

<https://doi.org/10.19164/gjsscmr.v2i1.1747>

Volume 2, Issue 1

Received: December 9<sup>th</sup> 2025; Accepted: April 24<sup>th</sup> 2026; Published in issue: June 12<sup>th</sup> 2026



## Research Article

# “We’re All Dads Here”: The Impact of Transitions on Coach-Athlete Relationships in British Ski Racing Academies

Rosie Latto & Neil Buchanan

*Moray House School of Education and Sport, University of Edinburgh, UK*

Running Title: Impact of Transition on coach-athlete relationship

## Abstract

The aim of this study was to examine how transitions within British ski racing academies impact coach-athlete relationships. British ski academies constitute a previously unstudied setting and are unique in that coaches and athletes live together in the academy house, leaving little separation between the training and home environments. The term “transitions” in the context of this paper refers to both longitudinal transition of athletes through age and competitive stage, and lateral transition between the training and home environments in the residential academies: the 2 transitions noted here were the initial focuses of this research. This study conducted semi-structured interviews with 7 professional coaches drawn from 2 British-run ski academies who operate European-based residential programmes. The research findings identified 2 additional transitions as significant: these were athletes’ longitudinal transition from UK training to full-time residential academy; and the lateral transition between training and race settings. The key findings within these transitions were the coaches’ role in facilitating athletes’ initial integration into academy; the significant impact that lateral transitions (between training and home/training and race) have on the coach-athlete relationship; and the role of gender in the coach-athlete relationship specifically in the transition from training to race settings. There were novel results from this research which reveal the scale of coaches’ pastoral role in a talent development environment where coaches and athletes live together. This study has implications for coach education provision in British ski racing and has resulted in consultation with Snowsport Scotland on ways in which to improve coaches’ education and wellbeing to enhance gender equity in coaching pathways.

**Keywords:** alpine ski racing, coach-athlete relationship, high-performance coaching, talent development environments, transition.

**Corresponding Author:** Rosie Latto ([lattorosie@gmail.com](mailto:lattorosie@gmail.com))

## **Introduction**

Ski racing academies are a particularly intensive model of sports academy, as in these settings, coaches and athletes live together within an academy house. In such settings, the coach's position becomes more than that of an instructor, coaches become embedded in athletes' personal development as de facto parents (Roux et al., 2022). This unique setting provides an overlap in areas of study, incorporating the importance of the coach-athlete relationship to youth athletes and to the context of transitional and developmental phases of an athletic career. While there are several studies that discuss the importance and key characteristics of the coach-athlete relationship, there is a dearth of research focusing on the impact of transition on this relationship, particularly in the sports academy setting, and particularly with regards to the coaches' perspective (Olusoga et al., 2021; Jowett & Poczwardowski, 2007).

The model within which this paper will situate discussion of transitions is the lifespan model as proposed by Wylleman and colleagues (2012). This model built upon the initial talent development transition model proposed by Bloom which placed talent development in the context of 3 stages: initiation; development; and mastery (Bloom, 1985). Wylleman and colleagues' perspective offers a more holistic approach to these transitions, as their lifespan model mapped Bloom's original stages onto 4 development domains: athletic; psychological; psychosocial; and academic or vocational (Wylleman et al., 2012). The transition phases and domains that will be discussed in the present research align with those proposed by Wylleman et al. (2012). Transition in this context refers not only to the longitudinal transition through the athlete's age or training stage, but also to the lateral transition in external environment (i.e., between training environment and academy home).

Transitions in the coach-athlete relationship come not only from external influences, but from the evolving nature of the relationship itself (Philippe et al., 2011). Such relational changes come naturally and occur routinely in academy settings as athletes progress through the phases of talent development, reflecting Bloom's proposed progressions through initiation and development to mastery (Wylleman et al., 2012; Bloom, 1985). Many athletes cite their relationships with their coaches as the most influential in either facilitating or jeopardising this progression, and thus the coach-athlete relationship becomes a lynchpin for athletes' development and sense of security in transitional phases throughout their careers (Orione & de Souza Fleith, 2022).

As is noted by Wylleman et al. (2012), athletes age and progress through competitive stages, add additional stressors outside of the sporting domain (i.e., academic pressures or interpersonal relationships), and the management of these stressors has the potential to impact performance (Wylleman et al., 2012). Santos and colleagues (2018) highlighted the importance of social support - and specifically the coach-athlete relationship - in helping athletes to cope with these non-sporting issues, demonstrating through their case study how successful long-term coach-athlete relationships can provide support through transitional and even traumatic periods in the athlete's life (Santos et al., 2018). This is what we see emulated in the long-term relationships established in ski racing academies. The successful coach-athlete relationship not only enhances an athlete's technical performance and results, but also supports their psychological and emotional well-being, and as such clearly intertwines with the development domains described in Wylleman's lifespan model (Jowett, 2017; Jowett & Poczwardowski, 2007).

The emotional impact of the coach-athlete relationship is especially formative when it comes to young athletes. Davis and Jowett (2014, p. 1457) observed that coaches act as "a safe haven, and a secure base" for athletes: the emphasis we see here on care as a key component to the coach-athlete relationship was also noted in Hampson and Jowett's (2014) research on coaching leadership styles, finding that athletes placed a high value on interpersonal relations and specified care, support, and trust as key components (Davis & Jowett, 2014; Hampson & Jowett, 2014). These characteristics become particularly relevant in the current research context as we consider how the coach-athlete relationship may be impacted by the close proximity entailed by coaches and athletes living together. Roux and colleagues (2022) posited that in residential sports academies, where athletes are often away from home for long training blocks, coaches take on central roles not only in facilitating sporting progression but in supporting athletes' personal development (Roux et al., 2022). Similarly, Collins and MacNamara (2018) emphasised the importance of the coach's influence in mitigating identity foreclosure (Collins & MacNamara, 2018). Identity foreclosure is a psychological phenomenon in which an athlete commits solely to one sport (in this case, ski racing) and in so doing, closes off other potential avenues for development (Petitpas & France, 2010; Collins & MacNamara, 2018). The role of coaches in mitigating foreclosure links back to Wylleman and colleagues' (2012) holistic view of athlete transition and the understanding of non-sporting domains as key contributors to athletes' performance and the sustainability of their sporting development (Wylleman et al., 2012). Fawver et al. (2020) also emphasised the risks of identity foreclosure with specific reference to the ski academy environment, where the external stressors of peers, parents, and the notable financial implications of academy training may increase the pressure on athletes to succeed in their sport (Fawver et al., 2020).

