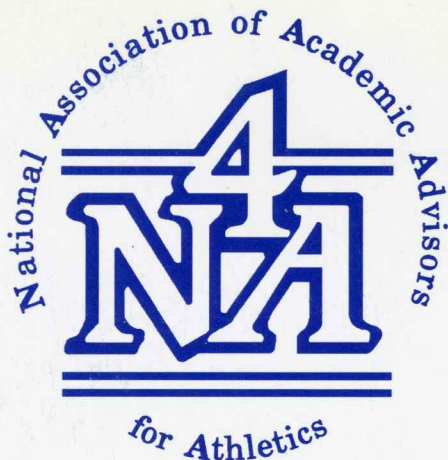




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Guidelines for Authors.....	ii-iii
Journal Staff.....	iv
Membership and Subscriptions.....	v
Editor's Statement.....	vi

Articles

College Adjustment of Football Players: Predictors of First Semester Adjustment to College Among NCAA Division III Intercollegiate Football Players.....	1
Scott C. Quarforth, M.S.; Britton W. Brewer, Ph.D.; Albert J. Petitpas, Ed.D.; Delight E. Champagne, Ph.D. and Allen E. Cornelius, Ph.D.	
What Do We Know About the Career Maturity of College Student-Athletes? <i>A Brief Review and Practical Suggestions for Career Development Work with Student-Athletes</i>.....	15
Alan S. Kornspan, Ph.D. and Edward F. Etzel, Ph.D.	
Active Athletes' Perceptions of Career and Education Services in the United Kingdom.....	34
Julian North and David Lavalley, Ph.D.	
Effects of Transferable Skills Workshops on the Career Self-Efficacy of College Student-Athletes.....	54
Sumiyo Shiina, M.S.; Britton W. Brewer, Ph.D.; Albert J. Petitpas, Ed.D. and Allen E. Cornelius, Ph.D.	
Student-Athletes: How Do They Cope?.....	65
Gary Miller, Ph.D. and Jason C. Pappas, M.S., M.Ed.	

Submission Guidelines for the *Academic Athletic Journal*

AUDIENCE

The primary audience of the *Academic Athletic Journal* is the membership of the N4A, that is, professionals providing counseling, life skills, and academic support services to student-athletes.

PURPOSE

The primary purpose of the journal is to assist its readers in providing the best possible counseling, advising, and life skills services to student-athletes. Toward that end, articles should add new knowledge, challenge existing opinion, and/or explain the implications of research. The arguments should be well-grounded in theory or research and clearly related to practice. Articles should be original and stimulating, written in a clear and concise style. Where applicable, authors should strive for methodological and statistical soundness, while avoiding unnecessary technical excursions.

SUBJECT MATTER

Relevant topics include, but are not limited to, the following: historical overviews of topics related to student-athletes; reviews of publications related to student-athletes; practical applications of theoretical or research-based conclusions; research on student-athletes and on professionals working in support service capacities, including a full discussion of results and implications.

Do not submit a manuscript that has been previously published, is scheduled for publication elsewhere, or is being considered for publication elsewhere.

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All manuscripts will be reviewed through the blind review process and by at least three members of the editorial review board. Their comments will be sent to the authors along with recommendations for acceptance, rejection, or revision.

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Manuscripts should be prepared utilizing the format and style described in the fifth edition of the American Psychological Association Publication Manual. Articles should be 1250-5000 words in length (i.e., roughly 5-20 pages of typed, double-spaced text) with ample margins for comments. Amplify the text with appropriate headings/sub-headings, figures, and reference citations. The references and all figures and tables should be typed on separate pages in accordance with the APA Publication Manual. Submissions that deviate substantially from Publication Manual format will be returned to the authors.

Authors should avoid sexist language at all times and terms such as "subject" when describing research participants.

Manuscripts must include the following:

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- (2) An abstract of 75 -150 words that briefly summarizes the major points of the paper. The abstract should be typed on a separate page and appear after the title page.
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- (4) A cover letter briefly describing the nature of the manuscript. Include relevant telephone and fax numbers and electronic mail addresses.

Submit the original manuscript and four copies to: **Carol Gruber, Ph. D., Director, Academic Counseling and Student Services for Intercollegiate Athletics, Bierman Field Athletic Building, Room 225 J, 516 15th Ave., SE, The University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN 55455. You may call at (612) 625-3595 or email grube012@umn.edu.**

Upon final acceptance of the manuscript for publication, authors should provide a copy of the final draft and the electronic version of the manuscript on computer diskette, formatted for IBM (compatible), in MS Word 5.0 or better. **Please do not submit diskettes prior to final acceptance.**

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EDITOR'S STATEMENT

Carol A. Gruber, Ph.D.
University of Minnesota

I am pleased to begin my tenure as journal editor with this issue of the *Academic Athletic Journal*. I would like to acknowledge the ever-diligent work of the editorial board in the review process, and of the authors, as they prepared and revised their manuscripts for publication.

Volume 17, Number 1 of the *Academic Athletic Journal* focuses on three key areas of interest for athletic academic professionals. First, Quarforth, Brewer, Petitpas, Champagne, and Cornelius look at first semester college adjustment issues of student-athletes. The authors look at both the social and sport-related factors and make recommendations for how professionals can facilitate positive adjustment. The second focus of this journal issue is on career development theory, skills, and services as they relate to student-athletes. In article two, Alan Kornspan and Ed Etzel present their work on the career maturity of student-athletes, along with a practical overview of career development suggestions for advisors working with student-athletes in this area. Article three, by Julian North and David Lavalley, discusses an approach taken in the United Kingdom to assess athletes' perceptions of career and education services, as well as the role that advisors play in the lives of student-athletes in this country. This article provides a slightly different perspective of the advising process from that to which most advisors at collegiate institutions in the United States are familiar, while pointing out that the issues brought to them by student-athletes in the United Kingdom are similar to those of collegiate student-athletes in the U.S. Article four brings us work by Shiina, Brewer, Petitpas, and Cornelius as they explore the effect of two types of career workshop interventions on the career self-efficacy of student-athletes. The third focus of this volume is on the coping skills of student-athletes. Miller and Pappas discuss four coping models, and how those may be used while working with student-athletes. They emphasize the mediating role that the athletics advisor plays in assisting student-athletes to cope with life situations and present a goal setting tool for use in problem solving with students.

Finally, in keeping with this year's presidential theme, "Cultivating Leadership and Building Bridges," this editor would like to encourage each N4A member to consider building a bridge between theory and practice, by submitting an article to our professional journal. I cannot think of a better way to show one's leadership than by sharing the knowledge and experiences of the profession with each other.

College Adjustment of Football Players: Predictors of First Semester Adjustment to College Among NCAA Division III Intercollegiate Football Players

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ABSTRACT

This study examined predictors of first-semester adjustment to college among 48 first-year intercollegiate football players. Participants completed measures of life stress, social support, quality of their relationship with parents, quality of their roommate relationship, sport satisfaction, athletic identity, and adjustment to college near the end of the first semester. The predictor variables accounted for 43% of the variance in adjustment to college, with quality of the roommate relationship and sport satisfaction emerging as significant ($p < .05$) predictors of adjustment. The results highlight the role of social and sport-related factors in how well first-year intercollegiate football players adjust to college. Recommendations for facilitating positive adjustment are provided.

INTRODUCTION

The transition from high school to college presents many challenges for first-year students. Simply by entering the college environment, adolescents are often thrust into the role of young adult (Berzonsky & Kuk, 2000). The college transition comes at a time when many students are separating from the beliefs of their parents and building their own identities (Blos, 1962; Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Additionally, college students face other developmental tasks that challenge them throughout their college careers. These tasks include developing physical, intellectual, and interpersonal competence, managing emotions, and developing autonomy, purpose, integrity, and mature interpersonal relationships (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). For incoming student-athletes, sport participation provides an additional set of demands and constraints that are not typically experienced by student-nonathletes (Sowa & Gressard, 1983). Pressures to improve their sport skills for higher levels of competition compound the stress of dealing with the expected developmental tasks of first-year students.

Adjustment to college refers to the extent to which students are able to move in a positive direction academically, socially, and emotionally during the transition from high school to college (Baker & Siryk, 1987). In the general college student population, a variety of factors have been identified as contributors to the quality of students' adjustment to college. One such factor is life stress. Inverse relationships have been documented between pre-enrollment levels of stressful life events and subsequent adjustment of first-year college students (Compas, Wagner, Slavin, & Vannatta, 1986; Prancer, Hunsberger, Pratt, & Alisat, 2000).

Another factor that has been found important during the transition to college is social support, which can affect adjustment to college both directly and indirectly. In terms of direct relationships, social support is positively associated with life satisfaction and inversely related to negative feelings such as loneliness, anxiety, and depression among first-year college students (Compas et al., 1986; Pratt et al., 2000). Social support operates indirectly on adjustment by buffering the adverse effects of life stress on adjustment (Cohen & Wills, 1985). In essence, social support can help students cope with the stress associated with entry into the college environment (Tao, Dong, Pratt, & Prancer, 2000).

Two specific types of social support may be particularly important in the adjustment process. The quality of the relationships first-year students have with their parents and their roommates have been correlated with adjustment to college (Helman, 2000; Holmbeck & Wandrei, 1993; Wintre & Yaffe, 2000). During the first year of college, students' relationships with their parents tend to remain consistent while their peer relationships are in a state of flux as high school relationships decline in importance and college relationships develop (Larose & Boivin, 1998). Students who have positive relationships with their parents tend to show more favorable adjustment to college (Holmbeck & Wandrei, 1993). Wintre and Yaffe (2000) found that students who maintain an open discussion with parents and perceive themselves as relative equals with their parents reported better adjustment during the transition to college.

First-year students' relationships with their roommates are of potential importance in the transition to college because they often constitute the first relationship developed on campus, and unless a transfer is requested, these individuals live in close proximity for an entire year. In support of this notion, Helman (2000) found that the quality of the relationship developed between roommates was positively correlated with social adjustment, and knowing one's roommate prior to beginning school was associated with better academic and overall adjustment to college. Roommate relationships may be of particular relevance to student-athletes because coaches often place first-year players in the same room, thereby increasing the likelihood that issues on the field of play could carry over to interactions between roommates.

In addition to the factors affecting the transition to college of the general student population, variables unique to intercollegiate sport participation may influence the college adjustment of student-athletes. Student-athletes can become accustomed to special treatment in high school and during the recruitment process, but very few first-year collegiate athletes participate extensively in sport competitions (Adler & Adler, 1987).

The relative lack of performance opportunities may cause student-athletes to be dissatisfied with their sport involvement, and this dissatisfaction may have an adverse effect on adjustment to college, particularly for those who are strongly identified with the athlete role as a source of self-worth (Brewer, Van Raalte, & Linder, 1993).

The current study was designed to examine factors associated with the adjustment to college of first-year student-athletes. Specifically, life stress, social support, quality of relationship with parents, quality of relationship with roommate, sport satisfaction, and athletic identity were evaluated as predictors of the overall adjustment to college of first-semester NCAA Division III intercollegiate football players. Based on the research reviewed, it was hypothesized that, as with first-year college students in general: (a) life stress would be negatively related to adjustment (Compas et al., 1986; Prancer et al., 2000), (b) social support and the quality of relationships with parents and roommates would be positively related to adjustment (Compas et al., 1986; Pratt et al., 2000), and (c) social support would moderate the relationship between life stress and adjustment (Cohen & Wills, 1985). It was also predicted that satisfaction with sport involvement would be positively associated with adjustment and that this relationship would be stronger for student-athletes who were highly identified with the athlete role.

METHOD

Participants

Participants were 48 first-year students at a small NCAA Division III college who began the academic year participating on the intercollegiate football team. All participants were in their first semester of college. The mean age of participants was 18.23 ($SD = 0.48$) years with an average of 6.47 ($SD = 4.01$) years of self-reported experience playing football. At the time of the study, 29 participants identified themselves as members of the football team, 16 indicated that they had discontinued their participation with the football team, and 3 did not report their team affiliation status. Of those participants who indicated that they were still members of the team, 14 noted that they were on the varsity squad, 14 indicated that they were on the junior varsity squad, and 1 participant did not provide varsity status.

Measures

Life stress was measured with the Life Events Survey for Collegiate Athletes (LESCA; Petrie, 1992). On the LESCA, respondents are asked to indicate which of the 69 events listed on the survey have occurred within the past year and then rate the impact of each of those events on a scale from -4 (*extremely negative*) to +4 (*extremely positive*). The survey yields positive, negative, and total life stress scores for college athletes. Petrie reported a test-retest reliability coefficient of .83 for the total life stress scale. In support of the convergent validity of the LESCA, Petrie found that scores on the survey were significantly correlated with those on the Social and Athletic Readjustment Rating Scale (Bramwell, Masuda, Wagner, & Holmes, 1975).

The Social Support Survey (SSS; Richman, Rosenfeld, & Hardy, 1993) was used to measure perceived social support across eight dimensions: listening support, task appreciation, task challenge, emotional support, emotional challenge, reality confirmation, tangible assistance, and personal assistance. Respondents are asked to write down the initials and relationship of people who provide each dimension of support and then rate their satisfaction with that support, the difficulty in obtaining more of the support, and the perceived importance of the support. Richman et al. presented evidence for the test-retest reliability ($r = .44$ to $.87$ over a 5-week period), concurrent validity, and discriminant validity of the SSS.

Relationship with parents was assessed with the Perception of Parental Reciprocity Scale-General Scale (POPRS-GS; Wintre, Yaffe, & Crowley, 1995). The POPRS-GS is a 9-item scale in which respondents rate the degree of perceived reciprocity in the relationship with their parents on a scale from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 4 (*strongly disagree*). Wintre et al. (1995) reported a .87 alpha coefficient for the POPRS-GS and presented evidence in support of the convergent, discriminant, and criterion-related validity of the scale.

