

FROM PLAYING TO DIRECTING: A QUALIATIVE INQUIRY INTO THE ATHLETE TO  
COACH TRANSITION

by

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ABSTRACT  
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The following dissertation explored six ( $n = 6$ ), current, professional baseball coaches' experience with transitioning from playing to coaching. Some experiences associated with athletic transitions based on the literature include missing sport or competition, body changes, social status changes, and vocational concerns (Wylleman & Reints, 2010; Park & Lavallee, 2015). Additionally, the salience of one's athletic identity can create difficulties such as identity loss, emotional distress, and grief (Lally, 2007; Fortunato & Marchant, 1998; Grove, Lavalle, & Gordon, 1997). Within vocational concerns, there can be uncertainty about the next career's link to sports. For many professional athletes, their age of retirement is different compared to non-athletes (Park & Lavallee, 2015) resulting in the potential need to find employment after playing is no longer an option. One potential path is coaching. Shachar, Brewer, Cornelius, and Paptitpas (2004) studied former, Israeli athletes who became coaches as well as those who did not. They found athletic identity did not play a significant role in the decision to coach although athletic identity was higher in those who chose coaching as a second career as opposed to those who did not. The current study's purpose was to understand the experience of becoming a coach after retirement from a professional baseball career. According to Super life-span, life space theory (Hartung, 2013) 14-24 years old is when individuals are exploring potential career paths. While

draft ages for professional athletics all fall under this window, baseball's draft age is the youngest therefore exploration may not be happening if these athletes are already employed.

Three significant themes emerged from semi-structured interviews: Mental Preparation, which captured the preparation involved to take on career transitions and handle potential challenges successfully, Multilayered Motivation, which considered the combination of intrinsic and extrinsic influences to become a coach, and Identity is not Stagnant, which noted the ebb and flow of athletic identity. The coaches' shared journey demonstrated the determination and resiliency that was involved in order to pursue a field that had no guarantee of success, twice. In addition, to strive for a dream regardless of challenges, doubts, or uncertainties.

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To my son, Liam. I hope I make you proud.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

The vocational/career literature has noted a change in the traditional career trajectory as individuals are no longer remaining at one career throughout their entire working life prior to retirement (Hartung, 2013). Over the course of one's life, an individual may revisit or recycle through the various stages of career development (Hartung, 2013; Super, 1985). Traditional disengagement from a career occurs at approximately 65 years of age (Hartung, 2013). Athletic, in comparison to non-athletic, careers result in an approximate 31 year age difference between the time of retirement. Though inevitable, the discontinuation of an athlete's career is a period of transition both when leaving sport and entering into the next phase of life, whatever that may look like. Retirement for an athlete is a stage in which he/she is no longer able to play the sport of his/her choosing which may have been a salient part of their life for a period of time. However, former athletes may choose to find a second or encore career after playing is no longer an option given how many "working years" still remain (Hartung, 2013).

For example, Schinke, Bloom, and Salmela (1995) studied the evolution of elite basketball coaches beginning from their first athletic experience. The participants highlighted an interest in finding a means to remain connected to sport after retirement. Additionally, a coach profile on Denise Boyd, former Australian sprinter, highlighted her time as an athlete aided her coaching due to an ability to understand the experiences of current athletes given her past history (Modern Athlete and Coach, 2013).

There has been an increase in the number of researchers, starting in the 1970s-1980s, who have focused on understanding athletic transitions (Wylleman, Alfermann, & Lavalley, 2004). Through literature reviews, quantitative, and qualitative inquiry, researchers have found the

transition out of sport to be a time of adjustment (e.g. Baillie & Danish, 1992; Baillie, 1993; Grove, Lavalley, & Gordon, 1997; Fortunato & Marchant, 1998). An athlete must begin to adapt to a life outside of his/her norm resulting in missing sport or competition, body changes, and social status changes. (Wylleman & Reints, 2010). Vocational concerns may also emerge including uncertainties about what the next career may be and its connection, or lack thereof, to sport (Park & Lavalley, 2015).

The extent to which the transition impacts an individual can depend on various factors such as predictability and athletic identity. By predictable, one means a transition is planned or expected such as the move from sixth to seventh grade. An unpredictable transition can manifest as a career-ending injury or being released from a team without warning (Wylleman & Reints, 2010). Wippert and Wippert (2010) note transitions out of sport can impact an athlete's well-being and ability to successfully transition regardless of the type (predictable and unpredictable). Their study found psychological distress was higher for those whose choice to leave sport was out of their control; however, distress did diminish over time regardless (Wippert & Wippert, 2010). Additionally, Lavalley and Robinson (2007) and Kerr and Dacyshyn (2000) found athletes struggled with retirement resulting in feelings of worthlessness, a sense of loss, and an attempt to discover a life without sport. Lavalley and Robinson (2007) note a strategy taken was the participants distanced themselves from sport in order to establish new non-athletic identities.

A common factor discussed in the transition literature is the impact of a salient athletic identity (Baillie & Danish, 1992; Beamon, 2012; Benson, Evans, Surya, Martin, & Eys, 2015; Murphy, Petitpas, & Brewer, 1996). Athletic identity is defined as "exclusivity and strength with which people identify with their role as an athlete" (as cited in Benson, Evans, Surya, Martin, & Eys, 2015, p.303). Baillie and Danish (1992) believe the moment sport participation begins, an

individual is starting to engrain his/her sense of self with his/her athlete status. The impending end of an athletic career does not always provide an indication to consider other life roles beyond sport. Benson, Evans, Surya, Martin, and Eys's (2015) study found even with an athletic career coming to an end, the athletic identity can still be held very salient. These findings could be a method to counteract the feelings of uncertainty accompanied by retirement through continuing to hold onto a significant and valued identity (Benson, Evans, Surya, Martin, & Eys, 2015).

Similarly, Beamon (2012) found collegiate participants experienced difficulty in accepting the end of their sport career describing it as a loss. They did not consider other career prospects while in school due to hopes of continuing to play following graduation. Their high athletic identity made leaving sport more difficult and there was little forethought about what would come next (Beamon, 2012). Conversely, Lally's (2007) longitudinal study found participants were able to utilize coping strategies such as consulting with former teammates, engaging other life roles, and involvement in other physical pursuits in preparation for the out of sport transition. The implication of Lally's (2007) study was considering other identities can help in the transition process through utilization of coping skills and one's support network. However, foreclosing on the athletic identity in addition to neglecting exploration of alternate paths may result in delayed career development as both tasks are needed to aid in a successful transition experience (Murphy, Petitpas, & Brewer, 1996).

Another potential factor found by Murphy, Petitpas and Brewer (1996) was gender. The authors noted the male collegiate participants involved in revenue-producing sports could be more at risk in regards to career decision-making skills potentially due to a lower level of career maturity or career adaptability. Career maturity is the ability to adapt to changes that occur in the working world (i.e. job loss, promotion) (Hartung, 2013). While Park, Lavalley, and Tod (2012)

note demographical issues (i.e. gender, age, social status, type of sport, etc.) as factors considered in transition research, the overall relationship was indeterminate.

The process of entering and leaving work can be considered across an individual's lifespan. Super's life-span, life-space theory of career is a developmental model that focuses on "the content, process, and outcomes of career choice and development throughout the human life course" (Hartung, 2013, p.83). As a developmental model, this theory considers an individual's engagement in the world of work across his/her life (Hartug, 2013). First, an individual begins to learn about personal attributes (i.e. strengths, interests, values, etc.) to aid in his/her understanding of the role of work in his/her life. Opportunities are provided to develop a vocational self-concept and specify opportunities that align with his/her identity as a result of exploring possible career paths. Once a career decision has been made, he/she gains security and stabilization in the self-concept while continuing to make advances in a position he/she finds meaningful followed by sustaining the work role.

Bobek, Hanson, and Robbins (2013) and Super (1985) highlighted how individuals may revisit and recycle through the discussed stages at different times in his/her life due to the new norm of career. As noted, individuals are less likely to remain at a single career throughout one's lifetime. The final stage in Super's life-span, life-space theory is that of disengagement or retirement. This is when the individual can choose to leave the world of full-time work perhaps to engage in other interests, hobbies, or part-time employment (Hartung, 2013). Alternately, an individual may choose to take on bridge employment or an encore career (Hartung, 2013). During this final stage, the individual is also tasked with letting go of the vocational self-concept to focus on other life roles which can increase in salience or importance.

Throughout one's life, it is possible challenges may emerge and to successfully maneuver requires career maturity, also known as career adaptability as discussed by Murphy and colleagues (1996). Rudolph, Lavigne, and Zacher (2017) considered career adaptability with measures of adaptivity, adapting responses, adaption results, and demographic covariates. Adaptivity focuses on one's readiness and willingness to adapt to changes (Rudolph, Lavigne, & Zacher, 2017). Adapting responses are how individuals deal with tasks and changes in their career (as cited in Rudolph, Lavigne, & Zacher, 2017). Adaption results are the fit between the individual and their career environment focusing on how good is the fit which can be measured by satisfaction or work success. Rudolph and colleagues (2017) found the effects of demographic factors (i.e. gender and tenure) on career adaptability to not be statistically significant within their meta-analysis specifically. It is useful to be aware of these for the current study as the sample consisted of all males and tenure in coaching fluctuated.

In addition, Rudolph, Lavigne, Katz, and Zacher (2017) explored the dimensions of career adaptability (concern, control, curiosity, and confidence) within their quantitative meta-analysis. Concern is related to an individual's focus and awareness of the future resulting in planning and preparation for what's next. Control is taking responsibility for an individual's career including the process leading up to the transition. Curiosity is the exploration of potential paths and options. Lastly, confidence is an individual's belief in them self (Rudolph, Lavigne, Katz, & Zacher, & 2017). Rudolph and colleagues (2017) found variations in the relationships between the dimensions of career adaptability and adaption results. The meta-analysis further supported the structure of career adaptability and the need to take the variations into account in future research.

While navigating through the developmental stages, individuals may take on diverse social roles. In his *Life-Career Rainbow*, Super (1990) depicts 9 life roles: child, student, leisurite, citizen, worker, spouse, homemaker, parents, and annuitant (as cited in Hartung, 2013). An individual does not identify with all these roles at a single time and in fact, typically holds 2-3 core roles with the others being minor or uninvolved. Whichever role(s) is (are) deemed most important by the individual are considered to be salient to his/her life (Hartung, 2013). For example, during an athlete's career, it is possible the “worker” role is most salient as it provides a means to sustain his/her life as athletics is the job.

Providing a context and understanding of athletic retirement and transition process may offer direction to both athletes and practitioners as leaving sports is an inevitable, potential challenge. Roach and Dixon (2006) noted the absence of guidance to help athletes in their transition from one of play to a second career, specifically coaching. This involves a role change from that of a peer to one of authority. As a result of their study, the authors suggested "practical research and application" (p.153) related to shifts in power and role status are necessary due to the difficulties experienced during the athlete to coach transition (Roach & Dixon, 2006). Despite an internet search, there is no accurate statistic on the number of athletes that take on coaching as a second career. Much of the coaching literature has focused on coaching development and the building of expertise while acknowledging some coaches were former athletes.

As discussed earlier, Schinke and colleagues (1995) studied the evolution of elite basketball coaches from their first athletic experience to now. Using qualitative inquiry, the researchers were able to identify the career stages of the coaches. Additionally, participants opened up about their desire to remain connected to sport after they retired. This interest in

remaining connected was a motivator that impacted the participants' decision to pursue coaching. In exploring the transition to coaching, this study not only sought to understand the transition process but also what led coaches to choose this specific encore career as opposed to other possibilities. Self-determination theory (SDT) is one approach to considering human motivation and does not view motivation in as a dichotomy of intrinsic versus extrinsic. Rather, Ryan and Deci (2000) viewed motivation on a continuum encapsulating varying degrees or levels of extrinsic or external motivators to intrinsic or internal motivation which vary in the level of perceived autonomy. The continuum begins with amotivation or lack of motivation or intent. There are four types of extrinsic motivation (external regulated, introjected regulation, identified regulation, and integrated regulation). These types vary in the level of autonomy and internalization the person has regarding the behavior. The other end of the continuum is intrinsic motivation which is purely self-determined and internalized (Gagne & Deci, 2005).

A meta-theory underlying SDT highlighted psychological needs which drive actions including competence, autonomy, and relatedness and when satisfied, increase well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000). These psychological needs are viewed as "nutriments" or necessities for intrinsic motivation and internalization (Gagne & Deci, 2005). Competence refers to feeling effective while autonomy relates to the experience of choice. Relatedness focuses on meaningful relationships (Chantara, Kaewkuekool, & Koul, 2011). Within the vocational arena, tangible rewards such as paychecks are a normal part of the work environment. Research has showed how detrimental such rewards can be on intrinsic motivation. Within SDT, the varying types of extrinsic motivation demonstrate how a reward can be utilized so as not to lead to a decrease in intrinsic motivation. SDT has been studied in conjunction with work motivation in organizations which have found impacts on effective performance, job satisfaction, and well-being. Questions

within the interview protocol were included to reveal the types of motivation the coaches experienced regarding their vocational choices and transitions.

Within the coaching realm, Bennie and O'Connor (2010) looked into the process of coaching itself noting the importance of a humanistic approach. This effective coaching philosophy led to coaches who teach skills that translate on and off the field as well as a focus on learning and improvement as opposed to win no matter. A case study on Pat Summitt, former collegiate basketball coach, highlighted this effective coaching philosophy (Becker & Wrisberg, 2008). After reviewing footage of six practices and coding behaviors, the authors found instruction and praise were the two most utilized behaviors (Becker & Wrisberg, 2008). Pat Summitt, in addition to Wayne Gretzky in hockey, Bill Russell in basketball, and Frank Robinson in baseball (ESPN, 2005) are examples of former athletes turned coaches.

Shachar, Brewer, Cornelius, and Petitpas (2004) looked specifically into the athlete to coach transition and its connection to athletic identity through quantitative analysis. Athletes who became coaches had a tendency to avoid engaging in career exploration of possibilities or opportunities outside of sport. Additionally, the researchers found identity at the time of retirement did not aid in the decision to become a coach. However, those who did not become coaches held weaker athletic identities as compared to those who became coaches (Shachar, Brewer, Cornelius, & Paptitpas, 2004). Self-identity is a more internalized motivator outside of intrinsic motivation which, according to SDT, can drive behavior. Shachar, Brewer, Cornelius, and Paptitpas's (2004) study demonstrated the potential minimal impact this motivator (identity) had on the decision to coach leaving questions about how this will play out in the current study (Ryan & Deci, 2000). A former athlete turned coach may experience benefits as a result of his/her past experiences as an athlete such as the ability to establish trust and socialization

(Roach & Dixon, 2006). Conversely, the transition, itself, can be a disadvantage due to the necessary role change resulting in blurred lines between being seen as a peer versus an authority figure (Roach & Dixon, 2006).