Thus again, the coach-athlete relationship appears as a pillar in providing emotional and psychosocial support to the athlete and helping to alleviate some of the pressures that may detract from athletes' performance and their psychological well-being.

However, alongside the strengths of successful coach-athlete relationships, it is important to also acknowledge the pressures that can come with developing such significant relationships in such intensive settings. The supportive role of the coach often leaves little capacity for coaches to address their own stresses or relieve the pressure of being the "safe haven" for athletes, particularly in environments where there is little time spent apart from said athletes (Davis & Jowett, 2014). As noted by Olusoga and colleagues (2021), the pressure of sustaining high-performing coach-athlete relationships is but one source of stress in the coaching role and can contribute to coaches' experience of burnout. Olusoga et al (2021) also highlighted that the majority of coach-athlete relationship and coaching stress research has focused on the athlete's perception and experience, while sidelining the coach themselves – a research gap addressed by this study's focus on coaches' experience of their relationships (Olusoga et al., 2021).

As noted, while there has been research conducted on the importance of the coach-athlete relationship and its role in intensive talent development settings and in ski racing, there remains little study of sporting development environments in which coaches and athletes live with one another and therefore minimal insight into how such contexts may impact the coach-athlete relationship. The closest comparison to this type of residential development environment is boarding schools: settings that generate similarly intensive development and limited or insular social interactions (Pfeiffer et al., 2016). The research found that boarding school students felt more supported by teachers than parents and noted that peer socialisation also took on greater influence in students' development (Pfeiffer et al., 2016; James, 2023). These observations are comparable to ski racing academies as, in both settings, non-parental figures such as teachers or coaches take on more significant roles in youth development than would normally occur, and therefore the strength of those supplementary relationships may become more influential for both performance and overall well-being. Collectively, the purpose of this research was to explore the coach-athlete relationship in the context of residential ski racing academies, and specifically to examine the ways in which transitions within these academies can impact and influence coach-athlete relationships.

## **Methods**

### *Research Design*

This is a qualitative study using a single-case research design, as the research focuses on understanding relationships and personal coaching experiences, areas which benefit more from interview and qualitative evidence than quantitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2013). In the case of this study, the focus is on the changes that occur in the coach-athlete relationship in relation to social or environmental transition (Barker et al., 2011). Barker and colleagues (2011) also noted that single-case designs are of particular benefit to applied practitioners in generating an evidence base for changes in behaviour or performance in relation to manipulated variables and for identifying potential interventions in a sports setting, thus making it a suitable study design choice for this project in its aim to provide insight to practitioners. While typically the single-case study design relies on a single participant, this participant can be conceptually expanded to encompass a participatory group which then constitutes the single case: in this instance, the case is a single demographic group of alpine ski coaches (Barker et al., 2011). The group is composed of 7 professional ski coaches who were drawn from 2 ski racing academies and all subject to the same inclusion criteria. The simplicity and adaptability of the design also makes for a readily replicable project in different sports or talent development settings (Albers & Kratochwill, 2010).

### *Participants & Sampling*

Participants were selected using purposive sampling, a technique in which participants are selected based on specific inclusion criteria (Jones, 2022). In this study, there were 2 crucial metrics for coach inclusion beyond their employment in a participating ski academy: coaches must have worked with their participating ski academy for at least 1 full season prior to acceptance to the project; and coaches must hold a minimum of a UKCP Alpine Level 2 coaching qualification or equivalent. These requirements aligned with the protocols of purposive sampling and ensured that coaches had a level of coaching education and experience that would allow them to reflect on their practice and relationships with athletes (Palinkas et al., 2015; Jones, 2022). There are limitations to the generalisability of findings drawn from purposive sampling, however in the context of this research, the technique is the best suited to provide the depth of insight required to make the research relevant and valuable to practitioners (Palinkas et al., 2015).

Ethical approval for this project was obtained (September 2023) before contact was made with 4 academies via email: 2 academies expressed interest in participating. Individual meetings were then

conducted with each head of academy to discuss their involvement and to learn more about their coaching teams in order to determine which coaches would be suitable for selection. After these meetings, contact was made with individual coaches, all coaches were provided with Participant Information Sheets and provide written informed consent prior to interviews. Four coaches were sampled from Academy 1, and 3 coaches were sampled from Academy 2 (n = 7). All participants held at least UKCP Level 2 coaching qualifications and all had been working with their participating academy for a minimum of 2 years prior to interview – surpassing the time-in-post requirement for inclusion. Both participating academies are British-run but operate European-based residential programmes, and work with a broad age range of athletes (12 to 22 years old). Table 1 provides some key demographic details about each of the participants allow for cross-referencing between quotations and participant (quotes will be attributed to a participant number: i.e., Participant 1, Participant 2).

**Table 1.** Participant Demographics

| <b>Participant</b> | <b>Years of Experience</b> | <b>Nationality</b> | <b>Location of Programme</b> | <b>Gender</b> | <b>Age</b> | <b>Academy</b> |
|--------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|---------------|------------|----------------|
| 1                  | 10                         | British            | Italy                        | Male          | 27         | 1              |
| 2                  | 6                          | British            | Italy                        | Male          | 24         | 1              |
| 3                  | 4                          | British            | Italy                        | Male          | 22         | 1              |
| 4                  | 7                          | British            | Austria                      | Male          | 29         | 2              |
| 5                  | 8                          | British            | Austria                      | Male          | 25         | 2              |
| 6                  | 8                          | British            | Austria                      | Male          | 25         | 2              |
| 7                  | 20                         | British            | Austria                      | Male          | 38         | 2              |

#### *Data Collection*

Semi-structured interviews were recorded and transcribed, prior to undergoing reflexive thematic analysis. Semi-structured interviews provided a framework which guided discussion through the interview schedule which ensured relevancy of content, while still allowing participants the freedom to engage in fluid discussion rather than adhering to a strict structured format (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). The ability to conduct interviews remotely removed any logistical issues that may have occurred in an observation- or intervention-based study.