Two items were used to measure the quality of participants' relationship with their roommates. The first item asked participants to rate the relationship on a scale from 1 (*very poor*) to 7 (*very good*). The second item asked participants to rate the relationship on a 6-point scale with endpoints of *I changed roommates* and *We hang out a lot outside the dorm room*. The two items were significantly correlated, $r = 0.85$, $p < .01$, so they were summed to create a total score.

An 11-item scale based on the Sport Satisfaction Inventory developed by Whittall and Orlick (1978) was used to assess the degree of satisfaction experienced by participants in association with their involvement in football. Responses are given on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Items address satisfaction with the sport or game itself, practice, position coaches, head coach, teammates, season, future prospects with the team, playing time, captains, and personal performance. An alpha coefficient of .87 was obtained for the scale.

The Athletic Identity Measurement Scale (AIMS; Brewer et al., 1993) was used to assess athletic identity, which is defined as the "degree to which an individual identifies with the athletic role" (p. 237). As modified by Brewer and Cornelius (2001), the AIMS has 7-items on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Items focus on the social, cognitive, and affective facets of athletic identity. Brewer et al. (1993) presented evidence supporting the test-retest reliability ($r = .89$ over a 14-day period), internal consistency ($\alpha = .93$), and construct, convergent, and divergent validity of the AIMS.

Adjustment to college was assessed with the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ; Baker & Siryk, 1984, 1999). The SACQ consists of 67 statements addressing various aspects of adjustment to college. Respondents rate their level of adjustment to each statement on a scale from 1 (*applies very closely to me*) to 9 (*doesn't apply to me at all*). Half of the items are negatively worded and half are positively worded, with the resulting sum yielding an overall measure of adjustment. Baker and Siryk (1984) reported that SACQ total scores were internally consistent ($\alpha = .92$ to $.94$) and inversely related to attrition from college, thereby providing support for the predictive validity of the inventory.

Procedure

Near the end of the fall academic semester, prior to final exams, all 137 individuals on a list (provided by the coaching staff) of incoming first-year students who had expressed interest in playing on the intercollegiate football team were contacted about participating in the study. Prospective participants were furnished with information about the study and given an opportunity to volunteer as a participant in the study. After signing an informed consent document, participants completed a questionnaire requesting demographic information and the LESCA, SSS, POPRS-GS, roommate relationship items, sport satisfaction scale, AIMS, and SACQ.

RESULTS

Completed questionnaires were obtained from 48 of the 137 (37%) incoming first-year students who had expressed interest in playing intercollegiate football. Means and standard deviations of the predictor and criterion variables are presented in Table 1. The mean POPRS-GS for this sample was approximately 0.5 standard deviations below the mean reported by Wintre et al. (1995) and the mean LESCA total score for this sample was more than a full standard deviation below the mean in the validation study by Petrie (1992). The current sample ranks in roughly the 50th percentile for the AIMS based on norms reported by Brewer and Cornelius (2001). There are no norms available for the SSS and the measure of sport satisfaction and roommate relationship. According to norms presented by Baker and Siryk (1999), the total score on the SACQ for this sample ranks in the 27th percentile.

Independent sample t-tests were conducted to determine whether there were differences in overall adjustment between varsity and junior varsity members, and between current and non-current members of the team. Because neither of the t -tests were statistically significant, subsequent analyses were conducted across playing and team membership statuses.

Pearson correlations were calculated to examine relationships among the predictor variables (i.e., life stress, social support, quality of relationship with parents, quality of relationship with roommate, sport satisfaction, and athletic identity) and the criterion variable (i.e., total adjustment to college). As shown in Table 2, sport satisfaction and roommate relationship were the only predictor variables significantly correlated with total adjustment to college. Life stress and athletic identity were the only predictor variables that were significantly correlated with each other.

A hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between the predictor variables and the criterion variable. The predictor variables (i.e., life stress, social support, parent relationship, roommate relationship, sport satisfaction, and athletic identity) were entered on the first step of the analysis. The sport satisfaction by athletic identity and social support by perceived stress interactions were entered on the second step of the analysis. The results of the analysis are summarized in Table 3. The overall regression equation was statistically significant, $F(8, 35) = 4.09$, $p < .05$, $R^2 = .48$, with sport satisfaction ($\beta = .53$, $p < .01$), and roommate relationship ($\beta = .46$, $p < .01$) the only significant predictors.

DISCUSSION

As predicted, the quality of the roommate relationship and sport satisfaction were positively associated with adjustment to college among first-year intercollegiate football players. The more favorably participants perceived the relationship with their roommates and the more satisfied they were with their involvement in football, the better their adjustment near the end of the first semester of college. Contrary to the hypothesized pattern of results, however, factors found previously to relate to adjustment to college in the general student body (i.e., life stress, social support, and relationship with parents) were not associated with the football players' adjustment to college. Social support did not moderate the relationship between life stress and adjustment, and athletic identity did not moderate the relationship between sport satisfaction and adjustment.

The significant relationship between roommate relationship and adjustment to college echoes that found by Helman (2000) for college students in general and highlights the potential importance of peer interactions in the immediate living environment in influencing intercollegiate football players' adjustment to college. The findings for sport satisfaction suggest that the experiences of student-athletes on the playing field have implications for how well they adjust off the playing field. Student-athletes are often highly invested in their sport participation (Brewer et al., 1993), and when things do not go well athletically, the negative feelings they have about their sport involvement may spill over into other areas of functioning and hamper their overall adjustment to college. Further, given the negative association between adjustment to college and student attrition (Baker & Siryk, 1984), dropping out of school or transferring to another institution are potential consequences of dissatisfaction with one's intercollegiate sport participation. Future research is needed to verify this speculation.

The failure of life stress, social support, and parent relationship to predict adjustment to college among first-year intercollegiate football players is surprising in light of research documenting associations between these variables and adjustment to college for the general student population (Compas et al., 1986; Holmbeck & Wandrei, 1993; Prancer et al., 2000; Pratt et al., 2000; Wintre & Yaffe, 2000). With a larger sample size and the increased statistical power that accompanies it, the results might more closely have approximated those obtained in previous studies.

It should be noted that the current study is limited by its cross-sectional design, which precludes causal inferences from being drawn from the results. It cannot be determined, for example, whether poor adjustment to college is a *cause of* or *caused by* difficult interactions with one's roommates and dissatisfaction with one's sport involvement. Also, the use of student-athletes from a single fall sport at a single college as participants limits the generalizability of the results. Longitudinal research with student-athletes from multiple sports at multiple colleges would enhance the internal validity and generalizability of the findings. The adjustment to college of student-athletes in fall sports should be compared with that of student-athletes in spring sports to examine the effects of a period of college attendance without intensive practice and competition.

Future research should also assess the extent to which factors not measured in the current study contribute to adjustment to college. Inclusion of individual difference variables such as coping ability (Feenstra, Banyard, Rines, & Hopkins, 2001) and hardiness (Mathis & Lecci, 1999) would help to provide a more comprehensive examination of the adjustment process.

From a pragmatic standpoint, the results of the current study have several implications for facilitating a smooth transition into college for male student-athletes. First, care should be taken to ensure that student-athletes have living situations conducive to positive adjustment. Roommate mismatches should be identified and rectified as soon as possible. When disharmonious roommate relationships exist and roommate changes are not feasible, alternate problem-solving options (e.g., counseling, peer mediation) should be pursued. Second, given that realistic expectations regarding college life are associated with better adjustment for first-year students (Prancer et al., 2000), helping student-athletes develop realistic expectations toward their sport participation could lead to a higher sense of satisfaction and, consequently, better adjustment to college. Clear communication from the coaches and support staff about the role and likely amount of playing time of first-year players could assist in the formation of realistic expectations. The need for communication is of particular importance when the team is naturally large and carries multiple back-ups in all positions. Third, the results of this study indicate a need for academic athletic professionals, coaches, teammates, and athletic trainers to pay attention to on-field events when helping first-year student-athletes adjust to college. Sport participation is highly valued by student-athletes, and how things are going on the playing field appears to serve as a barometer for how well first-year male student-athletes adjust to college. In a similar vein, professionals working with student-athletes should be aware that first-year students who highly value sport participation and try out for an intercollegiate sport team but fail to make the squad might encounter adjustment difficulties.

Overall, because the issue of adjustment to college among first-year student-athletes recurs on an annual basis, a primary prevention approach in which potential threats to successful adjustment are addressed prior to the emergence of adjustment problems (Pearson & Petitpas, 1990) is warranted. Finch and Gould (1996) discussed a training program designed to facilitate the transition of student-athletes from high school to college. The program includes three main steps: (a) helping student-athletes to understand their role in both athletics and academics, (b) helping student-athletes to develop realistic expectations toward professional sport participation, and (c) helping student-athletes to develop a positive outlook and mental attitude toward the transition. Preparing student-athletes for the transition to college life and sport participation could help to promote positive adjustment thereby increasing the likelihood that they will continue their education and have a satisfying sport experience.

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TABLE 1.

Descriptive Statistics (N = 48)

Variable	M	SD
LESCA	20.63	11.36
SSS	89.73	17.42
POPRS-GS	23.06	2.08
Roommate relationship	9.79	3.73
Sport satisfaction	38.96	9.53
AIMS	38.52	6.26
SACQ	392.44	60.40

Note. LESCA = Life Events Scale for Collegiate Athletes; SSS = Social Support Survey; POPRS-GS = Perception of Parental Reciprocity Scale-General Scale; AIMS = Athletic Identity Measurement Scale; SACQ = Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire total score.

TABLE 2.

Pearson-Product Moment Correlation Coefficients Among Predictor and Criterion Variables

	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. POPRS-GS						
	-0.23	-0.14	-0.00	0.26	-0.12	0.13
2. LESCA						
		0.49*	-0.06	0.26	0.02	-0.07
3. AIMS			0.12	0.05	0.20	0.09
4. Sport satisfaction				0.17	0.01	0.47*
5. Roommate relationship					-0.04	0.46*
6. SSS						0.01
7. SACQ						- -

*p < .05

Note. POPRS-GS = Perception of Parental Reciprocity Scale - General Scale; LESCA = Life Events Scale for Collegiate Athletes; AIMS = Athletic Identity Measurement Scale; SSS = Social Support Survey; SACQ = Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire total score.

TABLE 3.

Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Adjustment to College

Predictors

	Total R ²	F	F _{change}	<i>a</i>
Step 1	.43	4.74*	4.74*	
POPRS-GS				-0.10
LESCA				-0.27
AIMS				0.11
Sport satisfaction				0.41*
Roommate relationship				0.50*
SSS				-0.02
Step 2	.48	4.09*	1.66	
AIMS X sport satisfaction				-0.12
SSS X LESCA				-0.20

*p < .01

Note. POPRS-GS = Perception of Parental Reciprocity Scale - General Scale; LESCA = Life Events Scale for Collegiate Athletes Total Score; AIMS = Athletic Identity Measurement Scale; SSS = Social Support Survey.

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What Do We Know About the Career Maturity of College Student-Athletes?

A Brief Review and Practical Suggestions for Career Development Work with Student-athletes

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to provide useful information concerning career maturity and college student-athletes. An overview of developmental tasks college students face and how they relate to career maturity will initially be presented. Next, the construct of career maturity will be discussed as it relates to two career development theories associated with the construct (i.e., Super and Crites). Practical suggestions on how to enhance student-athlete career maturity based on theory, research and the author's experiences will follow.

INTRODUCTION

An area of interest of college student service providers and athletic department personnel is how student-athletes' overall career development can be facilitated during their college years. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) has demonstrated a strong commitment to this process by making career development a main component of their "Challenging Athletes Minds for Personal Success" (CHAMPS/Life Skills) programming model for student-athletes (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2003; Ward, 1999). Several researchers have also devoted considerable attention to student-athlete career development (Ahlgren, 2001; Etzel, Barrow, & Pinkney, 1994; Etzel, Ferrante, & Pinkney, 1996; Howard-Hamilton & Watt, 2001; Kirk & Kirk, 1993; Lantz, 1996; Lantz, Etzel, & Ferguson, 1996; Martens & Cox, 2000; Shriberg & Brodzinski, 1984).

One important aspect of student-athlete career development is career maturity. Several researchers have investigated: (a) how mature student-athletes are from a career standpoint; (b) how participation in college athletics may be related to career maturity; as well as (c) variables thought to influence the development of career maturity of college student-athletes (Ahlgren, 2001; Bals, 1992; Brown & Hartley, 1998; Doms, Monteleone, & White, 1994; Jacques, 2000; Kornspan & Etzel, 2001; McKinney, 1991; Muczko, 1993; Smallman, & Sowa, 1996). A central purpose of this paper is to provide information on selected aspects of student-athlete career development as they relate to the construct of career maturity. Initially, a brief look at the developmental aspects of college students and career maturity will be presented. This will be followed by a discussion of two career development theories associated with the construct (i.e., Super and Crites). Practical suggestions based on theory, research, and our work with student-athletes on the career maturity of college student-athletes will follow.

CAREER MAJORITY THEORY AND COLLEGE STUDENT-ATHLETE

What is "career maturity?" While career maturity means different things to different people, Donald Super (1990) defined career or vocational maturity as "the individual's readiness to cope with the developmental tasks with which he or she is confronted because of his or her biological and social developments, and because of society's expectations of people who have reached that stage of development" (p. 213). Super and J. O. Crites' (Crites, 1974) theories of career development and career maturity seem to be particularly valuable to those interested in studying the career development of college student-athletes and to helping professionals (e.g., academic advisors, counselors, CHAMPS-Life Skills coordinators) who provide support services to these young people. Their two models will be discussed after a brief summary of the developmental tasks of college students as they relate to career development.

