

**TTS\_1**

**The athlete’s journey: transitions through sport**

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**Introduction and guidance**

## Introduction and guidance

This free badged course, The athlete’s journey: transitions through sport, lasts 24 hours, with eight ‘sessions’. You can work through the course at your own pace, so if you have more time one week there is no problem with pushing on to complete a further study session. The eight sessions are linked to ensure a logical flow through the course. They are:

1. The athlete’s journey − what are career transitions in sport?
2. Influencing factors − key themes in the athlete’s journey
3. Out of the blocks − preparing athletes for career transitions
4. Keeping going − expected transitions in sport
5. Stopped in your tracks − unexpected transitions in sport
6. Spotlight − parenthood and sport
7. The final athletic chapter − retirement from sport
8. Moving on − life after sport.

This course will develop your confidence and skills for online study, whether this is to explore sport and exercise topics or as part of your preparation for other study.

You’ll begin in the first two sessions with a general overview of career transitions in sport, drawing on your own experiences and those from case study examples, before moving on to look in more detail at some of the key transitions athletes will face and the associated challenges.

Case studies and audio-visual examples are used to help explain concepts and you’ll get plenty of opportunities to demonstrate your new understanding and practise your study skills.

Part of this practice will be the interactive quizzes, of which Sessions 4 and 8 will provide you with an opportunity to earn a badge to demonstrate your new skills. You can read more on how to study the course and about badges in the next sections.

After completing this course, you should be able to:

* understand what career transitions in sport are
* identify the main challenges associated with career transitions in sport
* recognise how best to prepare athletes for career transitions
* identify the impact of different transitional episodes on athletes.

## Moving around the course

In the ‘Summary’ at the end of each session, you will find a link to the next session. If at any time you want to return to the start of the course, click on ‘Full course description’. From here you can navigate to any part of the course.

It’s also good practice, if you access a link from within a course page (including links to the quizzes), to open it in a new window or tab. That way you can easily return to where you’ve come from without having to use the back button on your browser.

The Open University would really appreciate a few minutes of your time to tell us about yourself and your expectations for the course before you begin, in our optional [start-of-course survey](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/athletesjourney_start). Participation will be completely confidential and we will not pass on your details to others.

## What is a badged course?

While studying The athlete’s journey: transitions through sport, you have the option to work towards gaining a digital badge.

Badged courses are a key part of The Open University’s mission to promote the educational well-being of the community. The courses also provide another way of helping you to progress from informal to formal learning.

Completing a course will require about 24 hours of study time. However, you can study the course at any time and at a pace to suit you.

Badged courses are available on The Open University’s [OpenLearn](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/about-openlearn/try) website and do not cost anything to study. They differ from Open University courses because you do not receive support from a tutor, but you do get useful feedback from the interactive quizzes.

### What is a badge?

Digital badges are a new way of demonstrating online that you have gained a skill. Colleges and universities are working with employers and other organisations to develop open badges that help learners gain recognition for their skills, and support employers to identify the right candidate for a job.

Badges demonstrate your work and achievement on the course. You can share your achievement with friends, family and employers, and on social media. Badges are a great motivation, helping you to reach the end of the course. Gaining a badge often boosts confidence in the skills and abilities that underpin successful study. So, completing this course could encourage you to think about taking other courses.

Start of Figure

The athlete’s journey: transitions through sport badge

End of Figure

## How to get a badge

Getting a badge is straightforward! Here’s what you have to do:

* read each session of the course
* score 50% or more in the two badge quizzes in Session 4 and Session 8.

For all the quizzes, you can have three attempts at most of the questions (for true or false type questions you usually only get one attempt). If you get the answer right first time you will get more marks than for a correct answer the second or third time. Therefore, please be aware that for the two badge quizzes it is possible to get all the questions right but not score 50% and be eligible for the badge on that attempt. If one of your answers is incorrect you will often receive helpful feedback and suggestions about how to work out the correct answer.

For the badge quizzes, if you’re not successful in getting 50% the first time, after 24 hours you can reattempt the whole quiz, and come back as many times as you like.

We hope that as many people as possible will gain an Open University badge – so you should see getting a badge as an opportunity to reflect on what you have learned rather than as a test.

If you need more guidance on getting a badge and what you can do with it, take a look at the [OpenLearn FAQs](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/about-openlearn/frequently-asked-questions-on-openlearn). When you gain your badge you will receive an email to notify you and you will be able to view and manage all your badges in [My OpenLearn](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/my-openlearn) within 24 hours of completing the criteria to gain a badge.

Get started with [Session 1](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/ocw/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=105605).

**Session 1: The athlete’s journey – what are career transitions in sport?**

## Introduction

Start of Figure



End of Figure

Regardless of whether an athlete competes at a recreational or elite level, they will potentially face a wide range of ‘transitions’ as they progress through their sporting career. A ‘transition’ represents a period of change for an athlete which results in a new set of demands for them to manage, for example, at entry into sport, on changing competitive level, and at retirement. Transitions can be categorised as those that are planned (normative), such as the move to senior level, to those that are unplanned and sudden (non-normative), for example injury or unanticipated deselection (Stambulova, 2010).

In this first session, you will learn more about the different career transitions that athletes may experience as well as why this is an important area to study for anyone involved in sport.

By the end of this session you should be able to:

* define and identify the range of different career transitions an athlete may experience
* apply the athletic career transition model to individual experiences
* understand the psychological nature of transitions.

Before you start, The Open University would really appreciate a few minutes of your time to tell us about yourself and your expectations of the course. Your input will help to further improve the online learning experience. If you’d like to help, and if you haven’t done so already, please fill in this optional [start-of-course survey](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/athletesjourney_start). Participation will be completely confidential and we will not pass on your details to others.

## 1 What are transitions?

Before you begin to investigate the more in-depth psychological implications related to transitions, let’s first look at the range of transitions an athlete may experience during their journey through sport. This first activity introduces you to the course authors, Candice Lingam-Willgoss and Caroline Heaney, as they discuss their own personal experiences of transitions in sport.

Start of Activity

**Activity 1 Real people and real lives**

Allow about 30 minutes

Start of Question

Both Candice and Caroline were highly committed to their chosen sports, in fact, one of the reasons they wanted to write this course was due to their own personal experiences of transitions in sport. Watch the video below and make notes on the following points:

* What were the differences and similarities in Candice’s and Caroline’s pathways into their chosen sports?
* What transitions have they both experienced?
* Note down the psychological impact of the transitions they experienced.
* Why did they retire from sport?

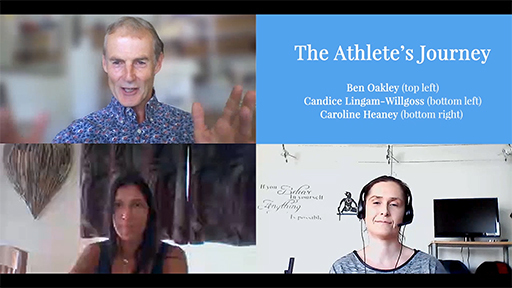
Start of Media Content

Video content is not available in this format.

**Video 1**

[View transcript - Video 1](" \l "Unit2_Session2_Transcript1)

Start of Figure



End of Figure

End of Media Content

End of Question

[View discussion - Activity 1 Real people and real lives](" \l "Unit2_Session2_Discussion1)

End of Activity

In the last activity you learned about the different transitions Candice and Caroline have made in their sporting journeys. Other transitions that athletes may experience throughout their sporting life, and which you will explore in the rest of this course, are shown in Figure 1.

Start of Figure



**Figure 1** What transitions do athletes face?

[View description - Figure 1 What transitions do athletes face?](" \l "Unit2_Session2_Description1)

End of Figure

You will explore both normative and non-normative transitions in more detail in Sessions 4 and 5.

You have now heard about the authors’ experiences of transitions in sport. Next, you will reflect on your own transitions or those of someone you coach or are closely associated with.

## 2 Your experiences of transitions in sport

Start of Figure



End of Figure

Most people have their first engagement with sport at school, or at school age, when they are introduced to ‘traditional’ school sports. For example, in the UK, these may include athletics, netball and football. As such, the entry phase into sport tends to occur in childhood as children ‘sample’ a range of different sports (Côté, 1999). From this initial entry phase into sport, people go on to have different relationships and experiences associated with sport whether through participation or, in some cases, as a career. What transitions have you experienced so far?

Start of Activity

**Activity 2 Your journey so far**

Allow about 15 minutes

Start of Question

Whether you are still involved in sport or have been in the past, reflect on the experiences you have had and consider the following questions:

* Where was your first experience of your sport?
* What motivated you to continue with it?
* Within these experiences, what would you identify as being transitions?

End of Question

[View discussion - Activity 2 Your journey so far](" \l "Unit2_Session3_Discussion1)

End of Activity

Through hearing the stories of the course authors and reflecting on your own experiences, you will be starting to see that the sporting journey is often unique to each individual and characterised by different events.

While it is often easy to identify a transitional period, the challenge can come when trying to make sense of how an athlete experiences it, as often a ‘one size fits all’ approach is too limiting. Every athlete will have different emotional and psychological reactions to their experiences. Talking to each and every athlete about their experiences is obviously one method of understanding their world, but it is also important to look more broadly at the topic of transitions in sport. One way to do this is to read the work of researchers who have examined the topic in more detail, something you will look at later in this session.

However, before you consider research within this field it is important to take a brief look at the theory that underpins the area. Developing an appreciation of relevant theory is very useful when looking at a new area, and in the case of transitions it can help you understand how and why athletes experience transitions in different ways.

## 3 The athletic career transition model

At times, theory can seem removed from practice, but theory can allow us to develop a better understanding of a concept and help predict what may happen in different situations.

Within the topic of career transitions, various frameworks have been used to explain the athlete’s journey. Perhaps the most useful theory when it comes to exploring transitions is the ‘athletic career transition model’ (Alfermann and Stambulova, 2007). This model views a career transition as a process that creates a potential conflict between what the athlete is and what the athlete wants to be, which requires a coping response. This coping response is either effective, leading to a successful transition, or ineffective, leading to a difficult (‘crisis’) transition. Video 2 shows the different stages of the athletic career transition model and the points at which intervention (which you will learn about in more detail later) can occur to increase the chances of a successful experience.

Start of Media Content

Video content is not available in this format.

**Video 2**

[View description - Video 2](" \l "Unit2_Session4_Description1)

[View transcript - Video 2](" \l "Unit2_Session4_Transcript1)

Start of Figure



End of Figure

End of Media Content

This model is helpful as it allows some predictions to be made in terms of how successful a transition will be for an athlete, something you look at in the next activity.

Start of Activity

**Activity 3 Applying the athletic career transition model**

Allow about 20 minutes

Start of Question

Read the case study below and consider how the athletic career transition model could be applied:

* to help describe Jack’s experience of his transition so far, and
* to help Jack experience an effective transition.

Start of Case Study

Jack is a talented young rugby player who has recently secured a contract at a professional rugby club. The club is 70 miles away from Jack’s home town and, a few weeks after moving, Jack is feeling very homesick. This is the first time he has lived away from his parents and he is feeling isolated and lonely. He is also finding his new training regime very daunting. He is training more frequently and intensely than he has previously and has doubts about his ability to cope with life at his new club.

End of Case Study

End of Question

[View discussion - Activity 3 Applying the athletic career transition model](" \l "Unit2_Session4_Discussion1)

End of Activity

You have been introduced to only one model within this section but you should already be able to see how even a relatively simple model can help give you more insight into athletic transitions.

In the final section of Session 1, you will start to look at some of the components raised in the athletic career transition model and how research has sought to develop our understanding of this topic.

## 4 What does the research say about transitions?

Your exploration of the athletic career transition model has shown you how an athlete’s experience of transition can be influenced at several points and that they need to manage different emotional and psychological challenges at various stages.

In recent years, researchers have started to move towards a more holistic approach to understand how athletes experience and cope with transitions. However, it is worth noting that much of the research still focuses on the impact of the final athletic transition, retirement (Ekengren et al., 2018). Table 1 introduces a variety of studies into a range of career transitions which illustrate not only why this is an important area to study but also several of the topics you will look at later in this course.

Start of Table

Table 1 Research into career transitions in sport

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Study** | **Main findings** |
| Samuel and Tenenbaum (2011) | Athletes experience a variety of change events and the way they react can be influenced by factors such as the level of competition and their identity. These would be known as **‘individual responses’**. |
| Fairlie et al. (2019) | Maintaining a **sport/life balance** is important if transitions are to be positive especially retirement. |
| Park et al. (2013) | **Readiness** for retirement is a key factor in how well an athlete will cope with the transition, and by selecting the right interventions at the right time experiences will be positive. |
| Knights et al. (2016) | There are potentially positive outcomes in relation to transitions within and out of sport and the experience is not always negative. |
| Brown et al. (2018) | **Social support** remains fundamental to positive transitions but athletes can often find it hard to ask for support. |
| Giannone et al. (2017) | Higher **athletic identity** was a potential risk factor for developing certain psychiatric symptoms such as depression and anxiety. |
| Torregrosa et al. (2015) | A study with elite swimmers found the voluntary nature of retirement and available social support were all precursors of a positive retirement experience. In contrast, involuntary termination, lack of planning, and a one-dimensional identity could result in a more problematic transition. |

End of Table

The findings discussed in Table 1 all link closely to the topics you will cover in the rest of this course.

## 5 This session’s quiz

Now that you’ve completed Session 1, you can take a short quiz to help you to reflect on what you’ve learned.

Open the quiz in a new tab or window by holding down Ctrl (or Cmd on a Mac) when you click on the link. Return here when you have finished.

[Session 1 quiz](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/ocw/mod/quiz/view.php?id=106380).

## 6 Summary of Session 1

This session has introduced the concept of career transitions in sport by examining athlete experiences, the athlete career transition model and relevant research within this area.

The key learning points from this first session are:

* Career transitions can be classified as normative (predictable) or non-normative (unpredictable).
* Transitions can cause a range of physical, emotional and psychological reactions.
* The athletic career transition model (Alfermann and Stambulova, 2007) provides a clear framework to help understand how athletes may experience transitions.

Before you start to look at each transition in more detail, you will explore some of the key factors that can influence an athlete’s experience of transition.

You should now go to [Session 2](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/ocw/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=105606).

**Session 2: Influencing factors – key themes in the athlete’s journey**

## Introduction

Start of Figure



End of Figure

While all transitions carry with them unique challenges for the athlete, it is important to understand what factors play a part in influencing these experiences. If you think back to Activity 1 in Session 1, Candice and Caroline both experienced a wide range of transitions but the way they responded and managed them was quite different. In this session, you will examine some of the factors that can influence the way an athlete manages their journey and which can ultimately have a bearing on their overall athletic development.

Before you begin, watch the short video below where former England hockey player Alex Danson introduces you to her thoughts on the key themes in her own athlete journey.

Start of Media Content

Video content is not available in this format.

**Video 1**

[View transcript - Video 1](" \l "Unit3_Session1_Transcript1)

Start of Figure



End of Figure

End of Media Content

By the end of this session you should be able to:

* understand the main psychological challenges that career transitions present
* recognise the factors that can influence an athlete’s adaptation to transition.

## 1 What factors influence transitions?

While the potential psychological impact of career transitions depends to some extent on the type of transition and on the individual athlete concerned, there are several key factors that reoccur when studying what may influence an athlete’s response. You are introduced to these in the next activity.

Start of Activity

**Activity 1 Transitions and the psychological impact**

Allow about 30 minutes

Start of Question

Watch Video 2 below where you will hear five athletes talk about their experiences of having their careers cut short and going into retirement. Note down what you think could have influenced their experiences.

Start of Media Content

Video content is not available in this format.

**Video 2**

[View transcript - Video 2](" \l "Unit3_Session2_Transcript1)

Start of Figure



End of Figure

End of Media Content

End of Question

[View discussion - Activity 1 Transitions and the psychological impact](" \l "Unit3_Session2_Discussion1)

End of Activity

Activity 1 clearly identifies five factors that can influence an athlete’s experience of transition and these are illustrated in Figure 1.

Start of Figure



**Figure 1** Influencing factors on athlete transitions in sport

[View description - Figure 1 Influencing factors on athlete transitions in sport](" \l "Unit3_Session2_Description1)

End of Figure

These factors will form the focus of the rest of this session.

## 2 Athletic identity: who am I?

As Alex Scott discussed in Activity 1, she had always been ‘Alex Scott, the footballer’.This is known as athletic identity and is ‘the degree to which an individual identifies with the athlete role’ (Brewer et al., 1993, p. 237).

Athletic identity can have a significant bearing on how an athlete copes with the transitions they may face in their career and underpins many of the psychological and emotional reactions they might experience. You will hear more about this in the next activity where Dr Josie Perry, a Chartered Sport Psychologist, talks more about why identity and transitions are so inextricably linked.

Start of Activity

**Activity 2 Athletic identity and transitions**

Allow about 35 minutes

Start of Question

**Part 1**

Watch the following video and as you listen to Josie talk about identity make notes on the following points:

* What are some of the positives Josie notes about having a strong athletic identity?
* What can be the negative implications of a strong athletic identity?
* What did the research Josie discussed note about professional athletes and retirement?
* What are some of the practical implications that Josie talks about when it comes to managing athletic identity?

Start of Media Content

Video content is not available in this format.

**Video 3**

[View transcript - Video 3](" \l "Unit3_Session3_Transcript1)

Start of Figure



End of Figure

End of Media Content

End of Question

[View discussion - Part](" \l "Unit3_Session3_Discussion1)

Start of Question

**Part 2**

Whether or not you are an athlete, you will still have more than one identity even if some identities feel more prominent than others. Think about the various different spheres of your own life – for example, your professional, family, social, sporting or cultural spheres. Then break down each sphere in order to work out just how many different roles you play.

One way of doing this would be to draw a mind map to describe your identity. Take a look at an example of the different roles Candice thinks she has in Figure 2, and then complete your own mind map to describe your identity.

Start of Figure



**Figure 2** Mind map to represent the different roles that make up Candice’s identity

[View description - Figure 2 Mind map to represent the different roles that make up Candice’s identi ...](" \l "Unit3_Session3_Description1)

End of Figure

End of Question

[View discussion - Part](" \l "Unit3_Session3_Discussion2)

End of Activity

Those with a strong athletic identity will define themselves almost exclusively in the athlete role (unidimensional), while someone with a weaker athletic identity might define themselves in a wider range of roles, for example athlete, parent, business person and so on (multidimensional). You will look at how a unidimensional athletic identity can be challenged when facing a transition in more detail next.

## 2.1 How athletic identity affects responses to transitions

Identity has a significant impact on the way athletes experience transition. As you learned in Activity 2, those with a high level of athletic identity may have more difficulty adjusting to transitions, in particular to unplanned (non-normative) experiences (Cosh et al., 2015). In the next activity you will hear first-hand about the impact an unplanned transition can have on athletic identity.

Start of Activity

**Activity 3 A changing stage: from football to Dr Who**

Allow about 20 minutes

Start of Question

Listen to the short audio excerpt below from the BBC’s Desert Island Discs in which Matt Smith talks about his experience as a young footballer with the potential to turn professional. As you listen, note down the impact the transitional episode discussed had on both his identity and the identity of those around him.

Start of Media Content

Audio content is not available in this format.

**Audio 1**

[View transcript - Audio 1](" \l "Unit3_Session3_Transcript2)

End of Media Content

End of Question

[View discussion - Activity 3 A changing stage: from football to Dr Who](" \l "Unit3_Session3_Discussion3)

End of Activity

You will re-visit identity again in some of the later sessions. You will now look at the next of the factors affecting how an athlete responds to transitions – that is, the level at which they compete.

## 3 Level of participation

Start of Figure



End of Figure

As Ollie Phillips (rugby) touched on in Activity 1, athletes who compete at a higher level (e.g. full time Olympic level athletes) arguably have more at stake since sport is their income. They are also likely to have a strong athletic identity. Furthermore, elite athletes tend to have a greater number of transitional events to navigate during their career, for example moving to a higher level, injury, deselection and changes in public perception (Samuel and Tenenbaum, 2011). These events all provide opportunity for disruption in their athletic career and require the ability to adapt and adjust.

However, it could equally be argued that lower level athletes face greater challenges negotiating transitions. One reason for this is because lower level athletes are more likely to have to juggle multiple roles and identities. While in the previous section you saw how this could help when coping with transitions − as less of your identity would be ‘lost’ or affected − multiple identities can take focus away from what needs attention. Take, for example, Caroline, who you met in Session 1, Video 1. Caroline as a club-level athlete found it difficult to deal with injury on top of her other roles, which she balanced with being an athlete.

Another reason lower level athletes may face more difficulties in transitions is because of a lack of support available to them. Jewett et al. (2019) looked at the experiences of university level athletes and reported that when the athlete left university and lost the support and status that came with being recognised as an athlete, they were vulnerable to several mental health challenges. This echoes the stories of the professional athletes that you heard from in Activity 1 and further illustrates how athletes of all levels can experience challenges navigating transitions in sport. You will look at the importance of support in more detail in Section 5.

While level of participation may not be a clear factor when it comes to distinguishing how athletes cope with transitions, there do seem to be some differences when the experiences of athletes from different sports are considered.

## 4 Is ‘type of sport’ relevant?

Start of Figure



End of Figure

So far you have looked at the impact that identity and level of participation may have on the way an athlete copes with transitions. But, with one sport so different from the next, does the type of sport played have an influence?

Within a team sports setting, Lagimodiere and Strachan (2015) compared the experiences of male hockey and rugby players and concluded that even within similar types of sport the transition experience can be very different especially in relation to social support networks both pre and post retirement. Within an individual sports setting, Clowes et al. (2015) looked at the transition experiences of elite female gymnasts. You look at their research in the next activity.

Start of Activity

**Activity 4 Transitions in gymnastics**

Allow about 30 minutes

Start of Question

Read the short summary of the study that Clowes et al. (2015) carried out and consider the following questions:

* What were the authors’ main findings connected to the experiences of the gymnasts?
* What differences do you think you may see when comparing transitions in gymnastics to other sports and why?

[Research summary](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/ocw/pluginfile.php/2573179/mod_resource/content/1/Research%20summary_Clowes.pdf)

End of Question

[View discussion - Activity 4 Transitions in gymnastics](" \l "Unit3_Session5_Discussion1)

End of Activity

The findings of the Clowes et al. (2015) study reflect how within a sport with a lower peak age of performance there are potentially different challenges for athletes to negotiate. The study also reflects the importance of social support networks. This is the final influencing factor that you will look at in this session.

## 5 Preparation and support

Several of the athletes you have met so far, such as Alex Scott in Activity 1, have alluded to preparation and support being closely associated with more positive transitions. As you may remember from the athletic career transition model (Alfermann and Stambulova, 2007) in Session 1, support can be a form of intervention. Put simply, if an athlete is prepared and supported they are likely to cope and experience a much smoother transition. You have already seen that non-normative transitions (e.g. injury) are often more psychologically challenging than normative transitions (e.g. developmental changes in level) as they are not planned for.

Preparation coupled with the right support allows the individual to develop coping strategies to deal with the impending transition (Park et al., 2013). In the next activity you will hear from former England rugby player Duncan Bell who talks about what can happen when you don’t prepare or have the right support network in place.

Start of Activity

**Activity 5 Feeling alone**

Allow about 20 minutes

Start of Question

Watch the video below where former England and Bath rugby player Duncan Bell reflects on his retirement. As you watch, consider what other athletes could learn from Duncan’s experience.

Start of Media Content

Video content is not available in this format.

**Video 4**

[View transcript - Video 4](" \l "Unit3_Session6_Transcript1)

Start of Figure



End of Figure

End of Media Content

End of Question

[View discussion - Activity 5 Feeling alone](" \l "Unit3_Session6_Discussion1)

End of Activity

In this course, you will see many references to people who may ‘support athletes’. This support is not just provided by coaches, but can also come from parents, friends, family members or indeed fellow athletes.

The support mentioned by Duncan in the last activity can be highly tangible such as the recruitment consultant he mentioned or perhaps a sport psychologist or performance lifestyle advisor. The importance of developing a more far reaching support network outside of sport is something supported by Warriner and Lavallee (2008). They concluded that the negative impact of losing relationships that were based in sport can be mediated if social circles are developed outside of sport. In turn this can facilitate a more positive adjustment to life outside sport. Another important point raised in the activity was how often athletes don’t feel comfortable asking for support, suggesting there is still a stigma attached to it (Brown et al., 2018). You will look at the importance of preparation more in Session 3.

## 6 Reflecting on your own experience of transitions

As you reach the end of this session, it is a good point to reflect on what you have learned about transitions so far and how you relate to this.

Start of Activity

**Activity 6 Your reflections on what influences transitions**

Allow about 20 minutes

Start of Question

Reflect on what you have covered in this session by answering the questions below. Only answer the questions that are relevant to your role − whether you are an athlete or someone supporting an athlete.

If you are an athlete …

1. What factors do you think have influenced your experience of transitions in sport?
2. What impact did these factors have on you and how did you cope?
3. Having studied this session what is the main point you will take away?