Pilot interviews were conducted prior to data collection, during which found statement prompts were more effective in generating discussion than specific questions and the interview schedule was subsequently amended to include both styles. Data collection interviews were conducted via Microsoft Teams and each interview was recorded and subsequently transcribed. The interviews were each 1 hour in length, and participants were notified of the beginning of recording, and were assured that the

interview could be paused or ended at any time. The interview schedule began with discussion of coaches' backgrounds and the operational structure of their ski academy and then moved on to more focused discussion about the coaches' experiences of the coach-athlete relationships and transitions in their academy. These questions and the follow-up statement prompts were designed to give the participant space to reflect on their professional practice, and to provide flexibility within the interview for the participant to lead discussion.

### *Data Analysis*

The analytical framework for this project is reflective thematic analysis (RTA), which allows the researcher to identify patterns or codes within the interview data and subsequently examine broader themes in order to identify areas of commonality or divergence between interview responses and develop analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Braun & Clarke, 2022; Braun & Clarke, 2023). This framework allows for a degree of flexibility in the research direction, as analysis is able to organically follow the themes that are identified while remaining aware of researcher subjectivity (Braun & Clarke, 2023). This choice of analytical framework is supported by research examples including a study conducted by Garner and Hill (2017) who applied thematic analysis to a qualitative focus group study conducted with ski coaches on Community of Practice (Garner & Hill, 2017). The thematic analysis in Garner and Hill's (2017) study was used to identify core elements of coaches' practice and validate the research hypothesis, and the application of this technique in the current research will be similar (Garner & Hill, 2017). A crucial element of this analytical framework is the reflexive aspect, as this identifies data points that were highlighted by participants as having high value, as opposed to assigning value by more traditional metrics as in a content analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Braun & Clarke, 2023). This reflexivity in the data analysis process was particularly effective in identifying themes which were not originally included in the scope of inquiry, but which became important to the research findings through the participants' direction. An example of this is the identification of integration into academy and training-to-race as key transitions; sub-themes that emerged as a result of the participants' assignation of value and which would not have been possible without the use of RTA as analytical framework; Table 2 shows a step-by-step breakdown.

**Table 2.** Reflective thematic analysis process

| <b>PROCESS OVERVIEW</b> |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <b>STAGE 1</b>          | Review of interview transcripts and recordings and creation of initial thematic maps to capture raw codes and identify recurrent themes in each individual interview (Process repeated for each interview) |
| <b>STAGE 2</b>          | Formalisation of identified themes   |
| <b>STAGE 3</b>          | Comparison of themes across individual interviews  |
| <b>STAGE 4</b>          | Identification of themes common across participants  |
| <b>STAGE 5</b>          | Formal identification of overarching themes common across all participant data   |
|                         | Identification of high value transitions and sub-themes  |
|                         | Situation of identified themes in the context of existing knowledge and literature   |

With regards to researcher reflexivity, reflexivity was incorporated into the analysis and research conduct to help mitigate any biases that may have arisen from the lead researcher’s longtime involvement in the British ski racing community (Braun & Clarke, 2013). This was exercised in particular relation to the sample population: the coaching staffs of both participating academies were entirely male, meaning that all coaches included in this study were male. As a result of this, there was initial concern that this could constitute a skewed sample, and potentially add to preconceptions within the ski racing community that the sport is male-dominated. However, it has to be acknowledged that this sample population is representative of the alpine racing scene in Britain: a predominantly or entirely male coaching staff is very common. This sample also – unexpectedly – created a more open dynamic between researcher and participants, as several coaches shared that the conversations they had with a female researcher were not conversations that they felt comfortable having with other male colleagues. Thus, both the participants’ and researcher’s genders become a factor in the data produced, highlighting researcher positionality has to be acknowledged. Overall, while the sample population may constitute a limitation due to its narrow gender pool, the dynamic created by having an all-male sample and a female researcher may in fact present an opportunity to gain insight that would otherwise have been unavailable and thus provide us with valuable data and as noted above, is fairly representative of the professional demographic of British ski racing. This provides an example of the ways in which personal reflexivity was exercised by acknowledging preconceived assumptions and recognising potential limitations in sampling, but also in understanding the ways in which the researcher’s position can contribute to the production of data.

## Results & Discussion

Table 3 provides an overview of the thematic analysis. Common themes that recurred across the interview data formed emergent sub-themes, indicative of the 4 transitions found to be most significant. Beyond the transitions initially intended for research, there were 2 new transitions identified: the athlete’s initial integration into an academy; and the lateral transition between training and race settings. The sub-themes were then identified as higher order themes of either lateral or longitudinal transition types.

**Table 3.** Thematic Analysis Map

| <b>THEMES</b>  | <b>SUB-THEMES</b>        | <b>HIGHER ORDER THEMES</b> |
|--|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Commitment & intensity of TDE                          | Integration into academy | Longitudinal Transitions   |
| Team culture & athlete integration                     |                          |                            |
| Coaches' role in facilitating preliminary transition   |                          |                            |
| U16 to FIS   | Age & stage              |                            |
| Relationship dynamics across age groups & continuity   |                          |                            |
| Process over performance: holistic athlete development |                          |                            |
| Balancing different roles                              | Training to home         | Lateral Transitions        |
| Coaches' involvement in pastoral care                  |                          |                            |
| Coaches' role in athlete discipline                    |                          |                            |
| Minimal separation between training & home environs    |                          |                            |
| Identity foreclosure                                   |                          |                            |
| Adaptability & communication                           | Training to race         |                            |
| Increase in athlete stress                             |                          |                            |
| Calming vs. aggressive pre-race dialogues              |                          |                            |
| Impact of gender                                       |                          |                            |
| Parental pressure & coaches' role as buffer            |                          |                            |

The results pertaining to longitudinal transitions were found to broadly align with established evidence of the evolution of the coach-athlete relationship over a long-term training partnership. The most significant results of this project were found in the context of lateral transitions. Throughout the Discussion section of this paper, there are quotes from coaches in interview which support these

findings, underline the significance of the themes identified, and provide insight into the implications of these themes for practitioners. The following discussion will begin by exploring in more detail the findings related to longitudinal transitions and will then focus in greater detail on the lateral transitions.