DEVELOPMENT ASPECTS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS AND CAREER MATURITY

Just like their non-athlete peers, college student-athletes are adolescents and young adults who must meet and master many so-called "developmental tasks" during their tenure at the university. Over the course of their approximately four to six years as undergraduates, college students confront the formidable challenges of: (a) becoming independent, (b) clarifying identity, (c) identifying a sense of direction and purpose, (d) fine tuning values, and (e) learning to be personally responsible for day-to-day activities (Chickering, 1969; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Erikson, 1968; Farnsworth, 1966; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). This passage through the college years has been described by Medalie (1981) as a "mini-life cycle". During this period, students encounter predictable personal and career development-related milestones to which they make adjustments (e.g., leaving home, identifying an academic major, investing energy in a major, and leaving the college experience behind for the world of work).

In general, students say that one of their principal motives for going to college is to prepare well for a meaningful, productive career (Orndorff & Herr, 1996). A needs assessment conducted by Etzel, Barrow, and Pinkney (1994), revealed that the student-athletes sampled were curious about their career-related interests, skills, personality characteristics, values and how to go about formulating plans leading to the world of work. Unfortunately, many college students are relatively "clueless" about the career development path. It has been estimated that about a quarter to one-half of incoming students have at best a vague notion of their future career plans (Gordon, 1995). While most student-athletes seem to view the experience of college as an opportunity; their motivation for attending college and/or what to do once they get there is often vague. We have seen many new student-athletes who say they head to college to: (a) continue to pursue their athletic interests and dreams (with all or some of their educational expenses paid for); (b) because it is what most of their peers are going to do; (c) because they are under pressure from family or others to do so; or (d) some combination of the above.

In contrast, at the end of their mini-life cycle, many student-athletes, having devoted considerable time and energy to studies and sport, remain quite uncertain of their career path and /or the steps that lead to their first job or graduate school. Like freshmen, seniors and fifth-year students often experience considerable distress in response to these novel transitions, in and out of college, that are filled with detachments and new attachments (Schwartz & Riefler, 1984). Although many of these older student-athletes are quite "career mature", some are not.

Increased autonomy, improved self-esteem, and the acquisition of "transferable" life skills (e.g., setting goals, managing time, performing under pressure, working as part of a team) are important outcomes of the student-athlete experience that can lead to successful transition out of college and into the world of work (Ahlgren, 2001; Pace, 1979). As they grow over time, student-athletes also need to develop more sophisticated ways of information gathering and better interpersonal and career decision-making skills (Miller & Winston, 1990). In the long run, college student-athletes obtain much useful information leading to a meaningful niche in the world of work. Perhaps more importantly, they become quite different people - hopefully evolving into well-adjusted, relatively mature young adults. The advisor's job is to help them along the way.

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF SUPER'S THEORIES

Donald Super contributed what he termed a "loosely unified set of [career development] theories" focused on stages of change in the self-concept" (Brown & Brooks, 1984, p.218). Super, as cited in Zunker (1994), described his theory of career-related self-concept as "essentially a matching theory in which people consider the compatibility of their own personal attributes and the attributes required by an occupation (p.208)." Accordingly, career choices are determined by aspects of one's self-concept which is believed to change over time (Leong & Brown, 1996). It is further assumed that the better the perceived fit between self-concept and occupation, the more satisfied, well-adjusted, and successful a person can be in a career and changing life roles (Klein & Weiner, 1977).

From Super's perspective, career development occurs over time as people develop specific personal competencies, the assessment of which is useful to our understanding of career maturity levels (Walsh & Betz 1995). He proposed that the typical career maturity path may be characterized by five developmental life stages including: (1) growth, (2) exploration, (3) establishment, (4) maintenance, and (5) decline. During these stages, people are assumed to work through developmental tasks that occur at approximate ages. These tasks include: (1) crystallization (ages 14-18), (2) specification (18-21), (3) implementation (21-24), (4) stabilization (25-35), and (5) consolidation (late 30's-40's) (Walsh & Betz, 1995). As the reader can see, tasks 1-3 appear to have the most relevance for work with college student-athletes

Crystallization

During the "crystallization" stage of adolescence, Super contended that people develop ideas about what type of career they imagine pursuing. This is a time when teenagers dream of doing certain things with their lives and/or being like someone they identify with and admire. For many student-athletes, those people are often respected family members, a coach, a teacher, or sometimes a famous sports figure. Some do not have these idealized persons or "objects" of identification. Of those who do, a high percentage of athletes who participate in sports where professional opportunities exist suggest that they aspire to be professional athletes (Kennedy & Dimick, 1987). Unfortunately, the odds of going on to a professional career in sport are quite slim (i.e., approximately 2 - 3%), with the average career span in the four major professional sports being approximately 3.5 years (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2000; Nixon & Frey, 1996). Investigators Brown and Hartley (1998) sampled 114 male NCAA Division I and Division II student-athletes and found that those who had a goal of playing professionally scored lower on a career maturity measure. Some researchers have also suggested that many student-athletes who participate in sports where attractive professional careers are possible such as football, baseball and basketball may formulate similarly unrealistic, immature career plans believing that they will go on to a "fun" professional career (American Institutes for Research, 1988; Kennedy & Dimick, 1987; Martinelli, 2000).

Specification

During the "specification" stage, which in theory transpires during the undergraduate college years, young people begin to identify vocational inclinations and hopefully start to investigate possible career paths. Ideally, the late teens and very early 20's should be a time of a great deal of exploratory activity for college students (e.g., career counseling, part-time work, shadowing, and internships). Regrettably, aspects of the athletics lifestyle and culture may discourage student-athletes from engaging in these activities. For example, NCAA rules limit the amount of money a student-athlete can earn during the school year (often discouraging part-time work) and do not permit schools to pay for career-development related testing or counseling that may help student-athletes make more appropriate choices (personal communication, B. Cox, April 28, 2003). In the case of young people who have put off this important life activity until after their athletics eligibility has expired, specification activity may be postponed into the early to mid-twenties or later on in adulthood.

Implementation

In their early 20's, the implementation phase, people typically enter the world of work or graduate school. It is a time in life when vocational identity usually solidifies (Sullivan, 1953). Like their non-athlete peers, the majority of graduating student-athletes appear to successfully make this transition. Unfortunately, some struggle to make the jump. These people who do not graduate in a timely fashion are often the "unmoored souls" previously "pre-NFL, pre-NBA, or pre-MLB" majors seen hanging around their college town and athletic facilities after their peers have departed. Hopefully, assistance is available to these former student-athletes that will allow them to complete their education and eventually head on to the world of work. Examples of such "helping hands" are: (1) career and counseling centers that keep their doors open to older returning students; (2) CHAMPS-Life Skills programs; (3) assistance available from the National Consortium for Academics and Sports (Northeastern University Center for the Study of Sport in Society, 2003), (4) and the NCAA degree completion Program.

Athletic Identity and Career Self-Efficacy

Two aspects of Super's model that seem to be especially relevant to student-athletes are having: (1) an unrealistic self-concept, and (2) a limited self-concept. Super (1990) observed that people who own unrealistic, simple self-concepts tend to make inappropriate career choices. Regrettably, these attributes are commonly observed in college student-athletes, many of whom own so-called strong "athletic identities" (Brewer, Van Raalte, & Linder, 1993).

Athletic Identity

People with limited self-concepts may lack ample information and experience to allow them to make wise career choices (Super, 1990). For example, when conducting career and personal counseling interviews with student-athlete clients seeking majors, one author (EE) has frequently observed that many student-athlete clients report not knowing how to find out about academic major options or the nature of occupations. Many report having had little or no job experience outside of sport-related endeavors (e.g., sport camps).

Freshman and sophomore student-athletes with limited perspectives on life and foreclosed self-views may experience difficulty identifying a meaningful academic major, typically required by the NCAA before the onset of their junior year. Career development is hampered by not spending at least some time and effort early on targeting meaningful, interesting major options. Unfortunately, the following career immature phenomena are often seen by those who advise and counsel student-athletes: (a) selecting academic majors "by default" (i.e., without exploring one's interests, skills, and abilities); (b) being encouraged by powerful others (e.g., coaches, academic advisors, peers) to pursue athletics-friendly majors (i.e., to fit academic responsibilities around training and competitive schedules); and/or (c) being told that one can major in a field of interest (i.e., when recruited) only to find out that it is not possible given the requirements of athletic participation (i.e., the old "bait and switch").

In a sense, NCAA rules may both help and hinder student-athlete's identity and career development. For example, the formal selection of a major requires them to make a commitment to pursuits they may know little about and/or have been provided limited time, energy and encouragement to devote to vis a vis their lifestyles. Major declaration may "resolve ambivalence for some students, but prematurely shuts down exploration for others" (Margolis, 1989, p. 76). Beyond the normal changing of majors (one or two times on average) and the usual uncertainties associated with this choice, older student-athletes (i.e., juniors, seniors, and "fifth years") may regret their major selection. Some postpone or put little or no systematic thought or effort into career development or career planning until the end of the undergraduate years; some return for career counseling only after graduation and unfulfilling work trials or failed attempts at professional sport. These people report feeling bewildered when they could be on track to thrive in the world of work or graduate school.

Heavy investment in the athlete lifestyle over time can contribute to adopting a strong athletic identity (i.e., over-identification with the athletic role and lifestyle) (Brewer et al., 1993). Such a restricted view of self and personal potential may limit: (a) exploration of other activities of interest, (b) normal experimentation with different social roles, (c) non-sport-related relationships, (d) academic achievement and, (e) future vocational opportunities (Brown, Glastcher, & Sheldon, 2000). Student-athletes who own strong athletic identities can be considered akin to Marcia's (1980) "foreclosed" students who tend to not seek out options for change and growth. Such student-athletes seem to foreclose on the athlete role and limit their educational and vocational options. Recent research has examined the possible relationship of athletic identity to the career development of college student-athletes (Brown, Glastcher, & Shelton, 2000; Doms, Monteleone, & White, 1994; Martens & Cox, 2000; Murphy, Brewer & Petitpas, 1996; Owens, 1994). For example, Owens (1994) found that student-athletes with a strong athletic identity engaged in less career exploration behavior than did student-athletes with a weaker athletic identity. Similarly, Murphy et al. (1996) found that athletic identity and foreclosed identity were significantly related to a measure of career maturity. In contrast, Brown et al. (2000), Martens and Cox (2000), and Kornspan and Etzel (2001) did not find significant relationships between athletic identity and a career development measure. Martens and Cox, however, observed that "many student-athletes do not or cannot distinguish between athletic and vocational identity, and so might not seek occupational information and assistance from university career [or counseling] centers" (Hill, Burch-Ragan, & Yates, 2001, p.70).

Career self-efficacy

Self-efficacy, a construct similar to self-confidence, can be thought of as a person's belief that s/he can successfully do something that is required to produce a desired outcome (Bandura, 1977). Having the confidence to engage in career-related tasks (e.g., interest identification, major selection, job information seeking, and participation in internships) is assumed to reflect a relatively mature sense of career self-efficacy. Career self-efficacy is believed to positively influence future job-related attitudes, efforts, and behaviors that shape career decisions (Betz & Hackett, 1986; Taylor & Betz, 1983). It has been observed that students with higher levels of career-related

self-efficacy typically exhibit higher levels of career maturity (Luzzo, 1993). According to Riffe and Alexander (1991), student-athletes can and often do acquire a great deal of transferable self-confidence from their athletic experiences, thus shaping their self-concept in a useful way. However, if a young person's confidence primarily stems from sport-related experiences, s/he may feel secure in the athletic realm but quite diffident in other life roles (e.g., in the student or worker role). Therefore, athletic participation can be seen as a double-edged sword: it can both facilitate and detract from involvement in useful, future-oriented activities as well as positively or negatively impact the ways one thinks and feels about work and career.

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF CRITE'S THEORIES

J.O. Crites (1978) saw career maturity as involving: (a) career choice "content", and (b) career choice "processes". From his perspective, a young person is considered career mature if s/he possesses accurate career-related information and well-developed planning and decision-making skills (Walsh & Betz, 1995). Crites further believed that a career mature attitude was characterized by: (a) decisiveness in making career choices, (b) active involvement in decision-making, (c) independence in thinking and action, (d) understanding and acceptance that work is not always fun, and (e) realistic goals and aspirations.

Career immature student-athletes may display a so-called "indecisive disposition" (Wooten, 1993). This mind-set is seen as the product of a life history in which an individual has somehow not acquired some combination of self-confidence, tolerance for ambiguity, cultural involvement, sense of identity, and self- and environmental knowledge to effectively deal with career decision making and other common problems (Holland & Holland, 1977, as cited in Wooten, 1993). Fuqua, Blum, and Bartman (1988) found that indecisiveness was also related to traits such as low career self-efficacy, external locus of control, and lack of a clear identity. Some student-athletes appear to be rather "wishy-washy" when it comes to making decisions in the face of uncertainty, perhaps because many of their life decisions have been made for them by influential others or because they are deficient in some of the afore mentioned attributes. Alternatively, they may act hesitantly and/or appear ambivalent or "stuck" in career development matters and other personal issues due to rather limited experience at making independent decisions or owning inadequate decision-making skills.

Lifestyle Issues

According to Crites, men and women with mature career attitudes should demonstrate high levels of active involvement in the career development process. As noted above, some student-athletes are quite involved, yet just as many appear not to be involved. The way student-athletes' days are normally structured may not allow them to be actively involved much in career development thinking or action. For example, Ferrante, Etzel and Lantz (1996) observed that "practice and competition can drastically limit the amount of free time student-athletes have available for accessing needed assistance (p.11)." While officially limited to 20 hours of athletics-related activity by the NCAA, it is clear that student-athletes can easily be involved in much more than 20 hours of "mandatory" and "voluntary" activity per week when one considers travel to and from competition, conditioning, injury rehabilitation, study halls,

video viewing, etc. (Sperber, 1990). Accordingly, Martens and Lee (1998) noticed that college student-athletes often have more time commitments than many other students and really may not have the time or energy to actively participate in career development activities (e.g., workshops, job fairs, counseling).

