

1994

Non-selection as a factor contributing to retirement from Australian sport

Maree B. Fish
Edith Cowan University

Follow this and additional works at: https://ro.ecu.edu.au/theses_hons



Part of the [Sports Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Fish, M. B. (1994). *Non-selection as a factor contributing to retirement from Australian sport*.
https://ro.ecu.edu.au/theses_hons/636

This Thesis is posted at Research Online.
https://ro.ecu.edu.au/theses_hons/636

Edith Cowan University

Copyright Warning

You may print or download ONE copy of this document for the purpose of your own research or study.

The University does not authorize you to copy, communicate or otherwise make available electronically to any other person any copyright material contained on this site.

You are reminded of the following:

- Copyright owners are entitled to take legal action against persons who infringe their copyright.
- A reproduction of material that is protected by copyright may be a copyright infringement. Where the reproduction of such material is done without attribution of authorship, with false attribution of authorship or the authorship is treated in a derogatory manner, this may be a breach of the author's moral rights contained in Part IX of the Copyright Act 1968 (Cth).
- Courts have the power to impose a wide range of civil and criminal sanctions for infringement of copyright, infringement of moral rights and other offences under the Copyright Act 1968 (Cth). Higher penalties may apply, and higher damages may be awarded, for offences and infringements involving the conversion of material into digital or electronic form.

**NON-SELECTION AS A FACTOR CONTRIBUTING
TO RETIREMENT FROM AUSTRALIAN SPORT**

By

Maree B. Fish O.A.M.

**Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the
Requirements for the Award of**

Bachelor of Applied Science (Sports Science) Honours

at the Faculty of Science, Technology and Engineering

**Edith Cowan University
Perth**

November 1994

USE OF THESIS

The Use of Thesis statement is not included in this version of the thesis.

ABSTRACT

Retirement from sport is inevitable and will occur at some stage in every athlete's career. Retirement may be voluntary or involuntary and signifies a lifestyle change that may be a major impact for many athletes. Involuntary retirement may occur in relation to chronological ageing, injury or non-selection. This study undertook an in-depth examination of one type of involuntary exit from sport, that of non-selection.

The purpose of this study was to explore, in-depth, the reactions and experiences of Australian athletes who were subject to non-selection from their sport. Supporting this main investigation were three sub questions which focused on factors that were problematic for the athletes, factors non-problematic for athletes and athlete recommendations to assist sporting organisations, administrators, coaches, selectors, significant others, and other athletes in dealing with non-selection from Australian sport.

Two semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were conducted with seven female and eight male state and national athletes. Athletes were current or former representatives in the three team sports of field hockey, cricket and water polo and were resident in Western Australia.

Inductive content analysis of verbatim transcripts was used to establish categories of patterns or themes portraying the athletes'

experiences of non-selection.

The major theme to emerge was the lack of understanding and knowledge of the issues of non-selection and the subsequent impact on athletes. This lack of understanding was not limited to any one individual but encompassed sporting and non-sporting individuals such as the sporting officials and the athlete's family members. Athletes also perceived a strong political influence in relation to their non-selection.

Although non-selection was initially a difficult time for many athletes in this study their enjoyment and fulfilment from sport saw the majority continue as participants at a lower level within the same sport.

DECLARATION

"I certify that this thesis does not incorporate, without acknowledgement, any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text".

Signature

Date ... 23RD JANUARY ... 1995

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the following people for their contribution to this research:

Dr. Lynn Embrey for her willingness to listen, generosity in sharing her knowledge and expertise and the enormous support she has provided prior to and during the completion of this research.

My fellow researcher, Janice, and her family, Colin, Daniel and Amy, for their kindness, encouragement and reminders that there is life after research.

To Kaye for listening to my ideas, challenging my thoughts and for all the help she and her family provided along the way.

To Yvonne for her advice during the final stages of completing this study and her thoroughness in reviewing this paper.

A special thanks to the athletes who made this research possible and for so freely sharing with me their experiences of the good times and of the not so good times.

To the best friend ever, Sophi my dog, who never answered back but was always nearby with those big brown eyes and floppy ears.

Finally to my family who, although from afar, are always close by.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Declaration	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Table of Contents	vi
List of Tables	x
List of Figures	xi

CHAPTER

1. INTRODUCTION	1
Background of the Study	2
Purpose of the Study	5
Significance of the Study	5
Statement of the Problem	7
Research Questions	8
Definition of Key Terms in the Study	9
Limitations	11
2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	13
Theoretical Perspectives	17
Social Gerontology	17
Thanatology	19
Transitions	22
Impact of Retirement	24
Causes of Career Ending	27
Non-Selection	28
Athlete Assistance Programs	31
Summary	33

3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	34
4. METHODOLOGY	39
Research Design	39
Sample	40
Sample Composition	40
Sample Selection	41
Interviews	46
Pilot Study	48
Researcher as Mediator	49
Conduct of Interviews	51
Supplementary Documentation	55
Transcriptions	56
Ethical Considerations	57
Data Analysis	58
Trustworthiness of Data	61
5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	63
The Interview Experience	64
Interviewees	64
Interviewer	66
Athlete's Reactions and Experiences of Non-Selection	67
Athlete's Self Expectation Prior to Non-Selection	68
Events of Non-Selection	70
Factors Problematic for Athletes	71
Notification of Non-Selection	73
Method of Notification	73
Lack of Player Respect	75
Out of Athlete's Control	77
Athlete's Initial Reactions	78
Emotional Response	78
The Need for Initial Isolation	79
Personal Humiliation and Embarrassment	80

Short Term Effects for the Athlete	80
Lack of Further Communication	81
Insignificance to the Former Team	82
Inability to Explain Non-Selection	83
Avoidance of the Issue	83
Lack of Support for the Athlete	84
Longer Term Effects for the Athlete	86
Desire of an Explanation for Non-Selection	86
Attachment to the Sporting Event	87
The Need for an Emotional Outlet	89
Inability to Reach Goals	90
Parental Attachment to the Athlete's Status	91
Positive Outcomes of Non-Selection	91
Support for the Athlete	92
Club Level Participation	94
Maintenance of Fitness and Appearance	100
Directional/Focal Change	101
Education in Sport/Life Experiences	102
Social Freedom	103
Emotional Maturity	104
Athlete Recommendations	104
Professionalism and Respect	105
Non-Selection as an Area for Concern	106
Professional Assistance	108
Importance of the Player to the Sport	110
Selection Procedures	111
Application of Results to Conceptual Framework	112
Summary	115
 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	 116
Major Findings and Conclusions	116
Recommendations for Further Research	120
Personal Epilogue	123

REFERENCES		124
<u>APPENDICES</u>		135
APPENDIX A	Introduction Letter and Informed Consent	135
APPENDIX B	Schedule of Interviews	138
APPENDIX C	Introductory Information for Interview Stage 1	139
APPENDIX D	Interview Guide Stage 1	141
APPENDIX E	Interview Guide Stage 2	144
APPENDIX F	Sample Summary of Interview Stage 1	148
APPENDIX G	Sample Transcript of Interview Stage 2	150
APPENDIX H	Sample Coding of Interview Stage 2	154
APPENDIX I	Subject Progress Record	157
APPENDIX J	Interview Record	158
APPENDIX K	Interview Transcription Record	159

LIST OF TABLES

Table

1.	Summary of empirical research conducted in relation to sport retirement	14
2.	Athlete codes and pseudonyms	43
3.	Athlete status at time of non-selection and years since non-selection	45
4.	Sequence for data collection	52
5.	Method of non-selection notification	74
6.	Athlete's level of sport participation	95

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure

1. Conceptual framework relating to non-selection as a factor contributing to retirement from Australian sport. 35
2. Athlete participation post non-selection. 98
3. Revised conceptual framework relating to non-selection as a factor contributing to retirement from Australian sport. 114

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Much government funding and promotion throughout the past decade has attempted to increase participation in sport. The process of socialisation into the competitive sport role may be viewed along a continuum. The athletic role commences with the introduction into sport and ends with the withdrawal from competitive sport participation (Blinde & Greendorfer, 1985). Until very recently there has been little concern for this withdrawal, retirement from sport, particularly for the elite athlete. Retirement, as either a voluntary or an involuntary decision, signifies a lifestyle change that may be a major impact for many athletes.

Sport retirement literature to date has been predominantly North American, based on participation in the college system and focused on male athletes. Limited attention has been given to the female athlete. Few studies have considered retirement that is both involuntary and unexpected, in particular relating to the issues of non-selection from sport. The majority of empirical research conducted relating to retirement from sport has utilised quantitative methods such as questionnaires and surveys. To better understand the process of retirement in Australian sport researchers must take into account the experiences and perceptions of the athlete, that is, employ interpretive methods.

Background of the Study

Australia has often been referred to as the 'Sporting Nation' with emphasis placed on participation and the 'have a go' ethos. A great deal of time is spent on selecting and developing athletes for all levels of competition, but very little attention is given to the process of retirement from sport.

In recent years the area of retirement from sport has become a concern for past Australian Olympic athletes. Innes (1992), (formerly Shane Gould) triple gold medallist at the Munich Olympic Games, broadly defined the phases of an athlete's career as being recruitment, training, competition, detraining and retirement. Innes further stated that the final two stages, detraining and retirement, have generally been neglected in Australian sport. Other issues raised include 'Sport Retirement Stress' (Davis, 1993) and the need for athlete counselling post Olympic Games (Marsh, 1992). These topics have been raised in the newspapers: *The Weekend Australian* and *The West Australian* respectively.

Concerns about retirement are not restricted to the Olympic athlete but are evident in a variety of Australian sports and at a variety of levels. Recent media attention has highlighted the difficulties faced by former Australian cricket captain Allan Border in his deliberations over retirement from the international arena. Although a voluntary retiree from international cricket the significance of the event was highlighted by

Border's comments reported in *The West Australian* (Reed, 1994, p. 108), "It's a tough decision for me. It's like a part of me has died by making this decision to retire and it was a painstaking process".

Several other Australian athletes have been forced to consider their sporting careers during the last 12 months after being subject to non-selection from their sport. In the Australian Football League, Collingwood footballer, Peter Daicos was subject to non-selection from a team for which he had played 250 games. *The West Australian* (Duffield, 1994, p. 97) reported Daicos commenting that, "It is just hard to accept that your football days are over. You get into a routine and you know where you are going to be at 4pm every day. All of a sudden one day at 4pm you are doing the dishes". A similar selection process saw cricketer, Danny Buckingham, omitted from Tasmania's historic first Sheffield Shield final. Buckingham was quoted in *The Mercury* as saying:

It's hard to explain just how I feel - I'm just devastated. I've played for the past 10 years in the hope of making a Shield final and when the most important game in my life arrives I find I've been left out. (Stockdale, 1994, p. 64)

Captain of the Australian Men's Hockey Team, Warren Birmingham, omitted from the team in May 1994 reacted angrily to the decision. Birmingham was reported in *The West Australian* (Stephan, 1994, p. 95) as saying that "people who make these decisions don't realise the impact they have on people ... if I wasn't performing I could understand it [the non-selection]".

The harsh selection process as described above is not restricted to athletes. Coaches are also subject to the decisions of sporting administrators as reported in *The West Australian* ("Queensland dumps Thompson", 1994). Queensland Sheffield Shield cricket coach, Jeff Thompson, learnt through the media that he was not re-selected after four years as coach. Thompson, extremely bitter about the decision, was quoted as saying, "cricket will now be without me ...which I reckon is a real loss. The last thing I want to know about at the moment is cricket".

This study will only examine the issues of non-selection in relation to state and national athletes. The experiences of coaches and other sporting officials will not be addressed by this research.

As a participant in the sport of field hockey the author represented Australia at the 1988 Olympic Games and was subject to non-selection from the team in 1991. Eight months later this led to retirement after a seventeen year career in the sport. Discussions with other athletes and the author's own experiences regarding non-selection fostered a desire for a greater understanding of the range of reactions and experiences relating to retirement.

Purpose of the Study

The Australian community based sporting system, unlike the North American college based system, allows athletes to participate in their chosen sport at a range of levels. These levels vary from that of the recreational sports person to the elite national athlete. The purpose of this research was to explore, in depth, the range of reactions and experiences of Australian athletes who were subject to non-selection from their sport. The research specifically considered the reactions and experiences of state and national athletes.

Significance of the Study

Success in sport relies heavily on the Darwinian philosophy of survival of the fittest. This philosophy puts a great deal of emphasis on athletes who are able to survive and reach a high level of participation, but gives little regard to the athletes who experience non-selection from their sport (Ogilvie & Howe, 1982).

With the announcement of Australia's successful bid for the Year 2000 Summer Olympic Games it is likely that a large number of athletes will be vying for selection in a number of future Australian teams. This along with increased public pressure to succeed may see many more

Australian athletes subject to non-selection from their sport. Australia as a nation will continue to encourage and support the pursuit of excellence in all its athletes and in particular the younger athletes' aspiring to the Olympic level. It is essential, as stated by Ogilvie (1987), that perfection in athletic skill does not forsake the individual's own self worth as a person. Ogilvie further added that "Psychological adjustment to deselection [non-selection] will be a reality from age-group ... national, Olympic and professional levels of participation" (p. 215).

Retirement from sport is inevitable and will occur at some stage in an athlete's career. The timing of such an event has been described as having a major bearing on the coping ability of the athlete (Ogilvie & Taylor, 1993). Looking specifically at one type of exit from sport, that of non-selection, the effects appear to be the most profound (Ogilvie 1987). Little research in this area has been conducted and in particular within the Australian sporting environment.

The need for qualitative research to enable the athlete's views to be more fully determined is essential in understanding the nature of non-selection (Kleiber & Brock, 1992; Allison & Meyer, 1988). Ogilvie and Taylor (1993, p. 765) further added that it is important "that the ramifications for those who have been deselected are explored, particularly those who remain committed to participation".

It is believed that information from this research will be of benefit in a number of areas including sporting institutions, administrators,

coaches, significant others and most importantly other athletes' subject to non-selection in their sporting life. The availability of such information is seen as a significant step in understanding the range of transitions, as proposed by Innes (1992), that are faced by the sports competitor.

In addition research into the area of non-selection in sport may be of benefit to other individuals as suggested by Ogilvie and Taylor (1993, p. 772), "the significant visibility of this select group of elite athletes and the exposure of these issues to the general population may have a positive influence on other individuals faced with similar difficulties".

Statement of the Problem

To date there have been few empirical studies relating to the area of retirement in sport. With particular regard to the issues of involuntary and unexpected retirement, limited research that considers the athlete's experiences and perceptions has been conducted. Much of the literature draws on the experiences of male athletes' participating in the college based sporting system of North America. This system is usually based on eligibility standards which restrict college athletes to four years of sport participation (Blinde & Stratta, 1992). Little research has been conducted to explore the area of sport retirement in Australia. This type of research is particularly necessary in the Australian sport system, which operates on a

community base, where athletes are able to participate at a variety of sporting levels for an extended number of years in contrast to the domain of college sport.

Research Questions

In relation to the specific focus of non-selection of athletes from Australian sport, the major research question investigated was:

What are the reactions and experiences of athletes subject to non-selection from their sport?

Other sub questions addressed included:

1. What factors relating to non-selection were problematic for athletes?
2. What factors relating to non-selection were non-problematic for athletes?
3. What recommendations do non-selected athletes advance to assist sporting institutions, administrators, coaches, selectors, significant others and other athletes in dealing with non-selection from Australian sport?

Definition of Key Terms in the Study

A number of key terms used in this study that require further elaboration are detailed below.

Complete Retirement:

The process where the athlete leaves the sport as a player. This may occur following partial retirement from sport.

Deselection:

Synonymous with non-selection. Other terms used to describe this process include being 'cut', 'dropped', 'dumped' or 'sacked' from the former team.

Elite Athlete:

Refers to an athlete participating at state level and higher in their sport. For this study elite athletes are state or national representatives.

Gerontology:

Is the study of ageing. In terms of sport retirement a parallel has been drawn with old age retirement specifically referring to the work place (Blinde & Greendorfer, 1985).

Non-selection:

The process whereby the athlete is not re-selected for the team in which the athlete has previously been a member.

Partial Retirement:

The process whereby the athlete, choosing to stay in the sport, must

compete at a lower level than that in which the athlete was previously competing. This partial retirement may be due to chronological ageing of the athlete, as a result of injury or through non-selection (Ogilvie & Taylor, 1993).

Retirement:

Is most often described in the literature as being the process of leaving or withdrawing from the role of sport competitor (Blinde & Greendorfer, 1985).

Thanatology:

Is the study of death and dying. In terms of sport retirement the stages that an athlete progresses through have been likened to the stages of grief typically experienced by the dying patient. These stages include denial, isolation, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance (Kubler-Ross, 1970).

In addition to the terms defined above various names or phrases have been used to describe the process of retirement from sport. The more commonly used include desocialisation (Blinde & Greendorfer, 1985; McPherson, 1993), social death (Lerch, 1984; Rosenberg, 1993), re-socialisation (Blinde & Greendorfer, 1985; McPherson, 1993), detraining (Botterill, 1982; Ogilvie, 1987), rebirth (Coakley, 1983), exit strategies (Kearl, 1986), desensitisation (Ogilvie & Howe, 1982), social disorganisation (Rosenberg, 1980), metathesis (Hill & Lowe, 1974) and termination stress

syndrome (Ogilvie, 1987). This lack of standard terminology creates confusion in discussing and referring to issues of retirement from sport hence a list of key terms used in this research.

Limitations

The research study conducted was limited by the following factors:

1. Only one type of involuntary retirement, non-selection, was investigated. Experiences relating to injury and chronological ageing were not examined.
2. The sample was limited to athletes currently residing in Western Australia.
3. Only elite athletes who have been state or national representatives in open senior competition were included in this study.
4. Only three team sports - field hockey, cricket and water polo - were included in this study.
5. No attempt was made to draw comparisons between sports due to the small number of athletes participating in the study.
6. Experiences of non-selection were only examined in relation to the athlete. Non-selection of coaching or sporting officials was not considered.
7. Individual sports were not represented in this study.

As the researcher experienced non-selection from sport, a further limitation may have been bias in relation to data collection and analysis. Conversely, it is believed that the researcher's personal experiences and understanding of the issues relating to the topic assisted in gaining a greater depth of response from the interviewee.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

This chapter identifies and discusses the literature related to the study of retirement from sport. Three theoretical perspectives that are most often linked with sport retirement - gerontology, thanatology and transitions - are examined in relation to their application to the retiring sports person. The impact of retirement and the causes for such retirement from the sporting environment are then discussed with particular attention to non-selection. Finally, a brief overview of athlete assistance programs currently available to United States, Canadian and Australian elite athletes is presented.

Over the past thirty years there has been a steady stream of anecdotal (Botterill, 1982; Coakley, 1983; Stevenson, 1982) and theoretical (Blinde & Greendorfer, 1985; Crook & Robertson, 1991; Thomas & Ermler, 1988) writings on the issues relating to retirement from the sporting arena. Empirical investigation throughout this time has been minimal as summarised in Table 1. As tabulated, much of this research has been conducted utilising quantitative techniques with a bias towards male athletes.

Table 1:*Summary of empirical research conducted in relation to sport retirement.*

Author/s	Methodology	Characteristics of Sample	Findings
Allison & Meyer (1988)	10 page questionnaire with both Likert and open-ended questions	20 retired female professional tennis athletes	Disengagement not traumatic seen as an opportunity to re-establish societal role and lifestyle
Blinde & Stratta (1992)	In-depth interviews	18 female and 2 male athletes	Athletes drew death analogy and experienced a series of responses as developed by Kübler-Ross
Curtis & Ennis (1988)	Comparative study using a questionnaire	109 retired junior ice hockey players compared with data matched from a Quality of Life Survey	No evidence of negative consequences of retirement
Greendorfer & Blinde (1985)	Questionnaire with fixed alternative and open-ended questions	697 retired male athletes 427 retired female athletes	Little evidence to suggest the athletes experienced adjustment difficulties
Hallinan & Snyder (1987)	Pilot study using a case study approach	4 female athletes	Findings presented within the framework of Kübler-Ross stages of death
Hawkins & Blann (1993)	Questionnaire and interview	124 athletes (11 interviews) 29 coaches (21 interviews)	Athletes and coaches believed that personal and career assessment would be most helpful

Table 1 (Continued):

Summary of empirical research conducted in relation to sport retirement.

Author/s	Methodology	Characteristics of Sample	Findings
Kleiber, Greendorfer, Blinde & Samdahl (1987)	10 page questionnaire with fixed alternative and open-ended questions	427 former male athletes	Significantly lower life satisfaction for athletes having sustained a career ending injury
Kleiber & Brock (1992)	Comparison of injured and non-injured athletes relating to career ending based on data from Kleiber et al. (1987)	427 former male athletes	Of injured athletes those likely to exhibit lower self esteem and life satisfaction related to those with strong investment in the sport
15 Koukouris (1991)	38 item questionnaire	113 former male athletes	Majority of athletes reacted positively to retirement. A substantial minority increased alcohol and cigarette consumption
Lerch (1981)	Questionnaire	511 former major league baseball players	High levels of present income, positive pre-retirement attitudes, good health and high level of education all related to high life satisfaction
Martin & Dodder (1991)	Survey instrument with seven 5-point Likert scales and one Gutman scale	Convenience sample of 504 first year sociology students	Possible to identify variables influencing decisions on participation but complex and difficult to measure

Table 1 (Continued):

Summary of empirical research conducted in relation to sport retirement.

