JYX
JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO
UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

This is a self-archived version of an original article. This version may differ from the original in pagination and typographic details.

Author(s): Ronkainen, Noora J; Ryba, Tatiana V.; Littlewood, Martin; Selänne, Harri

Title: 'School, family and then hockey!' : Coaches' views on dual career in ice hockey

Year: 2018

Version: Accepted version (Final draft)

Copyright: © Authors, 2018

Rights: In Copyright

Rights url: http://rightsstatements.org/page/InC/1.0/?language=en

Please cite the original version:

Ronkainen, N. J., Ryba, T. V., Littlewood, M., & Selänne, H. (2018). 'School, family and then hockey!' : Coaches' views on dual career in ice hockey. International Journal of Sports Science and Coaching, 13(1), 38-45. https://doi.org/10.1177/1747954117712190

The University of Jyväskylä's Rights Retention Strategy (RRS) enables accepted versions (final drafts) to be made openly available through self-archiving. For more information, see: https://www.jyu.fi/en/rrs

"School, family, and then hockey!" Coaches' views on dual career in ice hockey

Ronkainen, N. J, Ryba, T. V., Littlewood, M., & Selänne, H. (2018). "School, family, and then hockey!" Coaches' views on dual career in ice hockey. *International Journal of Sport Science & Coaching*, *13*(1), 38-45. DOI: 10.1177/1747954117712190.

Abstract

Despite the extensive research into coaches' roles in supporting athletic development and motivation for sport, few studies have examined coaches' attitudes and practices towards athletes' dual careers. The present study extends European research into athletes' dual careers by examining Finnish ice hockey coaches' attitudes and practices surrounding players' education. Ten male coaches aged 28-52 participated in semi-structured interviews. The data was analysed with an existential-narrative theoretical framework and with thematic and structural narrative analysis. Three composite vignettes were created entitled "supporting athletic development and players in reaching their own goals", "enjoyment and physically active lifestyle" and "developing good persons". The analysis revealed that although all coaches embraced the official rhetoric where school is a priority over ice hockey, most of them had few practical examples of how this view had informed their coaching practice. It is concluded that young players may be easily lured into dreams of professionalism, whereas coaches' dominant narrative of education as a back-up may be ineffective to spark athletes' interest and engagement with education.

Keywords: youth sport, education, coaching philosophy, narrative, existential psychology

"School, family, and then hockey!" Coaches' views on dual career in ice hockey

Unlike practitioners in many other fields of teaching and education, coaches in youth sport environments often have limited formal training or financial compensation for their work (1,2). It has been reported that coaches often draw their coaching philosophies and practices from various resources, including accumulated coaching experience, own athletic experiences, and interactions with other coaches and people affiliated with the sport clubs (3,4). With the lack of formal job descriptions to outline goals and responsibilities associated with the coach role, coaching practices can vary considerably across and within different sports and age groups in terms of key areas of emphasis (such as, winning, participation, skill development, fun, physically active lifestyles, and/or elite performance). Therefore, it has been argued that sport organisations do not seem to have systematic programs to teach life and sport skills (5).

Gilbert and Trudel (3) examined how Canadian youth sport coaches frame their role, and found nine internal components: emphasis on team, personal growth and development, sport-specific development, winning, safety, positive team environment, fun, equity, and discipline. It was noted that coaches' emphasis shifted based on the age group and competitive level, and there was a common implicit assumption that competitive sport required a different approach to coaching than recreational sport. In another Canadian study, Wilcox and Trudel (6) examined one youth ice hockey coach's philosophy of practice and found two central principles: winning and supporting player development. It was found that although the coach asserted that he promoted equal playing time, his actual decisions depended on the playing time left in a game and players' performance level.

