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Life after Sports: a Career Transition Program for Graduating Collegiate Student-Athletes

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LIFE AFTER SPORTS: A CAREER TRANSITION PROGRAM FOR GRADUATING

COLLEGIATE STUDENT-ATHLETES

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The Life After Sports program is an initiative designed to help graduating collegiate student-athletes transition out of college sports and into post-sports life. The program is designed with four main learning objectives: (1) support participants in planning and preparation through effective goal setting to facilitate growth and behavior change beyond sport (2) create a balanced self-identity as early as pre-retirement (3) enhance awareness and confidence in transferring life skills learned from college sport, and help participants identify opportunities and support for transferring these life skills and (4) serve as a reminder of an ongoing social support network to reinforce their journey beyond college athletics.

This program has been delivered to 15 graduating student-athletes over 12 months at a Division III university in the United States. A group workshop pre-graduation and individual follow-up sessions post-graduation were conducted. Surveys and interviews have been used to evaluate the program at multiple time points. Results showed that participants experienced an increase in hope, an increase in life satisfaction, a decrease in athletic identity, and an increase in total life skills transfer pre- to post-workshop. Follow-up data showed variable changes.

While one-time workshops may offer short-term benefits, ongoing support can lead to sustained improvements in athlete well-being by helping them navigate transitions over time. This study adds to the existing literature on athlete career transitions. Practitioners can use these

findings to help graduating student-athletes successfully navigate the transition to life after sports.

LIFE AFTER SPORTS: A CAREER TRANSITION PROGRAM FOR GRADUATING

COLLEGIATE STUDENT-ATHLETES

MELVIN SANGALANG

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LIFE AFTER SPORTS: A CAREER TRANSITION PROGRAM FOR GRADUATING

COLLEGIATE STUDENT-ATHLETES

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CONTENTS

TABLES

FIGURES

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Every athlete transitions out of sport at one point during their lives. When looking at nearly eight million high school student-athletes in the United States, data indicates that only 6 percent, equating to roughly 500,000 individuals, get to compete as college athletes (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2020). Of those who get to compete at the intercollegiate level, less than 3 percent will proceed to the professional level and college graduation often indicates a transition to a life after sports (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2020). During this transition, college athletes may face significant demands as sports have been a crucial part of their daily lives. They might need to start a new occupational career, reconstruct their self-identity, and renew their social support networks (Stambulova, 2020). It is critical to understand that the transition is a complex and multidimensional process as opposed to a singular, abrupt event. Providing support to athletes for their transition can help them have a successful and positive experience while minimizing negative consequences. Scholars suggest that the focus of the transition process should be on the continuation of behaviors and gradual alteration of goals rather than the termination and abandonment of these factors (Lavallee et al., 2014).

The quality of the transition out of sport is significantly associated with the voluntariness of retirement decisions among other factors (Erpič et al., 2004; Knights et al., 2016; Park et al., 2013a). Since collegiate student-athletes have an idea that their athletic careers will end following graduation, it may be the case that they will experience a positive transition out of competitive sports compared to other athletes such as professional athletes. While this consistent timing of the transition provides a clear opportunity to support college athletes, there is limited research on career transitions in this population (Miller & Buttell, 2018). Most studies exploring athlete career transitions have focused on professional-level athletes across the world, examining

1

their experiences post-retirement or the consequences of sports career termination in terms of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral outcomes (Alfermann et al., 2004; Dimoula et al., 2013; Erpič et al., 2004; Lavallee, 2005; Martin et al., 2014; Park et al., 2013b; Stephan, 2003).

In response to the need for athlete support during transitions, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) launched Athlete 365 in 2005. This is an initiative created by athletes for athletes aimed at providing support throughout their sporting journey, both on and off the field. One of its components, Athlete 365 Career+, addresses athletes' career transitions and has helped tens of thousands of athletes worldwide. Emphasizing that *"Sport will not last forever – and it is healthy to think about the future,"* this initiative emphasizes the importance of career planning for a positive transition and success beyond sport (International Olympic Committee, n.d.). This principle also holds true for graduating student-athletes as they transition out of college sports and into post-sports life. The purpose of this study was to design, implement, and evaluate an educational program specifically for graduating collegiate student-athletes as they transition out of college sports and into post-sports life.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Models and Frameworks

Over the past five decades, there has been a significant evolution in sports psychology research related to athlete careers and transitions (Stambulova et al., 2021). Different theoretical frameworks have emerged to help scholars understand the careers and transitions of athletes. Hence, the first part of this chapter will review five sport-specific frameworks that have been used both in research and practice.

The Holistic Athlete Career Model
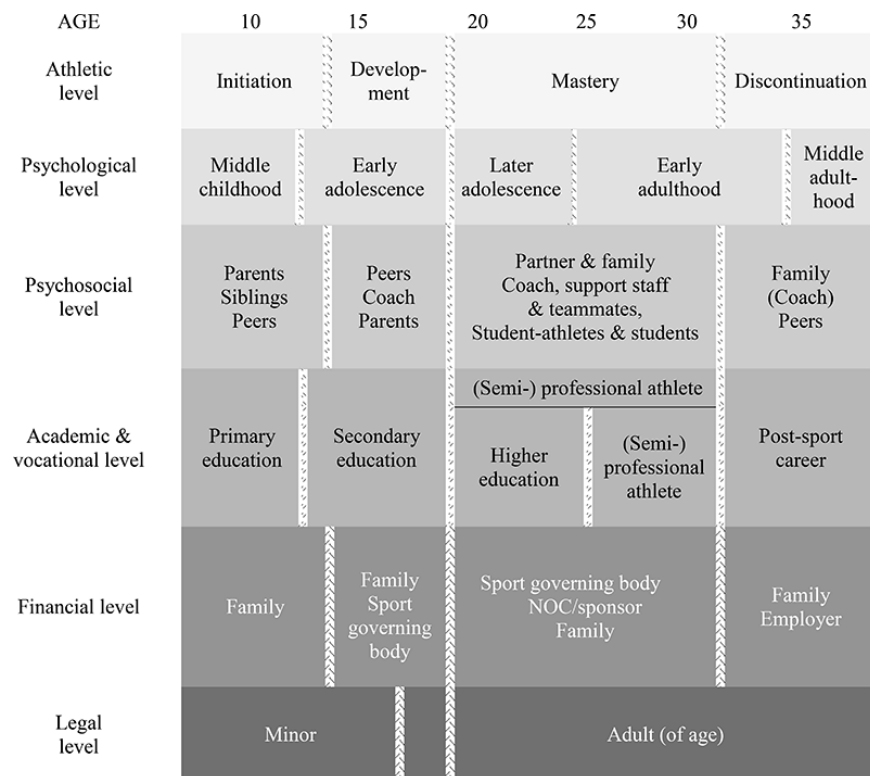
Figure 1. The holistic athlete career model *(Wylleman, 2019).*

The holistic perspective on athletic and personal development acknowledges that various factors and demands at important stages and phases can influence athletes throughout ongoing transition processes (Wylleman, 2019). The holistic athlete career model includes athletic,

psychological, psychosocial, academic & vocational, financial, and legal levels chronologically. Each level presents a series of distinct stages (Figure 1).

The athletic level consists of four stages – initiation, development, mastery, and discontinuation. This portrays the athlete's career as a normative transition, not to be viewed as a final endpoint but rather as a significant developmental phase within the athlete's lifespan. At the psychological level, the model includes five stages that mirror the major transitions and stages of an individual's psychological development. The psychosocial level emphasizes social support networks and highlights individuals who are perceived as most influential during a specific stage. At the academic and vocational level, the model lays out the educational, athletic, and post-sports stages. Lastly, the financial and legal levels reflect the financial support during and after sports careers, as well as the legal status of the athlete, whether they are considered as a minor or an adult. This highlights transitions as critical periods essential for scientific and practical considerations.

The Athletic Career Transition Model

The athletic career transition model emphasizes that career transition is a process and not a single, abrupt event (Figure 2; Stambulova, 2003). To navigate the transition out of sports successfully, athletes need to cope with specific demands or challenges. They must navigate conflicts between "who the athlete is" and "who they want to be." This can be achieved by balancing the transition resources and the barriers they face. The resources that can facilitate this process can be individual traits and social support, or crisis-prevention interventions.

Crisis-prevention interventions such as educational programs are found to be beneficial (Harrison & Lawrence, 2004; Lavallee, 2005; Petitpas et al., 2013). The goal of these interventions is to equip the athlete with the tools necessary for effective coping, including goal

setting and raising awareness and confidence in one's identity and life skills. Barriers to effective

coping can be internal or external factors that hinder the transition process. Examples of such

barriers include an identity foreclosure and a lack of social support.

Transition demands ← Crisis-prevention interventions

Dynamic balance between transition resources and barriers ←

Coping

Effective (= successful transition) | Psychological crisis-coping interventions → | Ineffective (= crisis-transition)

Need in intervention

Ineffective or no intervention

Effective

Dealing-with-consequences interventions → "Costs" for failure To cope with The transition

Figure 2. The athletic career transition model *(Stambulova, 2003).*

Based on the balance between resources and barriers, and coping strategies used, these

may result in an effective or successful transition or an ineffective or a crisis transition. The goal

for sports psychology practitioners is to use crisis-prevention interventions so that they can

maximize the chances of successful transition while minimizing the chances of crisis transition

and the use of psychological crisis-coping and dealing-with-consequences interventions.

However, it is still crucial to assist athletes when they experience a crisis, or one or several of the

earlier-mentioned costs for failure to cope with the transition.

The Scheme of Change for Sport Psychology Practice (SCSPP)

Sequence of Events and Associated Emotions and Cognitions

| Environment | Stable (Unthreatening) | An event that changes status quo and provokes instability * | Enduring environmental instability | Enduring environmental instability, or instability decreases |

| Individual (Emotions) | Positive affect / emotions | Negative affect / emotions/ concerns | Emotional instability / concerns | Reduction or stagnation of negative affect and concerns |

| Individual (Cognitions) | Sport-related decision making, Maintenance of status quo | Appraisal, Elaboration and A strategic decision **, *** | Decision: change / avoid change **** | Examining possibilities for decision implementation |

Stage I
Stability
*

Stage II
Instability

Stage III
Return to Stability or
Remain in Stagnation

Potential Changes in Athletic Status Quo:
1. An Injury
2. Performance Deterioration
3. Conflict with a Coach
4. Technological Changes

**
Potential Responses to the Change:
A. Denial / Ignoring
B. Consulting with Others
C. Self-Coping
D. Consulting a Sport Psychologist

***
Moderating Factors of the Strategic Decision:
1. Significance of Change/Situation (including emotional severity, temporal nature and perceived control)
2. Influence of Significant Others
3. Past Experience in Similar Situations
4. Availability of External Guidance
5. Personal Characteristics
6. Motivational Factors

****
Moderating Factors of the Decision to Change:
1. Application of Therapeutic Processes (independently or professionally)
2. Individual's Capacity for Change
3. Existing Psychological Support

Figure 3. The scheme of change for sport psychology practice (SCSPP) *(Samuel & Tenenbaum, 2011).*

The Scheme of Change for Sport Psychology Practice (SCSPP) shown in Figure 3 outlines typical attributes of change-events and processes that athletes undergo. These change-events create demands that may disrupt athletes' experiences, whether psychological, academic, athletic, or a combination of these aspects. As a result, a series of events unfold, influenced by the athletes' decisions, ultimately leading to either a "change" or "no-change".

The Integrated Career Change and Transition Framework (ICCT)

The Integrated Career Change and Transition Framework (ICCT) shown in Figure 4 was developed to provide a more recent and updated framework for athletes' transition (Samuel et al., 2020). Model factors were adopted from the Athletic Career Transition Model (Figure 2;

Stambulova, 2003) and the Scheme of Change for Sport Psychology Practice (Figure 3; Samuel & Tenenbaum, 2011), and was inspired by the Holistic Athlete Career Model (Figure 1; Wylleman, 2019).
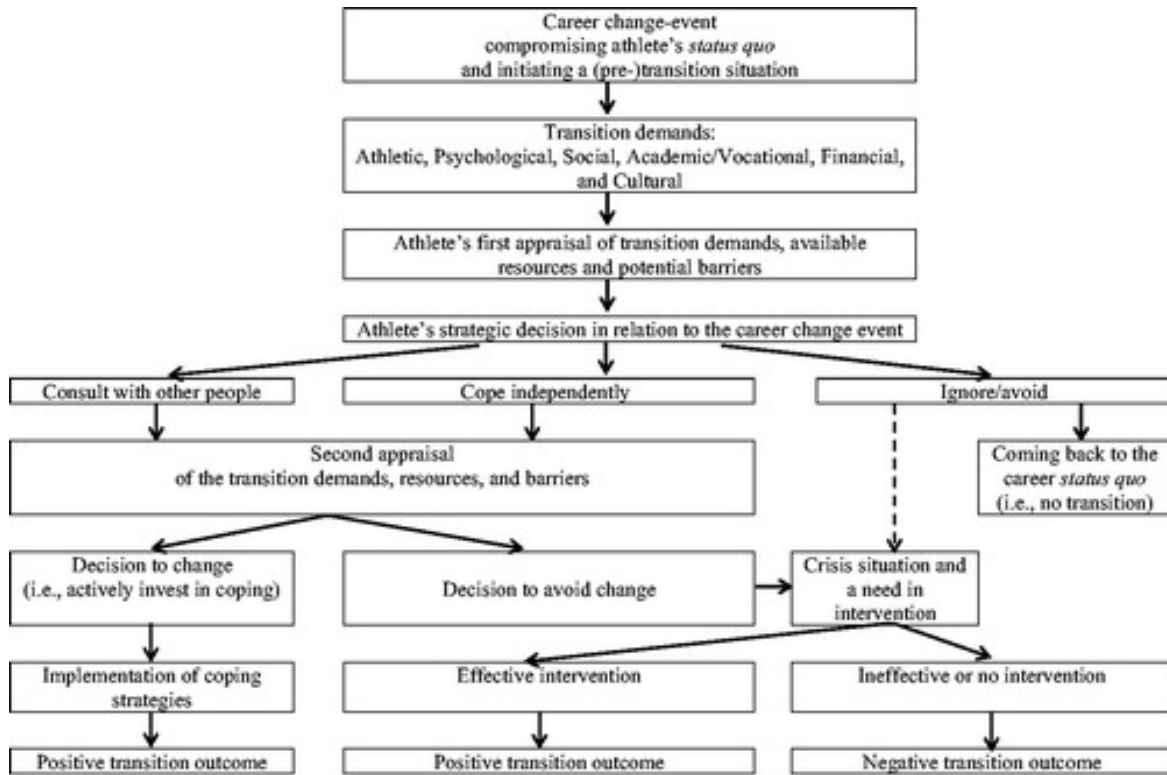
Figure 4. The integrated career change and transition framework (ICCT) *(Samuel et al., 2020).*

When referring to this framework, the transition process begins with a career change-event (e.g., transitioning out of college sport) and this involves the athlete's current status quo initiating a pre-transition situation. Transition demands vary per athlete but include athletic, psychological, social, academic/vocational, financial, and cultural aspects. Upon assessment of available resources and potential barriers, athletes make an initial appraisal of transition demands. Barriers can be internal (e.g., low self-efficacy, lack of clear goals) and external factors (e.g., lack of available job opportunities, financial constraints) that might interfere with the coping process. Resources can be internal (e.g., motivation, resilience) and external (e.g.,

availability of professional support, educational programs) factors that can facilitate the transition process. Athletes then make a strategic decision whether to consult with other people, cope independently, or ignore/avoid the new situation. Each decision leads to either a positive or a negative transition outcome but to cope effectively, athletes should make a conscious decision to change. Altogether, this framework proposes a probabilistic model of various transitional pathways that rely on athletes' decision-making and coping effectiveness, as well as the interventions provided to them.

