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THE EFFECT OF SUCCESS ON ELITE ATHLETES' PERFORMANCE: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the effects of success on elite athletes who reached the top in their sport. Individual in-depth interviews were conducted with 17 world champion athletes, representing 7 different sports from 4 different countries. All athletes, 11 male and 6 female subjects had won major international competitions (i.e. World Cup, World Championships or Olympic Games) between the years 1964 and 1988. The number of individual wins ranged from 1 to 86. The results indicate that athletes who won at this level, subsequently experienced many additional demands. Most had little or no assistance in dealing with these demands. Approximately one third of these athletes handled the additional demands well and continued to win. Many of the remaining two thirds did not handle the additional demands well and either never repeated their winning performance or took a significant amount of time to do so. Strategies to help prepare future champions to handle these demands are suggested.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the athletes who freely gave of their time to be interviewed, thereby making this study a reality.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Although winning may be the ultimate goal for elite athletes it may also be the biggest stumbling block for their future success. There are numerous accounts of athletes who have won a major international competition and either never won again or took some time to win again. Success seems to have a price, which often makes continued success more difficult. Many athletes' lives change as a result of their success and many have difficulty repeating their achievement.

This study was an exploration of the success experiences of high profile athletes who reached the top in their sport (i.e. what they experienced, how it affected their lives, their subsequent performances and how well they were able to cope with changes and changed expectations of themselves and others). The subjects were divided into three groups. Group one consisted of athletes who won and continued to stay successful. They were able to remain at the top once they won a major international competition. Group two

consisted of athletes who had a performance decline immediately following their first international win and took over a year to turn things around and reach the top again. Group three was comprised of athletes who only won once during their career and were not able to repeat their successful world-class performance. Extensive individual interviews were conducted with each athlete and subsequently, content analyzed in order to draw out factors related to successful and unsuccessful adaptation.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study was to delve into the personal lives of the high profile athletes interviewed, to go beyond the public image of a star, to see how they personally experienced being at the top and how they coped with the new expectations and experiences. The study was also intended to shed more light on the hypothesis that success breeds failure, that winning adds additional pressures and demands that make repeated winning more difficult than the initial success.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Success

Success refers to winning a major international competition such as the Olympic Games, World Championships or World Cup competition.

International Competition

International competition refers to Olympic Games, World Championships, World Cup meets or the equivalent.

Performance

Performance refers to the carrying out of a particular sport while competing in an international competition.

Elite Athlete

Elite athlete refers to an athlete who has won a major international competition.

Structured Interview

A structured interview refers to a particular format wherein the interviewer asks the same set of questions and presents them in the same manner and order to each subject.

Media Attention

Media attention refers to spending time and energy talking to the press and consequently increasing

public exposure.

Promotional Demands

Promotional demands refers to spending time and energy doing public appearances and commercials, signing autographs and fulfilling sponsor contracts.

Felt Expectations

Felt expectations refers to the presumption that a particular result might occur, both by other people and the athlete.

Motivation

Motivation refers to the force that moves an athlete toward a desired outcome.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A thorough review of the literature made it clear that studies specifically related to the effect of success on high performance athletes were virtually nonexistent. However, a limited number of studies have been conducted on the mental preparation of elite athletes which provide useful information and insights that are indirectly related to the scope of this study. Some sport psychology books and personal autobiographies also provided some relevant information.

I Sport Research Articles

Much of the attention in high performance sport is geared towards winning, and often that means winning at all costs. The pursuit of a lifelong athletic goal often means sacrificing other areas of life, whether it be education, a future career, other interests, or future health, in the case of drugs or injury. It is ironic that so much attention is given to the process of winning while so little is spent on the consequences of that success on the individual.

Mahoney & Avener (1977), in looking at the Psychology of Elite Athletes, found that there were differences in the way successful Olympic gymnastic contenders coped with competitive stress. Successful gymnasts were not only physically more capable than less successful gymnasts, they were also more capable mentally. Meyers et al. (1979) found successful competitors to be more self-confident and to have more imagery containing successful performances. He also noted that they could control and utilize competitive anxiety more effectively than their less successful counterparts. In a study on behavior states of world-class wrestlers, oarsmen and marathoners, Morgan (1974) found that the successful elite athletes tended to be less anxious, depressed and confused and to possess more athletic vigor. Highlen & Bennett (1979), as well as Rotella, Gansneder, Ojala & Billing (1980) found that better skiers perceived themselves as closer to reaching their maximum potential. They also noted that these skiers openly admitted their weaknesses and designed their training programs to meet those needs. In follow-up interviews with the more successful skiers it was learned that although they thought about their weaknesses, they did it in a

corrective-rehearsal nature as opposed to worrying about weaknesses. In addition, the better skiers tended to focus on the difficult sections of a race course when planning strategies for the race, suggesting that positive thinking without planning a strategy is not enough.

Orlick & Partington (1988) conducted an extensive interview study that assessed the level of mental readiness and mental control experienced by Canadian athletes at the 1984 Olympic Games. The results indicated that the most successful athletes practiced quality training, used simulation training, set daily goals and had well developed mental imagery skills. They were also the best prepared mentally for competition, having a competition focus plan, a systematic means of evaluating their performance as well as excellent strategies for dealing with distractions.

There were also athletes interviewed who were expected to do well and wanted to do well, yet failed to perform to their potential. Three major performance blocks were identified. The first one involved changing patterns that had been successful in the past. Some athletes dramatically increased their

training load for the Olympic year, while others adopted totally foreign training programs, and continued to do heavy work right up to the Games. This, combined with the stress of the Olympics, left many physically exhausted and mentally drained. Changes were also made in game plans which put athletes in unfamiliar patterns that had not been practiced. In some cases, coaches changed their preevent input, creating an unfamiliar and uncomfortable distraction for some athletes.

Another identified block was that of late selections. In some cases, athletes were not able to prepare adequately because they did not know they were on the team until one week before the Games.

The third block was getting "blown away" by distractions. The athletes had prepared for the competition but had failed to prepare for all the distractions and consequently lost their focus.

Following up on selected Olympic champions, one and two years following the 1984 Olympics, it was noted by Orlick & Partington (1988) that several of them failed to continue to perform to capacity. As a result of their Olympic achievement they suddenly had to deal with additional distractions which left them

with less quality rest time. They ended up feeling physically and mentally drained when it came time to perform.

In a recent paper by Scanlan, Stein & Ravizza (1988), an interview format was used to look at the sources of stress felt by former elite figure skaters. Stress was defined as negative emotions, feelings, and thoughts, relevant to the participants' skating experience. These would include feelings of apprehension, anxiety, muscle tension, nervousness, physical reactions (such as butterflies in the stomach, shaking, nervous sweating), thoughts centered on worry, self-doubt and negative statements to yourself. The results of the study revealed five major sources of stress: 1) Negative aspects of competition 2) Negative significant other relationships 3) Demands/costs of skating 4) Personal struggles 5) Traumatic experiences.

The skaters tended to worry about "letting others down" by not performing up to their expectations. They were also afraid of losing to a rival or falling in front of a crowd. They felt that being a skater required a constant need to work hard. Personal concerns as well as worrying about the results added

to the stress. Getting along with coaches and peers, the politics of skating, "psychological warfare" on the team, the extremely high cost of skating as well as the time commitment involved in the hours of training, were other areas of stress.

The results of this study indicated that young elite figure skaters live with a significant amount of stress in their lives and that being at the top in one's field increases demands and expectations, as well as the amount of stress.

Many high level athletes have said that living up to expectations adds increased pressure. This contradicts much of the literature on expectancy theory. The relationship between confidence and performance was explored in depth by Bandura (1977) in his theory of self-efficacy, which is defined as the strength of an individual's conviction that they can successfully execute a behavior required to produce a certain outcome. The strength of an individual's feelings of self-efficacy will likely affect whether of not they will even try to cope with a given situation. Individuals who doubt their abilities to overcome a challenge will reduce their efforts whereas those with a strong sense of self-efficacy will try

harder in the face of adversity.

Weinberg, Yukelson & Jackson (1980) related this theory to a sport setting, looking at the effect of public vs. private expectations and found little difference between the two. Bandura (1979), on the other hand, found that public commitment of efficacy judgement placed pressure within an individual for consistency in performance.

Self-efficacy cognitions are proposed by Bandura to have motivational effects. Other studies have shown increases in self-efficacy expectations to be positively related to increases in the quality of sport performance (Feltz et al., 1979; Weinberg, Yukelson & Jackson, 1979).

The results of two consecutive studies showed that participants with higher specific expectancies for winning each upcoming match, experienced lower precompetition stress and were more frequently victorious, than those with lower prematch performance expectancies (Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1984; Scanlan, Lewthwaite & Jackson, 1984). In a more recent study by Scanlan & Lewthwaite (1985) it was found that the relationship between perceived ability and specific expectancies aligns with previous research (Scanlan &

Passer, 1979, 1981) showing actual ability to be a predictor of specific performance expectancies. This study, as well as previous studies (Scanlan & Passer, 1979, 1981), demonstrated that histories of outcome success-failure predict participants' performance expectancies. However, none of these studies have dealt with athletes who have reached the top in their sport and none have done in-depth interviews to determine how athletes view this assumed relationship.

My own experience as an Olympic champion as well as subsequent informal discussions with many high level athletes, tells me that when athletes speak about feeling the pressures of expectations, what they are really saying is that they are becoming outcome oriented as opposed to process oriented. A study by Orlick & Partington (1988) has shown that athletes who performed best at the 1984 Olympic Games were process or task oriented. Athletes who were overly concerned with results, the audience, or what the media was saying, lost the proper focus and consequently performed below their expectations. Expectations are not negative in themselves, rather, it is how they are perceived that is important and whether they interfere with one's best performance focus. Further probing

with elite athletes in this area would shed more light on this matter.

In accordance with the expectancy theories, Leith (1988) found that athletes who were expected to "choke" (inability to perform up to previously exhibited standards) under pressure, were more likely to do so, than those who were presented with positive, confident expectancies. Even the mere mention of the word "choke" resulted in significantly poorer performance. He concluded that coaches, teammates and the media would do the athletes a great service if they could refrain from making such negative suggestions.

A study looking at peak experiences of athletes, conducted by Ravizza (1977), found many similarities to Maslow's (1968) description of peak performance. Athletes were totally attentive to their task, completely connected to the experience, with no awareness of time and space. Some athletes reported feeling in total control of the situation, which is similar to Maslow's account of being Godlike. The athletes felt like their performance was effortless and perfect. Fears were unapparent.

According to Maslow, peak experiences in sport are not unlike peak experiences of healthy people when performing or listening to a musical composition, or a mother engrossed in watching her child at play, or "being hit" by a book or painting. Self-actualized people have reached a high level of maturation, health, and self-fulfillment, even if for only a brief moment or moments in time. During these moments he is closer to actualizing his own potential, where he is more integrated, open for experience, more expressive or spontaneous, creative, humorous, more independent of his lower needs, etc. (Maslow, 1962).

Maslow (1962) also mentions positive aftereffects of peak experiences, as changing a person's view of himself in a healthy direction. They can also change a person's view of other people and his relationship to them, as well as his view of the world. They allow him to become more creative, spontaneous and expressive and to seek the repetition of these experiences. Life in general is considered to be more worthwhile. Not everyone however, experiences these positive aftereffects.

A common response by people during and after peak experiences, has been a feeling of being lucky,

fortunate and graced. Because these peaks often happen by their own design and are not always planned, people may respond by saying "I don't deserve this." These self-actualized people, not taking full credit for their luck, solve their dichotomy between pride and humility by fusing them together. "This gratitude enables us to integrate within one skin the hero and the humble servant" (Maslow, 1962, p. 107).

Results of Privette's (1981) study looking at the phenomenology of peak performance in sport, also support the previous research. The athletes experienced a clear focus with all their attention and energies channeled in the same direction. The focus was spontaneous and unrestrained, where motions flowed smoothly together. They also possessed a strong will to reach a desired result, and prior interest and fascination was extremely important to their peak experience.

In summary, much of the sport research literature concludes that successful elite athletes have well developed mental skills (Mahoney & Avener, 1977). They are able to control their anxieties and to think clearly in pressure situations (Morgan, 1974). They are more likely to reach their potential than their

less successful counterparts (Rotella, Gansneder, Ojala & Billing, 1980). It was also found that successful athletes were faced with increased distractions which caused them to lose their winning focus and to become mentally and physically drained (Orlick & Partington, 1988).

The expectancy theories support the notion that, the higher an athlete's conviction that a given result might occur, the more likely it will (Bandura, 1977). The conviction also decreased precompetition stress (Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1984). The more doubt an individual had, the less they would try to achieve. On the other hand, public commitment of a particular result placed increased pressure within the individual to perform consistently well (Bandura, 1979). In addition, athletes who were focused on the outcome and not the task at hand performed below their potential (Orlick & Partington, 1988).

An athlete's peak performance in sport was found to be similar to peak experiences described by Maslow (Ravizza, 1977), where an individual was totally connected to the experience, in control of the situation and without fear. Their motions flowed smoothly together and they were committed to their

goal (Privette, 1981).

II Other Related Literature

There are numerous anecdotal accounts of the difficulty highly successful people have had dealing with success. The following section is a review of personal accounts and autobiographies of successful athletes and performers who reached the top in their field.

Another source of stress exists for athletes when they are led to believe that their self-worth is dependent on being ranked at the top in their sport. When they are no longer ranked, they are left with the feeling of emptiness and insignificance. Feeling they are nothing, without their status as an athlete is a very difficult thing to cope with, and adds to the pressure to perform (Orlick, 1980).

As alpine skier Steve Podborski said in his personal autobiography (1987), "You've got to watch the star-trip syndrome. You read in the papers that you're great, people start telling you you're great, and you start thinking you're great. If you start believing it you're dead meat. You've got to separate the media personality from the reality" (p.113). Podborski also referred to the vast amount of media

attention he and his successful teammates had to contend with while competing at the Lake Placid Olympics in 1980. Not having some kind of organized structure to handle the media resulted in very stressful and unnecessary situations for the athletes. Other demands which were inflicted upon their already demanding timetable included invitations to numerous official functions that were normally not part of their routine. Podborski stated that the team got quite stressed by all the Olympic distractions.

When Steve Podborski won the overall World Cup downhill title, one of the highest achievements in alpine skiing, he suffered what many successful people experience after a great accomplishment, a decline in performance. He felt the responsibility and the effort of trying to live up to the public was largely responsible for his post-title state. He also felt conflicting emotions between the roles of being Steve Podborski the famous ski racer and Steve Podborski the boy from Don Mills, Ontario, trying to live up to what others perceived him to be.

Although success had bred success, Steve felt that success can also breed failure. Winning had brought on many new pressures, such as dealing with

the media and the public. It meant spending less time training, to meet the demands of the team suppliers. The fact that most downhill skiers win the title only once during their careers may be influenced by some of the additional stress factors mentioned by Podborski. Perhaps also, some did not feel winning was worth all the negatives that went along with it.

The women alpine skiers on the World Cup circuit have also discovered that stardom has a flip side, that success breeds pressure. There is added pressure from the media and sponsors, as well as expectations to live up to, especially when competing in front of hometown crowds. In a sport where the top 10 finishers are separated by fractions of a second, their ability to handle pressures, especially Olympic pressures, often makes the difference between medals and misery, according to Canadian national team coach, Currie Chapman. Lucrative endorsements have also meant increased pressure on the skiers. No longer is it just the skier skiing down the mountain, but it's also a bank, a restaurant chain, or a sports store. Laurie Graham, Canada's favorite to bring home a medal in alpine skiing at the Calgary Olympics admitted that her greatest pressure was being and staying at the

top. "Once you've won, you then have to live with the potentially lethal expectation of being consistently near perfect" (Laurie Graham in Weston, 1987, p. 60). Another one of Canada's successful ski racers came off a strong season including a win and a second place overall in one of the disciplines, only to find that the pressure was getting the better of her, and her results had decreased considerably (Weston, 1987).

There are other examples as well. One such example took place at a women's singles match in the $60,000 Tennis Week Open at the Orange Lawn Tennis Club in New Jersey:

> Cathy Beene said her problems began when she knew she could win. "The first game, I wasn't nervous."..."Then when I realized I could beat her, I got nervous." Miss Beene became so nervous that she served 11 double faults ("more than I've ever served in my life") and lost, 6-0, 6-2, to the 42-year-old Dr. Richards. (Amdur, 1976, p.1)

After winning the Olympic Gold medal in the 500 meter canoe race and the silver in the 1000 metre race, Larry Cain, looking back with hindsight said that he was not prepared for what comes after winning. He felt that was an area he needed to work on, to have

the mind set of winning rather than just focusing on getting to the top. "It seemed a little premature before the Olympics to worry about what comes after winning but I know now we are going to have to learn to deal with ourselves, after a performance like that, so we are ready to come back the next day" (Larry Cain in Orlick & Partington, 1986, p. 50).

After Debbie Brill became a great high jumper she was surprised by other people's reaction to her success. She said to herself, "This is wrong, people should not treat me like this. I don't want to be singled out. This isn't the way that anybody should look at another person" (Brill & Lawton, 1986, p. 35).

The pressure athletes experience at the top is not unlike the pressure felt by successful performers in other fields. Michael Jackson wrote about the side effects of fame in his recent autobiography, Moonwalk, (1988). He stated how the pressure of success does funny things to people, especially when success happens very quickly. They don't know how to handle what happens to them. He found the hardest part was having no privacy. During the time of his biggest hit, "Thriller", he grew wearisome of being in the public eye. He also stated that success definitely

brings on loneliness. He longed to be treated like a normal person, to meet someone who didn't know who he was and who would be a friend because they liked him, not because of who he was. He did not know if he liked being famous, but he did enjoy achieving his goals.

Many athletes have had a difficult time dealing with their success. There are numerous accounts of athletes who never really adjusted back into "normal" life after retiring from a successful athletic career. James Michener (1976) in his book, Sports in America, reported finding "One statistic after another which supported the thesis that sports are an ascent of greatness followed by a sickening drop to oblivion" (p. 286). An analysis of ninety former boxing champions who had earned more than $100,000 at a time when that amount of money was substantial, revealed that they were now working in taverns, or as unskilled laborers, or as janitors, or as helpers around gas stations. Not one had a substantial job.

Many of these examples support the ancient sayings about the wheel of fortune, which treats those who aspire to its' rim, to the heights of success and the depths of failure. Many ancient traditions have

referred to the formula. The Chinese philosopher, Lao-tzu stated; "Failure is the foundation of success; success the lurking-place of failure" (Tao-te-Ching: Section 58). The Spanish playwright Pierre Corneille said the same in Cinna (1639, act 2): "Ambition, having reached the summit, longs to descend". When Saul Bello accepted the Nobel Prize in literature, he quoted the Bible in his speech: "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you!" (Luke 6:25). In Isaiah (10:2-6): it is stated, "I will punish...the glory of his high looks. For he says, by the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom... therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of hosts, send among his fat ones, leanness". It is quite possible that one of the greatest obstacles to overcome is this sense of false pride. As many high profile people inferred, it is an easy trap to fall into. Perhaps one of the greatest strengths of the Swiss ski star, Pirmin Zurbriggen is his humble nature. He says, "Being a champion doesn't mean I have to lead the life of a rock star" (Johnson, 1988, p. 47).