Insufficient student-athlete involvement in the career development process may also occur because of the time of day when career development programs are offered (Ferrante et al. 1996; Martenelli, 2000) and because of a "divided campus" (Martens & Lee, 1998). Indeed, few student-athletes see themselves as "early birds," but very few are truly "night owls" (Pinkney, 1996). Ferrante et al. (1996) suggested that student-athletes usually have some free time and some energy left during early evening hours. However, they may be more inclined to use this time for rest, recreation or "socializing" rather than personal growth. In describing their divided campus theory, Martens and Lee (1998) note that many student-athletes are or feel segregated from the rest of campus because many athletic facilities and services are removed from the athletics mainstream. Thus, they may not be inclined to use services that the university makes available to students (e.g., career or counseling services). Student-athletes, like some of their coaches, report that they do not know that such services exist on campus, and/or if they do know about them, they do not know where they are located. It has also been observed that some coaches discourage the use of helping services outside of the athletic department assuming that they can care for student-athlete needs "in house" (Ferrante et al. 1996).

Locus of Control

Crites also proposed that people with more mature career attitudes are usually more independent in their career-related thinking, decision-making, and behavior. This aspect of Crites' model links to the developmental task of becoming autonomous (Chickering, 1969) and the construct of "locus of control". Rotter (1954) proposed that there are two basic types of locus of control: internal and external. Internal locus of control is the expectancy that reinforcement is contingent upon one's own thinking or behavior. Whereas, external locus of control is the expectancy that reinforcement is contingent upon outside forces such as luck, fate, chance, or powerful others (LeUnes & Nation, 1996). College students with an internal locus of control appear to be more likely to exhibit higher levels of career maturity than college students with an external locus of control (Bluestein, 1987; Gable, Thompson, & Glanstein, 1976). Some research on student-athlete locus of control suggests that many student-athletes tend to own a more external rather than internal locus of control (Etzel, 1990; LeUnes & Nation, 1982; Toye, 1987) and that career locus of control is related to a student-athlete's level of career maturity (Ahlgren, 2001; Kornspan & Etzel, 2001). Student-athletes who tell us that they are free to make their own decisions, relatively independent of the influence of others like parents and athletics staff, have a tendency to be more career mature than others. Accordingly, student-athletes with an internal locus of control would be considered more career mature if they believed, for example, that major selection is up to them and that obtaining a first job would be based on their own abilities and job-seeking efforts. These student-athletes are often more goal-oriented. In comparison, less mature student-athletes who own a more external locus of control may take the path of least resistance when choosing a major and/or assume that getting a job will come about as a result of uncontrollable forces, such as luck or fate. These individuals are the more passive.

Unpleasant work?

Another component of Crites' theory that is applicable to career development work with student-athletes is the appreciation that work is not always fun (Crites, 1978). This presumption does not seem to have been discussed much if at all in the literature. If student-athletes have not learned this earlier in life, this revelation is one that incoming young people soon begin to comprehend when the level of academic involvement and training for their sport is experienced as typically much higher than in high school or, in some cases, junior college. This insight and the experiences associated with it may impact one's investment in school, sport, and career development activities.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR HELPERS FROM CAREER MATURITY THEORY AND RESEARCH

It has often been said that there is nothing more practical than a good theory. Based upon the thinking of Super and Crites, several practical suggestions are helpful in facilitating career maturity. These suggestions are also based on the literature above and staff experiences in working with college students and college student-athletes.

Possibilities and Resources

Many potential programming ideas and interventions are available to cultivate student-athlete career maturity. While some of these can involve considerable effort and a small amount of money to develop, most can be crafted in very little time and employed on a very limited budget. Good examples of some basic ideas and interventions can be found in free materials available from the NCAA. For those institutions that have an NCAA CHAMPS/Life Skills program, free instructional and workbook materials are available in the career development commitment area. The topics included in these workbooks are Freshman - Senior Years, Post-College, Agents, Alumni Career Network, and Life after Sports Seminar. (See http://www1.ncaa.org/membership/ed_outreach/champs-life_skills/index.html). Another free resource from the NCAA is the brochure "A career in professional athletics: A guide to making the transition" (NCAA, 2000). At the very least, the inside cover of this publication provides data about the possibility of heading on to professional athletics, information that is an eye-opener for many new student-athletes who strongly identify with the professional sport dream and often bank on doing so.

Early Interventions

Clearly, timing is of the essence in most endeavors; the process of career development programming is no exception. Perhaps the most practical suggestion from a timing perspective is to start early. Several preliminary options exist. One useful initial intervention is to send introductory letters and/or brochures to incoming student-athletes soon after they decide to attend your school. These materials can include information about on-campus services, links to the university's or athletics department's web sites, and information about the student-athlete's academic advisor and/or CHAMPS/Life Skills coordinator.

Most universities also offer summer orientation programs for the general student population with some targeted to specialized groups like student-athletes. These brief encounters are excellent opportunities to meet incoming student-athletes and their families and to share information about career development tasks. With influential family members hopefully present, advisors and others can emphasize the importance of directing some initial effort to these tasks (e.g., major options), even though many student-athletes may not sense its importance at the time. All of these suggestions can help get the career development ball rolling.

Systematic Information Gathering

If time and a little bit of money are available, some brief surveying or standardized testing associated with early career development work (e.g., Self-Directed Search, Career Maturity Inventory Attitude Scale, Athletic Identity Measure, educational and work history surveys) may be appropriate to administer during orientation. Simple "home-made" Likert-scaled questionnaires are easy to create, administer and process. They can be designed to ask about: (a) current thinking about majors, (b) understanding of one's educational/career-related interests, values, and skills; (c) ability to make decisions and confidence in doing so; (d) freedom to make decisions; (e) information available to make decisions; (f) understanding of the steps needed to make decisions; and (g) knowledge of available resources. Such inquiries help to plant career development seeds and begins the process of assisting new student-athletes (e.g., to develop individualized educational-career development portfolios/files).

Based on feedback from these instruments, advisors and counselors can help student-athletes, especially the relatively career immature, with career and academic issues. For example, individual and group counseling sessions or workshops can be offered to help incoming young people learn about decision-making and related transferable life skills (e.g., goal setting). Information from surveys, standardized testing, and brief interviews can also help advisors and counselors get an initial feel for student-athlete backgrounds and developmental status. Recent research has suggested that testing can help student-athletes develop more realistic career plans (Martinelli, 2000). Street and Schroeder (1996) conducted a study in which they implemented both the Self-Directed Search (Holland, 1985) and the SIGI-PLUS program (Educational Testing Service, 2003). These interventions decreased the frequency of student-athletes who chose professional sport as their primary career of choice.

Information Access

Most athletic departments have web sites. These are wonderful places to include information about resources available to student-athletes who find this way of accessing information quite appealing. These sites can include downloadable files on topics of interest (e.g., the career development path, major selection, resume writing) specifically crafted for your school's student-athletes. Links to on-campus (e.g., advising, career and counseling services) and distance resources (e.g., job search sites such as monster.com) may be included. One outstanding web site for advisors, other professionals and student-athletes is "The Counseling Center Village" (see <http://ub-counseling.buffalo.edu/ccv.html>). This site has many free and practical handouts, workshop outlines and links to other related sites.

How and when to access on-campus resources is essential to include on web sites. Many student-athletes are unfamiliar with the location of services that are often housed in facilities that are separate from athletics facilities. Even a campus map can be one small facet of the career development process. While this may seem like common sense, additional information about when these services are open is essential. Hopefully, these services offer assistance at odd times (e.g., evenings) to accommodate student-athletes and others with unique daily schedules.

Although they are not as exciting as web sites, letters, brochures and handouts are helpful and inexpensive. Whenever possible, these should be visually attractive and succinct to fit the apparent reading habits of many of today's student-athletes. For example, the Channing-Bete company publishes several generic brochures that seem to appeal to student-athletes. Good places to display these printed materials are advising offices, study centers, CHAMPS-Life Skills centers, waiting rooms, and athletic training rooms. Again, the "Counseling Center Village" offers many of these downloadable resources for free.

If your school offers a freshman/transfer orientation class for student-athletes, consider devoting at least one or two weeks to the career maturity path. The following options are constructive: (a) having an academic advisor speak about her or his work and majors; (b) inviting speakers from your school's career and/or counseling service to talk about what they offer; (c) having mature student-athletes who have gone through the major selection process to talk about their experiences; (d) administer a brief self-exploratory instrument (e.g., Self-Directed Search, AIMS) or other brief questionnaire to stimulate thinking about self and career awareness. If your institution does not have such a class, consider offering brief mid-day or early evening workshops starting in the fall to advance career maturity. Involve and keep coaches and other athletics staff members informed about any career development activities and resources available to their student-athletes through memos, e-mails and personal contacts.

CHAMPS/Life Skills

As noted above, the NCAA has made a significant investment in career development as part of its CHAMPS/Life Skills program model (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2003). The central purpose of this area is to promote the pursuit of student-athlete career and life goals. Practical aspects of the free resource manual available to program participants include: 1) career development; 2) freshman to senior years; 3) post-college; and 4) life after sports seminar. The Petitpas, et al. (1997) book on athlete career planning is an excellent resource that meshes particularly well with the above CHAMPS/LifeSkills information. Many other useful career development activities can be offered to student-athletes as part of a CHAMPS/Life Skills program. These include providing career development information in an orientation or separate career path class, career development presentations to teams, the encouragement of student-athletes to attend job fairs, job shadowing, resume and job application letter writing, and interview skill development.

SUMMARY

For many collegiate student-athletes, career development appears to be a low priority, afterthought or mystery. For advisors and other helping professionals who serve these young people, such perspectives are often puzzling and/or discouraging to encounter. Background information provided in this article links career development and career maturity theory and related research, thus providing helping opportunities and solutions. Hopefully, the reader can use some ideas to stimulate thinking and creative applications, thus facilitating student-athlete career maturity. Specifically this article described issues that student-athletes face during the specification and implementation stage of career development and also provided practical strategies that advisors can use to help student-athletes through these stages. Athletic identity and career self-efficacy issues in relationship to career maturity of student-athletes during these stages were emphasized. Researchers and practitioners should continue to conduct research on how athletic identity and career self-efficacy affect a student-athletes career development.

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Active Athletes Perceptions of Career and Education Services in the United Kingdom

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ABSTRACT

This study examined perceptions of career and education services among a sample of active athletes in the United Kingdom. Employing both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, athletes eligible to receive support services through the United Kingdom Athlete Career and Education Program (ACE UK) were assessed in terms of their views of athlete advisers and ACE UK services. Results revealed that athletes perceived advisors as central to their career and education service provision, and that this accounted predominantly for its success. The adviser's role as a friend, mentor, and motivator was found to be as significant as the adviser being a source of information and advice, as well as a conduit to other more specialized services. Although a large proportion of athletes were aware of and were using ACE UK services, the reasons for not participating included a lack of perceived need, lack of awareness, athletes' time constraints, and access difficulties.

INTRODUCTION

There has been a growing interest in the career and education needs of elite athletes in recent years. An international special interest group has been developed in association with the European Federation of Sport Psychology to exchange information on applied and investigative work in the area (Lavalley & Wylleman, 2000). At the practical level, there have also been several attempts by governing bodies and sports institutes to promote the development of athletes – beyond sporting or 'performance' concerns – by providing career, education, and other 'lifestyle' support services (Anderson & Morris, 2000; Taylor & Ogilvie, 1998). The Olympic Athlete Career Centre in Canada, for example, designed one of the first programs in 1985 to assist elite-level athletes prepare for retirement (Olympic Athlete Career Centre, 1991). The United States Olympic Committee later initiated the Career Assistance Program for Athletes in 1988 to provide support to retiring athletes during the career transition process (Petitpas, Danish, McKelvin, & Murphy, 1992).

Since 1991, the Olympic Job Opportunities Program has assisted Olympic-calibre athletes in Australia, South Africa and the United States who are committed to developing a professional career as well as achieving their sport-related goals (Olympic Job Opportunities Program, 1996). The Athlete Career and Education (ACE) Program has also been developed to provide career transition services for Australia's elite athletes (Anderson & Morris, 2000), and the United Kingdom Sports Institute has also developed its own version of the ACE Program, entitled the ACE UK Program.

The ACE UK Program

The ACE UK program was established in 1999 to provide elite athletes with career, education and personal development guidance. The program is based on the notion that athletes with a balanced lifestyle are more likely to achieve their sporting goals, cope better with problems such as injury and retirement and have more confidence in their future after sport (UK Sport, 1999). It is currently provided as just one of a number of specific athlete services through the United Kingdom Sports Institute. ACE UK shares many common elements with other career and education programs highlighted above (Anderson & Morris, 2000). Service provision is coordinated through an 'athlete adviser' – ACE UK athlete advisers are typically ex-athletes who have received training in the provision of career and education services, but primarily have been recruited because of their understanding of the needs of elite athletes. The athlete adviser establishes contact with the athlete and begins service provision with an Individual Athlete Assessment, which is used to determine each athlete's educational, career and personal development needs through an Athlete Action Plan. Athletes may then access any of following program elements depending upon their circumstance and needs: (1) Personal Development Courses (i.e., training and development workshops) covering topics such as personal finance planning, media training, and job seeking skills; (2) Education Guidance advice and support concerning access to education at all levels; (3) Career Planning advice and support on career options, planning and job suitability; (4) Transition Support advice and support for athletes undergoing personal and sporting changes such as coping with injury and retirement from sport; and (5) Olympic and Paralympic Employment Network (OPEN) offers to match athletes with meaningful career paths and flexible working arrangements.

