

Running head: DROPOUT IN AMATEUR JUNIOR HOCKEY PLAYERS

Leisure Lifestyle and Casual Leisure's Influence on Athletic Identity, Performance and
Perception of Hockey in Dropout Amateur Junior Hockey Players

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Abstract

Athletes involved in competitive sport are often required to neglect certain aspects of their life to pursue their sport. One of these aspects is participating in valued activities outside of sport. However, an imbalance between sports, in this case hockey, and other valued activities can lead to living a less than optimal leisure lifestyle with a negative impact on well-being. The purpose of this study is to explore how amateur Junior hockey players leisure lifestyle and casual leisure participation influence athletic identity, performance and perception of hockey. Results indicate that most participants perceived over-identified to hockey, which led to living a less than optimal leisure lifestyle and a negative impact on perception of hockey, identity and performance. However, after dropping out participants perceived their leisure lifestyle as optimal and returned to playing recreational hockey with renewed joy for hockey and a multi-dimensional identity.

Keywords: dropout, leisure lifestyle, serious leisure, casual leisure, identity, performance

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Chapter I - Introduction

Dropout in sports is an important issue to address for two reasons. First, individuals are going from living a physically active lifestyle, which is what the Canadian government emphasizes for the population to stay healthy, to living a less active lifestyle and therefore potentially moving away from healthy living habits (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2012). Being physically active has many health benefits such as lowering the risk of cardiovascular disease, stroke, type-2 diabetes, obesity, colon and breast cancers, injuries and falls, and mental health issues (Miles, 2007). Second, dropout has been negatively associated with withdrawing from sport. Therefore, dropout contrasts retirement from sport, which is associated with a positive experience when leaving sport (Butt & Molnar, 2009). Participating in sports can be a way to maintain a physically active lifestyle and healthy living habits for the population. Thus, avoiding dropout can be important in reducing the risk of having individuals no longer wanting to take part in physical activities such as sports.

Participating in sports comes in different forms, but individuals are said to be serious about sport when “it is seen as so important to that person that he or she is willing to commit the time and effort needed to do his or her best at it in practices and games, even at the expense of other interests” (Stebbins, 1993, p. 81). However, research has demonstrated that an unbalanced lifestyle between sport (i.e., serious leisure) and other leisure activities (i.e., casual leisure) can lead to negative effects on well-being and quality of life (Stebbins, 2001a). Even though athletes are engaged in sport, they also enjoy participating in valued leisure activities outside of sport as well (Stebbins, 1997a). Thus, an athlete's lifestyle must encompass the aspect of sport but also,

the values activities they have outside of sport. This may help prevent athletes from having difficulties and negative impacts on their well-being during their athletic career (Stebbins, 2005).

Importance of Study

To examine the topic of this study, recruited participants will represent the sport of amateur ice hockey in Canada. Most of the Canadian population (48%) agrees that hockey is strongly associated with Canadian pride and culture (CBC, 2014). Many are registered to play starting at a very young age and continue to play well into their adult life. However, according to CBC (2014), in 2010 hockey was second to golf for the most practiced sport among Canadians aged 15 years and older. CBC (2014) also indicated that in 2010, hockey was the third most practiced sport among Canadians aged between five and fourteen years of age. Soccer and swimming were both ahead of hockey. Thus, it may be possible that the cultural significance of hockey in Canada may be diminishing or is not as important to the population as it once was.

Moreover, even though there is a small annual growth rate in hockey registration each year by 1.5% (comparatively to a 5.2% annual growth rate in the United States) (CBC, 2014), those who participate and have the dream of making it professionally some day must face the reality of the situation. The chance of making it to professional level hockey is nearly zero (MacGregor, 2013). According to Kesselring (2014), out of the roughly 22000 newly registered hockey players in Canada each year, only 132 will make it to the Junior leagues just below the National Hockey League (NHL). Additionally, of those 132 who made it to Junior level hockey, only seven of them will actually play an NHL game. This reaffirms the near impossibility of making it to the NHL someday as MacGregor (2013) indicated above. Making it to the NHL has been compared to winning the lottery, yet it is still every players dream to make it one day.

Additionally, it is estimated that approximately 50% of registered hockey players between the ages of twelve and 17 drop out of hockey each year, which is a concern for hockey in Canada

(For the sake of the game, 2003). Based on these statistics, many Canadian hockey players will face the reality and have their dream of playing professional hockey unachieved. Thus, the focus of this study will be held on voluntary withdrawal or dropout for hockey players in Canada. That is, those who were on their way towards reaching their goal of playing professional level hockey (i.e., NHL) and decided to withdraw themselves from reaching that goal. Also, Junior level hockey specifically will be the focus for this study as the Junior level is the stage just before professional hockey and a stepping stone for players on their way to professional leagues such as the NHL. These players have also had a prolonged engagement and strived towards success in the sport for a longer period of time than those who dropped out at twelve years old.

In addition, amateur Junior hockey players perception of their leisure lifestyle and its influence on their athletic identity, performance and perception of hockey has yet to be explored. Also, Casual leisure participation's influence on athletic identity, performance and perception of hockey for amateur Junior hockey has yet to be explored in past research. This study will therefore contribute to existing knowledge in leisure research by seeing if serious leisure pursuers in hockey actually perceive their leisure lifestyle as optimal. It will also aim to see if their leisure lifestyle can have an influence on how they identify themselves during their hockey career and how this influences their overall perception of hockey. As for the casual leisure component, this study will aim to explore if casual leisure participation can have an influence on amateur Junior hockey players athletic identity, if benefits of casual leisure can translate to serious leisure performance and if it can influence their overall perception of hockey.

Research Purpose and Questions

Exploring athletes' leisure lifestyle and its impact on athletic identification, perception of sport and performance prior to dropout requires further inquiry, as the topic has yet to be acknowledged from an athletes perspective. Nor has this topic been explored with amateur Junior

level hockey players. The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between leisure lifestyle and casual leisure on athletic identity, performance and perception of hockey in amateur Junior hockey players who have dropped out.

Specifically, guiding questions to be answered are: 1) was the leisure lifestyle of drop-out amateur Junior hockey players perceived as optimal?, 2) did their leisure lifestyle impact their perception of serious leisure prior to dropout?, 3) did their leisure lifestyle impact their serious leisure identification prior to dropout?, 4) did their leisure lifestyle impact their serious leisure performance prior to dropout?, 5) how is casual leisure utilized prior to dropout by amateur Junior hockey players?, 6) did casual leisure participation impact their serious leisure identification?, and 7) did casual leisure participation impact their serious leisure performance?

Operational Definitions

Dropout in sports: athlete who has voluntarily withdrawn from pursuing a goal in a sport previously engaged in over a prolonged period of time (Alfermann, 1995).

Serious leisure: activity that individuals pursue most of their life because of its appeal to that individual (e.g., sports, collecting, arts, etc.) (Elkington & Stebbins, 2014).

Casual leisure: activity that individuals participate in because of its immediate rewards to the self and well-being (e.g., watching television, listening to music, etc.) (Elkington & Stebbins, 2014).

Leisure lifestyle. Leisure participation in daily life (Peterson & Gunn, 1984).

Optimal leisure lifestyle: a combination of both serious and casual leisure participation to maximize an individual's well-being and quality of life (Stebbins, 2007).

Identity: a multitude of roles/statuses an individual possesses (e.g., brother, son, employee, athlete, student, etc.) (Lally, 2007).

Athletic identity: the athletic role/status portion of the individual to which they identify (Brewer, Van Raalte & Linder, 1993).

Central life interest: favored or prioritized role/status of an individual over their other identities (Dubin, 1992).

Perception: term inspired from phenomenology: thoughts expressed or explained from the point of view of the participant (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005), i.e., how participants perceive a certain situation.

Chapter II - Review of Literature

The content in the review of literature will cover different components such as careers in sport and serious leisure, casual leisure, identification, dropout and optimal leisure lifestyle. The concept of careers in sport and serious leisure will demonstrate the relationship between athletes in development and serious leisure pursuers in the field of sport. Casual leisure will be used to contrast this, as individuals rarely have a career in those types of leisure activities despite their importance. In the identification section we will look at how athletes value their serious leisure activity and the athletic role. The concept of optimal leisure lifestyle will be described to demonstrate how athletes can maintain their well-being when pursuing sport as a serious leisure. Lastly, dropout will allow us to understand why serious athletes withdraw from their sport as a serious leisure activity.

Careers in Sport and Serious Leisure

Sport Canada has developed the Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD) model as a standard and accepted way for athletes to reach elite levels of play and stay active for life. National Sport Organizations have been developing LTAD models tailored to each sport. The LTAD model consists of various stages that athletes must progress through during their sport career if they wish to master a sport and stay active for life. The different sets of stages allow for a comfortable transition into the following stage, where each new stage requires increased physical and psychological demands (Canadian Sport for Life, 2014).

A leisure career means one will progress through a series of stages during their leisure career and that these stages reflect a continuum of changing patterns related to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, and abilities. This can typically be achieved through serious leisure participation (Parker, 1996; Scott & Shafer, 2001; Stebbins, 1992). Further, turning points and key moments are typically included and spread out within serious leisure careers. Thus, leisure

careers are defined as “a career shaped by its own contingencies, turning points, and stages of achievement or involvement” (Elkington & Stebbins, 2014, p. 18). Contingencies within leisure careers are known as unintended or chance happenings, which affect the progress or decline of a leisure career. Moreover, turning points are moments, which can influence the careers direction (Elkington & Stebbins, 2014).

Amateurism

The first type of individual that will embark on career in serious leisure and the type of individual that will be looked at in this study is the amateur. Stebbins (1980) defined amateurs as being “part of a professional-amateur-public (PAP) system of functionally interdependent relationships, an institutional location that is both cause and effect of their serious, committed orientation toward the activity in question” (p. 414). Modern amateurs pursue chosen activities in art, science, entertainment and sport. The benefits of these forms of leisure come from the refusal to remain a player, dabbler, or novice at it. Instead, the activity becomes an avocation where participants are motivated by seriousness and commitment, expressed by regimentation, e.g., practices, systemization, schedules and organization (Stebbins, 1980).

According to Elkington and Stebbins (2014), amateurs are related to professionals in several ways. First, amateurs serve publics (e.g. members of the community, spectators, etc.), just like professionals do, and sometimes the same ones. Amateurs are guided by standards of excellence set and communicated by professionals. Second, monetary and organizational relationships exist when professionals train, advise and perform with amateurs, and when amateurs become a knowledgeable part of professionals’ publics. Third, intellectual relationships exist between professionals, amateurs and their publics. This comes from amateurs who have a lot of time for their activity and can maintain broader, but less specialized knowledge in the field than do professionals. Fourth, amateurs restrain professionals from overemphasizing and

stressing superficialities, instead of meaningful and profound work or products. Fifth, amateurs insist on retaining excellence, as do professionals. Sixth, amateurs push professionals to give their public the best they can. Lastly, professionals inevitably begin in amateur ranks. Unless they abandon their field or die in it, they will return to those ranks later in their career (Stebbins, 1982).

Thus, amateurs and professionals are both part of a PAP system, where the public is served by amateurs and professionals likely. This service is rewarding when accomplished, as it becomes an enriching experience when their publics appreciate the attention of being well served by amateurs and professionals expert work. This can be exemplified by fans' applause after a goal or a win by their team (Stebbins, 1980). The links between amateurs and professionals are what differentiate amateurs from hobbyists and volunteers (Stebbins, 1982).

Serious Leisure Characteristics

Elkington and Stebbins (2014) identified certain characteristics associated with serious leisure pursuers. These characteristics are leisure career, perseverance, personal effort, durable benefits, unique ethos, and identification. Leisure career has already been defined above, and identification will be described below in a separate section since this study is concerned with identity as a primary characteristic. Perseverance is defined as "the occasional need to persevere" (Elkington & Stebbins, 2014, p.17) and goal-directed behavior over a long period of time (Stebbins, 1998).

Personal effort "pertains to the exertion of significant personal effort to obtain and develop special knowledge, skills, or abilities" (Stebbins, 2007, p.11). Most serious leisure pursuers possess qualities such as manual dexterity, scientific knowledge, verbal skills, long experience in a role, showmanship, athletic prowess and persistent individual effort, which distinguish serious leisure participants from dabblers (Elkington & Stebbins, 2014).

Durable benefits is defined as the “realization of an agreeable or desired outcome, anticipated or not, that is more appealing and desirable than the previously existing state or condition” (Stebbins, 2007, p. 11). Elkington and Stebbins (2014) identified eight durable benefits for serious leisure pursuers: self-actualization, self-enrichment, recreation or renewal of the self, feelings of accomplishment, enhancement of self-image, self-expression, social interaction and belonging, and lasting physical products. There also exists a ninth benefit, self-gratification or pure fun, which is the only benefit shared by serious and casual leisure (Elkington & Stebbins, 2014, Kane & Zink, 2004).

Unique ethos is “the existence of distinguishing ideals, values, sentiments, or guiding beliefs that are shared by members of a serious leisure social world” (Stebbins, 2007, p. 12). Most pursuers develop subcultures and pursue their activity within the world of their activity (Elkington & Stebbins, 2014, Kane & Zink, 2004).

Benefits of serious leisure. Both costs and benefits can be associated with the progression of a leisure career. Serious leisure offers many benefits other than the ones mentioned above. Benefits can be personal, such as fulfilling ones human potential, expressing skills and knowledge, having cherished experiences and developing a valued identity (Brown, McGuire, & Voelkl 2008; Kane & Zink, 2004). Further, even though serious leisure requires more mental and physical effort, it can be regenerative. It has proven to be effective as participants often get so wrapped up in their activity that they temporarily forget about their worries in other aspects of their life. In addition, participants gain personal satisfaction, positive effects on well-being, and enjoyment from participating in their activity (Buettner & Fitzsimmons, 2002; Elkington & Stebbins, 2014; Heo & Lee, 2010; Major, 2001).

Past research has identified many social rewards related to serious leisure participation, for example: meeting new people, making new friends, and becoming a member of a social world

by being a part of various groups, events, networks, organizations and social relationships. Other social rewards occur when the group accomplishes something significant together, e.g. playing a great hockey game, winning a championship. By participating, they get the sense of being needed, and help the collectivity and make valued contributions to the group (Elkington & Stebbins, 2014)

However, when participants go beyond the beginner stages in their leisure career, they realize that satisfaction is diminished at times, as a result of the various costs. However, they know the costs are relatively minor compared to the much more powerful and attractive benefits. It is important to note that most serious leisure benefits come from overcoming challenges and difficult moments caused by certain costs, e.g. athletes may be physically and mentally fatigued, but if their team wins the game, the costs become less significant (Elkington & Stebbins, 2014) and rarely lead to career abandonment (Misener, Doherty, & Hamm-Kerwin, 2010).

Costs of serious leisure. Despite being able to overcome the costs due to its benefits, the costs of serious leisure cannot be ignored, as everyone will deal with them differently. Disappointment felt by participants when they play below personal expectations (e.g., losing important games, missing scoring opportunities), conflicts creating tension between controversial goals, policies and favoritism (e.g., having to attend class the same time of a hockey game), experiencing stage fright, the need for intense concentration, mental fatigue, requiring long periods of preparation, physical fatigue, and feeling obligated to participate in their activity, and disconnecting from social relationships outside their activities social world, and serious injuries are all costs associated with the pursuit of serious leisure (Bartram, 2001; Elkington & Stebbins, 2014; Gibson, Willming, & Holdnak, 2002; Jones, 2000; Lamont, Kennelly, & Wilson, 2012; Major, 2001; Stebbins, 2001b).

Casual Leisure

There are different forms of leisure activities. They can either be pursued seriously like serious leisure or they can be what most think of when they think of leisure activities like casual leisure. Casual leisure is contrasted with serious leisure, and represents all leisure activities falling outside the realm of serious leisure activities. These activities represent what practices come naturally to humans (Stebbins, 2001c). According to Stebbins (1992), if there is to be self-fulfillment, identity enhancement, and self-expression, one must engage in serious leisure rather than casual leisure. Casual leisure is defined as an “immediately, intrinsically rewarding, relatively short-lived pleasurable activity requiring little or no special training to enjoy it” (Elkington & Stebbins, 2014, p. 18). Casual leisure activities are usually less substantial and offer no opportunity for a career compared to serious leisure (Elkington & Stebbins, 2014).

There are several types of casual leisure activities, such as play (e.g., daydreaming, dabbling), relaxation (e.g., napping, strolling in a park, lounging), passive entertainment (e.g., watching TV, reading books), active entertainment (e.g., games of chance, party games), social conversation, sensory stimulation (e.g., sex, sightseeing, drinking alcohol), and non-career volunteering. Some may be experienced at the same time and in different combinations. Casual leisure activities all share a common function, i.e., hedonism. Thus, casual leisure activities provide a significant amount of pleasure or enjoyment to its participants (Elkington & Stebbins, 2014).

Benefits of casual leisure. Along with its hedonic function are the many benefits associated with participating in casual leisure activities. Elkington and Stebbins (2014) identified five benefits associated with casual leisure. The first benefit is its capacity to develop creativity and discovery. Casual leisure is closely related to serendipity, which is described as informal experimentation, accidental discovery, and spontaneous invention. Serendipity can result in understanding a government policy, to discovering a plant or type of animal lives within the

neighborhood, to making new artistic sounds on a musical instrument. Such discoveries are generally unintended and accidental.

The second benefit is edutainment. Activities such as watching films and television, listening to music, and reading books and articles are all sources of edutainment, along with going to theme parks and museums are all sources of edutainment. Taking in media consumption or attending these places can lead to learning about the social and physical world surrounding them. Therefore, individuals are educated and entertained simultaneously.

The third benefit is it offers opportunities for regeneration or recreation; potentially even more than serious leisure as it can be intense at times. Typically, leisure activities offer some form of relaxation or entertainment or both however, the distinction between casual and serious leisure lies in the durable effects of relaxation and entertainment of casual leisure. This enhances equanimity and most of the time, takes place between periods of intense activity.

The fourth benefit is it allows for developing and maintaining interpersonal relationships. Various forms of interpersonal relationships exist, but most leisure-based relationships form between friends, spouses and family members. The interpersonal feature of leisure relationships is possibly its most admirable quality. Each person gains high levels of deeply satisfying intimacy and interaction by participating with others in the given activity or activities (Stebbins, in press).

The fifth benefit lies in the positive impact on well-being and quality of life. For most, the greatest sense of well-being stems from leading an optimal leisure lifestyle in which casual leisure is a major component to achieve that (Stebbins, 2000).

Casual leisure also has functions beyond its primary benefits mentioned by Elkington and Stebbins (2014). Hedonic value can result in seeking escapism, or the motivation to leave the ordinary or unpleasantness of a situation (Hirschman, 1983). Hutchinson and Kleiber's (2005)

examined the benefits of casual leisure on health and well-being in difficult moments in life and determined that casual leisure contributes to self-protection, restoring a sense of self and growth-oriented change.

Casual leisure's contribution to self-protection allows individuals to distance themselves or take a temporary break from stressors. It helped with immediate coping during persistently stressful life situations with ongoing challenges. Casual leisure activities become positive distractions and give them something to look forward to (Hutchinson & Kleiber, 2005).