If you are someone supporting an athlete (or athletes) …

1. What factors do you think influence the transitions of those you support the most?
2. What coping strategies do you think the athletes you work with use?
3. Based on what you have learned in this session what is the main point you will take away?

End of Question

[View discussion - Activity 6 Your reflections on what influences transitions](" \l "Unit3_Session7_Discussion1)

End of Activity

## 7 This session’s quiz

Now that you’ve completed Session 2, you can take a short quiz to help you to reflect on what you’ve learned.

Open the quiz in a new tab or window by holding down Ctrl (or Cmd on a Mac) when you click on the link. Return here when you have finished.

[Session 2 quiz](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/ocw/mod/quiz/view.php?id=106381).

## 8 Summary of Session 2

In this session you have started to look at four key factors that can influence the transitions an athlete will experience during their career.

The key learning points from this second session are:

* The quality of the transitions an athlete experiences will be influenced largely by the strength of their athletic identity.
* The level an athlete competes at can influence their psychological reactions to transition.
* Careful planning and preparation as well as the right support network may lead to smoother transitions.
* Experiences may be influenced by the athlete’s sport.

In the next session, you will start to explore more about how to prepare athletes for transitions and hear more about the role that performance lifestyle planning plays in elite level sport.

You should now go to [Session 3](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/ocw/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=105607).

**Session 3: Out of the blocks – preparing athletes for career transitions**

## Introduction

Start of Figure



End of Figure

In Session 2 you explored the challenges of career transitions in sport and the factors that can influence an athlete’s transition experiences. In this session you will examine how best to prepare athletes to cope with these experiences and progress through career transitions as smoothly as possible. In doing this you will investigate the experiences of athletes who have engaged with programmes designed to help them develop these skills and reflect on what strategies are most effective to help athletes. You will also reflect on your own sporting career (or that of an athlete you support) and consider how to plan for any career transitions that might be experienced in the future.

By the end of this session you should be able to:

* recognise the need for athletes to develop the skills to prepare for and cope with career transitions
* understand how best to prepare athletes for a range of different career transitions
* identify the role that performance lifestyle planning can play in supporting the athlete.

## 1 The need for a life outside sport

As you saw in Session 2, research has shown that having a strong athletic identity can make some career transitions such as retirement or injury more difficult (e.g. Murdock et al., 2016). It was suggested that athletes should develop aspects of their life outside sport to help them cope with future transitions. You will explore this further in the next activity.

Start of Activity

**Activity 1 Life outside sport**

Allow about 25 minutes

Start of Question

Watch the two videos below in which Hannah Cockcroft (athletics) and Nekoda Smythe-Davis (judo) talk about the importance of developing a life outside sport. As you watch, make a note of the areas of their lives they developed beyond competing in their sports and the benefits they felt they gained from doing so. Then think about how this might impact on you or any athletes you support – what might you do differently having watched these videos?

Start of Media Content

Video content is not available in this format.

**Video 1**

[View transcript - Video 1](" \l "Unit4_Session2_Transcript1)

Start of Figure



End of Figure

End of Media Content

Start of Media Content

Video content is not available in this format.

**Video 2**

[View transcript - Video 2](" \l "Unit4_Session2_Transcript2)

Start of Figure



End of Figure

End of Media Content

End of Question

[View discussion - Activity 1 Life outside sport](" \l "Unit4_Session2_Discussion1)

End of Activity

The videos you have just watched are part of the English Institute of Sport (EIS) [#More2Me campaign](https://www.eis2win.co.uk/resource/more2me-campaign-launches-with-support-from-olympic-paralympic-athletes/) launched in 2019 to help athletes develop a better sport–life balance. This campaign is part of their performance lifestyle programme. You will explore performance lifestyle next.

## 2 Performance lifestyle

In recognition of the challenges that career transitions in sport can bring about, it is now commonplace for elite level athletes to have access to ‘athlete lifestyle’ or ‘performance lifestyle’ programmes to help them to prepare for the transitions they will face. The athletes in Activity 1 both referred to the performance lifestyle support they received from the English Institute of Sport (EIS) and cited this as helping them to develop their life outside their sports.

Performance lifestyle can be defined as ‘tailored, individualised coaching, mentoring and counselling services that support performance athletes, coaches and key personnel in all aspects of an athlete’s life – ensuring they successfully manage the transitions, challenges and choices encountered within the performance environment and in life away from sport’ (Sport Scotland, 2018). The video below explores the role of a performance lifestyle advisor.

Start of Media Content

Video content is not available in this format.

**Video 3**

[View transcript - Video 3](" \l "Unit4_Session3_Transcript1)

Start of Figure



End of Figure

End of Media Content

In the next activity you will reflect on the benefits of performance lifestyle programmes for athletes.

Start of Activity

**Activity 2 Preparing for life after sport**

Allow about 30 minutes

Start of Question

Watch Video 4 which explores some research undertaken by David Lavallee (2019) on performance lifestyle. As you watch the video make a list of the benefits for athletes engaging in performance lifestyle programmes, and then think about how you could apply principles of these programmes to your own situation (as an athlete, coach or parent).

Start of Media Content

Watch the video at [YouTube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vytL5pdem5M&hl=en&fs=1&rel=0).

**Video 4**

[View transcript - Video 4](" \l "Unit4_Session3_Transcript2)

End of Media Content

End of Question

[View discussion - Activity 2 Preparing for life after sport](" \l "Unit4_Session3_Discussion1)

End of Activity

These programmes are all about preparing athletes for transition and developing plans to cope. In the next section you will investigate in more detail what developing a career transition plan might involve.

## 3 The five-step career planning strategy

Start of Figure



End of Figure

In Session 1 you were introduced to the athletic career transition model (Alfermann and Stambulova, 2007). This model suggests that athletes will either experience a successful (positive) transition or a crisis (negative) transition (Stambulova, 2017). In order to help athletes develop the coping skills required to move successfully through career transitions, frameworks such as the five-step career planning strategy (Stambulova, 2010) have been developed.

You will explore this planning strategy using the case study of Larissa, a 23 year old full time swimmer who is working through the five steps with her sport psychologist Ravi. Other athletes may work through these steps on their own or with another person such as a coach, parent or performance lifestyle advisor.

Start of Box

**Box 1 The five steps**

**Step 1: Create a framework**

In this first step Larissa is asked to draw a timeline of her life, divided into past, present and future.

**Step 2: Structure your past**

Larissa then adds and describes the most important events that have happened in her life (sporting and non-sporting) to the ‘past’ section of her timeline. She identifies various events including key competitions she has won, moving away from home to train with her current coach and leaving school. Ravi asks her questions to help her think about these key events.

**Step 3: Structure your present**

In this third step Larissa identifies the most important aspects in her life currently. She identifies ‘sport, family and friends’ and after discussing them with Ravi ranks each of these on three different scales:

1. the subjective importance of each aspect (e.g. how important does she feel her family are)
2. the time spent on each aspect (e.g. how much time does she spend with her family in a typical week), and
3. the stress levels associated with each aspect (e.g. how much stress do her family cause her).

The purpose of this step is to help Larissa analyse the balance she has in her life. It makes her realise that almost everything she does in her life currently is focused on swimming.

**Step 4: Structure your future**

Larissa is now encouraged to think about the future and consider what important events she expects to occur in different aspects of her life over the next 1, 3, 5 and 10 years and her entire life. This encourages her to identify how long she imagines her career will last and what events are most likely to be prioritised following retirement from sport.

Larissa has very clear goals for what she wants to achieve in her sport over the next 1−5 years and doesn’t expect to be competing after that. But she hasn’t put a huge amount of thought into what she might do after she stops competing, although she thinks she could be a good coach.

**Step 5: Bridge your past, present and future**

This step is divided into three sub-steps (5a, 5b and 5c) that Larissa works through with Ravi.

* Step 5a directs Larissa from the present to the past and gets her to focus on the successes and difficulties she faced, as well as the skills and lessons gained. This helps Larissa to identify the skills she has developed on her journey so far and reminds her of what she has achieved.
* Step 5b directs Larissa from the present to the future and asks her to develop goals and identify goal achievement strategies and potential barriers. Larissa reflects on what she needs to work on with her coach to achieve her swimming goals and also what she needs to do to become a swimming coach.
* The final step 5c moves from the future to the present and focuses on how Larissa can balance her current and future priorities. This encourages her to plan ahead as well as plan for the present. As a result, she makes a decision to look into part-time and distance learning sports coaching degrees that she could fit around her training.

End of Box

Start of Activity

**Activity 3 Evaluating the five-step career plan**

Allow about 20 minutes

Start of Question

Having read the five-step career planning strategy in Box 1 reflect on how useful you think it would be to an athlete like Larissa. If you are an athlete yourself or if you support athletes, you may also like to reflect on how useful you think it would be to you. As you do this think about the potential strengths and weaknesses of the strategy.

End of Question

[View discussion - Activity 3 Evaluating the five-step career plan](" \l "Unit4_Session4_Discussion1)

End of Activity

So far in this session you have explored the importance of preparing for career transitions to ensure they go smoothly. In the next section you’ll look at other ways to help career transitions go smoothly.

## 4 Other strategies: coping with the unexpected

Start of Figure



End of Figure

So far in this session you have explored how planning and preparation can be an effective strategy for helping athletes cope with transition. However, as you considered in Session 1, some career transitions can be unexpected and consequently difficult to plan for. So, what other strategies can help facilitate a smooth transition? You will try to answer this in the next activity.

Start of Activity

**Activity 4 Academy reject**

Allow about 30 minutes

Start of Question

Read the article [Football’s biggest issue: the struggle facing boys rejected by academies](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/ocw/pluginfile.php/2573191/mod_resource/content/1/Footballs%20biggest%20issues.pdf), which outlines some of the difficulties faced by young players dropped by football academies.

Now imagine you are supporting Max, an 18 year old footballer who has recently been dropped by the academy team that he played for. Max felt that he had been playing well and so was not expecting this news. He is struggling to accept the decision and come to terms with the transition to a new, possibly lower level, club. What would you recommend to help support Max through this transition?

End of Question

[View discussion - Activity 4 Academy reject](" \l "Unit4_Session5_Discussion1)

End of Activity

Wylleman, Alfermann and Lavallee (2004) suggest that over the years the focus of helping athletes to cope with transition has moved away from traditional therapeutic approaches aimed at coping with the negative effects of transition. Instead, the focus has shifted to more holistic programmes, such as performance lifestyle programmes, which are aimed at preparation for transition and skill development. Career transitions are an inevitable part of the athlete’s journey through sport and it is important that athletes are prepared for these transitions and develop the skills to cope with them and thrive.

## 5 This session’s quiz

Now that you’ve completed Session 3, you can take a short quiz to help you to reflect on what you’ve learned.

Open the quiz in a new tab or window by holding down Ctrl (or Cmd on a Mac) when you click on the link. Return here when you have finished.

[Session 3 quiz](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/ocw/mod/quiz/view.php?id=106382).

## 6 Summary of Session 3

In this session you have explored how to prepare athletes to cope with the career transitions that they will inevitably face.

The key learning points from this third session are:

* There is strong evidence to suggest that preparation eases the psychological stresses associated with career transitions.
* Performance lifestyle programmes and similar services have been developed to support high level athletes. Those not able to access such services can still benefit from some of the ideas and planning strategies that are used.
* The five-step career planning strategy (Stambulova, 2010) is an example of a framework to help athletes prepare for, and cope with, career transitions.

In the next session you will examine some of the expected (or normative) career transitions experienced by athletes.

You should now go to [Session 4](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/ocw/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=105608).

**Session 4: Keeping going – expected transitions in sport**

## Introduction

Start of Figure



End of Figure

It is too simplistic to consider that transition into sport (starting sport) and out of sport (retirement) are the most important career transitions an athlete will face. Many transitions that athletes encounter during their career can be highly significant and have far reaching consequences.

You will now move on to explore some of the ‘within career’ transitions that athletes may face. These can be split into expected (or ‘normative’) and unexpected (or ‘non-normative’) transitions as described in Session 1. In Session 4, you will examine expected transitions and in Session 5 you will examine unexpected transitions.

By the end of this session you should be able to:

* identify the different normative transitions an athlete may experience during their career
* recognise the potential impact of normative transitions on the athlete
* appreciate normative transitions through a lifespan perspective.

## 1 What are normative transitions?

Start of Figure



End of Figure

Normative transitions refer to the ‘within career’ changes that an athlete would normally be expected to face during their career. They can therefore be thought of as predictable transitions. In the next activity you will consider the wide range of normative transitions that athletes may face in their time as sports performers and the potential psychological impact of these.

Start of Activity

**Activity 1 Normative transitions**

Allow about 15 minutes

Start of Question

Make a list of some of the normative transitions that an athlete might experience during their sporting career. To help you with this, you may find it useful to think about your own experiences either as an athlete or as someone supporting an athlete.

Once you have compiled your list, select one of the transitions and reflect on the potential psychological challenges that this transition might bring about.

End of Question

[View discussion - Activity 1 Normative transitions](" \l "Unit5_Session2_Discussion1)

End of Activity

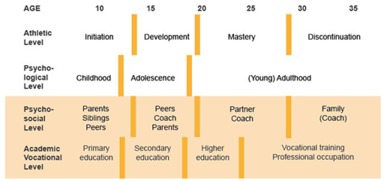
Now you’ve looked at the normative transitions directly associated with sport, you’ll next explore them through a ‘lifespan perspective’, which takes a more holistic view.

## 2 Lifespan perspective

From a holistic viewpoint, it is important to note that the transitions an athlete will face are not exclusively sport related and other transitions will occur across an athlete’s lifespan. As you will see in Wylleman and Lavallee’s (2004) developmental model shown in Figure 1, athletes will typically face normative transitions at an athletic, psychological, psychosocial and academic or vocational level as well. All of these could interact to impact on sports performance.

Briefly study Figure 1, where the orange bars represent the transition boundaries, and then complete the activity that follows where you will explore the elements of this model in more detail.

Start of Figure



**Figure 1** Wylleman and Lavallee’s (2004) developmental model

[View description - Figure 1 Wylleman and Lavallee’s (2004) developmental model](" \l "Unit5_Session3_Description1)

End of Figure

Although the model indicates that discontinuation on the athletic level occurs just before the age of 30 obviously this is different for different athletes, with many athletes retiring at a much later age and some, particularly those from early specialisation sports such as gymnastics, retiring at an earlier age.

Start of Activity

**Activity 2 Transitions across the lifespan**

Allow about 30 minutes

Start of Question

Watch the video below which explores the components of Wylleman and Lavallee’s (2004) developmental model. This model allows you to explore the transitions an athlete might experience in different aspects of their lives in order to give you a more rounded or holistic understanding of the individual and their transition experiences. The video talks about the model in relation to a hypothetical case study, Natasha, who is a sprinter.

As you can see the model has 4 ‘levels’ – athletic, psychological, psychosocial and academic/vocational. Within each level there are different normative transitions that an athlete will face that are important to be aware of.

As you watch the video complete the table below by identifying some of the features, potential challenges and impact of the different transitions Natasha experiences.

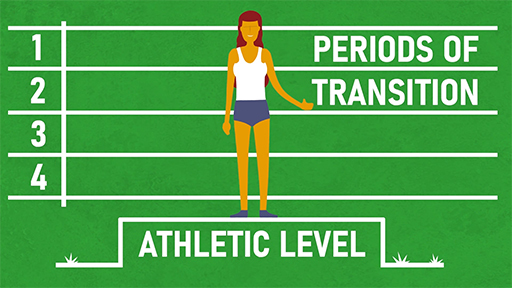
Start of Media Content

Video content is not available in this format.

**Video 1**

[View transcript - Video 1](" \l "Unit5_Session3_Transcript1)

Start of Figure



End of Figure

End of Media Content

Obviously not all athletes will follow this exact path, but it is important to consider the impact these academic and vocational developments can have on the athlete.

Start of Table

Table 1 Applying the model

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Transition** | **Features of the transition and potential challenges** | **Potential impact on sports performance and participation** |
| Childhood to adolescence | *Provide your answer...* | *Provide your answer...* |
| Adolescence to adulthood | *Provide your answer...* | *Provide your answer...* |
| Primary to secondary education | *Provide your answer...* | *Provide your answer...* |
| Secondary to higher education | *Provide your answer...* | *Provide your answer...* |
| Higher education to vocational training and a professional occupation | *Provide your answer...* | *Provide your answer...* |

End of Table

End of Question

[View discussion - Activity 2 Transitions across the lifespan](" \l "Unit5_Session3_Discussion1)

End of Activity

Through a lifespan perspective an athlete will invariably experience both upward and downward transitions in their performance level, both of which can place demands on the athlete. You will examine each of these in the next section.

## 3 Upward and downward transitions

As an athlete progresses through their career, upward (progressing to a higher performance level) and downward (moving to a lower performance level) normative transitions are a common feature.

## Upward transitions: moving to a higher performance level

One of the key developmental transitions faced by athletes as they progress through their career is the move to higher level competition. It is a natural progression, for example, for an athlete to move from junior to senior level or for higher level athletes to progress from amateur to elite level.

As you touched on in Activity 1 an upward career transition, although positive, can be highly demanding both physiologically and psychologically. In fact, dropout from sport can be common in this period and it is recommended that athletes are prepared for this transition (Pummell and Lavallee, 2019). Box 1 shares some athlete reflections on their experiences of upward transitions in sport. As you can see these athletes experienced both positive and negative responses.

Start of Box

**Box 1 Reflections on upward transitions**

* I went from being the big fish in the little pond to the little fish in the big pond and I found that hard to deal with at first. **(Hans, swimmer)**
* The discipline was the hardest thing for me to handle – in the academy everything was so much more relaxed and less serious. **(Jackie, rugby player)**
* I was ready for the move to senior level – I’d achieved everything I could as a junior and was ready for a new challenge. **(Jackson, sprinter)**

End of Box

## Downward transitions: moving to a lower performance level

Another significant transition is the move downwards in level of competition. This can be caused by a variety of factors such as age related performance decline or deselection. Some of these causes are normative, but some are non-normative. Whatever the cause, it can be a difficult transition for athletes to deal with as they come to terms with the ‘comedown’ in status, the associated performance decrements and perhaps the reduced training intensity.

Downward career transitions, whether they occur early (e.g. deselection) or late in an athlete’s career (e.g. age related decline), bring with them several psychological challenges. Box 2 gives some examples of athletes’ reflections on their experiences of downward transition. These athletes experienced different frustrations at the move. You will also examine another example in the next activity.

Start of Box

**Box 2 Reflections on downward transitions**

* After moving from a professional football team to a semi-professional team I found it hard to adjust to the ‘unprofessional’ attitude of the other players. I was used to watching what I eat and staying in the night before a match, but these guys saw nothing wrong with partying the night before a match. **(Zach, footballer)**
* I found that I became almost embarrassed of the times I was running. When I got to the end of the race, I felt like making an announcement to everyone in the race and everyone watching so that they knew how good I used to be! **(Priti, middle distance runner)**
* I found it very frustrating dealing with the lower levels of coaching and officiating and I ended up not having a lot of faith in my coach. **(Sonya, volleyball player)**

End of Box

Start of Activity

**Activity 3 Downward transitions**

Allow about 30 minutes

Start of Question

Watch the video below which explores the experiences of a group of young football players who have been dropped from their professional clubs. If these players continue to play football, they are likely to play at a lower level. Reflect on some of the responses the boys expressed to being dropped and then some of the challenges you think these players might face during this downward transition.

Start of Media Content

Video content is not available in this format.

**Video 2**

[View transcript - Video 2](" \l "Unit5_Session4_Transcript1)

Start of Figure



End of Figure

End of Media Content

End of Question

[View discussion - Activity 3 Downward transitions](" \l "Unit5_Session4_Discussion1)

End of Activity

In the video, the young footballers were forced to deal with a downward transition quite early on in their careers. However, the move downwards in competitive level can often be thought of as a developmental process as an individual’s career progresses and perhaps the final stages of an athlete’s sporting career before retirement. The decision of when to retire can be a difficult one as you will learn in Session 7 of this course.

## 4 Reflecting on normative transitions

As you reach the end of this session, take a few moments to reflect on what you’ve learned and how you can apply it to your own situation by completing Activity 4 below.

Start of Activity

**Activity 4 Your reflections on normative transitions**

Allow about 20 minutes

Start of Question

Reflect on what you have covered in this session by answering the questions below. Only answer the questions that are relevant to your role (as an athlete or someone supporting an athlete).

If you are an athlete …

1. What normative transitions have you experienced in your career so far?
2. What impact did these transitions have on you and how did you cope with them?
3. Is there anything you would do differently to help you cope better with these transitions having now completed this session?
4. What normative transitions do you expect to face in the future?
5. What strategies will you put in place to help you cope with these transitions?

If you are someone supporting an athlete (or athletes) …

1. What normative transitions have the athlete(s) you support experienced?
2. What impact did these transitions have on the athlete(s) you support and how did you help them to cope with these transitions?
3. Is there anything you would do differently to help support your athlete(s) with these transitions having now completed this session?
4. What normative transitions do you expect your athlete(s) to face in the future?
5. What strategies will you put in place to help them cope with these transitions?

End of Question

[View discussion - Activity 4 Your reflections on normative transitions](" \l "Unit5_Session5_Discussion1)

End of Activity

## 5 This session’s quiz

It’s now time to take the Session 4 badge quiz. It’s similar to previous quizzes but this time, instead of answering five questions, there will be 15.

Open the quiz in a new tab or window by holding down Ctrl (or Cmd on a Mac) when you click on the link. Return here when you have finished.

[Session 4 compulsory badge quiz](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/ocw/mod/quiz/view.php?id=106386).

Remember, this quiz counts towards your badge. If you’re not successful the first time, you can attempt the quiz again in 24 hours.

## 6 Summary of Session 4

In this session you have examined the impact of normative, ‘within career’ transitions.

The key learning points from this fourth session are:

* Transitions that occur during an athlete’s sports career are wide ranging and can be normative (expected) or non-normative (unexpected).
* Examples of normative transitions include moving from junior to senior level, moving from amateur to professional, and moving to a lower performance level due to age related decline.
* Wyllemann and Lavallee’s (2004) developmental model recognises that transitions occur in various aspects of the athlete’s life throughout the lifespan of their sports career.
* Both upward and downward career transitions can place psychological stresses on the athlete.

In the next session, you will examine some of the unexpected (or non-normative) career transitions experienced by athletes.

You are now halfway through the course. The Open University would really appreciate your feedback and suggestions for future improvement in our optional [end-of-course survey](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/athletesjourney_end), which you will also have an opportunity to complete at the end of Session 8. Participation will be completely confidential and we will not pass on your details to others.

You should now go to [Session 5](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/ocw/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=105609).

**Session 5: Stopped in your tracks – unexpected transitions in sport**

## Introduction

Having looked at expected ‘within career’ transitions in sport in Session 4, you will now move on to look at unexpected (or non-normative) career transitions that can occur within an athlete’s career and the impact they can have.

You begin this session by watching the video below in which sport and exercise psychologist Dr Josie Perry discusses why non-normative transitions such as injury are particularly challenging. She explains how these transitions are out of the athlete’s control and therefore harder to prepare for. Transitions like this often take athletes out of their comfort zone into periods of change which can make them feel insecure.

Start of Media Content

Video content is not available in this format.

**Video 1**

[View transcript - Video 1](" \l "Unit6_Session1_Transcript1)

Start of Figure



End of Figure

End of Media Content

By the end of this session you should be able to:

* identify some of the non-normative transitions an athlete may experience in their career
* understand the psychological and emotional impact of non-normative transitions on the athlete
* consider the psychological impact of sport injury on the athlete.

## 1 What are non-normative transitions?

Start of Figure



End of Figure

Non-normative transitions refer to the unpredictable ‘within career’ transitions that an athlete might face. Unlike normative transitions, they are not transitions that can typically be predicted and planned for and can therefore be more difficult to manage. In the next activity you will consider the wide range of non-normative transitions that athletes may face in their time as sports performers and the potential psychological impact of these.

Start of Activity

**Activity 1 Non-normative transitions**

Allow about 20 minutes

Start of Question

Make a list of some of the non-normative transitions that an athlete might experience during their sporting career. To help you with this, you may find it useful to think about your own experiences either as an athlete or as someone supporting an athlete

Select one or two of the transitions on your list and reflect on the potential psychological challenges that this transition might bring about.

End of Question

[View discussion - Activity 1 Non-normative transitions](" \l "Unit6_Session2_Discussion1)

End of Activity

You are now going to look at two examples of the non-normative transitions identified in Activity 1 in more detail. For the remainder of this session you will focus on sport injury, and in Session 6 you will focus on parenthood.

## 2 Spotlight: sport injury

Unfortunately, sport injury is something that athletes commonly experience during their careers. Depending on its nature and severity a sport injury can lead to several difficult transitions such as temporary withdrawal from sport or in some cases premature retirement from sport. These can have a significant impact on the athlete as you will discover in the rest of this session.

