



IDROTTPSYKOLOGI

HÖGSKOLAN I HALMSTAD
- Vi spränger gränserna

QUALITATIVE STUDY OF THE CAREER TRANSITION FROM JUNIOR TO SENIOR
SPORT IN SWEDISH BASKETBALL

Högskolan i Halmstad
Sektionen för Hälsa och Samhälle
Psykologi inriktning idrott, 61 – 90p. HT-2007
Handledare: Natalia Stambulova
Examinator: Urban Johnson

Författare: Goran Čačija

HÖGSKOLAN I HALMSTAD
Box 823
301 18 HALMSTAD

Tel vx 035 - 16 71 00
Tel direkt 035 - 16 7.....
Telefax 035 - 14 85 33

Besöksadress:
Kristian IV:s väg 3
Pg 788129 - 5

Čačija, G, (2007). *Kvalitativ studie av övergången mellan junior- och senioridrott inom svensk basket* (C-uppsats i psykologi inriktning idrott, 41-60 p). Sektionen för Hälsa och Samhälle, Högskolan i Halmstad.

Sammanfattning

Studiens syfte var att undersöka vilka faktorer som påverkade unga basketspelare i övergången mellan junior- och senioridrott. Studiens sekundära syfte var att ta reda på vilka coping strategier spelarna använde sig av och det avslutande syftet var att ta reda på vad som indikerar slutet på övergången för idrottarna. Intervjuguiden som användes bestod av tre delar, där den första behandlade bakgrundsinformation, den andra behandlade personliga erfarenheter relaterade till övergången mellan junior- och seniorbasket samt den tredje som behandlade övergångens effekt på idrottarens karriär, liv utanför idrotten samt vilka lärdomar idrottaren drog av erfarenheten. Studien bestod av nio kvalitativa intervjuer, med fyra manliga och fem kvinnliga deltagare, med öppna frågor som blev analyserade med hjälp av kategorisering och citat användes för att understryka resultaten. Resultaten blev uppdelade i flera kategorier, nämligen: barriärer, coping, krav, indikatorer, långtidseffekter och resurser. Resultaten visar att deltagarna tyckte att det var ett stort steg att ta mellan junior- och senioridrott, det involverade också förändringar både sportsligt och utanför sporten. Deltagarna kände också att sociala krav, krav på sig själv, skola och planering var de största barriärerna under nämnda övergång. Vidare visar också resultaten att deltagarna använde sociala faktorer (så som lagsammanhållning) som copingstrategi, tätt följt av fokus på individuella faktorer. Copingstrategierna som nämndes involverade psykologiska strategier samtidigt som långtidseffekterna visar en utveckling i psykologiska färdigheter. Slutligen var de mest frekvent förekommande indikatorerna objektiva och handlade om en ökning i ansvar eller bättre statistik. Det diskuteras hur resultatet av studien kan återknytas till tidigare forskning och teorier.

Nyckelord: Karriärövergång, övergång, junior, senior, basket

Čačija, G, (2007). *Qualitative study of the career transition from junior to senior sport in Swedish basketball* (C-thesis in Sport Psychology 41-60 p). School of Social and Health Sciences, Halmstad University.

Abstract

The purpose of the study was to investigate what factors affect the young athletes in the transition from junior to senior sport. The study's secondary purpose was to find out what the athletes do to cope with the transitions and the final purpose was to revile what indicates the end of the transition to the athletes. The interview guide had three parts with questions about background information, personal experience related to the transition from junior to senior sport and finally the transition's effect on the athlete's career, life outside sport and lessons drawn from the experience. The study consisted of nine interviews, with four male and five female athletes. The data was analysed by using sentence categorisation. Quotations were used to underline the results. The results were divided into several categories, namely: demands, resources, barriers, coping, indicators and long-term effects. The results implicate that the participants felt that it was a big step to take that involved changes in demands both in the sport and in the life outside sport. The participants also felt that social demands, demands on the self, school and planning caused the biggest barriers during the transition. The results also imply that the resource most commonly mentioned by the participants were social factors (such as team cohesion) followed by individual factors. The coping strategies mainly involved mental strategies while the long-term effects show effects of evolving mental skills. Finally the indicators most commonly mentioned were objective and involved an increase in responsibility and better statistics. It is discussed in which way the results of this study can be further strengthened by the results of earlier studies and theories.

Keywords: Athletic transition, transitions, junior, senior, basketball

Introduction

To reach and remain at the top level of competitive sports requires athletes and the people around them to heavily invest on different levels. The investments are in the physical, social and financial level and are done during a long time. From the outside an athletic career might look like a smooth and continuous development, but research has shown that the athletes describe the development of their careers in terms of specific moments or situations. These moments and situations are called “transitions” (Wylleman, 2002).

Most people have at one time experienced a transition, especially individuals involved in organized sports get exposed to career transitions. This area has been researched a lot for the past 20 years, but there is still a lot of work to be done.

“In addition, an inspection of proceedings of the recent world and European sport psychology congresses reveals that nearly 10% of the program was dedicated to topics related to the athletic career.” (Wylleman, Theeboom & Lavalée, 2004, p. 512)

Transitions reside in every sphere of life, hence most people have to go through a transition. These transitions happen even in sports and affect an athlete’s career in various ways. It can be a very hard period that eventually forces the athlete to drop out, but it can also be a period of learning from which the athlete can draw a lot of experience.

The most interesting transition for me is the transition from junior to senior sports, mainly because I have seen this transition go wrong many times in sports. A Belgian study conducted by Vanden Auweele, De Martelaer, Rzewnicki, De Knop & Wylleman in 2004 studied 167 Belgian elite track and field athletes between the ages of 14 and 18. The athletes were studied before their transition from junior to senior and then five years after the first study. The results show that only 17% of the athletes continued to evolve and made the senior national team (Vanden Auweele, De Martelaer, Rzewnicki et. al, 2004).

Many talented junior athletes, like in the study above, do not make the transition into senior sports. This has always been a big interest of mine, and I have always wanted to know the reasons behind this phenomenon.

Definition of key terms

Athletic Career (Alfermann & Stambulova, 2007) is a term for a multiyear sport activity, voluntarily chosen by the person and aimed at achieving his or her individual peak in athletic performance in one or several events.

A *transition* is generally the result of one or more events perceived by the athlete to make on the personal, sport and social level that are beyond the ongoing changes of everyday life. The transition also causes changes in the athlete’s assumption of him/herself. There are two types of transitions: *normative transition* is a predictable transition that is a part of a sequence of age-related biological, emotional, result oriented and social changes that every person goes through. Normative transitions are, according to Wylleman, Theeboom and Lavalée often related to the socialization process (2004). A *Non-normative transition* is a transition that does not generally follow any type of plan or schedule. The result of events that occur in an athlete’s life to which she/he responds. These transitions are often unpredicted and unanticipated. An example of a non-normative transition is deselection from a team or failing to qualify for a competition or changing coaches (Wylleman, Theeboom, Lavalée, 2004).

Successful transition occurs when the athlete is able to recruit or rapidly develop all necessary resources and to overcome transitions barriers. A successful transition is associated with effective coping (Alfermann & Stambulova, 2007).

Crisis transition is an alternative transition outcome. A crisis transition relates to the athlete's inability to cope with the demands on his/her own and to a perceived need in psychological assistance or intervention (Alfermann & Stambulova, 2007).