#### *Integration into Academy*

Athletes' initial integration into academies was found to be the most significant longitudinal transition, and within this, athletes' assimilation into the home environment of the academy was found to be more important for the success of this transition than their adjustment to the intensity of the training load. The research found that coaches played an influential role in facilitating this transition and particularly in building relationships with athletes to ensure their comfort in living away from parents. The integration phase into a ski academy means a change from 90-minute training sessions and returning home to their parents, to living in the European base of their ski academy for 2-3 week blocks and training 5-6 days per week. The full-time training programme for the 2022/23 season for Academy 1 was 16-18 weeks, while the full-time programme for Academy 2 was 25-30 weeks. While not one of the original focuses of this study, the research found that this transition is one of the most significant for athletes, and furthermore, the success of the athlete's integration is crucially influenced by the coach-athlete relationship. This transition out to academy falls in what Bloom refers to as the "middle years" of talent development, a stage at which athletes are typically becoming more committed to their sport and correspondingly a point at which coaches become more significant figures in athletes' psychosocial spheres (Bloom, 1985; Wylleman & Reints, 2010). The role of the coach in supporting athletes' adjustment to their new environment aligns with previous research which has placed the coach-athlete relationship at the centre of successful athlete transition through talent development stages (Wylleman & Reints, 2010; Jowett & Poczwardowski, 2007).

Beyond the physical adjustment to the increased training load of a full-time academy, coaches highlighted the intensity of the emotional adjustment to academy life for new athletes:

"they're going to miss mum and dad [...] you're skiing every day and skiing with a purpose. [...] the intensity can be really tough also, like, they're in a very close proximity to people they usually deal with for like 1 or 2 hours but then they're living with other kids as well." (**Participant 6**)

Adjustment to the home environment in the academy was found to be more critical to athlete's success than adjustment to training load, and it was also clear that the coach-athlete relationship was significant in supporting this:

“I also play quite a big role in them just feeling comfortable being away from their parents, living in Austria with the group of teenagers.” **(Participant 6)**

These results begin to indicate the role that coaches play in the home environment as well as the training environment and the coaches' awareness of their influence, and furthermore, demonstrate the importance of the long-term commitment to developing the coach-athlete relationship to support athletes' wellbeing and overall success in academy.

In light of this, the current research setting can best be compared to boarding schools – a comparison that was in fact made by a participating coach. In a boarding school setting, teachers play a significant role in both the socialisation of their students, and in the assimilation of those students into the internal culture of the setting; this mirrors the findings of the present study, as coaches noted their influence in making athletes comfortable in their new living environment and also in modelling acceptable behaviours within the home environment (James, 2023). The coaches' position here in modelling behaviour and constructing the academy culture corresponds to the psychosocial domain identified in Wylleman's lifespan model as young athletes' dispositional development is influenced by their coaches and their sports development settings (Debois et al., 2015; Wylleman et al., 2004). Furthermore, it has been found in school settings that the success of students' initial integration into the social environment and their understanding of teacher expectations is associated to their subsequent performance. Subsequently, this provides a basis for the findings of the current research study, in which it has been found that athletes' social integration is central to their success and continued progression within the academy, and which again relates to the lifespan model in the extent to which the academy setting influences athletes' development (Debois et al., 2015; Wylleman et al., 2004).

### *Age & Stage*

One of the original purposes of this study was to examine how the coach-athlete relationship impacts and is impacted by the athlete's progression through age and competitive stages in one academy setting. The longitudinal development of the coach-athlete relationships as athletes progress through age and competitive stage was found to align with established norms of coach-athlete relationship

progression, as has been found in previous studies across sports with the gradual evolution of the relationship from that of teacher/student to a more equal partnership of mentor/mentee as athletes age (Philippe et al., 2011; Collins & MacNamara, 2018).

**Table 4.** Age & Stage Relationship Breakdown

| AGE BAND | TRAINING FOCUS        | RELATIONSHIP DYNAMIC   |
|----------|-----------------------|--|
| U10/U12  | Learning through play | Playful  |
|          | More instruction      | Instructional/authoritative  |
|          | Developing confidence | Flexible   |
| U14      | Structured            | More focused in training, less instructional   |
|          | Technical development | More dialogue between coach & athlete about technical skills & rationale, athlete questioning more |
| U16      | Adaptability          | More independent, given more freedom (particularly in home life)                                   |
|          | Competitive focus     | Managing expectations for FIS transition   |
|          | Increased commitment  | More dialogue between coach & athlete as athlete's technical knowledge is established              |
| U18/U21  | Self-motivation       | Trust in coach's knowledge & decision-making, less questioning                                     |
|          | Less structured       | More of a dyadic relationship than teacher/student as in younger age bands                         |

Table 4 above offers a concise overview of the development of the coach-athlete relationship as athletes age progresses. These findings are aligned to much of the existing literature on the development of coach-athlete relationships, and demonstrate the trust and continual adaptation to athletes' needs necessary to building these relationships over time (Davis & Jowett, 2014; Jowett, 2017). This was highlighted by **Participant 7** who stated that:

“coaches try and reduce the intensity of that [age and stage] transition as much as possible.”

By maintaining the same peer group, coaching team and training environment as far as feasible, noted key components of strong communication and trusting coach-athlete relationships as essential to facilitating successful age and stage progressions (Davis & Jowett, 2014; Jowett, 2017). In the later stages of athletes' time in academy, there was again a crux moment where coaches had to adapt to

evolving athlete needs. This was coaches' awareness of and specific attempts to facilitate traits of independence in older athletes:

“...even athletes on the FIS team when they're 20/21 [years old], they'd say that they were also treated like [kids].” (**Participant 5**)

In the example given by **Participant 5**, the older athletes “fought back a little bit” and eventually Academy 2 went on to institute a senior athlete apartment separate from the main residence where older or “university age” athletes could gain more independence. This again demonstrates the adaptability of coaches in such intensive settings and their role in taking developmental decisions (such as living independently for the first time) that would normally fall under the purview of parents and again emphasises coaches' awareness of the changing needs of athletes as they age and progress.

#### *Training to Home*

The lateral transition between the on-snow training environment and the home setting in academy was found to be one of the most significant, and returned three major findings: the extent of coaches' pastoral responsibility in the home environment; the lack of separation between coaches and athletes in the residential academy structure; and the role of coaches in mitigating identity foreclosure in an intensive talent development environment. These are some of the most important findings from this study overall. While there has been consideration in previous literature of the formative nature of coaches' influence on young athletes' development, there has been no research conducted on a talent development setting of this type in which coaches and athletes live together, and in which the coaches reported taking on primary caring roles for their athletes. Roux and colleagues (2022) found that coaches often take on more formative roles in athletes' personal development as a result of participating in dedicated sports academies, an assertion that is upheld by the present study, but their research does not extend to how this influence may be increased by coaches and athletes having no separation at the end of the training day (Roux et al., 2022).