Author/s	Methodology	Characteristics of Sample	Findings
Mihovilovic (1968)	Questionnaire and interview	44 former male soccer players	Retirement is a painful experience marked by conflicts and feelings of frustration
Sinclair & Orlick (1993)	34 item questionnaire	199 retired athletes 99 males and 100 females	Positive adjustment related to achieving one's goals in sport
Svoboda & Vanek (1982)	Questionnaire	163 former superior athletes 30 female and 133 male	Retirement stress exists though not for every athlete and not always of the same calibre
Swain (1991)	In-depth interviews	10 male athletes	Withdrawal from sport was not simply an event but a process that began soon after the athlete became involved in the sport
Werthner & Orlick (1986)	In-depth interviews	14 female and 14 male former Olympic athletes	The majority of athletes had faced some degree of difficulty in the transition out of their sport

Theoretical Perspectives

In an attempt to understand the process of retirement from sport several theoretical perspectives have been drawn from outside of the sporting environment. These are social gerontology, thanatology and a transitional perspective, each of which will be outlined in the following sections.

Social Gerontology

This perspective focuses on ageing and considers life satisfaction as a critical component in the adjustment to work place retirement for the older adult. Although there are important differences between retirement for the traditional worker and the athlete, for example age of retirement, the consideration of a gerontological perspective has added to the knowledge of sport retirement (Baillie & Danish, 1992; Blinde & Greendorfer, 1985; Greendorfer & Blinde, 1985).

Four theories in particular from social gerontology have been considered most appropriate to the study of retirement from sport. These theories are disengagement theory, activity theory, continuity theory and social breakdown theory which are briefly described below.

Disengagement theory as proposed by Cumming and Henry (1961) suggested that society and the individual withdraw from each other for the good of both. This results in a decrease in interaction between the

individual and the social system that the individual belongs to. Baillie and Danish (1992) suggested that disengagement theory was not applicable in understanding athletic retirement as a mutual withdrawal from sport is rarely the case.

Activity theory, as discussed by Freidman and Havighurst (1954), was not formally presented until used as an alternative to disengagement theory (Rosenberg, 1981). Freidman and Havighurst proposed that on retirement the individual increases and adapts leisure time activity in order to obtain satisfaction previously provided by employment. The application of this theory to the sporting context was not supported by Baillie and Danish (1992). They considered that it would be difficult for most athletes to sustain their activity level outside the sporting arena post retirement.

The third social gerontological perspective is that of continuity. Continuity theory assumes that, following retirement, the individual will cope by increasing the amount of time spent in present activities rather than commencing new activities (Atchley, 1976). In contradiction to the theory of continuity Baillie and Danish (1992 p. 90) suggested that "although there are athletes who cling to the sport for support, there are far more who are able to undergo a drastic change in roles without necessarily suffering negative consequences".

The fourth social gerontological theory relative to the sporting context of retirement is that of social breakdown. Kuypers and Bengtson

(1973, p. 181) argued that the elderly are "susceptible to, and dependent on, social labelling" later in their lives. The consequences of this labelling for the elderly are described as generally negative and include an inability to cope and an "internalised sense of incompetence". Baillie and Danish (1992) suggested this theory had a clear application to sport retirement. They stated that with termination the athlete's skills become worthless and the situation may also be perceived by the athlete as being related to possible social deficits. In this situation negative labelling is highly likely and may continue in a cyclic fashion unless the athlete is assisted in reducing this negative evaluation.

Greendorfer and Blinde (1985) utilised a social gerontological perspective in their study on retirement from intercollegiate sport. Their findings highlighted that the theoretical perspectives of social gerontology may not be appropriate for the study of sport retirement. Results suggested that the former athletes did not withdraw from the sport system but rather there was a shift in priorities and interests. Greendorfer and Blinde (1985, p. 101) concluded "that the process of leaving sport may be more gradual or transitional than previously believed".

Thanatology

Two thanatological perspectives, the 'stages of dying' and 'awareness contexts', are prominent in the study of athlete retirement. The better

known 'stages of dying' was initially discussed by Kubler-Ross (1970) in relation to the grieving process of an individual diagnosed with a terminal illness. Kubler-Ross identified five common stages that dying patients typically progressed through. Initially there is denial and isolation, followed by anger, bargaining and depression. The fifth stage, that of acceptance, is reached if a patient has had enough time and has been given some assistance in working through the other stages.

The 'awareness contexts' as outlined by Glaser and Strauss (1965) have been based on studying the situation of dying people in a hospital environment. Glaser and Strauss suggested that when a patient arriving in hospital is in a conscious state, and there exists doubt as to whether or not that patient is dying, then the patient's definition of dying may differ from that of the hospital workers' definitions. "What *each* interacting person knows of the patient's defined status, along with his recognition of the others' awarenesses of his own definition ...we shall call an *awareness context*" (p. 10). Four awareness contexts are identified. These are closed awareness, suspicion awareness, mutual pretence awareness and open awareness.

In an athletic sense closed awareness represents athletes who are not aware that they are to be excluded from the team or program. Other team members may have been able to anticipate the demotion but the individual concerned is surprised at the decision. Suspicion awareness relates to a team member being subject to subtle action from the coach or

team management. This may include actions such as not receiving new equipment for a forthcoming tour. The athlete is then suspicious of events to follow. Lerch (1984) likens mutual pretence awareness to a grown up form of make-believe and suggested that this condition occurs most frequently to either the oldest or youngest team members who may be on the fringe of selection. This form of awareness is characterised by players receiving encouragement from teammates and coaches, however, all concerned are aware that the player will not make the team no matter how well they perform. The final awareness context, open awareness, is best depicted by the athlete who tries out for a team having full awareness that it will be impossible to gain selection ahead of the incumbent players.

Lerch (1984) and Rosenberg (1993) have drawn on a thanatological perspective in discussing athletic retirement. Both authors have viewed retirement as being a form of 'social death'. In this respect social death relates not to biological death, but to social isolation and ostracism from the former sporting group after retirement. It was noted by Lerch (1984), that the analogy to death may be more applicable to involuntary retirement rather than a voluntary decision to retire. The concept of 'social death' has also been criticised by Blinde and Greendorfer (1985) as this approach gives an excessively negative description of the retirement process.

Of the empirically based studies relating to retirement from sport, in Table 1, Hallinan and Snyder (1987) and Blinde and Stratta (1992) have

both utilised the thanatological perspective of the 'stages of dying' as outlined by Kubler-Ross (1970).

The earlier study conducted by Hallinan and Snyder (1987) utilised a case study approach to investigate the nature of the exit for four females 'cut' from their respective sporting teams. No specific mention of death was highlighted, but excerpts of interviews conducted with the athletes indicated a reaction in terms of the 'stages of dying'. The more recent study conducted by Blinde and Stratta (1992) utilised in-depth interviews to focus on the sport exit of athletes whose sporting teams had been eliminated from a university athletic program. During the interview process 16 of the 20 athletes in the study drew an analogy with death to describe their experiences of exiting the program.

Transitions

The theoretical perspectives of social gerontology and thanatology have been criticised by Blinde and Greendorfer (1985). They contend that both perspectives view retirement as a single abrupt event and that both approaches give an excessively negative description of the retirement process. An alternative theoretical perspective has been drawn from the counselling profession portraying retirement as a transitional process rather than a discrete event (Crook & Robertson, 1991).

Retirement as a transitional experience was considered by Hill and

Lowe (1974) with reference to Sussman's model for the sociological analysis of retirement. In an examination of this model, Hill and Lowe (1974, p. 29) supported its relevance to the study of retirement from sport and further outlined "individual variables such as the athlete's personality, motives, needs, habits and attitudes" as deserving attention representing the individual's perception of retirement. Baillie and Danish (1992) agreed that the model could be applied to the process of athlete retirement, however, it was highlighted that relationships among the identified factors were not addressed.

A similar model of transitions has been proposed by Schlossberg (1984) based on the knowledge that adults are continually having to face transitions in which the reaction is dependent on the type, context and the impact that the transition has on their lives. These transitions were further described as having no end point, but rather being a process over time. Schlossberg (1984, p. 69) added that "It is never one variable by itself but the way many variables interrelate that make the difference".

The transitional model as proposed by Schlossberg has been supported by qualitative research conducted by Swain (1991, p. 153) "seeking an understanding of an individual's subjective experience". It was concluded that the model was especially useful to assist in understanding the transitional process, the meaning for the individual and how this changes over time.

A seven-phase model of stages accompanying transition, similar to

the grieving process, has also been proposed by Hopson (1981, p. 37). The seven stages as identified by Hopson include immobilisation, minimisation, self-doubt, letting go, testing out, searching for meaning and internalisation. Progression through these stages allows the individual to gain insight into the transition and accept it as being complete therefore facilitating progression onto the next phase of life.

Impact of Retirement

In an examination of the role sport plays in today's society Danish, Petitpas and Hale (1993) described an athlete's career as being subject to continuous growth and change. As change may be perceived as a disruption in routine and may result in stress, change then, as a result of common life situations has been termed a 'critical life event'.

In discussing the factors contributing to crises in career termination among athletes Ogilvie and Taylor (1993) suggested that

Elite athletes, when faced with the end of their careers, are confronted by a wide range of psychological, social, and financial/occupational threats. The extent of these threats will dictate the severity of the crisis they experience as a function of their career termination. (p. 767)

The process of socialisation into the competitive sport role may be viewed along a continuum. The athletic role commences with the introduction into sport and is concluded with the withdrawal from

competitive sport participation (Blinde & Greendorfer, 1985). Although the completion of this athletic role is inevitable for all athletes at some stage in their career the reaction to this process may differ greatly among athletes.

Research has indicated that some athletes face considerable difficulty in adjusting to their post sport life (Blinde & Stratta, 1992; Hallinan & Snyder, 1987; Mihovilovic, 1968), while for other athletes retirement represented an opportunity for growth and development (Coakley, 1983). Conversely several authors (Allison & Meyer, 1988; Curtis & Ennis, 1988; Greendorfer & Blinde, 1985; Werthner & Orlick, 1986) found little evidence to suggest distress on retirement from sport. There still remains "considerable debate about the proportion of athletes who experience distress due to retirement and how the distress is manifested" (Ogilvie & Taylor, 1993, p. 766). However, some authors have de-emphasised the results of their findings.

Allison and Meyer (1988), in their study of 20 female athletes, reported retirement to be a positive rather than a negative transition into a new life. In relation to a question on the athlete's response to retirement "50% indicated relief while another 30% indicated that they had feelings of isolation and loss of identity" (p. 218). Similarly Greendorfer and Blinde (1985, p. 107), who studied 697 male and 427 female athletes, indicated that 90% of the subject group looked forward to life after college, however, little attention was given to the 34% who indicated they had some or

extreme dissatisfaction with their retirement.

In their study of positive transitions Sinclair and Orlick (1993, p. 42) considered the time taken for athletes to adjust to retirement. At the time the study was conducted 23% of the 199 athletes surveyed indicated that they had not totally adapted to their life after sport. Another 23% adapted to this new lifestyle almost immediately while 32% were happy within six months to one year following this transition. For the remaining 22% of the athletes adaptation to retirement took more than two years.

The retirement experiences of athletes outside of the college system were examined by Werthner and Orlick (1986) in their study of successful Canadian Olympic athletes. In-depth interviews were conducted with 28 (14 female and 14 male) elite amateur athletes from a variety of team and individual sports. Four athletes interviewed ended their sport career due to injury while the remainder voluntarily retired. Results indicated that 32% found the transition into a new career a very difficult time, 46% found it moderately difficult, while only 22% had no difficulties in the transition.

Werthner and Orlick (1986) identified seven factors that appeared to effect the transition of players from the athlete to the non-athlete role. These factors included having a new focus, feeling of accomplishment, relations with the coaching staff, injury/health problems, politics within the association, finances and support received from family and friends. It was concluded that the ease or difficulty experienced in the transition did

not equate to one single factor but was highly dependent on a complex interaction of all the factors identified. Petitpas, Danish, McKelvain and Murphy (1992, p.385) have suggested that the “real void for many athletes is emotional support. Athletes are typically very social and friendly but rarely allow themselves to be vulnerable by disclosing fears or insecurities”.

Causes of Career Ending

The causes of the career ending are usually expressed as one of four factors: chronological ageing; non-selection; the effects of injury and the free choice of the athlete. Of these four identified causes of retirement the most severe outcome relates to retirement that is both unexpected and involuntary, usually associated with injury or non-selection. For the injured athlete there is comfort, sympathy and empathy, while the athlete not selected is left with a sense of failure (Hallinan & Snyder, 1987).

In a study conducted by Kleiber, Greendorfer, Blinde and Samdahl (1987) the quality of exit from university sports and life satisfaction relating to three factors was measured. The factors measured included whether the athletes had received recognition in their last year, if they were regular starters in the team and whether they had suffered a career ending injury. A significantly lower life satisfaction was found for the career ending injury group. In a subsequent study Kleiber and Brock (1992,

p. 73) noted that although the measures used demonstrated a statistical significance, "a more interpretive approach may be needed to fully determine the subjective impact of injury on the lives of athletes".

Non-Selection

Empirical research into the experiences of athletes subject to non-selection has been limited. Hallinan and Snyder (1987) and Blinde and Stratta (1992) focused their research on this aspect using an interpretive approach to consider involuntary and unanticipated exits from sport by collegiate athletes. Both studies have also drawn upon a thanatological perspective utilising the 'stages of dying' as discussed previously.

The study by Hallinan and Snyder (1987) was conducted as a pilot study and used a case study approach to investigate the nature of the exit for four female athletes 'cut' from their sporting teams at one university. Three of the athletes were members of the basketball team and the fourth athlete was a member of the softball team. All four females had been regular team members prior to their non-selection.

Each athlete participated in a formal interview situation and completed an accompanying data sheet. No information was presented regarding the structure of the interview or the content of the data sheet. Unfortunately it was also unclear who conducted the interviews, their relationship to the athletes and the duration of each interview.

A framework relating to the 'stages of dying', as identified by Kubler-Ross (1970), was used by the authors to present their findings. Hallinan and Snyder (1987, p. 33) concluded from the study that the extent of trauma in relation to a forced retirement "will likely depend on the available athletic alternatives, strength of the sport identity, social support of team members and the recognition received from athletic endeavours".

The more recent study conducted by Blinde and Stratta (1992, p. 5) utilised in-depth interviews in an attempt "to explore the experiential dynamics of the exiting process". A team of athletes became available for study when the entire team was eliminated from the university athletic program. No details were provided as to the reason for exclusion of the team. From this team 11 females and two male athletes were interviewed. A further group of seven female athletes who had been individually 'cut' from their university sport team were included in the study. No information was provided by the authors regarding the previous standing of these athletes within their former team. Thus a total of 20 athletes participated in in-depth interviews conducted by the authors. The athletes were asked to describe their feelings and reactions in relation to when their sport career was ended. Sixteen drew an analogy with death and therefore like Hallinan and Snyder (1987) Blinde and Stratta (1992) utilised 'the stages of dying' as a framework for their data analysis.

The analysis of results presented by Blinde and Stratta (1992) is comprehensive and addresses the distinction between athletes whose

team was eliminated from the sport program and those athletes individually not selected. Contrasting responses were reported between these two groups of athletes. Athletes individually eliminated from a team isolated themselves from others while the athletes whose entire team was eliminated had a ready support structure. Blinde and Stratta reported that this latter group of athletes commonly shared a strong bonding.

Included among the factors making the exiting process problematic for the athletes were the suddenness of the decision and a great sense of loss on leaving the athletic role. Athletes were also required to continue living at the university. This environment contained many constant reminders to the athlete of their previous sport experience. The exiting process was also made problematic as athletes were not in control of the selection decision. Blinde and Stratta concluded that "such athletes often represent a neglected group of individuals who may need special assistance and consideration as they involuntarily exit the intercollegiate sport context" (p. 18).

In considering the research conducted by Hallinan and Snyder (1987) and Blinde and Stratta (1992) it should be highlighted that both sample groups represented college athletes whose athletic career would in most cases cease on completion of their collegiate education. As discussed previously, the structure of sporting participation in Australia differs to that of the North American college system. Therefore, it is essential that

the experiences of Australian athletes to such forced and involuntary sporting exits are examined.

Athlete Assistance Programs

With the accumulation of evidence sporting officials have begun to recognise the need for assistance programs to aid the athlete in dealing with retirement from their sport. In 1988 the United States Olympic Foundation initiated the development of a career assistance program for elite athletes (Petitpas, et al., 1992). Approximately 1,800 former Olympic and Pan-American Games athletes were surveyed to determine their needs in relation to retirement from sport. The Career Assistance Program for Athletes (CAPA) was developed based on a framework of a Life Development Intervention (LDI). A psychoeducational model applied to sport psychology LDI is based on a perspective of life span human development. The emphasis of this perspective is on continuous growth and change (Danish et al., 1993).

The career assistance program, CAPA, is presently offered to American athletes by the United States Olympic Committee. A similar program is also offered to Canadian athletes through the Olympic Athlete Career Centre. This centre is funded through the Canadian Olympic Association (Baillie, 1993). The assistance programs offered by these organisations provide "support and resources to athletes as they prepare

for and adjust to retirement from Olympic- or National-team-level competition" (p. 404). Baillie (1993) highlights that although the program emphasises particular career issues such as resume writing and interview skills, athletes benefit from sharing their experiences and the realisation that they are not alone in retirement.

Realising that Olympic athletes are not alone in their concerns about retirement from sport, the Advisory Resource Centre for Athletics at Springfield (Massachusetts) College initiated a program *Making the Jump Program* to assist high school athletes (Pearson & Petitpas, 1990). The program provides information and counselling for athletes and their parents to assist in making the transition from high school athletics to college participation.

In November 1990 a similar athlete assistance program was introduced for elite Australian athletes (Lifeskills for elite athletes program: L.E.A.P. Handbook, n.d.). The Lifeskills for Elite Athletes Program (LEAP), funded by the Australian Sports Commission, is a program of the Australian Institute of Sport. The objective of this program is "to develop and promote lifeskills programs for LEAP athletes in the areas of career, education and personal development in a balance with their sporting pursuits" (Lifeskills for elite athletes program: L.E.A.P. Handbook, p. 7). The LEAP program, recently altered to 'Sports LEAP' is now offered to Australian athletes in Canberra, Perth, Adelaide/N.T., Brisbane, Hobart, Sydney and Melbourne in conjunction with each

state/territory Institute of Sport (Lifeskills for elite athletes program: Sports LEAP, n.d.).

Summary

The review of literature outlined the theoretical perspectives that are most often linked with sport retirement. Gerontological, thanatological and transitional frameworks were examined. The causes of retirement have also been outlined with a specific focus on involuntary retirement characterised by ageing, injury or non-selection. Of these non-selection has been viewed as having the greatest impact for the athlete, although much debate remains as to the extent of this impact.

As the research in this area has been predominately North American it is necessary to apply the same principles to the Australian athletic situation in identifying the influences of non-selection. The community based sporting environment of the Australian sporting system allows athletes to participate at a number of levels in their chosen sport. From the literature and the author's own experiences a conceptual framework was established. This framework attempts to clarify the components of non-selection and is outlined in Chapter 3. The structure of interview guides and data analysis for this research were both guided by this framework. Details of the interview guides and data analysis are outlined in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 3

Conceptual Framework

The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 discussed various theoretical approaches that have been applied to the study of athlete retirement. These theories include gerontology (Mihovilovic, 1968; Greendorfer & Blinde, 1985) thanatology (Kubler-Ross, 1970; Lerch, 1984; Rosenberg, 1993) and a transitional framework as proposed by Schlossberg (1984).

Each of the theoretical approaches presented may be applied in part to the study of retirement from sport, but no one theory has been accepted as being representative of the complete process. The thanatology and gerontology perspectives have been criticised by Blinde and Greendorfer (1985, p. 90) as they "seem to depict inadequately the process of leaving sport". Baillie and Danish (1992) have described retirement as a transitional event that covers all aspects of sport from recruitment to disengagement along with the move into other roles after sport.

The conceptual framework shown in Figure 1 is a composite of the literature and the author's own knowledge and experiences of non-selection. This has resulted in a linear, or progressive sequence that depicts the progression of reactions by the athlete.