The Transition Environment Model

More recently, Henriksen et al. (2023) introduced an ecological view of career transitions. While it is important to focus on the development of the athlete as an individual, they also transition through various environments. For example, it would be a transition from an athletic environment to a non-athletic environment for graduating college athletes. However, it could also be an athletic-to-athletic environment if they choose to relocate themselves into the athletic world by working in a sport-related profession or having additional work related to sports (e.g., as coaches or members of the athletics staff).

The ecological view of career transitions introduced the concept of the transition environment model (Figure 5) to describe the components and structure of pre- and post-environments. The "athlete as a person" is shown to be the center of this model and it is all surrounded by a transition time frame. The model is divided into (1) two settings, considered as donor setting and receiving setting, (2) two domains which are the athletic domain comprised by the sports system, related teams, coaches, and peer athletes and friends, and the non-athletic domain comprised by the societal system, other areas of life, family, and non-sport peers, and (3) two levels – macro and micro.
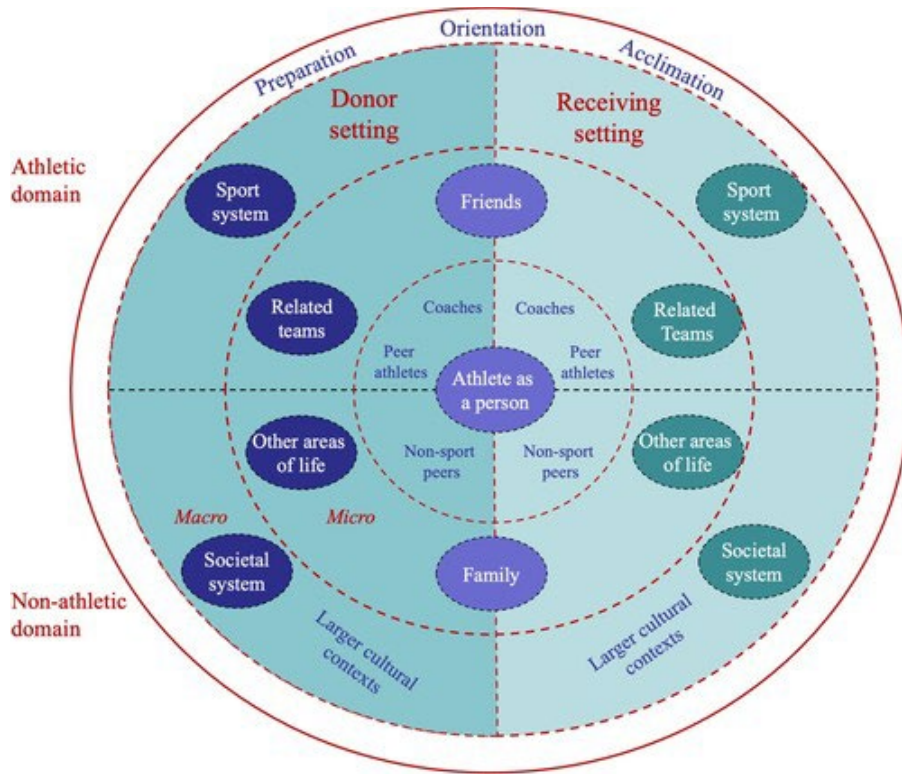
Figure 5. The transition environment model *(Henriksen et al., 2023)*.

The donor and receiving setting refer to the settings where the athlete came from and where they're transitioning respectively. The athletic and non-athletic domains refer to the parts of the environment that are directly related to sport and to the parts of the environment that are outside of sport respectively. The micro-level is the part of the environment where a transitional athlete spends most of their daily life (e.g., university, athletics, work) while the macro-level refers to systems in both the athletic and non-athletic domains, such as specific cultures in sport and work or industry culture. Lastly, the outer layer of the model represents the time frame – preparation (pre-transition), orientation (the initial days, weeks, or months spent adjusting to the new environment), and acclimation (time spent following the relocation when one has been accustomed).

Athlete Career Transitions

The second part of this chapter will review studies regarding athlete career transitions, focusing on key areas that have been previously researched and documented. These are (1) planning and preparation, (2) athletic identity, (3) life skills development and transfer, and (4) social support.

Planning and Preparation

According to a systematic review by Park et al. (2013a), one in six athletes encounter adjustment difficulties or challenges during the transition period. Athletes who did not plan for their retirement, along with limited self- and career exploration, are the most susceptible to crises. For example, Alfermann et al. (2004) looked at the effects of planned vs. unplanned retirement of national and international level athletes from Germany, Lithuania, and Russia. The participants were asked to complete the Athletic Retirement Questionnaire, developed by the authors, and found that those who planned their retirement had higher satisfaction with their career, shorter adaptation periods to post-career life, and higher present-life satisfaction. Furthermore, planned retirement led to better emotional and behavioral adjustment to career termination than unplanned retirement.

Similarly, Dimoula et al. (2013) looked at the athletic retirement of Greek and Spanish elite athletes regarding (1) preconditions for retirement, (2) their transitional period, and (3) the consequences of the transition. The study found that most of the athletes experienced voluntary retirement, received support from family and friends, and maintained a strong relationship with sports through exercise. However, most participants did not plan their retirement. As a result, most of the retired athletes did not exactly retire but rather, relocated themselves into the athletic world by working professionally related to sports or had additional work related to sports. These

findings indicate that athletes who plan for their retirement can potentially experience smoother transitions and higher post-sports career life satisfaction compared to those who do not.

Athletic Identity

Athletic identity, defined as "the degree to which an individual identifies with the athlete role" (Brewer et al., 1993), is a prominent feature in both research and practical efforts to support athletes during their transition from sports. The ICCT framework also recognizes that an athlete's athletic identity shapes their perception of a new situation and reinforces their reactions (Samuel et al., 2020). This transitional phase has been identified as a stressful experience for athletes for a variety of reasons, such as loss of identity (only if athletic identity was high at the time of retirement), negative emotions, decreased sense of belonging, and lack of coping strategies (Park et al., 2013a). Park et al. (2013a) found 36 studies that indicated a negative correlation between high athletic identity and the quality of adjustment. Furthermore, those who have a higher likelihood of developing identity foreclosure (high exclusivity subscale within athletic identity) will also have more trouble adjusting (Lavallee et al., 1997; Park et al., 2013a). Another study done by Park et al. (2013b) explored the career transition experiences of elite Korean tennis players from pre-retirement to post-sport life through semi-structured interviews either face-to-face or over the telephone for 20 months. The study found that the identity shift of elite athletes from an athletic to a new one starts during the later stages of their careers and not just after retirement.

Martin et al. (2014) tracked changes in athletic identity and life satisfaction among Australian elite athletes, focusing on how these factors varied based on retirement status. The study initially included 62 participants who were currently playing and were asked to answer questionnaires about their athletic identity, life satisfaction, and intentions of retirement. 4 years

after, they were asked to answer the same questionnaires and were categorized into three groups: (1) those who had retired from elite sport, (2) those who were still playing but had intentions to retire within the next 4 years, and (3) those who are still playing and had no current thoughts of retirement. The study found that athletic identity scores declined over time in all groups and were most likely caused by increasing age. In terms of life satisfaction, differences between groups were observed. Athletes who were still playing and competing (i.e., planning to retire and had no thoughts on retirement) showed no changes in life satisfaction while retired athletes showed an increase in life satisfaction scores. The study suggested that a positive adjustment may have occurred because of increased freedom time, freedom from injury, and freedom from sport and competition-related stresses.

Lally (2007) looked at the identity reformation of Canadian student-athletes 1 month after their last season started, approximately 1 month after their retirement, and approximately 1 year later through one-on-one in-depth interviews. The study found that identity issues following athletic retirement could be avoided by self-protection, that is, proactively decreasing the prominence of athletic identities. These studies suggest that balancing self-identity as early as pre-retirement provides support for athletes' career transitions. Redefinition of self before leaving the athlete role may result in successful navigation of the transition process. A more recent study that investigated collegiate athletes was done by Manthey and Smith (2023). Female student-athletes who had recently graduated from a Division I institution in the United States were interviewed regarding their experiences and perceptions of transitioning out of college sports. The study found that student-athletes encountered significant challenges, including the loss of their athlete identity. Participants shared that the transition out of college sports involves understanding or letting go of the identity as a college athlete. It is clear, however, that research

must continue to examine changes in athletic identity over time, and practical programs should provide ongoing support to help athletes adapt their identity (Lochbaum et al., 2022; Park et al., 2013a).

Awareness and Confidence of Life Skills Development and Transfer

Life skills transfer has also been found to be an area of scientific and practical interest, with significant potential benefits for athletes of all ages and stages. Life skills transfer enables athletes to navigate transitions between various stages and environments effectively. For example, when athletes move from athletic to non-athletic contexts (Henriksen et al., 2023), their ability to transfer life skills can offer meaningful advantages. Life skills transfer is defined as *"the ongoing process by which an individual further develops or learns and internalizes a personal asset (i.e., psychosocial skill, knowledge, disposition, identity construction, or transformation) in sport and then experiences personal change through the application of the asset in one or more life domains beyond the context where it was originally learned"* (Pierce et al., 2017). Specifically, athletes have been found to develop skills through their sports participation and have the potential to apply and transfer these skills beyond sports (Alfermann et al., 2004; Bernes et al., 2009; Navarro, 2015; Park et al., 2013b; Stephan, 2003).

Stephan (2003) explored the dynamics of subjective well-being during the transition out of elite sports of French Olympians. Participants were asked to answer a subjective well-being questionnaire and participated in semi-structured interviews over one year. The study concluded that helping athletes become aware of and develop transferable skills can increase subjective well-being, help with motivation, and provide direction in post-sports life. Similarly, Park et al. (2013b) found that awareness and education of life skills and their transfer to other domains can build competence in outside sports contexts and increase perceived readiness for retirement. In a

study done by Navarro (2015), student-athletes highlighted how life skills, such as time management, dedication, and teamwork, developed in sports would assist them in their future careers. Alfermann et al. (2004) suggested that programs designed for athletes transitioning out of sport should focus on helping them accumulate transition resources, such as transferable skills, to form a readiness for the transition. Increasing awareness and confidence in life skill transfer opportunities can enhance competency in applying these skills from sports to other contexts (Bernes et al., 2009; Pierce et al., 2017).

Coping skills, one of many life skills, can play a significant role in helping transitioning athletes navigate the challenges between different stages and environments that come with retirement from sport (Lavallee et al., 2014). Athletes need to develop healthy coping strategies that can help manage the various stressors that may arise during this transitional period. Park et al. (2013b) found that problem-focused coping was effective when dealing with career-related issues, such as developing vocational skills. On the other hand, emotional-focused coping was found to be more useful when dealing with interpersonal difficulties, such as conflicts with other people. Other coping strategies that were found effective for facilitating the transition process included exploring new hobbies and interests, staying busy, maintaining their physical activity participation and regimens, venting emotions, and staying in touch with one's sports and social network.

Social Support

Athletes tend to have most of their friends and acquaintances in the sports environment wherein their daily routines and interests are centered around their athletic lives. As a result, when college athletes complete their degrees and move on from the collegiate sports world, the social support they received and relied upon as an integral part of a team, or a university may no

longer be present. Social identity, an important aspect of athletic identity, may also cause issues for athletes' transitions when the social aspects of their sport are missing because of collegiate sports retirement (Stephan & Brewer, 2007). Moreover, Dimoula et al. (2013) reported that retired elite athletes perceived a lack of support from sports officials, sports organizations, former coaches, and psychologists. However, athletes who had supportive coaches, families, and friends are associated with a positive quality of transition (Park et al., 2013b). Thus, the roles and influences of athletes' networks are vital in supporting athletes' career transitions.

Interventions for Athlete Career Transitions

Athletes encounter different psychological, emotional, and behavioral difficulties before and after career termination. During this time, previous studies have demonstrated that interventions can directly or indirectly support transitioning athletes. Lavallee (2005) conducted a study that evaluated the effectiveness of a life development intervention on career transition adjustment in retired male professional soccer players. They were asked to complete a battery of questionnaires and participate in a life development intervention package that included awareness and transfer of life skills and coping strategies. The study found that the intervention significantly helped athletes in their career transition adjustment.

Specifically, for collegiate athletes, the CHAMPS/Life Skills program was created by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) to offer assistance and enhancement strategies as student-athletes navigate the transitions during and after their collegiate careers. In their senior year, the program focuses on career assistance where student-athletes are prepared for transitioning from college to the workplace. Services include (1) preparation for college academic and athletic career termination and (2) assistance in job-hunting strategies such as preparing resumes and practicing interviewing skills (Petitpas et al., 2013). Additionally,

Harrison and Lawrence (2004) explored the perspectives of student-athletes regarding the transition from an athletic to a non-athletic career, aiming to encourage them to plan for their future careers. Participants came from an NCAA Division II college and were asked to complete a scale designed by the authors. This study also included a qualitative section wherein the researchers used visual elicitation, an interview technique using photographs to guide the discussion, to prompt participants to share their thoughts and feelings afterward. The study found that through visual elicitation (i.e., looking at a profile of a previous student-athlete), participants were inspired and encouraged to start preparing for their futures. This encouraged them to work hard and create new meanings for their non-athletic careers. Thus, coaches, professors, trainers, academic counselors, and administrators should help student-athletes to consider and plan for their future careers.