By understanding the athlete to coach transition experience, the current researcher could begin to comprehend what elements facilitate a successful transition. In doing so, practical implications derived from the current study could be implemented providing aid to those when maneuvering through transitions. Qualitative inquiry can provide insight into possible resources the participants have used or would consider using if made available. Lally's (2007) study suggested coping skills including turning to social support as helpful tools when transitioning out of sport. This study explored what would be helpful when transitioning into the career of a coach. For resources that may already exist, insight could provide understanding as to the lack of use. If we do not explore, from the athlete's perspective, what would aid in the transition; we cannot create a resource that he/she is willing to utilize.

As a result, the purpose of the current phenomenological, qualitative study was to explore the essence behind the athlete to coach transition of current, elite, baseball coaches. According to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics (BLS; 2018), there were 11,800 athlete and sport competitor jobs in 2016. Approximately 5-7% of athletes retire each year (North & Lavalley, 2004) resulting in approximately 590 to 826 athletes retiring annually perhaps with the intention of pursuing a second career. The athlete to coach transition is a specific type of career transition; although, it is unclear what is experienced. Is it similar to other transitions within a vocational or even athletic lens or is there a difference to how it is experienced? The goal of the current researcher was to explore the participants' experience with transitioning including their beliefs and feelings about what the process itself was like. In order to explore coaches' experiences with the transition,

participants were asked a number of exploratory questions within a semi-structured interview format which was informed by the available literature, Super's life-span, life-space theory of career, and Self-Determination theory in order to understand the following research questions.

### **Main Research Question**

1. How do former athletes interpret and explain the experiences of the transition from athletics to coaching?

The researcher has the assumption the transition to coaching will involve discussions of the distress associated with leaving sport initially described in transition literature (Wylleman & Reints, 2010). In addition, the participants will demonstrate possession of career maturity, also known as career adaptability which aided in managing potential challenges to successfully prepare them for the transitions in, out, and back into sport (Hartung, 2013). The researcher believes the former athletes will have utilized resources in order to facilitate a satisfactory transition into coaching.

### **Sub-Research Question**

2. How do former athletes describe their identity in terms of their experience and decision to become coaches?

Athletic identity is the salience to which an individual sees them self through the athlete role (as cited in Benson, Evans, Surya, Martin, & Eys, 2015, p303). From a vocational perspective, Super's life-span, life-space theory would postulate the athlete or worker role as a salient part of the individual's vocational self-concept during the establishment and maintenance of his/her athletic career (Hartung, 2013). Despite the utility in relinquishing or letting go of the athletic identity upon retirement, athletes can struggle to do so (Beamon, 2012). Research has noted how a salient athletic identity is associated with higher levels of distress at the time of

retirement. Specific to the athlete to coach transition, Shachar, Brewer, Cornelius, and Petitpas' (2014) results highlighted identity did not play a statistically significant role in an athlete's decision to pursue a career in coaching. This may create a conflict within the literature as to how identity plays a role in the next career decision making process especially considering the basketball coaches studied by Schnike and colleagues (1995) who wanted to remain connected to sport. The current researcher believed identity or vocational self-concept would impact the experience of the athlete to coach transition process as well as motivate the coaches' decision to become coaches.

### **Summary**

This chapter has attempted to provide an overview of the need to understand the athlete to coach transition experience. The next chapter will review and critique literature relevant to the current dissertation focusing on factors related to athletic transitions including identity, coaching development and expertise, and empirical support for Super's life-span, life space theory and self-determination theory which provided a theoretical framework for the study. The third chapter will address the methodology that was used. Chapter 4 will discuss the findings of the current dissertation and the last chapter will provide insight into the overall essence of the athlete to coach transition. In addition, the final chapter will make connections between the findings, relevant literature, and theoretical framework while also discussing the limitation, significance, implications, and considerations for future research.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

Hobbies can become passions and passions can grow into career paths. However, a traditional career trajectory is less common in today's society as individuals are less likely to remain at one career throughout their entire working life. Hartung (2013) and Super (1985) note individuals may revisit or recycle through past career stages (growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and disengagement) over the course of their lifespan as a result of this new trend. Within the realm of sports, the one guarantee of all athletic careers; they inevitably end. This sentiment, as described by Hartung (2013) and Super (1985) appears to be particularly apparent in the sport world as the average age of retirement is 33 years (Hadavi, 2011); although, the age can vary (younger or older) depending on the sport.

Park, Lavallee, and Tod (2012) highlighted the increase in transition research within the sport psychology literature over the last 30 years. Studies have included both within and out of sport transitions. An example of a within sport transition could be a change in positions (i.e. defense to goalie) while out of sport transitions refers to leaving the sport. In the literature focused on leaving sport, the terms "retirement" and "transition out of sport" have been used interchangeably. Retirement, also known as disengagement in the vocational/career literature, marks a stage in life where an individual is leaving the world of work marking a time of transition (Hartung, 2013). For athletes, a transition is still experienced during retirement; however, retirement is the inability to continue playing the sport of their choosing. For the purposes of this dissertation, retirement and transition will be defined as follows: retirement is a stage in one's life and transition is the process of moving through stages.

Retirement from sport can take myriad of forms leaving many uncertainties about the next phase of life. In addition, various factors can play a role in the quality of the transition process such as identity, predictability/choice, etc. (Park, Lavalley, & Tod, 2012). Wylleman, Alfermann, and Lavalley (2004) highlight literature's direction towards a holistic, life-span approach. In their review, Wylleman and colleagues (2004) suggested researching specific types of athletic transitions such as drop out in youth sports or non-normative transitions (i.e. change of personal coach or athletic injury). In doing so, a greater understanding could be gathered about transition experiences. This study took Wylleman et al.'s (2004) advice and explored a particular type of transition process by exploring the shift from one career to an encore career within sports: athlete to coach. While transitions out of sport have received much attention over the last three decades (Wylleman, Alfermann, & Lavalley, 2004), there exists little exploration about what happens beyond retirement and into a possible next career.

McKnight, Bernes, Gunn, Chorney, Ornn and Bardick (2009) noted despite misconceptions, athletic retirement is different than traditional career disengagement. First, the age of retirement is younger. Traditional age of retirement is 65 years old compared to athletes whose average age of retirement is approximately 33 years (BLS, 2018; Hadavi, 2011). Consequently there is approximately 32 years left of working years available to former athletes should they choose to find another career. The concept of a second career after disengagement from the world of work, Freedman (2007) called an encore career (as cited in Hartung, 2013). Second, McKnight and colleagues (2009) highlighted the disruption of identity is more prominent in athletes due to the dedication and investment placed on their sport. After athletes retire from playing, a possible transition is into coaching which can consume the remainder of working years as an encore career.

For example, Schinke, Bloom, and Salmela (1995) studied the evolution of elite basketball coaches beginning with their first athletic experience. They were able to see distinct stages throughout the coaches' career paths that involved an interest in remaining connected to sport upon retirement. In addition, the "winningest collegiate basketball coach," Pat Summitt was a former athlete herself (Becker & Wrisberg, 2008). Her coaching ability was reviewed by researchers to understand effective coaching behavior finding instruction, praise, and hustle were most utilized as well as taking an individualized approach.

Despite the studies that referenced athletes who may turn to coaching as a second career, there are no accurate statistics on the number of athletes who become coaches. Nevertheless, this is not an unheard of phenomena given examples like Wayne Gretsky and Frank Robinson (ESPN, 2005). Knowing this phenomena occurs, this dissertation explored six current, elite coaches' experiences with the process of transitioning from a time of play to directing from the bench. In doing so, the researcher was able to understand the shared essence behind this lived experience. To understand the context related to this transition, the literature reviewed consisted of athletic transitions as a broad construct including identity as a contributing factor. Additionally, empirical support and a critique of Super life-span, life-space theory of career and Self-Determination Theory were provided as both gave a theoretical lens for the current study. Lastly, coaching development and expertise literature offered a basis for what research has considered important and relevant in the profession of coaching. For clarification purposes, this chapter will be separated into four distinct sections: 1) athletic transitions, 2) Super's life-span, life-space theory, 3) Self-determination theory, 4) coaching development and expertise, and 5) significance.

## **Athletic Transitions**

Transitions involve movement from one career stage or another which can occur as a result of various factors (Hartung, 2013). Within a sport context, transitions can take a variety of forms for instance the change from one level of competition to another (i.e. high school to college), position change (i.e. first baseman to outfielder), and leaving sport due to retirement. Stambulova, Alfermann, Statler, and Côté (2009) discussed the shifts that have occurred in the research on athletic transitions as follows: 1) transitions are viewed as a phenomena, 2) considering transitions within an athletic career is not simply retirement from sport, and 3) taking a holistic approach. There are inquiries which attempted to understand athletic retirement through reviews of existent literature and qualitative and quantitative studies. Erpic, Wylleman, and Zupancic (2004) highlighted how both athletic and non-athletic factors can impact the transition process. A questionnaire was provided to retired Slovene athletes who had competed at an elite level. Athletic factors such as identity, choice, and evaluation of achievement while non-athletic factors including education and negative transitions unrelated to sport (i.e. death of a loved one, serious illness) were found to impact career transitions. The study highlighted how multifaceted and complex athletic transitions can be; however, the participants were of Slovene descent which impacts the generalizability of the findings (Erpic, Wyllemann, & Zupancic, 2004).

On average, 5 to 7% of elite athletes discontinue from sports each year (as cited in Wylleman & Reints, 2010). Retirement or discontinuation from sport can be viewed as a turning phase in the athlete's life which may be met with stress and uncertainty about what the next chapter of life will look like (Wylleman & Reints, 2010). In fact, Alfermann (2000) highlighted 15-20% of elite athletes experience distress associated with retirement (as cited in Stambulova

, Alftermann, Statler, Côté, 2009). Potential challenges included adjusting to new life, missing sport or competition, body changes, social status changes, and vocational responsibilities (Wylleman & Reints, 2010). Specific to vocational responsibilities, Naul (1994) noted possible pitfalls included a lack of necessary knowledge, skills, or experience, reduction in salary, and having co-workers who are younger with seniority (as cited in Wylleman & Reints, 2010).

Furthermore, in comparison to non-athletes, athletes may struggle more during the transition process due to having less time to consider and plan for retirement or other circumstances surrounding the transition process (Fortunato & Marchant, 1999; Lavalley, Gordon, & Grove, 1997). McKnight et al. (2009) noted the type of transition (Fortunato & Marchant, 1999; Wippert & Wippert, 2010) and identity can play a role in the transition process. Transition can be predictable or unpredictable. Predictable means a transition is planned or expected such as the shift from sixth to seventh grade. On the other hand, an unpredictable transition can come in the form of a career-ending injury or being released by a team which can occur without notice or warning (Wylleman & Reints, 2010).

Fortunato and Marchant (1999) conducted in-depth interviews with 30 athletes who experienced unpredictable circumstances (injury or deselection) related to their retirement. Findings indicated positive reflections of playing experience but a sense of loss associated with a forced retirement as many felt bitterness toward having to discontinue versus choosing to walk away. Some participants expressed comfort with retirement while a majority felt unsatisfied with their new non-athletic lives. Self-concept was a theme that emerged related to the high importance of sport within the athletes' lives. Former elite gymnasts struggled to redefine their self-concept following retirement resulting in difficulties with the transition out of sport given how greatly they identified with their role as athletes (Kerr & Dacyshyn, 2000; Lavalley &

Robinson, 2007). Phenomenological approaches explored the experience of retirement of elite, female gymnasts. Lavalley and Robinson (2007) and Kerr and Dacyshyn (2000) found the athletes interviewed struggled with retirement resulting in feelings of worthlessness, frustration, a sense of loss, and an attempt to discover a life without sport. Lavalley and Robinson (2007) noted the participants had to distance themselves from sport in order to establish new non-athletic identities.

The participants (Lavalley & Robinson, 2007) suggested control over the transition may have been helpful in combating the distress as they could gradually withdraw from sport and find a meaningful replacement for the sport. This sentiment is reiterated in Arvinen-Barrow, Hurley, and Ruiz's (2017) qualitative study with three former, elite Irish rugby players who left sport due to injury. Many themes emerged about the injury experience including discomfort and stress as a result of the injury, and its impact on daily life. Arvinen-Barrow, Hurley, and Ruiz (2017) noted during the transition process, the athletes utilized strategies or resources such as turning to supportive persons, avoidance coping, and taking control over the rehabilitation process to manage.

Of the participants studied by Wippert and Wippert (2010), four left voluntarily while seventeen were let go unexpectedly. Standardized questionnaires found psychological distress was higher for those whose decision to leave sport was out of their control manifesting in more pronounced interpersonal sensitivity, OCD symptoms, and negative mood states. Distress did decrease over time; however after 5.5 months, those who left involuntarily experienced lower self-efficacy and more hostility (Wippert & Wippert, 2010). While taking control may be beneficial to athletes as noted previously, participants studied by Kerr and Dacyshyn (2000) still experienced distress associated with retirement even when the decision to leave sport was within

their control which highlights inconsistencies within the literature related to control's impact. Though the level of distress and impact of the transition process may manifest differently depending on the transition type, it is evident there is difficulty associated with disengagement from sport for some regardless.

The experience of distress can be seen at various levels of sport participation. For instance, 400,000 collegiate athletes participate in National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) sports (Sugerman, 2011) and graduation typically marks the end of sports for an athlete unless he/she moves on to an elite level of play. Harrison and Lawrence (2004) conducted a study as part of a larger research project utilizing the Life After Sports Scale (LASS), a mixed method inventory. They surveyed 143 collegiate athletes focusing on the qualitative portion of the inventory, specifically with grounded theory and visual elicitation, using a successful athletic visual profile. Findings suggested athletes who had not previously considered life after sports were motivated to do so following participation in the study. Having a positive image of an athlete living life post-sport was helpful to the student-athletes. Harrison and Lawrence (2004) noted the participants did not aspire to play professional sports after graduation which also allowed them to create a narrative around their future non-athletic careers.