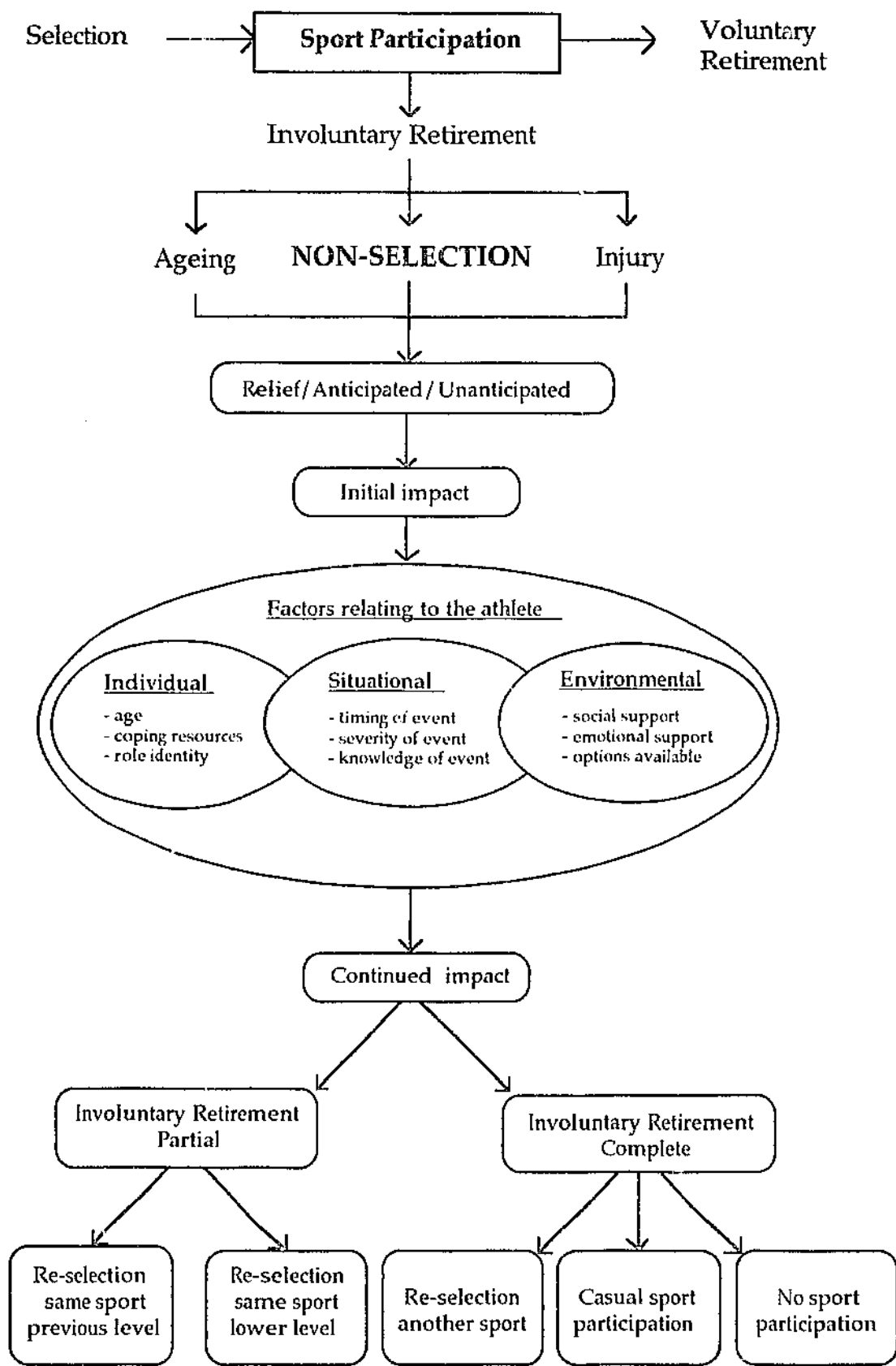


Figure 1: Conceptual framework relating to non-selection as a factor contributing to retirement from Australian sport.

Sport participation involves a series of stages from selection through to retirement with retirement being voluntary or involuntary. Involuntary retirement is commonly the result of ageing, injury, non-selection or a combination of these factors. For some athletes involuntary retirement may have been anticipated and/or be a relief, while for the remainder the situation is unanticipated.

Factors relating to the athlete are based on a model of transitions presented by Schlossberg (1984). Schlossberg outlined three sets of variables that influenced the individual in a transition process. These variables are: the variables characterising the particular individual; the variables characterising the particular transition; and the variables characterising the particular environment. Schlossberg added "It is never one variable by itself but the way many variables interrelate that makes the difference".

With a focus on athletes subject to non-selection from their sport involuntary retirement has been perceived by the author in two contexts. First, partial retirement and secondly, complete retirement. Partial involuntary retirement identifies those athletes who have been forced, through non-selection, to participate at a lower level than desired. For example, an athlete playing in an Australian team, subject to non-selection from that team, is therefore only able to participate at a state level in that sport. Such athletes may choose to remain at this lower level of participation or attempt to gain re-selection at the higher level. Both of

these situations see the athlete remaining in the same sport from which non-selection occurred. Complete involuntary retirement identifies those athletes who leave their current sport. It is suggested, by the researcher, based on her own sporting experiences and from anecdotal evidence in speaking with other sports men and women, that these athletes choose re-selection in another sport, become casual sport participants or cease sport participation.

The conceptual framework indicates diversity in the outcomes for the athlete who has experienced non-selection. Retirement has often been depicted as a process where the athlete leaves the sport as a competitor. This perspective is strongly influenced by the North American college based system which provides little opportunity for athletes to participate at a lower level in their chosen sport. The conceptual framework therefore considers the Australian system of community based sport participation. In this system the athlete is able to participate at a number of levels of competition ranging from the international athlete to the local club athlete. In both the North American and Australian sport systems there is also an avenue for athletes to participate in their sport in other non-playing capacities such as coaching or administration. This study only considers the playing role of the athlete.

Blinde and Greendorfer (1985) discussed the rigidity of previous theoretical perspectives in the area of retirement from sport and stated that these perspectives:

Have not been flexible enough to allow the consideration that an athlete can reject one level of sport involvement or competitive structure while accepting another. (p. 91)

The framework presented considers the possibility that an athlete may 'retire' from one level of sport participation while remaining competitive at a lower level.

According to Miles and Huberman (1984, p. 28) the development of theory "relies on a few general constructs that subsume a mountain of particulars". Researchers typically place a number of discrete events in a category and label the category accordingly. When labelling occurs it may not be known which groups go together or how events within the group are related. Miles and Huberman (1984) further stated that the categories applied to discrete events come from both theory and experience and may be directed by the objectives of the study.

Laying out those bins [categories], giving each a descriptive or inferential name, and getting some clarity about their interrelationships is what a conceptual framework is all about. (p. 28)

The conceptual framework presented attempts to clarify the interrelationships regarding non-selection from sport and has been further utilised to devise the research questions and interview guides that have directed the data collection for the research. The interrelationships depicted have also assisted in the direction taken during data analysis.

CHAPTER 4

Methodology

Research Design

Previous research in the area of retirement from sport has been based on quantitative methods using questionnaire data (Curtis & Ennis, 1988; Greendorfer & Blinde, 1985; Kleiber & Brock, 1992; Kleiber, et al., 1987; Mihovilovic, 1968). The need for qualitative research to enable the athletes' views to be more fully interpreted, has been emphasised by Kleiber and Brock (1992) and Allison and Meyer (1988).

Qualitative interviewing allows the interviewees to respond in their own terminology, expressing their own individual perceptions and experiences. As stated by Patton (1990, p. 357) interviewing provides "a chance for a short period of time to get inside another person's world". Whereas participant observation allows the researcher to "walk a mile in my shoes" the in-depth interview helps the interviewer to "walk a mile in my head". An objective of this research was to examine the views of the athletes in their own terms and not in terms of the interviewer's frame of reference.

Two semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were conducted with 15 athletes (7 female and 8 male) to explore, in-depth the

range of reactions and experiences that they have faced in relation to non-selection from their sport.

Sample

Sample Composition

The sample group for this research was selected from three team sports currently played at senior level nationally and internationally by Australian male and female athletes. Targeting team sports provided a large pool of prospective athletes. Individual sports were not represented in this study because it was felt they represented a different perspective.

The three sports chosen were field hockey (generally just known as hockey in Australia), cricket and water polo. From these sports several high profile athletes had received newspaper coverage throughout their career and in relation to the circumstances of their non-selection. It was therefore an important consideration of this research to ensure confidentiality for athletes who agreed to participate.

As a former elite hockey player the researcher was aware of players who had experienced non-selection in this sport. With cricket, the researcher was aware of several male athletes who could be invited to participate in the study. Water polo was selected after initial efforts to

locate suitable basketball players proved unsuccessful possibly because the highest representative level of the sport operates largely on a professional basis and teams regularly utilise interstate and overseas recruits. Additionally, players who are not selected for one team may be offered incentives to participate with another team and therefore remain playing at the same level. This phenomenon is worthy of a study in its own right.

The following criteria were used for selection of athletes for the study:

1. Currently resident in Western Australia.
2. A participant in one of the team sports identified.
3. Previously or currently a representative at a state or national level.
4. At least one year of participation at the level at which non-selection occurred.
5. At least six months must have elapsed since the athlete experienced non-selection from his/her sport.
6. A willingness to participate in the study.

Sample Selection

Purposeful sampling as advocated by Patton (1990) was used to select athletes who offered a rich source of data relating to their experience of non-selection. The power of this type of sampling lies in the selection of information-rich cases which Patton (1990, p. 169) states "are those from

which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research, thus the term *purposeful sampling*". To identify such information-rich cases the writer utilised both personal knowledge and the knowledge of senior executive or coaching staff involved in the sports identified. This process provided the researcher with a summary of the athlete's progress in their sport and was instrumental in determining the most appropriate athletes for possible involvement in the study.

Each of the prospective athletes identified for inclusion in the study was contacted by telephone by the researcher who verbally outlined details of the purpose and significance of the study. Upon verbal agreement to participate the athletes were sent a letter explaining the research in detail. Each athlete was asked to complete and return an informed consent form if they were prepared to continue as a participant (Refer to Appendix A).

Of 16 athletes contacted 15 agreed to participate comprising eight field hockey players, four cricketers, and three water polo players. For reasons of confidentiality each athlete in the study has been referenced by a code and pseudonym as shown in Table 2.

Table 2:

Athlete codes and pseudonyms*

Females		Males	
HF1	Carol	HM1	Robert
HF2	Julie	HM2	Jim
HF3	Debra	HM3	Paul
HF4	Anne	HM4	Peter
CF1	Mandy	CM1	Tom
CF2	Beth	CM2	Adam
PF1	Sarah	PM1	Brad
		PM2	Gary

* H = hockey, C = cricket, P = water polo
F = female, M = male

Each code represents the sport, reduced to one letter, gender and the athlete number in the study. For example, PM1 means water polo male athlete one. Throughout the data collection and analysis phases of this study athletes were referenced by their appropriate code. For reasons of confidentiality all names are pseudonyms and these will be used in this report. Pseudonyms have also been used throughout this report to assist readability. Throughout the study identification of the interviewee's sport was not highlighted, as there were no comparisons made between sports. Pseudonyms then, were adequate in identifying each interviewee.

Of the 15 athletes participating in the study 14 had represented Australia at the senior level while one player, Debra, had been a representative only at the state level. Two players involved in the study had captained both their national and state teams. One player had been a national vice captain and state captain while another three players had captained their state only. Further characteristics of athletes in the study are shown in Table 3.

Table 3:

Athlete status at time of non-selection and years since non-selection

Subject	Age (years)	Highest level of participation *	Years at this level	Years since non-selection
Carol	24	Aust Team	1	3
Julie	31	Aust Squad	7	2
Debra	23	State Team(a)	3	11
Anne	25	Aust Squad	1	10
Robert	35	Aust Squad	13	2
Jim	26	Aust Team	5 (d)	4
Paul	25	Aust Team	5	9
Robert	33	Aust Team	13	8
Carol	24	Aust Team	1	6
Beth	27	Aust Team	7	7
Tom	32	Aust Team	6	3
Adam	33	State Team(b)	12	5
Sarah	27	Aust Team	2	2
Brad	24	State Team(c)	5 (d)	7
Gary	27	Aust Team	8	4

* Aust Team = Australian Team

Aust Squad = Australian Squad

(a) State representative only.

(b) Former Australian representative.

(c) Non-Selection occurred at state level therefore ineligible for Australian selection.

(d) Currently competing at level of non-selection due to re-selection

Interviews

A two stage interview process was designed. Stage one of the interview process, also known as the preliminary interview, focused on establishing rapport with the interviewee by getting to know the person and obtaining background and demographic details. A brief overview of the events relating to the athlete's non-selection from their sport was included primarily to direct the athlete to events at that time period and to determine basic facts relating to the experience. Stage two pursued in greater depth details of the non-selection and the experiences and reactions of the interviewee.

Interview guides were prepared for each stage of the interview process to ensure that the same basic information was obtained from each interviewee (Patton, 1990). Questions were kept simple, easy to understand and open-ended to encourage the interviewee to answer in their own terms and in a manner expressing their own views (Douglas, Roberts & Thompson, 1988). In addition to the initial question listed on the interview guides, several other probing questions were included to assist the interviewer in obtaining a detailed response from the interviewee (Refer to Appendix D for interview guide stage one and to Appendix E for interview guide stage two).

Interview questions for stage one were based upon recommendations by Jamieson (n.d.) and Scanlan, Ravizza and Stein

(1989) and were designed to assist athletes in recalling information relative to the time period of when they were subject to non-selection. Questions were further designed to allow the interviewee to respond in descriptive terms (Patton, 1990). The interview commenced with general and non-threatening questions requiring minimal interpretation.

Stage one of the interview process consisted of 12 questions. The first five questions addressed personal details, family, education, employment and sporting history. Question six, relating to the actual occurrence of non-selection, was strategically placed in the middle of the interview. From the researcher's own knowledge, the discussion of events relating to non-selection often creates emotional tension and anxiety for the athlete. For this reason question five, asking for an outline of the athlete's sporting history, provided a lead up to the events of non-selection. The remaining six questions directed the focus away from personal experience and addressed other events that were occurring at the time of non-selection both for the athlete and the athlete's family.

The first stage or preliminary interview was considered by the researcher a vital component in the success of the entire interviewing process. As the time since the athletes had experienced non-selection from sport ranged from two to eleven years the preliminary interview provided athletes the opportunity to recall and verbalise their past experiences (Jamieson, n.d.).

Questions for stage two of the interview process were derived from

issues addressed in a comparable study conducted by Blinde and Stratta (1992) and from the researcher's own knowledge of non-selection issues. Questions for this second stage of the interview process were designed to encourage the interviewee to express individual feelings and emotions regarding non-selection (Patton, 1990). The second interview included 15 questions of which 12 related directly to the event of non-selection and the reaction and experiences of the interviewee. Initial questions asked the athlete to consider events prior to the non-selection. This was followed by several questions relating to the actual event and the immediate days thereafter. The remaining group of questions asked the athlete to consider the longer term impact and their experiences over this time. The final two questions were focused away from the athlete's own personal experiences to seek suggestions as to how to assist athletes who might experience similar circumstances in their sporting life. This format was also designed to taper off the interview.

Pilot Study

As a novice researcher the completion of a pilot evaluation was a vital stage in assessing both methodology and interview techniques. For the pilot two athletes were selected, one female and one male, for adequate gender representation. The female athlete, Helen, was known to the researcher and was chosen because rapport had already been established,

allowing the pilot work to focus on methodological issues such as interview technique. The male athlete, John, was not previously known to the researcher and thus provided an opportunity to assess techniques in identifying, locating and developing rapport with the athlete.

A preliminary design of each interview guide was piloted to determine suitability in addressing the research questions as comprehended by both the interviewees and the researcher. The pilot also enabled the researcher to assess the depth of information obtained in the interviewees' responses and the effectiveness of interview techniques.

Researcher as Mediator

As an extension of the piloting stage of the study the researcher was interviewed by an experienced sports coach and former physical education teacher personally known by the researcher. This is consistent with Evertson and Green (1986) in their discussion on the observer (researcher) as the first instrument in observation. "The perceptual system of the observer is the first tool used by the observer and ...this tool is influenced by the observer's own goals, biases, frame of reference, and abilities" (p. 164). The process of being the interviewee enabled the author to experience the feeling and emotion created by each stage of the interview process. Although at times responding to the interview questions created an amount of emotional tension for the author the structure and ending

of the interviews provided a tapering off and closure to the discussions. Completion of the interviews by the researcher provided a positive experience and enabled the issues of non-selection to be discussed logically and in depth. This had not been done previously by the researcher.

In theoretical terms the research was orientated toward heuristic inquiry. Heuristic inquiry as discussed by Patton (1990, p. 71) asks "What is *my* experience of this phenomenon and the essential experience of others who also experience this phenomenon intensely?" Patton further stated that the importance of heuristic research is that:

Through personal experience; it exemplifies and places at the fore the way in which the researcher is the primary instrument in qualitative inquiry; and it challenges in the extreme traditional scientific concerns about researcher objectivity and detachment.
(p. 73)

To assist in monitoring the researcher's influence as the first instrument in observation, a number of notes were made throughout the research process (Evertson & Green, 1986). A reflexive journal was maintained by the researcher from the commencement of the research through to its completion. Entries included theoretical, methodological and interpretive notes in relation to the progress of the study. At the completion of each interview the interviewer allocated a comparative amount of time in documenting events of the interview and any issues that may have assisted during the later analysis of the transcripts. Additionally, proformas for both stages of the interview process included

space for the interviewer to make notations. Similarly an 'interview record' document contained space for comments relating to the interview situation in regard to the environment, the subject and the interviewer (Refer to Appendix J).

Conduct of Interviews

Interviews were conducted over a four month period from May to August 1994 determined by the interviewees' and researcher's availability. The location for each interview varied according to the interviewees' requirements and included both the athlete's residence and workplace along with the researcher's residence and Edith Cowan University. Each interview was completed in a private area with confidentiality assured. Interviews for stage one varied from 18 minutes to 90 minutes, averaging 36 minutes in duration. For the second stage interviews ranged from 45 minutes to 90 minutes with an average interview time of 59 minutes (Refer to Appendix B).

According to Patton (1990) irrespective of the style of interview used or the care taken in devising interview questions the raw data from interviews, the actual words spoken by the interviewee, are the most important as "there is no substitute for these data" (p. 347). Each interview was accordingly audiotaped in full, with the interviewee's prior permission. This method of data collection not only increased the

accuracy of the data but allowed the researcher to be more attentive to the reactions and responses made by the interviewee during the interview process.

The progression from the initial identification of possible athletes for the research through to the completion of interviewing each interviewee is outlined in Table 4.

Table 4:
Sequence for data collection

Step	Action
1.	Identification of possible athlete
2.	Location of athlete
3.	Initial telephone contact
4.	Completion of informed consent
5.	Subsequent telephone contact
6.	Interview stage one (preliminary interview)
7.	Interview stage two
8.	Follow up telephone contact

On receipt of the 'Form of disclosure and informed consent' the researcher telephoned the participant to arrange the preliminary interview at a time and place convenient to the athlete. At this stage athletes were advised that questions would be asked relating to their education, employment and sporting background. Emphasis was also placed on the need for a quiet and confidential location.

For those interviews conducted at either the researcher's residence

or at Edith Cowan University, audiotape equipment was set up prior to the interviewee's arrival. On their arrival extra time was taken to allow the interviewee to become familiar with the environment. On the occasions where the researcher went to the interviewee's residence or workplace, equipment set-up provided an opportunity for general discussion to take place. An identification segment was recorded onto the audiotape and replayed to confirm correct operation and clarity of reception.

At the commencement of the initial interview the interviewee was provided with a copy of the signed 'Form of disclosure and informed consent'. The interviewer then outlined details of the research as outlined in the 'introductory notes' (Refer to Appendix C). The preliminary interview was completed and concluded with arrangements made for the second stage.

Prior to the second interview being conducted the researcher reviewed the audiotape of the preliminary interview and made a summary of its content. A sample summary for CM1 is presented in Appendix F. The factual nature of data obtained from the preliminary interview meant full transcription was not necessary.

Procedures for the second interview followed those outlined for stage one. A minimum of three days duration elapsed between interviews to enable the interviewee time to reflect upon that discussion. To re-establish rapport the interviewees were asked if they had discussed the

initial interview since its completion and for any additional thoughts they may have had from that time. Several questions were also asked regarding details from the preliminary interview. This was also done to re-establish rapport and to direct the interviewee's attention back to the interview process.

As interview stage two was transcribed verbatim, all interviewees were asked, at the conclusion of the interview, if they wished to review their transcript. Only three interviewees, Sarah, Brad and Gary took up this option. These interviewees were additionally provided with a verbatim transcript of their preliminary interview for review. Sarah, Brad and Gary did not recommend any amendments to their transcripts. The typical response to this offer by other interviewees was that they were quite happy with what they had said.

Due to the nature of the topic being researched and the emotional response by several of the interviewees additional care was taken to debrief interviewees at the conclusion of the final interview (Borg & Gall, 1989). In a comparable study Blinde and Stratta (1992, p. 7) reported that "athletes frequently displayed intense emotions during the interviews". It was anticipated that the researcher's own experiences of non-selection and retirement from sport would assist in providing care for the interviewee. Additionally follow up telephone contact was made within one week of completion of the second interview. This approach was made to demonstrate a caring and concerned attitude to the interviewee.

Assistance was also negotiated with the Senior Student Welfare Counsellor at Edith Cowan University to advise, if required, appropriate professional contacts participating in the Medicare scheme. Upon confirmation of athletes in the study the researcher provided the Senior Student Welfare Officer with a list of suburbs encompassing the residential and work place of all interviewees. Several of the interviewees showed signs of emotional tension during the interview process and were advised of this referral system. None of the interviewees wished to pursue the matter further.

Supplementary Documentation

To assist in the management and recording of the research three separate recording sheets based on similar documentation as described by Douglas et al. (1988) were designed to record athlete and interview data.

A 'athlete progress record' was constructed to document basic athlete information including personal details and the stage of progress in the study (Refer to Appendix I). A second 'interview record' was designed to record details relating to the completion of the interview and cassette tape identification (Refer to Appendix J). Finally an 'interview transcription record' recorded transcribing details for interviews completed with each interviewee (Refer to Appendix K).

An additional information sheet, 'introductory notes', was created

for use as a preliminary guide at the commencement of interview stage one (Refer to Appendix C). As suggested by Douglas et al. (1988) information included an outline of the purpose, procedures and phases of the research and how the information gained would be utilised. Issues such as confidentiality and the interviewee's rights were also included. Although such information had been previously provided to each athlete, by outlining these issues prior to the start of the preliminary interview, omission of details was reduced. This method was also used to assist in gaining rapport with the interviewee and to increase confidence for both the interviewee and interviewer (Douglas et al., 1988).