In addition to the growing investment in athletic development, young talented athletes are also expected to complete compulsory education and make important decisions concerning

higher education. It has been observed that there are increasing expectations for athletes to engage with education, and while some young athletes may prioritise sport over education (7,8), others may be highly motivated to achieve in both domains, and may experience sport and education as not only compatible, but also complementary (9,10). A number of recent studies have highlighted the multiple benefits of dual careers for athletes: for example, it can provide psychological benefits (e.g., balanced lifestyle, broader identity development, self-esteem, better preparedness to athletic retirement), social benefits (e.g., expanded social networks and support system) and financial benefits (e.g., broader skills and better chances for employment) (8-12). However, the dual career pathway involves a number of challenges, including difficulty in matching training and competition schedules with exams and obligatory classes, fatigue, finances, limited social life, and general lack of time (11,13,14). Studies have emphasised that supportive environments and collaboration between different actors at school, sports clubs and home, is crucial for developing a sustainable dual career (9,14).

Coaches have been seen as central non-parental socialising agents in young athletes' lives, (5) and have been found to impact athletes' self-perceptions and motivation in sport (8,15). Therefore, it can be assumed that their views on education can also be important for athletes. Yet, there is little research focused on coaches' approaches towards dual career. In professional football, it has been observed that coaches may not be supportive of education as they may think that it takes athletes' focus away from developing their sporting careers (16). In contrast, Knight and Harwood (14) found that coaches in different youth elite sport environments were consistently supportive of athletes' dual careers. However, the level of communication between coaches and the educational institutions varied considerably, and while some clubs had established protocols for communication, in other clubs keeping the contact was left to athletes'

and parents' responsibility. Moreover, in a football academy, coaches felt that interfering with players' education was not their responsibility, because the club had appointed an education and welfare officer to take care of such issues (14).

The current study extends the literature on coaching practice and athlete development by examining Finnish ice hockey coaches' perspectives on athletes' dual careers. In the Finnish system, sport and education have traditionally been separate, and sports participation has been organised within a volunteer-based club system. A small number of upper secondary sport schools were officially established in the 1990s, and only in the 2000s a more extensive sports academy network was established to extend dual career support to higher education (17). However, while the academy athletes participate in morning practices organised by coaching staff employed by the academy, most training still takes place in sport clubs which are not officially linked to educational institutions. Therefore, in the sport clubs there are no sport-related consequences for poor academic performance, and the clubs' own policies are open to coaches' interpretations. Moreover, coaching education is offered both by local clubs and the Finnish Ice Hockey Association, but attending the courses is not a strict requirement especially when coaching younger age groups. Ice hockey is the country's biggest professional sport characterised by traditional masculine values, hard training load, and availability of the professional athlete developmental pathway. In 2013 in Finland, more than half of the country's professional athletes were ice hockey players (18). With this background, the study sought to explore the following research questions:

1) How do youth ice hockey coaches articulate their attitudes towards dual career and how do they view their roles in supporting players' holistic development?
2) What are the practices coaches engage in to support players' educational success?

3) Is the coaches' everyday coaching practice in line with their ideas surrounding dual career?

Methodology

Conceptual Framework

The theoretical underpinning of the present study lies in existential psychology and narrative inquiry. While existential philosophers have rarely articulated an existential perspective specifically focused on education or coaching (19), from this approach it is generally emphasised that an educator (or a coach) can never choose for the student (-athlete) when it comes to attitudes towards life choices and meaningful goals (20). The existential view emphasises that our lives are permeated by uncertainty, incompleteness of meanings we assign to our experience, and necessity of choice (21). Young athletes face important decisions in terms of committing to meaningful goals in and outside sport, and accepting responsibility for their decisions. For an authentic choice, the person must feel that s/he is also free to choose otherwise, and to be able to assign subjective truth to that choice (19). From an applied perspective, this means that instead of seeking to indoctrinate student-athletes to a culturally dominant and preferred value, coaches should help athletes develop self-awareness and understanding of their situated embodied possibilities, so that they can make responsible choices for themselves (21). An existential view emphasises that making a choice means not-choosing the alternative, and that some values and aspirations may present themselves as incompatible. For the present study, it is of interest to study how coaches articulate their views on the role of education in athletes' lives and how they engage in practices which seek to influence athletes' career decisions.