Casual leisure contributes to self-restoration by restoring valued self-perceptions. For example, individuals engaging in casual leisure activities make efforts to take better care of them and make it possible to have fun during stressful life circumstances. This leads to increased perceptions of competence, feelings of accomplishment and sense of control over the situation (Hutchinson & Kleiber, 2005).

Casual leisure also has the ability to develop growth-oriented change. According to Hutchinson and Kleiber (2005), casual leisure participation in difficult moments gives a greater appreciation of the moment, changes priorities, creates stronger relationships with others in similar situations, develops personal strength (e.g. optimism in a difficult situation) and helps discover new paths in life.

Thus, casual leisure has important functions and benefits. At certain moments, individuals must rest and relax, and get away from it all. People must have the opportunity to regenerate themselves if they wish to accomplish life's obligations. It's also important to note that serious leisure pursuers enjoy and value their moments of casual leisure (Stebbins, 1997a). Among the most relevant types of casual leisure activities that are expected to contribute to the benefits and different aspects being looked at in this study are relaxation, social conversation, passive entertainment and active participation.

Costs of casual leisure. Although casual leisure has been associated with many positive benefits, they do have certain costs associated with them if pursued abundantly. Stebbins (2001c) and Elkington and Stebbins (2014) identified four costs associated with casual leisure. The first is boredom, an “unmistakable sign of momentary absence of well-being, or momentary presence of low quality of life” (Stebbins, 2001c, p. 307). Participants may lose interest in the amount and type of casual leisure available, resulting in weariness and restlessness. Boredom can spring out and spoil enjoyment if the activity loses its appeal.

The second cost is that it offers no opportunity for developing an identity. For example, individuals will rarely identify themselves as a napper, television watcher or fast food consumer. Most free time is occupied by casual leisure activities, but a dominant casual leisure lifestyle deprives individuals of one or more potential leisure identities. Casual leisure can enhance self-confidence and encourage positive self-image however; its superficial and transient nature rarely develops an identity (Roberts, 1997).

The third cost is engaging in large amounts of casual leisure leaves little time for serious leisure, which in turn deprives that person of an optimal leisure lifestyle. Exclusively pursuing pure pleasure brings a certain level of happiness however; not experience the richest form of it. This is achieved by having a perceived balance between serious leisure and casual leisure.

The fourth cost of casual leisure is its limited contribution to the self. This is closely related to not developing an identity via casual leisure pursuit. However, this cost includes failing to generate positive feelings of oneself, valuing self-esteem, valuing personal improvement and creating self-development.

Identification

It has been mentioned above that serious leisure pursuers identify themselves to their serious leisure activity over casual leisure activities they take part in. Thus, this section will look

at the serious leisure identity and the value of a serious leisure activity to its pursuer. For this reason, serious leisure identification was developed into its own section since this study is interested in this characteristic.

Identification to serious leisure was developed by Stebbins in regards to Dubin's (1992) concept of identity to a central life interest. Dubin (1992) defined central life interests as "that portion of a person's total life in which energies are invested in both physical/intellectual activities and in positive emotional states" (p. 41). Identification to a central life interest is an achieved status resulting from a total investment of personal energy to one selected role over the many others available to an individual. According to Dubin (1992), personal investment of physical and mental energy to an achieved status is a deliberate choice for two reasons, namely, individuals "choose a goal or goals toward which activity will be directed in fulfilling the selected role" (p. 49), and "attention is also given to developing, and perhaps also perfecting, the means to achieve the goal(s)" (p. 49). Once a role has been selected and becomes a central life interest, individuals must focus on that role to perform it successfully (Dubin, 1992). Elkington and Stebbins (2014) also indicated that individuals pursuing a serious leisure activity will fully invest themselves mentally and physically to achieve a desired end.

It is important to note that deliberately chosen and achieved roles are added to ascribed statuses, which everybody possesses, and is out of their control. Ascribed roles are given to us by society, e.g., male, age, education level, etc. Accompanying ascribed statuses are achieved statuses each individual strives to reach, but it's the combination of these two statuses that create an identity. Thus, individuals invest their total energy in one role that is their central life interest, however, that single role is part of a complex and multidimensional self-schema or identity (Dubin, 1992).

Serious leisure and identification. Identity is defined as "a multidimensional view of

oneself that is both enduring and dynamic” (Lally, 2007, p. 86). When strongly identifying to serious leisure activities, people tend to “speak proudly, excitedly, and frequently about them to other people, and to present themselves in terms of them when conversing with new acquaintances” (Stebbins, 1982, p. 257). It has been said that serious leisure participants at times realize they’re too enthusiastic about their activity when discussing it with peers (Stebbins, 1979).

In sports, athletic identity is defined as “the degree to which an individual identifies with the athletic role” (Brewer, Van Raalte, & Linder, 1993, p. 237). Identification to sport is conceptualized as possessing an athletic role in a multidimensional self-concept (Brewer, Van Raalte, & Petitpas, 2000). Thus, when athletic identity becomes an important aspect of an individual’s self-concept, he or she will perform better in the athletic role and have a higher self-esteem (Callero, 1985).

Stebbins (1993) stated that serious leisure can become an amateur athlete’s central life interest, “as it is a segment of their lives in which they have made a substantial emotional investment” (p. 81). Thus, sport often becomes a central component of an amateur athletes life. Sport becomes an activity to which athletes dedicate a lot of time, energy and strong identification to, and becomes a central component of an athlete’s social, personal, financial, recreational and working life (Dubin, 1992).

Serious leisure as a central life interest can also develop a leisure identity, as the activity becomes the basis of the individual’s lifestyle (Stebbins, 2001b). This can be exemplified by an amateur athletes engagement to their sport, where they will devote more time to training and practice, than actual playing time (Dubin, 1992). For example, hockey players spend much more time in training and in other forms of preparation than actual playing time in a hockey game. Thus, when identifying to serious leisure, individuals do more than just show up to perform;

rather, they are fully committed and invested to the activity and their athletic identity. Identity is important in understanding prolonged engagement in serious leisure, as participants may forfeit their valued social identity if they withdraw from pursuing their serious leisure activity (Shipway & Jones, 2007).

According to many different studies, identifying strongly to sport has functional benefits as it relates to commitment in training and focusing on sports goals (Horton & Mack, 2000). Athletic identification provides the motivation and discipline necessary for intense training, leading to success in high-level sports (Callero, 1985), and beneficial effects on athletic performance (Werthner & Orlick, 1986), health and fitness (Brewer, Van Raalte, & Linder 1993). Other benefits include being physically active (Anderson, 2004), enhanced body image, increased self-confidence and decreased anxiety (Horton & Mack, 2000).

Costs of identification. Although identification to sport (i.e., in this study sport is synonymous to serious leisure) is typically a favorable characteristic, it can become a risk factor for participants at times. High-level sports demands can lead to over-identification and a lack of role experimentation (Miller & Kerr, 2002). Even though identification is considered to be multidimensional, individuals usually favor one identity. Thus, athletes over-committing to their athlete identity at the expense of other aspects of life can become “unidimensional”. And, in many cases, over-investment to the athletic role is present when athletes focus on high sports goals (Werthner & Orlick, 1986).

Furthermore, over-committing and over-investing to athletic identity can lead to consequences such as overtraining, feelings of anxiety when not training (Coen & Ogles, 1993), restricting the development of a multidimensional self-concept and limit the opportunity for exploring other interests (Danish, Petitpas & Hale, 1993). Additionally, if athletes are to suddenly

be stripped of their athletic identity, not only will that dimension of life be affected, but the overall self-concept will be affected as well (Stryker & Serpe, 1994).

It is important to note that athletes are not only individuals who participate in sports, but individuals who participate in other activities as well. There must be an emphasis on multiple personal identities and a balance between, or combination, of different activities in life to be successful, e.g., between sports, play, studying and work (Bloom, 1985). The multidimensionality of an individual's identity becomes important to consider, as in the case, athletes must be able to participate in sports as well as values outside of sport if they wish to satisfy the different dimensions of their identity and avoid having difficulties during their athletic career. Not only does this satisfy their identity, but it is also important to consider in the balance between sport and casual leisure activities, as an imbalance between the two can lead to a decrease in well-being and quality of life for athletes.

Optimal Leisure Lifestyle

This section will look at the concept of leisure lifestyle, as it is an important component for optimizing an athletes' well-being and quality of life. It's important to distinguish the difference between lifestyle, leisure lifestyle and optimal leisure lifestyle if we wish to know how well-being for amateur athletes can be attained. According to Stebbins (2009), people who pursue a career in serious leisure have a pleasurable lifestyle awaiting them. Stebbins (1997b) first defined a lifestyle as:

A distinctive set of shared patterns of tangible behavior that is organized around a set of coherent interests or social conditions or both. It is explained and justified by a set of related values, attitudes, and orientations and, under certain conditions, becomes the basis for a separate, common social identity for its participants (p. 350).

Moreover, Peterson, and Gunn (1984) explained the concept of a leisure lifestyle, which is described as the leisure-related attitude, perception and behavior performance in the environment of daily life based on daily life experiences. To extend on the concept of optimal leisure lifestyle, Stebbins (2007) introduced the concept of leisure lifestyle. A leisure lifestyle can be optimal or less than optimal leisure. An optimal leisure lifestyle is defined as the “deeply satisfying pursuit, during free time, of one or more substantial and absorbing forms of serious leisure, complemented by a judicious amount of casual leisure” (Stebbins, 2007, p. 189). Optimal leisure lifestyle means participating in leisure activities, that individually and in combination, realize ones human potential and self-fulfillment, which enhances quality of life and well-being (Stebbins, 2005). A leisure lifestyle is less than optimal when there is an unhealthy imbalance between serious leisure and casual leisure participation. It is also possible for people to engage in exciting, but less profound, casual leisure lifestyles, however, as it is unusual for large amounts of individuals to collectively take part in casual leisure lifestyles due to their superficiality, it cannot be a basis for describing a way of living (Stebbins, 2005).

The concept of optimal leisure lifestyle has rarely been examined based on the perception of amateur athletes in competitive sport. The lack of knowledge on the perceived balance between serious and casual leisure from an athletes perspective warrants further inquiry. This study will also put an emphasis on the casual leisure component of a leisure lifestyle, as casual leisure’s impact on amateur athletes’ serious leisure performance and identity has yet to be explored as well.

Dropout

In sports, dropout refers to athletes voluntarily terminating their sport career before reaching their full potential (Alfermann, 1995). The decision to dropout is often related to a lack of control over certain situations and decisions, e.g. anticipating getting cut from teams, conflicts

with coaches, etc., and having feelings of failure (Butt & Molnar, 2009). These reasons also distinguish the term ‘dropout’ from ‘retirement’ (Wylleman, Alfermann, & Lavallee, 2004). According to the Sports Training Adviser (2014), it is estimated that one third of participants between the ages of ten and 17 will drop out of organized sport.

Types of dropout. According to Linder, Johns, and Butcher (1991) there are different types of dropouts. The sampler dropout has not committed to playing one particular sport and drops out at any time. The transfer dropout withdraws from one sport to continue playing in another. Lastly, the participant dropout, who has invested many years of their life playing one sport, withdraws because the sport no longer meets their needs. Thus, dropouts can be a different process and have a different meaning depending on the individual and the situation.

Transitions

Sport careers typically consist of many transitions, which can be associated with voluntary dropout in amateur athletes. Transitions may also have an impact on athletes’ identity (Kadlicik & Flemr, 2008). Schlossberg (1981) defined transitions as “an event or non-event, which results in a change in assumptions about oneself and the world and thus requires a corresponding change in one’s behavior and relationships” (p. 5).

Types of transitions. In sports, transitions are described as turning phases, which athletes face regularly during their athletic careers (Stambulova et al., 2009). Not only do athletes have transitions in their athletic careers, they also face coincidental transitions in other aspects of life on personal, social and affectionate levels.

In order to understand the influence of the different transitions athletes face, it was suggested to classify them into two categories, namely; non-normative and normative transitions (Wyllemann & Lavallee, 2004). Non-normative transitions are unplanned events in an individual’s life, taking place in an unforeseen and involuntary manner (Schlossberg, 1984), e.g.

season ending injury, loss of a coach. Non-normative transitions can be compared to contingencies in serious leisure careers as they share the same unpredictable nature. Moreover, normative transitions are usually predictable and anticipated by athletes when planning and organizing their careers (Wylleman & Lavallee, 2004), e.g. going from Minor to Junior level hockey.

Difficult transition in athletic careers. It's rare for an athletic career to follow a preplanned linear trajectory (MacNamara, Button, & Collins, 2010). Typically, a career oriented towards developing experts consists of essential stages, i.e. initiation, development, specialization and mastery (Stambulova et al., 2009). Every athlete follows a specified trajectory containing micro-stages, e.g. injury, change in performance, which can lead to excellence if overcome (Douglas & Carless, 2009).

However, the most difficult transition perceived by athletes is transitioning from junior to senior level sports, e.g. Minor to Junior hockey. It is the most critical point in an athlete's career and many are unable to cope with this transition (Stambulova et al., 2009). Often, this transition coincides with other major transitions in life, e.g. going from high school to university (Wylleman & Lavallee, 2004). At this point, athletes will either play successfully in senior level sport, play recreationally or dropout (Stambulova et al., 2009). Thus, there exist certain sensitive points for athletes during their athletic careers, particularly transitioning from junior and senior level. For this reason, Junior level hockey players was chosen as the population, as they have had a first hand experience progressing through this transition.

Theoretical Framework

Philosopher Charles K. Brightbill wrote an essay in an era where work was the most valuable activity an adult could engage in in the eyes of most North Americans. In his 1961 essay *Man and Leisure*, Brightbill wrote that opportunity is measured by what we want in life and that

in free time away from work and other obligatory activities it is possible to live a satisfying and full existence by participating in leisure activities. This was not only seen as taboo then in mid century, but it is still at odds today since many Americans and Canadians still believe work is the most valuable and appropriate activity adults should engage in. Thus, the idea that individuals finding their full existence through leisure had come to a halt for Brightbill, as work was always seen positively while leisure was seen negatively as it is works complete opposite. Despite leisure being negatively perceived, Brightbill was correct after all as participating in leisure activities does offer a rich and full existence to its participants. In today's language, it could be said that Brightbill was talking about serious leisure in his essay rather than casual leisure.

In the early 1980's, Robert Stebbins developed serious leisure through pure discovery (Stebbins, 2001b). At the time, Stebbins was writing about his experiences as a classical musician when the idea of serious leisure came to mind and its roots began to grow. The term serious leisure was developed after many of Stebbins' research subjects would say that they were quite "serious" about what they were doing, which was sport, theatre, music, etc. These activities were often contrasted with the other leisure activities they participated in, which are known today as casual leisure activities. These individuals felt the need to defend their leisure activity to others so that it could be distinguished from what every one thinks about when they hear the term "leisure". Individuals would often think about causal leisure activities right away when they thought of leisure. As a result from his experiences as a classical musician, having his subjects demonstrate how serious they were about their leisure activity and the fact that those leisure activities were not pursued the same way as casual leisure activities (Stebbins, 1999).

Elkington and Stebbins (2014) defined serious leisure as the "systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer sufficiently substantial, interesting and fulfilling for the participants to find a (leisure) career there acquiring and expressing a combination of its special

skills, knowledge and experience” (p. 4). Individuals see participating in these activities as an opportunity for personal expression, enhancing self-identity, and self-fulfillment (Elkington & Stebbins, 2014). In addition, while attempting to gain and express acquisitions offered by serious leisure, participants get the sense that they are pursuing a career similar to a high-level occupation, but without earning a salary (Stebbins, 2001b).

Serious leisure is also closely related to the term devotee work, which Elkington and Stebbins (2014) describe as an activity that has such a strong appeal and working towards achievement by the participants is so high that it is difficult to have a distinct division between leisure and work. Despite being associated with the sense of being at work, devotee work is a pleasant obligation since participants will participate in the activity in a highly intrinsic matter. Thus, serious leisure theory and devotee work can be compared with one another as they both emphasize the same form of personal satisfaction and self-fulfillment to the participant. This satisfaction and self-fulfillment is distinct from the satisfaction gained in other forms of leisure (Elkington & Stebbins, 2014).

Thus, serious leisure is much more distinct than other major forms of leisure described by Elkington and Stebbins (2014), which are casual leisure and project-based leisure. Casual leisure, as defined above in the literature review provides immediate gratification and pleasure to the participant. Furthermore, project-based leisure is defined as a “short-term, reasonably complicated, one-off or occasional, though infrequent, innovative undertaking carried out in free time” (Elkington & Stebbins, 2014, p. 4). Project-based leisure requires a certain level of planning and effort; however, it is not meant to be or to develop into a form of serious leisure at any time (Elkington & Stebbins, 2014).

Furthermore, Elkington and Stebbins’ (2014) serious leisure theoretical framework is particularly interesting because it associates two contradictory terms that are rarely thought of

together; these are ‘obligation’ and ‘leisure’. There are two types of obligations associated with serious leisure according to Elkington and Stebbins (2014), i.e., agreeable obligation and non-work obligation. According to the authors, agreeable obligation is a part of certain leisure experiences. This typically takes place when there is a positive commitment to an activity that is associated with pleasant memories and expectations to the participant, i.e., serious leisure. It can also be argued that agreeable obligation is not felt because participants have chosen to pursue the activity intrinsically (Elkington & Stebbins, 2014).

However, obligation to leisure has also been associated with certain tensions and conflicts, a cost of serious leisure as mentioned previously. Individuals sometimes know that they are pushing other life obligations aside as a result from feeling obligated to participate in their leisure activity. This is typically associated with non-work obligation, which is the opposite of agreeable obligation and fails to create pleasant memories and expectations for participants (Elkington & Stebbins, 2014). Elkington and Stebbins (2014) identified three types of non-work obligation tasks, i.e., unpaid labor, unpleasant tasks and self-care. Unpaid labor activities are activities people do themselves even though services exist that could do it for them, e.g., mowing the lawn, shoveling the driveway, tax return, etc. Unpleasant tasks are required activities in which no services exist, e.g., errands, parents driving children to sports, walking the dog, etc. It is interesting to note that some additional activities such as serious leisure volunteering can be associated with no sense of escape to the participant. This draws some attention in this study, as it is possible for serious leisure to be associated with disagreeable obligation. Lastly, self-care activities are those that maintain the physical or psychological state of the individual, e.g., getting a haircut, physical examinations (Elkington & Stebbins, 2014).

The abovementioned description of the serious leisure theoretical framework provides an insight as to why it was selected for this study. Elkington and Stebbins (2014) associated the

pursuit of sport as a serious leisure activity to which the individual is strongly bound. Serious leisure differentiates from other forms of leisure activities such as casual leisure. Another interesting aspect of the serious leisure framework is the association of serious leisure activities with different forms of obligations. This is important for this study as amateur Junior hockey players typically follow a very structured training and playing schedule that is followed throughout the entire season. Thus, for the reasons of serious leisure being associated with pursuing sports such as hockey, and obligation being a component of pursuing serious leisure, this framework will be retained throughout this study.