The importance of context to athletes' development and to the relationships that influence this development is proven by Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model, in which the environment and subsequent relationships are considered as interactive components (Domingues & Goncalves, 2014). This interaction is demonstrated in the findings of this study, as the specifics of the environment created the need for coaches to take on more pastoral responsibility and this, in turn, was found to impact the closeness of the coach-athlete relationships within the setting. This also further compounds

the significance of the coaches' position in the psychosocial development domain, thus overlapping the bioecological with the lifespan model. 6 of 7 coaches included in the study reported being aware of their level of influence on athletes' personal development, and felt this was increased by the lack of separation that comes with the integrated residential setting:

“It’s a little bit scary to think about how much of an influence you can have on them, you know, there’s that saying that somebody’s sport coach, whatever sport it is, whatever they’re doing, they can have more influence on that child’s life than any other adult other than their parents in their entire lifetime.” **(Participant 2)**

Coaches' reports of this awareness further highlighted the closeness of the coach-athlete relationship and the level of care required by such an intensive setting, components that have long been understood as integral to the success and efficacy of the relationship and to athletes' long-term development and performance (Davis & Jowett, 2014; Hampson & Jowett, 2014; Taylor, Ashford, & Collins, 2022). The extent of this involvement relates to research conducted by Taylor and colleagues who discussed the capacity of coaches to “care for and about athletes”, characterising this as coaches' engrossment in the athletes' lives and needs, high levels of empathy towards athletes, and “motivational displacement” in which coaches prioritise the needs of athletes to the potential detriment of the coaches' own wellbeing (Taylor et al., 2022, p. 91). These traits are clearly exhibited in the findings in the lateral transition from training to home, wherein athletes' needs come before those of the coach as a matter of routine: “all we do every day is for them” **(Participant 6)**. What all of this demonstrates is the significance of the lateral transitions between training and home environments to the coach-athlete relationship, and the way in which this transition changes the dynamic of the coach-athlete relationship from that of a traditional sports coach to a much more involved relationship based on care and the coaches' desire to “look after” athletes, in turn creating a much more intensive professional role for coaches (Taylor et al., 2022).

Table 5 provides an overview of what coaches reported as the average “inlier” or residential training day in the academy programme: this demonstrates again the intensive nature of the academy structure, underlines the crossover in training and home environments, and emphasises the prioritisation of athletes' needs. What is also made clear through these findings is a gap in the existing research: specifically, the lack of consideration of how the transition to a pastoral setting can impact the coach-athlete relationship as a whole – a transition which, as we can see from this study's evidence, plays an incredibly significant part in the coach-athlete relationship and the coaches' own

wellbeing. Thus, understanding how particularly the lateral transitions in academy settings impact coach-athlete relationships can provide insight not only into the specifics of that relational dynamic, but can also reveal where greater support and education for coaches can help to support them in preparing for and developing in residential academy work.

**Table 5.** Table detailing average “inlier” training day in academy

| ACADEMY 1 DAY |   | ACADEMY 2 DAY |  |
|---------------|---|---------------|--|
| 6:40          | Wake-up                                   | 6:30          | Wake-up                                |
| 7:00          | Breakfast                                 | 6:40-7:00     | Activation exercises                   |
| 7:45          | Commute to mountain                       | 7:00-7:45     | Breakfast                              |
| 8:00-12:30    | Ski training                              | 8:00          | Commute to mountain                    |
| 12:45         | Lunch                                     | 9:00-13:00    | Ski training                           |
| 14:00-17:00   | School/coaches begin ski prep             | 13:00-14:30   | Lunch & video analysis                 |
| 17:15-18:50   | Fitness session, video analysis, ski prep | 15:00-18:00   | School                                 |
| 19:00         | Dinner                                    | 18:30         | Dinner                                 |
| 20:00-21:00   | Downtime                                  | 19:30-21:00   | Downtime, gym session/alternate sports |
| 21:00         | Athlete bedtime                           | 21:00         | Athlete bedtime                        |
| 22:00-23:00   | Coaches finish ski prep, coaches' bedtime | 22:00-23:00   | Coaches' bedtime                       |

The data collected from this project also indicated that there is a disconnection between the way that British ski academies’ pastoral care provision is supposed to operate and how it actually does operate: this is seen in the fact that while both academies have dedicated pastoral staff (“house parents”) whose role is to take on the pastoral caring responsibilities in the academy home, coaches from both settings reported still taking on domestic responsibilities:

“we’re almost like dads there [...] you need to realise that you’re going to be in charge of dealing with not just the coaching but, you know, making sure they’re eating, sleeping, resting, doing school, showering.” (Participant 5)

It is clear here the scale of coaches’ non-sporting responsibility and the high level of emotional involvement that coaches have with their athletes. The coaches’ position in shaping athletes’

behaviour and overall development again corresponds to Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model in the influence of relationships and environment on athletes' dispositional development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Again, previous applications of Bronfenbrenner's model in the sports context fall short of the level of involvement seen in the present research context where coaches' influence on athletes' dispositional and behavioural development is more significant and other significant relationships (i.e., parents, teachers, or non-sporting peers) have a more limited impact by virtue of athletes' living in academy.