Start of Activity

**Activity 2 Responses to sport injury**

Allow about 25 minutes

Start of Question

Watch the video below in which Olympic medallist (hockey) Helen Richardson-Walsh describes her experience of sport injury. Then reflect on any personal experiences you have had of sport injury (either as an athlete or as someone supporting an athlete) and think about the psychological impact the injury had.

Make a list of some of the common psychological reactions that you think an athlete might have in response to a sport injury.

Start of Media Content

Video content is not available in this format.

**Video 2**

[View transcript - Video 2](" \l "Unit6_Session3_Transcript1)

Start of Figure



End of Figure

End of Media Content

End of Question

[View discussion - Activity 2 Responses to sport injury](" \l "Unit6_Session3_Discussion1)

End of Activity

Activity 2 demonstrates that adjusting to sport injury can be a difficult transition for people to cope with. Not only is sport injury difficult to deal with when it occurs and during injury rehabilitation, but once the injury has recovered, the return to sport can also represent a difficult period of transition. You will examine this in the next section.

## 2.1 Return to sport

Following injury an athlete will have a period of transition on their return to sport. On returning to sport, athletes may need to cope with additional challenges such as a loss of form or reduced performance level which they may find difficult to adapt to. For example, when returning to sport following an injury a first team player may initially return to playing for the second or reserve team.

You will explore these challenges more in the next activity.

Start of Activity

**Activity 3 Returning to sport following injury**

Allow about 25 minutes

Start of Question

Watch the video below in which you see athlete Emily Neff talk about returning to sport following a knee injury.

As you watch the video make a note of the concerns Emily mentions about returning to sport and then think more generally about how the issues she raises could impact on an athlete’s return to sport.

Finally, imagine you are supporting Emily. What interventions could you use to help her with her transition back into sport?

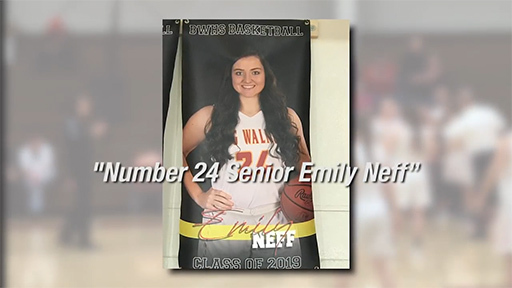
Start of Media Content

Video content is not available in this format.

**Video 3**

[View transcript - Video 3](" \l "Unit6_Session3_Transcript2)

Start of Figure



End of Figure

End of Media Content

End of Question

[View discussion - Activity 3 Returning to sport following injury](" \l "Unit6_Session3_Discussion2)

End of Activity

Returning to sport following injury can be challenging, but what if the extent of your injury means you will never return to sport? Next you will look at the impact of career-ending injuries.

## 2.2 Career-ending injuries

One of the most challenging aspects of sport injury is when an injury is so severe that it leads to the end of an athlete’s sporting career. In these circumstances the athlete is often unprepared for this premature retirement. This is why programmes that prepare athletes for career transitions and life after sport, such as those you looked at in Session 3, are so important.

In the next activity you will explore the potential impact of career-ending injuries.

Start of Activity

**Activity 4 What next? The impact of career-ending injuries**

Allow about 40 minutes

Start of Question

Read the BBC article linked below and then watch the video featuring rower Arielle Sanders.

Make a list of some of the feelings that Arielle Sanders and Victoria Vincent experienced in response to their career-ending injuries and the opportunities they took from the experience.

[Victoria Vincent: Ex-GB diver on mental health effects after career-ending eye injury](https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/diving/50545919)

Start of Media Content

Watch the video at [YouTube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uAEfU6UjkeM&hl=en&fs=1&rel=0).

**Video 4**

[View transcript - Video 4](" \l "Unit6_Session3_Transcript3)

End of Media Content

End of Question

[View discussion - Activity 4 What next? The impact of career-ending injuries](" \l "Unit6_Session3_Discussion3)

End of Activity

Social support provided by groups like the one Arielle spoke about has been shown to help people through sport injury. For example, in their study exploring the impact of career-ending injuries on three rugby union players, Arvinen-Barrow et al.(2017) (Box 1) found that social support was an effective strategy to help athletes cope with injury.

Start of Box

**Box 1 Helping athletes cope with injury through social support**

**Research summary (Arvinen-Barrow et al., 2017)**

**Title**

Transitioning out of professional sport: the psychosocial impact of career-ending injuries among elite Irish rugby football union players.

**Method**

Three rugby union players who had suffered a career-ending injury participated in a one-to-one interview about their injury and subsequent transition into retirement.

**Findings**

Sport injury and the transition into retirement was a distressing experience for all three players. They experienced feelings that included stress, loss, shock, sadness, and anger. Factors that helped them cope with injury and retirement included social support, pre-retirement planning and working with a sport psychologist (see sample quotes below):

Start of Quote

[The coach was] a huge advocate of fellas keeping on studies and doing other things outside of rugby.

End of Quote

Start of Quote

I was generally quite positive, I suppose, I attached myself to very positive, influential guys in the squad.

End of Quote

End of Box

Career-ending injuries are just one cause of retirement. You will explore retirement from sport in more detail in Session 7 of this course.

## 3 Reflecting on non-normative transitions

As you reach the end of this session take a few moments to reflect on what you’ve learned and how you can apply it to your own situation by completing Activity 5 below.

Start of Activity

**Activity 5 Your reflections on non-normative transitions**

Allow about 20 minutes

Start of Question

Reflect on what you have covered in this session by answering the questions below in relation to your role as either an athlete or someone supporting an athlete.

1. What non-normative transitions have you or the athlete(s) you support experienced?
2. What impact did these transitions have on you or the athlete(s) you support?
3. Now that you have completed this session, is there anything you would do differently to help you or the athlete(s) you support cope better with these transitions?

End of Question

[View discussion - Activity 5 Your reflections on non-normative transitions](" \l "Unit6_Session4_Discussion1)

End of Activity

## 4 This session’s quiz

Now that you’ve completed Session 5, you can take a short quiz to help you to reflect on what you’ve learned.

Open the quiz in a new tab or window by holding down Ctrl (or Cmd on a Mac) when you click on the link. Return here when you have finished.

[Session 5 quiz](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/ocw/mod/quiz/view.php?id=106383).

## 5 Summary of Session 5

In this session you have explored some of the non-normative (unexpected) transitions that can be experienced by athletes.

The key learning points from this fifth session are:

* Non-normative transitions are unexpected transitions such as injury, illness, pregnancy and relocation.
* Sport injury can be a particularly challenging non-normative transition resulting in several negative emotions.
* Return to sport following injury can be difficult and it’s important to consider both physical and psychological readiness to return.
* Career-ending injuries can be very distressing and cause negative emotional reactions.

In the next session, you will examine the ‘within career’ transition of parenthood in more detail.

You should now go to [Session 6](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/ocw/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=105610).

**Session 6: Spotlight – parenthood and sport**

## Introduction

Start of Quote

[At 35], my perspective on life had started to shift. I had different priorities. …Once the prospect of becoming a mother started to play on my mind, it grew to dominate my thoughts so much that I knew running would have to take a back seat for a while.

(Pavey, 2016, p. 146)

End of Quote

Start of Figure



**Figure 1** Jo Pavey − 10,000m athletics World, European and Commonwealth medallist

End of Figure

So far in this course you have looked at several ‘within career’ transitions that most athletes will experience. In this session you will turn the spotlight to a transition that has become more commonplace in elite sport in recent years with more athletes striving to combine an athletic career with a family life. Even away from the sporting domain, parenthood represents one of the most significant transitional periods in a person’s life. However, when placed in the context of sport it can present several unique challenges.

By the end of this session you should be able to:

* understand parenthood as a transition many athletes face
* recognise the potential impact on an athlete of becoming a parent
* identify how athletes successfully balance parenthood and a career in sport.

## 1 Combining parenthood and elite sport

Research within this field has predominantly focused on the experiences of female athletes as often the implications for them can be more far-reaching than for male athletes. However, it is important to recognise that having children can impact the sporting careers of both mothers and fathers. You will look at this in the first activity.

Start of Activity

**Activity 1 Parenthood and tennis – the challenge of being an athletic parent**

Allow about 40 minutes

Start of Question

Read the blog article ‘[Parenthood and tennis – the challenge of being an athletic parent](http://www.open.ac.uk/blogs/OU-Sport/?p=625)’ and answer the questions below:

* What are the main challenges of being an athletic parent?
* Are there different challenges for mothers and fathers?
* What are some of the benefits mentioned connected to having children and maintaining a career in sport?

End of Question

[View discussion - Activity 1 Parenthood and tennis – the challenge of being an athletic parent](" \l "Unit7_Session2_Discussion1)

End of Activity

While Activity 1 touched on the challenges both men and women experience during the transition into parenthood, it is clear that the experience can be somewhat more significant for female athletes. You will focus on the athletic mother in more detail next.

## 2 The athletic mother

Start of Figure

D:\AaaF\OUT\httpswwwopeneduopenlearnocw_cmid106857_2020-11-17_15-26-37_gw5989\word\assets\_ce4f3a93701fc50e8d2d70030dffa711b492f918_tts_1_s6_female_athletes_278620.tif.jpg

End of Figure

While some female athletes decide to wait until retirement to start a family, for others it is not a risk they are prepared to take as optimal fertility often falls at the same time as peak performance (Darroch et al., 2019). As a result, it is becoming more commonplace to hear of female elite athletes deciding to have children during their career rather than waiting until they retire (Cunnama, 2017).

It is, however, important to recognise that there are several physical challenges associated with this decision as it will result in a period of reduced training volume and a loss of fitness. The return to sport has also proved problematic for some athletes. There have been many cases of elite athletes citing increases in injuries such as stress fractures which have been attributed to the limited post-partum advice available to them (Sundgot-Borgen et al., 2019).

In the next activity you will hear from an elite athlete who has successfully navigated her return to sport post-pregnancy.

Start of Activity

**Activity 2 The athlete mother**

Allow about 30 minutes

Start of Question

Watch the video below of Swedish trail running and ski mountaineering athlete Emelie Forsberg. Emelie has won gold at multiple World and European Championships within skyrunning (mountain running), and she gave birth to her first child in March 2019.

As you watch, reflect on the questions below. If you are a parent, you may also want to reflect on your own experiences.

* What are some of the main challenges for an athlete when they decide to return to sport after parenthood?
* What factors contribute to a successful return to sport?
* What can partners of athletes take away from hearing about how Emelie and her partner Kilian manage parenthood?

Start of Media Content

Watch the video at [YouTube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TkjClV0te4w&hl=en&fs=1&rel=0).

**Video 1**

End of Media Content

End of Question

[View discussion - Activity 2 The athlete mother](" \l "Unit7_Session3_Discussion1)

End of Activity

The flexibility Emelie and Kilian have been allowed in their lives as athletes perhaps reflects how in some ways it is easier for an athlete to manage a career and a family than it might be for someone in another career. There are of course challenges and you will look at these in more detail next.

## 3 The challenges of being a sporting parent

Figure 2 illustrates some of the factors that athletes must consider as they negotiate parenthood and their sporting career. Most of these apply to both mothers and fathers, but as you explored in the previous section, athletic mothers experience additional physical challenges.

Start of Figure



**Figure 2** Factors to consider when balancing parenthood and sport

[View description - Figure 2 Factors to consider when balancing parenthood and sport](" \l "Unit7_Session4_Description1)

End of Figure

You have looked at some of the physical challenges that can be faced by female athletes due to the physical changes that take place during pregnancy and post-partum and which have practical implications on training and competition. While many women do continue to maintain training, the level at which they are able to train will be at a significantly lower level than pre-pregnancy.

You will look at this and some of these other challenges in the next activity.

Start of Activity

**Activity 3 Managing a career and parenthood – a case study**

Allow about 30 minutes

Start of Question

Read the blog article below which was authored by Candice Lingam-Willgoss (one of the authors of this course) and Jessica Pinchbeck.

In this article, Candice and Jessica share their thoughts on combining a career as an elite netball player with parenthood. As you read the article make notes on the following points:

* What makes it possible to juggle a career in elite sport with parenthood?
* Why do some athletes decide to wait until they retire before starting a family?
* Do you think different sports have different challenges when it comes to combining a career in sport with parenthood?

[Managing a career and motherhood: is it possible in elite netball?](http://www.open.ac.uk/blogs/OU-Sport/?p=2088)

End of Question

[View discussion - Activity 3 Managing a career and parenthood – a case study](" \l "Unit7_Session4_Discussion1)

End of Activity

Team sports such as netball − where teammates are reliant on you to be there − brings up a new challenge as athletes have to fit in with more structured training times. Those in individual sports, such as a long-distance runner who is able to train alone, may not feel that same sense of responsibility to their peers.

The article in Activity 3 very much focused on the tangible practical challenges that can in many ways be predicted. However, there are other less tangible, unpredictable factors that athletes face in relation to their emotional and psychological reaction. One example is guilt, a concept that is often talked about in connection to parenthood.

This theme is often highlighted in research looking more broadly at the relationship between physical activity and parenthood (McGannon et al., 2012). McGannon and Schinke’s (2013) study looked at the relationship recreational athletes had with exercise after they had children. They found that women accept, when they have children, they will feel guilty about anything they do for themselves. Furthermore, in the case of elite athletes, this is also a period that sees identity challenged as athletes seek to fulfil two roles (which could be viewed as incompatible by some) and manage the associated guilt.

## 4 Positive impacts: is parenthood the key to success?

Start of Quote

It’s not a secret that I have my sights on 25 (Grand Slams), and actually, I think having a baby might help. When I’m too anxious I lose matches, and I feel like a lot of that anxiety disappeared when Olympia was born.

(Williams, 2018, cited in Haskell, 2018)

End of Quote

Start of Figure



**Figure 3** Serena Williams and her daughter

End of Figure

While you have heard about the challenges connected with parenthood and sport, there are also several positive implications which you briefly touched on in Activity 1. These positives are alluded to in the above quote from Serena Williams (tennis), as she reflects that having a baby could help her be a more successful tennis player as she is much less anxious. This is something echoed by other athletes, both male and female:

Start of Quote

Before I became a mother, I would have been uptight and anxious about reaching my training targets, measuring my progress, worrying a session could have gone better; but [as a mother] I didn’t have the time to dwell on it.

(Jo Pavey, athletics − Pavey, 2016)

End of Quote

Start of Quote

Kids make it a lot easier than it would be without them… they help you take your mind off it (sport) they have their own needs. We're there to just give them what they want so I've got to put my difficulties aside… If they're happy, I'm happy. I try and make the most of my time with them.

(Taulupe Faletau, rugby union player − Faletau, 2020, cited in Pritchard, 2020)

End of Quote

What can be concluded from this is that deciding to combine a sports career with a family will carry with it several unique challenges but also several benefits.

## 5 This session’s quiz

Now that you’ve completed Session 6, you can take a short quiz to help you to reflect on what you’ve learned.

Open the quiz in a new tab or window by holding down Ctrl (or Cmd on a Mac) when you click on the link. Return here when you have finished.

[Session 6 quiz](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/ocw/mod/quiz/view.php?id=106384).

## 6 Summary of Session 6

Within this session you have focused on the transitional period around parenthood and have looked at a number of factors that can influence this transition. You have also looked at how athletes are able to manage this and successfully navigate the two roles to combine family life with elite sport.

The key learning points from this sixth session are:

* Parenthood can place a new set of demands on an athlete which requires a period of adaptation.
* There are several physical challenges for female athletes who decide to have children during their sport career.
* It is possible to manage multiple identities, and the new role as parent can in turn have positive implications for the athlete and their family.

In the next session, you move on to explore what is potentially the most problematic transition and one which is experienced by all athletes, that is retirement from sport.

You should now go to [Session 7](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/ocw/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=105611).

**Session 7: The final athletic chapter – retirement from sport**

## Introduction

Start of Figure



**Figure 1** Usain Bolt

End of Figure

Retirement from sport is the one inevitable transition that all athletes face, such as Usain Bolt seen above, and is often a daunting experience at the end of their athletic career. Knowing when to retire can be a difficult decision and for some this is a decision over which they have no control. Throughout this session you will hear from several former athletes and start to appreciate why athletes retire and the psychological impact this may have.

By the end of this session you should be able to:

* appreciate why retirement from competitive sport can be difficult
* recognise how retirement can be prompted by reasons such as injury, deselection, age and free choice
* understand why retirement difficulties are more likely to be faced by those who are forced to retire and those with a stronger athletic identity.

## 1 The reality of retirement

The physical nature of sport means that in contrast to other careers an athlete’s retirement tends to occur at a relatively early age. According to Wylleman and Reints (2010), athletes generally retire around the age of 34 (although this can be much younger in some sports such as gymnastics).

To learn more about the reality of retirement, in this first activity you will hear from several retired athletes about their experiences.

Start of Activity

**Activity 1 How do champions experience retirement?**

Allow about 30 minutes

Start of Question

Watch the video below from the start until 05:20. In the video you will hear from several retired elite athletes who discuss their experiences of retirement from sport. As you watch, focus on the stories of two of the athletes Lauren Jackson and Barry Hall and then answer the following questions:

1. What were some of the main emotions and reactions that the athletes experienced when confronted with retirement?
2. What did the athletes attribute these reactions to?
3. Were there different reactions between those who chose to retire and those who were forced to?
4. Ultimately, how did each athlete come to terms with their retirement?

Start of Media Content

Watch the video at [YouTube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tefAF0k4V3s&hl=en&fs=1&rel=0).

**Video 1**

End of Media Content

End of Question

[View discussion - Activity 1 How do champions experience retirement?](" \l "Unit8_Session2_Discussion1)

End of Activity

The stories of Lauren and Barry are not unique but illustrate very clearly why this final transition is often the one to receive most attention. As you move on through the session you will explore some of the points discussed in Activity 1 but also learn more about the impact of retirement. First, however, you will look in more detail at why athletes retire.

## 2 Why do athletes retire?

This might seem like a relatively obvious question with obvious answers, but before you try and understand the psychological impact of retirement you need to appreciate the different reasons why athletes retire. Research in 2005 by Levy et al. concluded that there were four causes of retirement. These are illustrated in Figure 2 below.

Start of Figure



**Figure 2** Causes of retirement (adapted from Levy et al., 2005)

[View description - Figure 2 Causes of retirement (adapted from Levy et al., 2005)](" \l "Unit8_Session3_Description1)

End of Figure

You will have noticed from Figure 2 that these categories are quite broad. But are there any other reasons that an athlete might retire? You will look at this in the next activity.

Start of Activity

**Activity 2 Why do athletes retire?**

Allow about 20 minutes

Start of Question

Levy et al. (2005) presented four potential causes of retirement but there are actually many more. Make a list of some of the reasons you think might cause an athlete to retire.

End of Question

[View discussion - Activity 2 Why do athletes retire?](" \l "Unit8_Session3_Discussion1)

End of Activity

One or more of these many causes of retirement highlighted in Activity 2 will be experienced in a unique way by every athlete and each carries with them a range of physical, social and psychological challenges. It is the impact of retirement that you will look at in the next section.

## 3 The impact of retirement – positive or negative?

From a psychological perspective, research tends to suggest that the best time to retire is when you are ready and have chosen to. This choice gives the athlete a sense of control over their career and, combined with a clear retirement plan, can result in a smoother transition into their new life after sport (Park et al., 2012). Indeed, many athletes approach the whole experience in a positive way as illustrated in the example of cyclist Victoria Pendleton.

Start of Box

**Box 1 Victoria Pendleton, multiple World and Olympic cycling champion**

Start of Figure



**Figure 3** Victoria Pendleton

End of Figure

Victoria Pendleton made the following comments after her last ever cycling race at the 2012 Olympics in London:

Start of Quote

I’m just so glad that it’s all done and I can move on.

(Bevan, 2012)

End of Quote

Start of Quote

I’ve had enough of the pressure of trying to maintain the top level in the sport for so many years.

(BBC, 2012)

End of Quote

Victoria retired at the top of her game having achieved all of her goals and viewed her retirement in a positive light, relishing the prospect of new challenges and feeling relief to be away from the intense pressure of cycling.

End of Box

Victoria’s experience is in stark contrast to that of middle-distance runner Kelly Holmes who, like Victoria, also chose to retire from sport. You will hear about Kelly’s experience in the next activity.

Start of Activity

**Activity 3 Feeling lost: the dark side of retirement from sport**

Allow about 10 minutes

Start of Question

Listen to the audio clip of Dame Kelly Holmes below. As you listen, note down what she says was one of the hardest things about retirement for her.

Start of Media Content

Audio content is not available in this format.

**Audio 1**

[View transcript - Audio 1](" \l "Unit8_Session4_Transcript1)

End of Media Content

End of Question

[View discussion - Activity 3 Feeling lost: the dark side of retirement from sport](" \l "Unit8_Session4_Discussion1)

End of Activity

While both Victoria and Kelly chose to retire from sport, their experiences were very different. Kelly’s experience reinforces the point made by Barry in Activity 1 that even when an athlete chooses to retire they can still suffer several negative emotional consequences.

But what is the impact of retirement on someone who feels their career is cut short due, for example, to a loss of form, deselection or injury (such as in the case of youth footballer turned actor Matt Smith who you heard from in Session 2)? Athletes in this position can suddenly find themselves in a situation out of their control and this, as you considered in Sessions 2 and 3, can have a significant impact on the quality of their experience (Kuettel et al., 2018). Forced transitions tend to be more problematic and can be characterised by periods of psychological distress and feelings including grief, sadness and anger (e.g. Demetrio et al., 2020). But how can these feelings be managed?

## 4 Coming out the other side: coping with retirement

If you think back to the athletic career transition model (Alfermann and Stambulova, 2007) that you were introduced to in Session 1, you may remember that having the right coping strategies in place can determine whether transitions are effective or ineffective. Below is an adapted version of this model which has had some additions to illustrate the different coping strategies and interventions that can be implemented to assist a successful transition.

Start of Media Content

Video content is not available in this format.

**Video 2**

[View description - Video 2](" \l "Unit8_Session5_Description1)

[View transcript - Video 2](" \l "Unit8_Session5_Transcript1)

Start of Figure



End of Figure

End of Media Content

Start of Activity

**Activity 4 Coping strategies in practice**

Allow about 20 minutes

Start of Question

Listen to this short interview with Alex Danson who talks a bit more about how she has coped with her retirement from hockey. As you listen to Alex speak, note down what coping strategies led to her having a positive retirement experience.

Start of Media Content

Video content is not available in this format.

**Video 3**

[View transcript - Video 3](" \l "Unit8_Session5_Transcript2)

Start of Figure



End of Figure

End of Media Content

End of Question

[View discussion - Activity 4 Coping strategies in practice](" \l "Unit8_Session5_Discussion1)

End of Activity

Although coping strategies and interventions can support an athlete through retirement, as you’ve seen so far in this session, an athlete’s experience of retirement is individual. In the final section of this session you will look at one example of an athlete who came out of retirement as she missed the sport too much.

## 5 But I can’t let go!

Some athletes seek to avoid the psychological stress that can come with retirement by deferring the decision and continuing to masters level. Others who have retired may subsequently revoke their decision if their life after sport fails to deliver the challenges, opportunities or thrills they are looking for.

Start of Figure



**Figure 4** Kim Clijsters, former tennis world number one, and six times Grand Slam winner

End of Figure

A good example of someone who came back out of retirement is Kim Clijsters, who returned to tennis in 2009 following two years out of the sport. In that same year she went on to win the US Open, a feat she repeated the following year. Kim famously said in 2012 that her second retirement would ‘stick’ but it seems like she was keen to rise to the challenge yet again, making a return to training in early 2020 with a clear plan to return to competition. Her reasons were quite simple:

Start of Quote

For me, I still love to play tennis… I don't feel like I need to prove anything, but I want to challenge myself and I want to be strong again.

(Clijsters, 2019, cited in McElwee, 2019)

End of Quote

What becomes clear is that the decision-making process surrounding retirement or planning a comeback is a complex one. For these athletes, nothing else seems to be able to fill the void left by sport and so continuing their athletic career seems the best option. It can be debated as to whether this is right as retirement (and all its challenges) is the one transition that all athletes will be forced to face at some point.

## 6 This session’s quiz

Now that you’ve completed Session 7, you can take a short quiz to help you to reflect on what you’ve learned.

Open the quiz in a new tab or window by holding down Ctrl (or Cmd on a Mac) when you click on the link. Return here when you have finished.

[Session 7 quiz](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/ocw/mod/quiz/view.php?id=106385).

## 7 Summary of Session 7

Through hearing the stories of several elite athletes within this session you have looked at both the reasons that athletes have for retiring as well as the impact this transition can have, whether forced or chosen. You have also briefly considered why some athletes may choose to defer their retirement and others may decide to make a comeback.

The key learning points from this seventh session are:

* Retirement is potentially one of the most challenging transitions an athlete will experience.
* Chosen retirement isn’t necessarily less problematic but it has the potential to be more positive for the athlete if the right support is in place.
* Forced retirement can result in an athlete’s mental health and wellbeing suffering.
* Some athletes defer retirement by continuing to compete past their peak, while others make a comeback after retirement.