Objectives

- To examine what factors are affect athletes in the transition from junior to senior sport
- To investigate how athletes cope with the transition
- To identify factors that indicate the ending of the transition

Theoretical frameworks

In modern sports psychology, there are three types of models that describe career transitions: the career descriptive models, the career transition explanatory models and intervention models (Alfermann & Stambulova, 2007.).

Career descriptive models

This group of models is inspired by the metaphor of an athletic career as a lifespan, but in miniature. The models in this group arrange the athletic career into several stages, and then describe the changes in the athletes social situation. These models do not explain the transition process, they only predict and describe athletes' normative transitions and their order. Models in this group have attempted to predict normative transitions. Stambulova's model from 1994 has five athletic career stages with six normative transitions. The first stage is *preparatory stage*, in which the participants are engaged in playful activities and perceive sport as a game they play. The second athletic career stage is *Beginning of sport specialization* in which the young athletes begin to specialize in their sport and skills, the first normative transition is between these two steps and it is called *the beginning of sport specialization*. Third athletic career stage is called *Intensive training stage in chose sport*, the athletes in this stage narrow their focus to one or two sport disciplines. The transition from the second to third stage is called *the transition to more intense training in chosen sport*. Fourth and fifth stages are called *culmination stage* and *Final stage, followed by discontinuation*. The athletes become experts in their sports in these two stages, they feel great responsibility for their trainings and performances. During these two phases the athletes also go through four normative transitions: *From junior to senior/high-achievement sport* (this transition is the focus of this paper), *from amateur to professional sport*, *from culmination to the final stage* and finally *athletic retirement* (Alfermann & Stambulova, 2007).

The developmental model of transitions faced by athletes (Wylleman & Lavallee, 2004) is presented on Figure 1, appendix 1.

This model is a descriptive career transition model. This model facilitates a developmental approach and a holistic view of the athlete's career. The model is considered holistic because it incorporates many aspects of life such as education, sports and social life. It consists of four layers:

Athletic Layer: This layer consists of four stages: *Initiation, Development, Mastery* and *Discontinuation*. These stages label the four different stages in an athlete's career.

Psychological Layer consists of three stages: *Childhood, Adolescence* and *Adulthood*. These stages grade the level of psychological maturity.

Psychosocial Layer: Represents the changes that may occur in the social development of an athlete, it includes development of the athletic family, relationships with peers and coaches, marital and family relations.

Academic Vocational Layer: Represents the stages in the academic and vocational development including: *Primary education, Secondary education, Higher education, Vocations training / professional occupation*. What is involved in these stages, and when the transitions occur, are largely dictated by which country the athlete lives in, by athletes, gender, sport event and individual circumstances.

The Athletic Career Transition Model is presented in Figure 2, Appendix 2.

Career transition explanatory models

The Athletic Career Transition model (Stambulova 2003.) is a part of a group of models called the "*Career transition explanatory models*", see Figure 2, Appendix 2. It considers a sports career transition as a process instead of a single event. The meaning of the process as a whole is to cope with a set of specific demands or challenges which are essential if the athlete wants to continue his/her career successfully (Stambulova, 1997; in Stambulova, 2003).

"Transition demands create developmental conflict between what the athlete is and what he/she wants or ought to be. This developmental conflict stimulates the athlete to mobilize resources and to find ways to cope. Effectiveness of coping is depended on the dynamic balance between transition resources and barriers." (Stambulova, 2003, p. 99)

In the *Athletic Career Transition* model, the resources can be both internal and external. These factors have a positive effect on the coping process. Some of the resources are the athlete's skill, knowledge, personality traits, social support and motivation. Barriers can also be both internal and external, but they have a negative effect on coping. Among the mentioned barriers are a lack of necessary skill, lack of financial/social support and difficulties in combining sports and work/studies (Stambulova, 2003).

Furthermore, the *Athletic Career Transition* model outlines two possible outcomes of a transition. A *successful transition* is when an athlete can quickly develop or restore all the needed resources in order to be able to deal with transitions barriers and cope with the demands of the transition. The opposite outcome is a *crisis-transition*. The *crisis-transition* occurs when the athlete is not able to cope with the demands and barriers of the transitions on his or her own.

Previous research (Stambulova, 2000; in Stambulova, in press) shows that there are various reasons for a *crisis-transition*, e.g., a) Lack of resources and/or reoccurring barriers, b) Inability to analyze a situation correctly and make a good decisions based on the analysis c) Low awareness of the demands in the ongoing transition

In order to cope with a *crisis-transition*, the athlete will need a *psychological intervention*. This intervention will help the athlete cope and will influence the *consequences* of the transition, if the intervention is effective. If the athlete does not get any qualified psychological assistance and/or if the intervention is ineffective, the model above predicts "*costs*" for failure to cope with the transition. Stambulova's research also shows what an

athlete might experience as “costs”, which include overtraining, injuries, premature termination of sports careers, neuroses, alcohol abuse, drug abuse and criminal behaviors. This final part of the model singles out the importance of psychological aid to athletes that are going through career transitions. It is vital in order to prevent *crisis-transitions*. The aid is also very important in the process of preventing the “costs” for failure to cope as well (Stambulova, in print).

The model suggests three kinds of interventions that can be very helpful in a career transition. The first type of intervention is *crisis-prevention intervention*. The aim of it is to help the athlete in question develop all the necessary resources needed for effective coping, and also to help to prepare the athlete to cope with a career transition. This intervention is most useful before or at the beginning of a transition. The second intervention is called *psychological crisis-coping intervention*, this intervention's goal is to help the athlete examine the situation at hand and to find the best possible way to cope. This intervention is used when it is apparent that the athlete is in a crisis. The final intervention is called *psychotherapeutic clinical intervention*. This intervention is used when the athlete experiences “costs” for failure to cope with the transition, the intervention aims to help the athlete with the negative consequences of not coping with the crisis-transition.

Research findings

Research findings on career transitions focused mainly on termination. There is a lot of work being done here, with good reason as well. If the transition into *normal* life does not go well, the athlete may resort to criminal behavior and alcohol and/or drug abuse. Research also shows that having a multiple identity, such as being an athlete and a father and a brother, makes a career termination much easier. If the athlete only identifies him/herself as “*a good athlete, and therefore a good person*” the termination of the career will be very hard. Also the athletes have to actively cope after the termination of the career. She or he can not just sit idly by and wait for somebody else to help them, they must act themselves. According to Cecic Erpic, Wylleman & Zupancic (2004), there are two groups of factors that effect a career termination: a) Athletic factors, such as gradualness of sports career termination, subjective evaluation of athletic achievements, post-sports life planning and athletic identity; b) Non-athletic; e.g age, educational status, positive and negative non-athletic transitions. Although some discussion can be done about the fact that the athletic identity effects the career termination, research shows that a strong athletic identity is one of the key components to a successful career. But a strong athletic identity makes it hard for the athlete at hand to adjust to a life after the active career in the sport is over. What also must be employed is the *holistic perspective*.

Carlson (1988) studied the term *socialization*, when in fact the research was more aimed towards transitions. The aim of the study was to try explaining the success that Swedish tennis players, at the time, experienced. Ten top players, five male and five female, along with their parents and coaches were interviewed. The interview guide contained questions about the player's background, early life sport experiences and development. A control group was also chosen by matching pairs regarding age, sex and junior ranking. The groups were equal from the ages of twelve to fourteen. The results of the study clearly show that it is not possible to tell who will develop into a great tennis player, or who will fail, based on the success achieved before making the transitions into senior sport. This study also shows that clubs with a relatively low number of players are able to develop players in a better fashion than bigger clubs, especially those in big cities. Carlson's study from 1988 shows that in small clubs, where coaches pay a lot of attention to a single player, young athletes had a successful

transition from junior to senior sport more often than not. The solution to the premature dropout is thus to offer players more social support, understanding, less pressure on winning and more time with the coach.