Yet despite of the lack of separation between coaches and athletes, and coaches' often intense pastoral responsibility, all coaches in this study stated that they would prefer to live with athletes than live apart, and all view the integrated living environment positively. Coaches emphasised the closeness of the setting and correspondingly, of the relationships, as a positive outcome from the integrated environment and felt that they were better placed to "look after" athletes when they were living together (Taylor et al., 2022):

"I quite like it because I feel like I can get more responsibility. I can look after them. I can make sure they're doing the things they need to do and also manage, like I said, that balance, balanced lifestyle a bit better. And it's helpful for them as well that they can come and just talk to me if they have a problem or, you know, my door's always open and obviously I'm always doing something for them or available to them. So, in some ways I find it actually better to live with them than live away." **(Participant 6)**

This again emphasises the impact of the lateral transition between training and home on the coach-athlete bond and demonstrates how integral this transition is to the development of closeness and provision of care in the coach-athlete relationship in ski academies (Hampson & Jowett, 2014; Taylor et al., 2022). However, coaches across both academies shared that they did not feel prepared for the pastoral element of the role before moving out to academy, which heightened the level of pressure that came with such responsibility. This was made most clear with regards to discipline in the academy home. Coaches from both academies noted that the disciplining of athletes often fell to coaches rather than house parents:

"There was a lot of difficult, challenging behaviour issues that we had to deal with, which would normally be more like a thing that parents would eventually have to deal with,

with teenagers and stuff like that, [...] which was really, really tough as well. And I don't think we were massively well equipped for that." (**Participant 5**)

The fact that discipline is often administered by coaches reinforces the coach-athlete relationship as the most significant relationship within the setting despite the presence of house parents, and underlines the ways in which the lateral transition between training and home changes the dynamic of the coach-athlete relationship:

"the teachers or the house parents weren't as like, I guess as strict as us, or the kids didn't respond as well to them. So, then we'd be in charge of all that discipline stuff as well, which I hated. But I had to do it because it was just part of the role." (**Participant 5**)

What these findings demonstrate is the impact of the lateral transition between the training and home settings on the coach-athlete relationship, as domestic disciplinary responsibility is integrated into the coaching role in a manner that would not occur without the residential component to the academies. A key aspect to note within this is the coaches' acknowledgement that they did not feel "equipped" for this responsibility, a comment which carries implications for both academy practice and coaching education provision (**Participant 5**). Related to this, coaches across both academies reported being "responsible for the culture and the behaviours and you know, setting examples of what's acceptable, what's not" (**Participant 6**). This is another element of developmental responsibility that goes beyond sports instruction and again emphasises the level of pastoral responsibility embedded in the coaches' role in the residential academy settings. Overall, this indicates a lack of education or preparation on the pastoral role during the coaching qualification process. While all coaches noted the normalisation of such structures in British ski racing and reflected on their own positive experiences as athletes in similar environments, this did not diminish coaches' perception of the intensity of the coaching role:

"It was tough for us. It was definitely tough for the kids as well. The kids, you know, they don't have much space. They're with coaches who do become more like... It ends up becoming like a family. [...] You're never off the clock as well. So when, you know, the kids go to bed, you have to be quiet. So, everything revolves around the kids." (**Participant 5**)

This evidence in particular highlights the duality of these settings: while coaches feel positively about the level of responsibility and care they can develop in the residential academies, this comes alongside the acknowledgement of the impact such an intensive setting has both on coaches' own wellbeing and on the fundamental nature of their relationships with their athletes.

The research also found that coaches' roles in mitigating identity foreclosure in athletes was heightened by the overlap in training and home environments. The significance of the coaches' role corresponds to previous research which highlighted a number of factors that increase the likelihood for young athletes to experience identity foreclosure: for example, the pressures of peers, parents, and the intense environment of ski academies themselves, all of which were also noted by coaches in this study as factors contributing to the risk of foreclosure (Petitpas & France, 2010; Fawver et al., 2020). Coaches across both academies noted their role in ensuring that athletes communicated with friends and family outside of the academy, and actively encouraged their interests in other sports and alternate activities to ensure that athletes continued to develop interests and social networks beyond just ski racing:

“I also find it's important they have time to call friends back home, call parents. Just chill out and do things they want like normal teenagers, like here, they can sometimes be almost like a little bit robotic” (Participant 6). This finding particularly emphasises the closeness in the coach-athlete relationship, as this is the element that allows coaches to recognise this “robotic” tendency in athletes and then encourage or facilitate changes in behaviour (**Participant 6**)

Again, this role was intensified by the lateral training-to-home transition as coaches would not be responsible for monitoring these types of communications if athletes lived with their parents: thus, it is clear that coaches take on a more formative position for athletes' dispositional development as a result of this transition. These findings connect back to Wylleman's lifespan and Bronfenbrenner's bioecological models in the coaches' awareness of athletes' holistic development and the consideration of non-sporting factors, or “proximal processes” in Bronfenbrenner's model, and their potential impact on athletes' performance and personal development (Wylleman & Reints, 2010; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

Due to the lack of previous research into academies in which coaches and athletes live together and the rarity of such a structure in sport more broadly, it is understandable that coaching education does

not encompass the domestic roles of coaches, but as this study has demonstrated, this aspect of the coaching role is significant to both coaches and athletes and is widely – albeit informally – acknowledged as common in the British ski racing community, and therefore could be more specifically addressed in coaching education in the UK. This would help to mitigate the lack of preparedness and sense of overwhelm described above, thereby better preparing and protecting coaches from potential burnout.

### *Training to Race*

The final point of discussion is the lateral training-to-race transition. In this sub-theme, there were two key elements identified that contribute to the significance of this transition and its impact on the coach-athlete relationship: these were the coaches' role as buffer between athletes and parents, and the impact of gender. Leading on from the discussion above of coaches' awareness of "proximal processes", a prime example of this was identified in the training-to-race transition, in which coaches reported acting as "buffers" (Participant 1) between parents and athletes. The crux of this "buffer" role comes at the transition to race settings, as coaches reported the pressure from parents heightened during race periods in comparison to the athletes' day-to-day and thus prompted intervention on the coaches' part to shield the athlete(s):

"I just phone parents in the winter to tell them to just get out, to be honest. There're some guys, you know, they're getting their kids and saying 'oh, you know, you only came 4th in this run and this person's beating you, this person is beating you here' but they have no idea the context of training or anything like that right. I just pick up the phone and just say, 'look, give them a break' which doesn't always go down well but tough."

**(Participant 1)**

The pressures often exerted by parents in competitive youth sport are well documented and known to be potentially detrimental to athletes' performance and wellbeing, and the role of the coach, as seen here stepping in to protect the athlete from that pressure, further exemplifies the closeness of the coach-athlete relationship and the more influential position of the coach by virtue of living with the athletes (Smoll et al., 2011). This is a prime example of the ways in which the varying environmental transitions in the ski academy setting interact with one another and with the coach-athlete relationship to prompt behaviours that would not otherwise occur: in this instance, the lateral training-to-race transition interacting with the coach-athlete relationship as it occurs in the residential setting demonstrates how the closeness gained through the residential environment informs everything else.