This paper presents research extracted from a wider study looking at UK athletes' lifestyles (i.e., their balance between sport, education, work, and leisure) as well as their experiences of, and views on, the ACE UK program (UK Sport, 2001a). This paper focuses, in particular, on athletes' use and perceptions of the ACE UK program in the context of a rapidly changing sporting environment. These changes have largely been stimulated by the UK government's decision to channel an extra estimated £50 million a year (US\$71) into elite sport from 1996 as a result of extra revenues gained through the introduction of national lottery in the UK in 1994. This new funding was used in two ways to support elite athletes: (1) to provide athletes with a 'contributory' grant such that they could, in theory, increase the amount of time they spent training and competing in their sport; and (2) to increase the range and quality of athlete services including coaching, sports science and medicine, training

centers and facilities, and, ACE UK (UK Sport, 2001b). These changes, however, as will be discussed later appear to have freed athletes to focus more on sport, but also brought their own pressures which, it is argued, changed the pattern of consumption of lifestyle services in a manner not yet identified in the athlete career and education literature.

One notable feature of the many evaluations that have looked at athlete experiences of, and views on, elite athlete support programs is that athletes tend to report favorably on the performance enhancing services, but less favorably about the lifestyle services (BMRB, 2000; Gorely et al., 2001). For example, a BMRB (2000) study of the Lottery-funded elite athlete support system in the UK, the World Class Performance Program, suggests that between two-thirds and four-fifths (64%-77%) of athletes reported coaching, sports medicine, sports science, training and competition support were 'excellent' or 'good'; whereas, just under a half (46%) said the same about lifestyle services. This result has been repeated in similar work conducted by UK Sport when evaluating its Lottery-funded programs (e.g., North, 2000). This may indicate quality concerns about lifestyle service provision; however, it is our view that this more likely relates to the notion that athletes focus on sporting concerns above all others and that wider lifestyle development is less of an issue until after retirement from sport (Danish, Petitpas & Hale, 1993).

METHOD

The research focused on those athletes who were currently 'active' on the ACE UK program database, that is, they were either eligible for, or in receipt of, ACE UK services. All, or a vast majority, of these athletes were currently training and competing at the elite level, and a large proportion were deemed to have sufficient potential to receive targeted elite funding support. In this sense, the research presented here offers a different perspective. Despite the growth of career and education programs for athletes, there exists a lack of research among athletes during their competitive careers (Gordon, 1995; Wylleman, Lavalley, & Alfermann, 1999). Based on a review of an annotated bibliography, all of the previous research studies focused only on athletes following their retirement from sport (Lavalley, Wylleman, & Sinclair, 2000).

This research utilized a two-stage methodology. Stage one was qualitative in nature and involved nine face-to-face interviews with athletes drawn from the ACE UK program database. These interviews were used to develop a grounded understanding of the language used and the key issues experienced by the athletes. Stage two was a self-administered postal survey. The aim of this stage was to examine the extent to which the issues and themes generated in the first stage were shared by the wider ACE UK athlete population.

The questionnaire employed in stage two was four pages long and consisted primarily of closed questions focusing on topics developed by examining the key issues emerging from the first stage transcripts. These included athletes' education and career profiles, short term plans, long-term plans related to retirement from competitive sport (including expected years until career termination), and plans about life after sport. Some open-ended questions were also included to allow the athletes to expand on their experiences of, and opinions on, the ACE UK program.

Sample

All 988 athletes eligible to receive ACE UK services in June 2000 (excluding the nine athletes who participated in stage one) were sent the survey questionnaire, an introductory letter, and a reply paid envelope for questionnaire return. The introductory letter explained the purpose of the study and assured confidentiality and anonymity.

A total of 561 valid and completed questionnaires were returned by the athletes (response rate = 57%). There were slightly more males (54%) than females (46%) in the sample, and more able-bodied athletes (83%) than athletes with disabilities (17%). The average age of the overall sample was 26.0 years old. A total of 37 individual and team sports were represented. In the individual sports, 20% of athletes reported that their current performance levels were in the World top 3, 24% in the World top 10, and only 9% suggested they were outside the World top 100. In the team sports, 29% reported that their team's current performance levels were in the World top 3, 46% in the World top 10, and only 8% suggested they were outside the World top 20.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The current research focused on career, education and lifestyle issues and this, it may be argued, appears to have focused the minds of the respondents to a greater extent on these wider issues such that not only were they very positive about the lifestyle services they received, but much more critical of the demands and pressures of what might be termed the 'performance environment'. The results suggest, for example, that the athletes had a very positive view of the services provided through the ACE UK program. This was illustrated particularly in relation to the activities of the athlete advisers, but also some of the more specific ACE UK services. On being asked their overall opinions on the ACE UK program, three-fifths of all athletes sampled were positive about ACE UK (including 30% who were very positive), and only 2% were negative. More importantly, those segments that had used ACE UK were very positive about the program. For example, the highest user segment – those athletes who had an Individual Athlete Assessment, developed an Action Plan and used one of the specific ACE UK services – were virtually unanimous in their praise of the program (94 % were positive, including 65% who were very positive, and none were negative).

Explaining the quality of the ACE UK program requires a different slant to that proffered in the existing literature on athlete career, education, and lifestyle services. In particular, it concerns the role of those individuals responsible for coordinating and in some cases delivering these services, for example, in relation to ACE UK. These individuals are the athlete advisers. Previously, the literature (e.g., Gorely et al., 2001) has tended to depict these individuals as one-dimensional conduits between the athletes and a range of specific services (e.g., career advice, education guidance). There appears to be little discussion of the dynamic between the athlete, athlete adviser, service provision and how this benefits (or otherwise) the athletes. This research addresses this weakness by taking a more detailed look at the athlete – athlete adviser relationship and, indeed, the results illustrate how central this relationship is to the success of the ACE UK program.

ACE UK Athletic Advisers

The research suggests that the athletes were particularly impressed with the services offered by the athlete advisers. These positive impressions, however, were based on more than the simple notion of the adviser as a conduit to more specialized career and education advice and support. Specifically, the athletes appeared to value the athlete advisers on a more personal level, as a source of 'friendship, mentorship and motivation'. This result was underpinned by both quantitative and qualitative evidence.

For example, as outlined in Table 1, the research collected information on seven adviser characteristics: 'friendliness', 'communication', 'confidentiality', 'sensitivity', 'knowledge', 'reliability', and 'flexibility'. The results suggest that athletes were particularly impressed with the advisers' friendliness (very satisfied - 84%), communication (very satisfied - 73%), confidentiality (very satisfied - 73%), and sensitivity (very satisfied - 67%) – all characteristics that could be said to be implicit in good and personalized relationships. The qualitative evidence provides greater insight into the content of the relationship and the motivations involved:

"I think [the ACE UK adviser] is somebody different to talk to but who understands and is interested in your life and what you do. I think I would never want to be an ACE UK adviser, I think that it has got to be the worst job out because you listen to everyone's life and times and what their cat did yesterday and all of that. [They also provide] guidance and information and even if it is information that isn't from ACE UK they can point you in the right direction and tell you who to talk to and give you encouragement and motivation to take responsibility for yourself."

"I have been having a lot of contact with my ACE UK adviser recently and s/he's like a social worker. Originally [I thought ACE UK would] help me with my career and life after sport, but it has been brilliant [because] when I come back from really horrible training session [there is someone there to help] ... [ACE UK] is an outside agency, it is somebody who does not know anything about [the particular issues in] my sport – this is great because I can sound off when I like it and I know it is not going to go any further. It is confidential but I know that if there was anything that my ACE UK adviser could do to help, then s/he would. It is like having, not a psychologist, but just somebody there. Personality wise we get on very well. I think the personal interaction and the fact that you can get them pretty much any time [is very positive]."

"My relationship with [my adviser] is not a teacher-pupil relationship where s/he's giving me advice and I'm just sitting here absorbing it. I'm older, so it was more an individual to bounce ideas off and talk round areas. That's the way that I've used her/him pretty much all the time ... I'd say the main benefit [of ACE UK is] having somebody who knows me personally very well and I am able to bounce ideas off them and get an educated response."

The above quotations illustrate many different elements to the athlete-athlete adviser relationship. For example, the adviser is cited as being a listener, confidant, social worker, motivator, and general mentor. This is an interesting new perspective on the relationship and how it helps the athlete. However, the real key to this relationship appears to be how it benefits the athlete beyond the support offered through more traditional networks, most obviously, family and friends – that is, the adviser's knowledge of the pressures of being an elite competitor, and especially the increasing pressures associated with the introduction of lottery funded support and services; and coaches and other sports specialists – that is, the advisers are interested in issues beyond sporting performance concerns.

The Athlete-Athlete Adviser Relationship

The relationship between athlete and athlete adviser appears to have gained greater meaning as a result of recent changes in elite sport in the UK, and in particular, the introduction of Lottery funding and service provision. Although athletes were generally realistic about the pressures of the being an elite athlete currently, a large proportion were still clearly concerned about the difficulties of balancing sport with education, work, and other commitments in this environment. For example, the results suggest that a third of athletes had problems taking up education opportunities because of the problems of being an athlete. This figure increased to a half (49%) of those currently in education. Over half the respondents (55%) suggested they had problems taking up work opportunities because of the requirements of being an athlete, as suggested in the following quotations:

"It is just trying to fit everything in really. Time to study and time to train and the money, that's the major thing really, it's just the money ... the domestic competitions you have to pay for yourself, your hotel and stuff. You can't get a Saturday job because you are training".

"I went through comprehensive school, sixth form, university, and straight out of university I became a full time athlete, I've had little experience - work experience - so obviously I don't know what the big wide world of work is like out there ... I'd feel much more comfortable competing and training knowing that when I decide to finish that I've got something that I can fall back on almost immediately. The fact that I haven't, and I'm not quite sure where I'm going, causes me concern, and consequently, I spend a lot of time investigating areas [rather than training]".

A number of respondents also suggested that sport has become all-pervading and that this may sometimes have a detrimental impact on all aspects of their lives – sport, education, career, and leisure:

"The reason why I went full-time athlete in the first place was to put the work and education aside for a bit, put it on hold as it were, and then pursue the athletic career to see how far I could actually go. [When I first started full-time] I was up in the morning, train, back, eat, train, sleep, that was it. It was like a military thing. I used to get a bit of a complex, actually, because I'd be sitting in a bar or pub or something, and I'm like, I've got a competition next week, I really shouldn't be here ... After the world championships in 1997 in Athens, I really performed badly – I mean really badly – and my coach was head in hands going, "oh, my God!" I'd just had enough of it, and I just sat in the hotel room thinking, I've had enough of this, I need break. After that I had a month and a half off, I did nothing. It was the end of the season, I wasn't competing. I just thought, right, I'll start back training again and let's sort this out properly. Then I tried to sneak in a bit of a social life as well ... I mean, I wasn't a complete boring sod, but ... my friends used to phone up and say, "we're going out" ... "oh, well, now, I've got to train" ... I thought, right, that's going to stop. I want to do my training, but I'll put it aside, not bring my sport home ... [Before Athens] I was training hard, I knew I was [competing] well, and then there was a lot of pressure on me, and... I remember watching my performance on television, the commentators were really building me up, and then I was absolutely terribly, it was really embarrassing. I'm embarrassed to talk about it now, it was so bad. I thought, it's got to change. So I changed my lifestyle and trained here, socialized there, competed there... 1998 was my best ever year for achievements and consistency, I made the final of the European Championships, I came fourth in the Commonwealth Games; and all year I was just super-consistent. So I think finding that happy medium after 1997 really helped my 98 and 99 season"

"You have no other focus other than sport. You don't have anything, if the sport is going badly, you don't have anything else that is a major focus. Because, effectively your hobby has become a job as well, so there is no escape from it and also I don't find it as mentally stimulating as having a job and trying to balance more than one thing and thinking about different things"

Although these issues are far from new (e.g., Wylleman, De Knop, Menkehorst, Theeboom, & Annerel, 1993), the wider research on which this paper is based suggests that elite competitors are spending more time training and competing and much less time concentrating on education and work issues as a result of the lottery although other issues are also important (i.e., the athlete's place in the sports competitive cycle, their existing resource base) (UK Sport, 2001a). Furthermore, many athletes have noticed a significant change in the attitude of 'performance' support staff such as coaches and sports specialists. This, of course, is not surprising since professional standards and requirements for this group have also increased as a result of the new funding, and often the latter are explicitly remunerated for getting results. Yet for many athletes, the introduction of a lottery-funded system appears to have contributed to an over-emphasis on performance-related factors:

"Once you walk away from the team, they (coaches and performance directors) are not too concerned about where you go after that. I think to some degree these officials are paid in order to achieve performances, and so the majority of their activities is productive towards that end. There isn't a slot of their salary, put aside, to make sure your athletes are all right when they're finished, and consequently maybe they don't have the time, the energy or the resources to be involved in that. I would like to feel though that the relationships that you develop with the officials within your sport, especially in a sport where you're in it for such a long period of time - I've probably been in the sport longer than most of the officials have - and I would like to feel that it's not just a professional relationship you have with them it's a social relationship, you're friends, and it would be nice to feel that they were concerned about your long-term well-being afterwards. Unfortunately there aren't too many individuals who at this moment in time I would jump out and say are. They'll ask after you, "how are you doing", sort of thing, but that's just as far as they go. If you're struggling or whatever or you were in a bit of a crisis, I can't see too many of them bending over backwards to help you."

"I am not thinking of anybody in particular, but you do get some coaches, they get so focused on what they are doing, and their job as a coach, that they don't tend to see the wider picture. Whereas you get other coaches that take a more holistic approach to it all and say well, "if the athletes are happy off court, then they are better on court", so they look at the whole wider picture and get more involvement."

Elite sport appears to be placing increasing demands of the athletes, both physically and psychological. Performance staff were often seen as too focused on performance issues, lacking concern for athletes' wider needs. As a response to these pressures, the athletes appear to have used their athlete advisers as a kind of 'release valve'. The advisers provided independence, friendship, reassurance, motivation, and a 'sympathetic ear' while still understanding the athletes' perspective – that is, showing an understanding of the institutional and performance requirements of high-level sport. Some respondents suggested that athlete advisers should take a more active role mediating between themselves and performance staff. These factors, perhaps more than any others, appear to underpin the positive athlete response to ACE UK.