A critical constructivist approach to narrative has been proposed as a position which can be integrated with the existential view to gain a more contextualised understanding of psychological

phenomena (22). Narrative theory complements the existential approach by its focus on cultural situatedness of experience and meaning. As Smith and Sparkes (23) asserted, "whilst people often depend on and act to defend what they experience as their interior lives and their personal authenticity, we draw and build our personal stories on the narrative resources that culture, local worlds, and relationships make available to us" (p. 5). Analysing coaches' stories about athlete development and education not only allows for insight into how they construct meaning in coaching practice, but also enables us to better understand what kind of cultural narrative resources are available for them. Coaches' stories, then, are the narrative resources that are passed on to the young players to bring meaning to their experiences and to help them project themselves to future possibilities in sport and life.

Participants

Participants of the present study were 10; male, Finnish ice hockey coaches aged 28-52. They had an average of 14,3 years of coaching experience and had been players themselves before becoming a coach (one of them was not coaching in the ongoing season). Most of them were asked to start coaching by former teammates, friends, or other coaches. Two participants were professional coaches, two were semi-professional, and six were amateur. Eight coaches were working with junior teams (aged 10-17), one coach worked with a men's team, and one coach was a manager for all junior teams in his club.

Procedure

After obtaining institutional ethical approval for the study, participants were invited to take part in a semi-structured interview. They were informed that the interview was a part of a longitudinal study on athletes' dual careers (24), and that the focus of the interview was on their coaching philosophy and everyday practices. All participants provided an informed written

consent. The interview started with a broad opening question, “tell me your story of becoming a coach”. Probes and follow-up questions were developed from participants’ stories to gain an understanding of their life trajectories and contexts. We then asked participants to elaborate on their coaching philosophy and their goals as a coach. For dual career, we asked for both their general views (e.g., what are your views on dual career? Can a player succeed in both school and sport?) and concrete experiences and practices (e.g., what are your club’s daily practices for student-athletes? Do you have examples of how you follow up on your players’ educational achievement?). At the end of the interview, coaches were also invited to ask questions and elaborate on topics that they found important but were not covered during the interview. Five coaches were interviewed in Finnish by the fourth author, and five coaches who were comfortable with the language were interviewed in English by the second author.

Data analysis and representation

All interviews were transcribed verbatim and then read through several times by the first author to become familiar with the data. Initial codes and memos were developed to record first impressions and ideas, and to inductively identify core themes and narratives holding together each participant’s account. Whilst five interviews had been conducted in Finnish, all notes and codes were written in English to allow the second and the third author to be involved in reviewing the emerging themes. Research meetings were held between the co-authors to discuss impressions and ideas and to share experiences from the actual interview situations and interactions that took place between the interviewer and the participant.

Thematic narrative analysis (25) was used to develop themes in a more systematic manner to include higher and lower order themes, and to involve psychological terminology. This stage of the analysis focused on identifying the building blocks or “what’s” of the stories, and sought to

compare and contrast central issues and themes across cases (25). In the final stage of the thematic analysis, the development of themes was guided by theoretical commitments in existential psychology and specifically the concepts of authenticity and choice. The thematic approach was then complemented by structural narrative analysis which sought to discern the core plot and the narrative types underlying each individual narrative (26). As Smith and Sparkes (26) explained, a structural analysis allows for identifying "the type(s) of narrative a person draws on from culture to shape their personal stories, and better know what type of story is guiding a person's actions, thoughts, hopes, emotions, and psychological health" (p. 283). In this stage, the analysis focused on one participant's account at a time to understand the internal logic and connections within each story. After completing a structural analysis for each participant's story, similarities across cases were identified to form a typology of storylines.

In order to preserve participants' voices, we represent our results in a form of composite vignettes (27), where accounts of multiple coaches were amalgamated into three different narratives. In constructing the vignettes, we drew upon the structural analysis where we had identified three different storylines, and identified narrative segments in interview transcripts that most clearly illuminated these narrative types. At this point, the selected interview segments that were in Finnish were translated to English by the first author. Narrative segments were then merged through re-organising and connecting sections to develop coherent and evocative stories using the participants' first person voice. Insertions from the researchers were kept to the minimum and were only used to clarify the context, correct grammar, or connect sentences (28,29). Narrative segments were included from all participants' stories.

