</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		not useful		very useful		57.1 Help in finding a new career or area of interest	1	2	3	4 5	57.2 Help in learning how to transfer your mental skills to a new career or area of interest	1	2	3	4 5	57.3 Help in building your confidence in post-sport life	1	2	3	4 5	57.4 Information on work and educational opportunities	1	2	3	4 5	57.5 Financial counselling	1	2	3	4 5	57.6 Assistance in finding a place to live	1	2	3	4 5	57.7 Assistance/guidance with medical and health care	1	2	3	4 5	57.8 Physiological and dietary detraining programme	1	2	3	4 5	57.9 Information on how other athletes have dealt with retirement	1	2	3	4 5	57.10 Workshops with other retired athletes to share and learn from each other’s experience	1	2	3	4 5
	not useful		very useful																																																					
57.1 Help in finding a new career or area of interest	1	2	3	4 5																																																				
57.2 Help in learning how to transfer your mental skills to a new career or area of interest	1	2	3	4 5																																																				
57.3 Help in building your confidence in post-sport life	1	2	3	4 5																																																				
57.4 Information on work and educational opportunities	1	2	3	4 5																																																				
57.5 Financial counselling	1	2	3	4 5																																																				
57.6 Assistance in finding a place to live	1	2	3	4 5																																																				
57.7 Assistance/guidance with medical and health care	1	2	3	4 5																																																				
57.8 Physiological and dietary detraining programme	1	2	3	4 5																																																				
57.9 Information on how other athletes have dealt with retirement	1	2	3	4 5																																																				
57.10 Workshops with other retired athletes to share and learn from each other’s experience	1	2	3	4 5																																																				

## Retrospect

What are the most important things that you gained from your sport career?  
Rank the following by placing a number (5 = most important to 1 least important) next to each aspect.

☐ Financial      ☐ Fame      ☐ Fitness      ☐ Friendships

Others:

---

Would you recommend your children to follow a career similar to yours?

☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Uncertain

**Thank you for your co-operation**



## **APPENDIX C**

### **Sport Career Termination Questionnaire (Afrikaans Version)**



# Sportloopbaan Beëindiging Vraelys

(Verwerkte weergawe van die SCTQ II)

**Naam:**

Hierdie vraelys is ontwerp met die doel om die kenmerke en verloop van die ontwikkeling van die beëindiging van jou sportloopbaan en aanpassing by jou lewe ná sport te identifiseer. Indien jy nog aktief aan sport deelneem (bv. meeding in 'n laer of amateurliga), oorweeg dan die vrae in die lig van jou elite sportloopbaan wat alreeds beëindig is.

## INSTRUKSIES

Merk asseblief die antwoord af wat die beëindiging van jou sportloopbaan die beste weergee. Die meeste vrae in die vraelys kan beantwoord word deur net die syfer wat jou mening oor die betrokke stelling die beste weergee, te omkring.

### Voorbeeld

*Ek het my lewe ná sport reeds tydens my sportloopbaan begin beplan; waar **1** beteken “Ek stem glad nie saam nie” en **5** “Ek stem volkome saam”. As jy dus volkome met die betrokke stelling saamstem, sal jy **5** omkring.*

Waar vrae van 'n **keuseblokkie** voorsien is, moet jy die toepaslike blokkie merk.

Wanneer jy spesifieke besonderhede in die spasie invul wat voorsien is, moet jy asseblief drukskrif gebruik.

- Reageer asseblief op elke stelling.
- Maak seker dat jy te alle tye net een respons kies tensy uitdruklik anders aangedui word.
- Dit is noodsaaklik dat jou antwoorde eerlik moet wees.
- Jou antwoorde sal streng vertroulik hanteer word.

Ek waardeer jou bereidwilligheid om deel te neem.