A number of Swedish studies (Ekengren, 2002; Josefsson, 2004; Båge & Hornbrinck, 2005; Mavroidis, 2005; Vujic, 2004) show that transitions from junior to senior sport relate to much more than just a sport context. The athletes experience new demands not only in practice and competitions but also in their psychological, academic/vocational and psychosocial development. According to the studies a successful transition lasts 1-3 years under which the athletes are under a big stress to find time for all their activities.

Lindner & Johns (1991) meta analysis provides an overview for the reasons for withdrawal from youth sports. They estimate that over one-third of all participants between ten and seventeen years of age withdraw from their sport every year. The athletes that quit were asked for the reasons for their withdrawals. The frequency of the specific answers varies a little from study to study, but a number of responses appear in some form in the majority of the reports. The most frequent reason for dropout was "other things to do" which was the number one reason in seven studies (Klint & Weiss, 1986; Narciso et al., 1984; Gould et al., 1982; Pooley, 1981, Frey et al., 1981, Sapp & Haubenstricker, 1978; Orlick, 1974; in Linder & Johns, 1991).

Lindner and Johns also felt that the response "sport took too much time" was closely related to the previous reason and possibly even overlapping (Johns et al., 1990; Seefeldt, 1989; Roberts & McKelvain, 1987; LeBlanc & Salmela, 1987; Klint & Weiss, 1986; Tippin, van Hooft & Bratton, 1983; Sefton & Fry, 1981; in Linder & Johns, 1991). Two other reasons were also listed as important, "no longer fun" (Seefeldt, 1989; Roberts & McKelvain, 1987, Klint & Weiss, 1986; Gould et al., 1982; Narciso et al., 1984; in Linder & Johns, 1991) and "I lost interest" (Johns et al., 1990; Seefeldt, 1989; Massimo, 1984; Sapp & Haubenstricker, 1978; in Linder & Johns, 1991).

In team sports, the reason "I did not get to play enough" is also very frequent (Seefeldt, 1989; Narciso et al., 1984; Sapp & Haubenstricker, 1978; Orlick, 1974; in Linder & Johns, 1991), while negative aspects pertaining to the coach and the club were also reasons for dropping out (Seefeldt, 1989; Seye & Salmela, 1987; Klint & Weiss, 1986; Narciso et al., 1984; Gould et al., 1982; Sapp & Haubenstricker, 1978; in Linder & Johns, 1991). "Too much pressure" is frequently an additional reason for discontinuing (Johns et al., 1990; Seefeldt, 1989; Roberts & McKelvain, 1987; Gould et al., 1982; Pooley, 1981; Orlick & Botterill, 1975).

Injury is rarely the main reason for withdrawal, but plays a role in the decision-making (Lindner & Caine, in press, 1988; Johns et al., 1990; Seye & Salmela, 1987; Klint & Weiss, 1986; Massimo, 1984). Finally, the financial aspects of the sport involvement and the costs-benefits assessment are infrequently found to play a role in sport withdrawal (Johns et al., 1990; Laberge & Segui, 1987; Massimo, 1984; Sapp & Haubenstricker, 1978).

Method

Participants

The players that were picked out for the study had to meet a set of criteria. They (the players) had to have been members of the senior squad for at least one season, further they needed to be established in the senior squad and regularly played with the senior team. The players that participated in the study were between the ages of 16 and 21, they have been active in basket

ball between three and 14 years (in average seven years and five months). They had been members of the senior squad between six and 60 months, also the athletes stated that it took between six and 30 months to get established in the senior squad. Also five out of nine players had been selected in the national side and seven out of nine had practiced other sports besides basketball. Four of the interviewed players had attended a basketball high school, while the other nine had attended regular high schools, also seven out of nine interviewed players had tried other sports besides basketball.

The selection was done by the athletics director, four males and five females were interviewed.

Instrument

An interview guide was specially created based on the *developmental model of transitions faced by athletes* (Wylleman & Lavallee, 2004) and *The Athletic Career Transition Model* (Stambulova 2003). The interview guide consisted of three parts (see Appendix 3): *Background information, experiences related to the transition from junior to senior sport and reflections on the role of the transition from junior to senior sport in athletic and personal development*. The first set of questions was aimed to get more information about the athletes in the study. Questions concerning age, time in sport, results, satisfaction with career so far, school and other interests/activities were asked. The design of the second part was aimed at getting data about the athlete's personal experience related to the transition from junior to senior sport. These questions involve different demands, coping strategies, factors that facilitated coping, factors that interfere with coping, factors that showed adjustment and how long time it took to adjust to the senior level. The final part of the interview guide had questions about the transition's effect on the athlete's career, life outside of sport and what knowledge the athlete could draw from the experience. A total of 15 questions were asked and each question had a few follow up questions. The questions were of a semi-structured character.

The models upon which the interview guide was based provided six categories for the analysis of the interview. These six categories were: *demands, resources, barriers, coping, indicators* and *long-term effects*. The *demands* theme involved the new demands that the athletes felt because of the transition, the *resources* theme proved what helped the athletes through this transition, *barriers* were considered the obstacles the athletes had to overcome in order to make the transition to the senior team, *coping* showed what the athletes did to cope with the new demands, *indicators* showed what signals were perceived by the athletes as the end of the transition and the *long-term effects* clarifies what effects the athletes felt in the long run due to the transition.

The interview guide played special attention to the holistic perspective. The questions in the interview guide were not only about sport, but also about other spheres of life such as the social situation, school and significant others. The questions were designed to gather information about the hardships that athletes faced when in the transition.

To ensure the content validity of the interview guide I chose to do a pilot test twice, which resulted in two minor modifications. The two persons that conducted the pilot study have a connection to the fields of psychology and sport psychology and their feedback ensured the content validity of the interview guide.

Procedure

Initial contact was made with an athletics director of an elite basketball club in the south of Sweden through both phone and email. He received the complete version of the interview

guide, which he read and approved of. The players were picked and informed about the interview by the athletics director according to the criteria previously mentioned.

The athletes were informed about the aims of the interviews and the study. The interviews were recorded, each participant was expected to answer truthfully to the questions asked. The results and gathered information was treated confidentially and all the participants are anonymous. Also, the participating athletes had the right to drop out at any time of the interview without giving any reason. Duration of the interviews varied from 20 to 30 minutes, and they were held at the club's facilities. The interviews took place in conjunction training sessions. Each athlete was interviewed individually in a separate room. Athletes who were waiting for an interview could not in any way hear what was going on in the interview room. This ensured that all information that was gathered and treated confidentially and all the interviewed athletes were anonymous. The entire interview followed the same procedure, all the questions (and follow up questions) were answered in the same succession to ensure equal conditions for the participants.

Data analyses

As the title communicates there were several analyses of the gathered information. First of all the recorded interviews were transcribed word by word. This meant that everything the athlete said in the interview was written. The second step involved the removal of "noise". "Noise" is data that is gathered but irrelevant to the aim of the study. The text was filtered of this noise, leaving only concentrated raw data units containing important information. Further the raw data units were categorized according to their meaning. All the raw data units that had the similar meaning were grouped together. These raw data units were then coded, meaning that each group got a short statement that symbolized the meaning of all the raw data units.