Chapter III – Methods

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between leisure lifestyle and casual leisure on athletic identity, performance and perception of hockey in amateur Junior hockey players who have dropped out. For this study, a qualitative phenomenological approach was chosen since it examines the study's topic based on the participants' perceptions and perspective. The topic under investigation has yet to be examined empirically as well, which justifies the use of a qualitative approach. Also, phenomenology was well suited for the exploratory nature and the use of the constructivist paradigm where meaning is constructed, developed, and transmitted through human engagement within a specified context (Crotty, 1998). Phenomenology is defined as "a person's perception of the meaning of an event, as opposed to the event as it exists external to that person" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005, p. 139). Phenomenology is appropriate for use when trying to understand several individuals' common experiences with a phenomenon (Creswell, 2007).

Sample Population

Context of study. The context of which participants were analyzed was amateur Junior club hockey in Canada. In Canada, there are two main levels of hockey, namely Minor and Junior hockey. Minor hockey is described as hockey leagues organized on the basis of age groups, operating below Junior age level (i.e., 17 years and younger). Different regions of the country have different leagues and many provinces will organize regional, provincial, and national tournaments. Moreover, Junior hockey leagues have players between 16-22 years of age. Junior hockey has different leagues starting with Major Junior hockey e.g., Ontario Hockey League (OHL), Quebec Major Junior Hockey League (QMJHL) Western Hockey League (WHL), and university and college teams, as well as various local Junior hockey teams and leagues e.g., Junior 'A', 'B' and 'C' leagues (Hockey Canada, 2013).

Purposeful sampling. According to Creswell (2007), data collection from a phenomenological approach usually consists of in-depth interviews with sample sizes ranging from five to 25 individuals. For this study, 15 participants took part in single semi-structured interviews. Participants were chosen to participate on a first come first serve basis. Participants also met the requirements outlined by Rubin and Rubin (2005) by being knowledgeable about the cultural area being studied, willing to discuss it, and represented different perspectives and points of view.

Purposeful sampling is the most important aspect to consider in qualitative research sampling (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Proper sampling procedures for selecting participants were used to ensure an in-depth investigation of the research questions (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This strategy involved selecting participants who had a first hand experience with the studied phenomenon. These participants are described as “people who are uniquely able to be informative because they are an expert in an area” (Weiss, 1994, p. 17). Thus, purposeful sampling was used to select specific individuals in order to obtain important information that cannot be accessed using other sampling choices (Maxwell, 1996). This is why a specific inclusion criterion was developed in order to recruit the most knowledgeable participants who have had a first hand experience with the study’s topic.

Inclusion criteria. This study had a specific inclusion criterion based on the level of participation and the demands associated with Junior level hockey in Canada. Participants had: 1) played ice hockey for over ten years, 2) pursued ice hockey as their primary sport, 3) played at high levels of competition (i.e., Junior), 4) dropped out before reaching elite levels of play (e.g., professional), and 5) no longer participate in any form of competitive hockey (e.g., Junior or professional).

An additional inclusion criterion was used based on the Canadian LTAD model that

represents the transition from junior to senior level sport (or Minor to Junior hockey), the most sensitive transition for athletes. Thus, 6) participants were at one point in year-round, high intensity, individual event and position-specific training, 7) performed their skills under a variety of competitive conditions during training, 8) placed special emphasis on optimum preparation by modeling high-level competition in training, 9) continued to refine individual fitness programs, recovery programs, psychological preparation, and technical development, 10) emphasized individual preparation addressed to each athlete's individual strengths and weaknesses, and 11) strived to deliver consistent high performance results in both training and competition (Canadian Sport for Life, Train-to-Compete stage, 2014).

Description of participants. To obtain accurate and relevant information on the studied topic it was important to select individuals who were deeply invested in hockey for a large portion of their life. Therefore, Junior level hockey players as a sample population were selected for this study, as they were pursuing a valued goal over an extended period of time in a highly competitive environment.

Participants consisted of fourteen males and one female between 22 and 44 years of age. They had all reached different levels of Junior hockey. Out of the 15 participants, ten played tier two Junior hockey, i.e., seven in Junior A and three in Junior B, and five played tier one Major Junior hockey, i.e., two in Major Junior leagues and two at the university/college level.

Construction of Interview Guide

A semi-structured interview guide was developed for this study. This approach allowed the researcher to explore different themes and adapt the interview guide to focus on specific themes over others. The interview guide was also interactive and focused on smaller specific themes, which led to gathering precise information from participants until the point of data

saturation (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The semi-structured approach meant that the interview guide and its questions continuously evolved, instead of being fixed in advance (Creswell, 1994).

Three types of questions were asked during interviews: main questions, probe questions, and follow up questions. Main questions helped with building a framework on certain topics and link them with others. Probe questions helped with getting more detailed descriptions, describing specific examples of an event, encourage interviewees to finish a train of thought, and demonstrate to the interviewee that the researcher is paying attention. Lastly, follow up questions were used to get in-depth descriptions on emerging themes during the interview. This way the participants were able to elaborate on certain topics being discussed (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

The interview guide (Appendix A) was created by the researcher and was based on Gould, Moore, McGuire, and Stebbins' (2008) Serious Leisure Inventory and Measure (SLIM). The SLIM is used to measure the level of involvement in serious leisure for the participants and focuses on the different aspects of serious leisure. For this study's interview guide, several questions were used as probes and some were transformed into main qualitative questions. For example, the SLIM uses questions such as "I find enjoyment in...", "I feel invigorated after participating in..." to measure recreation and self-gratification benefits from serious leisure participation. For this study's interview guide these questions were combined into the question "How important was playing competitive hockey to you?" with probes focusing on the benefits and different characteristics of serious leisure pursuers if certain answers were not obtained with the main question. For questions in the SLIM such as "Being involved in... has added richness to my life", "... allows me to express who I am" and "...has provided me with a profound sense of satisfaction", they were transformed into one main question of "What were some of the benefits of participating in hockey". Another example is the SLIM's identity section, which contains questions such as "Others that know me know that ... is a part of who I am" and "Others

recognize that I identify with". In this study's interview guide, these questions were transformed into "How did you identify yourself when playing competitive hockey?" and "How did others recognize and identify you as?" with probe questions such as "why do you think this was the case" added to encourage further discussion. The researcher created the sections for casual leisure and leisure lifestyle, as no prior questionnaires or interview guides covered these topics.

The final interview guide in Appendix A was adapted and reviewed several times after completing ten pilot interviews with participants in various sports before proceeding to participant recruitment for this study. Different sports were explored during the pilot interviews to assure validity and credibility to the interview guide. During the pilot interviews, questions were continuously added and removed to assure the validity and reliability of the interview guide, and to assure the collection of quality information for the fifteen interviews of the actual study. This was particularly for the leisure lifestyle and casual leisure sections. The researcher had to modify these sections several times as it became difficult for participants to focus only on leisure activities in their free time rather than obligatory activities they did such as study and work.

Further steps were also taken to ensure the proper flow of the interview. According to Rubin and Rubin (2005), there are seven stages to develop a good interview. These stages were used during the 15 interviews for this study. Rubin and Rubin (2005) stated that it is possible for some stages to be combined or not be present at times during interviews. The first stage is to create a natural environment where the interviewer starts off by expressing an interest in the participant's life and discusses general daily topics to gain trust with the participant. The second stage is to encourage conversational competence where the interviewer asks non-threatening questions related to the research topic, which can be easily answered by the participant. The third stage is showing understanding where the interviewer may ask follow up questions and demonstrate empathy towards the participants. The fourth stage is getting facts and basic

descriptions where the interviewer let the participants discuss a topic at large. Focus on specific themes will come later on. The fifth stage is asking difficult questions where the interviewee will ask questions that may be more difficult for the participant to answer. These questions are only asked if necessary and the researcher must withdraw from these questions if discomfort is overwhelming. The sixth stage is toning down the emotional level where the participant has the chance to ask the researcher any questions. The seventh and final stage is closing while maintaining contact where casual conversation is resumed and the researcher may ask participants to provide final information indirectly.

Distribution

Before data collection, ethics approval from the University of Ottawa's Office of Research Ethics and Integrity for Health Sciences was obtained (Appendix B). Several steps were taken from the point of participant recruitment to the interview itself. First, since the researcher was a past member of the Junior hockey community he had access to coaches at Junior level. Thus, the researcher contacted past coaches by telephone and asked if it was possible to forward the recruitment email for the study (Appendix C) to potential participants fitting the inclusion criteria of the study, which was given to him beforehand. From there, the researcher waited for email responses from participants who expressed an interest in participating in the study. Afterwards, interviews were scheduled at a time and location of the participants' convenience through back and forth emails.

Once interviews were scheduled, the researcher and the participant finally met. Three interviews were conducted in a graduate office at the University of Ottawa in Montpetit Hall while twelve interviews were conducted in the participants' homes. These interview locations were selected based on participants' availability. Upon meeting at either location, participants were presented with the study's consent form (Appendix D) to read over and clarify the purpose,

participation, benefits, etc. of the study. Participants then signed the consent form. The researcher then asked if the participants had any questions about the interview process. If participants had no further questions, the researcher reminded them that all information would remain anonymous and they had the right to withdraw from the study at any point and all their information would be securely destroyed. When the participant was satisfied, the interview began. All interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder and an iPod touch.

Once interviews were completed, the researcher explained that they would be assigned a pseudonym to preserve anonymity and so they could identify themselves during the member checking process. Participants were also asked to provide a password of their choice, since transcripts would be sent to them via email in a password-protected document for them to unlock and review its accuracy. After participants reviewed their transcripts, they responded to the email and the researcher began the steps for analysis. Finally, participants were asked to forward the recruitment email they had initially received to potential participants they thought had a similar experience as them in hockey, and the process began anew. Before proceeding with analysis, all interviews were transcribed verbatim. Interviews lasted between 40 and 75 minutes.

Data Analysis

Each transcript contained different layers of interpretation constructed by the researcher. Meaning behind the information came from the identification of dominant themes discussed between the researcher and the participant, which lead to a thematic analysis with large portions of the data remaining intact (Grbich, 2013). According to Grbich (2013), there are different steps to be taken before starting an in-depth thematic analysis. These steps include bracketing out your own experiences, entering a dialogue with individual participants (i.e., interviews), reflecting on what you have gained through reading and re-reading and through journaling your thoughts including any questions and responses, identifying the major themes from narratives/texts using

processes of preliminary data and/or thematic analysis, and questioning the data and any emerging assumptions so that new descriptions and new conceptualizations are more likely to arise (p. 96).

After completing these initial steps, the researcher proceeded to data analysis using Grbich's (2013) steps for thematic analysis. These steps consisted of: 1) becoming familiar with the completed database through moving backwards and forwards across it, reading and re-reading and comparing different aspects until the researcher is sure of what it contains, 2) keeping in mind the purpose of the research, the research questions which have provided the prime focus of the study, any relevant theoretical frameworks previously identified in the reviewed literature, go through transcribed databases and block/underline/color key segments and write descriptive comments beside them. And, let the database speak and reveal ideas and ideologies as well as behavior patterns, actions and events, 3) match and group the identified segments with relevant like segments across the database, 4) within the groupings, attach overarching labels and identify sub-groups, and 5) conceptualize the groupings and link them with literature and theory when starting to display and write up the data (p. 261). Conceptualizing the groupings of themes will be deductive and come from Elkington and Stebbins (2014) serious leisure theoretical framework. All transcripts were analyzed using Nvivo software, which was used to organize groups, themes and quotes.

Chapter IV- Results

Through Grbich's (2013) steps for thematic analysis, three main categories were identified each containing their own set of sub-groups, or themes. The first category is the build-up. This category of themes explains the participants' journey in hockey and their striving and pursuit towards playing professional level hockey some day. This category was created by identifying six themes: 1) serious leisure characteristics, 2) amateurism, 3) casual leisure participation, 4) benefits of casual leisure participation, 5) nurtured identity through casual leisure participation, and 6) performance enhancement through casual leisure participation.

The second category is the barriers. This category of themes explains the difficulties participants encountered during their hockey career, particularly when playing Junior level hockey. This category was created by identifying six themes: 1) transitions and dropout 2) over-identification to hockey, 3) less than optimal leisure lifestyle, 4) negative perception of hockey, 5) negative impact on identification, and 6) negative impact on performance.

The third category is the reconciliation. This category of themes explains the participants' reconciliation and involvement with hockey after dropping out of their pursuit to play professional level hockey. This category was created by identifying three themes: 1) current involvement in hockey and optimal leisure lifestyle, 2) multi-dimensional identity, and 3) positive perception of hockey. A visual representation of the results' three categories and 15 themes are presented in figure 1 just below to guide the reader through the results section. The categories and themes and their supporting quotes are presented after the two figures.

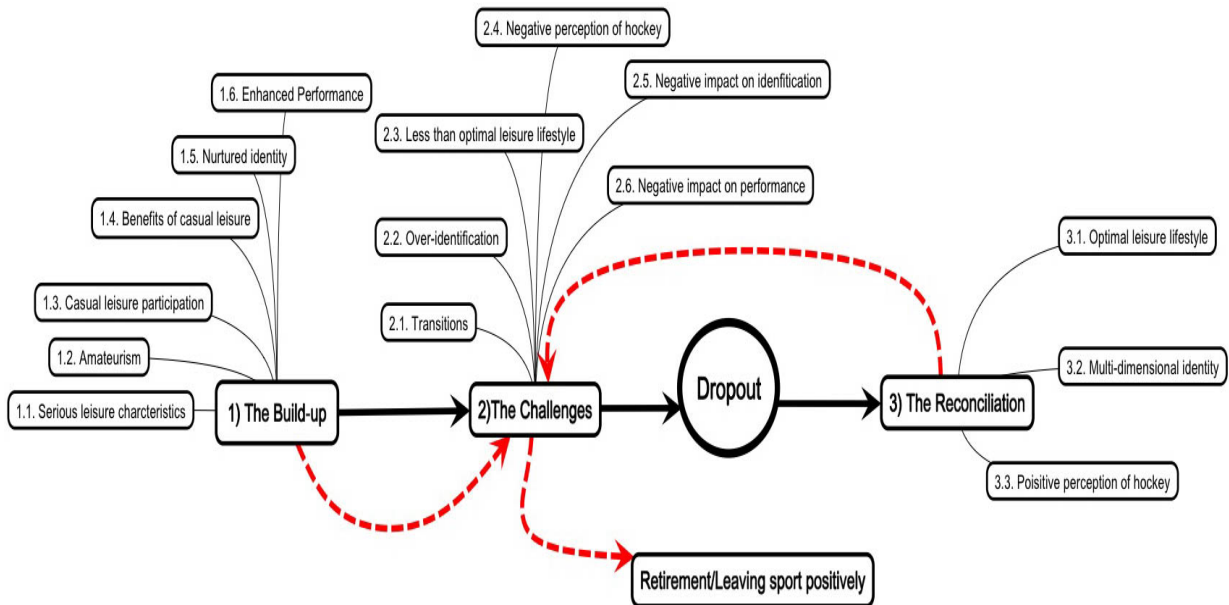


Figure 1: Typical progression of amateur Junior hockey players career with solution to avoid dropout and encourage retirement.

Figure 1 is a first and look at the progression of participants' amateur hockey career based on the results' trends. Dropout is the central topic of the study and contains two categories of themes before and one category of themes after. The build-up represents the initial periods in the amateur hockey players' career and striving into more competitive levels of play prior to reaching Junior level hockey. The theoretical framework is presented and demonstrates the relationship between amateur hockey players and hockey. It also includes the benefits of casual leisure participation. The barriers represents the struggles amateur hockey players face when entering Junior level hockey and before officially dropping out of Junior hockey. Different barriers are presented based on the interest and topic of the study. In this part of the model the difficult transitions are pointed out, and over-identification to hockey, living a less than optimal leisure lifestyle, and the impact of participants' leisure lifestyle's impact on perception of hockey, identification and performance are presented as well. This ultimately had an impact on participant's prior to dropping out which is the central topic of the study. Dropout indicates that

the participant has officially withdrawn from Junior hockey and is no longer pursuing their goal in hockey. The reconciliation represents the participants' eventual return to playing hockey in non-competitive recreational leagues in their post-dropout life. Components that are included in this category are the evolvment of the participants' identity from uni-dimensional to multidimensional, living an optimal leisure lifestyle and having a positive perception of hockey post-dropout.

The dotted arrow going from the build-up and the reconciliation category in Figure 1 going to the barriers category is what this study has strived to achieve and highlights the relationship between the three categories. That is, being able to incorporate both serious leisure and casual leisure to have participants live an optimal leisure lifestyle. The relationship between the build-up, the barriers and the reconciliation category may potentially be helpful in reducing the number of those leaving sport in a negative way, i.e., dropout, and help those who still decide to withdraw from competitive hockey in a positive manner, which is related more closely to the retirement. However, this relationship is a potential trend that is pointed out based on the results presented below.

Categories, Themes and Quotes

1) The Build-Up

The first category of themes is called the build-up. This section helps us understand the relationship between the participants and hockey. This category examines the different characteristics of someone who is involved in competitive sport based on the serious leisure theoretical framework. We will also look at how competitive hockey players involved in a serious leisure activity are related to professional athletes by looking at the characteristics of amateurs. It also explores casual leisure as well. For this category, themes were developed using Elkington and Stebbins' (2014) characteristics describing serious leisure enthusiasts.

Theme 1.1. Serious Leisure Characteristics

Identification. While describing their background and involvement in hockey, participants described their experiences, which resembled the characteristics of serious leisure. Participants of this study demonstrated that they would identify themselves primarily by their athletic identity to hockey when playing Minor hockey as well as Junior hockey. When asked about how they identified themselves, as well as how others identified them primarily during that time period fourteen participants quickly responded with pride: “I would say I would identify myself for most as a hockey player. That’s the thing you would say to most people”, “I would definitely call myself a hockey player. I’d tell people before anything else before saying I’m in university “hey I play hockey” for sure number one”, “if I were talking to [in general I] I would want them to see me as a hockey player for sure. [...] I was proud of where I played and what we were doing as a team”, “A hockey player”, “it was just a hockey player”, “For sure a hockey player. [...] I was really passionate about it”, “I felt like a hockey player”, “Definitely a hockey player. A serious hockey player”, and “definitely even just shortly before those last couple years or last year anyways would be hockey player”.