Further to this, there was another key finding specific to the training-to-race transition: the impact of gender. The data from Academy 2 showed that the coach-athlete relationships between female athletes and the all-male coaching team were strong in the training environment and were consolidated over time, with coaches in interview highlighting that athletes were comfortable enough to discuss personal issues like periods with their male coaches. However, in the race setting, coaches reported that female athletes showed high levels of pre-race anxiety:

“especially girls, I think, put a lot more pressure on themselves than the boys. [...] I really noticed that especially with girls, they would struggle to convert the training performances to race performances. With the boys, that was slightly easier. I don’t know if that’s something to do with the fact that we have an all-male coaching line-up.”

**(Participant 1)**

This data corresponds to previous research which shows that female athletes typically experience higher levels of pre-performance stress than their male teammates, and that this is particularly apparent in individual sports (Gligor et al., 2021; Correia & Rosado, 2019). In response to their observations, the coaches in Academy 2 changed their communication style with female athletes when in the race environment:

“To put it bluntly, I’ll probably be a lot nicer to girls than I will be to boys because that seems to work better.” **(Participant 2)**

However, as this did not generate significant improvement, the female house parent was added to the race support team for the female athletes. The house parent acted as a purely supportive figure with no technical coaching input. As was stated by one of the coaches, the decision to put the female house parent in the race setting was in an effort to:

“just try and make [the girls] feel comfortable, find out how they’re working, how they’re not working, all that kind of stuff. And because there are things that a 13-year-old girl is going to tell a female member of staff but not tell a male member of staff.” **(Participant 1)**.

Following this augmentation, coaches observed an immediate improvement in the girls' race performances:

“to have [the house mum] on the hill, all of a sudden, the girls just went from like zero to hero. There were so many changes [in performance] and there was no coaching input at all.” **(Participant 1)**

This finding demonstrated that despite the closeness of the coach-athlete relationships in the training environment, the race transition changed the dynamic of that relationship and therefore the relationship had to be adapted with the addition of the female house parent.

It has been found in previous research that the communication and support needs of female athletes in coach-athlete relationships differ from those of male athletes, however the complexity in the present study's finding is that those needs only changed when the transition from training to race occurred (Weiss & Kipp, 2018; de Haan & Norman, 2020). What this does demonstrate however is the coaches' ability to recognise limitations in the male-coach-female-athlete relationship and adjust in order to meet the needs of the athletes (Taylor et al., 2022; de Haan & Norman, 2020). This example also further emphasises the impact of the environment on the dynamic of coach-athlete relationship, a finding which has been evidenced in both of the lateral transitions identified by this study. Finally, it should be noted that as a result of coaches' observations, the coaching line-up for Academy 2 was changed for the following season to include female coaching staff.

#### *Limitations*

There are certain limitations in the present study: the sample population was comprised of all male coaches, which restricts the level of insight regarding female coaches' experiences of coach-athlete relationships and transitions, and the sample population consisted of only two academies. Due to these restrictions in the sample population, it may be worth conducting further study in which female coaches are included and in which a larger sample population is used. This research was also conducted via interview remotely, limiting the ability of the researcher to observe the coach-athlete relationships in their settings and so again, this subject may be worthy of further investigation through an observation-based study.

*Conclusions & Implications for Practice*

This study has focused on a type of talent development setting which has not previously been studied, and as a result of this, the research has added novel data to the existing body of knowledge on the coach-athlete relationship. The aim of this study was to investigate the impact of transitions on coach-athlete relationships in the context of British ski racing academies, and the research has concluded that transitions carry significant impacts and can enact change on the very nature of the coach-athlete relationship. The research identified more transitions than were originally intended for study, finding that the initial integration into academy and the lateral transition from training to race environment were particularly significant. The examination of the interaction between transition and coach-athlete relationship corresponded to established theories and demonstrated the importance of viewing the coaching role and the coach-athlete relationship holistically and with consideration for the role of the development environment. The most important findings of this research were the significance of lateral transitions to the coach-athlete relationship, and the importance of successful initial integration of athletes into the residential academy environment. In particular, the discussion of lateral transitions provides novel data on the extent of coaches' pastoral roles in residential academy settings and the impact that integrated training and living environments has on coach-athlete relationships. The emergence of gender as it relates to the training-to-race transition and the impact of that interaction on coach-athlete relationships also holds implications for coaching provision, as this finding indicates the need for more female coaches or members of staff in these intensive environments.

Finally, there are significant implications for coaching education in the findings regarding coaches' pastoral roles: the scale of coaches' involvement in pastoral care has been demonstrated clearly by this study, as has the fact that some coaches did not feel prepared for this part of their role. In order to better prepare coaches and thereby provide better care to athletes, the pastoral side of academy coaching should be addressed specifically in coaching education.

## References

- Adeoye-Olatunde, O. A. & Olenik, N. L. (2021). Research and scholarly methods: Semi-structured interviews. *J Am Coll Clin Pharm*, 4(10), 1358–1367. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jac5.1441>
- Albers, C. A. & Kratochwill, T. R. (2010). Design of Experiments. In P. Peterson, E. Baker, & B. McGaw (Eds.), *International Encyclopedia of Education* (3rd ed.) (pp. 125-131). Elsevier. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-044894-7.01380-4>.
- Barker, J., McCarthy, P., Jones, M. & Moran, A. (2011). *Single-Case Research Methods in Sport and Exercise Psychology*. Oxford: Routledge.
- Bloom, B. S. (Ed.). (1985). *Developing Talent in Young People*. New York: Ballantine.
- Braun V. & Clarke, V. (2023). Toward good practice in thematic analysis: Avoiding common problems and be(com)ing a knowing researcher. *Inter J Trans Health*, 24(1), 1-6. DOI: 10.1080/26895269.2022.2129597
- Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2022). *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2013). *Successful Qualitative Research: A Practical Guide for Beginners*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. & Morris, P. (2006). The Bioecological Model of Human Development. In Lerner, R. M. & Damon, W. (Eds.). (2006). *Handbook of child psychology: Theoretical models of human development* (6th ed.). (pp. 795-825). New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Collins, D. & MacNamara, A. (2018). *Talent Development: A Practitioner Guide*. Oxford: Routledge.
- Correia, M. & Rosado, A. (2019). Anxiety in Athletes: Gender and Type of Sport Differences. *Inter J Psych Res*, 12(1), 9-17. DOI: 10.21500/20112084.3552
- Davis, L. & Jowett, S. (2014). Coach-athlete attachment and the quality of the coach-athlete relationship: implications for athlete's well-being. *J Sports Sci*, 32(15), 1454-1464. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02640414.2014.898183>
- Debois, N., Ledon, A. & Wylleman, P. (2015). A lifespan perspective on the dual career of elite male athletes. *Psych Sport Exer*, 21, 15-26. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2014.07.011>
- de Haan, D. & Norman, L. (2020). Mind the gap: the presence of capital and power in the female-athlete-male-coach relationship within elite rowing. *Sports Coach Rev*, 9(1), 95-118. DOI: 10.1080/21640629.2019.1567160
- Domingues, M. & Goncalves, C. E. B. (2014). Systematic review of the bioecological theory in sport sciences. *Balt J Health Phys Act*, 6(2), 142-153. DOI: 10.2478/bjha-2014-0014