Purpose of the Study

It is notable that educational programs predominantly provide support during the final stages (i.e., last semester) of collegiate athletic participation (Manthey & Smith, 2023), and empirical studies generally provide only one-time, snapshot, or retrospective accounts of experiences of life skills transfer (Kendellen & Camiré, 2020). Those retrospective studies typically focus on one point in time where memory decay and recall bias are highly possible. As a result, there is a higher risk of significant information being neglected. For this reason, an opportunity exists to create programming that follows individuals throughout their transition out of college and provides targeted support for life skills transfer over an extended period.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to design, implement, and evaluate an educational program specifically for graduating collegiate student-athletes as they transition out of college sports and into post-sports life. The specific aims that will be addressed are as follows:

16

1) How do hope, life satisfaction, athletic identity, and life skills transfer change pre- to post-workshop for graduating collegiate student-athletes?

2) How do hope, life satisfaction, athletic identity, and life skills transfer change over 12 months for student-athletes who participate in the workshop?

3) What are the differences in hope, life satisfaction, athletic identity, and life skills transfer over 12 months for student-athletes who participate in only the workshop and student-athletes who participate in follow-up individual sessions?

The research hypotheses are presented as follows:

1) Graduating student-athletes who participate in the workshop will experience an increase in hope, an increase in life satisfaction, a decrease in athletic identity, and an increase in life skills transfer from pre- to post-workshop.

2) Over 12 months, student-athletes who participate in the workshop will continue to experience an increase in hope, an increase in life satisfaction, a decrease in athletic identity, and an increase in life skills transfer.

3) Over 12 months, student-athletes who participate in follow-up individual sessions, in addition to workshop participation, will experience greater changes in hope, life satisfaction, athletic identity, and life skills transfer than those who will only participate in the workshop.

This project was designed to extend the practical and scientific understanding of career transitions, particularly in the collegiate athlete population. By creating, implementing, and evaluating a unique, longitudinal, person-centered approach, it aims to support athletes as people throughout their transition. This approach has the potential to increase the chances of a successful and positive transition while minimizing the risk of identity crises and negative consequences (e.g.,

depression, anxiety, substance abuse). The findings from this study could offer invaluable insights for universities, sports organizations, and coaches, in developing strategies to better support student-athletes during and after their collegiate careers.

CHAPTER III: METHODS

In this section, the Life After Sports educational program will be presented. This will provide an overview of the educational content's conceptual design and practical implementation. Following this, the evaluation approach for the study will be presented. This will include information about the program participants, research procedures, measures, and data analysis approaches.

The Life After Sports Educational Program

An educational program was created to provide support to student-athletes who are transitioning out of college sports and life. From a content perspective, the program was designed based on the Integrated Career Change and Transition framework (ICCT) (Samuel et al., 2020). It focused on four main areas: (1) planning and preparation, (2) identity and personal development, (3) life skills development and transfer, and (4) social support. From a counseling and pedagogical perspective, the implementation of the program was guided by a combined humanistic, person-centered approach (Walker, 2010) and an explicit life skills approach (Conley et al., 2010). The teaching and learning throughout this program was guided specifically by (1) humanistic tenets that humans have free will and have the ability to make choices that are growth-enhancing (Walker, 2010) and (2) life skill coaching tenets that individuals can gain awareness and confidence to apply skills across contexts (Conley et al., 2010; Pierce et al., 2017).

The Life After Sports program has four main learning objectives: (1) support participants in planning and preparation through effective goal setting to facilitate growth and behavior change beyond sport (Whitmore, 2009) (2) create a balanced self-identity as early as pre-retirement (Lally, 2007; Park et al., 2013) (3) enhance awareness and confidence in transferring

life skills learned from college sport, and help participants identify opportunities and support for transferring these life skills (Bernes et al., 2009; Pierce et al., 2017) and (4) serve as a reminder of an ongoing social support network to reinforce their journey beyond college athletics.

Program Overview

(1) Participants were recruited two months before graduation and asked to complete the pre-workshop survey. Based on their responses, a personalized workbook was created for each participant. The personalized workbook consisted of worksheets and a personal life skills profile. An example of a Personal Life Skills Profile is shown in Figure 6, which used the participants' mean scores for each life skill.
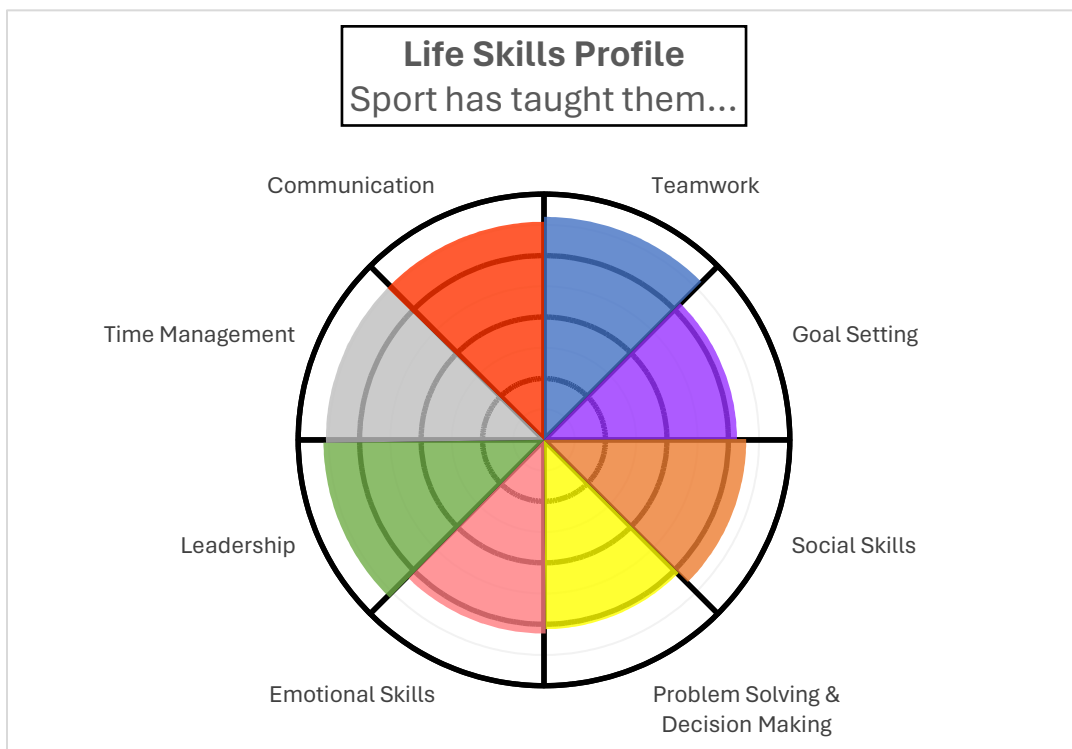

Figure 6. Personal Life Skills Profile example.

According to the participants, sports have taught them teamwork ($M = 4.63$, $SD = 0.38$), goal setting ($M = 4.14$, $SD = 0.83$), social skills ($M = 4.29$, $SD = 0.65$), problem solving

& decision making ($M = 4.08$, $SD = 0.75$), emotional skills ($M = 4.15$, $SD = 0.89$),
leadership ($M = 4.59$, $SD = 0.42$), time management ($M = 4.55$, $SD = 0.67$), and
communication ($M = 4.55$, $SD = 0.47$). One month after, the one-hour group workshop
was conducted (i.e., one month before graduation).

(2) The workshop began by answering the first worksheet – the 16-item GROW model
(Whitmore, 2009). The purpose of this worksheet is to coach participants in exploring
their *Goal* (e.g., What do you want to achieve?)*, Reality* (e.g., What have you done so far
to reach this goal?)*, Options* (e.g., What could you do as the next step in reaching this
goal?)*, and Will* (e.g., What will you do tomorrow toward achieving your goal?) in life
beyond college sport and college life. The questions were narrated one at a time to ensure
that there was a consistent pace between all participants.

(3) Next, participants completed the second worksheet to identify and write down their
multiple identities (including the "*athlete*" role). Then, they rank the identities in terms of
importance and are instructed to remove the "*athlete*" role to symbolize retirement and
elicit the feelings, reflections, and thoughts associated with that experience. Afterward,
the participants were asked to choose their top three identities that are most meaningful to
them (e.g., future nurse, brother, hardworking). This activity aimed to guide participants
in exploring who they are by identifying which aspects mean the most to them and how
these identities shape their actions, behaviors, and experiences. It was emphasized that
while it is perfectly fine to continue valuing being an athlete, it is encouraged to consider
this as just one aspect of their overall identity.

(4) The last component of the workshop focused on life skills and the personal life skills
profile was used to assess and identify life skills learned from college sports. For the third

and final worksheet, the participants were presented with their personal life skills profile and asked to write down and describe at least three experiences and reasons for developing these skills. Following that, they were asked to identify and write down at least three opportunities and situations for applying these life skills in the future. Each activity was followed by small and large group discussions to encourage participant reflection, learning, and application to life beyond college sports.

(5) To conclude the workshop, participants were asked to describe and write down who they aspire to be in a year by completing the statement "I am/I will..."

(6) After the workshop, video messages from several coaches were compiled to send out to participants upon graduation. The contents of the video message were instructed to include congratulatory and good luck messages, encouragement to have a balanced identity, reminders of life lessons and life skills from sports, and ongoing social support from their home university.

(7) Follow-up individual interview/consulting sessions were conducted 1-5 months and 7-9 months later.

Research Design

Sport psychology practitioners must take responsibility for evaluating and documenting the effectiveness of their programming (Anderson et al., 2002). For this reason, a systematic, outcome evaluation of the educational program was conducted. This evaluation was conducted with a judgment-oriented focus to assess the value and worth of the program on participant psychological outcomes (e.g., identity, life skills transfer); a knowledge-oriented focus to conceptually understand changes in student-athlete hope, life satisfaction, identity, and life skills transfer; and an improvement-oriented focus to formatively monitor program activities

22

(Chelimsky, 1997). Specifically, a mixed-methods design was used to collect evaluative survey data and conduct interviews to assess changes in hope, life satisfaction, athletic identity, and life skills transfer for student-athletes who participated in the program.

Participants

The sample for this study included a total of 15 graduating student-athletes from a Midwest NCAA Division III university in the United States (Male = 5; Female = 10). There were no participants who identified outside of the gender binary. All participants identified as Caucasian/White ($n = 15$, 100%) and represented a variety of different sports such as Basketball, Football, Lacrosse, Soccer, Swimming, Track & Field, and Volleyball. 12 out of 15 participants (80%) self-reported that they have planned for their career after college.

Research Procedures

The research study received approval from the Illinois State University Institutional Review Board. Data was collected at four different time points. After completing each time point, participants received a $20 Amazon gift card.

- Time-point 1 (T1; March 2023) occurred two months before graduation, which was scheduled in May 2023. During this time, the Division III university's athletic department staff notified student-athletes in their final year of college through email about an educational program focused on the transition out of college athletics. Student-athletes were informed that they could voluntarily complete surveys, attend the workshop, and participate in interviews as part of the educational program. Interested student-athletes completed the pre-workshop survey through Qualtrics.

- Time-point 2 (T2; April 2023) occurred one month after T1. During this time, the workshop was held with 15 student-athletes. After the workshop, participants completed

the post-workshop survey through Qualtrics. Additionally, participants were asked if they were interested in follow-up conversations. Those interested provided their email addresses and phone numbers.

- Time-point (T3; June – October 2023) occurred one to five months after graduation. Participants were notified through email and text messages about follow-up interviews over Zoom. An online scheduling appointment platform (Calendly) was utilized for participants to select a date and time for their interview. After scheduling, the follow-up interviews were conducted, and participants completed the post-workshop survey afterward through Qualtrics. Only 6 out of the 15 participants, all of whom were female, completed the T3 follow-up interview and post-workshop survey.

- Time-point (T4; December 2023 – February 2024) occurred seven to nine months after graduation. Participants were notified through email and text messages about follow-up interviews over Zoom. An online scheduling appointment platform (Calendly) was utilized for participants to select a date and time for their interview. After scheduling, the follow-up interviews were conducted, and participants completed the post-workshop survey afterward through Qualtrics. The same six female participants, who completed the T3 follow-up interview, completed the T4 follow-up interview and post-workshop survey. To gather additional follow-up data, the remaining 9 participants were asked to complete the post-workshop survey even without a follow-up interview. 7 of the 9 participants (Male = 3; Female = 4) completed the post-workshop survey.

Measures

The survey packet included demographic questions and four validated scales. The follow-up interviews included open-ended questions.

State Hope Scale

This scale was developed by Snyder et al. (1996) and is a brief, self-report measure of ongoing goal-directed thinking. A modified version of the scale was used for this study that included an additional question: "I am confident in the plan I have for my future after college." Participants were asked to rate how they think about themselves about their plans after college with 7 statements using an 8-point Likert scale, where 1 = definitely false and 8 = definitely true. Higher scores indicate a higher measure of hope. A sample question was: "At this time, I am meeting the goals that I have set for myself."

Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)

This scale was developed by Diener et al. (1985) and is focused on assessing global life satisfaction. Participants were asked to rate how much they agree to disagree with 5 statements using a 7-point Likert scale, where 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree. Higher scores indicate a higher measure of life satisfaction. A sample question was: "If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing."

Athletic Identity Measurement Scale (AIMS)

This scale was developed by Brewer and Cornelius (2001) and is a self-reported measure to which the participants identify with the role of being an athlete. Participants were asked to rate how much they agree to disagree with 7 statements using a 7-point Likert scale, where 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree. Higher scores indicate a higher measure of athletic identity. A sample question was: "Sport is the most important part of my life." Previous studies have commonly used a combined total AIMS score (Lochbaum et al., 2022), and this study used the same approach for analysis.

Life Skills Scale for Sport – Transfer Scale (LSSS-TS)

This scale was developed by Mossman et al. (2021) to assess participants' perceived life skills development and transfer from sport to other domains. For the life skills development part, participants were asked to rate the extent to which they developed eight life skills (i.e., teamwork, goal setting, social skills, problem-solving and decision making, emotional skills, leadership, time management, and communication) through playing sports using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 = not at all and 5 = very much. Higher scores indicate a higher life skills development. A sample question was: "Time Management – This sport has taught me to control how I use my time."