This form of distancing described by both Harrison and Lawrence (2004) and Lavalley and Robinson (2007) demonstrate the difficulty which can arise from a high identification with one's sport. Athletic identity is defined as "exclusivity and strength with which people identify with their role as an athlete" (as cited in Benson, Evans, Surya, Martin, & Eys, 2015, p303). Webb, Masco, Riley, and Headrick (1998) studied the athletic identity of former athletes who played in high school, college, or professional in order to examine the connection between identity and retirement difficulties. The findings showed a relationship between high athletic

identity and retirement struggles but not life satisfaction. This was especially apparent for those who experienced an injury which would be outside of one's control. (Webb, Masco, Riley & Headrick, 1998).

Among athletic identity research, Harrison and Lawrence's (2004) findings differed from that of Beamon (2012) who interviewed 20 African American male, former Division I collegiate athletes who played basketball or football. All those surveyed discussed difficulty with accepting the end of their sport careers and a sense of loss. Fourteen of the participants noted their salient athletic identity impacted their ability to transition. Consequently, they did not consider other career prospects while in school resulting in difficulty leaving sports (Beamon, 2012). Fortunato and Marchant (1998) found the salience of one's athletic identity can impact the transition process of leaving sport leading to a loss of identity and feelings of grief and loss. Additionally, identity can further impact the process in relation to emotional and social adjustment, planning, and distress with career decision making (Grove, Lavalley, & Gordon, 1997).

As can be seen, there are mixed findings as to the degree athletic identity may result in a negative transition experience. Lally (2007) took a longitudinal approach by interviewing six collegiate athletes at three separate occasions: 1) start of last season, 2) 1 month after retirement, and 3) 1 year after retirement. Participants who anticipated the end of their sport career and employed coping strategies experienced a less strenuous transition. Examples of coping strategies included reaching out to former teammates who had retired, engaging in other physical pursuits, and beginning to diminish their identity as athletes. Additionally, Stier (2007) interviewed Swedish, ex-professional tennis players in order to explore career retirement, role exit, and identity struggles. The role of a "tennis player" was described as being of high importance compared to other life roles. Through the athletes' responses, it was found the

transition was a more gradual process of adjustment and self-discovery. Stier (2007) noted a discrepancy from other literature in that challenges with adjustment were experienced but to lesser degrees than suggested in previous literature.

In addition to identity's potential role in the experience of transitions, culture has been considered (Küettel, Boyle, Christensen & Schmid, 2018; Stambulova, Stephan & Jäphag, 2007; Torregrosa, Boixadós, Valiente, & Cruz; 2004). Stambulova, Stephan and Jäphag (2007) conducted a cross-national comparison to understand athletic retirement from the perspective of athletes from France and Sweden using the Retirement from Sports survey. Differences between groups were found in relation to emotions about retirement which were more positive among the Swedish athletes. Also, there was perceived higher difficulty in starting the next professional career among the French sample. Lastly, a commonality found was the ability to plan for retirement in advance and the decision to leave was voluntary.

Torregrosa and colleagues (2004) took a prospective, qualitative approach in order to understand the process of retirement as it is occurring using a grounded theory approach with Olympic athletes in Spain. Three periods related to retirement were found: 1) initiation/training, 2) maturity performance, and 3) anticipation of retirement. This led researchers to believe that a gradual consideration of retirement prior to the event helps decrease the uncertainty and as distress cited in previous studies. Similar to Torregrosa and colleagues (2004), the French athletes found an encore career within sport; however, the expectation that it would help with coping was not supported as these athletes also had less psychological support compared to their Swedish counterparts (Stambulova, Stephan & Jäphag, 2007).

Additionally, Küettel, Boyle, Christensen & Schmid (2018) considered cultural factors in their cross-national study involving 401 former elite athletes of Swiss, Danish and Polish

heritage. The former athletes completed an online survey in addition to supplemental questions related to life after sport. No differences were found in regards to pre-retirement planning. Also, it took approximately nine months, post-retirement, for the former athletes to adjust to life after sport. Differences were noted between cultures such as: 1) Polish athletes found sport-related jobs after retirement and endorsed lower life satisfaction, 2) Swiss athletes experienced higher current career satisfaction, and 3) Danish athletes rated the gains of their sport career higher but perceived their emotional and social adaptation more challenging compared to the Swiss athletes.

With their review, Stambulova, Alfermann, Statler, and Côté (2009) provided a summation of findings among North American, European, and Australian research on the construct of career termination in sport. First, multiple causes can contribute to one's disengagement from sport which involves a long process of decision making. Diaz de Corcuera, Sáiz, Cuerva, and Calvo (2013) acknowledged these multiple contributing factors (i.e. academic, economic) aided in the conceptualization of the transition process as multidimensional. Second, there are individual differences that could dictate the level of distress experienced. Third, subjective feelings of choice to leave sports can play a bigger role in adaptation to retirement regardless of whether, objectively, it was voluntary or involuntary. Fourth, coping can be aided by planning for life after sport. Also, the coping process can depend not only on the individual but on resources available. Resources and programs do exist to facilitate the athletic transition process and research has explored the nature and effectiveness of them (Baille, 1993; Lavalley, Gordon, & Grove, 1997; McKnight, Bernes, Gunn, Chorney, Ornn, & Bardick, 2009; Pearson & Petitpas, 1990). By having an awareness of the contributing factors, including culture, which may result in anxiety and distress, programs can better attend to athletes' needs.

**Resources and Programs.** How athletes manage the potential distress that may come from transitions is necessary to understand the full experience. One tactic is engaging in available resources. Google dictionary defines resources as "an action or strategy which may be adopted in adverse circumstances." Stambulova and colleagues (2009) noted how others can play a role as a possible resource. For example, Park & Levallee (2015) discussed social support (i.e. coaches, training staff, family members, and sport psychology consultants) can be a buffer to the potential negative effects associated with retirement. Lavallee, Gordon, and Grove (1997) studied other coping tools outside of social support to handle the potential distress and identity issues, specifically, confiding and account-making. Both have been viewed as coping strategies in previous literature to manage stress and anxiety due to the feelings of loss which have been endorsed during the transition process.

Samuel and Tenenbaum (2013) discussed benefits of confiding in others in relation to decision making processes. Specifically they looked at decision making during change events (i.e. injury, field position change) and the tendency to either make or not make the required change. Three hundred thirty-eight athletes completed an inventory demonstrating a high tendency to consult with others during decision making followed by the decision to make the necessary change. Potentially, the decision to change is related to the helpfulness of the support provided, a motivation for change, or coping strategies. Lavallee and colleagues (1997) found a relationship between the use of account-making and confiding and less distress endorsed. Account making is the process of creating a story or account of the event including emotional experience and descriptions related to oneself and the environment. This skill has been found to aid those who have experienced a traumatic event and identity loss. Confiding in addition to account making have been viewed as coping strategies to manage stress and anxiety as a result of

loss which have been endorsed in the transition process (Lavalley, Gordon, & Grove, 1997). Lavalley and colleagues (1997) found a relationship between using account-making (expressing emotions associated with retirement) and confiding and less distress endorsed as athletes were able to express their emotions as well as gain an empathetic ear from a confidant. Moreover, findings suggested account-making and confiding are useful coping skills to manage the negative impact of a salient athletic identity. As both of these strategies can aid with the experience of retiring, it makes sense that better coping in turn creates a better adjustment to identity changes (Lavalley, Gordon, & Grove, 1997).

Another resource athletes can utilize is preventive programs. Baille and Danish (1992) noted athletes may have an unwillingness to plan for retirement yet are receptive to efforts to address post sport career development. In addition, Baille and Danish (1992) highlighted the complexity and individual differences associated with transitioning out of sport which could contribute to who may or may not take advantage of available programs. As noted, the struggles associated with the transition process can be experienced regardless of the level of competition attained (i.e. high school, collegiate, professional, Olympic) highlighting how implementation of resources or programs across these levels would be of great use.

Specific to collegiate athletes, Sugerman (2011) discusses a program called the NCAA Career in Sport Forum. This program is a 4 day event that discusses careers and life after graduation to student-athletes. In addition, students complete an Everything DiSC assessment that helps to individualize their experience and provide them with information on behavioral tendencies: Dominance (D), Influence (i), Steadiness (S), and Consciousness (C). It provides opportunities to explore and prepare for life after graduation. Sugerman (2011) reported 90 to 98% of those who attended found it useful as the four day event provides insight into sport-

related careers. While the student-athletes may not end up choosing sport-related careers following the conclusion of their college career, the tools they learned allowed them to connect with others athletes which helped them "improve their college sports experience and their lives" (p.87).

In Spain, Mateos, Torregrosa, and Cruz (2010) assessed thirty-five athletes to uncover their satisfaction with Tutorsport, a career assistance program aimed at supporting elite athletes during their undergraduate education in Spain. The athletes had varying lengths of time with Tutorsport and expressed high levels of satisfaction with the program as a whole. Difficulties related to career-decision making were reduced by involvement in the program; however, problems still emerged related to dysfunctional beliefs and general indecisiveness. This provided insight into areas the program could improve on (Mateos, Torregrosa, & Cruz, 2010).

Wylleman, Alftermann, and Lavallee (2004) and Stambulova and Ryba (2014) noted there are a wide variety of programs dedicated to helping elite athletes through transitions (i.e. CAPA, ACE, MJP, STEP, etc.). The programs in existence began as a means to provide emotional support, life-skills, and career guidance including retirement (Stambulova & Ryba, 2014). In relation to career skills and career guidance, the programs aimed to help former athletes with career counseling with tasks such as preparing a CV or resume and interview skills. Wylleman and colleagues (2004) noted a majority of the programs are run by national governing bodies, Olympic committees, specific sport federations, academic institutions, or independent organizations.

One of these programs is Career Assistance Program for Athletes (CAPA) which is offered by the United States Olympic Committee and the Olympic Athlete Career Centre to provide opportunities for retiring athletes to engage in post-sport planning both in career

planning but also the emotional experiences of leaving sports (Baille, 1993). Additionally, the Australian Athlete Career Education (ACE) program is one of the most internationally and influential programs (Stambulova and Ryba, 2014). ACE has been used with elite athletes in the United Kingdom, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland and it takes an individual and holistic approach to its work with athletes considering age, specific sports, finances, and career stage (Stambulova & Ryba, 2014). Pearson and Petitpas (1990) discussed another preventative program called Making the Jump Program (MJP). MJP is an ongoing project through Springfield College dedicated to providing seminars and workshops to high school students and their parents. The goal is to provide information and guidance related to the transition from high school to college athletics (Pearson & Petitpas, 1990).

Outside of social support and available programs, another tool or resource involved the identification of transferable skills (McKnight, Bernes, Gunn, Chorney, Ornn, & Bardick, 2009). Athletes develop skills throughout their athletic careers which could be implemented in their next career. McKnight et al. (2009) developed a treatment plan incorporating both psychoeducation and cognitive-behavioral therapy. However, the treatment plan, has not been tested to assess utility and effectiveness per the article. Stambulova and Ryba (2014) highlighted cultural differences such as various cultures may have a better ability to promote and finance programs compared to others. Overall, Lavalley and colleagues (2001) stated programs need a multidimensional approach to help former athletes, but in general, have received satisfactory opinions by those who have utilized the services of the program (as cited in Wylleman, Alftermann, & Lavalley, 2004). As this finding reveals, utilization is key leaving inquiry as to who would engage in programming.

North and Lavalley (2004) sought to explore this question among athletes in the United Kingdom. Five-hundred sixty-one elite athletes were surveyed and findings suggested an unwillingness of younger athletes to engage in planning for retirement. These athletes tended to believe there is a surplus of time left in their careers and in turn, time to consider a life after sports (North & Lavalley, 2004). Surujlal and van Zyl's (2014) study focused on career transitions from the point of view of two retired Olympic athletes. Insight from interviews into their family/life pre-sports, life during the Olympics, and life after sports and the transition into work was provided. For one of the participants (John), the transition was smooth and without many struggles. The second participant (Jack) discussed continued difficulty with adjusting to life post-sport. Additionally, neither participant received counseling or attended a program to assist in the transition process (Surujlal and van Zyl, 2014). Surujlal and van Zyl's (2014) findings highlighted the individual nature of the experience of transitions which Stambulova and colleagues (2007) had also noticed.

In addition to the programs (i.e. CAPA, MJP, ACE) that exist, Heird and Steinfeldt (2016) considered a specific psychotherapy which may be of assistance. The authors noted the influences of identity and the loss that may be experienced during withdraw from sports among student athletes could be helped through interpersonal psychotherapy (IPT). IPT addresses identity, the relationship with others, and takes role transitions into account which can help athletes to sit and process their experience switching from athlete to non-athlete (Heird & Steinfeldt, 2016).

Also Bjornsen and Dinkel (2017) took a different approach by taking a third party perspective from the viewpoint of collegiate coaches. Fourteen coaches partook in semi-structured interviews with Schlossberg's Transition Theory as a framework. Themes emerged

related to satisfaction with the supports in place for student-athletes, knowledge that transition factors can play a role in the process, recognition of the sport skills that can transfer to other areas, and additional programs/resources that could be beneficial such as a mentoring program between current and former student-athletes (Bjornsen & Dinkel, 2017).

Much of the research discussed has highlighted the difficulties which can accompany retirement and the transition experience. Knights, Sherry, and Ruddock-Hudson (2016) recognized these struggles; however, the purpose of their review was to assess factors that contribute to a successful career transition as few studies had taken this route of examination. After reviewing 10 studies, Knights and colleagues (2016) acknowledged the challenges athletes faced when leaving sport including occupational and social difficulties. Literature has explored life satisfaction, coping skills, and retirement type in order to understand what facilitates a successful transition. While few studies were included, Knights, Sherry, and Ruddock-Hudson (2016) were able to highlight a need for understanding successful transitions as opposed to solely focusing on challenges experienced. A suggestion which this dissertation took.

As can be seen while there are programs and resources available, there is always room for growth in order to aid in a satisfactory transition experience. When athletes engaged in using resources or programs there appeared to be satisfaction through the aid provided. However Pearson and Petitpas (1990) noted the difficulty in getting athletes to reach out and use such programs. This is further evidenced by North and Lavalley (2004) who found an unwillingness specifically in younger athletes to engage in planning for retirement. However, when used, Wylleman, Alfermann, and Lavalley (2004) found satisfaction in the services provide to athletes. Therefore, a question might remain as to what facilitates an athlete reaching out compared to those who do not.