Transcriptions

To assist in the analysis of data, audiotape recordings were made of each interview. The most efficient method of accessing the data recorded in this manner is a verbatim transcription. As outlined by Douglas et al. (1988) unnecessary habitual phrases such as 'you know' may be deleted, however, "the aim of the transcript is to reflect as accurately as possible what was said and how it was said" (p. 138). In the transcriptions limited punctuation was used with emotions or actions displayed by the interviewee highlighted in parentheses. Square brackets were used to indicate information not on the tape but inserted for clarification. Each completed transcript was numbered sequentially by page and line to

facilitate location of data. This enabled close examination of the transcript and identification of text. For an example of an interview transcript refer to Appendix G.

Ethical Considerations

The need to carefully consider ethical issues in qualitative research is particularly relevant when interview techniques are to be utilised. As Spradley (1979, p. 36) stated "interviewing represents a powerful tool for invading other people's way of life. It reveals information that can be used to *affirm* their rights, interests, and sensitivities or to *violate* them". Patton (1990, p. 355) added that "while interviews may be intrusive in reopening old wounds, they can also be healing".

Involvement in the research study provided an opportunity for several of the athletes to address issues related to their non-selection. For example, Beth had not previously spoken at length regarding her non-selection and the opportunity to do so enabled her to address issues that had long been a concern to her. In this respect the interview process was a valuable aid in healing old wounds.

In further consideration of the ethical issues in qualitative research all interviewees were provided with information regarding the research, its aims and objectives and were free to withdraw from the study at any

stage with no obligation. To ensure confidentiality all interviewees were referenced by either a code or pseudonym. All interviews were confidential and conducted in a private location convenient to the interviewee. Interviewees were provided with an opportunity to review their interview transcripts and any references made to individuals throughout the transcripts were deleted. All data relating to the interviews was securely stored in a locked filing cabinet and will be retained for a five year period after which time it will be destroyed by incineration.

Data Analysis

Data analysis as defined by Bogdan and Biklen (1982) is:

The process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials that you accumulate to increase your own understanding of them and to enable you to present what you have discovered to others. (p. 92)

Transcribed data records the experiences of individuals and in order to describe these experiences in relation to the overall culture, patterns must be discovered between interviewees (Spradley, 1979). As the research was of an inductive nature analysis involved working with the data searching for patterns and themes. Becoming highly familiar with the participants

and the transcriptions was a vital component in this process. Familiarisation with data commenced during the transcribing phase whereby the researcher noted key issues discussed by the interviewee. As each transcript was completed, the audiotape for that interviewee was replayed and transcribed information checked for accuracy.

Prior to further analysis a one page summary of the interviewee's progression in their chosen sport was completed. This summary also included specific highlights relating to events in the athlete's career and details of the events relating to their non-selection.

Each transcript was read at least three times. The first reading was used to highlight the main interview questions that were asked and to overview the interviewee's responses. At this stage all journal entries made in relation to the interviewee under analysis were consulted. The second reading involved a thorough review of content and provided the basis for the completed data analysis. This process entailed re-reading of the transcript until a thorough analysis was completed.

The researcher underlined key words or phrases found in the interviewee's response. Sections of the interviewee's responses were then categorised using the interviewee's terminology, the researcher's terminology or a combination of the two. The allocation of categories was based on the techniques of domain analysis as outlined by Spradley (1979). For example, in determining what factors relating to non-selection were problematic for athletes, four major categories were identified: (a)

notification of non-selection; (b) athlete's initial reactions; (c) short term effects for the athlete; and (d) longer term effects for the athlete. For each of these major categories a number of minor categories were further developed from the interviewees' responses. For example the major category identified as 'notification of non-selection' included three minor categories: (a) method of notification; (b) lack of player respect; and (c) out of athlete's control.

During the process of data analysis pertinent patterns or themes that were common among interviewees were noted. Significant portions of text that gave an example of views expressed by the interviewee were also highlighted. The final reading was used to check categories that had been assigned to the data and to accurately record the location of any highlighted text. For an example of data coding completed on an interview transcript refer to Appendix H.

All categories assigned by the researcher to the interviewee's transcript were summarised onto a single page. The one page summary for each interviewee was an invaluable tool throughout the data analysis process. Using the summary page from each transcript a complete list of assigned categories was made. This list identified the transcript which referred to each category. From this summary assigned categories were prioritised according to the number of citations. Categories were then separated into sections relative to the three sub questions. These were: (a) factors problematic for athletes; (b) factors non-problematic for athletes;

and (c) athlete recommendations. The presentation of results was based on this division of categories.

Trustworthiness of Data

As discussed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) trustworthiness of data in qualitative research incorporates four areas of concern. These concerns include issues relating to the truth value, applicability, consistency and neutrality of the research findings. These areas of concern relate respectively to credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Ensuring trustworthiness is the way in which qualitative studies are able to make claims for validity. Several methodological issues as suggested by Lincoln and Guba have been addressed in the research.

Credibility of the research was enhanced by investing time with each interviewee, building trust and getting to know the individual. Completion of the two stage interview process with each interviewee made this possible. Contact by the researcher, with each interviewee, following the second interview added to the credibility of the research.

In establishing transferability Lincoln and Guba suggested that it is "*not* the naturalist's task to provide an *index* of transferability; it *is* his or her responsibility to provide the *data base* that makes transferability judgments possible on the part of potential appliers" (p. 316). A thorough

description of time and context for the research along with purposeful sampling addressed this issue.

In considering the dependability of research findings “the naturalist seeks means for taking into account both factors of instability *and* factors of phenomenal or design induced change” (p. 299). Such factors have been addressed by the researcher. Extensive documentation and a thorough description of the research process would allow for an independent audit to authenticate the research findings. These methods may also be applied in establishing confirmability of the research.

One final technique that assisted in establishing the trustworthiness of data was the maintenance of a reflexive journal by the researcher. A reflexive journal or introspective journal records the “investigator’s mind processes, philosophical position, and bases of decisions about the inquiry” (p. 109).

CHAPTER 5

Results and Discussion

The major research question of this study was to investigate the reactions and experiences of athletes who were subject to non-selection from their sport. Three sub questions were addressed in consideration of this major research question. These were: (a) what factors relating to non-selection were problematic for athletes? (b) what factors relating to non-selection were non-problematic for athletes? and (c) what recommendations do non-selected athletes advance to assist sporting institutions, administrators, coaches, selectors, significant others and athletes in dealing with non-selection from Australian sport?

Throughout this chapter the results and discussion have been integrated for each research question to maintain unity with an emphasis on the findings because, as shown in Chapter 2, very little of the literature addresses non-selection.

Prior to addressing the research questions, it is necessary to review contextual information regarding the interview experience for both the interviewees and the interviewer. The following discussion briefly summarises the interview experience to convey the intensity and scope of material that emerged during this study.

The Interview Experience

Interviewees

In conducting the research the author was aware of the possibility of emotional tension being experienced by athletes during the interview process. As previously discussed, athletes were contacted by the researcher within one week of completing the second interview to demonstrate care for the interviewee. In addition, a professional counselling referral system was available to all interviewees. None of the athletes interviewed required additional professional assistance.

However, it was evident throughout the interviews that discussing events relating to non-selection caused emotional discomfort for all athletes. One athlete, Robert, a former national captain of his sport, subject to non-selection two years ago, showed no signs of emotional tension during the preliminary interview until discussing the effect non-selection had on his relationship with other family members. At this point in the interview Robert briefly succumbed to tears. For the remainder of the preliminary interview Robert's verbal responses were more thoughtful and his demeanour changed considerably with him being more relaxed and at ease. This relaxed attitude was again evident during his second interview. Sarah also showed emotional tension during her interview. She did not openly cry but commented "you know tears have been

coming to my eyes while [laugh] we've been talking about it [the non-selection] here, so it's still in you". Sarah was not re-selected in an Australian team two years prior to the interview.

The reaction to non-selection and the long term psychological effect for one athlete, Beth, became apparent at the conclusion of the second interview:

When I received your letter that I had to sign [and] it said about the psychological counselling [laugh] after [the interviews], the next three nights I just had nightmares about this bloody cricket and these people who were on the field and, oh, it was just terrible. I sort of laughed at the time but I knew the reason. I laughed because I knew that it [non-selection] was psychologically [difficult], it had been - it hurt.

Having been dropped from an Australian team seven years ago Beth acknowledged that this was the first time she had openly spoken in detail about her non-selection. Indeed many of the interviewees in the study had not previously spoken in detail about their experiences of non-selection.

The difficulty experienced by many athletes in discussing their non-selection was further evident when, prior to the second interview, the researcher asked the athletes if they had discussed the initial interview since its completion. Although 10 of the 15 subjects in the study were in a partner relationship at the time of the interviews, only one subject Tom, indicated that he had talked with his partner regarding the issues that had been discussed.

The follow up telephone call made after the final interview was

appreciated by several of the athletes in the study. Most indicated that they had put the events of their non-selection behind them and had moved ahead with their lives. Sarah specifically commented that she found the interview process "refreshing" in that she was able to discuss the topic in so much detail and was able to think back on what she recalled had happened. Similarly, Debra believed that talking about her experiences had allowed her to "let some of it out". She further commented that participating in the interviews had helped her in talking to others about her non-selection, an event that occurred eleven years ago.

Interviewer

Completion of the interview phase of the research was a difficult aspect for the author and one that needed to be approached in the correct manner. Having experienced non-selection approximately three years ago many of the memories of adjusting to that situation were at the forefront of the researcher's mind. An important consideration in conducting each interview was to remain objective and maintain distance from the issues being discussed. This process was particularly difficult during the piloting stage of the study. In fact, the initial stage two interview that was completed with Helen, left the author emotionally tense and uneasy the following day. On reflection of the interview the author recognised that her own experiences of non-selection were similar to Helen's and thus

were being relived while talking with Helen.

A very important stage in the author's own development was experienced when she herself was interviewed. This process not only allowed the author to speak in-depth about her own situation but was the first time that all issues relating to her non-selection from sport had been discussed openly and freely. The interview process not only assisted the author personally, in dealing with her non-selection, but also provided guidance and knowledge of how to conduct and manage the interview. It is believed that the author's ability as an interviewer was greatly enhanced from the experience.

Throughout the interview process the researcher documented the interview experience in a number of ways. This included notes made in the space allocated at the conclusion of each interview guide, entries made in the reflexive journal and comments recorded on the 'interview record' (Refer to Appendix J), although there was minimum use of this in the analysis and subsequent preparation of this chapter.

Athlete's Reactions and Experiences of Non-Selection

In addressing the major research question, that is, what are the reactions and experiences of athletes subject to non-selection from their sport, consideration of the athlete's self expectation prior to non-selection was an important component in the interviewee's response. The major

research question was then examined in relation to the three sub questions: (a) what factors relating to non-selection were problematic for athletes? (b) what factors relating to non-selection were non-problematic for athletes? and (c) what recommendations do non-selected athletes advance to assist sporting institutions, administrators, coaches, selectors, significant others and athletes in dealing with non-selection from Australian sport? The following discussion will outline the athlete's self expectation prior to non-selection followed by the events of non-selection, which specifically addresses the first two sub questions as above. The third sub question will be addressed at a later stage in this chapter.

Athlete's Self Expectation Prior to Non-selection

In response to a question regarding how the athletes saw themselves and their position in the team prior to non-selection, all athletes indicated they felt confident about being selected. Those athletes who had only been participating at the level of non-selection for one or two years (Carol, Mandy, Anne and Sarah) freely acknowledged their position in the team was not fully established. However, they were confident of selection believing that their previous performances were of the required standard and that the investment of time and money from their sporting association indicated a high prospect of re-selection. This belief was portrayed by Sarah:

If you put a person in the Australian team ... I only played that one year ... they'd given me that experience in the U.S. and Canada. I scored goals against the U.S.A when we were away and [against] Canada. I thought that I played really well and the coach even played me a lot when we were overseas ... and then not even to be re-selected ... not to be even given another go ... there's something wrong there.

Approximately half of the athletes interviewed, although confident about their prospect of selection, indicated some doubt about their performance leading up to the selection. A number of influences were cited by the athletes as being related to this performance doubt. These influences included injury (Beth), marital difficulties (Peter), marriage preparation (Jim), adaptation to a new residential environment (Carol and Brad) and outside media pressure (Tom and Adam). Athletes expressed disappointment that the officials did not take these influences into consideration. Athletes also believed that it did not matter how well they had performed previously, as this would have no bearing on the selection made. In addition, there was no direct indication given to the athletes that their positions may be in jeopardy. Peter commented that when told he was dropped from the Australian team:

That was really the first time I'd come across any commentary at all from anyone, the selectors through to the coach about that sort of thing and it wasn't as though it had been preempted ... you're doing this or you're doing that and this is what we want you to do and if we don't see any improvement at this next tournament then [you] won't be selected.

This group of athletes also raised the issue of complacency in the team. Tom, aware of his decline in form, felt "basically I was doing okay. I was

doing enough just to keep things going like I'd get 30, [playing partner] would get 70 and there would be a 100 run partnership something like that so things were going okay".

Eight athletes discussed their mistrust or suspicion of the selection process and/or the selectors as indicated by Robert:

I never had much faith in the selectors anyway. I didn't really think they were fit to select but I thought that if the coach had wanted me in there then he would have put my name forward and argued for me.

Similarly Julie stated:

I played really well the whole national tournament. I played very well, I got the winning goal, hit the winning goal in the semi final, was up there with the top goal scorers, picked up a couple of best players, got drug tested, you know, the usual whole lot and - but felt that [it] didn't matter what I did I wouldn't get in.

Events of Non-Selection

The following discussion specifically addresses the first two sub questions addressed in consideration of the major research question. These were factors problematic for the athletes and factors non-problematic for the athletes.

Two dominant issues emerged during interviews with athletes in this study. These included firstly, the lack of understanding and knowledge by sporting personnel in general of the issues of non-selection and second, the political influences that appear evident in sport regarding

non-selection.

The lack of understanding and general knowledge of the issues of non-selection, as perceived by the interviewees, was not specifically linked with any one individual. It was, however, viewed as impacting on the issues addressed in this research, that is, the reactions and experiences of the athletes specifically in relation to factors seen as problematic, factors seen as non-problematic and athlete recommendations. In addition, this lack of knowledge may be viewed as not only influencing the athlete's adjustment to non-selection but may be an important factor for all sporting personnel and non-sporting personnel who may be involved with athletes subject to non-selection.

The political influences, a term used by the interviewees, although not as visible in the sporting environment, were equally as evident for athletes in the study. Unfortunately the researcher did not probe sufficiently during the interviews to determine exactly what the interviewees meant by political influences, a point requiring further research.

Factors Problematic for Athletes

In relation to the first sub question of the research a number of issues emerged as being problematic for athletes in relation to non-selection.

These issues will be discussed below in four major sections: (a) the notification of non-selection; (b) the athlete's initial reactions; (c) short term effects for the athlete; and (d) longer term effects identified by the athlete as being problematic.

As discussed in the review of literature there has been limited research conducted in consideration of involuntary and forced retirement from sport. The need for qualitative research to enable the athlete's views to be more fully interpreted has been highlighted by Kleiber and Brock (1992) and Allison and Meyer (1988). Research conducted by Blinde and Stratta (1992) and Hallinan and Snyder (1987) utilised qualitative methodology in considering the involuntary retirement of collegiate athletes. However, as the experience of the athletes in the studies paralleled the 'stages of death', results were presented utilising this framework (Kubler-Ross, 1970).

The experience of non-selection for athletes interviewed in this study, although difficult for the athletes, represented less intensity of reaction than informants in previous studies. Only two of the athletes interviewed in this study made a direct reference to death. For both athletes this reference was related to the difficulty experienced by other individuals in discussing non-selection and not the athlete's own emotional response. The presentation of results for this study have therefore not been presented according to any such framework but have been guided by the athlete's responses and the research questions.

Notification of Non-Selection

Three main issues emerged regarding players being notified of their non-selection. These were how the news is delivered, the lack of honesty and respect for the player and the fact that non-selection was out of the athlete's control. Each of these emergent issues is discussed in greater detail below.

Method of notification.

Several methods were used to notify players of their non-selection from their team. Table 5 summarises how athletes in this study were notified of their non-selection.

Table 5:
Method of Non-selection Notification

Method of Notification	Carol	Julie	Debra	Anne	Robert	Jim	Paul	Peter	Mandy	Beth	Tom	Adam	Sarah	Brad	Gary
In person by the coach	X							X			X				
Letter delivered by the coach		X													
Letter delivered by a selector	X														
Telephone call from the coach				X		X									X
Telephone call from a selector												X			
Telephone call from an administrator							X								
Team meeting			X											X	
End of competition public announcement	X	X		X	X				X	X			X		
In the newspaper							X		X						X
Not officially notified										X					
From team member										X			X		

Note:

Subjects may have experienced non-selection on more than one occasion.
Notification of non-selection may include more than one method.

Only three of the fifteen athletes interviewed were notified of their non-selection in person by their coach. This was done both privately and prior to any formal public announcement. Two of these athletes, Tom and Peter, were senior players in their respective teams. Tom was vice captain of his team at the time of non-selection. The third athlete informed in person by the coach, Carol, happened to walk by the coaches' office at an opportune time for the coach to pass on the decision. One athlete, Beth, was not formally notified of her non-selection by her sporting association. Beth learnt of her non-selection via a letter of congratulations sent to a fellow player. This letter contained a list of team members.

It must be noted that on some occasions team selection was made at a time out of the regular playing season. Due to geographical location in Australia some athletes could not be informed of their non-selection in person.

Lack of player respect.

Two thirds of the athletes interviewed referred to the lack of respect given to players by coaches and sporting organisations. Specifically, athletes cited the lack of honesty in being able to provide an explanation to the player for their non-selection. "If they could give you an answer or a specific reason it would be much easier to handle but they don't tell you the truth, they tell you that it's for this reason and it's just political reasons anyway"

(Carol). Jim believed that no explanation was provided to players because "they never have in the past ...if you want to ring up the selectors and ask why then you do". Similarly to Carol, Jim believed that "they're never going to tell you the real reason anyway, they'll say something just to put your mind at ease rather than tell you the truth the real reason why they dropped you". One of the greatest disappointments for Paul was that nothing was said, "I would have thought that they may have said the exact - come up and had the heart basically to give you a reason".

Providing a reason as to why an athlete was not selected for a sporting team may be a difficult task for sporting officials. Team selection unlike many individual sports is not usually reliant on specific measurable quantities such as timed performances. Selection then may be based on a number of factors relative to both the individual's performance within the team and the team's performances as a whole. In this respect sporting officials may not be able to provide a specific reason for non-selection.

The lack of respect for players in sport was further highlighted by the manner in which Robert, a former national captain, was treated when excluded from the team. Discussions had been held by team members stating that they wished to be told by the coach, prior to any public announcement, if they were to be dropped from the team. Robert was forced to listen for his name to be read out at the conclusion of a major tournament. He was not personally informed of his non-selection as he

was a squad member and not in the previous touring team. Robert was particularly critical of this treatment saying "I thought that if you'd been in the side for 13 years at least they could have had the courtesy to let you know you weren't in it and not put you through the agony of waiting and listening for your name".

Out of athlete's control.

Eight athletes discussed the lack of personal control they had in relation to being dropped from their sporting team. Mandy was particularly disappointed at her exclusion from the team and saw no avenue for appeal to the decision that was made:

Having come off such a good tour before I felt I'd really done nothing wrong. My performances quite clearly in all sorts of matches, one day and the test matches, were really quite outstanding in comparison to the other bowlers. I just felt that I hadn't done enough bad performances to warrant being dropped.

Comments made by Sarah further highlighted the feeling that athletes had no control over the situation of non-selection. "I felt like I was part of the team I guess and then I'm thrown out of it and there's nothing in your control that you can do about it, I think that's the hardest thing to cope with because there's nothing you can do".

Athletes' Initial Reactions

In addition to the players' emotional response to the news of non-selection two other characteristics became evident throughout the interviews. There was a need for initial isolation from others and a strong feeling of personal humiliation and embarrassment by the player.

Emotional response.

Athletes described a range of emotional responses to their non-selection from that of devastation and heartbreak through to shock and disbelief.

I was just devastated. Pretty devastated. I couldn't think that whole night, it was so [laugh] - I don't know whether to cry now after so long - but yeah the whole night I was just totally devastated ... I kept going around from one person to the next crying and laughing but crying but [laugh] just spent the whole night in tears but laughing tears. (Sarah)

I think I was pretty shocked for quite a while, I can't remember my exact feelings, probably got something to do with the amount of beers that I had that night I guess but, oh yeah, I was shocked for weeks, weeks. (Paul)

Oh disbelief I suppose because I sort of thought I knew where I was going and suddenly I wasn't, yeah I felt numb [pause] I cried I suppose I was really sad about it. (Anne)

Denial of the non-selection or bargaining with the officials although not common among athletes was apparent for Peter and Brad. Peter described his reaction to the non-selection as "disappointment [long pause] a degree

of the unbelievable, a degree of well hold on don't make that decision now I'll promise that if I do this will you select me type stuff". Brad's reaction was "I just bit my tongue and just thought well surely he's made a mistake or my name was called out and I missed it which I doubted".

The need for initial isolation.