For the life skills transfer part, participants were asked to rate the extent to which they perceived they were transferring eight different life skills developed through sport to five different domains away from sport (i.e., in school/education, at home, within the community, job/doing chores, and in relationship with others) using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 = not at all and 5 = very much. Higher scores indicate a higher total life skills transfer. A sample question was: "I use these time management skills in school/education." A total life skill transfer score (i.e., an average of 8 life skills) was used for analysis.

Follow-up Interviews

Two sets of follow-up interviews (T3 & T4), conducted via Zoom, were held in a conversational manner and covered various topics. Follow-up interviews used a standardized list of questions which included graduation experience and plans, enjoyable experiences and stressors encountered, reflections on identity and transferable life skills, and workshop feedback. Only 6 out of the 15 participants completed both T3 and T4 follow-up interviews (i.e., 12 total

interviews). All communication was in English, and interviews lasted for an average of 27 minutes ranging from 18 to 38 minutes.

<div align="center">**Data Analysis**</div>

Data analysis was conducted in SPSS (version 29.0). For all study variables at all four time points (T1-T4), descriptive statistics were calculated. Changes across time in hope, life satisfaction, athletic identity, and total life skills transfer were also investigated. Because available data that were gathered differed at each time point, data analysis was done in waves:

- The first wave (i.e., pre-workshop and post-workshop; T1 & T2) consisted of 15 participants.

- The second wave (i.e., pre-workshop, post-workshop, 1-5-month follow-up, and 7-9-month follow-up; T1–T4) consisted of 6 out of the 15 original participants.

- The third wave (i.e., pre-workshop, post-workshop, and the 7-9-month follow-up (T1, T2, T4) consisted of 13 out of the original 15 participants.

For all three waves, one-way repeated measure ANOVA was conducted with time as the independent variable and (1) hope, (2) life satisfaction, (3) athletic identity, and (4) total life skill transfer as the dependent variables. Additionally, for the third wave, a 3 (Time) x 2 (Interview Status) between-subjects factorial ANOVA was calculated comparing the hope, life satisfaction, athletic identity, and total life skill transfer scores for participants at three different time points (T1, T2, T4) and who had follow-up interviews or not.

In addition to quantitative analyses, follow-up interviews T3 and T4 were analyzed using both deductive and inductive approaches (Braun et al., 2016). For the T3 interviews, a deductive thematic analysis was conducted to explore connections between the participant experiences and responses and the guiding frameworks and concepts for this study. Specifically, a 'top-down'

approach was used by the researcher to identify statements related to the concepts of planning and preparation, athletic identity, life skills development and transfer, and social support, and categorize these statements into themes and sub-themes related to the transition (Braun et al., 2016). For the T4 interviews, a combination of deductive and inductive approaches was used. First, a similar deductive approach to the T3 interviews was used to identify statements, themes, and sub-themes related to planning and preparation, athletic identity, life skills development and transfer, and social support. Second, an inductive approach was used to analyze the program feedback. Specifically, statements were identified that provided insights into the participant experience and reflections on their involvement in the program. This 'bottom-up' approach allowed the researcher to identify any relevant statements about the program and create themes and sub-themes to best explain participant experiences and feedback (Braun et al., 2016).

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

Quantitative Data

Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were calculated to track changes across time in state hope, life satisfaction, athletic identity, and total life skills transfer over 12 months. Internal consistency for measures was also calculated at each time point (*see* Table 1).

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Analysis for Study Measures

Measure (range)	T1 ($n = 15$)			T2 ($n = 15$)			T3 ($n = 6$)			T4 ($n = 13$)		
	M	SD	α	M	SD	α	M	SD	α	M	SD	α
State Hope (1-8)	6.62	1.02	0.91	6.99[*]	0.80	0.87	7.38	0.41	0.72	7.08	0.92	0.92
Life Satisfaction (1-7)	5.53	0.98	0.92	5.89[*]	0.66	0.78	6.40	0.51	0.82	5.84	0.61	0.68
Athletic Identity (1-7)	4.73	0.68	0.58	4.07[**]	0.88	0.71	3.74	0.56	0.34	3.80	0.99	0.78
Total Transfer (1-5)	4.11	0.68	0.98	4.44[*]	0.40	0.94	4.43	0.22	0.74	4.36	0.50	0.95

[*]$p < .05$ (T1 vs. T2). [**]$p < .01$ (T1 vs. T2)

First wave: pre- to post-workshop (T1 & T2)

A one-way repeated-measures ANOVA was calculated comparing the State Hope scores of all 15 participants pre- to post-workshop. A significant effect was found ($F(1,14) = 5.01$, $p = .042$, partial $\eta^2 = .26$). Scores increased significantly from pre-workshop ($M = 6.62$, $SD = 1.02$) to post-workshop ($M = 6.99$, $SD = 0.80$).

A one-way repeated-measures ANOVA was calculated comparing the Satisfaction with Life scores of all 15 participants pre- to post-workshop. A significant effect was found ($F(1,14) = 5.56$, $p = .033$, partial $\eta^2 = .28$). Scores increased significantly from pre-workshop ($M = 5.53$, $SD = 0.98$) to post-workshop ($M = 5.89$, $SD = 0.66$).

A one-way repeated-measures ANOVA was calculated comparing the AIMS scores of all 15 participants pre- to post-workshop. A significant effect was found (F (1,14) = 9.79, p = .007, partial η^2 = .41). Scores decreased significantly from pre-workshop (M = 4.73, SD = 0.68) to post-workshop (M = 4.07, SD = 0.88).

A one-way repeated-measures ANOVA was calculated comparing the Total Life Skills Transfer scores of all 15 participants pre- to post-workshop. A significant effect was found (F (1,14) = 7.48, p = .016, partial η^2 = .35). Scores increased significantly from pre-workshop (M = 4.11, SD = 0.68) to post-workshop (M = 4.44, SD = 0.40).

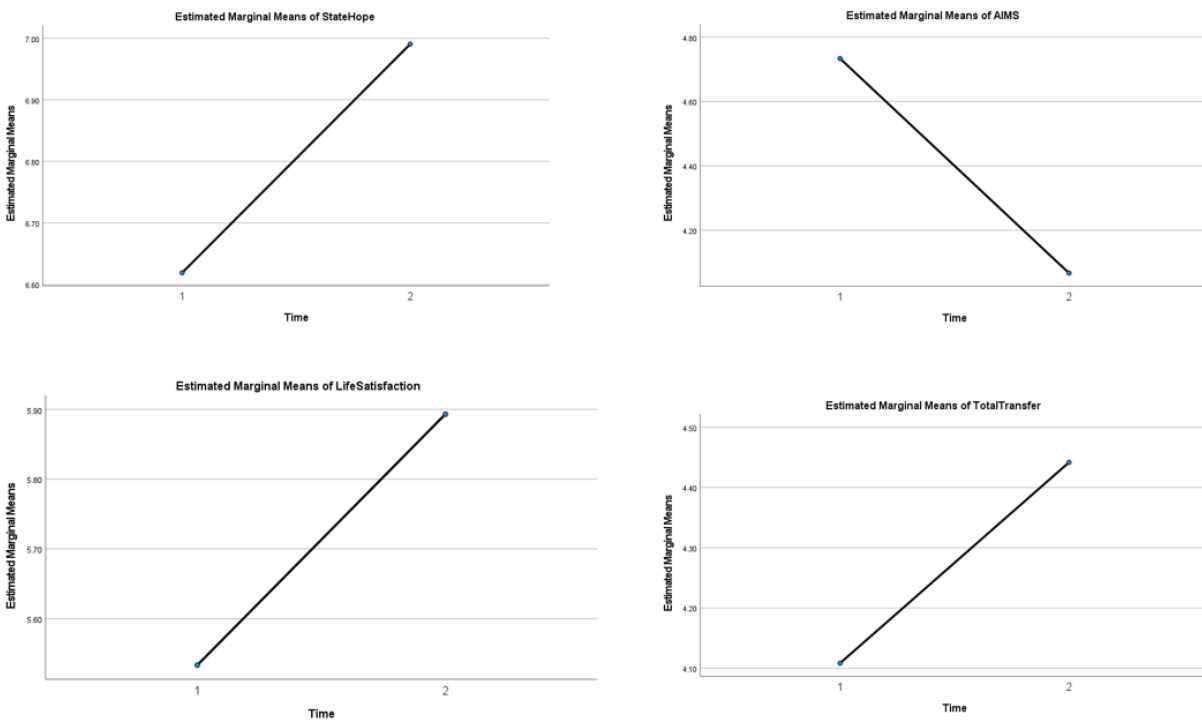First wave trends for all measures over time are shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7. First wave trends for all measures

Second wave: pre- to post-workshop & both follow-ups (T1–T4)

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Analysis (second wave; n = 6)

Measure	T1 (*n* = 6)			T2 (*n* = 6)			T3 (*n* = 6)			T4 (*n* = 6)		
(range)	*M*	*SD*	α	*M*	*SD*	α	*M*	*SD*	α	*M*	*SD*	α
State Hope (1-8)	6.79	1.04	0.85	7.14	0.69	0.78	7.38	0.41	0.72	7.36	0.62	0.91
Life Satisfaction (1-7)	5.37	1.26	0.93	5.97*	0.83	0.79	6.40[†]	0.51	0.82	6.03[‡‡]	0.56	0.68
Athletic Identity (1-7)	4.57	0.53	0.17	4.02	1.12	0.85	3.74	0.56	0.34	3.26[**]	0.87	0.77
Total Transfer (1-5)	3.89	0.63	0.96	4.31	0.35	0.89	4.43	0.22	0.74	4.50[**§]	0.32	0.86

*p < .05 (T1 vs. T2). †p < .05 (T1 vs. T3). **p < .05 (T1 vs. T4). §p < .05 (T2 vs. T4). ‡‡p < .01 (T3 vs. T4).

A one-way repeated-measures ANOVA was calculated comparing the State Hope scores of 6 participants at four different times: pre-workshop (T1), post-workshop (T2), 1-5-month follow-up (T3), and 7-9-month follow-up (T4). Due to a mild violation of the sphericity assumption ($\varepsilon > 0.70$), the Huynh-Feldt adjusted *F* was used. No significant effect was found (F (3,15) = 1.97, *p* = .16, partial η^2 = .28). Based on follow-up paired t-tests, no significant differences were found between any of the 4 time points.

A one-way repeated-measures ANOVA was calculated comparing the Satisfaction with Life scores of 6 participants at four different times: pre-workshop (T1), post-workshop (T2), 1-5-month follow-up (T3), and 7-9-month follow-up (T4). There was no violation of the sphericity assumption ($\varepsilon < 0.70$) and the Greenhouse-Geisser F was used. There was a significant difference in Life Satisfaction across time, F (1.21, 6.03) = 6.46, *p* = .04, partial η^2 = .56. Paired t-tests were used as post-hoc tests for significant differences. A significant increase from T1 (*M* = 5.37, *SD* = 1.26) to T2 (*M* = 5.97, *SD* = 0.83) was found (t (5) = -3.11, *p* = .027). A significant increase from T1 (*M* = 5.37, *SD* = 1.26) to T3 (*M* = 6.40, *SD* = 0.51) was found (t (5) = -3.04, *p*

= .029). A significant decrease from T3 (M = 6.40, SD = 0.51) to T4 (M = 6.03, SD = 0.56) was

found (t (5) = 4.57, p = .006). No further significant differences were observed.

A one-way repeated-measures ANOVA was calculated comparing the AIMS scores of 6

participants at four different times: pre-workshop (T1), post-workshop (T2), 1-5-month follow-

up (T3), and 7-9-month follow-up (T4). Due to a mild violation of the sphericity assumption (ε >

0.70), the Huynh-Feldt adjusted F was used. No significant effect was found (F (3,15) = 2.95, p

= .066, partial η^2 = .37). Since p = .066, and therefore approached significance at p > 0.05,

follow-up paired t-tests were used to explore any potential significant differences between

individual time points. A significant decrease from T1 (M = 4.57, SD = 0.53) to T4 (M = 3.26,

SD = 0.87) was found (t (5) = 2.86, p = .036). No further significant differences were observed.

A one-way repeated-measures ANOVA was calculated comparing the Total Life Skills

Transfer scores of 6 participants at four different times: pre-workshop (T1), post-workshop (T2),

1-5-month follow-up (T3), and 7-9-month follow-up (T4). There was no violation of the

sphericity assumption (ε < 0.7) and the Greenhouse-Geisser F was used. No significant effect

was found (F (1.35, 6.77) = 5.23, p = .051, partial η^2 = .51). Since p = .051, and therefore

approached significance at p > 0.05, follow-up paired t-tests were used to explore any potential

significant differences between individual time points. A significant increase from T1 (M = 3.89,

SD = 0.63) to T4 (M = 4.50, SD = 0.32) was found (t (5) = -2.90, p = .034). A significant

increase from T2 (M = 4.31, SD = 0.35) to T4 (M = 4.50, SD = 0.32) was found (t (5) = -2.62, p

= .047). No further significant differences were observed.