The categorization process was a mix between the inductive and the deductive method, the categories were already given due to the theoretical framework of the paper. As for the low-order and high-order themes the work was inductive. I grouped the coded data units together according to meaning and category affiliation, I then proceeded to name the low-order themes by trying to see what the coded data units had in common, then the low-order themes were combined into high-order themes. I also triangulated with my supervisor whose feedback was the basis of modifications to the presentation of the analyses. The final step was compiling the data from the analyses and sorting the results according to size.

Results

In this section the results are presented in tables that show (from left to right) coded data units, low-order themes, high-order themes and categories. Quotes and explanations have also been added below each figure to underline and explain the results presented.

Demands

Coded data units	Low-order themes	High-order themes	Category
Tougher physically (6) Higher tempo (2)	Physical demands	Changes within sport 63%	Demands
More pressure on good performance (2) Tougher mentally (6) Have to prove skill all the time (7) More challenging	Mental demands		
Different relationship with the coach (2) Reductions of responsibility Everything was stricter Clear roles in the team	Changes within the team		
Forced to prioritize (2) The changes was perceived as negative to start with (2) Forced to plan better (6) Choices one did not have to make as junior athlete (2)	Changes in the life outside of sport	Social changes 37%	
Hopes of a lot of playing time (2) Sport became more important Big step to take (2)	Changes in the view of sport		

Figure 3. Demands

Figure 3 shows the demands perceived by the participants in the transition between junior and senior basketball. In figure 3, as presented above, the players initially felt an increased physical resistance. This can be attributed to the physical maturity of the other players in the senior squad as illustrated by the quote below:

“The players we faced were taller, stronger, faster, jumped higher and were far more experienced than us.”

The participants also felt that they had to prove their skill during every training in order to defend their place in the team. All the participants had this as one of the first things that came to mind when asked about the demands of the transition. The biggest mental demand was that the sport got a lot tougher mentally according to the participants. This was largely attributed to the reduction in playing time and responsibility.

Two of the participants of the study also said that the relationship with the coach had changed. They said that the coach’s position in the senior team was much more secluded position from the player, as the quote below shows. The youth team coach was closer to the players and discussed more with the players giving them advice. The coach of the senior team had to be respected, the participants stated that they turned to their previous coach or their team mates for advice when needed.

“In the senior team you have to respect the coach, you can’t argue with the coach.”

A few of the other changes in the team involved the responsibility and roles the participants had. They felt that they had far less responsibility in the senior squad, especially in key

situations. The players also got different roles than they were used to from the junior squad. They stated that they had to play to supporting roles to the star players in the senior team instead of being the stars themselves as they were in the junior team. A related statement to this was “everything got stricter”, meaning that the level of discipline was a lot higher. The participants elaborated by saying that the roles in the team were set and the players themselves were not allowed to leave the set roles. In short, they had to follow the instructions a lot closer.

But the participants also had demands in the life outside of the sport. The participants felt that they had to prioritize and plan better, but the players also said that the effect was negative to begin with. Two of the participants stated that they had to make choices they did not have to as junior players, this because of the increased demands of playing in the senior team or as one participants put it:

“You had to make a choice, either go out that Friday or go to the gym and lift some weights. When I was playing as a junior player I could go out and still play that weekend without any consequences. Nowadays you can’t afford to miss a training opportunity.”

The final part of the table above concerns statements made about the changes in the view of the sport itself. When transitioning to the senior team a few of the participants had high hopes of getting a lot of playing time, also two participants that it was a big step to take. A single participants that the sport had become a lot more important by demanding more time and thus being a bigger part of his/her life.

Resources

Coded data units	Low-order themes	High-order themes	Category
Supports from significant others (6)	Outside of sport	Social support 49%	Resources
Support from team mates and team cohesion (5) Support from former/present coach (8)	Within sport		
Skill as a player (3) Willpower (6) High level of focus (3) Persistency High confidence	Strengths within sport	Individual strengths 48%	
High level of flexibility (2) Ability to structure one’s time to meet all demands Easy to make new acquaintance (2)	Strengths outside of sport		
Support from the federation	Financial support	Financial support 3%	

Figure 4. Resources

Figure 4 presents what the participants saw as resources that helped them cope with the transition. The largest high-order theme, “social support” mainly involves factors within the team. As can be seen in the table, almost all the participants saw their former/present coach as a big resource that helped them cope. Also, the second biggest resource mentioned by the participants was “team mates and team cohesion”, as one athlete put it:

“...We were a very tight group, we supported each other when someone was having a rough time. I also spoke a lot with my junior team coach, he told me to be patient and that my time would come.

Another big resource in the “social factors”-theme is “significant others”. All people outside of the sport, like parents and siblings or partners, are in this category.

The second largest high-order theme of this category is “individual factors”. This high-order theme is divided into two low-order themes. The first of them is “skills within sport”, this theme presents all the personal skills that the participants felt helped them succeed in the sport. The factors here involve “skill as a player”, this includes both technical and tactical skills, and mental skills (will, focus, persistency, confidence). The second low-order theme here is “skills outside of sport”. These skills helped the participants to cope with the transition outside of the sport, and among these skills are “flexibility” (which refers to being flexible as a person and adopting to the situation at hand), structure (which refers to having structure in the life outside of sport involving planning) and “easy to make new acquaintances” (which refers to the participants skill to make new acquaintances and being an open and communicative person). The last coded data unit was described by a participant like this:

“I have never struggled when I have met new people. When basketball took more time and when I no longer could meet new people the regular ways I just found new ways to do it because I’m a very open person.”

The final high order theme, “financial support”, presents the financial support that one of the participants expressed. This support was from the federation, they payed for trips to and from the national team gatherings.

Barriers

Coded data	Low-order themes	High-order themes	Category
Less time to meet friends (8) Demands from people outside of sport(2)	Relationships become less prioritized	Social difficulties 39%	Barriers
Not knowing team mates	Lacking support social support		
Negative thoughts (2) High demands on self (5)	Negative mental state	Mental difficulties 25%	
Less spare time (5) Less time for school (5)	Sport consumes more time	Difficulties in combining sport and other activities 46%	

Figure 5. Barriers

Figure 5 presents the perceived barriers in the transition. The barriers are factors that had a negative effect on coping and had to be dealt with. Among these barriers we find that the social demands are the biggest high-order theme. The participants stated that they had considerably less time to spend with friends and other people outside of sport because of the transition. Another social aspect that was “not knowing team mates”, although this was only stated by one participant. The social demands, especially the low-order theme “outside of sport”, are a direct result of the increased training rate and the increase of time needed to prepare for games and practices. One participant put it like this:

“I spent much less time with my friends and sometimes had to cancel plans for the weekend a on short notice because of a friendly game in the pre-season. But they had to understand, basketball started to demand more time then.”

The second largest high-order theme is “mental difficulties”. The athlete generally expressed high expectations on their own performance (“wants to do well”) and gave themselves very little space for error (“high demands on self”). They also said that they had some negative thoughts that were working as barriers when the outcome did not go as hoped for, or as one participant:

“When you start performing worse you get these negative thoughts. You think you are worse than you really are. It becomes a downward spiral.”

The third and final part of figure four is “planning”. During the transition, participants felt the need to plan their spare time better in order to do all the things that needed to get done. More than half the participants that they had much less spare time (in some cases this was due to transportation issues), also the participants that school was a big barrier here. Many participants that:

“.. In school you get more and more to do all the time. The teachers do not really understand the situation in the basketball. They just give you homework.”