Leisure career. Another significant aspect of participant’s description of their involvement in hockey was that they were involved in a career. They began by explaining the different transitions, contingencies and stages of development they went through in Minor as well as in Junior hockey, thus, describing their involvement in a leisure career. The following two quotes best describe the stages of development and the contingencies amateur hockey players progress through in their serious leisure career in hockey:

[...] like anybody in Canada everybody starts off. [...] Played [different levels of Minor hockey]. I also [played] during the summer. Teams would vary. [Summer hockey is] not a set group of guys or a certain district they put up a team so it would vary from year to year. [...] [I played on] different teams. So during winter

I'd play [the highest level of Minor hockey] that year. [...] after my 16 year old year I played [the highest level of Minor hockey]. (David)

Started playing when I was four or five. [...] from there it kind of slowly [I] started getting more and more into it. [...] [I] started playing competitive. And after that I moved a little bit higher. I started playing [the highest level of Minor hockey]. That was the biggest year, I got drafted to the OHL. And after that I kind of went a little bit around here and there and played some Junior B [...] Played some Junior A [...] As you go forward it becomes more and more of a career [...] (Martin)

Personal effort. Participants also explained that they would put a lot of focus and effort when pursuing their career in Junior hockey. They would engage in training sessions and whatever was necessary in order to progress in Junior hockey. Thus, they would put a lot of personal effort into their serious leisure in an attempt to gain skills and strength, as these quotes explain: “I maintained my shape”, “I just always thought of making it in hockey and the way to do that was to play competitive hockey and try and go as high as you can. Play as much as you can.”, “I was putting all my efforts into playing hockey, into being a hockey player [...] I trained the whole summer”, “Go to the gym. Stay fit for hockey so that’s kind of related [...] you’re trying to stay fit”, “Pretty much practice every day”, “I continued to push in my first year in Junior”, “you spent the whole summer just thinking about when are you going to start playing hockey again. Playing summer hockey and getting in shape”, “Fitness was obviously a key component [...] so I'd go to the gym. That I spent a lot of time at the gym training”, and “when you're trying to reach the top you got to definitely narrow it down to what is essential. You would allocate your time to training and sleep. All the stuff you need to become a better athlete”.

Durable benefits. Participants described some of the long-term benefits from participating in hockey throughout their life. Through hockey, participants explained how they gained and transferred qualities achieved in hockey into everyday life such as social prestige, confidence, discipline, respect, working with others, leadership, communication, striving towards

a goal, making connections, helping out in the community and maintaining their health. Therefore, hockey provided them with many durable benefits as described: “understanding how other people approach different situation.”, “respect, learning how to lose, how to win, working hard, but also seeing [...] the result of hard work. And accumulation of all kinds of emotions and obviously friends right.”, “you obviously learnt how to get yourself in shape”, “I made a lot of contacts.”, and “I mean every day we played hockey or we did something. Either we were training or we were in the community helping out”. The following two quotes also help illustrate the benefits of participating in hockey and the transferability of these benefits into everyday life:

For my whole career I think first of all hockey is a team sport so any [person] will learn when playing a team sport. You’ll make new friends, you’ll learn skills like leadership, confidence [...] Discipline also [...] You’ll also make more contacts for your future. (Paul)

[...] pretty much all my friends that I have or somewhere along the lines I played hockey with them. Or met them through other hockey players. It kept me in shape. So many intangibles that you can use like dedication, discipline, team work that are relatable in the real world. (Nicholas)

Unique ethos. Furthermore, participants described their subgroups and cultures developed within the world of hockey while they were involved in competitive hockey. This resembled the characteristic of unique ethos in serious leisure, as participants developed brotherhoods with their team mates and started acting a certain way with them, and gained certain benefits by being a Junior hockey player, as the following quotes state: “when I was off the ice I hung out with a lot of the guys and we might not have talked hockey. [...] You went out as a team you were the guys. And the city knew you”, “In college you were going to a new school and to college as someone who knew so it helped you make a lot of friends. You also gained the brotherhood with other hockey players on your team.”, “depending on the team [...] everyone was really close so your free time was kind of spent with the team. It was a big family there.”,

and “I don't know hockey players are known for kind of being [funny people] [...] A lot of my friends become whoever's on my team.”.

Perseverance. Lastly, participants explained their need to progress through various challenges and difficulties they faced whether it was trying to make teams, find teams to play for, and injuries. Therefore, participants demonstrated their need to persevere in their competitive hockey career at certain times of difficulty and to keep progressing in hockey. The following two quotes best describe participants' need to persevere occasionally in difficult situations:

[...] when you grow up from the age of five that's all you did was play hockey and it was probably the main thing that I focused on was trying to find ways to play hockey at higher levels. I travelled around to play quite a bit like I said invitational tournaments. Those types of things. So every opportunity to play I jumped on those. [...] that was my driving force. (Ethan)

I didn't get drafted by any team. I was kind of looking for another route since that one wasn't working so I'd gone to some hockey camps over the summer and some showcases. And I was told about the prep school route and that's why I was going to some of these showcases. I ended up getting looked at by a prep school [...] and a few other ones [...] so I decided to play club hockey with them. (Michael)

Theme 1.2. Amateurism

Serving publics. Focusing on their experiences in Junior hockey, certain participants displayed some of the qualities of amateurs. The first was that they often served publics in different circumstances whether it was playing for the people in attendance or being recognized and meeting fans of their team in the community. This was described by participants as “every single game we had about 1500 people in the crowd”, “You were still met with fans at the end of the day”, and “the fact that there were other people watching you. So whether it was scouts or other high level coaches or things like that”. The following two quotes also describe the experience of playing Junior level hockey and the resemblance of the stage has with professional hockey:

[...] we had a good set up in Junior B [meaning] we have the O' Canada and we had warm up and we had a pretty legit hockey. So definitely that whole aspect among other things were going on we felt like real hockey players. We were playing in a small town. People knew who you were. (John)

The school really prided itself on its hockey players so you know it made you kind of popular and girls liked you and came to watch. [...] a lot of the school is watching and you want to impress everybody. People like to see big hits and you didn't want to get hurt out there playing big guys. (Michael)

Training with professionals. The second quality of amateurism certain participants mentioned was that they would occasionally have professional trainers hired for them or their team to train with at the level of Junior hockey. Thus, they were closely related to professionals in the field off the ice, as described in this quote “When training off ice our trainer was good he was NHL level”. The following two quotes explain their relationship and experiences training with professionals off the ice as well at the Junior level:

I went to a goalie camp where there's goalies from the [Russian professional league] and NHL [...] And a thing that they would tell us time again [...] they would keep repeating to me is you have to be a pro. You have to become a pro. [...] what I mean by becoming a pro was the mindset that you had to put everything into one basket and to just focus on hockey. To become a pro was they'd tell you they wake up in the morning they do their stretch they go on the ice they work. They do the off ice they watch video they you know take notes. They are active in their development even how to answer media. (David)

I had [...] supplied personal trainers. [I had] workout programs for the summer, which you had to check in every week [...] You had to fill in all the things you did and fax it to the personal trainer to show that you followed. And then they'd have testing twice a year and they'd find out there if you lied on your sheets that you were handing in [...] (Adam)

Theme 1.3. Casual Leisure Participation

Participants described having minimal time for casual leisure activities outside of hockey on many occasions when playing Junior hockey. However, they also stated that they were still occasionally participating in casual leisure activities during some of their free time. It's important to note that for this section some activities are found within different groups, as they were

categorized based on the way participants described their feelings and perceptions in that moment.

Passive entertainment and relaxation. All 15 participants stated that they took part in passive entertainment and relaxation activities, which were very similar in nature, whether it was playing video games with people, taking photos, going shopping, watching television, learning about personal interests, listening to music, casual alcohol consumption, reading, playing video games, painting and collecting memorabilia: “learning about the human body”, “Played video games once in a while”, “I just kind of started taking photos. [...] whenever I had a free moment I'd take some photos and post them and then read about photography.”, “I liked to take a lot of pictures and then classify them in folders”, “I liked some of the memorabilia stuff actually. I collected some hockey cards. I had posters I used to collect as well”, “Sometimes you just got a ride or took the bus there and there were go-karts and stuff. If I got the chance I would just go shopping or I'd even go walk downtown”, “Mostly art I guess. I'm an artistic guy so I'd be drawing and painting. [...] Just draw whatever was on my mind”, “Usually watch games obviously hockey NHL games. Catch a movie. Hang out at someone's house. Just play video games”, “kick back and watch some TV quite honestly. [...] Read a book those types of things. I'd sit down and probably just watch some sports because that's what I still do today”, “just take a beer or two and that's about it. Go out with some of the boys. [...] It was pretty [relaxing] just to have a beer”, “most of the times I would like watch NHL games on my computer or on TV. [...] Catch up on some TV shows or what not. Just enjoy the time off I had I guess. Relaxing and doing stretching and stuff like that”, “Listening to music was usually a pretty big deal”, “relax play video games, read like I said. Go outside”, and “Video games [...] Watch TV, watch movies. [...] Music was good too. Just enjoyed music and kind of draw at the same time [...] While I was watching TV and relaxing or watching movies”.

Active participation and play. In addition, fourteen participants mentioned that they took part in activities that required more active participation and were in a more playful form in their free time. These activities ranged from casual to extreme sports, going clubbing and partying with friends, and taking part in party games (i.e. card games, casino) with friends or teammates, as these quotes describe: “we had outings I mean we were close to the age of going clubbing or experiencing still going out”, “We would go to the casino and play black jack, poker in the casino poker room, I even learned to play Pai Gow.”, “I went to parties [...] a lot of people would go out every Friday”, “You know card games”, “I was a pretty big partier with the team or without”, “water skiing and some other water sports”, “we went to house parties or frat parties [...] house parties and all those college things that you do with those people”, “we went to the casino”, “go out to bars”, “you take more time to go out with your friends [...] mostly partying at that age of 19 where you want to go out and party”, and “If we didn't have a game the next day we'd go out and party and be on top of the world. [...] go out for a few drinks and have a good time”.

Furthermore, participants stated that they dabbled and played various sports casually in their free time during days off from hockey. They participated in sports in a more casual context, as stated: “I like to play [basketball] on my own out in my driveway. [...] I played a whole bunch of other sports”, “I say we played softball, tennis, basketball, volleyball”, “I like playing squash, tennis, soccer, baseball, hockey, snowboard, I did all those kind of things. So I dabbled in a lot of different things”, and “sports here and there like I started skiing. [...] Or you know like play pool, bowling”.

Social conversation. Eleven participants said that they took part in social activities with either family members or with friends, whether it was at school or with other members on their team. On some occasions there were either family get-togethers or friend get-togethers: “outside

the rink we would often go out [...] and have drinks and pizza”, “sitting at somebody’s house and carrying out a conversation and watching whether it be the NHL playoffs or some other sport that’s going on”, and “I always had close friends growing up again in my first year university I made another lifelong friend. So two lifelong friends. And we started hanging out more”. The following quotes also describe some of the social activities with family members when playing Junior hockey:

I've had girlfriends in that career [...] family wise well we had big family here [...] not just my family per se but in my mom’s side and dad’s side so we have a lot of parties. [...] There’s always a lot of birthdays and what not [...] (Charles)

[...] with my family we've always been close. I have a brother [...] We always had a great relationship [...] I lived with my brother and he's 2 years older than I am. So we always just hung out together. (Martin)

Our family is pretty close so we'd get together for Sunday dinners, birthdays and stuff usually my grandparent’s birthdays. Everybody all the family gets together for it. My parents mostly we had a tight family. It wasn't like it’s [only] birthday we'd [celebrate. We also] have dinners [...] (Ryan)

Sensory stimulation. Three participants engaged in sensory stimulation casual leisure activities, as they would often go sightseeing either on small camping and hiking trips, going to see the occasional concert, and visit local festivals held in the community: “we would go on a camping trip just to die it down and hang out in small campground [...] we'd go on trips just outside the city or whatever. Take in a concert those types of things”, “hiking if we’re on a bit of a more camping trip”, “sometimes they had festivals. Like Italian festivals or those kinds of things just go visit and see. Walk around and find out new things”.

Theme 1.4. Benefits of Casual Leisure Participation

The occasional participation in casual leisure activities offered many benefits to participants during their Junior hockey career. Again, certain casual leisure activities are found

within two different categories of benefits, as they were categorized based on the participants' description of their experience in the activity.

Escapism. The first benefit, which nine participants identified after participating in casual leisure activities was escapism. Casual leisure activities helped them think of something other than hockey and shifted their focus away from some of the stress associated with Junior hockey: "I think again it's just kind of getting away from whatever is on your plate or on your mind", "You want to do something different and get your mind off what you've been doing. [...] Get your mind off things and think about something different", "it shifted and took me away from thinking about the future and what I had to do, that kind of stuff. I just kind of tried to enjoy my time there", "We could say that it was to escape and think of something else", and "it was definitely of distraction. [...] definitely to take your mind off hockey and do something different". These quotes also describe the feeling of escapism from participating in casual leisure activities:

[...] with Xbox I mean in a way I didn't play Xbox like I wasn't screaming at the remote or the TV but I had some games just playing NHL and just relaxing not thinking about stress not thinking about nothing. So it's a good escape [...]
(Charles)

[...] trying to just get away from hockey itself. Trying to have that other I don't want to call it sanity but that other side. Obviously I was there just to play hockey. That was my main goal but I think doing other stuff also reminded me that I was still only 18 years old and I was still just a kid trying to find other stuff to do.
(Martin)

[...] it could be an escape [...] where your minds just blank. You're just drawing whatever you're drawing it'd be an escape at that point. [...] I can just think clearly without anybody there. So that's where I made most of my decisions on the couch or just drawing. (Ryan)

To get away. It was nice to kind of not think about hockey every now and then. Because its usually on your mind most of the time. It's definitely to get away and a bit of relief to not have to worry about it sometimes. (Adam)

Regeneration. The second benefit mentioned by participants was regeneration and recreation. Six participants said these forms of activities allowed them to relax and rest, and relieve some of the stress associated with the demanding Junior hockey schedule: “You relax with your friends. [...] It’s fun and you get to relax”, “I’d take it mellow. It was a good day of rest”, “it becomes the new way to tone it down [...] time to just relax it just puts less stress on the mind”, “Recharge and sleep in [...] it’s healthy to relax a little bit because you know you can’t just be on the go all the time. You need to relax your body and stretch”, and “I draw just to relax”. Further, a participant described the importance of having time to rest, as he knew his the cycle of the Junior hockey schedule:

[...] if I’m just really tired then I want to kick back and sort of let off some stress and just relax and take some down time because I know the next day it’s going to be starting all over again [...] if I was playing bad then it was to sort of put me back into a like a calm relaxed mood [...] (Daniel)

Maintaining well-being. The third benefit from participating in causal leisure activities is that it helped maintain their well-being. Six participants described how casual leisure activities helped ease and rest their minds, as well as put them in a positive state of mind: “Each had a different role but absolutely there’s a lot of stress there’s a lot of pressure for sure. Not only in hockey, but in other activities so there’s definitely those type of activities kind of [relieve some stress]”, “it kept you grounded for sure. You know I find you know if you focus too much on one thing it’s hard to understand what is transpired”, “it relaxes you and also you know gives you a chance your mind a chance to rest about hockey. And think about other things too. To you know relax but explore I guess other interests”, “just to have time for myself. Collect my thoughts”, and “Just kind of keep your mind at ease. Not exactly stressing or going to do anything much”. For one participant, he realized that these activities were a good way to remember that there are other aspects in life instead of just hockey, as described:

[...] you need to take the time to get your state of mind at the right place. It definitely helps you stay grounded. I mean when you immerse yourself in training and a singular goal, which is climbing to higher caliber hockey you got to remember there's other things in life. Which I didn't quite get at first. But there's definitely more enjoyment out of life than just being a good hockey player and that's what those things helped me realize. (Matthew)

Self-restoration. The fourth benefit was self-restoration, as described by six participants.

Participants described how participating in certain casual leisure activities re-established some enjoyment and fun in their life during their Junior hockey career: "You have to have a certain level of fun in there. [...] you have to have fun outside the game too", "It was to really just have fun", "It was to have fun", and "it was more related to try to have fun outside of hockey because I wasn't having fun anymore. So I was trying to enjoy myself and to actually just stuff that I enjoyed". Two participants also stated that when they were doing well in hockey that they would try to keep the feeling of fun going by participating in casual leisure activities with friends:

[...] if you are doing well in hockey there's a lot of ups so you can go do things like go to the movies and hang out with your friends and go [have a night out] and that kind of stuff." (Nicholas).

[...] if I'm on a high I played a really good game then maybe I'll go out and continue that high or something like that [...] If I was playing great then I would enjoy it and keep it going and go hang out with friends and enjoy my self with them. (Daniel)

Maintaining interpersonal relationships. The fifth benefit of casual leisure participation as described by five participants was that it helped with the development and maintenance of interpersonal relationships. Casual leisure activities in groups offered the opportunity to make connections with new people in different situations or environments. Other times, participants had the opportunity to maintain existing relationships with family or friends, as stated: "social time like I said I'm outgoing and I needed that time to be in a social environment and that was where my family and friends fit in for sure", "we get to know more people so any time you had an opportunity to meet people [...] It's an opportunity to meet new people and try new things",

and “gaining some pretty decent friends. You know making some decent memories it was a good time”. Two of the participants described their social experiences during difficult moments and situations when playing Junior hockey:

[...] keeping those bridges alive with friends and girlfriends and just not shutting everyone out for the sole purpose of being a better hockey player definitely benefits me today. [...] it's always healthy to see other people. Having good friends and a good social life is very important. Even if you don't realize it right away when you don't have that contact with friends [afterwards] [...] (Matthew)

I probably hung out with people a bit more when I was happy. When I was down like I said before you don't really want to be around people so [I] definitely hung out with people more as I got older and had more fun. (Nicholas)

Self-protection. The sixth benefit in which five participants described was how casual leisure activities helped with self-protection during difficult moments when playing Junior hockey mostly after losses. Six participants described this experience in the following quotes:

[...] you don't want to talk to people because you're just kind of feeling like a loser. So I don't know you just kind of want to get that loss out of your system and then see people the next day.” (Nicholas)

[...] when you're with your friends you talk about it. You cheer yourselves up. You go out for outings. You think about other things. And that's what we did when we lost a game we just made a big group together we talked we just talked about what happened. And what's next or what not. But the social aspect with the friends with the girlfriend it made you take your mind off of it and maybe take a step back and realize its not a big deal. (Charles)

I think it helped me cope [...] I had to find a new way to feel comfortable in my skin and to be able to make friends. [...] it helped me to deal with my social anxiety and that kind of thing. (Michael)

It gave me pleasure in some times, moments of I don't know thinking of why am I here? Why am I doing this? Why am I playing hockey? So it helped in that sense for sure. (Martin)

At least when you did those things it made you change your ideas. Then at least you had control on what you were doing [...] when you're doing your activity it's you that gets to decide what you're going to do. (Francis)

I would just go eat with them and relax and try to talk about other things. But I mean mostly the game. Trying after a while you have that on the back of your

mind if you play that team again but you can improve. Try to move on. I think also talking to my sister after the games. I think my parents would put me at ease as well [...] (Amelia)

Growth-oriented change. The seventh benefit from participating in casual leisure activities was growth-oriented change. When participating in casual leisure activities, three participants would use this time to think about what they wanted to move onto in the future and what type of activities they would like to try after leaving Junior hockey. This is described in the following quotes by three of the participants:

[...] having friends around that you can [talk with] in certain situations was important. In my alone time just sitting and thinking about what do I want to do next. Do I want to pursue this or do I want to do that? Making some of those decisions and running that by somebody. (Ethan)

Take advantage of the alone time and probably at that point do some thinking because [...] you're going to the game or to the team and you're not enjoying it and you're wondering why because hockey's always been enjoyable so you think what am I doing now? (Ryan)

[...] reflecting to what am I going to do next type of thing you know. [...] the benefits were really more to try to deal with the fact that I was moving onto something else and to try to deal with the fact that I wasn't enjoying myself [...] it's like for example travelling. I never travelled but I wanted to travel. (David)

Creativity and discovery. Lastly, the eighth benefit participants spoke about was creativity and discovery. Two participants mentioned how participating in their casual leisure activities gave them the opportunity to discover new things and work some of their creativity into the activity they were doing, as described:

[...] it's just a way to relax and just think about nothing right. Your just free just playing guitar it's all I don't need charts to play so I just do whatever I want with the guitar think of a song and I try to figure it out. And it's really a relief and your just calm. [...] It's a way to let go and let your creativity flow [...] (Charles)

[...] taking photos just kind of helped me to take my mind off of the fact that I was away from home and left my girlfriend behind, and left my family behind and just went off to play hockey. So it gave me something else to think about and put my mind to and put my creative force to work. (Martin)

Theme 1.5. Nurtured Identity Through Casual Leisure Participation

After describing their experiences of participating in different casual leisure activities, participants were asked to describe how being able to participate in those types of activities while still playing Junior hockey impacted their identity as a hockey player. Eleven participants responded saying that being able to take part in casual leisure activities occasionally had a positive impact and strengthened their identity to hockey: “Taking a break from hockey to participate in other activities no doubt had an impact on my identity as a hockey player”, “a healthy and effective cycle for my hockey identity”, “it strengthened my hockey identity”, “I think it helped me”, “made it better, yes, strengthened”, “Definitely”, “I think it was a good thing”, and “It did obviously”.