In the final session of this course, you will move on to look at what happens after retirement and life after sport.

You should now go to [Session 8](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/ocw/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=105612).

**Session 8: Moving on – life after sport**

## Introduction

Start of Figure



End of Figure

As you saw in Session 7, retirement from sport can be very difficult. But it can also be a positive experience through which athletes can identify new opportunities. In this session you will explore some case studies of athletes who have successfully made the transition into life after sport and the journey they have been on.

Video 1 introduces some of the challenges athletes face as they approach life after sport, which can serve as a reminder of the need for retirement planning as you explored in Sessions 3 and 7.

Start of Media Content

Video content is not available in this format.

**Video 1**

[View transcript - Video 1](" \l "Unit9_Session1_Transcript1)

Start of Figure



End of Figure

End of Media Content

By the end of this session you should be able to:

* appreciate life after sport experiences of a range of different athletes
* understand the opportunities available to athletes after they retire from sport
* identify the emotional and psychological impact of life after sport.

## 1 Making a successful transition

Making a successful transition into life after sport is very important because, as you have seen in Session 7, retirement can have a significant negative psychological impact and has been associated with mental health difficulties (Moesch et al., 2018). These difficulties include depression (Giannone et al., 2017), anxiety (Giannone et al., 2017) and substance abuse (Ponizovskiy, 2013).

Strategies aimed at preventing such difficulties when retirement inevitably occurs are key to avoiding a ‘crisis transition’ and ensuring a successful one. Pre-retirement planning and encouraging athletes to think about life after sport long before it is expected to happen is one of the most important strategies.

Programmes and support services such as the performance lifestyle programmes you were introduced to in Session 3 aim to help athletes to do this, and later in this session you will explore some examples of athletes who have benefited from utilising these services.

As you explored in Session 7, retirement can be chosen or forced. It is often those athletes who have suffered a forced retirement (e.g. due to injury) and who have failed to think about life after sport who are perhaps most at risk of experiencing significant difficulties. Successful transition is about transitioning into a new career and identity as you will see in the next activity. This can be facilitated by implementing strategies such as sport psychology support, social support and mentoring (Hallmann et al., 2019).

Start of Activity

**Activity 1 Moving on: finding a new identity**

Allow about 25 minutes

Start of Question

Watch the video below which explores planning for retirement and life after sport, and then answer the following questions. The video is introduced by former professional footballer Robbie Simpson who has set up an online platform to help athletes to plan for the retirement transition.

1. How does athletic identity link to retirement?
2. What are some of the difficulties retired athletes face?
3. Why might athletes be in a strong position to move into a new career?

Start of Media Content

Video content is not available in this format.

**Video 2**

[View transcript - Video 2](" \l "Unit9_Session2_Transcript1)

Start of Figure



End of Figure

End of Media Content

End of Question

[View discussion - Activity 1 Moving on: finding a new identity](" \l "Unit9_Session2_Discussion1)

End of Activity

Next you will explore a series of four case studies of athletes who have been through the transition to life after sport. In doing this, you will compare and contrast their journeys and reflect on what helped them to have a successful new career.

## 2 Case study 1: Lizzy Yarnold

In the next activity you will watch a video about Olympic skeleton champion [Lizzy Yarnold’s](http://lizzyyarnold.com/profile/) retirement from sport and her transition into life after sport.

Start of Activity

**Activity 2 Lizzy Yarnold: preparing early reaps positive rewards**

Allow about 25 minutes

Start of Question

Watch the video below in which Lizzy Yarnold talks about her journey towards retirement and then answer the following questions.

1. Why did Lizzy feel it was beneficial to be in education alongside training and competing?
2. What did she do during her sabbatical?
3. When did she start thinking about retirement?
4. What advice did she offer to other elite athletes about retirement?

Start of Media Content

Video content is not available in this format.

**Video 3**

[View transcript - Video 3](" \l "Unit9_Session3_Transcript1)

Start of Figure



End of Figure

End of Media Content

End of Question

[View discussion - Activity 2 Lizzy Yarnold: preparing early reaps positive rewards](" \l "Unit9_Session3_Discussion1)

End of Activity

Lizzy Yarnold’s journey into a life after sport appears to be a very positive one. Next you will look at another athlete who had a positive experience.

## 3 Case study 2: Kristian Thomas

In the next activity, you will explore the story of another Olympic medallist – former gymnast [Kristian Thomas](https://www.kristianthomas.co.uk/about) who retired after the 2016 Rio Olympics.

Start of Activity

**Activity 3 Kristian Thomas: switching identity**

Allow about 25 minutes

Start of Question

Watch the video below in which Kristian Thomas talks about his retirement and life after sport. As you watch the video, reflect on what helped him to have what he described as a positive and smooth transition.

Start of Media Content

Video content is not available in this format.

**Video 4**

[View transcript - Video 4](" \l "Unit9_Session4_Transcript1)

Start of Figure



End of Figure

End of Media Content

End of Question

[View discussion - Activity 3 Kristian Thomas: switching identity](" \l "Unit9_Session4_Discussion1)

End of Activity

Both Lizzy Yarnold and Kristian Thomas appeared to have positive experiences of retirement and life after sport, but is that the case for all athletes? In the next case study, you will explore a young footballer’s story.

## 4 Case study 3: Josh Lukwata

Professional football has a different structure to that of Olympic sports like gymnastics and skeleton and so career transition experiences are likely to be different. In this section you look at the case study of Josh Lukwata, a former footballer who played for the Fulham FC Academy.

Start of Activity

**Activity 4 Josh Lukwata: using football to make music**

Allow about 25 minutes

Start of Question

Watch the video below in which former goalkeeper Josh Lukwata discusses his experience of life after football and then answer the following questions.

1. How did Josh’s experience of retirement differ from Lizzy and Kristian’s?
2. How have Josh’s experiences in football helped him in his new career?

Start of Media Content

Video content is not available in this format.

**Video 5**

[View transcript - Video 5](" \l "Unit9_Session5_Transcript1)

Start of Figure



End of Figure

End of Media Content

End of Question

[View discussion - Activity 4 Josh Lukwata: using football to make music](" \l "Unit9_Session5_Discussion1)

End of Activity

All the athletes you have explored in this session so far are relatively newly retired. In the next section you will examine the life after sport experiences of a group of former elite athletes who have been retired for a much longer period of time.

## 5 Case study 4: Olympic athlete panel

In Activity 4 Josh discussed the transferable skills he learned in sport that benefited his new career. This is something that you will explore further in the next activity which features five Olympians who have transitioned out of sport into successful new careers.

Start of Activity

**Activity 5 Olympic athlete panel: why are former athletes attractive to employers?**

Allow about 35 minutes

Start of Question

Watch the video below from 24.58 to 31.17, which contains extracts from a panel of five former Olympic athletes talking about life after sport.

The five athletes featured in the video are (from left to right):

* Ashton Eaton (athletics − decathlon) who had been retired for two years when the video was made (2019) and was running his own company and working in an operations role
* Erin Cafaro MacKenzie (rowing) who had been retired for seven years and at the time of the video had just completed a research project. Erin was planning to start a company to support athlete and veteran career transitions
* Brianne Theisen-Eaton (athletics − heptathlon) who had been retired for two years and was working for an executive health and wellness company
* Emily Hughes (figure skating) who had been retired for nine years and was working for Johnson & Johnson in an operations role for the health technology team
* Margie Pedder (swimming) who had been retired for fifteen years and was working in Visa’s global sponsorship management group.

As you watch the video, answer the questions below.

1. What did Brianne say helped her with the transition into life after sport?
2. Why might former athletes be attractive to employers?

Start of Media Content

Watch the video at [YouTube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LuUY4Sf1Z6c&hl=en&fs=1&rel=0).

**Video 6**

[View transcript - Video 6](" \l "Unit9_Session6_Transcript1)

End of Media Content

End of Question

[View discussion - Activity 5 Olympic athlete panel: why are former athletes attractive to employer ...](" \l "Unit9_Session6_Discussion1)

End of Activity

## 6 Bringing it all together

As you near the end of this course, this section provides an opportunity to reflect on what you have learned about career transitions in sport, and what you can do to support athletes (or yourself) prepare for and successfully navigate the transitions they will face.

Start of Activity

**Activity 6 Reflecting on career transitions in sport**

Allow about 15 minutes

Start of Question

Watch the video below in which Candice Lingam-Willgoss and Caroline Heaney, the authors of this course who you first met in Session 1 Activity 1, reflect on how the content of the course has impacted on them in various different roles, for example as an athlete, a coach or as a parent.

Then, using the following questions as prompts, reflect on what you have learned in this course and how it will affect your future practice in your role as an athlete or someone supporting an athlete.

1. Will your interactions with others – for example, fellow athletes, athletes you coach, your children − change as a result of studying this course? If so, in what way?
2. What actions might you now take to help prevent crisis transitions either in your own career or that of the athletes you support?
3. What actions might you take to help prepare yourself or the athletes you support for both normative and non-normative transitions?
4. What are the key lessons you have learned about career transitions in sport?

Start of Media Content

Video content is not available in this format.

**Video 7**

[View transcript - Video 7](" \l "Unit9_Session7_Transcript1)

Start of Figure



End of Figure

End of Media Content

End of Question

[View discussion - Activity 6 Reflecting on career transitions in sport](" \l "Unit9_Session7_Discussion1)

End of Activity

## 7 This session’s quiz

Now that you’ve come to the end of the course, it’s time to take the Session 8 badge quiz. It’s similar to previous quizzes but this time, instead of answering five questions, there will be 15.

Open the quiz in a new tab or window by holding down Ctrl (or Cmd on a Mac) when you click on the link. Return here when you have finished.

[Session 8 compulsory badge quiz](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/ocw/mod/quiz/view.php?id=106387).

Remember, this quiz counts towards your badge. If you’re not successful the first time, you can attempt the quiz again in 24 hours.

## 8 Summary of Session 8

In this session you have explored life after sport, drawing on a range of case studies. These case studies have shown that, while retirement from sport can be difficult, it can provide athletes with new opportunities and experiences.

The key learning points from this final session are:

* Pre-retirement planning can help prevent a crisis transition.
* Other strategies such as sport psychology support, social support and mentoring can help with the transition into life after sport.
* Athletes have a range of transferable skills that can be attractive to employers.

## Where next?

If you’ve enjoyed this course you can find more free resources and courses on [OpenLearn](http://www.open.edu/openlearn/). If you have not already done so, you might be especially interested in looking at our other badged courses on sport:

* [Exploring the psychological aspects of sport injury](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/exploring-the-psychological-aspects-sport-injury/content-section-overview?active-tab=description-tab)
* [Learning from sport burnout and overtraining](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/learning-sport-burnout-and-overtraining/content-section-overview?active-tab=description-tab)
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## Tell us what you think

Now you've come to the end of the course, we would appreciate a few minutes of your time to complete this short [end-of-course survey](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/athletesjourney_end) (you may have already completed this survey at the end of Session 4). We’d like to find out a bit about your experience of studying the course and what you plan to do next. We will use this information to provide better online experiences for all our learners and to share our findings with others. Participation will be completely confidential and we will not pass on your details to others.

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Figure 1: adapted from Wylleman and Lavallee's (2004) Developmental Model

**Session 5**

Section 1: francescoch; Getty Images

**Session 6**

Figure 1: Action Plus Sports Images / Alamy Stock Photo

Section 2: peepo; Getty Images

Figure 3: UPI/Alamy Live News

**Session 7**

Figure 1: dpa picture alliance / Alamy Stock Photo

Figure 3: Sportsphoto / Alamy Stock Photo

Figure 4: Ben Lewis / Alamy Stock Photo

**Session 8**

Introduction: BrianAJackson; Getty Images

### Articles

**Session 3**

Section 4: 'Football's biggest issue': the struggle facing boys rejected by academies; David Conn, The Guardian, 6 October 2017

### ****Audio/Video****

**Session 2**

Video 2: courtesy of Professional Players Federation; www.ppf.org.uk

Video 4: courtesy of Rugby Players Association

Audio 1: Desert Island Discs, BBC Radio 4

**Session 3**

Videos 1 and 2: courtesy of: The English Institute of Sport Limited 2018

Video 3: courtesy of: The Victoria Institute of Sport

**Session 4**

Video 2: from: FourFourTwo Video: “The Exit Trial | One game to save a career | Documentary”.

**Session 5**

Video 3: courtesy of: Nationwide Children's Hospital

**Session 7**

Audio 1: Kelly Homes; BBC Radio 5 Live

**Session 8**

Video 1: courtesy of: Schladitz Consulting; https://www.careeraftersport.com/; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5j0wi0UrN3w

Video 2: courtesy of: Life After Professional Support Limited (LAPS)

Videos 3 and 4: courtesy of The English Institute of Sport Limited, 2018

Video 5: courtesy of joe.co.uk

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## Solutions

## Activity 1 Real people and real lives

#### Discussion

As you listen to Candice and Caroline talk, you will have noticed how both still maintain involvement in sport and still identify closely with being an athlete. Both have experiences in very different sports and performance settings and retired at different ages.

Unlike many sports that you are introduced to at school, Candice’s first experience of her sport was through her family. She experienced a range of different transitions quite early on, from joining a ski team at 12 years old and finding herself in a high-performance setting at a very early age. She also reflects how, in the six years she competed, she had to grow up very quickly and spend a large proportion of her time away from home from a young age. While no one injury caused her to retire, she was skiing in pain a lot of the time and was quite realistic about the opportunity to ‘make it’ as a skier.

Candice’s story is in contrast to the relatively late transition into sport experienced by Caroline who didn’t join an athletics club until she was 16, something she reflects may have resulted in her having such a long career. Another difference is how Caroline refers to having a ‘phased retirement’, first retiring from hurdling and then from 400m/800m flat running. It is very clear she still misses competing on the track.

[Back to - Activity 1 Real people and real lives](" \l "Unit2_Session2_Activity1)

## Activity 2 Your journey so far

#### Discussion

While it’s common to have your first experience of sport at primary school there are also instances when you may have been introduced outside of the school environment, like Candice.

Motivations for involvement can vary and are often multi-faceted. For example, you may have noted that you played your sport because your friends did and it was fun. But it could be that you had a parent who played the sport too, or maybe you were inspired by a professional in that sport. Whatever the reason, you will have had different motivations for wanting to be involved.

Depending on what stage you are at in your sporting journey, you will have experienced different transitions. If you are only at the start of your journey, your experiences may be more limited, such as your entry into sport and perhaps moving to playing at a higher level. If, however, you have completed your sporting career, you will probably have lots of transitional experiences and may even have moved into coaching or supporting your child.

[Back to - Activity 2 Your journey so far](" \l "Unit2_Session3_Activity1)

## Activity 3 Applying the athletic career transition model

#### Discussion

In applying the athletic career transition model to this case study you may have felt that there is potentially an imbalance between Jack’s transition resources and the transition barriers he is facing, resulting in him finding it difficult to cope with the move to a new club (i.e. the barriers outweigh the resources).

Applying the model could help Jack to experience a successful transition. If someone − perhaps a coach − at Jack’s new club recognised that he was experiencing a crisis transition they could apply an intervention − for example, speak to a psychologist − to help him develop his coping skills. (Interventions to help athletes cope with career transitions are discussed later in this course). Failure to apply an intervention to help Jack cope with the transition could have several ‘costs’ for him, such as underperformance, anxiety or, if things were to develop, depression.

[Back to - Activity 3 Applying the athletic career transition model](" \l "Unit2_Session4_Activity1)

## Activity 1 Transitions and the psychological impact

#### Discussion

As you watched the video, you will probably have noted several themes discussed by the athletes. Both Clarke Carlisle (football) and Alex Scott (football) discuss the challenge of no longer being footballers and recognise they suffered a loss of **identity**. This loss of identity links closely to the **level** at which these athletes competed, as they potentially have much more at stake − something Ollie Phillips (rugby) alludes to when discussing the loss of adulation and income.

What nearly all of the athletes recognised was the importance of **preparing** for a life after sport. Alex Scott, Luke Harvey (jockey) and Matt Machan (cricket) all highlighted how a career in sport is relatively short so having a plan for a second career is crucial. Having the right **support** around you to do this is also key.

A final point links to the **different sports** that each athlete was involved in and whether that had an influence on their reactions to retirement.

[Back to - Activity 1 Transitions and the psychological impact](" \l "Unit3_Session2_Activity1)

## Activity 2 Athletic identity and transitions

### Part

#### Discussion

* Josie mentions how having a strong athletic identity can result in an athlete being highly focused, determined and motivated.
* The negative impact was discussed in relation to injury and how, when an athlete has a strong identity, they can suffer a range of negative emotions if they can no longer fulfil this identity.
* The research conducted by the BBC noted that up to 50% of professional athletes reported symptoms of depression in retirement largely down to not having a passion for something else. This further illustrates the impact a strong athletic identity can have.
* Some of the practical implications that Josie mentioned very much focused on encouraging the athlete to develop a more rounded identity so that if their athletic identity were to be disrupted they had something else to fall back on. This point is not just pertinent for sport psychologists but also for anyone who interacts with performers, for example, coaches, parents and fellow athletes. Encouraging a rounded identity is important and doesn’t need to be a distraction from an athlete’s sport if managed appropriately.

[Back to - Part](" \l "Unit3_Session3_Part1)

### Part

#### Discussion

By reflecting on the different identities you have, you should have started to see how everyone juggles different roles. You may have noted identities related to your work, being a parent, the sport you play or coach, the other hobbies you partake in or even as a learner on this course. What is important to recognise is that even if you are an athlete with a strong athletic identity you will still have other roles in your life. As Josie explained in Part 1, these different roles can be extremely useful during transitional phases in sport to help athletes ‘still feel like themselves’.

[Back to - Part](" \l "Unit3_Session3_Part2)

## Activity 3 A changing stage: from football to Dr Who

#### Discussion

While Matt has gone on to have a hugely successful career in acting including a stint as Dr Who, he still remembers how tough the period was when he was dropped from Leicester City FC. Matt reflected on how hard he found it to tell people about being let go from his football club as he was always ‘Matt the footballer’. He remembers it being a time filled with uncertainty largely due to the fact that being a footballer was his only career plan at the time.

You will probably have also noted that the interviewer raises the impact this had on his father whose identity was as the father of a footballer. Those of you who are parents of athletes may empathise with this.

[Back to - Activity 3 A changing stage: from football to Dr Who](" \l "Unit3_Session3_Activity2)

## Activity 4 Transitions in gymnastics

#### Discussion

The research findings suggest that gymnasts represent a vulnerable group in terms of their susceptibility to negative transitional experiences, notably retirement from sport. The authors conclude that, in part, the organisational structure of high level gymnastics is one which presents a number of unique challenges such as the early age that these athletes reach elite level. This often results in unequal power in the coach−athlete relationship which can culminate in the development of a unidimensional identity. This can be further enforced by the coach trying to reduce any other distractions for their athletes so they have a sole focus on their sport. A subsequent effect of this is that the athlete may only have support from within that sporting set up, meaning that when they leave that environment, they also leave their main or only support network.

One key difference for other sports is that often the elite level isn’t reached until much later and the athlete may have had the chance to develop a more rounded support network. Furthermore, the longevity of a career in other sports may reduce the pressure that an athlete feels. You may have also noted that other sports have a stronger social set up connected to them, for example in a team sport, which may allow reduced feelings of isolation during transition.

[Back to - Activity 4 Transitions in gymnastics](" \l "Unit3_Session5_Activity1)

## Activity 5 Feeling alone

#### Discussion

Duncan’s story is far from unique with many retired athletes having quite negative experiences. Duncan reflects on how he felt isolated at this point in his life, losing the support of his wife as he went through a divorce and also reporting that he didn’t feel he could reach out for support.

A key point for athletes to learn is that they should ensure they ask for support and forge relationships and networks while they are still playing as this can help the transition process.

[Back to - Activity 5 Feeling alone](" \l "Unit3_Session6_Activity1)

## Activity 6 Your reflections on what influences transitions

#### Discussion

Your reflections will be very personal to your own situation and experiences, but below are the brief reflections of former 200m runner Raja in response to these questions.

1. The level I competed at and my identity were definitely big factors for me. I remember turning up at the track at club training and everyone would turn and look as I was the best runner there, the only guy to make the national squad. It was who I was, Raja the sprinter. The newer athletes looked up to me, I loved how that felt. I remember going back a few years ago to help coach a session and no-one knew who I was anymore!
2. I think the biggest impact was when I decided to retire from athletics, but I was already doing a bit of coaching so had a plan in place. I knew that was what I wanted to go into. It allowed me to stay in the sport and my support and social network didn’t really change as I was still around the same people. It was what made it all pretty positive for me that I had things in place.
3. I think one of the main things I have learned is that everyone’s experience is different, just because my experience was positive it doesn’t mean everyone’s will be. I was lucky I had systems in place, but I have seen others who didn’t. They didn’t have a coaching focus and as such when they had an injury or retired, they really didn’t know what to do with themselves.

[Back to - Activity 6 Your reflections on what influences transitions](" \l "Unit3_Session7_Activity1)

## Activity 1 Life outside sport

#### Discussion

Hannah felt that it was important to develop her life outside sport and spoke about education, media work and socialising as examples of areas she had developed. She felt that these have helped her grow as a person and allow her to switch off from the pressure of sport. She also felt that this would help her to be better prepared for retirement in the future.

Similar to Hannah, Nekoda spoke about the importance of developing her education and broadening her life experiences. She discussed several benefits of this including preparation for life after sport and skill development. She also noted the importance of being able to switch off from sport and stated that she ‘would go stir-crazy’ without other things in her life!

As you saw in previous sessions, there is evidence to support the perspective of these athletes. Research such as Brewer and Petitpas (2017) and Torregrosa et al. (2015) suggest that athletes who develop a ‘multidimensional identity’ cope better with transitions and tend to perform better than athletes who have a ‘unidimensional identity’. In a multidimensional identity, athletes develop different aspects of their identity − such as athlete and student − whereas those with a unidimensional identity concentrate on developing only their athletic identity.

If you are an athlete yourself or involved in supporting athletes, it is important to take note of this. For example, if you are a coach you might find it useful to talk to your athletes about developing their identity beyond sport and encourage them to develop other interests.

[Back to - Activity 1 Life outside sport](" \l "Unit4_Session2_Activity1)

## Activity 2 Preparing for life after sport

#### Discussion

Performance lifestyle programmes are believed to be effective in helping athletes to prepare for career transitions. For example, in his study of rugby league players which is discussed in Video 4, Lavallee found that players who engaged with pre-retirement planning support services were not only better prepared for career transitions, but also derived performance advantages such as being more likely to be selected for teams or having longer careers. It was suggested that performance gains might be due to the players having fewer concerns about the future, resulting in greater levels of satisfaction and enhanced capacity to focus on their sports performance. In the video, Lavallee suggests that this holistic approach to developing athletes − which focuses on athlete welfare and wellbeing − is superior to a ‘win at all costs’ approach as it still leads to winning and successful performance.

It is important to note that while only high level athletes tend to have access to performance lifestyle programmes, that doesn’t mean that lower level athletes should miss out. Transitions are still highly significant for these athletes too and similar support should be offered by significant others around these athletes, such as coaches, parents or teammates.

If you are one of these significant others you can incorporate principles from the programmes in the videos into your own practice by speaking to your athletes about the importance of preparing for transitions in their sporting careers and developing their identity outside sport. You may, for example, encourage an athlete to look at local college or university courses or encourage them to socialise with friends when not training or get a part-time job. Telling athletes that developing their identity outside sport can actually improve their performance − as shown in Lavallee’s (2019) research − could well be a good motivation!

[Back to - Activity 2 Preparing for life after sport](" \l "Unit4_Session3_Activity1)

## Activity 3 Evaluating the five-step career plan

#### Discussion

Stambulova (2010) reported that the five-step career planning strategy is perceived as effective by both athletes and practitioners.

You may have reflected that it could be a useful tool to help you or the athletes you support think about and plan for future moves. It appeared to be a useful tool to help Larissa think about her career so far and plan ahead for future transitions and life after sport. It encouraged her to start preparing now for a future career in coaching, something she hadn’t thought about until creating and discussing her timeline.

A strength of the strategy is that it can encourage an individual to start thinking about and preparing for future transitions, and this preparation can help an athlete experience a positive rather than crisis transition.

A potential limitation of the strategy is that its success depends on the skill of the person supporting the athlete to ask the right questions to help them delve deeper into their world and consider future transitions. For this reason, professionals such as performance lifestyle advisors and sport psychologists are well placed to support athletes through the five-step strategy. However, as you saw earlier, not all athletes will have access to these professionals and may instead utilise the support of another person.

[Back to - Activity 3 Evaluating the five-step career plan](" \l "Unit4_Session4_Activity1)

## Activity 4 Academy reject

#### Discussion

There are a wide range of strategies that you might have identified that could help Max through the transition. Based on what you have covered so far in this course you might have thought about other options available to Max such as playing for a new team, education or work.