Coping

Coded data units	Low-order themes	High-order themes	Category
Talking to team mates (5) Talking to previous & present coach (8)	Relying on social support	Mental strategies 55%	Coping
Not listening to negative thoughts (7) Not giving up (2) Focusing on oneself	Working with one's own thoughts		
Enrolling in other activities(7) Listening to music (4)	Persue other activities	Pursue something other than the sport 31%	
Playing other sports (2)	Try other sports	Making more time available 14%	
Prioritizing better (2)	Planning		
Ignoring school (4)	School		

Figure 6. Coping

Figure 6 presents the coping strategies employed by the participants of the study. As can be seen, the biggest high-order theme is the “positive” coping strategies. These strategies did not involve any negative side effects for the athlete in the long run. The top two low-order themes (“Within the team” and “within the sport”) represent people within the team or sport that helped the participants to cope with the transition and the demands. The third low-order theme, called “mental”, presents the mental strategies that the participants employed. Almost every participant stated:

“What did I do? I just simply stopped listening to the negative things I was saying to myself. I simply ignored the negative thoughts and tried to think positive to break the downward spiral.”

“Pursue something other than the sport” is the second biggest high-order theme. As the name of the title indicates, these coping strategies show what the athletes did to cope with the tensions of basketball. As can be observed in figure 6, a vast majority of the participants declared that they had “Pursue other activities” on their spare time. Other activities, beside the unspecified ones, included music and other sport (although just for fun).

The final high-order theme in this figure is the “negative” theme. It explains the negative aspects that the participants faced due to their coping strategies. Two participants declared that they were “forced to prioritize”, meaning that they had to pick basketball over various other social activities. Also, four participants stated that “ignoring school” was a coping strategy they had employed. As one of them put it:

“When you had to put more time on the basketball you simply did not show up at school as much. You ignored a few tests, did not study as hard or did not come in some days at all.”

Indicators

Coded data	Low-order themes	High-order themes	Category
National team selection (2)	Official recognition as a senior player	Objective 67%	Indicators
More responsibility (7) Statistics (7)	Enhanced responsibility and performance		
Positive feedback from surrounding people (2)	Social	Subjective 33%	
Feel better (4) Better understand the game (2)	Individual appraisal		

Figure 7. Indicators

Figure 7 shows the indicators which were perceived by the players as markers that showed the end of the transition from junior sport to senior sport. The largest high-order theme is “objective”, where the majority of the players stated that statistics (involving playing time, points and other important statistics) and more responsibility are the most common factors.

“I felt that I had made the transition when I made over 20 points in a single game. Then I really felt I belonged at that level and that I had evolved a lot.”

Two participants also pointed out that they saw national team selections as a clear objective indicator.

“When I got selected for the national team I got the proof that I could play on a high level. Also I got a lot of responsibility, not only in my team but also in the national team.”

The high-order theme called “subjective” houses the indicators that the players themselves felt marked the end of the transition. A majority of the participants mentioned “feel better” as a subjective factors and two participants claimed that “better understand the game” and “positive feedback from surrounding people” as further indicators of the ending of the transition.

“When I made the transition and really got established in the team I got a lot of attention from the people around the team. The coach from another team talked to me and I got some attention from the media.”

Long-term effects

Coded data units	Low-order themes	High-order themes	Category
More goal oriented(3) Striving ahead (4)	Goal setting	Immediate effect of the transition 62%	Long-term effects
Responsibility in/out of sport (2)	Responsibility		
More secure when in new surrounding (2) Beliving in oneself Daring to take chances	Confidence		
Not listening to negative thoughts (7) Not giving up (2) Focus on oneself	Focus	Lessons learned from the transition 30%	
Development goes up and down Prepared on not playing (3) Thinking positively (4)	Mental		
Team mates (2)	Social	Influence of school 8%	
Teacher at basketball high school understand	Positive		
Less focus on school and more on training (2)	Negative		

Figure 8. Long-term effects

Figure 8 illustrates the long-term effects felt by the participants as a result of the transition from the junior team to the senior team. The largest high-order theme (“Immediate effect of the transition”) involves three low-order themes. The top low-order theme called “goal setting” shows that the transition taught the participants to pursue and set goals, and move forward continuously.

“...you learned to set goals and only pursue the set goals and forget about everything else.”

The participants also declared that they became more prone to take a bigger responsibility in and outside sport as a result of the transition.

Further, the participants stated that they became more comfortable when getting new surroundings, gained believe in themselves, and got the courage to take chances. These three coded data units were all classed as general improvement of the confidence.

Seven participants stated that they had learned not to listen to negative thoughts and two stated that they learned not to give up. One participant stated that he/she learned to focus on oneself (meaning tend to one's own needs). These statements were all placed in the "focus" low-order theme. A participant worded it well by saying:

"I learned never to give up and when it gets hard you shouldn't listen to the negative thoughts. Giving up and saying negative things to yourself never gets you anywhere so there is no point in doing it."

The middle high-order theme called "lessons learned from the transition" is where statements concerning the experiences that were drawn from the transition were placed. These statements were divided into two low-order categories (mental and social).

Mental was where the participants claimed that their experience showed that they should think positively, be prepared that the development goes up and down and most importantly be prepare on not playing.

"When coming to a better team you should be prepared on sitting on the bench for a while, before you get into it. Not playing is hard, but knowing you may not get to play a lot makes it easier to take."

The other low-order theme is called "social". The participants claimed that the team mates were a very important part of making the transition a successful one. Knowing the team mates and getting support from them was said to be important by two of the participants.

The final high-order theme is the "influence of school". There were two types of thoughts about that. One participant said that the teachers at a basketball high school did understand what the participant was going through in the sport, making the transition a little easier on the participant. Two participants stated that they focused less on school and more on training. This resulted in decreased results in school.

Discussion

The main purpose of the study was to find out what factors affected the young athletes in the transition from junior to senior sport. The study's secondary purpose was to find out what the athletes did to cope with the transitions and the final purpose was to revile what indicated the end of the transition to the athletes.

The study showed that the general awareness about the transition from junior to senior sport was fairly low. A majority of the participants claimed that there was no difference compared to the junior level. Despite saying this, most of the participants went on to say that the opposition got a lot stiffer on the senior level, they also felt the need to prove their abilities in every training as more acute than before.

All participants had experienced transitions in different spheres of life before, every participant had changed coach a minimum of three times through out the career and changed

team at least once. A majority had also changed organization at least once in their career which shows an experience in handling with different types of career transitions.

A more worrying aspect was the fact that all the participants stated that they had little or no spare time in which they could engage in activities outside of the sport. This might become a problem as the meta research done by Lindner and Johns (1991) shows the biggest reasons for dropping out of sport were “other things to do” and “took too much time”. Research shows (Cecic Erpic, Wylleman & Zupancic, 2004) that a strong athletic identity will cause problem when terminating the career or dropping out of sport. The participants have little time to do anything else than basketball, which can result in a very strong athletic identity. Although this identity is very useful while active in the sport, it can, as Cecic Erpic, Wylleman & Zupancic’s research show be a very big barrier when it come to getting used to a life without sport.

The participants in the study also mentioned long term effects of the transition. Generally the participants matured, took more responsibility and developed mental skills in terms of focus, confidence and goal setting. They also learned that the transition is a process that goes both up and down but most of all they developed a scene of what is needed when entering a transition into a high level of the sport.