Jantjie Marthinus  
Telefoon 021 880 2625 of 083 473 5007



## Biografiese Inligting

1. Hoofsport \_\_\_\_\_
2. Geslag: ☐ manlik ☐ vroulik
3. Ouderdom \_\_\_\_\_ Jaar
4. Huwelikstatus  
☐ Enkel ☐ Getroud / woon saam  
☐ Vervreemd/geskei/weduwee/wewenaar ☐ Vaste verhouding, maar woon apart
5. Het jy enige kinders? ☐ Ja ☐ Nee  
Indien ja, hoeveel kinders? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Huidige beroep: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Hoogste onderwyskwalifikasie  
☐ Primêre skool ☐ Baccalaureusgraad  
☐ Tegnieuse skool ☐ Meestersgraad  
☐ Hoërskool ☐ Doktorsgraad  
☐ Tersiêre (na-skoolse) diploma
8. Is jy tans steeds besig om te studeer? ☐ Ja ☐ Nee  
Indien “ja”, op watter vlak? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Het jy enige ander onderwys- of opleidingsprogramme gevolg (bv. kursus of program vir ’n afrigtersertifikaat)? ☐ Ja ☐ Nee  
Indien “ja”, watter? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Hoeveel jaar het jy aan jou sportsoort (op alle vlakke) deelgeneem?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Jaar

11. Vir hoeveel jaar was jy 'n lid van 'n:  
 (a) Provinsiale span? \_\_\_\_ Jaar      (b) Nasionale span? \_\_\_\_ Jaar
12. Vir hoeveel jaar was sport die verpligting waaraan jy die hoogste voorkeur gegee het? \_\_\_\_ Jaar
13. Hoeveel oefensessies per week het jy gedurende jou elite sportloopbaan gehad? \_\_\_\_ Sessies  
 Ongeveer hoe lank was die gemiddelde oefensessie? \_\_\_\_ Ure
14. Op watter vlak het jy op die hoogtepunt van jou loopbaan deelgeneem?
- ☐ Olimpiese Spele      ☐ Wêreldbekerbyeenkomste
- ☐ Wêreldkampioenskapsbyeenkomste      ☐ Nasionale kampioenskapsbyeenkomste

**Lewe As 'n Atleet  
 Tydens Jou Elite-sportloopbaan**

1. Het jy studeer tydens jou elitesportloopbaan?  Indien “ja”, op watter vlak?	<input type="checkbox"/> ja <input type="checkbox"/> nee  <input type="checkbox"/> Skool  <input type="checkbox"/> Tersier
2. Jou posisie met betrekking tot skoolopleiding op daardie tyd was:  <input type="checkbox"/> Nie gestudeer <input type="checkbox"/> Voltydse studie <input type="checkbox"/> Deeltydse studie	
3. Het jy besluit om op te hou studeer tot voordeel van jou sportloopbaan?	<input type="checkbox"/> ja <input type="checkbox"/> nee
4. Was jy tydens jou eliteloopbaan ooit getroud of in 'n hegte en standhoudende verhouding betrokke?	<input type="checkbox"/> ja <input type="checkbox"/> nee
5. Hoeveel dink jy het jy verdien deur jou betrokkenheid by sport?	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; font-size: small;"> <span>baie min</span> <span>baie</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; font-size: small;"> <span>1</span><span>2</span><span>3</span><span>4</span><span>5</span> </div>
6. Het jy genoeg met sport verdien om vir jou 'n gemaklike lewe ná sport te verseker (bv. om 'n woonstel of 'n huis te kan koop of om jou eie besigheid te kan begin)?	<input type="checkbox"/> ja <input type="checkbox"/> nee