Alternatively, you might have thought about psychological strategies. Strategies that have received research support and that could help Max include (Wylleman, Alfermann and Lavallee, 2004):

* counselling
* cognitive restructuring (e.g. replacing negative thoughts with positive ones)
* stress management techniques
* projective techniques (e.g.where an individual projects their thoughts and feelings onto an imaginary person or situation), and
* mentoring.

Max may benefit from working with a mentor who has perhaps been through a similar experience in the past. Hallmann et al. (2019) suggest that mentors can support athletes through career transitions by fulfilling several roles such as providing social support and being a role model.

[Back to - Activity 4 Academy reject](" \l "Unit4_Session5_Activity1)

## Activity 1 Normative transitions

#### Discussion

The transitions that athletes may experience during their career can be considerable and will vary from athlete to athlete. Below are a few examples of normative transitions that an athlete might experience:

* moving from junior to senior level competition
* moving from part-time to full-time athlete
* moving from amateur to professional
* moving from senior to masters or veteran competition
* moving to a lower level due to age related decline
* change of coach.

This is not an exhaustive list and you may well have thought of many other examples that you or people around you have experienced. Obviously, not all athletes will experience all of the transitions identified in this list – the transitions an athlete will face during their career will depend on their personal circumstances and the level they compete at.

Even though these transitions are expected and can therefore be prepared for, they can still be challenging. For example, an athlete moving from junior to senior level may find the senior training and competition environment very different and difficult to adapt to. This was explored in a research study by Røynesdal et al.(2018) which examined the transition from youth to senior teams in professional football. They found that footballers making this transition often find things like managing the social dynamics and the competitiveness in the first team challenging as demonstrated by the quote below from one of the coaches in the study. The study concluded that young footballers need support to help them successfully navigate the transition from youth to senior level.

Start of Quote

It is going out into an unfamiliar environment, dealing with the pressures of playing in men’s football where it is competitive, and it is playing for three points. People’s livelihoods and careers are on the line, there is a passionate support base and it is a much more challenging environment than youth level football.

(Røynesdal et al., 2018, p. 32−33)

End of Quote

[Back to - Activity 1 Normative transitions](" \l "Unit5_Session2_Activity1)

## Activity 2 Transitions across the lifespan

#### Discussion

Below are some examples of what you might have put in your table after watching the video.

Start of Table

Table 1 Applying the model (completed)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Transition** | **Features of the transition and potential challenges** | **Potential impact on sports performance and participation** |
| Childhood to adolescence | * Time of great change * Developing more mature relationships with others * Desire for role identification * Becoming more independent from parents | * If a parent is heavily involved in supporting their child’s participation this may conflict with the adolescent’s need for greater independence * If the athlete develops a strong athletic identity at the expense of other aspects of their identity, it can have a negative impact on the athlete’s development and ability to cope with stressors (e.g. career transitions) |
| Adolescence to adulthood | * Priorities may change * Young adulthood is characterised by a need to form intimate, loving relationships with other people | * An athlete may begin to have more relationship commitments that could compete with the demands of sports participation |
| Primary to secondary education | * Change in structure of education (e.g. larger school, broader range of lessons) * An increase in the volume of work * A need to fit into a new social group | * An athlete may find it harder to fit in training sessions as they have more homework * They may increasingly be invited to socialise with friends outside school which may compete with the demands of their sport |
| Secondary to higher education | * Possibly moving away from home * New social networks | * Moving away will require a change in coach * New social networks may help or hinder sports participation * May open up a new level of competition to athletes, thus providing more opportunities for athletic development |
| Higher education to vocational training and a professional occupation | * Logistical difficulties * Longer working hours * Financial commitments | * Sports participation may be harder to maintain * Depending on the athlete’s level they may have to prioritise work over sport to satisfy financial and career demands |

End of Table

[Back to - Activity 2 Transitions across the lifespan](" \l "Unit5_Session3_Activity1)

## Activity 3 Downward transitions

#### Discussion

All the players featured in the clip have experienced a setback that will possibly lead them to playing at a lower level. In response to the initial news of being dropped, all three players expressed a fear of the unknown and concerns about what they were going to do next. One player described being shocked at the decision, indicating that for him this was a non-normative transition. If they move on to playing at a lower level − depending on what they move on to − they may experience several challenges such as coming to terms with not being able to play full time and the financial and emotional implications of this. They may also experience feelings of frustration with the lower level of coaching or with the attitude of other players.

[Back to - Activity 3 Downward transitions](" \l "Unit5_Session4_Activity1)

## Activity 4 Your reflections on normative transitions

#### Discussion

Your reflections will be very personal to your own situation and experiences, but below are the brief reflections of an ice hockey coach Lesley in response to these questions.

1. I coach the junior team so I see both ends of the transitions into the junior age group – the younger age group moving up into my squad and the older athletes moving out of my squad to join the senior team.
2. There’s no one answer to this question as different athletes respond differently. Generally, the challenge is change – all of them have to cope with things being slightly different when they move up a level. That might be different coaching styles, different teammates or different expectations and some of them find that more difficult than others.
3. Reflecting on what I’ve learned on this course so far, I probably could have done more to help them get ready for the change ahead and talked it through with them more. Also, Section 2 has helped me to appreciate that they might also have lots of other adjustments going on in different aspects of their life, like education, that might have an impact.
4. I am continuing to coach the junior team, so the most significant change I can have an impact on is their transition from junior to senior level.
5. Having read this session, I am going to talk more to my older players about moving up to the senior team and how they are feeling about it, and also ask them about their life outside ice hockey. I’m also planning to work more with the senior team coach on a transition programme and am thinking of different things we could put in place such as linking the older players in my squad with mentors on the senior team. Hopefully this can help them with the transition.

[Back to - Activity 4 Your reflections on normative transitions](" \l "Unit5_Session5_Activity1)

## Activity 1 Non-normative transitions

#### Discussion

By their very nature, the non-normative transitions that athletes may experience during their career are unpredictable and will vary from athlete to athlete. Below are some examples of non-normative transitions that an athlete might experience, together with some quotes illustrating their psychological impact. (You may have thought of other examples of non-normative transitions.)

## Injury

Start of Quote

I found it really hard to cope with not being able to compete while I was injured and the loss of form when I returned

(Lena, snow boarder)

End of Quote

## Pregnancy

Start of Quote

The physiological changes that happened to my body during pregnancy were really difficult to cope with

(Sonal, cyclist)

End of Quote

## Parenthood

Start of Quote

Being a parent means that I have to plan my training sessions around childcare, and I feel really guilty when I travel away for a competition

(Lance, sprinter)

End of Quote

## ****Relocation****

Start of Quote

When I moved to a new house, I had to join a new hockey club and it was hard to fit in at first

(Trevor, hockey player)

End of Quote

## Deselection

Start of Quote

Being dropped from the first team and having to play for the reserves was tough to take

(Kyle, footballer)

End of Quote

## A change in weight category

Start of Quote

I never expected to have to move from lightweight to light welterweight – everything felt different

(Azir, boxer)

End of Quote

## Financial pressures reducing participation

Start of Quote

I got a new job with more money which I needed to pay my mortgage, but it meant I couldn’t get to as many training sessions as I used to which was really frustrating

(Sarah, rower)

End of Quote

## A change of coach

Start of Quote

When my coach retired, I moved to another coach and she did everything differently to what I was used to and it took me a while to adjust

(Asha, high jumper)

End of Quote

## Illness

At the 2017 World Athletics Championships, around thirty athletes were quarantined due to an outbreak of gastroenteritis. Hurdler Thomas Barr who was forced to miss his semi-final race said that he was ‘gutted’ as his whole year had been focused on this competition (BBC, 2017).

As you can see from the list above non-normative transitions can include both positive events, such as parenthood, and negative events, such as injury or illness. These transitions can be challenging for an athlete to deal with – even if they are positive – particularly as the athlete may not have had time to prepare for the transition.

[Back to - Activity 1 Non-normative transitions](" \l "Unit6_Session2_Activity1)

## Activity 2 Responses to sport injury

#### Discussion

Everyone’s experience of sport injury is different, but common reactions to injury include:

* feelings of isolation
* fear
* anxiety
* hopelessness
* loss of identity
* anger
* depression
* grief
* loneliness
* stress
* anxiety
* low self-esteem.

You may well recognise some of these feelings from your own experiences of sport injury. These feelings are all largely negative emotions, but experiencing sport injury can sometimes lead to some positive consequences. For example, some athletes believe that the experience of injury makes them a better athlete by giving them a new perspective or allowing them to develop new skills while on the sidelines. These gains are often referred to as ‘sport injury related growth’ (Salim and Wadey, 2018).

[Back to - Activity 2 Responses to sport injury](" \l "Unit6_Session3_Activity1)

## Activity 3 Returning to sport following injury

#### Discussion

In the video Emily mentions that she had feelings of nervousness about hurting herself again when she returned to sport. This fear is a common response amongst injured athletes.

Returning to sport is influenced by both physiological and psychological factors. It is recognised that a decision about whether an individual is ready to return to sport should take a ‘biopsychosocial’ approach − that is, it should consider biological, psychological and social factors (Ardern et al., 2016).

An athlete can be physically healed and ready to return to sport but may not be psychologically ready to return. For example, a lack of confidence and fear of re-injury can have a significant impact on how successful an individual’s return to sport will be. Research has found that those who are not psychologically ready to return are more likely to be re-injured (McPherson et al., 2019). As such it is important that attention is paid to psychological recovery as well as physical recovery to ensure that transition back into sport is successful.

Psychological interventions such as imagery (Rodriguez et al., 2019) and social support (McVeigh and Pack, 2015) have been suggested to help athletes prepare for the return to sport. If you were supporting Emily, these are interventions you might encourage her to try. For example, you could encourage her to use imagery to visualise her successful return to sport and encourage her to talk to you (social support) about her concerns.

[Back to - Activity 3 Returning to sport following injury](" \l "Unit6_Session3_Activity2)

## Activity 4 What next? The impact of career-ending injuries

#### Discussion

Both athletes found their injuries and subsequent retirement difficult and described several negative responses such as depression and feelings of failure, embarrassment and devastation. Arielle found being part of a support group useful to help her communicate her feelings and get through her injury.

After retiring, Victoria channelled her energy into an alternative career and is training to become a doctor. She felt that the injury made her more empathetic and resilient and provided her with the opportunity to study hard for the grades she needed to get into medical school.

Arielle also changed direction and moved into a student–coach role which allowed her to continue to feel part of the team.

[Back to - Activity 4 What next? The impact of career-ending injuries](" \l "Unit6_Session3_Activity3)

## Activity 5 Your reflections on non-normative transitions

#### Discussion

Your reflections will be specific to your own situation and experiences, but below are the brief reflections of ice hockey coach Lesley who you met in [Activity 4 of Session 4](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/ocw/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=105608&section=4).

1. Injury is a pretty common unexpected transition in my sport and probably the non-normative transition I see most.
2. For most of the athletes, being injured was a pretty negative and frustrating experience. I recognised a lot of the emotions described in Activity 2 in my injured athletes, and I also recognised some of the fear of re-injury issues in a couple of players I’ve worked with over the years.
3. I’m going to look into working with a sport psychologist to learn about psychological techniques like imagery that my injured players could use. Also, I can now see that I could be a really important source of social support for my injured athletes and I’m going to make more of an effort to call and check in with the athletes on the squad who are currently injured and who I haven’t seen for a while. I’m going to encourage some of the non-injured players to do the same and check in with their peers, especially those who have been injured in the past and know what it’s like.

[Back to - Activity 5 Your reflections on non-normative transitions](" \l "Unit6_Session4_Activity1)

## Activity 1 Parenthood and tennis – the challenge of being an athletic parent

#### Discussion

A range of challenges was discussed in the article, from the logistics connected to travel, balancing family life and sport, and the management of multiple identities.

In the case of female athletes, the challenges are connected to the physical implications associated with pregnancy and the time they have to take out of sport. However, male players also have to adapt to a new way of life, balancing family life with elite sport.

There were several benefits noted by the athletes in the article, but the overriding theme was that being a parent could make the athletes ‘better’ by giving them a stronger focus and enhancing their motivation and drive. For example, Djokovic felt becoming a father gave his tennis a deeper, more intrinsic value.

[Back to - Activity 1 Parenthood and tennis – the challenge of being an athletic parent](" \l "Unit7_Session2_Activity1)

## Activity 2 The athlete mother

#### Discussion

You may already have a good idea of what some of the challenges are when returning to sport after having a family. Emelie discusses how she has taken it very slowly in her return to sport, listening to her body as avoiding injury is paramount. She also comments how there is much uncertainty and many ups and downs connected to a return as you don’t know how your body will react. As you learned earlier, the impact of pregnancy on the body can increase the risk of injury and so the slower approach adopted by Emelie is particularly important.

There are several factors that seem to facilitate a positive return to sport but it is clearly a balancing act. Emelie mentions the importance of support during this period as without it a return is almost impossible due to training demands and travel. She also mentions ‘preferring to take it slow’ and allowing herself time to return to her sport by not rushing the process.

Emelie talks about how it is easier being a parent while an elite athlete compared to if she had a regular job which required her to find time around parenting and work to exercise. She also comments on how having a partner who is also an athlete helps as they can both be flexible. Finally, she recognises the need to be quite relaxed and flexible in approach, something perhaps simpler for an athlete who is more in control of their schedule than for someone with a regular job.

Kilian − Emelie’s partner − is also an athlete and understands the demands of her sport and her need to train. As the partner of an athlete, it is clearly important to be as adaptable and flexible as possible in terms of accommodating training needs and balancing that with childcare.

[Back to - Activity 2 The athlete mother](" \l "Unit7_Session3_Activity1)

## Activity 3 Managing a career and parenthood – a case study

#### Discussion

The article notes that one of the main factors making it possible to juggle a career in elite sport with parenthood is the importance of support, whether social or financial. This links closely to **external factors** as detailed in Figure 2.

The nature of elite level netball requires athletes to travel extensively in order to play, which often means leaving family at home and possible childcare issues. This can seem like an insurmountable **logistical challenge** to overcome and is often a reason athletes decide to wait until they retire before starting a family. As mentioned in the article, Geva Mentor decided to freeze her eggs so the decision to start a family is not affected by the age she chooses to retire.

[Back to - Activity 3 Managing a career and parenthood – a case study](" \l "Unit7_Session4_Activity1)

## Activity 1 How do champions experience retirement?

#### Discussion

1. Both Lauren and Barry described a range of quite negative emotions related to their retirement. Lauren remembered it as a time when she cried a lot and even when recounting certain experiences, it is clear she still finds it hard to talk about. Barry admitted to feeling no motivation and isolated, which led to him drinking heavily. In Barry’s case this resulted in him developing feelings associated with depression and several other negative mental health issues.
2. You probably noticed when listening to both stories the feelings of loss both athletes experienced as they didn’t have anything else in their lives. This loss is closely linked to athletic identity (as you saw in Session 2) and it is the loss of this athletic self that underpins many of the negative emotions experienced during this transitional period.
3. You may have assumed that those who make a conscious decision to retire and therefore have control over it would experience a more positive retirement from sport. However, as the video highlights, regardless of the control athletes have over their decision, it may not ultimately influence whether retirement is positive or negative.
4. Both athletes found a way out of their negative mental states and several different coping mechanisms were discussed. Lauren is a good example of someone who suddenly had a different focus when she found out she was pregnant. For Barry, like other athletes, he realised the importance of having structure and he started to set goals in his life as he had previously done in sport.

[Back to - Activity 1 How do champions experience retirement?](" \l "Unit8_Session2_Activity1)

## Activity 2 Why do athletes retire?

#### Discussion

While Levy et al.’s (2005) causes of retirement do present the four key areas, they do not cover all possibilities. For example, where would you place a local league cricketer who retires because he’s got three young children and can’t afford to spend his whole weekend on the cricket pitch? Likewise, when considering the distinction between chosen or forced retirement, where would you place the athlete who still loves the sport but retires because they are experiencing an age related decline in performance?

There are many reasons why an athlete may choose to retire from sport regardless of the level that they perform at. Below are a few examples, although you may well have come up with others:

* want to retire at the top of their game
* have achieved all their goals
* want to escape the pressure of training and competition
* no longer get a ‘buzz’ from the sport
* want to focus on other aspects of their life, e.g. family, work, new avenues
* want to start a family
* realise they no longer have the drive and passion they once had
* realise they are unable to achieve their goals.

[Back to - Activity 2 Why do athletes retire?](" \l "Unit8_Session3_Activity1)

## Activity 3 Feeling lost: the dark side of retirement from sport

#### Discussion

Although Kelly retired having had an incredibly successful career, she shares how lost she felt when she retired and how she even had suicidal thoughts. Kelly also alludes to the loss of her athletic identity as she went from being an Olympic athlete to a retired athlete. She notes how this was a hard period of adjustment for her but how it is even harder for athletes who have not had her success but who suddenly find themselves forced to retire.

[Back to - Activity 3 Feeling lost: the dark side of retirement from sport](" \l "Unit8_Session4_Activity1)

## Activity 4 Coping strategies in practice

#### Discussion

Alex is an example of an athlete who was forced to retire while still potentially at the top of her game, due to a life-changing injury. However, having had significant success she also felt she had achieved a lot in her sport and was able to step away having lived her career with no regrets. What does become clear is the importance of planning and how being mentally prepared for life after sport allowed Alex to successfully navigate her retirement. She talks about having continued to study and gain additional work experience and always being aware that the career of an elite athlete can come to an end suddenly for a variety of reasons.

[Back to - Activity 4 Coping strategies in practice](" \l "Unit8_Session5_Activity1)

## Activity 1 Moving on: finding a new identity

#### Discussion

1. As you’ve explored previously in this course, athletic identity has an important impact on career transitions. Those with a strong athletic identity, who have not developed other aspects of their life outside sport, are more likely to struggle with life after sport. As you see in the video, a successful transition into life after sport is about developing a new identity.
2. In support of what you looked at in Session 7, it was suggested in the video that retiring athletes can face financial worries, employment issues and mental health issues. In some cases, retirement has been associated with athlete suicide. In the video, Robbie Simpson states that only 30 per cent of professional sports people choose when they want to retire, which suggests that the remaining 70 per cent have a forced retirement. This again highlights the importance of athletes thinking about − and planning for − retirement long before they expect it to happen in case it happens sooner than they expect.
3. In the video you saw several employers and athletes talking about the transferable skills that athletes gain in sport that can be beneficial in other careers. These include goal setting, resilience, work ethic and team working.

[Back to - Activity 1 Moving on: finding a new identity](" \l "Unit9_Session2_Activity1)

## Activity 2 Lizzy Yarnold: preparing early reaps positive rewards

#### Discussion

1. Lizzy felt that studying while still competing helped her to switch off from sport and develop a different part of her identity.
2. Lizzy effectively had two periods of her life when she left sport – her sabbatical (break) inbetween her two Olympic titles, and her retirement. During her sabbatical she wanted to do something different and so she registered on an Open University course.
3. In the video she said she started to think about retirement four years before she actually retired, which allowed her to work with her performance lifestyle advisor to plan for life after sport in advance. Lizzy chose to retire but had she been forced to retire early (e.g. due to injury) she would have been prepared.
4. The advice that Lizzy gave other athletes was to talk to other athletes and to a performance lifestyle advisor (or another person who can provide support). These are both strategies that were suggested in Section 1.

[Back to - Activity 2 Lizzy Yarnold: preparing early reaps positive rewards](" \l "Unit9_Session3_Activity1)

## Activity 3 Kristian Thomas: switching identity

#### Discussion

Kristian appeared to be very focused on just gymnastics until two years before he retired, when he began to plan for life after sport. Like Lizzy, Kristian had a chosen retirement and was able to plan when he retired and had the support of a performance lifestyle advisor. He felt that his transition was made easier because he had a new focus (university) immediately after he retired. This was important as he was able to switch his identity from ‘athlete’ to ‘student’. Kristian highlights an important point in the video – that everyone will have a unique experience of retirement. Some athletes will have a positive retirement and some athletes will have a negative retirement.

[Back to - Activity 3 Kristian Thomas: switching identity](" \l "Unit9_Session4_Activity1)

## Activity 4 Josh Lukwata: using football to make music

#### Discussion

1. There are several differences between Josh’s experience of retirement and those of Lizzy and Kristian. Firstly, Josh’s experience was generally more negative. He described being released as causing his ‘world to fall apart’ and described how his self-worth was negatively affected. The big difference is that Josh retired from sport at a much younger age and without achieving the success he desired in his sport, in contrast to Lizzy and Kristian. His retirement was a forced retirement rather than a planned retirement. Additionally, unlike Lizzy and Kristian, Josh had not prepared for life after sport. All these factors combined to make his experience more likely to lead to a crisis transition. Fortunately, Josh was able to adjust to life after sport and has now transitioned into a successful music career.
2. Josh feels that he has been able to transfer the skills he learned in football (such as discipline, hunger and sacrifice) to both his new career in the music industry and life in general. This matches with what the employers in Activity 1 said about the benefits of employing former athletes.

[Back to - Activity 4 Josh Lukwata: using football to make music](" \l "Unit9_Session5_Activity1)

## Activity 5 Olympic athlete panel: why are former athletes attractive to employers?

#### Discussion

1. In the video you can see that the athletes, despite finding transition difficult, have successfully moved into careers outside competitive sport. Brianne discussed how working with a sport psychologist helped her to prepare for the transition and reflect on her identity and what she would say if after retirement someone on an aeroplane asked her what she did. She also spoke about the importance of work–life balance in her new career and consciously making time for family and friends.
2. The panel discussed how retired athletes bring with them a wealth of transferable skills that are highly attractive to employers. These skills include communication, performing in front of an audience, team working, leadership, strong work ethic and goal setting. Margie stated that because of this she has hired a large number of former athletes. Emily highlighted that it can be difficult for athletes to recognise that they have these transferable skills, and that is where support services such as performance lifestyle programmes can help athletes to develop awareness of their skills and attributes.

[Back to - Activity 5 Olympic athlete panel: why are former athletes attractive to employers?](" \l "Unit9_Session6_Activity1)

## Activity 6 Reflecting on career transitions in sport

#### Discussion

Candice and Caroline reflected on how the content of the course had influenced the way they interact with their own children and other athletes as they progress through various transitions both ‘within career’ and ‘post career’ (retirement and life after sport). For example, Candice reflected that writing the course has encouraged her to think more about supporting her daughter through career transitions in sport as she gets older. In her role as a sport psychologist, Caroline reflected on her work with injured athletes and the importance of having an awareness of the psychological impact of this difficult unexpected transition.

Reflecting like this is a useful way to consider how what you have learned in this course can be applied to your everyday life. Hopefully, the course has led you to consider the psychological challenges and opportunities of career transitions and the importance of preparation.

You may have reflected on how you can integrate more sport psychology into own your role in career transitions (e.g. coach, instructor, athlete, parent). You may also have reflected on how you can encourage athletes to think about the future and develop their identity outside sport.

[Back to - Activity 6 Reflecting on career transitions in sport](" \l "Unit9_Session7_Activity1)

# Figure 1 What transitions do athletes face?

## Description

Poster displaying the different transitions athletes face: injury/illness; pregnancy/parenthood; relocation; deselection; financial pressures; change of coach; change of weight classification.

[Back to - Figure 1 What transitions do athletes face?](" \l "Unit2_Session2_Figure2)

# Video 2

## Description

Flow chart displaying different stages of the athletic career transition model.

The first box at the top of the flow chart reads ‘Transition demands’. An arrow from this points downwards to the next box that sits underneath. This box reads ‘Dynamic balance between transition resources and barriers’. Two dotted arrows point to these first two boxes from the right with text next to them that reads ‘Crisis-prevention interventions’ and a large pink arrow labelled ‘A’.

Underneath the ‘Dynamic balance between transition resources and barriers’ box is an arrow pointing downwards to a box which reads ‘Coping’. From this box there are then two arrows pointing downwards. One arrow points to the box ‘Effective (\*a successful transition)’ the other points to the box ‘Ineffective (\*crisis transition)’. A dotted arrow points towards the ‘Ineffective (\*crisis transition)’ box from the left with the text ‘Psychological crisis-coping interventions’ alongside.

Immediately underneath the ‘Ineffective (\*crisis transition)’ box is a box which reads ‘Need intervention’ – this also has a large blue arrow labelled ‘B’ pointing towards it from the right.

Two arrows points off from the ‘Need intervention’ box. One points directly downwards to the box ‘Ineffective or no intervention’, the other point diagonally downwards to the box ‘Effective’. From the ‘Effective’ box there is then an arrow pointing upwards to the ‘Effective (\*a successful transition)’ box.

An arrow points downwards from the ‘Ineffective or no intervention’ box to a box which reads ‘‘Costs’ for failures to cope with the transition’. A dotted arrow points towards this box from the left with the text ‘Dealing-with-consequences interventions’ alongside.