The athletes' perception of the adviser as a source of friendship, mentorship etc. was reinforced by other similar or 'softer' roles not typically identified in the literature. For example, a number of respondents suggested that their athlete advisers provided some much needed credibility when negotiating with education providers and employers. This, as the following quotations highlight, proved to be a highly valued support service:

"Having an organization which can act as a voice on my behalf [is very useful]. I ring up a [education provider] or something like that and say, "I'm a sportsman, and I'm trying to find out information about this", then yes I might find a bit, but there's a good chance that I maybe wouldn't get the same level of service that I would if [my athlete adviser] rang up and said,

"I'm ringing up on behalf of ACE UK, which is a UK Sports Council initiative, and I'm trying to put together a program of information or a package of information for this, that and the other – can you help me?" I think that carries a lot more weight than old Joe Bloggs ringing up."

"If I went to the university and said "I am athlete and I need a flexible course" and this that and the other, they don't tend to listen. But if you are someone from an organization like ACE UK then they take you more seriously. If it is just me and my mum they just like don't care sort of thing, but if it is someone from an organization they tend to take you seriously."

The results also revealed that just over three-fifths of athletes were very satisfied with the reliability (63%) and flexibility of their adviser – and just under a quarter (23%) were fairly satisfied (Table 1).

"[The delivery is] excellent for me. I live 2 minutes up the road, and [the advisers] here. Usually I can knock on the [her/his] door and s/he'll welcome me in straightaway and find time to talk about it. If s/he can't do it immediately then usually it's some time in that day."

Despite this, respondents who provided open responses in the main survey frequently mentioned concerns about delivery issues. In particular, they were concerned that there were insufficient athlete advisers to effectively cover all athletes who would like to receive services.

"Our ACE UK adviser is very busy and it is quite difficult to find time to accommodate us all in this area, therefore, another more casual ACE UK adviser would be useful."

Athletes were also concerned that there was not enough communication and feedback from their athlete advisers – perhaps as a result of the fact that the advisers are very busy dealing with other cases. The respondents wanted more one-to-one meetings with their ACE UK advisers, and they wanted advisers to show more interest. This illustrates a major policy finding from the research that for the athlete advisers to perform the role effectively, it is a full-time physically and emotionally intensive activity, and thus the athletes quickly realise when resources run short.

The Adviser as a Source of Information and Conduit to Other Services

When athletes were asked for their views on the athlete advisers' 'knowledge', it was found that over a half were very satisfied (56%), just under a third were fairly satisfied (31%) and 2% were dissatisfied (see Table 1). This is supported by evidence from the following open responses:

"[ACE UK athlete advisers] open your eyes to what is available. [There is] always someone to talk to, to get advice from. The adviser has knowledge that is useful, gives you options."

"[My athlete adviser] came over and each meeting I would discuss where I want to go and that has been quite good because at the beginning of the year I was quite confused and now I have thought about what I want to do."

Although encouraging, the 'very satisfied' figure for athlete advisers' 'knowledge' was ranked the lowest for all the adviser characteristics covered in the survey (see Table 1). In some respects, the role is difficult because the advisers are expected to have knowledge of a wide range of areas (i.e., specific career and education opportunities). So were there any problems with the advisers as a source of information and knowledge? Evidence from the face-to-face interviews and open responses in the main survey suggest that advisers could improve their knowledge in two not necessarily complementary areas.

Firstly, the respondents commented that the advice they received from their adviser did not meet their specific or technical education and career needs. This criticism tended to come from those athletes with higher qualifications and/or who were looking for career opportunities in highly specialized and technical areas, as indicated in the following quotations:

"Obviously, ACE UK and Open are really new. But as they develop and progress, they will get better and their umbrella is going to get wider and the advisers will get more experienced in what they are doing. I think their advisers are quite inexperienced. I can only really talk about [adviser], but [s/he] was an athlete, and [her/his] actual experience of careers or careers advice, must be pretty minimal. [Her/his] experience comes from being a full time athlete, so [s/he] can relate to that side, but I don't think her/his experience as a career adviser is particularly high. But obviously as the scheme evolves and [s/he] spends longer in the job, [her/his] level of expertise is going to increase, assuming that ACE UK offers their advisers the necessary training for them as well. I think the basic [ACE UK] idea is right, it is just going to take a while to flush out."

Secondly, the respondents suggested that they would benefit from their advisers having more knowledge about the specific details of their sport:

"I wouldn't expect [my ACE UK adviser] to go out and read ten books on [my sport] but I just find it frustrating when I say, I did this, and this is about classification."

"An ACE UK adviser was brought in as I was being dropped from [my program]. S/he had no knowledge of my sport and therefore was no help at all. Try to encourage a wider selection of former sports persons to become ACE UK advisers. Athletes need to feel that adviser has some knowledge or experience of their sporting environment."

Others were content with the services, however:

"I think it is good to have specialist knowledge of combining sport and work, and rather than if you went to any other careers adviser. They (careers advisers) are used to dealing with people who are solely looking for a career, rather than trying to combine it with sport. I think that athletes are a case to themselves, so it is good that you have got someone specifically to look with that in mind."

The advisers also provided a number of specific services to the athletes, for example, action planning, informal career or education advice; or provided access to relevant services provided by others. The research allowed for the analysis of athletes' views on these services. With regard to action planning, the results suggest that about three quarters of athletes (76%) who developed a plan found them useful, including just under a quarter who found them very useful (23%) (see Table 2). Although these results are positive, they are not quite as positive when compared with education and career advice alluded to below. This may reflect the 'journey' rather than the 'destination' nature of the action plan, that is, it is part of the process rather than the actual acquisition of new skills and ideas.

The results also suggest that some athletes were less than convinced by the level of formalization implicit in the action planning process. Athletes may feel tied by a formal plan when they need to retain flexibility to fit in training and competition as well as work and education. Over two-fifths (43%) of athletes who had an Individual Athlete Assessment had decided not to develop an action plan. Just over one-in-ten athletes who were aware of ACE UK were using other ACE UK services without reference to an action plan. Although useful for many athletes, the action plan may not necessarily be seen as central to lifestyle service provision, since to some, the level of formalization may discourage the take-up of other ACE UK services in some athletes.

Nearly all (97%) athletes who had used education guidance suggested it was useful, and over half thought it was very useful (51%). For example, several respondents commented favorably on their athlete adviser's attempts to find them a place at university that was flexible to their needs as athletes. Others were simply impressed by the advice on training courses received although some athletes suggested that they received only limited help in relation to their specific training requirements.

Just over nine out of ten athletes (94%) who had used personal development courses suggested they were useful, and just under half (46%) reported they were very useful (see Table 2). The research indicated that respondents had used and valued a wide range of courses although some suggested that there should be more consultation with athletes on course content. A number of respondents with defined career paths suggested that personal development courses were not specialized enough for their needs. Interestingly, several athletes made favorable remarks about media training, including the following from one athlete in the study:

"The [media] course was useful. I do get reporters coming up, and we do get cameras up your nose and up your bottom, and if I can learn to face them a little bit better [that's good]. I have to present myself so that it would help the sport, because if the sport gets a bit more highlighted then [we will all benefit]."

Just under nine out of ten athletes (88%) who had used career planning suggested that it was useful, and just over two-fifths reported it was very useful (42%). Respondents reported feeling more aware of the career opportunities open to them, more organized in relation to their career prospects, and having something to focus on when injured from sport. However, just over one-in-ten athletes (12%) who had used career planning suggested that it was not very useful – again this related to the need for more specialized help and support.

Despite an overwhelming interest and support for the principles underpinning the OPEN network, it appears as if respondents' experiences to date have been rather modest. The problems perhaps relate to the relative newness of this service provision (it was not fully established at the time of the research and was recently re-launched during the writing of this paper) and, more specifically, how much time and resources it takes to develop this kind of service effectively. Although just over a half of the athletes (56%) who had used the OPEN network suggested it was useful (including 44% who thought it was very useful), just under half (44%) thought it was not very useful.

Reasons for Not Utilizing ACE UK Services

Although a large proportion of athletes were aware and were using ACE UK services, between just over a third and half of all the athletes were not aware, had not used, or had only a very minimal use of ACE UK services. The research looked in more detail at why these athletes were not using ACE UK services and revealed that it was related to the lack of perceived need, lack of awareness, athletes' time constraints, and access difficulties.

The results suggest that the main reason why the athletes did not use ACE UK was because they perceived that there was little or no need. This reason was mentioned by just under a quarter of athletes (23%), by a half (49%) of those athletes who were aware of ACE UK but had not used its services to date, and by a third of those athletes (31%) who had an Individual Athlete Assessment but not taken ACE UK service provision any further (see Table 3). There are a number of possible explanations for why respondents believe that they do not need ACE UK services, but it seems likely that most are related to the existing education and work profile of the athletes, which in turn are largely a function of age and life-cycle factors (Lavallee, Gordon & Grove, 1996).

The next main reason why athletes did not use ACE UK services relates to a lack of awareness (12%). Approximately 8% of the sample had not heard of ACE UK. However, lack of awareness extends beyond the recognition or otherwise of the brand 'ACE UK' – and respondents appeared discouraged from using ACE UK because they were unaware of the nature and content of services underpinning the program. For example, one in ten athletes who had heard of ACE UK implied that they did not use ACE UK services because they were unaware of what service provision entailed. A number of athletes were also concerned about general access to ACE UK services because they were uncertain about their eligibility.

Another reason why athletes were not using ACE UK services was related to athletes' time constraints. Moreover, about 7% of athletes, and 14% of athletes who were aware of ACE UK but had not yet used its services, suggested that they did not use ACE UK because they were too busy training, competing, working or in education; or because personal development courses, in particular, were provided at a time when they were otherwise pre-occupied (see Table 3). In some instances this may relate to the time in which the fieldwork was undertaken, that is, in the run up to the Sydney Olympics. However, as indicated in the following quotation, it is clear that some athletes feel too constrained by the sporting demands in their lives to consider using ACE UK:

"As an athlete, I feel that during competition time there is no point putting ACE UK programs on, because my time-table is so demanding that I cannot make time to attend. There are programs I am very interested in and therefore it would suit myself and others to schedule them during off season, as this is not as critical a time."

Finally, about 4% of respondents suggested that they did not use ACE UK services because they had difficulties accessing services. The athletes reported that the geographical coverage of the ACE UK advisers was often limited, that is, they did not cover all of the UK in an even manner. They also reported that they had difficulty attending events because of where they lived.

Future Use of ACE UK Services

Those athletes who were unaware of ACE UK, or who were aware but had not used ACE UK services to date, were asked whether they would use the program in the future. The results suggest that just over two-fifths (43%) would use ACE UK, including over half (54%) of those who were currently aware of the program. This suggests that if awareness of the program, and in particular awareness of the content of the program, could be raised, then take-up of services will continue to increase in the future. These figures would also presumably increase if many of the issues raised above (viz., relevance, timing, and location) were addressed.

"I haven't used ACE UK to date because I hadn't needed to. It's not because I didn't want to, it's just because I hadn't felt as if I needed to yet, if that makes sense. I know it's there, I know what they do, but I've just been concentrating on my sport and I've been away training a lot, and I just thought, well, that's something to do another time ... I really want to learn a language, so maybe if I find, 'right, I've got time to do this now, let's really go for it, then I know that I can phone up, one phone call, and say, right, I want to do this course - is there anything you can do, can you send me some information, can you help me out?' So I know that they'll be there. But to date the reason why I haven't phoned them or contacted them is because I haven't actually wanted to do that yet. And I use the word yet."

"Though I have not yet used ACE UK services it is reassuring to know they are there when I choose to use them. [ACE UK] helps lessen worries about future beyond sport, knowing that there is some sort of system to help guide and advise me in career matters."

CONCLUSION

Sports governing bodies and institutes are increasingly coming to recognize the importance of providing athletes with lifestyle services such as career and education advice beyond the provision of other more performance related services such as coaching, sports science and sports medicine. Various programs have emerged over the last 20 years, and the ACE UK program represents one of the most recent incarnations of this ever-developing model. At the same time, the literature's understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of these programs is also increasing - be it from a low base - as agencies commission and undertake evaluation and research in this area (Lavalley & Wylleman, 2000).

The research presented in this paper has contributed to this growing understanding in a number of ways. First, it has looked at the experiences and opinions of athletes who are still training and competing, an issue that was considered to be a weakness in the existing literature. Second, the research design - a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches - has provided a detailed analysis of the issues involved, highlighting in particular the important role which is played, or could be played, by those who deliver the lifestyle services to the athletes - in the case of ACE UK, the athlete advisers.

The athletes in this study generally perceived athlete advisers as central to ACE UK service provision, and this appeared to account for a large share of its apparent success. The surprising issue, however, was that it was not the typically depicted role of the adviser as a source of information and advice and conduit to other more specialized lifestyle services that that athletes considered important. Rather the athletes appeared to value more the role the advisers play as a friend, mentor and motivator. This appears to have been compounded by recent changes to sports funding and service provision in the UK, resulting from the introduction of the UK's national lottery. This has not only increased the pressure on athletes to devote more of their time to sport and delivering sporting performances, at the expense of other lifestyle considerations, but also it has affected - the athletes argued - the environment in which they are training and competing as shaped by performance staff (e.g., coaches, sports scientists). The athlete advisers act as a release valve from this environment; they are people that athletes can trust, talk to about their problems and generally gain the personal/emotional support which all individuals require when dealing with problems.