The following four quotes best describe how participants’ identification to hockey was nurtured when being able to participate in casual leisure activities and having the contrast between hockey and other leisure activities:

Summer was really a break from everything. A chance to try other sports. Just to relax and either go fishing or what not but hockey what I liked about that was in the next winter when I came back I was that much more excited to play and start playing again [...] having the summers off definitely made me a more motivated and dynamic player when training-camp started. Because as much as I anticipated the summer season [...] I would by the end of the summer start to look forward to the return of hockey. (Charles)

Because I was coming from hockey and going to hang out with people and then I was thinking about how I played, about [my] game tomorrow so that’s what I’m thinking about. I got to get up early and go to bed and stuff like that so I think it probably made [my identity] stronger because the more I was away from it then the more I had to think about it. Like when I was at hockey you don’t have to think about it you’re just doing it. You’re just playing. You’re just working out. And then when I was away from it then everybody would ask you about it or how [hockey’s] going are you playing? You guys doing good? I’d be hanging out with guys from the team that also have mutual friends and we’d just be talking about [hockey]. I think it did have an effect but not a negative effect [rather] a positive effect on my hockey identity. (Daniel)

[...] it certainly helped kind of put you back to why you wanted to go. If you had taken a few weeks off or you taken part of the summer off then why you wanted to go back to some of the hockey. [...] if I did you know take some time to read or do a session on the drums and invite some friends or going biking and your camping and doing something else outside of it. At the same time when you got a passion you know you like to do those things to distract you a bit too. And get your mind off hockey [but] at the same time once you've done those things you cant help but think about you know the fun that you have getting back on the ice too. (Luke)

[...] when I played or tried for my most competitive then I lost that. It was more minded towards what do you want me to be and I'll become that. And so I was just you know becoming a pro. What do you want me to be and I'll do it? I'll do whatever it takes. So I lost that identification so those leisure activities I wasn't doing really. [...] the leisure activities was more the Junior B year and at the end of my Junior A. And that would help define myself but that's when I was actually defining myself versus taking on the hockey player competitive hockey player model and to be like "OK I'll be that". (David)

Theme 1.6. Performance Enhancement Through Casual Leisure Participation.

Benefits from casual leisure activities extended into performance at Junior level for all fifteen participants. They stated that one or different aspects of their performance was impacted positively when they had the opportunity to partake in casual leisure activities: "I'd say yes", "I think it would help performance", "That really got me in the zone", "my personal down time helped my individual performance", "Definitely", and "it would be affected positively".

Concentration/focus. There were different aspects of performance that were impacted after participating in casual leisure, the first being focus. Ten participants described how casual leisure activities helped them clear their minds and in turn allowed them to put their minds towards hockey. This increased their concentration and focus level before performing, as described in the following four quotes:

[...] I was more relaxed. When you're more relaxed you're able to concentrate because there are things outside of hockey that can impact your concentration. So if you have a healthy balance between your leisure activities and hockey and you're good with yourself you can relax and have fun. You'll think positively. You're not stressed. (Paul)

Just helped ease the mind. You know you don't want to think too much because you can certainly over think things I think. So just kicking back and understanding what was going on. Just taking it easy and not thinking about the game so much in that down time [...] your head was in the game. Your head was clear. [...] And more focused. (Ethan)

[...] your mind wasn't at work throughout the day so you can kind of put it towards hockey and focus it on the game. [...] I feel like its better if I'm not busy all day with other things. I can just put my focus to my skating, to my puck handling, my team at that point and kind of visualize my game. (Ryan)

[...] the best hockey I played was when I did activities that were not minded towards the game. [...] it's counterintuitive when you're playing hockey to say I'm going to do all this other stuff and then show up for the game because you're like I said in the beginning you're minded to be a pro and to wake up and do everything in your power to have a good game. Whereas for me personally I could've done all this other stuff that I enjoyed and shown up for the game then we'll have our game then we'll be serious. [...] It's contradictory to everything they tell you because it's like when were playing competitive [...] as crazy as it sounds if I woke up, read a little bit, went rock climbing, went to see somebody one of my friends. Haven't seen in a bit and then showed up to the rink and say "alright I'm ready for the game" probably would've been better. But if we would've told that to the coach they would've thought you were crazy and you're not focused. That's the thing that comes back a lot. You're not focused and they'd question if you're devoted to the game. (David)

Feeling energized. Another aspect of performance that was affected by casual leisure participation was their physical energy, as stated: "I was rested [...] It might just be all in your head if you just think "OK I didn't spend any energy today so I have so much to give tonight"". Eight participants stated that after taking part in certain relaxing activities helped them conserve their energy and transfer that energy into their performance, which also transferred into other physical aspects of their performance:

Playing NHL for example on the Xbox. You often see some crazy hits that make no sense. And I was actually often trying those hits. I've always been a fan of hitting my favorite player growing up was Scott Stevens. And so I had a blast trying to replicate either the hits or trying to get the crowd in the game or what not. (Charles)

It was mostly when I slept I was just more alert. Like I was more in the game. My legs were moving faster I felt stronger. Like I just felt I just over all felt better about my game. (Daniel)

Because you just got that nap in. You're less tired [...] Probably my stamina. Just relaxing. [...] right before the game and then if you know you get pumped up and you're good to go for the rest of the game. (Amelia)

Confidence. Another aspect of performance that was affected by was confidence. Five participants said that after participating in causal leisure, such as listening to music, watching movies and other relaxing activities, they felt rested, which in turn translated into their readiness and their confidence in their upcoming game: “if you felt good about yourself and some of your self confidence definitely you know and especially if you had some friends watching it was always that extra effort that seemed to come out”, and “you felt ready and that confidence was a key factor where you feel ready and you'd play. Whether it was a good game or not at that point you're rested and you tried your best”. Other quotes stated by participants describe similar experiences, as quoted:

It actually got me pumped up and I think it really gave me a confidence for some reason. It's just kind of like “hey I'm ready to go I'm going to play a good game today”. I felt like my problems sometime was a lack of energy. So I felt like I was lazy and I felt like that pump up affected and got me going. It really motivated me to actually work hard and try hard. (John)

You're thinking more about the good you can do then the bad you can do. You're thinking that you're going to be the hero rather than the guy who messes up. I think in that case it gives you more confidence. [...] I think it helped me to be more confident before starting the game or to get into the flow of the game. (Michael)

Lower stress level. The last aspect of performance that was affected was participants' level of stress during performance. Similar to relaxation, four participants stated that going into a game, they were less stressed and nervous, as the casual leisure activities they participated in relaxed them before their upcoming game, which translated into them being less nervous or stressed during a game:

I was a lot more relaxed. [...] I was just playing in the moment. [...] I played more relaxed. I was probably more relaxed [...] When I say relaxed just a lot

looser in my body because I'm not all tense and thinking about so much that you crisp up and you're nervous and when you're nervous as a goalie your movements are usually too fast or you're reacting too much to the plays. Or you're thinking too much. You're acting too slow. So when you're just in the moment it's a lot more on point and you're body is not all [tensed] up. (David)

You try and loosen them up and you can tell some games they were nervous especially playoff games. They didn't really have any experience and we'd just joke and say "hey look [my friend] were just here to have fun and play hockey at the same time no need to stress about it". (John)

In a certain way yes because I was relieved of stress. [...] During a game if I think of me and my [friend] we were big fans of NHL [on Xbox]. We always played before the game we would probably talk about that too hey you played online we beat each other [it was all fun and games] making jokes but it was a way to either ease the moment of stress in the game. It would help me calm myself. (Charles)

2) The Barriers

The second category is called the barriers. In this section, we will look at how an athlete's amateur hockey career starts to decline and eventually leads to dropout due to certain barriers. We will look at several themes that are of risk to athletes who identify strongly to hockey and neglect casual leisure participation to the point of living a perceived less than optimal leisure lifestyle. This theme examines participants' interpretation of the situation from a phenomenological perspective.

Theme 2.1. Transitions

Participants were asked about their process of dropping out, beginning with the most challenging transition they faced during their career, as well as the barriers during this transition. Thirteen participants described the most difficult transition as being the one between Minor and Junior hockey, i.e. transitioning from junior to senior level sport. There were multiple factors and barriers that came into play during this transition, which made it so challenging to go through. The barriers of this transition led to a negative perception of the situation instead of ending their careers on a positive note and retiring:

I think it was more when I turned 19. You see all the people that you grew up playing hockey against. They're starting to get drafted and starting to move up. A [lot] in your life are changing. People are moving out, your full time university, you're starting to think about past hockey. I think that was a difficult time just starting to realize that your hockey career might not be what you thought it would be. But definitely that was about that age where I started to think that hockey was maybe not for me. (John)

Well it's basically at the end of my season [...] would've been I think 18 or 19. [...] I had just played half the season in [Junior A]. So it was at that point where I realized that some people aren't really in the business of hockey to let these kids develop and let these kids play and have fun. They were more there just to get their money's worth and make sure their team was doing OK. It left a sour taste in my mouth and I think at that point I started to really think about what I really wanted to do with my life and if hockey was actually going to work out for me. [...] (Martin)

The toughest year was probably my first year playing Junior A because I was coming back from a camp [...] in the Quebec Major Junior and if I wanted to go back the next year I had to really prove myself my first year at 17 years old [...] And that year I can't remember exactly how many points I got but it was like five or six points in 40 games. [...] So there it became tough because I had to decide what was going to be my plan B. I can't continue to say "OK I have to keep pursuing this". (Paul)

Furthermore, participants described their process of withdrawing from their pursuit towards professional level hockey after briefly playing Junior level hockey. Participants listed certain barriers they had faced prior to making the decision to dropout once again. But ultimately, participants did not have a process of retirement from Junior hockey, which is typically viewed as positive. Rather, participants dropped out, which is associated with negative feelings. The following three quotes best describe the participants' process of dropping out:

I mean it was always kind of looming over me after I got passed up twice in the NHL draft. But I guess when I really had to start thinking about it was at the start of my last year so when I was 21. Kind of realizing people are getting ahead of me in school that are my age and just kind of thinking is it worth it to keep playing. Like give it one last shot or should I just start a normal school life. (Nicholas)

[...] at that point I had to make a choice and I decided school over hockey because hockey was more of a pass time by then. Still competitive but definitely I could see that it wasn't going to bring me what I thought it would back when I

was a kid. [...] I thought about trying out for Junior A again but I'm pretty sure they released me without telling me so I had no one to try out for anymore. And like I said I was quite happy in Junior B and by the time it rolled around the tryouts I had already made my choice. So that one year I got my mind together and I made the decision. (Matthew)

I played the odd time. I mean six shifts a game. And it was fine I mean I'm a rookie its part of the game you play. But I think at that point I was 18 it was that I didn't know many people on the team either. So it was a new team with a bunch of new guys, I'm the rookie. [...] And I think I was just over the whole thing before it even started. Like a couple games in you come out of the game you didn't do anything really. You don't score any points. So you come out of there with your head down a bit. You might have won the game but its like you personally know you could play better or have more fun and you just don't. So I think that got stressful. Half way through the year that's when I quit so the build up was pretty much that happened where I wasn't playing [...] (Ryan)

After gaining insight into their process of withdrawal from the sport, the researcher began to focus on some of the different aspects of their career and of the study. This was to look at identity, their perceived optimal leisure lifestyle, and their leisure lifestyles impact on their perception of hockey, its impact on their identity itself, and its impact on their performance.

Theme 2.2. Over-Identification to Hockey

To expand on the concept of identification, participants were asked why their athletic identity was their primary identity at the time. From the participants' perspective, they strongly identified themselves as hockey players over any other status or role in their life at that time period. The following quote describes why participants over-identified to the athletic identity: "Everything else kind of came second at that point because hockey was most important". Their world revolved around hockey, as participants would make sure everything in their life was oriented and accommodated by their hockey schedule. Academics, family time, along with other activities of interest were always a second priority to hockey. The following two quotes describe how participants perceived the hockey identity. They also describe how that identity became the central component in their life when playing Minor hockey and even more so in Junior hockey:

[...] you had to invest as you were playing Junior or what not. You were gone for at least half the week you know so it makes a heck of a difference in your life and also in your schoolwork. Where sometimes you had to balance and sacrifice one or the other. But if you ask me to sacrifice either school or hockey I would always sacrifice school. (Charles)

But its the reality you're not immune to that I would've been like I played in the QMJHL that's their first trait but its like because at that point it becomes your life. You don't have that much more to identify yourself to. So it's like well I don't travel, I don't do this I don't do that so. You know I am a part of hockey player I do most of the activities on the team do because were put together most of the time. (David)

Theme 2.3. Less Than Optimal Leisure Lifestyle

One of the major struggles for participants during their Junior hockey career was to keep a perceived balanced leisure lifestyle. As mentioned above, athletes put hockey ahead of most aspects in their life, which in turn led to most of their free time taken by either training or playing hockey. Thus, hockey took up the majority of their leisure lifestyle, which made it less than optimal. When asked about how the perceived balance between participating in hockey and other leisure activities of interest, fourteen participants quickly responded with: "it was not balanced. To be honest probably hockey had a bigger role", "Like didn't have time to do anything else. [...]" "Was there a balance between the two? No.", "I don't think it was very balanced", "definitely not.", "Balanced? No. For sure it wasn't balanced", "I didn't have much time", "I don't think so", "It definitely wasn't balanced. Definitely not", and "not really at all".

Participants described their leisure lifestyle while playing Junior hockey and how it interfered with other activities due to their overwhelming involvement in the sport. Twelve participants realized that they were often required to sacrifice participating in leisure activities other than hockey, in particular social interactions with friends and even some other personal activities. This was a result of demanding playing and training schedule in Junior hockey during

the regular season and off-season to prepare for the next regular season. Again, this resulted in their leisure lifestyle being perceived less than optimal when playing Junior level hockey:

For the most part hockey was such a big factor that there was no time to make a real leisure or hobby of some sort. [It was] more oriented towards hockey. There was no real time where you can say you know this day everyday I'm going to be doing this for myself where you just sit down and draw for example. I'd draw just because I'd pick a paper up. I don't think there was a balance or room for much. Balance and kind of leisure time for you because hockey was always there. (Ryan)

[...] we had maybe one day off [a week] so it was very intense. And we didn't get much breaks because when you're done your season you start to train for next season [...] we would be working out or on the ice at least five hours a day every day and then weekends we had games so that would take most of our day because we had to eat together as a team and then for leisure not much. Even in the summer I would train twice a day. I mean I'd hang with friends some times but not as much as maybe I'd want to because hockey was a priority back then. (Amelia)

It's very demanding. Six days a week in the rink in the winter and six days a week in the gym in summer. And all your summer camps and obviously all the other different things you miss out on what teenagers do. [...] At that age all you're thinking about is hockey and you don't really care about anything else. (Adam)

In contrast, two participants perceived their leisure lifestyle as being more oriented towards participating in casual leisure activities, which in turn also led to a perceived less than optimal leisure lifestyle. Thus, they perceived the opposite imbalance than the previous twelve participants, as described:

I was probably more imbalanced then because I didn't know what to do. At that down time your like "OK I don't really know if I'm playing hockey". Especially in that year off I wasn't at the job I wanted to do. So you're trying to figure out where do I go from here. So then you're probably spending more time with friends at that point. And then still a little time probably less amount of time at work but what you were doing was probably work you enjoyed because you just left what you enjoyed doing. I don't think it would've been balanced especially in that down time I would have everything all over the place. (Ethan)

I think it had a lot to do with girls, a lot to do with partying. [...] You know even video games or watching movies [...]. So I think that kind of stuff played a big role and that was really I didn't have any other commitments it would be about

that stuff. It would be getting friends and partying really in whatever way we could. (Michael)

Theme 2.4. Negative Perception of Hockey

Participants were asked how they perceived hockey in general in relation to their leisure lifestyle as an amateur Junior hockey player to which eleven participants stated that they had a negative perception and feelings towards the sport, hockey was perceived as more of a chore and/or job, and they no longer had fun when playing. They responded with: “It was definitely discouraging”, “like a job in a way”, “it changed my perception of how the business of the sport played in it”, “I think a little negatively at some point”, “in Junior A and higher level it becomes your job to play hockey”, “I certainly had a perception of hockey that it was like a job sometimes. And it was a tiresome sport. And a chore”, “I was frustrated”, “it was more of a you know task. [...] It wasn't fun anymore”, and “towards the end it was more like now I hate this, now I want to do stuff that I take my mind almost away from it because I'm going to quit and I'm not enjoying myself. I'm almost dreading going”.