In "The Catastrophe of Success", author Tennesee Williams (1945) relates his sudden rise into fame and fortune with the tremendous critical acclaim of The

Glass Menagerie on Broadway:

> The sort of life which I had had previous to this popular success was one that required endurance, a life of clawing and scratching along a sheer surface and holding on tight with raw fingers to every inch of rock higher than the one caught hold of before, but it was a good life because it was the sort of life for which the human organism is created. I was not aware of how much vital energy had gone into this struggle until the struggle was removed. I was out on a level plateau with my arm still thrashing and my lungs still grabbing at air that no longer resisted. This was security at last. I sat down and looked about me and was suddenly very depressed. (p. 15)

In summary, from the opinions of successful athletes and performers, it is apparent that success does carry consequences. From ancient time to the present, success has often been followed by failure. We know that success brings fame and with it conflicting roles as a public and a private individual. How a person deals with the roles will determine their future success. Success increases

demands, especially at major events. It also increases pressure on the individual to perform, including expectations to live up to. Preparing athletes for the aftereffects of winning at the elite level is an area that has been overlooked in the past. Getting to the top is only half the battle. It would appear that staying consistently at the top requires a different strategy.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODS

Overview of the Project Design

This study was exploratory in nature. It attempted to explore and describe what elite, high profile athletes experienced as a result of high level success and how they dealt with the consequences of being at the top in their field. Extensive interviews were conducted with 17 elite amateur and professional athletes, 12 retired and 5 still actively competing, to determine whether there were factors related to successful adaptation evidenced by athletes who were able to maintain the same high level of performance after their initial success. The interviews were designed to draw out individual coping strategies used by the more successful athletes as well as the types of demands they were faced with.

METHOD

Subject Selection

Subjects interviewed for this study included 17 elite athletes who had won at least one major international competition such as the Olympics, World

Championships or World Cup competition. Eleven of the subjects were male, 6 were female. One subject was a professional athlete who had played in a team sport. The remainder were amateur athletes from individual Olympic sports. Seven sports were represented and athletes were citizens of 4 different western countries. The majority of subjects, 11, were alpine skiers. The number of wins ranged from 1 to 86 World Cup, World Championship or Olympic victories between the years 1964 and 1988. All subjects continued to compete for at least one year after their first major international win.

The subjects were divided into three groups based on continued level of performance. Group one continued to stay successful upon reaching the top in their sport. Groups two and three had a performance decline immediately following their initial success. Group two was able to return to the top after a year of disappointing results, while group three never regained their winning form. The following table is a profile of the subjects.

Table 1

Athlete Profile

Country	#	Sport	#	Average Age: Time of Win	Total # of Wins (Average Wins)
		Group One			
Canada	5	Alpine Skiing	3	24.5	131
Sui.	1	Speed Skating	1		(18.7)
Sweden	1	Synchro. Swim.	1		
		Hockey	1		
		Bob Sleigh	1		
		Group Two			
Canada	5	Alpine Skiing	4	21	35
Sui.	1	Diving	1		(5.8)
		Canoe	1		
		Group Three			
Canada	3	Alpine Skiing	4	22	4
USA	1				(1)

Instruments

An Elite Athlete Performance Interview Guide (see Appendix B) was developed, based upon an adaptation of the interview schedule used successfully by Orlick & Partington (1988). This open-ended, in-depth interview schedule was designed to elicit qualitative information about each athlete's own perspective of their experience of success. It consisted of 11 questions, investigating the athlete's specific experiences following a major successful accomplishment and how it affected their life. Before implementing the research, an interview apprenticeship was first conducted with the researcher's advisor, who had extensive research background in the interview process as well as a strong athletic background. The interview guide was tested in a pilot study utilizing elite athletes. The interviews were tape recorded in order to receive feedback from the advisor. This was followed by a detailed discussion about the interview process and the interview guide.

The researcher was highly experienced in the domain of research, having 10 years experience on a National team, including winning an Olympic Gold medal. All interviews were taped in their entirety

and later transcribed.

Design

The interview format allowed the researcher to gain in-depth information relevant to the individual coping strategies of highly successful athletes. The interview format was chosen for the following reasons:

a) Interviews provide an opportunity for the open searching and probing necessary to explore new topics.

b) Interviews enable the investigator to learn and understand the terms athletes use in their field.

c) Interviews scheduled at the athlete's convenience increase the likelihood they will participate in the study. (Orlick & Partington, 1988)

Through a face to face meeting, the investigator was able to gain cooperation more readily from busy high profile athletes, acquire more in-depth information, ask clarifying questions and ultimately gain deeper understanding of the athletes' perspective.

Procedure

In most cases, individual interviews were arranged either in person or by telephone. The

researcher knew most of the athletes personally and was able to schedule interviews by contacting the athlete directly when they were in the area for competition or on vacation. In other cases, the researcher was able to travel to meet athletes at their homes.

By utilizing the Elite Athlete Performance Interview Guide, the focused interviews followed a standardized approach. This allowed for as much uniformity as possible in the procedure. In addition, typed transcripts were returned to selected athletes for their review. In each case, they confirmed that what was recorded was in fact an accurate account of their personal views and experiences.

Data Analysis

Typed verbatim interview transcripts were qualitatively analyzed. Initially the researcher read and reread the transcripts to identify categories related to the athletes' responses. Each interview question was broken down to identify common themes among the athletes' responses. Individual quotes were used to support the categories. The researcher's advisor then reviewed the categories, also looking for common themes within the quotes. Quotes were

clarified by referring to the context of the interviews. Revisions were made where necessary. The two researchers then agreed upon the same set of categories.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The following section is based upon the qualitative analysis of interview transcripts of World Champions, Olympic Champions and World Cup winners from different sports. The results were organized as follows. The first category, 1) Preevent Winning Focus, discussed the common focus these exceptional athletes carried into their first major win. All the athletes were treated as one group in this category. In the following category, 2) Within Event Winning Focus, the athletes were categorized into 3 groups based upon their subsequent level of performance. From this point on the subjects were treated as 3 groups, unless otherwise noted. It was of interest to the researcher to then make a comparison between the athletes' winning focus and their subsequent competition focus. Differences between the groups were made using representative quotes to support the comparisons. The results then examined the goals the athletes made, and rated the relative difficulty staying at the top. They also extensively examined

the demands the athletes were faced with, how well they dealt with the demands and recommendations the athletes had for others who might face a similar situation. For those who were able to stay at the top, they commented on how they were able to maintain their level of performance.

Preevent Winning Focus

In assessing how these world champion athletes were focused prior to the start of their first major international win, it was found that all athletes, whether they achieved the same level of success again or not, had very similar patterns of mental readiness. The athletes' preevent "winning" focus was divided into two main categories, based upon their individual responses. These categories included,
1a) Belief Plus Focus on Task and 1b) Belief Plus Extra Boost, and 2) More Relaxed Than Usual.

1a) Belief Plus Focus on Task

It was found that prior to their first world-class win, 56% of the athletes had two major mental factors working in their favor. 1) They were very confident, having a strong belief in their ability to perform at the top level. 2) Their preevent focus was centered on preparing to carry out

their task effectively. They were very positive with themselves, used mental imagery to visualize their optimum performance, dealt with their feelings constructively and focused on the best course to follow for their upcoming moves.

* "I was not so concerned about what was going on around me. We were so focused on what we were doing. We had been training on the mind set of being number one. Our training was a lot more intense, focused and goal specific. I do a lot of mental rehearsal and I think we really applied it there. We practiced for distractions. Competition simulation is a big part of our training."

* "I was enjoying myself and changed my attitude to a positive one. I wanted to do it. I'm doing it for myself now. Nobody is pushing me to do this. I was feeling confident with myself and that I belonged among the world elite. I never put pressure on myself. I was focused on myself, thinking of my performance, really concentrating on what I had to do. I don't like to compete against everybody else. I felt a lot more in charge of what I was doing. Everything was planned."

* "I was really focused on getting off the starting line well, then getting into a stroke that was really powerful but also very light, really feeling the rhythm of my strokes and feeling the boat move well underneath me. I knew I was feeling good and I knew I could win. I think the big thing was my approach, being very aggressive and confident at the starting line, taking it early and just holding on. I wanted really badly to beat the Hungarians and the East Germans."
* "Within myself, from the time I was ten, I was going to do exactly what I did. I never did anything ever to jeopardize my performance. There's no other way than to be totally focused. Just give me one more shift. I knew I was going to do it. I always imagined what I was going to do."
* "I had the confidence to know I could withstand the pressure because we just had our best result ever the week before: fourth. We were expected to win, unless I cracked. I expected us to win too. You go into a vacuum at that point and just stay to yourself and do whatever, just to keep your head together. I was ready for it. There was no question in my mind that psychologically I could handle it because it's

basically a sport of precision and nerves."

* "Two days before I came second in the slalom. That gave me a lot of confidence. I was all pumped up. I prepared for the race by concentrating on the course, staying calm and not worrying about who I was going to beat."

* "I had a good feeling, very confident and was very focused on the course. I was 4th, 5th and 3rd coming into this competition."

* "We had really good fall training without a lot of pressure. We had the philosophy we were number two and we wanted to try harder. I knew I could win. The way I do my focusing actually starts the night before. When I was preparing my equipment I'd be thinking about different parts of the course, mentally rehearsing the course in detail, imagining what I would do if this happened in this turn. In the morning I would run over the course once or twice in my mind."

* "The races before the Olympics I would get to the bottom and say just give me one more shot and I know I can do it this time. I felt so close, like I was there. When I got to the Olympics, one thing that was running through my mind at the start was, don't get to

the bottom and wish you had a second chance. The day before the race I was really confident. I made a $50.00 bet with my coach that I would win a medal. I wouldn't say I was relaxed before the start but I wasn't nervous. I didn't plan to win but I was confident I would do alright: first, second or third. I knew I was good enough, that if I put everything together I could win. But I wasn't really thinking that. I was thinking put it all together."

1b) Belief Plus Extra Boost

Nineteen percent of the athletes felt their success that day was related to an exceptional feeling of confidence, (i.e. having a strong belief in themselves), plus a little added incentive in that competition, such as the excitement of competing in a big event, or in an exotic country, discovering a new advantage, or competing at home. In answering this question their responses centered primarily on their sense of preevent confidence. They tended not to discuss their preevent task focus as did the first group.

* "The talent was there already, I was in the first group and knew I could do well. I had never really seriously aspired to win one. It was just that day

that gave me the added kick and yet I didn't have to tell anyone I was really trying. If I didn't win, it wouldn't have been a failure, yet in my own mind I said I've got to win this. I felt the duty to fill in the gap and be a Canadian winner. I had the security of knowing I didn't have to win and yet if I could win it would kind of save the day. There wasn't the pressure but an added motivation."

* "The day before I had just missed out on being on the podium. The next day I'd been going well in training and our coach set the race course. I had that confidence, like there was not going to be any surprises. I even said to my rep., I'm going to win today. It was so clear in my mind that today was going to be a good day. I felt strong and upbeat about being in Japan. I felt very, very confident."

* "I was in this new position trying to prove something: first seed. There was some pressure to prove that I belonged there. Warming up, everything was flowing nicely together, things were clicking. I was feeling good, confident about my skills. I had no time to get thrown off balance before leaving the start because I was late and rushed at the start."

* "Plus I had this great new wax. I knew I had a bit of a boost."
* "I like big events. I wanted to feel everything that had to do with the Olympics. I really wanted to experience what it was like to compete in the Olympics. I wanted to feel that pressure."

2) More Relaxed Than Usual

Twenty-five percent of the respondents felt their first world-class win was facilitated by being more relaxed than they had been in previous competitions. They either didn't expect to win or were able to shift their focus away from winning, in this particular competition.

* "I was more relaxed because I was sick and didn't think it was possible to have good results. I didn't even want to start. I had been second four times the season before."
* "I had finished second, three times. I didn't think I could win at this race. I was relaxed and didn't make any mistakes."
* "I had been training really well. It got to a point where I just said it really isn't that important how well I do. I was a lot more relaxed. I was 5th and 4th in the races just before."

* "The coach took me aside the night before to tell me to relax and not to be so hard on myself. I remember being really aware of everything, really sharp and alert. I planned to just do my best in that race."

Three Groups of Winners

The remainder of the results are presented separately, as three distinct groups, based upon consistency of top world-class performance. Group one is comprised of 7 athletes who continued to win during the year, after they made it to the top of the world in their sport. The number of wins at the World Cup/World Championship level for individuals in this group ranged from 3 to 86. Group two consisted of 6 athletes who had a performance decline immediately after their first world cup, or equivalent win and took at least a year to turn things around and win at that level again. Group three was comprised of 4 athletes who continued to compete after their first world cup win, but never won again.

Within Event Winning Focus

The athletes were asked to recall how they were focused during their first world title performance. Their responses were divided into three main

categories, 1) Auto-Pilot, 2) Attacking and 3) Focused on Feeling. Sixty percent of all the subjects stated that they were on "auto-pilot" during this performance. Twenty percent of the subjects said they were in an attacking mode, trying to get the most out of each move. The remaining 20% of the subjects mentioned that they were very tuned into how everything was feeling. They felt everything flowing together and really clicking.

Group One

It is interesting to note that all of the athletes in group one, comprised of the most consistent world cup winners, mentioned feeling like everything was happening automatically during the competition (auto-pilot). They didn't have to think about what they were doing. It was as if they were in a trance-like or totally connected state.

* "I really fuzzed out the audience and focused in during the performance. The routine goes by so fast. You know exactly what you have to do. It's so automatic. When it's right on, you can really feel each other."

* "Everything should be natural and by instinct. I remember feeling light. When I feel light on my feet

like a cat, with quick reflexes, I know I'm in my own game."

* "You're totally involved ahead and you sort of feel that horse start to gallop underneath you. If you concentrate on what's happened, you've had it. It's got to be gone. You like to get the sled into a position of a runaway truck, that the sled was just taking over and I was riding it down and just handling it for the second half of every corner."

* "I can't remember what I was thinking going down the course during a winning performance but I can certainly remember when I under performed, when I was really distracted going down."

* "I don't remember what I was thinking about going down the hill. In races where I did really well, I don't remember anything. I'm just like in another world, just skiing. I don't have to think about my body position, about my skiing or about the course. When I ski really well, everything comes automatically."

Group Two

Fifty percent of group two said they were focused on how everything was feeling. Thirty-three percent said they were in an attacking mode and 17% felt

everything was happening automatically.

* "Everything was flowing really nicely together, things were clicking. I was feeling good. You're finishing off your turn, you're feeling really confident on your skis. I ran a good race and everything clicked within the race."
* "I didn't know how I was doing (on the scoreboard). I was reading, listening to music and enjoying myself when I wasn't performing."
* "I can remember how I skied in this race, really well. I felt really strong and saw that I could attack from one gate to another and to the finish. I had a good feeling and was very focused on the course."
* "Everything flows and I just let them go. I felt very aware of everything, like I was outside my body watching all this stuff going on and my body was just taking over and skiing really fast."
* "I was really focused on getting off the starting line well then getting into a good stroke that was really powerful but also very light - really feeling the rhythm of my strokes and feeling the boat move well underneath me."

* "The way I went down the hill it was just very, very aggressive. I was actually saying swear words in my mind, anger almost, just determination. I was not really thinking skiing that much, it was just get to the bottom as fast as you can and make up the mistake that my teammate made."

Group three

Seventy-five percent of the athletes in group three were on auto-pilot during their successful competition while 25% were in an attacking mode.

* "On the way down, during the run I was thinking, got to do it now. I had never been in a race where I thought, give it a little more at each gate. I didn't feel the pressure. On the course the thing that came in mind the most was, don't get to the bottom and wish you had had a second chance. I thought, you're almost there, just give it more all the way down. I thought of looking ahead but nothing technical."

* "Usually I have an intense concentration when I am on the course. I am really focused on what is coming up and what I am doing. Here I said it doesn't matter. I'll just get in the course and try not to think about it too much. I knew what I wanted to do but I was just skiing at the same time. I know right

away when things are working and it was right on at that point, I could do anything. I knew that I was going to carve a turn through and there was no fear of the skis sliding or whatever. It was just all clicking for me."

* "This feels so good. I was so caught up in how it felt. I wasn't thinking about anything else except that everything was easy and fun and I couldn't do it any better. I was thinking consistency and keeping it fun. I was calculating ahead rather than what was behind me and there was nothing that was going to surprise me."

* "I went by emotion. Some turns would be mechanical but every now and again I would check in on my technique, momentarily scanning the body for the right position. Then I'd just be looking ahead and getting the input of the course. You can't spend time dwelling on any one thing."

Subsequent Goals

All but one athlete set subsequent goals after winning their first major international competition. For some, their subsequent goal was to do their best, for others to defend their position, and prove they belonged at the top, or to have consecutive wins.

There was no difference between the three groups.

Group One

* "After I won my first medal I wanted to be the first person to win three medals in the same Olympics."
* "We had to prove we were the right pair together."
* "During that series, my job was to keep my opponent off the score board. In a defensive role the object is to keep yourself between the player and the net."
* "It was my goal to win but I didn't think I could win because I had been second so many times. After I won I made goals to win again."
* "My first goal was to defend, which we did. I wanted to prove to myself that it wasn't a fluke."
* "I want always to give my best."

Group Two

* "I had a motivational crisis. What do you do now? You've achieved what you aimed for. Now you've reached your goal of winning a World Cup race and it took a couple of days to realize now your goal is to win two. My next goal was proving I belonged in the first group and that it wasn't a fluke. It took two and a half years to win another race."

* "I always had goals. I really like to have short term goals and long term goals. My goal is not always to win. I want to perform well, as best I can."
* "My next goal was to ski well in the World Championships."
* "After my first win, I didn't really have another goal to win another World Cup race. I never really had a goal to win over the whole season."
* "I set new goals to have consecutive wins or more wins or maybe a World Cup title."
* "I wanted then to beat the Hungarians and East Germans at the World Championships that year."

Group Three

* "Then I wanted to win again and again. All that mattered to me was winning, which was obviously the wrong approach. Anything less than winning was total disappointment."
* "I wasn't that prepared to maintain that same level of performance, because we had been focusing on winning. It took a while to pull that into perspective. The goal of winning was always there but once you are at the top there are things that have to be done a little differently."

* "I set new goals. My goal was never to win but to place well but I felt like I knew how good I was. I was very realistic. That gave me lots of confidence."
* "My goal is always to win."

Subsequent Competition Focus After First Major Win: Before and During Performance

The subjects were asked how they were focused at the competition immediately following their first major win. It was found that athletes in group one were very confident in their ability to win again and were very focused on the job or were on "auto-pilot". They kept the same focus they had during their previous win.

The responses from the other two groups, who did not win the next competition they entered, can be divided into four categories, those who were 1) outcome oriented, 2) focused on high expectations, 3) were not as clear minded and 3) tried too hard. Twenty-one percent claimed to have been focused on the outcome instead of being totally connected to their performance. Twenty-one percent were expecting too much from themselves and were too focused on theirs' and others' expectations to win again. Twenty-one percent felt they were just not as clear minded coming

into and during their performance as they had been when they won. Eleven percent felt they tried too hard in the next competition and subsequently performed worse, made errors or fell.