7. Hoe beroemd was jy gedurende jou elite sportloopbaan?	<div> <div>onbekend</div> <div>baie goed bekend</div> <div>1 2 3 4 5</div> </div>
8. Het jy 'n bevoorregte status in jou portuurgroep geniet danksy jou betrokkenheid by sport?	<div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> ja</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> nee</div> </div>
9. Het jy 'n bevoorregte status onder volwassenes geniet danksy jou betrokkenheid by sport?	<div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> ja</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> nee</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> onseker</div> </div>
10. As gevolg van jou algehele betrokkenheid by sport, het jy ander belangrike aspekte van jou lewe wat nie met sport verband gehou het nie, verwaarloos?	<div> <div>baie min</div> <div>baie</div> <div>1 2 3 4 5</div> </div>
11. As gevolg van jou algehele betrokkenheid by sport, het jy sommige belangrike geleenthede en aktiwiteite wat nie met sport verband gehou het nie, misgeloop?	<div> <div>baie min</div> <div>baie</div> <div>1 2 3 4 5</div> </div>
12. Hoe dikwels het jy tydens jou sportloopbaan aan sosiale aktiwiteite deelgeneem?	<div> <div>baie selde</div> <div>dikwels</div> <div>1 2 3 4 5</div> </div>
13. Hoeveel vriende het jy gedurende jou elite sportloopbaan gehad?	<div> <div>baie min</div> <div>baie</div> <div>1 2 3 4 5</div> </div>
14. Gedurende jou elite sportloopbaan het die meeste van jou vriende ook uit die sportwêreld gekom.	<div> <div>baie min</div> <div>baie</div> <div>1 2 3 4 5</div> </div>
15. Hoe was jou verhouding met jou ouers en gesin gedurende jou elitesportloopbaan?	<div> <div>baie sleg</div> <div>baie goed</div> <div>1 2 3 4 5</div> </div>
16. Het jou ouers jou gedurende jou sportloopbaan ondersteun en aangemoedig?	<div> <div>baie min</div> <div>baie</div> <div>1 2 3 4 5</div> </div>
17. Hoeveel, dink jy, het jou ouers finansieel in jou sportloopbaan belê?	<div> <div>baie min</div> <div>baie</div> <div>1 2 3 4 5</div> </div>
18. Vergeleke met jou nie-atletiese portuurs is jou:	<div> <div>Omkring die syfer wat jou mening die beste uitdruk.</div> <div> <div>effe laer</div> <div>heelwat hoër</div> <div>1 2 3 4 5</div> </div> </div>
18.1 Opvoeding	<div> <div>effe minder</div> <div>baie meer</div> <div>1 2 3 4 5</div> </div>
18.2 Lewenservaring	<div> <div>effe minder</div> <div>baie meer</div> <div>1 2 3 4 5</div> </div>
18.3 Vriende	<div> <div>effe minder</div> <div>baie meer</div> <div>1 2 3 4 5</div> </div>
18.4 Ervaring met intieme verhoudings	<div> <div>effe minder</div> <div>baie meer</div> <div>1 2 3 4 5</div> </div>

18.5 Werks-/professionele ondervinding	effe minder	baie meer
	1 2 3 4 5	
18.6 Verhouding met jou ouers	baie slegter	baie beter
	1 2 3 4 5	
18.7 Probleme om 'n professionele loopbaan te begin	baie minder	baie beter
	1 2 3 4 5	
18.8 Finansiële posisie	baie swakker	baie beter
	1 2 3 4 5	
19 Het jy reeds in die tyd toe jy aktief by sport betrokke was aan die einde van jou sportloopbaan gedink?	glad nie	baie
	1 2 3 4 5	
20. Het jy gedurende jou sportloopbaan vir 'n lewe ná sport begin beplan?	glad nie	baie
	1 2 3 4 5	
21. Het jy gedurende jou sportloopbaan meestal aan jouself as 'n atleet gedink?	glad nie	baie
	1 2 3 4 5	
22. Gedurende jou sportloopbaan het die meeste van jou doelstellings met sport verband gehou?	glad nie	baie
	1 2 3 4 5	
23. Gedurende jou sportloopbaan, was sport die belangrikste aspek van jou lewe?	baie min	baie
	1 2 3 4 5	
24. Gedurende jou sportloopbaan, het ander mense jou hoofsaaklik as 'n atleet gesien?	baie min	baie
	1 2 3 4 5	

### Beëindiging van 'n Sportloopbaan

25. Wanneer het jy die eerste maal daaraan begin dink om jou sportloopbaan te beëindig? \_\_\_\_\_ Jaar  
Opmerking \_\_\_\_\_
26. Wanneer het jy jou aktiewe sportloopbaan beëindig? Jaar \_\_\_\_\_
27. Jy het jou sportloopbaan beëindig:
- ☐ Aan die einde van die seisoen ☐ Tydens die af-seisoen
- ☐ Voor die begin van 'n nuwe seisoen ☐ Gedurende die seisoen