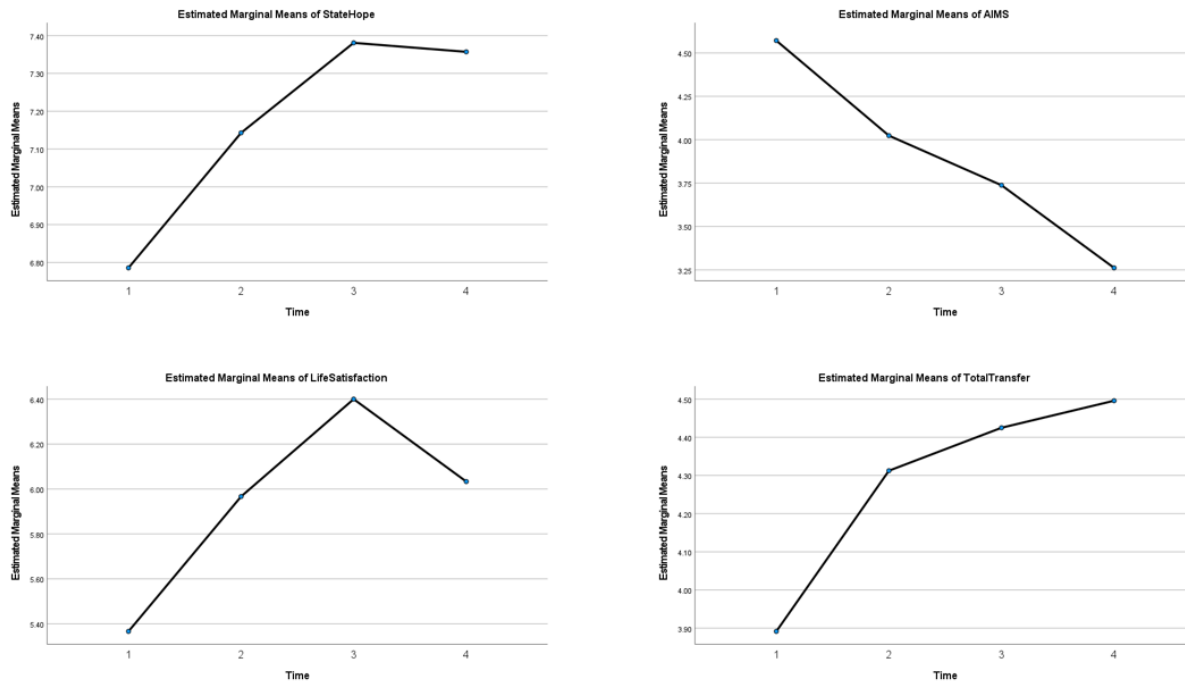Second wave trends for all measures over time are shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8. Second wave trends for all measures

Third wave: pre-workshop, post-workshop & 7-9-month follow-up (T1, T2, T4)

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Analysis (third wave; n = 13)

Measure	T1 ($n = 13$)			T2 ($n = 13$)			T4 ($n = 13$)		
(range)	*M*	*SD*	α	*M*	*SD*	α	*M*	*SD*	α
State Hope (1-8)	6.57	1.09	0.91	6.91	0.81	0.85	7.08††	0.92	0.92
Life Satisfaction (1-7)	5.55	1.05	0.92	5.88	0.71	0.79	5.85	0.61	0.68
Athletic Identity (1-7)	4.77	0.70	0.59	4.16*	0.90	0.72	3.80††	0.99	0.78
Total Transfer (1-5)	4.07	0.68	0.97	4.43*	0.38	0.93	4.36	0.50	0.95

*$p < .05$ (T1 vs. T2). ††$p < .01$ (T1 vs. T4).

A one-way repeated-measures ANOVA was calculated comparing the State Hope scores

of 13 participants at three different times: pre-workshop (T1), post-workshop (T2), and 7-9-

month follow-up (T4). Due to a mild violation of the sphericity assumption ($\varepsilon > 0.70$), the

Huynh-Feldt adjusted *F* was used. There was a significant difference in State Hope across time,

F (2,24) = 4.85, p = .017, partial η^2 = .29. Paired t-tests were used as post-hoc tests for significant differences. A significant increase from T1 (M = 6.57, SD = 1.09) to T4 (M = 7.08, SD = 0.92) was found (t (12) = -3.18, p = .008). No further significant differences were observed.

A one-way repeated-measures ANOVA was calculated comparing the Satisfaction with Life scores of 13 participants at three different times: pre-workshop (T1), post-workshop (T2), and 7-9-month follow-up (T4). Due to a mild violation of the sphericity assumption (ε > 0.70), the Huynh-Feldt adjusted F was used. No significant effect was found (F (1.62, 19.49) = 2.31, p = .13, η^2 = .16). Based on follow-up paired t-tests, no significant differences were found between any of the 3 time points.

A one-way repeated-measures ANOVA was calculated comparing the AIMS scores of 13 participants at three different times: pre-workshop (T1), post-workshop (T2), and 7-9-month follow-up (T4). Due to a mild violation of the sphericity assumption (ε > 0.70), the Huynh-Feldt adjusted F was used. There was a significant difference in AIMS across time, F (2,24) = 7.62, p = .003, partial η^2 = .38. Paired t-tests were used as post-hoc tests for significant differences. A significant decrease from T1 (M = 4.77, SD = 0.70) to T2 (M = 4.16, SD = 0.90) was found (t (12) = 2.68, p = .02). A significant decrease from T1 (M = 4.77, SD = 0.70) to T4 (M = 3.80, SD = 0.99) was found (t (12) = 3.98, p = .002). No further significant differences were observed.

A one-way repeated-measures ANOVA was calculated comparing the Total Life Skills Transfer scores of 13 participants at three different times: pre-workshop (T1), post-workshop (T2), and 7-9-month follow-up (T4). Due to a mild violation of the sphericity assumption (ε > 0.70), the Huynh-Feldt adjusted F was used. There was a significant difference in Total Life Skills Transfer across time, F (2,24) = 4.04, p = .031, partial η^2 = .25. Paired t-tests were used as post-hoc tests for significant differences. A significant increase from T1 (M = 4.07, SD = 0.68)

to T2 ($M = 4.43$, $SD = 0.38$) was found (t (12) = -2.67, $p = .02$). No further significant differences were observed.

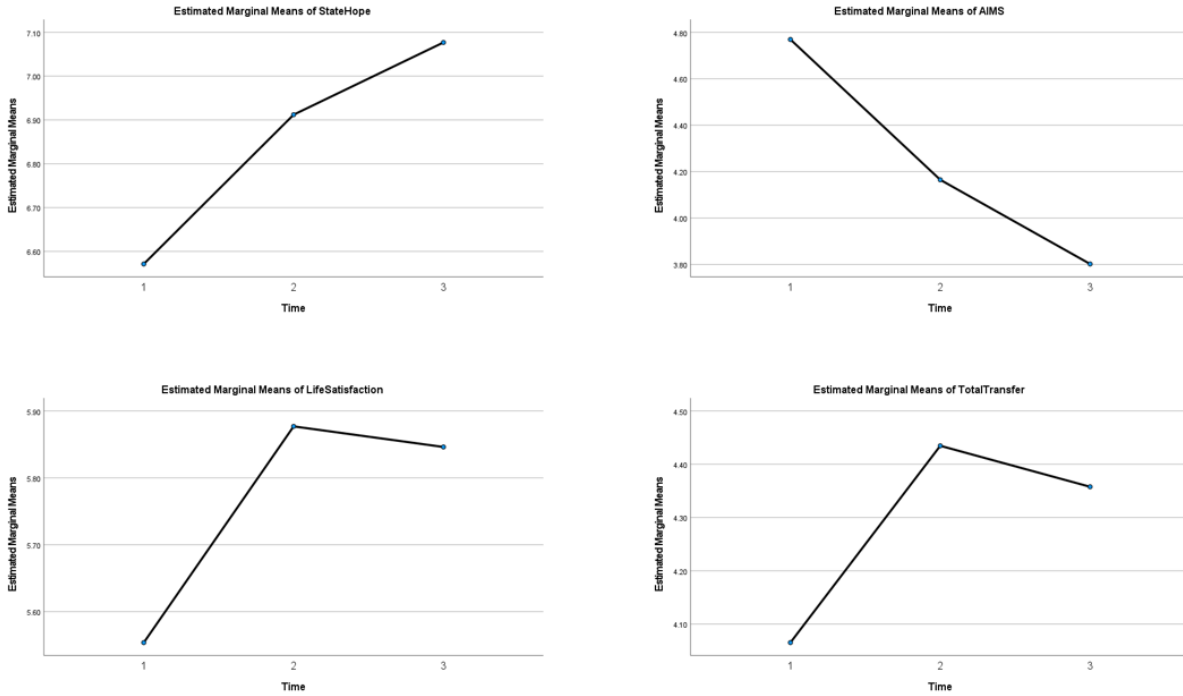Third wave trends for all measures over time are shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9. Third wave trends for all measures

Table 4

Interview group (n = 6) vs No-Interview group (n = 7)

	Interview Group ($n = 6$)						No-Interview Group ($n = 7$)					
	T1		T2		T4		T1		T2		T4	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
State Hope (1-8)	6.79	1.04	7.14	0.69	7.34	0.62	6.39	1.18	6.71	0.89	6.84	1.11
Life Satisfaction (1-7)	5.37	1.26	5.97	0.83	6.03	0.56	5.71	0.90	5.80	0.65	5.69	0.65
Athletic Identity (1-7)	4.57	0.53	4.02	1.12	3.26	0.87	4.94	0.82	4.29	0.74	4.27	0.87
Total Transfer (1-5)	3.89	0.63	4.31	0.35	4.50	0.32	4.21	0.72	4.54	0.39	4.24	0.62

The third wave has a total of 13 participants where 6 participants had 2 follow-up interviews before taking the follow-up survey while 7 participants did not. Considering the follow-up interviews as an intervention in itself, a 3 (Time) x 2 (Interview Status) between-subjects factorial ANOVA was calculated for each measure to check for time and interview status main effects and interaction. Factorial ANOVA plots for each measure are shown in Figure 10.
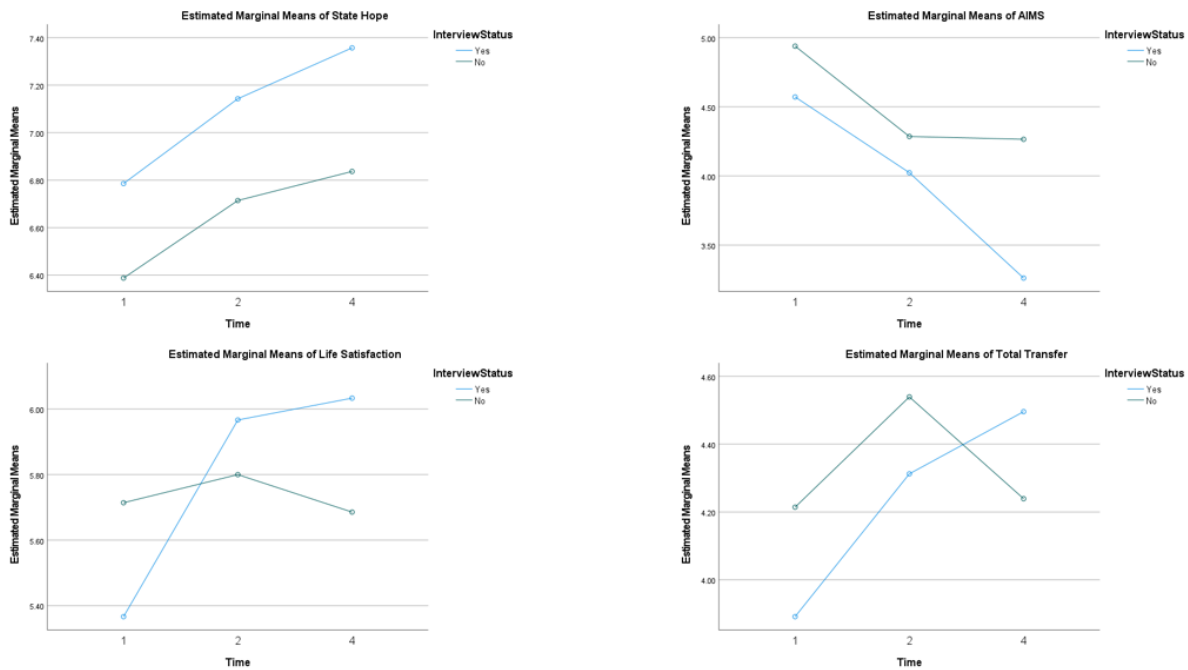

Figure 10. 3 (Time) x 2 (Interview Status) factorial ANOVA plots for all measures

A 3 (Time) x 2 (Interview Status) between-subjects factorial ANOVA was calculated comparing the State Hope scores for participants at three different time points (T1, T2, T4) and who had follow-up interviews or not. The main effect for time was not significant (F (2,33) = 0.96, p = .39, partial η^2 = .055). The main effect for whether they had a follow-up interview or not was also not significant (F (1,33) = 2.14, p = .15, partial η^2 = .061). Finally, the interaction was not significant (F (2,33) = 0.01, p = .99, partial η^2 = .001). Thus, it appears that neither time

nor whether they had a follow-up interview or not has any significant effect on State Hope scores.

A 3 (Time) x 2 (Interview Status) between-subjects factorial ANOVA was calculated comparing the Satisfaction with Life scores for participants at three different time points (T1, T2, T4) and who had follow-up interviews or not. The main effect for time was not significant (F (2,33) = 0.68, p = .51, partial η^2 = .04). The main effect for whether they had a follow-up interview or not was also not significant (F (1,33) = 0.04, p = .84, partial η^2 = .001). Finally, the interaction was not significant (F (2,33) = 0.60, p = .55, partial η^2 = .035). Thus, it appears that neither time nor whether they had a follow-up interview or not has any significant effect on life satisfaction scores.

A 3 (Time) x 2 (Interview Status) between-subjects factorial ANOVA was calculated comparing the AIMS scores for participants at three different time points (T1, T2, T4) and who had follow-up interviews or not. A significant main effect for time was found (F (2,15) = 4.52, p = .018, partial η^2 = .22). AIMS scores during T4 (M = 3.80, SD = 7.43) were lower than during T1 (M = 4.77, SD = 5.50). AIMS scores during T2 were not significantly different from either of the other time points. The main effect for whether they had a follow-up interview or not was also not significant (F (1,33) = 4.03, p = .053, partial η^2 = .11). Finally, the interaction was not significant (F (2,33) = 0.73, p = .49, partial η^2 = .042). The effect of time was not influenced by whether the participants had an interview or not.

A 3 (Time) x 2 (Interview Status) between-subjects factorial ANOVA was calculated comparing the Total Life Skills Transfer scores for participants at three different time points (T1, T2, T4) and who had follow-up interviews or not. The main effect for time was not significant (F (2,33) = 1.80, p = .18, partial η^2 = .098). The main effect for whether they had a follow-up

interview or not was also not significant (F (1,33) = 0.32, p = .58, partial η^2 = .01). Finally, the interaction was not significant (F (2,33) = 1.71, p = .35, partial η^2 = .061). Thus, it appears that neither time nor whether they had a follow-up interview or not has any significant effect on Total Life Skills Transfer scores.

Qualitative Data

Experiences and Perceptions at One-to-Five-Months Post-Graduation (T3)

Out of the 15 participants, only 6, all of whom were female, completed the T3 follow-up interview. Planning and preparation, identity, life skills development and transfer, and social support, are used as thematic concepts to explore the transition experiences of these six female participants.