**Theoretical Framework.** Within the current study, two theories provided a framework for the interview protocol, data analysis, and data interpretation stages. The coaches interviewed engaged in career transitions when they retired from playing and reentering baseball as coaches. Super's Life-span, life-space theory of career (Hartung, 2013) explores career development across the life span and takes into account the ability to shift and maneuver through various vocational stages. This ability is called career maturity or career adaptability which allows one to handle the potential challenges and utilize resources to successfully transition. Additionally, in exploring the coaches transition back into baseball, this dissertation provided insight into influencers or motivators to become a coach. Self-Determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) provided insight into the motivation behind this action. It goes beyond the dichotomy of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and instead considers it on a continuum based on the level of perceived autonomy and integration of said behavior. Both of these theories aided in exploring the experience of a successful transition into coaching as well as the driving forces which made coaching appealing as compared to other potential paths. Empirical support and a critique of each will be presented in the following sections.

**Super's Life-span, life-space theory of career.** Athletic transitions have been described as a process which coincides with Super's (1985) view of career development. Individuals may experience "spurts and plateaus, retrogressions and recyclings" as opposed to going through each career stage in one single motion (Super, 1985, p.407). Super's life-span, life-space theory of career is a developmental model which focuses on career across the life-span (Hartung, 2013). Donald E. Super developed the theory with three areas comprising it: 1) differential psychology, 2) developmental psychology, and 3) self-concept theory (Hartung, 2013). Differential psychology within a career context considers a match between the self and the situation. Hartung

(2013) expands on this notion further as individual-vocation match which can increase satisfaction and success within that career. Developmental psychology focuses on how an individual builds their career over a period of time. This relates to the life-span approach in that an individual will go through career stages over the course of his/her life (i.e. growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, disengagement) (Hartung, 2013). Career maturity, also known as career adaptability, is defined as "a psychological construct that denotes an individual's resources for coping with current and anticipated tasks, transitions, traumas in their occupational roles" (as cited in Rudolph, Lavigne, & Zacher, 2017, p.17) is a tenet of the theory. In order to successfully move through the stages and manage transitions successfully one must possess career maturity (Hartung, 2013). Lastly, self-concept theory "explains how individuals develop ideas over about who they are in different roles and situations based on self-observations of their own unique personal characteristics and experiences, as well as on social interactions feedback from others" (Hartung, 2013, p.88). An individual will develop and implement his/her sense of self into the occupation. Hartung (2013) provides the example of an athlete's notion of self as physical and fast to meet the role requirements of being an athlete. Hartung (2013) highlight Super's life-span, life-space theory over the last 60 years has resulted in empirical support of the tenets of the theory as well as its applicability to practice.

Of note, Hartung (2013) discusses the Career Pattern Study conducted in Middletown, New York which was a longitudinal study that provided evidence for the tenets of the theory (Super, 1985). 100 males were studied at 14-25 years of age and followed up at 21, 25, and 36. In discussing the establishment stage of the theory, Super (1985) notes traditionally this occurs in early, middle, and late 20s. However, as discussed earlier, individual differences could impact when one establishes and begins to maintain a career. Career maturity was found to be a

predictor of vocational and career outcomes including career satisfaction and self-improvement (Hartung, 2013; Super, 1985).

Past literature has supported and critiqued the various concepts within Super's theory. Some criticisms have emerged resulting in follow up studies. For example, concerns related to the theory's lack of consideration for demographic factors such as gender and culture were thought to be problematic (Fouad & Arbona, 1994; Hartung, 2013). Super's original theory was considered in relation to white males; however, studies have worked to assess the theory's concepts across cultures (Fouad & Arbona, 1994). The studies conducted have found concepts such as career maturity and progression through the career stages to fit cross-culturally; however, suggestions have been made. For example, Fouad and Arbona (1994) called for future studies to examine the relationship between ethnic identity and formation of the self-concept.

In the area of career maturity or career adaptability, meta-analyses have been conducted. Rudolph, Lavigne, and Zacher (2017) considered career adaptability with measures of adaptivity, adapting responses, adaption results, and demographic covariates. Within their quantitative meta-analysis, adaption results such as job performance, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions were considered in relation to career adaptability dimensions (i.e. concern, control, curiosity, and confidence) (Rudolph, Lavigne, Katz, & Zacher, 2017). Rudolph and colleagues' (2017) meta-analysis supported the structure of career adaptability and the need to take the variations into account in future research.

The dimensions of career adaptability are what demonstrate an individual possessing this feature allowing them to experience a successful transition. Concern refers to an individual's awareness and preparation of the future (Ryba, Zhang, Huang, & Aunola, 2017). Control references the level of personal responsibility a person takes regarding their future. Curiosity is

exploring for options or possibilities and confidence is the level of self-efficacy or belief in oneself (Ryba, Zhang, Huang, & Aunola, 2017). McMahon, Watson, and Bimrose (2012) investigated thirty-six older women's experience with coping and adapting to career transitions through qualitative inquiry. Within their investigation, a focus included the sub-theme of career adaptability including the four dimensions plus a fifth dimensions: cooperation. The findings of McMahon et al.'s (2012) show the value of qualitative inquiry in order to understand the experience of career adaptability and its dimensions. Additionally, the dimensions of career adaptability were evident within all the women's experiences although manifested differently showing the individual nature.

The utilization of vocational theories, like Super's life-span, life-space, has been considered in relation to athletic retirement. Baille (1993) does note the value of a life-span approach when working with retiring athletes as athletes may enter different stages of career development in their lives compared to the norm potentially creating feelings of falling behind. A necessary factor to moving through stages involves an ability to adapt to changes. Murphy, Peptitas, and Brewer (1996) studied the relationship between identity variables and career maturity with 124 intercollegiate athletes. Identity variables consisted of identity foreclosure and athletic identity. The findings suggest the foreclosure of one's athletic identity as well as failure to engage in exploration of other paths may result in delayed career development (Murphy, Petitpas, & Brewer, 1996).

**Self-Determination Theory.** Understanding the career transition experience of the current coaches includes exploring what motivated them to choose their specific profession. Various factors can move an individual to action (Ryan & Deci, 2000). For example, one can choose to work based on the financial reward or because they simply enjoy what they are doing.

From these examples, motivation can come from both internal and external factors. SDT was distinct in explaining motivation because it found multiple types of motivation rather than the dichotomy of solely internal or external. Within SDT, cognitive evaluation theory (CET) is included as a sub-theory which considers competence and autonomy as fundamental needs (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Specific to intrinsic motivation, studies have shown both competency and a sense of autonomy can enhance intrinsic motivation. Consequently, CET highlights the need for both efficacy in one's ability as well as belief that the behavior or action is self-determined or autonomous in order for intrinsic motivation to be elevated (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Beyond this notion, individual will engage in behaviors or actions that they are not intrinsically driven towards. SDT has found multiple types of extrinsic motivation and in fact, motivation is viewed on a continuum (Ryan & Deci, 2000). On one end of the spectrum is amotivation or experiencing a lack of motivation or intention to act. On the other end is intrinsic motivation or the tendency to act based on inherent interest. The middle ground encompasses four types of extrinsic motivation which ranges in the level of autonomy perceived and how much the behavior is internalized. Extrinsic motivation is the opposite of intrinsic in that the behavior or action is driven by an outcome (Ryan & Deci, 2000)

As noted, the level of autonomy depicts the four types of extrinsic motivation: 1) external regulated, 2) introjected regulated, 3) identified regulation and 4) integrated regulation. External regulated behaviors are driven by external rewards and resembles that of behaviorist theories of operant conditioning (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Introjected regulated actions involve feelings of a bit more autonomy on the part of the individual. These actions are done in order to avoid negative emotions or to experience feelings of pride. For instance, a student may choose to study rather than go to a party to avoid the anxiety that may come up due to procrastination. Continuing to

move along the continuum is identified regulated behavior. This involves seeing the behavior as something of personal value and important. The final type of extrinsic motivation according to SDT is also the most autonomy driven, outside of intrinsic motivation: integrated regulation. Integrated regulated behaviors are congruent with the person's view of self.

As can be seen and previously discussed, autonomy plays a role within SDT. Autonomy in addition to competence and relatedness are psychologist needs under a meta-theory within the theory. Autonomy is the experience of choice while competence refers to feeling effective. Relatedness focuses on meaningful relationships (Chantara, Kaewkuekool, & Koul, 2011). SDT informs the need for these three needs to be satisfied in order to an individual to experience well-being.

Research within self-determination theory has explored its connection with vocation/careers as well as athletics. Related to the current dissertation, Stephan, Fouquereau, and Fernandez (2008) explored motivation behind post retirement activities among 150 French retirees using SDT as a theoretical framework. Questionnaires were collected inquiring about retirement satisfaction, subjective health, and self-determination. The findings demonstrated higher levels of intrinsic motivation as compared to extrinsic motivation. Additionally, intrinsic motivation for accomplishment and stimulation led to greater satisfaction with retirement. Hollembek and Amorose (2005) considered a coach's impact on athletic motivation with regard to SDT and the three psychological needs of competence, autonomy, and relatedness. The findings demonstrated how impactful the three needs were on the athletes' intrinsic motivation as all were predictors. Also, Hollembek and Amorose's study also found the specific coaching behaviors predicted the psychological needs and as noted prior, those needs predict intrinsic motivation.

## **Coaching Development & Expertise**

A theme that emerged from Lavallee and Robinson's (2007) analysis of former gymnasts was the need to find a "worthwhile replacement" for the sport. Schinke, Bloom, and Salmela (1995) studied the career stages of elite basketball coaches beginning with their first athletic experience. The researchers were able to identify the career stages of the coaches; in addition, the methodology provided a space for the participants to acknowledge the desire to find a means to remain connected to sport following retirement. Perhaps coaching, for some, is that "worthwhile replacement" which eases the distress that can be associated with retirement.

An internet search was unable to provide a statistic related to the number of athletes that become coaches although it is not unheard of. Pat Summitt, for example, was a former player that became the "winningest collegiate basketball coach in NCAA Division I history" (Becker & Wrisberg, 2008, p.197). Becker and Wrisberg (2008) conducted a case study on the former collegiate basketball coach in order to explore behaviors of effective coaching through video recordings of 6 practices. After reviewing footage and coding behaviors, the researchers coded a number of behaviors through an observation instrument finding instruction and praise to be Summitt's two most utilized behaviors (Becker & Wrisberg, 2008). Additionally, an interview with Denise Boyd, former Australian sprinter, noted her return to sport as a coach came after her children became involved in sport (Modern Athlete and Coach, 2013). Boyd believes her time as an athlete helped with her coaching due to her ability to understand the athletic experiences (i.e. injury, pre-game nerves, wins/losses).

Much of coaching literature has focused on development and expertise within the profession of coaching. Research has acknowledged multiple experiences can facilitate a coach's knowledge (Callary, Werthner, & Trudel; 2012; Côté, 2006; Lorimer & Holland-Smith, 2012).

Callary, Werthner, and Trudel (2012) focused on the meaningful experiences of five Canadian, female coaches resulting in 5 non-fictional vignettes depicting how each participant learned to coach as a result of meaningful life experiences. They found learning to coach can manifest from experiences with athletes, talking or watching other coaches/mentors, applying information from educational courses, family, and self-reflection (Callary, Werthner, & Trudel; 2012). Lorimer and Holland-Smith's (2012) case study on an outdoor adventure coach demonstrated a similar mind-set as Callary and colleagues (2012). The participant discussed his early experiences with hiking and the outdoors and in turn, adventure sports influenced in decision to become an outdoor coach (Lorimer & Holland-Smith, 2012).

Similarly, Côté (2006) notes learning can come from coach education programs and active coaching. Côté (2006) highlights past experiences as an athlete can be a factor within coaching development based on past research on successful coaches. Successful coaches were defined as having at least 5 years of experiences, a winning percentage, and peer recognition for coaching experience. Coaches within college volleyball, high school softball, and college football were recruited and displayed thousands of hours and multiple years of athletic experience prior to coaching (Gilbert, Côté, & Mallett, 2006). The past athletic experiences of the coaches highlight programs that gave opportunity for transferable skills to aid in the development of successful coaches (Côté, 2006). As noted previously by McKnight, Bernes, Gunn, Chorney, Ornn and Bardick (2009), identified transferable skills can be beneficial during the transition out of sport in preparation for the next phase of life. Past athletic experience can provide skill which would be beneficial to one day coaching those same skills.

Bennie and O'Connor (2010) looked into perceptions of effective coaching through qualitative interviews. Professional athletes and coaches from Australian rugby and cricket were

recruited to answer questions related to what makes an effective coach and the role of the coach as part of the team. Findings demonstrated an importance of a humanistic approach as an effective coaching philosophy. This relates to coaches whose programs are dedicated to teaching skills that translate on and off the field as well as a focus on learning and improvement as opposed to winning at all costs.

In addition to the research focused on development and expertise, coaching literature has considered the link between athletes and coaches. Blackett, Evans, and Piggott (2015) highlight how common the athlete to coach phenomena is among current English and Welsh rugby and football coaches. As a result of their past performance, Rynne (2014) notes former athletes are "fast tracked" into the coaching profession. The purpose of Blackett and colleagues' (2015) study was to explore professional sport directors' decisions to fast-track former athletes into the coaching profession. From the perspective of the directors, they believed these former athletes had a quicker way to "legitimize their authority" (Blackett, Evans, & Piggott, 2015, p.13).

These findings are opposite of Roach and Dixon (2006) who discussed the benefits and disadvantages of hiring former athletes. The transition itself was considered a disadvantage due to the necessary role change resulting in blurred lines between being seen as a peer versus an authority figure (Roach & Dixon, 2006). It is worth noting the participants in these 2 studies included former athletes becoming head coaches (Blackett, Evans, & Piggott, 2015) and assistant coaches (Roach & Dixon, 2006) which could have different experiences.

Shachar, Brewer, Cornelius, and Petitpas (2004) took a quantitative approach to explore what drives an athlete to embark on a coaching career including the possible connection to athletic identity. Participants included athletes who became coaches as well as those who did not. The Israeli former athletes who became coaches had a tendency to avoid engaging in career

exploration outside of sport. Additionally, the researchers found identity at the time of retirement did not aid in the decision to become a coach. However, those who did not become coaches held weaker athletic identities as compared to those who became coaches (Shachar, Brewer, Cornelius, & Paptitpas, 2004). Despite studies relating past athletic experience to coaching, none focused on the experience of transitioning from athlete to coaches outside of Shachar and colleagues (2004) which was focused on coaches of Israeli decent limiting generalizability.

