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RETIREMENT EXPERIENCES OF CANADA'S SUCCESSFUL ELITE AMATEUR ATHLETES: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

by

Penny C. Werthner-Bales

Thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Kinanthropology in the School of Human Kinetics and Leisure Studies, University of Ottawa, 1985.

Ottawa, Ontario

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ABSTRACT

The central purpose of this study was to explore and describe the experiences of Canada's best amateur athletes as they faced the ending of their sport careers and the subsequent move to a new and different stage in life. In order to fully investigate and understand the process of leaving behind a career in sport, an open-ended, in-depth interview schedule was designed to elicit qualitative information about each athlete's life from their own perspective. It consisted of 32 questions investigating the athlete's specific feelings and behaviors during the stage as an elite athlete, the reasons for retirement, the transition phase and the present, post-competitive life.

The subjects in this study were limited to 28 of Canada's very best amateur athletes who had retired from high level sport competition. They were drawn from the Canadian medalists in the 1976 and 1980 Winter and Summer Olympic Games and from those who finished in the top six in individual sports and the top half of the field in team sports in the 1976 and 1980 Olympic Games.

One of the major findings of this study was that the majority of athletes interviewed felt they had had some degree of difficulty in making the transition out of their sport careers. Seven major factors appeared to have influenced the nature of each of these athletes' transition: A New Focus, A Sense of Accomplishment, Coaching, Injuries or Health Problems, Politics and Sport Association Problems, Finances,

Support of Family and Friends. No single factor could be said to have exclusively influenced the transition but rather the ease or difficulty of the adjustment was very much dependent upon an interaction of these factors and the way in which each of these 28 athletes reacted to them.

This study has resulted in a number of recommendations for making positive changes in the present amateur sport system in Canada. These changes would help in making an athlete's sport career more positive and help in easing the adjustment to a new life when an athlete's sport career came to an end.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I. INTRODUCTION AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Amateur sport has changed a great deal in the last nine to ten years. The demands of being a competitive amateur athlete have increased enormously. Now in order to be a world class athlete, in most sports, it is often impossible to "be" much else. Certainly many athletes go to school or hold seasonal or part-time jobs, but their identity is often totally tied up in sport. They define themselves as an athlete. This definition is made possible, to a large extent, because of government support and, in some cases, because of corporate or individual sponsorship. This financial support enables athletes to concentrate totally on training and competition, which has a positive effect on performance, but often this occurs to the exclusion of everything else in their lives, which may have a negative effect. It is this latter aspect that needs to be explored. What are elite amateur athletes experiencing when their sport careers come to an end? Are they finding the movement from "athlete" to "ordinary citizen" a difficult or easy transition? Recently there has been much speculation surrounding these questions, but very little actual research has been conducted. The fact that problems in transition may exist has been recognized by the Honourable Gerald Regan, the former Minister responsible for Fitness

and Amateur Sport, who on August 22, 1980 announced a limited one year program to assist the 1980 Olympic team athletes who were retiring from sport. Beginning in 1982, this program for retired athletes has been incorporated into the Fitness and Amateur Sport Athlete Assistance Program.

This study proposes to explore the experiences of Canada's best amateur athletes as they moved out of a sport career and on to a new and different stage of life. If some light can be shed on the nature of this transition from elite athlete then it may be possible to put some tentative answers to the above stated questions, and hopefully begin to understand how we can help our athletes not only in their lives after sport, but also in their experiences and relationships with sport while they are still involved.

II THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to explore how elite amateur athletes experience the ending of their sport careers and the subsequent move to a new and different stage in life. This exploration was structured as follows:

1. The study attempted to reconstruct the process of leaving a sport career by gathering information from those who had left.

2. The study took into consideration the thoughts and feelings and relationships within three stages in the athlete's life; the competitive stage, the transition phase upon ending the sport career, and the present, post-competitive stage.

3. The study attempted to determine if the athlete experienced a sense of loss upon the ending of her sport career, and if so, whether there are any commonly experienced stages of coping with this sense of loss.

III DELIMITATIONS

The subjects in this study were limited to 28 of Canada's very best amateur athletes who had recently retired from high level sport competition. They were drawn from the Canadian medalists in the 1976 and 1980 Winter and Summer Olympic Games and from those who finished in the top six in individual sports and the top half of the field in team sports in the 1976 and 1980 Winter and Summer Olympics. The results of this study should not be generalized to other athletes who have not reached such a high level of success.

The time factor of the number of years retired prior to being interviewed was not controlled for other than all athletes had been retired for at least 6 months.

IV DEFINITION OF TERMS

Retirement/"No Longer Actively Competing". Retirement or no longer actively competing refers to no longer engaging in international competition as a member of a Canadian team.

Competition. Competition refers to any ordinary competition, at any level, sanctioned by the appropriate sport governing body.

International Competition. International competition refers to any organized and sanctioned competition that takes place between a Canadian athlete and athletes from any other recognized country.

Canadian Team. Canadian team refers to a team consisting of athletes, coaches, officials, medical staff, that is chosen to compete and represent Canada at an international competition.

Elite Amateur Athlete. Elite amateur athlete refers to any athlete who has competed internationally for his/her country.

Stages of Coping With Loss. The stages of coping with loss refer to four stages - shock/denial, anger/depression, understanding/acceptance and personal growth.

> Shock/Denial refers to feelings such as numbness, not wanting to believe the end is close; attempts to deny or fight the inevitable ending.
>
> Anger/Depression refers to feelings of anger, expressed outwardly or internalized; questions such as "why me"; feelings of hatred toward officials, politicians, doctors etc.; feelings of depression, a withdrawal, and inability to concentrate and finally, a sadness as the realization begins to set in.

Understanding/Acceptance refers to the beginning of coming to terms with the ending and with one's self-identity; the beginning of looking to the future.

Personal Growth refers to an actual movement from understanding and acceptance to a new phase in life; beginning to initiate and create again.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The review of literature has been divided into four main areas; the first section dealing with the social gerontological literature, the second section with the phenomenon of second careers, the third with the sport research and the fourth section with the concept and process of coping with loss. The major concepts in each section are presented with a review of relevant research. An attempt is made to place each concept into a sport perspective.

I SOCIAL GERONTOLOGY

The phenomenon of retirement is widespread in present day North American and European society, and its influence on both the individual and society is pervasive. Retirement has been defined in a number of different ways. Economists use the term to refer to a retired person as one totally absent from the labour force. It has also been considered an event, to describe the giving up of work.

Retirement has also been conceptualized as a process, a stage in life. Shanas (1972) has stated that retirement, this process of giving up work, is a major event in the life of men and women in industrialized society. Leaving the work force may carry positive or negative connotations. Thus, it may be seen as a beginning as well as an end - a

beginning in the sense that it is the start of a new life in which the individual is being rewarded for a life of work with a life of leisure (Shanas, 1972). From this perspective, retirement from a career in sport can be seen as a movement to a new phase or stage in life.

Retirement has also been seen as a potential problem within modern society. If one accepts the idea of an intense relationship between one's definition of self and one's work involvement, then retirement often carries a stigma which suggests individuals assign to it a devalued status (Goffman, 1963). With these broad definitions in mind, the three major theories of aging, that have been developed within the gerontological literature, are presented.

Disengagement Theory

The theory of disengagement states that "disengagement is an inevitable process in which many of the relationships between a person and other members of society are severed, and those remaining are altered in quality" (Cumming and Henry, 1961:211). Cumming and Henry (1961:14) have also stated that "aging is an inevitable mutual withdrawal or disengagement, resulting in decreased interaction between the aging person and others in the social system he belongs to. The process may be initiated by the individual or by others in the situation." The viewpoint of this theory, which is essentially social and psychological in nature, is that retirement is the visible point in the transition between engagement and disengagement.

Several of the main postulates of disengagement theory as delineated by Cumming and Henry (1961) are briefly presented as follows:

(1) Although individuals differ, the expectation of death is universal, and decrement of ability is probable. Therefore, a mutual severing of ties will take place between a person and others in his society. Disengagement may occur at different times for different individuals.

(2) Because interactions create and reaffirm norms, a reduction in the number or variety of interactions leads to an increased freedom from the control of the norms governing everyday behaviour. Thus, once begun, disengagement becomes a circular, self-perpetuating process. For example, older individuals, with an increasing lack of interaction, become eccentric, and thus further cut themselves off from possible new interactions.

(3) The process of disengagement will differ for men and women because the central role of men in American society is instrumental, and the central of women is socio-emotional. For example, it was postulated that a man loses his job, his central task, when he retires, while a woman, whose main

role is one of "maintaining the integrity of the family", can do so for her entire life.[1]

(4) Success in an industrialized society is based on knowledge and skill, and age-grading is a mechanism used to insure that the young assume control and the old are retired as they lose skill. Disengagement may be initiated by the individual or by society, or by both simultaneously.

(5) When both the individual and society are ready for disengagement, completed disengagement results. When the individual is ready and society is not, a disjunction occurs, but engagement usually continues. When society is ready and the individual is not, the result is usually disengagement. This latter disjunction causes serious problems of adjustment for the individual.

---

[1]This is, of course, not true today. Women are an integral part of the workforce, and thus retirement should be equally problematic. In addition, for mothers in a traditional family role a type of retirement disengagement might be experienced when all the children leave the family home for their own homes.

In summary then, disengagement theory takes a functionalist approach to the process of aging and retirement in that it sees society as constantly seeking equilibrium, with the necessary transition of power moving from the old to the young (Sussman, 1972). Disengagement theory sees old age as a potential developmental stage in its own right, with an individual gradually and voluntarily disengaging from various positions and roles. Therefore activity reduction is seen to be normal.

Since disengagement theory was first introduced in 1961, many criticisms of it have been raised. Perhaps the major criticism of the theory is that it does not give enough weight to the role of the socially determined situation in the processes of disengagement (Atchley, 1977). Cumming and Henry (1961) have presented disengagement as inevitable due to societal rules, but perhaps the individual is much more reluctant to retire than would appear. Certainly, much of the research does not support the idea that individuals, as a majority, seek to retire (Atchley, 1977). It has been hypothesized that as workers grow older and function longer in the work role, they become increasingly anxious to remain in that work role and retire at a later age (Rose and Mogey, 1972). This has been supported by Standford's study of the military which found that young military men look forward to an early retirement and a new career in civilian life, while older men wanted to remain in the military (Standford, 1971). This hypothesis has also been tentatively supported in several studies on retired professional sport athletes, as will be seen in the section on the sport literature.

It would appear to some extent, in recent years, that the functional necessity of the disengagement process is no longer valid (Atchley, 1977). Senators are active in the legislature until they are over 70, and retiring professors are often retained on a part time consulting or advising basis. For example, Roman and Taietz (1967) reported that 41 percent of "emeritus professors" were still engaged within the same university.

Cumming and Henry (1961) had viewed readiness to disengage as a result of aging, regardless of the social system. Roman and Taietz (1967) have instead assumed disengagement to be the product of particular social systems, not of systems in general, and that opportunity would greatly influence the individual's "readiness to disengage". Spence (1975) saw a constant reinterpretation of self and situation, with individuals engaged in many different careers, roles and lifestyles. Perhaps, as Carp (1968) has suggested, the frequency of disengagement is very much a product of the opportunity for continued engagement.

In summary, it is clear from the above, that in more recent years, researchers have been critical of disengagement theory. Many of the criticisms are valid in that the processes of aging and retirement appear to be far more complex than this theory allows for in its presentation. Disengagement theory, in its applicability to an analysis of the ending of a sport career, is certainly limited, primarily because of the theory's emphasis on withdrawal from society. The ending of a sport career is certainly inevitable, but it comes at a relatively young age

and, while retiring athletes may choose to withdraw from the subculture of sport, they do not "disengage" from society, they move on to a new stage in their life.

Activity Theory

Activity theory, the second major theory within the aging literature, assumes that work has different meanings for different persons, and that retirement brings "a loss of certain satisfactions and thus creates a void in a person's life which he will seek somehow to fill" (Friedmann and Havighurst, 1954). The meaning of work, which implies both the individual's recognition of the role the job has played in his life, and the type of affective response to it, is an essential component to this theory of aging and retirement.

Friedmann and Havighurst (1954), as the major proponents of this theory, have stated that an understanding of the significance of work in the life of an adult in our society has several important implications for the consideration of the phenomenon of retirement and the associated problems of adjustment (eg. in deciding who should retire, in understanding the adjustment process which involves the "leaving" of an old situation, the "entering" of a new situation, and the possible subsequent loss of values). Specifically, what retirement means to an individual depends partly on what work has meant to that individual. If the same satisfactions can be derived from retirement that were formerly derived from work, or newer and greater satisfactions, then activity theory postulates that adjustment to retirement will not be problematic.

Activity theory is social-psychological in nature, and its major propositions are as follows:

(1) The giving up of work will involve a sense of loss on the part of the individual.

(2) The focus of this sense of loss will differ from individual to individual.

(3) For a satisfactory adjustment in retirement to take place, it is necessary that the individual make some substitution for what he has lost in work.

(4) This substitution involves replacing one set of activities with another.

The analysis of the meaning of work and retirement by Friedmann and Havighurst (1954) was essentially very exploratory. Shanas (1972) has taken their concept of substitution and developed it more thoroughly into two alternative explanations of the mechanisms of adjustment in retirement. The two explanations or concepts are labeled substitution and accommodation.

Substitution is defined as "a life-stage theory in which a set of post-retirement activities is presumed to substitute for a set of pre-retirement activities, and in which the measurement of adjustment

must be how well post-retirement activities fulfill the same needs as pre-retirement activities" (Shanas, 1972:243). In an attempt to test this concept of substitution, Shanas sampled older men throughout the United States. Those retired were asked to list what they missed about not working, and those still employed were asked to indicate what they thought they would miss when they stopped working. Over half the sample indicated that income from the job was the major item. Two things operated to limit the non-economic meanings of work for her sample; the high proportion of blue-collar workers among the retired, who usually, as a group, have little control over work satisfaction and retirement, and the subsequent high proportion of men without orderly careers. According to Shanas, this primarily economic meaning of work limits the relevance of the concept of substitution.

The second proposed explanation of the mechanisms involved in the adjustment to retirement is that of accommodation, which views adjustment to retirement "as a process in which the individual after retirement achieves a new distribution of his energies in new roles and new modes of behavior. Adjustment in retirement may vary within the retirement period as social and individual circumstances vary" (Shanas, 1972:243). This concept of accommodation is very similar to the idea of "adaptation" (Havighurst, 1968; Friedmann and Havighurst, 1954; Clark and Anderson, 1967).

Accommodation takes into consideration the differences between the factors which influence retirement and the factors which are influenced

by retirement. The former are a mix of demographic factors such as an individual's sex and age; social-psychological factors such as an individual's self-concept and perception of his health; and of social-structural factors such as an individual's occupation, financial status, general level of employment opportunities, and availability of retirement benefits. The latter, those factors influenced by retirement, are primarily individual and social-psychological in nature. Retirement usually implies lessened opportunities for social involvement, and a cessation of many social roles. Some individuals will seek new roles, some will attempt to continue to hold on to the old ones, some will simply accept reduced involvement.

Having defined retirement as a process, it can be seen then, that "the person who experiences retirement undergoes a period of change in which the self seeks to adapt to a new social role, to a new rhythm of activity, to a new body awareness, and often to a different level of living" (Shanas, 1972:235). Adjustment in retirement then is dependent on the individual's accommodation to these life changes.

Little research has been conducted, other than the work by Shanas (1962, 1972), to test these specific concepts of substitution and accommodation. However, studies in the area of general adjustment have been reviewed by Rosow (1963). He divided all measures of adjustment in old age into three general categories: those involving role content and changes, those which were measures of morale, and those which were measures of personality. Rosow stated that "good" adjustment represented

maximum continuity and minimum discontinuity of life patterns between the two periods in the life of the individual.. However, changes which eliminate previous negative aspects of life or add positive features are viewed as contributing to good adjustment, and those patterns which introduce frustration or dissatisfaction are viewed as contributing to poor adjustment (Rosow, 1963).

In summary then, activity theory and the concepts of substitution and accommodation, despite a lack of research regarding measurement, might be helpful in an exploration of the experiences of an athlete as she ends her career in sport. The proposition involving a sense of loss is a valuable one. The demands of being a top amateur athlete have increased enormously, and if an athlete concentrates almost totally on training and competing, to the exclusion of everything else, a sense of loss may be a predominate part of the giving up of one's sport career. As well, an athlete must learn how to "substitute" new activities, new interests, new goals and perhaps new friends.

Continuity Theory

Continuity theory, the third major theory of aging, assumes that, in the process of becoming an adult, individuals develop habits, commitments, preferences, and other dispositions that become a part of their personalities. As individuals age, they are then predisposed toward maintaining a continuity in these habits and preferences, if at all possible (Atchley, 1977). "At all phases of the life course, these

predispositions constantly evolve from interactions among personal preferences, biological and psychological capabilities, situational opportunities, and experience. Change is thus an adaptive process involving interaction among all these elements" (Atchley, 1977:27).

A concept proposed by Miller (1965), entitled identity crisis theory, challenges continuity theory. Miller's analysis of the retirement situation rests on the assumption that prior to retirement the individual derived his or her identity primarily from a job. His theory also implies that most individuals want to stay on the job, and thus most retirement is involuntary. He further states that retirement is degrading because the individual is being coaxed from the work role and is led to believe that he is no longer able to successfully fulfill that role. A stigma of "implied inability to perform" is associated with retirement and is carried over into remaining roles which result in an identity breakdown (Miller, 1965).

Robert Atchley (1977) questions the validity of this identity crisis theory as it applies to the majority of the population. Atchley states that the majority of individuals do not rest their entire identity on a single role. Rather one's identity usually is made up of several roles, and thus losing one of these roles in the process of retirement need not be extremely traumatic or problematic. Atchley does state, however, that "between them, the continuity and identity crisis theories probably account for the majority of cases" (Atchley, 1977:173).

The major difference between these two theories seems to lie in the number of roles an individual was engaged in prior to retirement. If the retiree has had several roles, and if he can continue to occupy at least some of the roles after retirement as before, then continuity exists and the stress will be lessened. The idea of "adaptation", as mentioned under activity theory, and as proposed by Clark and Anderson (1967) and Freidmann and Havighurst (1954) is closely akin to continuity theory in that the individuals who survive best in later years are those who are able to let go of primary values and roles and pick up substitutes or roles that had previously played secondary roles in their lives. These theories could prove particularly relevant in an examination of retirement from sport. Is the elite athlete who manages to maintain a number of roles as well as that of "athlete" better able to cope with the end of a career in sport than the elite athlete who rests her identity solely on her athletic career?

In summary, having reviewed the three major theories of aging - disengagement theory, activity theory, and continuity theory - it is clear that disengagement theory attempts to explain why individuals often do not adjust to retirement, while activity theory and continuity theory attempt to explain how individuals are able to adjust to retirement, depending upon the presence or lack of a number of parameters. It would appear that the theory of disengagement is limited in its applicability to an exploration of the ending of a career in sport. However, the theories of activity and continuity, as well as the identity crisis theory and the concepts of substitution and accommodation,

hold promise of helping to conceptualize the transition from a sport career.

II THE SECOND CAREER

A second career is defined not simply as a change in jobs, but as a complete shift in one's occupational field (Haug and Sussman, 1970). The factors associated with the choice and entrance into a second career, as delineated by Haug and Sussman (1970), can be broken down into "push" and "pull" factors.

A prime "push" factor is the inability to continue in a field of work. This inability may be structurally determined, such as in the case of airline pilots who must retire at a relatively young age due to a supposed inability to perform, or athletes, in the sense that age begins to "catch up with them" and they too are unable to perform as well. This inability may also be the result of actual physical problems such as those caused by disablement, or, in sport, by injuries or illness. A second "push" may come from the recognition that the first career is over or at a dead end. This could apply to the woman at forty who had stayed at home to rear her children and is now beginning to look to the job market for some new means of fulfillment (Cooperman, 1971). It could also apply to an individual in the military who has reached the end of his career possibilities (Ullman, 1971), or to the athlete who has won an Olympic gold medal. A third "push" factor can result from technological changes; this factor would rarely apply to the sport

situation, except perhaps in the case of anabolic steroids, in that its usage is very prevalent today, but an athlete may not want to take part, and thus be forced to leave behind her sport career. A fourth "push" may simply result from an individual's desire to "get out of a rut", to innovate and change. This could apply to the athlete who begins to tire of the training regimen, the travel, and the competing. Finally, a "push" toward a second career may arise from dissatisfaction with the status, the pay, or the insecurity of the first career. Certainly, professional athletes have been known to retire over disputes in salary, and many amateur athletes are often forced by economic reasons to retire and seek more lucrative careers.

The "pulls" of better status and pay, and greater mobility and security are mediated by the individual character of the second career (Haug and Sussman, 1970). Most individuals entering a second career will generally be older than those who are embarking on their first career. Thus, careers such as medicine or law, with lengthy courses of training, are usually ruled out as second careers. This, of course, may not be true for athletes who often end their sport career at a relatively young age.

An exploration of this phenomenon of movement or "shift" from one field to another was conducted by DellaCava (1975), in which she analysed the processes involved in priests leaving the priesthood. Priesthood must certainly be considered a long term, permanent status, demanding total commitment. The findings indicated that in order for

the priest to successfully leave behind this high commitment status, there had to be "... a complex pattern of breaking down the individual's self-identity derived from priesthood and establishing a new identity based on new relationships and activities" (DellaCava, 1975:48). She also pointed out that there was a formation of new primary relationships which served as sources of support for moving out of the status, and that without this support, there would have been no resignation from the priesthood (DellaCava, 1975).

A sport career may not be seen as quite so long term or permanent as priesthood, but it may be viewed as demanding as much commitment. Clearly, the concept of second careers and of "shifting" from one occupational field or focused commitment to another can aid in the exploration of an athlete's shift from a sport career to another stage in life. As well, DellaCava's (1975) finding that movement out of a high commitment status, such as the priesthood, could not take place without significant support from others, is an important point to keep in mind in an exploration of an athlete's movement out of a sport career.

III SPORT RETIREMENT LITERATURE

The topic of "retirement from sport", at both the professional and the amateur sport levels, is one that has recently received much attention in the literature. However, in an examination of the following sport literature it is important to note that much of the documented

information is anecdotal and journalistic in nature. The empirical research which is available has concerned itself, until very recently, almost exclusively with professional sport and male professional athletes.

Professional Sport

Numerous books and magazine articles have been written on the lives of professional sportsmen. There have been poignant books written by or about ex-players in baseball, basketball, and football, detailing the trauma involved in "getting out" of a career in sport (Bradley, 1976; Kahn, 1972; Kramer, 1973; Jordan, 1975). Bradley (1976) writes that the professional athlete must eventually "... live all his days never able to recapture the feeling of those few years of intensified youth" (Bradley, 1976:190). The content in various magazine and newspaper articles has ranged from the serious problems professional athletes face in attempting to understand how and when to leave sport behind (Plimpton, 1977; Morrow, 1978; Elliot, 1982; Alfano, 1982; Stephens, 1984), to the success stories of ex-professional athletes (Batten, 1979; White, 1974). Vecsey (1980), in a two part series for the New York Times, reported that many professional sport clubs have set up vocational counselling services for their players to help them cope with the transition out of sport. A Boston psychiatrist who had dealt with many professional athletes is quoted as saying that "the loss of leaving sports is painful and recovery is tough..." (Vecsey, 1980:9). Bernie Parent, an NHL goalie for 20 years, stated that "you work 20

years at a job and suddenly it's all over. I wasn't starting at zero, I was starting at 50 minus zero" (Vecsey, 1980:9). Parent, who went through a bout with alcoholism after retirement, was helped by his club, the Philadelphia Flyers, as well as Alcoholics Anonymous, and is now helping other athletes to plan for a second career. Vecsey (1980) notes that there is a thrust by the clubs to encourage the athletes to begin to prepare before their sport careers come to an end. However, the extent to which early preparation for retirement or athlete counselling actually occurs is unknown.

On the research side, several studies have examined the adjustment to retirement of professional athletes (Arviko, 1976; Hill and Lowe, 1968; Haerle, 1975; McPherson, 1978; McPherson, 1980; Mihovilovic, 1968).

One of the first empirical studies to attempt to analyse the possible adjustment problems of retiring athletes was a study of 44 former Yugoslavian soccer players by Mihovilovic (1968). In an analysis of the factors influencing the adjustment to retirement, 95.4% of the athletes reported that retirement was imposed upon them. In other words, retirement was involuntary, due to illness, injury, family concerns, elimination by younger athletes. Mihovilovic (1968) summarized his major findings as follows: (1) older players attempted to remain on the team as long as possible, and favoured gradual retirement rather than sudden termination; (2) if the player had no other profession, then retirement was seen to be very painful, and was manifested by increased

smoking, drinking and neglect of physical exercise; (3) the retired player's circle of friends diminished at the end of the sport career; and (4) many respondents state that they felt retirement would be less painful if allowed to remain involved with the sport club in some capacity.

Hill and Lowe (1974), in an attempt at synthesizing all the relevant information to that date, on the retiring professional athlete, found that "... retired athletes span the gamut of fortunes from destitution to affluence ... the rags-to-riches story woven into the mythology of sport was clearly based on the success of very few" (Hill and Lowe, 1974:21). In their conclusions, they state that the retired athlete faces an identity crisis, and that retirement from sport has a negative connotation, leading to a devaluation in status, a reduction in income, a need for new skills, and new roles.

Haerle (1975) examined the adjustment to retirement among former professional baseball players from both a socio-psychological dimension and an occupational dimension. He found that; (1) 75% of the 312 respondents to his questionnaire reported that they were in the last quarter of their sport career; (2) over half of the respondents reported that they were oriented toward the past; (3) the decision to retire, if it was involuntary, brought on feelings of regret, sadness and shock; and (4) approximately 25% were future oriented and the comments of this group indicated "a strong sense of self-confidence and acceptance of the inevitable" (Haerle, 1975:500).

Arviko (1976), in a study examining the present job and life satisfaction of former baseball players, found that those who were better adjusted occupied a large number of social roles during their playing careers. As well religious players with high levels of education and income who had retired voluntarily were better adjusted and more satisfied.

McPherson (1978) concludes that the majority of former professional athetes adjust successfully, although the second career may not be as psychologically or economically rewarding. However, he states that more research needs to be done in the socio-psychological area where the athlete, as he adjusts to a new life style, is no longer "... the central actor with high prestige" (McPherson, 1980). He also notes that few studies have been conducted on former elite Olympic athletes and no studies on female athletes.

Amateur Sport

There has been little research, until very recently, in this area of elite amateur athletes and their retirement from a career in sport. The few research studies that were conducted in the past concluded that, on the whole, top athletes had been successful in their adjustment (Hallden, 1965; Vuolle, 1978). It is important to note, however, that in both these studies the athletes' training time was relatively small. For example, Vuolle's study, though completed in 1978, covered athletes from 1956-1972, and most of the respondents

trained only an average of 18 days per month. Work was dominant, with training taking place outside of work hours (Vuolle, 1978). As mentioned in the introduction, amateur sport has changed a great deal since 1972 and many elite athletes today train twice per day, 11-12 months a year.

More recently, journalists and researchers alike have begun to consider the demands of contemporary elite amateur athletes and what they face as they move out of their sport careers. Many of the magazines and newspaper articles that have been published have looked at individual cases and come up with alarming stories (Kaplan, 1977; McLaughlin, 1981; The Citizen, 1983). Kaplan (1977) documents the difficult transition of American swimmer Debbier Meyer, winner of three gold medals in the 1968 Olympics, and retired at age 19. Meyer reportedly did not know how to act in the "real" world, and it took her until almost 1976 to finally feel "grown up" and comfortable in a new life.

A similar story has been written about Elaine Tanner, a Canadian swimmer who performed brilliantly at the 1966 Commonwealth Games but then "failed" to win a gold medal at the 1968 Olympics (The Citizen, 1983). She said "I hit a low when I quit swimming -- got lost -- no self-esteem, set no goals. It's only been the last couple of years that I've found myself. That's a long period of adjustment." These difficulties are echoed by the following quote found in Orlick's In Pursuit of Excellence:

> A bronze medal winner in the 1968 Olympic Games had a coach who had really impressed upon her that excelling in swimming was the only really important thing in her life. He had convinced her that all those other people out there (outside the pool regimen) were vegetables because they weren't doing anything. As she expressed it, 'then I stopped swimming and became one of them' (Orlick, 1980:272).

McLaughlin (1981) wrote a two part series on amateur athletes and their retirement experiences which included extensive interviews with several top Canadian athletes. He concludes that retirement is a "difficult experience, one that triggers varying degrees of emotional and physical stress" (McLaughlin, 1981:14). He calls for coaches and athletes to be aware of the outside world, and for the athletes to attempt to maintain some form of balance in their lives, much as Orlick states, "the challenge is not only in pursuing excellence but in doing so without destroying the rest of your life" (Orlick, 1980:272). Stevenson (1982) reiterates these thoughts in an examination of one's identity of self. Within the context of sport he states that an athlete's identity can be dramatically transformed by situations such as "making" the team, being "cut" from the team, and "retiring" from a sport career. The effects of such a transformation may be quite profound and stressful. Stevenson (1982) states that in order to minimize the trauma of an "identity transformation", such as retirement from sport, athletes and coaches should realize that a reasonable balance is required between the commitment to athletic goals and to other goals in life.

On the research side, Reid (1979), in a study involving 79 male and female elite athletes, found that 96% of the respondents felt that their involvement in sport was a positive one, but that 61% reported feelings of fear when faced with the decision to retire. Unlike the study of retired professional soccer players by Mihovilovic (1968), Reid found that over 96% of her respondents, being amateur athletes, retired of their own volition.

At the Fifth World Sport Psychology Congress 1981 there was, for the first time ever, an entire section of the program devoted to retirement and detraining of elite athletes. Two major papers were presented by Svoboda and Vanek (1982) and Ogilvie and Howe (1982).