[Back to - Video 2](" \l "Unit2_Session4_MediaContent1)

# Figure 1 Influencing factors on athlete transitions in sport

## Description

Influencing factors on athlete transitions in sport: athletic identity, level of participation, chosen sport, preparation and support.

[Back to - Figure 1 Influencing factors on athlete transitions in sport](" \l "Unit3_Session2_Figure2)

# Figure 2 Mind map to represent the different roles that make up Candice’s identity

## Description

Candice’s identity divided into five different roles, which are then sub-divided further.

1. Social role. As a:
   * college friend
   * sports parent and friend
   * work friend
   * old school friend
   * sporting friend
2. Professional role. As a:
   * university lecturer
   * line manager
   * PhD student
   * coach
3. Sporting role. As a:
   * skier
   * runner
   * weight trainer
   * waterskiier
4. Cultural role. As a:
   * music listener
   * theatre goer
   * reader
5. Family role. As a:
   * daughter
   * mother
   * niece.

[Back to - Figure 2 Mind map to represent the different roles that make up Candice’s identity](" \l "Unit3_Session3_Figure2)

# Figure 1 Wylleman and Lavallee’s (2004) developmental model

## Description

Model showing the different transitions athletes typically face at an athletic, psychological, psychosocial and academic or vocational level. The model shows the different transitions from the ages of 10 to 35.

The athletic level starts around the age of ten with the initiation phase. At around 13 or 14 years old the athlete then transitions to the development phase which lasts until the age of 20. Between the ages of 20 and 29 the athlete is in the mastery phase before they transition to the discontinuation phase.

The psychological level starts at childhood and then at the age of 12 moves to the adolescent phase. At the age of 18 the athlete then moves to (young) adulthood.

The psychosocial development of an athlete involves parents, siblings and peers up until the age of 13 or 14. From the age of 13 or 14 to the age of 19, peers, coaches and parents are involved. Between 19 and 29, partners and coaches are involved and then from the age of 29 family and coaches (bracketed) are involved.

The academic or vocational level involves primary eduction until the age of 11, secondary education until the age of 18, higher education until the age of 24 and vocational training and/or a professional occupation beyond the age of 24.

[Back to - Figure 1 Wylleman and Lavallee’s (2004) developmental model](" \l "Unit5_Session3_Figure1)

# Figure 2 Factors to consider when balancing parenthood and sport

## Description

The physical, emotional and psychological, logistical, and external challenges of parenthood and sport.

Physical challenges: physical changes and adaptation of the body; lack of sleep.

Emotional and psychological challenges: guilt; identity management; loss of athletic identity.

Logistical challenges: travel; support available.

External challenges: funding/finance; governing bodies; support; social norms.

[Back to - Figure 2 Factors to consider when balancing parenthood and sport](" \l "Unit7_Session4_Figure1)

# Figure 2 Causes of retirement (adapted from Levy et al., 2005)

## Description

Causes of retirement: age, injury, deselection, free choice.

[Back to - Figure 2 Causes of retirement (adapted from Levy et al., 2005)](" \l "Unit8_Session3_Figure1)

# Video 2

## Description

Flow chart displaying different stages of the athletic career transition model. Some of the text has been faded – where this has occurred it has been noted in the description below.

The first box at the top of the flow chart reads ‘Transition demands’ (faded). An arrow from this points downwards to the next box that sits underneath. This box reads ‘Dynamic balance between transition resources and barriers’ (faded). Two dotted arrows point to these first two boxes from the right with text next to them that reads ‘Crisis-prevention interventions’ and a large pink arrow labelled ‘A’ (all faded).

Underneath the ‘Dynamic balance between transition resources and barriers’ box is an arrow pointing downwards to a box which reads ‘Coping’. From this box there are then two arrows pointing downwards. One arrow points to the box ‘Effective (\*a successful transition)’ the other points to the box ‘Ineffective (\*crisis transition)’.

Pointing towards the ‘Effective (\*a successful transition)’ box is the text ‘Social support (Session 2) and Planning (Session 3).

A dotted arrow points towards the ‘Ineffective (\*crisis transition)’ box from the left with the text ‘Psychological crisis-coping interventions’ alongside.

Immediately underneath the ‘Ineffective (\*crisis transition)’ box is a box which reads ‘Need intervention’ – this has a box which reads ‘e.g. Setting goals, Professional support’ pointing towards it from the right.

Two arrows points off from the ‘Need intervention’ box. One points directly downwards to the box ‘Ineffective or no intervention’, the other point diagonally downwards to the box ‘Effective’. From the ‘Effective’ box there is then an arrow pointing upwards to the ‘Effective (\*a successful transition)’ box.

An arrow points downwards from the ‘Ineffective or no intervention’ box to a box which reads ‘‘Costs’ for failures to cope with the transition’ (faded). A dotted arrow points towards this box from the left with the text ‘Dealing-with-consequences interventions’ alongside (faded).

[Back to - Video 2](" \l "Unit8_Session5_MediaContent1)

# Video 1

## Transcript

BEN OAKLEY:

So, Caroline and Candice, welcome. So we're going to go straight in. We haven't got much time. Caroline, tell us about how you got into your sport.

CAROLINE HEANEY:

So my sport is athletics. I did lots of different sports at school, but I always really enjoyed athletics the most. But I didn't join an athletics club until I was 16, which is probably quite late compared to some of my peers. And that was mainly just because I didn't have the confidence to join a club without my friends until I got to that age.

BEN OAKLEY:

Oh, dear. And athletics, that's a very broad spectrum. What event did you do?

CAROLINE HEANEY:

I did 400-metre hurdles. I competed at a decent club level as a senior athlete. And then as a masters athlete, I was a British champion.

BEN OAKLEY:

Fantastic. So you're going to talk more about transitions. Tell us about your journey through your sport. I think you were in it for 20-odd years, weren't you?

CAROLINE HEANEY:

Yeah, I've stuck around for quite a while. So I retired when I was 39, after starting at age 16. So I had a very long career. And because of that, I had quite a lot of transitions that happened during my career.

So I had things like moving to a new club. So after about 15 years in my first club, I moved to a club where I could get a higher level of competitions. So they were in a national league rather than local leagues. So that was different. So it was a smaller club moving to a bigger club, different people. So that was quite difficult at first but also gave me lots of opportunities.

BEN OAKLEY:

That would be a change of culture. What about a change of coach? Did you experience that?

CAROLINE HEANEY:

Yes, at a similar time, I did change coaches. So I was with my first coach for about 15 years. I then went into a period where I coached myself for a couple of years and some other athletes in my training group. And then I moved on to a different coach after that.

So there was a couple of transitions from moving from being coached, to being a coach and coaching yourself, and then moving on to a different coach who does things differently to how previous coaches have. So that's always a little bit difficult. But you kind of learn different things from different people.

BEN OAKLEY:

OK. Lots of adjustments and change there. What about the experience of getting older and maybe changing categories and maybe your times not being so good as before?

CAROLINE HEANEY:

Yeah, I think moving from being a senior to being a masters athlete, which happens at age 35 in athletics, was quite difficult for me in some ways, because my time started to deteriorate. So I found it quite hard being slower. And that probably contributed to my decision to retire in the end, just basically not being able to cope with that.

But at the same time, masters competition did give me other opportunities. So I was a decent level senior athlete competing at the club level, county level. But when I became a masters athlete, I became British champion, so that was quite nice and kind of softened the blow a little bit.

BEN OAKLEY:

And just very shortly, which of those transitions was the toughest for you personally?

CAROLINE HEANEY:

Out of those transitions, I think, probably the moving to senior to masters. So-- because athletics is very-- it's very clear that you're not as good as you used to be. Your times are a few seconds slower than they were. So there's no hiding.

BEN OAKLEY:

[INAUDIBLE].

CAROLINE HEANEY:

No, it doesn't.

BEN OAKLEY:

So, Candice, what about your journey? I think it's a bit different.

CANDICE LINGAM-WILLGOSS:

Yeah, mine is quite different to Caroline's. So I'm actually a skier, or was a skier, which, obviously, is not a sport you start to do in school. So I did all the traditional school sports and then was spotted skiing on a family holiday and invited to join a club, which I did. So I kind of entered that high-performance sport world at about 12. So it was quite, quite, different to Caroline.

BEN OAKLEY:

That's amazing, to be spotted on a holiday and then be invited to join a club and possibly a high-performance programme. So within that programme, how long did it last for?

CANDICE LINGAM-WILLGOSS:

I only competed from 12 till 17. That was my years of competing. So quite different and much shorter career compared to Caroline.

BEN OAKLEY:

And what happened in the middle and end-- latter stage of that, when you were 16 and 17? What was happening then?

CANDICE LINGAM-WILLGOSS:

So the end of my career, really, was-- it was really injury that meant that I decided it wasn't something I could continue doing. And I had to make a decision whether I was going to carry on, maybe have surgery, maybe make a career of it, or whether I was going to go back and focus on going to university and things.

And I was quite realistic with myself. British skiers, how many make it? Not that many. And it's a lot of work and effort, a lot of travel. And all of these factors played a part in me thinking, I don't know that I can keep doing this. And I kind of wasn't enjoying it as I probably should. There was lots of factors towards the end of my career.

BEN OAKLEY:

And what about the kind of question, really, about travel around Europe? Because you've been in the Alps a lot. One day you'd be in France, the next day you'd be in Switzerland, then you'd be in Austria. Was that quite-- those sort of smaller micro transitions, is that hard to deal with as well?

CANDICE LINGAM-WILLGOSS:

Yeah, that was quite difficult, particularly as I was quite young when I entered that programme. So at 12 years old, I was traveling to lots of different countries on my own, with a squad, obviously, but not with my parents. And that was quite young to not spend time with them for pretty much every holiday. I'd be away for two, three, four weeks, sometimes, in a very strict regime of having to be up early, train, having everything I ate, everything I did, monitored, long days of training.

So it was almost a bit like school again. Everything was so structured in my life at a very young age. But also, then, what I was putting my body through at such a young age. So it was a lot of things to deal with. So I think, for me, it wasn't so much connected necessarily just to the sport. It was that transition into a different way of life, really, at a very young age.

BEN OAKLEY:

And on top of all that, you've got all your educational commitments. Presumably you took some exams and things. But we won't go into that now. And the rest of the course is going to explore all these points. Thanks so much.

[Back to - Video 1](" \l "Unit2_Session2_MediaContent1)

# Video 2

## Transcript

CANDICE LINGAM-WILLGOSS:

The athletic career transition model illustrates how if an athlete is able to balance the demands of the transition they are facing with the resources that they have they are likely to cope effectively with the experience. If you look at arrow A, the model identifies a point at which interventions can be implemented in order to provide additional resources. This can enable the athlete to cope with the new demands placed upon them.

For example, an athlete who has joined a new club may find the experience overwhelming with so much to learn. However, they could be given a mentor in the form of a more experienced team member who is able to support them and answer questions that they may have. On a relatively simple intervention, it is likely to give the player a resource which will ease their transition into their new club.

However, there will be athletes who do not have the resources to hand, meaning they will be unable to cope with the transition they are experiencing. For example, take the under 16 netball player who has picked up an ankle injury, she's never been injured before and is feeling annoyed, upset, and lonely. Her main friendship group was based at her netball club, and she isn't able to see them as she isn't able to train. An athlete in this situation is unlikely to have resources to draw on and as such won't cope so well with her injury, which can result in an ineffective transition.

What the model does suggest though, is that if you look at arrow B, there is another opportunity for an intervention to be implemented. For example, her coach could ask her to come to help coach training or come to matches and make notes on the game, this would allow the player to feel involved and that she was helping her team. Again, a small intervention such as this could result in a change in the athlete's emotions and the transition will become more positive.

Finally, there are those who don't have resources and are either unable to implement any coping interventions or try an intervention and it doesn't work. These are the athletes who can find themselves having a very poor transitional experience. The main learning to take from this model is that it is important for athletes to build up their resources so they are able to cope with the transitions they will face in their career. As you move through the course, you will start to explore some of these strategies a little more.

[Back to - Video 2](#Unit2_Session4_MediaContent1)

# Video 1

## Transcript

ALEX DANSON:

I think at different points in my career, I felt an enormous sense of I guess real athletic identity. I was an athlete. I was proud I was an athlete and everything that came with that. But I think, certainly at the start, I was a hockey player and I identified as a hockey player, which was a hobby and I did it as much as I could.

But even when I think back at that point, I was playing in the national team. I'd gone to my first Commonwealth Games. I'd been in the set up for a few years and I was still calling myself a hockey player because I don't think I had that athletic identity. And I think the professionalisation of our game, and moving from amateur to professional sport, I think helped enormously.

National Lottery funding, it gave, I think a sense of credibility, it became my job. And yeah, there was a real sense between when someone or a company or in our case the National Lottery invest in you, it's saying we believe that you can do something pretty special here. And I think at that point and particularly the London 2012 games had an enormous impact on I believe the professionalism of all our sports. They just put them all in the spotlight and I think at that point, we really grew prouder about the fact we are athletes. We are athletes who play hockey.

It's funny. When I had my accident and I had to come away from the sport for a long period of time, it made me realise just how powerful that identity is, on a physical level just how fit, how strong, how conditioned that we really were. I think I took it for granted. I think I just thought, oh, that's normal. It's not. It's incredible. It's a real privilege.

And then also everything that comes with that identity. So that being a part of a team, having a common purpose, working incredibly hard with like-minded people, being very good, and being at the top of your game very, very suddenly, that identity disappeared. So I think that would be for me certainly in my career when it was challenged the most.

I think a really interesting point is if you're in a team transitioning or if you're in an individual sport, maybe triathlon, swimming, athletics, whatever it may be, you're running the 800 metres on your own, transitioning then may feel quite different. I think my experience was probably more similar to that of an individual sport, through no one's fault of their own. I had a head injury where I was unable to communicate or have any connection really to anybody other than my husband and my nearest family. And so I envisage that my transition with a team and with a group of friends and more people about would be, I guess in some respects less isolating, less lonely. But actually what I learned is that we're all in a team. But it might not be the most obvious.

So whether you are a hockey player and you have 29 teammates who you've travelled all around the world with, or whether you are a triathlete that travels the world on their own with a physio. They have other competitors. And it's the same people that you're competing against around the world. It's your family. It's your friends, and actually when you transition the people that become integral to you doing that well are your nearest and your dearest.

And your teammates and your friends, they play in a role and a really important role, but their role is that you have those memories forever. They won't play the part in your life that they have over the last 20 years, which is being day in, day out, but your family will.

So I guess when you're planning or when you're thinking about any form of transition, think of your team as not only just the people you compete with, but the people that have been a part of your career the whole time, that have been on the sidelines, that have been in the crowd, and that's your family. And they form your team, and whether you're in an individual sport or a team sport, those closest to you will be kind of the rocks when you go through that next stage.

[Back to - Video 1](" \l "Unit3_Session1_MediaContent1)

# Video 2

## Transcript

CLARKE CARLISLE

The hardest aspect of that transition is the total loss of identity. The hardest statements to hear are didn't you used to be Clarke Carlisle? Well, no. I still am. I'm still here. As strong and resolute as you try and be in that next role, to all intents and purposes, for everyone else, it will never be as good as. And that's hard to shoulder every day.

OLLIE PHILLIPS

It's just that the transition's so different. Everything, from the adulation, the time, the feeling you have because you're fit and healthy, the money. All of it suddenly just stops, moving away from that, and accepting that that's kind of all over is really, really hard. Going from an environment that was full of so many emotional highs, and then going to an environment that I couldn't really resonate with. It didn't really seem familiar to me.

CLARKE CARLISLE

The sad fact of it is is that a cut short career is what, cut short to seven years? Cut short to seven years from what? 10? This is a very short, finite career.

LUKE HARVEY

A lot of people hit a really big low. You've got to be positive about a second career. When you're 30, you've still got-- you're only halfway through your working life.

MATT MACHAN

Playing cricket is most people's dreams from a little boy. That can get cut at any moment, and that is probably the toughest pill to swallow. But at the same time, the PCA, as I said before, are an amazing sounding board. And the more you can invest in yourself whilst you're playing, it's only going to make the transition, whether you retire early, or at the end of your career, a lot easier to handle, and the transition will be smoother.

ALEX SCOTT

That day when I had to make the announcement, it was so hard, because I had been Alex Scott, the footballer, for so long, and it is-- It's a big part of your identity and what you've known and what you describe yourself as to other people, I suppose. It was hard, but what I would say is don't wait till that last day. Put things in place. You don't want to get to that end day, then sit there and think, what am I going to do with my life? So it is signing up for a course, or going to speak to people at the PFA, just to get some advice, just get those wheels in motion sooner rather than later.

[Back to - Video 2](" \l "Unit3_Session2_MediaContent1)

# Video 3

## Transcript

DR JOSIE PERRY:

So your identity as an athlete is really important. Around transitions it can really come into play. So we talk about it like a piece of rock that you buy from the beach. If you chopped a person in half, would it say athlete, or runner, or footballer all the way through you. If it would, shows you're really focused, you're determined, you love what you do, you've got a great motivation for it. But it's also very dangerous because if you suddenly can't play, if you're suddenly injured, you get dropped from a team, who are you? What are you? Everything you thought you knew about yourself changes. You can feel really, really lost.

There was a piece of research a couple of years ago that the BBC did, and they looked at professional athletes and how they felt after retirement. And 50% of them had symptoms of depression. And often that comes because they haven't prepared to retire, they haven't got a passion for something else.

So when I work with an athlete one-to-one, we will look at the different self-identities they've got. And if they are too wholeheartedly just a sporting identity, we'll try and bring other elements into that. So I have a lot of athletes that will end up doing quite a bit of baking, or they'll be computer gamers as well, or they love certain Netflix channels. And it's not because we're trying to get them not to focus on their sport, but it's trying to give them other things so that if they can't do that sport for a while, they still feel like themselves.

[Back to - Video 3](" \l "Unit3_Session3_MediaContent1)

# Audio 1

## Transcript

KIRSTY YOUNG:

You suffered then this really debilitating back condition, spondylosis, what was it? I think that-- yeah.

MATT SMITH:

Yes. Well that's impressive. I always forget what it's called. My lumbar 5 was getting thinner, basically. Yeah. It's a pain in the ass. And had I kept playing, it would have basically got thinner and thinner and thinner. And then in my early 20's, I would have had to have had a sort of metal plate essentially put in it. I mean, kind of Leicester are like, we just can't take a chance on this. But it was tricky because I was captain, and I was doing really well. And I was injured for 13, 14 months.

KIRSTY YOUNG:

And that was your identity. So tell me about losing it.

MATT SMITH:

Very difficult, actually. Yeah, it was very difficult for me to tell people that I had been released, because the vain part of me was like, I am that and I am the footballer. You know, and at school, I was the footballer. And suddenly, I wasn't that. You know, fortuitously, there was a drama teacher, Gerry Hardingham, who said you were never meant to be a footballer. I always thought, you were really great at acting.

KIRSTY YOUNG:

How did he know that? Had you been in school productions?

MATT SMITH:

I did it for GCSE. And he put me in a drama festival and I said I'd do it, and then I just didn't turn up. And then he did it again, and I didn't turn up. He rang my mom and said, look, Matt's not turned up twice. But I'm going to give him one more chance and put him in a play, 12 Angry Men, and my mom said to me, you should do this. And then I went back, and I did it.

KIRSTY YOUNG:

I'm going to ask you a little bit more about that in a second. But I'm interested, it occurs to me as I see you sort of lost your identity, but then for your dad, he was father of Matt, the footballer. He was the guy that ran him everywhere. He was the guy on the touchline. He was the guy that shared the albums and the journeys back when it was just the two of them. That must have been a great loss for him too.

MATT SMITH:

I know. It was. You know, I mean, when I got Doctor Who, I rang him like two months in, and I said I can't do this. And he said you can. The hardest thing in life is to adapt. And you will adapt. And you've got to adapt. And you know, I did. I adapted. And you know, he'd always said it doesn't matter what you do as long as you enjoy it.

But it was tough. It was a tough time. It was a tough time because I was just uncertain. I just felt unfulfilled, to be honest with you. I felt like I was so certain that that was what I was going to do. As I got fit just towards the end, and this is just towards the time when they're picking the boys that were going to play for the YTS, because then you go in and you spend three years as like YT, then you know, I'd been out for a year, and I was trying to get fit.

But playing in all these games where they were deciding, you know, who was going to-- and it was just the love of it. I ran away from home once the night before a match. We were playing Sheffield Wednesday, and I climbed out the window, stole 20 quid out my dad's wallet, got a taxi, I got on a train, got to Euston. I phone my sister, and said, I'm in Euston, pick me up.

KIRSTY YOUNG:

How old were you?

MATT SMITH:

15. And I think, subliminally, I didn't want to play. I said my mom and dad were having an argument. So Laura had to tell dad. He drove up. And it's the only time he's ever, ever swore at me. He drove up, picked me up. He drove me from London up to Sheffield because we were playing Sheffield Wednesday.

And then he didn't say a word, not a word to me, and then I played the game. And actually played alright, funnily enough. And then I got back in the car, and got in, and I closed the door. And he said, you idiot. And that was it. He drove home, didn't say a word. And that was it.

[Back to - Audio 1](" \l "Unit3_Session3_MediaContent2)

# Video 4

## Transcript

DUNCAN BELL:

I've had some dark times since retiring. It coincided with a divorce. It coincided with extremes of lack of finances, very close to being destitute and homeless. It was savage, absolutely savage. I just felt very isolated. I thought I had an exit plan from rugby. I had it all sorted out.

The one thing I didn't do enough of-- I thought I did, but I didn't-- was forging relationships and networking. So I know how it works. You know, a lot of the players, you get beaten up on the field for 80 minutes. The last thing you want to do is going to do corporate hospitality, or schmooze with the sponsors, or talk to anyone. Especially if you've just been beaten up, got an injury, or lost the game, it's the last thing you want to do, like a bear with a sore head. But they're the times we forged the best relationships, the massive majority of players will have to enter civvy street and get themselves a normal job after rugby. And trust me that is a difficult thing to do.

I would've spoken to the RPA. Maybe my foolish self-pride restricted me from doing so, or at least letting Rich and yourself and others know how bad things were. So the only two things probably I would change would speak to you more and I'd get myself a recruitment consultant. And you probably could have given me the some names for that. But I had 18 months of strife that I probably didn't need to go through. And that was the darkest point in my life.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

[Back to - Video 4](" \l "Unit3_Session6_MediaContent1)

# Video 1

## Transcript

[MUSIC PLAYING]

[TEXT ON SCREEN: Hannah Cockcroft is the current World and European champion, a world record holder and multiple Paralympic gold medallist. Hannah is a #More2Me champion.]

HANNAH COCKCROFT:

When I got involved with wheelchair racing, I never-- it was never a dream. I never wanted to be a Paralympian, so I always had different interests and different hobbies going on around that. I still went to college. I still went to sixth form, got my A-levels, got a degree at college, went to university. I just always had something else fitted in there, because I found that the moment athletics grew, the more I kind of wanted that distraction.

I think it's really important to have something else outside of your sport that you can go away and focus on. For me, it's just about having two channels. So I've got my athletics channel, and I love athletics. I love my training. It's the most important thing in the world to me.

But I found, going into London 2012 when all I was was an athlete, I just found that I got bored. Training didn't-- it didn't switch me on like it should do. It didn't feel like the most important thing in the world. Because I was doing it. I was eating, sleeping, everything was around training. And so my coach encouraged me. He encouraged me to go to university, just to add that a little bit of extra something back in so that I could have that change of channels.

Post 2012, I decided that I wanted to move into television and media studies. I wanted to work in the media somehow. And off the back of that, I worked really hard with my lifestyle advisor. So I went and studied journalism at university, and then, we just recently completed a presenting course. And then that got me my first ever job on BBC Countryfile.

My interests are really, really simple. Music-- I love going to concerts and gigs, and love just live music. I go to the cinema. I go shopping. They're not massive interests. But I obviously don't have loads of time for something time consuming. So for me, it's just finding that little thing that I can switch off from my training and just go into normal person mode, as it were.

I think if an athlete or a coach came to me and said they don't want any other interest outside sport. They want to be totally focused. Ultimately, it's a personal decision. You decide what you want to do outside of sport. But my advice to them would be that if you are so focused on one thing, then you're never going to grow as a person. And you're never really going to build a life outside of sport. And eventually for us all, we're all going to have to end sport. And it's going to be a lot sooner than retirement age.

It doesn't have to distract you. It can work really well alongside your sport as long as it's the right thing.

I think my message to any athlete coming into sport-- but also any athlete that's already in sport that's maybe struggling to find that balance-- is to just go out and try things. For me, everything that I've tried has just come up as an opportunity. And I've always been brought up to think that if you don't take that opportunity, you'll never know whether you enjoyed it or whether you didn't. And the thing is you never lose anything by taking opportunities.

Yes, I'm Hannah the athlete. I love to train, and training's what I do. But you have to find something else that lets your body and your mind rest from that. You don't want to be constantly thinking about 800-meter tactics. You need to go out-- even if it's something simple like going out with your friends, going for a meal, going to cinema. Or if it's something bigger like continuing your education or finding a part-time job-- whatever it is.