Five of the female athletes described how they wanted to disappear after they had been dropped from the team. This may be associated with the fact that several of these athletes learnt of their non-selection during a public announcement at the conclusion of a tournament. As the tournament may have been played away from the athlete's home state the athlete may be forced to contend with communal living and communal travel prior to returning to their home. "All I wanted to do was sit in the bus and cry, put my bag in the bus and disappear. I didn't want to see anyone or be seen or have anyone pat me on the shoulder or the head" (Anne). For Carol the difficulty was having to go out on the field for the closing ceremony after having received a letter notifying her of non-selection for the Australian team.

Personal humiliation and embarrassment.

Closely linked to the need for initial isolation from others was the personal humiliation and embarrassment that players experienced on being informed of their non-selection.

The thing with it [non-selection] when that happens to you, you honestly feel like everyone is looking at you like you really feel like everyone is talking about you not being selected and it's probably not the case ... but it makes you feel worse. (Debra)

Similarly Carol felt "stupid, I felt stupid. I felt like an idiot and I thought that other people would think that I was an idiot".

Alternatively a common reaction to this situation was for the player to show courage, to show that they had not been adversely effected by the decision. "I thought no I'm worth more than that, get up stand up and be counted I suppose ...I was determined in some way not to let that affect my self worth personally" (Anne).

Short Term Effects for the Athlete

During the initial days after being subject to non-selection from a team athletes in this study experienced a number of similar problems. These problems included: (a) a lack of further communication from the sporting association; (b) insignificance to the former team; (c) an inability to explain the non-selection decision; (d) avoidance of the issue; and (e) a lack of

support for the athlete. These difficulties are presented in the order of importance as indicated by the frequency of their responses.

Lack of further communication.

Once the team selection had been completed and players became aware of their non-selection, very little effort was made by the coach or sporting association to contact the athletes who were no longer part of the team. As Julie suggested "It's, 'ra ra' for the people who get there and, 'oh well' for the people who don't". Although as mentioned previously, many athletes felt the need for initial isolation, communication from the coach or sporting association may be more appropriate at a later time. This may be more conducive to all concerned if done one or two days after non-selection.

To this day [seven years later] I've never had a thank you for representing Australia from anyone like nothing ... they [the association] use you as the product that they want to market and when they finish with you they dump you out on a scrap heap. (Beth)

"You're just another number basically ... once your career is finished or if you're injured you can't play anymore, you're just thrown on the meat rack" (Adam). This lack of communication with players after non-selection was particularly difficult for the more senior team members who had previously been involved with team selection and team strategies.

You go from being one of the selectors ... getting asked and putting all your two bobs worth in and then bang you get dropped and then that's it and ... you could sort of die, you could walk off the face of the earth and no one [would know].

(Tom)

Insignificance to the former team.

In the process of being dropped from a team athletes suddenly changed in the eyes of former team mates. Nine of the athletes interviewed felt that they were relegated to a minor or inferior status and were no longer part of the former group. Beth described the feeling as being like "you'd died, they wouldn't acknowledge you or talk to you they were suddenly these people who were high and mighty and you're just a state player now". Gary experienced a similar reaction by former team members. "You know that they have lost some sort of respect for you for sure, especially the young kids - I'm an Australian player and you're not". This attitude of superiority was not necessarily exhibited by all former team members.

It is believed that this type of reaction by former team mates was related to the lack of knowledge and understanding of the issues of non-selection. There may be a need for team management and sport psychologists to consider the implications of non-selection not only for the non-selected athlete but also for athletes who remain in the team.

Inability to explain non-selection.

A cause of frustration and annoyance to many of the athletes was the inability to explain to others the reason for exclusion from the team. The lack of a valid explanation lead to assumptions and insinuations of misbehaviour or wrong doing as being the cause of non-selection. Gary and Jim commented that they became abrupt and terse in their efforts to answer people's questions. Neither athlete was able to offer a valid explanation and efforts to suggest a reason became monotonous. This led to a typical response of "I don't know. I have no idea. Leave me alone" (Gary).

Avoidance of the issue.

Nine athletes described how other people avoided discussing the topic of non-selection. These people were identified as ranging from the selectors and coach through to former team mates, general family and friends. Embarrassment and not knowing what to say was a strong basis for people to avoid discussing the issue of non-selection with the athlete. Peter indicated that people who knew him or knew the sport were able to talk about his non-selection and viewed it as a being a "crazy decision". "People who weren't so close to you tended to say nothing to avoid embarrassment [pause] and many of the administrative type people did

the same. They didn't have any courage really" (Peter). Julie also described how people outside of the sporting environment avoided discussing her non-selection:

People outside of hockey chose to avoid it, the relatives [relatives] and the work people [they] don't know what to say. It's like when someone dies I think or when someone finds out they've got a terminal illness. You can't compare, there's no comparison but they don't know what to say so they don't say anything they just look at you and just sort of look away ... to avoid saying anything.

In some instances avoidance of the issue of non-selection was forced on the athlete even if that athlete did wish to discuss the subject. Debra described how she felt that she could not talk about having been dropped from the team, in particular to her former team mates, as "it was like sour grapes".

Lack of Support for the athlete.

A difficulty faced by many of the athletes interviewed was the lack of support from their former team mates, coaches and the sporting organisation as a whole. Although related to a lack of understanding and knowledge of non-selection, athletes were left to fend for themselves and cope with the situation as best they could.

There was no methodology of coping with that sort of situation [being dropped]. It was basically left to your own devices as to how you were going to cope with that and what you were going to do. The way you were going to plan if in actual fact you wanted to stay involved.
(Peter)

Although eight of the fifteen athletes interviewed in this study had access to a sport psychologist with their team, only three athletes had any dealings with this person in regards to non-selection. Julie, Gary and Adam were critical of the inability of the team psychologist to help them in coping with non-selection. Both Julie and Gary were approached by their respective sport psychologist:

He [the sport psychologist] came in and said some really stupid comment like, 'I know how you feel'. I said, 'how would you know how I feel, you've never been a top athlete, you have no idea how I feel'. He just did the quickest about turn and bolt that you've ever seen and never spoke to me again". (Julie)

The only athlete to approach a sport psychologist after non-selection was Adam. He found the sport psychologist to be of little assistance. "I actually rang him on the night [of non-selection]. I didn't get much sense from him at all. I was probably fairly emotional at that time, but he certainly didn't ring back which I found very disappointing".

Two athletes in the study discussed how they had been supported by members of their state sporting association. However, this support had been instigated without the player's knowledge or authority. Gary felt good that someone had showed concern and had wanted to approach the Australian team management regarding his non-selection in the team. The support for Gary was via telephone contact made by a club coach and an administrator from his sport. Conversely, Mandy, was supported by her state sporting association by way of a letter to the Australian

association. To Mandy's knowledge a response to the letter was never received by the state association. In response to this letter being sent Mandy commented:

In hindsight if I had of continued to play and press for national selection that may have gone as a disadvantage. I'm not sure how clever it was in doing that [sending the letter] even though I think their reason was to try and support me.

Longer Term Effects for the Athlete

Following the initial short term effects experienced by athletes in response to non-selection several issues emerged as being problematic for the athlete in the longer term. These issues were: (a) desire of an explanation for non-selection; (b) an attachment to the subsequent sporting event; (c) the need for an emotional outlet; (d) inability to reach goals; and (e) parental attachment to the athlete's status. Each of these issues are discussed in greater detail below, presented in the order of importance as signified by the interviewees' responses.

Desire of an explanation for non-selection.

Although the majority of athletes interviewed in this study have progressed on with their life after non-selection, there remains a desire to know the reasons behind why they were excluded from their sporting

team. For an athlete such as Gary, who achieved his goal in sport two years prior to non-selection, there was no resentment to anybody but "I just wish he'd [the coach] let me know what the hell went on but that's about it". Gary was excluded from an Australian team four years ago. Anne who missed Australian team selection ten years prior to the interviews had not really thought about why she was not told the reason for non-selection, but would "still like to know".

Athletes recognised that the coaches or sporting association may not view non-selection as being a difficult time in the athlete's future life. "I'm sure that if it was brought up today [the events of non-selection] he'd [the coach] probably go oh yeah right not thinking about it whereas it's something that every time I see him I think about" (Brad).

Attachment to the sporting event.

Additional problems were evident for several athletes who held an attachment to the event for which they had been excluded in the process of non-selection. Julie discussed her physical reactions when watching her former team mates perform at the Olympic Games. Although television coverage of the event was during the early hours of the morning Julie had on other occasions stayed up or woke during the night to watch the Australian men's team. Watching her former team mates compete Julie described:

When the girls came on [for] the first game they played [of the Olympic tournament] I sat up and watched. I ended up taking my pulse at about 160 [beats per minute] half way through the game. I figured that physically it wasn't doing me any good so I went to bed and then the rest of the games I couldn't watch.

For Tom his disappointment of non-selection was greatest one week afterwards when his former team mates were playing and he was forced to watch from the sidelines.

Attachment to the sporting event also became evident when several athletes indicated that they held secret desires for their former team to lose the game or tournament to be played. A loss for the former team allowed non-selected athletes to believe that had they been in the team then the result would have been different. This result also meant that the athlete did not miss out on the long term recognition of being in the winning team had the team in fact won. For Gary and Julie the fact that their former team did not achieve success at the tournament for which they were dropped was a positive outcome.

I shouldn't say this but I felt good that Australia didn't do that well. Deep down inside I was cheering them and hoping that they would win games. 'Cause they didn't do well ... it looked better for me ... that [the national coach] made the wrong decision by not having me there. (Gary)

When ... they [the former team] missed out on getting to the finals ... that helped a lot in recovering. If they'd come back with a medal, I think that would've made it harder to cope. Then you could say well maybe the selectors were correct and you shouldn't have gone. That was the best team because they did so well and got a medal. (Julie)

Paul was faced with the opposite outcome when his former team won a world cup event. He was disappointed in not being part of the team but also commented that "you think about it [being dropped] down the track and think well maybe they did the right thing, they've won the world cup ... after that I didn't really worry too much about it".

An attachment to the sporting event was also depicted by Gary. He was subject to non-selection from an Australian team two months prior to a World Championship event. At the conclusion of the World Championships Gary was able to move on from his sport and put his energies into furthering his work place career.

The need for an emotional outlet

Those athletes who were able to discuss their non-selection with an understanding partner or knowledgeable person were provided with a valuable emotional outlet. "Yeah [partner] was always pretty helpful, in fact really helpful. That's probably why I didn't talk to a lot of other people because I talked to [partner] about things. So yeah she was great" (Paul). I suppose I'm lucky that he's [partner] a hockey player and he could understand. I always had his support and he was ready to be there for me (Anne).

Several other players, now able to reflect on their experience of non-selection, believed that the opportunity of speaking to someone in

detail may have been of assistance at the time. Sarah, who had never really spoken at length about her non-selection, suggested that "maybe that's why I kept getting upset for so long 'cause I didn't really talk to anybody about it properly". Adam also acknowledged:

It would have been tremendous to be able to speak to someone a professional person ... not just [someone] that can guide you in certain ways but just to talk, to get it off your chest and I certainly would have appreciated the opportunity.

Inability to reach goals.

Six of the athletes interviewed identified the inability to reach their desired goal as being a long term effect of non-selection. This factor also related to the selection decision being out of the athlete's control. For Beth, not being able to reach her goal, one that had been instigated by the sporting association, was particularly frustrating and a source of anger:

I think I'll be eternally frustrated and angry that I wasn't given the opportunity to achieve my goals of what they [the association] had set up for me. They were the ones who appointed me under 23 and under 25 captain and said 'we're grooming you as the next Australian captain'.

Denial of the chance to ever know how good she could have been was a negative effect for Mandy:

I guess on the negative side of it or the down side of not being selected is that I would have missed out on really I think being able to have the chance to see how good I could have become. How much potential I could have reached playing at an international level. I guess that's an effect that I'll never know.

Brad still finds it hard to accept that his goal to achieve a national gold medal was “messed up” by the coach. Brad still competes at the state level in pursuit of his goal to win a national title.

Parental attachment to the athlete’s status.

The effects of non-selection were not always limited to the individual athlete. The athlete’s status as an elite sports person was also harboured by the interviewee’s parents. Peter described that the implication of the non-selection for his parents was to some extent also embarrassing for them. “If your son is a national athlete and then all of a sudden to be out is a problem. They have their own social problems that come from that and all the commentary that occurs” (Peter). The extent of the effects of non-selection on the athlete’s immediate family and/or partner cannot be adequately determined by this study.

Positive Outcomes of Non-Selection

The second sub question attempted to identify what factors relating to non-selection were non-problematic for the athlete. Although this question was addressed throughout the interviews, athletes diverted in their responses to discuss issues that were an outcome of the non-

selection. Despite the interviewer following up the initial question with probes to re-direct attention to non-problematic factors, interviewees continued to take the direction of discussing positive outcomes in relation to their non-selection. As stated by Patton (1990, p. 290) "The fundamental principle of qualitative interviewing is to provide a framework within which respondents can express *their own* understandings in their own terms". In allowing interviewees to discuss their perceived positive outcomes seven major issues emerged. These were: (a) support for the athlete; (b) club level participation; (c) maintenance of fitness and appearance; (d) directional/focal change; (e) education in sport/life experiences; (f) social freedom; and (g) emotional maturity. Specific characteristics of each of these issue are described in the following sections.

Support for the Athlete

Although, as discussed in the previous section, there was a lack of athlete support from former team mates, coaches and the sporting organisation as a whole, there was support provided to the athlete from other areas.

Just over half of the athletes in the study discussed the support provided by their respective families. Although at times some family members may not have fully understood the impact of non-selection, their concern was a major source of assistance for the athlete. Debra

described how being dropped during a tournament played in her home state allowed her to be supported by her family. "I really got support outside, I didn't get support from the team. I phoned friends ...and family and I'm probably lucky I was here. They were my support rather than the team". Anne and Adam both described how, although already close, they became closer to their family and partner respectively after their non-selection occurred. "I think he [athlete's husband] was really disappointed ...we became closer because you talk about your hurt and things like that. We're fairly close anyway" (Anne).

From the sporting environment athletes were appreciative and in some instances surprised to receive support from players knowledgeable in the sport and from public supporters.

I felt good about someone like [Olympic team member] saying 'well you're the one throwing the passes and doing all that sort of stuff'. The know [knowledgeable] hockey players recognising that it was, what I thought, a poor selection decision. (Anne)

Public support was brilliant, even right up till today. People will say 'you can get back there, they need you back in there'. It's always nice to think that people think that you can [get back into the team]. (Tom)

Carol described how she received support from people involved with her state team after she had been dropped from the Australian team following a major tournament. "People would send me cards. Somebody brought me a flower home ...parents of some of the girls who had been in the team [state team] sent me cards and things". Julie experienced similar

support from the public:

I got a lot of letters from people and cards from people that I didn't even really know ... just talking about how they had followed my career and come and watch[ed] me play and were really disappointed. So that was quite interesting.

Several athletes also described how their club team had been very supportive following their non-selection.

I received tremendous support from my local club. I was playing at [club] at that stage and they were very supportive. My previous club phoned and offered their support, so from the grass roots level it was tremendous [pause] they offered a great amount of support. (Adam)

Oh well, my club, we were a very close team and a very close club so they were magnificent. Lots of phone calls and ... just general comments and everything. They were really supportive. (Anne)

Club Level Participation

Although many of the athletes interviewed experienced an amount of emotional tension and difficulty in adjusting to their non-selection, participation at a club level was not compromised. Table 6 provides a summary of the participation level of the athletes interviewed. The highest level of participation is shown for each athlete both at the time of non-selection and their present level of sport participation.

Table 6:
Athlete's level of sport participation

Subject	Level of participation at time of non-selection	Present level of sport participation *
Carol	Australian Team	Club
Julie	Australian Squad	Club
Debra	State Team	Retired
Anne	Australian Squad	Club
Robert	Australian Squad	Retired
Jim	Australian Team	Australian Team (a)
Paul	Australian Team	Club
Peter	Australian Team	Retired
Mandy	Australian Team	Club (New Sport)
Beth	Australian Team	Club
Tom	Australian Team	Club
Adam	State Team	Club
Sarah	Australian Team	Club
Brad	State Team	State Team (a)
Gary	Australian Team	State Team

* Highest level of present participation

(a) Athlete gained re-selection to previous level of participation

A number of athletes discussed the fun and enjoyment that was associated with participation at a club level in their sport.

I still always played club hockey 'cause that was another thing. I loved hockey and probably, not probably, most of all club hockey. I just didn't want to stop playing club hockey because ... you've got your choice of who you want to play with and what you do. If you don't enjoy club hockey then you shouldn't really be doing it basically. (Paul)

I didn't think of giving up hockey altogether. I really enjoyed club level and I had played with the team for a long time. I enjoyed the coach and I had great team to play with. I didn't think of giving up on that level ... I thought I'd never stand for state again. (Debra)

Debra further elaborated:

Playing at club level didn't mean I was involved with any of that [events of non-selection]. I didn't have to be involved with those people [people involved with non-selection] so I felt like I could cope with that but there was no way I wanted to [retire] 'cause I really loved playing.

The sense of fun and enjoyment that was experienced from playing at a club level was typified by Julie, "Club is there to play as long as you can so club's great, it's good fun".

Additional benefits of club participation were discussed by both Anne and Adam. Adam described the club situation as being a social occasion where his entire family could be involved. He further believed that this social atmosphere was a "good bonding thing" for his wife, children and parents. Anne viewed her sport as being a "nerve centre" for both herself and her husband, "that's where our memories were".

The athlete's progression in sport from the level of participation at

the time of non-selection through to the present level of participation was briefly examined. This progression has been depicted in Figure 2 demonstrating the general trend for athletes in this study.

H and \diamond = Highest Level
 I and \bullet = Intermediate Level
 L and \square = Lowest Level
 R and \blacksquare = Retired

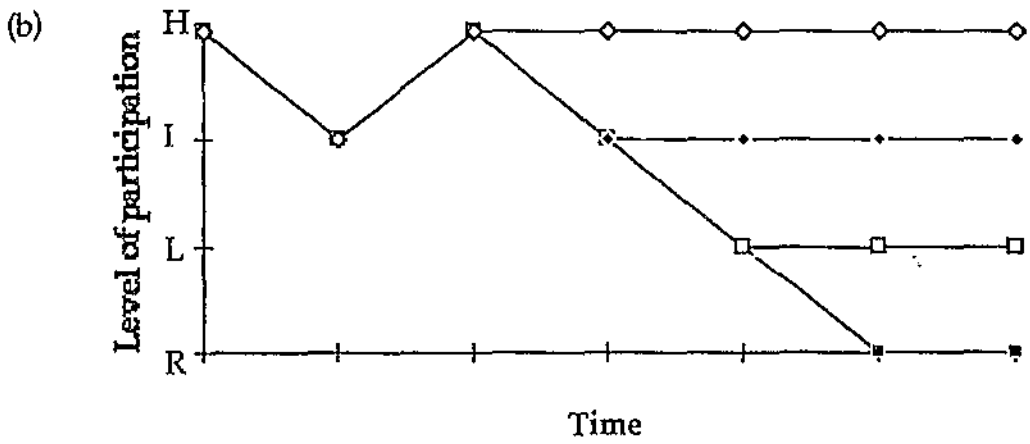
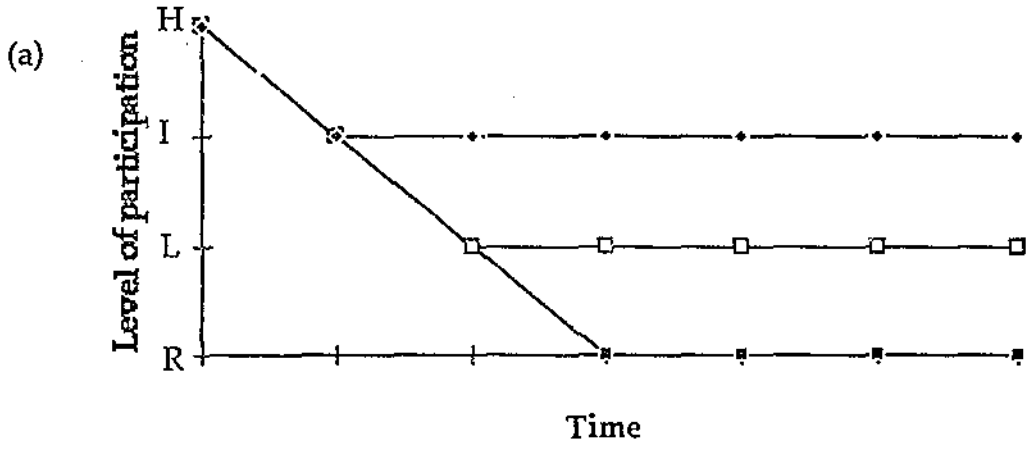


Figure 2: Athlete participation post non-selection

Miles and Huberman (1984, p. 79) suggested that a display being “a format that presents information systematically to the user” is a valuable tool in presenting research findings. Miles and Huberman further suggested that displays “present information in a compressed, ordered form, so that the user can draw valid conclusions”.

In generating the display presented in Figure 2 individual patterns were constructed for each athlete and then superimposed using the athlete’s highest and lowest levels of participation rather than specific team or squad selection. Two patterns emerged. Figure 2a representing those athletes (nine) who progressively participated in a lower level of their sport without gaining re-selection and Figure 2b representing those athletes (six) who gained re-selection following their non-selection. There are individual variations but the overall graphic representation shows the level of participation on the vertical axis and time following non-selection on the horizontal axis. The labels allocated to the vertical axis, that is H, I, L, and R, represent the participation level as highest, intermediate, lowest and retired respectively. As the horizontal axis is a conceptualisation rather than a specific reference to time labels have not been included.