Athletes in group one were not affected by these distracting factors and consequently were able to maintain their ideal focus. None of the athletes in group two and three focused the same way they had during their previous win. They all changed their focus in one way or another and consequently had substandard performances.

Group One

* "I had the same focus in my next competition. I was very confident from doing well in the previous competition and was relaxed because I had already done well. I went on to win everything that year. My confidence was very high."
* "I had a head cold and couldn't train. I just did a lot of mental imagery and stayed positive instead of thinking, I'm not ready. We won. I always did better when I focused on doing my best and not on the results."
* "I knew I was going to do it. I was never so relaxed in my life as that whole series, each and

every game."

* "I won 6 or 7 races that season. I was nervous almost every race. To deal with it I always came late to the start so I had to hurry up. I had to do something with the boots to keep me away from thinking about the course."

* "I know what I can do. It's not a question of nervousness. Everything has to be right, your condition, equipment, the weather and your start number."

Group Two

* "I was definitely more nervous in the next race. I knew there was a whole bunch of focus on me. Focus was on the outcome, trying to prove something rather than skiing well, which had been the focus the first time around and the whole previous year."

* "I was expecting too much of myself. I was just going with the pressure. I was saying I have to win this competition. I was thinking a lot more of the other people instead of what I have to do now. I was thinking a lot about the outcome."

* "The next race I had some problems. Sometimes I skied very well and sometimes I skied very bad. I didn't have a good feeling. I was too aggressive. I

couldn't imagine how I should ski. I would lose a bit in all the turns. I skied too hard."

* "The next race I did really poorly. The focus wasn't the same as the win. I didn't really want to win it, I wanted to do really well. Maybe I was a little too confident, thinking I am on a roll. In a good race my mind was really clear. In poorer races I seemed to be concerned about everything around me. Everything kind of bugged me a little bit and I wasn't clear headed."

* "Very focused on trying to do the same thing. Maybe a little too focused on results and not enough on what is required to get those kind of results. I was more nervous than usual."

* "That was the last race of the season. That's also when I switched equipment, so there was a break in the pattern and it took me a few years to recover."

Group Three

* "I tried to keep it exactly the same. I had had a dramatic change at the last competition so I tried to keep the same focus there. I remember it not being quite as believable. Right after the win there was a lot more attention on myself and people really expected I could win again. I had not come over the

win yet. I wasn't skiing that well there. I remember it just not being as clear. I'd say my attitude the competition before was that it didn't matter and I was trying to get that same attitude, but it seemed like it did matter a lot more."

* "I know I didn't feel as confident. I knew the expectation was there, from others and myself. Maybe I started to second guess myself already. During the race I don't remember it being as much fun. It was harder work. I still thought about skiing well and not the outcome."

* "The next competition I crashed, probably trying too hard. My focus before the start was the same as the previous race. As far as I was concerned I was just a guy out there like anyone else in the top thirty. They could all win. I wasn't more nervous than usual. I didn't have to win. I had already won. I might have been more cocky in that I took more chances."

* "I was 9th. I don't remember the start or going down the hill. My expectations must have been a little higher than they had been in the past. When I won at the Olympics, I was so in tune that I can remember everything. I never was nervous before

races."

Difficulty Staying at the Top

The athletes were asked whether they felt it was more difficult getting to the top or staying there. Fifty-nine percent of the total group of respondents felt it was more difficult staying at the top than getting there, primarily because there was more pressure to deal with. For example, they said that once they had won, they were always expected to win and became discouraged more easily when they didn't win. After winning, athletes were suddenly placed in a new situation. It took a certain kind of individual or perspective to stay at the top.

Twenty-nine percent of the respondents felt it was easier to stay at the top than to get there, because now they knew they had the ability to be the best, plus some also mentioned that it had taken a long time to get there.

Twelve percent did not know which they felt was more difficult.

Table 2

Difficulty Staying at the Top

	T (f)	Gr.1 (f)	Gr.2 (f)	Gr.3 (f)
More difficult	59% (10/17)	43% (3/7)	67% (4/6)	75% (3/4)
Easier	29% (5/17)	43% (3/7)	17% (1/6)	25% (1/4)
Unsure	12% (2/17)	14% (1/7)	17% (1/6)	

T = All subjects

f = Frequency

Group One

If we look specifically at the most successful group of athletes we see that 43% of group one felt it was more difficult staying at the top and 43% felt it was more difficult getting there. Fourteen percent were not sure.

* "It's more difficult to stay at the top. To win a race is also difficult but to stay several years at the top is a lot more difficult in every sport."

* "I don't know. When you're trying to get to the top you are one of many. When you get there everybody is trying to catch you."
* "Staying at the top was harder. Getting there was hard but staying there you have to be a step ahead all the time. You can't look back. We always had to think of what we could do that was better."
* "I think getting there was harder. Once you've competed against enough guys, you know in yourself where your abilities lie. You work hard to get to the top but that's where you want to be. I love being at the top. A lot of guys forget how they got there."
* "Getting to the top is difficult and not everyone gets there. Once you are on the top, winning after winning doesn't give you much reward."
* "For me it was easy to stay on the top for many years but normally it's harder to stay on the top. I wanted to show someone I was good. When everyone expected me to win, it wasn't fun anymore."
* "I prefer moving up. At the top there's everything to lose and nothing to gain, except the self satisfaction and the fact that you've been fair to your competitors."

Group Two

Athletes in group two took over a year to win again. Sixty-seven percent of this group felt it was more difficult staying at the top, 17% felt it was more difficult getting there, and another 17% were not sure.

* "I still think it's more difficult to get to the top because not everybody gets there, but it takes a certain kind of individual to stay there. It's not a physical thing."
* "I don't know. It took me a long time to get to the top even though I was pretty fast to get there compared to most in my sport. When I got there nobody could touch me. I was very confident and knew I could win."
* "I think to stay there is harder. When you are at the top there are other guys who try to beat you. At this time you are in another situation so it's another feeling. When you start from behind you have nothing to lose and nobody knows you. When I was at the top, you have the media and they think when you are not in the top three, then you are no good."
* "Staying there is more difficult. It's a long struggle to get there too but once you are there it's

such a mind game that it's difficult to stay there."

* "I think it's probably more difficult to stay there. I much more enjoy getting to the top. It's a lot more fun because there's no pressure."

* "Staying there at the top is harder. Although it took me six years to win a race, it didn't feel that difficult because there were the little successes along the way. It's more difficult to stay there because you get discouraged easier. If you don't win it becomes a failure. You drive yourself harder and expect more, or fear losing the feeling, and you get a little panicky."

Group Three

For athletes who never won again, 75% felt it was more difficult staying at the top while 25% felt it was more difficult getting there.

* "Definitely staying there has been the tough situation."

* "Staying there was harder. Once you get there and don't win, that's the point you realize getting there was the easy part because you have the pressure to do it again. It's not just the outside pressure, it's the inner pressure from yourself."

* "It always seems harder staying at the top but how many years did it take to get there and how many get there? It's a lot easier to stay at the top. Once you are to the top, there are things that have to be done differently."
* "I never felt like I was at the top. I was, on that one day."

General Demands

The athletes were asked how their lives had changed after their first big win, and whether or not they faced additional demands as a result of winning. All of the subjects experienced an increase in demands as a result of winning.

They felt there was more pressure to deal with, they found it more difficult to find time for training and resting, and they suffered from a sparcity of free time. Everyone seemed to want a bit of their time, whether it was the media, requests for public appearances, or promotional obligations. There were times when they felt it was impossible to find time to relax. For many athletes the demands were difficult to handle and distracted them from staying focused on their sport in the same way as they had before.

The more successful athletes (group one) were able to put a good system into place to help them deal with the demands, and accepted a certain number of demands as part of their job. They became more professional and efficient in dealing with these demands and were thus able to continue to train hard.

The domains which resulted in the greatest increase in demands for these athletes are presented below.

Media Demands

The media posed additional demands for all of the subjects. However, this was generally not perceived as a problem if they were performing well. For example, for one athlete who dominated his sport many years, it was not enough to win if it was only by a small margin. One of the main problems for these athletes was having to explain to the media why they had not performed better, and answering their uninformed questions. The athletes felt these media people were not informed enough about the sport to understand the intricacies involved and expected too much from the athlete in terms of results.

Fifty-seven percent of all the athletes said they had learned how to handle the media successfully as

the media were not easily avoidable. There was no clear distinction between the three groups of athletes with respect to how well they handled the media.

Table 3

Extent to Which Media Posed Additional Demands

	T	(f)
Increased demand	100%	(17/17)
Handled well	57%	(8/17)
Difficulty handling	43%	(6/17)

T = All athletes

f = Frequency

Group One

* "When you are at the top, you have the media and they think when you are not in the first three, then you are not good."

* "I had to win every race to give the people and the press what they wanted. After one or two years it was not enough to win. If I won by one tenth of a second it was not enough. I could never feel relaxed."

* "The media was hard to deal with sometimes. The media is not a problem if you are doing well, but it's when you have a competition at home and you haven't

being doing well and they expect you to win."

* "The media wasn't a problem for me. It was all on my partner because she had been in the Olympics before. It was like that for three years until the Olympics, then there was a lot more media attention."

* "We have the media there every single day, every practice, every road trip. If you can't handle the media, you're going to have a hard time your whole career. I love the media."

* "I knew how to handle the media. They liked me. I gave them what they wanted, simple answers."

* "Media demands were instant and fairly heavy, but they didn't last very long. So there wasn't a big deal made of it because it's not a big sport in Canada."

Group Two

* "I find it hard explaining to the media why you're not doing better. You can't tell them I'm not in shape and I don't expect to win. You always have to be up there, making it look like you can win. You always have to find an excuse if you don't. That's hard because if you are happy with your performance, it's hard to say that to the media. It's just part of the training program and I'm not up to top form yet.

Besides, you can't be up there all the time. They don't really understand what's going on."

* "The media demands were definitely present. I found that you weren't going to get away from them and it's better to have good press than bad press and a lot more of a hassle to block them out than to deal with them quickly and pleasantly."

* "Media demands are OK. They are usually pretty quick."

Group Three

* "The worst is at the Olympics when you get guys who don't know what they are doing and ask stupid questions."

* "You have to realize what the media is doing and then it's easier to cope with. I think the media doesn't understand enough about the sport."

* "Dealing with the media comes with the territory. When things go bad and they start getting down on you, that's the one thing that really becomes tough. The media can make you or break you in a lot of ways. I always tried to be sure that I did my media thing and paint the pretty picture, but at times when it's hard they almost become your worst enemy."

* "It took a lot of my time and I learned to say no."

Public Appearances

Winning resulted in demands for public appearances which took away from training or rest time. Forty-six percent of all the athletes found public appearances to be a problem because of the additional travel, time and energy they required. Thirty-one percent enjoyed doing the appearances because of the attention they received, and/or felt they were part of their job, even though they cut into valuable time. Twenty-three percent were able to keep them under control by saying no to them when they wanted to.

Table 4

Extent to Which Public Appearances Affected Performance

	T (f)	Gr.1 (f)	Gr.2 (f)	Gr.3 (f)
Difficult to handle	46% (6/13)	29% (2/7)	50% (1/2)	25% (1/4)
Enjoyed doing	31% (4/13)	42% (3/7)		75% (3/4)
Said no to them	23% (3/13)	29% (2/7)	50% (1/2)	

T = All athletes

f = Frequency

Group One

For the athletes in group one, 42% didn't mind or even enjoyed doing the public appearances. They provided the kind of recognition the athletes had been looking for. Twenty-nine percent felt they were a problem which distracted them from their sport, and 29% just said no to them.

* "A lot of the demands were political things, going to city halls. We went to every city hall in every

major city in Canada. In Ottawa, every time there is a foreign guest they invite you."

* "There were definitely more public appearances after winning, speaking at schools and conferences."
* "I would get 25 calls a day. To me you're supposed to get those calls. That's why you trained the hardest. Now the key is to pick the right ones. When I was competing I never did many appearances. You want to do the ones with the right company and something that appeals to you."
* "It was a demand in that it took away from training time and it was sometimes hard to organize your dryland training around them. It wasn't stressful on me in the beginning because I liked it and the attention. Later on I found them very exhausting. I was swarmed with people."
* "They were not a big problem because I said no to most of them."
* "There were certain opportunistic demands where people expected you to do quite a bit for very little. I caught on fairly quickly and would ask for a fee through the sport organization. You didn't mind doing them if you knew that your sport organization was getting an appearance fee."

Group Two

Group two was evenly divided in their responses. Fifty percent found public appearances to be a problem, while 50% said no to them.

* "I don't know how to say no a lot of the time, so I ended up doing a lot more things than I wanted to. They were pretty stressful because before I even did it I knew that I didn't want to, but I felt that I should."
* "The important thing with public appearances was timing. You had to keep your priorities. If you had time to go to them, that's fine, but you had to be able to say no too. Agents were good as the buffer zone. I tried to do the ones that were local."

Group Three

Seventy-five percent of group three found public appearances not to be a problem. Twenty-five percent found them to be very stressful and difficult to cope with.

* "There were more public appearances. I didn't know how to say no to them and just got swamped. I didn't want any of that. I couldn't handle it."
* "They come with the territory. I never really did any major public engagements that took a lot of time.

I worked more with my specific sponsors and they were really good and supporting."

* "If you have a good system for dealing with public appearances someone else can say no for you. The team kept putting a lot of demands on us."

Felt Expectations

New or heightened expectations were felt by all of the athletes after they won. Some of these expectations were unrealistic (i.e. That they must always win). Sixty percent of the athletes felt that these new expectations were difficult to deal with. The other 40% did not have a problem with them. They were able to use them to their advantage and did not feel overly pressured by them.

Table 5

Extent to Which Felt Expectations Affected Performance

	T (f)	Gr.1 (f)	Gr.2 (f)	Gr.3 (f)
Increased demand	100% (15/15)			
Difficulty handling	60% (9/15)	50% (3/6)	80% (4/5)	50% (2/4)
No difficulty	40% (6/15)	50% (3/6)	20% (1/5)	50% (2/4)

T = All athletes

f = Frequency

Group One

Fifty percent of the athletes in group one were negatively affected by the felt expectations and 50% were not.

* "I find when you are confident, you don't care how much pressure you have. The problem is when you are not sure of yourself, then you feel that everybody is watching you and they want you to do well. You wonder what people are thinking, because you used to win and now you are not."

* "I've had expectations from the media and the people, from my coaches a little bit and from myself too. For many years I won races but I could not enjoy it. After I won ten, fifteen races, I was not happy, even though I still won. I enjoyed skiing more my last years, when I didn't ski so well, because I didn't have any pressure and didn't have to prove anything."
* "There were a lot of expectations on me, especially when the people in my home town were spending the money to send me places."
* "I feel pressure to do well. I want to do well for my sponsors and friends but I know I can do it so it's no problem."
* "My expectations grew stronger all the time. It was positive and made me push myself harder."
* "Never entered my mind."

Group Two

Eighty percent of group two felt the expectations were very difficult to handle while 20% felt they were realistic.

* "Living up to others' expectations was one of the harder demands. I think the ones who become champions are the ones who live up to their own expectations and

not to others, what's important to them and not to everybody else."

* "I was expecting too much of myself. I was just going with the pressure, thinking a lot about the other people and the outcome instead of what I have to do now. I was saying I have to win this competition, it's big, instead of saying it's just another competition."

* "There were a lot of expectations on me at the Olympics which didn't go well for me, but there were a fair amount on me here and I won. It sure didn't work at the Olympics but it worked here. At the Olympics, things bothered me. Here my mind was much more determined and I didn't think about that stuff."

* "I tried to conform to what I thought people expected of me, more in the year or two after I won. That's probably not very good because you are what you are. You shouldn't let anyone try and change that."

* "I felt expectations from others, but they were realistic. I didn't feel over pressured by them."

Group Three

Fifty percent of group three were negatively affected by the felt expectations while 50% were not.

* "Sometimes the expectations were a little unrealistic. After that win, I was expected to be good in every race. Sometimes it was from the coaches, the press and even myself."
* "Felt expectations was a big one. You even feel the expectations from your teammates, when you finally do win because there weren't a lot of winners on our team. It was hard to deal with them. Sometimes I couldn't do it at all."
* "Felt expectations were a consideration but I tended to look at each race just as another race."
* "If other people had other expectations of me, it didn't really bother me."

Training and Rest

For 69% of all the subjects, rest time and/or training time was affected by the additional demands. There were more demands placed on these athletes who already had very full and demanding schedules, therefore less time was available for training or rest. Thirty-eight percent of the athletes felt their rest time was affected the most while 31% felt their training suffered the most. Another 31% said that training and rest were not really affected because: they were able to say no to demands, they set

priorities, or the additional demands were not highly demanding (i.e. lower profile sports). Athletes had to work out ways to deal effectively with additional demands in order to continue to perform at a high level.

It is interesting to note that more athletes let their rest time suffer than their training time. Only the least successful group (group three), let their training suffer the most.

Table 6

Extent to Which Training and Rest was Affected by Winning

	T (f)	Gr.1 (f)	Gr.2 (f)	Gr.3 (f)
Rest &/or Training	69% (11/16)			
Rest affected	38% (6/16)	25% (2/8)	75% (3/4)	25% (1/4)
Training affected	31% (5/16)	25% (2/8)	25% (1/4)	50% (2/4)
Neither affected	31% (5/16)	50% (4/8)		25% (1/4)

T = All subjects

f = Frequency

Group One

The highest percentage of athletes who were able to maintain normal training and rest were from the group that continued to be most successful, group one, at 50%. Another 25% felt training suffered the most while 25% felt rest suffered the most.

* "It's harder to find time to plan your training programs, to have all the free time you want. Before I won that's all I had to do. I wasn't going to school before the Olympics and I would arrange my own schedule. Now you have to make your training schedule according to those demands and that's hard. The problem was sometimes I didn't know whether I should train or rest."
* "The demands definitely affected training. That's one of the hardest things to cope with. You need somebody to say no when everyone is asking you to do things. Rest wasn't too affected. I wasn't lying awake worrying and I could fall asleep anywhere."
* "You must first take care of your training and then you can deal with the other obligations like the media and the promotional demands."
* "I was in the top 1% of conditioned athletes in the league every year for ten years. I always found time to train."
* "Finding time for training was not a big problem because it was always well arranged from the coaches from the beginning. Sometimes I had a problem with the press. They were too demanding sometimes but it could have been much worse. There was not always

enough rest time but almost."

* "Our sport wasn't like other sports in that there were great demands for us to do things, so we were able to get enough training and rest. Our coach was also very structured with our time."

* "I carried on training in my multi-sport way. It wasn't that you had to keep in peak form all year anyways, because we didn't have a season long circuit then."

Group Two

In group two, 75% felt rest was the most affected while 25% felt training was most affected.

* "My time is full with the sport and also with the demands of my sponsors. I used to have more time at home and I could be more relaxed. I think you have to say no to many things. When you want to be a good racer you have to relax and then you have to train to build up your strength."

* "It did cut into my training but more my rest time."

* "I was quite diligent about training. Rest was the hardest thing because you were more busy."

Group Three

Fifty percent felt training suffered the most while 25% felt rest was most affected. Twenty-five percent were unaffected in their training and rest.

