



# A Case Study of Student Athletes' Life After Sport

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**THE LIFE AFTER SPORTS RESEARCH TEAM, UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**

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#SAUGA411**

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# Learning Goals

- Provide an overview of literature pertaining to Life After Sport (LAS)
- Describe the student-athlete transition research agenda
- Discuss implications for practice



# Transition

**What are the unique needs of student-athletes as they transition to life after sport?**



# Participant Voice

“And that’s all I hear about is pushing them through the system. And they want them to get degrees and that’s all fine and good, but we don’t get any personalized treatment. You know there’s no, okay, this guy is good at this, this guy’s good at that, we need to set a system up for these specific people. It’s, you know, we’re going to take everybody and we’re going to throw them in [Academic College], or whatever it is, and we’re going to push them through and they’re going to get degrees, and it’s all going to be fine and good. And they get out and realize that might not be the field they want to be in. “





# Life After Sport Literature

- “As a person’s identity and activity increasingly center on athletics, however, the likelihood increases of encountering developmental issues and events that are unique, or are substantially different from those of persons not engaged in careers centered on performance that demands high levels of physical excellence” (Pearson & Petitpas, 1990, p. 7).
- **Student-Athlete Transitions + Athletic Identity = Potential Career Paths**  
(Chemers, Hu, & Garcia, 2001; Green, 2005; Pearson & Petitpas, 1990; Watt & Moore, 2001; Wylleman & Lavallee, 2004).



# Life After Sport Literature

- Psychosocial support and role diversification(Fuller, 2014)
- Career planning and identity development for student-athletes (Fuller, 2014)
- Job-market competition variables (Harrison & Lawrence, 2003; Irons, 1999)



# Purpose of Study and Research Question

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand the experiences of former football players of an elite Division I institution in the Southeast participating in a life after sports program (LAS).

RQ: How do former Division I football players perceive their athletic, psychological, psychosocial, and academic/vocational development?





# Study Design

- Design: Narrative inquiry case study
- Theoretical Framework: Student Athlete Lifespan (Wylleman & Lavallee, 2004)
- Data collection method: Focus group with interview protocol developed using theoretical framework
- Sample: 14 former Division I football players participating in a Life After Sports program
- Site: Division I Athletic Program in the Southeastern US
- Data Analysis: Developed codebook using theoretical framework; Created definitions of codes from literature; Research Team Discussion; Themes



# Interventions

**Based on the unique experiences of student-athletes, what are some interventions that could benefit this population as they seek to transition to life after sport?**



# Findings

RQ: How do former Division I football players perceive their athletic, psychological, psychosocial, and academic/vocational development?

- Theme 1: Acknowledgement of Athletic-Centrism
- Theme 2: Locus of Control for Academic and Career Preparedness
- Theme 3: Experience and Mentorship as Idealized Solutions
- Theme 4: Search for Psychosocial Support in Life After Sport





# Implications: Leveraging the Athletic Identity

- Supporting Students
  - Career Development for Student Athletes
  - Academic Exploration
- Increased Collaboration with Student Affairs
- Campus-Wide Education on Student-Athletes



# Implications: Leveraging the Athletic Identity

- The Life After Sport Transition
  - Networking and Relationships
  - Mentorship
- Beyond Sports



# Application

**How can this research be applied to my work on my campus?**





# Future Research

- **Continue exploration of student-athlete transitions**
- **Expand LAS research to other sports**
- **Use quantitative methodology to explore the effects of wellness on transition**
- **Collaborate with additional external partners**



# References

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