Figure 2a shows how athletes after non-selection may remain participating at the next lowest level or progressively lower their participation level through to retirement from the sport. Not all athletes in this study have reached the level of retirement. Figure 2b shows

athletes who have gained re-selection and been reinstated to their former team. Following this re-selection the athlete may continue participating at the highest level or progressively lower than their previous participation as shown.

Of the 15 athletes interviewed in this study only four (Debra, Robert, Peter and Mandy) are now retired from the sport in which they experienced non-selection. Robert and Peter, both at the latter stage of their sporting career when non-selection occurred, had pre-planned their retirement. At present both Robert and Peter are casual sport participants. Debra and Mandy, aged 23 and 24 respectively at the time of non-selection considered themselves in the early stages of their sporting career. Debra, who gained re-selection to the former level of participation, progressively participated at the lower level and then retired from the sport. Debra now participates as a casual sport participant. Mandy, who was subject to non-selection in the early stages of a sporting season, completed the season at a lower level of participation and then retired from the sport. Mandy now participates at a club level in a new sport.

Maintenance of Fitness and Appearance

Two thirds of the athletes interviewed referred to the maintenance of their physical activity since non-selection occurred.

I still always generally like to keep myself fit and active. I enjoyed running and I never really stopped ... doing that as far as I can remember. I think it's good just in life to keep yourself in that situation anyway. (Mandy)

"You've got to have a pride in your fitness and your appearance and whatever. I still try and maintain that [fitness] (Adam). I've often trained by myself ...that's sort of just continued, perhaps not at exactly the same intensity. I'm still happy to go out and run by myself and swim and cycle by myself (Robert).

Directional/Focal Change

Ten of the athletes interviewed non-selection meant that a change of focus or a new direction was required. This change was evidenced in areas such as employment or career direction and sporting participation. Carol decided "I wanted to study so that I would have another direction in life which would take me away and give me time away completely from hockey". Mandy changed sports, "I took up golf seriously fairly soon after that cricket season had ended ...I just switched to another sport and that was a new challenge". Anne described how that once non-selection had occurred she thought, "oh well, that's the way they play it, I'll reset my goals and just get on with what I was going to do". In relation to work performance, Anne, a teacher, believed that her work performance was affected more by being in the Australian team than being out of the team:

I was training before and after school, not really having much time to do much lesson preparation. I was just turning up and working. Turning up eating two rounds of baked bean sandwiches for breakfast before I started work. I think I probably was a better teacher afterwards because I had more time basically.

Furthering his work career was important to Gary:

I put my mind, [focused] my direction on my career definitely. I said right, [water] polo's over, travelling nationally and that [is over]. I'll work on my career now. From that time [four years ago] to now, I'm now the state manager.

Education in Sport/Life Experiences

Two thirds of athletes interviewed referred to non-selection as being an educational benefit both in terms of sport and general life experiences. Jim thought that non-selection "taught me that hockey is not everything. That you've got to have something outside of hockey ...get a job, get something behind you". Similarly Carol believed that not being selected helped in a lot of ways:

It [non-selection] taught me to be a much better hockey player. It taught me what it's really about to play sport and I had to reassess the reasons why I was playing ... I've learnt a lot more about myself since that event. I've reassessed my life and I've reassessed what I want to get out of the sport.

Both Julie and Peter described how non-selection had impacted on their future outlook of life and life's experiences.

It [non-selection] was a really big eye-opener into how things happen in terms of work and just everything in life. Now if people want to make decisions, I'm really for [the situation

where] you to have to take the consequences if your decision is wrong. That never entered my mind before so that's something I really strongly believe in [now]. (Julie)

To do with life and life skills I think it [non-selection] in combination with a few other things has probably made me more able to cope with any negative experience. (Peter)

Peter, who was able to gain re-selection in the Australian team, felt that “no one really suffered apart from a little bit of pride from my point of view ...the experience of humility was probably not so bad. I think a few other people could go through it [non-selection] quite honestly”.

Social Freedom

Approximately half of the athletes made use of the extra time they had in their life after non-selection occurred. Several athletes discussed the reduction in training commitment that was required and the greater opportunity that arose for pursuing other interests both in sport and outside of the sporting environment.

In summer I'll just go out running and I love it, there's no time schedules. Someone's not standing at the end of the line with a stop clock. It doesn't matter if one day you plod around 5 kms and another day you bolt 10 [kms]. It's just relaxing and it's enjoyable. (Beth)

I had an opportunity to do other things that I hadn't been able to do ... recreational pursuits, whether it was surfing or wind surfing or playing golf. From that point of view I was able to spend more time with my family which made it a plus. (Robert)

Probably it's [non-selection] been a good thing in some ways. I just have been able to spend more time doing things that I didn't have time for before. Maybe taking a few TAFE courses just for enjoyment ... I've played golf and I really enjoy that. I've been able to get better at that and I find that great fun. (Mandy)

Emotional Maturity

Six of the athletes in the group studied believed that their experiences of non-selection had assisted in them becoming tougher and more mature emotionally. Jim commented that he thought he was, “probably more confident now, more confident in my ability for my work and my job. I think I’m a little more wiser and experienced because of what happened”.

Similarly both Anne and Sarah became stronger:

I think it [non-selection] made me probably a stronger person. At some stage in every ones life you have to realise that a goal that you set out to achieve may be unachievable ... I suppose it made me wiser [pause] emotionally I suppose stronger [pause] a bit harder as well. (Anne)

Athlete Recommendations

The third sub question required the interviewees to make recommendations that they believed may assist athletes, sporting institutions, administrators, coaches, selectors and significant others in dealing with issues of non-selection in the future. Five major areas were identified by the interviewees as deserving particular attention when dealing with the non-selection of athletes.

Issues identified were: (a) the need for professionalism and respect in dealing with the athlete; (b) non-selection as an area for concern in

sport; (c) availability of professional assistance to athletes subject to non-selection; (d) the importance of the player as a basis for any sport; and (e) professionalism in selection procedures. Each of the recommendations put forward by athletes in the study are addressed in the order as presented above.

Professionalism and Respect

The need for a professional approach and consideration of the players in sport was a major concern for all athletes interviewed. As many sporting teams now compete throughout the year, athletes deserve respect and fair treatment for their efforts. This increased professionalism should also be expected of administrators and other management staff involved with sporting groups. As outlined by Julie "there's too much money in sport now and [there is] too much at cost, at stake, for people not to be prepared to bow out if they've made errors". In relation to selections Robert believed:

You have to consider their [the athlete's] feelings in the selection process. They're not inanimate objects that you can push around and sort of tamper with their lives. I think that their feelings have to be considered more than what they are [at present].

When dealing with players subject to non-selection Anne felt "someone has to take responsibility and look after the players that are in a squad and say, give them reasons why they're not [in the team] ... someone has got to

take responsibility”.

Confidentiality of selection decisions must be adhered, particularly if the selection is controversial or major changes have been instigated.

If someone's been in the team for like ... X amount of years and all of a sudden everyone else knows that they're going to be dropped except that person that's being dropped, now how that gets out I'll never know. (Debra)

Honesty in dealing with players not selected was a major concern for the athletes interviewed. This was frequently referred to along with the inability of officials to speak face to face with the athlete regarding selection decisions. While the athletes interviewed appear to perceive the officials as being mean and heartless people, further research is needed to ascertain the extent to which this may be an accurate perception.

Non-Selection as an Area for Concern

Eleven of the fifteen athletes interviewed discussed the need for a greater understanding of the effect and impact of non-selection on players. Two specific areas of concern were highlighted. Firstly, non-selection must be recognised by players, coaches, selectors and administrators as an area of concern. Secondly, a greater understanding is required as to the impact and effect of non-selection on the player.

Carol suggested that non-selection was seen as an inferior form of exclusion from sport. A similar viewpoint was depicted by Peter who

commented:

I think they [the sporting organisation] need to devise very carefully the methodology that they use to go about those processes [non-selection]. Certainly it is just another selection, but in actual fact it's a huge part of people's lives and it needs to be attended to in a fairly delicate way.

Peter further added that non-selection was:

Not something that is seen as a priority by administrators. Quite honestly they don't have any idea and they're not interested in finding out. They just don't care about it because it doesn't affect their own little world and that's a bit of a shame. I'm sure that the implications of these things are not understood well enough by people.

Anne believed that sporting organisations are basically ignorant and "have no idea of the impact they have on people's lives and ...no idea of the commitment people make to a sport". Similarly Jim expressed concern when he commented, "I just don't think sporting associations realise how much of a kick in the pants it is for someone to be dropped".

Interviewees also addressed the need for all athletes involved in sport to be provided with information regarding non-selection. Paul, Julie and Adam, acknowledged the need for this information to be given to juniors as they enter the sporting arena:

When you play any sort of sport at the highest level then if you're not picked then you might have done everything right and you think that you're better ... at a young age you've got to be taught that or certainly mentioned to you that you might have to wear some decisions that you don't agree with". (Paul)

The long term effect to players in coping with or accepting being dropped from a team was depicted by Brad. He was subject to non-selection seven years ago:

It's still something that I keep inside of me, it's like a skeleton in the closet ... it's just something that keeps bobbing up in my head. Whenever this coach ... is mentioned I just - the hair on the back of my neck stands up and makes me want to excel a bit more. (Brad)

Non-selection may be a great disappointment to the player who has invested a large amount of time in preparing to be an elite sports person. As Tom described "you don't prepare yourself for that one day, one day in your life that some bloke's going to come along and say 'sorry pal we'll see you later', and that's a big fall".

Professional Assistance

The need for players to be provided with professional assistance following non-selection was highlighted by over half of the athletes interviewed. It was further emphasised that this assistance be a longer term commitment to the athlete rather than just a one off situation.

The assistance of a sport psychologist or counsellor was recommended by several athletes interviewed particularly for when athletes are dropped prior to the larger sporting events such as a World Cup or Olympic Games.

They could look at having actually someone who can speak to people or contact people who could need a bit of help even if it's coping with retirement, coping with injury, coping with getting dropped especially for big events like World Cups and Olympics. I think there's an avenue for that certainly 'cause I mean [non-selection] had a big effect on a good year and a half of my life.

(Julie)

Adam emphasised that any professional assistance must involve the right person who is able to deal with a variety of issues from emotional difficulties to the player's future involvement in the sport. "Life can be a very complex thing and I think the easier we can bring people down the better they are going to be in the long term". Robert also viewed that counselling was an important aspect in dealing with non-selected athletes and believed that this must begin with the coach. Therefore the role of the coach in sporting teams may need to encompass a number of aspects beyond pure skills training. In particular consideration of the athlete's occupation outside of sport may ensure that they have other interests to fall back on in the event of non-selection.

Several interviewees put forward that some type of policy should be established in dealing with players subject to non-selection from their sport. This approach also identified the need for ongoing support beyond the coach or manager's responsibility:

I would definitely say they should implement a plan by which people are formally debriefed if they are non-selected ... perhaps join a group whereby they are managed, they are given professional counselling in how to handle it [non-selection] and continual contact with that in coming days, weeks, months as long as it takes for them to get over it [the non-selection]. (Carol)

The process [of informing players] is incredibly inconsistent ... I think they should have, develop a process by which they inform them and so that's got to be the selectors and the board getting together and working out the best ways. (Beth)

Peter and Adam added that there may even be a need for government assistance for the elite athlete:

I think there becomes a time when it's no longer the coach and manager's responsibility but I think it's the system ... if it's a national athlete then the government need to be responsible, quite frankly they need to make sure that these people are re-established into the society with the least possible problem. (Peter)

Importance of the Player to the Sport

A strong issues raised by many of the athletes interviewed related to the political influences in their sport. Athletes considered that player concerns were often not considered in decision making.

I hate politics in sport ... I think they [people running the sport] make a lot of decisions that are wrong and they make a lot of decisions for a lot of reasons not for the players ... I know and have experienced them in hockey and [am] still experiencing bad decisions that they don't think about the players. (Paul)

Athletes who are subject to non-selection may be left with bitterness and resentment to their sport if treated badly or not assisted at this critical time in their career. As Peter suggested, "harbouring the bitterness that they [the players] have is really sad". This bitterness may in some instances be extended to include other team members and could be influential in those

players considering leaving the sport. The greatest loss then may be to the sport itself.

If you suddenly lose really good players ... they dropped me as captain owing to political reasons. From that team, that year, I think there was something like five incredibly experienced players [that] just said, 'we've had enough' and walked out. Where does that leave the sport in WA? Sent it back 25 years without a doubt. (Beth)

This view was also supported by Anne who stated "people will opt out because they don't want to be controlled in such a ship shod way".

Selection Procedures

Associated with the political influences in sport several athletes suggested that selection procedures and the appointment of the selectors must become more professional and ethical. Selection procedures must be clearly known to players and selectors must take responsibility for their decisions. Three athletes - Brad, Mandy and Anne - outlined the importance of having independent selectors and the inclusion of the coach on the selection panel.

Have a few more selectors ... a few more outsiders or one person from each club [to] say who they think should be in the squad or in the team ... get three or four selectors and have outsiders voting them in as well. (Brad)

The method of appointment to a selection panel was also a contentious issue as athletes believed this process must be more professional and

perhaps relate to standard work place selection methods.

They [the selectors] have to be more accountable ... when they [the administrators] select these people to put in this role they have to say [to the selectors] you are picking not only for Australia but you are prepared to step down if you make a bad error ... business people would do that ... because they know that this is at stake for me personally. (Julie)

It should be like a job. These days if you're going for a job, you have to meet the criteria ... there should be criteria set down and if you're going to apply to be a selector then you've got to meet that [criteria]. [The person chosen] can't be just someone that's got knowledge of the game. [That person needs to be] more than just a good player. (Debra)

Anne and Beth described their perception of the selectors. "The selectors were faceless people that no one ever spoke to at tournaments or the privileged few spoke to" (Anne). Beth believed the selectors needed to communicate more with the players. She described their actions during a national tournament as:

Three selectors just wandering around the whole tournament as if they're god. They don't fall and they almost bark at anyone who walks within cooee of them. It's just this ridiculous scenario that they're almost untouchable.

Application of Results to Conceptual Framework

The results of this study suggest that the conceptual framework presented in Chapter 3 provided an adequate structure for the research to be based

upon. The framework was based on the sport retirement literature and the researcher's own experiences of retirement from an elite level of sport.

Analysis of the results suggested two minor amendments to the framework. Initially the order of presentation of avenues to involuntary retirement were revised to depict involuntary retirement resulting from either ageing, non-selection or injury. Secondly factors relating to the athlete emerged as being less defined than had been presented. These factors had been adapted from a transitional model as proposed by Schlossberg (1984).

A major finding of the research was that the experience of non-selection for athletes needed to be considered in the context of the sporting organisation in which non-selection occurred. As discussed by Evertson and Green (1986) multiple levels of context must be considered in research. In particular there is a "need to account for relevant aspects of other contexts that impact on the specific context under study" (p. 166). An emergent issue for all athletes in the study was the political influences that athletes perceived as impacting on their non-selection. The factors relating to the athlete have therefore been enclosed within the sporting context, depicting the influence over the athlete's experience.

Resulting from the above modifications the linearity of the framework has remained unchanged. A revised conceptual framework is presented in Figure 4.

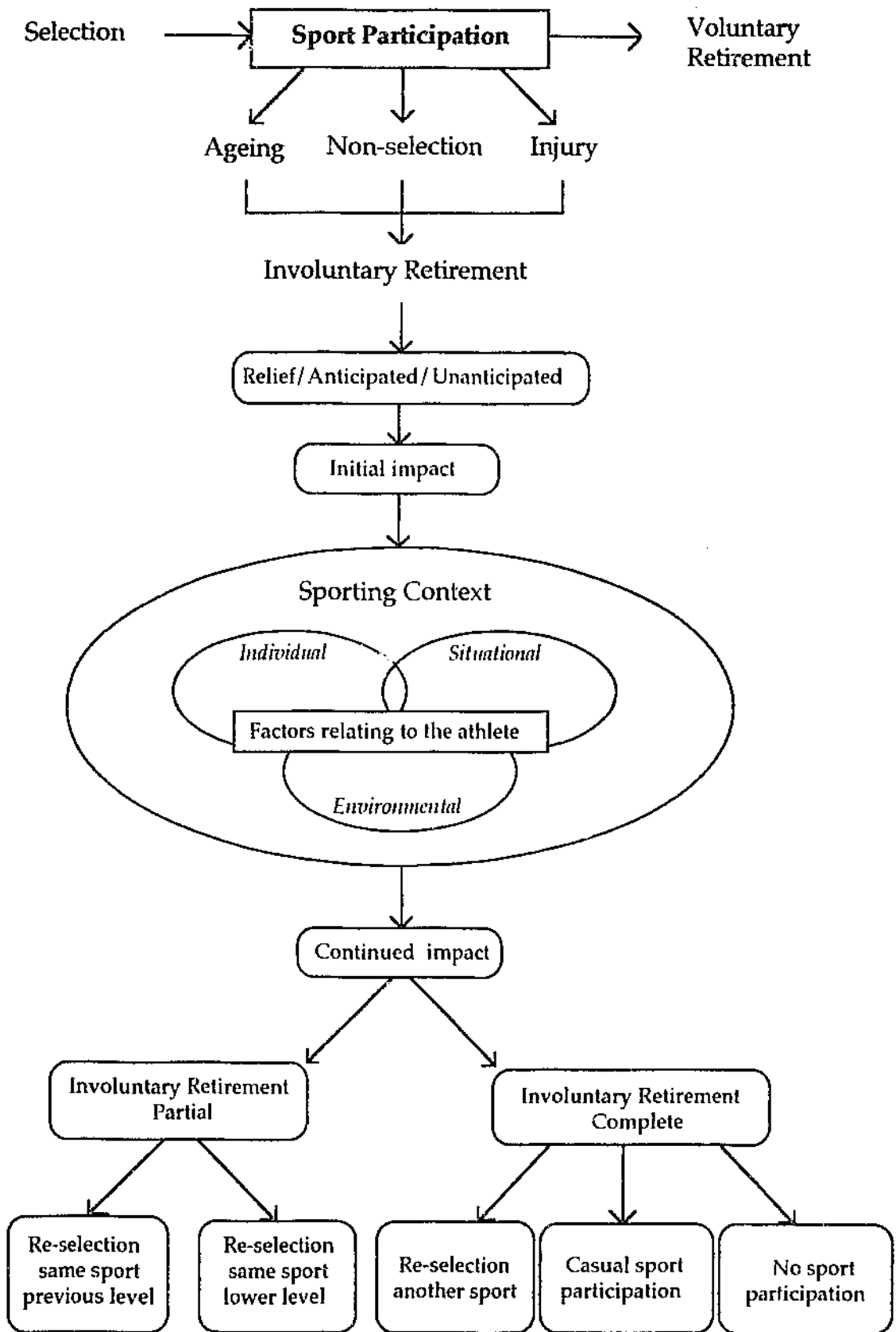


Figure 3 Revised conceptual framework relating to non-selection as a factor contributing to retirement from Australian sport.

Summary

The major research question of this study was to investigate the reactions and experiences of athletes who were subject to non-selection from their sport. Three sub questions addressed in consideration of this major research question focused on factors that were problematic for athletes, factors non-problematic for athletes and athlete recommendations to assist sporting organisations, administrators, coaches, selectors, significant others and other athletes in dealing with non-selection from Australian sport.

In relation to the major research question results from interviews with 15 athletes covered aspects of the athlete's own self expectation prior to non-selection, the events of non-selection relating specifically to the first two sub questions as discussed above and athlete recommendations.

The major findings and conclusions of the research are presented in Chapter 6. A number of recommendations for further research are also discussed.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this research was to explore, in-depth, the range of reactions and experiences of Australian athletes who were subject to non-selection from their sport.

Athletes interviewed for the study were state or national representatives in field hockey, cricket and water polo. Athletes included eight field hockey players (4 female and 4 male), four cricketers (2 female and 2 male) and three water polo players (1 female and 2 male).

The research was guided by three sub questions: (a) what factors relating to non-selection were problematic for athletes? (b) what factors relating to non-selection were non-problematic for athletes? and (c) what recommendations do non-selected athletes advance to assist sporting institutions, administrators, coaches, selectors, significant others and athletes in dealing with non-selection from Australian sport?

Major Findings and Conclusions

For many athletes participation in the study provided an opportunity to discuss their non-selection in-depth. This was something that many of the

athletes had not done previously. The most significant finding in the study was that athletes perceived their sporting associations, officials, team mates and in some instances family members as lacking a general understanding of the issues of non-selection. This factor played a major role in regard to many of the issues addressed by athletes interviewed. Further to this, the political influences in sport were a concern to all athletes and again impacted on many of the issues identified by the athletes.

In relation to the events of non-selection occurring several issues were of greatest concern to the athletes interviewed. Notification of non-selection was handled in a number of ways. Significantly personal communication with the player prior to any public announcement was limited. Athletes perceived the coaches, selectors and sporting organisations as lacking respect of the player in this situation. The suddenness of the decision also did not allow athletes to have control over the situation. The initial reaction to non-selection was typified by a range of emotions. Many athletes indicated a desire for initial isolation immediately following their non-selection. This was possibly a result of the personal humiliation and embarrassment that players experienced.