* "About a month after I won the Olympics I made the decision to focus on my sport instead of going on the social, media and money making tour. I personally couldn't handle that. That's when I was wishing I hadn't won, because there were all these demands. So I chose to go the other way, which I don't regret."
* "I like training and I was able to keep the same level. There was also no problem with enough rest time."
* "I never had enough time to train but then it wasn't really my favorite thing to do because I was

Sponsors and Promotional Obligations

A surprising 82% of the athletes said the sponsorship demands and promotional obligations were not unreasonable. Some of these athletes felt their sponsors understood their need to train and therefore were not overly demanding. It was easier to say no to their sponsors and the athletes did not mind these obligations because they benefitted from them

financially. Other athletes said they did not have a problem with sponsors and promotional obligations simply because there were so few sponsorships in their sport.

Only 18% of the athletes in this study felt sponsors posed additional unwanted demands, usually in the form of pressure when the athlete was not performing well. No one in the top group had a problem with the sponsorship demands.

Table 7

Extent of Which Sponsors and Promotional Obligations Affected Performance

	T (f)	Gr.1 (f)	Gr.2 (f)	Gr.3 (f)
Not unreasonable	82% (9/11)	100% (6/6)	50% (1/2)	67% (2/3)
Undesired	18% (2/11)		50% (1/2)	33% (1/3)

T = All subjects

f = Frequency

Group One

* "I want to do well for my sponsors and friends but I know I can do it so it's not a problem."
* "The sponsors were better than everyone else. They would understand that I had to train."
* "There weren't many sponsors involved in my sport."
* "With sponsors I always felt they owed me because I wasn't paid by them."
* "I didn't have so many, just sometimes before the season started. Sponsors were perfect, all the time."
* "There were no promotional obligations because we never had any sponsorships."

Group Two

* "Sponsor demands are probably the worst. I find now I am accepting them better and putting more into them. I try to talk to people more and be professional about it."
* "Promotional obligations benefitted me financially so I wanted to do them, but it meant choosing a quiet time of the year."

Group Three

* "A lot of the demands I've been looking for, like more promotional opportunities and more financial gain, but when you get those kinds of things you have

to put the time in as well. That hasn't really bothered me too much. I've always wanted to make my sport more of a career rather than just sport."

* "I worked with my specific sponsors and they were really good and supportive."

* "There's also the demands of sponsors and the pressure they put on you when you're not doing well."

During their interviews a limited number of athletes made some interesting comments relating to how their interaction with fans and personal relationships were affected by their rise to the top. The essence of these comments are presented here.

Fans

Thirty-five percent of all the subjects commented on fans, whom they generally considered as an unnecessary burden because of the multiple demands the athletes already faced. Some felt obligated to give them their time, while others did not know how to say no to them.

* "Little kids and grown ups would ask me for my autograph all of a sudden. I didn't know how to say no. I would get swamped. I finally had enough and I just put my head down and started to cry."

* "My little experience with semi-stardom has given me an insight into movie stars because you see that they are normal people behind that, yet if you believe all the press, they're like this unattainable person. I almost feel sorry for fans because they're looking at this package that's not real."
* "Fans are like media. You can't deny them the opportunity to come in contact with someone they've been following, but they are a pain."
* "Sometimes it was too much because I was quite shy. I would rather stay at the hotel instead of going to be with people."
* "I usually took the time for fans. Some of them were a pain, real clingers. I think generally they were an unnecessary pain."
* "Fans can be an advantage when you realize the effect you can have on them as a role model, especially in your home town."

Personal Family and Friends

Thirty-five percent of all the subjects commented on their family or personal relationships. Sixty-seven percent of these athletes felt that personal relationships often changed as a result of their success and posed additional distractions that

could not be avoided and the other 33% of these athletes felt their family helped them keep things in perspective.

* "I found it really hard when people put you on a pedestal. You can't really relate to your old friends and you're in a situation where everybody is coming around you for all the wrong reasons. You don't want to have a fan for a friend."
* "Relationships were a demand. I had trouble and it seems all the women on the team were the same, having boyfriends who couldn't understand when you were home why you didn't want to spend every waking minute with them. Unfortunately, I found I always performed better when I was single, when I could be selfish. Relationships were one more distraction."
* "You can't close the door on them. You are obliged to them."
* "Treatment by others is a really good thing to look at because that's one of the hardest things. It's very subtle. Your friends put you on a pedestal. It's really hard to get back to the relationship you had before you won."
* "You get reality when you are married and you come home and the kids are crying. Getting married was the

best thing that ever happened to me."

* "The family was always supporting me. They understood everything. They were very good.

The whole area of exploring the role of personal relationships of those who excel is one that should be studied in more depth in future research.

Most Stressful Demand

The most stressful demand faced by these athletes after winning (and one which they all faced to some extent) was felt expectations. Fifty percent felt this demand was the most stressful. The next most stressful demand (which everyone also experienced to some extent) were public demands (media, appearances, etc.) especially in that it meant taking time away from training or rest. This demand was rated as most stressful by 36% of the respondents. Seven percent said treatment by others was most stressful and another 7% felt sponsors were the most stressful.

In response to the question, what was the most stressful demand you faced after winning, the following responses were given.

Table 8

Most Stressful Demand Faced by All Subjects

	T (f)	Gr.1 (f)	Gr.2 (f)	Gr.3 (f)
Felt expectations	50% (7/14)	40% (2/5)	40% (2/5)	75% (3/4)
Public demands	36% (5/14)	40% (2/5)	40% (2/5)	25% (1/4)
Treatment by others	7% (1/14)	20% (1/5)		
Sponsors	7% (1/14)		20% (1/5)	

T = All subjects

f = Frequency

Group One

Forty percent of group one found felt expectations to be most stressful while another 40% found public demands to be the most stressful. Twenty percent said treatment by others.

* "Felt expectations. We were never allowed to have an off day. The expectations can help you but they can also make it more demanding."

* "Expectations from the media and other people, everybody, were the hardest to deal with."
* "Dealing with people generally who would ask you those inane questions."
* "There were a lot of public appearances involving a lot of travelling. We went to every major city hall in every major city in Canada."
* "Treatment by others. I found it really hard when your friends put you on a pedestal. You can't really relate to your old friends and you're in a situation where everybody is coming around you for all the wrong reasons."

Group Two

Felt expectations was the most stressful for group two athletes at 40%. Forty percent of group two felt public demands were most stressful, while 20% felt sponsor demands were most stressful.

* "Living up to others' expectations was one of the harder demands. I think the ones who become champions are the ones who live up to their own expectations and not to others."
* "In big competitions where I should have won, I was expecting too much of myself. I was just going with the pressure. I would say, I have to win this

competition instead of saying it's just another competition."

* "Sponsor demands are probably the worst."
* "Public appearances. You were afraid to pick up the phone because it's going to be someone asking you to do something and you know you have the time to do it but you really don't want to do it."
* "Anything dealing with the public was more stressful, where you had to take time off training or where I had to expend energy talking to suppliers and at cocktail parties."

Group Three

Seventy-five percent of group three found felt expectations to be most stressful while 25% found public demands to be more difficult to handle.

* "Living up to expectations to win again is the most stressful demand."
* "I was frustrated because I wasn't living up to my own expectations of my career. I had high expectations, not because I won an Olympic Gold medal but because of the athlete that I am."
* "Felt expectations."
* "Dealing with the media and public in general."

Dealing With Demands

None of these athletes had any real assistance in learning how to deal with the additional demands effectively. Occasionally an agent would book their time in a reasonable way or a coach would help keep the media away, but that was the extent of the "help". None of these athletes had prepared themselves in advance to deal with these demands and they had no idea that winning would result in so many of them. For some, the demands came instantly, while for others they came gradually, which made the transition easier to handle. Those who handled the demands well, approached them with a positive attitude, tried to maintain control over the timing of the demands and learned that a certain number of them came with the territory.

Group One

* "It's our job, not a problem. I have no assistance in dealing with the demands. I do it myself and it's enough."
* "No real assistance with the demands. My agent would say I wasn't available from October to March."
* "Our coach had really prepared us to be real champions. It was really embedded into us."

* "I don't think you really prepare yourself for them. For me it didn't happen all at once, so that the demands that came prepared me for the demands to come."
* "I was lucky in the first years, my coach kept the media away from me. We just had press conferences two days before a race and then right after. They continued this pattern. I think that was very important. I didn't prepare myself to deal with these demands. We had no other assistance from sport psychologists or anyone."

Group Two

* "Our coach was not bad at acting as the screen, but he occasionally got carried away with things, and did not not act as the bad guy enough, saying this is enough."
* "A couple of months before the Olympics it got pretty bad and my coach said no more media and to focus on my training. That really helped a lot because it's hard for an athlete to say no."
* "I had no real assistance. I have learned from experience to push myself harder in order to be more successful over the whole season. I am better at seeing myself win now."

* "The head coach is a big part of dealing with all this. There's also my agent who acts as a buffer."
* "You take it as a fact, as something you have to do and you set a time limit for things. Before I won I didn't know it was going to be that demanding. I had no real assistance other than my agents who would book time or at the races the coaches would do that."

Group Three

* "I saw the promotional opportunites arising but I didn't see the expectation part coming. We have a sport psychologist available to the team. I've done some work with another sport psychologist and use some of his relaxation tapes but there was no assistance for dealing with the demands."
* "It was hard to deal with them. Sometimes I couldn't do it at all. I had no assistance or preparation to deal with them. I don't think I ever really thought about how I would deal with the expectations. I overlooked it."
* "My parents were the only people looking after my interests. For two years my mom was the only one who answered the phone. I was afraid of agents because I didn't know who was looking after my interests. Before I won my medal it probably would have been

helpful to have all this in place. After you win, then everyone wants a piece of you and you don't know who to turn to."

* "I had no assistance in dealing with the demands."

* "Not much assistance really. I probably should have. I tried to make the best of it."

Maintaining Level of Performance

Those athletes who reached the top in their field and either stayed there or returned to the top were asked how they were able to maintain that high level of performance in subsequent competitions. The responses varied from person to person. They included, having a game plan, staying focused on a specific goal, maintaining good physical conditioning, enjoying the sport and new challenges, using mental imagery, and focusing on the task.

* "Just keeping on the same sort of game plan, taking it step by step, keeping that focus to where you are going."

* "Each time was a new time out. I tried to learn from my mistakes and tried to do it better the next time, and to always stay focused on the task and not the results and the what if's. I learned to stay in the present tense, in the here and now. It came quite

naturally to me and I think my family had an influence. My dad has been a very successful business man and yet he still counts his pennies. You work on the little things and the big things take care of themselves.

* "One of the reasons why I sustained winning over three or four years was because it came bit by bit and when I was already twenty-one. Inside my own family I wasn't allowed to get a swelled head. Every time I came home I was handed the dish towel."

* "Everything was planned. I knew a lot more about where I wanted to go and what score I wanted to have. I didn't need as much practice and to risk getting hurt and to be sick of the pool. I could see my moves so much in my room and I didn't need to be there all the time. I was very confident."

* "Because I enjoyed skiing so much. I like new challenges."

* "It was a feeling you had. You just would expect it of yourself."

* "I think for one reason, conditioning. I was in the top 1% of conditioned athletes in my sport every year. I watched what I poured down my throat. Mentally you couldn't wear me down."

* "You have to enjoy it, to be fanatical about it and to see your goals. When I don't do well it's a question of motivation because I've already won so much."

Sixty-seven percent of the athletes from group two, who took more than a year to win again spoke about how they were able to win again after having some disappointing results.

* "I attribute the winning again to the refocusing, regrouping, working on the physical, getting the touch back and time on the test track. It was the refocusing that made the difference. I knew how to handle the demands then. I learned to decide which demands were important and to ask people to modify their demands."

* "Now I know what works for me. I am better at seeing myself win now. There was a time when I made a good result and was happy but then I didn't really concentrate on the next race. Then I saw that I have to continually work hard on myself to have good results over the whole year."

* "I wasn't exposed to distractions and demands after I wasn't doing as well. I focused a lot more on my sport and therefore started to enjoy it a lot more. I

really got into it and felt good about what I was doing. I did a few things to improve my fitness and also improve my mental commitment to the sport."

* "I fixed my feet problem and that's when I started to do well again. Again it was the feeling of trying to have a Canadian win. There was that extra kick of wanting to win on home ground. I didn't feel the pressure, it was excitement. I ran the tape through my head so many times."

Recommendations

All the subjects felt that in order to stay successful and to cope with the additional demands of winning, there were a number of key factors that needed to be in place. These included, enjoying what you are doing, remembering where you came from, and keeping it all in perspective. Some specific suggestions included, know why you win and why you lose and work hard toward your goals. Believe in yourselves, think positively, and stay on track. Be well rested physically and mentally, and avoid going with the pressure. Create new challenges and let the politics of sport pass by. Work on the feeling aspect of your sport, be mentally prepared, and keep the desire sharp. Know what is important and what isn't.

Perhaps most importantly, create a system for dealing effectively with the demands.

Group One

* "Make a goal then focus on what you have to do to get there, not the end result. I think you have to keep it in perspective. For me it's answering why I'm doing this: because I love the sport. You have to let the garbage pass by, like the politics."
* "I would not like to go through this once again because it's been too much pressure. I think the most important thing is the feeling and the psychology. When it didn't go so well I didn't have the right feeling. I tried too hard to force it."
* "You certainly have to remain positive. You have to put out of your mind the negative aspect of how much you have to gain or how much you have to lose. You've got to enjoy being there. Whatever you do in life, go for it and try to make a contribution, try to make a difference."
* "The most important thing in sport is knowing why you lose and why you win. Then it's possible to get good results again. You must work hard to keep winning. When you think you are the best then you lose. You cannot teach someone to win. You must know

the way and work hard. It helps to have a strong system in place."

* "I have always thought that everything is based on confidence. It's to believe, look at why you're doing what you're doing and what your goals are. It's how you train in the summer and what you think about when you are training. It's being positive and always believing you can do something well."

* "If I could do it over again, I would not train as much as I did. I whipped myself too hard. Just remember what you did before you got there."

* "People like you and I, who have been through the system, should make suggestions back to the sport, and the sport governing bodies need to be open to these suggestions."

Group Two

* "Keep it all in perspective. Sure it's important but it's not everything in life...to be accepting of yourself whether you win or lose. Keep in touch with other people outside of sport. Remember the basics. Remember all the stages you went through to get there and once you are there, doesn't mean you can coast. You've got to set new goals and create new challenges so you can still stay interested and not become

blasé."

* "Don't feel you're doing it for everybody. I really tried not to feel the pressure of other peoples' expectations. The pressure I always had was from myself. If I start thinking about what everybody is thinking about me there's no way I can make it. I just tell myself, I know I'm OK, I believe in what I'm doing."

* "Stay focused. Stay on track. I was a firm believer in cycles and building on a cycle. Be mentally and physically rested for competition. I felt I had to reinvent the wheel, that I didn't have people guiding me with this. I think it comes down to the support system."

* "As long as I have the will enough to want to win, then I think that will come out of me. Sometimes you're just going along with the game not really thinking about winning."

* "There has to be more to why you compete than just getting good results. You have to enjoy it and I enjoy competing in my sport, but sometimes I forget that."

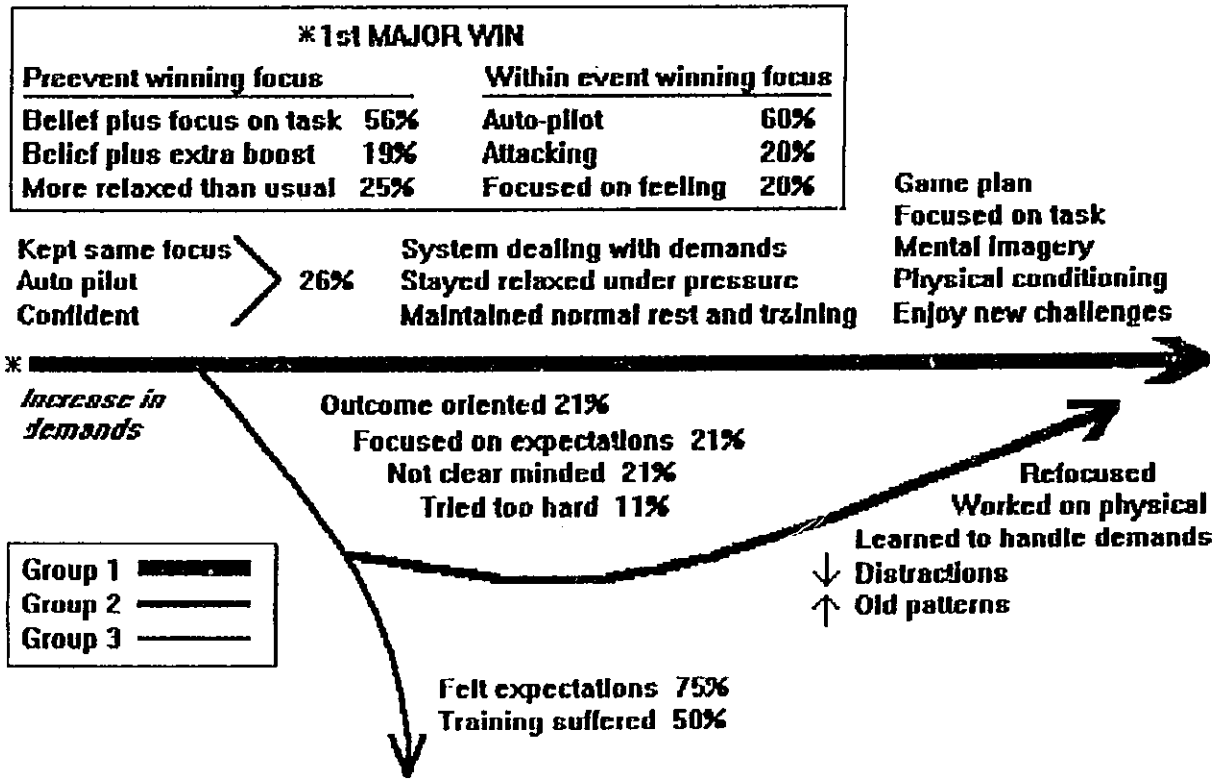
* "I think you always have to keep learning."

Group Three

* "Appreciate what you've got rather than what you're going to get. Then it would be less of a job you have to do and more something you completely enjoy. Remember you are doing it because you love it, not because you have to. To be the greatest you have to keep it in perspective and to think back to your roots."
* "Surround yourself with good professional people who are looking after your interests. Before I won a medal it probably would have been helpful to have all this in place. After you win then everyone wants a piece of you and you don't know who to turn to."
* "I would know what was important and what wasn't important. I would create systems for people around me."

Table 9

Results Summary Flow Chart



CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The results of this study support the hypothesis that success breeds failure for most athletes unless they learn to control two major areas, 1) the felt expectations from themselves and others and 2) public damands (media and appearances). Otherwise training, rest and performance suffers. This was supported by Cain (in Orlick & Partington, 1986). As was the case in this study, Orlick & Partington (1984) also found, the most consistently successful athletes remained process or task oriented instead of focusing on the results/outcome of a competition. Ravizza (1977) and Maslow (1968) also found high achievers experiencing peak performances, to be totally connected and attentive to the task at hand, having no fear and in effortless control.