Participants went on to describe how their less than optimal leisure lifestyle and not having the chance to participate in leisure activities outside of hockey reflected on their negative perception of hockey. The imbalance in their leisure lifestyle and lack of participation in pleasurable leisure activities had taken away some of the pleasure of playing Junior hockey, as one participant stated: “I really saw my angry side as I was playing hockey. It got my negative emotions out of me. [...] it was negative in the sense that it was hockey was just kind of taking over my life”. The following three quotes also describe how participants' imbalanced leisure lifestyle developed into a negative perception of hockey:

[...] hockey was serious at that time and I was very light and not serious at all so you'd compare being able to go out with friends who weren't playing hockey or had to go to a game. You know its tough at that age what you'd rather do. Yes I'd always pick hockey first but maybe that did affect me. Maybe it was something I

did but had something else I'd rather be doing out there. So that kind of stuff definitely made me perceive hockey as more of work or almost like a chore compared to going to a party and having a good time. (Michael)

I want to do stuff on my own. More fun alone or whatever it was. And I couldn't because I had commitments with hockey. So at that point I was like I'm going to quit and do stuff that I do enjoy so I think the imbalance there was a factor of me quitting. (Ryan)

I realized it was too much once I didn't want to spend all my time doing it then I didn't have fun anymore. [...] I played competitive hockey everyday intuitively and I realized it was way too much for me. [...] at the beginning I was like "you know I love it I love the game" but as soon as I realized like it's too much and I was probably going to quit then I was like you know hockey's so negative. It had an effect on my attitude towards my friends and parents. And it was affecting a lot of things in my life and I just perceived it as a big negative. [...] there's a lot of things I couldn't do [...] I started realizing that how it had so much a pull on me and like it drove everything in my life so I was like man this is too much. So I started perceiving it as something really negative. (David)

Theme 2.5. Negative Impact on Identification

When asked about how their leisure lifestyle and its relation to their identification as a hockey player, twelve participants focused on the negative impacts hockey had and how they no longer wanted to be associated or primarily identified as a hockey player. One participant stated: "Some would certainly see it as you know too much you know too demanding emotionally physically and would ultimately see it as a negative effect on the identity". Other participants described having similar experiences when describing the relationship between their leisure lifestyle and being primarily identified as a hockey player. When they realized that hockey had a restraining threshold on them their identity started evolving and they did not want to be identified primarily as a hockey player:

I didn't want to relate to it. I wouldn't say at all I mean I still play hockey [today] but I didn't want to be that hockey player that just does that and [...] it just latches on. I wanted to explore a lot of different avenues. I wanted to dissociate with the identity definitely. (David)

I think it started to evolve as things started to go downhill. I think I kind of shifted gears basically. Instead of looking at it in a positive light it was more looking at it

into a negative light. But more in the sense that I wasn't seeing myself as a hockey player anymore. (Martin)

I would've not spent the time towards hockey at that time. I would spend more time in down time and hanging out with other friends. Probably wouldn't have gone to the gym as much. [...] I would say on the hockey identity itself it may have because the guys would've seen you not putting in the time. They looked at it as you checked out type of idea [...] (Ethan)

Theme 2.6. Negative Impact on Performance

When asked about how their leisure lifestyle related to their performance in Junior level hockey, nine participants stated how their performance was impacted negatively at times. An overwhelming amount of hockey affected different aspects of performance. They responded with: “definitely when there’s things that are not going on outside of hockey and not going right it does affect your hockey performance”, “it affected my game play for sure”, “its going to show in your game and the decisions that you make”, “I think that definitely would've had an impact”, “it probably did affect how good I actually got how well I played.” and “100% for sure yes”.

Motivation and focus. For three participants, the imbalance in their leisure lifestyle weighed in on their conscience and in turn impacted their motivation and focus while performing in a game. The following quotes describe how participants perceived their motivation and focus levels in this situation:

[...] when I didn't get enough social time or I didn't feel like I could hang out with my friends as much you know you go tot he rink with a different attitude. A different mindset and it absolutely turned out on your performance. [...] I think that’s the idea of balance. I got used to doing it a certain way. I got used to going to school and playing video games or spending time with my friends and then playing hockey and when it was just hockey, hockey, hockey, it definitely caused an imbalance and did affect my performance because I wasn't as motivated to play. (John)

[...] the amount of preparation that I put in and all that kind of stuff wasn't top notch because of the other stuff I wanted to do. I'd sacrifice that kind of stuff to go out and have a good time. (Michael)

[...] you weren't as focused as you would've been when things were going well. So any time in that down time you wouldn't have played as hard. You wouldn't have maybe went in the corners when you normally would've. You're mindset would've been different. At that time I know for sure my mindset was different. Because I was ready to cut it out. (Ethan)

Confidence. Additionally, another aspect of performance that was compromised was participants' confidence and strength when performing. Three participants described how a lack of confidence mentally transpired into their physical movements and the pressure they felt when performing on the ice, as these quotes suggest:

You try to get your mind off of it and play hockey but for some reason it's there and you make a mistake and it's there again it's even just got worse in your mind so mental game is always been I know its important to hockey [...] (Charles)

When I was playing Junior it's a high tempo so when you're making decisions or you're making moves and stuff like that you have to be like strong about it. You have to be decisive about it. And if you have no confidence then that shows and [...] your holding your stick to tight and you're making floppy passes [...] (Daniel)

[...] during games I was petrified because I put so much pressure on myself. Especially when it came to really competitive hockey. That was part of the problem. [...] I just realized I put so much pressure [...] for me it built up so much pressure that it just caused to be negative. It's because I just psyched myself out before the game. Think too much about it. (David)

Physical fatigue. Furthermore, two participants described how their perceived leisure lifestyle translated into physical fatigue, which in turn affected their physical performance negatively. They mentioned how they lacked energy due to their demanding Junior hockey schedule and were not able to give their maximum effort when performing on and off the ice:

[...] let's say your ability to have more explosive speed on the ice. [...] with an early morning practice or two a week you certainly feel overwhelmed and you do get tired because if you're going to bed later [...] and then you got an early morning practice for sure there's times where your just pure tired. And also impacted performance on the ice too. [...] Just pure fatigue. [...] you do need sleep. And I was probably compromising sleep because I was making sure that I

was on the rink and [...] we caught the bus early and we played in the evening twelve hours later you just run out of gas [...] (Luke)

After a big game and stuff on the weekend if we didn't get a day off you're obviously tired on the ice. [...] some times they would put seven a.m. workouts on a Monday after a big weekend. A couple of times I would you have to get up but I didn't want to because I was too tired. Not because I was lazy just I was tired. [...] your legs would hurt a little bit. Work out wasn't always 100 percent. Maybe I could've given more if I would have had time to recover. (Amelia)

Belonging. One participant described how his performance was affected by his feeling of belonging on the team. He rarely took part in social leisure activities with the team outside of the rink due to his primary focus being on hockey. This affected his integration into the team, whether it was communication or even aspects such as passing between him and other teammates:

I think had I done all the other things everybody else was doing maybe I could've built a couple more friendships and maybe at that point I would've been more integrated into the team. [...] If were going specifics, communication. Even just passing. Some guys would choose not to pass to me just because they didn't feel like they wanted to pass to me. Or during practice I would see some guys smiling and chatting it up or saying some inside jokes and I was definitely out of the loop [...] (Martin)

3) The Reconciliation

The final category is called the reconciliation. In this section, we will look at the potential benefits of participating in casual leisure activities while pursuing a career in Junior level hockey. This will include looking at the benefits of casual leisure participation during participants' Junior hockey career, and the impact of casual leisure participation on athletic identity and performance. We will also look at the participants' involvement in the sport post-dropout and re-examine their identification, overall feeling and perception of the sport of hockey, and the perceived balance between hockey and casual leisure activities in their life.

Theme 3.1. Current Involvement in Hockey and Optimal Leisure Lifestyle

Although participants dropped out of their Junior hockey career and attempt at making it to professional level hockey some day, they are all currently still involved in the sport and play recreationally in organized leagues. Participants were asked about the perceived balance in their leisure lifestyle after dropping out of Junior hockey. When asked this, participants immediately described their leisure lifestyle as being perceived as much more balanced currently: “A hundred percent”, “I just look at leisure and hockey I have a lot more time to do my leisure [activities] now”, “I create my own schedule”, “I think it’s definitely more balanced”, “Definitely more balanced now”, “it’s balanced”, “There’s definitely a balance”, “Definitely”, “It’s more than it was before definitely [...] I think I have more time for other things”, “There’s much more balance there”, and “Balance in the sense that I’m striking my balance”.

Furthermore, participants explained how their leisure lifestyle has changed after dropping out of Junior hockey. Prior to dropping out, hockey was prioritized before anything while now hockey has been integrated with the many other aspects of their life and activities they participate in, as described by one participant: “Nowadays I’m a lot freer. My schedule is more open. You know no more games [...] or whole days off playing hockey. So definitely more time today for leisure activities and friends”. The following quotes also describe the evolution of participants’ leisure lifestyle after dropping out:

I play volleyball now. I play baseball. I play hockey too. I play roller hockey. I feel like now I'm more open to trying new activities. I even told others I regretted not playing school sports when I was in school because I was so focused on hockey. All of this time I could've been enjoying these sports I'm now enjoying and I feel there's more of a balance in terms of just hockey and other things in my life as well. So definitely I feel now that there's a better balance then when I was playing. [...] I feel like if I don't feel like playing hockey that's OK and when I feel like playing hockey I go play hockey. I feel like I don't have that set schedule like “hey Sunday you're playing hockey, Friday you're playing hockey, Wednesday your playing hockey.” I couldn't fit anything else. The balance is a lot better. (John)

Now I still play at a pretty high level [hockey] like were playing Division-one [recreational hockey] against guys who play in the OHL or Division-one NCAA and stuff like that somewhere playing really good teams. But now I have the time to I also play coed soccer on every Sunday and throughout the school year I play intramural soccer or whatever. If I have any friend wants to do something or invites me out to a cottage or to fishing a lot so if I want to go fishing anywhere or go golfing it's now I have more control over it. (Daniel)

Theme 3.2. Multi-Dimensional Identity

Although participants strongly identified themselves as a hockey player when pursuing a career in Junior hockey, when asked how they identified themselves today, they said that they no longer primarily identified themselves as a hockey player. However, hockey still remained as one of their identities as two participants mentioned: “It was part of me right. Still part of me obviously” and “the sport will always be a part of my life that's for sure”. After dropping out of Junior hockey, participants explained how their identity had also evolved and had become more of a multidimensional identity incorporating many different things:

Well you know primarily student [...] Someone that enjoys travelling. Someone who enjoys family time, friend time, [...] who enjoys reading. I would say I enjoy life and doing I do more artistic stuff. I enjoy museums, I enjoy plays, I enjoy stuff like that. But I still enjoy music. A lot of stuff that's truer to me. I was always true about me but I did it very minimal because I didn't really have the time but I always did those [activities] a little bit. But not as much because I didn't really have the time. It was still me but now it's come a lot more. (David)

I would say my careers probably become the primary now of growing in my career and continuing to move up the ranks in the company I work for. Those are probably my primaries but I would say my second is hockey for sure. [Hockey's] still up there and near the top of the list but it's more balanced the other way because of where I am in my life. (Ethan)

A photographer who still has a passion for hockey [...] It's hard to forget that or erase that so I still see myself as a hockey player. I still have a few friends that play hockey. I still enjoy hockey. I love watching hockey. I love playing hockey with friends. So definitely still see myself as a hockey player per se. (Martin)

Probably as an employee. I mean it sticks with you so there's still I mean my girlfriend will say it when she met me she said I knew you were a hockey player. I knew you played hockey. So it's kind of like she knew. I wouldn't say it's wearing off but it's not there it's behind somewhere. So now there's more of an

adult in me so there's more I've been at work for 3 years and I'm becoming an everyday [common person] working man. But there's always that you go to work you can still pick off the guys that play hockey. It's always there I think at a certain extent. A hockey player will be able to recognize another hockey player. (Ryan)

Theme 3.3. Positive Perception of Hockey

Moreover, participants were asked about how they perceived the sport in general now after dropping out and perceiving their leisure lifestyle as more balanced or optimal now to which many responded with: "love the sport and like would do anything to play the sport", "you get to have the fun and still have the competitive edge", "Hockey is fun now. It's strictly for fun", "It's more of a game or a pass time then it is a career", "it's always fun", "Just hockey for fun", "enjoy the game a lot more", "You know what its fun I love it", "it's perfect", and "more like for fun. It's not a job anymore".

Participants described having a renewed enjoyment in the sport in relation to living a perceived optimal leisure lifestyle presently, as they explained recreational hockey is a good source of exercise and they are not pressured to play hockey or follow a demanding Junior hockey schedule. They now have the freedom to participate in any leisure activities while maintaining a competitive edge when playing. They explained how they are no longer confined and restrained by hockey as the following quotes describe:

The enjoyment factor sort of balances every other negative aspect because of the fact that were playing competitive but were also you know we also realize that were not playing to a pro level either. So the level of pressure backs off and the level of enjoyment goes up. (Luke)

I know it's not going to get me anywhere but I go there because I like the workout. It does give me good exercise. I like being around hockey players and being around the guys. That's always been fun to me being at the rink. But I just go out there and you know sometimes when you're out there you think you're going somewhere or the best out there and you do the move or try something different. (Michael)

Still feel like I can play at the most highest level I can play at. I go to the gym I still train to play. So even at my age I feel like it still contributes. I mean it's trying to continue to play and have fun more so then knowing you're going to try and get drafted by a team or those types of things. Now it's more of the camaraderie. You know hanging out with the guys but within the games I still have that competitive edge so that stuff is still part of why I play. And just the love of the game. (Ethan)

[...] you don't have to go to bed early for games. Or you can stay out and do whatever you want really so the worlds kind of your oyster. You can do whatever. You can go see friends late at night. Drink on a day of a game. Like you can do whatever you want so you're not limited by hockey [...] (Nicholas)

Chapter V – Discussion

In this chapter there will be a discussion based on the researchers interpretation of the results in relation to the guiding research questions. The chapter is broken up into different sections based on the themes and categories previously identified in the results chapter. The researcher will first present how findings of this study relate to past literature in each section and progress into findings that contribute and build on existing knowledge. The chapter's sections are consistent with the order of the categories and themes in the results section. That is, starting with the build-up, the barriers, and the reconciliation, along with their respective themes. This study had the purpose of exploring how amateur Junior hockey players' leisure lifestyle and casual leisure participation had an impact on their identity to serious leisure, overall perception of hockey and performance.

Summary of Results

Summarized here are the findings of this study in relation to the seven research questions. First, participants' leisure lifestyle was perceived as less than optimal prior to dropping out. Second, participants had a negative perception of hockey from living a less than optimal leisure lifestyle. Third, participants' athletic identity was negatively influenced from living a less than optimal leisure lifestyle. Fourth, participants' physical and mental serious leisure performance was negatively influenced from living a less than optimal leisure lifestyle. Fifth, casual leisure participation was very beneficial to participants even though there was minimal participation prior to dropping out. Sixth, participants' athletic identity was positively influenced from casual leisure participation. Seventh, participants' physical and mental performance was positively influenced from casual leisure participation.

Serious Leisure and Amateurism

This study used serious leisure as its theoretical framework to establish the relationship between amateur Junior hockey players and hockey prior to dropping out. In this section, there will be discussion on the level of implication in hockey of the participants and the characteristics of the serious leisure theoretical framework. Based on the results, participants indicated that they possessed all six qualities of a serious leisure participant. These characteristics are found within the build-up category of the results and in order of significance starting with identification, leisure career, personal effort, durable benefits, unique ethos and perseverance. The build-up section also contains amateurism as a theme, however, in this theme only two of seven characteristics of an amateur athlete were present, i.e., serving publics and training with professionals.

According to Elkington and Stebbins' (2014) serious leisure theoretical framework, amateur athletes can be identified by six characteristics. Participants of this study were distinguished from the average hockey enthusiast or participant, as the six characteristics of a serious leisure pursuer were easily identified. Their experience in hockey was consistent with Elkington and Stebbins' (2014) and Stebbins' (2005b) description of a leisure career, containing its own set of developmental stages and turning points, which influenced the course and outcome of their career in hockey. Their hockey career prior to dropout also consisted of various stages of progression, each with their own periods skill acquisition, knowledge and abilities (Stebbins, 2005b), in which they needed to persevere, give personal effort, develop a unique ethos and learn its durable benefits (Brown et al., 2008; Elkington & Stebbins, 2014; Kane & Zink, 2004; Stebbins, 2007).

Although participants were easily identified as serious leisure pursuers based on their characteristics, the relationship between amateurs and professionals, or amateurs in a PAP system was not as easily identified. Stebbins (1980) indicated that amateurs and professionals are related

in several ways as mentioned above in the review of literature. However, findings of this study indicate two ways in which they were primarily related, that is by performing in front of a public or audience, and by occasionally training with professionals. Despite this, participants affirmed that they could be labeled as amateurs by their prolonged engagement in hockey and continuous efforts in trying to acquire abilities to perform at higher levels of play, thus refusing to remain a novice in the sport. This is also one of the primary benefits of being an amateur participant according to Stebbins (1980).

Thus, even though participants only spoke about two of the seven characteristics of an amateur's relationship with professionals, they did in fact possess all six qualities of a serious leisure participant. They also possessed the strongest quality of an amateur athlete by refusing to remain a novice in hockey and strived to acquire the abilities, knowledge and experience in hockey. Thus, this has re-affirmed that these participants in particular were in fact involved in a serious leisure activity. Findings may also imply which characteristics of an amateur are most significant to amateur athletes, as only a two were identified.

Furthermore, as it was of particular interest in this study, based on the participants' described experience when playing Junior level hockey, it was evident that hockey or the athletic role or identity was their central life interest as described by Dubin (1992) and Stebbins (1993). Most participants described investing the majority of their time and energies (physical and mental) towards the pursuit of hockey to the point of it being perceived as a profession central to their daily living habits (Stebbins, 2001b). This is consistent with Dubin (1992) and Elkington and Stebbins (2014) who indicated that those identifying to a particular chosen and valued role or identity will invest themselves physically and mentally to perfecting and achieving a goal associated with that identity. In this case, participants fully invested themselves to the athletic role as the 'hockey player' of their overall identity over anything else (Brewer et al., 1993). This

was attributed as a result of the amount of attention they gave to that identity compared to their others such as the student, employee, family member, etc.

As participants indicated that they identified themselves primarily with the athletic role it was also apparent that they neglected other aspects of life as a result of over-committing to hockey. This is what Werthner and Orlick (1986) described as athletes becoming 'unidimensional' due to neglecting aspects of life outside of sport when pursuing high sports goals. Among some of the consequences that stem from over-identifying to hockey, was the lack of time to explore other valued interests (Danish et al., 1993) such as casual leisure activities (Elkington & Stebbins, 2014; Stebbins 1992; 2001c). This was also one of the areas of focus for this study.

Findings of this study suggest that amateur Junior hockey players value their identity to the athletic role over any other, which comes at the expense of other interests in their life. Thus, the multidimensional aspect of participants' overall identity is compromised, which also compromises the perceived balance in participation and combination between different activities in their life. This study's results expand on the previous literature on the concept of central life interest by Dubin (1992) Elkington and Stebbins (2014), and identification by Stebbins (1982; 1993) by indicating that this characteristic in particular can have a major influence on the athlete. Since participants often view serious leisure as their central life interest it therefore becomes common for amateur athletes to over-identify and over-commit to their sport. In this case, most participants identified as a 'hockey player' primarily, which meant they did not give as much time and attention to other aspects of their life, which were of value to them along with hockey. Over-identifying to the athletic identity can also lead to other consequences, which will be explained further below.

Casual Leisure Utilization, and Influence on Identification and Performance

In this section, casual leisure and its benefits will be of focus. Participants stated that they had minimal amounts of time for casual leisure activities, however, realistically they did occasionally take part in casual leisure activities. Among the most significant types of activities in order were passive entertainment and relaxation, social conversation, active participation and play, and sensory stimulation.

Participants took part in various types of casual leisure activities, which were consistent with the different types of casual leisure activities mentioned Elkington and Stebbins (2014). The most popular types of casual leisure activities participants took part in passive entertainment and relaxation, social conversation, active participation and play, and sensory stimulation as previously mentioned. Additionally, these activities had an important role for participants during their Junior hockey career despite their limited participation in those types of activities.