Results

Vignette 1: Supporting athletic development and players in reaching their own goals

As a coach, I never had personal goals, for example I wanted to become a national league coach or something like that. All my work has targeted that individual players would develop as much as possible, that I could tell and teach those things that I know, and in that way help them move to a higher level. My main idea has been that I can give something to the players in their pursuit of their goals... So that as many as possible would become as good players as they can and have the potential to become [professional]. We try to give them the possibility to play hockey, try to teach them to be better players and we try to teach them why you should practice so many hours, if you want to go become pro players.

Of course the goal is that the team I am coaching at that time will be as successful as possible. The last five [players], I had to teach them more and more, but they can't be a part of the game team. It [also] takes too much practice time. Because we [the club] try to make players who can go to NHL, so we have to take care of the best players. So [the coaches] have to find the balance.

Many youth players have the dream of playing in NHL, but in reality only a small percentage will actually get there. The reality is that, even from the better players, only few even become national league players. Education, on the other hand, opens possibilities for the future. If and when they don't become professionals, they have [other] options in life. It is wise to tell the big mass quite early, that although they should have goals [in hockey], it should not come at the expense of education. It's important that coaches and team leaders give the message that education is truly important. [So] I try to keep them in that level that school comes first, and then hockey second. Unfortunately, many [professional] hockey players only start thinking what they

should do after they are over 30, and in these days it is difficult to find work without proper education. Yesterday, I was talking to one former pro player who told me that he knows a lot of players who are age of thirty-five, and they have nothing.

We don't really formally follow [how they do at school], but in the normal interaction with players we ask them how they are doing – also at school and in broader life, is everything in balance? We often have personal discussions [with players], [but] I admit that they're often much about hockey. Usually only when they already have difficulties [at school], then we interfere. Maybe we should be interested in these things earlier… For example, I don't know my players' [grades] – or how they are doing at school.

Vignette 2: Enjoyment and physically active lifestyle

I think that I'm more of an educator than a coach of the skills. Of course I have realised that from these 24 boys, zero to three go to the top. [For] others, the more important goals are that they now enjoy, they get to the physically active lifestyle model, and enjoy ice hockey. I want to feel like players enjoy training and doing what we do, that's definitely the most important, because it's their hobby, still they are not professionals. I'm not professional either so that's, that's probably the most important thing. Of course we do as high quality training as possible, so we enable those, who in [the] future may [be]come top players, [to] have the skill level at the right things in the juniors. But that's just, you know, we enable. So we see the other goals, or I see the other goals even more important than the skill level of ice hockey.

We actually talked about it yesterday, that if we are coming to training it takes probably two hours of your day, there is still 22 hours... I asked them what else is important and then first was probably eating, I guess, then sleep, and third was school so… It's very important how the coaches see the players, you know, how they feel and what's important to their life. They are

teenagers, they are young adults, there is something more than just ice hockey. Always when I have those talks with players, we always talk about school as well. Those young boys are, you know, "no it's not fun and it's boring" and so on. I will try to respond to that, no but you have to take care of that. That's the most important thing for you, beyond the ice hockey. You have to remember that not every one of you is going to make it as a career, so school is still important.

We have had couple of these events, when we had a game or training session on Saturday, [and] the school [also] had a school day. And it's very obvious for me that of course they go to school. So you know, parents are, maybe they are not even asking anymore, but at the first time they were asking what to do. I said, go to school, of course you go to school, and then if the school days ends so that you can come to the games, you come to the games. [And when] we were in the West coast, we played two [away] games there, it was a Sunday. And when we came back, there was like one hour that everybody had to have a school book with them, and they had to at least be quiet. I don't know if they did anything, but at least it was required. I said, [it's] the same, I'm not playing with my [phone]. I'm reading as well, so it's good for me as well.

Vignette 3: Developing "good persons"

[For me], it's not so much about trying to teach them how to be athletes, it's more like trying to teach them how to be a good person, how to be... How to live their life. And [I value] the possibility that I can be a part of that story, be a part of their everyday life. I don't know what they'll become, but to be a part of that story and, I don't know, to have some sort of effect on them when they grow up. [So] we're talking pretty much only about being a good person and then maybe something good will happen in hockey as well. And [also to be] a good ice hockey player, but main thing is [being a] good person.