The results indicated that for most of the athletes, the ideal winning focus consisted of having a strong belief in one's ability to win a particular competition accompanied with being focused on the task. A smaller percentage of subjects attributed

their success to a strong belief in their ability to win, plus having an extra boost. This supports Bandura's theory of self-efficacy (1977), where a strong confidence in an individual's ability to perform at a particular level increases the likelihood of that outcome. Scanlan, Lewthwaithe & Jackson (1984) also found that higher expectancies of winning resulted in lower precompetition stress. On the other hand, Bandura (1979) contends that public commitment of a conviction increases pressure on an individual. As Podborski (1987) said, one must separate oneself from the media personality. If one feels responsible to live up to public expectations it will have an adverse effect on results. Some athletes in the present study claimed their success happened as a result of being more relaxed than usual.

The ideal focus for athletes in this study, within the winning competition was being on auto-pilot for 60% of the subjects. For 20% the focus was on attacking the course and for the remaining 20% it was on how everything was feeling.

As a result of their success, all the athletes felt an increase in demands. How they handled the demands determined their continued level of

performance. Those athletes who put a system in place for dealing with the demands continued to have success. They also stayed relaxed under pressure and maintained a normal rest and training schedule. Group two (athletes who took over a year to win again) and three (athletes who never won again) let their training and/or rest suffer as a result of the increase in demands. In their subsequent competition, group one (continued winners) kept the same winning focus. They were on auto-pilot and were very confident.

Groups two and three, who had a performance decline following their initial success went into their subsequent competition being outcome oriented, focused on the expectations of others and themselves, were not as clear minded as they had been in their successful competition and tried too hard to duplicate their best result. Consequently their performance was substandard, supporting Michener's claim (1976) that success in sports is often followed by a drop into oblivion.

Group two was able to turn their performance around and reach the top again by refocusing and regaining their physical conditioning. They learned

how to handle the demands effectively and because they had experienced less demands as a result of poorer performances, were able to get back into their old successful patterns.

Group one, the continued winners, were able to maintain their performance by having a game plan, staying focused on their goal and task at hand, using mental imagery, maintaining their physical conditioning and enjoying their sport and new challenges. This supports the findings made by Orlick & Partington (1988) of the mental readiness of successful athletes.

In following up on selected Olympic champions, one and two years later, Orlick & Partington (1988) also found that the additional distractions as a result of winning caused them to be physically and mentally drained and to have substandard performances.

It is possible that athletes who come from a team that has more of a tradition of winning, cope better with the increase in demands because they accept them as being part of the job and have positive role models. This needs further study to verify. It also appears that athletes who achieve their success gradually and at an older age may be inclined to

handle the demands more successfully, and with a greater capacity to keep their winning focus. This also requires further research.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, this study helped clarify differences between athletes who reached the top only once and those who were able to stay at the top, by exploring how they dealt with the demands of winning. Athletes who continued to win were able to maintain their ideal focus in subsequent competitions, while the less consistent athletes were distracted and altered their focus. All athletes who won at the world level experienced an increase in demands as a result of winning, but only those who were able to handle the demands effectively, by creating a system to deal with them, continued to win at that level.

Consistent winners not only had a strong belief in their ability to perform well but were also able to maintain their focus on the task at hand, as opposed to distractions. They developed an ability to stay relaxed under pressure.

All athletes in group one, the most consistent winners, performed on "auto-pilot" when performing their best results. Virtually all of them also set new goals after winning their first major international competition.

Following their first major international win, only athletes in group one were able to carry the same winning focus into the next competition. All other athletes altered their "winning" focus for the subsequent competition. They became outcome oriented, focused on felt expectations, were less clear minded or tried too hard.

The following is a list of the most stressful demands, faced by athletes who won major international events.

* The most stressful demand was dealing with the expectations to repeat their winning performance. All athletes in this study, felt the effects of expectations to perform at the top level and most of them found these expectations difficult to handle.
* The next most stressful demand were public demands, whether it meant dealing with the media or public appearances of any sort. All the athletes felt the effects of this demand to some extent.
* Training and/or rest was negatively affected for many athletes because of the additional demands on the athlete's time. Rest was more affected for the top athletes, while training was more affected by the least successful group. Group one had the highest

percentage of athletes (50%) who were able to maintain a normal level of rest and training.

None of the athletes had any assistance in dealing with the additional demands they faced and no one had prepared to deal with them in advance. Many were surprised by the extent of the demands which accompanied winning.

The athletes had many recommendations for other athletes who might face a similar situation. They are summarized in the following list:

* Create a system for dealing with the demands.
* Keep sport in perspective.
* Remember the basics about how you got there.
* Work hard towards your goals.
* Believe in yourself.
* Be mentally well prepared.
* Be positive.
* Be well rested.
* Avoid going with the pressure.
* Create new challenges for yourself.
* Enjoy what you are doing.
* Keep the desire sharp.
* Know why you win and why you lose.

* Don't get caught up in the politics of sport.

This study sheds light on the importance of athletes being mentally prepared, not only for winning but for dealing with the aftereffects of success. If an athlete had a system in place for dealing with these additional demands before they occurred, he or she would be much better prepared to maintain a more consistent level of performance and to keep his or her life in perspective.

Future champions could better prepare themselves to cope with the additional demands which accompany winning. They should become more aware of the techniques that have worked well for today's top athletes and work with well trained sportpsych consultants who have experience with this transitional process. The training of sportpsych consultants and coaches in this area is important and should be a consideration of future coaching curriculums.

Based on the results of this study, recommendations for promising athletes would include instructing them about the increase in distractions and demands as a result of being at the top, especially higher expectations and public demands. Because of limited time, athletes should priorize

their activities and plan to meet their own needs first. If time permits, then schedule time to meet others' requests. If incapable of handling the scheduling personally, then have someone else handle the calls. Create a system for dealing with the additional demands in order to maintain control of circumstances.

Further applied research and application in the field is needed to better understand and assist athletes who reach the top. A comparison between countries that have a history of success with those who do not, would shed more light on this important topic. Future research could also look specifically within a particular high profile sport. Another suggestion would be to look at a narrower time period and perhaps at gender differences.

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APPENDIX A

THESIS PROPOSAL

Chapter I

Statement of the Problem

I Introduction

Fame and glory may be the ultimate goal of elite athletes but it may also be the biggest stumbling block for their future success. There are numerous accounts of athletes who have stood on the podium in an international competition only to be never heard from again. Athletes' lives change as a result of their success and many have difficulty with a repeat performance.

Some of the obvious changes include, increased time and energy spent talking to the media, making public appearances, fulfilling corporate contracts and the like. Some of the less obvious changes include felt expectations, self-image and lack of confidence in this new role, as a sporting hero. Not all successful athletes are affected in the same way, however. Individual differences and the profile of the sport have a significant impact on how the athlete will be affected.

This study will attempt to explore the success experiences of high profile athletes who reached the top in their sport (i.e. what they experienced, how it affected their lives, their subsequent performances and how well they were able to cope with changes and changed expectations). An attempt will be made to separate the subjects into two groups: 1) athletes who had a subsequent permanent performance decline or a difficult time coping with the consequences of their success and 2) those who were able to cope well and/or continue on a successful performance streak. Individual interviews will be content analyzed in an attempt to draw out factors related to successful and unsuccessful adaptation.

II The Problem

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to explore how elite amateur and professional athletes' lives changed and how they coped with the consequences of their success, after finishing among the top three in international competition in a reasonably high profile sport. The in-depth interview exploration is structured as follows:

1. The researcher will document athletes' perceptions of the precise ways in which their lives changed as a result of their success (i.e. treatment by others, felt expectations, training time, quality training, rest time, media demands, travel demands, fears, happy times, quality of life).
2. The researcher will examine closely, how the athletes coped with these changes (i.e. specific strategies or approaches used to deal with increased media attention and promotional demands, and the added pressures of living up to the expectations of others and self) and how well they feel their specific coping strategies worked, if at all.

III Delimitations

The subjects in this study are limited to 25 athletes, who are among the world's best amateur and professional athletes, who continued to compete for at least one year following their first major international placing. They will not be limited to Canadian athletes. Since the population of subjects to choose from is unique and relatively small, the results of this study cannot be generalized to athletes as a whole.

IV Definition of Terms

Success.

Success refers to placing in the top three in the world in a major international competition like the Olympic Games or World Championships.

International Competition.

International competition refers to Olympic Games,

World Championships, World Cup meets or the equivalent.

Performance.
Performance refers to the carrying out of a particular sport while competing in an international competition.

Elite Athlete.
Elite athlete refers to an athlete who has placed in the top three in an international competition.

Structured Interview.
A structured interview refers to a particular format, wherein the interviewer asks the same questions and presents them in the same manner and order to each subject.

Media Attention.
Media attention refers to spending time and energy talking to the press and consequently increasing public exposure.

Promotional Demands.
Promotional Demands refers to spending time and energy making commercials, doing public appearances, signing autographs and fulfilling sponsor contracts.

Felt Expectations.
Felt expectations refers to the presumption that a particular result might occur, both by other people and the athlete.

Motivation.
Motivation refers to the force that moves an athlete toward a desired outcome.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

A thorough search of the literature made it clear that studies specifically related to the effect of success on athletes were nonexistent. This study will investigate the "stress of success", which appears to have increased with the influx of corporate dollars, media coverage and general public exposure of today's high profile athletes. Only recently (i.e. within the last 10 years) have studies been conducted on the

mental preparation of elite athletes. A limited number of these studies provide useful information and insights which are relevant to the scope of this study. These will be discussed in the following review. Other references have also touched on this area, in the form of sport psychology books and autobiographies. This review of literature will therefore be divided into two sections: related sport research articles and other related literature.

I Sport Research Articles

Much of the attention in high performance sport is geared towards winning, and often that means winning at all costs. The pursuit of a lifelong athletic goal often means sacrificing other areas of life, whether it be education, a future career, other interests, or future health, in the case of drugs. It is ironic that so much attention is given to the process of winning while so little is spent on the consequences of that success on the individual.

Mahoney & Avener (1977), in looking at the Psychology of Elite Athletes, found that there were differences in the way successful Olympic gymnastic contenders coped with competitive stress. Successful gymnasts were not only physically more capable than less successful gymnasts, they were also more capable mentally. Meyers et al. (1979) found successful competitors to be more self-confident and to have more imagery containing successful performances. He also noted that they could control and utilize competitive anxiety more effectively than their less successful counterparts. In a study on behavior states of world class wrestlers, oarsmen and marathoners, Morgan (1974) found that the successful elite athletes tended to be less anxious, depressed and confused and to possess more athletic vigor. In agreement with findings of Highlen & Bennett (1979), Rotella, Gansneder, Ojala & Billing (1980) found that better skiers perceived themselves as closer to reaching their maximum potential. They also noted that these skiers openly admitted their weaknesses and designed their training programs to meet those needs. In followup interviews with the more successful skiers, it was learned that although they thought about their weaknesses, they did it in a corrective-rehearsal nature as opposed to worrying about weaknesses. In addition, the better skiers tended to focus on the

difficult sections of a race course when planning strategies for the race, suggesting that positive thinking without planning a strategy is not enough.

Orlick & Partington (1988) conducted an extensive interview study that assessed the level of mental readiness and mental control experienced by Canadian athletes at the 1984 Olympic Games. The results indicated that the most successful athletes practiced quality training, used simulation training, set daily goals and had well developed mental imagery skills. They were also the best prepared mentally for competition, having a competition focus plan, a systematic means of evaluating their performance as well as excellent strategies for dealing with distractions.

There were also athletes interviewed who were expected to do well and wanted to do well, yet failed to perform to their potential. Three major performance blocks were identified. The first one involved changing patterns that had been successful in the past. Some athletes dramatically increased their training load for the Olympic year, while others adopted totally foreign training programs, and continued to do heavy work right up to the Games. This, combined with the stress of the Olympics, left many physically exhausted and mentally drained. Changes were also made in game plans which put athletes in unfamiliar patterns that had not been practiced. In some cases, coaches changed their preevent input, creating an unfamiliar and uncomfortable distraction for some athletes.

Another identified block was that of late selections. In some cases, athletes were not able to prepare adequately because they did not know they were on the team until one week before the Games.

The third block was getting "blown away" by distractions. The athletes had prepared for the competition but had failed to prepare for all the distractions and consequently lost their focus.

Following up on selected Olympic champions, one and two years following the 1984 Olympics, it was noted by Orlick and Partington (1988) that several of them failed to continue to perform to capacity. As a result of their Olympic achievement, they suddenly had to deal with additional distractions which left them with less quality rest time. They ended up feeling physically and mentally drained when it came time to perform.

In a recent paper by Scanlan, Stein & Ravizza (1988), an interview format was used to look at the sources of stress felt by former elite figure skaters. Stress was defined as negative emotions, feelings, and thoughts relevant to the participants' skating experience. These would include feelings of apprehension, anxiety, muscle tension, nervousness, physical reactions (such as butterflies in the stomach, shaking, nervous sweating), thoughts centered on worry, self-doubt and negative statements to yourself. The results of the study revealed five major sources of stress: 1) Negative aspects of competition 2) Negative significant other relationships 3) Demands/costs of skating 4) Personal struggles 5) Traumatic experiences.

The skaters tended to worry about "letting others down" by not performing up to their expectations. They were also afraid of losing to a rival or falling in front of a crowd. They felt that being a skater required a constant need to work hard. Personal concerns as well as worrying about the results added to the stress. Getting along with coaches and peers, the politics of skating, "psychological warfare" on the team, the extremely high cost of skating as well as the time commitment involved in the hours of training, were other areas of stress.

The results of this study indicate that young elite figure skaters live with a significant amount of stress in their lives. Being at the top in one's field would likely increase demands and expectations, as well as the amount of stress. The many factors which could increase stress at the top will be the focus of this investigation.

Many high level athletes have said that living up to expectations adds increased pressure. This contradicts much of the literature on expectancy theory. The relationship between confidence and performance was explored in depth by Bandura (1977) in his theory of self-efficacy, which is defined as the strength of an individual's conviction that they can successfully execute a behavior required to produce a certain outcome. The strength of an individual's feelings of self-efficacy will likely affect whether of not they will even try to cope with a given situation. Individuals who doubt their abilities to overcome a challenge will reduce their efforts, whereas those with a strong sense of self-efficacy will try harder in the face of adversity.

Weinberg, Yukelson & Jackson (1980) related this theory to a sport setting looking at the effect of public vs. private expectations and found little difference between the two. Bandura (1979), on the other hand found that public commitment of efficacy judgement placed pressure within an individual for consistency in performance.

Self-efficacy cognitions are proposed by Bandura to have motivational effects. Other studies have shown increases in self-efficacy expectations to be positively related to increases in the quality of sport performance (Feltz et al., 1979; Weinberg, Yukelson & Jackson, 1979).

The results of two consecutive studies showed that participants with higher specific expectancies for winning each upcoming match, experienced lower precompetition stress and were more frequently victorious, than those with lower prematch performance expectancies (Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1984; Scanlan, Lewthwaite & Jackson, 1984). In a more recent study by Scanlan & Lewthwaite (1985), it was found that the relationship between perceived ability and specific expectancies aligns with previous research (Scanlan & Passer, 1979, 1981) showing actual ability to be a predictor of specific performance expectancies. This study, as well as previous studies (Scanlan & Passer, 1979, 1981), demonstrated that histories of outcome success-failure predict participants' performance expectancies. However, none of these studies have dealt with athletes who have reached the top in their sport and none have done in-depth interviews to determine how athletes view this assumed relationship.

My own experience as an Olympic champion as well as subsequent informal discussions with many high level athletes, tells me that when athletes speak about feeling the pressures of expectations, what they are really saying is that they are becoming outcome oriented as opposed to process oriented. A study by Orlick & Partington (1988) has shown that athletes who performed best at the 1984 Olympic Games were process or task oriented. Athletes who were overly concerned with results, the audience, or what the media was saying, lost the proper focus and consequently performed below their expectations. Expectations are not negative in themselves, rather, it is how they are perceived that is important and whether they interfere with one's best performance focus. Further probing with elite athletes in this area would shed more light

on this matter.

In accordance with the expectancy theories, Leith (1988) found that athletes who were expected to "choke" (inability to perform up to previously exhibited standards) under pressure were more likely to do so, than those who were presented with positive, confident expectancies. Even the mere mention of the word "choke" resulted in significantly poorer performance. He concluded that coaches, teammates and the media would do the athletes a great service if they could refrain from making such negative suggestions.

II Other Related Literature

Another source of stress exists for athletes when they are led to believe that their self-worth is dependent on being ranked in the top three in the world. When they are no longer ranked they are left with the feeling of emptiness and insignificance. Feeling they are nothing, without their status as an athlete, is a very difficult thing to cope with, and adds to the pressure to perform (Orlick, 1980).

As alpine skier Steve Podborski said in his personal autobiography (1987), "You've got to watch the star-trip syndrome. You read in the papers that you're great, people start telling you you're great, and you start thinking you're great. If you start believing it you're dead meat. You've got to separate the media personality from the reality" (p. 113). Podborski also referred to the vast amount of media attention he and his successful teammates had to contend with while competing at the Lake Placid Olympics in 1980. Not having some kind of organized structure to handle the media resulted in very stressful and unnecessary situations for the athletes. Other demands inflicted upon their already demanding timetable included invitations to numerous official functions that were normally not part of their routine. Podborski admitted to the team getting quite stressed by all the Olympic distractions.

When Steve Podborski won the overall World Cup downhill title, one of the highest achievements in alpine skiing, he suffered what many successful people experience after a great accomplishment, a decline in performance. He felt the responsibility and the effort of trying to live up to the public was largely responsible for his post-title state. He also felt

conflicting emotions, between the roles of being Steve Podborski the famous ski racer and Steve Podborski the boy from Don Mills, Ontario, trying to live up to what others perceived him to be.

Although success had bred success, Steve felt that success can also breed failure. Winning had brought on many new pressures, such as dealing with the media and the public. It has meant spending less time training, to meet the demands of the team suppliers. The fact that most Downhill skiers win the title only once during their careers may be influenced by some of the factors mentioned by Podborski. Perhaps some did not feel winning was worth all the negatives that went along with it.

The women alpine skiers on the World Cup circuit have also discovered that stardom has a flipside, that success breeds pressure. There is added pressure from the media and the sponsors, as well as expectations to live up to, especially when competing in front of hometown crowds. In a sport where the top 10 finishers are separated by fractions of a second, their ability to handle pressures, especially Olympic pressures, may make the difference between medals and misery, according to Canadian National Team coach Currie Chapman. Lucrative endorsements have also meant increased pressure on the skiers. No longer is it just the skier skiing down the mountain, but it's also a bank, a restaurant chain, or a sports store. Laurie Graham, Canada's favorite to bring home a medal in alpine skiing at the Calgary Olympics admitted that her greatest pressure was being and staying at the top. "Once you've won, you then have to live with the potentially lethal expectation of being consistently near perfect" (Weston, 1987, p. 60). Another one of Canada's successful ski racers came off a strong season including a win and a second place overall in one of the disciplines, only to find that the pressure was getting the better of her, and her results had decreased considerably (Weston, 1987).