Fawver, B., Cowan, R. L., DeCouto, B. S., Lohse, K. R., Podlog, L. & Williams, A. M. (2020). Psychological characteristics, sport engagement, and performance in alpine skiers. *Psych Sport & Exer*, 47. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2019.101616>

Garner, P. & Hill, D. M. (2017). Cultivating a Community of Practice to Enable Coach Development in Alpine Ski Coaches. *Inter Sport Coach J*, 4, 63-75. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1123/iscj.2016-0076>

Gligor, S., Oravitan, M. & Pantea, C. (2021). Anxiety of Students Practicing Competitive Sports: Part of a Vicious Circle or Not? *South Af J Res Sport Phys Edu Rec*, 43(2), 47 - 58.

Hampson, R. & Jowett, S. (2014). Effects of coach leadership and coach-athlete relationship on collective efficacy. *Scand J Med Sci Sports*, 24, 454-460. DOI: 10.1111/j.1600-0838.2012.01527.x

James, G.. (2023). The Psychological Impact of Sending Children Away to Boarding Schools in Britain: Is there Cause for Concern?. *Brit J Psychother*, 39(3), 592–610. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjp.12854>

Jones, I. (2022). *Research Methods for Sports Studies*, (4th ed.). London: Routledge.

Jowett, S. (2017). Coaching effectiveness: the coach-athlete relationship at its heart. *Curr Op Psych*, 16, 154-158.

Jowett, S. & Poczwadowski, A. (2007). Understanding the Coach-Athlete Relationship. In S. Jowett & D. Lavallee (Eds.), *Social Psychology in Sport*, (pp. 3-14).

Olusoga, P., Kenttä, G. & Bentzen, M. (2021). Coaching Under Stress and Burnout. In Resende, R., & Gomes, A. R. (Eds.), *Coach Hu Dev Perf Sports*. 371-409. Springer.

Orione, L. & de Souza Fleith, D. (2022). What is the Role for Psychosocial Factors for Talent Development in Sports? *Psicologia: Teoria e Pesquisa*, 38(38316), 1-10. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1590/0102.3772e38316.en>

Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N. & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful Sampling for Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis in Mixed Method Implementation Research. *Admin Pol Mental Health Mental Health Serv Res*, 42(5), 533–544. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y>

Petitpas, A. J. & France, T. Identity Foreclosure in Sport. Tod, D. & Hodge, K. (Eds.). (2010). *Routledge Handbook of Applied Sport Psychology: A Comprehensive Guide for Students and Practitioners* (1<sup>st</sup> ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203851043>

Pfeiffer, J. P., Pinguart, M. & Krick, K.. (2016). Social Relationships, Prosocial Behaviour, and Perceived Social Support in Students From Boarding Schools. *Can J School Psych*, 31(4), 279–289. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0829573516630303>

Philippe, R. A., Sagar, S. S., Huguet, S., Paquet, Y. & Jowett, S. (2011). From Teacher to Friend: The Evolving Nature of the Coach-Athlete Relationship. *Int J Sport Psych*, 42, 1-23.

Roux, V., Martinent, G. & Trouilloud, D. (2022). Temporal dynamics of the quality of the coach-athlete relationship over one season among adolescent handball players: a latent class analysis approach. *Int J Sport Exer Psych*, 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1612197x.2022.2109185>

Santos, F., Camiré, M. & MacDonald, D. (2018). Lived experiences within a longstanding coach-athlete relationship: The case of one paralympic athlete. *J Physl Edu Sport*, 20(2-3), 279-297.

Smoll, F. L., Cumming, S. P., & Smith, R. E. (2011). Enhancing Coach-Parent Relationships in Youth Sports: Increasing Harmony and Minimizing Hassle. *Inter J Sports Sci Coach*, 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.1260/1747-9541.6.1.13>

Taylor, J., Ashford, M. & Collins, D. (2022). Tough Love - Impactful, Caring Coaching in Psychologically Unsafe Environments. *Sports*, 10(83). <https://doi.org/10.3390/sports10060083>

Weiss, M. R. & Kipp, L. E. (2018). Social Relationships Rock! How Parents, Coaches, and Peers Can Optimize Girls' Psychological Development Through Sport and Physical Activity. In LaVoi, N. M. (Eds.), *The 2018 Tucker Center Research Report, Developing physically active girls: An evidence-based multidisciplinary approach* (pp. 37-54). Minneapolis: Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sports.

Wylleman, P., Reints, A. & de Knop, P. (2012). A developmental and holistic perspective on athletic career development. In Sotiriadou, P., & de Bosscher, V. (Eds.), *Managing High Performance Sport*, (1st ed.), (pp. 159-182). Routledge.

Wylleman, P. & Reints, A. (2010). A lifespan perspective on the career of talented and elite athletes: Perspectives on high-intensity sport. *Scand J Med Sci Sports*, 20(2), 88-94. DOI: 10.1111/j.1600-0838.2010.01194.x

Wylleman, P., Alfermann, D. & Lavalée, D. (2004). Career transitions in sport: European perspectives. *Psych Sport Exer*, 5(1), 7-20

### **Data Availability**

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to data restrictions, namely survey responses containing information that could compromise the anonymity and privacy of research participants.

### **Conflicts of Interest**

There are no relevant financial or non-financial competing interests to report.