[As you grow older] you start seeing that hockey is only such a small part of this bigger picture. I guess that's something that I try to tell the kids as well. Realising there are so many things in life besides hockey. [But] I think in our sport, it's maybe harder than in other sports, because everybody knows that you can earn money from playing hockey. It's really hard to tell a 16 or 17 or 18 year old kid that you will need this education in 20 years' time. They don't buy it. They don't care. So that's why it's really important that you start to influence them early enough, in third grade or fourth grade or fifth or sixth grade, so that it's kind of built in to them.

[In] every team I [have been] coaching, we have… [the] guys take their school books with them. We study on the bus and it's a very good thing. In my team, 12 players [have] school grades over the nine point [average]. For me it's [a] very big thing. [If the guy has] three or four exams next week, I can say hey, go home and study. I don't want them [to] focus only [on] hockey because [so few] guys every year go to the top. But I want them to practice as well as they can. And they [also] go to school and make a good life.

I think the stories of other athletes [are important]. They hear stories that some pro athlete is saying that I went through that path [combining sport and education]. If they are saying that yeah it was doable, and it was easy, and yeah they really helped me go through that path… I have a couple of good stories [about top players] that I keep on telling to the guys, but not too many.

Discussion

The first vignette exemplified the dominant narratives of sport coaching where the main task of the coach is to focus on athletic development. This narrative structure, where the most important aspects of sport are athletic development and achievement, penetrates all aspects of elite sport and has been identified not only in elite athletes' stories (30), but also in research

literature asserting that “no doubt a degree of agreement exists in and about coaching, in that its primary purpose is about athlete learning and performance improvement” (31) p. 211). Within this narrative, discussion about education was tightly connected to the limited prospects for youth players to reach the professional status, and the short time span of the professional athletic career. As such, these narratives conformed to the dominant dual career discourses, where education has often been viewed as a way to prepare for a post-athletic career (9), or as a back-up plan for youth athletes that get de-selected, or for some other reason can’t secure professional contracts (16). For the participants represented in the first vignette, the coach’s job was to provide the possibility for the talented athletes to reach the professional status, but simultaneously outline realistic expectations “for the masses” for whom hockey would not provide a professional pathway.

Albeit recognising that the “official truth is, school first and hockey second” (coach 8), coaches within the first vignette had few examples about how that “truth” informed their daily practices and interactions with the players. Aware of the official club policies that for coaches “a minimum is that they take school seriously” (coach 6), all coaches mentioned that school is one of the topics they take up in one-to-one developmental discussions with players. However, when asked for more concrete examples, most of them did not recall specific incidents when they would have discussed education with their team, and did not know what kind of grades the players had at school. That is, whilst coaches were unanimous about the value of education for youth players, for most of them it had few implications for their practice. Such findings resonate with a study by Bean and Forneris (32) who found that coaches’ recognition of the value of life skills doesn’t necessarily imply having the skills explicitly integrated into coaching practices.

Within the first vignette, education was narratively constructed as “a plan B” for those who don’t “make it”, rather than something that should be pursued for its own sake. Similar to the observations by McGillivray and Macintosh (16), we may ask whether the hockey culture is experiencing a “movement towards a forced – or instrumental – engagement with education” (p.383). The lack of authentic alignment with the educational discourses was illustrated by coach 8, who confessed that as a coach who is not so emotionally engaged, “it's easy to tell them that you have to go to school and there is more [in life] than to play hockey”. However, as a father he had followed his more authentic narrative and advised his talented son that, “you have the chance to be a [professional] hockey player so practice a lot”. As such, it was implied that the professional prospects in ice hockey may easily lure the young players, their parents, and perhaps some coaches into the “NHL dream” narrative, leaving little consideration for exploring alternative life projects outside sports.

The second vignette illustrated the tension between performance and participation approaches to coaching. Such tensions have enduring presence in the narrative context of Nordic sport culture (33), and the vignettes revealed ambiguity within the ice hockey coaching community. For younger age groups, sport was mainly framed as a hobby rather than a (potential) career; however, in older age groups, the approaches were diverse. The coaches telling the second storyline had made an active choice to prioritise the non-elite pathway whilst also seeking to provide adequate challenge to the potential elite players. Given that sport participation would remain a hobby for the large majority of young players, schoolwork was described as the natural priority.