I know that my lifestyle advisor's always there to lean on and to support me in making the right decision. And I know that everyone else's will do that too.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

[TEXT ON SCREEN: Outside of sport Hannah is a keen baker having appeared on Channel 4’s Celebrity Bake Off. She’s also an aspiring TV presenter having already presented on BBC’s Countryfile. Meanwhile Hannah is in full-time training as she heads towards the 2020 Paralympic Games. #More2Me. For more information go to: https://www.eis2win.co.uk/service/performance-lifestyle/]

[Back to - Video 1](" \l "Unit4_Session2_MediaContent1)

# Video 2

## Transcript

[MUSIC PLAYING]

[TEXT ON SCREEN: Nekoda Smythe-Davis is a judo Commonwealth champion and World Championships Silver and Bronze medallist. Nekoda is a #More2Me champion.]

NEKODA SMYTHE-DAVIS:

It's really tough when you're a sports person, an elite athlete. It takes up all of your time, and it's all you ever think about. As soon as you wake up in the morning, it's I've got to go training. I've got to eat right. I've got to rest right. So it is difficult. But I find for me personally that if I just did sport, I'd probably go stir crazy. I have to do other things.

In judo, we work in Olympic cycles. And I would say for the Rio cycle, everything was new. Everything was the first time I was preparing for the Olympics. So all I could think about was going to the Olympics. All I could think about was preparing right, and I found it very hard to switch off. I didn't really do that much outside of judo in the Rio cycle. And you become really obsessive, and some of those behaviors aren't always healthy.

[TEXT ON SCREEN: After Rio 2016, along with support from her EIS Performance Lifestyle advisor, Nekoda decidely to actively plan for life after sport...]

NEKODA SMYTHE-DAVIS:

Obviously, I'm getting older, and I'm more experienced. And I decided that if I was going to go on this journey again and try and qualify for the Olympics, this possibly could be my last. And I started to think about life after sport. What do I do when I finish in Tokyo? Where do I go next?

After Rio, I was potentially thinking of starting university and we spoke about the pros and cons of taking on a course and whether I'd have enough time. And we actually decided that maybe if I leveled up in my judo course and did the level three, then it puts me in a really good position. After Tokyo, I could actually do the level four, which is a degree-- which is amazing. I don't have to go to uni for three or four years. I can actually get a degree another way.

So I'm just a "yes" person. If someone says, do you want to come along and do this thing? Do a talk to this school, or to an army base, or wherever it is, I just go, yeah, OK. I'll do it. And I found that I've just been broadening my experiences over this cycle.

[TEXT ON SCREEN: What would your advice be to other elite athletes?]

NEKODA SMYTHE-DAVIS:

My advice would be that when an opportunity comes your way and you have to take a half a Saturday off or maybe it's an evening after training and you know you might be tired, I would say just every so often, just try one of them. It might seem really annoying and pointless at the time, but you can actually start to actually find another niche outside of your sport-- something that you actually are really good at.

I never knew that I could be good at motivating other people or speaking in front - I always thought I was camera shy - I couldn't speak in front of people. But I would say that you'd be surprised about what you can discover about yourself when you try other things.

[TEXT ON SCREEN: Why are you supporting the #More2Me campaign?]

NEKODA SMYTHE-DAVIS:

The reality is that one day, you're not going to be doing this. You're not going to be traveling around the world and winning big medals and feeling the emotions that you're feeling now.

And it's so important that I don't have that feeling of I'm scared to quit. I'm scared to stop. I'm scared to retire because I have nothing else afterwards. And it's really given me that peace of mind that I can just enjoy this journey up until it stops. Because I know that I'm already putting things in place so that when I do finish, I'm not going to be in no-man's land. I know where I'm going from there.

[TEXT ON SCREEN: Nekoda is currently in full time training. She has completed her Level 3 coaching certificate. She regularly gives motivational talks and speeches in her spare time. And has recently become a dog owner! #More2Me. For more information go to: https://www.eis2win.co.uk/service/performance-lifestyle/]

[Back to - Video 2](" \l "Unit4_Session2_MediaContent2)

# Video 3

## Transcript

ANDY FARROW:

My name is Andy Farrow. I'm the performance lifestyle advisor here at the VIS. We use a method of positive psychology. And looking at all the different facets of an individual and how we can ensure that they flourish in various aspects of their life.

TAYLA HONEY:

I've generally liaised with Andy. And she's been great for me in terms of uni and helping me sort out any timetabling issues that I have. And generally, just picking subjects and course completion times. So I've found her really handy in that regard.

ANDY FARROW:

We do individual consultations with the athletes, and working on their dual career.

TAYLA HONEY:

Definitely, my stress level have reduced. Like, I didn't really know too much about my course and prerequisites and credit points, and things like that. And she was really good in explaining all that to me and putting my mind at ease.

ANDY FARROW:

We really try to ensure that we can assist them balance their sport and their life. And sometimes, it's a bit of a juggling act for the athletes.

TAYLA HONEY:

Success in sport and life to me means having a dual career and being able to fall back on something that you're also passionate about.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

[Back to - Video 3](" \l "Unit4_Session3_MediaContent1)

# Video 4

## Transcript

[MUSIC PLAYING]

NARRATOR:

Giorgio Chiellini is starting his 15th straight season for Juventus. He says studying for a masters in business administration in his free time has helped make him a better player.

GIORGIO CHIELLINI:

[SPEAKING ITALIAN] It gave me a big help. In football if you are not active mentally, if you are not lucid and quick thinking about reading situations you won’t reach a high level.

NARRATOR:

Professor David Lavallee recently published an academic study that shows Chiellini is right. Generally, athletes who study for a second career have a more successful sports career. Professor Lavallee tracked 632 players in Australia's National Rugby League over three years and found those actively preparing for their career transition were more likely to be selected for matches and enjoy a longer sports career.

DAVID LAVALLEE:

Those people that were more engaged in their career, and their educational planning, planning for their retirement, actually stayed in the club for longer, and they stayed in the game for longer. There were benefits to the individual, there were benefits to the club, there were benefits to the game overall.

This is the first study in the world that has actually proved this link. From our perspective, we see it as a missing link.

Iris Slappendel was a pro cyclist for 15 years. She was Dutch champion in 2014. In her free time, she studied for a design degree. She also made cycling clothing, and equipment.

IRIS SLAPPENDEL:

I had all these trainers or coaches who told me either please stop doing all the other stuff that you're doing and just focus on cycling. But I think that's a choice you make. And I felt quite happy doing it the way I did. I'm really convinced it can give you energy as well, that can make you a better athlete if you have any interest in normal life.

DAVID LAVALLEE:

This is the future. I think that for the next 20 years, this is where the performance gains will be seen within sport. I think it will be in the well-being and the welfare area. And I don't think there'll be marginal gain. I think it'll be much significant, much more significant than marginal gains.

I think this is great opportunity in football to be able to-- probably more than any other sport.

GIORGIO CHIELLINI:

[SPEAKING ITALIAN] Studying helped me take away the tension and pressure that we have in football.

DAVID LAVALLEE:

If you do something outside of sport, you are in many ways reducing the stress that you might have with the uncertainty of not doing something else. And a lot of players' identity is very much tied up within the sport. They're very much encouraged from a young age to continue to focus just on one thing, and they foreclose on their identity.

NARRATOR:

Peter Enckelman spent 14 years playing as a goalkeeper for clubs in England and Scotland. Like many of his teammates, he did not plan for life after football. After he left the game, he began a new career with international career company, DHL.

PETER ENCKLEMAN:

As soon as you've got football at UK, you forgot about education. All that went out the window. I was always thinking what am I going to do when I grow up I mean, you're 36, you would like to think you're grown up. But when you're in the footballing world, it's kind of a dressing room mentality sets in. You're 17, it's 37. It's just, don't think about the future.

DAVID LAVALLEE:

Players, coaches, senior management, managers, I think should recognise that if you place greater value on the holistic development of players rather than focusing on just winning in its own right, it actually has a better opportunity to lead to winning. And that's a very different way of thinking from the perspective of just the winning at all costs.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

[Back to - Video 4](" \l "Unit4_Session3_MediaContent2)

# Video 1

## Transcript

CAROLINE HEANEY:

The athletic level indicates that during her career Natasha will experience four key periods of transition. Her first transition involved her initiation into athletics at the age of 11. Then, as she got older and became more involved she transitioned into the development phase. Here, she began developing her skills with more specialist training and competing in junior competitions. As she progressed from junior to senior competition, she transitioned into the mastery phase, where she is currently enjoying her most successful performances. Now that she is in her late 20's, Natasha is starting to think about retirement and life after sport, when she will move into the discontinuation phase.

The two transitions seen at the psychological level are moves from childhood to adolescence and adolescence to adulthood, which loosely coincide with the transitions at the athletic level from initiation to development and development to mastery, and appear to involve an increase in drop-out from competitive sports, as Natasha saw with some of her friends.

The transitions associated with the psycho-social level relate to changes in who is most important to the athlete. During her childhood, Natasha's parents were the most important people around her, but now as an adult her partner has become more important. Coaches are obviously important, too, and tend to become significant figures in adolescence and then throughout the athlete's participation.

Finally, the academic and vocational level of the model identifies three key transitions-- primary to secondary education, secondary to higher education, and higher education to vocational training and work. Natasha found the transition from secondary school to university difficult, experiencing challenges connected to moving away from home, changes in her social network, and moving to a different coach. After university, when she started working, she found she had less time to train and sometimes experienced conflict between her work and athletic roles.

[Back to - Video 1](" \l "Unit5_Session3_MediaContent1)

# Video 2

## Transcript

CAL TEMPLETON:

It's all that I've ever wanted to do. I didn't really see myself doing anything else. It's something that I've dreamed of doing since I was a little boy. I've worked hard.

I was at Leicester from the age of 10 to 18. So I've been there for eight years. Also represented Northern Ireland under 17 and under 19 level, playing in the Euro qualifiers.

At the start of March, we had decision meetings. Me and my mum went into the club for a meeting with the academy manager. And it was simply a decision of that there was no pathway for me at Leicester.

RHYS SPRINGER-DOWNES:

Schoolboy, that was a good time for me personally. I'd say I was one of the top performers in my group. I got my scholarship early, so the beginning of under 16 I got offered my scholarship. Started the scholarship was doing quite well. Towards the end, confidence was low.

And then basically we went into the meeting. We had our head of academy, head of coaching. And they basically just said unfortunately we're not going to be offering you a new contract next year.

Everything went out my head. It was like, well, bit of a shock. You've been here for six years. So it's like, not sure what would happen from here. Thoughts going through your head of, is this the career I still want to do? Do I want to go somewhere else, do I want to try something else, do I want to stay in football?

It was a big, thing for me. And it did take a week or so for me to get back up and say, OK, Rhys, where you gonna go from here?

SAM PHILLIPS:

I was at Wolves for about nine years. I just went on trial there about nine years ago, and I've been there ever since. I had a scholarship there, as well. You've obviously got to put in a lot of work, not only on the pitch but off the pitch. We've been doing our BTEC college work for the whole two years of my scholarship, so that's another thing you got to work at.

But then on the pitch you've also you got to really try your hardest, and hopefully the coaches see that in you and they decide to offer you a pro contract.

We all had meetings. Everyone would then be told in that meeting whether we were going to get a pro contract or not. And I just wasn't one of the ones who got a pro contract at the end of my scholarship.

If I'm being honest, it hurt a lot, again, because I'd been there for so long. I'd spent so many years at the club. I knew a lot of people there, I'd made loads of friends there. And it was just a real homely club to be at, and I enjoyed my time there.

I suppose maybe for a few weeks I thought, Christ, what am I going to do now?

CAL TEMPLETON:

It came as a shock. Because I've been there for eight years. It's all I've ever known, I didn't have anywhere before that. So you go into shock a little bit. Obviously, your mind just starts going into overdrive thinking about what you're going to do next. But I never considered giving up football, it was what I always wanted to do.

MICKY ADAMS:

It's not something that you do over a month period, they've been with football clubs in general two years, sometimes even longer than that. So what you have to do is consider the budget restraints that you've got on the football club, how many gaps in the squad you need to fill, and the quality of the player that you're having to give the bad news to. So it's not easy, I have to say.

I've delivered it from the Premier League at Leicester City down at Port Vale level in League Two. So I've let some good players go, I have to say, who've come back and haunted me.

BARRY DUNN:

We let a player go last year and he's got a pro-contract at QPR. It's a matter of opinion if you think that's a mistake. But there's not many.

The message I always give to players is the game's about opinions. My opinion at this precise moment in time is that you're not quite up to the standard that we require, but you shouldn't lose heart with that.

SAM PHILLIPS:

We got told of the Exit Trials before we got told our decisions. So they were always in the back of my mind. But obviously no footballer really wants to think that before they get told that decision. Assessment Trials has always been a thing that people know about, and it's proven to work in the past.

DANIEL JOLLY:

Tonight is really part of our progression program. So we have the players for two years on an apprenticeship program. League Football Education manage that process, make sure that they are achieving their apprenticeship framework. I think one of the things that we recognize from a contractual point of view and from a moral point of view is that after that two years, decisions have been made about players as to whether they will be offered a professional contract or not.

We see it as our duty to make sure that, for those that aren't offered that professional contract, we offer something to allow them a route either back into the game or utilizing the football skills that they've acquired over the last two, three, four, five, ten years to move forward within football in order to make the most of the talents and skills that they have.

One of the most notable successes from this event has been Jamie Hopcutt, who took part in these events and as a result of that, went on the Swedish player placement programme. He's now playing for Ostersund. So he's now playing at the top division in Swedish football.

Marvin Sordell and George Boyd are other individuals who have gone through this process. It's a stepping stone for other things. Yes, back into the football pyramid, but also out into other broader, wider opportunities as well.

[Back to - Video 2](" \l "Unit5_Session4_MediaContent1)

# Video 1

## Transcript

DR JOSIE PERRY:

I think transitions in sport are really important because what it comes down to is change. Change can be really difficult for anybody. But when you are really used to something in sport, there's always external elements going on that change in sport, but you can get quite secure in the team you're in or the team you've got around you. And so when that's likely to change, it makes you feel really insecure inside. You can start to see things much more as a threat than a challenge. And when we get into a threat mindset, we just don't perform in the same way as we would like to. So not only does our well-being suffer, our performance can also suffer.

INTERVIEWER:

What do you think of are challenges of career transitions in sport? So why do athletes find them so challenging?

DR JOSIE PERRY:

I think one of the biggest challenges of career transitions in sport is when you're not in control of what's happening. So if you're in the under 14s and you move up to the under 16s, it's something you always knew was coming and so you can prepare for it. You'll know you'll be going out with lots of other people at the same time. So that feels like a really positive development. But some career transitions can feel really negative. The biggest one for most people is injury. And you go from doing the thing you love every day and getting to see your friends when you do it and knowing your journey because it's mapped out and you know the competitions or tournaments you'll be doing, and it can go. And the real tricky element of injury is not knowing how long it will take to recover. And I've even had athletes say to me, they would rather know they couldn't do anything for a whole year with an injury because at least they have a framework, than just it go on and on and not know when they're going to recover. So that can be a really tricky one.

[Back to - Video 1](" \l "Unit6_Session1_MediaContent1)

# Video 2

## Transcript

HELEN RICHARDSON-WALSH

As a full-time hockey player, I've experienced, unfortunately many injuries-- lots of little niggles, a few muscle tears. But I've also, unfortunately, experienced some quite big injuries that kept me out of the game for some time. When I was around 21, 22, I had an ankle injury which needed three operations, and I was out the game for two years.

More recently, I had double back surgery within the space of a year. That was hard to take. I missed a World Cup, which was very difficult. And it took a lot of hard work and some mental resilience to get me back to the sport that I love.

When I experienced those injuries, I had, obviously, the physical effects but also had to deal with the psychological effects. And there were many. Trust me. I found one of the things I did straight away was kind of isolate myself from the group, which I found really weird because I was someone who was very sociable. And I suddenly found I didn't want to be around the people that were doing what I wanted to do. I guess I was a little bit jealous of that and so took myself away.

I had a fair bit of embarrassment because I didn't get selected for a tournament, and I'd always been selected for a tournament. And there was kind of fear and anxiety that I couldn't get back to the sport that I played and had a dream of becoming an Olympic champion. That was a massive goal for me, and this injury was getting in my way.

Kind of encompassing that was a loss of identity as well. I really saw myself as a hockey player. And when I was injured, I struggled to mentally get around that, because was I a hockey player anymore because I couldn't actually physically play it? Plus the whole thing of not being able to do the thing that all my friends are doing because that's my social group. So there were so many mental aspects that I had to deal with when I was injured.

There was always a kind of progression with how I went through to get back on the pitch. Initially, when I was told that I was-- had the pain and told that I had to have surgery-- it was actually quite a fearful time. Surgery on your back, in particular with me, is quite scary. And so I was scared. It's not a nice thing to have to go through. But once I had the surgery and the surgeon comes in and says everything's fine, it was all about setting a plan. And that really helped me. I love plans, and once I was on that I kind of got the confidence to be able to go forward.

But unfortunately, the plan never works out. Always something comes up. And I always tell people now when they're going through injuries expect stuff to go wrong. And having that expectation is actually quite helpful, because I got to the point where because it's not going right, you kind of feel hopeless. You're thinking is this going to work out? You go through those different transitions, but once I was getting closer to the pitch that obviously helps.

But when you get back onto the pitch, then you're not as good as you were. And that's something really difficult to deal with. You're not as fit. Your skills aren't quite as good. And so you go through another difficult time. And then it's about setting your own expectations about how long things are going to take and how quickly you can get back to where you were.

[Back to - Video 2](" \l "Unit6_Session3_MediaContent1)

# Video 3

## Transcript

Emily Neff.

JENNIFER NEFF (EMILY'S MOM):

Emily is a great kid. She enjoys sports. She's been playing sports since she was six years old.

EMILY NEFF:

I was playing basketball. I jumped and landed wrong and tore my ACL.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

JENNIFER NEFF:

It was a torn ACL. I think going in, we knew that that's probably what the problem was, but just knowing what you hear about, that it's a long recovery. Is she going to be able to come back and play sports again?

RYAN INGLEY (ATHLETIC TRAINER):

The most important thing I think is making sure they're comfortable with what we're doing. Every athletic trainer is going to feel that way. We want to make sure that they're safe ultimately, and that's why we're there.

EMILY NEFF:

They said it was going to be six to eight months recovery, and my mindset was well, I'm going to get back in six months.

RYAN INGLEY:

Motivation I think is very important. It's a very tedious process as you rehab an injury because you need to basically rebuild a foundation.

EMILY NEFF:

There were times in the training when it was really hard, in the back of my head I knew what I was working for, and I knew that the end payoff would be worth it, so I just pushed through it.

RYAN INGLEY:

As you get weeks, months out making sure that she can get her full range of motion back, get her full extension back, she's got to have that confidence or else she's not going to be able to play her game.

JENNIFER NEFF:

She was right around that six-month mark when they cleared her. That allowed her to come back to the playing field for soccer.

I was really nervous, honestly, just to make sure I wasn't going to do anything to get hurt again, but I knew I was strong enough physically, and my doctors wouldn't put me back out there if they didn't know I can fully do it.

JENNIFER NEFF:

She was able to play in the regional semifinal game, and she scored three goals in that game, known as a hat-trick in soccer, and that was just awesome. This hasn't slowed her down. She's become stronger, I believe, because of the injury and come out further ahead had it not happened.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

[Back to - Video 3](" \l "Unit6_Session3_MediaContent2)

# Video 4

## Transcript

ARIELLE SANDERS:

When I started at the University of Michigan, I had no idea I would have the opportunity to walk onto the rowing team. I immediately fell in love with the sport, and the team. Every aspect of my life revolved around the team, and I didn't want it any other way.

During the fall of my junior year, everything changed. I became injured and had to medically redshirt for the rest of the season.

[TEXT ON SCREEN: Athletes Connected. Coping with a career-ending injury.]

I was devastated. What was I supposed to do without rowing?

Being away from my teammates, unable to practice or compete, made me sick to my stomach. Negative thoughts ran through my mind. I spent most of that year crying, feeling sorry for myself. I went from everything in my day to day revolving rowing, and my teammates, to isolating myself to numb the pain. I felt like a failure. I was scared and embarrassed to ask for help.

This same year, Athletes Connected was created. I started attending Athletes Connected meetings. These meetings helped me realise that I shouldn't suffer in silence. I began to open up to my coaches and close friends. Learning how to communicate my feelings during these meetings was important for my mental health while being injured.

With the injury rehabbed, I came back in the fall of the next year, ecstatic to be back training with my favourite team. Within the first week of practice, I was injured. Again. I was devastated. Through that year, I worked with my athletic trainer, and I was able to come back at the end of the season, but I did not contribute in the way I wanted.

Fast-forward to the beginning of my fifth year, I was still suffering from lingering injuries. My coaches and I decided that it was time to medically retire. I had recently been elected as one of the captains by my teammates, and I felt that by seeking medical retirement, I was giving up, and letting my team down. But, in reality, it was the opposite. I was met with unwavering support. My coach asked me if I wanted to still be captain and take on a new role as a student coach.

It took me a long time to accept that my rowing career was over, but I had a new place to put my passion for the team, and rowing.

Athletes Connected, and our athletic counsellors, helped me realise that my sport does not define me. Even though I was not contributing to the team physically, I could still contribute by being a great leader, and a great teammate.

Although my journey was a rollercoaster of ups and downs, and different than I could have ever imagined, I am forever grateful for the experience. Michigan, and Michigan Rowing, has changed my life for the better.

STEVE CONNELLY:

We are one community.

CAROLINE MANDEL:

You perform best when you're physically and mentally healthy.

JEVON MOORE:

Asking for help is a sign of strength.

[Back to - Video 4](" \l "Unit6_Session3_MediaContent3)

# Audio 1

## Transcript

DAME KELLY HOLMES:

The highs and lows are so extreme in sport. I mean, really extreme, and I don't think in normal life you really experience those, apart from bereavement, which I have from losing my mother four months ago. I know how that feels, and so actually, at that point, when I hadn't had that in my life, sport was everything. And I got to the point of depression, self-harm, looking in the mirror and not actually wanting to be there. Did I ever expect to be like that, being an ex military sergeant? No. Being an international athlete? No. But I'm human, and somewhere down the line, it just got on top of me. I didn't want to be here.

And actually what happened was, the reason why I'm quite a strong advocate of helping people transition, is because when I finished, I've finished with two gold medals. I was the only British person to have done that in a long, long, long time, and the only female ever to have done it in Britain. And six months after, I still felt really lost. Suddenly, my identity, I could tell people, I'm an Olympian, I'm an Olympic champion, no, sorry, I'm an Olympian. I'm an athlete, I do this, then I was real enough-- oh, I open shops here, oh, I get asked to go on shows, oh, I get I go to schools. And suddenly, you're just like, well, who actually am I? I have no idea. So I got on a really bad low again.

I've started to speak to sports people that have been to those Olympic Games with me-- I'd been to three Olympic Games-- who had nowhere of going. They weren't in the public eye, they had not won two gold medals, they weren't having these doors open, but suddenly, they're dropped.

[Back to - Audio 1](" \l "Unit8_Session4_MediaContent1)

# Video 2

## Transcript

CANDICE LINGAM-WILLGOSS:

You can see in this adapted version of the athletic career transition model some examples of coping strategies and interventions that can facilitate a positive transition. You may also recognise that several of these have already been mentioned.

For example, earlier in the session you heard how Lauren coped with retirement best when she had a new focus. Barry talked about his use of goals, and Alex Scott had a very clear retirement plan. If you think back a little further to Session 3, Max utilised several interventions to help him manage transitions, such as counselling, cognitive restructuring, and getting a mentor to support him.

[Back to - Video 2](#Unit8_Session5_MediaContent1)

# Video 3

## Transcript

ALEX DANSON:

So one of the most important things for me throughout my career was to always feel a sense of preparedness for when I did transition out, or when I did retire, or when I wasn't selected, or when I maybe had an injury and had to come out.

So one of the transitions that I did always thoroughly prepare myself for, more mentally probably than anything else, was deselection. And it was always something, from very early on in my career, I wanted to prepare myself for. So the way I did that was study because, you know, at the age of 16, I never dreamed for a million years that I would be playing-- I'd have an 18-year career.

So my plan was to become a teacher, so I did my degree. I always placed a really high importance on work experience. So don't get me wrong, my sport was always, you know, the thing at the forefront of my mind and that was where I put all of my energies. But I would always make sure I did my best to spend time in a workplace.

In 2018, one of my biggest honours was to lead the England team out at a home World Cup in London. It was incredible. The stadiums were full, it was a celebration of hockey, we were playing the best teams in the world. We had really high hopes, unfortunately that tournament didn't end where we wanted it to and we got knocked out in the quarter-finals.

But I had every intention of playing for another two years until the Tokyo games, perhaps leading out my team, if I was selected and still doing a good job. And then after that World Cup we had the opportunity to go away on holiday and it was a really fabulous, beautiful place.

