

# MIND THE GAP



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



# Project outline

## WP1 CURRENT SITUATION

### Research focus

- Best practices
- Competences
- Quality assessment methods



## WP2 CAREER SUPPORT SERVICES



Long Term Capacity in implementing support services for professional players

## WP3 COMPETENCIES



## WP5 EVALUATION



## WP4 TOOLS



**AIM: Close the gap**

# MIND THE GAP

## WORK PACKAGE 1 – CURRENT SITUATION

# Introduction and aims

As the importance of competent and tailor-made support services has been emphasized by many researchers and practitioners (e.g., Hong & Coffee, 2017), FIFPRO and its partner organisations aim at constantly improving their holistic support. The specific objectives of this work package are therefore to:

- 1 Provide a **literature review** specific to the population of professional players and the support provided to them in view of their dual career and/or preparation for a post-player career;
- 2 Get an overview of the **quality assessment methods** PDMs use to assess the quality of their support towards professional players;
- 3 Identify the main **roles PDMs should have and the competencies PDMs require** to fulfil these roles successfully;
- 4 Gain a clear overview of **good practices** used by PDMs and other experts in holistic career support



# Introduction and aims

## General Aim - Overview current situation

Literature Review



Quality Assessment Methods



Roles and Competencies



Good practices



Systematic Literature  
Review

15 Semi-structured interviews  
(N = 18)

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# Objective 1: Literature review

**AIM:** Gain a clear overview of the literature specific to (a) the population of **semi-professional and professional** team sport players and (b) the **career support** provided to them in view of their dual career

## METHOD:

### Databases

- ✓ Psychological domain: PsycINFO
- ✓ Educational domain: ERIC
- ✓ Vocational domain: Business Source Premier
- ✓ Sports domain: Sportdiscus

### Literature Selection Criteria

- ✓ (Semi-)professional team-athletes
- ✓ Topic of support/services for a dual career pathway or a post-athletic career
- ✓ Published between 1998-2018
- ✓ Peer-reviewed journal articles, books or book chapters
- ✓ English
- ✓ Accessible

### Keywords

(Player OR athlete OR sport\*) AND (Support OR assistance OR consultant OR service OR counsellor OR provider) AND ('dual career' OR 'post-athletic career' OR 'post-player career' OR retirement OR transition OR employment OR job OR education OR academic)

# Objective 1: Literature review

**MAIN RESULT:** It is important for career support services to take a holistic lifespan perspective or whole-career/whole-person approach (e.g., Wylleman & Rosier, 2016). Despite the importance of this holistic perspective, various support services still focus on supporting athletes with challenges within one single level of the holistic perspective.

AGE	10	15	20	25	30	35
Athletic level	Initiation	Deve- lopment	Mastery			Disconti- nuation
Psychological level	School- child	Puberty	Adoles- cence	Adult		
Psychosocial level	Parents Siblings Peers	Peers Coach Parents	Partner Coach - Support staff Teammates- Students			Family (Coach) Peers
Academic/ Vocational level	Primary edu- cation	Secondary education	(Semi-) professional athlete Higher education (Semi-) prof. athlete			Post-athletic career
Financial level	Family	Family Sport federation	Sport federation NOC • Sponsor			Family Employer

# Objective 1: Literature review

**MAIN RESULT:** It is important for career support services to take a holistic lifespan perspective or whole-career/whole-person approach (e.g., Wylleman & Rosier, 2016). Despite the importance of this holistic perspective, various support services still focus on supporting athletes with challenges within one single level of the holistic perspective.



- ✓ 11 articles focused on the provision of **psychological** support towards athletes
- ✓ 1 article focused on the provision of **psychosocial** support towards athletes
- ✓ 8 articles focused on the provision of **academic and/or vocational** support towards athletes
- ✓ 0 articles focused on the provision of **financial** support towards athletes
- ✓ **9** articles focused on the provision of **holistic** support towards athletes



# Objective 1: Literature review



## Conclusion

Players still face difficulties and suffer from **a lack of support** in order to transition successfully to a new professional career.

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## Objective 2: Quality measures

Overview of quality measures mentioned by the interviewees



Database



Surveys, questionnaires and interviews



Success stories, responsiveness of players



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## Objective 3: Roles and competencies PDMs

PDMs' main roles and tasks are situated in 5 **key areas of focus**



E.g.,:

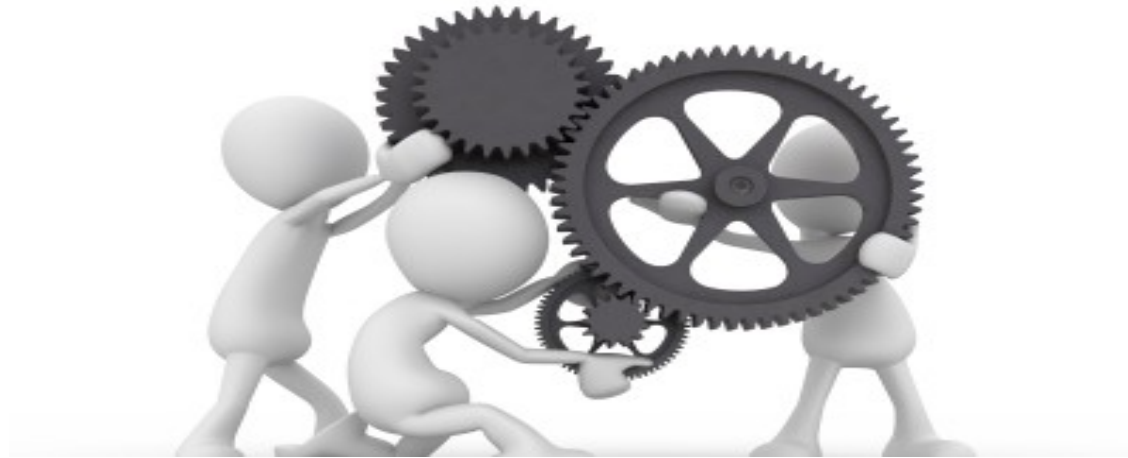
- To inform players about the career support provided by the players' association via conduction club visits, locker room visits, group presentations, and one-to-one meetings;
- To facilitate the access of players in education;
- To recognise possible signs of mental health problems;
- To develop successful collaborations with employment agencies
- To be aware of your own limitations

## Objective 3: Roles and competencies PDMs

PDMs' required competencies

Skills

Experience



Attitudes

Knowledge

## Objective 3: Roles and competencies PDMs

UNDERLYING ATTRIBUTES OF A PERSON	CATEGORIES
<b>Skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Psychological skills</li><li>• Organisation skills</li><li>• Technological skills</li><li>• Networking &amp; cooperation skills</li></ul>
<b>Attitudes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Authenticity</li><li>• Flexibility and adaptable</li></ul>
<b>Experience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Life experience</li><li>• Vocational experience</li><li>• Athletic experience</li></ul>
<b>Knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Technological knowledge</li><li>• High-performance knowledge</li><li>• Academic knowledge</li><li>• Job market knowledge</li><li>• Educational knowledge</li><li>• Organisation knowledge</li></ul>

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## Objective 4: Good practices

Good practices include working methods or sets of working methods that have been accepted as being very effective and efficient within a specific context.

- ✓ There are multiple reasons why investigating and providing good practices is important:
  - Providing and exchanging good practices has been proven to be effective in optimising working methods of organisations;
  - It can inspire current and future PDMs;
  - To have an insight into the current status of services, and thus, have an overview of the good practices that are already being applied.

Type	Good practice
<b>Awareness &amp; information provision</b>	Physical attendance & visibility Case studies Social media Website Magazine Newsletter TV show
<b>Collaborations</b>	Athletic level Educational level Financial level Psychological level Vocational level Sharing experiences
<b>Resources</b>	Human resources Financial resources
<b>Standardisation</b>	Standardised procedures
<b>Support</b>	Career guidance Education Financial Wellbeing Legal
<b>Tools</b>	CV Database PDM Tool Templates Track database
<b>Way of providing support</b>	Business approach Event-based approach Holistic approach Independent approach Individual approach Theory-based approach



# More info and the whole, detailed research report can be consulted on the webpage of the Mind the Gap project

**ABOUT 'MIND THE GAP'**

Giorgio Chiellini: 'At 35, your career...'

Later back to school

'Mind the Gap' is a project led by FIFPRO to help athletes transition as smoothly as possible between the end of their professional sports career and a new career of their choice. The project is co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union.

When their sports career ends, life can be tough for professional footballers and other athletes. Suddenly, sometimes without warning, a gap opens in their lives: there might be a drop in income, loss of confidence and a move away from a support group of teammates and club staff.

Players often have fewer educational qualifications and less relevant work experience than their competitors in the employment market. Only 13% of active professional male football players in Europe have post-school vocational education - compared to about 53% of the male population in the EU.

**FIGURE 2.6: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT PER REGION**

Source: 2016 FIFPRO Global Employment Report

While male footballers typically neglect their education and focus their energy on reaching the elite level of their sport, women footballers are more prepared for a life change: 46% of women professional players are studying for another career, and 67% already have another job.

Juventus defender Giorgio Chiellini (in the video above) is among professional footballers who have shown that a sport career is compatible with further education: Chiellini has a master's degree in business administration from Turin University.

During the 'Mind the Gap' campaign, we will be speaking to footballers and player unions about career transition. Among them is former Dennis Iliohan, a former Dutch professional footballer who has designed the campaign logo.

**RELATED NEWS**

- Coloccini goes back to school
- Mind the Gap: Meet the new hires
- Mind the Gap: English footballers plan a...
- Player's study earns Besiktas deal
- How rugby players prepare for a new life...
- Premier League striker's new job
- Giorgio Chiellini interview
- 'I felt like a teenager at 30'
- Player development in Denmark
- From goalie to surgeon (or astronaut)

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