In contrast to the first vignette, the coaches in the second vignette could tell stories about concrete situations when they had discussed education and broader life issues with young

318 athletes and their parents. As such, the second vignette illustrated a closer alignment between
319 stated personal values and actual practices than the first vignette. However, requiring athletes to
320 sit quiet on the bus without checking if they were actually doing their schoolwork could still be
321 interpreted as formal compliance with the club policy, rather than actual interest in players'
322 educational engagement. Storying the coaching practice as a hobby indicated a lack of
323 seriousness in engagement with the coach role, and perhaps undermined the potential influence a
324 coach could have on players' life choices.
325 The third vignette was similar to the second one in constructing the coach's role as an
326 educator rather than a teacher of athletic skills. The vignette aligns closely with the life skills
327 literature (34) where sport is seen as one context for broader development as a person. Within
328 this vignette, coaches also rejected the belief that mere participation would produce "good
329 persons" (32), and aligned themselves with the approach that personal development should be
330 actively facilitated by the coach. Similar to the second vignette, the third vignette described
331 actual strategies used to engage players with schoolwork, and also exemplified the coach's
332 knowledge of and pride in his players' educational achievement. Yet, the vignette also contained
333 a more reflective account about the challenges in trying to influence young athletes whose
334 dreams and aspirations may not coincide with adults' advice and official club policies. Similar to
335 coaches in the study by Gould et al., (35), the coach stressed the importance of developing a
336 good relationship with players in order to have an impact on their personal development. This
337 coach also talked about the need for subtle means to influence players' life decisions, rather than
338 simply telling the athletes that they must do their schoolwork properly. Telling stories about
339 professional players who had successfully completed the dual career pathway was given as an
340 example of how education could be presented as an attractive life project for players'

consideration. Such approach has similarities with the existential view on education, which Saeverot (20) described as a "kind of seduction where the teacher can ensnare the pupils, making them aware of, and perhaps interested in, another perspective which challenges their present attitude to life" (p.558).

Overall, the coaches put little trust on youth players' ability to make responsible choices concerning education. Finnish youth national teams' recent successes and consequent media attention were mentioned as sources of youth players' unrealistic dreams, and coaches' dominant perception was that everyone wanted to become a professional player. Whilst all coaches engaged with educational discourses and told that they considered athletes' schoolwork important, the means to communicate these values to players were generally not well reflected upon. None of the coaches talked about working to increase athletes' awareness of their possibilities and capacity to make choices, whereas many of them described authoritarian practices to ensure that athletes engaged with schoolwork. The danger is that, despite the good intentions, such approaches may actually increase the distance between the coach and the athlete (20). That is, the dominant authoritarian attitudes combined with an instrumental approach to education (a back-up or a plan B) does not seem to enhance athletes' capacity for choice, and might not lead them to view education as an intrinsically meaningful life project.

From an applied perspective, it is important to recognise that if sport clubs wish to enact a policy about dual careers, coaches also need more support in developing means to implement that policy to their practical work. Many participants in the study mentioned that coaches "must be interested in players' education", but how this could be done was less well articulated. This finding supports previous studies that indicate that coaches seem to value life skills development in sport, but often might not know how to promote it, or describe how the positive development

takes place (32). A specific structural challenge for the Finnish context (in comparison to the American model, for example) is the separation of sport and school, and coaches often had difficulty in gaining information about what was happening in the schools. They didn't have access to any school reports, often didn't know the teachers, and mentioned that some parents did not want them to interfere with something that was "not their business". To advance integration of personal development and dual career agendas into coaching practices, it is important to support individual coaches through coaching education, but also target structures to facilitate better communication between sport clubs and schools.