There are other examples as well. One such example took place at a women's singles match in the $60,000 Tennis Week Open at the Orange Lawn Tennis Club in New Jersey:

> Cathy Beene said her problems began when she knew she could win. "The first game, I wasn't nervous."..."Then when I realized I could beat her, I got nervous." Miss Beene became so nervous that she served 11 double faults ("more than I've

ever served in my life") and lost, 6-0, 6-2, to the 42-year-old Dr. Richards (Amdur, 1976, p.1.).

The pressure athletes experience at the top is not unlike the pressure felt by successful performers in other fields. Michael Jackson talks about the side effects of fame in his recent autobiography, Moonwalk (1988). He stated how the pressure of success does funny things to people, especially when success happens very quickly. They don't know how to handle what happens to them. He found the hardest part was having no privacy. During the time of his biggest hit, "Thriller" he grew wearisome of being in the public eye. He also stated that success definitely brings on loneliness. He longed to be treated like a normal person, to meet someone who didn't know who he was and who would be a friend because they liked him, not because of who he was. He did not know if he liked being famous, but he did enjoy achieving his goals.

Many athletes have had a difficult time dealing with their success. There are numerous accounts of athletes who never really adjusted into normal life after retiring from a successful athletic career. James Michener (1976) in his book, Sports in America, has reported finding "One statistic after another which supported the thesis that sports are an ascent of greatness followed by a sickening drop to oblivion" (p. 286). An analysis of ninety former boxing champions who had earned more than $100,000 at a time when that amount of money was substantial, revealed that they were now working in taverns, or as unskilled laborers, or as janitors, or as helpers around gas stations. Not one had a substantial job.

Many of these examples support the ancient sayings about the wheel of fortune, which treats those who aspire to its' rim, to the heights of success and the depths of failure. Many ancient traditions have referred to the formula. The Chinese philosopher, Lao-tzu stated; "Failure is the foundation of success; success the lurking-place of failure" (Tao-te-Ching: Section 58). The Spanish playwright Pierre Corneille said the same in Cinna (1639, act 2): Ambition, having reached the summit, longs to descend". When Saul Bello accepted the Novel Prize in literature, he quoted the Bible in his speech: "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you!" (Luke 6:25). In Isaiah (10:2-6): it is stated, "I will punish...the glory of his high looks. For he says, by the strength

of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom... therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of hosts, send among his fat ones, leanness". It is quite possible that one of the greatest obstacles to overcome is the sense of false pride. As many high profile people inferred, it is an easy trap to fall into. Perhaps one of the greatest strengths of the Swiss ski star, Pirmin Zurbriggen is his humble nature. He says, "Being a champion doesn't mean I have to lead the life of a rock star" (Johnson, 1988, p. 47).

In "The Catastrophe of Success" author Tennesee Williams (1945) relates his sudden rise into fame and fortune with the tremendous critical acclaim of The Glass Menagerie on Broadway:

> The sort of life which I had had previous to this popular success was one that required endurance, a life of clawing and scratching along a sheer surface and holding on tight with raw fingers to every inch of rock higher than the one caught hold of before, but it was a good life because it was the sort of life for which the human organism is created. I was not aware of how much vital energy had gone into this struggle until the struggle was removed. I was out on a level plateau with my arm still thrashing and my lungs still grabbing at air that no longer resisted. This was security at last. I sat down and looked about me and was suddenly very depressed. (p.15)

The English poet A.E. Housman clearly summed up the problem in his poem, "To an Athlete Dying Young" (1896):

> The time you won your town the race
> We chaired you through the market place;
> Man and boy stood cheering by,
> And home we brought you shoulder-high.
>
> Smart lad, to slip betimes away
> From fields where glory does not stay
> And early though the laurel grows
> It withers quicker then the rose.
>
> Now you will not swell the rout
> Of lads that wore their honors out,
> Runners whom renown outran
> And the name died before the man (Michener, 1976, p. 287).

In summary, it seems evident that an elite

athlete's life is not an easy one. It takes a great deal of effort to become successful and it appears to take a great deal more mental strength to stay there. The purpose of this study is to delve into the personal lives of the high profile athletes interviewed, to go beyond the public image of a star, to see how they personally experience being at the top and how they cope with the new expectations and experiences.

Chapter III

Research Methods

This chapter discusses the methodology to be used in this study beginning with an Overview, followed by Selection of the Subjects, Instrument Development, Design, Procedure and Analysis of the Data.

I Overview

This study is exploratory in nature. It will attempt to explore and describe what elite, high profile athletes experienced as a result of high level success and how they have dealt with the consequences of being successful at the international level. Extensive interviews will be conducted with 25 elite amateur or professional athletes, who may or may not be still competing, in order to determine whether there are factors related to successful adaptation evidenced by athletes who were able to maintain the same high level of performance after their initial success. The interviews are designed to draw out individual coping strategies used by some of the more successful athletes.

II Selection of the Subjects

Subjects selected to be interviewed for this study will be 25 elite male and female athletes who meet one of the following criteria:

1. placed in the top three in international competition at least once in their career (in a reasonably high profile amateur sport)
2. professional athlete who has been ranked as one of the top three players in their sport
3. star players of successful professional or amateur team sports.

Subjects will be selected from sports that consistently receive media attention. The athletes must have continued to compete for at least one year after their first successful result.

III Instrument Development

The effects of success on elite athletes' lives and subsequent performance is an unexplored area of research. In relatively unique exploratory studies with elite athletes such as this, an interview format is viewed as most appropriate (Orlick & Partington, 1988).

An Elite Athlete Performance Interview Guide was developed based upon an adaptation of the interview schedule used successfully by Orlick & Partington (1988) (see Appendix B). This open-ended, in-depth interview schedule was designed to elicit qualitative information about each athlete's own perspective of their experience of success. It consists of 11 questions investigating the athlete's specific experiences following a major successful accomplishment and how it affected their life.

The researcher will tape all the interviews in order to be more attentive to the verbal and nonverbal cues of the athletes. This will enable the researcher to be more probing into the athletes' lives, leading to more accurate responses to the questions.

A pilot study will be conducted, in order to test the relevance and comprehension of the interview questions on four elite athletes. This process will allow the interviewer the opportunity to practice and refine the interview technique.

IV Design

This study utilizes an interview format in order to gain in-depth information relevant to the individual coping strategies of highly successful athletes. The interview format was chosen for the following reasons:

1) Interviews provide an opportunity for the open searching and probing necessary to explore new topics.
2) Interviews enable the investigator to learn and understand the terms athletes use in their field.
3) Interviews scheduled at the athlete's convenience increase the likelihood they will

participate in the study. (Orlick & Partington, 1988)

Taped interviews are more convenient for athletes than written questionnaires and therefore increase the likelihood of them participating in the study. They also provide much more in-depth data than can be gained through the use of questionnaires (Orlick & Partington, 1988; Werthner, 1985).

The human interaction which is part of an interview procedure, provides a number of advantages over the more impersonal and limited questionnaire contacts. In a face to face meeting, the interviewer is able to clarify questions which athletes may have, ask clarifying questions of the athletes, and encourage the athletes in their responses, as was experienced in the Orlick & Partington (1988) survey. Through respondent's incidental comments, facial and bodily expressions and tone of voice, an interviewer can also acquire additional information that would often not be conveyed in written replies.

V Procedure

To arrange each interview, a personal letter (Appendix C) will be mailed to each potential subject explaining the purpose and significance of the study, and asking their permission to participate. After the subject's participation has been approved, they will be contacted again to arrange an interview. At this time further details of the interview will be discussed.

Interview bias will be minimized through the use of the Elite Athlete Performance Interview Guide. This guide ensures a standard of uniformity in the procedure, by introducing controls that permit the formulation of scientific generalizations. In addition, the transcripts will be returned to respective athletes for review, to confirm that their accounts are accurate. Orlick & Partington (1988), came to the conclusion that it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to manipulate the responses of elite athletes using this format.

VI Analysis of the Data

Typed verbatim interview transcripts will be qualitatively analyzed. Transcripts will be read and reread by the researcher and another experienced

researcher in elite sport, to independently identify coping strategies. The researcher and an independent investigator will list common factors associated with successful adaptation and individual coping strategies for each interview. In addition, a content analysis will be conducted question by question to determine response categories and percent response per category.

APPENDIX B

THE ELITE ATHLETE PERFORMANCE INTERVIEW GUIDE

Introduction

I will be asking you a set of questions that will attempt to shed light on how success affects world-class athletes. These questions are used as a guideline to explore this relatively new area of research. Please expand on your answers as we are looking for as much detail as possible.

1. Think back to your first World Cup win (or other appropriate big win). What were you thinking about prior to that race? How were you focused during the performance? How did you feel immediately after you knew you had won? How about the next day and a couple of days later? At that time, why did you think you had won? What do you think now?

2. Did you begin to think about any other goals after you accomplished your goal of winning that major event? If yes, what were they? Did you have any worries or doubts concerning those goals?

3. Think back to the very next competition in that event. What were you thinking before that meet? How were you focused during that event? (If not already answered, were you calm or nervous compared to normal? Were you thinking about doing the job or about the result/outcome? How were your thoughts compared to your prior best and compared to normal?)

4. If your thinking/focus was negative, or unproductive were you able to turn that thinking/focus around in subsequent competitions? If yes, how? (Explain) Do you still do that now? If your thinking/focus was positive, or productive were you able to hold that thinking/focus in subsequent competitions? If yes, how? (Explain)

5. Which was more difficult for you, getting to the top or staying there? Why do you say that?

6. How did your life change after that win, if at all? Did you have additional demands? If yes, what sort of demands? (Comment on whether and how things

changed, with respect to the following: see list.)

7. How did you deal with them? What was most difficult or most stressful for you? Did you prepare yourself to deal with this? If yes, how? What was most effective for dealing with these demands, if anything? Did you have any assistance in preparing yourself to cope? Again, I'd like you to go through the list and briefly comment on how you handled or coped with these additional demands. (see list)

8. Why do you think you were (or were not) able to maintain that level of performance in subsequent competitions?

9. If you could do it over again, what would you do to be better prepared, or to cope better with being or staying a champion? What would you recommend for others?

10. Any other suggestions which might help others who will soon have to face a similar situation?

11. Do you have anything else that you would like to add, that would help us better understand how success can affect someone or how to successfully cope with it?

List of Demands

* media
* public appearances
* promotional obligations/sponsors
* felt expectations
* self-image conflicts
* training
* rest
* confidence in new role
* treatment by others
* quality of life
* fans
* personal family & friends

APPENDIX C

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Dear Athlete,

We are in the process of conducting a study in a relatively unexplored area of sport, the effect of success on high level performers. In an attempt to shed light on this relevant and important topic, we would like to conduct interviews with a select group of athletes who have won a World Championship event or similar high level competition.

We are aware of the considerable demands on your time, but would be most appreciative if we could arrange to interview you as one of the subjects for this study. The interview would take approximately one hour and would be scheduled at your convenience.

Based on feedback from elite amateur and professional athletes in other studies, we feel certain that you will find this interview to be an interesting and worthwhile experience. Upon completion, we will be happy to share the findings of this study with you.

Should you wish further information, please contact us at the above address. One of us will be calling you in the near future to confirm details. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Kathy Kreiner-Phillips
1976 Olympic Gold
Medalist

and

Dr. Terry Orlick
Mental Training
Consultant

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW 1, Group 1

1. The worlds in 1985 were the first World Championships that my partner and I won. I was not so concerned about what was going on around me. We were so focused in on what we were doing. The media, at that time for me didn't have a big place. It was our first year performing internationally together. We were paired together in 1984. Everyone expected the American duet to win because they had been together 14 years already and they were next in line. We had been training on the mind set of being number 1. Our coach was always saying we had to try to do our best. We surprised a lot of people when we won. It was a real thrill. It didn't sink in until after. Our training before that competition was a lot more intense, a lot more focused and goal specific. I do a lot of mental rehearsal and I think we really applied it there. My mind set was so set on winning. In our sport you have to be feeling that on the inside because it shows on the outside. It was the biggest meet I had ever swam in. I really fuzzed out the audience and focused in during the performance. We practiced for distractions. Even training was intense and focused. Competition simulation is a big part of our training. The routine goes by so fast. You know exactly what you have to do. It's not like you really count, it's so automatic. When it's right on, you can really feel each other, you're just like "one" and you don't have to worry about the other person. We really see a lot of improvement every year. We needed that 4 years together before the Olympics. We communicated really well and had to compromise just like in a marriage.

People would say,"Oh, you are world champion" but to me I was still the same person.

The whole year everything seemed to click. We had a plan and took it step by step. We put all the elements in that we knew were right to get there, and on the day that it was to be, we were right there mentally and focused. We did what it took and it was enough. The day of the competition, it's important to keep yourself relaxed the whole time. We tried to make it just another time out but an extra special practice almost. We'd say, let's go out there and have fun.

2. We had to prove that we were the right pair

together. Goals developed more after Worlds, and the Olympics were definitely our goal. I had no real doubts about achieving our goals because we would hit every major meet before the Olympics.
3. The next competition was when I had a head cold and couldn't practice for three days, which is really bad in our sport. I just did a lot of mental imagery and stayed positive, instead of thinking I'm not ready. It went really well - we won. We took each one as it came. I always did better when I focused on doing my best and not on the results.
5. Staying at the top was harder. Getting there was hard, but staying there you have to be a step ahead all the time. You can't look back. We always had to think of what we could do that was better. It really made you pull everything out and push yourself more.
6. I don't think my life changed that much really.
- The media wasn't a problem for me. It was all on my partner because she had been in the Olympics before. It was like that for three years until the Olympics, then there was a difference.
- There were definitely more public appearances, speaking at schools and conferences.
- There weren't a lot of sponsors in our sport.
- My expectations grew stronger all the time. It was positive and made me push myself harder. Sometimes you might get down on yourself but that's just part of it. I tended to turn everything around all the time.
- It was always a bit tough because people wondered if we were the right pair to be together. It was a lot of extra pressure on me. It made me a lot stronger.
- Our coach started coaching us full time after 1986 and I stopped going to school. She was very structured with our time.
- It wasn't like other sports where there were great demands for us to do things, but she really kept that in control if there was.
- We were treated normally by our teammates. It was just other people that made a big deal. It all came gradually up to the Olympics. To tell you the truth, we were really isolated. It was training and home. We weren't around a lot of other people. We don't have a lot of competitions.

The most stressful demand was felt expectations. We were never allowed to have an off day. There are two ways you can look at expectations. They can help but they also make it more demanding for you.
7. Our coach had really prepared us to be world

champions. It was really embedded into us. We did some stuff with a sport psychologist. It was really pretty general, like relaxation and techniques before you compete and mental imagery. Wendy Jerome did a general program and then we applied it more specifically. We did a few things like dealing with the media at one training camp.
8. Just keeping on the same sort of game plan. Taking it step by step. Knowing what it would take to get there, covering every area, keeping a consistent step going. Keeping that focus to where you are going.
9. It would be pretty much the same. It's great to see the young athletes using this stuff, like having a game plan.
10. Focus on yourself and doing the best you can do. Make a goal but then put it aside and focus on what you have to do to get there, not the end result, but what you have to do now. For me, focusing on the outcome added pressure instead of focusing in on what you're doing.
11. I think you have to keep it in perspective. For me it's answering why I'm doing this: because I love the sport. You have to let the garbage pass by like the politics.

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW 2, Group 1

1. I had been 2nd at the beginning of the 1975 season, so the season before I finished 2nd, 3 times. Once I was 3rd, and once 4th at the end of the season. I didn't think I could win at this race, where I won. I didn't expect it at all. I was 22nd in the first run. I was skiing relaxed. I was not that far behind, maybe one and a half seconds. I didn't make any mistakes. I don't remember what happened 2nd run that allowed me to win. I know I was relaxed. I just had a good run. I don't remember what I was thinking about when going down the hill. The races I did really well, from those races I don't remember anything. I'm just like in another world, just skiing. I don't have to think about the position, about my skiing, or about the course. When I ski really well, everything comes automatically. I never found out how I controlled that. I think I was lucky to have that feeling. I don't know why. I didn't try to do something special. I think that's the main difference between winning and losing because there are many good skiers in training. In a race the thing that it depends on is the psychology. I was 11th or 20th in the next competition but it was a Giant Slalom. I don't remember how I did in the next slalom, but I won 5 or 7 races that season.

It was a fantastic feeling. I didn't have the chance to feel good for the next few days because I made a bad result the next day.

2. It was my goal to win but I didn't think I could win because I had been 2nd so many times. When I was a young kid, I never won when we played table tennis. I could lead by 20 - 15 but I never won. I got too nervous. Many racers are good skiers but they are not winners. Like Strolz, he has been 2nd for like 20 times. He never wins. I made goals to win again.

I always had that pressure on me to win, by the journalists from my country. As soon as I started winning a couple of races they expected me to win all the races. If I lost a race or was worse than a 3rd they started writing bad things. So I always had the same pressure every race. I could never feel relaxed. I think it was the same feeling before all the races, if I won or was 3rd or 10th.

Dealing with the media: I was lucky the first

years, my coach kept the media away from me. We just had press conferences 2 days before a race and then right after. Between the races they were not allowed to speak with us. That was good that he did that at the beginning so they knew they could only do this. I think that was very important. I was nervous almost every race. To deal with it I always came late to the start so I had to hurry up. I had to do something with my boots to keep me from thinking about the race.
5. I think I was lucky to get to the top so fast. For me it was easy to stay on the top for many years, but normally it's harder to stay on the top. It's easy to make good results if no one expects you to. I wanted to show someone I was good. When everybody expected me to win it wasn't fun anymore. I knew even if I win, it's nothing. People expect me to win.
6. - Media: I had to win, every race, to give the people and the press what they wanted. After one or two years it was not enough to win. If I won by one tenth it was not good enough. It was more a feeling. I skied better when I was more aggressive. I liked to get mad at the start. I was maybe too quiet sometimes before the start.
- Not a big problem because I said no to most of the things.
- I didn't have so many, just sometimes in October or November before the season started.
- I've had expectations from the media and the people and also from my trainers a little bit and from myself too. I wanted to ski well. For many years I won races but I could not enjoy it. Not like the first races, which were fantastic. After I won 10 or 15 races I was not happy. I just skied to win but I was not happy. The last years I raced, I didn't ski so well but I enjoyed skiing more because I didn't have any pressure and didn't have to prove anything.
- I never see myself as a famous person or like other people make you out to be.
- Not a big problem because it was very well arranged by the coaches from the beginning. Sometimes I had problems with the press. It was too much but it could have been much worse.
- Not always enough rest but almost.
- I never felt like a team leader. I was just one of the team.
- Treatment by teammates has always been perfect. I think it's harder for girls maybe. There's more competition perhaps.

- Sometimes I didn't want to do what I did. I always let the others decide. I didn't want the people to say, "You decided that. We should have done it the other way." So I let them decide, the coaches and my teammates. Of course I had my opinions sometimes. I think it worked very well, everything.
- Sometimes it was too much because I was quite shy. I would rather stay at the hotel instead to going to be with people.
- My family was always supporting me. They understood everything. They were very good.
- Sponsors were perfect, all the time.

Expectations from the media and other people were the hardest demands.