Ogilvie and Howe (1982), in their paper entitled "Career Crisis in Sport", present several case studies of both professional and amateur athletes, and state that regardless of the cause of termination "... each individual faces a period of adjustment during the transition from athlete to ex-athlete" (Ogilvie and Howe, 1982:176). They also propose that the transition process follows a predictable course consisting of several stages: shock and numbness, denial, anger and resentment, depression.

Svoboda and Vanek (1982), in a study of 163 male and female Czechoslovakian athletes from 20 Olympic sports conclude, as Ogilvie and Howe (1982) do, that retirement stress exists. They report that only 17% of their respondents said they had experienced no negative

sensations during retirement. Svoboda and Vanek (1982) also make an interesting observation about physical activity after retirement. They state that athletes are accustomed to vigorous physical activity every day and yet, when their sport career comes to an end, many abruptly cease physical activity. Gilbert (1980), in his book on the GDR sports system, notes that Kornelia Ender, Olympic swimming champion, followed a down-training program for two years following her official retirement, but few articles or research, except for a brief article by S'Jongers (1976), have addressed this issue of physical detraining.

Svoboda and Vanek (1982) in conclusion, point out that retirement from sport is inevitable and that athletes can learn to cope with the stress of retirement by understanding that sport is a short term career, and that they must never sacrifice everything to high performance. As Orlick points out, the "athletes who emerge as most well-adjusted during their retirement years are those who are able to balance their lives during their competitive years" (Orlick, 1980:273). He believes that sport may be the centre of commitment while at the height of one's competitive career, but other pursuits should not be relegated to zero.

Broom (1982), in a reaction to the two papers presented by Svoboda and Vanek (1982) and Ogilvie and Howe (1982), agrees that in order to be successful, amateur athletes must now be training full-time or almost full-time, and that with such an investment it is often difficult for elite amateur athletes to avoid neglecting other aspects of

life. In comparing various sport systems in Eastern and Western countries he concludes that presently "the level of commitment now necessary for success in amateur sport is too great a sacrifice unless the system is sufficiently flexible to allow the athlete to combine sport with part-time study or work ..." (Broom, 1982:96). He states that the ideal sport system encompasses identification, preparation, competition, detraining and retirement and that, to this point in time few Western countries have concerned themselves with the phases of detraining and retirement.

On a slightly different note, a very recent study has examined the possibility of jobs in the business sector for current and past elite amateur athletes (Wilkinson and Wiele, 1982).[2] The authors found that the majority of corporations were not prepared to "help" national level athletes. They found that athletes who wish for meaningful careers in the business world must meet the same criteria as anyone else. They conclude that "depending upon the individual and the sport, the choice to pursue the path of excellence in sport at the national/international level could have damaging trade-offs to some athletes who are serious about building a post-sport career in the corporate sector" (Wilkinson and Wiele, 1982:14).

[2]The U.S.A. has an Olympic Job Opportunity Program (OJOP) for potential Olympic athletes and has had success in placing a small number of athletes with large corporations.

In summary, the recent research studies and the various magazine articles indicate that each athlete faces a period of adjustment, or a phase of transition, as he moves out of his career in sport, and this period of adjustment is very difficult for some athletes. But further research is needed to attempt to clarify just what athletes are feeling when they move out of sport. Why are some athletes having a difficult transition and others not? How prevalent is this "stress of retirement"? Only when we have answers to these questions can we begin to help athletes learn how to better prepare for and cope with this inevitable transition.

IV COPING WITH LOSS

In the introduction to this study it is stated that the demands of being a high level athlete in amateur sport have increased enormously in the last few years and according to the research as related in the previous section, so has the trauma related to retiring from a sport career (McLaughlin, 1981; Orlick, 1980; Ogilvie and Howe, 1982; Reid, 1979; Svoboda and Vanek, 1982). Perhaps a new way of exploring this trauma needs to be attempted. Perhaps this "retirement from sport" should not be viewed as retirement at all. After all, it is not really retirement in the sense that the athlete is still in good physical shape, in most cases, and quite young and full of life. Werthner and Orlick (1982) see a relationship existing between an athlete and her sport, and for those committed to high level sport for several years, the relationship can grow into something very intimate and intense.

They state that a better way of examining the end of a career in sport would be to regard it as a sense of loss and at the same time a passage from one stage of life to another. This concept of a passage comes from Sheehy (1976) who states that adults continue throughout life to go through predictable stages and she uses the term passages to label the critical transitions between stages. A sport career, due to its inevitable end, could certainly be viewed as a stage in life.

The concept of a sense of loss has already been delineated by activity theory within the gerontology literature (Friedmann and Havighurst, 1954). Wehlage (1980) has also applied it to sport, and he states that "grief is the reaction to the irreversible loss of something an individual feels is important" (Wehlage, 1980:144). If this sense of loss is to be used in an exploration of the end of a sport career, then a brief examination of the literature on coping with grief or loss is necessary.

Various stages that a grief-stricken person passes through have been documented. Kubler-Ross (1969) has delineated the five stages of denial and isolation, anger, bargaining, depression and finally acceptance. Other researchers have similar but somewhat abbreviated versions of the stages of coping with a loss. Colgrove et al (1976) have three stages, the first being shock/denial, the second being anger/depression and the third being understanding and acceptance. For example, in coming to terms with the death of someone close, an individual may first attempt to deny the death. She may refuse to believe it, and assume

there must be some mistake. The individual may then withdraw into herself and shut out friends and family. These actions and feelings often then turn to anger - anger at the doctors for not having saved the person's life. She may ask why did it have to happen? Depression may then set in, with feelings of deep sadness and an inability to work or concentrate. Finally, the individual comes to an understanding and acceptance of the death and is ready to continue with life.

Wehlage (1980) within the context of sport, postulates the three stages of coping as protest/anger/denial, hopelessness, and then reorganization. Ogilvie and Howe (1982) also state that the transition process from sport involves a series of stages, but these stages have not been tested or verified with retiring elite amateur athletes. Almost everyone experiencing loss goes through these stages no matter how tragic or trivial the loss may be. The only difference seems to be the length of time it takes and the intensity of emotion felt (Kubler-Ross, 1969; Colgrove et al, 1976).

Melges and DeMaso (1980), in a study on the resolution of grief, state that the grief may be particularly bad if the loss is unexpected. Within the context of a sport career, if an athlete is unexpectedly forced to retire, the sense of loss and subsequent transition might therefore be much more difficult than for an athlete who chooses voluntarily to move out of sport.

In summary, this concept of athletes' experiencing a sense of loss at the end of their sport careers similar to a loss in an important relationship might prove valuable in exploring what elite athletes face as they end their careers in sport. It would be helpful to determine if in fact, and to what extent, athletes feel a sense of loss and, if so, whether they went through any common stages of coping in the retirement process. It would also be interesting to explore the differences, if any exist, between those elite athletes who had a relatively easy transition from sport and those athletes who had a difficult transition.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODS

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

I OVERVIEW

This study was exploratory in nature. It was an attempt to explore and describe how contemporary elite amateur athletes feel about and deal with the ending of their career in sport. Extensive interviews were conducted with 28 recently retired elite Canadian amateur athletes in order to determine exactly what happened to each of these athletes' lives and their feelings about sport throughout this important transition from being an "athlete" to being an "ex-athlete".

II SELECTION OF THE SUBJECTS

Subjects selected to be interviewed for this study were 28 of Canada's very best male and female amateur athletes who had retired from international competition. To ensure that all subjects had been elite international athletes and had dedicated a significant period of their lives to success in amateur sport the recently retired athlete met one of the following criteria:

1) medalist in the 1976 Winter or Summer Olympic Games

2) medalist in the 1980 Winter Olympic Games (Canada did not compete in the 1980 Summer Olympic Games)

3) in individual sports, have finished in the top 6 in the 1976 Winter or Summer Olympic Games, or the 1980 Winter Olympic Games

4) in team sports, have finished in the top half of the field in the 1976 Winter or Summer Olympic Games, or the 1980 Winter Olympic Games.

III INSTRUMENT DEVELOPMENT

It was clear that there was very little research on the contemporary elite amateur athlete and the process involved in leaving a career in sport. It was decided that a first step to initiating sound research in this area would be to investigate in detail what the process of retirement from sport entails for an elite amateur athlete and how it affects his feelings toward his life and his sport. Drawing from an extensive review of the related literature in the areas of sport, career retirement and coping with loss, the Elite Athlete Retirement Interview Schedule was developed (See Appendix A). This open-ended, in-depth interview schedule was designed to elicit qualitative information about each athlete's life, from their own perspective. It consisted of 32 questions investigating the athlete's specific feelings and behavior during the stage as an elite athlete, the reasons and mechanisms for retirement, the transition phase, and the present, post-competitive life.

A pilot study, to test the relevance and comprehension of the interview questions, was conducted with three retired elite amateur athletes.

IV COLLECTION OF THE DATA

The data in this study was gathered by means of in-depth interviews in an attempt to reconstruct, from each athlete's own perceptions, thoughts and feelings, her career in sport and the nature of the transition to a new stage in life.

Each athlete was initially contacted by telephone and an interview date was arranged. They were told that the purpose of the study was to discuss their experiences as an elite athlete, their retirement from sport and their present life, and they were assured that their responses would remain confidential. Individual interviews with each subject were conducted across Canada between June and September of 1982 by a single researcher.

To ensure against interviewer bias the Elite Athlete Retirement Interview Schedule was strictly adhered to for each interview, the information was recorded on tape and then transcribed in complete detail onto the interview schedule. As well, it has been shown that athletes who are involved at a high performance level tend to be independent-minded and act according to their own principles and that the longer an athlete is at the top level the more independent-minded she is likely to

be (Rychta, 1982). This was borne out by the fact that each of the 28 athletes, when asked at the conclusion of each interview if they felt they had been influenced by the interviewer, reported that they had not felt that they had been influenced in any way (See Chapter IV, Results and Discussion, p. 107).

V ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data generated from the interview. Where appropriate, responses have been categorized and the mean and range or percentage of responses have been presented. For many of the interview questions a sample of athletes' comments have been included.

As well, the complete responses for the 7 most relevant interview questions for each of the 28 athletes have been presented in the form of case studies. Given the exploratory nature of this study and the open-ended design of the interview schedule, these Case Studies have been included in the results in order to present a clearer understanding of each athletes' thoughts and feelings and to provide insight into the process that each athlete went through when moving out of a career in sport.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter has been broadly divided into three sections; the first section dealing with the results of the interview schedule, the second with actual excerpts from the interviews conducted with the athletes, and the third section with a discussion of the major findings.

I RESULTS OF THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

A total of twenty-nine interviews were conducted across Canada, with one interview rejected as the athlete decided to begin competing again. Therefore the results, unless otherwise stated, are based on a total of twenty-eight interviews with fourteen of the subjects being female and fourteen of the subjects being male athletes (Table 1). The results are broken down by sex in the tables but due to the relatively small number of interviews the discussion is based on the total numbers.

TABLE 1

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF ATHLETES BY SEX

Athletes	Actual Number	Percent
Females	14	50.0
Males	14	50.0
TOTAL	28	100.0

The data was gathered from athletes living in the provinces of Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario, Alberta, British Columbia and the state of California (Table 2).

TABLE 2

DISTRIBUTION OF ATHLETES BY PROVINCE (AND STATE)

Province	Actual Number of Athletes	Percent
Ontario	11	39.3
British Columbia	12	42.8
Quebec	1	3.6
Nova Scotia	2	7.1
Alberta	1	3.6
California (U.S.A.)	1	3.6

The age of the athletes at the time of the interview ranged from 20 years of age to 35 years of age with the average being 28.5 years of age (Table 3).

TABLE 3

MEAN AGE AND AGE RANGE OF ATHLETES AT THE TIME OF THE INTERVIEW

Athletes	Mean (in years)	Range (in years)
Females	27.2	20 to 34
Males	29.7	24 to 35
TOTAL	28.5	20 to 35

The twenty-eight athletes interviewed competed in a total of 9 different Olympic sports - swimming, basketball, rowing, wrestling, track and field, canoeing, diving, equestrian, and skiing (Table 4).

TABLE 4

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF ATHLETES BY SPORT

Sport	Actual Number of Athletes	Percent
Swimming	5	17.8
Basketball	6	21.4
Rowing	9	32.1
Wrestling	1	3.6
Track and Field	3	10.7
Canoeing	1	3.6
Diving	1	3.6
Equestrian	1	3.6
Skiing	1	3.6

The age at which the athletes began competing in their respective sports ranged from 5 years of age to 25 years of age with the average being 15 years of age (Table 5).

TABLE 5

MEAN AGE AND AGE RANGE AT WHICH ATHLETES BEGAN ENTERING COMPETITIONS IN THEIR SPORT

Athletes	Mean (in years)	Range (in years)
Females	16.0	5 to 25
Males	14.1	6 to 22
TOTAL	15.0	5 to 25

The age at which the athletes made their first Canadian team ranged from 13 years of age to 25 years of age with the average being 19.2 years of age (Table 6).

TABLE 6

MEAN AGE AND AGE RANGE OF MAKING FIRST CANADIAN TEAM

Athletes	Mean (in years)	Range (in years)
Females	19.0	13-25
Males	19.5	14-23
TOTAL	19.2	13-25

The number of years that an athlete was a member of a Canadian team ranged from 1 year to 11 years with the average number of years being 5.4 (Table 7).

TABLE 7

MEAN NUMBER OF YEARS AND RANGE OF YEARS ON A CANADIAN TEAM

Athletes	Mean (in years)	Range (in years)
Females	4.7	1-10
Males	6.2	2-11
TOTAL	5.4	1-11

Each athlete was asked when she had retired from active competition. It was then possible to determine the number of years an athlete was retired prior to the interview. The range was from less than one year to 6 years with the average number of years of retirement prior to the interview being 3.6 (Table 8).

TABLE 8

MEAN NUMBER OF YEARS AND RANGE OF YEARS RETIRED PRIOR TO THE INTERVIEW

Athletes	Mean (in years)	Range (in years)
Females	3.1	less than 1 year to 6 years
Males	4.0	less than 1 year to 6 years
TOTAL	3.6	less than 1 year to 6 years

Each athlete was asked what was his best competitive year. With this response, and knowledge of the year of retirement (determined from a previous question), it was possible to see how many years prior to retirement an athlete felt she had her best competitive year (Table 9). The range was from 5 years prior to retirement to the same year as retirement, with the average being that the best competitive year came 2.1 years prior to retirement.[3] As well, it set up the second part of the question which was to describe the kind of training for the entire year prior to that best competitive year.

TABLE 9

MEAN NUMBER OF YEARS AND RANGE OF YEARS FOR AN ATHLETE'S BEST COMPETITIVE YEAR PRIOR TO RETIREMENT

Athletes	Mean	Range
Females n = 14	2.1 years prior to retirement	5 years prior to retirement to same year as retirement
Males n = 13	2.0 years prior to retirement	4 years prior to retirement to same year as retirement
TOTAL n = 27	2.1 years prior to retirement	5 years prior to retirement to same year as retirement

[3]This mean is for 27 athletes. One athlete did not answer the question.

Each athlete was asked to describe her training commitment for the entire year prior to her best competitive year. The athletes' responses were divided into two categories of high training commitment and low training commitment. Due to the differing training demands in each sport, an athlete defined as having a high training commitment was determined by the following: i) trained 1 or 2 times per day, 6 or 7 days per week on virtually a year round basis; ii) often away from home for training reasons; iii) travelled extensively during the competitive season and therefore was away from home. An athlete defined as having a low training commitment was determined by the following: i) no regular training schedule; ii) a seasonal commitment only.

Twenty-seven of the athletes interviewed (96.4%) had high training commitment with only one of the athletes having a low training commitment (3.6%) (Table 10).

TABLE 10

COMMITMENT TO TRAINING PRIOR TO THE ATHLETES BEST COMPETITIVE YEAR

Athletes	High Training Commitment		Low Training Commitment	
	Actual No.	Percent	Actual No.	Percent
Females	13	92.9%	1	7.1%
Males	14	100.0%	0	0.0%
TOTAL	27	96.4%	1	3.6%

Outlined below are examples of high training commitment:

Case 1: From September to March, training was once per day with the university rowing team. This included weights and running. From March onward the athlete moved out west to be with the team in a training camp situation. Training was now twice per day with rowing, weights and running. The summer was spent training, travelling and racing in Canada and Europe.

Case 2: In September the athlete was at an American university on scholarship. In October she decided to leave school and come home to train for the 1980 Olympics. From October to July she did not work or go to school. She trained twice per day, 6 days per week, 2-2½ hours per session. Then, to quote the athlete, she "got blown up in June" when Canada boycotted the Moscow Olympics.

Case 6: From September to March the athlete trained twice per day, 7 days per week. Training camp began in March and that meant being away from her home and her husband. In the training camp the athlete ran for ½ hour in the morning, rowed for 2 hours, lifted weights at noon and rowed for 2 hours in the evening.

Case 18: In the fall, at an American university on scholarship, training was 4 hours per day, 7 days per week until the season started. Once the season began training was 6 days per week plus games. The national team training camp began in April and the athlete had to leave school 6 weeks prior to the end of the term. In the training camp training was twice per day. There was then a European tour and the 1976 Olympics. The athlete said that the national team was a "life-dominating situation - practice, sleep and play games."

The one athlete interviewed whose training was categorized as low training commitment did not train in the fall or winter months. The athlete was in training camp in the spring and then in Europe and across Canada for competitions in the summer but did not actually ever "train". As a cox "the only requirement was to make weight".

The twenty-seven athletes categorized as having a high training commitment were asked how many years they trained with the same kind of intensity as the year prior to their best competitive year. The responses ranged from one year to 8 years with the average number being 4.1 years (Table 11).

TABLE 11

MEAN NUMBER OF YEARS AND RANGE OF YEARS WITH HIGH TRAINING COMMITMENT (FOR TWENTY-SEVEN ATHLETES)

Athletes	Mean (in years)	Range (in years)
Females n = 13	4.1	1 to 8
Males n = 14	4.1	2 to 6
TOTAL n = 27	4.1	1 to 8

The athletes were asked whether they went to school and/or worked during the years that they were on the national team, and what kind of time commitment was involved. Eight of the athletes (28.6%) had been in school for some portion of their sport careers, 3 athletes (10.7%) had worked and 17 athletes (60.7%) had a combination of school and work for some portion of their sport career (Table 12). When asked about the kind of time commitment involved, the following was discovered:

i) The 8 athletes (28.6%), in the school only category, had been full-time students. Four of the 8 athletes (50.0%) took more than 4 years to complete an undergraduate degree; 2 of the 8 athletes (25.0%) took the standard 4 years; 1 of the 8 athletes (12.5%) was a full-time high school student and 1 of the 8 athletes (12.5%) was a full-time high school student until she left after grade 11.

ii) Two of the 3 athletes (66.6%), in the work only category, worked at full-time jobs (although they did take off a period of time for training and competing) and 1 (33.3%) only worked on a very irregular basis.

iii) All 17 of the athletes (100.0%) in the combination of school and work category, had been in university full-time for a portion of their sport career. (Five of these 17 athletes (29.4%) took more than 4 years to finish an undergraduate degree, and 3 of the 17 (17.6%) have not yet finished a degree). Twelve of these 17 athletes (70.6%) had then worked at part-time jobs during their sport careers and the other 5 athletes (29.4%) had worked at full-time jobs (again, with periods of time off for training and competing).

However, looking more closely at the athletes responses it becomes clear that all of the athletes (100.0%) had periods of time when they were not involved in any other activities such as working or attending school but were only training and competing. These periods of time ranged from summers off from school (5 athletes - 17.9%) to anywhere from 4-5 months to 1 year off from work or school (22 athletes - 78.6%) to 8 years of solely training, travelling and competing (1 athlete - 3.6%).

TABLE 12

NUMBER AND PERCENT OF ATHLETES WHO ATTENDED SCHOOL OR WORKED DURING THEIR YEARS ON THE NATIONAL TEAM

Athletes	Work Only		School Only		Work and School	
	actual number	percent	actual number	percent	actual number	percent
Females	3	21.4	4	28.6	7	50.0
Males	0	0.0	4	28.6	10	71.4
TOTAL	3	10.7	8	28.6	17	60.7

Outlined below are examples of athletes who, while competing internationally, fit into the school only category.

Case 2: While competing internationally this athlete was in high school and then in an American university on a sport scholarship. She returned to Canada in 79-80 in order to train for the 1980 Olympics and during that year she did not work or go to school. It took this athlete 6 years to get an undergraduate degree.

Case 13: This athlete quit high school after Grade 11, and for the next 8 years was solely involved in her sport. It was impossible for her to continue at school because she was travelling from September to April for training and competitions.

Case 16: This athlete had a sport scholarship to an American university for 4 years and competed for the national team in the spring and summer. He was then accepted into medical school but received a deferment for one year in order to concentrate on training for the 1976 Olympics. He continued to compete for several years while in medical school.

Below are examples of athletes who while competing internationally fit into the work only category.

Case 10: This athlete did not attend university. During her competitive years, she gave some clinics and did some teaching in the sport in which she competed for Canada.

Case 11: This athlete had a full-time job and sometimes worked 2 jobs. She once "worked night shift so I could train during the day - that didn't work". She also had a young son whom she took with her when she went training. With money from the federal government she was able to take a leave of absence from work from April to August to train for the 1976 Olympics. She said that throughout her sport career she "did a lot of trying to organize things (for her sport). No one deserves to go through all that, but it was my choice, no one pushed me to do it".

Below are examples of athletes who during their sport careers fit into the school and work category.

Case 5: This athlete began a graduate degree but left after a year because " ... training and studying didn't mix well and I wanted to do well in (my sport)". She was then unemployed for 4 months, took a few university courses while in a training camp, and had a series of jobs, with April to September always off for training camps and travel and competitions.

Case 23: This athlete completed high school on time and then took a sport scholarship to an American university but did not complete his degree. While in high school he had some part-time jobs and his last summer of competing he had a full-time job.

Case 24: This athlete competed for many years. During those years he completed university and then worked for 5 years with the months of March to August off each of those years. For that period when he wasn't working he received lost time payments from the federal government. He said "I knew that I wanted to continue to (do my sport) so I more or less picked my jobs the way I was training". When he decided to get serious about a career it was " ... very difficult to train after that. In 1980 I took 4 months off to train and the company was very receptive but they wouldn't have done it again, I don't think."

Case 28: While competing this athlete completed university and then worked although his employment was structured around his sport. "My number one commitment and objective in life was to go to the Olympics and do well, and I sacrificed work for that. I designed all these other things to fit into my (sport) schedule."

The athletes were asked if they did any recreational activities, other than their own sport while they were competing internationally. Thirteen of the athletes (46.4%) said yes they did do other kinds of recreation while 15 of the athletes (53.6%) said they did not (Table 13).

TABLE 13

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF ATHLETES WHO DID AND DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN OTHER RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES WHILE COMPETING

Athletes	Did Participate		Did Not Participate	
	Actual Number	Percent	Actual Number	Percent
Females	7	50.0	7	50.0
Males	6	42.9	8	57.1
TOTAL	13	46.4	15	53.6

Outlined below are some of the comments made by the 15 athletes who did not participate in other recreational activities while competing internationally:

- "no, everything was directed to training"
- "no, worried about injuries"
- "no, virtually none"
- "no, not much time"

Of the 13 athletes who did participate in other recreational activities 8 athletes (61.5%) did not do so on a regular basis. Some of the comments made are as follows:

- "yes, but not much, never really felt like too much extra"
- "extra things really got cut when travelling set in"
- "yes, but never as much as I wanted, very much regulated toward running"

In terms of level of education obtained by the 28 athletes, at the time of interview, all but one athlete (and she was, at the time of the interview, enrolled in an American university as a mature student) had completed a high school education. Most of the athletes had completed this level of education prior to the end of their sport careers. Twenty athletes had completed a university degree with 3 of those 20 having also completed a graduate degree, and 1 of those 20 was, at the time of interview, enrolled in graduate school.[4] As well, 3 of the 28 athletes were, at the time of interview, enrolled in university full-time. Two of the 28 had not completed their undergraduate programs and were not in school at the time of interview. Three of the 28 athletes had not attended university although one of those athletes was a qualified nurse. (Table 14).

The athletes were also asked what they had been doing since the end of their sport careers in terms of employment. Four of the athletes (14.3%) were teachers, 1 (3.6%) was a doctor, 2 (7.1%) were professional coaches, 5 (17.9%) were in sales/marketing type jobs, 2 (7.1%) were managers of retail stores, 1 (3.6%) was a manager of a farm, 3 (10.7%) were in other professional type jobs, 5 (17.6%) in miscellaneous jobs and 1 athlete (3.6%) was unemployed, qualified but unable to get a teaching job. (As stated above and in Table 14, 4 of the athletes (14.3%) were students, enrolled in university full-time.) On the Blishen Occupational Class Scale there was 1 athlete in Class 1, 13 in Class 2, 2 in Class 3, 3 in Class 5, 1 in Class 6 and 8 not able to be ranked (4 students, 1 unemployed, 3 sales persons). See Appendix B for a detailed list of occupations.

[4]Included here is an athlete who is now a medical doctor.

TABLE 14

ATHLETE'S EDUCATIONAL LEVEL AT TIME OF INTERVIEW

Education Level	Female		Male		TOTAL	
	Actual Number	Percent	Actual Number	Percent	Actual Number	Percent
High School (N=28)						
completed	13	92.6	14	100.0	27	96.4
not completed	1*	7.1	0	0	1	3.6
University, Undergraduate (N=25)**						
completed	8	72.7	12	85.7	20	80.0
in progress	3	27.3	0	0	3	12.0
not completed	0	0	2	14.3	2	8.0
University, Graduate (N=4)						
completed	1	100.0	2	66.6	3	75.0
in progress	o	0	1	33.3	1	25.0
not completed	0	0	0	0	0	0

* presently enrolled in university as a mature student.

** 9 of these athletes did attend or were at the time of interview attending American universities on athletic scholarships.

The athletes were asked if being an elite, international calibre athlete caused them financial hardship. Thirteen of the athletes (46.6%) answered yes to the question, 14 of the athletes (50.0%) said no and 1 athlete (3.6%) was undecided (Table 15). One of the 14 athletes who said that her sport career did not cause her financial hardship actually made money through endorsements.

The major factors that differentiated those athletes who felt their sport careers carried a financial cost vs those athletes who felt it did not were as follows:

i) the athletes who felt there were costs tended to be older and self supporting vs younger athletes who were often still supported by their parents;

ii) the nature of the sport was a factor. Some sports were more expensive than others. Training for some sports was more time consuming and required more travel which did not allow athletes time to work;

iii) most of the athletes received federal government money in the form of the Athlete Assistance Program. However, for some athletes it came very late or, in the case of one sport, was taken from the athletes when they were in train ing camp or travelling to competitions despite the fact that they still had to pay rent and tuition.

TABLE 15

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF ATHLETES WHO DID AND DID NOT EXPERIENCE FINANCIAL HARDSHIP DURING THEIR ELITE COMPETITIVE YEARS

Athletes	Did Experience Financial Hardship		Did Not Experience Financial Hardship		Undecided	
	Actual Number	Percent	Actual Number	Percent	Actual Number	Percent
Females	7	50.0	7	50.0	0	0
Males	6	42.9	7	50.0	1	7.1
TOTAL	13	46.4	14	50.0	1	3.6

Outlined below are some of the comments made by athletes who felt their sports careers had caused them financial hardships:

- "yes (athlete assistance money was to start in September and it didn't arrive until January) as a result, I had absolutely no money, I had to quit school and look for a job"
- "oh God yes, not so much me as my father; but had money to get by from the government - not in amateur sport to make money"
- "there were sacrifices by my parents, training is expensive"
- "it wasn't exactly a hardship but yes it cost a lot of money"
- "we lost tremendous amounts of money, but it was my decision, at the time never thought about it".

Below are some of the comments made by athletes who felt their sport careers had not caused them financial hardship.

- "worked at periods of time so had more money than most elite athletes"

- "I feel grateful to the government for what they did - (the financial assistance) helped me go to school"
- "not really, basically got 8 years of education for free"
- "I didn't feel it at the time, we just lived within the means we had"
- "in 1980 fortunate to have an employer give me the time off with pay"
- "I made less money than I would have but I knew all that when I went into it. I consider whatever it cost me to have been worth it".

While some of the athletes were quite adamant about their sport careers costing them money and for good reasons, it is evident from the above comments that others who felt it did cost them also acknowledged that it was their choice. One athlete who felt it didn't cost him personally made an interesting comment. "I was pretty lucky. I think it does cost a lot of people a lot of money if they are right on the boundary of being a national athlete and don't quite make it because they don't get the money or the support". This study does not address itself to those athletes, but it would be valuable for future research to look at those athletes who, in most cases, train just as hard and with just as much commitment, but don't manage to make their national team.

The athletes were asked to describe their circle of friends both during the years that they competed internationally and since they had stopped competing. During their competitive years, 16 athletes (57.1%) said they had mostly sport related friends with some non-sport friends. Eight athletes (28.6%) said they had a relatively even combination of sport and non-sport friends, with 3 athletes (10.7%) stating they had

mostly non-sport related friends and one athlete (3.6%) stating that she had only sport-related friends. With the movement out of the sport career, there was a trend toward non-sport related friends, with 10 athletes (35.7%) stating they now had a relatively even combination of sport and non-sport friends and 10 athletes (35.7%) stating they now had mostly non-sport friends. Two athletes (7.1%) said they now had only non-sport friends while six (21.4%) stated that they still had mostly sport related friends (Table 16). There seemed to be no real problem for athletes in making this adjustment in friendships. It was a logical step for each of the athletes as they moved out of their sport careers and into a different life with a new career, new interests, to also gain new friends. However, it is important to note that all but 2 athletes retained a few close sport friends from their competitive years.