<p>28. Hoe sterk was die invloed van elk van die onderstaande faktore op jou besluit om jou sportloopbaan te beëindig? Ken aan elk van die faktore 'n punt op die 1-tot-5-intensiteitskaal toe in ooreenstemming met die invloed wat dit gehad het op jou besluit om jou sportloopbaan te beëindig.</p> <p><i>(Omkring die syfer wat jou mening die beste weergee:</i>  <b>1</b> beteken geen invloed hoegenaamd nie;  <b>5</b> beteken baie sterk invloed.)</p>		<p>geen invloed hoegenaamd nie</p>	<p>baie sterk invloed</p>			
28.1	Jy het die meeste van jou doelstellings in jou sportsoort bereik	1	2	3	4	5
28.2	Jy het moeg geraak van die lewenstyl van 'n atleet (bv. reis, stres)	1	2	3	4	5
28.3	Jy is 'n geleentheid buite jou sportloopbaan aangebied (bv. 'n werksaanbod, 'n onderwysgeleentheid)	1	2	3	4	5
28.4	Jy wil jou op jou skoolwerk/studie toespits	1	2	3	4	5
28.5	Jy het 'n werk gekry	1	2	3	4	5
28.6	Jy wil jou aan jou gesin toewy	1	2	3	4	5
28.7	Jy wil meer tyd aan jou verhouding met jou lewensmaat bestee	1	2	3	4	5
28.8	Jy het probleme ondervind met die persone wat jou afrig	1	2	3	4	5
28.9	Jy het probleme met 'n sportvereniging.	1	2	3	4	5
28.10	Jy het 'n besering opgedoen of het ander gesondheidsprobleme	1	2	3	4	5
28.11	Jy was in 'n swak verhouding met jou spanmaats	1	2	3	4	5
28.12	Jy was in finansiële moeilikheid	1	2	3	4	5
28.13	Jou werks- en opleidingsomstandighede was swak	1	2	3	4	5
28.14	Jy het nie vir die nasionale span gekwalifiseer nie	1	2	3	4	5
28.15	Jou ouderdom	1	2	3	4	5
28.16	Veranderinge in kompetisieregulasies	1	2	3	4	5
28.17	Verandering van tegniek	1	2	3	4	5
28.18	Verandering van toerusting	1	2	3	4	5
28.19	Onbevredigende prestasie	1	2	3	4	5
28.20	Gebrek aan ondersteuning van gesin	1	2	3	4	5
28.21	Gebrek aan ondersteuning van vriende	1	2	3	4	5
28.22	Druk van ouers	1	2	3	4	5
28.23	Ander _____	1	2	3	4	5
<p>29. Kies uit die faktore hierbo genoem die drie wat die grootste invloed gehad het op jou besluit om jou loopbaan te beëindig.</p>		<p>Verskaf die nommer van die drie faktore.</p> <p>_____</p>				

30. Hoe vrywillig was jou besluit om jou sportloopbaan te beëindig?	glad nie vrywillig nie 1 2 3 4 5	heeltemal vrywillig 1 2 3 4 5
31. Was die beëindiging van jou sportloopbaan 'n geleidelike proses?	glad nie 1 2 3 4 5	heeltemal 1 2 3 4 5
32. Wat was die vlak van jou prestasie toe jy besluit het om jou loopbaan te beëindig:		
<input type="checkbox"/> My prestasie was aan die verbeter <input type="checkbox"/> My prestasie was aan die afneem		
<input type="checkbox"/> Ek was op die hoogtepunt van my sportloopbaan		