Planning and preparation before graduation. Most participants valued the time spent during the workshop to plan and prepare for their lives after college graduation. In particular, the goal setting activity was found beneficial. One of them stated:

I think back to the goal setting one because I think it is really important to have goals. I sat by my best friend, and we have completely different goals because she's going to get her master's whereas I'm going straight into the workforce. So, I thought it was really interesting how unique our futures are going to be, and how we can still use the tools we have and help us be successful.

Another athlete had similar thoughts to share by saying:

I remember we did the goal setting. I can't remember, like there was an acronym or something. We talked about our goals, and I feel that just kind of helped me. Like, you know, think about what I was doing after graduation and plan for it and kind of prepare for the obstacles that I would have. I usually get stressed about stuff in the future, so I

feel the goal planning was good for me just to focus on the things I can do to ease the

transition and what I'm doing next, instead of the stuff I can't really control.

Balanced self-identity. According to the quantitative findings, there was no significant change in athletic identity from T1 to T3, although there was a noticeable downward trend. Among the participants who voluntarily participated in the follow-up interviews, there seemed to be a strong sense of who they were, suggesting a balanced self-identity. One of them shared their perspectives on their identity in relation to the workshop activity:

I don't think I've ever really struggled with my identity. I'm very strong in my faith too …

But I think it helped me reiterate and really focus on "What is my list of identities?" "If I

had to pick a top 10, what is it?"

Another athlete shared a similar perspective and said:

When you guys had us rank where athlete is on our identity, when I was there, I don't

really want just athlete to be my identity. I want to be more than that and I want to have a

balance between a lot of different things, I don't want to just be like an athlete. So, that

really made me think about what I want my identity to be like. I obviously want athlete to

be a part of it, but I wouldn't want it to be one of my top things, one of my top describers

anymore. Maybe when I was little, but not anymore.

Some of them associated their athletic identities with being athletic or being physically fit. When asked about their athletic identities, they relate it to their current physical activity participation. For example, one athlete said:

I feel like I'm still very athletic and I'll still be very athletic. It's not important for me to

continue to be an athlete per se, but I would like to still be an athletic person. So just like

kind of working out and stuff like that.

Life skills development and transfer. According to the quantitative findings, there was

no significant change in total life skills transfer scores from T1 to T3, although there was a

noticeable upward trend. Participants seemed aware and confident in the life skills they have

developed in sports and mentioned a number of opportunities for life skills transfer. Several life

skills have been mentioned but one that stood out the most was time management. One athlete

shared how they developed this through sport and said:

> *Time management for sports is always huge. You have to be on time for everything, stuff*
>
> *like that and getting your work done when you're a student as well. I would say just to*
>
> *expand more on that, knowing when you need to get things done and doing it in a timely*
>
> *manner.*

An example of time management transfer was:

> *I've been using time management more and I assume I will be in my job in the future and*
>
> *also with my (current summer) internship. I guess being a swimmer and a bio major, it*
>
> *just made me want to be more productive so that I'm getting stuff done and also have time*
>
> *for other things and can get enough sleep and everything. I think time management has*
>
> *been a big one. I think at the beginning of college, I would put things off a lot, but now I*
>
> *always just want to just get it done.*

Social support networks. Feelings of sadness were commonly expressed, particularly in

relation to friends and communities formed during college life. Participants mentioned being

excited to transition to the next phases of their lives upon graduation, yet still felt emotional

because that means they will be taking on different paths. One athlete said:

> *It was sad. It's like, I'm excited to move to the next chapter, but obviously, you know, sad*
>
> *to leave everything behind. It also didn't really hit me for another week because most of*

us were still in our houses. But then when we all finally moved out, that's probably when

it was more "Oh, this kind of sucks."

Another athlete shared a similar experience after graduation and said:

It was pretty sad. Well, it was very bittersweet because I was very ready to be done with

school and I was just kind of tired of the same old thing, but it's also kind of sad that

being able to live with my friends and have that community for so long and (now I) have

to move back home. So, it was bittersweet really.

On a positive note, some participants expressed their gratitude for the coaches' video message

sent upon graduation highlighting the ongoing support offered by the athletic department. For

example, one participant mentioned:

It kind of gives you a little bit of relief as well as just reminds us that we can be thankful

and look back on that time. We still have that big support system if we need it. That's

really what I've gathered out of that. That's something that I think is super unique to (my

university).

Experiences and Perceptions at Seven-to-Nine-Months Post-Graduation (T4)

Out of the 15 participants, the same 6 who had the T3 follow-up interview completed the

T4 follow-up interview. Identity, life skills transfer, social support, and relocation in sports, are

used as thematic concepts to explore the transition experiences of these six female participants.

Balanced self-identity. According to the quantitative findings, there was a significant

decrease in athletic identity from T1 to T4. The continuous decrease throughout the study

suggests that participants' athletic identities became less prominent over time, as they started

adopting new roles and identities. One of them shared their perspectives on how their identity

evolved:

41

In the workshop, I still kind of thought of myself as an athlete. Obviously, I still was because I was still in the middle of my season, but little by little, it just feels like I'm a little bit less of an athlete and a little bit more of a coach, a girlfriend, a daughter. My roles are definitely changing, and it's not as difficult as I was expecting it to be. I think it's because I'm really excited to become a counselor and I'm really diving into my studies. So, I'm just excited to have a new role and take what I learned in softball with me in that role.

Another participant shared a similar perspective while still feeling proud of their athletic identity:

It's not (as) super important, but it was a big part of my life for a long time. I still kind of consider myself an athlete. I guess because I'm not super far removed. Yeah, it doesn't affect me, I guess. I'm excited to be in grad school now, kind of doing what I want for my career because I was always the person who didn't really know what I wanted to do. But now that I have a solid idea, I want to be a dietitian. That's kind of changed, not changed my identity, but added to it.

Life skills transfer. According to the quantitative findings, there was a significant increase in total life skills transfer scores from T1 to T4. Participants reported several instances where they were able to transfer life skills at their current career jobs or graduate school. Time management remained a prominent one for all participants. Moreover, when participants transitioned to a different role (e.g., a job), they mentioned that goal setting, teamwork, social skills, and communication skills were particularly helpful. For example, one participant mentioned that goal setting played a crucial role in their success in their new job:

We set goals actually at the beginning of the year in my office. I had three goals. One of them was to not get pushed around, so I feel like I did pretty well on that one. The second

42

one was to grow my knowledge of Adobe products, which include Photoshop and Illustrator. And I definitely did that. I had to do that. And then my third one, I can't remember off the top of my head, but we sat down and discussed it with my boss, and she was like, 'You've excelled in all three of these. I'm really glad these were the goals you set. And now let's just make three more goals.'

Another participant shared how they have teamwork and social skills are vital to their new role:

I also think (about) teamwork like we are a team; there are seven of us. We work together, and building those relationships I think is really important. I'm close with about 3 out of the seven. I'm hanging out with one of them tonight. It's really important to have those close relationships instead of just, you know, maybe fake relationships. Just actual genuine relationships that make work more fun. It makes teaching more enjoyable, and it just makes everything seem a lot more personable and relaxed. I don't always feel like I'm in a work setting. It's a good place to be. It's a healthy place. It's fun, it's good.

Communication skills were also frequently mentioned, especially concerning the inevitability of difficult conversations in sports. One participant said:

I feel like sports prepare you for so much, you know. Handling those difficult conversations, I can't tell you how many times I've had a difficult conversation with a coach and then being able to be like, 'Oh, I see why this was important,' because now I have to talk to a (higher-up/coworker). Those instances helped me prepare for who I am now and what I'm doing now.

Social support network. Creating a new social support network was still a challenge but participants have mentioned making new friends in a new environment, and how it helped with their transition. One participant shared:

I think anytime you move to a new place and have a new job, it's always super weird because you're trying to make friends and just see how your coworkers are. Do you like them? Is it a good place to work? And I can honestly say, like, I love my coworkers. They're all very helpful. So that definitely made the transition so much easier.

Another participant shared a similar experience about making new friends while keeping old connections and said:

I've been meeting a lot of new people through them and my classmates. Just actually within the last couple of weeks, I have started hanging out with them a lot more and just getting to know new people. And then I also keep in touch with a lot of my hometown friends and college friends through texting and FaceTiming.

Relocation in sports. Similar to Dimoula et al. (2013), some participants relocated themselves into the athletic world by working professionally related to sports or had additional work related to sports such as sports nutrition, sports management, and coaching.

Perceptions of the Life After Sports Program

Statements were identified that provided insights into the participant experience and reflections on their involvement in the program. However, most of the participants either did not provide or had minimal feedback. Nonetheless, three themes were found in the feedback that was received, including the avenue for self-reflection, shared experiences, and future workshop suggestions.

Self-reflection. Participants mentioned that the program provided a space to think about the ups and downs of their transition to a life after sport. For example, one participant shared:

But honestly, now looking back at it, I'm obviously glad that I went because now I like meeting up with you every so often so that we could talk about the workshop and also

help you give feedback. I think about that day and how I was struggling then. Now, I'm

not even really worried about my athletic identity. Not having the sport is an adjustment,

but I'm OK, I'm doing good. I wish I could have told my April self, 'Don't be so hopeless.'

This sport will be with you forever, even if you're not even touching a softball ever again.

It will not leave you. So, knowing that then was kind of helpful, especially now.

Shared experience. Participants found comfort in the group aspect of the program. It was

encouraging for them to witness their peers going through similar experiences. One participant

said:

I would say, at the moment, it made me more comfortable, like everyone feeling kind of

similar ways. I think, at the moment, it made me more... you know, more comfortable to

transition out, knowing that people were feeling kind of similar to how I was.

Future workshop suggestions. Participants have expressed their appreciation for the

workshop while also suggesting how future programming can be improved. They mentioned the

importance of a higher number of participants or mandatory participation, emphasizing that those

who did not attend may have missed out on valuable insights:

We loved your workshop. I wish more people would have come to that because the people

who didn't go needed it, and I could tell because, like, I'm not saying we didn't probably

benefit from it, we did. But there are people that I know who are struggling with who they

were as athletes and who they are now who should have been there, you know?

Another participant suggested increasing awareness about changes in nutrition and body image

for a more holistic perspective:

I think for me, nutrition hit home a lot harder, the nutrition part of it. Just because I didn't know about it. I was an athlete my whole life. I didn't know any different. So maybe just giving a heads up like, 'Your body may change. Don't be surprised.'

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION, PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to design, implement, and evaluate an educational program specifically for graduating collegiate student-athletes as they transition out of college sports and into post-sports life. The content of the educational program centers around preparation and planning, identity, life skills transfer, and social support. Results show that the educational program provided applicable and relevant content for this transition. Significant changes over time have been found in measures of hope, life satisfaction, athletic identity, and total life skills transfer. Although no significant interactions were identified, this chapter will discuss the patterns that emerged from the visual data. The findings of this study added original contributions to the literature on the transition out of college sports via longitudinal assessment.

The Application of Athlete Career Transition Models and Frameworks

Over the past two decades, several models have been posited to explain how athletes transition through athletic and career stages and phases. Recently, the ICCT framework (Figure 4; Samuel et al., 2020) combined the Holistic Athlete Career Model (Figure 1; Wylleman, 2019), the Athletic Career Transition Model (Figure 2; Stambulova, 2003), and the Scheme of Change for Sport Psychology Practice (Figure 3; Samuel & Tenenbaum, 2011) to explain how athletes experience career-change events, such as the transition out of college sport and life. This study provided the unique contribution of designing an educational program that aligns with the ICCT propositions (Samuel et al., 2020). Specifically, the Life After Sports program focuses on the transition out of college sports and life as the career change-event, with goals to (1) initiate psychological support before the transition out of college sports and life; (2) help student-athletes

identify and appraise the demands of transition out of college sport and life; (3) facilitate the development and application of personal resources (i.e., goal setting, personal identity, life skills); (4) promote strategic decisions for navigating the transition out of college sport and life; (5) provide on-going psychological support following the transition (i.e., from mental performance and sports coaches); and (6) encourage ongoing appraisal of transition demands and application of personal resources (i.e., personal identity, life skills) following the transition.

The study aimed to examine the changes in hope, life satisfaction, athletic identity, and life skills transfer for graduating collegiate student-athletes from pre- to post-workshop, and over a period of 12 months. The study also aimed to compare the differences in these variables between student-athletes who participated solely in the workshop and those who further participated in follow-up individual sessions.

State Hope and Satisfaction with Life

Previous research has emphasized the importance of goal-oriented beliefs and behaviors, and life satisfaction as important psychological dimensions involved in athlete transitions (Alfermann et al., 2004; Dimoula et al., 2013; Martin et al., 2014). The study hypothesized an increase in hope and life satisfaction scores and found that these measures significantly increased from pre- to post-workshop (T1-T2) for all participants. Aligned with previous studies, athletes who planned for retirement had higher life satisfaction (Alfermann et al., 2004). One objective of the workshop was to take the time to sit down and write their plans using the *GROW* model to encourage deeper processing. Answering specific questions, such as potential barriers they might encounter and ways they will overcome these, may have affected how they perceive their present situation and move forward into the future. Participants also highlighted that the program

provided a sense of shared experience making them feel more comfortable knowing that they are not alone in this process.

To examine and track changes as athletes go through the transition process in real-time, a longitudinal, prospective approach is recommended (Lally, 2007; Manthey & Smith, 2023; Martin et al., 2014; Park et al., 2013) and was utilized in this study. The study expected a continued increase in hope and life satisfaction and scores and found a continuous improvement in these measures one to five months after graduation (T3). Freedom from sports and competition-related stresses can be attributed to these positive findings (Martin et al., 2014). Additionally, planning and preparation before graduation provided athletes with a sense of direction in post-sports life.

Seven to nine months after graduation (T4), all 13 participants showed a significant increase in hope and maintenance of life satisfaction scores. Potential differences between the interview group and the no-interview group may arise since follow-up sessions not only served as data collection but also aimed at facilitating participants' continued reflections and learnings about their transition. The study hypothesized that those who participated in follow-up individual sessions, in addition to workshop participation, would experience greater changes in hope and life satisfaction scores. The study found that both groups have a continued increase in hope. However, parallel lines found in State Hope plots indicate that no interaction effects between interview status and time occurred. On the other hand, Satisfaction with Life plots showed nonparallel lines indicating an interaction. After graduation, the interview group experienced maintenance, or a slight increase, in life satisfaction scores while the no-interview group returned to their baseline scores. These results suggest that interventions aimed at improving well-being among transitioning athletes can be effective. While one-time workshops may offer short-term

benefits, ongoing support can lead to sustained improvements in athlete well-being by helping them navigate transitions over time.