Although these personal/emotional issues were very important, the athletes still used the athlete advisers and other services provided through the ACE UK program as a more instrumental source of information and advice. Here the advisers did slightly less well than in relation to the more personal/emotional issues – although generally the feedback was still positive. For example, a majority of athletes was very satisfied with the education and career guidance they received. But like all 'consumer' groups, athletes can be segmented by their particular needs and requirements. Thus younger, less well-qualified, less experienced athletes were more likely to see value in the education and career advice they were offered than those with established education and career paths. This highlights a particular concern for the athlete adviser, and subsequently international career and education programs, as to how can they be all things to all athletes? How can they have the requisite knowledge of sporting issues, detailed and technical education and career guidance information, and also have the ability to deal with the personal and emotional placed upon them by the athletes?

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TABLE 1.

Percentage of Athletes' Views on ACE UK Athlete Advisers Characteristics

	Very Satisfied	Fairly	Neither	Fairly Dissatisfied	Very
Friendliness	84	14	2	0	0
Communication	73	22	3	1	0
Confidentiality	73	18	8	1	0
Sensitivity	67	22	11	1	0
Knowledge	56	31	10	2	0
Reliability	63	23	12	2	0
Flexibility	61	23	16	1	0

Base: All athletes who have met an ACE UK adviser and who expressed a view on the service offered.

TABLE 2.

Percentage of Athletes' Views on Action Plans and the Specific ACE UK Services

	Action Plan	Educ. Guid.	Personal Devel. Courses	Career Plan.	OPEN Network	Transition Support
Very Useful	23	51	46	42	44	60
Fairly Useful	53	47	48	46	11	40
Not Very Useful	20	3	6	12	44	0
Not At All Useful	4	0	0	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Base: Athletes who had used action plans or any specific ACE UK services and who expressed a definitive view as to their use.

TABLE 2.

Percentage of Why Athletes Have Not Used ACE UK

	No Need	Not Aware	No Time	Access Difficulty	Quality Problems	Other
Unaware of ACE UK	8	92	0	0	0	0
Aware but no Usage	49	11	14	11	2	8
Had Indiv. Athlete Assessment	31	2	5	2	2	0
Had Athlete Assessment Made Action Plan	16	1	8	2	2	1
Total	23	12	7	4	1	2

Base: Athletes who provided a definitive response to the question.

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Effects of Transferable Skills Workshops on the Career Self-Efficacy of College Student-Athletes

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ABSTRACT

This study was designed to investigate the effects of two types of transferable skills workshops on the career self-efficacy of intercollegiate student-athletes. Student-athletes ($N = 79$) were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: (a) a control condition that involved viewing a video on sports nutrition, (b) an unaugmented transferable skills workshop that was based on the model suggested by Petitpas and Schwartz (1989), and (c) an augmented transferable skills workshop similar to the unaugmented workshop but including completion of a self-report inventory designed to help athletes identify sport-related skills that can transfer to other domains. All participants completed the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Short-Form (CDSE-SF; Betz & Taylor, 2001) before and after the workshops. Analyses of covariance (ANCOVAs) with CDSE-SF pretest scores as a covariate revealed that the augmented transferable skills workshop produced significantly greater increases in career self-efficacy than the unaugmented transferable skills workshop and the control condition. Paired samples t -tests indicated that both transferable skills workshops, but not the control condition, produced statistically significant gains in career self-efficacy. The results suggest that both transferable skills workshops can have a positive influence on the career self-efficacy of student-athletes and that a standardized transferable skills inventory can be a helpful tool in enhancing the ability of student-athletes to identify transferable skills that can increase their career self-efficacy.

INTRODUCTION

Intercollegiate student-athletes have been identified as a population that requires special support services (Chartrand & Lent, 1987; Ferrante, Etzel, & Lantz, 1996; Lanning, 1982; Parham, 1993; Remer, Tongate, & Watson, 1987). Researchers investigating student-athletes have revealed several developmental concerns, including lower career maturity (Kennedy & Dimick, 1987; Martens & Cox, 2000; Murphy, Petitpas, & Brewer, 1996; Smallman & Sowa, 1996), lower levels on age appropriate developmental tasks (Sowa & Gressard, 1983), and lower academic attainment (Purdy, Eitzen, & Hufnagel, 1982) relative to non-athlete peers. It has been suggested that these concerns, all of which may have an adverse impact on the career development of student-athletes, arise as a consequence of student-athletes' dual roles as student and athlete (Ferrante et al., 1996; Selby, Weinstein, & Bird, 1990) and the nature of the intercollegiate athletic system (Eitzen, 2001; Sperber, 2001).

Researchers have also argued that athletes, through participation in sport, can gain skills that have value in other fields (Danish, 1983; Danish, Petitpas, & Hale, 1990, 1993). Skills that can be transferred to other domains are called transferable skills (Bolles, 1992). Danish, Petitpas, and Hale (1992) suggested that "sometimes, especially in a sports situation, it is not the lack of skills per se but the athlete's inability to transfer the desired skill from a sport to a non-sport setting that impedes the athlete from achieving success in non-sport settings" (p. 410). Accordingly, to facilitate the career development of student-athletes, it may be useful to assist student-athletes in identifying their transferable skills and applying them in the career realm.

There are only a small number of studies that have examined the effectiveness of career development interventions on student-athletes. Nelson (1982) found that freshmen intercollegiate student-athletes who attended career counseling workshops had significantly higher grade point averages than student-athletes who were not enrolled in these sessions. The United States Olympic Committee (USOC) created the Career Assistance Program for Athletes (CAPA) to assist Olympic level athletes in planning for future careers (Petitpas, Danish, McKelvain, & Murphy, 1992). Nancy Hilliard, who coordinated the CAPA and was a former Olympian herself, commented, "A major problem for athletes in making the transition from sports competition to new careers is, believe it or not, self-esteem... They are confident in their sports, but they feel ill-equipped outside them" (Hanlon, 1988, p. 5). Most CAPA participants reported that they had benefited from the experience and stated that they were more confident in their abilities to engage in career development. They rated the transferable skills identification portion of the workshop as the most useful component of the overall experience (Petitpas et al., 1992).

Although no published studies have examined the effects of interventions on student-athletes' confidence to engage in career development activities, several investigations have explored the effects of interventions on the career self-efficacy of students in general and have produced contradictory results. For example, Fukuyama, Probert, Neimeyer, Nevill, and Metzler (1988) investigated the effects of a computer assisted guidance system called DISCOVER on the career self-efficacy and decision making of 77 undergraduates who had not yet declared an academic major. The researchers found significant improvements on career self-efficacy and decision making of participants after working on the DISCOVER program for one hour.

In contrast, evaluation data from a similar career development intervention conducted by Kraus and Hughey (1999) revealed no significant effects on career decision-making self-efficacy or career indecision in high school students, even though the intervention was facilitated by an experienced school counselor twice a week for a period of four consecutive weeks. A possible explanation for the inconsistent findings in this area is the age of the participants. There is some evidence that providing college students with a list of transferable skills or a print-out of specific occupational information can influence their level of career self-efficacy (Fukuyama et al., 1988). As such, college students may be more realistic in their self-appraisals and responsive to career development interventions than high school students.

The purpose of the current study was to assess the effects of two types of transferable skills workshops on the career self-efficacy of college student athletes. The goal of both workshops was to help student-athletes identify and gain confidence in their ability to transfer skills to non-sport domains. One of the workshops was augmented with a pencil-and-paper inventory designed specifically for athletes to facilitate the process of identifying transferable skills. It was predicted that the augmented transferable skills workshop would produce a greater increase in career self-efficacy than the unaugmented transferable skills workshop and a control condition. It was also hypothesized that both transferable skills workshops would produce significant increases in career self-efficacy over baseline, whereas the control condition would not.

METHOD

Participants

Participants were 79 college student-athletes (45 males [30 football players and 15 basketball players] and 34 females [14 softball players and 20 soccer players]) enrolled at a small NCAA Division III institution. The mean age for participants was 19.08 ($SD = 1.14$) years. In terms of self-reported race/ethnicity, the sample was 86% White, not of Hispanic origin; 10% Black, not of Hispanic origin; 3% other; and 1% unspecified. The college year distribution for the participants was 57% freshman, 17% sophomore, 15% junior, and 11% senior. One-third of the participants reported playing more than one sport in college, and 87% of the participants were on varsity teams. Participants reported having been involved in their particular sport for approximately 1 to 13 years.

Measures

A demographic questionnaire was used to obtain information regarding the gender, age, college year, intercollegiate sport involvement, and length of involvement in the primary sport of participants. The Career Decision Self-Efficacy Short-Form (CDSE-SF; Betz & Taylor, 2001), an abbreviated version of the Career Decision Making Self-Efficacy Short-Form (CDMSE-SF; Betz, Klein, & Taylor, 1996), was used to assess career self-efficacy. The CDSE-SF is a 25-item instrument with response options ranging from "no confidence at all" to "complete confidence" on a 10-point confidence continuum. Betz and Taylor reported adequate internal consistency for the CDSE-SF. The concurrent validity of the CDMSE-SF has been documented through significant correlations with self-efficacy (Betz & Klein, 1996) and, as reported by Taylor and Betz (1983) and Robbins (1985), scales of the Career Decision Scale (Osipow, Carney, Winer, Yanico, & Koschier, 1980) and My Vocational Situation (Holland, Daiger, & Power, 1980), respectively.

Procedure

Participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: (a) control condition ($n = 22$); (b) transferable skills workshop ($n = 30$); or (c) augmented transferable skills workshop ($n = 27$). Participants in all three groups completed an informed consent document, the demographic questionnaire, and the CDSE-SF. All workshops were scripted and were approximately one hr in length. The workshops were facilitated by graduate students enrolled in a master's level counseling program who received training in delivering the workshop content. The workshop facilitators rotated across conditions to control for differences in individual presenting skills. Members of the control group were shown a video on eating disorders in student-athletes and, after a brief question-and-answer session, asked to complete the CDSE-SF a second time.

The two transferable skills workshop conditions followed the format outlined in the *Athlete's Guide to Understanding and Identifying Transferable Skills* (Petitpas & Schwartz, 1989) to facilitate the identification of transferable skills by student-athletes. The workshops consisted of large and small group activities designed to assist student-athletes in identifying transferable skills that they have learned through sport and facilitating the transfer of these skills to other career-related domains. The workshops were designed to enhance the career self-efficacy of student-athletes by providing the four sources of self-efficacy information (i.e., performance accomplishments, vicarious learning or modeling, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal) specified by Bandura (1977). Small group discussions were intended to enable vicarious learning from other student-athletes in the group and reduce anxiety about the career decision making process. Group facilitators emphasized that student-athletes had already taken an important first step in their career development through sport participation. At the conclusion of the workshops, participants completed the CDSE-SF for the second time.

The transferable skills workshop condition and the augmented transferable skills workshop condition were essentially identical with the exception that participants in the latter condition also completed the Transferable Skills Inventory (TSI; Cornelius et al., 2001), a self-report instrument on which respondents rate the extent to which they have acquired each of 88 skills (e.g., motivating others, making good decisions, being competitive) through sport or other activities on a scale from 0 (*not at all*) to 4 (*very well*). TSI items are clustered in 11 skill areas (with 8 items per cluster): communication skills, teamwork skills, leadership skills, ethics and proper conduct, problem solving skills, self-motivation skills, organization skills, physical skills and knowledge, coping skills, execution skills, and creativity skills. Group facilitators helped participants interpret their TSI scores as part of the process of identifying transferable skills gained through sport participation.

Statistical Analysis

An analysis of co-variance (ANCOVA) was performed on CDSE-SF post-test scores with CDSE-SF pre-test scores as a co-variate to investigate the different effects of the unaugmented and augmented transferable skills workshops on career self-efficacy. Two additional ANCOVAs were performed to compare the CDSE-SF post-test scores (controlling for CDSE-SF pre-test scores) of (a) the control group and the augmented transferable skills workshop group, and (b) the unaugmented transferable skills workshop group and the augmented transferable skills workshop group. In

these additional analyses, a multistage test by Holm (1979) was used to adjust the alpha level for inflated Type I error when testing multiple hypotheses with ANCOVA. Finally, paired samples *t*-tests were performed on pre-test and post-test CDSE-SF scores to investigate the effect of each workshop separately on career self-efficacy.

RESULTS

Means for the pre-test and post-test scores of CDSE-SF are presented in Table 1. As shown in Table 2, there was a significant difference in post-test CDSE-SF scores of participants across the three conditions when controlling for pre-test CDSE-SF scores, $F(2, 75) = 5.19, p < .01$. For the Holm's test used in the follow-up analyses, the alpha level was divided by the number of hypotheses remaining to be tested. Thus, the alpha level for the ANCOVA comparing the post-test CDSE-SF scores of the control group to the scores of the augmented transferable skills workshop group, while controlling for pre-test CDSE-SF scores, was .025. The adjusted mean CDSE-SF score of the augmented transferable skills workshop group was significantly higher than the adjusted mean score for the control group, $F(1, 46) = 6.73, p < .013$.

For the remaining ANCOVA, the alpha level (.05) was divided by 1 because there was one hypothesis left to be tested. The ANCOVA comparing the post-test CDSE-SF scores of the unaugmented transferable skills workshop group and the augmented transferable skills workshop group, while controlling for pre-test CDSE-SF scores, revealed that the adjusted mean CDSE-SF score for the augmented transferable skills workshop group was significantly higher than the adjusted mean score for the unaugmented transferable skills workshop group, $F(1, 54) = 5.01, p < .029$.

Paired samples *t*-tests performed on CDSE-SF scores separately for each workshop indicated that: (a) there was no significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores for the control group, $t(21) = -.24, p > .05$; and (b) post-test scores were significantly higher than pre-test scores for both the unaugmented transferable skills workshop group, $t(29) = 2.95, p < .01$, and the augmented transferable skills workshop group, $t(26) = 3.57, p < .001$. Thus, although the CDSE-SF scores of the control group did not increase after the workshop, they did increase after the two transferable skills workshops.

DISCUSSION

This current study was designed to examine the effects of two types of transferable skills workshops on the career self-efficacy of a group of intercollegiate student-athletes. Both of the transferable skills workshops followed the model suggested by Petitpas and Schwartz (1989), but participants in the augmented workshop also completed the TSI as part of the workshop protocol.