Most of the benefits associated with casual leisure described by Hutchinson and Kleiber (2005) and Elkington and Stebbins (2014) were present throughout this study. Participants would utilize casual leisure activities primarily for escapism, regeneration, maintain their well-being self-restoration, maintaining interpersonal relationships, self-protection and growth oriented change as described by Elkington and Stebbins (2014) and Hutchinson and Kleiber (2005). Additionally, based on the significance and use of casual leisure activities, participants greatly valued their participation between training sessions, which was consistent with Stebbins (1997a).

Not only was this study interested in the utilization of casual leisure activities, but it also wanted to explore how being able to participate in casual leisure affected serious leisure identification. In this case, how casual leisure participation impacted their 'hockey player' identity. Interestingly, although Elkington and Stebbins (2014) and Stebbins (1992) indicated that in order for there to be identity enhancement one must participate in serious leisure rather than

casual leisure and that casual leisure offers no opportunity to develop an identity, findings of this study suggest that being able to participate in casual leisure can in fact enhance ones identity to serious leisure.

Participants described how being able to remove themselves temporarily from hockey to pursue other activities of interests would make them miss and want to get back to playing hockey after having the opportunity to partake in those activities. Thus, having the opportunity to participate in other activities would serve a purpose of reminding players why they wanted to go back and pursue their serious leisure, i.e., hockey. This allowed for participants to continue wanting to be associated with hockey rather than wanting to dissociate with that identity. Thus, casual leisure also has the benefit of enhancing the quality of serious leisure identification and the quality of and experience in serious leisure careers. This was previously unexplored by Elkington and Stebbins (2014) and Stebbins (1992). This has extended on previous literature and casual leisure's role with athletic identity, which may also allows this to be a new benefit of casual leisure.

Another area of interest in this study was to explore casual leisure participation's impact on serious leisure performance. That is, if it was possible for benefits of casual leisure to translate into game time performances, another part of this study that was previously unexplored in past research. Having the opportunity to occasionally take part in casual leisure impacted different aspects of performance such as concentration and focus, participants feeling energized, confidence, and having a lower level of stress. Essentially, these positive impacts on performance contrast the previous negative impacts on performance mentioned which came from living a less than optimal leisure lifestyle. Thus, the few times participants did take part in casual leisure it did have an impact on their performance.

For the concentration and focus aspect of performance participants spoke about being able to invest themselves mentally to hockey after participating in casual leisure as a result of their mind being at rest and not always having to concentrate on hockey. This in turn led to participants being able to return to hockey in a refreshing manner and increase their mental investment towards hockey. This builds on the cost of having to give a lot of time towards preparation and concentration previously stated by Elkington and Stebbins (2014). As this cost was diminished after participating in casual leisure, participants were able to elevate their personal effort characteristic described by Stebbins (2007).

For the increased feelings of energy aspect, participants described that being able to relax and regenerate themselves would allow them to return to performing with an increased amount of energy, thus being able to fully invest themselves physically to hockey. This was due to the fact that their body was rested and thus had more energy to stored for their performance. Again, this can be related to the personal effort characteristic Stebbins (2007) has mentioned. Therefore, casual leisure participation would allow participants to ease their mind and regenerate themselves physically to increase their level of personal effort.

These two benefits on performance can also be related back to Dubin (1992) and Elkington and Stebbins' (2014) previous statements about serious leisure enthusiasts investing themselves both mentally and physically to their activity. However, findings of this study extend on this statement by demonstrating that serious leisure enthusiasts are able to do so as a result of having the opportunity to participate in casual leisure occasionally. Thus, serious and casual leisure working together in a leisure lifestyle can lead to optimization of mental and physical investment for participants in their serious leisure activity.

Another aspect of performance that was affected positively was confidence. Being able to participate in casual leisure activities helped participants get into a positive state of mind prior to

performances. Being rested and having a positive state of mind would translate into feeling positive about their performance and being able to invest themselves mentally and physically as described by Dubin (1992) and Elkington and Stebbins (2014). As a result, feeling good going into a performance increased how well they thought they had performed in that game.

The last aspect of performance that was affected was a lower stress level for participants. Having the opportunity to relax prior to performing allowed participants to perform more relaxed and ease the pressure on them during performances. Participants went into performances at ease with themselves mentally, which translated positively to physical performance. Thus, casual leisure participation proved to be effective in enhancing serious leisure performance and allowed them to fully invest themselves mentally and physically going into performances. Therefore, allowing participants to perform better in their serious leisure activity can potentially be another benefit to casual leisure, which also extends on past literature by Elkington and Stebbins (2014) and Hutchinson and Kleiber (2005).

Optimal Leisure Lifestyle, Perception of Hockey, and Influence on Identity and Performance

This section explores the concept of optimal leisure lifestyle, as it was a central component to this study's guiding research questions. The concept of optimal leisure lifestyle relies heavily on the identification characteristic of serious leisure. Thus, the majority of participants indicated that they did perceive their leisure lifestyle as less than optimal. Findings of this study suggest that there was a severe imbalance between participating in serious leisure and casual leisure activities based on the participants' perspective. Findings also suggest that living a less than optimal leisure lifestyle can have a negative impact on amateur Junior hockey players overall perception of hockey, identity and certain aspects of their performance. This section emphasizes on the barriers category of the results.

One of the central aspects of this study was the perceived balance between leisure activities for Junior hockey players. In this case, the perceived balance between participating in serious leisure, i.e., hockey, and casual leisure, i.e., other interests outside of sport, was evaluated as the whole consist of a leisure lifestyle (Peterson & Gunn, 1974) or optimal leisure lifestyle if a perceived balance is achieved (Stebbins, 2007). Stebbins (2007) stated that a leisure lifestyle is optimal when serious leisure is complemented by casual leisure activities. According to the findings of this study, the majority of participants lived a less than optimal leisure lifestyle when playing Junior level hockey.

Over-identifying to the athletic role and having minimal opportunities to participate in casual leisure activities had an impact on the perceived balance between serious and casual leisure. Thus, it was not achieved. Participants stated spending most of their time for leisure to playing and training for hockey, as the demands and schedules associated with Junior hockey are quite demanding. This may have also been a result of over-identifying to the athletic identity and therefore wanting to pay much more attention to hockey over any other aspect in their life at that time.

This study's findings extend on previous literature by examining how serious leisure pursuers actually perceive their leisure lifestyle when pursuing serious leisure activities at higher stages of development, acquisition of skills and knowledge. To date, the concept of an optimal leisure lifestyle developed by Stebbins (2007) had yet to be evaluated to determine if amateur athletes actually perceive their leisure lifestyle as optimal or not. Thus, along with the sensitivity of over-identification to serious leisure, it also becomes a commonality for serious leisure enthusiasts in the field of sport to live a less than optimal leisure lifestyle.

Stebbins (2005) has indicated that living a less than optimal leisure lifestyle has consequences on quality of life and well-being. However, this study aimed to build on this

knowledge by exploring how the general feelings or perception towards hockey were influenced based on participants' leisure lifestyle when playing Junior hockey. It's interesting to note that by living a less than optimal leisure lifestyle when playing Junior level hockey, participants primarily perceived hockey as a chore or job rather than a leisure activity. This relates once again to Dubin (1992), Elkington and Stebbins (2014), and Stebbins (2001b) previous statements saying serious leisure can be perceived as a profession rather than leisure at times. However, in this study, perceiving hockey as a job meant that it was not always associated positively with wanting to go to games and practices. In addition, participants began to feel bound and pressured to attend hockey practices or games to the point of hockey being associated with a negative perception in general. For some, having to sacrifice activities of interest for hockey began to weigh in on their desire to continue attending hockey and the pleasure they received from playing hockey. Thus, hockey was typically perceived as negative in general based on living a less than optimal leisure lifestyle.

Furthermore, another research aspect of this study was to explore at how identification to serious leisure was affected by participants' leisure lifestyle when playing Junior hockey. Some of the consequences of over-identification have been noted in past research (Coen & Ogles, 1993; Danish et al., 1993; Miller & Kerr, 2002; Stryker & Serpe, 1994; Werthner & Orlick, 1986). However, this study extends on previous findings by exploring how identification to serious leisure is affected based on the leisure lifestyle of amateur Junior hockey players.

Findings suggest that living a less than optimal leisure lifestyle and compromising casual leisure activities of interest outside of hockey, has a negative impact on their identification to the athletic role as the 'hockey player'. Although serious leisure as a central life interest typically means one will fully invest themselves mentally and physically to their activity (Dubin, 1992; Elkington & Stebbins, 2014), feelings of being pressured and obligated to attend hockey led to

participants no longer wanting to associate with the hockey identity. Over an extended period of time, the identity associated with hockey begins to wear off to the point where participants dissociate themselves from that identity, as they no longer have the desire to invest their time and energies to hockey.

Thus, this extends on previous literature by showing that over-identification, living a less than optimal leisure lifestyle and not having the chance to explore other interests can be detrimental to the athletic identity itself. It's interesting to note that living a less than optimal leisure lifestyle was developed by over-identifying to serious leisure and by sacrificing casual leisure activities, and in turn living a less than optimal leisure lifestyle had a negative impact on the identity to serious leisure. This was previously unexplored by Stebbins (2007) on the concept of optimal leisure lifestyle. Thus, a cycle is formed in this manner where one aspect affects the other and so on, i.e., identification has a negative impact on the leisure lifestyle and the leisure lifestyle has a negative impact on identification.

Additionally, some participants also indicated that they lived a less than optimal leisure lifestyle where serious leisure was neglected over participating in casual leisure. This also had the same consequences as those neglecting casual leisure activities. This again emphasizes the importance of living a perceived optimal leisure lifestyle when pursuing Junior hockey. These findings imply that the concept of an optimal leisure lifestyle as described by Stebbins (2007) is not easy to achieve for those pursuing serious leisure in the field of sport and that costs such as the need for intense concentration, long periods of concentration and feeling obligated to participate in their activity (Elkington & Stebbins, 2014) had not been related to the concept of living a less than optimal leisure lifestyle.

Moreover, among these negative consequences coming from over-identifying to hockey and living a less than optimal leisure lifestyle, was its impact on performance. One of the guiding

research questions was to explore how Junior hockey players' leisure lifestyle affects their playing performance. This was also a previously unexplored area in past research by Bartram (2001), Elkington & Stebbins, (2014). Gibson et al. (2002), Jones (2000), Lamont et al. (2012), Major (2001), and Stebbins (2001b). Although playing below personal expectations was another cost previously mentioned in past research, it was once again not related to the participants' leisure lifestyle. Thus, participants of this study did indicate that playing below personal expectations and having different aspects of their performance affected may have been related to them living a less than optimal leisure lifestyle. Participants spoke about different aspects of their performance being affected negatively such as motivation and focus, confidence, physical fatigue, and their sense of belonging to the team.

For the motivation and focus aspect of performance, participants mentioned that they would put less time into preparing themselves for their game and wanting to put in their maximum effort towards their performance as a result of wanting to spend more time pursuing interests outside of hockey. This contradicts what Elkington and Stebbins (2014) previously stated about putting in a lot of mental preparation towards their serious leisure activity, and participants contradicted themselves with the characteristic of personal effort of a serious leisure pursuer. That is, less effort was put in to preparing themselves for hockey over time.

For the confidence aspect, having a dense hockey schedule resulted in a build up of perceived pressure on participants with high expectations related to their performance. This in turn led to difficulty making simple physical movements such as making passes and a decrease in mental confidence during performances. Participants also described how they felt exhausted physically when performing at times as a result of being overwhelmed by hockey. Physical fatigue would build up due to the fact that participants rarely had any days off during the week from playing or training for hockey. This can also be related to certain costs previously described

by Elkington and Stebbins (2014) about stage fright, and mental and physical fatigue. Participants had a built up amount of pressure on them, which may have led to a certain level of stage fright or fear of deceiving their coach through their performance. Additionally, participants also had to compromise sleep and recuperation time because of their playing and training schedules. Thus, physical fatigue would accumulate to the point where they lacked energy and were unable to give a maximum effort during performances. This translated into weaker performances and then a lack of confidence in themselves.

The last aspect of performance that was affected is related to the sense of belonging on the team. Although a minor discovery, one participant mentioned that his team would occasionally take part in social gatherings outside of hockey but he would never attend due to his sole focus being to play and improve his performance. As a result, communication on the ice between him and his teammates was compromised and he would even be neglected from receiving passes from teammates. This is similar to Elkington and Stebbins' (2014) previous statement saying it is possible to disconnect from relationships in the participants social world outside of the serious leisure context. However, in this case, the participant disconnected from the social world within his serious leisure environment as a result of dedicating too much time to training for hockey. The participant had neglected the opportunity to develop social connections with teammates by taking part in casual leisure activities, which could have maybe been beneficial to his inclusion on the team.

As mentioned, these aspects of performance can be related to some of the costs of serious leisure as described in past research (Bartram, 2001; Elkington & Stebbins, 2014; Gibson et al., 2002; Jones, 2000; Lamont et al., 2012; Major, 2001; Stebbins, 2001b). This study extends on this literature as these costs of serious leisure by demonstrating that these costs can be related to them living a less than optimal leisure lifestyle. In particular, costs such as playing below

personal expectations (i.e., making basic movements when performing), giving a lot of time towards preparation and concentration (i.e., personal physical and mental effort), experiencing a certain level of stage fright (i.e., pressure) and disconnecting from social relationships (i.e., within the social world of serious leisure) can all be related to living a less than optimal leisure lifestyle.

Dropout and Transitions

In this section, the researcher will relate the findings to the existing knowledge on dropout and transitions. This section was used to gain insight on the participants' process of withdrawal before moving into specific barriers based on the research questions and some of the impacts these barriers had on them. Participants described their experience when dropping out and related it to certain specific time periods or transitions that were more difficult to deal with than others. They described at which instance they decided to withdraw and the most difficult transition as being the one from junior to senior level sports or in this case going from Minor to Junior level hockey.

Leisure careers in sports contain many turning points or transitions, which can influence the progress or decline of the career (Elkington & Stebbins, 2014; Stambulova et al., 2009; Stebbins, 2005b; Wyllemann & Lavalley, 2004). Participants of this study primarily faced normative/predictable transitions, which can be exemplified by the transitions between each stage of development (Wylleman & Lavalley, 2004) and how amateur hockey organizations are structured in Canada.

Furthermore, findings suggest that the most difficult transition for amateur hockey players is going from Minor to Junior hockey or junior to senior level sports, which is consistent with Stambulova et al.'s (2009) study. Results indicate that during this transition, participants realized

that their hockey career was no longer progressing like it once was and began to decline after graduating from Minor hockey.

In turn, the costs associated with pursuing hockey after Minor hockey and into Junior hockey ultimately resulted in the voluntary withdrawal of participants before reaching their fullest potential in Junior hockey (Alfermann, 1995). Since participants were engaged over an extended period of time in only one sport, i.e., hockey primarily, and their dropout process took place in later stages of their career, they can be identified as participant dropouts based on Linder et al.'s (1991) definition. However, as mentioned above, although they withdrew from competitive Junior hockey, each participant did return to play recreational hockey afterwards. This perhaps extends on Alfermann (1995) term dropout and Linder et al.'s (1991) term 'participant dropout' to an athlete who abandons the pursuit of a valued goal because the sport no longer meets their needs. Thus, it does not necessarily mean that athletes will abandon the sport completely.

Current Leisure Lifestyle, Perception of Hockey and Identity

In this section, the participants' involvement in hockey post-dropout will be looked at. Participants indicated that they did eventually return to playing recreational level hockey after their Junior careers. Some participants did so at different periods of time in their life. Now, participants mostly had a positive experience when playing recreationally, as hockey is now more incorporated into their daily life. Participants also stated perceiving their leisure lifestyle as optimal, and having a renewed joy for playing hockey.

After dropping out of hockey and returning to play in recreational leagues they described their experience as no longer having to dedicate the majority of their time to hockey and have more time to pursue other interests. Thus, these casual leisure activities are much more incorporated with playing hockey, which has led to a perceived balance in their leisure lifestyle.

Participants' leisure lifestyle has become closer to what Stebbins (2007) defined as an optimal leisure lifestyle by incorporating serious leisure complemented by casual leisure. Participants now have time for both serious and casual leisure, which translates into their feelings of pleasure towards playing hockey. Participants now have a renewed joy and overall positive perception of hockey and no longer feel obligated to go play.

Living an optimal leisure lifestyle as described by Stebbins (2007) has diminished the cost of feeling obligated to participate in their serious leisure activity described by Elkington and Stebbins (2014). By living an optimal leisure lifestyle presently, there is an emphasis on the benefits of serious leisure and casual leisure such as personal satisfaction, enjoyment and positive effects on well-being as stated in past research by Buettner and Fitzsimmons (2002), Elkington and Stebbins (2014), Heo and Lee (2010), and Major (2001). Participants are no longer limited by their hockey schedules and having to sacrifice casual leisure activities for hockey. This extends on past literature as these benefits of serious leisure had yet to be related to the leisure lifestyle of the participants except for that of well-being, which had been previously mentioned by Stebbins (2000).

Furthermore, participants also no longer identified themselves primarily as a 'hockey player'. That identity has evolved and is now more incorporated with other identities such as the family member, student and employee. Therefore, participants now possess an overall multidimensional identity consisting of many roles, which is consistent with Brewer et al. (2000) and Lally et al. (2007). Findings of this study have extended on this literature by a positive perception of sport and possessing a multidimensional identity can be a result of living an optimal leisure lifestyle.

In summary, identification to serious leisure can be a particularly sensitive characteristic for serious leisure pursuers in the field of sport. It can lead to living a perceived less than optimal

leisure lifestyle, which in turn can lead to negative consequences on serious leisure identification, perception of sport and performance. Rather, athletes should strive to live an optimal leisure lifestyle by perhaps participating in more casual leisure activities, as this can be beneficial to serious leisure identification, performance, and perception of the sport. This is demonstrated in Table 2 with the dotted arrow between the reconciliation category and the barriers category. Having these two categories may be beneficial to amateur Junior hockey players pursuing their goal or at least, have those withdraw from hockey positively rather than negatively.

Limitations

This study had a number of limitations. First, only one sport was studied, which limits the transferability of the findings to other sports. By limiting this study to only one sport, do not know if these trends are similar or different in other competitive sports.

Second, twelve interviews were conducted in the participants home, while three were conducted in a formal setting in an office at the University of Ottawa. Participants interviewed at home may have been biased due to their level of comfort. The three interviews conducted in a formal setting may have compromised the level of comfort and impacted responses. Additionally, participants were accommodated when it came to scheduling a time to meet the researcher for an interview. This may have also contributed to participants' level of comfort and biased their responses. It is always possible for the interview to have an influence on the participants' responses during interviews as they are a part of the environment they study, which may be a challenge to the validity of the study (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995).

Third, only one participant was female, which means there was an under representation results from the female perspective. With only one female participant, the researcher cannot state if these trends are similar in female hockey organizations or not.

Fourth, the study only explored participants who have withdrawn prior to obtaining their goal of reaching elite level hockey. The study neglected those who have dropped out of playing hockey after reaching elite level hockey. The study also neglected those who have made it successfully to professional level hockey, which may have been interesting to see how they perceived their leisure lifestyle and career in Junior level hockey. This study also neglected the talent aspect for participants. Perhaps some of these participants were not highly ranked players on their team or had little chance to make it higher than Junior hockey.