I am very satisfied with the study and the results. The information gathered was rather easy to work with and the athletes supplied numerous interesting quotes. The interviews were very similar which I attribute to the situation the participants were in. They had all experienced roughly the same events and all had similar education. I’d also like attribute this to the transition itself, the demands of the transition required certain types of personalities that could cope with it. The participants of the study had all made the transition meaning they all had met the demands of the transition in a satisfying way.

Factors that affect athletes in transition

The factors that affect the participants are divided into three categories such as *Demands*, *Barriers* and *Resources*. These factors involve both factors inside and outside the sport, which can directly be related to the *Developmental model of transitions faced by athletes* (Wylleman & Lavallee, 2004) that employs the holistic perspective.

Figure number three presents the perceived demands by the athletes. This shows us the changes in both the basketball sphere and the social sphere when in the transition period. Wylleman and Lavallee’s (2004) model states that in the age that the participants are (16-21) the peers, coaches and parents are very important. The participants state that the relationship to the coach changes when they start playing for the senior team. A closer look at figure three (*Barriers*) shows that the high-order theme called *Social demands* involves almost exclusively the two other important social groups from Wylleman and Lavallee’s model (peers and parents). The participants stated that they had less time to spend with their friends and other people outside of the sport because the increase of training. One participant felt that not knowing the team mates was a big barrier, which further enforces the Wylleman and Lavallee model’s theory about the important social groups at that certain age.

As Stambulova’s *Athletic career transition model* (2003) shows, the transition is successful when a balance between transition resources and transitions demands is present. The participants of the study did make the transition, therefore one can argue that they did have a

balance between the demands and resources, or at the very least that they developed their resources during the transitions process.

There were not only social demands on the players, the participants also felt demands in the sport sphere of their lives. The two most common statements concerned the increasing physical toughness and the increasing mental toughness. The statements of the physical situation concerned both the play and the increased training rate which the participants had to adapt to. More training also meant more time for rest which in turn meant less spare time. The mental situation involved another statement too, that of the decrease in responsibility that the players could take. In reality this meant that the participants had to get used to sitting on the bench, not playing a lot of minutes and concentrating on supporting the older players on the team instead of producing points themselves. Further, as figure four shows, the players had demands on themselves and their performance and had some negative thoughts. All this affected their overall performance and had to be coped with while at the same time school put demands via homework.

But to counter act the mentioned barriers the players had a number of resources, as presented in figure 4. The players interviewed in the study stated that they saw significant others, teammates and former/present coaches as very important resources. They even stated that they saw a number of mental attributes as resources such as adaptability and willpower.

Coping strategies

The coping strategies the participants employed are presented in figures number six. The participants went on to state that not only did they receive support from themselves, but also from teammates and former and current coaches. A vast majority of the participants in the study stated that they talked to their current/former coach when they faced hardships in sport. Their teammates also provided a social support that helped them cope with the transition, few participants pointed out that a strong team cohesion helped them through the transition.

A conclusion can be drawn from this, the participants looked in two places when they tried to cope with the transition. They looked into themselves and tried to break negative thought patterns in order to cope, but they also looked to the people around them in their team. A high level of team cohesion is crucial in these moments and can help the athletes in general who are making the transition from junior to senior sport. Many participants of this study also said that their former coach was a monumental support for them and an important sounding board with which they could discuss their problems and their development. Carlson's (1988) research confirms that a strong connection to a coach in the club is an ingredient for a successful transition.

The participants also chose to ignore school in order to cope with the difficulties in sport. This resulted in a decrease of grades which can clearly be seen as a negative outcome of a coping strategy. This is confirmed by the Wylleman and Lavallee (2004) model, a person can not only be seen as an athlete there are many more aspects. If one sphere draws more attention and resources and time then another sphere will get less. The participants invested more time and effort into the sport, hence they had less time and effort to invest into the educational sphere.

Indicators

The seventh figure presents the events or feelings that the participants felt marked the end of the transitions for them, the indicators that the participants mentioned were either objective or subjective. I feel that this is the most interesting part of the study, as no study I have come across has presented these indicators.

The indicators that the participants mentioned were either objective or subjective. Among the objective indicators selections to the national team, increase in statistics and responsibilities can be found. All this speaks of a higher importance in the team and even nationally, the participants portrayed this as a proof of their skills.

The subjective indicators (positive feedback from surrounding people, feeling better and better understanding the game) are also interesting because they show in what way the participants feel when they have made the transition. The completion of the transition and establishment in the senior team gives them a sense of completion, hence why they stated that they felt better. Once the athletes get the overview of the game and get a greater understanding of why they do certain details in games and practice they will also feel that they have or at least are about to complete the transition. To facilitate this, the coaches need to better inform the players, and make sure the players understand the meaning of certain tactical details in training and matches. This is not the easiest of tasks, but if the athletes get a better understanding of why they should do it they will also feel better.

Long-term consequences of the transition

Figure 8 shows the long-term consequences of the transition. This part of the results is the one that was the hardest to analyze because the transition was completed relatively close to the interview hence making it very difficult to see what effects it had in retrospect.

But it proved none the less to be interesting because all of the consequences were attributed to be mental. One would think that at least a fraction of the players would mention that they had evolved physically, but all the participants unanimously claimed only psychological changes. This can be attributed to the fact that the players interviewed expected to evolve physically given the fact that they increased their amount of training hours.

Implications

With the research as a background and the results of my study as support I would like to present a few implications. These implications are my own ideas of what needs to be done, and are offered as a sort of inspiration for the future work and for the benefit of future athletes that are about to transition from junior to senior sport.

- The clubs and schools need to have a better dialogue when it comes to planning schedules for the young athletes that are aiming for the top. School is considered to be one of the biggest barriers, the athletes need help to better plan their time in order to be able to do both.
- Athletes should be educated in mental coping strategies in order to be able to handle the psychological issues that arise in a sports career. In my opinion every club should

have at least one sport psychologist working with their athletes in order to get better results.

- Coaches should pay attention to what signals they send to players. Open communication with the players, especially young players concerning their place in the team, will prevent a lot of misunderstandings. Also a lot of attention should be on coaching and the coach him/herself. As two studies show (Vujic, 2004; Wolfenden & Holt, 2005) the coaches role is one of the key ingredients to a successful transition.

Method discussion

The interviews used for this study lasted between 20 and 30 minutes using semi-structured design. The questions were formed so the players would give their perspective on the transition and different aspects of that.

The single largest problem was that the athletes who just underwent that transition often are very young. The athletes in this study were between the ages of 16 and 21, which meant that most of them have never looked at their career in retrospect and gained some perspective on the events in their career. The questions in the interview guide that involve reflection on their own career were therefore very hard to answer for some participants. This in turn resulted in a decrease of answers in those particular questions.

This problem becomes very apparent when there is only one interview, a longitudinal study over a period of at least few months would solve this problem relatively easy. The participants would also get used to the type of questions asked in the interviews, meaning they could elaborate more. The questions would also help the athletes to reflect on their career and have more answers that they have thought through better.

The second aspect I would like to attend to is the fact that a few of the participants were not very talkative during the interview. Of course there are a few factors that influenced this, first of all the interviews were done after a training session. The participants were tired and it was beginning to get late, so it is understandable that some answers were short. A few participants were very shy and did not fully carve out their answers, not even in the end of the interview. This aspect can also be avoided by using the longitudinal study. The participants become more comfortable with the interviewer and are able to elaborate their answers a lot more than before as a result of this.

