



## **A holistic and whole-person perspective on athletes' lifelong development**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Athletes' development is no longer looked at purely from an athletic performance perspective. Rather, research looks at athletic development from a whole lifespan and holistic perspective (Wylleman, 2019; Wylleman et al., 2020). Furthermore, in looking at athletes' development, research is increasingly taking into account both athletes' and other stakeholders' perspectives (e.g., coaches, parents; Wylleman & Rosier, 2016). Research shows that the use of evidence-based monitoring and evaluation tools to measure specific aspects of athletes' whole-person development, has become crucial in this regard and can facilitate clear communication between athletes and support staff with regard to athletes' personal development. First, this introductory presentation, will provide insight in holistic athletic career (HAC) model, which describes athletes' development at different levels of development, namely the athletic, psychological, psychosocial, academic/vocational, financial and legal development. The different layers of the model and the challenges and barriers associated with the most challenging transitions (e.g., junior to senior, transition to the post-athletic career) will be discussed. Secondly, this presentation will provide insight in the development and application of some crucial evidence-based measurement instruments that can help to measure specific aspects of athletes' whole-person development. More specifically the development and initial validation of the Dual Career Competency Questionnaire for Athletes (DCCQ-A) (De Brandt et al., 2018) and the Athletes' Competency Questionnaire for Employability (ACQE; Smismans et al., 2020) will be discussed. Both instruments can help athletes and support stakeholders to monitor, evaluate and optimize competencies that are required to combine elite sport and education (DCCQ-A) or the competencies athletes' can transfer from elite sport to labour market (ACQE). Thirdly, this presentation will introduce the three main presentations of this symposium, that cover (1) the early whole-person development (presentation by Suzan Blijlevens), (2) the coping with wider challenges during the performance phase (presentation by Koen De Brandt), and (3) the transition to the post-athletic career (presentation by Sofie Smismans). Finally the discussant (Jolan Kegelaers) will already be introduced, by providing a first insight in the key themes that will form the structure of discussions during this symposium: (a) athletes lifelong holistic development, (b) the main challenges and barriers in their development, (c) the competencies required to cope with those challenges, (d) the role of the environment (e.g., coaches) in facilitating athletes' whole-person development.

**KEYWORDS**

Holistic; Transitions; Support staff; Development; Competencies