Athletic Identity

Identity has been a consistent focus when studying and supporting athletes through sports and career transitions (Samuel et al., 2020). In this study, the low alpha coefficients for the AIMS scores must be recognized as a potential issue, and the results should be interpreted with caution. The study hypothesized a decrease in athletic identity scores and found that participants experienced a significant decrease in athletic identity from pre- to post-workshop (T1-T2). Creating a balanced self-identity, redefinition of self, and decreasing the prominence of athletic identity (i.e., self-protection) were shown to support athletes during the transition out of sports (Lally, 2007; Martin et al., 2014; Park et al., 2013). The results suggest that the workshop achieved this objective. Further, qualitative findings showed that the workshop activity helped student-athletes to focus on the other aspects of their identity and believe that they are more than just an athlete. One to five months after (T3), participants experienced a continued decrease in athletic identity, which aligns with the research hypothesis. In addition, some participants perceive their athletic identity as a function of their physical activity participation.

The study hypothesized a further decline in athletic identity seven to nine months after graduation (T4). The results showed that participants continued to demonstrate a significant decrease in athletic identity. Again, the difference between the interview and the no-interview groups suggests that participants who engaged in follow-up sessions may have had additional opportunities for reflection and discussion, potentially influencing their perceptions and experiences compared to those who did not participate in interviews. As expected, nonparallel lines in the Athletic Identity plots indicate an interaction effect (see Figure 10). After graduation,

the interview group showed a continued decrease in athletic identity, while the no-interview group maintained its score. During the follow-up sessions, the interview group expressed a strong awareness of a balanced self-identity and how their identities and roles have changed over time. While they continue to acknowledge and celebrate their athlete identity, given that sport played a significant part in their lives, they also expressed a willingness to embrace new roles. These findings underscore the impact of follow-up sessions on participants' perceptions and emphasize the benefits of ongoing reflection for improved well-being and a smoother transition out of college sports.

Life Skills Transfer

Athletes who transition from sports to new careers and life environments experience opportunities and challenges to apply skills learned from sports (Henriksen et al., 2023; Pierce et al., 2017). For this reason, increasing awareness and confidence in life skill transfer, as highlighted in previous studies (Alfermann et al., 2004; Bernes et al., 2009; Navarro, 2015; Park et al., 2013; Pierce et al., 2017; Stephan, 2003), is a critical area of interest for both scientists and practitioners. The study hypothesized an increase in total life skills transfer over time. Results showed that these scores significantly increased pre- to post-workshop (T1-T2) for all participants. Similarly, one to five months after (T3), participants demonstrated a continued increase in total life skills transfer score. On a different note, seven to nine months after graduation (T4), a slight decrease in total transfer scores was observed. This trend could be explained by the nonparallel lines shown in the Total Transfer interaction plots. Specifically, the interview group showed an upward trend from T2 to T4, while the no-interview group showed a downward trend from T2 to T4, balancing out the total T4 score.

Time management emerged as a prominent life skill mentioned in both follow-up sessions by the interview group. The structure of sports and its demands helped student-athletes organize their daily activities both within and outside of their sport. Additionally, upon transitioning to a new role and a new environment, such as getting their first job after graduation, life skill transfer was discussed in greater depth. Participants highlighted the opportunities for transferring other life skills such as goal setting, teamwork, social skills, and communication skills, and described how developing them through sports was beneficial. Various experiences in sports provided them with valuable skills that can be transferred to their careers post-college sports. The longitudinal, seven-to-nine-month follow-up results of this study highlighted that life skills transfer may be difficult for individuals to maintain as they get further removed from their sports learning environment (Kendellen & Camiré, 2019). Furthermore, the support provided by the researcher in the interview group may have helped to increase the awareness of life skills transfer abilities and opportunities (Pierce et al., 2017).

Overall, the findings of this study suggest that, while a one-time workshop pre-transition may help student-athletes on their transition to life after college sports, ongoing support is recommended especially after graduation. Based on the insights and perceptions of the participants, the Life After Sports program revealed both strengths and areas for improvement. For strengths, the program prompted self-reflection and appraisal of demands, helping athletes consciously make strategic decisions. This increases the likelihood of effective coping while minimizing the risk of crisis situations. This aligns with the principles outlined in the ICCT framework (Samuel et al., 2020). Additionally, the program provided ongoing support and valuable shared learning experiences. To improve the program, suggestions include having more targeted recruitment or mandatory participation and including other aspects such as nutrition and

physical activity participation to promote holistic personal development among transitioning

athletes (Wylleman, 2019).

Practical Implications

The findings of this study offer invaluable insights for practitioners (e.g., mental

performance coaches) as well as institutions (e.g., universities and sports organizations) in

developing programs to better support student-athletes during and after their collegiate careers.

Such programs can focus on key areas such as preparation and planning, identity, life skills

transfer, and social support. A deliberate and unique feature within the program was the

involvement of coaches to help share messages of encouragement for appraisal of transition

demands and skill application. This study recommends providing education for coaches on

assisting their athletes develop balanced identities, appraising transition demands, developing

coping skills, and planning for life skills transfer to position athletes for successful transitions out

of college.

Researchers and practitioners should be mindful of the challenge of motivating student-

athletes, who lead busy lives, to actively engage in reflection and learning about their transitions.

Evaluative feedback has highlighted a couple of key pedagogical recommendations. First,

participants in group sessions consistently reflect on the value of the shared learning experience

(e.g., group discussions and collaborative learning) and are provided with a safe and comfortable

environment to listen, learn, and connect with their peers who are experiencing similar

transitions. Second, individualizing program content (e.g., personalized life skills profiles;

personal identity cards) has been identified as a tool to help enhance the depth of athletes'

reflection and appraisal of their transitions and resources.

Since career transition is an ongoing process as opposed to a singular, abrupt event, psychological support must also be viewed as an ongoing process and not a singular, abrupt event. Therefore, programming for transitioning student-athletes should be designed accordingly. Utilizing a longitudinal, prospective approach to examine and track changes in student-athletes' transition process in real-time can provide valuable insights. However, it is important to acknowledge the logistical challenges faced by athletic departments, particularly those that are understaffed from a mental health and mental performance staff standpoint and often have little contact with athletes after graduation. Finding innovative ways to stay connected to student-athletes is necessary for long-term psychosocial athlete benefit.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

The present study has several limitations and should be addressed in future research. First, the study's sample size is small with the retention rate in some waves of this study being low. This resulted in a variation in the number of participants across four time points, with some time points having an even lower sample size. Specifically, T1 and T2 included 15 participants each, T3 only included 6 participants, and T4 included 13 participants, with 6 participants participating in follow-up sessions while 7 did not. Because of the small sample size at T3, the statistical power to detect significant effects may have been affected. Similarly, at T4, when comparing the interview group and the no-interview group, there are limitations related to sample size and statistical power that should be considered when interpreting findings. This limitation significantly reduces the statistical power, particularly at T3 and T4. Future research should consider conducting a large-scale longitudinal study with a larger sample size and improved participant retention.

Second, only 15 people have signed up for the study, indicating a potential selection bias. Additionally, the study sample only consisted of NCAA Division III athletes who all identified as Caucasian/White, with only female athletes self-selecting to participate in follow-up sessions. Therefore, the results may not be fully applicable to all NCAA divisions and athletes, indicating limited generalizability. Future research should consider mandatory participation to include all graduating student-athletes across various NCAA divisions and different racial and ethnic backgrounds, while also exploring potential gender differences.

Third, Cronbach's alpha values for the Athletic Identity Measurement Scale (AIMS) indicate low reliability and internal consistency. Therefore, any results related to identity should be interpreted with caution. Future research should consider using a more recent and comprehensive measure of athletic identity, such as the Athletic Identity Measurement Scales-Third Generation (AIMS-3G) developed by Brewer et al. (2022). This may offer more reliable insights into understanding identity-related phenomena in sports.

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APPENDIX A: PRE-WORKSHOP SURVEY

Student-Athlete Survey

Please create 3-4 character personal code. Include
1. The first letter of the first name
2. Date of birth (day only)
3. First letter of the sport you participate in.
(e.g., 1. Melvin = M; 2. 01/16/96 = 16; Track & Field = T. Code: M16T)

Code: _____

Ethnicity (select all that apply)
O   American Indian or Alaska Native
O   Asian
O   Black/African-American
O   Caucasian/White
O   Hispanic/Latinx
O   Native-Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
O   Prefer to Self-Describe (list) _____

Gender
O   Male
O   Female
O   Non-Binary/third gender
O   Prefer not to say
O   Prefer to self describe:_____

Current Collegiate Sport _____

Have you been a captain for your team?
O   Yes
O   No

Part I

Have you planned your career for the future (i.e., after college)?

O   Yes
O   No

Read each item carefully. Using the scale shown below, please select the number that best describes how you think about yourself right now in relation to your plans after college. Please take a few moments to focus on yourself and what is going on in your life at this moment.

		Definitely False	Mostly False	Somewhat False	Slightly False	Slightly True	Somewhat True	Mostly True	Definitely True
1.	I am confident in the plan I have for my future after college	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
2.	If I should find myself in a jam, I could think of many ways to get out of it	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

3.	At the present time, I am energetically pursuing my goals	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
4.	There are lots of ways around any problem that I am facing now	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
5.	Right now, I see myself as being pretty successful	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
6.	I can think of many ways to reach my current goals	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
7.	At this time, I am meeting the goals that I have set for myself	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

Below are five statements that you may agree or disagree with. Using the scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by placing the appropriate number on the line preceding that item. Please be open and honest in your responding.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1.	I am confident in the plan I have for my future after college.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
2.	If I should find myself in a jam, I could think of many ways to get out of it.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
3.	At the present time, I am energetically pursuing my goals.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
4.	There are lots of ways around any problem that I am facing now.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
5.	Right now, I see myself as being pretty successful.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

List your 3-5 hobbies or interests outside of your sport:

1. _____   4. _____

2. _____   5. _____

3. _____

Part II

Fill in the circle that best represents how much you agree or disagree with that statement.

		Strongly Disagree			Neither agree nor disagree			Strongly Agree
1.	I consider myself an athlete.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
2.	I have many goals related to sport.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
3.	Most of my friends are athletes.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
4.	Sport is the most important part of my life	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

5.	I spend more time thinking about sport than anything else.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
6.	I feel bad about myself when I do poorly in sport.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
7.	I would be very depressed if I were injured and could not compete in sport.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

Part III

Directions:

Life Skills Questions: Young people have all kinds of experiences and can learn a lot from playing sport. Some of the questions below ask about the skills you may have learned through playing your MAIN sport. For these questions, please rate how much your sport has taught you to perform the skills listed.

Transfer Questions: The life skills that young people learn through sport may be transferred to other areas of life. Some of the questions below ask about the areas you may transfer the life skills to. For these questions, please rate the extent to which you transfer the life skills to each area. When answering these questions, please read back through the life skills questions if necessary.

All Questions: Please answer by circling the number to the right of each question. There are no right or wrong answers, so please answer as honestly as possible.

Teamwork

This sport has taught me to…	Not at all	A little	Some	A lot	Very much
Work well within a team/ group.	1	2	3	4	5
Help another team/ group member perform a task.	1	2	3	4	5
Accept suggestions for improvement from others.	1	2	3	4	5
Work with others for the good of the team/ group.	1	2	3	4	5
Help build team/ group spirit.	1	2	3	4	5
Suggest to team/ group members how they can improve their performance.	1	2	3	4	5
Change the way I perform for the benefit of the team/ group.	1	2	3	4	5
I use these teamwork skills…	**Not at all**	**A little**	**Some**	**A lot**	**Very much**
In school/ education.	1	2	3	4	5
At home.	1	2	3	4	5
Within my community (e.g., when volunteering).	1	2	3	4	5
In my job/ when doing chores.	1	2	3	4	5
In relationships with others.	1	2	3	4	5

Goal Setting

This sport has taught me to…	Not at all	A little	Some	A lot	Very much
Set goals so that I can stay focused on improving.	1	2	3	4	5
Set challenging goals.	1	2	3	4	5

Check progress towards my goals.	1	2	3	4	5
Set short-term goals in order to achieve long-term goals.	1	2	3	4	5
Remain committed to my goals.	1	2	3	4	5
Set goals for practice.	1	2	3	4	5
Set specific goals.	1	2	3	4	5
I use these goal setting skills...	**Not at all**	**A little**	**Some**	**A lot**	**Very much**
In school/ education.	1	2	3	4	5
At home.	1	2	3	4	5
Within my community (e.g., when volunteering).	1	2	3	4	5
In my job/ when doing chores.	1	2	3	4	5
In relationships with others.	1	2	3	4	5

Social Skills					
This sport has taught me to...	**Not at all**	**A little**	**Some**	**A lot**	**Very much**
Start a conversation.	1	2	3	4	5
Interact in various social settings.	1	2	3	4	5
Help others without them asking for help.	1	2	3	4	5
Get involved in group activities.	1	2	3	4	5
Maintain close friendships.	1	2	3	4	5
I use these social skills...	**Not at all**	**A little**	**Some**	**A lot**	**Very much**
In school/ education.	1	2	3	4	5
At home.	1	2	3	4	5
Within my community (e.g., when volunteering).	1	2	3	4	5
In my job/ when doing chores.	1	2	3	4	5
In relationships with others.	1	2	3	4	5

Problem Solving & Decision Making					
This sport has taught me to...	**Not at all**	**A little**	**Some**	**A lot**	**Very much**
Think carefully about a problem.	1	2	3	4	5
Compare each possible solution in order to find the best one.	1	2	3	4	5
Create as many possible solutions to a problem as possible.	1	2	3	4	5
Evaluate a solution to a problem.	1	2	3	4	5
I use these problem solving & decision making skills...	**Not at all**	**A little**	**Some**	**A lot**	**Very much**

	Not at all	A little	Some	A lot	Very much
In school/ education.	1	2	3	4	5
At home.	1	2	3	4	5
Within my community (e.g., when volunteering).	1	2	3	4	5
In my job/ when doing chores.	1	2	3	4	5
In relationships with others.	1	2	3	4	5

Emotional Skills

This sport has taught me to…	Not at all	A little	Some	A lot	Very much
Know how to deal with my emotions.	1	2	3	4	5
Use my emotions to stay focused.	1	2	3	4	5
Understand that I behave differently when emotional.	1	2	3	4	5
Notice how I feel.	1	2	3	4	5
I use these emotional skills…	**Not at all**	**A little**	**Some**	**A lot**	**Very much**
In school/ education.	1	2	3	4	5
At home.	1	2	3	4	5
Within my community (e.g., when volunteering).	1	2	3	4	5
In my job/ when doing chores.	1	2	3	4	5
In relationships with others.	1	2	3	4	5