The memory distortion is one of the reasons I chose participants that recently had undergone the transition from junior to senior sport. All the participants had the transition itself relatively fresh in memory when they were interviewed. This limited the effect of the memory distortion. The participants remembered many details that were helpful in the study. Of course the distortion had a small effect, but it was minimal compared to the other studies in the field that had participants answer questions about a transition that occurred many years before the interview time.

Future research

The field of career transitions has mainly focused on career termination over the years. In the recent ten years the focus of the research has shifted towards the career transition between junior and senior sport. Through research for this study and by writing this study I have noticed some areas that in my opinion need more emphasis.

First of all, I would like to turn the attention to figure seven where I present indicators which imply the end of the transition from junior to senior sport. No study has focused on these factors to provide some answers. These indicators show when the players think that they have made the transition, but an interesting aspect might be to interview coaches with focus on these indicators. Their answers might differ from the athlete's answers, and that difference would be of big interest since it could create conflicts between the coaches and the players.

I would also like to point out that very few longitudinal studies have been performed in this entire field, and even less when it comes to the transition from junior to senior sport. A possible target group that might generate interesting results might be the young athletes at various elite teams. The young players commit to their sport and spend a lot of time in practice early in life, as the participants of his study also have, which makes them ideal to follow for a longer period of time. The design might be mixed with both interview and diaries which might give valuable insight into the athlete's thoughts. Although the ethical aspects of this study might be hard to overcome, a study over a longer period of time following the same athletes is preferable. As said before in this discussion, several interviews will give a more complete set of data to analyze.

My final implication is to have more studies employing the holistic perspective. As proven by literature in this study, like Lindner & Johns (2002) and Carlson (1988) to name a few, there are more factors than just the ones within the sport that influence an athlete (and specially an athlete in a transition). More attention needs to be paid to an athlete's social situation during the transition from junior sport to senior sport.

There are few studies that have studied the effects of parents on athletes in transition. The parents can be a very powerful resource to use during a transition but they can also be a barrier. Many times one can read in the papers about parents that push their children too hard which makes a young athlete with a lot of potential drop out.

Besides the parents, the total social situation around an athlete needs to be looked into. By this I mean the friends and connections an athlete has outside of her/his sport can, as the parents, both act as a resource and a barrier. Many participants in my study stated that the social situation within their sport helped them cope with the transition from junior to senior sport. An idea for future research is to compare individual sports with team sports. Do the athletes in a team sport have their team mates as their resource? What resource do the individual athletes have instead?

Even here I would like to point out that a longitudinal study might prove to give the best type of result. The social situation changes, especially for young people in a time of big changes. Studying the social atmosphere for a longer time will not only answer the questions above but also give a kind of illustration on how the social situation changes throughout an athlete's career.

Reference list

- Alfermann, D., & Stambulova, N. (2007). Career transitions and career termination. In G. Tenenbaum and R. C. Eklund (Eds.), *Handbook of Sport Psychology* (3rd ed., p.712-736). New York: Wiley.
- Båge, C., & Hornbrinck, E. (2005). *Vägen till eliten I svensk damfotboll: Faser och övergångar samt parallella karriärers inverkan på elitidrottskarriären*. C-uppsats i psykologi med inriktning idrott, 41-60p. Sektionen för Hälsa och Samhälle, Högskolan i Halmstad.
- Carlson, R. (1988). The Socialization of Elite Tennis Players in Sweden: An Analysis of the Players' Backgrounds and Development. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 5, 1988. 241-256.
- Cecic Erpic, S., Wylleman, P. & Zupancic, M. (2004). The effect of athletic and non-athletic factors on the sports career termination process. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*. 5, Jan 2004, 45-59
- Ekengren, J. (2002). "Att gå från dröm till verklighet"- steget från handbollens u-landslag till a-landslag. D-uppsats i psykologi med inriktning idrott, 61-80p. Sektionen för Hälsa och Samhälle, Högskolan i Halmstad.
- Josefsson, E. (2004). *Idrottselevs livsstil: Att finna balans mellan livets krav – En explorativ och interventionsbaserad studie*. D-uppsats i psykologi med inriktning idrott, 61-80p. Sektionen för Hälsa och Samhälle, Högskolan i Halmstad.
- Mavroidis, D. (2005). *Coaches' perception of the transition from junior elite football to professional football*. D-uppsats i psykologi med inriktning idrott, 61-80p. Sektionen för Hälsa och Samhälle, Högskolan i Halmstad.
- Lindner, K. J. , & Johns, D. P. (2002). Factors in withdrawal from youth sport: A proposed model. *Journal of Sports Behavior*, 14, 3-16.
- Stambulova, N. (2003) Symptoms of a Crisis-Transition: A Grounded Theory Study. In N. Hassmén (Ed.), *Svensk Idrottspsykologisk Förening Årsbok 2003*. Örebro: Örebro Universitet.
- Stambulova, N. (in press) Talent development in Sport: Career Transitions Perspective. In E.Tsung-Min Hung & R. Lidor (Eds.) *Psychology of Sport Excellence*. ISSP Publication.
- Vanden Auweele, Y., De Martelaer, K., Rzewnicki, R., De Knop, P., & Wylleman, P. (2004). Parents and coaches: A help or harm? Affective outcomes for children in sport. In Y. Vanden Auweele (Ed.) *Ethics in youth sport*. Leuven, Belgium: Lannoocampus.

- Vujic, A. (2004). *Two contrasting cases of the transition from junior to senior in swimming*. C-uppsats i psykologi med inriktning idrott, 41-60p. Sektionen för Hälsa och Samhälle, Högskolan i Halmstad.
- Wolfenden, L. E., & Holt, N. L. (2005). Talant development in elit junior tennis: Perceptions of players, parants, and coaches. *Journal Of Applied Sport Psychology*, 17, 108-126
- Wylleman, P. (2002, October). *Why is the step from a talented junior to a successful senior player so difficult?* Paper presented at the Conference on the occasion of the European Championships in Handball, Stockholm, Sweden.
- Wylleman, P., & Lavallee, D. (2004). A developmental perspective on transitions faced by athletes. In M. Weiss (Ed.), *Developmental sport and exercise psychology: A lifespan perspective* p. 507-527. Morgantown, WV: Fitness Information Technology.
- Wylleman, P., Theeboom, M. & Lavallee, D. (2004) Successful Athletic Careers. In Spielberger, C. (Ed.) *Encyclopedia of applied psychology*. 3, 511-517. New York: Elsevier.

