

Investigating the role of Identity in the Retirement from Sport in Graduating Athletes



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Research Questions

Background

- ❖ Athletic Identity is “the degree to which an individual identifies with the athletic role” (Brewer et al. 1993).
- ❖ The retirement transition commands a lifestyle shift and a re-definition of oneself outside the athletic role, which can lead to a feeling of loss for that former self as well as a loss of purpose (Lally 2007).
- ❖ Cognitive shifting of perceived control to a more internal locus of control and engaging in more problem-focused coping strategies lead to more positive adjustment outcomes. (Grove 1997).
- ❖ Exclusivity of the athletic identity can be detrimental psychologically, socially, and emotionally. (Melendez 2009, Lally 2007, Grove et al. 1997, Martin et al. 2014).

Data Sources

Utilizing list-servs within the sport psychology community and preexisting relationships with athletic departments and coaches

Participant Eligibility Requirements:

- ❖ NCAA Student-Athlete
- ❖ Graduated Spring 2017
- ❖ will NOT continue to play at the elite level

Analyses

- ❖ ANOVA Analyses and Bivariate Correlations will be utilized to determine between subjects differences and
- ❖ Thematic Analysis will be run through Nvivo software to examine overarching themes between participant experiences.

Research Design

Preliminary survey includes self-report measures to assess:

- Athletic Identity (AIMS)
- General Physical, Social, and Emotional Well-being (RAND-36)
- Athletic Coping Skills Inventory (ACSI)
- Emotion Regulation (ERQ)
- General Self-Efficacy (GSE)
- Satisfaction with season and personal performance

Qualitative Semi-Structured Interview

Guided interview will allow for assessment across subjects of central themes as well as more in-depth exploration of themes as they emerge. Interviews will assess current adjustment, team and athletic institution attachment, background in sports, and preparedness to transition upon commencement.



Project Timeline

August 2017: Distribution and Analysis of Preliminary Survey

October 2017: Qualitative follow-up Interviews Conducted

December 2017: Transcription, Analysis, and coding of qualitative data

Significance of Project

- ❖ Expand upon the current literature identifying the retirement from sport to be unique compared to retirement from career.
- ❖ Illuminate the unique intersection of identities present in this population
- ❖ Allow mental health professionals to more effectively advise student-athletes in order to promote more successful adjustment through this transition
- ❖ Identify the impact of expectations in order to better prepare student-athletes with realistic expectations regarding this transition.

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