Below are some of the comments athletes made regarding their circle of friends:

(i) during their sport careers

- "others, not in sport, didn't understand the commitment"
- "mostly all in the sport because we were spending a lot of time together"
- "I never made a lot of friends - that is my own choice"
- "had friends on team but had a healthy mixture - tried to get people who weren't just interested in basketball"

(ii) since the end of a sport career

- "When I quit track and field it was the last thing I wanted to talk about, I was so tired of it"
- "closest friends are ex-swimmers, but have a lot of friends who are not swimmers"

TABLE 16

ACTUAL NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF ATHLETES AND THEIR CIRCLE OF FRIENDS BOTH DURING THEIR SPORT CAREERS AND SINCE THE END OF THEIR SPORT CAREERS

	DURING COMPETITIVE YEARS						AFTER COMPETITIVE YEARS					
	Females		Males		TOTAL		Females		Males		TOTAL	
	Actual Number	Percent	Actual Number	Percent	Actual Number	Percent	Actual Number	Percent	Actual Number	Percent	Actual Number	Percent
Only Sport-Related Friends	1	7.1	-	-	1	3.6	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mostly Sport-Related Friends/ Some Non-Sport Related Friends	5	35.7	11	78.6	16	57.1	2	14.3	4	14.3	6	21.4
Some Sport-Related Friends/ Some Non-Sport Related Friends	5	35.7	3	21.4	8	28.6	4	28.6	6	42.9	10	35.7
Mostly Non-Sport Related Friends/ Some Sport Related Friends	3	21.4	-	-	3	10.7	6	42.9	4	28.6	10	35.7
Only Non-Sport Related Friends	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	14.3	-	-	2	7.1

When asked if they were close to their families during their competitive years, 16 athletes (57.1%) said they were and 12 athletes (42.9%) said they were not (Table 17). The specific family members that athletes said they were close to included mothers, fathers, husbands, wives, brothers and sisters. Of the athletes who said they were not close to their families, not all explained why, but those who did cited 2 major reasons — either not at home very much or their parents were not supportive of their sport career. (See below for specific comments).

TABLE 17

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF ATHLETES CLOSE TO THEIR FAMILIES DURING THEIR COMPETITIVE SPORT CAREERS

Athletes	Close to Their Family		Not Close to Their Family	
	Actual No.	Percent	Actual No.	Percent
Females	6	42.9	8	57.1
Males	10	71.4	4	28.6
TOTAL	16	57.1	12	42.9

Below are some of the comments made by athletes who <u>were close to members of their family</u>:

- "my dad - financially supported me"
- "very close to everyone in my family - my mother was always my best friend - we spent hours in the car together"
- "my wife - hardest thing was being separated and then come home and it was an adjustment each time"

- "my husband - I couldn't have done it without him. He is my greatest supporter. We both wanted to make the Olympic team and we did, but it was hard. We had no summers together"

- "they (parents) made every effort to let me know they were proud of me"

- "my father - he never missed a meet. He knew what I felt, especially when I lost"

- "quite close to my family, and my older brother"

- "my mother, my sister - my father, who was my coach, died, so that put a big dent in my training - felt there was no one better who could coach me"

Below are some of the comments made by athletes who said they were not close to their family:

- "far away, physically, from family"

- "my father didn't believe women should be in sports and my mother didn't believe anybody could succeed at anything"

- "my family's only concern was that I should quit, I was working too hard"

- "I didn't see much of them (family) because I was never home"

- "never got a whole lot of support from my parents - my father felt it was a waste of time, (I) should be out working rather than sitting on my ass going backwards".

When asked if they were close to anyone outside of the family during their competitive years, 19 athletes (67.6%) said they were and 9 athletes (32.1%) said they were not (Table 18). Of the 19 athletes who said they were close to someone, 8 mentioned their coaches, 8 mentioned friends and other athletes and 3 mentioned boyfriends/girlfriends. Of the 6 male and 2 female athletes who said they were close to their respective coach, 3 athletes (2 males, 1 female) spoke of them with great affection and love, as can be seen from the direct quotes below.

TABLE 18

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF ATHLETES WHO WERE AND WERE NOT CLOSE TO SOMEONE OUTSIDE OF FAMILY DURING THEIR COMPETITIVE SPORT CAREERS

Athletes	Close to Someone		Not Close to Someone	
	Actual No.	Percent	Actual No.	Percent
Females	8	57.1	6	42.6
Males	11	78.6	3	21.4
TOTAL	19	67.6	9	32.1

Outlined below are some of the comments made by athletes who said they were close to someone outside of their family during their competitive career:

- "very close to my coach, could talk to him about anything. He was my best friend, he was everything to me"
- "my boyfriend was very supportive"
- "if he (boyfriend) hadn't been there (Olympics), I wouldn't have made the finals"
- "a couple of friends who you could phone up and talk about anything"
- "like my second father (coach). I really don't think I would have swam if it wasn't for him. He was very good at understanding me"
- "my coach was almost my adopted father. He could almost feel, without asking, what I needed"
- "shared a lot (with another athlete/friend) because we were both married".

Outlined below are some of the comments made by athletes who said they were not close to anyone:

- "that was something that I'd wished I'd had" (closer relationship with her coach)
- "had friends, but no one really close"
- "there wasn't really anyone"
- "tried to avoid getting really close to people because I am not from a close family and I see a lot of situations that can get you hurt"
- "never had any serious boyfriends, felt they would get in my way".

All of the athletes were asked if they were involved in a close personal relationship at the time of the interview. They were not asked to elaborate unless they chose to do so. Twenty-one athletes (75.0%) said they were involved in a personal relationship and 7 athletes (25.0%) said they were not (Table 19).

TABLE 19

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF ATHLETES WHO WERE AND WERE NOT INVOLVED IN A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP AT THE TIME OF THE INTERVIEW

Athletes	Close Personal Relationship		No Close Personal Relationship	
	Actual No.	Percent	Actual No.	Percent
Females	8	57.1	6	42.6
Males	13	92.6	1	7.1
TOTAL	21	75.0	7	25.0

Of the 21 athletes who said they were presently involved in a relationship 8 were married and the other 13 had boyfriends/girlfriends. Three athletes had been married and divorced. Of the 7 athletes who said they were not involved in a close personal relationship, it is interesting to note that 6 of those were women. Several of the female athletes echoed the thought of the one who said it was " ... not easy meeting men that have similar ideas, goals, commitments".

The athletes were asked why they had decided to end their sport career. A complete explanation for each athlete is included in the Case Studies under Question 17(a) and (c). The following is a summary of reasons as stated by the 28 athletes:

(i) 5 athletes (17.9%) stated that it was 'time to get on with life', time to move onto a new career;

(ii) 5 athletes (17.9%) stated that they no longer felt motivated, that sport was not fun anymore, that they were tired of it;

(iii) 4 athletes (14.3%) said that injuries brought an end to their sport careers;

(iv) 4 athletes (14.3%) said that it was because of the negative environment within sport which included mention of the 1980 boycott, coaching problems, politics within sport;

(v) 2 athletes (7.1%) said they had reached the goals they had set for themselves;

(vi) 2 athletes (7.1%) mentioned financial reasons;

(vii) 6 athletes (21.4%) were unable to break it down to a single reason, but gave some combination of the above.

When asked whether they would describe the end of their sport career as abrupt or gradual, 19 athletes (67.6%) described it as a gradual process and 9 athletes (32.1%) described it as an abrupt end (Table 20). Several athletes who said there was an abrupt end to their sport careers expressed bitter feelings because of the 1980 boycott and several others had abrupt endings due to injuries. Of those who described the ending more as a gradual process, several athletes described it in such a way because they had difficulty making the decision to end it, while others felt a gradual process was a natural progression to a new and different life. See the Case Studies under question 17(b) for direct quotes.

TABLE 20

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF ATHLETES WHO DESCRIBED THE END OF THEIR SPORT CAREERS AS AN ABRUPT END OR AS A GRADUAL PROCESS

Athletes	Abrupt End		Gradual Process	
	Actual No.	Percentage	Actual No.	Percentage
Females	2	14.3	12	85.7
Males	7	50.0	7	50.0
TOTAL	9	32.1	19	67.6

The athletes were asked if they felt they had accomplished what they wanted to in their sport career. Seven athletes (25.0%) felt they had, 11 athletes (39.3%) felt they had not, and 10 athletes (35.7%) were unable to state a clearcut yes or no. The latter group felt quite ambivalent toward their accomplishments, some stating that they had

accomplished some of their goals, but not all, or not in the way that they had wanted (Table 21). See the Case Studies under question 18 for complete quotes.

TABLE 21

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF ATHLETES WHO FELT THEY HAD AND HAD NOT ACCOMPLISHED WHAT THEY WANTED TO IN THEIR SPORT CAREERS

Athletes	Accomplished		Not Accomplished		Ambivalent	
	Actual No.	Percent	Actual No.	Percent	Actual No.	Percent
Females	3	21.4	5	35.7	6	42.9
Males	4	28.6	6	42.6	4	28.6
TOTAL	7	25.0	11	39.3	10	35.7

The athletes were asked if during their competitive years they had ever thought about the time when they would stop actively competing. Fourteen athletes (50.0%) said they had, 12 athletes (42.6%) said they had not, and 2 athletes (7.1%) said they had thought about it a little at the beginning of their sport career, but not once they became seriously involved (Table 22).

The 14 athletes who said they had given some thought to the end were asked if they had done anything to prepare for that time. Many of these athletes had university degrees, or in a few cases, jobs, which they saw as preparation for a new life after sport. Several athletes mentioned they had been aware of the problems involved in getting out of sport and had felt this awareness would help them in coping with the transition. Others felt they had not known how to prepare for the future. Some of the athletes' comments are as follows:

- "I knew (the end of sport career) would be when I started working. I saw how difficult it was."
- "I did think about it a lot. I was very aware of national team athletes, who once retired, had not finished a degree, had nothing to do. Luckily, I had had some real jobs."
- "it always goes through your mind"
- "yeh, I always wondered what I would do"
- "yes, it was very well planned"

Of those athletes who said they never thought about the end of their sport careers, no one said they tried to avoid such thoughts but most were so engrossed in their sport careers that they could not imagine it ever ending. Below are some of the comments:

- "at the time I just wanted as much out of it as I could, I was not thinking about what I would do after"
- "never thought it would end. For me, my whole everything centered on the horses"
- "at that time the future was so bright. All I could see was the future and it was a continuous game of basketball"
- "I don't think I ever did (think about the end). I always took one year at a time. Every year I got better so I kept going".

- "just never crosses your mind"
- "I was completely engrossed in what I was doing. I didn't worry about it"
- "didn't ever think about quitting - it was part of me"

The two athletes who said in the beginning they had thought a little bit about the end of their sport careers made the following comments:

- "At the very beginning, I thought the Olympics that will be the end of it. And then the Olympics was too easy, I guess, so I just kept setting short term goals. My retirement date I never thought of."
- "I thought a little bit about it around 1976, but I wasn't really committed to the idea. It just was not an issue."

TABLE 22

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF ATHLETES WHO DID AND DID NOT THINK ABOUT THE TIME WHEN THEY WOULD STOP ACTIVELY COMPETING

Athletes	Did Think About the End of Their Sport Career		Did Not Think About the End Of Their Sport Career		Yes and No - Thought About It A Little at Beginning of Sport Career	
	Actual No.	Percent	Actual No.	Percent	Actual No.	Percent
Females	9	64.3	4	28.6	1	7.1
Males	5	35.7	8	57.1	1	7.1
TOTAL	14	50.0	12	42.6	2	7.1

The athletes were asked to think back to when they decided to end their sport career and to describe their thoughts and feelings for the time period immediately following that decision. Their responses were divided into 3 categories. These three categories, which indicate the degree of difficuty of the transition from a career in sport to a new life, were derived from the actual comments made by the athletes, (see the Case Studies under question 20 for complete quotes) and the athletes' answers to a subsequent question which asked them to numerically rate their life on a scale of 1-10 for that same period of time. If the athlete rated his life for that time period from 0 to 3.0 the transition was considered to be extremely difficult and traumatic; if the athlete rated his life for that time period from 3.5 to 6.5 the transition was considered to be moderately difficult with some problems; if the athlete rated his life for that time period from 6.5 to 10 the transition was considered to have been no real problem.

Based on the above stated criteria 9 athletes (32.1%) were found to have had a very difficult time in the transition from a career in sport to a new life, 13 athletes (46.4%) were found to have had a moderately difficult time adjusting and 6 athletes (21.4%) were found to have had no real problems in adjusting to a new life (Table 23).[5]

[5]Two athletes rated their lives during the transition phase as 6.5. However, the researcher and an independent rater, after an examination of the actual comments made by each of the athletes, felt that one of the athletes should be categorized as having had no serious problems in adjusting and one should be categorized as having had a moderately difficult time in adjusting.

Looking first at those 6 athletes who felt they had no real problems adjusting to a new life it is interesting to note that five of them remained involved in their sport. Two of the athletes were professional coaches; one was involved as a volunteer, in the administration of his sport, although his profession was teaching; one was in graduate school and assisted in coaching the university team; one was attending university and competing at the college level. All of these athletes had had an immediate new focus — new careers, school, continuing to compete but at a much more relaxed level. All five of the athletes said they had been ready to move on to a new life, although several still voiced some sadness or disappointment at leaving behind their sport career. The one final athlete who said she had no problem in making the transition had only competed at the international level for one year and had just managed to make the national team. She had not expected to do so well and had not been really interested in commiting herself further.

The 13 athletes who experienced some problems in making the transition to a new life after sport expressed a number of different thoughts and emotions. Several athletes had a tough time making the decision to end their sport career and said that they would still like to be competing if it were not for an injury, the 1980 Olympic boycott, or work/family commitments. A number of athletes mentioned coaching problems they had faced within their sport careers — primarily the lack of good coaches. Several athletes, all in the same sport, expressed feelings of anger and disappointment, mostly aimed at the ineptitude of their sport association. Several others said they had felt a bit of

fear about the future because they had felt unsure of themselves. Others said they had recognized that it would be a big change but were ready to leave behind their life in sport and get on with a new and different one.

The 9 athletes who had a very difficult transition phase spoke about coaching problems, the 1980 boycott, personal problems or a major disappointment in their sport career. Certainly many of the athletes characterized as having a moderately difficult transition also had disappointments and problems, but for these 9 athletes the problems caused their life, as one athlete said, to hit 'rock bottom' for a period of time.

Those athletes in the difficult transition group who spoke of major disappointments included two athletes who were extremely disappointed at not winning the 'expected' medal, although one of these also had marital problems which certainly helped account for a difficult transition out of sport. There was another athlete who incurred a sudden and severe injury that ended his participation in a major games after he had totally re-arranged his life so that he could take part. This led to his deciding to end his sport career. There was a fourth athlete who after a successful Olympics was dropped by his sport association, as was his coach, and so with no money, no coach and with great bitterness he ended his sport career.

Two of the athletes who had a very difficult transition spoke of coaching problems. One of the athletes had a coach who was extremely negative and made life very miserable for this athlete. The other athlete felt his sport managed to alienate all the good coaches. However, another factor that contibuted to his difficult transition was the 1980 boycott which he felt was extremely devastating and forced him into deciding to retire.

The final three athletes who had a very difficult transition experienced problems of a personal nature. One athlete had had a particularly difficult time throughout her sport career partially because she was also a single mother. The transition phase was difficult because, in her sport career, she had driven herself to exhaustion and it took a while to regain her health and equilibrium and get on with the rest of her life. However, she also expressed relief that her sport career was over. The second athlete had had great success in her sport career at a very young age, and had problems later on coping with that success and in making the decision to end her sport career. The final athlete made many drastic changes all at once and as a result sunk into a severe depression. She had decided to end her sport career and at the same time she had ended her university education and moved to a new city where she knew no one. So she had had a great deal to cope with all at once.

TABLE 23

ATHLETES' PERCEPTION OF THE DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY OF THEIR OWN TRANSITION FROM A CAREER IN SPORT TO A NEW AND DIFFERENT LIFE

Athletes	Extremely Difficult/ Traumatic		Moderately Difficult/ Some Concerns		No Major Problems	
	Actual No.	Percent	Actual No.	Percent	Actual No.	Percent
Females	4	28.6	8	57.1	2	14.3
Males	5	35.7	5	35.7	4	28.6
TOTAL	9	32.1	13	46.4	6	21.4

The athletes were asked whether there was anyone or anything that had helped them during the transitional period from their sport career to a new life. Seventeen athletes (60.7%) replied that yes someone or something had helped them, 7 athletes (25.0%) replied no and 4 athletes (14.3%) said they had had a little bit of help (Table 24).

People, in the form of friends, parents, boyfriends/girlfriends, coaches were mentioned most often as helping in the transition. Five athletes mentioned people as their sole source of help, another 7 mentioned people as helping in combination with work or school. In describing how friends, parents, etc., helped, the athletes said simply by being there to talk to and lend support.

Continuing to be involved in sport in some way was mentioned by 7 athletes as helping in the transition phase. One athlete said it was his sole source of help, the other 6 said it helped in combination with people or work or school. Three athletes continued to play their sport but not nationally, three athletes were involved in coaching, 2 as professionals, and one athlete took up a new sport which he felt helped ease the transition.

Six athletes mentioned that work had helped them in making the transition out of sport and 3 athletes mentioned that school had helped. (All of these athletes listed school/work as helping in combination with something else, such as friends, family or continuing to be involved in their sport). They indicated that school or a career got them involved in something new and took their mind off the fact that they were leaving behind their sport career. Other things that were mentioned by athletes as a help in the transition were easing out of the sport gradually, religion, becoming pregnant, and getting away for a holiday immediately following the decision to end the sport career.

Of the 7 athletes who said that they didn't have anyone or anything that helped them during this transitional phase, 3 of them were able to make the adjustment out of sport with no serious problems. The other 4 athletes experienced some difficulty in making the adjustment, with 2 of them having a very difficult transition phase and 2 of them having a moderately difficult transition. One of the athletes who experienced a very difficult transition described herself as a 'loner'

and said she preferred to cope with her problems on her own. The other athlete who had a very difficult transition out of his sport career said he "felt alone, cheated". The two athletes who had moderately difficult transition phases made the following comments:

> "... did not want to involve my friends in my problems."
> "It would have been nice if we had someone to help us."

TABLE 24

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF ATHLETES WHO DID AND DID NOT HAVE SOMEONE OR SOMETHING HELP DURING THE TRANSITION PHASE FROM A SPORT CAREER

Athletes	Did Have Help		Did Not Have Help		Had A Little Bit of Help	
	Actual No.	Percent	Actual No.	Percent	Actual No.	Percent
Females	8	57.1	5	35.7	1	7.1
Males	9	64.3	2	14.3	3	21.4
TOTAL	17	60.7	7	25.0	4	14.3

The athletes were asked if they continued with any kind of physical activity immediately following the end of their sport careers. Seventeen athletes (60.7%) said they did continue to be physically active, 3 athletes (10.7%) said they continued with a limited amount of physical activity, (ie. not on a regular basis), and 8 athletes (28.6%) said that they stopped physical activity with the end of their sport careers (Table 25).[6]

[6]Regular activity is defined as being physically active at least 2 times per week.

Of the seventeen athletes who continued to be physically active on a regular basis, 2 continued to be active in the sport in which they had competed, 9 athletes became involved in other recreational sports and 6 athletes were involved in both their past competitive sport and new physical activities.

The three athletes who were physically active on an irregular basis did so in activities other than the sport in which they had competed internationally. The 8 athletes who said they were not physically active immediately following the end of their sport career cited the following reasons: 6 athletes said they were simply 'tired of it', 'did not feel like it', 'could not get motivated'; 1 athlete had serious family problems which curtailed his participation for a while; and 1 athlete was injured and therefore unable to do any physical activity for a period of time.

TABLE 25

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF ATHLETES WHO DID AND DID NOT CONTINUE TO BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE END OF THEIR SPORT CAREERS

Athletes	Did Continue to Be Active		Active, But Not On a Regular Basis		Did Not Continue To Be Active	
	Actual No.	Percent	Actual No.	Percent	Actual No.	Percent
Females	6	42.9	2	14.3	6	42.9
Males	11	78.6	1	7.1	2	14.3
TOTAL	17	60.7	3	10.7	8	28.6

The athletes were then asked if, at the time of the interview, they were physically active. Nineteen athletes (67.9%), up from 17 in the transitional period, said they were physically active on a regular basis; 7 athletes (25.0%), up from the 3 athletes, said they were physically active but not on a regular basis; and 2 athletes (7.1%), down from 8 athletes, said they were not active (Table 26).

Of the nineteen athletes who were currently regularly involved in physical activity, 10 were active both in their past competitive sport and new activities, and the other 9 athletes were active in new recreational sports. Of the 7 athletes who were active but not on a regular basis, 5 were involved in sports activities other than the one in which they had competed internationally, and 2 were involved in both a new sport and their past competitive one.

Below is a sample of some of the comments made by the athletes regarding their physical activity level both immediately following the end of their competitive career and at the time of the interview:

- "after I quit I just did not feel like doing anything — always on my mind that should do something, but ..."
- "stopped for a while — did not do a thing, could not get motivated"
- "no difficulty in staying fit"
- "now, it is great. I do something physical almost every day"
- "off and on I join master's swimming, but sometimes I do not do anything"
- "have not been able to re-establish any habits toward (fitness) yet"
- "everyday I do something -- I need that"

TABLE 26

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF ATHLETES WHO WERE AND WERE NOT PHYSICALLY ACTIVE AT THE TIME OF THE INTERVIEW

Athletes	Physically Active		Physically Active But Not On A Regular Basis		Not Physically Active	
	Actual No.	Percent	Actual No.	Percent	Actual No.	Percent
Females	8	57.1	5	35.7	1	7.1
Males	11	78.6	2	14.3	1	7.1
TOTAL	19	67.9	7	25.0	2	7.1

The athletes were asked how they now felt, (ie. at the point in their lives when the interview took place), about the time they had committed to elite amateur sport. Twenty-six of the athletes (92.9%) expressed very positive feelings about the time spent in their sport, although 1 of those athletes pointed out that he had not always felt so positive — that several years earlier, when he had just ended his sport career, he had had some very negative feelings about the time he had spent in sport. One athlete (3.7%) was unable to decide whether she felt positive or negative about her sport involvement and one athlete (3.7%) had quite negative feelings about the time she had committed (Table 27).

Below are some of the comments made by those athletes who expressed positive feelings about the time committed to their sport careers:

- "I do not think any of it was a waste, do not regret any of it"
- "I learned a lot. I am not sorry I did it at all"
- "It was worth it, I would do it again, no regrets"
- "I feel I would not have missed it"
- "I feel good about it"
- "For those years that I had that were good, I am really thankful and the overall influence of the sport has definitely been positive, I would not give it up for anything"
- "You cannot replace what I got. I would not want it any other way"
- "Probably the best period of my life in terms of travel, the people, the excitement, the challenge"
- "I have got no regrets, because I was doing something that for the most part I really enjoyed"
- "I don't regret a minute of it. I really enjoyed it, I had a good time"
- "I have no reservations. In fact I wish I could have commited more because I felt I could have done better"

The one athlete who said he had not always felt so positive made the following comment:

- "Two years ago I was still viewing it as a disappointing experience. I almost wanted to wash it out of my background. There was so much hurt in having got so close and not quite doing it. I am taking much more pride in it now, from the fact that I can understand that it is something I dedicated my life to and achieved an extremely high level that most people never achieve".

The one athlete who was unable to decide her feelings in a positive or negative manner said the following:

- "Fortunately, I can only remember all the good things and only one or two of the bad things. There was an awful lot of time spent in a gym or in a boat — sort of like a big void — 5 years and I really cannot account for a whole lot".

The one athlete who freely expressed negative feelings regarding the time she had committed to her sport career said that "if I had to do it again I would not do it".

TABLE 27

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF ATHLETES WHO FELT POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE ABOUT THE TIME THEY HAD COMMITTED TO THEIR SPORT CAREER

Athletes	Very Positive Feelings		Very Negative Feelings		Undecided	
	Actual No.	Percent	Actual No.	Percent	Actual No.	Percent
Females	12	85.7	1	7.1	1	7.1
Males	14	100.00	0	0.0	0	0.0
TOTAL	26	92.9	1	3.7	1	3.7

The athletes were also asked what they perceived to be the gains and the losses involved in being part of sport at the international level (Table 28). All 28 of the athletes (100.0%) said they felt there were gains. What the athletes perceived as gains (some listed more than one) are listed as follows, in order of frequency mentioned:

(i) a sense of discipline or dedication was mentioned 13 times

(ii) a feeling of self-confidence was mentioned 11 times

(iii) an increased self-awareness was mentioned 7 times

(iv) an increased self-respect was mentioned 4 times

(v) the friends made through sport were mentioned 4 times

(vi) the ability to work as a team was mentioned 2 times

(vii) the travel that came about because of involvement in international sport was mentioned 2 times.

Sixteen athletes (57.1%) felt there were no losses involved in an international sport career, 10 athletes (35.7%) felt there were losses and 2 athletes (7.1%) were unsure but felt perhaps there was some measure of loss involved. Listed below are what the athletes perceived as losses, in order of frequency (some listed more than one loss):

(i) loss of time - for family, for a career, for academics, for themselves was mentioned 4 times;

(ii) leading a sheltered life/giving up a social life was mentioned 3 times;

(iii) financial losses were mentioned twice;

(iv) 2 athletes mentioned malnourishment — being in sports that imposed weight limitations;

(v) one athlete listed not winning the 'expected' medal as a loss;

(vi) one athlete said the following when asked about losses -- "... having to bend with the political situation. I think that was bad. There is a loss of self-dignity, there is a lack of control. You can train hard and with a flick of the finger you are not on the team. Having my eyes opened to that has been probably the worst experience of the sport".

One athlete summed up his perception of the gains and losses involved in international amateur sport by saying:

> - "If you had asked me in 1976 I would have said you could never have replaced that experience, but I would also have said that there are a number of other things I would like to have done that I never had the opportunity to do. But now I have done those things so what may have been seen as losses in 1976 are no longer losses".

It is interesting to note that several athletes pointed out that what they felt and said at the time of being interviewed was not how they had always felt, or that they only wanted to remember the good times. At least for these athletes, who had been retired for several years, the passage of time as well as involvement in a new career helped heal any sadness or bitterness, and they expressed an awareness of this change in their feelings.

However, the responses of several athletes appear to be inconsistent with earlier comments and answers. Eleven of the 26 athletes (42.3%) who said they felt very positive about the time they had committed to their sport careers also spoke of significant problems throughout their careers such as conflicts with their sport association (including being abruptly and unjustly dropped from the national team); serious and painful injuries that, in some cases, resulted in a premature end to a career; the disappointment of the 1980 boycott; coaching difficulties. For example, one athlete had had a very bad relationship with her coach. She said her coach was always negative and she had often finished training sessions in tears. Yet when asked how she felt about the time she had committed to sport she said "I don't regret it --

it was a good time" and she felt there were no losses. This study did not question the athletes regarding these apparent contradictions but perhaps, as already mentioned, an athlete chooses to remember only the good things and forget the negatives, or the passage of time and involvement in a new career helps heal bitterness or disappointment. Or perhaps, when you invest so much of your life and energy into something, as an athletes does, you convince yourself that the time committed was worthwhile.

The athletes were asked, in three separate questions to rate their life in general, their sense of personal control and their feelings of self-confidence, on a scale of 1-10 (1 being low and 10 being high) for 3 different time periods in their lives: (i) when they were actively competing; (ii) immediately following the end of their sport career; (iii) at the time of interview.

The discussion that follows the results of each of these three questions deals with the changes that occurred over the 3 time periods. For each athlete's actual rating and comments for the 3 questions see the Case Studies, questions number 24, 25, 26.

TABLE 28

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF ATHLETES AND THEIR PERCEPTION
OF THE GAINS AND LOSSES INVOLVED IN AN INTERNATIONAL SPORT CAREER

Athletes	PERCEIVED GAINS				PERCEIVED LOSSES					
	Yes		No		Yes		No		Somewhat	
	Actual Number	Percent	Actual Number	Percent	Actual Number	Percent	Actual Number	Percent	Actual Number	Percent
Female	14	100.0	0	0	6	42.9	6	42.9	2	14.3
Male	14	100.0	0	0	4	28.6	10	71.4	0	0
TOTAL	28	100.0	0	0	10	35.7	16	57.1	2	7.1

In rating life in general the scores are for twenty-seven athletes. One athlete felt she could not put numbers to the three time periods. The average rating for the competitive phase was 7.6 with a range from 3 to 10; the average rating for the phase immediately following the end of the sport career was 4.4 with a range from 0 to 10; the average rating at the time of interview was 8.0 with a range from 5 to 10 (Table 29, Figures 1, 2, 3).

Twenty-four of the 27 athletes (88.8%) rated their life immediately following the end of their sport career lower on the scale than their life as an athlete. This change, along with the thoughts and feelings quoted in the Case Studies, indicates that for the majority of athletes the end of their sport career was a time of adjustment, of decision making, of attempting to find a new life style and new career. However, all but one of these 24 athletes (95.8%) rated their life at the time of the interview as being close to or above the level experienced as an athlete. The one athlete who did not raise his life rating felt that his present career was not quite where he wanted it to be and so simply felt he could not give his life, at the time of interview, a higher rating than when he ended his sport career. For the 3 remaining athletes, 2 maintained ratings of 8's and 10's respectively for all three phases of their lives, while the third athlete did not give her life as an athlete a high rating, but then felt her life got progressively better as she moved out of sport.

TABLE 29

THE MEAN AND RANGE OF THE ATHLETES' RATING OF THEIR LIFE, ON A SCALE OF 1-10 (1 BEING LOW, 10 BEING HIGH) FOR THREE DIFFERENT TIME PERIODS

Athletes	While Competing Internationally		Immediately After Ending Their Sport Career		At the Time of Interview	
	Mean	Range	Mean	Range	Mean	Range
Females n = 13	6.8	3-8.5	4.2	0-8	8.1	5.5-10
Males n = 14	8.4	5-10	4.6	1-10	7.9	5-10
TOTAL n = 27	7.6	3-10	4.4	0-10	8.0	5-10

In rating their sense of personal control, the average rating for the competitive phase was 6.1 with a range from 1-10; the average rating for the phase immediately following the end of the sport career was 6.3 with a range again from 1 to 10; and the average rating at the time of interview was 8.1 with a range from 5 to 10. (Table 30, Figures, 4, 5, 6). These mean scores show a slight increase in a sense of personal control as the athletes ended their sport careers with a continued increase to the time of interview.