## Algemene Sielkundige en Emosionele Toestand Gedurende die Verandering in jou Sportloopbaan

33. Is jou onttrekking van elitesport (as mededinger):	<input type="checkbox"/> Permanent <input type="checkbox"/> Tydelik <input type="checkbox"/> Besluit nog													
34. Het jy twyfel oor jou besluit om jou loopbaan te beëindig?	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>glad nie</td> <td colspan="5"></td> <td>baie</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	glad nie						baie	1	2	3	4	5	
glad nie						baie								
1	2	3	4	5										
35. Hieronder is 'n lys met emosionele toestande waarmee jou uittrede uit sport gepaard kon gegaan het. Deur die 1 – 5 intensiteitskaal te gebruik, dui aan watter syfer die aanwesigheid of afwesigheid van elk van hulle die beste aandui.	Omkring die nommer wat jou opinie die beste reflekteer Nommers wissel tussen <b>1 – baie min</b> <b>5 – baie</b>													
35.1 Ontevredenheid	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>totaal afwesig</td> <td colspan="5"></td> <td>sterk aanwesig</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	totaal afwesig						sterk aanwesig	1	2	3	4	5	
totaal afwesig						sterk aanwesig								
1	2	3	4	5										
35.2 Kon my nie by die einde van my sportloopbaan berus nie	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>totaal afwesig</td> <td colspan="5"></td> <td>sterk aanwesig</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	totaal afwesig						sterk aanwesig	1	2	3	4	5	
totaal afwesig						sterk aanwesig								
1	2	3	4	5										
35.3 Hartseer	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>totaal afwesig</td> <td colspan="5"></td> <td>sterk aanwesig</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	totaal afwesig						sterk aanwesig	1	2	3	4	5	
totaal afwesig						sterk aanwesig								
1	2	3	4	5										
35.4 Vrees vir 'n onbekende toekoms	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>totaal afwesig</td> <td colspan="5"></td> <td>sterk aanwesig</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	totaal afwesig						sterk aanwesig	1	2	3	4	5	
totaal afwesig						sterk aanwesig								
1	2	3	4	5										
35.5 Verligting	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>totaal afwesig</td> <td colspan="5"></td> <td>sterk aanwesig</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	totaal afwesig						sterk aanwesig	1	2	3	4	5	
totaal afwesig						sterk aanwesig								
1	2	3	4	5										
35.6 Ander _____	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>totaal afwesig</td> <td colspan="5"></td> <td>sterk aanwesig</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	totaal afwesig						sterk aanwesig	1	2	3	4	5	
totaal afwesig						sterk aanwesig								
1	2	3	4	5										

36. Tot watter mate het uittrede uit sport jou lewe verander?	glad nie				baie
	1	2	3	4	5
37. Die verandering was oor die algemeen:	baie negatief			baie positief	
	1	2	3	4	5
38. Hieronder is 'n lys probleme waarvoor elite-atlete dikwels te staan kom ná uittrede uit sport. Ken aan elk van die items 'n punte op die 1-tot-5 intensiteitskaal toe soos dit aan die einde van jou eliteloopbaan op jou van toepassing was.	Omkring die syfer wat jou mening die beste weerspieël. <b>1</b> beteken geen probleem nie <b>5</b> beteken groot probleem				
38.1 Gesondheidsprobleme (beserings, ens.)	was geen probleem nie			was groot problem	
	1	2	3	4	5
38.2 Probleme met vermindering van oefening	1	2	3	4	5
38.3 Probleme met gewig	1	2	3	4	5
38.4 Alkoholmisbruik	1	2	3	4	5
38.5 Dwelmmisbruik	1	2	3	4	5
38.6 Mis vriende uit die sportomgewing	1	2	3	4	5
38.7 Mis sportverwante sosiale aktiwiteite	1	2	3	4	5
38.8 Probleme met die opbou van sosiale kontakte	1	2	3	4	5
38.9 Mis die lewenstyl van 'n atleet	1	2	3	4	5
38.10 Gevoelens van onderprestasië ten opsigte van sportverwante doelstellings	1	2	3	4	5
38.11 Verlies van status as openbare figuur	1	2	3	4	5
38.12 Verlies van openbare bewondering	1	2	3	4	5
38.13 Finansiële probleme	1	2	3	4	5
38.14 Probleme om werk te kry	1	2	3	4	5
38.15 Probleme met die aanpassing by die vereistes van jou beroep	1	2	3	4	5
38.16 Probleme met die aanpassing by gereelde skoolbywoning/studie	1	2	3	4	5
38.17 Gevoelens van onbevoegdheid in ander aktiwiteite as sport	1	2	3	4	5
38.18 Gebrek aan professionele kennis	1	2	3	4	5
38.19 Druk as gevolg van werk/skool/studie	1	2	3	4	5
38.20 Probleme met die beplanning van 'n toekoms	1	2	3	4	5
38.21 Gebrek aan selfvertroue	1	2	3	4	5
38.22 Lae eiewaarde	1	2	3	4	5
38.23 Gebrek aan selfbeheersing	1	2	3	4	5
38.24 Verhoudingsprobleme met ouers, gesin	1	2	3	4	5
38.25 Verhoudingsprobleme met lewensmaat	1	2	3	4	5