Leadership

This sport has taught me to…	Not at all	A little	Some	A lot	Very much
Know how to positively influence a group of individuals.	1	2	3	4	5
Organise team/ group members to work together.	1	2	3	4	5
Know how to motivate others.	1	2	3	4	5
Help others solve their performance problems.	1	2	3	4	5
Consider the individual opinions of each team/ group member.	1	2	3	4	5
Be a good role model for others.	1	2	3	4	5
Set high standards for the team/ group.	1	2	3	4	5
Recognise other people's achievements.	1	2	3	4	5
I use these leadership skills…	**Not at all**	**A little**	**Some**	**A lot**	**Very much**
In school/ education.	1	2	3	4	5
At home.	1	2	3	4	5
Within my community (e.g., when volunteering).	1	2	3	4	5

| In my job/ when doing chores. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| In relationships with others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Time Management

This sport has taught me to...	Not at all	A little	Some	A lot	Very much
Manage my time well.	1	2	3	4	5
Assess how much time I spend on various activities.	1	2	3	4	5
Control how I use my time.	1	2	3	4	5
Set goals so that I use my time effectively.	1	2	3	4	5
I use these time management skills...	**Not at all**	**A little**	**Some**	**A lot**	**Very much**
In school/ education.	1	2	3	4	5
At home.	1	2	3	4	5
Within my community (e.g., when volunteering).	1	2	3	4	5
In my job/ when doing chores.	1	2	3	4	5
In relationships with others.	1	2	3	4	5

Communication

This sport has taught me to...	Not at all	A little	Some	A lot	Very much
Speak clearly to others.	1	2	3	4	5
Pay attention to what someone is saying.	1	2	3	4	5
Pay attention to people's body language.	1	2	3	4	5
Communicate well with others.	1	2	3	4	5
I use these communication skills...	**Not at all**	**A little**	**Some**	**A lot**	**Very much**
In school/ education.	1	2	3	4	5
At home.	1	2	3	4	5
Within my community (e.g., when volunteering).	1	2	3	4	5
In my job/ when doing chores.	1	2	3	4	5
In relationships with others.	1	2	3	4	5

Thank you for completing this survey.

APPENDIX B: POST-WORKSHOP SURVEY

Student-Athlete Survey

Please create 3-4 character personal code. Include
1. The first letter of the first name
2. Date of birth (day only)
3. First letter of the sport you participate in.
(e.g., 1. Melvin = M; 2. 01/16/96 = 16; Track & Field = T. Code: M16T)

Code: _____

Part I

Read each item carefully. Using the scale shown below, please select the number that best describes how you think about yourself right now in relation to your plans after college. Please take a few moments to focus on yourself and what is going on in your life at this moment.

		Definitely False	Mostly False	Somewhat False	Slightly False	Slightly True	Somewhat True	Mostly True	Definitely True
1.	I am confident in the plan I have for my future after college	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
2.	If I should find myself in a jam, I could think of many ways to get out of it	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
3.	At the present time, I am energetically pursuing my goals	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
4.	There are lots of ways around any problem that I am facing now	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
5.	Right now, I see myself as being pretty successful	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
6.	I can think of many ways to reach my current goals	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
7.	At this time, I am meeting the goals that I have set for myself	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

Below are five statements that you may agree or disagree with. Using the scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by placing the appropriate number on the line preceding that item. Please be open and honest in your responding.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1.	In most ways my life is close to my ideal.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
2.	The conditions of my life are excellent.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
3.	I am satisfied with my life.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
4.	So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

	If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
5.								

Part II

Fill in the circle that best represents how much you agree or disagree with that statement.

		Strongly Disagree			Neither agree nor disagree			Strongly Agree
1.	I consider myself an athlete.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
2.	I have many goals related to sport.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
3.	Most of my friends are athletes.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
4.	Sport is the most important part of my life	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
5.	I spend more time thinking about sport than anything else.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
6.	I feel bad about myself when I do poorly in sport.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
7.	I would be very depressed if I were injured and could not compete in sport.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

Part III

Directions:

Transfer Questions: The life skills that young people learn through sport may be transferred to other areas of life. Some of the questions below ask about the areas you may transfer the life skills to. For these questions, please rate the extent to which you transfer the life skills to each area. When answering these questions, please read back through the life skills questions if necessary.

All Questions: Please answer by circling the number to the right of each question. There are no right or wrong answers, so please answer as honestly as possible.

Teamwork **I use these teamwork skills…**	Not at all	A little	Some	A lot	Very much
In school/ education.	1	2	3	4	5
At home.	1	2	3	4	5
Within my community (e.g., when volunteering).	1	2	3	4	5
In my job/ when doing chores.	1	2	3	4	5
In relationships with others.	1	2	3	4	5

Goal Setting **I use these goal setting skills…**	Not at all	A little	Some	A lot	Very much
In school/ education.	1	2	3	4	5
At home.	1	2	3	4	5

Within my community (e.g., when volunteering).	1	2	3	4	5
In my job/ when doing chores.	1	2	3	4	5
In relationships with others.	1	2	3	4	5

Social Skills

I use these social skills...	Not at all	A little	Some	A lot	Very much
In school/ education.	1	2	3	4	5
At home.	1	2	3	4	5
Within my community (e.g., when volunteering).	1	2	3	4	5
In my job/ when doing chores.	1	2	3	4	5
In relationships with others.	1	2	3	4	5

Problem Solving & Decision Making

I use these problem solving & decision making skills...	Not at all	A little	Some	A lot	Very much
In school/ education.	1	2	3	4	5
At home.	1	2	3	4	5
Within my community (e.g., when volunteering).	1	2	3	4	5
In my job/ when doing chores.	1	2	3	4	5
In relationships with others.	1	2	3	4	5

Emotional Skills

I use these emotional skills...	Not at all	A little	Some	A lot	Very much
In school/ education.	1	2	3	4	5
At home.	1	2	3	4	5
Within my community (e.g., when volunteering).	1	2	3	4	5
In my job/ when doing chores.	1	2	3	4	5
In relationships with others.	1	2	3	4	5

Leadership

I use these leadership skills...	Not at all	A little	Some	A lot	Very much
In school/ education.	1	2	3	4	5
At home.	1	2	3	4	5
Within my community (e.g., when volunteering).	1	2	3	4	5
In my job/ when doing chores.	1	2	3	4	5
In relationships with others.	1	2	3	4	5

Time Management

I use these time management skills...	Not at all	A little	Some	A lot	Very much
In school/ education.	1	2	3	4	5
At home.	1	2	3	4	5
Within my community (e.g., when volunteering).	1	2	3	4	5
In my job/ when doing chores.	1	2	3	4	5
In relationships with others.	1	2	3	4	5

Communication

I use these communication skills...	Not at all	A little	Some	A lot	Very much
In school/ education.	1	2	3	4	5
At home.	1	2	3	4	5
Within my community (e.g., when volunteering).	1	2	3	4	5
In my job/ when doing chores.	1	2	3	4	5
In relationships with others.	1	2	3	4	5

Thank you for completing this survey.

If you are willing to participate in follow-up conversations, please provide a suitable:

E-mail address: _____

Phone number: _____

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Introduction

Welcome to this interview session. Thank you for joining me and thank you for taking the time to share your perspectives and experiences with this educational program and your transition out of life as a student-athlete. My name is _____. In this interview session, we would like to focus on your experiences and perspectives regarding your career transition.

T3 – Guide Questions

1. In April we met for our workshop focused on the transition out of life as a student-athlete. Please describe your life events since we met in April
   a. What are your perspectives/feelings about the graduation experience
   b. What are your perspectives/feelings about next steps (e.g., moving to a new place) following graduation
   c. What are your perspectives/feelings about being away from sport following graduation
2. What have been the best/most enjoyable experiences that you have had since we met in April.
3. What are the challenges or sources of stress in your life since we met in April?
4. Please describe the changes that you believe you have experienced in relation to your athletic identity in the past 3 months.
   a. Out of 10, how important is being an 'athlete' to you right now? Do you think that has changed since we met in April?
   b. Have you consciously thought about your identity over the past 3 months?
   c. Have there been situations or experiences that have helped you reflect on or adapt your identity?
5. Please describe the skills from sport that you believe you have used, applied, or transferred to other areas of your life in the past 3 months.
   a. Have you consciously thought about these life skills in the past 3 months?
   b. Have there been situations or experiences that have helped you use and apply these life skills?
6. Thinking back to our workshop and the video material we shared, please describe if and how the IWU transition educational program has impacted your athletic identity.
7. Thinking back to our workshop and the video material we shared, please describe if and how the IWU transition educational program has impacted your ability to use, apply, or transfer life skills.

T4 – Guide Questions

1) In _____ we interviewed you regarding the transition out of life as a student-athlete. Please describe your life events since we met in _____.
   i) What are your perspectives/feelings about the past n months?
   ii) What are your perspectives/feelings about the next steps (e.g., moving to a new place) following graduation?
   iii) What are your perspectives/feelings about being away from sports following graduation?
2) What have been the best/most enjoyable experiences that you have had since we met in _____?
3) What are the challenges or sources of stress in your life since we met in _____?
4) Please describe the changes that you believe you have experienced with your athletic identity in the past n months.
   i) Out of 10, how important is being an 'athlete' to you right now? Do you think that has changed since we met in _____?
   ii) Have you consciously thought about your identity over the past n months?
   iii) Have there been situations or experiences that have helped you reflect on or adapt your identity?
5) Please describe the skills from sport that you believe you have used, applied, or transferred to other areas of your life in the past n months.
   i) Have you consciously thought about these life skills in the past n months?
   ii) Have there been situations or experiences that have helped you use and apply these life skills?
6) Thinking back to our workshop and the video material we shared, please describe if and how the IWU transition educational program has impacted your athletic identity.
7) Thinking back to our workshop and the video material we shared, please describe if and how the IWU transition educational program has impacted your ability to use, apply, or transfer life skills.

GROW Model

In the next year…

Goal – What do you want?

Reality – What is happening?

Options – What can you do?

Will – What will you do?

Goal

1. What do you want to achieve?

    _____

    _____

2. How could you break this down into manageable sub-goals?

    _____

    _____

3. How will you know when you reach your goal?

    _____

    _____

4. By when do you want to achieve it?

    _____

    _____

Reality

5. What have you done so far to reach this goal?

    _____

    _____

6. What have you learned from that?

    _____

    _____

7. What external constraints are there to you achieving your goal?

    _____

    _____

8. What is really stopping you?

_____

_____

Options

9. What could you do as the next step in reaching this goal?

_____

_____

10. What else could you do?? … What else could you do???

_____

_____

11. If time were not a factor what could you do?

_____

_____

12. What would happen if you did nothing?

_____

_____

Will

13. Which option appeals the most?

_____

_____

14. What obstacles do you expect to meet?

_____

_____

15. How will you overcome them?

_____

_____

16. What will you do tomorrow toward achieving your goal?

_____

_____

<div align="center">

HOW COMMITTED ARE YOU (1-10)?

_____

</div>

Identity – Who am I?

Create a list of 10 roles you play/identities you hold. Then, rank them in terms of importance to you. (e.g., Gender, Race, Nationality, Personality trait, etc.)

- _____   _____
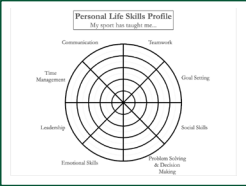- _____   _____
- _____   _____
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Personal Life Skills Profile
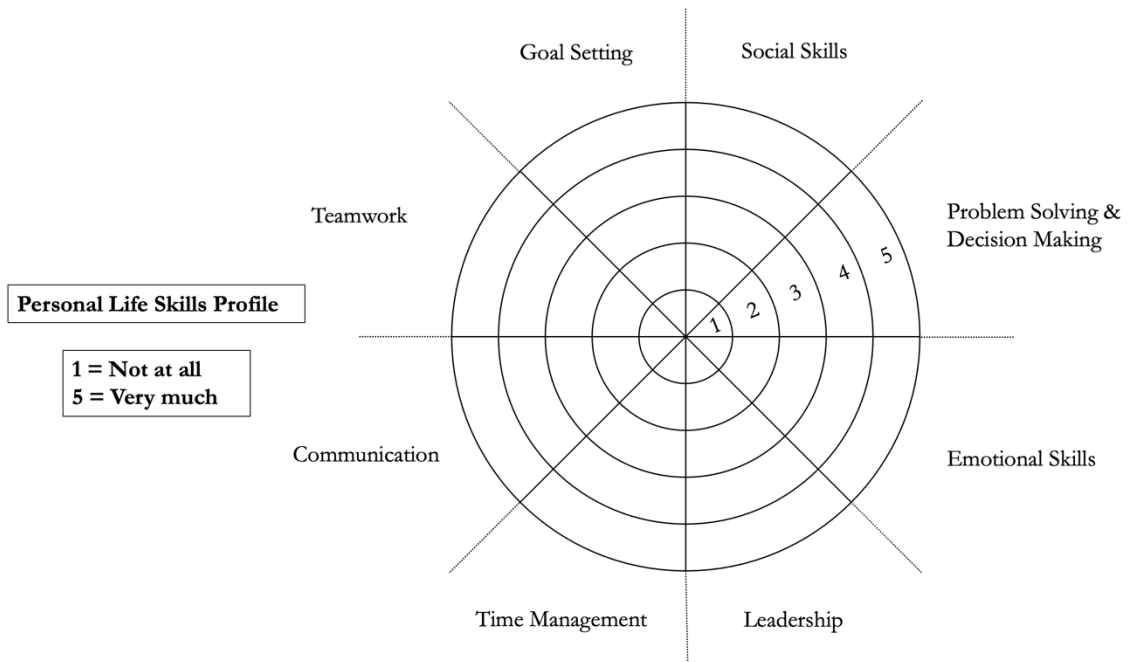
Describe yourself/who do you want to be a year from now:

I am/I will… _____

_____

_____

List top 3-5 experiences/reasons for developing these skills in sport.

1. _____
   _____
   _____

2. _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

3. _____
   _____
   _____

4. _____
   _____
   _____

5. _____
   _____
   _____

Identify 3 situations where you can apply these life skills in the next year.

1. _____
   _____
   _____

2. _____
   _____
   _____

3. _____
   _____
   _____