It is interesting to note that an examination of the actual comments made by each of the athletes indicates that 18 athletes (64.3%) felt they had had very little personal control over their lives during their sport careers. Five athletes (17.9%) rated themselves relatively high numerically but then noted that it was probably a false sense of personal control — that really the coach or sport association had been

FIGURE 1. THE MEAN AND RANGE OF THE ATHLETES RATING OF THEIR LIFE ON A SCALE OF 1-10 (1 BEING LOW, 10 BEING HIGH) FOR THREE DIFFERENT TIME PERIODS: TOTAL SAMPLE (n=27)

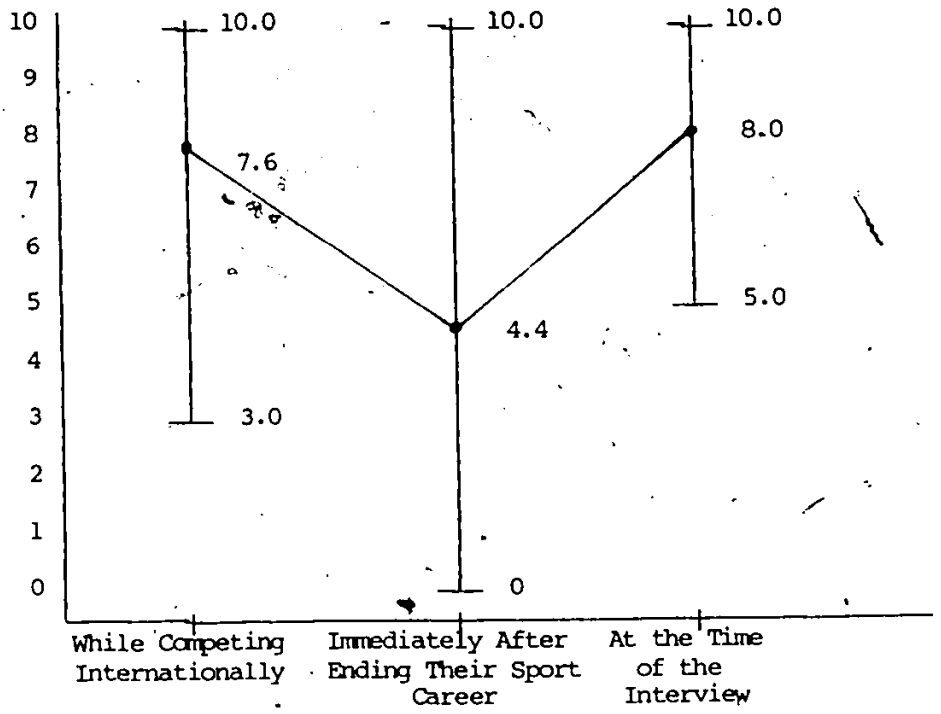


FIGURE 2. THE MEAN AND RANGE OF THE ATHLETES RATING OF THEIR LIFE ON A SCALE OF 1-10 (1 BEING LOW, 10 BEING HIGH) FOR THREE DIFFERENT TIME PERIODS: FEMALE SAMPLE (n=13)

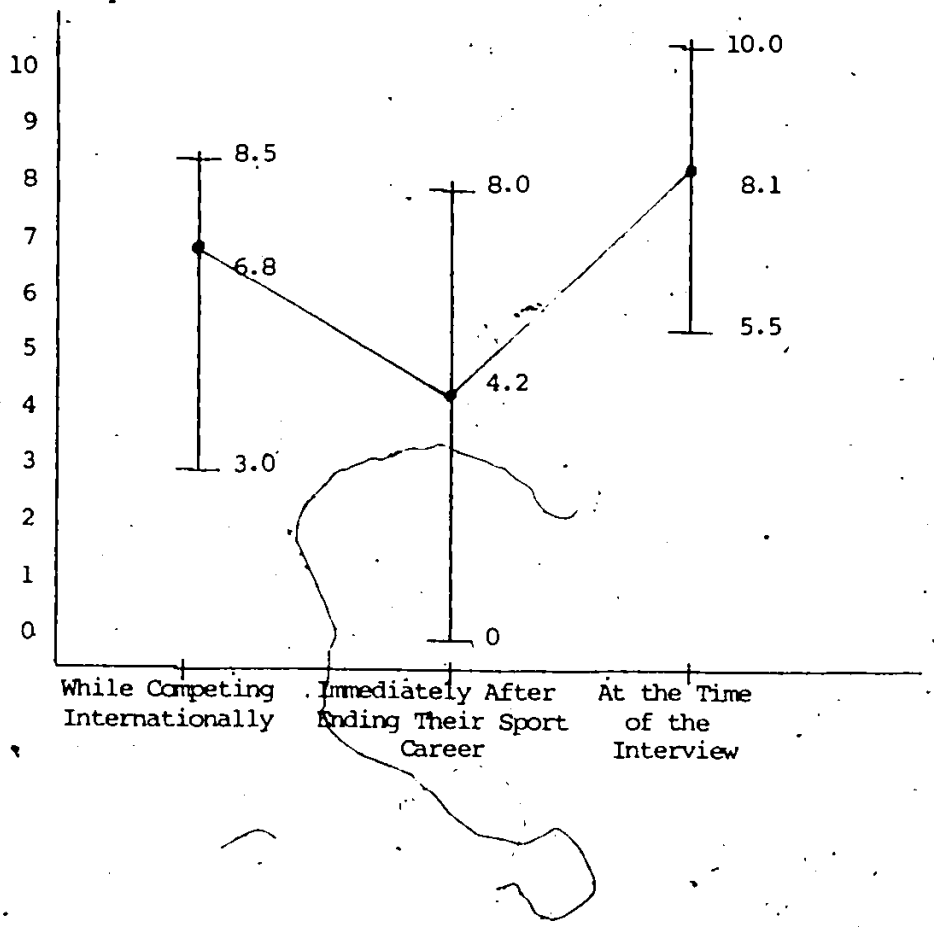
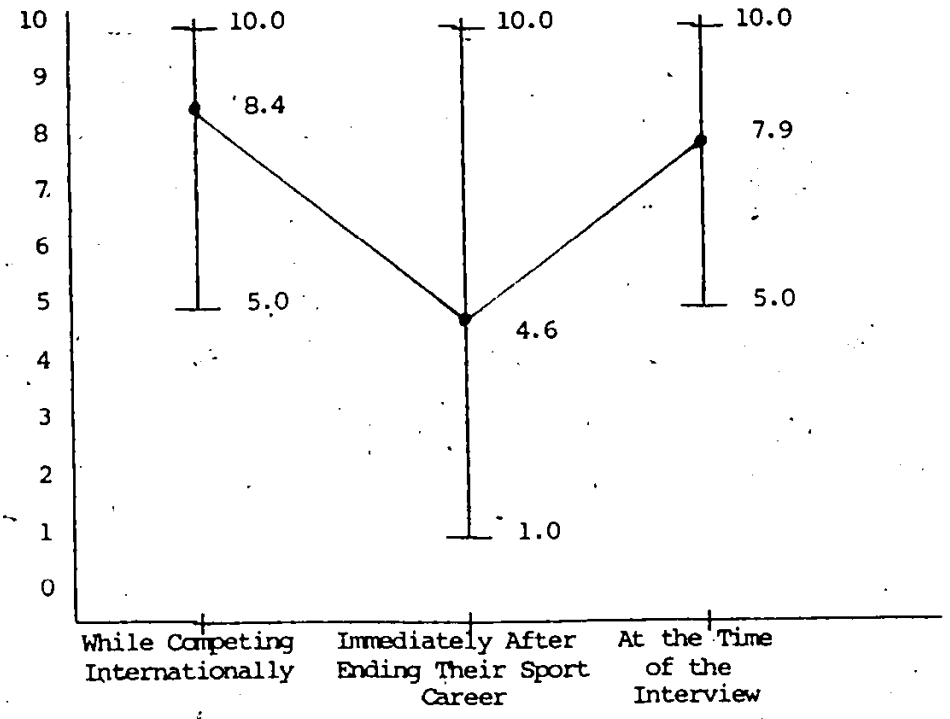


FIGURE 3. THE MEAN AND RANGE OF THE ATHLETES RATING OF THEIR LIFE ON A SCALE OF 1-10 (1 BEING LOW, 10 BEING HIGH) FOR THREE DIFFERENT TIME PERIODS: MALE SAMPLE (n=14)



in control. Only 5 athletes (17.9%) expressed a strong sense of personal control over their lives as athletes. As they moved out of their sport careers, 13 of the 18 athletes who felt they had had little control over their athletic lives, felt they began to gain some self control over their lives, while the other 5 athletes sunk even lower for a period of time. Of the 5 athletes who perceived themselves as having a false sense of control during their athletic lives, 4 rated their sense of control as lower during the transition to a new life and 1 felt he gained in control over his life. Finally, of the 5 athletes who felt they had strong personal control as an athlete, 2 were consistent 10's across all 3 time periods, while the other 3 gave themselves a lower rating for the transition phase. All of the athletes felt their sense of personal control, at the time of interview, was quite high.

TABLE 30

THE MEAN AND RANGE OF THE ATHLETES' RATING OF THEIR SENSE OF PERSONAL CONTROL, ON A SCALE OF 1-10 (1 BEING LOW, 10 BEING HIGH) FOR THREE DIFFERENT TIME PERIODS

Athletes	While Competing Internationally		Immediately After Ending Their Sport Career		At the Time of Interview	
	Mean	Range	Mean	Range	Mean	Range
Females	5.4	1-10	6.6	1.5-10	8.1	5-10
Males	6.9	1-10	6.0	1-10	8.1	5-10
TOTAL	6.1	1-10	6.3	1-10	8.1	5-10

FIGURE 4. THE MEAN AND RANGE OF THE ATHLETES' RATING OF THEIR SENSE OF PERSONAL CONTROL, ON A SCALE OF 1-10 (1 BEING LOW, 10 BEING HIGH) FOR THREE DIFFERENT TIME PERIODS: TOTAL SAMPLE (n=28)

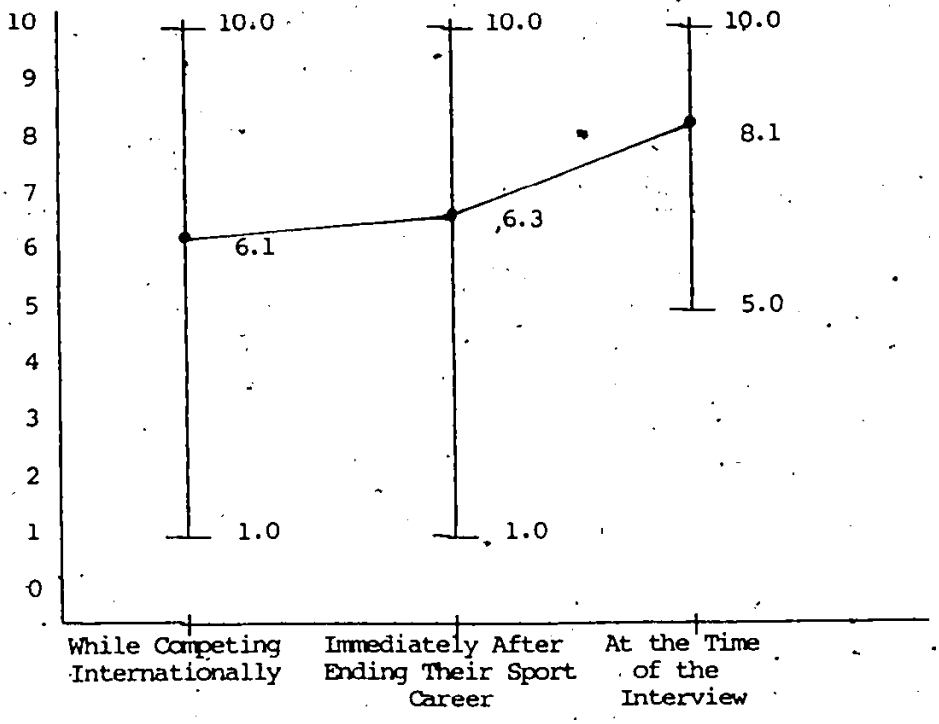


FIGURE 5. THE MEAN AND RANGE OF THE ATHLETES' RATING OF THEIR SENSE OF PERSONAL CONTROL, ON A SCALE OF 1-10 (1 BEING LOW, 10 BEING HIGH) FOR THREE DIFFERENT TIME PERIODS: FEMALE SAMPLE (n=14)

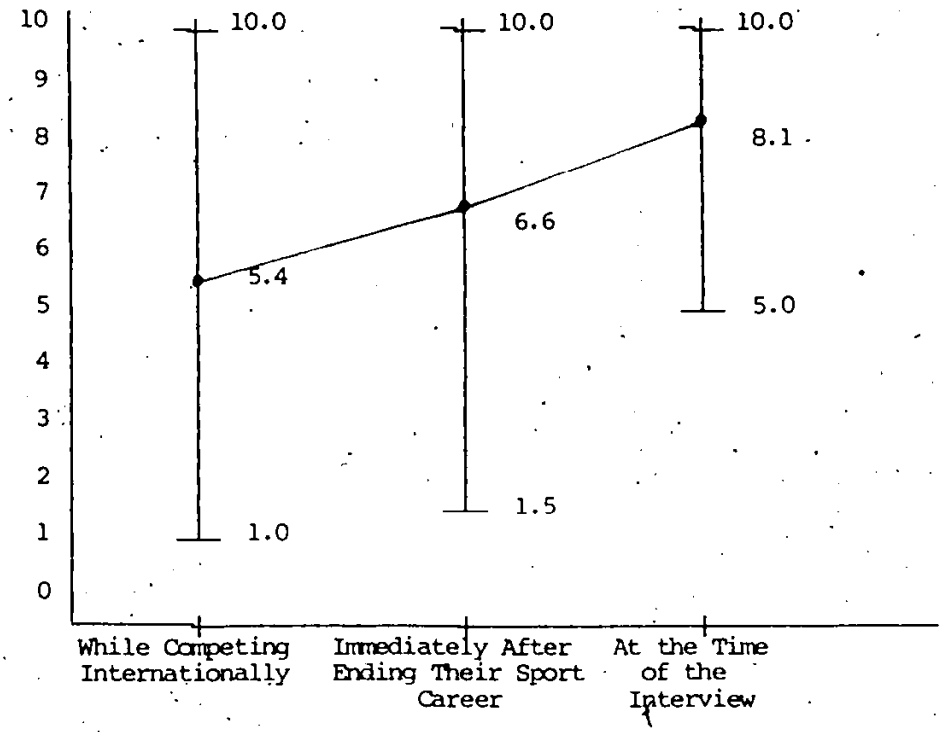
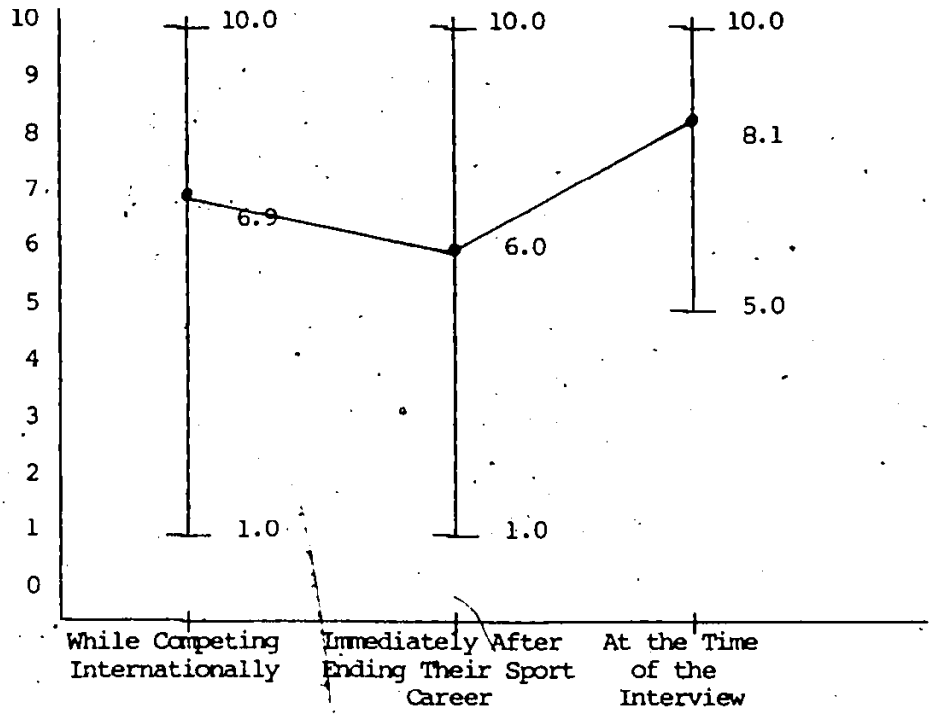


FIGURE 6. THE MEAN AND RANGE OF THE ATHLETES' RATING OF THEIR SENSE OF PERSONAL CONTROL, ON A SCALE OF 1-10 (1 BEING LOW, 10 BEING HIGH) FOR THREE DIFFERENT TIME PERIODS: MALE SAMPLE (n=14)



In rating feelings of self-confidence, the average rating for the competitive phase was 8.2 with a range from 3.5 to 10; the average rating for the phase immediately following the end of the sport career was 6.2 with a range from 1 to 10; the average rating at the time of the interview was 8.3 with a range from 6 to 10 (Table 31, Figures 7, 8, 9). These ratings are for 27 athletes. The same athlete as mentioned previously felt she could not put numbers to the three time periods.

During the competitive phase, 25 of the 27 athletes (92.6%) felt that their self-confidence was quite high. The other 2 athletes (7.4%) felt they lacked self-confidence during their sport careers. They were both in team sports and both said they were constantly being challenged for a position on the team.

Sixteen of the 27 athletes (59.3%) rated their feelings of self-confidence lower on the scale for the time period immediately following the end of their sport career than for the time period as an athlete. It was a time of uncertainty about their abilities in new situations outside of the sport world. However, as with the ratings for life, all of these athletes felt their self-confidence at the time of interview, was back up in the range experienced as an athlete. Of the 2 athletes who had problems with confidence during their sport careers, one made a steady gain in confidence following the end of his sport career; the other dropped even lower in confidence for a period of time but then, at the time of interview, was feeling quite confident. The

remaining 9 athletes indicated that their level of self-confidence did not waver very much throughout the 3 time periods. A typical comment was "... confident throughout".

TABLE 31

THE MEAN AND RANGE OF THE ATHLETES' RATING OF THEIR FEELINGS OF SELF-CONFIDENCE, ON A SCALE OF 1-10 (1 BEING LOW, 10 BEING HIGH) FOR THREE DIFFERENT TIME PERIODS

Athletes	While Competing Internationally		Immediately After Ending Their Sport Career		At the Time of Interview	
	Mean	Range	Mean	Range	Mean	Range
Females n=13	8.2	6.5-10	5.9	1.5-8.5	8.1	6.5-10
Males n=14	8.2	3.5-10	6.4	1-10	8.5	6-10
TOTAL n=27	8.2	3.5-10	6.2	1-10	8.3	6-10

The athletes were asked directly whether or not they experienced a sense of loss after they had retired from their sport careers. Six teen of the athletes (57.1%) said they had experienced a sense of loss, six athletes (21.4%) said they had not and 6 athletes (21.4%) said they had experienced some sense of loss but not to any great extent (Table 32). For complete quotes see the Case Studies under question 27.

FIGURE 7. THE MEAN AND RANGE OF THE ATHLETES' RATING OF THEIR FEELINGS OF SELF-CONFIDENCE ON A SCALE OF 1-10 (1 BEING LOW, 10 BEING HIGH) FOR THREE DIFFERENT TIME PERIODS: TOTAL SAMPLE (n=27)

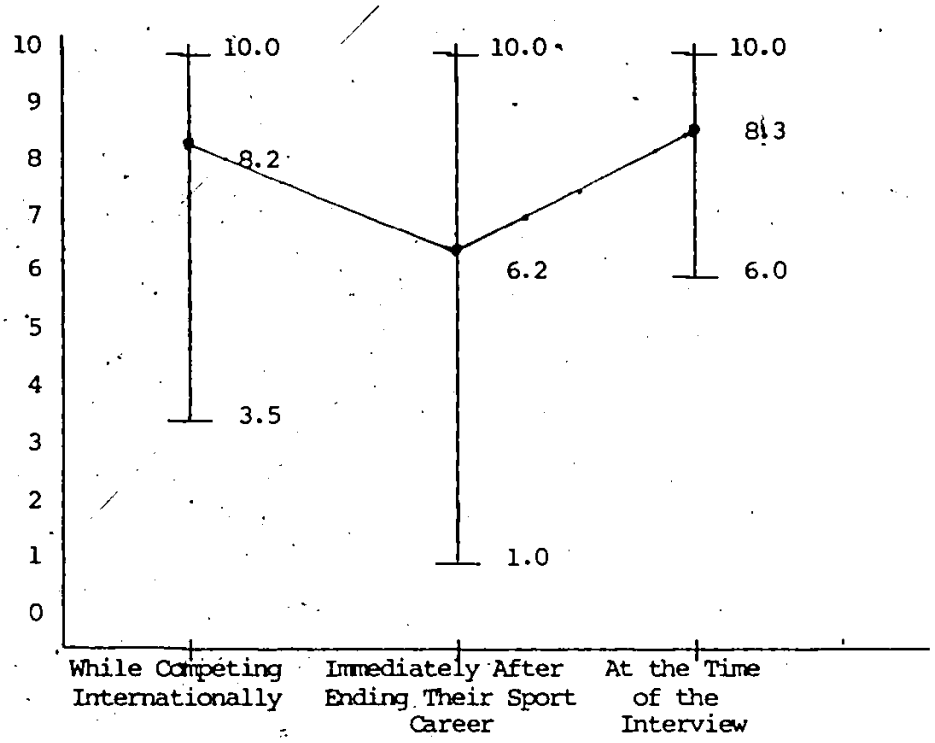


FIGURE 8. THE MEAN AND RANGE OF THE ATHLETES' RATING OF THEIR FEELINGS OF SELF-CONFIDENCE ON A SCALE OF 1-10 (1 BEING LOW, 10 BEING HIGH) FOR THREE DIFFERENT TIME PERIODS: FEMALE SAMPLE (n=13)

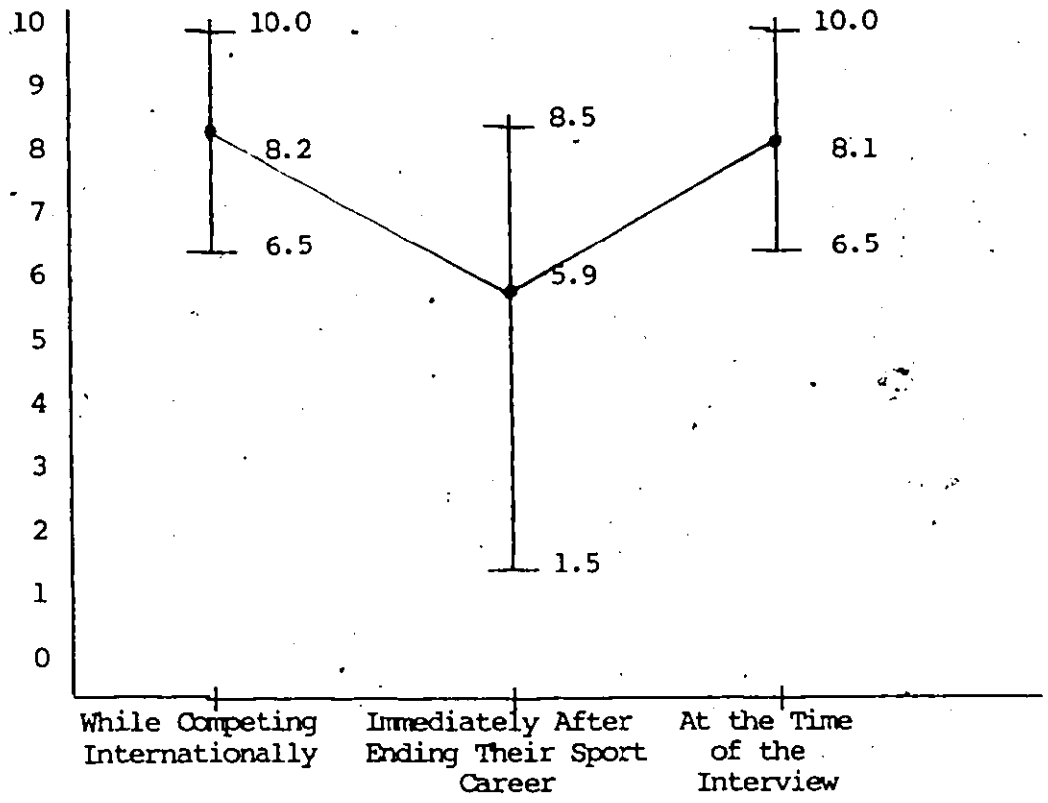
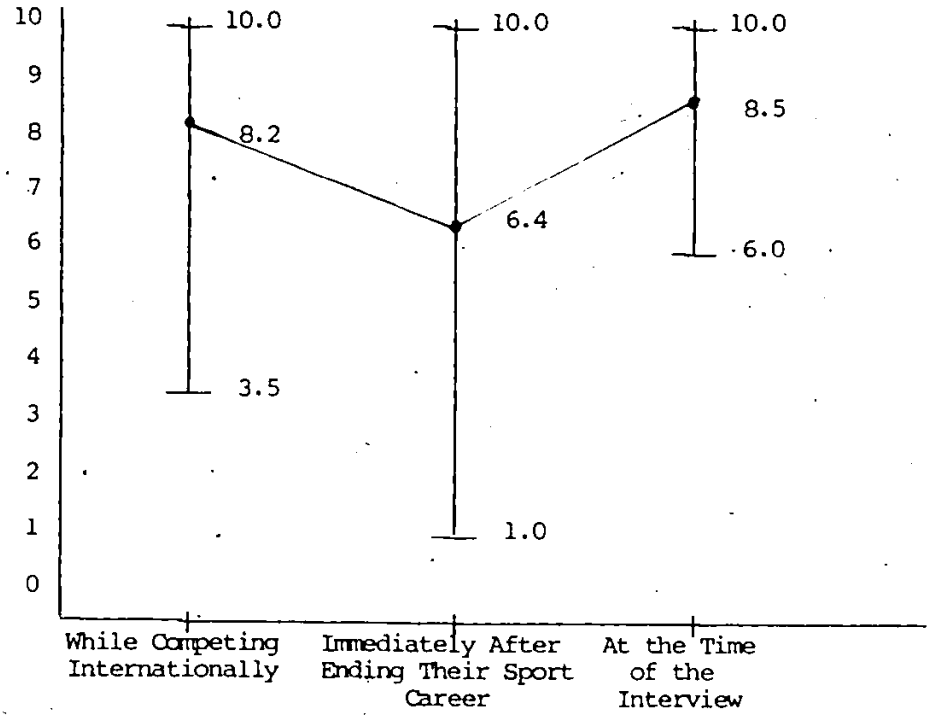


FIGURE 9. THE MEAN AND RANGE OF THE ATHLETES' RATING OF THEIR FEELINGS OF SELF-CONFIDENCE ON A SCALE OF 1-10 (1 BEING LOW, 10 BEING HIGH) FOR THREE DIFFERENT TIME PERIODS: MALE SAMPLE (n=14)



The 22 athletes who said they had experienced some sense of loss however small, were then asked if they could relate in any way to the four phases of shock/denial, anger/depression, understanding/acceptance, and personal growth that have been previously associated with a sense of loss (Colgrove, Bloomfield, McWilliam, 1967; Kubler-Ross 1969). Seven athletes (31.8%) said yes, they had experienced the 4 phases; 10 athletes (45.5%) said they had experienced some of the phases but not all; 3 athletes (13.6%) said they had not experienced any of the phases; and 2 athletes (9.1%) said they were uncertain (Table 33).

TABLE 32

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF ATHLETES WHO DID AND DID NOT EXPERIENCE A SENSE OF LOSS AT THE END OF THEIR SPORT CAREER

Athletes	Did Experience A Sense of Loss		Did Not Experience A Sense of Loss		Did Experience A Sense of Loss, But Not To Any Great Extent	
	Actual No.	Percent	Actual No.	Percent	Actual No.	Percent
Females	6	42.9	5	35.7	3	21.4
Males	10	71.4	1	7.1	3	21.4
TOTAL	16	57.1	6	21.4	6	21.4

The athletes were asked if they felt the emotions and feelings that they had expressed during the interview regarding the end of their sport career were unique to them or if they felt other elite athletes experienced similar emotions. Twenty-three of the 27 athletes who replied (85.2%) felt their feelings were not unique, that other athletes

TABLE 33

FOR THOSE 22 ATHLETES WHO SAID THEY HAD EXPERIENCED A SENSE OF LOSS -- NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE WHO HAD AND HAD NOT EXPERIENCED THE FOUR PHASES OFTEN ASSOCIATED WITH A SENSE OF LOSS

Athletes	Yes, Had Experienced The Phases		Partially, Had Experienced Some of the Phases		No, Had Not Experienced Any of the Phases		Uncertain	
	Actual Number	Percent	Actual Number	Percent	Actual Number	Percent	Actual Number	Percent
Females (n=9)	4	44.4	4	44.4	0	0	1	11.1
Males (n=13)	3	23.1	6	46.2	3	23.1	1	7.7
TOTAL (n=22)	7	31.8	10	45.5	3	13.6	2	9.1

would share them; 3 athletes (11.1%) were undecided; and 1 athlete (3.7%) looked upon the question philosophically and said "I don't think other athletes are like me. I think everyone is unique" (Table 34). Below are a few of the comments made by those athletes who felt their feelings were not unique:

- "I think a lot of athletes feel anger and bitterness toward the system"
- "I would think a heck of a lot of athletes go through it, whether they admit it or not - depends on how much of their identity is tied up in being an athlete"
- "I am sure other athletes experience it, maybe with a different emphasis"
- "human nature to feel that way - might be able to help someone get over it, but you cannot get around it"

TABLE 34

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF ATHLETES WHO FELT THEIR EMOTIONS/FEELINGS EXPRESSED IN THE INTERVIEW WERE UNIQUE AND THOSE WHO DID NOT FEEL THEY WERE UNIQUE

Athletes	Unique		Not Unique		Undecided	
	Actual No.	Percent	Actual No.	Percent	Actual No.	Percent
Females (n=13)	0	0	11	84.6	2	15.4
Males (n=14)	1	7.1	12	85.7	1	7.1
TOTAL (n=27)	1	3.7	23	85.2	3	11.1

The athletes were asked if they had any suggestions that might help other athletes both in the transition out of a sport career and in improving performance and satisfaction while still competing.