7. No, I didn't prepare myself to deal with this. I had no assistance or sport psychologist working with me. I visualized my runs after training and after races. The day of the race I would see myself ski, think about technique and how I was feeling.
8. I was able to stay successful because I enjoyed skiing so much. For some years I didn't enjoy skiing but I still won. I like when there were new things coming like rapid gates, new skis, new material, new boots, to test things. It was never boring. There was always something new and challenging like when it's icy and when it's soft.

I didn't look at it exactly like a job but maybe when I skied bad I thought it's better than having another job or a bad job.

9. I would not like to go through this once again, because it's been too much pressure.
10. Others should be aware that even if they win for a long time, suddenly you can start losing and you don't know why. I think you should just take it easy, and not try too hard. Many skiers have made that mistake. They tried too hard to win, and I did it too. When I started losing, maybe one year I tried too hard and I was skiing worse and worse. When it didn't go so well, I didn't have the right feeling. I think in skiing the most important thing is the feeling and the psychology. With new equipment I always had the chance to try my old equipment, so I could compare. I think when the other racers are getting closer, you feel you have to try harder and then you make mistakes and you lose the right feeling. I should have focused on what I was doing and not worried about the others. There was too much focus on winning and not enough on just skiing.

APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW 3, Group 2

1. I wasn't a favorite to win. My teammate had been winning every training run. This race was in Canada, the first race in Canada and all the hopes were pinned on her to win. She drew number 1 and I was number 8. I knew the results and she had been beaten. She had made a big mistake and hadn't won. I felt a duty to fill in the gap and be a Canadian winner. It was an extra motivation. I had the security of knowing I didn't have to win and yet if I could win it would kind of save the day. There wasn't the pressure but an added motivation. If I was going to do it, this was a good day to really go. The way I went down the hill, it was just very, very aggressive. It was a flat, easy course and I was actually saying swear words in my mind, anger almost, just determination. I was not really thinking skiing that much. It was just get to the bottom as fast as you can and make up for this mistake that my teammate made.

I felt unbelievable, incredulous but also so thankful, elated and on cloud nine. I was also a bit aware of my teammate's disappointment.

A few days later it was still the same thing, really excited, lots of congratulations from lots of people, and interviews. I felt like I was on my way now...this was just the beginning. I had finally done it. It had taken me 6 years to win a World Cup. I had been top 3, but I had never won one, and not everyone in their career wins one, so it was kind of...At least I've won one and now I can go on and try some more.

The talent was there already, I was in the first seed, I knew I could ski well. I had never really seriously aspired to win one. It was just that day that gave me the added kick and yet I didn't have to tell anyone I was really trying. If I didn't win, it wouldn't have been a failure yet in my own mind I went, "I've got to win this."

2. It was the last race of the season so I wanted to train hard that summer and really start off the next year with a real bang. I set new goals to have consecutive wins or more wins or maybe a World Cup title.

That's when I switched the equipment, so there was a break in the pattern and it took me a few years

to recover. I finally fixed my feet problem and that's when I started doing well again, which was coming into the 1985-86 season, the next time I won in the Downhill. That again was on home ground.
3. Again it was the feeling of trying to have a Canadian win. I felt like I was doing it for all the volunteers that worked on the race and all the corporate sponsors that were involved. It's so much more rewarding for them if they get a Canadian to win. There was just that extra kick of wanting to win on home ground. That was a double race and the first day I had been second, so I really was within grasp. The next day I could hardly wait to race. I knew where I could make up some time. I felt confident that I could win. I didn't feel pressure, it was excitement. I couldn't wait to get to the bottom. I liked to imagine myself as a speeding bullet or a cruising missile until I got critisized by a passivist that being an elite athlete that young people look up to, I shouldn't be adding credibility to war instruments. I hadn't even thought of it that way. It was just that feeling of the quietness, the quiet focus and the quiet strength. My cue words are more technical and specific but it's kind of nonverbal. I ran the tape through my head so many times so that when I was in the start all I thought about was getting an explosive start, being here in the present and not thinking way down the hill or whatever, just right there. It was almost like the tape would start rolling and I would be on autopilot.

That was at the next competition. I was just on a roll by then. I wanted to get another win.

I was focused the same sort of way, really up and happy to be doing what I was doing, confident and loving that feeling of skiing, the speed and cleanness of a turn. I wasn't more nervous than normal. I wasn't focused on the outcome but keeping the feeling going. I always kept saying it was so much fun. It's got to be where everything just flows and it's not an effort and you're on top of the world.
4. I was being rewarded with wins or top three placings. When you're winning, you don't think much, it's when you're having problems you start overanalyzing and overcompensating. When you're winning it's just smooth and flowing.
5. Staying there at the top is more difficult, although it took me 6 years to win a race, it didn't feel that difficult because there were the little

successes along the way - your first top 15 result or your first top 10 and every time you get better and better. You always draw the positive and once you've won, everything else is secondary until you win again. It's more difficult to stay there because you get discouraged easier. If you don't win it becomes a failure. You drive yourself harder and expect more. Or there's the fear of losing the feeling, and you get a little panicky.

6. Personally, once I started winning I became more professional, more mature. I trained harder. If I wanted to keep winning I had to stick to the basics.

- The media demands were definitely present, more so because Canada doesn't have a lot of top world class athletes. I found that you weren't going to get away from them and it's better to have good press than bad press and also a lot more of a hassle to block them out than to deal with them quickly and effectively and pleasantly. Then they're happy and you're happy.
- Public appearances were timing. You had to keep your priorities. If you had time to go to them, that's fine, but you had to be able to say no too. Agents were good as the buffer zone. I tried to do the ones that were local.
- Promotional obligations benefitted me financially so I wanted to do them but again it meant choosing a quiet time of the year, like summer. You still need to leave yourself 2 hours a day to do training.
- I felt expectations from others but they were realistic. I didn't feel over pressured by them unless my training runs didn't go well.
- Seeing 2 people: You're still the same person except people see you differently now, because you're on TV and in the newspaper. That's the public image. It was just like a job, you had to fulfill a role in the one and be yourself in the other.
- Training: I was quite diligent about training, especially for my own peace of mind, going into the Olympic year when I was so busy.
- Enough rest was of course difficult to get. That was the hardest thing because you were more busy.
- I handled the new role with confidence. I was the team leader, but that was partly out of seniority as well as results. I lead by example. I didn't tell them what to do or give them pep talks, but they saw my work ethic and so they followed suit.
- Others treated me with respect. The coaches knew what I needed. It didn't change a lot.

- The quality of life was very hectic and very narrow. At the time, that's all I wanted to do was ski but now that I've retired, I realize I did miss out on a lot of things but there's time now to get caught up. I would do it all again, so I don't think it was a bad quality of life.
- Fans...My little experience with semistardom has given me an insight into movie stars. You see that they are normal people behind it all, yet if you believe all the press, then they're like this unattainable person. I almost feel sorry for fans because they're looking at this package that's not real.
- Relationships were a demand. I had trouble and it seems all of the women on the team were the same, having boyfriends who couldn't understand when you were home why you didn't want to spend every waking moment with them. Unfortunately, I found I always skied better when I was single, when you could be selfish. You have to be a little bit selfish. Dealing with relationships was one more distraction.
- With sponsors I felt I was giving them their money's worth.

7. Anything dealing with the public was more stressful, where you had to take time off training, or where I had to expend energy talking to suppliers, or people at cocktail parties, where everybody was asking the same old question just wanting to rub shoulders with you.

You take it as a fact, as something you have to do, and you set a time limit for things. Before I won, I didn't know it was going to be that demanding. I had progressively gotten better, so that made it easier.

I had no real assistance other than from my agents who would book time and act as a buffer, or when we were at races the coaches would do that.

8. Each time was a new time out. I tried to learn from the mistakes that I made and tried to do it better the next time and to always stay focused on the task and not on the results and the what if's. I also tried to stay in the present tense, the here and now. This is what you do to try to win and what's needed to ski well. It came quite naturally to me and I think my family had an influence on me as well. My Dad has been a very successful business man and yet he still counts his pennies. You work on the little things and the big things take care of themselves.

9. I wasted a few years at the beginning of my career, when I was fooling around, not being serious and partying and not training hard enough. So maybe I would have tried to be serious sooner but then I may have burned out sooner. Basically during my core years of competition I liked what I did. Maybe towards the end I might have been too nice. I wasn't demanding enough for equipment, for things I knew I needed. Maybe I compromised to fit in with the whole team. My last year I didn't win because I was having equipment problems, and because there wasn't a lot of snow, so we were on different courses that weren't very demanding. I do better on the tougher courses. My best pair of skis were damaged in a race and I hadn't found another pair to replace them. Then I was getting worried that I had lost the winning feeling even though I knew I was skiing well. At least 3 races were because of the skis but some were my errors. I had the same pair of skis for a lot of my wins especially on soft snow. I had 2 or 3 pairs max.
10. I would recommend to others to keep it all in perspective, that it's not a life and death situation. Sure it's important, but it's not everything in life and you shouldn't judge yourself on whether you can ski fast down a hill or not. Be accepting of yourself whether you win or lose and try to learn from the losing and apply it. Stay in touch with other people outside of sport.
11. Remember the basics. Don't let success go to your head. Remember all the stages you went through to get there and once you are there, doesn't mean you can coast. You've got to set new goals and create new challenges so you can still stay interested and not become blase...but mainly to remember the basics that got you to where you are.

APPENDIX G

INTERVIEW 4, Group 2

1. I actually won the World Championships that year in Germany. There was a big tail wind. I was really focused on getting off the starting line well, then getting into a stroke that was really powerful but also very light. I was also really feeling the rhythm of my strokes and feeling the boat move well underneath me. When I got to about the 500 meter point in the race, I was leading, and when I got to 750 meters into the race I was still leading. The last 250 meters was a situation where I knew I was feeling good and I knew I could win. At that point my focus changed a little bit, from keeping such a good technical performance to just not letting this guy pass me. It was a good race. Earlier that day, I remember there were Hungarians and East Germans at that regatta and I wanted really badly to beat them. I was trying to get really aggressive and energized towards getting out fast and getting out ahead of these guys. I actually focused more on the competition then I would now, but I was a little bit younger then. I used to try to get really pumped before the race, now I tend to get more relaxed. Now I know what I'm capable of and what the competition is capable of. I've done it so many times before. It's now a question of going out and being relaxed and focused, not making any mistakes and using the adrenalin of the race to raise me that extra bit. When I first started to realize I could beat these guys, I'd get really, really pumped and try to excite myself. Maybe if I had the confidence I have now and the experience, maybe I could have been more relaxed back then. LA was a little more controlled. Especially with the boycott, I knew there were really only a couple boats in the race I had to be concerned with. I could be a little more focused on myself and not the rest of the field. Still in LA I was focusing on trying to blow the other guys to bits, more than just paddling a race that was good for me. I think in the 500 that worked, but in the 1000 it might have been better to go the other way. If I'm in a lane next to my competitor or he is close to me, sometimes it's good to know where they are, especially depending on how a person races. You could aim to be ahead of a fast starter because you know you can beat him at the

finish and hurt his confidence a bit. It's a pretty tactical race.

Physically I was very capable of doing it. Up to that point, I never really knew I was capable. I thought maybe I was. I think it was really important to be really aggressive and to tell myself before the race I was going to go out and take it. When I got three quarters of the way into the race it was more a question of just not losing it. I think the big thing was my approach, being very aggressive and confident at the starting line. Taking it early and just holding on. I told myself, to do my best, that I wasn't going to let an East German or a Hungarian beat me. I don't know how much I believed that before the race.

It was great. I was all of a sudden pumped up, still breathing heavily. I was ready to go again almost. I was really focused on it.

I think it was good because at that time I belonged at that level. Quite often when I've improved, I've improved in jumps. It's good for confidence to have a performance like that.

2. I wanted then to beat these guys at the World Championships that year. Actually I came close but I didn't. I was 4th. I had some bad luck in the lane assignment. I probably went too hard at the beginning though.

3. My next competition was the World Championships. I was confident that I was in the first group. I was very focused on trying to do the same thing. Maybe I was a little too focused on results and not enough on what is required to get those kind of results. I was probably like that a lot. It was probably only in the last year or two that I learned to get away from that a bit. I was only 19. I find it's harder to be the favorite then to come from behind as the underdog. You've got more to lose. I was probably more nervous than usual. The next big regatta was in May, 1983 in East Germany and I won the 1000 there and was 2nd in the 500. There again I was very focused on what I was doing but probably more on how I was feeling and the process, not so much on the outcome. In the World Championships, later that year I was probably more focused on results once again and not so much on what I had to do. I didn't race that well. All these things I am thinking about are things that I've just realized in the last year or two because the more time you have between a certain event and the present, the

better insights you have into what actually happened. You're constantly reassessing things that happened even 5 or 6 years ago to try and learn. I had some good regattas in 1984 and some that were not so good. One weekend I did well and the next I wouldn't. I don't know if it was because I had done well the week before or not. I don't think there's any pattern to it. When we got to LA, it was a bit of a bummer with the boycott because I could have a substandard race and still have a half decent result. The day that I won was probably the best race I ever had and it was the day I needed to have it. I was 2nd in the other event.

During the race I was trying to get out ahead and take control of the race right from the beginning. I was focused on trying to smash the others at the start. Looking back on it, I did race that very much within myself. I didn't worry about the other competitors. In the other event, I had the guy who ended up winning right beside me. It was a very tactical race. I didn't want to get too far in front of him the first half because I was afraid he'd ride my wash. I probably worried too much about what he was doing.

5. I think it's probably more difficult to stay at the top. I much more enjoy getting to the top. It's a lot more fun because there's no pressure and it seems like there's more challenge because there's people better than you to beat. It's more fun knocking them off. At the same time I think it's a drag to feel that people are knocking you off. You feel like you've got something to lose. I race better when I realize my last races were crummy. There's about 5 or 6 people really killing me and I end up really focusing on my training and my race and not on what the others are doing. Then I end up going out and having a good result. If I think too much about the good result, that I can get another result like that, then it almost seems invariably that I end up having another crummy result. I get too conscious of what is possible, like it's possible to win a medal. It just seems to me that it's a lot easier to keep all those kinds of thoughts out of your head if you are not the favorite, or you know you have a chance and you don't really expect anything because you never know what to expect. Most of the time what you expect isn't what happens.

6. My life didn't change that much after my win. I

experienced a lot of demands and they were hard to handle, although I didn't have them to the degree that a lot of people did. I don't really enjoy public speaking or being in the limelight too much. I also don't know how to say no a lot of the time, so I ended up doing a lot more things then I wanted to do.

It did cut into my training but more my rest. I think it just distracted me. I ended up not being focused as much on just paddling. That was only a problem in 1985 and 1986. Since then I haven't done well enough to have anyone really bother me. It's been much better.

There were no real promotional opportunities after LA. It would have been nice but at the same time I can't complain about how things worked out. If I felt like I was having a hard time handling whatever things I had to deal with, if I was doing endorsements, things like that, the demands would have been much greater. I probably would have ended up getting even more frazzled by all of it. Looking back on it, it's probably fine it worked out the way it did.

I would say I probably tried to conform to what I thought people expected more in the year or two after the Olympics than I did before and I do now. That's probably not very good because you are what you are. You shouldn't let anything try and change that. Things are a lot more enjoyable now and they were a lot more enjoyable before LA, than the period right after, although it was great to have won and it was a great experience. For paddling it's better to have a little obscurity, and for the kind of life I enjoy, it's better not to be in the spotlight that you're thrust into.

I didn't have much assistance really. I tried to do as much as I could. I wouldn't have a whole lot of help doing things. I probably should have. I tried to make the best of it.

It wouldn't always be the same request. When the phone rings you were afraid to pick it up because it's going to be someone asking you to do something and you know that you have the time to do it but you really don't want to. You don't know how to say no to this person. Those are the kinds of things I ended up doing a lot of. They were pretty stressful because before I even did it, I knew that I didn't want to. I felt that I should. I think that was a bad thing. I would have been better off if I had just said "I'm

sorry but I just can't do it." I never had an agent. I never had to deal with that kind of thing before.
9. If things go well and I win in 1992 and if I were to retire after that, I don't think it would be as bad to have things go the way they went last time but if I want to compete again, there's got to be some way to escape the demands and expectations of other people, whether it's learning how to say no sometimes or getting an unlisted number or getting an agent. I think if I was doing it now, I'd just sort of know by the way I felt whether I was handling it well or whether I wasn't. If I started to feel at my wits end, frustrated and tired, then I'd know I wasn't getting enough time for myself and for what I liked to do. I'd have to just put an end to it. I'd never really realized what was happening before.

1985 and 1986 were really crummy years. I think it all had to do with how things went after the Olympics. I probably wasn't as hungry as I was before. I certainly wasn't as focused because of all the distractions. It wasn't until the World Championships in the 1986 season that I got my act together, that I sat down and took a look at what was going on and what I was doing differently. In 1987 I came back strong, getting good results again. First of all I was exposed to distractions. When you start coming 6th at the Worlds, no one wants to talk to you. If you are winning, then everyone wants to talk to you and there's all kinds of distractions. All of a sudden I wasn't exposed to them anymore. I focused a lot more on paddling. Because I was doing that, I started to enjoy it a lot more. I really got into it and felt good about what I was doing. I did a few things to try to improve my fitness and also improve my mental commitment to the sport. I stopped driving my car whenever possible and rode my bike wherever I was going. I didn't drink beer for a whole year. These little things are maybe insignificant or have a small effect on the physical part of it, but I thought they made me more focused on what I was doing. I didn't have any late nights for a whole year. I was totally keyed in on paddling. The first competition I had in 1987 was in Moscow, and I lost by about 6 inches. It was a great race. I actually beat the guy who ended up winning the worlds that year. So I was back on track. Last year was a good year too and I'm hoping that this year can be even better because I actually feel more keyed into paddling then I did

then.
10. I guess there has to be more to why you compete then just getting good results. You have to enjoy it and I enjoy paddling but I think sometimes I forget that. When it comes time for the big competition, I'm more concerned about where I have to come or what I have to do then just going out there and having fun and enjoying the whole experience of going to the World Championships or something like that. I think if I enjoy it and I stay relaxed and just focus on the process involved and not on the results...if I could walk away from every competition and say that I did the best I could have done and I couldn't have gone any harder in a certain race, then I'd have to be happy with that race. I think that's a much better way to approach it then to say "I want to go in this race and win", then come second and think it's a disaster. It's probably better to go in to want to have fun and to want to race the best you can race. After it's all over, if you can say that you raced well, whatever your result is, be happy with it and then you'll have a good memory of the competition. I just went from one way of preparation to another, over a period of 6 or 8 years.

Before the Olympics, we tried to have a plan on how to deal with the distractions while we were going to be competing. That was very successful. That was excellent. There wasn't any real way to prepare for what went after. I don't think you can plan for it. Besides, when you haven't won yet and the objective is to perform well or to win, you don't want to be thinking about what we are going to be doing after. Everything is directed towards getting there, and then it's a whole new ball game once you've achieved your goal. It's pretty hard unless you've got someone who's done it all before and can lead you through it. Most of us aren't really fortunate to have that. I think for me, after 1984, maybe I didn't handle it well in 1985 and 1986 and the things that happened hurt me. I think ultimately it will help. The nice thing for me is that I was young enough at that time. After I got by 1985 and 1986, I had plenty of time to get back into it and refocused. I think also, I will be better because of that.