The short term effects for athletes were highlighted by the general lack of understanding of the issues of non-selection by both the sporting group and the non-sporting group. The major issues were the lack of further communication to the athlete from the sporting organisation and

the insignificance of the athlete to the former team. Athletes in the study also experienced difficulty in being unable to explain their non-selection. Two further issues related to the lack of understanding of non-selection saw people from the sporting group avoiding the topic and providing little support for the athlete subject to non-selection.

The most prominent longer term effect for athletes interviewed was the continued uncertainty as to the reasons for non-selection. Some athletes also held an attachment to the event for which they were not selected or for which they had set as their goal in the sport. For these athletes the result of the competition or event provided some self justification for non-selection. The completion of such an event also allowed a number of the athletes interviewed to 'let go' of the sport and move ahead in their lives.

Although non-selection was a difficult experience for a number of athletes in the study there were several positive outcomes. The most prominent was the support received by the athlete from sources other than the former team or sporting organisation. A knowledgeable partner and concerned family were a major source of assistance. On some occasions public support was received by the players, although this may be related to the player's status within the team or publicity surrounding the event of non-selection.

A further positive outcome of non-selection saw the athlete continue sport participation following non-selection. The enjoyment and

fun gained from participating was a major influence in players remaining in their sport, albeit at a lower club level. The opportunity of being able to progressively reduce the level of participation may be a vital avenue in adjusting to non-selection for the Australian athlete. The sense of fun and enjoyment gained from sport participation remained with a number of the athletes following their non-selection in that athletes continued to maintain their fitness and appearance.

The occurrence of non-selection also provided a stimulus for athletes to make a directional or focal change in their lives and provided an education for sporting and life experiences. The ability to move ahead was a feature of the strength of character of the player and significant emotional maturity in dealing with non-selection.

Athletes made a number of recommendations based on their experiences of non-selection. The recommendations further highlighted the need for a greater understanding in sport of the effects of non-selection, not only for the athlete concerned but for all sporting and non-sporting people who may be involved with athletes subject to non-selection. Key issues included the need for greater professionalism in areas such as player relations, selection procedures and athlete support. It was also a priority that information should be provided to all athletes at all levels regarding non-selection from sport.

As a result of in-depth interviews with state and national athletes, the reactions and experiences of those athletes have contributed to a

greater understanding of important issues relative to the non-selection process.

Recommendations for Further Research

Athletes interviewed in this study made a number of recommendations which they believed may assist sporting organisations in dealing with issues of non-selection in the future. These recommendations were discussed at length in Chapter 5. The following recommendations focus specifically on non-selection and are posed as questions for further investigation.

1. Do athletes participating at the highest club level, that is 'A grade' or 'first grade', experience similar reactions to non-selection as the elite athletes investigated in this study?
2. What are the reactions and experiences of athletes from individual sports in relation to non-selection?
3. What similarities and differences are there between sports in relation to the issues of non-selection?

4. What are the effects of non-selection on the athlete's family members and or partner?
5. At the time of team announcement how do the coaches/selectors responsible for not selecting a player behave in the presence of the non-selected athlete and vice versa?
6. What are the views of coaches, selectors and sporting organisations in relation to their responsibility of providing explanations or reasons to athletes subject to non-selection?
7. In the longer term how do coaches and selectors prepare for and deal with excluding players from a team?
8. In association with athletes, coaches, selectors and sporting administrators what factors need to be considered in implementing a policy or procedural document in dealing with issues of non-selection, in particular the method of notification and follow up contact with the athlete.
9. With the introduction of club/national league tournaments to a number of Australian sports there are increased opportunities and incentives for interstate and overseas player movement. What

effect will this have on athletes subject to non-selection? Will the opportunity or invitation to participate with another team reduce the effects of non-selection?

10. What are the effects of non-selection in competitions such as the National Basketball League and the Australian Football League where the sport operates largely on a professional basis?
11. To what extent do non-selected athletes voluntarily seek to continue involvement in non playing positions such as coach, selector or administrator?
12. What are the reactions and experiences of coaches who are subject to non-selection from Australian sport? Are there similarities or differences between coaches and athletes in this situation?

While the above recommendations have focused on non-selection the whole area of retirement from sport requires a great deal of in-depth research particularly in the Australian sporting context.

Personal Epilogue

When I was excluded for the Australian Women's Hockey Team in May 1991, I could have chosen a number of paths to follow. There was a great deal of uncertainty ahead in a number of areas: to continue on with hockey and aim for re-selection; to continue with my university studies; to return interstate to a safe environment; or stay and do something about it all. I chose, with an enormous amount of help from some very valuable friends, to stay. This research then became part of the process of my adjustment to non-selection.

However, I could not begin the research until I had dealt with my own emotional tension. Two years went by before I was ready. Every stage of planning the research posed a potential difficulty. With the help of talking with those valuable friends, talking with other athletes, and piloting my research those difficulties were passed and I was ready to conduct the research.

Completing this study has allowed another phase of my personal development to be achieved. It has been a phase that may have passed by one day in the future but this research has been a stimulus for moving ahead at a far greater rate and with far more positive outcomes.

I thank all those who have been a part of this work, no matter how small, they have been invaluable.

REFERENCES

- Allison, M. T. & Meyer, C. (1988). Career problems and retirement among elite athletes: The female tennis professional. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 5(3), 212 - 222.
- Atchley, R. C. (1976). *The Sociology of Retirement*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Schenkman Publishing Company.
- Baillie, P. H. F. (1993). Understanding retirement from sports: Therapeutic ideas for helping athletes in transition. *The Counselling Psychologist*, 23(3), 399 - 410.
- Baillie, P. H. F. & Danish, S. J. (1992). Understanding the career transition of athletes. *The Sport Psychologist*, 6(1), 77 - 98.
- Blinde, E. M. & Greendorfer, S. (1985). A reconceptualisation of the process of leaving the role of competitive athlete. *International Review of Sociology of Sport*, 20(1 & 2), 87 - 93.
- Blinde, E. M. & Stratta, T. M. (1992). The 'sport career death' of college athletes: Involuntary and unanticipated sport exits. *Journal of Sport Behaviour*, 15(1), 3 - 20.

- Bogdan, B. A., & Biklen, S. (1982). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon Inc.
- Borg, W. R., & Gall, M. D. (1989) *Educational research: An introduction*. (5th Ed.). New York: Longman Inc.
- Botterill, C. (1982). What 'endings' tell us about 'beginnings'. In T. Orlick, J. T. Partington, & J. H. Salmela, (Eds.), *Mental training for coaches and athletes: ISSP 5th World Sport Psychology Congress*, (pp. 164 - 166), Ottawa, Canada: Coaching Association of Canada.
- Coakley, J. J. (1983). Leaving competitive sport: Retirement or rebirth? *Quest*, 35, 1 - 11.
- Crook, J. M. & Robertson, S. E. (1991) Transitions out of elite sport. *International Journal of Sport Psychology*, 22(2), 115 - 127.
- Cumming, E. & Henry, W. E. (1961). *Growing old: The process of disengagement*. Basic Books: New York.
- Curtis, J. & Ennis, R. (1988). Negative consequences of leaving competitive sport? Comparative findings for former elite-level hockey players. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 5(2), 87 - 106.

- Danish, S. J., Petitpas, A. J. & Hale, B. D. (1993). Life development intervention for athletes: Life skills through sports. *The Counselling Psychologist*, 21(3), 352-385.
- Davis, Michael. (1993, August 7-8). Why a super athlete can turn a problem child. *The Weekend Australian*.
- Douglas, L., Roberts, A., & Thompson, R. (1988). *Oral History: A handbook*. Sydney, Australia: Allen & Unwin Australia Pty. Ltd.
- Duffield, Mark. (1994, March 12). Daicos quits, a Pie to the end. *The West Australian*.
- Evertson, C. M. & Green, J. L. (1986). Observation as inquiry and method. In M. C. Wittrock (Ed.), *Handbook of Research on Teaching*. (3rd Ed.). (pp. 162 - 213). New York: Macmillan.
- Friedmann, E. A. & Havighurst, R. J. (1954). *The Meaning of Work and Retirement*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Glaser, B. G. & Strauss, A. L. (1965). *Awareness of Dying*. Chicago, Illinois: Aldine Press.

- Greendorfer, S. & Blinde, E. M. (1985). 'Retirement' from intercollegiate sport: Theoretical and empirical considerations. *Sociology of Sport*, 2(2), 102 - 110.
- Hallinan, C. J. & Snyder, E. E. (1987). Forced disengagement and the collegiate athlete. *Arena Review*, 11(2), 28 - 34.
- Hawkins, K. & Blann, F. W. (1993). *Athlete/coach career development and transition*. The Australian Sports Commission Applied Sports Research Program, Canberra.
- Hill, P. & Lowe, B. (1974). The inevitable metathesis of the retiring athlete. *International Review of Sport Sociology*, 9(3), 5 - 29.
- Hopson, B. (1981). Response to the papers by Schlossberg, Brammer and Abrego. *The Counselling Psychologist*, 9(2), 36 - 39.
- Innes, S. (1992). A personal view: Pain of Shane not in vain. *Western Australian Sports Federation: Sportsview*, 7(5), 6.
- Jamieson, R. (no date). *Oral history: How to interview: A step by step guide to successful interviewing*. (Cassette Recording) Library and information service of Western Australia.

- Kearl, M. C. (1986) Knowing how to quit: On the finitudes of everyday life. *Sociological Inquiry*, 56(3), 283 -303.
- Kleiber, D. A. & Brock, S. C. (1992). The effect of career ending injuries on the subsequent well-being of elite college athletes. *The Sociology of Sport Journal*, 9(1), 70 - 75.
- Kleiber, D. A., Greendorfer, S., Blinde, E. M., & Samdahl, D. (1987). Quality of exit from university sports and life satisfaction in early adulthood. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 4(1), 28 - 36.
- Koukouris, K. (1991). Quantitative aspects of the disengagement process of advanced and elite Greek male athletes from organised competitive sport. *Journal of Sport Behavior*, 14(4), 227 - 246.
- Kubler-Ross, E. (1970). *On death and dying*. Great Britain: Tavistock Publications Ltd.
- Kuypers, J. A. & Bengston, V. L. (1973). Social breakdown and competence: A model of normal aging. *Human Development*, 16, 181 - 201.

Lerch, S. (1984). Athletic retirement as social death: An overview. In N. Theberge, & P. Donnelly, (Eds.), *Sport and the sociological imagination*. (pp 259 - 272). Fort Worth, Texas: Texas Christian University press.

Lerch, S. (1981). The adjustment to retirement of professional baseball players. In S. L. Greendorfer & A. Yiannakis (Eds.), *Sociology of sport: Diverse perspectives*. Proceedings of the 1st Annual North American Society for the Sociology of Sport Conference, Denver, Colorado. (pp. 138 - 148). West Point, N.Y.: Leisure Press.

Lifeskills for Elite Athletes Program: L.E.A.P. Handbook (no date).
(handout). (Available from Commonwealth Hockey Stadium,
Western Australia).

Lifeskills for Elite Athletes Program: Sports LEAP (no date). A program of
the Australian Sports Commission, Canberra.

Lincoln, Y. S. & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. U.S.A.: Sage
Publications, Inc.

McPherson, B. D. (1993). Retirement from professional sport: The process and problems of occupational and psychological adjustment. In A. Yiannakis, T. D. McIntyre, M. J. Melnick, *Sport sociology: Contemporary themes*. (4th Ed.). (pp. 591 - 599). Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt.

Marsh, David. (1992, April 3). Support for call on counselling. *The West Australian*.

Martin, D. E. & Dodder, R. A. (1991). Socialisation experiences and level of terminating participation in sports. *Journal of Sport Behavior*, 14(2), 113 - 128.

Mihovilovic, M. A. (1968). The status of former sportsmen. *International Review of Sport Sociology*, 3, 73 - 93.

Miles, M. B. & Huberman, A. M. (1984). *Qualitative data analysis: A sourcebook of new methods*. U.S.A.: Sage Publications, Inc.

Ogilvie, B. C. (1987). Counselling for sports career termination. In J. R. May, & M. J. Asken, (Eds.). *Sport psychology: The psychological health of the athlete*. (pp. 213 - 230). U.S.A.: PMA Publishing Corporation.

Ogilvie, B. C., & Howe, M. A. (1982). Career crisis in sport. In T. Orlick, J. T. Partington, & J. H. Salmela, (Eds.). *Mental training for coaches and athletes: ISSP 5th World sport psychology congress*, (pp. 176 - 183.) Ottawa, Canada: Coaching Association of Canada.

Ogilvie, B. C., & Taylor, J. (1993). Career termination issues among elite athletes. In R. N. Singer, M. Murphey, & L. K. Tennant, (Eds.), *Handbook of research on sport psychology*, (pp. 761 - 775). New York: Macmillan.

Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. (2nd Ed.) U.S.A.: Sage Publications.

Pearson, R. E. & Petitpas, A. J. (1990). Transitions of athletes: Developmental and preventative perspectives. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 69(1), 7 - 10.

Petitpas, A., Danish, S., McKelvain, R., & Murphy, S. (1992). A career assistance program for elite athletes. *Journal of Counselling and Development*, 70(3), 383 - 386.

Queensland dumps Thompson. (1994, May 27). *The West Australian*.

Reed, Ron. (1994, May 12). Bitter Border fires parting shot at ACB. *The West Australian*.

Rosenberg, E. (1980). Social disorganizational aspects of professional sports careers. *Journal of Sport and Sociology*, 4(27), 14 - 25.

Rosenberg, E. (1981). Gerontological theory and athletic retirement. In S. L. Greendorfer & A. Yiannakis, (Eds.), *Sociology of sport: Diverse perspectives*. Proceedings of the 1st Annual North American Society for the Sociology of Sport Conference, Denver, Colorado. (pp. 118 - 126). West Point, N.Y.: Leisure Press.

Rosenberg, E. (1993). Athletic retirement as a social death: Concepts and perspectives. In A. Yiannakis, T. D. McIntyre, & M. J Melnick, *Sport sociology: Contemporary themes*. (4th Ed.). (pp. 601 - 607). Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt.

Scanlan, T. K., Ravizza, K., & Stein, G. L. (1989). An in-depth study of former elite figure skaters: I. Introduction to the project. *Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology*, 11(1), 54 - 64.

Schlossberg, N. K. (1984). *Counselling adults in transition: Linking practice with theory*, New York: Springer.

- Sinclair, D. A. & Orlick, T. (1993). Positive transitions from high-performance sport. *The Sport Psychologist*, 7(2), 138 - 150.
- Spradley, J. P. (1979). *The ethnographic interview*. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College.
- Stephan, Gené. (1994, May 26). Old guard axed for WA junior. *The West Australian*.
- Stevenson, C. L. (1982). Identity transformation and competitive sport. In T. Orlick, J. T. Partington, & J. H. Salmela, (Eds.), *Mental training for coaches and athletes: ISSP 5th World sport psychology congress*, (pp. 192 - 193). Ottawa, Canada: Coaching Association of Canada
- Stockdale, David. (1994, March 23). 'Bucky' out - may quit. *The Mercury*.
- Svoboda, B. & Vanek, M. (1982). Retirement from high level competition. In T. Orlick, J. T. Partington, & J. H. Salmela, (Eds.), *Mental training for coaches and athletes: ISSP 5th World sport psychology congress*, (pp. 166- 175), Ottawa, Canada: Coaching Association of Canada.

Swain, D. A. (1991). Withdrawal from sport and Schlossberg's model of transition. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 8(2), 152 - 160.

Thomas, C. E. & Ermler, K. L. (1988). Institutional obligations in the athletic retirement process. *Quest*, 40(2), 137 - 150.

Werthner, P. & Orlick, T. (1986). Retirement experiences of successful olympic athletes. *International Journal of Sport Psychology*, 17(5), 337 - 363.

APPENDIX A

Introduction Letter and Informed Consent

<Date>

<Subject's Name>

<Address>

<Address>

<Address> <Post Code>

Dear <Subject>

As previously discussed with you I am seeking your assistance in a research project entitled, 'Non-selection as a factor contributing to retirement from Australian sport' which I am undertaking for my Honours degree in a Bachelor of Applied Science (Sports Science) at Edith Cowan University. My interest is broadly in the area of psychology in sport and more specifically the experiences of athletes in relation to their sporting participation and issues of non-selection.

As a member of the Australian Women's Hockey Team from 1985 to 1991 and a 1988 Olympian, I experienced non-selection from the team in 1991. Resulting from this experience and knowledge of the pressures faced by Australian athletes the purpose of the research is to examine the reactions and experiences of athletes who have been subjected to non-selection from their sport.

For me to obtain such information it is necessary to interview athletes who have experienced such an event in their sporting career. I have further limited the focus to team sport participants. From my knowledge of your sporting experiences, I believe that you may be a suitable subject and would be pleased if you would agree to participating in the research.

Your participation in this research would involve the completion of two interviews which, with your permission, would be tape recorded and transcribed in full. The initial interview concerning general background and demographic information is anticipated to take approximately 30 minutes. The second interview will explore in greater depth events related to your non-selection and be approximately 1 1/2 hours in duration. If you wish you may review the transcripts prior to their detailed analysis.

The information gained from this research will be reported in a thesis and selections from the thesis may be published to provide assistance for coaches, administrators, sporting associations, significant others and other athletes in an attempt to provide the best possible outcomes for athletes who are subject to non-selection in the future.

Reports from the research may include excerpts of comments made by subjects but confidentiality and anonymity will be assured at all times. The identity of subjects within the study will be masked by pseudonyms or codes and you will not be identifiable.

If you are agreeable to participate in this study could you please sign the enclosed 'Form of Disclosure and Informed Consent' and return in the envelope provided. I will contact you in the near future and make further arrangements regarding the interview process.

In discussing the issue of non-selection some emotional tension may be experienced. If further assistance is required in this respect a confidential and professional counselling service convenient to your location would be recommended. At any stage throughout the research you would be free to withdraw with no further obligation.

If you have any immediate questions or require further clarification regarding any of the above details please do not hesitate to contact me at home at any time, or my supervisor for this research project, Dr. Lynn Embrey, during working hours at Edith Cowan University on 405 5655.

Thank you for your consideration of assisting with this research.

Yours sincerely

Maree Fish

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area, obscuring the name and any handwritten notes or dates.

**NON-SELECTION AS A FACTOR CONTRIBUTING TO RETIREMENT
FROM AUSTRALIAN SPORT**

by

**Maree Fish
Bachelor of Applied Science (Sports Science) Honours
Edith Cowan University**

'FORM OF DISCLOSURE AND INFORMED CONSENT'

I _____ (Participant's name) have read the information provided and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

I agree to participate in this research, realising that I may withdraw at any time.

I agree that the research data gathered for this study may be published provided I am not identifiable.

Signature: _____ Date: _____
(Participant)

Signature: _____ Date: _____
(Researcher)

APPENDIX B

Schedule of Interviews

Subject	Interview Stage 1			Interview Stage 2		
	Date	Duration (minutes)	Venue*	Date	Duration (minutes)	Venue*
HM4	12/5	36	SR	17/5	70	SR
HF1	13/5	28	SR	19/5	67	SR
CF1	24/5	33	RR	28/5	90	RR
HF3	28/5	34	SR	2/6	70	SR
CF2	26/6	90	SR	30/6	84	SR
HF4	27/6	35	RR	10/7	48	SR
CM2	28/6	37	ECU	5/7	55	ECU
HM1	5/7	23	SW	8/7	48	SW
PF1	7/7	40	SR	10/7	47	SR
PM1	8/7	45	RR	12/7	50	RR
HM3	11/7	34	SR	21/7	56	SR
HM2	11/7	18	SR	16/7	46	SR
HF2	12/7	36	SR	19/7	57	SR
PM2	20/7	29	SR	25/7	45	SR
CM1	28/7	25	SW	1/8	55	SR
	Total	543		Total	888	
	Mean	36.2		Mean	59.2	

- * SR - Subject's Residence
 RR - Researcher's Residence
 SW - Subject's Workplace
 ECU - Edith Cowan University

APPENDIX C

Introductory Information for Interview Stage 1

Non-Selection as a Factor Contributing to Retirement from Australian Sport

Purpose and procedures of the research

Is to gain an understanding of the experiences and reactions that athletes go through in relation to non-selection in their sport. Completed by two interviews that will be taped in full with the first interview relating to general background information and your sporting history. The second interview will cover more in-depth issues regarding your non-selection.

Reasons for doing the research

To provide formal information about the topic, athletes have expressed their concerns but little action has eventuated. To provide information to people such as coaches, administrators, family and other athletes who are subject to non-selection.

Phases of the research

The research I am conducting deals with only a small area of retirement in sport. There is scope for continued research in the future, particularly as very little investigation has been conducted on this topic within the Australian sporting environment.

How the information will be used

I will analyse the completed transcripts and look for repeated

themes and issues that are common among subjects and also examine the differences between subjects' experiences. I anticipate that my results will be published in Australian sporting magazines and in relevant journal publications.

Confidentiality and subject rights

All information is treated with strictest confidence, you will remain anonymous, being identified by codes or a pseudonym.

You have the right to withdraw from the study at any stage with no further obligation.

You may stop the interview at any time or pause if you want to say something off record.

I may make notes while you are speaking and I will also be watching the tape at times and will pause the interview every thirty minutes to turn the tape over.

APPENDIX D

Interview Guide Stage 1

Firstly I am interested in some general information about you and your background relating to your family and your sport.

1. Could you tell me where and when you were born?
2. How many are in your family, their names and ages in relation to you?

Where do you fit in the family?