Twenty athletes (71.4%) offered suggestions regarding the transition out of a sport career. The suggestions, summarized into 4 main points and highlighted by a sample of direct quotes are as follows:

(i) Eleven of the 20 athletes (55.0%) felt the most important suggestion they could offer regarding easing the transition was to have something planned, and/or have other goals, other interests outside sport:

- "having something to go to, to do, is a help, you might feel a loss but it is less devastating if you can redirect your energies"
- "most important thing is to have another goal, outside of sport"
- "better have something planned"
- "identify another task immediately and get on with it. Hopefully can get involved in something that will give you the same feelings of achievement that you got out of sport"
- "have to have other avenues. You can involve yourself 100% in sport but when either they feel or you feel that it is time to quit you better have something to fall back on — so you have a less depressive state when you finish — not left out in the cold like I felt and so many of my friends felt."

(ii) Four of the 20 athletes (20.0%) felt that talking to others, particularly ex-athletes would help:

- "would have been fabulous to sit down with ex-Olympians and talk to them"

- "I would say talk to people, talk to your coach, talk to a wide range of people who know you well, in and out of sport. There is no magic solution. I think you have to go through those stages, some people just go through them faster than others."

(iii). Three athletes (15.0%) suggested that tapering off gradually would help in easing the transition:

- "don't get out too quickly, take your time"
- "must continue to do some physical activity - from 5 hours per day to nothing is not good."

(iv) Two athletes (10.0%) felt that the transition would be easier if athletes got out when it wasn't fun anymore and not let it drag on:

- "if you don't like the sport anymore you should quit"
- "get out when you stop having fun."

Nineteen athletes (67.6%) offered suggestions regarding the improvement of performance and satisfaction during an athlete's sport career. The suggestions, summarized into 5 main points with a sample of direct quotes, are as follows:

(i) Six of the 19 athletes (31.6%) felt that it was important to enjoy being involved in sport:

- "You have to really enjoy what you are doing. As long as you enjoy it you cannot look back and say I wish I had never done it"
- "Do it for yourself. Don't do it if you don't want to"
- "important to enjoy it while you are doing it although there are frustrations"
- "I always say it has to be fun."

(ii) Four of the 19 athletes (21.2%) felt that in order to improve performance and satisfaction while competing it was important to keep a balance in life, be involved in other things, such as continuing an education:

- "it is a good idea to continue with education and have outside interests, if you can get your training in"
- "keep a balance — school is important."

(iii) Four athletes (21.1%) felt that it was important to be realistic about their sport involvement:

- "yes it is important, but it is not everything"
- "have to be able to accept winning and losing"
- "main thing is to be a realist — not being foolish enough to say 'oh I can achieve that right now' — realizing there are steps to be taken"

(iv) Two athletes (10.5%) felt it was important to have goals, a focus:

- "need to be striving for something specific"

(v) Three athletes (15.8%) made the following suggestions that do not fit into any of the above categories:

- "I have lost so many memories — might want to keep a diary"
- "wouldn't use drugs or recommend them"
- "I actually told some kids not to get involved. They asked me if it was worth it ... if you can be left alone to do it and be good at it and get around all the crap and bullshit that goes on it's just an unbelievable experience, one of the best in the world."

The athletes were asked if they had anything they would like to say to the Canadian sports system. Fifteen athletes (53.6%) had the following to say:

(i) Five of the 15 athletes (33.3%) felt that the sports governing bodies and the government should listen more to the athletes and try to keep former athletes involved:

- "listen more to the experienced athletes"
- "listen to what the athletes and ex-athletes have to say"
- "the people at the top have to have specific goals and they should be the people who have the greatest positive desire for the sport, ie. past athletes, people who have experienced it."

(ii) Four of the 15 athletes (26.6%) saw problems with the sport programs — coaching problems, planning problems, money problems:

- "if you expect the cream, coach with the cream"
- "need to run associations like a business"
- "Canadian athletes are being asked to be first class competitors on a second rate program in terms of money and planning"
- "Is Canada trying to build a nation of Olympic athletes or aren't they? Make that decision and then figure out how to get it done".

(iii) Two of the 15 athletes (13.3%) felt athletes should be helped with planning for the future:

- "help athletes plan for the future — maybe the coaches because they are the closest to the athletes"

- "would have been good to help athletes get jobs in the off-season — give them job experience, for a future career and some money"

(iv) The final four comments do not fit into any of the above categories:

- "1980 Olympic boycott was a farce. I will always feel bitter towards our government, as an athlete going for gold in 1980"
- "keep kids in Canada rather than having them go to the U.S. colleges on scholarships"
- "treat athletes as individuals, not trying to fit everyone into the same mold"
- "it is a good system — now the system has to develop a base."

Before concluding the interview, each of the athletes was asked if they felt their answers had been influenced at all by the interviewer. Every athlete (100.0%) said that they had not been influenced in any way.

II CASE STUDIES

The following section includes the complete responses on seven questions for all 28 athletes. These excerpts, which are quoted directly from the interviews, are included within the results section because they are the essence of this study. The study was exploratory in nature and it is important to understand in detail the thoughts and feelings of the athletes. Cases 1-14 are the female athletes, cases 15-28 are the male athletes. In each of the Case Studies all mention of the specific sport has been deleted in order to preserve the anonymity of each of the athletes.

CASE 1

17. (a) Why did you stop competing internationally?

> Because our coach was in the States and there were no coaches here worth anything and there still aren't (in our sport). After '77 (after getting a bronze medal in the World Championships), I really liked (my sport) and I wanted to win and there was no way with no coach. It was such a mess. And I didn't feel like puddling along and going to (a foreign country) for the trip. It wasn't worth it to train like that for nothing - I wanted to win.

(b) Was it an abrupt ending or a gradual process?

It was a gradual process. It took me a long time to make that decision. It should have been made before that but I just didn't want to actually bring myself to quit - until I finally got so sick of it.

(d) What was the most important reason for stopping?

No good coach.

18. Do you feel that you accomplished what you wanted to?

I would like to have done better. I guess I didn't really leave the sport on good terms. But 1977 was good and I think that's all we could have accomplished that year.

20. Reflections on feelings about the end of this stage of life.

I just hated it. I hated the sport. I hated the system. I hated all the little men in power. I got very angry. I was just so sick of the whole thing. The head coach had quit too, so I could not see much success coming out of anything that year and to me, I felt like I wanted to win and there was no way we were going to win and it's a lot of work for nothing. It was really difficult to quit, it was a very tough decision, but it (the sport) was driving me nuts. It was a relief to me. I would go down and visit and watch them train and I could see it wasn't going anywhere. I was glad I quit. I felt resentment toward the

whole system and I guess I still feel it now because the same thing is going on.

24. Rate your life on a scale of 1-10 for the following 3 time periods: (i) when you were an active athlete; (ii) immediately after you stopped actively competing and; (iii) now.

(i) (7.5)

(ii) (3.5) Relief, but I guess a low. I wasn't used to not being involved in my sport. It was just an adjustment. I had to re-introduce myself to regular life which can be very much different than competing or training.

(iii) (7.5) I enjoy what I do now. (Actually I miss competing. When I'm coaching I can't stand it when they go out).

25. On a scale of 1-10 rate yourself on a feeling/sense of personal control for the following 3 time periods: (i) when you were an active athlete; (ii) immediately after you stopped actively competing; (iii) now.

(i) (4) Everything was pretty well controlled.

(ii) (9.5) I had total control.

(iii) (8) Unless in business for yourself, you don't have total control.

26. On a scale of 1-10 rate your feelings of self-confidence for the 3 time periods.

(i) (9) Because you have to believe or you'll never make it.

(ii) (6) Really wasn't sure what I was doing, unsure of where my life was going.

(iii) (8) --

27. Did you feel a sense of loss at the end of your career in sport?

Yes, there is a sense of loss because (the sport) rules so much of your day. I think it's worse after a major competition - like the Olympics - that's a horrible anti-climax. That's a very depressing period. I've never been so emotionally sterile in all my life. For about 2-3 months I didn't care if I even spoke to anyone.

Did you experience any of the phases associated with loss?

I was extremely angry and bitter. At that point I couldn't get depressed because I was so angry. It was depressing just to think about what could have been. What really helped me was that the program was still shitty - so I couldn't get depressed because it was terrible and I didn't want to be in it.

CASE 2

17. (a) Why did you stop competing internationally?

The first time I stopped (April '81) because I wanted to figure out what else there was in life. I have never been burned out by the sport and I still love the sport. I wanted to give something back to the sport, so came home and was coaching for one month, then I guess I was still too close to the sport so I started training again and I was back on the national team again that summer. Then I decided I would retire. (So first time stopped for two months.) After '81 summer season I went back to school and didn't train from September to February. Then I talked to my Canadian coach, trained 2-3 weeks and went to indoor nationals and made standard. Then went back to school and was going to continue to train but figured I didn't want to abuse my sport that much, if I was going to do it I really wanted to do it. I sat around thinking about it for 2-3 weeks and I said no, I don't want to, I want to get into life, I want to start working, doing things.

(b) Was it an abrupt ending or a gradual process?

A definite long process. The thought (of retirement) when it came into my head was pretty abrupt, I couldn't believe the thought entered my head and then for me to actually convince myself that that's what I wanted to do took me a

long time, and it's obvious because I keep going back and forth.

(d) What was the most important reason for stopping?

I wanted to work, and I wanted to see what the rest of life was about, and not devote so much time to (my sport).

18. Do you feel you accomplished what you wanted to?

No. I feel that I really got ripped off in 1980. I felt that was the time I was going to do something and I felt that by not being able to have that experience that I don't think I'll ever be able to say that I was successful. When the boycott was announced, I died.

20. Reflections on feelings about the end of this stage of life.

From the summer before I felt 'do I have anything else besides my sport going for me?'. So when I finally decided in April, I had already done my testing to figure it out - sort of like two stages. My thoughts at the beginning were, is the sport my whole life, will people know that I'm a person too and will I be good at anything else? That was my big concern - I wasn't sure of my capabilities in anything.

24. Rate your life on a scale of 1-10 for the following 3 time periods: (i) when you were an active athlete; (ii) immediately after you stopped actively competing; (iii) now.

(i) (8.5) looking back on it, really happy times. There were unhappy times but they didn't overshadow the happy times.

(ii) (6) it wasn't a horrible time, because I was excited to see what was going to happen in my life, but it was kind of a downer because I wasn't sure what was going to happen.

(iii) (7) (she had some personal concerns that had to be worked out)

25. On a scale of 1-10 rate yourself on a feeling/sense of personal control for the same 3 time periods.

(i) (7.5) when younger, I thought I was in total control, looking back I see I had no control.

(ii) (6) out of control - had no idea what was going to happen.

(iii) (8) I feel really in control.

26. On a scale of 1-10 rate your feeling of self-confidence for the 3 time periods:

(i) (9) quite high for the most part because I was meeting my goals and objectives.

(ii) (7) wasn't sure where I could get, wasn't sure of my capabilities, but relatively self-confident.

(iii) (8) —.

27. Did you feel a sense of loss at the end of your career in sport?

Loss of a physical goal, but not loss of the sport. Loss of participating in the sport, participating in competition.' I think my retirement was different, because I think I was smart, thinking back on it now, that I kept going after '80 because at that time I was very very bitter, horribly bitter. If I had stopped (training) then I'd always be bitter, saying I could have done that ... Whereas when I kept on (training) it kind of mellowed out the hurt that I had.

Did you experience any of the phases associated with loss?

Uncertain.

CASE 3

17. (a) Why did you stop competing internationally?

(In 1977 had come 4th, with her partner, in the World Championships. The coaches then decided in 1978 that everyone had to try out individually and they would decide which athletes were best suited to race together). She was

"very upset" by this, didn't make the team and was "very very upset". She said she "couldn't play the game". Then decided, "I'm not going to compete anymore, but then decided that I didn't want my career to end that way, so trained, didn't make it, so I finished (my sport career), I had done my best but didn't achieve my goals".

(b) Was it an abrupt ending or a gradual process?

Gradual, over a period of a year.

(d) What was the most important reason for stopping?

My own pride, didn't want to be known for hanging around and trying to make it again. Felt I had achieved good results.

18. Do you feel that you accomplished what you wanted to?

No. Made finals in 1976, but didn't know how to get psyched up for the finals. Canada hadn't made finals before. But knew that we could get a medal and we came close in Amsterdam - frustrating - close but no medal.

20. Reflections on feelings about the end of this stage of life.

What was I going to do with my time, with no sport. I knew that I would go back to school (had stopped in order to train and compete), but not immediately - couldn't change concentration so quickly. I didn't have plans for

retiring, no one to help with the transition, lack of something to do. I missed it a lot. I loved to race, to compete.

24. Rate your life on a scale of 1-10 for the following 3 time periods: (i) when you were an active athlete; (ii) immediately after you stopped actively competing; (iii) now.

(i) (7.5) doing what I wanted and achieving goals.

(ii) (4.5) the pits - period of trying to decide what I wanted to do.

(iii) (7.5) again, achieving goals, doing what I want.

25. On a scale of 1-10 rate yourself on a feeling/sense of personal control for the same 3 time periods.

(i) (4) little sense of control - people telling you what to do and making the decisions.

(ii) (6) a bit more control.

(iii) (8) now, much more control, doing what I want and I have the desire to do it.

26. On a scale of 1-10 rate your feelings of self-confidence for the 3 time periods.

(i) (8) a great deal in 75-76 - knew I was one of the best - had respect from my peers.

(ii) (4.5) (feelings of) what am I going to do? Going from knowing what I wanted to do to a kind of darkness - what was I going to do next?

(iii) (7) more confident, achieving again, but not athletically.

27. Did you feel a sense of loss at the end of your career in sport?

Yes, a bit of loss.

Did you experience any of the phases associated with loss?

Yes, I can relate - definitely some anger when I didn't make the team in '77 - but didn't quit until the next year, therefore a little easier.

CASE 4

17. (a) Why did you stop competing internationally?

Graduated and I was going to work. My sport was not compatible with work, just can't ask for 3 months off in the summer.

(b) Was it an abrupt ending or a gradual process?

Basically abrupt ending, made the decision after the 1980 boycott.

(d) What was the most important reason for stopping?

as 17 (a).

18. Do you feel you accomplished what you wanted to?

Tough question - would have wanted to be in Moscow in 1980, so no, but in actual achievement, yes I have a sense of accomplishment.

20. Reflections on feelings about the end of the this stage of life

(Official announcement of boycott came while team was in Europe). Felt shock, disappointment, anger, what's going on.. 1980 was such a frustrating year, I felt pissed off. Final kick in the teeth was not naming the spares to the team. Many athletes then didn't want to have anything to do with the sport. Now it's almost a complete new slate of athletes, brand new coach, brand new program. Kind of a joke, kind of anti-climactic. There were little perks to appease us, to ease the disappointments - benefit in Toronto. She feels she hasn't really dealt with it (retirement) yet.

24. Rate your life on a scale of 1-10 for the following 3 time periods: (i) when you were an active athlete; (ii) immediately after you stopped actively competing; (iii) now.

(i) (7) everything was pretty good, achieving in school and sport.

(ii) (4) personal difficulties, filling time from my sport, deciding what to do when graduating.

(iii) (8.5) know what I want to do - now coaching - very happy.

25. On a scale of 1-10 rate yourself on a feeling/sense of personal control for the same 3 time periods.

(i) (5) everything was set up, no individual input.

(ii) (7) trying new things, but not sure.

(iii) (9) everything is now my own choice and I'm pleased with the way things are going.

26. On a scale of 1-10 rate your feelings of self-confidence for the 3 time periods.

(i) (6.5) did well and had a good sense of confidence.

(ii) (6.5.) not yet really finished - not a personal loss.

(iii) (10) very self confident.

27. Did you feel a sense of loss at the end of your career in sport?

No sense of loss.

CASE 5

17. (a) Why did you stop competing internationally?

Wasn't fun anymore ... got to be a big drag ... not much intelligent conversation (between athletes) ... could only talk about the sport ... a lot of back biting, gossiping ... started thinking about doing other things - knew I would be going to graduate school in fall of 1980.

(b) Was it an abrupt ending or a gradual process?

Gradual process - harder and harder to get up in the morning.

(d) What was the most important reason for stopping?

Wasn't fun anymore - no one around me to help keep up my enthusiasm.

18. Do you feel that you accomplished what you wanted to?

No, would have liked to have won - I got to almost where I wanted to be, but not quite there - would have been most satisfying to have won in World Championships or Olympics. After not making the team in 1979 I realized that the opportunity was really gone - I was training but never able to reach that point again - we were so close and yet so far away. The first 3 years were a lot of fun, after that it was a bit of a grind - do regret a little bit of the time

spent training, in the last couple of years, but didn't mind all that time I didn't have to myself in the first 3 years.

20. Reflections on feelings about the end of this stage of life.

Very hard. I had lined up grad school, I knew what was going to happen to me, but still really strange not to have to get up in the morning to train. (She spent summer with her sister, painting her house). Very relaxing, but still there was something in me that said go, go - bewildering. It took a year before real serious sport dreams went away - was in limbo, casting off all kinds of things - coming out of the sport world into the real world - strange process trying to get used to not being an athlete. But overwhelmed by work at graduate school and couldn't afford too much time to dwell on things gone by.

24. Rate your life on a scale of 1-10 for the following 3 time periods: (i) when you were an active athlete; (ii) immediately after you stopped competing; (iii) now.

(i) (7) first 3 years of competing - building up confidence - wonderful. Last 2 years perhaps sliding down as I lost interest - it didn't seem all that worthwhile.

(ii) (6.5) had a whole new thing - started to laugh at myself again.

(iii) (10) everything is great.

25. On a scale of 1-10 rate yourself on a feeling/sense of personal control for the same 3 time periods.

(i) (2) everything planned, everything decided for you. I did put some controls on myself, but making myself do what they wanted me to do.

(ii) (10) it was my decision, I had complete control.

(iii) (10) I know what I want to do.

26. On a scale of 1-10 rate your feelings of self-confidence for the 3 time periods.

(i) (9) lots of self-confidence - big and strong and did well.

(ii) (8) hard to say - 'in limbo'.

(iii) (9.5) now, out of shape, kind of fat, but I know what I want to do and how I'm going to do it.

27. Did you feel a sense of loss at the end of your career in sport?

Leaving a really established pattern of daily habits and that camaraderie. I felt quite empty because I wasn't doing that stuff anymore. I was really at a loss - just mope around the house - should I go weight-training, running, homework and I'd do nothing.

Did you experience any of the phases associated with loss?

I was a little depressed, I was a nobody all over again and I had been a somebody and that was a little sad, but I was doing something really different that demanded almost all my concentration, so I really didn't have a whole lot of time to get upset.

CASE 6

17. (a) Why did you stop competing internationally?

It was an accumulation of what I could tolerate as far as clinical pressures and the training demands and I knew our marriage was a little shaky, and I was going to haye to go back to teaching. Really couldn't face another year of that kind of training - it was very strenuous. It was painful - made us race when we weren't ready for it. Plus had my marriage on my mind, just bought a house - couldn't totally concentrate on my training. I was starting to feel like I was being very self-centered - realized that there was more to life than just my pursuits. I had something to develop in our marriage and I had started to think that I'd better watch out, because I could be pushing things just a little too far.

Perfectly happy to quit, had done what I wanted to do. Too mentally taxing on the girls, to allow progress - the coach made it too hard.

Perhaps, if partner and I had not been separated, would have (competed) another year or would have finished (the sport) with a good attitude.

(b) Was it an abrupt ending or a gradual process?

Gradual process.

(d) What was the most important reason for stopping?

The environment, the total atmosphere of the sport - the athletes' selfishness, their immaturity, the coach's attitude - not caring.

(2nd reason) - training was too hard.

18. Do you feel that you accomplished what you wanted to?

Had done what I wanted to.

20. Reflections on feelings about the end of this stage of life.

I was really angry - toward those people who put me in that hopeless situation where we couldn't do well. I gave it my best chance (with new partner) but angry at the coach - after the race told him off and told him I was quitting. Also, totally relieved that it was over, it was like living through a nightmare. In '78 World Championships, after our race, my partner said 'it doesn't really matter' that we didn't do well - to say that after we had come that far - terrible attitude.

These feelings stayed a long time - I felt I was robbed of my potential - (old partner) and I worked so hard, we knew we were in the medals and to build yourself up and then to be toppled down.

Always felt regret that I should have stuck with old partner.

It's taken me a long time to get over it - the reason I've gotten over it is because I realized it was the ignorance of the coaches - not anything against me personally. Now I only think of the good times, great feeling of competing.

24. Rate your life on a scale of 1-10 for the following 3 time periods: (i) when you were an active athlete; (ii) immediately after you stopped actively competing; (iii) now.

(i) (4) wasn't anywhere near where I wanted to be, as far as being a happy person and achieving.

(ii) (6) —

(iii) (8) not quite where I'd like to be.

25. On a scale of 1-10 rate yourself on a feeling/sense of personal control for the same 3 time periods.

(i) (4) not much control.

(ii) (6) --

(iii) (8) most control now.

26. On a scale of 1-10 rate your feelings of self-confidence for the 3 time periods.

(i) (8) always been a confident person.

(ii) (6) —

(iii) (8.5) confidence as a person.

27. Did you feel a sense of loss at the end of your career in sport?

I miss the ascetics of the sport, I miss the excitement, the travel, but that's all.

Did you experience any of the phases associated with loss?

First shock was no more routine; second, my fitness level dropped - didn't do anything for quite awhile. I didn't hit a depression until a lot later on - when I realized that I wasn't anybody anymore. Eventually realized that I'm still the same person even if I don't do really well in sport. The running was enough to make me happy again; started to take on Christian qualities and find out that you could be happy within yourself; pregnancy totally released me from everything.

CASE 7

17. (a) Why did you stop competing internationally?

Thirty-two years old - body can't continue to do the same things as the younger people. Not only that, I felt a high level of disappointment with what happened in 1980, and I don't think the boycott accomplished anything. You just can't put out that hard for that long aiming at one goal and have someone say that this is their political decision. I don't think that athletes are getting the support that is required.

(b) Was it an abrupt ending or a gradual process?

Gradual.

(d) What was the most important reason for stopping?

Disgusted with 1980 boycott. Hurt a lot to compete in Europe against countries who were going to the Olympics.

18. Do you feel that you accomplished what you wanted to?

Hard to say. No. I did in the first couple of years but in last couple of years the administrative politics got involved and that was bad, very bad. Had I foreseen what was going to happen to the political situation, I would have quit several years earlier. Through politics, I didn't make the team in 1979. I had to make the team in

1980 which I did. You just can't end that way - want to finish on a positive note and yet a negative note with the boycott.

20. Reflections on feelings about the end of this stage of life.

A feeling of loss more than anything else, because you no longer have a goal. Almost a feeling of having lost a great many of your friends, even though you know you're going to be associated with them later on - really don't share what you had before. You meet a lot of fantastic people, athletes who have the same goals, aspirations, and you miss that. You miss the thrill, excitement of actual competition, that incredible rush that you get when you do succeed. You miss the adulation you no longer get - can't understand why you miss it, but you do. You really don't begin your career until after the sport is over - coach tells you when to train, when to eat. I had a particularly rough time during that period. I found it very difficult.

24. Rate your life on a scale of 1-10 for the following 3 time periods: (i) when you were an active athlete; (ii) immediately after you stopped actively competing; (iii) now.

(i) (8.5) it was quite good.

(ii) (5.5) my life per se wasn't bad, but my whole head space was.

(iii) (8) I still miss it.

25. On a scale of 1-10 rate yourself on a feeling/sense of personal control for the same 3 time periods.

(i) (9.5) high - probably a false sense, but it felt like the world was at your fingertips.

(ii) (2.5) extremely low - hadn't got a goal, hadn't got a career - sort of floundering, don't know where you are going to go, what you are going to do.

(iii) (5) higher now, but still not where it belongs.

26. On a scale of 1-10 rate your feelings of self-confidence for the 3 time periods.

(i) (9.5) very high when competing.

(ii) (8.5) It never got really low. I think you keep your self-confidence - feel a bit shaken at times but I quit, not because I was incapable of competing internationally, but because there was an anger and a lack of confidence in the administration and in the government.

(iii) (8.5) Okay, now.

27. Did you feel a sense of loss at the end of your career in sport?

Yes, lack of direction, lack of prestige.

Did you experience any of the phases associated with loss?

Yes, definitely.

CASE 8

17. (a) Why did you stop competing internationally?

Injuries. Goal was to compete in World Championships in 1978 but couldn't do it because of injuries. After 1976 Olympics, wanted to quit, not ever see the sport again - I thought I was a bum, a lousy athlete - coach convinced me I was a lousy athlete. She didn't work on each small point, just rejected the whole - you need minor corrections, not total rejection.

After 1974 had personality problems with coach - always telling me I was a bum, every day getting the confidence knocked out of me.

(Left coach after '76, went to U.S. and tried to compete in '77, '78, '79 but always injuries, sickness)

Fear - always fear in my sport.

(b) Was it an abrupt ending or a gradual process?

Gradual process - trying to train and compete after 1976 and not able to (due to injuries and illness).

(d) What was the most important reason for stopping?

Injuries.

18. Do you feel you accomplished what you wanted to?

No. Everything happened so quickly, never really worked on basics. Would like to have walked out of Olympics and feel I could have said 'I did a good job'. I was so screwed up. I wanted to do well, so I believed what anyone said. (For the entire year before '76, was alone with coach 2 times per day.) I had such a lump in my stomach before each workout - 2 or 3 times per week I would come home in tears.

20. Reflections on feelings about the end of this stage of life.

After 1976, I was very bitter - for about 1 year. Coach very devoted, but channelling all that energy in wrong direction. Strict discipline and negative reinforcement, but no real alternative (no other coaches), so make best of bad situation. By 1979 I wanted out and didn't miss it.

24. Rate your life on a scale of 1-10 for the following 3 time periods: (i) when you were an active athlete; (ii) immediately after you stopped actively competing; (iii) now.

(i) (5.5) (there were ups and downs - coaching problems, injuries.)

(ii) (3) --

(iii) (9) (how did she move from a "3" to a "9"?) -- I applied myself with the same degree of energy as when I was in sport - worked hard at university and at my

job. Worked hard at my relationship and 10 years later, we are still together. Whereas in sport, could work hard and some obscure thing would shit on you - that's what I didn't like.

25. On a scale of 1-10 rate yourself on a feeling/sense of personal control for the same 3 time periods.

(i) (1) very little control over what I was doing.

(ii) (6) had it, but not really pleased with what was going on.

(iii) (10) don't have to answer to anybody but me.

26. On a scale of 1-10 rate your feelings of self-confidence for the 3 time periods.

(i) (7) —

(ii) (2) --

(iii) (9.5) --

27. Did you feel a sense of loss at the end of your career in sport?

No.

CASE 9

17. (a) Why did you stop competing internationally?

Mostly because of my back, I didn't want to make it worse. Also it was such a time-consuming thing, I figured there

must be something else to do. I didn't really want to stay totally involved in one thing for a long period of time.

(b) Was it an abrupt ending or a gradual process?

Abrupt - decided after the Olympics were over - went over to visit sister in England for 2 months after the Olympics and when I got back there was no idea that I'd go back and compete.

(d) What was the most important reason for stopping?

Back problems.

18. Do you feel that you accomplished what you wanted to?

To tell you the truth, I never really did start out to accomplish anything. I was already competing when they brought women's (sport) into the Olympics in 1976 and this program started and I thought I'm already in it, why not give it a shot. But I hadn't been one of these people that my dream had always been to compete in something internationally. I made a stab at it and yes, I did succeed at what I set out to do, but I never made this plan that I would go to the Olympics. It just sort of fell into place. But I was pleased by how it all turned out.

20. Reflections on feelings about the end of this stage of life.

I don't really remember. I wasn't sad. It was a funny feeling to all of a sudden have all this time on my hands - I had time to do things. But I wasn't too upset about it. There was an adjustment to make though, but there was no great feeling one way or the other.

24. Rate your life on a scale of 1-10 for the following 3 times periods: (i) when you were an active athlete; (ii) immediately after you stopped actively competing; (iii) now.

(i) (8) highs and lows, because I was at the bottom end of the list - first to get kicked out of the starting team, but I always managed to get back in. Psychologically, a strain, but not unhappy about it.

(ii) (8)

(iii) (8) the same, all along.

25. On a scale of 1-10 rate yourself on a feeling/sense of personal control for the same 3 time periods.

(i) (5.5) (sport) had almost total control.

(ii) (7) --

(iii) (7) have a bit more choice now.

26. On a scale of 1-10 rate your feelings of self-confidence for the 3 time periods.

(i) (6.5) the same throughout.

(ii) (6.5)

(iii) (6.5)

27. Did you feel a sense of loss at the end of your career in sport?

No.

CASE 10

17. (a) Why did you stop competing internationally?

Too much money down the drainhole. Initial reason was financial. It's not that at the time, right after the Olympics, that I said to myself 'that's it, one Olympic Games is enough', it just evolved over a year or so. I could not ask my father to keep pulling out money year after year. I thought 'I'm getting older, I must start to make some money.' And it also seemed that unless I had the set-up with the equipment, free and clear of mortgage, I could not afford to. If I had that I could have made a good living and still competed.

Didn't want to spend my life in a hotel training for a team.

Financially it seemed like a silly venture. It would have been nice to just keep a good horse, but I didn't have the good horse and I wasn't going to go out and look for it. When I looked back on it, a few months after the Olympics,

I thought it's not worth it - the Olympics were nice to go to but it was very anti-climactic, especially being in Canada, and the whole selection was a fiasco - the politics throughout the selection, just so much politics and nonsense, it's just not worth it.

(b) Was it an abrupt ending or a gradual process?

It evolved over a year or so - gradual process of doing clinics, etc. ... and never the right horse, but I didn't go looking for it.

(d) What was the most important reason for stopping?

Didn't have a good horse, but closely aligned were financial reasons.

18. Do you feel that you accomplished what you wanted to?

Yes and no. Yes, I think I did very well for the length of time I competed, yet I know I could have done better and I know I would have done better if I had gone a little bit longer - if I had the horse I had in the Olympics and continued on ...

20. Reflections on feelings about the end of this stage of life.

I never said 'that's it.' It just happened gradually. I'd be lying if I said I never regretted it because I like to train and compete.

When you don't have a horse, it's forced on you, you don't have much choice.

At first, a little disappointed, a little mad, sorry for yourself - you take so much shit from all those people and then it's 'see you later Charlie' - you get a lot of that. First couple of competitions, I thought 'that's too bad I'm not competing,' but then it never really bothered me, but there were times I felt sorry for myself.

24. Rate your life on a scale of 1-10 for the following 3 time periods: (i) when you were an active athlete; (ii) immediately after you stopped competing; (iii) now.

(i) (7) I was very content, very happy. There were a lot of problems but I was in my glory.

(ii) (5) because it was very anti-climactic. It's a change. You're a somebody and all of a sudden it's all over and you have to start again. I wasn't in the doldrums but it wasn't a great time. And of course I was married and didn't want to be married.

(iii) (8) I'm happy, I'm very optimistic. This is a good situation I'm in now.

25. On a scale of 1-10 rate yourself on a feeling/sense of personal control for the same 3 time periods.

(i) (4) I had no control when I was competing. I did what they said, but I did it willingly, that's what I

wanted. It was because I was young and I just didn't know. You get manoevered around for other people's good.

(ii) (8) I had too much control. I was out of control - I did have all the control I wanted even though I made a lot of mistakes.

(iii) (6) I'm in control of my life, but I don't have a lot of control over it, I have a lot of responsibilities. I'm employed, so I have to satisfy my employer.

26. On a scale of 1-10 rate your feelings of self-confidence for the 3 time periods.

(i) (8.5) I was high when I was competing because you always have people building you up.

(ii) (7) I never really lacked confidence in general.

(iii) (7) " " " " " " "

27. Did you feel a sense of loss at the end of your career in sport?

No.

CASE 11

17. (a) Why did you stop competing internationally?

I became really tired of the whole struggle, I was feeling very grossly tired, not feeling very healthy. Surprised I

got through (the last Commonwealth Games). I had just finally burnt myself right down.

(b) Was it an abrupt ending or a gradual process?

Over a period of 2 years. Took me 2 years to quit. Problems weren't really bad until 1977-78, just wasn't healthy.

(d) What was the most important reason for stopping?

Physical problems were the biggest reason, but also I was tired of it.

18. Do you feel that you accomplished what you wanted to?

Yes, I accomplished what I wanted to accomplish, but not in the way I wanted to. I said to myself 'see how good I could be' and I did.

If I had had another year like '76, I may have done better. (Financial help and therefore not have to work.) I'll always feel disappointed (that coaches couldn't get her financial help for another year). (Coach) acts like I created a mortal sin by quitting, I'm sure he doesn't understand anything.

20. Reflections on feelings about the end of this stage of life.

Knew long before I went that that was my last competition. I was feeling and thinking a great deal of pain and distress. I was glad when I had my last race, but I put everything into it - wished we had of got a gold instead of a silver. Glad when it was over and everyone at home was glad, and that's all I heard from them (sister, mother).

24. Rate your life on a scale of 1-10 for the following 3 time periods: (i) when you were an active athlete; (ii) immediately after you stopped competing; (iii) now.

(i) (3) not past a 3 - it was a struggle, you're not living. I didn't do it for the enjoyment. I did it because I wanted to see how well I could do - the want to know.

(ii) (0) I was rock bottom. Just overextended myself.

(iii) (10) it's a whole new life, energy put in different places, much easier.

25. On a scale of 1-10 rate yourself on a feeling/sense of personal control for the same 3 time periods.

(i) (10) always fairly high. I've always been strong, if I wasn't I wouldn't have been doing it.

(ii) (10) —

(iii) (10) always had a great deal of self-control.

26. On a scale of 1-10 rate your feelings of self-confidence for the 3 time periods.

(i) (7) self-confidence wavers at times, but you catch it.

(ii) (7)

(iii) (7)

27. Did you feel a sense of loss at the end of your career in sport?

Yes, you lose a part of your life. For a while, had the feeling of being nowhere, suspended in between - it's taken a long time to adjust (lasted 3 years from 1978-1981).

Did you experience any of the phases associated with loss?

Yes, that's an honest way to sum it up - you go through all those periods.

CASE 12

17. (a) Why did you stop competing internationally?

I was tired of it. I was starting to resent the sport. I was seeing someone who I wanted to see more of. I wanted to do some travelling on my own, without having to train. I wanted to not be tired physically all the time, and I'd always said, 'when I stop enjoying it, I'll leave it for six months and if I don't come back to it, then I'll quit' and that's what I did.

Just a natural thing to do, school was finished, and I needed money and couldn't work and train.

(b) Was it an abrupt ending or a gradual process?

It was gradual - part of the whole change in lifestyle.

(d) What was the most important reason for stopping?

The inside motivation wasn't there anymore. Something inside died along the way.

18. Do you feel that you accomplished what you wanted to?

I fell into the sport, it was never a dream to make the Olympic team. I think I could have done better, with different guidance, different training. I think the potential was there, but something inside died off along the way. I needed more psychological support. I wanted more information about training, different ways of training. It just wasn't there. There was only one way to do things. (Coach) was a very good technical coach but I would have liked more psychological support.

20. Reflections on feelings about the end of this stage of life.

This is really good to talk about this, there was a lot of mixed up things. For one, there was a lot of resentment, I was starting to get really angry at the lack of support, lack of emotional support, being tired all the time, tired

of all the politics, the lack of long term planning. I'd get a lot of 'oh you have so much potential' - people making comments but not giving anything back in terms of how you can do something.

I was seeing a change in my whole lifestyle. I was scared when I thought of quitting. It was such a big change, I'd grown up; those 5 years, really fast in (the sport). Scary to think of not having my friends there, not having a routine, not having motivation for exercising. Plus it's one of the ego boosts, you're doing something, you're doing it well and you're getting recognized for it.

While I was trying to decide, there was guilt, I'm letting people down, my coach, my club. Once I made the decision, it was total relief and then I knew that I'd made the right decision.

I went through a really bad depresssion. I got real skinny. I wasn't eating enough. I was exercising a lot. It was clinically diagnosed as depression. It's only now that I can talk about it. (retired in April 1980, went to doctor in April 1981 - saw a psychiatrist for 1 year). Definitely had to do with (the sport). A lot of it had to do with my sense of control over my life. My self-esteem wasn't there. I always tied (my sport) and university

together and they ended at the same time and I had nothing. So much of my identity was wrapped up in being an athlete, like me, athlete and university student. Now it was me, nobody. Who didn't know what she wanted. Who had no control over her life whatsoever.

24. Rate your life on a scale of 1-10 for the following 3 time periods: (i) when you were an active athlete; (ii) immediately after you stopped competing; (iii) now.

(i) (8.5)

(ii) (2) went travelling immediately after and that was fine, but the trying to find a job with no concrete skills -- 'that's nice that you've done (sport), but what skills can you offer us'.

(iii) (8.5) (how did she move from a 2 to 8.5?) A lot of hard work, a lot of thinking. Part of it, for me, was gaining recognition in something other than sport, feeling competent.

25. On a scale of 1-10 rate yourself on a feeling/sense of personal control for the same 3 time periods.

(i) (6.5) not too high, because so many things I felt I had to do to maintain my level as an athlete.

(ii) (1.5) felt like I had no control - ironic because there was nothing there to have control over.

(iii) (8) now I feel I have quite a bit of control over what's happening in my life - more so than when I was training.

26. On a scale of 1-10 rate your feelings of self-confidence for the 3 time periods.

(i) (8.5) —

(ii) (1.5) my self-confidence was barely surfacing, when trying to make up my mind and then quitting

(iii) (8.5) —

27. Did you feel a sense of loss at the end of your career in sport?

Yes.

Did you experience any of the phases associated with loss?

Went through a really bad depresson. Angry for awhile; guilty, should I have quit? (see also #20).

CASE 13

17. (a) Why did you stop competing internationally?

I really had a feeling that I had had enough. I had done it a long time. I was still racing well, but at the same time asking 'why am I doing this, there must be more to life than just trying to (be the fastest)'.

(b) Was it an abrupt ending or a gradual process?

Gradual process. You get the feeling every so often, but then you have a good result, that makes it all worthwhile, and you forget it. The last year that I raced I wasn't enjoying it anymore - going back to the same places, not really learning much.

18. Do you feel that you accomplished what you wanted to?

Yes, I feel I did. I satisfied my own personal goals. My goals were in knowing that I could be faster than anyone else and not in doing it over and over for other people, it seemed like. The hardest thing for me was to be consistent.

20. Reflections on feelings about the end of this of life.

(Retirement) was more over a period of time, thinking before the end of the season 'I don't think I'm going to do this next year'. A feeling that I can't get motivated for this anymore. I never went through a difficult time adjusting, I knew other athletes had had problems adjusting - didn't want it to happen to me - wanted to get right into something else. I had a new direction right away - excited about going to school - a new challenge for me.

24. Rate your life on a scale of 1-10 for the following 3 time periods: (i) when you were an active athlete; (ii) immediately after you stopped actively competing; (iii) now.

(i) (no rating) lows and highs - low time in last few years of racing - 'it's not worth doing this to come 20th, that's not where I belong'.

(ii) (no rating) I never went through a difficult time adjusting. I knew other people had had problems adjusting and didn't want it to happen to me. I wanted to get right into something else (into a new sport and university).

(iii) --

25. On a scale of 1-10 rate yourself on a feeling/sense of personal control for the same 3 times periods.

(i) (5) in the hands of the team.

(ii) (8.5) I have the choice now.

(iii) (8.5)

26. On a scale of 1-10 rate your feelings of self-confidence for the 3 time periods.

(i) (no rating) fluctuates with results - everything depended on results - tried not to have this happen, but it was hard to do.

(ii) (no rating) --

(iii) (no rating) more consistent now in my emotions. When I meet different people now, I get a kind of instant respect - respect me for what I did - makes me feel good.

27. Did you feel a sense of loss at the end of your career in sport?

It wasn't a loss, I felt I had done my thing.

CASE 14

17. (a) Why did you stop competing internationally?

I probably should have retired earlier, but I can't remember before I was 5, so I can't remember never (doing my sport). I knew I had lost interest but the actual subconsciouly dealing with it, bringing it out in the open was very difficult. I started to feel like I'd been on the road for a long time. I was tired of it, but I thought it was just a product of having put so much time in, so I thought 'take a break, forget about (the sport) for a month and get into school and be with friends again'. I thought my whole attitude would be refreshed, renewed. Tired, but didn't think it was the end, I didn't want to let it go until I knew I was really finished with it.

(b) Was it an abrupt ending or a gradual process?

Very gradual process, coming to the realization that I was unenthusiastic.

(d) What was the most important reason for stopping?

My loss of interest - finally realized it.

18. Do you feel that you accomplished what you wanted to?

It was no. 1 or nothing, and I didn't accomplish that, but I'm fairly happy with what I accomplished. I guess so.

20. Reflections on feelings about the end of this stage of life.

Second year (at school), things were very up and down - relationship with coach, attitudes about (the sport). Got everything straightened out because I was determined that nothing was going to make me stop (competing) except that I didn't want to (compete) anymore. So, I got everything in order, school, relationship with coach and then I still wasn't happy. So I said 'it's got to go'. I made the decision in a 4-day period - spent 3 days on the phone, calling home. Scary, what am I going to do. I never thought of seriously quitting until that day. Hard also, everything in (my sport) had been planned, now life would not be planned. It was hell - even though I really knew it was time, it was just really hard. It was a complete change around. I went through a lot of emotional effects from trying to deal with it. I was very hard on myself.

There was a time when I was very unhappy, but not just about (the sport), but a good chunk of it was. I was very unhappy and didn't know why. (Lasted for 1½ years - but she didn't want to go into it - said she "did a lot of hard thinking and figured out what was wrong".)

24. Rate your life on a scale of 1-10 for the following 3 time periods: (i) when you were an active athlete; (ii) immediately after you stopped competing; (iii) now.

(i) (6) —

(ii) (1) —

(iii) (5.5) (see quotes in #20 above).

25. On a scale of 1-10 rate yourself on a feeling/sense of personal control for the same 3 time periods.

(i) (7) highs and lows.

(ii) (4)

(iii) (7.5)

26. On a scale of 1-10 rate your feelings of self-confidence for the 3 time periods.

(i) (10)

(ii) (5.5) last 2 years of (sport) and then quitting, re-adjusting - I had a lot of self-confidence but ... I knew I could do things but getting myself to do them is another thing.

(iii) (7.5)

27. Did you feel a sense of loss at the end of your career in sport?

Yes, but I wasn't afraid - I have so many hopes and dreams.

Did you experience any of the phases associated with loss?

I went through an angry part, but I was still (competing) - because I felt I wasn't in control of my life. I did go through some depression and acceptance but that was not just (my sport).

CASE 15

17. (a) Why did you stop competing internationally?

I was 27, I'd been playing 6 years. Sport had given me all of what I had asked and set objectives for and I wasn't prepared to put another four years in. I had responsibilities as far as my wife and my career. I had done all that I set out to do.

(b) Was it an abrupt ending or a gradual process?

Abrupt, in the sense that with Montreal, it was over, retired from international (sport).

(d) What was the most important reason for stopping?

I had achieved my goals.

18. Do you feel that you accomplished what you wanted to?

I had done all that I set out to do.

20. Reflections on feelings about the end of this stage of life.

First thing was disappointment we didn't win a medal. That was one of the goals we had set as a team and I believe we had the ability to attain it and we came close. That was a disappointment. As soon as our participation in the Olympics was over; it was kind of a hollow feeling inside because the whole concept of the team disappeared. The tie that had kept us together had been cut. As well, there's one stage of your life over and now I'm going to go on to the next stage and go from there - a little apprehensive.

24. Rate your life on a scale of 1-10 for the following 3 time periods: (i) when you were an active athlete; (ii) immediately after you stopped actively competing; (iii) now.

(i) (10) my life was full, but very concentrated in one area.

(ii) (7.5) I was coaching, so still involved but not playing much.

(iii) (9.5) a wider range of things became available. 1977 was the first summer home since 1969 - it was great, provided a different perspective on things.

25. On a scale of 1-10 rate yourself on a feeling/sense of personal control for the same time periods.

(i) (8.5) your life was ruled by (sport) schedules. Your personal life revolved around the schedules - you did what you could in the time you had to yourself.

(ii) (10) your decisions, your control.

(iii) (10) your control and you accept the consequences.

26. On a scale of 1-10 rate your feelings of self-confidence for the 3 time periods.

(i) (10) always been self-confident.

(ii) (10) always been self-confident.

(iii) (10 always been self-confident.

27. Did you feel a sense of loss at the end of your career in sport?

Yes, can relate to this.

Did you experience any of the phases associated with loss?

Yes, but I had already established some other trends - career in teaching, coaching, prior to finishing. I already had some other experiences to relate to, plus had a strong wife and family.

CASE 16

17. (a) Why did you stop competing internationally?

I didn't want to get to the point where I was embarrassing myself. I knew that I had to look down the road. It got to the point where I had to start putting more time and energy into work and I just didn't have the time to put into (the sport). And by then I was working more on the smarts than on physical energy. I saw the writing on the wall and got out.

I had started for the whole time that I was playing and that year it was at the point where the guy behind me ... it was a toss-up who was playing and it was more loyalty from the coach that I was still playing. I didn't want that, either I was going to be there because I deserved to be there or I wasn't going to be there.

(b) Was it an an abrupt ending or a gradual process?

In terms of that particular year, it was the sudden injury and that was it for the year. I'd been struggling a bit with the decision, what I'd do next year, with my internship. I hadn't really decided what to do for the next year and then it was kind of a traumatic exit in '79 for me personally and it sort of tipped the balance over to decide to pack it in.

Sudden injury, but a gradual decision-making process to retire - over a 1 year period.

(d) What was the most important reason for stopping?

I don't think there was a primary reason, I think there was a combination of things.

18. Do you feel that you accomplished what you wanted to?

No, we didn't win a medal. I have a fair bit of pride in what we accomplished - we were in the toilet bowl in '72 and by '76 we had established an international presence.

I was very disappointed when we came back and we didn't do what we wanted to do at the Olympics, but we did everything we could and there just wasn't anything more we could have done so I can accept not getting what I want rather than say failing because we didn't do something we should have done.

20. Reflections on feelings about the end of this stage of life.

It was the blackest two weeks of my life when I came home (injured, prior to the Games starting). I had pulled some strings to start my internship two weeks later (in order to compete in the Games) - gave up vacation time to do that. So instead I moped around here, listening to the news reports (from the Games) - so that was miserable, really a black time.

I was depressed and frustrated. I had worked very hard that spring to get into shape (after being busy at school). I was playing well until I got injured - got injured on first tour and worked really hard, to get back again, and then injured again. All that five weeks was down the drain, all that summer was down the drain, career was down the drain, it was a bummer.

Once I got over that and started playing with the guys at Senior A a bit ... I can't remember a definite time that I said I wasn't going back (to the national team). I just slowly became aware I wasn't going to go back next year. So the final decision that I wasn't playing on the national team anymore wasn't so bad. I think when I decided to quit Senior A was probably the worst. I felt like an alcoholic saying 'I'm not going to touch it anymore' and actually I have not touched it since March '82. (Why did he quit Senior A?) I have less time to stay in shape, didn't want to be one of those guys who try and go out and do what they can't do anymore, but it's difficult because it's still a big part of my social life.

24. Rate your life on a scale of 1-10 for the following 3 time periods: (i) when you were an active athlete; (ii) immediately after you stopped actively competing; (iii) now.

(i) (8) ups and downs. The quality of life and the challenge and excitement was all there. But a lot of frustration was there. (problems with college coach)

(ii) (2.5) (see quotes in #20 above.)

(iii) (7) there isn't as much excitement right now. I have to work really hard and the long hours can get you down but I'm probably headed in the right direction.

25. On a scale of 1-10 rate yourself on a feeling/sense of personal control for the same 3 time periods.

(i) (8) pretty much in control. I never got in a situation where I wasn't getting what I always wanted - I always played.

(ii) (3) victim of circumstances beyond my control. (injury)

(iii) (8)

26. On a scale of 1-10 rate your feelings on self-confidence for the 3 time periods.

(i) (8)

(ii) (3)

(iii) (8)

27. Did you feel a sense of loss at the end of your career in sport?

Oh yeah, you go from being one of the top five players in the country on one of the top four teams in the world to being another clinical clerk on the ward - it's a big drop there. Yo go from being extremely competent in something to now back just like the rest of the world - you've lost that edge.

Did you experience any of the phases associated with loss?

Not in classic transition.

CASE 17

17. (a) Why did you stop competing internationally?

I thought that after 1976, after having the privilege of playing in the Olympics, that there was really nothing else left to do in terms of (my sport), at least at that level. Plus I was going into teachers college and that's a goal that I had. I wanted to settle down, not that I was going to quit (the sport) (would play with a Senior A team) but trying to go back and play with the national team again would have been I think maybe too much of a challenge - 1980 was so far away. Maybe I was afraid that if I went back to play in 1977 the job might not be there.

(b) Was it an abrupt ending or a gradual process?

When I knew I had made the team and would be playing in '76, I could see that at that point that would be it - that would be the pinnacle for me in terms of competitive (sport). I knew I wouldn't play after that.

(d) What was the most important reason for stopping?

It depends on what point of view I look at it from - too difficult to differentiate.

18. Do you feel that you accomplished what you wanted to?

I always felt I should have been able to make a better contribution, I don't know whether my full talents came out - sort of haunts me a little bit.

The greatest thing would have been to win a medal. Actually the 4th place finish is a fond memory. If we had won a medal, that would have been the crowning touch, could have gone out without any haunting feelings or any regrets.

20. Reflections on feelings about the end of this stage of life.

After the last game in the dressing room, coach talking to us, knowing that most of those guys wouldn't be back with the team - it was a very emotional thing, guys were crying their eyes out. You develop an emotional bond with guys even though there are conflicts in character and personality.

I knew this was going to be it for me. I realized just that part of my life was finished and (time to) move on to something else - everything comes to an end. I was ready to accept that. I was ready to stop all the travelling.

24. Rate your life on a scale of 1-10 for the following 3 time periods: (i) when you were an active athlete; (ii) immediately after you stopped actively competing; (iii) now.

(i) (7) it was pretty good - few worries. I was going to school and playing (my sport). I had enough money at least to get by.

(ii) (4.5) dropped right after the Olympics. At the time I was very very weak in terms of responsibility. I didn't want a lot of responsibility. I was very care-free. Responsibility scared me a little bit. I was a little scared of the future at that point.

(iii) (9.5) I'm very happy. I can see where we are going and I can see some progress. A good time in my life.

25. On a scale of 1-10 rate yourself on a feeling/sense of personal control for the same 3 time periods.

(i) (3) I had very little self-control when on the national team. I was following guidelines. In terms of vision, when I was playing international (sport) I never looked beyond the day.

(ii) (6) I had an idea of what I wanted to do, the control was in my court.

(iii) (8) I take direction on my own now rather than looking to people to give me direction.

26. On a scale of 1-10 rate your feelings of self-confidence for the 3 times periods.

(i) (4) "during the national team era I think I had a serious conflict with confidence because I questioned at times whether I was showing the abilities I could show. I was in a constant challenge to keep people out of my position. Maybe it made me a little stronger - 'I want to be on this team', but I lacked a lot of confidence."

(ii) (7) "After the national team years, my confidence grew considerably because of the fact that people recognized me. I wouldn't say it opened all sorts of doors, but people recognized my name if and when interviews came up."

(iii) (8.5) "confidence in my job because of experience."

27. Did you feel a sense of loss at the end of your career in sport?

I don't think I suffered from any loss. I don't think I left anything behind when I came home to stay.

CASE 18

17. (a) Why did you stop competing internationally?

(This athlete stopped competing for Canada after the 1976 Olympics, but he continued to compete at the university level for a further 1½ years.)

When I left the Olympic village in '76, the decision was pretty much clear that I'd given it a real good shot, achieved a goal I wanted, which was to play in the Olympics, didn't get a medal but probably would never go through that again maybe because I couldn't face the letdown one more time. The goal had been reached, there wasn't much more to be gained. An Olympic medal was always the next step but I felt that it was very much out of reach. I couldn't see four more years down the road.

I'd been playing so intensively for 2½ years, almost every day for 4 hours. My feeling was that I didn't want to get back into it. My intent was probably to drop out for a year and then get back into it. The other problem was I had a back injury and it became physically unwise to keep pursuing it. (It was) a constant nagging problem - played in a full corset for 2 years.

Olympics were something I wanted very very badly. At times I questioned why I was doing it - beating the hell out of your body and living with constant pain, but the goal obviously warranted the sacrifice.

(b) Was it an abrupt ending or a gradual process?

Abrupt. If we'd won a medal in '76, it might have changed the whole perspective. Deciding to leave (the sport) - the decision was made very quickly, based on a lot of frustrations - both from the physical injury thing and the mental frustrations that go along with it. It just kind of broke all of a sudden, (thinking) I'm not getting out as much as I'm putting in.

(d) What was the most important reason for stopping?

I would say because I'd reached the goal and played reasonably well. I guess maybe I didn't dream big enough. At that stage the next goal was the Olympics again. Maybe if I'd gone into '76 thinking '80 or '84, it would have been very different, but I went in very much with a single-minded '76 perspective (injury played a big part, as well).

18. Do you feel you accomplished what you wanted to?

I felt very unsatisfied. There was a big void left when the final buzzer went off and we weren't going to get a medal. I don't think I'll ever be satisfied with not

getting that medal. The older I get and the more I see of the self-confidence that I've gained, the more I'll probably be satisfied with what has happened. Being relatively young and seeing some of my friends playing pro sport, there is still a little bit of dissatisfaction there that maybe, given the right circumstances, that might have happened to me.

20. Reflections on feelings about the end of this stage of life

When it was over and we finished 4th, it was such an incredible letdown. For about 1 month, I just did nothing, just sat and stared at the wall and wondered what happened. I have memories of lying in my parents pool on an air mattress, floating in circles. All that preparation and everything that went into it and all of a sudden so close and yet it just never happened. A huge emptiness. A huge void. Something that was supposed to happen, that I wanted in my heart of hearts to happen, didn't. I felt very much robbed, at the time, both physically and emotionally. I couldn't really equate all the things it brought me (as I can now) in terms of winning and losing and we lost.

But when I finally left the team (university team, 1½ years after Olympics), there was a huge crash - the career was over, (the sport) has been terminated. (There was) a big stage of depression which I compensated for by working

extra hard at school and expanding my interests - such as skiing, white water canoeing, to get the adrenalin flowing. After depression came frustration - nothing was good enough.

There's another big void in my life now - when you walk out on the street and the glory is over and you don't read your name in the newspaper every week.

24. Rate your life on a scale of 1-10 for the following 3 time periods: (i) when you were an active athlete; (ii) immediately after you stopped actively competing; (iii) now.

(i) (5) The physical output that was required to compete while injured and to compete against people that were older was a traumatic physical experience - got tired awfully quickly. Most of the memories of the national team are travelling, sleeping, playing - so not a great life experience.

(ii) (2) The sheer disappointment of being robbed" (of a medal).

(iii) (7) Leading a bit more of a fuller life now. I'm reasonably adjusted to the business world, I'm accomplishing a lot of things and I'm getting a lot of rewards from the job.

25. On a scale of 1-10 rate yourself on a feeling/sense of personal control for the same 3 time periods.

(i) (3) (Coach) had total control of my life.

(ii) (4) had a little more control (but still playing at university).

(iii) (8) I have much more control over my life now.

26. On a scale of 1-10 rate your feelings of self-confidence for the 3 time periods.

(i) (3.5) I need a lot of help in building self-confidence and didn't get it. Internally there was a lot of turmoil, I was not really sure of myself - constantly being challenged for a position on the team.

(ii) (2) —

(iii) (8) much more self-confident now.

27. Did you feel a sense of loss at the end of your career in sport?

Yes, I think it still exists. There are certain things that are taken away from you as an athlete - the glory, the limelight, the ability to be around your teammates - that social thing that is wonderful. The strict discipline is taken away from you.

Did you experience any of the phases associated with loss?

Not so clear cut. (See #20 - played at university for 1½ years after leaving the national team.)

CASE 19

17. (a) Why did you stop competing internationally?

I had a few problems at home and I wasn't playing a lot and I figured I would no longer go out for the national team. I thought we should have done better. I was quite disappointed, we should have been going for gold.

The players were getting improved - a 6'5" center is not going to be of much help. A realization of my upper limits, I could have tried out in '79 but the writing was on the wall.

(b) Was it an abrupt ending or a gradual process?

It was an abrupt thing.

(d) What was the most important reason for stopping?

I felt the time had come to start growing up.
(team wasn't playing well; home situation was bad)

18. Do you feel that you accomplished what you wanted to?

I think I could have played better. I think I could have played more. I could have been higher on the rung and contributed more to the team.

20. Reflections on feelings about the end of this stage of life.

Personal play (on the team) wasn't going well. All the drive and spunk were gone - I just didn't want to play. Had premonitions that things weren't going well at home (while at world tournament).

I felt quite sad. I didn't really want to make the decision. I liked the team aspect. It felt like a sacrifice (to stop) because I liked it so much. When I came home one of the sacrifices was not to play anything - that was stupid, a manoeuvring game. I thought it might save the marriage.

24. Rate your life on a scale of 1-10 for the following 3 time periods: (i) when you were an active athlete; (ii) immediately after you stopped actively competing; (iii) now.

(i) (8) very much dependent on how the team did.

(ii) (2) all the situations - family, sport.

(iii) (8) involved now in a lot of things.

25. On a scale of 1-10 rate yourself on a feeling/sense of personal control for the same 3 time periods.

(i) (6) low sense of control. The team guided me - I followed the team.

(ii) (1) pretty wild, erratic - totally out of control - job was wild, family (situation) was wild.

(iii) (7.5) control now is high, I have some goals.

26. On a scale of 1-10 rate your feelings of self-confidence for the 3 time periods.

(i) (8) (in try-out situation) unbelievable self-confidence - believed I could beat anybody. Then, a little less self-confidence once on the team - you had a role to play.

(ii) (1.5) (team and family problems)

(iii) (7.5) feel like I could play again.

27. Did you feel a sense of loss at the end of your career in sport?

I can relate to that. It's a loss because I loved doing it. I miss it now.

Did you experience any of the phases associated with loss?

Uncertain. After '78, it was difficult, but writing was on the wall. It hurt for awhile, but I kept doing things.

CASE 20

17. (a) Why did you stop competing internationally?

Not by choice. I would have continued but I had more knee problems. I was lucky to get to Montreal. If I had been able to, I would have gone back and competed in '80. Had I

had a good 1976, not got hurt and played and it'd been a pinnacle of my (sport) career, maybe I wouldn't feel this frustration but I doubt it, it's awfully hard to leave.

(b) Was it an abrupt ending or a gradual process?

More of an abrupt ending - injured, not able to continue playing. (It took him a year or so to understand, come to the realization and accept that it really was all over).

It wasn't a really cut and dried decision, like I said 'that's it'. I still feel if I could play, today, I'd go out and try out, I wouldn't even question it, although realistically I know I can't do it.

(d) What was the most important reason for stopping?

My knee injury.

18. Do you feel that you accomplished what you wanted to?

No, it's something that I'll always live with. I felt I could have done better. I know where I would have been (if not for knee injury). I felt I could have made money at (the sport) but having all that happen, that's something I'll just have to learn to live with and I do.

It's not something I'm bitter about, but it's a disappointment.

The biggest disappointment was not attaining what I felt I could have done physically - after that, I'm very happy where I am now. The only thing that would make me happier would be to be coaching.

20. Reflections on feelings about the end of this stage of life.

In the locker room, guys were crying. A lot of it was because we came close and couldn't do it. But also, I think, a lot of those feelings were like 'now I have to start my life'. A lot of guys knew this was it. Montreal Olympics hadn't provided them that cakewalk in life.

Personally, Montreal was a high and a low. A high because it was the Olympics and I was part of it. A low because of where I was as a performer - I didn't start, coming off a knee injury. It was a frustrating experience for me.

After '76, I went through my jock shock. I couldn't play (pp6) and when I realized those coaching jobs weren't going to happen, I went through a period where I wasn't sure what I was going to do. I still hadn't accepted that, physically, I wasn't going to be the same - that I wasn't going to be able to come back. It was hard to accept, yet at the same time other things were happening - I was getting my teaching degree.

24. Rate your life on a scale of 1-10 for the following 3 time periods: (i) when you were an active athlete; (ii) immediately after you stopped actively competing; (iii) now.

(i) (8) things worked well.

(ii) (6) Montreal was frustrating. Then realizing (sport) was over for me. Then realizing I wasn't going to get a coaching job. (But) it wasn't too bad a time. I was ready to go on with my life.

(iii) (8.5) I'm content.

25. On a scale of 1-10 rate yourself on a feeling/sense of personal control for the same 3 time periods.

(i) (8.5) At the time, I thought I was in control - when I look at it now, I wasn't.

(ii) (8) much more in control.

(iii) (9.5) I've got it more under control now than ever before in my life.

26. On a scale of 1-10 rate your feelings of self-confidence for the 3 time periods.

(i) (6) lows and highs. It was a roller coaster with my knee. When I was physically right I was very confident.

(ii) (8.5) it was letting go of something that had been good to me, but still confident.

(iii) (8.5) —

27. Did you feel a sense of loss at the end of your career in sport?

Oh yeah. I still feel I miss it.

The loss that I really feel is not having laid it on the line, that I gave it my best and I couldn't have done anything more.

Did you experience any of the phases associated with loss?

Yes. But probably still weak on the denial - if not for my knees, I still think I could do it.

CASE 21

17. (a) Why did you stop competing internationally?

I was tired of doing the same thing. I stopped because I wanted to (compete) until I finished school. I spent a lot of time in my sport and my school suffered because of it. After I left (one university), my priority was to get into school (at a second university) and finish it off. I was still going to (compete) for another year but I was a lot more relaxed. I had a lot of experience - a lot of it was positive thinking - I knew I could do it.

I got to the point where I was tired of always not having any money. I was broke.

It was time to move on, make a living, settle down a bit, get married.

(b) Was it an abrupt ending or a gradual process?

Very gradual, I sort of faded out, backed out over a year process. In the last 1½ years I backed off in the intensity and I lasted a little bit longer. I don't think I could have kept going at the pace I had gone for 4 or 5 years. It was good. I sort of gradually worked my way out of the sport but I was still successful in my last major meet.

(d) What was the most important reason for stopping?

Just, I think, the time spent at training. Just get tired of it - the scheduling, getting up early ... It was the type of sport that if you really wanted to continue to succeed you had to (train) twice a day. Although I was successful in my last year, I think I could have been even more successful if I had trained just a little bit harder.

18. Do you feel that you accomplished what you wanted to?

I did. I don't think I ever really believed I could be the world's best. I just wanted to be successful - my goals were fairly realistic. I don't think I set them really high enough at times. I just always tried to make the teams and I always tried to improve on what I did. It was

nice to get the medals and the placings but as long as I did a personal best time I was pleased.

20. Reflections on feelings about the end of this stage of life.

A long summer and a lot of pressure in '78 with Commonwealth Games and then 2 weeks later the World Championships. I remember finishing and just wanting to relax. I just missed a medal in the relay. I (did) my lifetime best split, and one of the guys screwed up and we ended up coming fourth. So I was disappointed that I didn't get a medal, but happy I'd done my best. Looking back on it, I'd do it again at the snap of my fingers, but at the time I just wanted to get out. I thought I might get out completely and not want to do it, but it was quite gradual. I still kept in shape. Eight months later, I was still in good enough shape to go to (winter) nationals.

I was pleased with what I'd done but I knew I had to go on and make a living and think about my future, but because I was still involved, there was no abrupt downer. I was relieved that I didn't have to be under pressure and under the constant training. I was on the other end - coaching.

24. Rate your life on a scale of 1-10 for the following 3 time periods: (i) when you were an active athlete; (ii) immediately after you stopped actively competing; (iii) now.

(i) (8.5)

(ii) (7) still pretty high. I missed the sport a bit, but I was channelled right into coaching, there was no stalling period. My name helped me. The changeover was pretty good for me.

(iii) (6) down a little bit - up as far as a new life starting but as far as coaching, I'm setting a bit higher expectations. Being an assistant coach has it pluses and minuses but it's very frustrating. Once I get to a successful team as a head coach I'll be higher.

25. On a scale of 1-10 rate yourself on a feeling/sense of personal control for the same 3 time periods.

(i) (5.5) When I went into the sport I was very determined to get as much out of it as I could, but once I got into it I think I was just carried along by the system, I really wasn't in control. It wasn't until at the end of my career that I took a little bit more control.

(ii) (8.5) pretty much in control.

(iii) (8.5) " " " "

26. On a scale of 1-10 rate your feelings of self-confidence for the 3 time periods.

(i) (7) First few years of (competing) my self-confidence was medium. As I got older and more confident in my (sport) my self-confidence got a lot better.

(ii) (8.5) pretty confident in what I'd done.

(iii) (8.5) I'm pretty confident in myself and my coaching career.

27. Did you feel a sense of loss at the end of your career in sport?

I sense the loss of striving for something that you alone can strive for - individual things that only you are responsible for. The loss I felt was the actual competition - getting up and having the pride that you just did something - but the loss was minimal. Because I have a very successful career, I don't think I felt a lot of loss when I retired.

Did you experience any of the phases associated with loss?

No. Not really.

CASE 22

17. (a) Why did you stop competing internationally?

Because of my shoulder, it hurt every time I (trained and competed). I'd get a shot of cortisone every time I (trained) - for the last year of (training). I was addicted to pills - injections of cortisone every week.

(b) Was it an abrupt ending or a gradual process?

After '80, that was it - quit, very disillusioned. When I decided to continue in '78 (after injury and operation), I said 'I'm going to (train) until 1980'. That's why the boycott was so disappointing - I didn't need to go through all that pain.

(d) What was the most important reason for stopping?

Shoulder injury. I got back to where I was in '77 but I couldn't get better. I couldn't train like a normal (athlete). I was getting beat by people that I knew I could kill if I could have trained - it just got very frustrating. Most frustrating thing I can think of - you know you can do better if you could train and you can't train.

18. Do you feel that you accomplished what you wanted to?

No. I did the best I could, but if I didn't have my shoulder, I wanted to win an Olympic gold medal, and I think I was capable. Never got the chance. (At the same time he says) very happy with my career, I did the best I could.

20. Reflections on feelings about the end of this stage of life.

I was in a lot of pain - my shoulder was really bad.

Relief, that it was all over, I didn't have to get shots anymore. I threw away all the pills. I felt I did it, I made the Olympic team, and I don't have to go through the pain anymore.

Happiness because I accomplished my goals, relief because I didn't have to go through the pain.

24. Rate your life on a scale of 1-10 for the following 3 time periods: (i) when you were an active athlete; (ii) immediately after you stopped actively competing; (iii) now.

(i) (10)

(ii) (10)

(iii) (10) I'm very content. I'm a very happy guy. The only thing that's happened bad in my whole life is my shoulder.

25. On a scale of 1-10 rate yourself on a feeling/sense of personal control for the same 3 time periods.

(i) (10) Always knew what I wanted to do. I was always working toward that goal, so I was always content.

(ii) (6.5) (I thought) now where do I go, but never worried about it.

(iii) (6.5) I'm not sure what I'm going to be doing" (but he has several possibilities).

26. On a scale of 1-10 rate your feelings of self-confidence for the 3 time periods.

(i) (10)

(ii) (10)

(iii) (10) always confident.

27. Did you feel a sense of loss at the end of your career in sport?

Miss (the sport), but ready to get on with life.

Did you experience any of the phases associated with loss?

No.

CASE 23

17. (a) Why did you stop competing internationally?

(Athlete's) peak usually tops out at 22. I was considered an old man competing at 23, 24. That, plus I'd won Commonwealth gold medals, I'd won World Championship medals, I'd broken world records - in my mind I'd accomplished just about everything exept a gold medal in Olympics and I would have just been too old in 1984. Plus I had to go out and make a living and support myself.

(b) Was it an abrupt ending or a gradual process?

Gradual - knew it was coming.

It was very well planned. I'd planned to retire after the '80 Olympics (but) I decided to keep going, I didn't want to feel bitter about it. And I knew I'd compete until 1982.

(d) What was the most important reason for stopping?

I wanted to bow out gracefully and not hang on like a Muhammed Ali.

18. Do you feel that you accomplished what you wanted to?

Yeh, again the elusive gold, but yeh I feel quite happy with what I've done, with what I set out to do. There were a few things that got away but that always occurs.

20. Reflections on feelings about the end of this stage of life.

It was hard to sit down and know that was it. But afterwards I knew I had to redirect my energies very quickly or else I'd start to be depressed.

That night (after the race) I sat down by myself and thought of my career. I thought I came out on the plus side - thought of my experiences, the funny ones, the depressing ones. Weeks after, I wanted to go forward, just as in competition - the same philosophy. Having the coaching job helped.

I never really had any problem with the transition, of getting out, because I knew that was it, I'm not going to make any comebacks.

24. Rate your life on a scale of 1-10 for the following 3 time periods: (i) when you were an active athlete; (ii) immediately after you stopped competing; (iii) now.

(i) (8.5)

(ii) (6.5) A little bit down for a while. I had to take a breath before I went on to the next phase in my life. A reflective time, but not very constructive.

(iii) (7.5) I feel quite good about things; about the way things are going for me career-wise - there's a lot out there.

25. On a scale of 1-10 rate yourself on a feeling/sense of personal control for the same 3 time periods.

(i) (9.5) I feel I've always been in personal control both emotionally and physically. With trust in the right coaches.

(ii) (6) Things were uncertain.

(iii) (9) I'm quite in control.

26. On a scale of 1-10 rate your feelings of self-confidence for the 3 time periods.

(i) (9.5)

(ii) (9.5)

(iii) (9.5) felt self-confident throughout.

27. Did you feel a sense of loss at the end of your career in sport?

Not really a loss. I felt a loss, but it's like going from high school onto something else, I know I'll never be back there again and it would be foolish to keep going on at it. I feel I was confident and bright enough to put it away and redirect my energies towards something else - so the loss ... I don't have pangs wishing I could be in there, I know I can't be and I have to accept that and carry on with something else.

Did you experience any of the phases associated with loss?

No.

CASE 24

17. (a) Why did you stop competing internationally?

Culmination of a lot of things. 1980 was a very bad year. From an athlete's point of view, what happened in 1980 was probably more damaging than anything I had seen in the 10 years that I had (competed). Devastating to anybody who was competing that year. Forced me into a decision - 'what am I going to do now? I don't think I want to (compete) - I want to finish my (degree) and get on with it'.

(b) Was it an abrupt ending or a gradual process?

Gradual process over summer of 1980 - boycott and no good coaches - (the sport) managed to alienate all the good international coaches.

(d) What was the most important reason for stopping?

A cumulative thing for me - not just the boycott.

18. Do you feel that you accomplished what you wanted to?

No. I always felt that we could have got some kind of medal. We just didn't do it and I wanted to. I don't know why we didn't do it. Canada had been shut out for so

long. (We) trained to get into the final. It was something just to get into the final and (we) lost sight of what happens when you get to the final.

20. Reflections on feelings about the end of this stage of life.

It was depressing because I was so infatuated with the sport, it was like a career - like being a chartered accountant and then saying I'm not going to be a chartered accountant anymore. Such a big change. You're going from something you know very well to something you don't know at all. It was a very difficult decision, but I knew that I had to make it. It was difficult getting out of something you know so well, it comes so easily, you fit into it so well and you're going into something so foreign. You have to start all over again, to gain back respect.
I still feel a little bit of that and perhaps always will - moving from something that I was very good at to something that I'm maybe average at and that's hard to take.

24. Rate your life on a scale of 1-10 for the following 3 time periods: (i) when you were an active athlete; (ii) immediately after you stopped actively competing; (iii) now.

(i) (8) if we had of won a medal would have been a 10 - but disappointed.

(ii) (3) a depressing period.

(iii) (5) in the middle. I'm missing something and I don't know how to fill that gap - comes down to a sort of personal achievement. Yet nothing is drastically terrible, life is pretty good.

25. On a scale of 1-10 rate yourself on a feeling/sense of personal control for the same 3 times periods.

(i) (8) Generally felt I had fairly good control over what was happening to me - although really came down to (the association).

(ii) (6) lost a bit - back to square one. Yet, had to study and get down to exams and I did that.

(iii) (8) haven't lost much control - who knows if you're going to have your job tomorrow, but there is always something you can do.

26. On a scale of 1-10 rate your feelings of self-confidence for the 3 time periods.

(i) (10) had a lot of self-confidence when I was (in my sport).

(ii) (4) lost it - starting something new - not going to be a star - lost the group of people with whom you had gained respect.

(iii) (8) slow coming back but I'm confident doing it - although probably never be as good as it was.

27. Did you feel a sense of loss at the end of your career in sport?

Yes, I did and I still do. Anybody who is good at anything and who can't do it anymore because either they don't have the resources to do it or lost the edge, they'll always look back and say 'geez, I wish I could be back there doing it'.

Did you experience any of the phases associated with loss?

Yes to depression, uncertain about the rest.

CASE-25

17. (a) Why did you stop competing internationally?

I never decided to quit, I just stopped, the season ended. Except for 1976, every year had some political incident (from the administrative side) and the athletes could not have all their energies devoted to the sport. Every year got worse and 1980 was by far the worst, incompetence surrounded the whole thing. I said that 'if this is the way the sport is going to be run, I don't want to have anything to do with it anymore'.

(b) Was it an abrupt ending or a gradual process?

In actual fact, more abrupt than anything.

(d) What was the most important reason for stopping?

Frustration - at the administrative side, the political side.

18. Do you feel that you accomplished what you wanted to?

I've accomplished a lot, but looking at my best performance and how I felt around that and after that, I don't think I've done my best. That's the reason I came back in 1980 (when I embarked on my working career in 1979, I thought it was over).

20. Reflections on feelings about the end of this stage of life.

Absolute disappointment at not being named to the 1980 team.

Depair. Glad that the other people I was (training) with wanted to salvage something out of this. (We) raised money to compete in Europe, to show them that we were the best.

24. Rate your life on a scale of 1-10 for the following 3 time periods: (i) when you were an active athlete; (ii) immediately after you stopped actively competing; (iii) now.

(i) (9.5) everything going well in (sport).

(ii) (4.5) mixed feelings - felt positive about our performance, but disappointment and regret at not having been part of the team (for 1980).

(iii) (6.5) -

25. On a scale of 1-10 rate yourself on a feeling/sense of personal control for the same 3 time periods.

(i) (1) very little control over my life - they tell you everything - when to train, when to eat, etc...

(ii) (9) making decisions for yourself.

(iii) (9.5) now I have absolute control.

26. On a scale of 1-10 rate your feelings of self-confidence for the 3 time periods.

(i) (9.5) very very high level of self-confidence - doing something you are good at and you're among the best in the world.

(ii) (9) still fairly high - knew I was good at something.

(iii) (9) still pretty high - a lot of questions I have to ask myself but still high.

27. Did you feel a sense of loss at the end of your career in sport?

Yes, I felt a sense of loss. There's a little bit of a void there.

Did you experience any of the phases associated with loss?

Yes to denial and depression.

CASE 26

17. (a) Why did you stop competing internationally?

I felt I was cheated and I didn't have a coach. My coach was very disillusioned because of the way he was treated. I felt very insecure after competing because I had nothing to show in terms of job security, so I had to individually say 'well, I go back to school or look for a job'. That was of primary importance at the time rather than just continually (training and competing). Some of my friends kept giving most of their time to (the sport) and still are without jobs. So I don't know if I made the right decision, but it's just the decision I felt was of more primary concern.

(b) Was it an abrupt ending or a gradual process?

Abrupt. Like the bottom fell out. It seemed like there were so many more negatives than positives, as opposed to 1975. The risk was so much higher to continue that there was no incentive to continue.

(d) What was the most important reason for stopping?

Coaching and financing - they are tied one with the other.

18. Do you feel that you accomplished what you wanted to?

No. I feel I should have at least won a medal internationally. I do not feel that I reached my full potential.

20. Reflections on feelings about the end of this stage of life.

I felt cheated. I felt disappointed. All the positive growth that we had. We had become international calibre in one short year with intensive training and coaching and then those two coaches were both let go. These guys did all this positive in such a short time and now we would have to start from square one with no coaching, no money.

I felt that the (sport) media said to the news media that 'yes, I'm an up and coming potential international champion' and yet on the other hand said 'you're getting old, you should retire'. So on one hand I think I had a shot at '80 but on the other hand, they weren't looking at me as a prime candidate.

People from the (sport) group saying 'well I guess you're finished eh' and I said 'no, I think I might try a bit more' but I didn't receive any positive feedback. So I thought if I'm training hard and they're still not going to pick me, why sacrifice, so I decided not to. Those feelings haven't left me.

24. Rate your life on a scale of 1-10 for the following 3 time periods: (i) when you were an active athlete, (ii) immediately after you stopped actively competing; (iii) now.

(i) (10) competing successfully, no worries at the time, being supported.

(ii) (1) almost rock-bottom - potential and yet no where to go, no positive direction,

(iii) (6) in limbo now - no real set of emotions, potential for years to come.

25. On a scale of 1-10 rate yourself on a feeling/sense of personal control for the same 3 time periods.

(i) (9) when competing internationally and in university, every university wanted me. So you felt you had some security - that was a sense of control, a temporary false sense of control.

(ii) (1) because I didn't know if I was coming or going and there didn't seem to be any help or assistance.

(iii) (6) levelled off.

26. On a scale of 1-10 rate your feelings of self-confidence for the 3 time periods.

(i) (10) "winning - everyone knows you're winning."

(ii) (1) "they (the sport association) sort of dump you off, shovel you away."

(iii) (6) -

27. Did you feel a sense of loss at the end of your career in sport?

I lost a family - coach, peers.

Did you experience any of the phases associated with loss?

Yes. Anger is short, mostly depression.

CASE 27

17: (a) Why did you stopped competing internationally?

Had a hernia operation - took a lot out of me. Then trained hard, but no enthusiasm - there was nothing there at all.

(b) Was it an abrupt ending or a gradual process?

Gradual - was trying to continue for several years, but injuries, illness.

(d) What was the most important reason for stopping?

No real enthusiasm anymore.

18. Do you feel that you accomplished what you wanted to?

I always felt I could do better.

20. Reflections on feelings about the end of this stage of life.

Frustrating, because it was 1980 and I didn't want to end on a bad year. But also thinking of taking the next year off and then after that, starting back. But then other commitments came along.

24. Rate your life on a scale of 1-10 for the following 3 time periods: (i) when you were an active athlete; (ii) immediately after you stopped actively competing; (iii) now.

(i) (7) I was enjoying what I was doing.

(ii) (4) my life was kind of upside down.

(iii) (10) have a serious girlfriend, she helps a lot.

25. On a scale of 1-10 rate yourself on a feeling/sense of personal control for the same 3 time periods.

(i) (6) I think I had control over my life but I was letting others control it.

(ii) (5) I didn't know what I was going to do at that time, but I was gaining more control.

(iii) (5) credit cards and loans are trying to control me.

26. On a scale of 1-10 rate your feelings of self-confidence for the 3 time periods.

(i) (9) when I was (competing) I was always confident.

(ii) (6) I wasn't sure I was going to quit" (so not too low - thought of a comeback).

(iii) (7) I'm working and I'm making steps forward in my life. Confident, but not as confident as when I competed.

27. Did you feel a sense of loss at the end of your career in sport?

Yes, missed it at first.

Did you experience any of the phases associated with loss?

Yes, can relate, but didn't feel any anger, just wish it had ended on a better note.

CASE 28

17. (a) Why did you stop competing internationally?

I needed a job. I had to get a career going. It was closing me in. My life was going down a narrower and narrower path. I was starting to feel boxed in psychologically. Starting to really bother me. I just had to get away from it, too much of one thing. Started to realize I was missing out on something.

(b) Was it an abrupt ending or a gradual process?

A gradual process, a decision being made (through a year period).

(d) What was the most important reason for stopping?

Had to get a career started.

18. Do you feel that you accomplished what you wanted to?

Yes. I know now how I would have done things better but we had objectives when we started out in '73 and we accomplished every single one of them., I walked away in '76 completely satisfied.

20. Reflections on feelings about the end of this stage of life.

Got out of (sport) and knew that was it. I was tired, physically and mentally. A sense of anger. I just didn't like the lifestyle anymore. I knew I could be staying in a nice clean place and have clean clothes. I just didn't want it anymore, didn't like the scene anymore.

24. Rate your life on a scale of 1-10 for the following 3 time periods: (i) when you were an active athlete; (ii) immediately after you stopped actively competing; (iii) now.

(i) (10) it was a great life.

(ii) (4) for the brief period of time in between give it a 4. It was a tough time. It was rough going but I'm glad I went through it; in hindsight it's made the 10 now possible. It wasn't a good or bad time, it was a time that had to be gone through.

(iii) (10)

25. On a scale of 1-10 rate yourself on a feeling/sense of personal control for the same 3 time periods.

(i) (10)

(ii) (10)

(iii) (10) feel I have a high level of control throughout my life.

26. On a scale of 1-10 rate your feelings of self-confidence for the 3 time periods.

(i) (10) very high, setting a goal and achieving it.

(ii) (10) knew I would find something. It was just a matter of when.

(iii) (10)

27. Did you feel a sense of loss at the end of your career in sport?

Yes, very much so.

Did you experience any of the phases associated with loss?

Yes to depression but nothing so severe ...

I made myself aware of all this, so I knew it was coming and it was tough but I did it.

III DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

This discussion of the findings has been divided into three sections; the first dealing with the major factors that played an important role in determining the nature of the transition out of a sport career, the second with a discussion of the implications arising from the results of the 3 rating scales, and the third section with a brief discussion of the findings related to a sense of loss.

I The Major Factors

In discussing the major factors that appeared to have influenced the nature of each athletes' transition out of a career in sport it is important to begin by re-emphasizing the vast commitment, both physically and emotionally, on the part of the twenty-eight athletes. All of the athletes interviewed had some period of time during their sport careers when they were only training and competing. For those athletes in school during those years it often meant no summer jobs which in turn meant little or no job experience when the time came to look for employment at the end of their sport careers. This lack of job experience became more serious the longer the athlete stayed involved in her sport career. It also meant time missed from school — a semester, a year off to train for the Olympics -- which for some athletes meant more than the normal 4 years to obtain an undergraduate degree. However, on the positive side, it also meant that most athletes had their education paid for, either by the Canadian government or by means of an athletic scholarship to a U.S. university.

For those athletes who worked during their sport careers it more often than not meant postponement of serious career commitments until the end of their sport careers. Many of the athletes held part-time jobs or worked full-time but only at certain times of the year, usually the off-season for their sport. The few who did have careers established still required weeks or months off from their jobs in order to travel and compete at major competitions and Games. Most echoed the thoughts of the athlete who said "I designed all the other things in my life to fit my (sport) schedule".

With that kind of commitment in mind, it is not surprising that one of the major findings of this study was that the majority of athletes interviewed (22 of the 28 - 78.6%) felt they had had some degree of difficulty in making the transition out of their sport career. This finding supports (and is supported by) the related articles and research cited in the review of literature which also found that many amateur athletes had had some difficulty in adjusting to a new life outside of sport (Reid, 1979; Orlick, 1980; McLaughlin, 1981; Ogilive and Howe, 1982; Svoboda and Vanek, 1982). Given such a finding it seemed necessary to examine the results of this research for the answers to two questions. What factors contributed to a difficult transition for 22 of the 28 athletes? And what factors contributed to a relatively easy transition for the other 6 athletes?

Based on an analysis of all the answers and comments to the interview questions there would appear to have been a number of factors that played an important role in determining the nature of the transition out of sport for a great number of the athletes. No single factor can be said to have guaranteed an easy adjustment or to have condemned an athlete to a difficult transition. Rather the ease or difficulty of this transition phase was very much dependent upon a complex interaction of these factors and each of the 28 athletes reacted in their own individual way. Outlined below are each of these factors and a description of the way in which they helped athletes ease out of their sport careers or caused a more difficult transition.

A New Focus

The results of this study indicated that if an athlete had something concrete and challenging to turn to as his sport career came to an end it helped redirect all the energy that had been channelled into a sport career and in many cases it helped ease the transition to a new life. This concept of "a new focus" is supported by findings in the general retirement literature. Specifically the work of Friedmann and Havighurst (1954) and Shanas (1972) found that in order for a satisfactory adjustment in retirement to take place, it was necessary for the individual to substitute new activities for old ones.

Many of the athletes in this study had lined up school or a job to go to as they came to the end of their sport careers. For example, several athletes moved full-time into undergraduate or graduate school or teachers college. One athlete had had a teaching career well established during his sport career and he was able to move back into it full time after he ended his commitment to his sport. Two other athletes became professional coaches. Many of these athletes commented that they felt having something new and challenging to immediately turn to enabled them to re-focus their energy and helped ease the transition.

There were also athletes who didn't have anything concrete planned for the end of their sport career. For some the end of their sport career came unexpectedly due to sudden injuries or being cut from the team. For others, they simply were not quite sure what they wanted to do or what they were capable of doing. Several of these athletes indicated that they felt"in limbo" for a period of time which for some seemed to be a factor in making the transition more difficult.

However, it is important to emphasize that having an immediate new focus, whether that focus was a new job, school or finding religion, did not exclusively guarantee an easy transition. As mentioned above, and as will become clearer as each of the major factors are discussed, the nature of each athlete's transition often depended very much on the interaction of a number of factors. For example, a number of athletes, despite the fact that they had had a job or school to go to, still had a

difficult period of adjustment because of another factor, such as an injury or family problems or problems with their sport association.

It is interesting to note that for several athletes the "new focus" was still their sport although their involvement was no longer that of an athlete. Two athletes moved directly from their competitive careers into coaching careers and two others began to work in managerial-type positions within their sport -- one athlete in a technical position at the national sport level and the other as head of a thoroughbred farm. For these athletes, continued involvement in their sport certainly seemed to ease the transition out of their competitive career perhaps because not only did they have something to get involved in immediately following the end of their sport careers but it was still within the sport where they had already developed a great deal of knowledge and expertise. There is support for this idea in a study by Mihovilovic (1968) which found that staying involved in the sport in some capacity helped professional soccer players ease the pain of retirement.

In terms of remaining involved in one's sport, 10 athletes, (in addition to the four previously mentioned athletes who were working within their sport) said that they had stayed involved with their sport although it was not their main focus. Some coached on a volunteer basis, others were involved on an administrative basis, still others

said they continued to run or row or swim on a recreational basis. Six of those athletes continued to compete although not at the national or international level.[7] One of these athletes, who was competing at the college level at the time of interview, felt that her transition out of sport had been relatively easy. It is this author's opinion that this ease of adjustment was because she was immediately involved in a university career — a new focus -- and at the same time was able to continue to train and compete in her sport but at a much less intense level. This was, in varying degrees, also true of the other five athletes who continued to compete in league play at a local level. This certainly seemed to be a viable way, for some athletes, to ease out of the intense commitment of a competitive sport career. However, it does raise the question of when these six athletes actually came to terms with the end of their sport careers. One athlete had faced a difficult transition phase when he ended his national career but he then also had had a difficult period of adjustment when he quit playing in the local league. He said, "I think when I decided to quit playing Senior A was probably the worst. I felt like an alcoholic saying 'I'm not going to touch it anymore' ..." So perhaps the athlete who was competing at the college level at the time of interview will still have to face a period of adjustment when she must completely let her sport go. But so much will depend on her other interests and involvements in her life at that time.

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[7]For the purposes of this study retirement from a sport career was defined as "no longer engaging in international competition as a member of a national team".

Certainly it would appear that staying involved in sport, either professionally as the new focus or recreationally as a sidelight to education or work, helped some athletes in easing through the transition to a new life. However, this was not always possible for all athletes. Several athletes said they would have liked to have coached but there were no jobs available. And, of course, there were athletes who didn't want to remain involved in their sport. They were quite happy to cut all the ties with the sports world and get on with a different life.

A Sense of Accomplishment

For seven athletes, the feeling of having accomplished all that they set out to achieve in their sport career was an important factor in helping ease the move out of sport. Most of them felt the time spent in their sport career had been positive and all of them had a sense of having succeeded at what they set out to do. They were ready to end their sport career and get on with new challenges. It was their choice. They made comments such as the following; "I had done all that I set out to do", and "I walked away in 1976 completely satisfied".

However, the majority of athletes interviewed either felt they had not accomplished everything they had wanted to or were rather ambivalent, feeling that they had accomplished some but not all of their goals. Several of these athletes had their careers cut short by injuries, others by being cut from the national team. They, in a sense, were forced to end their career, usually before they were ready and

certainly before they felt they had accomplished all of their goals. So quite often the transition out of the sport career was difficult. Several other athletes spoke of not getting the "expected medal" and others had frustrations within their sport career, such as lack of good coaching or problems with their sport association. It was their decision to end their sport career but they often did so with reluctance, with disappointment, with feelings of not having fully succeeded. The following comments illustrate these feelings:

> "I felt very dissatisfied. There was a big void left when the final buzzer went off and we weren't going to get a medal. I don't think I'll ever be satisfied with not getting that medal."
>
> "No, I do not feel I reached my full potential."
>
> "No, I feel that I really got ripped off in 1980 ... I don't think I'll ever be able to say that I was successful."

Thus, a sense of accomplishment, or lack thereof, was certainly an important factor in determining the ease or difficulty of the transition phase for some athletes. However, whether an athlete was able to achieve this sense of accomplishment was again very much dependent upon other factors.

Coaching

Coaching was a third factor that seemed to play a predominant role in some athlete's lives, in determining the way in which they faced the end of their sport career. A number of athletes spoke of coaching problems. Several mentioned problems such as a lack of good coaches and

conflicts with coaches or with coaching decisions. Two athletes, who had had excellent coaching situations during which time their performances and spirits were high, then saw that relationship end because one coach was dropped as a national coach by the sport association and the other left for a better paying position in another country. Another athlete had a particularly poor relationship with her coach who was very negative and constantly belittled her skills as an athlete. Many of these coaching situations prompted the athletes to leave their sport careers with feelings of bitterness, of dissatisfaction at not having reached their potential and sometimes sooner than they would have liked. All of this often made the actual transition quite difficult.

On the more positive side, several athletes spoke of close personal relationships with their coaches. When such a relationship existed it seemed to enable the athletes to enjoy their actual sport careers and helped them toward achieving their goals which in turn often meant they were able to end their sport careers without too much difficulty.

Clearly then, it would appear that the coaching situation, whether negative or positive, influenced the way in which some athletes viewed their time spent committed to sport and the way in which they were able to cope with the ending of their careers in sport.

Injuries/Health Problems

Injuries and/or health problems played an important role in some athletes lives and were usually a negative factor in determining when and how an individual's sport career was to end. Several athletes faced injuries that were painful, frustrating and in one way or another ended their competitive careers. For example, one athlete experienced a sudden injury that totally disrupted all of his plans; put an unexpected end to his career and resulted in a particularly difficult transition phase. Another athlete, because of her personal circumstances, had to work full time and train at night. She found that after many years of this she was left completely exhausted and in poor health for several years after her sport career had ended. Two other athletes who were in sports where "making weight" was crucial became malnourished. One of these athletes at the time of the interview, which was several years after he had stopping competing, said he could still feel the effects of having abused his body.

So, for some athletes, the injury factor could be linked to the factors of a sense of accomplishment and a new focus. If the athlete was injured and forced to end his sport career prematurely he often had not had the chance to accomplish all his goals and may not have planned for a new life outside of sport. With the added feelings of frustration and unwillingness to let the sport career go, it often led to a difficult transition phase. As one athlete said "I would have continued but I had more knee problems ... I still feel if I could play today I'd go

and try out ..." For the three athletes who overused their bodies and suffered from ill health it meant a difficult and often a long transition phase as they physically adjusted to a more normal lifestyle, although there were certainly other factors involved in why they ended their sport careers.

Politics/Sport Association Problems

Quite a number of athletes spoke of problems with their sport association. In relationship to the previously mentioned coaching factor several athletes felt that their sport association was responsible for their coaching problems — good coaches leaving the sport or being dropped as national coaches. Without their coach they were unable and/or unwilling to continue to train and commit themselves.

There was also considerable concern on the part of several athletes about problems surrounding team selection procedures and carding of athletes.[8] Athletes were cut from teams or from carded status in what was to them extremely unfair circumstances and it resulted in a few very bitter athletes. One example is that of the athlete who was dropped from the national team after placing fourth in the Olympics because he was "too old", at 25 years of age! At the same time his coach was also dropped from the national program. With no money and no coach he felt it was impossible to continue and he ended his career as a very

[8]The Sport Canada carding system classifies amateur athletes into A, B, and C categories as a basis for providing the athletes with financial assistance.

bitter athlete. At the time of being interviewed several years after retiring, he still felt extremely bitter toward his sport association. He said "They sort of dump you off, shovel you away." It is interesting to note that at least one sport association is still seeking out younger athletes at the expense of so-called "older" athletes (Renken, 1983).

This raises the whole issue of the length of time Canada's best amateur athletes train and compete at the top level. On average, the athletes that were interviewed in this study competed internationally for 5.4 years which is a relatively short period of time in which to attempt to achieve one's potential. Often it seemed that they were not encouraged to continue and circumstances such as financial worries or concerns about a future career forced an end to the sport career. Perhaps if the athletes had been helped and encouraged, both monetarily and emotionally, to continue their sport careers in order to be able to leave really feeling that they had given it their best, it would have eased the transition to a new life for many of the athletes, and eliminated the extreme bitterness and anger felt by a few of the athletes.

On a related note, several athletes mentioned the 1980 Olympic boycott and how it had affected the way in which they ended their sport careers. Those athletes who continued on for a few years after 1980 and competed in world championships or major international competitions seemed to have been able to alleviate some of the disappointment and bitterness at having missed their chance at an Olympic medal. For example one athlete said that she "died" when the boycott was announced

but she stayed on to compete for several years and felt that it helped ease her disappointment. However, several athletes who felt they had already sacrificed enough for the 1980 Olympics and felt that it was not worth committing themselves any further, sometimes had a more difficult transition. As one athlete said, he quit in 1980 and was "... very disillusioned". So certainly for some athletes the 1980 boycott had a profound affect on their feelings about their sport careers and on the way in which they faced the ending of that career.

Finances

Approximately half of the athletes interviewed felt that their sport careers had caused them some degree of financial hardship, and three of these athletes indicated that financial problems contributed to a difficult transition out of sport. Two of these athletes felt that they had not received the funding necessary to continue at the level of training that they felt was required. One athlete was dropped by his national sport association as a carded athlete which meant he no longer received financial assistance and the other athlete had asked for enough money to enable her to quit her full time job and simply train and compete and she was refused. The third athlete competed in a very expensive sport and felt it had simply begun to cost too much for herself and for her father. So while there were certainly other factors involved here -- politics, sport association problems, lack of a sense of accomplishment, coaching problems, ill health problems -- the lack of adequate funding played a crucial role in determining the way in which these athletes ended their sport careers.

Support of Family and Friends

Friends and family were often mentioned by athletes as helping ease the transition out of a sport career. For many athletes simply having someone to talk to and lend emotional support was very important. This finding is supported by the work of Della Cava (1975) which indicated that moving out of the priesthood, an activity requiring a very high degree of commitment, was eased by the support of family and friends. There were, however, athletes who had no help or support from family or friends. Two athletes mentioned that they had felt all alone when they ended their sport careers and they wished they had had some support. As well, it is interesting to note that several of the athletes who indicated that they had not been very close to either their family or any friends had experienced quite difficult transition periods. There were other major factors involved such as injuries, coaching problems and/or financial concerns that certainly contributed to a difficult transition for each of these athletes. Nevertheless, it would seem that emotional support from family or friends would have helped them in coping with these other factors, and thus might have helped make the movement to a new career and lifestyle smoother and less painful.

In summary, what has been outlined here were the major factors that seemed to determine, for the majority of athletes, how smooth or how difficut a transition they each faced as they moved out of sport. In most of the cases no single factor necessarily ensured an easy or

difficult transition. Rather, there were normally a number of factors working for or against each athlete as they faced the end of their sport careers although usually one of the above mentioned factors was more predominent than the others.

II Self Ratings for Life, Self-Confidence and Personal Control

The three rating scales for life, for feelings of self-confidence and for a sense of personal control allowed for an overall picture of the athletes' lives during the three important stages — as an athlete, in the transition and at the time of interview.

As we have seen in the results section the ratings for both life and self-confidence followed a similar pattern — high ratings while an athlete, a drop in ratings in the transition phase and high ratings again at the time of interview. The high ratings for self-confidence while an athlete were not surprising because the athletes interviewed for this study had all been at the very top of sport in Canada and in the world. However, the fact that life as an athlete was rated very highly is interesting in that, in the interviews, many of the athletes brought up problems or frustrations within their sport careers. It would appear that these athletes felt that the positive experiences outweighed the frustrations. For example, one athlete said that "I was very content, very happy. There were a lot of problems but I was in my glory." Another said "there were unhappy times but they didn't overshadow the happy times."

It is also important to point out the few athletes who did in fact give a low rating to life as an athlete. Their sport careers were filled with frustrations and/or problems, and yet they continued in their sport. It would appear that they continued because, as has already been mentioned in the results section, they had committed so much of themselves to the career. They kept striving for their goals, hoping to reach them despite the problems, perhaps hoping that the problems, over which they had little control -- coaching problems, sport association problems, injury problems -- would resolve themselves. And perhaps they continued because they loved their sport despite these problems.

The drop in ratings for life and self confidence during the transition period illustrated a major finding of this study -- that the majority of athletes experienced difficulty in adjusting to the end of their sport careers. The end of such a career meant leaving behind something that had required a huge commitment both emotionally and physically. Each of these individuals had been Olympic athletes, each had been one of the best in the world in their sport. They would have to start again in something new, to learn all over again how to be good at something. As one athlete said of the transition "you're going from something you know very well to something you don't know at all". It meant losing a routine, a pattern of doing things. It meant going from two tough, physical workouts a day to a much less active lifestyle. They would have to learn to fill all that free time with new activities. Their bodies would have to adjust to the lessening of activity.

It meant being finished with one set of goals and having to establish new goals for themselves and their new life. It meant losing old friends and having to establish a new circle of friends.

It also meant that each athlete had to begin to see themselves as something other than "an athlete". They had spent years absorbed in the world of sport and with the end of that career they had to begin to develop a new identity. Support for this latter concept came from the identity crisis theory of Miller (1965). This theory maintained that individuals derive their identity primarily from a job and that as they are forced from this work role there may be an "identity breakdown". While the vast majority of athletes who were interviewed for this study had been involved in other activities, such as school or work, during their competitive careers, these activities were certainly secondary to their careers in sport. Most were athlete first and student etc., second. As one athlete said "so much of my identity was wrapped in being an athlete ..."

Finally, the fact that the ratings for life and for self-confidence at the time of interview had returned to levels close to or above those for the time as an athlete indicated that most of the athletes felt happy and confident in their new lives. It would appear that part of this feeling that life was good again was related to a realization that although the athletic time period had been special there were other areas of life that could also be exciting and rewarding. Renewed confidence was also related to the gaining of a sense of

competency in a new setting. As one athlete said, "part of it for me was gaining recognition in something other than sport, feeling competent. However, it should be pointed out that one athlete took as long as three years to make this adjustment. As well, a few other athletes, given that the number of years retired prior to being interviewed ranged from less than one year to six years, did not feel that their lives and/or careers were quite as settled as they would someday like them to be. For example, one athlete felt he was "....in the middle. I'm missing something and I don't know how to fill that gap — comes down to a sort of personal achievement".

The ratings for a sense of personal control did not follow the same pattern as the ratings for life and self-confidence. Very few athletes indicated a strong sense of personal control during their sport career. Most felt they had had little personal control during their competitive years or said that at the time of competing they felt they had had control but later realized that it was a false sense, that really the coach or the association had been in control of their lives. For example, one athlete said, "I had very little self control when on the national team. I was following guidelines ... I never looked beyond the day". Another said, "they tell you everything, when to train, when to eat...." Interestingly, this lack of personal control did not appear to affect the overall ratings for life or self-confidence which were both high during this time period.

In the transition phase most athletes indicated that their sense of personal control grew as they began to make the decisions concerning their lives. There were however, a number of athletes who indicated that they had had no idea of what they should have been doing and as a result they rated their sense of personal control lower than as an athlete.

At the time of being interviewed the majority of athletes rated their sense of control as quite high. Most felt they were in control of their lives although several mentioned that they realized that not many people have total control. As one athlete said, "unless in business for yourself you don't have total control".

The finding that so many of the athletes felt they had had so little control over their competitive lives was very interesting although perhaps not that surprising. After all, as may be seen from the above quotes, for many athletes on national teams, everything was decided for them, from how, when and where to train to arrangements of plane fares and accommodation. The coaches or sport associations, in many cases, made all the decisions. As one athlete said at the end of his sport career, "I was very weak in terms of responsibility ... Responsibility scared me a little bit". Perhaps the world of amateur sport inadvertently builds against a sense of personal control and responsibility by doing everything for the athlete. Clearly for some individuals that would appear to be the case.

However, this lack of personal control as an athlete did not appear to have directly affected the nature of the transition out of sport. The results from this study indicated that it was one or more of the factors mentioned earlier in this discussion that primarily helped or hindered an athlete's transition. For example, two athletes who had experienced very difficult transitions, primarily because of injuries and illness, indicated that they had felt a strong sense of personal control. Nevertheless, perhaps if athletes were allowed to be part of the decision-making process and allowed to be more independent as athletes they would develop more skills necessary to cope in the world outside of sport. This might help ease the adjustment. However, it is difficult to generalize on this point without further research into this concept of personal control.

In considering these three ratings it is important to remember that this was a selected group of athletes who had reached a high level of performance in the world of international amateur sport. It would not be wise to generalize these findings to other athletes who had not reached the same level.

III A Sense of Loss

The majority of athletes, in answer to a directed question, said that they had experienced a sense of loss when they came to the end of their sport careers. Support for this finding came from activity theory, a major theory within the aging literature, which maintained that the giving up of work would involve a sense of loss on the part of the individual. This finding also lends support to the idea of sport as a relationship as proposed by Werthner and Orlick (1982). As well, 17 of those 22 athletes who said they had experienced a sense of loss, said they experienced all or some of the four phases associated with loss, supporting the work of Ogilvie and Howe (1982).

In looking first at the six athletes who said they in fact had not felt a sense of loss at the end of their sport careers, all but one of them had a new interest or career to turn to immediately and were ready and eager to get on with a new life. It is difficult to pinpoint any other common factor. A few of these athletes felt they had accomplished all of their goals, others did not. A few had the support of family and friends, others did not. A few had had an injury or problems within their sport careers which had precipitated the end. But what seemed to be key was the readiness, the willingness to leave behind the sport career. As one of the athletes said, "It wasn't a loss, I felt I'd done my thing".

In considering the remaining twenty-two athletes who said they had felt a sense of loss as they ended their sport career, the degree to which each of them felt this loss varied greatly. There were a number of athletes who said they had felt some sense of loss but not to any great extent. In most cases these athletes had been on their way to establishing a new career. For several athletes this new career was still in the sport field so this certainly lessened their feelings of loss. But again it seemed that, although most felt they hadn't accomplished all their goals, they were ready to get on with a new life. As one of these athletes said, "I miss it, but I'm ready to get on with life".

There were other athletes who indicated that they had felt a deep sense of loss when they ended their life in sport. It would seem that for these athletes this sense of loss was almost always associated with a feeling of something left undone. Most did not feel that they had accomplished all that they had hoped for. Something, whether it was injuries, illness, personal problems, problems with the sport association, caused them to end their competitive career before they felt ready to do so, and as a result, most of these athletes faced a difficult period of transition. For a few the feeling of loss continued to exist at the time of interview, although they may have been retired for several years.

Finally, there were a couple of athletes who said they had felt some sense of loss and yet had had quite happy and successful sport careers and relatively easy transitions to a new career and new life. This feeling seemed to exist because they had loved the sport so much and a part of them was very reluctant to let it go.

In conclusion, most but not all of the athletes interviewed remembered their life as an elite athlete as having been enjoyable and rewarding, even though there had been difficult times. It was a period that many would remember with fondness, some with a sense of loss and a few with feelings of frustration and anger. There was almost always a period of adjustment as each of the athletes left behind their sport careers and moved on to a new life. The majority of athletes faced some degree of difficulty in making that transition from international athlete to ordinary citizen. The factors that appeared to significantly affect the difficulty or ease of this transition phase have been summarized but it was clear that each athlete dealt with the inevitable change in lifestyle in a very individual manner. Some had a particularly long and difficult time, others moved swiftly, with little noticeable stress, to new careers. Most, at the time of being interviewed, appeared to have made or were in the process of making a successful adjustment to life outside of international competitive sport.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I SUMMARY

International amateur sport has changed a great deal in the last nine to ten years. The demands of being a competitive amateur athlete have increased enormously. Now, in order to be a world class athlete, in most sports, it is often impossible to "be" much else. The federal government's financial support has enabled athletes to concentrate totally on training and competition, which has a positive effect on performance, but often this has occurred to the exclusion of everything else in their lives. Given such intense demands and commitment, much speculation but little actual research has surrounded the nature of an athlete's transition out of her sport career. The central purpose of this study was to explore and describe the experiences of Canada's best amateur athletes as they faced the ending of their sport careers and the subsequent move to a new and different stage in life.

The subjects in this study were 28 of Canada's very best amateur athletes who had retired from high level sport competition. They were drawn from the Canadian medalists in the 1976 Winter and Summer Olympic Games, the 1980 Winter Olympic Games and from those who finished in the

top six in individual sports and the top half of the field in team sports in the 1976 Winter and Summer Olympic Games and the 1980 Winter Olympic Games.

An open-ended, in-depth interview schedule was developed after an extensive review of the related literature. This Elite Athlete Retirement Interview Schedule was designed to elicit qualitative information about each athlete's life from their own perspective. The interviews were conducted with each of the 28 athletes in their homes or workplaces.

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the resulting data. Responses were categorized and the mean, range, and percentage of responses were presented. Complete responses to seven questions were recorded in full for each athlete in the form of case studies. These case studies allowed for an in-depth look at each athlete's thoughts and feelings as they faced the ending of their sport careers.

II CONCLUSIONS

Within the limitations of this study, the following conclusions seem warranted:

1. The majority of athletes indicated that they had had difficulty in making the transition out of their sport careers although the degree of difficulty varied with each athlete.

2. All of the athletes interviewed had some period of time in their sport careers when they devoted themselves exclusively to their training and competing. This ranged from periods of 4-5 months off from work or school to the one athlete who was solely involved in her sport career for eight years. Such a commitment usually meant delaying or prolonging an education and/or a career.

3. Seven major factors appeared to have strongly influenced the nature of each athlete's transition out of a career in sport.

   i) A New Focus - whether or not an athlete had something concrete and challenging to turn to as his sport career came to an end;

   ii) A Sense of Accomplishment - whether or not an athlete felt she had accomplished her goals;

   iii) Coaching - whether or not an athlete felt he had had a good coaching relationship or had faced a difficult coaching environment;

   iv) Injuries/Health Problems - whether or not an athlete faced serious injuries or health problems as a result of his sport career;

   v) Politics/Sport Association Problems - whether or not an athlete had experienced problems with her sport association or with the federal government;

vi) Finances - whether or not an athlete faced financial difficulties during his sport career;

vii) Support of Family and Friends - whether or not an athlete had the emotional support of family and/or friends.

No single factor was found to have exclusively influenced the nature of an athlete's transition out of a sport career. Rather, the ease or difficulty of this transition phase was very much dependent upon a complex interaction of these factors and each of the 28 athletes reacted to them in their own individual way.

4. The vast majority of athletes indicated that they felt very positive about the time they had committed to their sport careers although many of these athletes experienced problems and frustrations within those careers.

5. The majority of athletes indicated that they felt they had had little personal control over their lives during their sport careers. However, most of the athletes felt their sense of personal control increased steadily as they moved out of sport and on to a new life.

6. The majority of athletes indicated that they had experienced a sense of loss when they ended their sport careers although the extent of the feeling of loss varied with each athlete. Some felt a sense of loss but were ready and eager to get on with a new life, while others felt a deep sense of loss that, for some, continued to exist at the time of being interviewed.

7. The vast majority of athletes, at the time of being interviewed, appeared to have either established a new career and life or be on their way to doing so. Having overcome the adjustment problems described in this study most appeared happy and content in their new lives.

III RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has explored and described the experiences of some of Canada's best amateur athletes as they faced the ending of their sport careers and the subsequent move to a new life. In the process a number of suggestions for improving the sport system in Canada became evident. These recommendations are outlined below with the responsible group or agency in brackets after each recommendation.

1. At the end of their sport careers athletes need to be assisted in the following ways:

i) the federal government program for retired athletes should be continued and expanded so that all athletes are ensured of financial support in order to finish their educations and/or start a career (SPORT CANADA -- ATHLETE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM);

ii) there should be counselling services available for any athletes who feel they need them (SPORT CANADA -- ATHLETE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM);

iii) a job placement service should be set up both for athletes who are still competing (for job experience in the off-season) and at the end of the sport career (SPORT CANADA/CANADIAN OLYMPIC ASSOCIATION -- ATHLETES ADVISORY COUNCIL).

2. Exit interviews should be conducted with all elite retiring athletes to find out what they perceived as hinderances to their careers and/or what they felt helped them succeed (SPORT CANADA/NATIONAL SPORT GOVERNING BODIES).

3. Athletes should be represented on Boards of Directors of their respective Sport Governing Bodies (NATIONAL SPORT GOVERNING BODIES).

4. Selection procedures both within the sport (selection of a team) and outside the sport (selection to a major event such as the Olympics) must be as objective as possible and most importantly, be communicated properly and well in advance to the athletes (NATIONAL SPORT GOVERNING BODIES).

5. Coaches need to understand that athletes may face some degree of difficulty in the transition out of their sport career. Coaches should learn to help athletes develop an awareness of this possibility, help them plan for the future and help them keep a balance in their lives. Coaches need to be taught not only technical skills but psychological and human communication skills (COACHING ASSOCIATION OF CANADA/COACHES).

6. The financial needs of current athletes and coaches must be assessed on an individual basis to ensure that all athletes and coaches are able to devote the time necessary to reach their goals (SPORT CANADA-ATHLETE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM/ COACHING ASSOCIATION OF CANADA).

7. There should be more full-time paid coaches to meet the needs of the high performance athletes (SPORT CANADA/ COACHING ASSOCIATION OF CANADA).

8. The athletes interviewed for this study made the following recommendations to help future athletes in the enjoyment of their sport careers and in coping with the end of their sport careers:

i) athletes need to plan for the end of their sport careers and to be aware of the potential problems;

ii) athletes need to have goals in and outside of sport;

iii) athletes should try to keep a balance in their lives, and try to keep up some interests outside of sport;

iv) talking to former athletes, coaches, and friends would help in coping with the end of a sport career;

v) athletes need to taper off physically at the end of their careers;

vi) athletes should enjoy sport and remember that it is important but not everything;

vii) athletes should apply their focus skills from sport to other areas of interest. As one one athlete said, in answer to how she succeeded in settling into a new life, "I applied myself with the same degree of energy as when I was in sport — worked hard at university and my job."

The following recommendations are suggested in order to strengthen the methodology of future self-report research.

Where possible:

1. Obtain multiple perspectives i.e. interview the subject, then interview others close to the subject such as parents, coach, wife, husband, fellow team member.

2. Authenticate the information i.e. interview the subject, then clarify the responses a second time at a later date to check for accuracy.

3. Utilize more than one researcher to assess the data i.e. more than one person listens to the tapes of the interviews and draws inferences.

Finally, it should be re-emphasized that this research was limited to 28 of Canada's very best amateur athletes. All had finished in the top six of the Olympic Games. Future research is needed in order to discover whether or not other athletes experienced the same feelings and problems in sport, and as they ended their sport careers. Two future groups of athletes to be studied would be those who were on national teams but did not place in the top six in the Olympics, and those who committed themselves to their sport careers but did not make the national team. So much can be learned from talking and listening to athletes that would help future generations of athletes and help in improving the sport system in Canada.

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APPENDIX A

ELITE ATHLETE RETIREMENT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

ELITE ATHLETE RETIREMENT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Name _____

2. Address _____

3. Age _____

4. Sport _____

5. When (in what year) did you begin entering competitions in your sport?

_____

6. In what year did you make your first Canadian team? _____

7. How many years were you a member of the Canadian team? _____

8. In what year did you stop actively competing as a member of the Canadian team? _____

9. a) What do you feel was your best competitive year? _____

b) Could you describe your training commitment for the year prior to that achievement? _____

_____

_____

_____

c) For how many years did you train with this kind of time commitment? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

10. During the year(s) that you were on the national team and competing internationally were you involved in:

a) school/occupational training courses etc.?

yes ____ if yes, what kind of time (and/or personal) commitment did it involve?

no ____

b) work?

yes ____ if yes, what kind of time commitment? _____

_____

no ____

c) recreational activities?

yes ____ if yes, what kind of time commitment, and what kind of activities?

no ____ _____

_____

d) Other?

_____

_____

_____

_____

11. What have you been doing since the end of your sport career?

a) educational? _____

_____

b) work-related? _____

_____

c) Other? _____

_____

_____

12. Did your year(s) as an elite athlete cause financial hardship?

yes ____

no ____ if no, did you profit financially? _____

_____

_____

13. During the year(s) that you were on the national team and competing internationally, were your friends fellow athletes or non-athletes?

a) only sport-related friends _____

mostly sport-related friends/
some non-sport-related friends _____

some sport-related friends/
some non-sport-related friends _____

mostly non-sport friends/
some sport-related friends _____

only non-sport related friends _____

b) What happened with these friends after you stopped actively competing? _____

_____

_____

14. Were you very close to your family or any one member of your family during this period of international level sport?

yes ____ if yes, who? _____

could you describe this relationship? _____

_____

_____

no ____

15. Were you very close to anyone, outside of family relationships, during this period in your life?

yes ____, if yes, who? _____

could you describe this relationship? _____

_____

no ____, _____

16. Do you have a close personal relationship in your life now?

yes ____

no ____

17. a) Why did you stop actively competing internationally? _____

b) Was it an abrupt ending, or was it a gradual process? _____

c) What do you think was the most important reason for stopping?

18. Do you feel that you accomplished what you wanted to (in your sport career)?

19. During your elite competitive years, did you ever think about the time when you would stop actively competing?

yes ____ if yes, do you feel that you consciously did anything to prepare yourself for this time when you would no longer be "an athlete"? yes ____ if yes, what did you do?

no ____ if no, why do you think that you did nothing to prepare for it?

no ____ if no, (a) why do you think you never thought about it?

(b) did you try to avoid thinking about it?

20. I would like you to take a moment and reflect back to your feelings about the end of this stage of your life (as an athlete)? Can you try to describe what you were feeling and thinking?

_____

_____

21. Was there anyone or anything (eg. new career, faith, music, meditation) that helped you during this time period after you stopped actively competing?

yes ____ if yes, who? what? and how did they help? _____

_____

_____

no ____ if no, was there anyone/anything you wished could have helped you, and in what way?

_____

_____

22. a) When you ended your high level sport involvement, did you continue with any kind of physical training/activity?

yes ____ if yes, please explain (time commitment?, specific activities?, pattern of participation?)

_____

_____

no ____ if no, why not ... what were your feelings at the time?

_____

_____

b) are you physically active now?

yes ____ if yes, in your own sport? _____ other sports/physical pursuits? _____

_____

how often per week? _____

(distance/time/effort) _____

no ____

23. a) How do you feel now, about the time you committed to sport?

_____

_____

b) What do you feel you have gained from being involved in sport at the international level?

_____

_____

_____

_____

c) What do you feel you have lost?

_____

_____

_____

_____

24. Try to rate your life on a scale of 1-10 (one being the pits and 10 being perfect):

a) when you were an active athlete _____

b) immediately after you stopped actively competing _____

c) now _____

Can you explain the ratings? _____

_____

25. On a scale of 1-10 (1 being not at all in control, and 10 being totally in control), could you rate yourself on a feeling/sense of personal control (control over your life, what you are doing) for the following 3 periods in your life:

a) when you were an active athlete _____

b) immediately after you stopped competing _____

c) now _____

Can you explain the ratings? _____

_____

26. a) Could you rate your feelings of self-confidence on a scale of 1-10 (1 feeling very unconfident and 10 feeling very self-confident) for the following time periods in your life?

i) when you were an active athlete _____

ii) immediately after you stopped competing _____

iii) now _____

27. Some athletes have expressed a feeling of loss upon retiring from sport. Do you feel that you experienced a sense of loss?

yes ____ if yes, there are four phases that are often experienced when one faces other kinds of loss: shock/denial, anger/depression, understanding/acceptance, personal growth. I wonder if you could tell if you experienced any of these phases?

yes _____

no _____

uncertain _____

partially/some of the phases _____

no ____

28. Do you feel that the emotions/feelings that you have expressed in this interview regarding the end of your sport career, are unique or do you feel other elite athletes experience similar emotions?

unique _____

not unique _____

29. Do you have any suggestions that might help other elite athletes, with the transition out of elite sport?

_____

_____

_____

30. Do you have any suggestions that might help other elite athletes improve performance and satisfaction while still competing?

_____

_____

_____

31. Do you have anything you would like to say to the Canadian sport system?

_____

_____

_____

32. Do you think that I have influenced your answers in any way?

yes ____

no ____

APPENDIX B

OCCUPATIONAL STATUS OF THE 28 ATHLETES, AT THE TIME OF INTERVIEW

OCCUPATIONAL STATUS OF THE 28 ATHLETES, AT THE TIME OF INTERVIEW

5 unemployed - 4 in university full-time; 3 in undergraduate, 1 in graduate school

- 1, qualified to teach but unable to find a job, coaching as a volunteer.

1 doctor

2 professional coaches, each in the sport in which they competed

4 teachers; 3 in high school, 1 at a primary level

1 technical assistant in a national sport governing body

1 marketing and sales representative for C.P. rail, now involved in administrative end of her sport as a volunteer

1 worker in a photo lab

1 manager of a thoroughbred farm

1 nurse

1 computer specialist

2 managers of retail stores - 1 is a part-owner of the store

1 sales clerk, coaching as a volunteer

2 salesmen - 1 for Zerox, 1 in lumber industry in B.C.

1 coordinator of sport and recreation program in a school for the blind

1 chartered accountant

1 investment trader

1 shipping clerk

1 advertising agent