### **Significance**

This chapter has provided insight into the main tenets of the current study: athletic transitions including identity, Super's life-span, life-space theory of career, self determination theory, and coaching development and expertise. As can be noted, there have been a wide range of literature dedicated to exploring these constructs as separate entities including reviews of past research and differing methodologies. The quantitative studies have provided support for the distress that can be experienced when withdrawing from sport and how identity may be a factor due to high role salience. The qualitative inquiries, including phenomenology and grounded theory, have explored the experience of leaving sports through retrospective, prospective, and longitudinal approaches. However, few studies have considered the next phase after an athlete's playing career has concluded. Even the coaching literature presents conflicting findings related to past athletic experience as a benefit or disadvantage to becoming a coach.

More specifically, the researcher looked into current baseball coaches. The reason for this was Major League Baseball (MLB) stipulates to be recruited, at the youngest, an individual has graduated from high school who have not attended college (MLB, 2016). It is worth noting that players from outside the United States are not subject to the draft and can be signed by any team at a younger age; however, MLB made the minimum age 17 (Ruck, 2011). Conversely, for

National Football League (NFL) hopefuls must be 3 years post high school and have used up their college eligibility prior to the next college football season (NFL, 2018) to be drafted. The National Basketball Association (NBA) requires draftees to be a minimum of 19 years of age while National Hockey League's (NHL) minimum age is 18 (DraftSite, 2018).

According to Super's theory of career development between 14-24 years of age, an individual is entering a stage of exploration into the world of work. For all professional athletics, the draft ages fit within this window; however, MLB remains the youngest. Therefore, these young baseball professionals are potentially bypassing exploration in place of establishing a career and in turn, their vocational self-concept as an athlete/worker. Hartung (2013) highlighted key tasks during this stage include career planning and development of knowledge related to career decision making. The current researcher chose to focus on baseball in order to explore how the transition from athlete to coach is experienced with Super's theory in mind as exploration may not be occurring leaving questions as to how this impacts the transition into coaching.

Qualitative inquiry was able to provide insight into this exploratory research. In addition, a phenomenological approach sought to discover the essence of the transition of the phenomena of transitioning from playing baseball to coaching it, as well as the participants' views of what resources helped or hindered the process. Understanding what athletes experienced during the could inform support staff (i.e. coaches, family members, sport psychology consultants) to develop interventions or programs that will actually be utilized given when used, such resources were given satisfactory rating and experiences from athletes.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

This chapter presents a description of the methodology that was utilized in this qualitative, exploratory study with six, elite, male baseball coaches. This chapter will provide insight into the research design, a summation of the epistemology, and methodology of phenomenology. Data was collected using semi-structured, audio-taped interviews in order to answer the following question:

#### **Main Research Question**

1. How do former athletes interpret and explain the experience of the transition from athletics to coaching?

The researcher assumed participants would discuss current satisfaction with their encore career in coaching as well as a discussion about the ups and downs associated with the transition itself both out and into sport. Distress after athletic retirement has been documented in the literature and may include adjusting to new life, missing sport or competition, body changes, social status changes, and vocational responsibilities (Wylleman & Reints, 2010). Throughout one's vocational life, it is possible that challenges may emerge. Super's life-span, life-space theory states that to successfully pass through the developmental stages of career, one must have career maturity, also known as career adaptability (Hartung, 2013). The researcher believed the former athletes possess and/or have utilized resources in order to facilitate a satisfactory transition out of playing and into coaching. However, little research has studied the specific transition of athlete to coach nor followed an athlete past retirement and into their second career. As a result, the current study was framed as exploratory in nature and examined the following sub-research question.

## **Sub-Research Question**

2. How do former athletes describe their identity in terms of their experience and decision to become coaches?

Athletic identity is a well studied phenomenon in the sport psychology literature (Baillie & Danish, 1992; Beamon, 2012; Benson, Evans, Surya, Martin, & Eys, 2015). Athletic identity is defined as "exclusivity and strength with which people identify with their role as an athlete" (as cited in Benson, Evans, Surya, Martin, & Eys, 2015, p303). From a vocational perspective, Super's life-span, life-space theory would postulate the athlete or worker role has become a salient part of the individual's vocational self-concept as he established and maintained a career (Hartung, 2013). At the point of retirement, the vocational self-concept must be relinquished allowing the individual to focus on other life roles. However, research has noted the impact identity can have on the transition process following retirement such as higher levels of distress based on the salience of one's athletic identity. To the contrary, Shachar, Brewer, Cornelius, and Petitpas' (2014) results highlight identity did not play a statistically significant role in an athlete choosing to become a coach. This study creates the notion that identity does not motivate the decision to coach (Shachar, Brewer, Cornelius, & Petitpas, 2014). However conflict within the literature is present as to how identity plays a role in the next career decision making process. The current researcher assumed that a qualitative approach will be able to explore the participants' views of their identity and the potential motivating factor identity has to becoming a coach.

## **Research Design**

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological research study of elite baseball coaches was to understand the experience of the athlete to coach transition and how they

describe their identity throughout the transition and decision making process. Qualitative research strives to understand experiences and stories in addition to how these intersect with one another (Glesne, 2016). Van Maanen (1979) further explains qualitative inquiry uses a myriad of techniques meant to "describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world" (as cited in Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p.15). The purpose of qualitative analysis is three-fold: 1) understand how individuals interpret their experiences, 2) uncover how they construct the world, and 3) learn how individuals attribute meaning to their experiences (Glesne, 2016).

In conducting a qualitative study, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) describe four characteristics: 1) focus on meaning and understanding, 2) researcher as primary instrument, 3) an inductive process, and 4) rich description. Each will be described briefly in order to further comprehend the utility of qualitative research for the current study. First, in comparison to other forms of inquiry, qualitative analysis focuses on the process rather than the outcome of one's experience in order to understand how an individual sees his/her world or environment. Furthermore, the meaning of the experiences comes from the perspective of the participant or individual rather than the researcher. Second, instead of using surveys, measurements, and statistical programs, the researcher is the tool for both data collection and analysis. A third characteristic is due to a usual lack of theory to provide explanation for a phenomena. As a result, qualitative research takes an inductive approach in which data is gathered to build concepts and theories as opposed to beginning with a theory to test hypotheses. Lastly, qualitative results are richly descriptive as words are the data instead of numbers (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Creswell (2013) notes qualitative inquiry is utilized when a phenomena or issue needs to be explored. As a result of the current study's exploratory nature, qualitative techniques were appropriate to explore a phenomena in the sport world. Qualitative research is a broad description of research. Therefore, the following section will describe the qualitative technique that was employed in this dissertation: phenomenological.

**Overview of a Phenomenological Approach.** Glesne (2016) describes phenomenological research as the study of participants' lived experiences. Phenomenology strives to get at the essence of an experience. The goal is to "describe what all participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon" (Creswell, 2013, p.76). The process involves the identification of a phenomena, collecting data through interviews from participants, and developing a combined description of how the participants find meaning in that shared experience. The question is not so much about "why" the participants experience the phenomena but rather "what" and "how" it is experienced (as cited in Creswell, 2013). As noted earlier, there are two research questions the study was seeking to answer: 1) how do former athletes interpret and explain the experiences of a transition from athletics to coaching? and 2) how do former athletes describe their identity in terms of their experience throughout the transition process? In conducting a qualitative study, there are many types of research designs that may be considered. For example, in an ethnography the purpose is to understand and describe the culture of a group by looking at patterns in the group ideas and beliefs (Creswell, 2013). A case study, on the other hand, focuses on an in-depth understanding of a case. However, neither of these designs get at the essence of the experience that phenomenology is able to provide.

Phenomenology fits for the study due to its function in exploring the shared lived experience of the athlete to coach transition. The researcher was able to explore and provide

insight based on the research questions. Phenomenology allows for exploration into the nuances and complexities that also emerge such as career maturity, motivation, and identity.

**Overview of Epistemology.** Epistemology is a term used to describe the study of knowledge (Glesne, 2016). Glesne (2016) and Merriam and Tisdell (2016) discuss the concept of epistemology noting that what one believes dictates the type of research he/she conducts on top of the questions asked. There are both philosophical and theoretical assumptions which inform one's research. The determination of what assumptions are evident are established by how the researcher considers knowledge and the reality of the world. Creswell (2013) provides an outline of questions to consider when conceptualizing an epistemological framework: 1) what counts as knowledge? 2) How are knowledge claims justified? and 3) What is the relationship between the researcher and that being researched? (p.21). For the current dissertation, it was required the researcher rely on the quotes of her participants to provide evidence about the phenomena studied. As a former athlete, the current researcher has some degree of insider knowledge which may be shared to provide backing to the study; however, this cannot be fully achieved as the researcher was never a coach nor played baseball.

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) and Glesne (2016) highlight different philosophical assumptions including positivism, interpretivism, critical theory, and poststructuralism. The current study came from the belief that “reality is socially constructed” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p.9). This means that there is not a single reality but rather multiple realities of explanations for a single event or phenomena in need of interpretation and understanding. Glesne (2016) proposes it becomes the role of the researcher to “access others’ interpretations of some social phenomenon and of interpreting, themselves, other’s actions and intentions” (p.9). The central purpose of an interpretive qualitative study is to understand coinciding with this

dissertation's purpose. The current researcher's goal was to understand a phenomena: transition from athlete to coach. A transition process occurs over time meaning participants could still be in the midst of the transition. It was the researcher's responsibility to gather perspectives from a sample of former athletes who have or are still taking part in this transition which would be able to provide insight into the phenomena but also the culture of athletics (Glesne, 2016). As a result of taking an interpretivist framework, the study design included in-depth interactions with the participants. An interpretivist lens fits for this study due to the researcher's goal in exploring how each coach constructed their reality of the transition process experience.

### **Theoretical Framework**

As previously discussed, the purpose of this study was to explore the essence behind the coaches' transitions from playing their sport to directing on the sidelines. This involved understanding the transition experience as well as the driving force behind becoming a coach. Consequently, two theories provided a framework for this dissertation: Super's life-span, life space theory of career and Self-determination theory.

Similar to any other profession, there is a developmental approach that can apply to an athletic career. As noted, the traditional trajectory of one's career has shifted over the years with individuals changing jobs as opposed to maintaining employment at a single organization until retirement. In addition, Hartung (2013) notes that after traditional disengagement from the work place, individual may engage in bridge employment or as Freedman (2007) called it, an encore career. Within a sport context, athletes cannot expect to be playing their sport up to traditional disengagement age.

When the coaches left baseball, there was still many year of working life left given that retirement occurred as young as 23 years old to as old as mid 30s. Many options and possibilities

were available for the coaches to pursue; however, all chose coaching. Within self-determination theory, behaviors are not influenced by one sole driving force but rather multiple (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Additionally, the motivation behind a decision can also range in the level of autonomy perceived by the individual. Self-determination theory notes the degree of autonomy creates a continuum of motivation as opposed to a dichotomy of extrinsic or intrinsic motivation.

For the participants of the current study, the transition is one of play to that of directing from the sidelines. Their decision to pursue coaching above any other career is also driven by particular motivators. Super's life-span, life space theory and self-determination theory informed this study by providing insight into the interview questions that were asked about the athlete-to-coach transition. Additionally, the current researcher revisited the tenets of these theories during the data analysis and interpretation process as it informed the coding and interpretation of the results which will be presented in Chapter 4: Results.

### **Sources of Data**

Per Merriam and Tisdell (2016), most qualitative research utilizes interviews as a form of data with the most common being person-to-person. The purpose of interviews is to gather special types of information. Semi-structured interviews were utilized for the study in order to allow participants to share how they felt and interpreted the athlete to coach transition process. This is a useful source of data as interviews aid in research "when we cannot observe behavior, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p.108).

A semi-structured interview guide was used as it allowed for flexibility if the participants had more to offer or share than what was asked. The interview protocol was developed from the gaps in the literature, the phenomenological framework of the study, and the research questions. Patton (2015) discussed six type of questions to create a conversation (as cited in Merriam &

Tisdell, 2016). The researcher assessed which of the six types of questions would be most suitable to answer the research questions. The current study utilized the following due to their appropriateness in addressing the research questions discussed prior: 1) experience and behavior questions, 2) feeling questions, and 3) background/demographic questions. See Appendix B for a table depicting the relationship between the research questions and interview protocol.

Experience and behavior questions aim to understand what an individual does. Specific to the current study, these questions will be used in order to understand the behaviors and experience of being a former athlete turned coach. Feeling questions get at the emotional responses participants may experience. For instance, the current researcher asked questions about feelings related to leaving and returning to sport and the impact that may have had. Lastly,

background/demographic questions (see Appendix A) provided a picture of who the participants are for example asking about length of time in sport, type of transition, length of coaching experience, etc (as cited in Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The interview protocol (see Appendix C) asked questions in an open-ended format in which the goal was to understand the athlete to coach transition experience as well as the participants' feelings and thoughts surrounding their journey throughout athletics. The use of open-ended questions assisted in allowing the participants to frame their responses based on their personal experiences as opposed to what the researcher assumed would be the case. Being aware of one's position and assumptions as a researcher is vital to qualitative research as the researcher is the instrument rather than surveys or questionnaires. Further detail about researcher reflexivity will be provided in the "Researcher as the Instrument" section.

## Methodology

### Participants

A sample of six male ( $n = 6$ ) elite, baseball coaches consented to participate in the study. Given the nature of baseball consists solely of male athletes and coaches, all those interviewed were men providing no gender differences. Two coaches identified as Hispanic/Latino, one identified as Asian American, and three identified as White. Athletic careers, which was defined as the length of the coaches baseball careers beginning from the first time they participated as young boys through the end of their professional careers, ranged from 15 to 30 years. Coaching careers ranged from 6 to 19 years. Two of the coaches interviewed reach the major leagues during their player careers. Profiles of each of the coaches will be presented below focused on where they were at the time of their interview. Pseudonyms were used to protect the anonymity of the coaches.

**John.** At the time of his interview, John self-identified as a 45 year old, Hispanic male. At 18, he signed a professional baseball contract. He played professional baseball for fourteen years but never made it to the major league level. John experienced pain in his arm as well as surgeries which led him to choose to walk away from his playing career. He took a 9 year hiatus between when he finished playing to when he returned to the professional level as a coach. He was in his 6th year of coaching at the professional level and his current role was that of a manager at a minor league affiliate team.

**Riley.** At the time of his interview, Riley self-identified as a 46 year old, Hispanic male. He signed a professional contract at 17 years old. He had a minor league career until he was released from his team at 23 years old. Riley did not have a say in his retirement as he was let go and chose to focus his attention on his family. Three years after his last active season as a player,

Riley began scouting and coaching at a professional level. He was in his 19<sup>th</sup> year of coaching with a minor league affiliate team.

**Terrance.** At the time of his interview, Terrance identified as a 48 year old, White male. At 23 years old, Terrance signed a professional contract. He had a minor league baseball career which lasted 7 years. He experienced injuries which required surgeries. While Terrance felt he could have kept playing despite his injuries, he also experienced a personal loss. This in combination with his injuries led him to choose to walk away from his playing career. He had been coaching for 18 years which included the following roles: manager, catching coordinator, and field coordinator.

**Russell.** At the time of the interview, Russell identified as a 62 year old, White male. He began his professional baseball career when he was 22 years old which began with a stint in the minor leagues. Russell is one of two participants who made it to the major leagues at 23 years old. He experienced multiple consecutive injuries which ultimately led to the end of his nine year professional career. While he felt he could have stayed involved longer, his time in the major leagues taught him what was required to be successful. He knew it was time and he was prepared for what was next. Russell had twelve years of coaching experience both at the minor and major league level.

**Justin.** At his interview, Justin identified as a 62 year old, White male. He was drafted at 23 years old which began his professional baseball career. He was the other participant who made it to the major leagues where he played for 10 years. Justin felt it was time to retire after realizing he was not the same player he used to be. While he felt he could have prolonged his playing career as a "back-up," this was not congruent with his view of self. Justin was in his 11<sup>th</sup> year of

coaching during the time of this study which has included a managerial role with a minor league affiliate.

**Ken.** At his interview, Ken self-identified as a 40 year old, Asian-American male. He was 21 years old when he was drafted. His professional minor league playing career lasted 11 years. He had hopes that he would be able to reach the major leagues while also acknowledging his age. In having conversations with staff members there was hope instilled in him eliminating any preparations he had made for retirement. However, he was let go from his team. After taking a few months to process the loss of his playing career, he pursued his coaching career which had lasted 8 years at the point of the interview.

**Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria.** Google dictionary defines elite as "a select part of a group that is superior to the rest in terms of ability or qualities" (n.d). In order to help with saturation of data, only participants from a single sport were sampled. For the purposes of the study elite referred to coaches who work at the professional level of baseball. This will include minor league and/or major league sport organizations. In order to be included in the study, participants had to have had an athletic career as defined by Alfermann & Stambulova (2007). Athletic career "is a term for multi-year sport activity, voluntarily chosen by the person, and aimed at achieving his/her individual peak in athletic performance in one or several sport events" (as cited in Stambulova, Alfermann, Statler, & Cote, 2009, p.397). The participants were considered "experts" as defined by Ericsson, Krampe, and Tesch-Römer (1993). Ericsson and colleagues (1993) defined expertise as occurring after 10 years, 10,000 hours of deliberate, intense practice. Participants' athletic careers lasted a minimum of 10 years at any level. Participants had to be currently coaching baseball at an elite level. There were no requirements as to the number of years of coaching experience or the length of time it had been since they participated in sport. Participants

under the age of 18 were not considered for the study. In addition, participants who were not coaches; defined as an individual who is in uniform focused on the physical, technical, and tactical elements of baseball. That eliminated athletic trainers, strength and conditioning coaches, and mental health coaches.

**Recruitment.** The population of interest for the current study was current, professional baseball coaches. There were concerns related to acquiring participants from this population when this dissertation was proposed in May of 2018. As a result, the researcher included a contingency plan within the IRB. This plan involved including collegiate coaches as a possible participant pool in case access to professional coaches would prove to be too difficult. While this plan was in place, it was not needed as this study was able to comprise a sample of six ( $n = 6$ ) current professional coaches.

Participants were recruited using purposeful and snowball sampling. The current researcher utilized professional contacts or gatekeepers to recruit participants. Creswell (2009) defines gatekeepers as individuals that have access to potential participants therefore aid in gaining entry. In making contact with potential participants, the researcher sent a recruitment email (Appendix D) with a flyer attached (see Appendix E) or presented a hardcopy to gatekeepers. Details about the study as well as this researcher's contact information was provided in order to allow the potential participants to determine if they there was some interest or not in further contact. Purposeful sampling involved choosing participants to make up the sample that best helped the researcher understand the research question (Creswell, 2009). This involved choosing participants that met the inclusion/exclusion criteria as previously discussed. Upon contact, the researcher discussed the purpose of the study via phone (or alternate form of communication) and if the coach expressed interest in continuing with the study the most convenient mode of

communication for the participants was used moving forward (phone or email). Snowball sampling was also used in that as participants were recruited, they were then asked to become gatekeepers themselves in order to recruit more participants. The current sample consisted of 6 professional coaches.

## **Procedures**

IRB approval was received prior to the start of recruitment and data collection process. Semi-structured interviews were utilized for the study. The researcher interviewed participants once and asked if they would be willing to be contacted for follow up questions at a later time. Depending on the geographic location of the participants and their preferences, interviews were conducted in person or via telephone. If in person, interviews were conducted in a setting suggested by the participant. If via telephone, the researcher held the interview in her place of residence. At the beginning of each interview, participants were asked to sign an informed consent form explaining the purpose of the study and any potential risks/benefits to participating (Appendix F). Additionally, participants were asked to sign a consent to audio record form as well (see Appendix F). Audio-recording software was utilized during the interviews. If the participant was geographically unavailable, the informed consent was sent via email with instruction to return to the researcher.

The interviews took approximately 45-60 minutes with most typically taking 45 minutes. A semi-structured interview format was used (see Appendix C). At the end of the interviews, the current researcher debriefed with the participants about personal thoughts or comments on the conversation. After each individual interview, the researcher transcribed the audio-recordings verbatim.

## **Researcher as an instrument**

Pillow (2013) defines reflexivity as referring to the "critical reflection on how researcher, research participants, setting, and research procedures interact and influence each other" (as cited in Glesne, 2016, p.145). The researcher's background, experiences, theoretical framework, and more can impact the participants chosen, the questions asked (or not asked), and the interpretations of the data due to possible biases. The purpose of reflexivity, according to Creswell (2013), is to bring to the researcher's consciousness "the biases, values, and experiences that he or she brings to a qualitative study" (p.216) making her position on the phenomena very explicit. This included disclosing demographic information (i.e. gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation) and two other elements: 1) her experience with the phenomena and 2) how her personal experiences may shape the interpretation made as this all pertains to the current research proposal (Creswell, 2013; Gilgun, 2010). This was a continuous process that occurred throughout the research study including but not limited to before and during the design processes, during the implementation process, and while conducting the analysis (Gilgun, 2010).

As this section is meant to be a self-disclosure, the current researcher will use "I" statements. I am a Hispanic, cis-gender female, ex-soccer player who had a semi-planned transition out of sport. I began participating in athletics from a young age, approximately 5 years old including T-ball, soccer, gymnastics, and volleyball. I began to specialize in soccer, meaning I only participated in this sport, at 12 years of age. I participated in the sport at a competitive level until I was 18. I had plans to continue playing beyond that point when I attended college; however, I experienced a shoulder injury my senior year. I finished out the season that year but chose not to continue due to pain. Additionally, I realized I did not fully have the necessary skills

required for a college-level goalie and knew my playing time would be miniscule at my Division III college. I continued to play recreationally through intramural athletics but have not stepped out onto a soccer field in 4 years. I still am a fan of athletics and demonstrate this through attending and watching sporting events regularly.

I have no coaching experience outside mentoring younger athletes on my past teams. Therefore, I have no direct relationship to the phenomena of study; however, I chose a field within psychology that would allow me to continue my relationship with athletics: sport psychology. As a former athlete, I am aware I felt a void when I stepped away from sports and I continue to miss playing even at this present time. From personal experience, I recognize the difficulty I experienced in leaving sport behind and the initial struggle with being unable to play at a level I wanted and was accustomed to. Despite having this experience and having found another way, outside of coaching, to remain involved in athletics, I recognize this experience may not be reminiscent of all former athletes. Some athletes may choose to walk away from sports and be completely content with that decision while others may have a longing to return. The assumptions presented earlier in this chapter highlight the literature but also my beliefs as it pertains to the main and sub-research questions. As a result of these assumptions, the researcher engaged in steps so as to minimize the assumptions from taking over the study and data. These steps will be further discussed in the 'Sincerity' section.

### **Data Analysis**

After completion of each interview, the current researcher transcribed them verbatim. Moustakas (1994) and Polkinghorne (1989) provide insight into data analysis steps specific to a phenomenological study (as cited in Creswell, 2013). As the current study was phenomenological in nature, it was prudent to follow the steps laid out by experts in this domain,

therefore providing structure to the analytical process. The current researcher went through the transcripts line by line highlighting "significant statements" that provided insight into the participants' experiences of the phenomena. Moustakas (1994) calls this method horizontalization as it is a line by line analysis of the interviews. This researcher strove to find key phrases based on the research questions described earlier (as cited in Creswell, 2013). This initial stage of coding was a means to take an inventory of the data through descriptive coding (See Table 1).

Table 1

Collation of Codes to Themes

Codes	Theme
Mentality, Mindset, Focus, Shift in mindset, Planning, Confidence, Learning, Growth Mindset, Acceptance, Healthy Outlook, Positive Mindset, Ready, Change Lens Challenges, Struggle, Coaching vs. Playing, Different than Playing, Comparison to Play Perspective, Balance, Resources to be a Coach, Mentors to Coach, Education, Support, Mentor, Comparison, Individual to Others Mindset	Mental Preparation
Intrinsic, Passion, Influences, Enjoyment, Connection Reward, Sharing, Helping, Give Back, \$ (Money), Happy Share Experience, Help kids, Teach, Help others, Content Second Chance, Impact	Multilayered Motivation
Identity, Baseball is a Piece, Fit View of Self, Trait Impact on Identity, Baseball as part of Identity, New Role A Piece, Baseball not defining, Piece of Self, Part of You, Life Roles, More than Baseball, Shift, Player to Now, Baseball	Identity is Not Stagnant

Descriptions are able to be made as a result of the significant statements. Textural descriptions involve noting what the participants experienced (as cited in Creswell, 2013). Structural descriptions provide insight into the setting that influenced how the phenomena was experienced. As reflexivity is an essential element of qualitative inquiry, Moustakas (1994) adds another layer into the data analysis process in which the researcher writes about her experiences and the context and situations that have influenced those experiences (as cited in Creswell, 2013). This aids in presenting the "essence" of the phenomena and what it actually means for the participants who experience it. This would allow the researcher to look into the commonalities amongst the participants. Polkinghorne (1989) stated that after this stage, the researcher will be able to walk away stating "I understand better what it is like for someone to experience that" (as cited in Creswell, 2013, p.82). In addition, the current researcher utilized concepts from Brod, Tesler, and Christensen (2009) in determining saturation of data through creation of a saturation grid (See Table 2 below). Saturation is deemed reached when an individual participant provides no new themes or concepts (Brod, Tesler, & Christensen, 2009).

This bottom up approach, as described by Reid, Flowers, and Larkin (2005) aims to capture and uncover the meaning the participants placed on their experiences of the phenomena. In addition to the analysis described, a top down processing was also be integrated. Erickson (2004) discussed means to achieve this such as listening to the recordings while writing fields notes or continuously having a question in mind while reading the transcripts in search of the answer. This dissertation was informed by theory as explained in the 'Theoretical Frameworks' section. Super's life-span, life-space theory of career and Self-Determination theory created reference points in providing an understanding for the themes that may emerge. The bottom up or blank sheet approach aided in producing codes and themes from the data without assumptions

in addition to the themes that were pulled based on the theoretical framework. As biases may have emerged throughout the research process, the current researcher bracketed (discussed later) her bias (es) in order to be open to potential new themes that could emerge during the data interpretation stage. Through integration of both processes, the researcher hoped to provide a full understanding of the phenomena.

As discussed previously, the researcher has a history and experience with athletics and transitioning out of sport. Consequently steps were taken to help maintain the objectivity of the results in order to keep the researcher's bias (es) from determining the themes that emerged. The structure provided by Moustakas (1994) and Polkinghorne (1989) aided in the impartiality of data analysis; however, further steps will be taken that were addressed in the following section (as cited in Creswell, 2013).

Table 2

Saturation Grid

Themes/Sub-themes	John	Terrance	Riley
Theme I: Mental Preparation	X	X	X
• Healthy Outlook			
• Acceptance	X		
• Confidence	X	X	X
• Challenges	X	X	
• Resources	X	X	X
Theme II: Multilayered Motivation	X	X	X
• Passion	X	X	X
• Identity & Motivation	X	X	
• Give to the next generation	X	X	X
• Second chances			X
• Financial			X
Theme III: Identity is not Stagnant	X	X	X

• Creation of Athletic Identity	X	X	X
• Shifting Life Roles	X		X
• Baseball is a piece	X	X	
Theme/Sub-themes	Russell	Justin	Ken
Theme I: Mental Preparation	X	X	X
• Healthy Outlook	X	X	
• Acceptance	X		
• Confidence	X	X	X
• Challenges			X
• Resources			X
Theme II: Multilayered Motivation	X	X	X
• Passion	X	X	X
• Identity & Motivation			X
• Give to the next generation	X	X	X
• Second chances		X	
• Financial	X	X	X
Theme III: Identity is not Stagnant	X	X	X
• Creation of Athletic Identity	X	X	X
• Shifting Life Roles	X	X	
• Baseball is a piece	X	X	X

**Trustworthiness.** Trustworthiness is a term referring to the criteria that is used to assess the quality of a study. Tracy (2010) provides a model for the development and execution of quality research based in qualitative methodology. The eight markers are as follows: worthy topic, rich rigor, sincerity, credibility, resonance, significant contribution, ethics, and meaningful coherence. These eight markers, as opposed to their parallel constructs (reliability and validity), to demonstrate quality and trustworthiness throughout the research process. In addition to addressing the criteria, the researcher will provide the steps that were taken to achieve each.