Fifth, another challenge in qualitative research is researcher bias. Selecting data that supports theory, goals, preconceptions and any other data that stands out to the researcher can be a challenge for researchers as they tend to be biased on what data will be selected for the study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). These biases can potentially influence the conclusions of the study.

Sixth, one of the challenges in qualitative research is that participants may have faulty memory on the actual events that they are trying to explain during an interview (Fontana & Frey, 2005). If participants are recalling events that took place over a decade ago or two years ago there will most likely be some variance as to how they actually remember and describe these events.

Recommendations

This study may raise awareness on certain issues that have been identified with Junior level hockey in Canada. Its important to note that Hockey Canada has already begun to implement certain tactics in their youth hockey development programs such as promoting the practice of many sports at once until at least age twelve and avoiding early specialization in one sport to keep participants motivated to play (Active for Life, 2015a).

This is similar to participants of this study who tended to over-identify to hockey and neglected the practice of other activities in their life to the point of it having negative impacts on their Junior hockey career. Thus, while Hockey Canada is trying to avoid early specialization or

over-identification in the youth population, it seems as though similar trends are found within older hockey players as well, based on this study's findings. Junior hockey players are required to follow dense training and playing schedules with little time to take part in any other leisure activities. As this study has demonstrated, casual leisure activities can have a number of positive impacts on a player and their hockey career.

Furthermore, major voices in hockey such as renowned coach Brent Sutter has raised awareness about certain points to consider when developing Canadian hockey players such as reducing the number of games in a season and taking part in less tournaments or to play the same amount of games over a longer season to increase free time (Active for Life, 2015b). Brent Sutter has stated that well-rounded athletes make the best athletes. Its also interesting to point out that hockey legends Wayne Gretzky and Bobby Orr did not play hockey all year round when growing up and looked forward to playing in other sports at the end of each season (Active for Life, 2015c).

Although this is primarily for youth hockey players, at the Junior level schedules are much more dense than in Minor hockey with an increased amount of games per season, practices and off ice training. Hockey Canada promotes the practice of other sports rather than saying casual leisure specifically, however, participants of this study place a great value on casual leisure activities, which should also be incorporated between the practices of other sports. Also, participants stated that they did participate in certain sports casually making this form of participation in sport a type of casual leisure, i.e., dabbling/play. Therefore, the hockey movement in Canada must think about the direction of Junior hockey along with the youth population as the trends seem to be quite similar.

Future studies should continue to look at the perceived balance between hockey and other leisure activities from the perspective of Junior hockey players. This way coaches, instructors,

policy makers and program developers can evaluate the potential need or facilitation of casual leisure participation for players. Another important aspect to continue to examine is playing and training schedules. Junior hockey schedules are quite dense and players are required to take part in many sessions per week, which leaves little time to partake in casual leisure activities. A point to consider is that the typical Junior hockey player has family, work and educational obligations on top of Junior hockey. This already decreases the amount of time to pursue leisure activities between these obligations. If the larger portion of these players is consumed by hockey, it makes it even more difficult to lead an optimal leisure lifestyle. Future studies should also consider a longitudinal basis and explore the perceived balance in leisure lifestyle starting from Minor to Junior hockey along with the perceived amount of pleasure when playing. This may be helpful in identifying the amount of pleasure athletes have going into Junior hockey or if their pleasure from playing has already worn out before getting to Junior level or if the level of pleasure is the same throughout the entire career. The parent's aspect should also be considered at Junior hockey to evaluate the amount of pressure parents put on their child to take part in hockey camps and training at the Junior level. Additionally, it may be interesting to look at athletes who have reached their goal in sport or those who play professionally to see how they managed these barriers or if they even perceived their leisure lifestyle as being less than optimal or a decrease in enjoyment in the sport. Lastly, this study had an under representation of results coming from the female perspective and therefore cannot generalize that the results from this study transfer to women's hockey in Canada as well. Thus, it would be interesting to have a future study on women's hockey specifically to see if the trends from men's hockey are consistent with those of women's hockey in Canada.

Alleviating Limitations

In order to alleviate some of the limitations described above, certain steps can be followed. First, rather than studying one sport future studies should include different sports in order to increase the breath of findings. This may be beneficial to other sports rather than just hockey.

Second, rather than conducting interviews in different settings all interviews should be conducted in the same setting. This may reduce the possibility of participants biasing their responses based on their level of comfort based on the environment they are in.

Third, since only one female was interviewed in this study, future studies should focus on women's hockey to see if these trends are similar or different than men's hockey. This can also enhance the transferability of findings between women and men hockey in Canada.

Fourth, future studies should also look at those who have made it to professional level hockey and made it through Junior level hockey. This may help uncover other recommendations based on how these players were able to make it through and manage the challenges presented in this study.

Fifth, although it is impossible for the researcher to completely withdraw themselves from their study, it may have been beneficial to better identify the researcher's biases prior to conducting the study. This could have been achieved through a bracketing interview with the researcher.

Sixth, as it is possible for participants to have faulty memory when recalling past events, it may be of benefit to have participants who have just lived the experience of withdrawing from hockey. These participants would have a fresher memory of these events than those who had lived the experience over ten years ago.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is believed that based on the findings that this study has served its purpose and answered the guiding research questions. This study has demonstrated that it is difficult to perceive a leisure lifestyle as optimal when playing Junior level hockey. Living a less than optimal leisure lifestyle can lead to negative perceptions of hockey such as it being perceived as a chore or job rather than leisure. It can also lead to negative impacts on identity and wanting to dissociate with the athletic identity. Also, it can have a negative impact on certain physical and mental aspects of performance. In contrast, the opportunity to participate in casual leisure activities can have a positive impact on identity and performance. Being able to partake in casual leisure allows participants to return to hockey refreshed and go to games or practices regenerated and ready to put in more effort physically and mentally when performing.

It is important to note that although results are presented in a linear manner in figure 1 it is possible to have some overlap between categories. For example, some of the challenges may have been experienced during the build-up. Participants did not experience these things in a clear-cut fashion, as challenges began to arise during the build-up stage and continued on throughout their career before finally deciding to dropout.

Interestingly, even though participants dropped out rather than retiring, they eventually reconciled with the sport and returned to play in recreational leagues. They now perceive their leisure lifestyle as optimal and possess a multi-dimensional identity rather than a uni-dimensional identity centered on hockey. This has led to a rejuvenated pleasure when playing hockey after dropping out.

While this study used Elkington and Stebbins' (2014) serious leisure as a theoretical framework, it has come to attention that that the dichotomy between serious leisure and casual leisure may not be as evident. Shen and Yarnal (2010) indicted that the line between serious leisure and casual leisure may not be as clear-cut as it once was. There are a number of activities

between the two types that share similar characteristics, which reflects a continuum between serious leisure and casual leisure rather than a dichotomy. This may be interesting for future studies that are applying theoretical frameworks in the field of leisure to their studies.

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Appendix A

Semi-structured interview guide for Dropout in amateur Junior hockey players: Leisure lifestyle and casual leisure's impact on athletic identity, performance and perception of hockey

*Numbers indicate steps to interviewing by Rubin and Rubin (2005)

1) Introduction

- Hello, I'm Brad from the University of Ottawa. I would like to start off by thanking you for agreeing to participate in this study.
- How are you today?
- Anything new and exciting going on in your life?
- Have you been keeping up with any hockey or other sports lately?

2) Background and Serious Leisure Involvement

- What was your involvement in hockey (highest level reached)?
- How important was playing competitive hockey to you (self-enrichment, self-gratification, satisfaction, expression of talent and skills, self-image)
- What were some of the benefits of participating in hockey?
- What was your lifestyle like as an athlete (pros/cons)?
- What was your lifestyle like away from sport?

3/4/5) Dropping out of the Train to Compete Stage

- Please tell us about the process of withdrawing from competitive hockey?
- What were low points leading to the decision to reduce your involvement?
- What specific instance (transition/time/age) in your hockey career did you begin to consider reducing your involvement?
- How did you perceive hockey in general at that time?

Casual Leisure

- What other leisure activities did you have in your life as a competitive athlete (family, friends, association with other member of the team, alone time)?
- What was the role of these activities/people in your hockey career?
- What leisure activities did you do before or on a game day (activities, routines, etc.)
- How did these leisure activities before a match/game day impact your performance specifically (positive impact, negative impact)?

- What aspects of your performance were impacted after participating in these activities?

Identification

- How did you identify yourself when playing competitive hockey?
- How did others recognize and identify you as?
- Did participating in leisure activities outside of hockey ever have an impact on your identity?
- How do you identify yourself today?

Leisure Lifestyle

- What is the difference between your leisure lifestyle now compared to when you were a competitive athlete (pros/cons)?
- Was your leisure lifestyle balanced when playing competitive hockey? Balanced between hockey and the other leisure activities you did.
- How did your leisure lifestyle as an athlete impact your performance?
- Do you think your leisure lifestyle ever had an impact on your identity when playing competitive hockey?
- How did your leisure lifestyle impact your perception of hockey (then/now)?
- What is your involvement in hockey now?
- How do you perceive the sport now?
- Do you think your leisure lifestyle is balanced now?

6) Conclusion

- Would you like to add anything?
- That is all I have to ask for today.
- I hope you enjoyed the experience.
- I would like to thank you again for your participation in this study. It is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

7) Casual Conversation

- So which sport/teams have you been following this year?
- Any plans for the day?

Appendix B

Université d'Ottawa/ University of Ottawa

Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche/Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

This is to confirm that the University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board identified above, which operates in accordance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement (2010) and other applicable laws and regulations in Ontario, has examined and approved the ethics application for the above named research project. Ethics approval is valid for the period indicated above and subject to the conditions listed in the section entitled "Special Conditions / Comments".

During the course of the project, the protocol may not be modified without prior written approval from the REB except when necessary to remove participants from immediate endangerment or when the modification(s) pertain to only administrative or logistical components of the project (e.g., change of telephone number). Investigators must also promptly alert the REB of any changes which increase the risk to participant(s), any changes which considerably affect the conduct of the project, all unanticipated and harmful events that occur, and new information that may negatively affect the conduct of the project and safety of the participant(s). Modifications to the project, including consent and recruitment documentation, should be submitted to the Ethics Office for approval using the "Modification to research project" form available at: <http://www.research.uottawa.ca/ethics/forms.html>.

Please submit an annual report to the Ethics Office four weeks before the above-referenced expiry date to request a renewal of this ethics approval. To close the file, a final report must be submitted. These documents can be found at: <http://www.research.uottawa.ca/ethics/forms.html>.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Office at extension 5387 or by e-mail at: ethics@uOttawa.ca.

Signature:

550, rue Cumberland, pièce 154 550 Cumberland Street, room 154 Ottawa (Ontario) K1N 6N5
Canada Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6N5 Canada (613) 562-5387 • Téléc./Fax (613) 562-5338
www.recherche.uottawa.ca/deontologie/ www.research.uottawa.ca/ethics/

Appendix C

Hello,

I am inviting you to participate in my Master's thesis project titled Dropout in Amateur Athletes: Examining Lifestyle and Identification During a Leisure Career. I am looking to recruit participants who have played hockey and have withdrawn from their pursuit towards a career at elite levels of play. I have selected you as a potential participation, as I believe you are knowledgeable with this topic.

Your participation in this study would consist of taking part in a single individual interview lasting 60-90 minutes approximately. You will also be provided with the chance to review the transcript of your interview. If you are interested in participating, please reply to this email and I will send a consent form with further information on the process your participation in the study.

Your participation in this study would be greatly appreciated. Please contact me if you are interested at bmacc067@uottawa.ca

Thank you

Bradley MacCosham

Texte de recrutement

Bonjour,

Je vous invite à participer au projet de ma thèse de maîtrise intitulé « Le décrochage d'athlètes amateurs: un examen du style de vie et de l'identification au cours d'une carrière de loisirs ». Je cherche à recruter des participants qui ont joué au hockey et se sont retirés de leur quête vers une carrière de niveau élite. Je vous ai sélectionné en tant que participation potentielle, car je crois que vous êtes bien informé à ce sujet.

Votre participation à cette étude consisterait à prendre part à un seul entretien individuel d'environ 60-90 minutes. Vous aurez également la chance d'examiner la transcription de votre entrevue. Si vous souhaitez participer à l'étude, je vous prie de répondre à ce message et je vous enverrai un formulaire de consentement contenant de plus amples renseignements sur votre participation à l'étude.

Votre participation à cette étude serait grandement appréciée. Veuillez me contactez si vous êtes intéressé à bmacc067@uottawa.ca

Merci

Bradley MacCosham

Appendix D

Consent form

University of Ottawa, School of Human Kinetics, Master's Thesis

Invitation to Participate: I am invited to participate in the research study entitled Dropout in Amateur Athletes: Examining Leisure Lifestyle and Identification During a Leisure Career conducted by Bradley MacCosham

Purpose of the Study: I understand that the purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between leisure lifestyle and dropout in amateur athletes, and how it relates to serious leisure identification.

Participation: My participation will consist essentially of taking part in one individual interview lasting approximately 90 minutes during which I will discuss matters related to my area of expertise. The interview will occur at a time and place of my convenience. I understand that the interview will be audio recorded. Once the interview is completed, it will be transcribed and sent by email in a password-protected document so that I may review it and make any necessary adjustments.

Benefits: My participation in this study will allow me to share relevant information to the researcher so once data has been analyzed, the researcher will write a thesis (to publish afterwards in scientific article format). This study will help understand sport career transitions, enduring involvement in sport, enhancing quality of experience in sport, and help participants either attain their dreams of reaching elite sport or help them transition smoothly to another level of involvement in sport. Ultimately, we want participants to have a positive outlook on physical activity and allow individuals to maintain a physically active lifestyle for life.

Confidentiality and Anonymity: I have received assurance from the researcher that the information I will share will remain strictly confidential. Only members of the research group will have access to the data and codes (instead of names) will be used to ensure anonymity. I understand that all identifying information will be removed from quotes (e.g., name of sports team, name of teammate, etc.).

Conservation of data: The data collected (both hard copy and electronic data) will be kept in a secure manner in the thesis supervisor's office. All physical and electronic data will be stored and conserved by the researcher in a locked cabinet in his office on campus for five years following the publication date of the article format of the thesis.

Voluntary Participation: I am under no obligation to participate and if I choose to participate, I may withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions. If I choose to withdraw, all data gathered until the time of withdrawal will be destroyed and not used for any research purposes in the study.

Acceptance: I, _____, agree to participate in the above research study conducted by Bradley MacCosham of the University of Ottawa's School of Human Kinetics, which

research is under the supervision of Dr. Francois Gravelle Ph.D. I understand that by accepting to participate, I am in no way waiving my right to withdraw from the study.

Coordinates: If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the researcher or thesis supervisor professor:

Bradley MacCosham, M.A. (c)
School of Human Kinetics / École des sciences de l'activité physique
Faculty of Health Sciences / Faculté des sciences de la santé
University of Ottawa / Université d'Ottawa
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Francois Gravelle, Ph.D.
Associate Professor / Professeur Agrégé
School of Human Kinetics / École des sciences de l'activité physique
Faculty of Health Sciences / Faculté des sciences de la santé
University of Ottawa / Université d'Ottawa
125 University Private, Montpetit 361
Ottawa, Canada, K1N 6N5
613-562-5800 (2442)
fgravel@uottawa.ca

If I have any ethical concerns regarding my participation in this study, I may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154, (613) 562-5387 or ethics@uottawa.ca. There are two copies of the consent form, one of which is mine to keep.

Participant's signature:

Date:

Researcher's signature:

Date:

Formulaire de consentement

École des sciences de l'activité physique, Université d'Ottawa, Thèse de maîtrise

Invitation à la participation: Je suis invité à participer à l'étude de recherche intitulée « *Dropout in Amateur Athletes: Examining Lifestyle and Identification During a Leisure Career* » par Bradley MacCosham

But de l'Étude: Je comprends que le but de cette étude est d'examiner la relation entre le mode de vie de loisirs et le décrochage d'athlètes amateurs, et l'impact sur l'identification de ces derniers à la pratique d'une carrière en loisir.

Participation: Ma participation consistera essentiellement à participer à un entretien individuel d'environ 90 minutes au cours duquel je vais discuter de questions liées à mon domaine d'expertise. L'entrevue aura lieu à un moment et lieu de mon choix. Je comprends que l'entrevue sera enregistrée sur appareil audio. Une fois l'entrevue terminée, il sera transcrit et me sera envoyé par courriel dans un document protégé par mot de passe afin que je puisse l'examiner et faire les ajustements nécessaires.

Avantages: Ma participation à cette étude va me permettre de partager des informations pertinentes et une fois les données analysées, le chercheur va écrire une thèse (à publier par la suite en format d'article scientifique). Cette étude permettra de comprendre les transitions de carrière sportives, la participation durable dans le sport, contribuera à l'amélioration de la qualité de l'expérience sportive, et aidera les participants à atteindre leurs rêves, soit d'atteindre le sport d'élite ou faire la transition en douceur vers un autre niveau d'implication sportif. En fin de compte, nous voulons que les participants aient un regard positif sur l'activité physique et leur permettre de maintenir un mode de vie actif.

Confidentialité: J'ai reçu l'assurance du chercheur que l'information que je vais partager restera strictement confidentielle. Seuls les membres de l'équipe de recherche auront accès aux données. Des codes (au lieu de noms) seront utilisés pour assurer l'anonymat.

Conservation des données: Les données recueillies (papier et données électroniques) seront conservées de manière sécurisée dans le bureau du directeur de thèse. Toutes les données physiques et électroniques seront stockées et conservées par le chercheur dans une armoire verrouillée dans son bureau sur le campus pendant cinq ans suivant la date de publication du format de l'article de la thèse.

Participation volontaire: Je n'ai aucune obligation de participer et, si je décide de participer, je peux me retirer de l'étude à tout moment et/ou refuser de répondre aux questions. Si je choisis de me retirer, toutes les données recueillies jusqu'à ce temps de retrait seront détruites et ne seront pas utilisées à des fins de recherche dans l'étude.

Acceptation: Je _____, accepte de participer à l'étude de recherche ci-dessus réalisée par Bradley MacCosham de l'École des sciences de l'activité physique. La recherche est sous la supervision de François Gravelle Ph.D. Je comprends qu'en acceptant de participer, je ne renonce pas à mon droit de me retirer de l'étude.

Coordonnées: Si j'ai des questions au sujet de l'étude, je peux communiquer avec le chercheur ou directeur de thèse:

Bradley MacCosham, M.A. (c)
School of Human Kinetics / École des sciences de l'activité physique
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613-562-5800 (2442)
fgravel@uottawa.ca

Si j'ai des préoccupations d'éthiques concernant ma participation à cette étude, je peux communiquer avec le responsable de l'éthique en recherche de l'Université d'Ottawa, 550, rue Cumberland, pièce 154, (613) 562-5387 ou ethics@uottawa.ca. Il y a deux copies du formulaire de consentement, dont l'un est à moi.

Signature du participant:

Date:

Signature du chercheur:

Date: