Successful and less successful athletic retirement in Swedish female elite athletes: Contributing factors

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Abstract

This study deals with athletic retirement experiences of Swedish female elite athletes. The objectives are to examine and compare reasons for retirement, factors contributing to experience of the retirement process, factors contributing to current life satisfaction and life quality between two groups of retirees having less successful and successful transition. This study is based on 10 retrospective semi structured interviews about the experiences of the retirement process. Questions were asked about retirees’ athletic background, retirement process, experience of the retirement process, coping strategies, current life satisfaction and life quality. Results of this study reveal differences between the two groups regarding reasons for the retirement (i.e., less successful retirees more often retired involuntarily than successful ones) and factors contributing to the experience of retirement process (i.e., less successful retirees experiences more barriers than resources during retirement, and successful retirees experiences more resources than barriers during retirement). Results reveal differences in factors contributing to life quality (i.e., Less successful retirees value friends, family and studies equally, successful retirees value friends and family highest, followed by lifestyle/training and studies/work). Results also reveal inter-group similarities in terms of factors related to their life satisfaction (e.g., less successful and successful retirees have more contributing than reducing factors).

Key terms: Athletic career, career transition, athletic retirement, culture, gender, sport.

**Abstrakt**

Denna studie behandlar ämnet om idrottsligt karriäravslut hos svenska kvinnliga elitidrottare. Syftet är att undersöka och jämföra orsaker till avslut, faktorer som påverkar upplevelsen av avslut, samt nuvarande livssituation mellan två grupper, mindre framgångsrik och framgångsrik avslutningsprocess. Studien är baserad på 10 återblickande semi strukturerade intervjuer om idrottarnas upplevelser av avslutningsprocessen. Frågor ställdes gällande idrottarens generella bakgrund, idrottsliga bakgrund, avslutningsprocess, hantering av processen samt angående nuvarande livssituation och livskvalitet. Resultatet av studien visar på skillnader i orsak till avslut (dvs., majoriteten av idrottarna med en mindre framgångsrik avslutningsprocess slutade ofrivilligt till skillnad från idrottarna med en framgångsrik avslutningsprocess som till största del slutade frivilligt) samt i faktorer som påverkar upplevelsen av avslutningsprocessen (dvs., idrottarna med mindre framgångsrik avslutningsprocess upplevde fler hinder än resurser till skillnad från idrottarna med framgångsrik avslutningsprocess, som upplevde fler resurser än hinder). Resultatet visar skillnader i faktorer som bidrar till livskvalitet (dvs., idrottare med mindre framgångsrik avslutningsprocess värderade vänner, familj samt studier lika högt, till skillnad från idrottare med framgångsrik avslutningsprocess som värderade vänner och familj högst, följt av livsstil/träning samt studier/arbete). Vidare visar resultatet att det inte finns någon större skillnad i faktorer som bidrar till nuvarande livsstilfredsställelse (dvs., idrottarna med mindre framgångsrik och framgångsrik avslutningsprocess upplevde båda fler bidragande än reducerande faktorer).

**Nyckelord:** Idrottslig karriär, karriärövergång, idrottsligt karriäravslut, kultur, kön, sport.
Introduction

Career transitions are something that all individuals at some point in life encounter, not least in the athletic world. In sports, different types of career transitions exist and it is important to learn how to cope with it. There are four types of athletic transitions that can occur during an athletic career (Wylleman & Lavallee, 2004). Those are initiation into organized sports, development to higher level of sport, mastery-level of sport, and termination of an athletic career. In sport there are a lot of transitions that are potentially hard to go through, but most of the athletes experience the last transition, the athletic retirement, as the most critical transition. When an athlete decides to terminate athletic career that transition can cause negative feelings and consequences, a crisis transition, or it can be a pleasant experience linked with positive feelings and thoughts, a successful transition (Stambulova, 2003). The adaption to athletic career termination process and new life situation, into crisis or successful transition process, is impacted by a number of factors. These factors include causes of transition and what resources the athlete possess, internal as well as external (Taylor & Ogilvie, 2001, ref in Alfermann & Stambulova, 2007). In this paper the main focus is to present current research and create a better understanding of career transitions in general but specifically of the last athletic transition, related to how athletes’ retirement experiences are influenced by Swedish culture as well as by gender.

Significance of the topic
It is of great significance to keep doing research in the field of athletic transitions in sport. Wylleman, Alfermann and Lavallee (2004) suggest future scientific directions about how gender and cultural specifics influence the athletes retirement. They claim that it is of great interest in order to learn how to apply interventions and programs that can be adapted on a broader range of athletes. There is a lack of research made on female athletes, this may be because the values of sport which are often associated with male attribute (Frei & Eitzen, 1991).

Therefore the aim of this study is to examine whether there are factors contributing to less successful and successful athletic retirement in former Swedish female elite athletes. With the results of this study it could be possible to highlight contributing/reducing factors related to retirement. This study contributes to researchers being able to produce new effective strategies and tools to help athletes cope with the athletic retirement process.

Key terms

Athletic career. An athletic career is “a succession of stages and transitions that includes the athlete’s initiation into and continued participation in organized sport and that is terminated by the athlete’s voluntary or involuntary discontinuation of participation in organized competitive sport (Bloom, 1985; Wylleman, Theebom & Lavallee, 2004, ref in Alfermann et al., 2007, p. 713).

Career transition. A career transition is “an event or nonevent (which) results in a change in assumptions about oneself and the world and thus requires a corresponding change in one’s behavior and relationships” (Schlossberg, 1981, p. 5).

Athletic retirement. Athletic retirement is defined as “the clearest example of a normative and even inevitable transition” (Alfermann, & Stambulova, 2007, p. 714).

Less successful transition. A less successful transition “is conceptualized as a transition the
athlete had to make but was not able to cope with independently, and for which the athlete perceived a need for psychological assistance” (Stambulova, 2012).

**Successful transition.** A successful transition “is a case of a good fit between demands and the athlete’s coping resources” (Stambulova, 2012).

**Culture.** Stead (2004) defines culture as “a social system of shared symbols, meanings, perspectives, and social actions that are mutually negotiated by people in their relationships with others” (p. 3). Based on this definition, sport culture can be defined as a social system of symbols, meanings, perspectives, and social actions that are created, negotiated, and shared by sporting people and organizations (in general, within particular country, and within particular sport).

**Gender.** Gender is defined as “culturally determined cognitions, attitudes and belief systems about males and females” (Leneck, 1994, p. 130).

**Sport.** Coakley (2004, ref. in Volkwein-Caplan, 2004) defines sport as “institutionalized competitive activities that involve rigorous physical exertion or the use of relatively complex physical skills by participants motivated by internal and external rewards” (p. 12).

**Elite athlete.** In this study the term “elite athlete” refers to athletes competing on a national or an international level.

**Theoretical frameworks**

The developmental model of transitions faced by athletes (Wylleman & Lavallee, 2004). When considering a developmental perspective on athletic transitions there are four layers that are crucial, see *Figure 1*.

**Layer one.** The first layer consists of an age range considering when athletic transition can occur. The first transition occurs when the athlete start to get involved in organized sports, this usually happens at the age of 6 to 7 years old. The second transitions occurs when the athlete start to intensify training and start to compete at a higher level than before, this often happen at the age of 12 to 13 years old. The third transition occurs when the athlete enters training and competition at an elite level, which mostly happen when the athlete is about eighteen to nineteen years old. The last transition in this layer occurs when the athlete decides to stop participating in competitive sports, this often occurs when the athlete is 28 to 30 years old.

**Layer two.** The second layer of the model consists of the psychological level of transitioning. In this layer there are multiple age ranges that usually mean different psychological level for the athlete. First there is the childhood-phase, from 0 to 12 years old, the adolescence, from 13 to 18 years old, adulthood, from 19 to onward (Rice, 1998, ref in Wylleman, et al., 2004).

**Layer three.** The third layer consists of the athletes social development stages involving marriage, kids and so on.

**Layer four.** The fourth and final layer of this model consists of the academic and vocational level. Involving academic education stages like primary education, secondary education and college/university. Last at this level the vocational training are mentioned as a last education and work related step. It should be noted that all of these transitions and steps on each level of the four layers do not always occur at all, or they simply occur later or earlier.
than expected out of this model. This model helps clarifying the view of different transitions in an athlete’s life and how those are related to athletic transitions. This model can be used as an instrument in order to get a better understanding of interactions between different developmental layers of an athlete’s life and reality.

![Developmental model of transitions faced by athletes](image)

**Figure 1.** The developmental model of transitions faced by athletes (Wylleman et al., 2004).

The athletic career transition model (Stambulova, 2003). This model, see Figure 2, describes the transition and highlights the path from actual transition demands to the case of either successful or a crisis transition. According to this model the crucial factors for a successful transition is how the athlete experiences that he or she has enough resources to deal with the demands of the transition, and also how the athlete copes with the situation. The resources can be both internal strengths such as high motivation, skills, personality and so on. External resources can be social and financial support. There are three interventions inserted in the athletic career transition model, the most important one is the crisis prevention intervention. This intervention can help prepare the athlete for coming transition and the potential barriers often linked with it. In the case of a successful transition the athlete has been able to use his/ her internal and external resources in an effective way that enables him or her to cope with the challenges and barriers during the transition. The crisis transition occurs when the athlete fails to use his or her internal and external resources effectively or has a lack of those resources, which will cause him or her to experience a crisis associated with transitioning. When a failure in coping with the barriers and demands of transition is a fact it is still possible to get the athlete back on the right track by introducing psychological crisis intervention to help the athlete balance up demands with adding resources. This might result in a delayed effective coping that affect the transition in a positive way, from crisis to successful. In those cases of ineffective psychological intervention a crisis transition can be a fact. The consequences of a crisis transition can lead to injury occurrence, disappointing results and sometimes even drug abuse. These consequences are described as “cost” in the model below, and they can be dealt with by introducing a so called “dealing with consequences- intervention”. Sometimes clinical psychological help is needed at this stage.
Conceptual model of adaptation to retirement among athletes (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994). This model, see figure 3, points out three factors which all can have an effect on how athletes adapt and react to athletic retirement, and how those affect the final outcome of the transition, success vs. crisis. The first factor is what caused the athlete to terminate athletic career, the reason. The second factor is factors that might affect adaptation to new life. The third factor is due to what resources the athlete has in order to adapt to retirement from athletic career. These factors affect quality of adaption to retirement, good or bad. The quality of adaption to retirement affects the outcome of the transition, healthy transition or crisis transition. This model helps to clarify where an athlete might have troubles, causing a bad adaption. With that knowledge athletes can get the help that they need, by adding certain resources to balance by implementing suitable interventions that are also a part of this model.
Figure 3. Conceptual model of adaptation to retirement among athletes (Taylor et al., 1994).

Gender theories.

Socialization theory. According to socialization theory (Larsen & Bass, 2010) children are treated differently depending on their gender. In extent that differential treatment causes girls and boys to possess different gender specific behaviors and characteristics.

Social gender theory. According to social gender theory (Eagle, 1987; Eagle & Wood, 1999, ref. in Eagly, Wood & Diekman, 2000) stereotypical gender behaviors are emerged from children learning by observation of gender role performances of men and women, which will reflect the gender hierarchy as well as the sexual labor division in society. Expectancies that are linked with gender typical behavior foster young men and women into behaving in certain ways that are compatible with the role of their gender. Those social roles of women often emerge from the most gender typical activities and occupations in family. Typical expectancies of the female gender role are nurturing activities in family as well as in work, for example as a nurse, teacher or social worker. Women are also expected to possess characteristics that are compatible with their social role. Behaviors that are often thought of as proving successful female role and female characteristics are for example predominantly communal behaviors, subordinated behaviors and domestic behaviors, which is an explanation of why women generally posses those roles in society.

Relevant research findings

Athletic career. An athletic career can be on different levels, for example on a local level, on a national level and on an international level. An athlete can have a sport career even if he or she is not on a professional level. Sport careers can be on both amateur levels and on professional levels. Important to know is that it is just competitive sports that can be seen as a career (Alfermann & Stambulova, 2007).

An athletic transition. An event transition which leads to a change in an athlete’s sport related and social attitude is for example to be picked to the national team. However, not be picked to the national team, if it is the athlete’s goal, is an example for a nonevent transition (Grove, Fish, & Eklund, 2004).
A primary characteristic of career transitions are their degree of predictability. Predictable career transitions are often organized and structured and related to changes in athletes´ achievements (Petitpas, Champagne, Chartrand, Danish, & Murphy, 1997, ref in Wylleman, Lavallee & Alfermann, 1999). It is important that a career transition is a process and not a single event or nonevent (Wylleman et al., 1999). Researchers have identified different forms of career transitions in sport, for example transition into sport specialization, transition into intensive training, transition into elite sports and transition out of elite sports (Wylleman et al., 1999). Career transitions can be normative or nonnormative. Normative career transitions are for example the beginning of the specific sport and the transition from different levels; local, national and international level, and from youth to junior, and finally to senior level. Normative career transitions even include the last transition in an athletic career, the retirement. Normative career transitions are relatively predictable. Nonnormative athletic career transitions are situation-related and less predictable, and include for example injuries, changing of coaches and teammates (Alfermann & Stambulova, 2007).

**Athletic retirement.** When an athlete is retiring he or she can experience changes in identity, social network and in work. If the athlete has planned to end the sport career it is a normative and predictable transition, and because of that the athlete have the opportunity to prepare itself for a life without sport. The experience of athletic career retirement is unique for every athlete, but patterns exist in some groups, for example in some cultures, sports and gender (Alfermann & Stambulova, 2007). Researchers from North America, Western Europe and Australia have found that athletic career retirements are caused by multiple sources and are often a process over time (Stambulova, Alfermann, Statler & Côté, 2009). Athletic career retirement tend to occur when the athlete has had time to develop a high athletic identity. If that is the case, that can cause difficulties in emotions, social and professionals during retirement process (Alfermann, Stambulova & Žemaityte, 2004; Cecic-Erpic, Wylleman, & Zupancic, 2004). Research findings show that athletes´ subjective feelings about the termination are essential for the adaptation. Athletes have better adaptability if terminating is the athlete's own decision. It is also easier for athletes with resources, such as education, social network and clear goals, to make the transition in a positive way and to build a new life after terminating (Stambulova et al., 2009). The key term for a successful athletic retirement is the resource of social support (Murphy, Abbot, Hillard, Petitpas, Danish & Holloway, 1989). If the athlete is still identifying himself/herself with the sport at a high level and exclusively after retiring the retirement process can take longer. Theretof it is easier for athletes that do not identify themselves to the sport as much after terminating to adapt a new life without the sport (Lavallee, Gordon, & Grove, 1997). It has been shown that some of the elite athletes who have retired from athletic career are in need of psychological support (Alfermann, 2000). Because of the possibility of traumatic experiences of retirement some treatments are used, such as stress management and emotional expression practice (Ogilvie & Taylor, 1993). Because of that knowledge career support programs have been established internationally in Canada, USA and Australia. In these programs some topics are covered, such as social aspects, physical and psychological aspects (Wylleman et al., 1999), self-esteem and self-identity aspects together with the athletes´ priority, education, work and economy. From these programs athletes get information and education in different ways, for example through trainings modules, workshops and seminars (Wylleman et al., 2004). Athletes can prepare themselves mentally for the athletic career retirement by thinking about the future, put it aside or mentally construct the different components in the athletic retirement (Wylleman et al., 1993)

**Less successful and successful transition.** Consequences of a failure transition are for example injuries, eating disorders, alcohol and drug abuse (Alfermann & Stambulova, 2007). Causes of a failed transition could be lack of social support, skills, knowledge (Stambulova, 2003), high athletic identity, lack of control over the retirement and loss of athletic status (Stambulova, 2012). Coping recourses are important during successful transition, those can be social support, coping skills and retirement planning (Stambulova, 2012).

**Culture.** The fact that society is affected by sports is often referred to as the” sportification of society” (Crum, 1991). Sports are influencing society as well as society influences sports. This phenomenon occurs most frequently in the higher levels of sport, more than in lower levels of sport (De Knop, Engström, Skirstad, & Weiss, 1996). The cultural and geographical context of sports affects results of studies and research on athletic career retirement. Because
of different countries cultural, economical and social development sports have developed differently and therefore cultural context has an effect on the experience of athletic retirement in athletes (Werhner-Bales, 1985; Tretiak, 1988, ref. in Stråhlman, 1997). Factors that can be contributors to athletic retirement in different countries are differences in socioeconomically status, demographical status and organizational trends. These are also factors that contribute to different sport cultures in different areas of the world (De Knop et al., 1996). Stambulovas and Alfermanns (2009) review paper on German and Russian sport career termination research points out the importance of understanding different countries socio-cultural history to see the patterns in which athletes from different countries react and cope with athletic career termination differently, and to consider that while doing research.

**Gender.** Gender is a product of both biology and society (Larsson, 2001). The concept of gender can be used in order to emphasize that masculinity and femininity are culturally and historically contingent (Larsson, 2001). Larsen et al. (2010) claim that “gender stereotypes can have important consequences for men and women. These consequences can damage people where it counts most- in their health, their occupation, their chances for advancement, and their social reputations” (p. 512). Lavallee (2000) highlights that there is some research that indicates some differences in reasons for retiring from athletic career between female and male athletes. Female athletes tend to begin their athletic career earlier than male athletes, and female athletes also tend to terminate athletic career earlier than their male colleagues (Stambulova et al., 2009). Because of the fact that there are gender role expectancies in sport as well as in society and also because of the fact that female reach biological age earlier than males do, there are some gender differences regarding reasons for terminating athletic career. According to Alfermann (2000) the biggest difference seems to be that females tend to end their athletic career because of family obligation to a higher extent than male do for the same reason. Female and male athletes differ in their reactions and expectations on future career. Female athletes tend to not expect to find a professional career in sports, as a coach or similar, and do not expect to get financial support after terminated sport career. Male athletes tend to have the opposite reaction and expectation on post athletic career.

**Sport.** Different sports tend to put different amount of pressure and demands on the athlete performing the activity. The types of sport are different regarding their demands on athletes as well as the capacities they require for peak performance. They are also different in terms of at which age the athletes usually begin to specialize (Stambulova et al., 2009). Kerr and Dacyshyn (2000) also support the idea that the nature and the level of sport very much influence how the athlete reacts to the termination of sport career. One example is their qualitative study using retrospective semi-structured interviews on female elite gymnast’s experience of athletic retirement. The results pointed out that gymnasts tend to terminate their career early as a result of the sport demanding a very high level of commitment and a certain physical appearance. Lavallee et al. (2000) suggest that cause of career transitions in sport can be influenced by the structure of the sport.

**Swedish female sport.** The trend of living a physically active life is also very visible in the female population of Sweden. In Sweden 44 percent of all girls and females, age 7-70 years old, reported that they took part in organized sport in the year of 2011 (Riksidrottsförbundet, 2011). According to Lundquist-Wanneberg (2011) Sweden is one of the most equal sport societies and that development has been going on for the last 40 years.

**Research objectives**

Current research, which has already been described in the sections above, shows that it is of great interest to keep doing research in the field of athletic transitions and retirement from sports. Wylleman et al. (2004) suggest future scientific directions about how gender and cultural specifics influences the athletic career termination. They claim that it is of great
interest in order to learn how to apply interventions and programs that can be adapted on a broader range of athletes. There is a lack of research made on female athletes and non-athletes, this might be because of the values of sport are often associated with male attributes (Frey & Eitzen, 1991). Since it is a fact that a lot of current research is done in a quantitative way is could be interesting to explore the area of athletic retirement in sport in a qualitative way. Therefore the objectives of this study is to examine successful and less successful retirement experiences of Swedish female elite athletes, in terms of:

- Reasons for athletic retirement.
- Factors contributing to athletic retirement experience.
- Factors contributing to current life satisfaction and life quality.
Method

Participants
In this study the participants are 10 Swedish female former elite athletes, of whom they all have retired from sport since between one and five years ago. Every participant’s background information is presented in table 1 below.

Table 1
*Retirees background information*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Adjustment time (months)</th>
<th>Current occupation</th>
<th>Education completed</th>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Tennis</td>
<td>International</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>University student</td>
<td>University student</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Football</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>18 (still in process)</td>
<td>University student</td>
<td>University student</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Rhythmic gymnastics</td>
<td>International</td>
<td>30 (still in process)</td>
<td>University student</td>
<td>Secondary school</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>24 (still in process)</td>
<td>Studying, secondary school</td>
<td>High-school</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>University student</td>
<td>Secondary school</td>
<td>Boyfriend</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Floor ball</td>
<td>International</td>
<td>36 (still in process)</td>
<td>Working</td>
<td>Master degree</td>
<td>Boyfriend</td>
<td>Pregnant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Rhythmic gymnastics</td>
<td>International</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>University student</td>
<td>Secondary school</td>
<td>Boyfriend</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Rhythmic gymnastics</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Working</td>
<td>Secondary school</td>
<td>Boyfriend</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>International</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>University student</td>
<td>Preparatory for university</td>
<td>Boyfriend</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Rhythmic gymnastic</td>
<td>International</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Studying, secondary school</td>
<td>High-school</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participant A, B and C are in the subgroup of less successful retirement, see table 1 (grey section). The mean for adjustment period in this group is 24 months. The remaining participants are in the subgroup of successful retirement. The mean for adjustment period in this group is 13.5 months.
**Instrument**

**The athletic retirement interview guide.** In this qualitative study the interview questions are based on the Athletic retirement survey (ARS) (Alfermann et al., 2004). The interview guide consists of five parts, see appendix 1, each described shortly below:
- General background information, containing questions about retirees’ age, occupation, highest completed education, marriage status and children.
- Athletic background, containing questions about retirees sport, level of competition and satisfaction with athletic career.
- Athletic retirement, containing questions about when retirees retired from sport, if retiree planned to retire and the reasons for athletic retirement.
- Coping with athletic retirement process, containing questions about how retirees’ lifestyle changed when retiring, emotional reaction to retirement process and duration for retiring to new lifestyle.
- Current life situation, containing questions about life situation connected to family, occupation, social network, and lifestyle, and which factor being most important for life quality.

**Procedure**

**Contact with participants.** The first step in this study was to get in contact with female former elite athletes, who had been competing on either a national or an international level. This was done achieved through contacting old sport contacts of ours to see if they knew someone who may fit in our participant-profile. That way we signed up seven participants. Researchers also searched for participants by contacting sport profiles, such as coaches, who passed us on to former athletes. That way researchers signed up another three participants, thereby researchers had filled the study group with ten participants.

**Conduct interviews.** Before actually conducting the interviews with real participants of the study researchers made sure that researchers ways of asking questions were to the highest extent possible similar, in order to make the interviews standardized. This was achieved by practicing interviewing each other, using the interview guide, until we felt confident knowing we could conduct the interviews similar to each other. After this researchers contacted the participants and decided when and where to meet. Taking into consideration that the participant should be able to feel comfortable in the situation and the context. Researchers tried to conduct as many interviews as possible on neutral places like school library-rooms, one interview was conducted in a hotel lounge. Before that interview researchers called up the hotel to make sure that it would be possible to conduct the interview in a quiet environment, and that was also achieved. Two interviews were conducted in the home of participants after they had suggested it to be their preferred option. Before every interview researchers informed the participant about the concept of the interview and the aim the study, as well as about the confidentiality and anonymity-aspects of participating. Every participant got to sign a consent-paper before conducted interview in order to give them an opportunity to think about the information. Every participant gave their consent to participating in this study. Every interview was recorded.

**Ethical issues**

There are six principles to follow when doing research (Ruane, 2005).

**Principle one.** The first one is to make sure that the research is not harming participants’ physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. In this study this principle is considered while formulating appropriate questions for the semi structured interview guide. Precautions regarding eventual harmful effects on participants’ mental health are achieved by offering participant contact with sport psychologist or clinical psychologist in case of researchers or
participant perceiving a need for it.

**Principle two.** The second principle is the one about participants consent. In this study this is considered by formulating a consent document, see appendix A. In this document participant get to sign that they have been fully informed about the purpose of their participation and that they approve usage of their data in a confidential way.

**Principle three.** The third principle is that the participants are capable of giving their approval. This principle is extra important to consider while doing research on children or mentally disabled. One participant of this study is under the age of 18 and therefore it is crucial to get parents approval, which was done in this particular case.

**Principle four.** The fourth principle concerns voluntariness, meaning that every participant should be in position to choose to consent or not. In case of hierarchical situation or surrounding that might cause the participant to feel forced to consent. In this study this has been achieved to highest extent possible by allowing the participant to choose not to take part of the study at any time during the study.

**Principle five.** The fifth principle is about how detailed information the participants receive about the research before giving their consent to participate. The participants in this study were informed about the details of this study verbally before every interview, reading the information from a standardized information sheet, see appendix D.

**Principle six.** The sixth principle is to present the information about the research in a way that all participants should be able to understand it. In this study the information have been presented in the easiest way, not using difficult terms. The participants have been given some time to think things over before giving their possible consent.

**Analysis**

**Transcribing interviews.** After every interview session the interviews were transcribed from the recorded tape. The recordings were saved even though the information was already written down. This was done in order to enable some follow-up in case of not understanding the tone of the given information. During this study follow-up questions were not necessary.

**Separating transcribed interviews into two groups.** The first step of analysis was to separate each transcribed interview and to determine if they were less successful or successful transitions. There were three transcribed interviews that were perceived by researchers to be more negative, containing negative perceptions about transition experience. Because of this fact this group of retirees was defined as less successful retirement. The mean value of time needed for adjustment to new life situation is 24 months in this particular group. There were seven transcribed interviews that were perceived by researchers to be more positive. Those were containing more positive perceptions about transition experience. Because of this fact this group of retirees was defined as successful retirement. In contrast to the group of less successful retirees the mean value of time needed for adjustment to new life situation is 24 months, in this particular group. These two groups, less successful and successful- transitions, were then treated separately in every following step of analysis. This was done in order to get answers on our objectives in every group, and also to be able to compare the two with each other.

**Making individual profiles.**

**Mark sentences related to research objectives.** The first step was to mark words and sentences that were related to this study’s research objectives in both groups of retirees’ transcribed interviews, less successful and successful transition. This was done separately so that researchers would not affect each other’s opinions before discussing how to reduce the information.

**Reduce data.** The following step was to discuss which marked data was relevant and put that data into a new document, for each retiree in each group. The next step was to dissect the
text into raw data units.

**Develop a frame.** Six topics of raw data units were arranged in each retiree’s individual profile, in order to get answers to the research objectives of this study. These 6 topics were:
- Background information, containing raw data units about age, occupation, highest completed education level, civil status, and children.
- Athletic background information, containing raw data units about participants sport, and level of competition.
- Reasons for athletic retirement.
- Factors contributing to experience of athletic retirement process, containing raw data units about for example social support/lack of social support, involuntarily/ voluntarily retirement.
- Current life situation and satisfaction, containing raw data units about current situation in family- relations, friends, education/work and lifestyle.
- Factors contributing most to current life quality. Participant got to choose and rank from factors like family, friends, occupation and life style.

**Making category profiles.** The first step when doing the category profile was to go back to the original research objectives in order put a name on each category profile. In order to follow up on our research objectives these three category profiles included following topics:
- Reasons for athletic retirement, less successful/successful transition.
- Factors that are barriers or resources during less successful/successful transition.
- Factors that contributes/ reduces current life satisfaction and quality, less successful/successful transition.

The second step was to arrange all the raw data units into integrated units in both groups of retirees, less successful and successful- transition, treated separately. Discussion and compromising was key when creating integrated units out of all the raw data units in each category and in both groups of retirees. Sometimes researchers needed to go back to the original transcribed interviews in order to get a better understanding of raw data units. This procedure of discussion and compromising was followed when deciding low order and high order-themes for the integrated data in each category and each group of retirees.

**Results**

**Reason for retirement**

**Less successful transition, see figure 4.** This study show that the involuntarily chosen retirement is the one most common in the case of a less successful transition (60%). The involuntarily chosen reasons are mainly by health-related (2 raw data units). As retiree B said: “It was when I got injured …on a ski- vacation with my family …I fell and my knee broke pretty badly”. Long break (1 raw data unit) is also a part of the involuntarily retirement. The voluntarily chosen reasons (40%) were mainly body-image related reasons (1 raw data unit), retiree C said: “I did not want to expose myself in my gymnastics outfit, but mostly because of me being away too long from sport”. Thought about future (1 raw data unit) is included in voluntarily retirement. As retiree A said: “At that point I had to move on with other things in life.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw data</th>
<th>Low order theme</th>
<th>High order theme</th>
<th>Category (n=3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anorexia-suspended (1)</td>
<td>Health-related reasons (2)</td>
<td>Involuntarily retirement (60%)</td>
<td>Reason for retirement, less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Got injured (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>successful transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could not come back after a long break (1)</td>
<td>Long break (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not want to expose myself in my gymnastic suit (1)</td>
<td>Body-image related reason (1)</td>
<td>Voluntarily retirement (40%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanted to move on in life (1)</td>
<td>Thoughts about future (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4. Reasons for retirement, less successful transition.

**Successful transition, see figure 5.** In contrast to reasons for retirement during less successful transition, see figure 4, our study shows that the dominating reasons for retiring from sport during a successful transition is voluntarily chosen by the athlete. Our study shows that the voluntarily chosen retirement is the one most common in the case of a successful transition (75%). The voluntarily chosen reasons were mainly that the athletes wanted to have time to do other things (6 raw data units). As retiree H said: “There was a lot of practice when competing in gymnastics so I got more spare time and therefore I had time to see my friends and do other stuff…”. Lack of motivation (5 raw data units) is also included in voluntarily retirement as well as being happy with her accomplishments in sport (1 raw data unit). The involuntarily chosen retirement is relatively small (25%) and is mainly caused by health-related reasons (2 raw data units) and relation-related reason (2 raw data units). As retiree D said: “Well, we had a really nice group of people. And a lot of people in my swim group retired so it was not as fun anymore…and I did not get along with my coach either”. 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw data</th>
<th>Low order theme</th>
<th>High order theme</th>
<th>Category (n=7)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wanted to have time to see friends and new interests (6)</td>
<td>Wanted to do other things (6)</td>
<td>Voluntarily retirement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of fun to continue (5)</td>
<td>Lack of motivation (5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Factors contributing to transition experience

Less successful transition, see figure 6. This study shows that the biggest barrier that contributes to a less successful transition is to have difficulties accepting and coping with retiring (15 raw data units). As retiree C said: “It took a long time. I still have not adjusted”. Negative emotions (14 raw data units) and lack of readiness to change (13 raw data units) are also barriers. As retiree B said: “Meaningless and boring. It sounds really negative but that is kind of how I feel. It is not the lifestyle that I want, and I do not want to get used to it”. Negative self-perception and self-identity confusion (5 raw data units), and to have parallel transitions in life (4 raw data units) is also included in barriers during transition process. These barriers stand for 68% of the factors affecting less successful transition. Career termination barriers stands for 16% and contains impaired health (7 raw data units), and mentally unprepared (5 raw data units) as a factor for successful transition. The resources during the retirement process stands for 13% of the study results and contains factors like new focus (7 raw data units). As retiree A said: “I coped with it by trying to fill out the emptiness. I can say that it was what happened… hanging out with friends and partying”. Social support (3 raw data units) is also included in resources during retirement process. The resources accumulated before retirement stands for only 3% of the study results and contains of important relations (2 raw data units)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Barriers during retirement process (68%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Could not cope with retirement (5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not to know what to do after retirement (5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have not accepted retiring yet (5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulties accepting and coping with retiring (15)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression, frustration, sadness, feelings of stress (14)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative emotions (14)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forced lifestyle-change caused by involuntarily retirement (5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulties coping with more responsibility for training and diet (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulties with training frequency (5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding it hard not to see sport friends and coaches after retiring (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of readiness to change (13)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychologically weak (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troubles with still seeing myself as an athlete after retiring (4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative self-perception, and self-identity confusion (5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other personal events occurs during the retiring process, such as divorce, and lost contact with</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parallel transitions in life (4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Successful transition, see figure 7. In contrast to factors contributing during less successful retirement, see figure 6, this study show that factors that are contributing to a successful transition are dominating over the barriers that occur during transition process. This study shows that the biggest recourses that contribute to a successful transition are to have a new focus (44 raw data units). As retiree I said: “You have more time, you create new goals, you go for other things in life… like get a good job… you create a future”. As well as having a positive emotional experience of former sport career and retirement (22 raw data units). As retiree E said: “When I look back at my athletic career I feel like I gained a lot from it, not only swimming- wise but a lot of things around it. Which I have had help from in my current life”. New and stronger relations (8 raw data units), to take on a new role in the sport context (7 raw data units), and to have support from others (6 raw data units) is also included in resources during retirement process. These resources stand for 76% of the factors affecting successful transition. Career termination resources stand for 17 % and contains own decision to retire (20 raw data units). As retiree H said: “Of course it was hard to take the step to telling coaches and friends... that I was going to retire. But I do not think it was too hard. My mom and dad supported me, it was fully my decision”. The barriers during the retirement process stands for only 7% of the study results and contains factors like absence of action plan (6 raw data units). As retiree J said: “I had too much spare time, I had nothing to do… I did not know what to do with all my spare time. it took me some time to get into new routines”. Negative emotions (2 raw data units) are also included in barriers during retirement process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disease/injury (7)</th>
<th>Impaired health (7)</th>
<th>Barriers related to career termination (16%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not mentally ready for retiring (5)</td>
<td>Mentally unprepared (5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do other things, such as start education, see friends (4)</td>
<td>New focus (7)</td>
<td>Resources during retirement process (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work extra as a coach in my former sport (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move on in life (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support from others (3)</td>
<td>Social support (3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real friends and family (2)</td>
<td>Important relations (2)</td>
<td>Resources accumulated before retirement (3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6. Factors contributing to less successful retirement.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw data</th>
<th>Low order theme</th>
<th>High order theme</th>
<th>Category (n=7)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moved away, started education, became an adult, started my own family/ partner (11) Do other things, such as work, see friends, work out, new interest hobbies (28) Able to focus more on studies (5)</td>
<td>New focus (44)</td>
<td>Resources during retiring process (76%)</td>
<td>Factors contributing to successful retirement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less demands/pressure after retirement (6) It felt good to put athletic career aside (4) It was mainly positive to retire (5) Have had help/benefits from sport experience in life after retirement (7)</td>
<td>Positive emotional experience of former sport career and retirement (22)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relations outside sport grew stronger(5) Many new friends (3)</td>
<td>New and/or stronger relations(8)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Started working extra as a coach, never lost contact with sport(7)</td>
<td>New role in sport context(7)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents supported me during retiring process (6)</td>
<td>Support from others (6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned to retire (10) My own decision to retire (10)</td>
<td>Own decision to retire (20)</td>
<td>Career termination resources (17%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard to rain by myself without a coach (4) Did not get things done after retiring (1) Did not know what to do with all spare time (1)</td>
<td>Absence of action plan (6)</td>
<td>Barriers during retiring process (7%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angry and frustrated because of non-existing support from coaches after retiring (2)</td>
<td>Negative emotions (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 7. Factors contributing to successful retirement.*

**Factors contributing to current life satisfaction**

**Less successful transition, see figure 8.** This study shows that there are several factors contributing to retirees’ current life satisfaction (79%). These factors are relations, friends and family (9 raw data units). As retiree C said: “It is good, better than before… but now I have moved away so it is really nice to meet my family when I go home”. Another factor is occupation (9 raw data units). As retiree C said: “I prioritize studying more now. I think that is the most important thing now, and I study something that I am interested in”. The factor that reduces retirees’ current life satisfaction stands for 21% and those are factors such as lack of relations (2 raw data units), and negative perception of lifestyle (2 raw data units). As retiree B said: “I feel quite low because I cannot do what I want. It is not the lifestyle that I want to have”. To sum these facts up our study shows that the current life satisfaction are dominated by factors that are contributing to it.
### Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw data</th>
<th>Low order theme</th>
<th>High order theme</th>
<th>Category (n=3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gained new friends (4)</td>
<td>Relations, friends and family (9)</td>
<td>Factors contributing to high order theme</td>
<td>Factors contributing to life satisfaction, less successful transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good relations in my family (4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I see my family more often now after retirement (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work out (2)</td>
<td>Occupation (9)</td>
<td>Factors contributing to life satisfaction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full time student (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(82%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working full time (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part time job aside school (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost old friends (2)</td>
<td>Lack of relations (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boring, goalless lifestyle (1)</td>
<td>Negative perception of lifestyle (2)</td>
<td>Factors that reduces life satisfaction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehab is a big part of my life (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(18%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 8. Factors contributing to current life satisfaction, less successful transition.*

**Successful transition, see figure 9.** Similar to factors contributing to current life satisfaction during less successful transition, see figure 8, this study show that the current life satisfaction are dominated by factors that are contributing to it. This study show that there are several factors contributing to retirees’ current life satisfaction (79%). These factors are occupation (14 raw data units). As retiree F said: “I work and I enjoy it, I really do”. Another factor is spare time activities (10 raw data units). As retiree D said: "I got a different life after retiring… spent more time with my friends on weekends and did a lot of fun things with them”. The last contributing factors are positive perception of lifestyle (4 raw data units), and relations with friends and family (5 raw data units). As retiree E said: “…it is still very good, like it was before…I have created a lot of new friend relations since I have adapted to my new life situation”. The factors that reduce participants current life satisfaction stands for 21% and those are factors such as decreased quality of relations (5 raw data units), retiree J said: “Actually my family relations changed negatively because I spent more time at home, we started to argue more”. Geographical living situation (4 raw data units) is also included in reducing factors.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw data</th>
<th>Low order theme</th>
<th>High order theme</th>
<th>Category (n=7)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Full time student (8)  
Full time job (2)  
Part time job aside studies (4) | Occupation (14) | Factors contributing to life satisfaction (79%) |  |
| New interests/hobbies (1)  
See friends (4)  
Work out (5) | Spare time activities (10) |  |  |
| Gained new friends after retirement (2)  
Gained more close friends after retirement (1)  
See family more often after retirement (2) | Relations, friends and family (5) | Factors contributing to current life satisfaction, successful transition. |  |
| Healthy lifestyle (4) | Positive perception of lifestyle (4) |  |  |
| Family relations not so good, more arguments because I am home more after retiring (1)  
Not as good/close relation to my mother as before retirement (1)  
Have no time to see friends because of work (1)  
Lost friends from sport after retiring (2) | Decreased quality of relations (5) | Factors that reduce life satisfaction (21%) |  |
| Do not live close to my family after | Geographical living situation (4) |  |  |
Factors contributing to current life quality, see figure 10
When comparing factors contributing to life quality between less successful transition and successful transition, some differences are identified. The group of less successful transitions value family (2 raw data units), friends (2 raw data units), and studies (2 raw data units) as equally important for life quality. The group of successful transitions value family (6 raw data units) as the most important factor for life quality, followed by friends (4 raw data units), lifestyle/training (3 raw data units), and studies/work (3 raw data units). Successful transition has more factors highly valued for life quality (4 factors) than less successful transition (3 factors).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparison: factors contributing to current life quality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less successful transition (n=3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successful transition (n=7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family (33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends (33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studies (33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family (38%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifestyle/training (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studies/work (19%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 10. Factors contributing to current life quality.

Discussion

Summary of results
The objectives of this study is to examine successful and less successful retirement experiences of Swedish female elite athletes, in terms of:
-Reasons for athletic retirement.
-Factors contributing to athletic retirement experience.
-Factors contributing to current life satisfaction and life quality.
Below follows discussion about results of this study connected to the research objectives mentioned above.
Reasons for retirement. Results of this study show differences comparing reasons for retirement in retirees of less successful transition and successful transition. The less successful transition reasons are dominantly involuntarily compared to the successful retirement reasons that are dominantly voluntarily chosen. It may be a fair assumption to say that involuntarily chosen transition catches the athlete of guard and does not allow the athlete to prepare for transition. In case of unprepared, involuntarily transition, the athlete might find it difficult to cope with the new situation in life. If the athlete is prepared, voluntarily transition, the retiree has got time to get ready for eventual lifestyle and mental changes. The athletes have to have something else to do in their spare time and have new things to look forward to. It may be a fair assumption to say that if athletes have not had time to prepare and find a new focus in life there could be some difficulties regarding athletic identity still being dominant. By studying this result it may be possible to pin point transition- reasons and then use that knowledge in the future in order to prevent less successful transition by providing the athlete with extra resources to deal with transition.

Factors contributing to experience of retirement process, comparison of less successful and successful transition. Results of this study shows differences comparing less successful transitions and successful transitions when it comes to barriers and resources during the transition process. The less successful transitions contain more barriers than resources. The difficulties of managing and accepting the athletic transition might cause the retiree to experience an imposed new lifestyle. The successful transitions contain more resources than barriers. The biggest barrier in this group was not getting things done, this might depend on the fact that retirees have not planned their everyday life themselves before because of athletic career and every aspects of it being very controlled by coaches. To have a new focus is the biggest resource in this group of retirees. It may be a fair assumption to say that the fact that majority of these retirees have a new focus is depending on the fact that the majority of them retired voluntarily from sport, and therefore they had more time to plan for the future. These facts indicate that the turn out of the transition, into less successful or successful one, is depending on which factors that are dominating, barriers or resources. In case of fewer resources than barriers, that might cause a less successful transition and the opposite for successful transition.

Factors contributing to current life satisfaction. Results of this study show that there are not so much differences when comparing less successful and successful transition in the matter of current life satisfaction. Both less successful and successful transition groups indicate that they have more contributing factors than they have decreasing factors to their life satisfaction. The group of less successful transition indicates that the most contributing factors for their life quality is relations with family and friends. It may be a fair assumption to say that this group of retirees has had big need for social support during the tough transition process and therefore the relations are highly valued. The group of successful transition retirees name more contributing factors. This may be because of the fact that this group of retirees have not had the same need for social support and therefore have been able to focus and develop more contributing factors. With this result it might be a good assumption to say that the majority of both groups’ participants have moved on from being in the process of transitions. This assumption might be more of a fact for the less successful group, because of indication that their life satisfaction has evolved from experiencing a tough transition to being quite satisfied with current life situation. This indicates a positive development in this group. This indicates that both groups have recovered well from transition.

Factors contributing to current life quality, comparison of less successful and successful transition. In current life the factors contributing to life quality in less successful transition retirees are fewer than in successful transition retirees. The group of less successful
retirees value family, friends and occupation equally. This might be because of the fact that family and friends have been very important during transition process and still are. The group of successful transition retirees name family, friends, lifestyle/training and studies/work in that given order of importance for life quality. This group name more factors which might be because of them having an easier experience of transition and therefore have found a new lifestyle that they are happy with. It is a fair assumption to say that the experience of transition affect what factors is important for life quality in current life.

Results relevant to the theoretical frameworks

Developmental model of transitions faced by athletes (Wylleman et al., 2004), see figure 1. Parallel transitions occurring during retirement process can be connected and supported by the developmental model of transitions faced by athletes. Since this model suggests that parallel transitions that occur during athletic transition can have an impact on the outcome of the transition, the transitions found in our study that are supported by this model are described below.

Age. The participants of this study are at different ages, from 17 to 30 years old.

Athletic level. This study is focused on the last athletic transition, the discontinuation phase.

Psychological level. Depending on the ages of participants of this study they are at different developmental stages of psychological level. Two participants are currently in the adolescence- phase, 8 participants are in adulthood- phase. Which phase the majority of the participants are in can affect which transitions that occurs at other levels.

Psychosocial level.

Less successful transition. In this study result show that the participants have experienced parallel transitions as barriers in relations with family, friends and coach during less successful transition and in current life satisfaction, see figure 6 and 8. Another parallel transition parallel to retirement discovered in this study is the motivation to move on in life, see figure 6.

Successful transition. During the successful transition the participants have experienced parallel transitions, such as good relations with family and friends as contributions to a positive experience, see figure 7 and 9. Despite this, participants in the group of successful transition have experienced bad relations with coach as a barrier before retirement, see figure 2. Another transition that occur parallel to retirement process is the drive to start a family, see figure 7.

Academic/vocational level. Because of the ages of the participants 2 of them are currently at secondary education- level, 6 participants are at higher education level, and 2 participants are at professional education- level.

Conclusion. Because of the fact that participants of this study are at different ages it is a fair assumption to believe that different parallel transitions are mentioned and highlighted in the category profiles. These parallel transitions mainly occur at psychosocial level and they are perceived as barriers or resources when looking at results. It is not possible to draw conclusions about which ages, psychological levels or psychosocial levels that are connected to a certain experience of barriers or resources, because of the fact that results are presented as a unit of participants’ raw data in a confidential way. It is our opinion that the results that we perceived from our study can support this model to some extent.

The athletic career transition model (Stambulova, 2003), see figure 2.

The domination of barriers or resources during athletic retirement process is important since it has an effect on how the retiree copes with retirement. In extent this has an impact on how the turnout of the retirement process, into less successful transition or into successful transition.

Balance between resources and barriers.
**Less successful transition.** During less successful transitions our study shows that there is no good balance between resources and barriers, see figure 6. The barriers during transition (68%) and barriers related to transition (16%) stands for the biggest factors during a less successful transition. The resources during transition (13%) are dominated by the barriers mentioned above.

**Successful transition.** During successful transitions this study shows that there is no good balance between resources and barriers, see figure 7. The resources during transition (81%) and the resources related to transitions (17%) stands for the largest amount of factors during successful transition. The barriers during successful transitions (7%) are dominated by the resources.

**Conclusion.** Results of this study show that there are barriers or resources dominating in the different groups of retirees. During less successful transition the barriers are dominating the resources. During successful transition the resources are dominating the barriers. This result indicates that mentioned model can be supported by the result of this study.

**Conceptual model of adaptation to retirement among athletes** (Taylor et al., 1994), see figure 3. Reasons for retirement have an impact on the quality of adaption to retirement. The available resources and other factors also affect the quality of adaption.

**Reasons.**

**Less successful transition.** In the less successful transition group, see figure 4, results show that involuntarily retirement stand for 60% of the reasons for retirement. Voluntarily retirement stand for 40 % of the retirement reasons.

**Successful transition.** In the successful transition group, see figure 5, results show that voluntarily retirement stand for 86% of the retirement reasons. The involuntarily retirement stands for only 14 % of the reasons for retirement.

**Factors related to adaptation to retirement.**

**Less successful transition.** The result of this study indicates that the participants of the less successful group, see figure 6, have a more negative perception of the retirement process in terms of negative feelings, mentally unprepared and a lack of readiness to retire. The self-perception of these participants is negative or conflicting. Despite the tough experience of retiring process, results show that participants of this group has managed to get a new role in sport, as a coach, impacting their social identity in a positive way.

**Successful transition.** The results of this study indicates that the participants of the successful retirement- group, see figure 7, have a more positive experience of the retirement process, in terms of positive emotions and a feeling of control since decision to retire was their own choice. Results show that participants of this group tend to get a new role in sport, impacting their social identity in a positive way. Despite these positive factors result indicates that some participants have experienced lack of control during transition process.

**Current life satisfaction.** The result of this study indicates that the group of less successful transition experience has managed to reach the same level of current life satisfaction as the group of successful transition experience. This could be interpreted as a positive development, from having a lot of barriers and negative emotions, figure 6, to experiencing more positive factors contributing to current life satisfaction than decreasing factors. This interpreted fact can be supported by mentioned model when it comes to developmental experience. The tough experience of the less successful transition might have empowered the participants in this group when looking at it in a long term perspective.

**Available resources.**

**Less successful transition.** During the less successful transition results of this study show that participants of this group have more barriers than resources available, see figure 6.

**Successful transition.** During the successful transition results of this study show that participants of this group have more resources than barriers available, see figure 7.
**Conclusion.** Results of this study support mentioned model. Because of the fact that results of this study show that in case of mainly involuntarily retirement reasons, negative factors related to adaptation to retirement, and lastly fewer resources available indicate a higher possibility for less successful transition. Those negative factors including negative developmental experiences including problems with self-identity and perception of lack of control. The results of the successful transition-group show that in case of voluntarily reasons for retirement, factors related to adaptation to retirement, and lastly a lot of available resources than there are barriers indicates a high possibility for a successful transition. Those positive factors including positive developmental experience, perception of control and a new social identity in sport. In both groups, less successful and successful transition, there are some factors contradicting to this model. Despite this the dominating factors being positive or negative is the conclusive factor for the transition turnover. Because of results of this it is a fair assumption to say that results of this study are supported by mentioned model.

**Social gender theory (Eagle, 1987; Eagle & Wood, 1999, ref. in Eagly et al., 2000).** Results of this study indicates majority of participants of both groups, less successful and successful transition, claim reasons for retirement that are not connected to family related reason. Despite this some participant’s claim that they want to create a family of their own, see figure 5, some claim that they want to move on in life, see figure 4. It is a fair assumption to say that the reason for not having that many raw data suggesting family related reasons for retirement is that we do not have many participants that are in the typical age span for those kinds of thoughts to emerge. It is a fair assumption to say that the fact that a lot of the participants from both groups choose to stay in sport context as a coach, see figure 6 and 7, indicates some nurturing tendencies, which could be a support to some extent to earlier mentioned theory. Despite this questionable support for mentioned theory it might be a fair assumption to say that Swedish sport culture is not affected to such high extent by gender expectancies.

**Results related to previous research**

**Less successful transition.**

**Reasons.** Results of this study highlights that the majority of the participants in the less successful transition group retired involuntarily from sport because of health-related reasons, see figure 4. This result finds support in previous research saying that athletes retiring involuntarily have less ability to cope with the retirement (Stambulova et al., 2009). This result also finds support in previous research saying that athletes with high athletic identity and lack of control over retirement often lead to a less successful transition (Stambulova, 2012). It is unclear whether the difficulty in managing the retirement depends on the athlete’s decreased health, or that the athlete retires involuntarily and therefore is not prepared for the retirement.

Result of this study show that some of the participants retired because of body-image related reasons. Previous research show that different sports tend to put different amounts of pressure and demands on the athlete performing the activity. The types of sport are different regarding their demands on athletes as well as the capacities they require for peak performance (Stambulova, 2009). Previous research suggests that cause of career transitions in sport can be influenced by the structure of the sport (Lavallee et al., 2000).

**Factors contributing to less successful transition.** Results of this study show that the group of less successful transition participants has more barriers than resources during the retirement process, including difficulties to accepting and coping with retirement, negative emotions, lack of readiness to change, negative self-perception, and self-identity confusion, parallel transitions in life and barriers related to retirement, such as impaired health and mentally unprepared, see figure 6. These result findings can be connected and identified to
certain extent with the definitions of a less successful transition, that “is conceptualized as a transition the athlete had to make but was not able to cope with independently, and for which the athlete perceived a need for psychological assistance” (Stambulova, 2012). Symptoms of a failure transition are for example injuries, eating disorders, alcohol and drug abuse (Alfermann et al., 2007). Causes of a failed transition could be high athletic identity, lack of control over termination and loss of athletic status (Stambulova, 2012).

Results of this study show that majority of the participants in the group of less successful transition have negative emotions connected to the retirement, see figure 6, which is a barrier during the retirement process. This is supported by research findings showing that how the athlete feel about the termination is essential for the adaptation (Stambulova et al., 2009). Result of this study show that most of the participants of the less successful group were unprepared for the retirement, which is a barrier during the retirement process. Athletes that already have new focus, such as education, social networks and clear goals have more rescores and are more mentally prepared for the termination and therefore it is easier to make the transition in a positive way and build a new life after terminating (Stambulova et al., 2009).

Result of this study show that some of the participants in the group of less successful transition have negative self-perception and self-identity confusion. This is supported by research findings showing that athletic retirement tend to hampered when the athlete has a high athletic identity (Alfermann et al., 2004; Cecic-Erpic et al., 2004). If the athlete is identifying to the sport after retiring the process can take longer, therefore it is easier for athletes that are not identified to the sport after terminating to adapt a new life without the sport (Lavallee et al., 1997).

Successful transition.

Reasons. Results of this study highlights that the majority of the participants in the successful transition- group retired voluntarily from sport, see figure 5. This result finds support in previous research saying that athletes have better adaptability if terminating is the athletes own decision (Stambulova et al., 2009). Because of the fact that results of this study show that participants of the successful transition- group retired voluntarily see figure 5, it is a fair assumption to believe that they were mentally prepared for retiring. Results also show that most of these had a new focus after retiring. These results is supported by previous research meaning that athletes can prepare themselves mentally for career transitions and career termination by thinking about the future transition or termination, put it aside or mentally construct the different components in a future career transition or future career termination (Wylleman et al., 1993) The fact that there are support from previous international research regarding reason for retirement indicate that Swedish female sport culture do not differ so much from other sport cultures where this kind of research have been done.

Result of this study show that none of the participants in the group of successful transition retired from sport directly because of wanting to start a family, but some raw data highlights that the focus directly after retiring was to start a family, see figure 7. This result can be supported to some extent by previous research meaning that females tend to end their athletic career because of family obligation to a higher extent than male do for the same reason Alfermann (2000). These contradicting facts may be explained by the fact that majority of the participants in our study are still quite young and are still in school trying to figure out their future.

The results of this study show that none of the participants in this study reflected on financial aspects as a contributing reason for retirement. This indicates that none of the participants had major financial troubles at the time before and during transition process. It might be a fair assumption to say that majority of Swedish sport context/ culture does not
have financial aspects separating them from being active in sport. This result highlights previous research meaning that factors that can be contributors to athletic retirement in different countries are differences in socioeconomically status, demographical status and organizational trends (De Knop et al., 1996). These are also factors that contribute to different sport cultures in different areas of the world. Sports are influencing society as well as the society influences sports (Crum, 1991).

The results of this study are based on raw data units collected from Swedish female former elite athletes, competing on a national or an international level. This fact supports previous research saying that this phenomenon of society affecting sport, including financially and culturally, occurs most frequently in the higher levels of sport, more than in lower levels of sport (De Knop et al., 1996). It is important to understand different countries socio-cultural history to see the patterns in which athletes from different countries react and cope with athletic career termination differently, and to consider that while doing research (Stambulova et al., 2009).

Factors contributing to successful transition. Results of this study show that the group of successful transition retirees have a lot of resources available connected to retirement, including own choice to retire, and resources during retiring process, such as new focus and support from others, see figure 7. These result findings can be connected and identified to certain extent with the definitions of a successful transition that “is a case of a good fit between demands and the athlete’s coping resources” (Stambulova, 2012). Coping recourses are for example social support, coping skills and retiring planning (Stambulova, 2012).

Results of this study show that majority of the participants in the group of successful transition have positive emotions connected to both former sport career and to the retirement itself, see figure 7, which is a resource during the retirement process. This is supported by research findings showing that how the athlete feel about the termination is essential for the adaptation (Stambulova et al., 2009).

Results of this study show that participants in the group of successful transitions have a majority of resources dominating the barriers, see figure 7. These resources are mainly that they had a new focus after retiring, such as starting education, see friends and start a family. This is supported by (Stambulova et al., 2009), meaning that it is often easier for athletes with resources, for example education, social network and clear goals, to make the transition in a positive way and build a new life after terminating (Stambulova et al., 2009).

Results of this study highlights resources like building stronger relations after retiring from sport and having a social support from others during the transitions process, see figure 7. This is supported by previous research findings pin pointing social support as being the key to a successful transition (Murphy et al., 1989).

Results of this study highlights that a lot of the participants in the group of successful transitions continued to be active in sport context after retiring, working as a coach, see figure 7. This results are contradicting to previous research saying that female athletes tend to not expect to find a professional career in sports, as a coach or similar, and do not expect to get financial support after terminated sport career (Alfermann, 2000). Results of this study does not reveal if participants do get financial support from being a coach. Results do reveal that working as a coach is not participants’ main occupation and might not be seen as a professional job.

Application
By presenting this study we want to highlight resources that are important for the athlete to have available during the retirement process. It is crucial for the retirees to prepare and have resources for the retirement process. This can be done if the retirees plan for retirement process and the future in terms of:
-Occupational plans, in terms of studies/work/spare time activities.
- Family-related plans
- Expanding social network outside sport, in terms of new relations.
- Social support, in terms of increasing relations within family and with friends.
- New focus, in terms of seeing friends/work out/new hobbies.

This study was conducted regarding Swedish female athletes and therefore it would be possible to use the results in order to develop tools and action plans specifically designed for Swedish sport culture and female retirees.

**Methodological reflections**

**Qualitative design.** This study was conducted in a qualitative way. The limitations of qualitative design are that the results are not as generalizable as results from a quantitative study. The qualitative design makes it possible to examine our objectives on a deeper level and therefore the pros are dominating the cons when using the qualitative design for this study purpose.

**Interview guide.** The interview guide used in this study is semi-structured. The limitation of the interview guide is that it was created for this particular study and therefore has not been tested before. There is a risk that researchers do not get the answers they are looking for that is connected to their research objectives. The pros of using this semi-structured interview guide is that there is a big chance that the questions are well adapted to the research objectives, and therefore the answers will be useful in this study.

**Interviews.** The limitation of the interview is that they were not possible to arrange in a standardized way in terms of place and time. The pros are that every interview was conducted considering the individual’s needs and comfort. This is positive because it can affect the individual’s willingness to answer the questions in the best way.

**Time factor.** The fact that this study is based on retrospective interviews can be a limitation to the significance of the result. This because of the fact that participants may not remember everything about the retirement process, it is then a good chance that they fill in the gaps of their stories with information that is not accurate. This limitation has been avoided to some extent by constructing a well-adapted interview guide for these research objectives. The environmental aspect was considered for example by conducting the interview in a comfortable environment which help the retiree to relax and take time to remember.

**Result-related reflections**

**Number of participants.** The number of participants in the two groups, less successful and successful transition, is not equal. The group of less successful transition only contains three participants, while the successful transition group contains seven participants. This means that there are fewer available raw data units in the group of less successful transition, which can affect the reliability of the result compared to the group of successful transition. Despite this limitation it is positive that the original selection of participants were done not knowing if they had a less successful or successful transition experience because that would have been even more limitating and not ethical which could create prejudice when analyzing the raw data units.

**Translation of results.** The result of this study was originally done in Swedish because of the participants being Swedish and therefore giving their answers in Swedish. The limitations of translating the results are that it is inevitable that some meanings or the tone of the raw data units get lost during translating it. The pros of doing the interviews in Swedish are that it makes it easier for the participants to express themselves in the easiest way. By translating it into English our study is more easy access internationally. These pros are considered to be dominating the cons of translating the results.
**Future directions**

In this study results show that previous research and models are quite well adaptable and supportive on Swedish female athletes experience of transition, less successful or successful transition, considering reasons and factors contributing experience of transition. With this knowledge it could be interesting to do comparison research on female Nordic former athletes to see if they differ from each other, regarding reasons to retirement and factors contributing to experience of transition. It would also be interesting to do research on Swedish female team athletes and compare them with Swedish female individual athletes, regarding reasons to retirement and factors contributing or reducing experience of transition.

The results of this study show that the group of less successful transition and the group of successful transition do not differ so much regarding current life satisfaction, in terms of reducing and contributing factors. With this knowledge as a base it would be interesting to do research on if and how the group of less successful transition retirees uses their experience to reach the same life satisfaction as the group of successful transition retirees.
References


List of appendices

Appendix A
Contract of consent, in Swedish.

Appendix B
Interview guide, in Swedish and in English.

Appendix C
Individual profiles, in Swedish.

Appendix D
Standardized information sheet, in Swedish.
Appendix A

Medgivande


Jag godkänner att den information som jag lämnat via intervju får användas som underlag till denna studie.

Deltagare

Namn:____________________      Datum: _______

Ansvariga för studien

Namn:____________________      Datum: _______

Namn:____________________      Datum: _______
Appendix B

Intervjuguide (in Swedish)

Del 1. Generell bakgrundsinformation

1.1 Ålder?
1.2 Nuvarande yrke/daglig syssla?
1.3 Högsta avslutade utbildning?
1.4 Civilstånd?
1.5 Barn?

Del 2. Idrottslig bakgrundsinformation

2.1 Vilken var din sport?
2.2 Vilken nivå, nationell eller internationell, var du på under din idrottskarriär?
2.3 Är du nöjd med din idrottskarriär?

Del 3. Hur gick det till när du avslutade din karriär

3.1 När slutade du idrotta?
3.2 Planerade du att sluta idrotta? Hur?
3.2 Vad fanns det för anledningar till att du slutade idrotta?

Del 4. Hantering av processen

4.1 Berätta om hur din livsstil förändrades i och med din avslutade idrottskarriär?
   Krav, Resurser, Utmaningar, Hälsa, Hantering och strategier?
   - I familjen
   - Vänner
   - Yrkeslivet/skolan
4.2 Hur kände du i och med detta?
4.3 Hur lång tid tog det för dig att anpassa dig till din nya livsstil efter att du avslutat din idrottskarriär?

Del 5. Nuvarande situation i livet

5.1 Hur År din situation idag?
   - I familjen
   - Yrke/ Skola
   - Socialt nätverk
   - Livsstil
5.2 Vilka av dessa anser du bidrar mest till din livskvalite?
Interview guide (in English)

Part 1. General background information
1.1 Age?
1.2 Current profession or daily chore?
1.3 Highest completed education?
1.4 Civil state?
1.5 Kids?

Part 2. Sport background
2.1 Which sport did you perform in?
2.2 Which level, national or international, did you perform in?
2.3 Are you satisfied with your sport career?

Part 3. Termination of sport
3.1 When did you terminate from sport?
3.2 Did you plan to terminate your sport career? If so, How did you plan it?
3.3 What was the main reason for your sport termination?

Part 4. Athletic retirement process
4.1 Please, share your thoughts about how your lifestyle changed after terminating from sport. Demands, resources, health, barriers, coping strategies.
   - Family
   - Work/education
   - Social network
   - Lifestyle
4.2 What feelings did you have during this change in lifestyle?
4.3 How long time did it take for you to adjust to your new lifestyle after terminating your sport career?

Part 5. Current situation in life
5.1 What is your life like today?
   - Family
   - Career/ school
   - Social network
   - Lifestyle
5.2 Which ones of these factors do you think contribute most to your satisfaction today?
Appendix C

Individuella profiler

Individuell profil, A


Idrottslig bakgrund: Tennis. Internationell nivå.

Slutade idrotta: När jag var 23.

Orsaker: tvungen att gå vidare med något annat i livet; ta det steget.

Faktorer som påverkar upplevelsen: vart planerat; när jag skulle flytta tillbaka från USA; tvungen att gå vidare med något annat i livet; splittrad inomfamilj; försökte springa iväg ifrån mig själv; fylla ut tomheten; svårt att lägga ner träningen; tränade väldigt mycket; inte balans i träningen på en hälsovård motionsnivå; mycket med kompisar, festa mycket; göra så mycket som möjligt för att inte vara hemma... det var det som var så jobbigt; ännu mera ansvar; livsstil förändrades mycket; familjen har alltid funnits där... men de såg ju... att livsstil förändrades väldigt mycket; sprang bara ifrån det började umgås mer med andra människor; det var jobbigt att man inte kunde hantera det; känslomässigt var det jobbig; jag stressade väldigt mycket; inte så mycket positiva känslor; en utav de jobbigaste perioderna i mitt liv; andra personliga grejer också. Jag kan väl säga att det var det som tog över...att hänga med kompisar och festa.

Tid för anpassning till ny livsstil: Två år.

Nuvarande situation: väldigt bra; lite lugnare; mer jobbnätverk; väldigt nöjd med vart jag är idag; har inte kunnat släppa idrotten...vill jobba med det framtidsmässigt; personlig utveckling.

Viktigast för livskvalitet: mig själv; studier.

Individuell profil, B


Slutade idrotta: För ett och ett halvt år sedan.

Orsaker: Jag skadade mig.

Faktorer som påverkar upplevelsen: slutade inte som jag hade velat; inte planerat; skadade mig; sjätte operationen som precis är gjord men antagligen så är det väl inte slut där; inte bli någon mer sport; det har varit sjukt tungt; man inte kan göra det man vill; identitetskris; nedstämd; livet har ändrats totalt; liksom min egna syn på mig själv; egna krav som har ställt till det; mycket stöd från familj och vänner; söka stöd hos andra när man inte klarar av att bära det själv; ta dag för dag; kortsiktiga mål; enormt svag psykiskt just nu; har haft jobbiga relation med familjen; den har stärkts; inte orkat träffa kompisar; haft väldigt kort stubin; riktiga vänner, de har alltid funnits där; flesta av mina kompisar är fotbollskompisar; det är en tyngd som ligger på en; vill spela även om man inte kan; två månader sedan jag började plugga; försöka kombinera humör med plugg; jag är så svag; bli leden så himla ofta och lätt; tänker på olyckan och all tid som har gått; ingen aning om vart jag kommer sluta; antagligen aldrig mera kunna spela; varken jag eller läkarna vet; kan inte riktigt sätta upp mål för att jag har försökt sätta upp mål så många gånger under den här tiden och jag når dem aldrig; stannar jag hellre i processen och försöker bearbeta; har ingen kontakt med min mamma... processen har ändå hållit på under samma process som med knät; klarar inte av att göra så mycket som alla andra orkar... både fysiskt och mentalt; då avstår jag; rehab är en stor del av vardagen; målloös, tråkig; inte den livsstilen jag vill ha, inte den livsstilen jag vill vänja mig vid; det är inte så roligt; slugget är ju jätteroligt och det är
något jag vill göra.

**Tid för anpassning till ny livsstil:** är nog fortfarande i processen.

**Nuvarande situation:** den är bra; jag har ingen kontakt med min mamma; både min syster och min bror i Sverige; man ses ändå lite oftare; jag pluggar, för det mesta; när jag inte går i skolan så kollar jag på tv, vilar; har filmkvällar och säng med kompisar; rehab är en stor del av vardagen; har lärt känna många som man trivs med.

**Viktigaste för livskvaliteten:** vänner, eller familj.

**Individuell profil, C**

**Bakgrund:** 22 år. Student, högskola. Tränare i gymnastik. Gymnasiet. Singel. Inga barn.

**Idrottslig bakgrund:** Rytmisk gymnastik. Internationell nivå.

**Slutade idrotta:** två och ett halvt år sedan.

**Orsaker:** anorexi och avstängd från träning och tävling; höll upp för länge; ville inte visa mig i dräkt.

**Faktorer som påverkat upplevelsen:** inte planerat; anorexi; saknar det; aktivt liv till ett liv utan träning; jobbigt; försökte övertala mig att fortsätta; mentalt inte redo att avsluta karriär; ingen aning om vad göra med mitt liv; föräldrarna skilde sig; allt på samma gång; inte avsluta frivilligt och bättre; inte träffa alla tränare och kompisar; Jag har fortfarande inte anpassat mig helt; inte accepterat; svårt att man fortfarande är tränare och kompisar; inte frisk.

**Tid för anpassning till ny livsstil:** det tog lång tid. Har fortfarande inte anpassat mig helt.

**Nuvarande livssituation:** bra, bättre...det är väldigt kul att träffa dem när man kommer hem; flyttat; prioriterar skolan; läser det jag är intresserad av; nya vänner; tappat gamla; aktiv.

**Viktigast för livskvalité:** familj och vänner; utbildning.

**Individuell profil, D**

**Bakgrund:** 18 år. Studerar, gymnasiet. Tränare i simning. Högstadiet. Singel. Inga barn.

**Idrottslig bakgrund:** Simning. Nationell nivå.

**Slutade idrotta:** slutade helt för två år sedan.

**Orsaker:** många i gruppen, av mina kompisar försvann ju; inte överens med tränaren.

**Faktorer som påverkar upplevelsen:** hade inte planerat det innan; när jag började dra ner på simtränningen så förstod jag att jag skulle sluta; är nöjd över att jag orkade hålla i så länge; simmade för skoj skull; fick inte gjort saker när jag slutade simma; ingen press på mig; kunde göra vad jag ville; behövde inte prestera; ändrades till det positiva, fick bort pressen; ingen som bestämde över mig längre; kompisar på helgen och hittade på grejer; var ingenting utan simningen; när jag la allt åt sidan, så kändes det jätteskönt; jobbar ju med det nu så att jag tycker ju det är roligt; vill inte förlora det; mycket närmare min pappa nu; har mycket mera tid; umgås ju väldigt mycket med kompisar; lever ändå fortfarande sunt; annat själförtoende. fortfarande har det i baktanken hela tiden; träningen, att man inte kan släppa den; fortsätter träna hela tiden.

**Tid för anpassning till ny livsstil:** har det i baktanken hela tiden...just med träningen...inte kan släppa den.

**Nuvarande situation:** inte lika nära min mamma som när jag simmade; samma relation till båda; mycket mera tid; umgås mycket med kompisar; ute på helgern och är med kompisar; Pluggar bara; lever ändå fortfarande ganska sunt.

**Viktigast för livskvalitet:** familj och kompisar; bra livsstil.
Individuell profil, E


Idrottslig bakgrund: Simning. Nationell nivå.

Slutade idrotta: 2010; så två år sedan.

Orsaker: det var dags för någonting annat; fick ett stipendium för att åka till USA.

Faktorer som påverkar upplevelsen: var planerat; fått ut mycket av det; haft hjälp av sen i livet; det sociala, organiserad och planera; stipendie- möjligheten; hade ju helt plötsligt tid till annat; college ett år, helt annan livsstil; alltid haft höga krav; annat att se fram emot att göra; föråldrarna alltid stötande; stöttade mitt beslut att sluta; relationerna utanför simningen blev starkare; hade mer tid; mentalt förberett att sluta; beredd på övergången; mycket nya vänner; nya intressen; att vara aktiv har fortsatt; svårare nu eftersom man måste stå för att liksom hitta tillfällen att träna själv.

Tid för anpassning till ny livsstil: väldigt snabb omställning; anpassade mig ganska snabbt; tog inte så lång tid; någon vecka eller så.

Nuvarande situation: fortfarande väldigt bra; mycket nya vänner; nya intressen; att vara aktiv liksom så det har ju fortsatt.

Viktigast för livskvalité: Familj och vänner.

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Individuell profil, F


Idrottslig bakgrund: Innebandy. Internationell.

Slutade idrotta: två år sedan ungefär; försöker fortfarande hitta min grej.

Orsaker: Det blev för mycket; spelade både i klubblaget och i landslaget; orkade inte i längden; var väldigt less på det; inte kul; hade gjort mitt.

Faktorer som påverkar upplevelsen: Jag tyckte mest det var positivt; skönt att slippa kraven; började köra pass på gymmet; utbildade mig till instruktör; tyckte det var jätteroligt; tid att träffa kompisar och behöver inte stressa; mer fritid; blev lugnare; sambo träffade jag efter jag hade slutat med innebandyn; flyttade till Varberg och spelade jag lite innebandy där; hade tur och hade väldigt bra kompisar; pluggade samtidigt som jag spelade; jobb under; provar hela tiden nya grejer.

Tid för anpassning till ny livsstil: provar hela tiden nya grejer för att man inte riktigt vet vad som är ens grej; jag vet inte...om jag riktigt anpassat mig; det tar väl ett bra tag; jag hoppas...genom att bilda familj...kanske man har hittat det man vill göra.

Nuvarande situation: familjen träffar jag mera nu; avslutet har påverkat min relation till familjen positivt; jag har mer tid för dem; arbetar och trivs bra; inte jättemånga vänner; mer riktiga vänner; tränaar styrketräning två gånger i veckan kondition en dag i veckan; så slappar jag typ de andra dagarna, träffar kompisar; det känns jättebra. Helt fantastiskt.

Viktigast: Familjen och livsstilen.

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Individuell profil, G


Idrottslig bakgrund: Rytmisk gymnastik; internationell nivå.

Slutade idrotta: 2011.

Orsaker: Jobb; jobbade hela somrarna; visste inte när och hur jag skulle börja studera; dumt att fortsätta satsa när jag inte visste vad jag ville med mitt liv och om jag hann med eller inte.
Faktorer som påverkar upplevelsen: Planerat; jobb 6 dagar i veckan; mindre aktiv; inte krav från andra; krav på mig själv att lyckas med någonting; släppte det nästan direkt; inte så svårt; jobbade så mycket att jag tänkte inte på träningen; stöttat beslutet; ingen som tvingat mig att fortsätta; träna; nya vänner; träna trupp; fokus på skolan; mer balanserat liv mellan skola och träning.

Tid för anpassning till ny livsstil: det gick väldigt fort; blev knappt någon skillnad; det gick rätt så fort; sex månader.

Nuvarande situation: Bra; som den alltid varit; pluggar; börjat träna igen; mer aktiv; mer hälsosam; friskare kropp.

Viktigast för livskvalité: Träning och familj.

Individuell profil, H


Idrottslig bakgrund: Rytmisk gymnastik; nationell nivå.

Slutade idrotta: fem år sedan.

Orsaker: Framförallt skador; skolan och kompisar och andra intressen; inte lika roligt längre.

Faktorer som påverkar upplevelsen: Planerat; innan jag började gymnasiet; skolan och kompisar och andra intressen; inte lika roligt; hann träffa kompisar mer och göra andra saker; mer fritid; hade aldrig krav på mig; mamma och pappa stöttade; mitt eget val; träna; tappade aldrig kontakten med sporten; inte veta vad man skulle göra med all tid; aktiv på fritiden; nära mamma och pappa; kändes jobbigt så pratade vi om det; förhållandet bättre; tid att träffa vänner och få nya; kvar i föreningen; mycket tillbakasom tränaer.

Tid för anpassning till ny livsstil: svårt att säga; det tog inte så lång tid; det funkade bra ändå; tre till fyra månader.

Nuvarande situation: Tränaare; hinner inte träffa vänner och pojkvän och familj.

Viktigast för livskvalité: Pojkvän och familj; vänner.

Individuell profil, I


Idrottslig bakgrund: Simning. Nationell nivå.

Slutade träna: tre eller fyra år sedan.

Orsaker: Gick sakta utför; mindre engagemang och tog slut; tid att göra andra saker; inte intresserad av att tävla.

Faktorer som påverkar upplevelsen: Nej men gick utför; mindre engagemang och tog slut; flyttade; vuxen på riktigt; annat fyllde upp tiden; trappades ner; krav på plugget; upp till mig om jag ville sluta; jobbigt från att träna varje dag till nästan ingenting; inte hitta träningsrutm utan tränaare; tränaare; tid att träffa vänner; mer tid; nya mål; satsar på annat; få ett jobb; nöjd med utbildning och vad man gör; skapar en framtid; utöva andra sporter; lägger mycket tid på skolan; övergick till att vara tränaare.

Tid för anpassning till ny livsstil: det var väl inte jättesvårt; ingen drastisk omvändning; ett är ungefär.

Nuvarande situation: Bra; bor inte nära familj; träffar dem inte lika mycket; mycket tid på skolan; satsning på skolan; förlorat nätverk; fått nya; tränaar 3 gånger i veckan; springa då och då; vegetarian.

Viktigast för livskvalité: Pojkvän och familj; utbildningen.
Indivuell profil, J


**Idrottslig bakgrund:** Rytmisk gymnastik. Internationell nivå.

**Slutade idrotta:** tre år sedan.

**Orsaker:** ont i rygg.

**Faktorer som påverkar upplevelsen:** ja jag är ganska så nöjd; först planerade jag inte ...hade ont i min rygg ganska länge så tänkte jag att NM ...min sista tävling; familj stöttade mig; inte att jag led av det; behövde inte så mycket stöd; det blev ganska mycket dötid; jag hade ingenting att göra; ganska arg; frustrerad; relation till vänerna stärktes; mer fritid; skolan blev första prioritet; slapp all press; få känna sig; nya hobby.

**Tid för anpassning till ny livsstil:** det tog kanske ett år.

**Nuvarande situation:** faktiskt så förändrades min relation till familjen negativt...man började tjafsa mycket mer; skolan som jag sa innan är fortfarande min första prioritet. träner när jag hinner. pluggar, jag prioriterar skolan först och jag jobbar. Och sen så är jag med vänner.

**Viktigast för livskvalitet:** jobbet; pengar på jobbet; skolan också ...alla vänerna där.
Appendix D

Standardiserat informationsblad