Based on the interviews, it is clear that the coaches were informed about official policies and had adopted the dominant dual career discourses, constructing education as a back-up plan for those who couldn't realise their dreams in ice hockey. Yet, researchers and policy makers promoting these discourses should be aware of the instrumental ethos implied in these views, and seek to broaden the discussions to include transformative potential and intrinsic value of education for athletes, regardless whether sport becomes their professional pathway or not. It may be questioned whether dominant narratives communicated within current dual career policies encourage athletes to engage in personal reflection in order to make authentic choices concerning their embodied possibilities.

As a limitation of the present study, using one-shot interviews with coaches only revealed how they narratively construct their coaching practice, and not what they actually do. It is likely that social desirability of presenting positive attitudes towards dual career played a role in how coaches co-constructed their stories with the researchers. Moreover, given that that the stated coaching philosophies and actual practices often misalign (36), using observations in combination with interviews could develop a more complete picture of practices surrounding

dual career. In addition, some coaches had not given much prior thought to how they approach dual career, and therefore they might not have been able to articulate their views in rich detail. This could have been enhanced by, for example, multiple interviews or sending the coaches some questions for reflection prior to the interview.

Conclusions

The present study contributed to the limited literature on coaches' strategies to foster athletes' personal development with a specific focus on dual career. All study participants agreed that dual career was important for all athletes, either as an alternative life plan if the dreams of professionalism would not become true, or for facilitating the transition out from professional sport to the job market. Yet, there was a great diversity in the degree of integration of these attitudes to the coaching practice, from being an integral aspect of daily communication, to a topic that was taken up only in formal developmental discussion with players. In future studies, it will be valuable to examine how coaches and other support staff engage in dual career discourses in various national and sport sub-cultural contexts in order to better understand how current dual career policies are implemented in clubs and teams. Moreover, it is the researchers' task to challenge the dominant dual career discourses that inform policies, and question what these discourses work to omit and whether there are alternative (and better?) ones.

References

(1) Schlechter CR, Rosenkranz RR, Milliken GA, Dzewaltowski DA. Physical activity levels during youth sport practice: does coach training or experience have an influence? J Sports Sci 2016:1-7.

(2) Ewing ME, Seefeldt VD, Brown TP. Role of organized sport in the education and health of American children and youth. In: Poinsett A, editor. The role of sports in youth development New York: Carnegie Corporation; 1996. p. 1-157.

(3) Gilbert WD, Trudel P. Role of the coach: How model youth team sport coaches frame their roles. Sport psychologist 2004;18(1):21-43.