38.26 Verhoudingsprobleme met afrigter	1	2	3	4	5
38.27 Verhoudingsprobleme met sportvereniging	1	2	3	4	5
38.28 Verhoudingsprobleme met sportklub	1	2	3	4	5
38.29 Lae selfbeeld	1	2	3	4	5
38.30 Vrees vir 'n onseker toekoms	1	2	3	4	5
38.31 Ander _____	1	2	3	4	5
39. Het jy al jou sportverwante doelstellings bereik?	glad nie			volkome	
	1	2	3	4	5
40. Tot watter mate het jy finansiëel op sport staatgemaak aan die einde van jou sportloopbaan?	glad nie			volkom	
	1	2	3	4	5
41. Hoeveel steun (bv. emosioneel, finansiëel) het jy ná jou uittrede uit sport van die onderstaande <b>ontvang</b> ?	<b>geen</b>		<b>min</b>		<b>baie</b>
41.1 Maat (meisie, kêrel, huweliksmaat)	1	2	3	4	5
41.2 Ouers	1	2	3	4	5
41.3 Ander familieledede	1	2	3	4	5
41.4 Spanmaats	1	2	3	4	5
41.5 Vriende	1	2	3	4	5
41.6 Nasionale sportvereniging	1	2	3	4	5
41.7 Afrigtingspersoneel	1	2	3	4	5
41.8 Olimpiese Komitee	1	2	3	4	5
41.9 Sportsielkundige	1	2	3	4	5
41.10. Ander: _____	1	2	3	4	5
42. Hoeveel ondersteuning (bv. emosioneel, finansiëel) het jy van die onderstaande <b>verwag</b> ?	<b>geen</b>		<b>min</b>		<b>baie</b>
42.1 Maat (meisie, kêrel, huweliksmaat)	1	2	3	4	5
42.2 Ouers	1	2	3	4	5
42.3 Ander familieledede	1	2	3	4	5
42.4 Spanmaats	1	2	3	4	5
42.5 Vriende	1	2	3	4	5
42.6 Nasionale sportvereniging	1	2	3	4	5
42.7 Afrigtingspersoneel	1	2	3	4	5
42.8 Olimpiese Komitee	1	2	3	4	5
42.9 Sportsielkundige	1	2	3	4	5
42.10 Ander (spesifiseer) _____	1	2	3	4	5



<p>43. Hoe lank het dit geneem voordat jy gevoel het dat jy volkome aangepas het by die nuwe eise en sosiale rolle buite die elitesport?</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> 0-2 maande    <input type="checkbox"/> 3-6 maande    <input type="checkbox"/> 7-11 maande    <input type="checkbox"/> 1-3 jaar    <input type="checkbox"/> 3+ jaar </p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> nog nie ten volle aangepas nie</p>	
<p>44. Hoe sou jy op hierdie tydstip jou algemene gesindheid oor jou uittrede uit sport beskryf?</p>	<p>baie negatief      baie positief</p> <p>1   2   3   4   5</p>
<p>45. Het jy direk ná jou uittrede uit sport by enige aktiwiteit betrokke geraak (bv. werk, skool, verhouding, stokperdjie)?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> ja    <input type="checkbox"/> nee</p>
<p>46. Tot watter mate mis jy sport en die lewenstyl van 'n atleet ná die beëindiging van jou loopbaan?</p>	<p>glad nie                      baie</p> <p>1   2   3   4   5</p>
<p>47. Het jy ná 'n ruk gevoel dat jy sport mis (bv. jy het aan jou sportloopbaan, prestasies, die mense van die sportwêreld, ens. gedink)?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> ja    <input type="checkbox"/> nee</p>
<p>Kommentaar: _____</p>	
<p>48. Neem jy nog aan sport deel? Indien “nee” gaan voort met vraag 49. Indien “ja” wat doen jy tans? Merk die volgende:</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> ja    <input type="checkbox"/> nee</p>
<p>48.1 Ek werk professioneel in sport as afrigter.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> ja    <input type="checkbox"/> nee</p>
<p>48.2 Ek werk professioneel in sport bestuurder.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> ja    <input type="checkbox"/> nee</p>
<p>48.3 Ek werk professioneel in sport as raadgewer.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> ja    <input type="checkbox"/> nee</p>
<p>48.4 Ek werk professioneel in sport as skeidsregter / beampte.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> ja    <input type="checkbox"/> nee</p>
<p>48.5 Ek werk in sport as vrywilliger (bv. deeltydse afrigter). Spesifiseer _____</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> ja    <input type="checkbox"/> nee</p>
<p>48.6 Ek ding in 'n laer liga mee.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> ja    <input type="checkbox"/> nee</p>
<p>48.7 Ek ding in 'n plaaslike amateurliga, 'n liga vir veterane, ens. mee.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> ja    <input type="checkbox"/> nee</p>
<p>49. Geniet jy steeds openbare aansien as gevolg van jou sportloopbaan?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> ja    <input type="checkbox"/> nee</p>
<p>50. Hoe vergelyk jou huidige lewe ná sport met jou aktiewe sportloopbaan wat betref die belang daarvan vir jou persoonlik?</p>	<p>heelwat minder                      baie belangriker</p> <p>1   2   3   4   5</p>
<p>51. Hoe tevrede is jy oor die algemeen met jou lewe ná sport?</p>	<p>baie ontevrede                      baie tevrede</p> <p>1   2   3   4   5</p>