3. Could you give me an outline of your education from high school onwards?

Which school did you go to?

What years were you at this school/uni?

What subjects did you study?

What levels did you achieve (TEE score/Degree)?

Are there any other educational studies or courses that you have attempted?

4. Can you tell me about what you have done since finishing school?

Outline of paid employment positions you have held?

Major areas of interest?

Were the positions part time or full time?

How long were you in the position for?

Unpaid voluntary opportunities?

Lets move onto your involvement in sport.

5. Could you describe to me your involvement in <sport> from how you started to where you are now?

When did you start playing?

Was there anyone who influenced you to become involved?

What was your progression through the representative stages?

6. Could you describe to me the events of not being selected for the <sport> team?

7. Have you experienced non-selection at any other stage of your sporting career?

If so, could you describe the situation?

I am also interested in what other events were happening in relation to you and your family at the time you were not selected.

8. Could you tell me about your own circumstances at that time?

Your age?

What were you doing other than <sport>?

Where were you living?

9. In relation to your family could you describe their circumstances at the time of your non-selection?

Their occupation?

Where were they living at the time?

10. At the time of your non-selection could you describe the type of relationship that you had with your other family members?

11. What involvement in sport have the rest of your family had?

What sports do they play?

Level achieved?

12. Could you tell me about any other events relating to you and to your family that may have had an impact on your participation in sports?

Marital/Sickness/Move of house?

That is all the questions I have, do you have any questions or anything you would like to add to the interview at this stage?

End of the interview (No. time).

Arrangements for next stage of interview to be conducted.

GENERAL COMMENTS: _____

APPENDIX E

Interview Guide Stage 2

Brief discussion with subject about how they have felt since the last interview and if they have talked about the interview or their non-selection since.

Discussion regarding any questions related to Interview Part one. Any details that need clarification or additional information that is required.

Following on from our first discussion I would now like to focus more on your experience and reaction to not being selected in the <sport> team.

As you talked about in our last discussion you were not selected for the <sport> team when <specific situation>. Are these details correct?

1. Could you describe how you saw yourself - your position within the team prior to the selection being made.

How did you feel about your prospect of being selected for the team?

2. Can you describe the actual situation of how you found out about the selection decision.

How were you told?

Who told you?

What was their relationship to you and to the team?

Where were you when you were told?

3. Were you given any type of explanation for the selection decision?

If so, was this offered to you or did you have to pursue the matter?

If not, why do you think this was so?

4. What were your initial feelings after being told about the selection decision?
5. What were your feelings the next day after having time to think about the situation?
6. After the selection was known to others how did people react to you?
7. What support did you get firstly, from people within your sport, and secondly, from people outside of this environment?
8. Was there any support provided to you from your own sporting organisation at any time after your non-selection?

If so, what did this involve?

If not, why do you think this was not given?

9. What were your thoughts about future participation in <sport> prior to not being selected?

What were your thoughts after not being selected?

What were your thoughts about retirement pre and post selection?

I am also interested to find out what the impact of this selection decision had on other areas of your life.

10. Could you describe to me the effect that you felt it had on;

Your relationship with other team members?

Your academic / work performance?

Your own social relationships?

Your relationship with other family members?

Your participation / involvement with other sports or activities?

Your own physical well being?

Your own emotional well being?

11. Can you recall any strategies that you may have used to help you adjust to not being selected for the <sport> team.

If not, then how did you handle or react to not being selected?

12. What do you think has been the long term effect for you of not being selected in the <team>?

Has your not being selected in the team had a bearing on your future life?

13. What involvement in <sport> or other sporting activities do you now have?

14. What are your thoughts and feelings when you hear of other athletes who have experienced similar selection processes?

15. If you had an opportunity to comment to your association about your experience of not being selected what would you suggest to them so that they may be able to assist other athletes in the future?

We have covered quite a bit of detail about your progress in <sport>, are there any other thoughts or issues you would like to discuss about anything we have already spoken about?

Do you have any questions about either of the discussions we have had or anything to do with the study that I am doing?

Are there any questions you thought I would ask you but I haven't?

APPENDIX F

Sample Summary of Interview Stage 1

INTERVIEW STAGE ONE WITH CM1:

Interview conducted on Thursday 28th July 1994 at subject's work place.

Note: Specific details of interview withheld for confidentiality.

Family:

Born 31/12/58 - 2nd eldest - 2 sisters and 1 brother

Education:

Country Primary School to grade 6.

Year 7 - year 12 at private school, cricket had priority.

Subjects studied - Accounting, Maths, English, Geography, Woodwork, Metalwork, Technical Drawing.

Unsure of results from year 12 and did not want to go to university.

Employment:

At completion of year 12 had various part time employment including storeman, groundsman and insurance salesman.

Married at a young age and returned to family home in country remained there until mid twenties when first selected to play test cricket.

Since non-selection occurred employed full time at private school attended as a student.

During test cricket selection not employed.

Sporting history:

First game played age 9 at country town - team short due to bush fire.

Watched father when he used to play cricket.

Influenced by father and an uncle who played state cricket.

Played backyard cricket with brother and practiced with a ball on string.

Picked to play junior association cricket for country town.

Picked in a junior country team aged 12 and came to Perth to play - cricket career started from here.

From this stage on (1971) played cricket with private school team.

1st year A's, 2nd year A's, 3/4/5th years 1st XI.

Picked in state sides 1975 onwards.

1975 - 76 Under 16

1977 Under 19, Australian Under 19 team to tour England

1978 Played 1st game for WA Seniors

1st year batting average approximately 38

1985 2nd year unable to secure a place in the team
In and out of team for a couple of years
Made test side (Australian Senior Team)
Played 50 tests straight
1992 Played 117 One day games straight
Dropped from Australian Senior Team

The non-selection:

Told of non-selection over breakfast by team coach.
Another team member also dropped at same time.
Told of selection with one day still remaining in current test match.

Other occasions when not selected:

Dropped playing state cricket a couple of times.
World Cup dropped for a couple of one day games.

General circumstances at time of non-selection:

Living in Perth aged 33, not employed, full time cricketer.
Three children, two boys aged 7 and 5, girl 1 year old.
Wife performing home duties.
Siblings, one brother and one sister living on country property, harvest time.
One sister lived in Perth.
Family relationships 'good' but family were disappointed.

Family sporting involvement:

Mother fanatical golfer, father a bit of golf, sisters netball, brother golf and football, should have played League.
Wife basketball, aerobics, did try for state under 19 hockey team.
Eldest son cricket and basketball,

APPENDIX G

Sample Transcript of Interview Stage 2

INTERVIEW STAGE TWO WITH HF4:

Tape identification: Interview stage 2 with HF4 on Sunday 10th July 1994.

Note: For confidentiality reasons only a sample of the complete transcript has been included.

Tape 2 of 2 - Side A

Interviewer: Ok just to start with there's a couple of things I wanted to just check on from the last interview we did the first one was you said you started teaching at [Junior High School] in 1981 was that . .

Athlete: 1980 it must have been.

Interviewer: Was that straight after you graduated from teachers college?

Athlete: Yes 1980 I think it was.

Interviewer: Also you talked about your post grad you did at [University] was that a one year a two year you did it part time?

Athlete: I did it over five years part time I took one year off in the middle to have a baby.

Interviewer: So you must have started that in about '88 you talked about starting that?

Athlete: '87 . . I took a year off and I was just doing two units a year sort of thing so it took a while.

Interviewer: And also you're now teaching at [Primary School] a couple of days a week how long have you been there for?

Athlete: Ahm . . since last year second term of last year 1993.

Interviewer: Ok that's cleared that little bit up for me so just today's interview just going back on last interview when we discussed when you were not selected so basically the most significant one for you was the Sydney nationals where you went along you played you were captain you were player of the tournament the team the Australian squad was named at the end of that tournament and your name didn't appear on the list ok

so today's interview is mostly about that instance if you want to add something about when you were not selected in the Olympics because you commented you were not happy with that selection procedure please feel free to comment about that too.

Athlete: Yeah ok.

Interviewer: So just following on from the last interview today obviously the focus is on that experience of when you were not selected at the end of that nationals ok so first of all could you describe how you saw yourself your position in the team prior to that selection being made?

Athlete: Ahm I realised I'd missed out on the olympics one of the reasons for the Australian team one of the reasons I knew that I had missed was because [player] had come back after having a baby and decided to play and probably my best position was a [position] but I was also a [position] and could play [position] well and so basically I knew that [player] was going to retire and I wanted to consolidate my position and be the best [position] in the world that was sort of my goal that I had set myself that I wanted to learn I'd been on a huge learning curve and I just wanted to consolidate and get back in and play really well and be the best [position] I could be.

Interviewer: So how did you feel about your prospect of getting selected for that Australian squad?

Athlete: Quite confident I didn't it didn't enter into my mind that I wasn't I was playing great hockey I'd been 'cause I'd been training so much before the nationals and I mean Sydney was a difficult tournament 'cause it was on a rugby field that was had gravel on it and stuff like that so yeah possibly the skills astroturf skills and things like that didn't help on that surface but I still played a good tournament it was a hard tournament yeah.

Interviewer: In the last interview you described the actual situation of how you were told to me that you were standing at the end of the game and they just read out the names . .

Athlete: All the teams had to come out onto the field yeah.

Interviewer: Anything else you would like to add to that at all of how you were actually told?

Athlete: No not that I can think of.

Interviewer: Do you remember who it was that actually made the announcement?

Athlete: Ahm . . yeah it was the president of the assoc... Australian association at the time I think was announcing the team wasn't [official] it might have been [official].

Interviewer: Or [official] perhaps?

Athlete: Ah no she was a selector . . or was she I can't remember 'cause she did change over at that stage and no I can't remember who made the announcement.

Interviewer: The name is not so important just so it was the president of the association - after you were . .

Athlete: It must have been [official] because I remember the look between [selector] and [selector] ah yeah that's the look I remember that look just when I got player of tournament I thought hmm there was something that struck me about the way they looked at each other.

Interviewer: And that was as you were walking up to receive . .

Athlete: That's my name got announced as being player of the tournament.

Interviewer: So there was two three selectors?

Athlete: Three yeah and what's her name from South Australia was the other one [selector].

Interviewer: Ok were you given any type of explanation as to the selection decision?

Athlete: No I wasn't [coach] came up to me in the tent when we went to have the afternoon tea after the nationals and said I hope you didn't think it was I'm really sorry [HF4] I hope you didn't think it was because of the conversation we had earlier which we'd had a conversation when he arrived a couple of days before where he wanted to know what my goals in hockey were and because I didn't trust him I didn't tell him and I just said I'll just take it one year at a time and he he was more worried about his own skin [laugh] there I think I don't think he was really that concerned about me so and I just cried I just started crying and the WA team were great they just closed around me and told him to naff off basically [laugh] yes so that was the only attempt at a conversation from anybody that I got.

Interviewer: Do you why do you think that was so that no one gave you an explanation?

Athlete: Maybe just didn't feel I was good enough or whatever I really I have no idea I've never really thought about it but I wasn't hadn't been in the team very long but I thought I'd made a mark but yeah I've not really thought about why I wasn't told I'd still like to know . . and then the next year there was a change of selectors in Melbourne at the nationals and I was the only team member virtually in the Western Australian side that didn't the only person that didn't nominate and [husband] and I agonised over it we went away for a weekend talked about whether I'd renominate and he didn't want me to basically because he said it was it you still don't know why you weren't selected so why go through all that again play really well and in fact I did play really well in Melbourne again but I had [player] who was captain of the side come up to me in Melbourne the next year saying why aren't you going to nominate why haven't you nominated and then I had [manageress] came up and said put your nomination in but I just wasn't prepared to trust them again and [husband] and I had already decided the goals that we'd reset another 5 year plan of where we were going to go and we'd given hockey our best shot sort of thing so I didn't so but yeah that the only approaches were really probably in Melbourne when I got the feeling that from those approaches if I had nominated I would have got back in but I wasn't in a way I wasn't prepared to take the risk.

Interviewer: Ok as soon as that team was named back in at that Sydney nationals what were your initial feelings?

Athlete: as soon as like immediately?

Interviewer: Yes sort of in the next few hours after the team was named.

Athlete: Oh disbelief I suppose because I sort of thought that I knew where I was going and suddenly I wasn't yeah I felt numb . . I cried I suppose I was really sad about it and then I didn't know I thought well ok come on show a bit of guts show a bit of courage go back there have coffee in with everybody and all I wanted to do was sit in the bus and cry you know put my bag in the bus and disappear I didn't want to see anyone or be seen.

End of Sample Transcript HF4

APPENDIX H

Sample Coding of Interview Stage 2

INTERVIEW STAGE TWO WITH HF4:

Note: For confidentiality reasons only a sample of the complete coding has been included.

- 01 HF4: Yeah.
- 02 MF: Ok as soon as that team was named back in at that Sydney nationals
- 03 ~~What were your initial feelings?~~
- 04 HF4: . . . as soon as like immediately?
- 05 MF: Yes sort of in the next few hours after the team was named.
- 06 HF4: Oh disbelief I suppose because I sort of thought that I knew where I was
- 07 heartbroken going and suddenly I wasn't yeah I felt numb . . . I cried I suppose I was really
- 08 sad about it and then I didnt know I thought well ok come on show a bit of
- 09 guts show a bit of courage go back there have coffee in with everybody and all
- 10 I wanted to do was sit in the bus and cry you know put my bag in the bus and
- 11 disappear I didnt want to see anyone or be seen or have anyone pat me on the
- 12 shoulder or the head or wherever but I thought no I'm worth more than that
- 13 you know get up stand up and be counted I suppose so I suppose I wasn't it
- 14 was determined in some way not to let that effect my self worth personally . .
- 15 I got angry later on with a couple of the girls in my team that we'd lost the
- 16 nationals but theyd made the Aust team for the first time and were really
- 17 happy so in fact it was quite devastating for our team 'cause we had half
- 18 partied in one room and half not partied in the other room and I thought
- 19 really sad about that 'cause that Sydney team was one of the best state teams
- 20 I'd ever gone away with as been as far as cohesiveness and the basically ended
- 21 up really bad . . I still tried to go in and be happy with the other girls and
- 22 everything but yeah no it hurt a lot.
- 23 MF: What about what were your feelings the next day after you had a bit of
- 24 a chance to think about it?
- 25 HF4: I just wanted to get home I just wanted to forget about hockey I
- 26 remember that I just I had my I was up early I had my bags packed helping
- 27 everyone get their stuff in I just wanted to go home and the aeroplane trip
- 28 home was awful and I couldn't ring my husband and tell him 'cause he was
- 29 skiing [laugh] so I really felt quite alone yeah I remember feeling very lonely.
- 30 MF: After that selection was known to others how did people react to you?
- 31 then?
- 32 HF4: I really dont know I imagine they were caring and concerned but I
- 33 didnt feel that I mean I felt that when [coach] came to talk to me around
- 34 coffee that the [player] and those sort of girls in the team they were just really
- 35 gorgeous and got me the coffee got me you know so yeah I suppose they were
- 36 very caring and very concerned the girls who got in the team I think avoided
- 37 me a little bit . . I remember being disappointed in my coach that another girl
- 38 didnt make the team and she and I just said to her I just cant believe it and

avoidance of
topic
- deflection
loneliness

01 she said I cant believe it either and she also said I cant believe that [player]
02 wasn't in it and then she continued she said I've gone up and had a word to
03 them about [player] and all that and I'm thinking but did you have a word to
04 the selectors about me and I've never been game to ask shes a good friend
05 never been able to I assume she did but she seemed to deflect it away onto
06 someone else and I wanted her to talk to me about me so I remember I was
07 disappointed in that but . . I mean she was friend and shed been through it
08 herself so . . yeah which maybe that might have been her reaction too that we
09 were quite close and she found it quite difficult dont know . . but maybe
10 mainly caring and concerned about me I think I felt that in the afternoon tea
11 room.

sporting group support
- lower level

social
freedom

12 MF: What sort of support did you get later on from firstly from people
13 within your sport and then secondly from outside of that environment?

14 HF4: Oh well my club we were a very close team and very close club so they
15 were magnificent you know lots of phone calls and . . yeah I just general
16 comments and everything people yeah they were really supportive . . and I
17 suppose I my husband and I started doing things that we started going out to
18 parties and peoples place for tea and things that we hadnt been able to do and
19 we've moved us both staying late and stuff like that so yeah no it was good
20 coming home to [club] its always good fun coming home to that team that
21 team at the time . . and at they were quite I remember people were quite
22 angry about it that I think people were angry about the initial selection with
23 [player] getting in the Aust team when she hadnt been in the squad or
24 whatever which seemed ludicrous and then for that to happen you sort of it
25 was sort of felt like I was cursed [laugh] and played for [club] people seemed to
26 give you a harder time or something 'cause it happened to a couple of [club]
27 players and . . and as far as the Aust . . team and everything went no just . .

sporting group
support
- lower level

insignificance
- to former team.

28 you may as well not have been there oh which is not true really I mean I had
29 people like [player] and [player] who I was good friends with as well in the
30 team that we socialise with them to so they were quite sort of angry and I
31 suppose supportive and made comments from what they saw on the TV that
32 I should have been in there ahead of a couple of other girls which I wont
33 mention by name but . . yeah so I felt good about someone like [player] saying
34 well your the one throwing the passes and doing all that sort of stuff 'cause
35 the know hockey players recognising that it was what I thought was a poor
36 selection decision so but the general team the rest of the team I couldn't there
37 was only really a few that I was really great friends with.

sporting group support
- knowledgeable peers.
- respected peers.

38 MF: what about people outside of that sporting environment what sort of

01 support did they give you?

02 HF4: My work group was I worked with a really talented Phys Ed staff and I

03 think 7 out of the 8 of them had represented Aust in some sport so fair lot of

04 support at school and . . just suppose theyd been there and then like I suppose

05 we talked about selection decisions in various sports and teaching and yeah

06 but life went on basically I had to get on with it and I did I'm not . . I'm not a

07 stirrer in that sense that I will go and make a big issue of it or whatever there

08 was an article [administrator] wrote an article in the Sunday times which I

09 remember my mum cut out and sent to me [laugh] which I thought was great

10 she saying it was really a shocking decision . . now I cant remember he wrote

11 that article after the olympics selection or after the nationals selection might

12 have been that might have been an article after the olympic one selection

13 yeah but it was good to get people like that who I respect a lot to know that

14 you have their support.

15 MF: Was there any support provided to you from the hockey organisation ,

16 at any time after your non selection? ;

17 HF4: Nothing absolutely nothing.

18 MF: Why do you think that was not given? *

19 HF4: I just think that they're they have no idea of the impact they have on

20 peoples lives and they have no idea of the commitment people make to a

21 sport . . I just think its ignorance basically pure unadulterated ignorance that

22 and I think that was one of the reasons why I decided not to re stand I just

23 thought I'm not going to have ignorant people playing with my life anymore

24 I want to take control of my life again . . yeah so absolutely no support

25 whatsoever from the hockey association I mean other people within the

26 hockey association that I knew people like [male player] he came up to me

27 and said you've got to renominate 'cause he'd heard that I wasnt

28 renominate before we went away and he just said you play till you drop

29 which he's doing that now which is really gorgeous but yeah I got more

30 support from people like that than anyone official and I just think its a lack of

31 education.

32 MF: What were your thoughts about future participation in hockey prior to

33 that selection?

34 HF4: Yeah I wanted to be the best RI in the world I wanted to take off where

35 [player] left . . I've always felt myself to be a really great team player I can read

36 the play I can throw some great passes to score goals I love doing that maybe

37 that was my problem I liked passing more than I liked scoring [laugh] goals

38 or something I'd rather someone else give the ball to someone else to score

work group support

unobtrusive team participant

sporting group support
- knowledgeable peers/other

ORGANISATION
Lack of SUPPORT.

ignorance by association.

control of self.

sporting group support
- knowledgeable peers

Self concept (prior)

unobtrusive team member.

APPENDIX I

Athlete Progress Record

Initial source: _____

Initial contact made: Letter / Phone Date: _____

Follow up letter sent: _____

Participation: Yes / No Indemnity form completed: _____

Subjects name: _____

Subject Code: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Address: _____

_____ P/Code: _____

Postal Address: _____

_____ P/Code: _____

Telephone contact: Home: _____

Day/Hours available: _____

Work: _____

Day/Hours available: _____

Int. part one proposed: _____ Completed: _____ (Date)

Int. part two proposed: _____ Completed: _____ (Date)

Thank you letter sent: _____ (Date)

Follow up call made: _____ (Date)

APPENDIX J

Interview Record

Subject Name: _____ Subject Code: _____

Day & Date: _____

Location: _____
(Address)

Interview Number: 1 or 2 Counter No. at end: _____

Interview Start Time: _____

Interview End Time: _____

Total interview time: _____

Tapes used: _____ Tape Identification Label: _____

Comments relating to interview situation:

The environment _____

The Subject: _____

Self: _____

APPENDIX K

Interview Transcription Record

Subject Name: _____ Subject Code: _____

Total number of tapes used for interviews: _____

Tape 1 of _____ Interview Part _____

Length of interview : _____

Transcription completed: Side A - _____ Page No.s: _____

Side B - _____ Page No.s: _____

Tape 2 of _____ Interview Part _____

Length of interview : _____

Transcription completed: Side A - _____ Page No.s: _____

Side B - _____ Page No.s: _____

Tape 3 of _____ Interview Part _____

Length of interview : _____

Transcription completed: Side A - _____ Page No.s: _____

Side B - _____ Page No.s: _____