**Worthy topic.** Tracey (2010) defines a worthy topic as one that is relevant, timely, significant, and interesting. Choosing a topic out of convenience without giving thought to what it can

provide in the larger context is not a worthy pursuit. However, "research that is counterintuitive, questions taken-for-granted assumptions, or challenges well-accepted ideas is often worthwhile" (Tracy, 2010, p.840). While it is difficult to draw statistics, there are many athletes that choose to pursue an encore career in coaching or other sport-related fields following retirement. There is vast literature on athletic retirement and coaching development and expertise but little that links the two. Perhaps athletes remain in sport due to interest or a job opens up making it an easy decision to stay. However, "well-accepted ideas" may not always be accurate. With the encouragement of Tracy (2010), this study worked to challenge the obvious answers by seeking coaches' transition stories. Through an understanding of the transition process, practical implications which emerged further labeled the study as worthy.

***Rich Rigor.*** Another concept in quality qualitative research is one of rich rigor. Tracy (2010) describes rich rigor as a "rich, complexity of abundance" (p.841). A study that has rich rigor includes various and complex theoretical constructs, data and time in the field, sample(s), context(s), and data collection and analysis processes. Due to this, it is believed the researcher was able to see the nuances and complexity associated with qualitative research. The study used Super's life-span, life-space theory of career and Self-Determination theory as frameworks. The researcher assessed the interview protocol through mock interviews with peers in order to gauge the understanding and wording of the questions. Creswell (2013) notes rigor involves attempts by the researcher to validate the results with techniques including member checking and triangulation. The field notes that were collected throughout the process aided in ensuring rich rigor and transparency as they detailed the IRB process, participants, setting, instruments, and procedures. In addition, the researcher will discuss the procedure of converting raw data into the results.

**Sincerity.** "Sincerity as an end goal can be achieved through self-reflexivity, vulnerability, honesty, transparency, and data auditing" (Tracy, 2010, p.841). The goal of sincerity is for the researcher to be aware of potential biases and their impact on the research process. Additionally, the researcher must be open about these with the audience creating transparency.

As noted in the 'Researcher as an Instrument' section, reflexivity is a major component of qualitative inquiry as well as a strategy for sincerity. The researcher was constantly reflecting on her biases. Moustakas (1994) highlights the concept of bracketing which was utilized in the study (as cited in Creswell, 2013). Bracketing involves the researcher setting aside or bracketing her experiences as much as possible. This allows for a fresher point of view in regards to the phenomena rather than allowing past experiences to dictate the data collection, analysis, and interpretation. In addition to reflecting on her own, the researcher engaged in periodic meetings with the chair and methodologist of her dissertation committee to address concerns, provide updates, and discuss emerging categories and concepts. Lastly, the researcher maintained an audit trail throughout the research process providing both reflective practice and transparency. This included saving and organizing all documentation and field notes. This was a means to demonstrate that there is a credible source from where the data came from and the process that occurred leading to the results/interpretation.

**Credibility.** The construct of credibility is focused on answering the question, "are the results credible or is the account accurate given the data collected" (as cited in Merriam & Tisdell, 2016)? Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) note the following questions when considering the credibility of a study: 1) Do the findings of the study make sense? 2) Are they credible to the people we study and to our readers? and 3) Do we have an authentic portrait of what we are looking at? A credible study is marked by thick description of knowledge, triangulation,

multivocality, and member reflection (Tracy, 2010). When considering the credibility of a study this pertains not only to the procedure but also within data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Glense, 2016).

The current researcher used a one-time interview protocol as opposed to immersion in the field. In order to provide the descriptive detail required, the researcher used the interview protocol to explore each participant's story. The mock interviews with peers previously conducted aided in ensuring credibility as feedback was gathered on the quality and structure of the interview protocol.

Triangulation can come in many forms but at its core involves using multiple forms to reach a single conclusion whether it is multiple sources, multiple investigators, or multiple theories. The current researcher achieved triangulation through multiple investigators. Throughout the data analysis process, this researcher had multiple meetings with her methodologist in order to discuss codes/themes that emerged. As the methodologist was less familiar with coaching/baseball as well as Super's life-span, life-space theory (Hartung, 2013), she was able to provide insight in the form of an outside perspective which aided in triangulating the data and increasing trustworthiness.. Both investigators agreed to the themes that emerged. While Super's life-span, life space theory of career (Hartung, 2013) and Self Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) provided theoretical frameworks for the current dissertation, other literature/theories highlighted identity in regards to transitions. Super's theory (Hartung, 2013) and athletic identity literature highlight the need to let go of one's salient identity in order to make room for other life roles. As with having multiple reviewers or researchers, having two sources of information which highlight similar sentiments also helps in creating triangulation of data.

"Multivocal research includes multiple and varied voices in the qualitative report and analysis" (Tracy, 2010, p.844). To create multivocality, the researcher created a space where participants felt comfortable to share their opinions and thoughts. The interview protocol included open-ended inquiries and avoided leading questions. Having diversity within the sample (i.e. race, class, age, etc.) created a base for different opinions and viewpoints; therefore, credibility was enhanced. As purposeful, snowball sampling was used, the researcher was not able to choose participants on the basis of demographics but diversity was aspired and reached achieving multivocality.

Member reflections or checking aid in credibility by seeking input from participants should there be any questions, critiques, or thoughts. During the informed consent process, a form of member checking was included. As noted in the "Procedures" section, the interview occurred once. During the informed consent process, participants were asked if they would be willing to be contacted for follow up questions at a later time; however none expressed interest in this element of research. However, 4 coaches expressed interest in reviewing the transcripts and provided approval with no additional feedback or thoughts given.

***Resonance.*** Tracy (2010) states that not all qualitative research will have similar qualities of resonance; however, all must have an impact to be deemed high quality. This can be partly achieved through aesthetics of the writing or text. The researcher had a committee of active members throughout the research process including the written portion. The researcher took feedback and critiques in order to show the stories of the participants involved.

Transferability is another means to achieve resonance (Tracy, 2010). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) note that transferability is the qualitative construct for external validity. The purpose of establishing transferability is to answer the following question: Can the findings of the current

study extend to other situations or is generalizable? In a statistical sense, generalizability cannot, nor is the goal of qualitative inquiry; however, Lincoln and Guba (1985) state the burden of determining transferability falls on the applicators rather than the initial researcher (as cited in Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The strategy used is providing "sufficient descriptive data" in regards to the context, participants, process, and self (the current researcher) (p.254). The steps of data analysis as described by Creswell (2013) provides the opportunity to create rich descriptions about the experience of the phenomena and the context and setting within. Non-identifiable descriptions of the participants were provided in order to give anonymity. In presenting the findings, quotes from the transcripts were provided as a form of evidence to the interpretations made. In addition, reflexivity on the part of the researcher and detailed field notes played a role in establishing transferability (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Another strategy that was employed is maximum variation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Patton (2015) highlights that purposely picking participants that give variation which can 1) "document diversity and 2) identify important common patterns that are common across the diversity" (as cited in Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p.257). The current study limited the sample to baseball coaches; however, there was no exclusions based on length of coaching, age, race, or level achieved during athletic career allowing for variation in these areas.

***Significant Contribution.*** It is not enough to conduct a research study for the sake of completion. It is important to consider the following questions: 1) "Does the study extend knowledge? 2) Improve practice? 3) Generate ongoing practice and 4) Liberate or empower" (Tracy, 2010, p.845). There are various ways research can answer these questions. For instance, results may provide a theoretical contribution in the form of a new theory of study or practice. It can propel others to research similar questions to further understand the phenomena or it can be

useful in practice. The goal in conducting this research was to provide practically significant results. Wylleman and Reints (2010) note that 5-7% of athletes retire each year with an average age of 34 years. Understanding the athlete to coach transition identified pitfalls or areas of growth where one could intervene which will be discussed in Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions under practical implications.

**Ethics.** The study involves human subjects. As a result, considerations were made and described in the following sections as to how the researcher protected them. The research study will sought approval through the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to recruiting participants. Once approval was granted, the information was provided to potential participants via an email (See Appendix D) and attached recruitment flyer (See Appendix E). In addition to receiving IRB approval, the current researcher had undergone the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Program SBER Research Investigators as an affiliate of the University of Denver on October 12, 2013; as well as Social and Behavioral Researchers program as an affiliate of the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee on September 1, 2016.

In addition to the protection of human subjects, there were procedural ethics that needed to be considered. The goal of the researcher was to create an environment in which the participants would feel comfortable to share their experiences with transitioning into coaches. In order to do this, participants were fully informed on the purpose of the study and its potential risks and benefits through the process of informed consent (see Appendix G). In addition, participants had the opportunity to ask any questions and learn they may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty given participation was voluntary. The current researcher worked to protect the confidentiality of the participants involved in the study through the use of

pseudonyms; however, this could not be guaranteed. The researcher kept the file that links the participants with their pseudonyms on a non-campus laptop under two levels of password protection. There was very little risk in participating in this research; nevertheless, in the event that a situation arose, the researcher planned to follow the protocol laid out through the IRB which involved turning off the audio recording and providing resources as necessary. No such situations occurred.

***Meaningful Coherence.*** Tracy (2010) identifies 4 components of a meaningfully coherent study: "1) achieve their stated purpose, 2) accomplish what they espouse to be about, 3) use methods and representation practices that partner well with espoused theories and paradigms and 4) attentively interconnect literature reviewed with research foci, methods, and findings" (p.848). This includes an interconnection between all the elements of the study. For the current phenomenological study, the researcher considered the paradigm and research goals in order to create focus of the study throughout each stage.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Results**

This chapter will identify key themes which emerged from the current study. This chapter will first reintroduce the research questions and assumptions made by the researcher. Then a description of the participants will be presented. Next, the chapter will examine the qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews with six current, professional, baseball coaches. The chapter will conclude with a summary of the results of the research questions which were analyzed through a phenomenological lens. This researcher explored the following questions:

#### **Main Research Question**

1. How do former athletes interpret and explain the experiences of the transition from athletics to coaching?

The researcher examined relevant literature regarding the athletic transition process. Much of this research focused on when an athlete is no longer able to participate in sport. From the discipline of vocational psychology, specifically Super's life-span, life-space theory which provided a theoretical framework for the current study, challenges emerge at different points throughout one's vocational life requiring career adaptability. Based on this literature, the researcher believed former athletes would discuss initial distress upon their departure from sport and current satisfaction with their coaching careers. Additionally, the researcher believed the former coaches would discuss possession or have used resources demonstrating their career adaptability both when leaving sport and into coaching. The following sub-research question was also explored.

### **Sub-Research Question**

2. How do former athletes describe their identity in terms of their experience and decision to become coaches?

There is an extensive amount of literature related to athletic identity and its salience to those who participate in sports. When athletics is one's career, their athletic identity resembles the worker role discussed in Super's vocational theory. This identity can remain salient up until the point of retirement in which case one must surrender this part of their identity allowing for a greater focus on other life roles. However, this is not always an easy undertaking which can affect one's experiencing transitioning. The researcher found variations to the extent that athletic identity can play a role in a former athlete's decision in the context for subsequent career decision making. Due to the specific phenomenon of the athlete to coach transition having little research surrounding it, this study was framed as exploratory in nature.

### **Participant Demographics**

Six (n=6) current, professional, baseball coaches participated in semi-structured interviews for this study through the recruitment procedures discussed in Chapter 3. Interview sessions were conducted in August 2018, March, and June of 2019 based on each coach's availability. All the participants were males with variations in ethnic background, highest education reached, length of baseball career (since first began playing), type of transition (voluntary/involuntary), and years in coaching as noted in Table 3 below.

Table 3

## Demographic Information

Pseudonym	Age	Ethnicity	Athletic Career*	Highest Level Played At
John	45	Latino	24 years	Minor League
Terrance	48	White	25 years	Minor League
Riley	46	Latino	15 years	Minor League
Russell	62	White	30 years	Major League
Justin	62	White	26 years	Major League
Ken	40	Asian American	25 years	Minor League

\*Athletic career refers to number of years in baseball at any level

Pseudonym	Transition Type	Coaching Career	Coaching Position	Highest Ed.
John	Voluntary	6 years	Manager	Some college
Terrance	Involuntary	18 years	MiLB Coordinator	Some college
Riley	Involuntary	19 years	Hitting Coach	High School
Russell	Involuntary	12 years	Outfield Coach	Some college
Justin	Voluntary	11 years	Manager	High School
Ken	Involuntary	8 years	Hitting Coach	Some college

**Qualitative Findings**

This section will depict the findings from the 6 interviews held (See Appendix C for interview protocol). Qualitative data were collected, transcribed, and analyzed to gain an understanding of the nuances involved in the athlete to coach transition. The significant

statements that emerged from each transcript were then grouped together to form larger codes providing insight both into what and how each coach experienced the transition. Once all the transcripts were coded to reflect these larger codes, themes were formed examining the phenomenon as a whole.

After analyzing the interview transcripts, three main findings emerged from the data:

**Mental Preparation, Multilayered Motivation, and Identity is not Stagnant.** How these findings relate to the research questions can be found in Table 4.

Table 4

Findings Linked to Research Questions

Finding	Research Question
1. One's mindset in the form of mental preparation helps in managing potential distress that can be associated with athletic transitions.	How do former athletes interpret and explain the experiences of the transition from athletics to coaching?
2. Motivation to engage in a behavior is multilayered as no single factor drove the coaches to pursue baseball or coaching. A combination of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators influenced the transitions in and out of sport.	How do former athletes interpret and explain the experiences of the transition from athletics to coaching?
3. Athletic identity ebbs and flows throughout the coaches' journeys in and out of sport with the level of salience adjusting across the coaches' vocational life span.	How do former athletes describe their identity in terms of their experience and decision to become coaches?

Mental Preparation refers to the coaches' ability to adapt and prepare mentally for the transitions they experienced in order to manage any potential distress or challenges that arose. Multilayered Motivation highlights how no singular force drove the coaches to pursue their career endeavors and in fact, their decisions were motivated by a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic factors.

Lastly, Identity is not Stagnant highlights how the salience and importance of one's athletic identity ebbs and flows over time playing varying degrees of importance across the coaches' vocational life span. Definitions of these findings as well as the support themes/sub-themes can be found below in Table 5. In presenting the results, the researcher will include selected data in the form of quotations to support findings related to the phenomenon and that best capture the participant voice.