52. Hoe goed pas jy oor die algemeen aan by die lewe ná sport?	nie juis suksesvol nie	1	2	3	4	5	baie suksesvol
53. Hoe belangrik is die rol van 'n voormalige elite-atleet vir jou?	baie belangrik	1	2	3	4	5	glad nie belangrik nie
54. Is sport is steeds die belangrikste aspek van my lewe?	stem volkome saam	1	2	3	4	5	stem glad nie saam nie

### Berading vir uittredende en/of uitgetrede atlete

55. Het jy enige sielkundige probleme verwag ná jou uittrede uit sport? Indien "ja", watter soort probleme het jy verwag?	<input type="checkbox"/> ja <input type="checkbox"/> nee				
Spesifiseer _____					
56. Indien jy moeilike en stresvolle omstandighede ná aftrede sou beleef, na wie, indien enigeen, sou jy gaan vir hulp? (Merk almal wat van toepassing is.)					
<input type="checkbox"/> Sportsielkundige <input type="checkbox"/> Ander sportverwante kundige byvoorbeeld:					
<input type="checkbox"/> Berader, terapeut, fisioterapeut, sportbestuurder)					
<input type="checkbox"/> Afrigter <input type="checkbox"/> Ouers <input type="checkbox"/> Intieme vriende					
<input type="checkbox"/> Geneeskundige <input type="checkbox"/> Broers / susters <input type="checkbox"/> Geeneen					
57. Watter van die onderstaande dienste sou jy as bruikbaar beskou tydens en ná beëindiging van jou sportloopbaan?	Nie bruikbaar	baie bruik- baar			
57.1 Hulp om 'n nuwe loopbaan of belangstelling te kry na 'n nuwe loopbaan of belangstellingsveld te verskuif	1	2	3	4	5
57.2 Hulp om te leer hoe om jou sielkundige vaardighede	1	2	3	4	5
57.3 Hulp met die opbou van jou vertroue in 'n lewe ná sport	1	2	3	4	5
57.4 Inligting oor werk- en onderwysmoontlikhede	1	2	3	4	5

57.5 Finansiële raadgewing	1	2	3	4	5
57.6 Bystand met die verkryging van 'n blyplek	1	2	3	4	5
57.7 Bystand/leiding met mediese en gesondheidsorg	1	2	3	4	5
57.8 Fisiologiese en dieetkundige program tydens staking van afrigting	1	2	3	4	5
57.9 Inligting oor hoe ander atlete uittrede gehanteer het	1	2	3	4	5
57.10 Werksessies met ander uitgetrede atlete ten einde van mekaar te leer en mekaar se ervarings te deel	1	2	3	4	5

## RETROSPEKTIEF

Wat is die belangrikste dinge wat jy tydens jou sportloopbaan bekom het? Rangskik die volgende deur 'n nommer (5 = baie belangrik tot 1 min belangrik) langs mekaar te plaas.

☐ Finansieel    ☐ Beroemdheid    ☐ Fiksheid    ☐ Vriendskap

Ander \_\_\_\_\_

*Pectus roborant cultus recti*

Sal jy jou kinders aanmoedig om dieselfde loopbaan as joune te kies?

☐ Ja

☐ Nee

**Dankie vir jou samewerking**