(4) Werthner P, Trudel P. A new theoretical perspective for understanding how coaches learn to coach. The Sport Psychologist 2006;20(2):198-212.
(5) Petitpas AJ, Cornelius AE, Van Raalte JL, Jones T. A framework for planning youth sport programs that foster psychosocial development. The Sport Psychologist 2005;19:63-80.
(6) Wilcox S, Trudel P. Constructing the coaching principles and beliefs of a youth ice hockey coach. Avante-Ontario 1998;4:39-66.
(7) Cosh S, Tully PJ. “All I have to do is pass”: A discursive analysis of student athletes' talk about prioritising sport to the detriment of education to overcome stressors encountered in combining elite sport and tertiary education. Psychol Sport Exerc 2014 3;15(2):180-189.
(8) Tekavc J, Wylleman P, Erpič SC. Perceptions of dual career development among elite level swimmers and basketball players. Psychol Sport Exerc 2015;21:27-41.
(9) Aquilina D. A Study of the Relationship Between Elite Athletes' Educational Development and Sporting Performance. The International Journal of the History of Sport 2013;30(4):374-392.
(10) Brettschneider W. Risks and Opportunities: Adolescents in Top-Level Sport. Growing Up with the Pressures of School and Training. European Physical Education Review 1999;5(2):121-133.
(11) Stambulova NB, Engström C, Franck A, Linnér L, Lindahl K. Searching for an optimal balance: Dual career experiences of Swedish adolescent athletes. Psychol Sport Exerc 2015;21:4-14.
(12) Debois N, Ledon A, Wylleman P. A lifespan perspective on the dual career of elite male athletes. Psychol Sport Exerc 2015;21:15-26.
(13) O’Neill M, Allen B, Calder AM. Pressures to perform: An interview study of Australian high performance school-age athletes’ perceptions of balancing their school and sporting lives. Performance Enhancement & Health 2013;2(3):87-93.
(14) Knight CJ, Harwood CG. The role of the entourage in supporting elite athlete performance and educational outcomes 2015.
(15) Amorose A, Horn T. Intrinsic motivation: relationships with collegiate athletes' gender, scholarship status, and perceptions of their coaches' behavior. J Sport Exercise Psychol 2000;22(1):63-84.
(16) McGillivray D, McIntosh A. ‘Football is My Life’: Theorizing Social Practice in the Scottish Professional Football Field. Sport in society 2006;9(3):371-387.
(17) Lämsä J, Anu, Nenonen J, Manninen T, Puhakka A, Kainulainen J, Hokkanen T. Kuinka hitaita urheilijat ovat? Selvitys urheilijoiden korkea-asteen opintojen etenemisestä. 2014;47.
(18) Lämsä J. Suomessa 1195 ammattiurheilijaa [There are 1195 professional athletes in Finland]. Kihu, Jyväskylä. 2014.
(19) Baker BF. Existential philosophers on education. Educational Theory 1966;16(3):216-224.
(20) Sæverot H. Kierkegaard, seduction, and existential education. Studies in Philosophy and Education 2011;30(6):557-572.
(21) Spinelli E. Existential coaching. In: Cox E, Bachkirova T, Clutterbuck DA, editors. The complete handbook of coaching. 2nd ed. London: Sage; 2014. p. 91-103.
(22) Richert AJ. Integrating existential and narrative therapy: A theoretical base for eclectic practice. Duquesne University Press, Pittsburgh, PA; 2010.
(23) Smith B, Sparkes AC. Narrative inquiry in sport and exercise psychology: What can it mean, and why might we do it? Psychol Sport Exerc 2009;10(1):1-11.

(24) Ryba TV, Aunola K, Kalaja S, Selänne H, Ronkainen NJ, Nurmi J. A new perspective on adolescent athletes' transition into upper secondary school: A longitudinal mixed methods study protocol. Cogent Psychology 2016:1142412.

(25) Riessman CK. Narrative methods for the human sciences. Thousand Oaks: Sage; 2008.

(26) Smith B, Sparkes AC. Narrative analysis and sport and exercise psychology: Understanding lives in diverse ways. Psychology of Sport & Exercise 2009 02;10(2):279-288.

(27) Spalding NJ, Phillips T. Exploring the use of vignettes: from validity to trustworthiness. Qualitative Health Research 2007;17:954-962.

(28) Ryba TV. Researching Children in Sport: Methodological Reflections. Journal of Applied Sport Psychology 2008;20(3):334-348.

(29) Blodgett AT, Schinke RJ. "When you're coming from the reserve you're not supposed to make it": Stories of Aboriginal athletes pursuing sport and academic careers in "mainstream" cultural contexts. Psychol Sport Exerc 2015;21:115-124.

(30) Douglas K, Carless D. Abandoning The Performance Narrative: Two Women's Stories of Transition from Professional Sport. Journal of Applied Sport Psychology 2009 Apr;21(2):213-230.

(31) Jones RL, Edwards C, Tuim Viotto Filho, I. A. Activity theory, complexity and sports coaching: an epistemology for a discipline. Sport, Education and Society 2016;21(2):200-216.

(32) Bean C, Forneris T. Is Life Skill Development a By-Product of Sport Participation? Perceptions of Youth Sport Coaches. Journal of Applied Sport Psychology 2016:1-17.

(33) Eichberg H, Loland S. Nordic sports–from social movements via emotional to bodily movement–and back again? Sport in Society 2010;13(4):676-690.

(34) Gould D, Carson S. Life skills development through sport: Current status and future directions. International review of sport and exercise psychology 2008;1(1):58-78.

(35) Gould D, Collins K, Lauer L, Chung Y. Coaching life skills through football: A study of award winning high school coaches. Journal of applied sport psychology 2007;19(1):16-37.

(36) Carless D, Douglas K. Stories as Personal Coaching Philosophy. International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching 2011 03;6(1):1-12.