Appendix 1

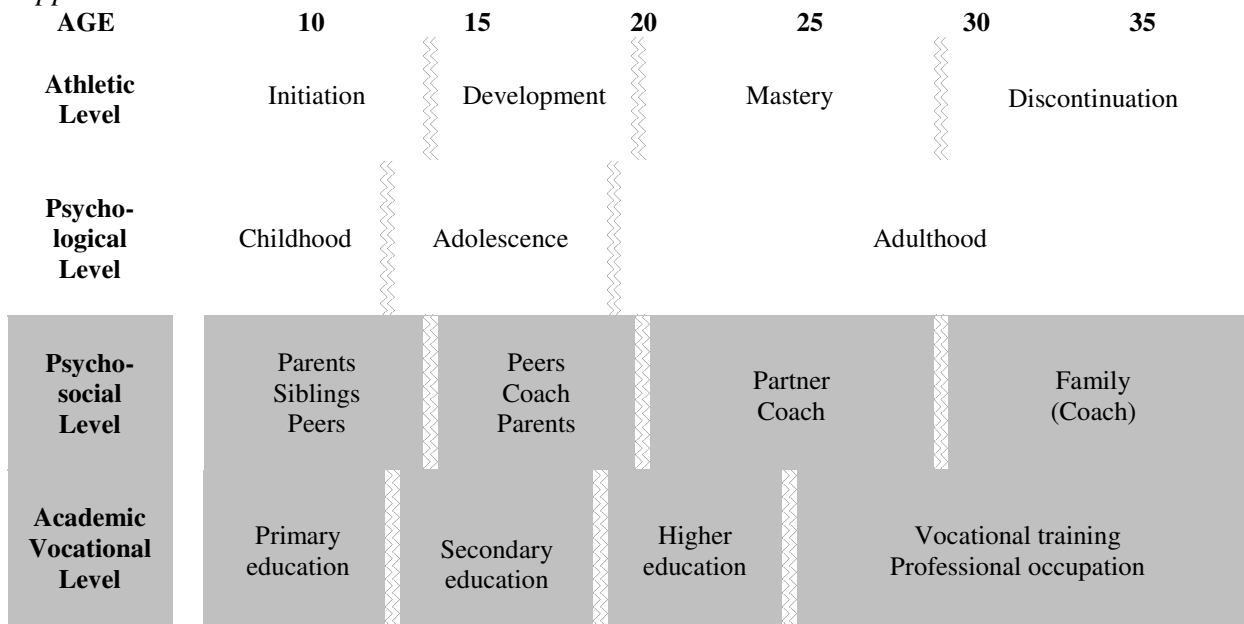


Figure 1. The developmental model of transitions faced by athletes (Wylleman & Lavallee, 2004)

Appendix 2

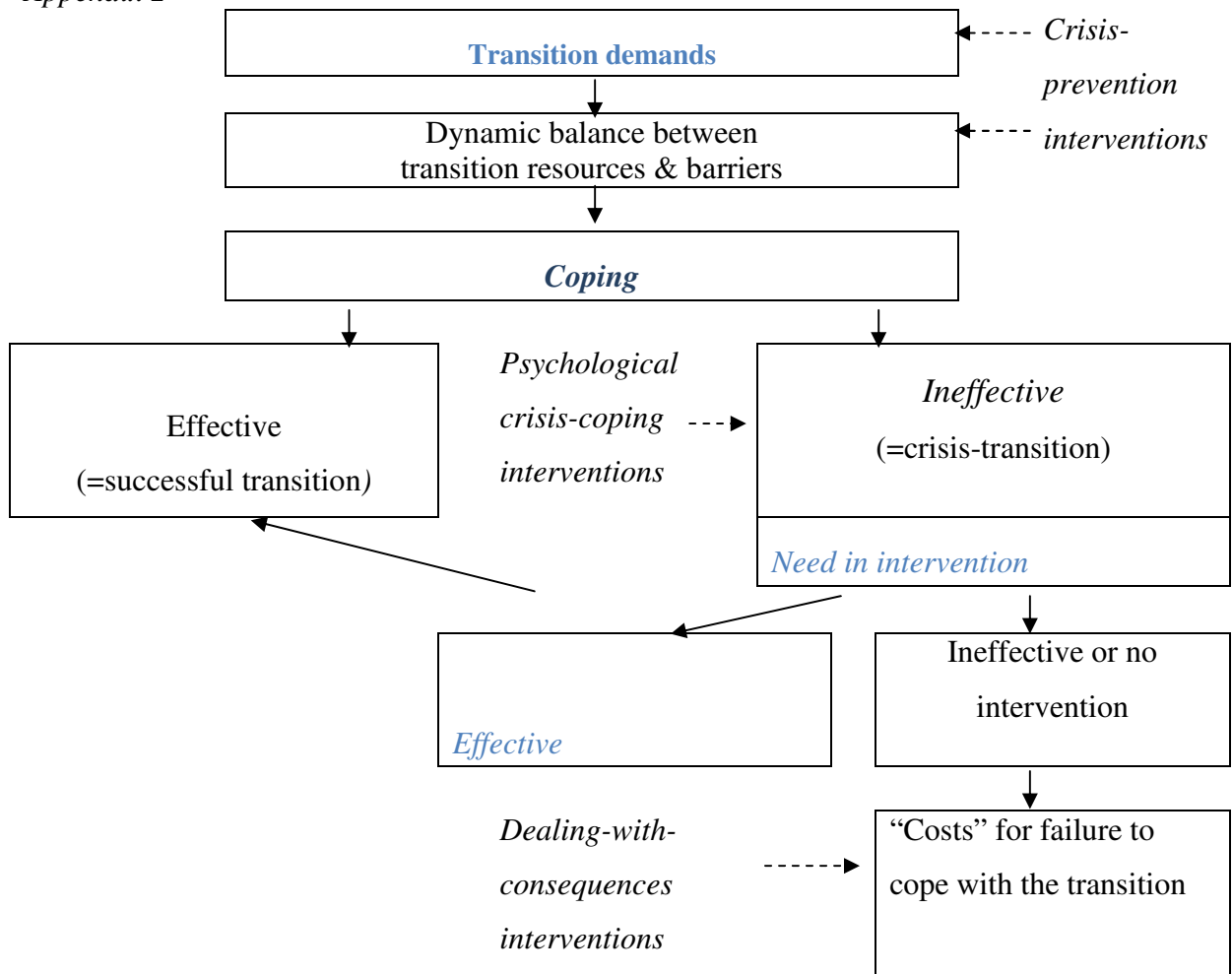


Figure 2. The Athletic Career Transition Model (Stambulova 2003)

Appendix 3

TRANSITION FROM JUNIOR PLAYER TO SENIOR PLAYER IN BASKETBALL

Interview guide

This is an interview that is going to be recorded. Each participant is expected to answer truthfully to the questions asked. The results and gathered information will be treated confidentially and all the participants will be anonymous.

Part 1. Background information

1.1 What do you find important about yourself as an athlete?

- Your current sport?
- Age of the start in sport & time in current sport?
- Other sports practiced?
- Levels/results in your current sport?
- Time in senior squad?

1.2 Are you satisfied with your athletic career so far?

- Why?

1.3 Please tell me what you find important about yourself as a person

- How old are you?
- Please tell me about your other activities besides sport?
- Other interests besides sport?
- School?

Part 2. Personal experiences related to the transition from junior to senior sport

2.1 Please tell me about the period in your athletic career when you just started to practice with senior athletes and participate in senior competitions

2.2 What kind of demands did you experience?

- In training
- In competition
- Combining sports and other spheres of life
- Relationship with teammates/people outside of sport

2.3 What did you do to cope?

- In practice?
- In competition?

- In other spheres of life?

2.4 What personal strengths helped your coping?

- Confidence?
- Communication skills?
- Different types of skills?
- Goals?
- Technical and tactical skills?
- Motivation?

2.5 What other factors helped you cope?

- Financial support?
- Support from federation?
- Support from coach, did the senior and junior coach cooperate?
- Support from team mates?
- Support from people outside of sport?

2.6 Which factors were obstructing your coping?

- Internal?
- External?

2.7 What did you do to overcome these barriers?

2.8 What were signs of your adjustment to the senior level?

- Subjective?
- Objective?

2.9 How long time did it take for you to adjust to the senior level?

- Timeline?

Part 3. Reflections on the role of the transition from junior to senior sport in athletic and personal development

3.1 How did this transition influence your athletic career?

3.2 How did it affect you as a person and your life outside of sport?

3.3 What lessons have you learned for today and the future from this transition experience?