But unfortunately, I had an accident while I was out there and I fell and hit the back of my head really very hard on a brick wall. And I came back from Kenya very, very unwell. And for the next six weeks I deteriorated and deteriorated. I could hardly walk at the beginning, I couldn't tolerate any light, any noise, couldn't hold a conversation-- I'd just be in a dark room for months and months.

So I went from leading my country out, to not being able to really process a normal day-- just to get through a day was an enormous challenge. I think my character was that I didn't want to leave hockey on those terms, I wanted to be able to try and make it back, try and come back for Tokyo.

And I gave it a go for a few weeks, but I knew I couldn't compete at that anymore, so I officially retired in February of this year. A lot of the feelings you have associated with transition and retirement, I think I had very early on in my head injury.

You know, the isolation, the losing your identity overnight, suddenly not being present when that first tournament happens, and you're not there. Somebody else is leading the team out. All of those things, which are incredibly difficult, I dealt with when I was really quite unwell.

A year and a half later when I essentially gave in my retirement notice, I'd already dealt with those and I was very grateful I'd lived my career in a manner, which meant I had no regrets.

I think one of the biggest challenges is, within sport, when you transition out of that game when you hadn't planned to. So whether it be through injury, through deselection, you're suddenly in a world that you don't want to be in because I want to be still there competing. And there are so many options but you have to make them for yourselves.

And some people are very, very lucky, they come out of an international career and there are options there, readily available. Some people come out of an international career and you have to create your own. Either way, you still have to think about, well, where do my skill sets best take me? What am I most interested in?

And I would encourage anybody, which I did do after I retired, would be to sit down and think about what your plan is within that first year of retirement, because it's a very, very strange place to be. You suddenly don't have the routine, you suddenly don't have that one purpose.

I think the one thing I've learned is that, when you retire out of elite sport people don't all go to the same job-- the variety is enormous. And that's what I mean around skill sets being very, very diverse.

I've got one of my dear friends, who retired a couple of years ago, is now an executive to coaching. I've got another friend that's teaching. I've got another friend that's running Airbnb and on a fishery on a farm. So there's lots of very different areas that people have gone into. There's also other athlete colleagues that have gone into the media or who have gone into journalism.

So it's about working out, I think, first and foremost, is the next journey or part of your life, do you still want it to be connected to your sport? And there's very, very specific areas in which you can stay involved. Whether it be coaching, whether it be journalism, whether it be governance.

Or do you want to do something completely afresh? And then if it is completely afresh, it's finding the right qualifications. But understanding you have the bedrock of those key skills and those values that will support you in your next journey.

[Back to - Video 3](" \l "Unit8_Session5_MediaContent2)

# Video 1

## Transcript

[MUSIC PLAYING]

NARRATOR:

As an athlete, you've dedicated your whole life to achieving your sporting goals. You've put in enormous commitment and hard work to get to the top. But while there is no guarantee of success in sport, there is one certainty for every athlete, and that is that your career will not last forever. Because at whatever stage you are at, retirement will become a reality. You are going to have to contemplate the next stage of your life, your career away from the sports field.

We know that the transition out of sports is tough, but also unpredictable. No one transition is the same. You don't know how you're going to feel until you get there. For some, it's a relief-- happiness at the prospect of starting over.

But for many others, it will be like venturing into uncharted territory without a map. You don't recognize where you are, and you don't know which road to take. You feel lost and alone. You may feel sad, frustrated, disappointed, or even angry.

So just as you did for your sporting career, you need to invest time and energy to prepare your second career. The good news is that you have already developed skills that you can use in your new life. You are not starting from scratch. You just need help identifying what you already know, and how your skills, interests, and passion can be best put to use. This way you can draw the map yourself.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

[Back to - Video 1](" \l "Unit9_Session1_MediaContent1)

# Video 2

## Transcript

ROBBIE SIMPSON:

When you're living your dream, making a living from sport, you kind of feel invincible. Sport has been the focus for probably your whole life, and you don't spend too much time thinking about what happens next. But when that reality comes to an end, whether it be through injury, a contract not being renewed, or just because you're getting older, for a lot of people, there is no plan in place for what comes next. And that's a really scary situation to be in.

Only around 30% of professional sportspeople actually choose when they retire. And when you think at any one time there are 17,500 professional sportspeople in the UK, that basically means that there are 12,000 sportspeople where retirement will come before they really expect it.

TOM POYNTON:

Out of nowhere, the click of a finger, and my life turned upside down. And I lost my father, and ultimately on that day I lost my career because that's what stopped me. And at that point, you feel invincible. You feel like you're immortal. You feel like you've not got a care in the world. It's a fantastic position to be in, to be a professional sportsman, but careers are over so quickly. And from a cricketing context, it doesn't support you for the rest of your life, and often, the guys have done nothing to prepare for it.

MELISSIA PETTY:

If someone had told me six years ago that at 27 I'd be retired and trying to look for a job and to prepare myself for it, I would have laughed at them, because you never think that it's going to be your last day on the golf course or your last day on a football field. And I think sometimes if someone had given me the advice I now know, which would be to always prepare yourself and always make sure that you've got a backup plan and a second option.

ROBBIE SIMPSON:

When you've focused on one thing for so long, it can be really hard to find a new identity outside of sport. And research has shown that around half the people who retire from sport face real difficulties when they stop competing-- financial worries, employment issues, of course, mental health issues, and much more. And there's been far too many cases of sportsmen who try and take their own lives after they retire. And it's not just in football. It's in all sports.

So I've set up LAPS to try and address these issues and to help sportspeople plan, prepare for, and find new careers after sport. Sportspeople have so much to offer outside sport. In fact, even Sir Richard Branson wrote an article about the benefits of hiring sportspeople and even gave a mention to LAPS at the end. There's been loads of research in this area, and we've spoken to lots of organizations and academics who are well aware of the qualities that elite athletes have to offer.

PROF MICHAEL DICKMANN:

Sportspeople are attractive to organizations because they've shown from a young age, normally, that they have a goal and they're willing to pursue it, even though it means great personal sacrifices. They are able to basically be resilient, to survive when they don't have success. They pick themselves up and go at it again.

MATT HUGHAN:

Sportspeople, they bring that kind of hard work ethic, which I think we're looking for. They're not afraid to get stuck in. They work together as a team really well, and one of our key core behaviors is about all being one team, chipping in for each other and making sure the job gets done no matter what. I think that sportspeople generally bring those transferable skill sets or more behaviors into the business, which we tend to recruit for over a skill set, for example.

DR MARK SLASKI:

They have incredible focus, and they must think about the task in hand and specifically not let anything get in the way of the objectives that they're trying to achieve. When they are setting themselves an objective, setting themselves a task, there are things that they can't do, things that they have to give up in order to follow that dream.

ROBBIE SIMPSON:

Sportspeople often demonstrate specific personality traits. They're actually well suited to other careers.

CLAIRE BENNETT:

I was always looking, always, for that continuing improvement and that has meant that I've taken that through to my work life. And that means that I'm constantly thinking about how I can be a better performing person and a more well-rounded person in the work place.

[Back to - Video 2](" \l "Unit9_Session2_MediaContent1)

# Video 3

## Transcript

[MUSIC PLAYING]

[TEXT ON SCREEN: Lizzy Yarnold is Great Britain’s most successful ever Winter Olympian who won Skeleton gold at the 2014 and 2018 Winter Olympic Games. At the start of her career, she combined her training with studying for a degree at university.]

LIZZY YARNOLD:

I think being an athlete, it can be very all consuming. So one of the massive benefits of me doing my degree and taking on education whilst training is that in the evenings, when you've got nothing to do. It's great to watch films and relax. But it was also great to be able to disappear into my books, get some me time, chill out, and push myself in a different way that wasn't just the physical stuff-- lifting and sprinting fast. It was learning and educating myself. And that meant that when I came back into the Skeleton world the next day and the expectations were high, I was much more refreshed for that challenge. So I absolutely loved having the balance of education and sports.

[TEXT ON SCREEN: Following Sochi 2014, Lizzy won the European Championship in 2015, but in September of that year announced she was taking a sabbatical from the sport.]

Taking time out of Skeleton, although I loved not having to go to the gym every day and that focus, I knew that I did have to find something to do. So working with my performance lifestyle advisor, we thought, is there Open University courses? Are there other kind of fun courses I can do? So I did quite a long 10, 12 week Open University course on accounting-- something I knew nothing about. I didn't understand, and it was just a total challenge and kind of refreshing thing to do.

Even though it was keeping me busy from my break from Skeleton, now I can look back and be really proud of the fact that I did just try something different. I may not be the expert on it, but it's something else of me. And it's another string to my bow.

[TEXT ON SCREEN: Lizzy returned to Skeleton in 2016. At the PyeongChang Olympics in 2018, she became the first British athlete in history to retain their Olympic title at a Winter Games.]

I probably started thinking about retirement after my first Winter Olympics in Sochi, so actually four years before I retired. I found that talking to other people, no one would say, oh, I'm going to retire at this point. Or I'm thinking of this, because it was a taboo. If you said you were going to retire, then suddenly, you weren't worthy of being on the program and you'd be chucked off.

So I sort of made myself face up to the fact that there is a reality. I'm not going to be an athlete forever. And there is a whole world-- a great world-- out there that I want to be involved in.

[TEXT ON SCREEN: Since retiring, Lizzy has been elected onto the British Olympic Association’s Athletes’ Commission. She is also a frequent speaker at schools and conferences and is a #More2Me Champion.]

I can honestly say-- hand on heart-- that taking time off, doing education, having other things in my life are all major reasons why I have been so successful as an athlete.

My message to anyone within a world-class program thinking of the future is talk to some older athletes within your sport-- so friends you already have. That first conversation needs to be what's helped them? What are they planning doing in their future?

Get comfortable talking about retirement and the next steps, then go to your performance lifestyle advisor so they'll give you much more structured help. Start thinking about the life after sport. It’s a wonderful place, and it's a reality for all of us. And embrace-- embrace it.

[TEXT ON SCREEN: #More2Me. For more information head to: www.eis2win.co.uk/expertise/performance-lifestyle]

[Back to - Video 3](" \l "Unit9_Session3_MediaContent1)

# Video 4

## Transcript

[MUSIC PLAYING]

[TEXT ON SCREEN: Kristian Thomas was part of the British Gymnastics team that won a historic bronze at the 2012 Olympic Games. He captained the British Gymnastics team at the 2016 Olympics and retired from the sport shortly after Rio. Kristian is a #More2Me Champion.]

KRISTIAN THOMAS:

I think for me being an athlete and I guess when I first started out in the sport and it got a little bit more serious, I was very much tunnel vision one focus and that was results driven. It was on getting to a certain score. It was doing or being selected for certain competitions.

And nothing really, I guess, external to actually gymnastics really mattered to be honest. For me, it was round about two years before Rio. I started thinking in my head that Rio potentially would be my last competition. And if that was the case, then I need to have an escape route really.

I need to have another focus that was outside the sport. I need to come out the sport in a position where I'm able to move on with my life and for it to be moving into another positive as opposed to retiring that's a negative perhaps. And so yeah. I started to put things in place and probably about two years before retirement, I would say.

I knew that there was help and I knew that there was support available to me, particularly through the EIS and through the performance lifestyle advisor. I guess just get a bit more knowledge of what we actually had available to us and just, I guess having those general conversations as well, just that I hadn't really had. What are my interests? What potentially might I like to do for the future? Little things like that I hadn't really given much thought of, which seems crazy, really. But I guess when your sole focus is winning medals and representing your country, it wasn't really something that I'd ever thought too much of.

[TEXT ON SCREEN: After competing for Team GB at the Rio Olympics in 2016, Kristian retired from competitive gymnastics aged 27.]

I think the experience of retirement is very personal and it's very different for every single athlete. And some athletes have had negative experiences, some have had positive. And for the whole, I'm pretty pleased to say that mine was a fairly pleasant sort of retirement. And I think a lot of that was potentially because I knew I was going to something straightaway.

I came back from Rio, I think, August and in September, I started university. So it gave me a complete new focus to go into. And I think that for me was probably one of the biggest reasons that I was able to make that transition quite smoothly. My messages would be for the younger athletes that are in elite sports would be to utilise their support services, their support services through their governing body, through the EIS that they can use. And it hasn't got to be a decision where that's your concrete plan. But at least, it's a step in the right direction. You've had those conversations. You've got something put in place. And also, just look in the area of the time is when is the best time to actually maybe do other things.

It hasn't got to impact your training. I think that's always a negative for the athletes. They always think that having something else potentially could impact my training and so that's the first thing to get dropped. But actually, research is telling us that it's the other way around and that actually having another focus, having something else to look forward to that actually then helps with your training. So just go out there and try new things. Have those conversations.

[TEXT ON SCREEN: Kristian is studying for a BSc in Strength and Conditioning at the University of Wolverhampton. He is an athlete ambassador for British Gymnastics and the British Gymnastics Foundation. In 2018 he was elected to the British Olympic Association’s Athletes’ Commission. Kristian is also Head of Recreation at Park Wreklin Gymnastics Club and delivers motivational talks in schools.]

[Back to - Video 4](" \l "Unit9_Session4_MediaContent1)

# Video 5

## Transcript

JOSH LUKWATA:

I joined Fulham's Academy when I was 9 years old. I spent nine years playing for them, then my world fell apart when I got released at the age of 18.

INTERVIEWER:

So what was it actually like playing for Fulham Academy? Was is everything you thought it would be?

JOSH LUKWATA:

Yeah, and more to be fair. I think it teaches you a lot from a young age. Like discipline, knowing how to perform under pressure, and knowing how to conduct yourself everywhere you go. One thing they always told us was that wherever you go, as long as you're wearing the badge, or the tracksuit or whatever you are representing the club so, it really teaches you a lot of discipline.

INTERVIEWER:

Were there any lads in your academy that went on to become professionals?

JOSH LUKWATA:

Ryan Sessegnon, Steven Sessegnon, Josh Walker at Barnet.

INTERVIEWER:

So talk to me about the moment when you realised that it wasn't going to work out, you know, you weren't going to be able to fulfill your dream of being a Premier League keeper. Where were you when you found out?

JOSH LUKWATA:

They implied it. I don't know how to explain it but they implied it. So I needed to take it in myself. And then another goalkeeper coach then came to me and said, I'm so sorry about what happened. I heard, you know, it's going to be a shame that you're leaving and all of this. So there wasn't really a direct answer. Then I remember just going back to digs at the time, I think I called my mom first. I was just crying. I didn't know what to do. I just knew from there that obviously if they released me because of my height, a lot of other clubs it's going to be the same.

INTERVIEWER:

Did you have a backup plan? Because obviously, when you're playing football, all you're thinking about is being a footballer.

JOSH LUKWATA:

Not at all.

INTERVIEWER:

No plan. No backup plan?

JOSH LUKWATA:

Not one. They told me I should have one, I said, no I don't need one. I don't need one. I believed in myself that much at the time. They suggested I go to America. I think it was three or four years for like a scheme up there, to play football up there, Sweden for three months. Once I stopped loving the sport, there was no point in me playing. It's tough to take. It's tough to take in, because you feel like your life's over, literally. As a footballer, all your worth and your self-worth is you get from football and yourself as a football player. You don't really get your self worth as you as an actual person. So, the better you are at football is how much you rate yourself as a person. So, once you get released you feel like you're worth nothing.

During my time in Sweden, I met a producer up there. And then that's when I realised I wanted to do music. I recorded Mona Lisa I think in my second session. For a first single, it didn't do too bad.

[TEXT ON SCREEN: 352K views on GRM daily. 2.6 million listens on Spotify.]

JOSH LUKWATA:

I already do studio sessions regularly. I've had shows here and there, but I've also started studying. I'm going to uni now to take a popular music course, which will potentially teach me how to produce my own stuff.

INTERVIEWER:

Looking back, do you regret playing in the academy and going that route? Do you wish you'd started music earlier?

JOSH LUKWATA:

I don't regret nothing, to be fair, because I'd say the music industry and the music journey is very similar to football. So, you have to be disciplined. You have to realise that, and I think with music, you're even representing yourself more than anyone else. Like, it's I think where you're in it by yourself once you're an artist. I don't say I regret nothing really. Football taught me a lot of things that I needed, not only music but in life. So, discipline, hunger, sacrifices that you need to make, knowing what your priorities are. So, I can't say I regret nothing to be fair.

INTERVIEWER:

Well, top man, Josh. Best of luck with the new single, mate.

JOSH LUKWATA:

Thank you very much.

INTERVIEWER:

I know you're going to smash it.

JOSH LUKWATA:

Thank you very much.

[Back to - Video 5](" \l "Unit9_Session5_MediaContent1)

# Video 6

## Transcript

[24.58 to 31.17]

BRIANNE THEISEN-EATON:

So I was really fortunate to have a great sports psychologist that I worked with throughout a lot of my career. And she was a really big part of helping me through the transition. I mean, she was the first person I told that I was thinking of retiring. She walked me through all of these different things to think about before announcing it. And I literally didn't announce it for four months, like just took four months to really think about it.

And some of those questions she had for me were like, OK, next time you're sitting on an airplane and somebody asks, what do you do, what are you going to say? It was just like those really uncomfortable feelings of like, I don't know. I don't know who I am. I don't know what I do. And then that's when you break down crying because you're just like, I don't have anything anymore. Or I lost my community or whatever that was.

But the one thing that I think she helped me realize, and I don't think this has to be how it is for every professional athlete that retires, I think some people will be really fortunate to find the passion in something else like they did in sport. Although, I think that's really, really hard. She explained to me that sport gave you everything you needed in life. You had a community. You had friends. You had a goal. You had all of these things that fulfilled everything you needed.

She's like, when you go into the working world, your job is not going to do that. You have to-- that's what work/life balance is, which a lot of athletes don't have. It's just like train, train, train, compete, compete, compete. And you're totally fine with that.

But she was like, working is like you work, yes. But you need to have friends. And you need to go out. And you need to go on vacation. And you need to see your family. And you need to have days off. And you need to have downtime.

And I think I just wasn't used to planning that. And so putting a priority on that has really helped, like going to Tahoe on weekends with friends and stuff. I didn't understand how important that was until I got a job and was just like a regular person. And so I think that has been a big one for me. And I don't know the answer to how do you find the thing that you're as passionate about. I don't know if I ever will because it's just, I mean, it was such an amazing thing to have. You know? But--

EMILY HUGHES:

I was going to have a tangential answer because I think, I mean, I think you really highlighted what sport gives you and how you can take that to your next thing of community and like how do you find that. And maybe it's not in sport. But maybe it's somewhere else.

But I think related to the question you asked earlier and what you said was I think sport gives you so many-- I hate to use the word-- but transferable skills, where it's not just like, oh, hardwork is important and will get you your goal. It's how do you communicate, so many things that your original what you introduced where we're not just going somewhere and leaving everything behind. It's like we learned so many things and you learn how to lead a team. You learn how to set small goals to get somewhere or how to navigate something or so many things that I'm not listing right now.

But it's using those in a different way. And I think as I made that transition out of sport, I was starting to apply for internships. And then they're like, oh, submit a resume. And I thought, well, I skated 20 years of my life. And yeah, then realizing that there was so much more that I could put on there and that now I use every day in work.

Yeah. I think I started talking to people. I talked to my parents. I talked to my friends. And I thought, I don't know what to put on here.

And it was funny because my coach would say, oh, but you did this event. And you can put that there. In my mind, I think it was part of a non-profit. And my mind, I was like, well, I did that because I really wanted to. I didn't think it made it on the resume kind of thing. And there were just so many things like that that you could add on there.

But yeah, I think that even every day we competed in front of thousands of people. And that transfers into, well, can you make a presentation in front of a VP or in front of 10 people? And you learn those skills, maybe it's just in sport, but that you can shift to another aspect. But I think I didn't really internalize and still internalizing it, but I think knowing that then I think would have helped a lot.

MARGIE PEDDER:

I 100% agree so. I work for Visa. And a few of you in here, it's kind of a joke within our group there are so many athletes. And athletes have 95%, if not more, of what employers are looking for, go-getter attitude and hard work ethic. Honestly, I have now had a career for 10, 15 years. And every time I interview somebody or want to hire somebody, they're the traits you look for first.

You can learn stuff. Yeah. It's just having those core attributes that you really have to hone in on. And they're ingrained in all of us. So I think that the hard part is-- and Kayla, I've had this conversation with you-- it's like, when you're an athlete, you have a very specific goal, and there's very specific steps in the ladder that you can take.

When you enter the workplace, and this is what I struggle with the most is, not necessarily what you put in is what you get out. It's a little grayer than that. And there's other people that influence that. So for me, the biggest psychological shift was, how do I still have a goal? What are the steps of the ladder to get there? Who do I need to help me get there like? That's the biggest transition because, when you're an athlete, very clear how you get there and who's going to help you get there. So for me, that was one of the hardest things and still have to work on, what's my goal and how do I get there?

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# Video 7

## Transcript

BEN OAKLEY:

So here we are at the end of the course, and I know from personal experience that writing these courses brings about all sorts of thoughts and feelings. So Caroline, starting with you, what did you learn from writing this?

CAROLINE HEANEY:

I think it was really useful in that it made us reflect on our interactions with athletes including our own children, in fact.

BEN OAKLEY:

So you talked about interactions with athletes. Tell us a bit more what you mean by that.

CAROLINE HEANEY:

I think it's just about thinking how athletes feel when they go through certain transitions. So for example, as a sports psychologist, I currently do a lot of work with injured athletes. And it's kind of made me or reminded me about how difficult those transitions can be, whether that's a minor injury or a major injury. That can have a really significant impact on how that person is feeling and every aspect of their life, not just their sport. So it's kind of reminded me of that type of thing.

BEN OAKLEY:

And presumably, that interest has come from you being injured at some stage and thinking about the psychological aspects of it?

CAROLINE HEANEY:

Yes, so I've had a few injuries during my career. And that kind of sparked my interest in that area. And it's an area that I did a PhD in, and I've done research in, because I'm interested in it. And I see it around me as an athlete, as the coach, and as a sports psychologist. It's a really massive transition for a lot of people.

BEN OAKLEY:

OK, what about the more general, the journey, the highs and the lows, all the way through your career, how do you reflect on those?

CAROLINE HEANEY:

I think just by writing this course, it's just reminded me about all of those highs and lows, and going back and thinking about those transitions I've been through, and kind of the periods where I was injured and how bad I felt during those periods. And when you move to a new club, and you do higher level competition, and it's really good and you run PBs, because you're getting those opportunities, it's kind of looking at all those different things. And I kind of reflected on the people that helped with that.

So at all stages of my career, when things went well or when things were going difficult, and I had to get through those things, it was the people around me, so coaches that were supporting me, my family supported me talking to other athletes who've been through the same thing, and kind of that planning aspect as well. And I think when it came to my retirement, I did have quite a well-planned out retirement. I had a phased retirement, where I retired from hurdling first, did a bit flat running, and then properly retired. So it was a softer landing in the end.

BEN OAKLEY:

OK, you're practicing what you preach then?

CAROLINE HEANEY:

Trying.

BEN OAKLEY:

OK, so Candice, you had a quite short intense career. Tell us about the end of your career and that big movement from there.

CANDICE LINGAM-WILLGOSS:

Yeah, I think that's been something that I've really reflected on through writing this course. Obviously, Caroline and I chatted a lot about our own sporting experiences while we put this course together. And for me, I didn't really understand, even though this is my area of interest, I didn't really realise why I felt how I did when I left my sport. I think in my head, at 17, I didn't view it as a retirement. Because that was a term I wouldn't have connected to something at that age.

I just thought I'm stopping skiing. And I felt really rubbish, to be honest. I suddenly wasn't at school Candice, the skier. I suddenly wasn't the person being written about in the local paper. And all of these things-- and I only now actually in a chat with Caroline about things that I suddenly realised that was my identity I'd lost. And I had no support with that. I had no one-- I left the skiing performance set up, didn't stay in touch with anybody. No one at school really could support me. The teachers they didn't really understand what I'd been doing. And I lost a whole sense of who I was. And that was really hard. And only now do I understand why I felt like that.

BEN OAKLEY:

OK, and so what other sort of big reflections do you have, since then?

CANDICE LINGAM-WILLGOSS:

I think, for me, it will definitely be the way I support my daughter with her sporting choices. So she is involved in competitive sport at a reasonable level. She's 13. But I'm quite realistic that when you are involved in high performance sport at quite a young age, it doesn't mean you're going to make it. And there will be lots of bumps along the road. And I hope that through my experience as an athlete, through studying things, through writing this course, that I'm kind of equipped to support her, and not make decisions for her, but listen to her thoughts and feelings on decisions that she makes so that she has a positive sporting journey.

BEN OAKLEY:

Great, well, thank you so much for putting the course together. I've had a read through it. I really enjoyed it. Obviously, I'm biased, and I hope you had a good time.

CANDICE LINGAM-WILLGOSS:

[LAUGHS]

BEN OAKLEY:

Thank you.

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