APPENDIX H

INTERVIEW 5, Group 3

1. The Olympic win was my first win. I had a third and a fifth place right before that. I was building the momentum up to that point. Even though it was a good season leading up into the Olympics, it still was frustrating. The races before the Olympics I would get to the bottom and say, "Just give me one more shot and I know I can do it this time." I felt so close, like I was there. When I got to the Olympics, one thing that was running through my mind at the start was, "Don't get to the bottom and wish you had a second chance." On the way down, during the run I was thinking, "Got to do it now." I had never been in a race where I thought, "Give it a little more at each gate." The Olympics is a different situation and fortunately that didn't scare me away. It made me really excited. I really wanted to experience what it was like to compete in the Olympics. I wanted to feel that pressure and I wanted to see how everyone else handled the pressure. I wanted to feel the pressure and the stress at the starting gate. I just wanted to feel everything that had to do with the Olympics, how it was different and why it was different. I just loved it. It was exciting, walking around the Olympic Village, trading pins, seeing the other athletes, inspecting the course and seeing the American flags on the side. In the starting gate, I just wanted to have fun and I did. The day before the race I was really confident. I made a $50 bet with my coach, that I would win a medal. I wouldn't say I was relaxed before the start but I wasn't nervous. I was pumped up and jumping all around. I was probably releasing some of that energy. I didn't plan to win, but I was confident I would do alright, 1st, 2nd, or 3rd. I thought if I just have the time of my life, the best race of my life and just take care of first things first, something else will follow. I knew I was good enough, that if I put everything together, I could win. But I wasn't really thinking that. I was thinking, put it all together. I was 2nd after the first run and it didn't surprise me. The 2nd run was easy. The first run I experienced the Olympic experience, so the 2nd run I was doing it for the 2nd time. That freed me up even more. I didn't feel the pressure. I was having a good time. On the course,

the thing that came in mind the most was not the have fun part, but the don't get to the bottom and wish you had had a second chance. I thought, "You're almost there, just give it more, all the way down." I was grunting like crazy. It wasn't a very long course but I was pooped at the bottom. I don't ever remember being so tired at the end of a race. I thought of looking ahead but nothing technical. For me, tactics was more important.

That was hard. It was like, after I won then a whole new chapter started. The build up before the race and during it was exciting but getting the medal and the stuff that follows wasn't. For me, to be physically and mentally and emotionally...for everything to have been so 100% at that time was what it was all about. That was the ultimate high for an athlete. It was about putting everything together. For the next three weeks I cried every day. They weren't happy tears either. Right after the Olympics we went back to the US nationals and I was miserable. There were lots of times I wish I hadn't won. I didn't know how to handle it. People would call me at 11 o'clock at night. Little kids and grown ups, would ask me for my autograph all of a sudden. I didn't know how to say no. So I'd say yes and just get swamped. I remember riding up the chair, and at the top of the chair there were a bunch of people waiting for my autograph, and I had finally had enough and just put my head down and started to cry. When I looked back up everyone was gone. I thought, well that's how you can handle it. I just wanted it to be my race. I love everyone at home being able to enjoy it, but at the same time it was my day and when everyone else wants a little piece of it, that made it hard for me.

I like big events. I won the junior Olympics by a lot. The first World Cup I was in I won the first training run. I was 4th in the World Championships after the Olympics. I had felt like that was going to be a good race for me. I was wanting to experience the big events.

2. I did set new goals. That doesn't mean I reached them. A lot had to do with injuries. First my goals were to make special seed because I wanted to be an all event skier. In January I got hurt and from then on it was a struggle. It was very frustrating for me because I was older and more experienced. There were a lot of things going into play here. I never felt

like there was a goal I made that I never reached. I was very realistic. That gave me lots of confidence. I didn't think of winning on a consistent basis. My goal was never to win but to place well. I felt like I knew how good I was. I was 4th and 5th before getting hurt and felt like I was right there.
3. I was 9th in the next race. I don't remember the start. The coach was happy about it but I was disappointed a bit. He helped put it in perspective. I don't remember the start or going down the hill. My expectations must have been a little higher than they had been in the past. At the Olympics, I was so in tune that I can remember everything. I never was nervous before races.
5. I never felt like I was at the top. I was, on that one day. I felt like I really could have been the best. I felt like I was the best athlete out there. I did basketball and soccer and I still do that. If somehow I could get everything going my way, like it did at the Olympics, then I could do it. After that, it was frustrating for me because things weren't coming together. In 1986 when I felt like things were going in my direction, I got hurt. The coach I was working so well together with, went to work for the Swiss and I was devastated. I had a taste of having the best coach in the world and never having that again. From then on, I felt like I was always being deprived of something. It took so much to try to get it going. I felt like the 1985 season, after the Olympics was a wasted season. People were asking if it was pressure from the Olympics but I didn't feel like I was feeling any pressure. What I must have been feeling and didn't realize was burnout. Once the 1986 season started, that good season for me with Max, I was right there, I was a new person, so fresh. I was just ready to go. Once the 1986 season started, I could see the difference between the two seasons. Looking back on the 1985 season, now that I am away from it, I can see how out of it I really was. I was fried. The 1984 Olympics took a lot out of me and it lasted all summer. The Olympic stuff carried on into the next season. I was burned out of Olympic stuff and Olympic hype. I didn't think I was feeling pressure but I must have been feeling something. It just wasn't me. My best result in 1984 was 4th, 3 times. It was a better year points wise, but every year was a better year.
6. It changed a lot, some ways good and in other ways

not. I made the decision in 1984 just to go on with ski racing, instead of going on the social, media and money making tour. I personally couldn't handle that. So I chose to go the other way, which I don't regret. I didn't have an agent. It gave me an opportunity to be a role model at home and I enjoyed that.
- media: It took a lot of my time and I learned how to say no.
- public appearances: There were more.
- promotions: I didn't pursue it.
- expectations: I'm pretty confident in myself. If other people had expectations of me it didn't really bother me. I wasn't aware if there were.
- self-image: If people only can see me as a skier then that's their problem.
- training: Before I had made the decision to focus on ski racing and not the promotional stuff I thought, what am I supposed to do now? Everyone talks about Olympics and making all this money. I didn't know what to do. I talked to my teammates about it, who had won World Cup races. What happens now? I got really wrapped up in that. I was lost. I didn't have any guidance. I hadn't done this before and I got so frustrated. That's when I was thinking, I wish I hadn't won, because there were all these demands. I didn't even know what my options were, what decisions to make. I finally threw my arms up in the air and said forget it. None of that. This was a month later. I don't want any of that. I can't handle it - nothing. I almost did the opposite. Just because I won on that day didn't make me think now I have to win all the time.

8. So many things came into play: injuries, stuff that I didn't feel was directly related to me yet I had to deal with it. The way I dealt with it affected my skiing. I was frustrated because I wasn't living up to my own expectations of my ski career. I had high expectations, not because I won an Olympic gold medal but because of the athlete that I am.

9. So much of it an athlete doesn't have any control over. That was the most frustrating thing. There were times I was given the control and that was too much. I need a coach, someone to guide me along. It would have been helpful if there had been another athlete that had been there before, to give me some options, to let me know where I am at and what's happening in my life and the direction I was probably going. A lot comes into it. It's not just ski racing

anymore. I'm just an athlete and all I know is how to ski fast. I guess I just needed more professional help.

10. Surround yourself with good professional people, people that are looking after your interests. My folks were the only ones that were looking after my interests. They helped me a lot. For two years Mom was the only one who answered the phone. All of a sudden they weren't just parents anymore, they were being the agent. I was afraid of agents because I didn't know who was looking after my interests. Before I won a medal it probably would have been helpful to have all this in place. After you win, then everyone wants a piece of you and you don't know who to turn to.

APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW 6, Group 3

1. The day before in the downhill, I had just missed out on being on the podium by a couple hundreds of a second and I was really mad. The next day, I'd been going well in training prior to the inspection. During the inspection, I looked at the course which had been set by our coach, so I had that confidence, like there were not going to be any surprises and he was going to set it for us. I inspected the course and I saw our ski rep. and he asked, "How does it look?" I just looked at him and I said, "I'm going to win today," and off I went. It was just so clear in my mind that today was going to be a good day. I felt strong. I felt very, very confident. God, if I could have only keyed in on that again and again. As I was skiing the course I thought, "This is great, this feels so good." I was so caught up in how it felt. I wasn't thinking about anything else except that everything was easy and fun and I couldn't do it any better. I got through the finish and my gut feeling crossing the finish line was, if I turn around and I am not first, there's something wrong. I had never skied like that in a race.

Going down the course I was thinking consistency, keeping it fun. To me there was nothing that was going to surprise me. I was calculating ahead rather than what was behind me. It was always, "Ah, this is fun, ah, that felt good." I know there were a couple of key points on the course and I just came around them with confidence knowing that I was riding the finest line I could, but I was still going to make it and there was nothing that was going to surprise me, that I was going to be off course for. I wasn't thinking of one particular cue word.

After the win I felt, "Finally." It wasn't like you were so ecstatic. For me it was a quiet satisfaction. I'm so glad. I've finally done it. For so long you believe you can do it and every time you don't, it chips away at your confidence a little bit and then you have a couple of races that bring you back up. It seems like it's such a climb to reach the peak. You slide back a bit, then you go on. When I crossed the finish line, I knew I would be disappointed if I didn't win. So it was a great satisfaction.

Days later: We were coming right back to a race in Canada. I was still very confident afterwards, especially when you've got the races in North America. You've got the support of fellow Canadians. I always did pretty well at home. I came back to have some decent results in the DH and in the GS. I was 4th going into the 2nd run. In the 2nd run I blew out. I knew at that point I was skiing well and the mistake I made wasn't a mental error. It was a really tough turn that lost nearly 50% of the field. I wasn't really disappointed about going out there because I still had the confidence. I was skiing well, and it was more just bad luck. I knew of the problem area, made what I thought was enough of an adjustment, but it wasn't enough. Tough luck.

Why won: Perseverance. I think there's factors like, certain people, coaches you work with that really help your confidence. I finally felt I had a really good rapport with them. I found the coach I really liked to work with, especially in Super-G. He had set the course as well and I knew as far as my rep. goes, to me he was an extra coach an extra confidant that I knew I could stay on the level with. I wasn't going to be really erratic. I could stay away from the people that would cause me to think a little more erratically. From training days to race days there was very little change. I always figured, if you could race like you could train then it would be easy. There's still an aura about race day that some people get you really hyped for, and for me it changed me too much. Race day was "all" and I would forget what I had learned on the training day, the day before or two hours before on the warm up course. With my coach, I felt I could be more level and relaxed continuously. My coach built up my confidence before this winning race. Training was going well and I felt upbeat about being in this foreign country. I liked the snow and the type of hill. It seemed to be the course, the day for me. Our coach would always take you aside and tell you how well he felt you could do. Some of the other coaches never did or they would try to ignite you by getting you mad at the wrong time. I didn't need someone to get me all psyched up between inspection and race time. It works for some people. I need to be calm, cool, collected. That's when I felt the best and happiest. Getting me mad made me think of too many things. If I could just feel confident and sure, I knew I could perform.

I think I would have approached the year after differently. I don't think differently about why I won. I just didn't learn the lesson then as I know it now.

2. Then you want to win again. For so long you want to win once. Then I felt like I wanted to win again and again. All that mattered to me was winning, which was obviously the wrong approach. That didn't happen directly afterwards. I finished the season consistently skiing well. I didn't win again that year. The following year the focus was winning instead of being confident and skiing well. I wasn't focusing on the basics. I didn't have a bad year following, I just didn't meet the expectations that I put forth for myself, like winning. Because it wasn't what you wanted I might as well have been last. I had no doubts initially concerning winning. The World Championships were the worst part because I put the pressure on myself there. To me, it was the rehearsal for the Olympics. I just completely destroyed my confidence there. Anything less then winning was total disappointment. With every race and training run it got worse and worse to the point where after the first GS race run, I went to my coach and said please don't make me do that again. I don't need it. I at least had something left that said don't beat yourself up anymore. Go back where you can win and start fresh. Start rebuilding your confidence, which is what I did. Between runs I left to go to a Europacup race. I was trying too hard. Instead of skiing well, the focus became beating the rest. My approach was completely wrong. I was making too many little mistakes. I was losing all the way down the course. As soon as I would make a mistake, I would dwell on it. There was no reaching forward. I wasn't taking command. When I won it was like, "Where's the next gate?" and charging along. At the World Championships, when my tails would slide I'd think, "I hate this snow," rather then looking to the positive side. It was like that a lot through the season. My focus changed a lot through the season because of outside influence. I had reporters who were really getting down on me and why I would agree to do an interview with them I'll never know. You try to put it out of your mind. You're caught between people who support you and those who don't. You don't know what to believe. I let it bother me. I felt I was letting more people down then just myself as well.

3. In the next Super-G, I was 3rd. I know I didn't feel as confident. I knew the expectation was there, from others and myself, like was it a fluke I won last week? It was important to do well. Everything was going well. I was 4th in the DH. I skied well and I was happy with it. Unfortunately, it was the end of the year. (Why less confidence at this race?) Maybe I started to second guess myself already. "Did you deserve to win that one?" I don't know why now I would second guess myself because when I won, I won by a second almost. It wasn't really a fluke, but I started back in the pack. Second and 3rd was from back in the pack too, so you think maybe the course got faster. Here I was at the next race, in the first seed. I didn't lack the confidence until after I came down, so I remember that more. I had the same focus before the start at both places. During the race I don't remember it as being as much fun. It was very important for me to do well, prove my position. It was harder work. I wasn't as positive at the finish line that I was going to be in there. I still thought about skiing well and not the outcome. I made a concerted effort to focus on the fun (the fun didn't come as easily), striving ahead, and the outcome would come with that. After that I had my best GS result in two years, 11th or 12th.

The next year, in the first downhill, I wasn't able to keep the same focus. I did bad. I didn't feel good about the amount of training I had had in DH. I was a lot less confident. I was 36th the first day and the second day I was 5th or 6th. I was concerned about the expectations that I really could do well. From that point I was focusing on the outcome rather than the task at hand. The World Championships were a disaster. I turned things around at the Canadian Championships. I went home and rested and decided I would win the Canadians, and I did. It was the only way I could turn my season around. Again it was so blatantly there, my focus and the way I approached it - set a reasonable goal, focus, enjoy and do it. That was just before I got hurt.

5. Staying there was harder, definitely. Getting there is also a challenge, but you can live with the ups and downs because you still haven't won. Once you get there and you don't win, that's the point you realize getting there was the easy part, even though you felt that was hard at some point, because you have the pressure to do it again. And it's not just the

outside pressure it's the inner pressure from yourself. Besides, you like winning. It's a lot of fun. It's the reward to hard work, and interestingly enough, for me it didn't seem to be as hard as the struggle to get close to the top. Winning is total satisfaction and anything less is disappointing.
6. There were more demands but I think most of them come from inside, from what you believe people want from you and believe you have to do again. Sure people can say it doesn't matter what people think, you just get out and do it for yourself, but you still have that pressure. People are paying you and people believe in you. You can make that positive or negative in your results. Naturally you want to perform for them, prove to them they didn't make a mistake.
- Media demands: That's something that comes with the territory. When things go bad and they start getting down on you, that's the one thing that really becomes tough. The media can make you or break you in a lot of ways. I always tried to be sure that I did my media thing and paint the pretty picture, but at times when it gets hard they almost become your worst enemy.
- Public appearances: Again that comes with the territory. I never really did any huge public things that took a lot of time. I worked more with my specific sponsors and they were really good and supporting. My goal with sponsors was to build a real bond, to become known together as a package.
- I was always able to train. I never did the cross-country trade shows and ski shows. You could use it as a positive thing, when people were there supporting what you do, feeling the power of their support, getting to know the people who are at home cheering you on every weekend.
- Felt expectations was a big one. Even teammates, when you finally do win, especially on our team because there weren't a lot of winners, you feel the expectations of them.
- Dealing with these: a lot of times you'd hash it out in your mind. It was hard to deal with them. Sometimes I couldn't do it at all. You have to be really strong. Definitely the hardest.
- Self-image: If anything, rather than thinking of yourself as a winner, you don't want to be too big an image to yourself. I never wanted to walk around with such an air of confidence that you're inhuman. Maybe in a way I should have. I was brought up to be human.

My Dad always said, "Remember, you meet the same people going up as you do going down." Maybe I wasn't confident enough but I can live with myself now too. The thing is, sport isn't your entire life. I don't think it was tough to think of myself as a winner. I felt deserving of it, because I put in my knocks. You think any day it could be mine. There was no real conflict.

- I like training and I was able to keep the same level.
- No problem with enough rest time.
- Playing new role was no problem. If anything I felt more confident, but you also realize you have farther to fall, so you have to constantly build yourself up. I felt like I was technically a better skier than my teammate, yet she was very strong mentally, and I finally had the proof, that I could stand next to her and say granted you're good but there are other people.
- The girls were as happy as you were when you won, especially the ones that are as good as you are (on the Canadian Team). Everyone gets a boost by it, for the same reason, any day they could stand next to you or above you, and that's proven in training.
- The quality of life changes a bit. You are invited to more events. I still like being at home living in a small town.
- Fans can be an advantage when you realize the effect you can have on them as a role model, especially in your home town.

Felt expectations was the most stressful.

7. No assistance or preparation to deal with this. Aside from working with Terry, I don't think I ever really thought about how I would deal with the expectations. I overlooked it.

Dealing with the media: well, you had to deal with them. It was just one of those things. They try to force a negative and against it I tried to force a positive. If the media is hounding you, you might as well do it and get it over with, otherwise they will always ride you. At the big events there was time set aside for the media.

8. The following year I demanded a lot from myself and didn't focus on getting there. I thought I had it all figured out. I can remember talking to Terry and saying, "It's a matter of feeling cool, calm and confident," but when it came down to standing in the starting gate, you wanted to win so badly.

9. I think it would be more of an inner satisfaction. I would stand in the start and think...this is a great thing. You really are lucky to be here. Rather then, I want to win this race. It has to be thinking to your training and how much fun it is, how you love the snow and you've been brought up doing this. You are in your element. Appreciate what you've got, rather than what you're going to get. I would go to the people I know I could get what I need from. It would be less of a job you have to do and more something you completely enjoy.
10. Remember you are doing it because you love it not because you have to do it. You're there, not because you have to win but because you enjoy doing this and the results become part of it. Now that I have stepped back from it I realize it was a pretty good lifestyle. The lifestyle was easy to overlook at the time. I realize now, how the coaches that have followed the World Cup for so long have done it. It's because it can be very rewarding and enjoyable, not just ski hill after ski hill.
11. It's something a lot of people can be good at but to be the greatest, you've got to keep it in perspective and to think back to your roots. You're not there because you are a selfish person. I think the best ones have kept it in perspective. If you've got the attitude of, take the money and run, then you're not getting out of it what you could. Because you've won once doesn't mean you're going to win again, but be happy with that because many people never get that far. It can be so frustrating but it can be so simple. If you just look to what you did, rather than look to what you can do. I could analyze my ski career forever, but I think the real key would be to keep it simple, keep the garbage out of it.