The career self-efficacy level of student-athletes who participated in the transferable skills workshops increased significantly compared to that of the control group. In addition, participants who completed the TSI as part of their transferable skills workshop showed higher levels of career self-efficacy than student-athletes who did not complete the TSI. It appears that participating in transferable skills workshops helps student-athletes to identify personal skills that enhance their beliefs about their abilities and their confidence to engage in the career development process.

Consistent with the results of the Olympic CAPA program (Petitpas et al., 1992), participants in the present study who participated in a transferable skills workshop increased their career self-efficacy. In addition, those student-athletes who also completed the TSI showed even greater increases in career self-efficacy. Exposing student-athletes to a wide variety of transferable skills may be helpful in challenging personal beliefs about their abilities to engage successfully in career development. Danish et al. (1993) suggested that one of the primary reasons that skills acquired through sport participation do not transfer automatically to other career domains is that athletes often do not understand what skills they have learned. As a result of having student-athletes examine and discuss a list of skills that are often learned through sports participation, they may challenge their self-doubts and change their self-talk from "I have never done this before" to "I have done this before." From the result of the present study, it appears that the TSI can be a useful self-assessment tool for student-athletes and a helpful component of a comprehensive career development program for intercollegiate student-athletes.

The present study had several limitations. All of the participants were team sport student-athletes from a Division III school who were randomly assigned to one of the three conditions. No additional attempt was made to match the groups by age or number of years in college, which could have been related to the effect of the transferable skills workshops. In addition, controlling for all the factors related to the exact adherence of the workshop presenters to the planned format of each workshop was difficult. These limitations should be addressed in future research.

In general, the results of the study supported the hypothesis that transferable skills workshops can positively influence career self-efficacy in student-athletes. The more exposure that student-athletes have to transferable skills through tools such as the TSI, the greater the possibility that they will be able to identify more of their own skills and thereby increase their career self-confidence. Other resources on transferable skills are available on the Internet (e.g., www.studentaffairs.cmu.edu/career/CareerBriefs/transkills.html, www.lifeworktransitions.com/exercises.html). Although the study provided some empirical support for the effects of transferable skills workshops, more research is needed to investigate the effectiveness of other career-related interventions with student-athletes, such as computer-based and one-on-one counseling.

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TABLE 1.

Descriptive Statistics by Group (N = 79)

Group	Pre-test		Post-test		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Control	91.36	38.04	90.45	43.68	22
Unaugmented Transferable Skills Workshop	83.00	32.00	87.60	34.25	30
Augmented Transferable Skills Workshop	83.85	38.31	97.33	40.99	27

TABLE 2.

ANCOVA Results Comparing the Three Groups

Comparison	F Value	Degrees of freedom	Alpha level	p value
Differences among all three groups	5.19	2,75	.05	.008*
Augmented group versus control group	6.73	1,46	.025	.013*
Augmented group versus unaugmented group	5.01	1,54	.05	.029*

* indicates significant differences between groups

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Student-Athletes: How Do They Cope?

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ABSTRACT

The ways student-athletes cope with academic and athletic situations on campus will be discussed in this paper. The authors examine four models for helping and coping that have direct application to working with student-athletes. They also present a goal-setting model and discuss implications for athletic academic advisors.

INTRODUCTION

As athletics departments continue their efforts to offer academic and personal support to students, it is helpful to consider the overall model they try to implement. Such a model should provide the overall structure and philosophy governing the actions of support staff on campus. Ferrante, Etzel and Pinkney (1991) noted that institutions could take one of two directions in developing their programs by either using: (1) personnel from outside the institution and outside of the athletics department or (2) providing services from someone within the institution or within the athletics department. In their paper, they have listed services such as education, counseling, assessment, consultation and referral as components of a viable program for student-athletes. In examining their paper and papers by such authorities as Brooks, Etzel, & Ostrow (1987), Chartrand & Lent (1987), Pearson & Petipas (1990), the authors have not found an overriding model for a program's philosophy. In this paper, we present an overview based on a paper by Brickman, Rabinowitz, Karuza, Coates, Cohn and Kidder (1982) addressing approaches for helping and coping which we believe can help athletic advising personnel examine the overriding philosophy they may use in their programs

Who is responsible?

Many academic advisors see their role as helping students deal with the maze of issues they face when they are on our campuses. As advisors, many individuals stress the need for the student-athletes to learn to take responsibility for their academic, athletic, and personal lives on campus. Oftentimes we hear of immature athletes who do not take responsibility, and consequently we spend vast amounts of time trying to help them develop a sense of responsibility.

The Models

According to Brickman et al., (1982) there are four basic models used by helping professionals as they work with individuals. All of the models they present provide some way to attribute the responsibility of the problem and the manner in which the problem is addressed by helpers. The authors note that blame is placed on people when we believe they are responsible for the creation of their problem. We also give others control when we make them responsible for changing events in their lives.

The moral model is the first model presented by Brickman et al., (1982). The basic premise is that individuals are seen as responsible for both the creation and the solution of their problems. When this model is in place, the student-athlete may be seen as lazy and not being willing to take the effort to follow through on his or her responsibilities. A good example of this is the individual who does not attend classes and rapidly falls behind in the course work. Often athletic advisors try to influence the individual by reminding student-athletes that their fate on campus is in their own hands, and it is up to the students to get involved in both learning and assignments. A positive point in using this approach is that we can compel student-athletes to recognize their part in the total picture of their academic success and appreciate the responsibility they have for this. However, there is a downside to this, as they may believe that by simply taking responsibility they can eventually develop a mastery of all things in their lives. This is unrealistic as one may have the desire but not the tools to achieve such overall mastery. Brickman et al. (1982) caution that the use of the moral model can lead to a sense of loneliness based on the belief that when one does not gain success, it was because he or she was not in the proper frame of mind, was not responsible and thus failed. Such attributions may lead to loneliness and feelings of isolation.

The compensatory model is the second developed by Brickman et al., (1982). Through this approach, the individual is not blamed for the problem but held responsible for its solution. When applying this line of thinking, the individual is expected to overcome the obstacles in life, either through one's own strategies or with the cooperation of others. Student-athletes who have learning disabilities may fall into this model. They are seen as not being responsible for the learning disability but are expected to put forth efforts to cope and compensate for their situation. Special meetings with tutors who deal with learning disabilities, having extended test times, and getting assistance from note takers or books on tape are all strategies used in the compensatory model. A positive aspect of this model is that it provides individuals with strategies outside of themselves that can help them find success. Since they are not blamed for their problem, they can often rely on the assistance of others to help them compensate. A negative perspective of this model is that individuals may feel pressured to find ways to compensate, while from the student's perspective, others seem to have been dealt a better hand and do not have to get the extra help.

A model familiar with individuals who work with student-athletes is the medical model. From the Brickman et al., (1982) paper, this is the model where the individual is not held responsible for the creation of one's problem or for its solution. Sometimes student-athletes have situations happen that are totally out of their control and need assistance from others to remedy the situation. The student-athlete who gets injured in practice or during a game is a prime example of this model. He or she must rely on the medical staff to treat the specific situation. Athletic advisors can work with

these individuals to assist them with scheduling and tutoring adjustments while they are in the rehabilitation process. The positive perspective of this model is that the individual is neither blamed nor held totally responsible for the solution of the problem. From the negative side, if not careful, one can begin to rely too heavily on others and thus develop a dependency. The athletic advisor must monitor the situation to be sure that the student-athlete is moving toward a sense of independence when recovering from an injury and may wish to meet with medical personnel to get a perspective on how much he or she needs to support the student-athlete without promoting a dependency relationship.

Lastly, the enlightenment model places the responsibility for creating the problem on the person, while not stressing his or her responsibility for the solution of the problem (Brickman, et al., 1982). The model emphasizes that the person may not perceive having control over his/her experiences. An example of this model is when a student-athlete tests positive for substance abuse and admits to the staff that he or she has developed a substance abuse problem. Obviously, one of the solutions used is to get the individual into a treatment program in order to understand and deal with the problem. Programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous provide the structure for individuals seeking help for their drinking problems. Brickman et al., (1982) indicate that a negative outcome of such treatment may be that people reconstruct their entire lives around coping with their dependency problems. Consequently, they become so focused on their addiction problems that they miss opportunities to participate in other rewarding activities.

Implications

In discussing these models, it is important to keep in mind that student-athletes seek out individuals who they see as genuinely caring for them to assist them. They also seek individuals who provide clear communication to them and assist them in dealing with the logical consequences of their behavior. This idea of genuineness reflects what Rogers, (1980) wrote about when he noted, "The more the therapist is himself or herself in the relationship . . . the greater is the likelihood that the client will change and grow in a constructive manner", (p. 115).

Advisors all know that student-athletes have great opportunities on their campuses to stretch themselves and grow in ways that would not be possible in some of their home communities. By being a caring and genuine person, the athletic advisor can assist in this process.

Coupled with this is the need to communicate clearly with student-athletes. This requires that the athletic advisor know policies, procedures and can accurately communicate them to the student-athlete. This does not mean that one acts as a message board, but that an effort is put forth to give the student-athlete a clear, accurate picture of his or her dilemma without glossing over the situations that may present problems later on in the student-athlete's life on campus.

Having to live with being a responsible citizen on campus requires student-athletes to be prepared to deal with the logical consequences of their behavior. When advisors work with them, they must help them see the logical outcomes of their behaviors. It is always helpful when speaking with an individual about a situation to ask him or her, "What do you want to get out of this situation for yourself," and, "Are you

ready to deal with the consequences of the choices you are making at this time?" It is very helpful to have consequences in writing in order to avoid the development of any conflict about what matters and what does not matter.

How do staff members see themselves working with these four models? We believe it is important for academic advisors to have an understanding of how they use these models when they work with the student-athletes on their campuses. We also believe it is important to understand how student-athletes view their issues and what they expect from us when trying to resolve problems.

Perhaps the first thing advisors need to do is assess their listening skills and be sure that what they hear as the problem is what the student-athlete says is the problem. How do advisors do this? The first step is to quiet one's own thinking and emotions and to relax so that one can hear what is being said and how it is being conveyed. Many advisors see themselves as "doers" and believe that things must be moving along for progress to take place. In fact, one of the best things advisors can accomplish is to become quiet and focus on what is being said by students. Ivey and Ivey (2003) have conceptualized the skills of listening as consisting of three V's + B. They indicate that they must demonstrate visual contact with the person to whom they are trying to listen. In addition, the vocal qualities of one's voice and how an individual verbally tracks someone's conversation all play a role in how well the listener is attending to the talker. Lastly, the authors recognize that body language plays a major role in the attending process. Good listeners learn to be quiet, look at the person, use a voice tone that is pleasing, not blaming or condescending, and stay on track with the student-athlete, as he or she explains the situation. The listener's body should lean toward the person, and one should demonstrate an interest in the individual. Through this listening process, advisors can gain an understanding of how the student-athlete frames his or her particular problem. Using the four models described by Brickman, et al (1982), advisors must ask, "Who is taking responsibility here for the cause of this individual's problem?" With the student-athlete advisors can explore this issue and discuss how he or she understands the factors relating to the cause of the situation. Advisors can then ask a similar question, "Who is taking responsibility for the solution of this situation?". Here is where the advisor can discuss with the student-athlete the options available for seeking a reasonable solution. The four models presented above will help athletics advisors to conceptualize how to assist the student-athlete in seeking a resolution for the situation.

Goal Setting

For those student-athletes who wish to take responsibility for the solution of their situation, it is important for the advisor to assist them in setting some realistic goals for themselves. Some individuals have difficulty in transferring their goal-setting skills for their sport into a strategy for dealing with other life issues. The senior author has developed the SPORT goal setting approach (Diagram 1) to help when individuals are having trouble developing ways to resolve issues. The short goal setting exercise presented in Diagram 1 can be an effective tool in helping one focus on what a person wants to occur in a given situation. At the **S** point, a clear and thorough definition can help one analyze the clarity of a goal. At the **P** point, one determines the performance required to achieve the goal. This may include what the individual does daily and/or weekly to progress toward meeting the goal. Once this is clear, at the **O**

point, the individual needs to determine what materials and resources are needed to move ahead. By determining these, one develops a knowledge base and tools for use in meeting the goal. Next, it is time for a reality check. At the **R** point one must evaluate how realistic the plan is. If one can check the "YES I can," line, it is time to move ahead into the action plan. However, if one checks the "NO I can't," line, it is time to re-evaluate the plan by going back to the **S** point and starting anew. It is here where the advisor and the student develop a sense of how the student plans and reconsiders what s/he really does want to have happen. With the help of the athletic advisor, the student-athlete can restructure the plan so that the "YES I can," check can be made. It is important that the plan has a timetable; thus, at point **T**, the athletic advisor can help the student-athlete forecast a timetable for completing the tasks to achieve the goal. It helps solidify the commitment of the student-athlete to the plan by having him/her sign the **SPORT** form. The advisor can also sign off on it, give a copy to the student-athlete and keep a copy for his/her advising file. Repetition of this process with a variety of goals can assist the student-athlete in developing a systematic way of planning for success.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper was to introduce four models used in the helping and coping processes of individuals. The four models were explained with suggested examples appropriate to working with student-athletes. Athletic advisors have the opportunity to begin to examine the issues presented to them by student-athletes within the framework of the four models so that a common language can be used to examine issues and so that advisors can help student-athletes plan to deal with their issues. The SPORT model for goal setting can be one approach useful in helping student-athletes as they seek to make positive changes for themselves.

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DIAGRAM 1

The SPORT Model

SPORT

State what you want to have happen:

Performance expected of you to accomplish this:

Organize yourself for success by doing:

Reality Check(Circle one): ____ Yes, I can ____ No, I can not (Try again)

Time table for completing your goal:

Student-Athlete: _____ Advisor: _____

Date: _____

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