Table 5

Theme/Sub-themes Defined

Theme/Sub-Themes	Definition
Theme I: Mental Preparation	Engaging in mental strategies to manage career transitions allowing one to feel ready prepared for potential distress/challenges.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthy Outlook</li> <li>• Acceptance</li> <li>• Confidence</li> <li>• Challenges</li> <li>• Resources</li> </ul>	Looking to the future with positivity opportunity for growth Ability to see ones circumstances with approval and readiness Self-efficacy or belief in one's ability Difficulties or struggles that arise Utility of available opportunities in the form persons, materials, etc. to aid oneself
Theme II: Multilayered Motivation	Myriad of driving forces play a role in the decision making process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passion</li> <li>• Identity &amp; Motivation</li> <li>• Give to the next generation</li> <li>• Second chances</li> <li>• Financial</li> </ul>	Intrinsic love or enjoyment One's view of self and the role it plays to drive one's behavior or decisions an interest to pass on knowledge, skills, abilities to another generation of individuals Opportunity to achieve a goal or ambition which may not have been reached before Money

Theme III: Identity is not Stagnant	Athletic identity is not constant and changes over time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of Athletic Identity</li> </ul>	The moment one begins to identify with the athlete role
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shifting Life Roles</li> </ul>	Shift in salience of athletic identity focusing on other life roles (i.e. parent, spouse).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baseball is a piece</li> </ul>	Baseball/athletics plays a role in one's life but is not the most important

**Mental Preparation.** For the purposes of the current study, mental preparation refers to the coaches' abilities to consider and think about their transitions in order to aid in the adaption process. Within career adaptability, one of the main domains which aids in successful transitions is confidence or self-efficacy in one's ability to handle the tasks and challenges associated with moving in and out of the vocational stages of career (Hartung, 2013). As the coaches shared their journeys it became clear that little preparation occurred in the form of considering the future, exploring possible career paths, and the level of control or personal responsibility varied creating some positive and negative responses. The coaches were able to share how they mentally and emotionally were ready for their transition to leave and reenter baseball. Additionally, they were able to manage challenges which arose at each of these junctions in their journey (retirement, reentry). The types of mental preparation which were discussed included "a healthy outlook," acceptance, and experiencing confidence leading to a satisfactory transition and a lack of distress which can be associated with sport transitions (Wylleman & Reints, 2010).

**Healthy Outlook.** Having a healthy outlook references seeing an ability to see positivity and growth despite the any potential hardships which could be present. Retirement and out of sport transitions can be a difficult time for athletes being met with issues such as missing sport or competition, body changes, and social status changes. (Wylleman & Reints, 2010). It is important to have a healthy outlook to the future in thinking about the good at that could be awaiting. Mental preparation in this form was present for the coaches (Russell, Justin) in that

they were able to feel ready after realizing their time playing had finished. In the following exchange, Russell is quick to point out how having a healthy outlook aided when injuries were a main factor in leaving sport. His ability to possess a healthy mindset and be open to what was awaiting him help alleviate the potential distress literature has noted.

Interviewer: How was the fact that you really didn't get to fully choose when you left impact you leaving playing cause it was more your body deciding for you as opposed to maybe you deciding?

Russell: Well I just had a healthy outlook... I was smart enough to know I had learned what works and what doesn't work at the big league level and so I accepted my fate and I let my family know that I was finished playing. It was a sad day but it was also a happy day because I was a little car wrecked.

From the above conversation, it is evident that Russell was mentally prepared for whatever would come given he always possessed a mindset focused on what would be coming next. This allowed him to refocus on a life after sports as well as accept that he would not be able to play in the same way. It made it easier to walk away after all the injuries despite potentially knowing he would miss the field given it was both a happy yet sad day.

Like Russell, Justin was also asked about how having some kind of choice helped or hindered his ability to transition out of sport. Justin did not see leaving baseball as difficult because he realized he would not play the same way. The same realization which occurred for Russell due to injuries, arose for Justin. With Justin, his healthy mindset and outlook allowed him to see it was time to go home as opposed to fight tooth and nail to remain in a field that he could not excel in the same way anymore.

I don't know, I just felt like it was time. You know I just felt it was time for me to get into something else. You know I guess the worst part of it is that day that you realize that physically that you can't compete with the best in the world anymore. I mean after being on top for 10 year and that avenue just to be at that level and really competitive and competing with the best players in the world for 10 years and then all of sudden you see that I can't get there. My just...and when you realize that and when you...it's a pretty easy transition for me. Like I said, I could've hung around and been a back up player but it just wasn't in my heart.

Justin took some time to acknowledge and mourn the loss of his physical capabilities within the above quote; however, overall he is able to show that having a healthy outlook about finding something else eased the transition. Having that realization allowed him to mentally consider and prepare for whether staying in baseball was what he truly wanted. Justin could see that he would not be the same player and instead saw it as time to pursue other endeavors, whatever that would be.

*Acceptance.* Confidence and a healthy outlook are all part of mental preparation. Additionally, acceptance of one's circumstances and fate can go a long way in feeling mentally ready and prepared to engage in the next stage of life. Russell and John were both able to discuss an ability to accept their fate and make the decision to walk away from sport. On the other side of the spectrum, Ken was the only coach to experience a negative response to retirement which occurred from a lack of mental preparation and acceptance about when it was time. First, the researcher will highlight Russell and John's experience followed by Ken's.

Russell was able to accept when his journey ended as he did not see himself as the same player when he started. He was the type of player who was on the field for most of those 9

innings rather than one who could walk up cold from the bench and perform. After experiencing his many injuries and realizing he was not going to be the same, it seemed easy for him to accept what was and look to what would be coming next for him.

So I accepted that that was the end of my road that I just wasn't going to be the kind of guy who hung around and hit homeruns off the bench at 33. I wasn't built that way and so I accepted my fate if you will and knew it was time to go home. And so I kind of started looking at it like okay what's next?

His ability to accept what was happening around him made it easier for him to manage the transition of retirement. He could have tried to adjust himself to become a different type of player; however, he accepted that was not him. Russell knew what he was capable of as a player and if he could not perform in the same way, it was easier and better to accept rather than fight to be what he was not. John also shared an ability to accept and choose when it was time which aided in the transition experience. Like Russell, John also experience pain and injuries which prompted a need to mentally prepare for what would need to be next: continue to play or accept it was time to move on. John accepted he would not play at the same level which made it easier to him to adjust because he was not fighting a system that did not want him. Rather he was walking away on his own terms.

And that's when I said okay, I am going to play this year and then end it and then stop so that why it was kinda of my own terms. That was a little bit comforting for me instead of having you want to play but you can't cause you just had surgery. Nobody wants to sign you. That type of thing. So that little transition in there was a little bit easier for me leaving so I left on my own.

For John, accepting it was time to retire helped him to walk away from his playing career unscathed as he felt comforted rather than distress. Like Russell, John did not experience a difficult transition for as both could mentally prepare for the impending decision to walk away.

Unlike Russell and John, Ken's experience with retirement was not met with ease. Ken was initially ready to accept his fate and leave baseball as a player. He considered what he could do afterwards as he was aware his age may be getting in the way of his ability to perform. As a result, there was some mental preparation and acceptance as he was contemplating his playing career prompting him to talk with the staff of the team he was on. These conversations threw all his preparation out of the window as he was told he would be resigned and able to keep playing. He went from a place of acceptance to "I'm gonna keep playing" which made retirement a hard pill to swallow.

Speaking with their on-field staff, and their player development staff every one of them felt that I still had enough in the tank to keep playing and all I asked was their honesty because if not I was gonna, I was ready to make that transition over into either coaching professionally or going back to school. And I told them I didn't want...you weren't gonna hurt my feelings if you didn't think I could do it. That's just the way the reality is. I knew I'm getting older so when that didn't come to fruition it was a big, big letdown. I was really upset. I was bitter at baseball. I was bitter at the game and the people who told me I still had told me that they were gonna bring me back and give me an opportunity and when it didn't happen I really just kind of shut the door on baseball in regards of I'm upset at baseball now what I'm gonna do.

Ken's above quote shows the emotional toll that was taken in his experience with retirement which differs from every other coach. While he was not the only coach to be let go from a team,

he was the only one to share an initial readiness and acceptance to walk away only to be given false hope and then blindsided with his termination. The false hope he was provided through his discussions with the team's staff eliminated any mental preparation and acceptance he had acquired. Therefore, he experienced distress and negative response to his transition manifesting in bitterness and anger toward baseball in general.

Overall having acceptance about one's fate can be helpful in becoming mentally prepared for career transitions. By having acceptance for one's current circumstances, it allowed the coaches to prepare and think about what would be next for them as well as feel comfortable with retirement. Ken was not able to have this experience and perhaps if the staff members had not provided him false hope, he would have maintained his acceptance and readiness to retire eliminating the negative, distress experience he endured.

*Confidence.* The coaches demonstrated confidence throughout the journey into professional coaching. This is having the belief in one's self to get through various challenges and be successful as they maneuver through the stages of vocational development. By having confidence, the coaches demonstrated a belief in themselves to not only achieve their goals but also to address any challenges that could emerge. As the coaches reflected on their journeys, they were able to discuss having this form of mental preparation as each was confident in their ability to be a coach. Terrance, Russell, and Ken believed in themselves which appears necessary to in working towards and successfully achieving one's goal. If they floundered or gave in to self doubt, they may not have been able to become coaches.

In the below exchange, Terrance shared a one hundred percent certainty of his ability to influence the players he would come in contact with. It was a great feeling he was able to experience and saw it as a fact that he would be able to do so.

Terrance: I was 100% convicted in and convinced that I would be an impactful player development person.

Interviewer: That has to be an amazing feeling to just know.

Terrance: yeah that was the one thing that I knew. That was the one thing I felt confident in is taking a player from one point in his development and knowing for a fact that some of things that you could add along the way would elevate the game for sure.

Terrance's use of words like "convicted" and "convinced" convey just how much he believed in himself to be a good coach. He was certain and belief in his ability so much so that there was no room for uncertainty. There was one hundred percent absolute sureness that he could be a successful coach. He was not alone in this belief system. Ken was also able to see his abilities as a coach. He saw his past playing experience as a strength that would allow him to be not only a good coach but empathetic to his players.

I think I knew that if I stayed in baseball that I felt that I could be a good coach. I could be a very empathetic coach and I think that's where my strength lies in.

His confidence showed through his tone of voice that the conviction to be a coach was certain. By using the phrase "I knew," Ken is showing little hesitation in what he felt he was capable of accomplishing should he remain in baseball. He felt not only could he be a good coach, he could also empathize given his past experiences as a player.

In Russell's discussion of confidence, he made comparisons between his abilities as a player and a coach. He saw himself as a confident player believing in his ability to deliver consistently and effectively in the games he participated in. As a coach, he saw an even greater capability and noted a specific skill set which would be especially beneficial.

I honestly think I was a better coach than I was a player and I was a pretty good player but I think I was an even better coach cause I think I have pretty good communication skills.

Russell was a coach who was not shy about acknowledging what made him great. In pursuing coaching, he was able to see his ability to communicate effectively as the tool which would allow him to succeed. Knowing he had this, allowed him to be confident in his new role. Overall, having a level of confidence was evident in the coaches' experience of transitioning into their encore careers. This allowed them to feel prepared to engage in this new role despite any challenges that could arise. This belief in self perhaps was part of the fuel which propelled the coaches to get back into baseball and excel. Given that each returned to professional baseball, at some point one cannot dispute the importance of having self-confidence that you can make it.

*Challenges.* In discussing mental preparation, the current researcher noted the utility of this skill set in managing potential challenges which can emerge while moving through the developmental stages of career. As understanding the transition experience was part of the current dissertation's goals, questions were included about potential challenges which did arise. As far as disengagement or retirement from baseball, Ken was the only one who experienced difficulty from the lack of mental preparation. However, the coaches were able to discuss the challenges associated with their return to professional baseball as coaches. In acknowledging the potential struggles, they also identified resources which they believe could or were helpful during the transition process. First challenges will be discussed followed by resources.

It is worth noting re-entry into the world of professional baseball was not an easy feat just because each coach had a history with the sport from their playing days. The coaches were able to reflect on their journey and discuss some of the challenges faced as they transitioned into

coaching (Terrance, John, and Ken). Despite whatever challenges these coaches shared, none felt their abilities to manage them were outside of their capabilities demonstrating mental preparation in the form of confidence.

Terrance discussed two challenges regarding his transition into coaching. The first involved needing to find balance between his personal and professional lives and the second adjusting to changes in the game itself from when he played. He shared most of his life was dedicated to baseball and when that shifted during his coaching phase, it was a challenge which required adjustment.

I was single with no kids and then I met my now wife and that whole thing was an obstacle but was a major point in my life like trying to now figure out how to become not only a husband but a father and trying to be a good one which was humbling and amazing and all that stuff was cool but that was one thing.

As Terrance shared these new identities, he expressed both excitement as well as concern about managing. He has enjoyed his new roles as spouse and father in addition to being a worker; however, it is hard for him not to acknowledge it required an adjustment given worker was most salient for a long time. He chuckled as he "suggested" this researcher check with his wife about whether he was successful in managing this challenge while acknowledging finding a balance was the solution. As stated before, this was not the sole challenge Terrance discussed experiencing. He reflected on the change of the game from when he was player to when he was a coach.

And then the other thing was the intersection of where the game was going and I'm not one of those guys that, I don't believe that kids are different or this or that. I think that the industry itself is at a different place and so like coaching styles is a fascinating

conversation so I played in an era where the traditional coach would probably beat you to death into submission until you made adjustments and that was the vehicle that moved players, fear. And our industry now is not 100% like that anymore. There are cases like that but it's not really like that anymore so that different little direction in the industry was another one.

As Terrance notes, the type of coaches he had were different than the type of coach he wanted to be and was becoming more of the norm. As a result, he had to adjust to this shift. It may have been perceived as less of a challenge or not even a challenge at all if the industry had remained constant to what he had seen although this was not the case. While he reflects on the shifting of coaching from his playing days to the present in regards to coaching style. Other coaches (John and Ken) reflect on the challenge of shifting perspective from that of a player to a coach.

John referred to this shift in perspective as working through a different lens. He is able to note that this shift is also not limited to player to coach. In fact, being able to shift lens is needed when changing coaching positions (i.e. hitting coach to manager).

It's just a different lens you have to look through. That was my first year I was a hitting coach so okay I was concentrating on the hitting and when I actually became a manager the second year it was like okay so now I gotta look at so many other things not just the hitting. I'm looking at the infield, the catching which I was a former catcher so that part came a little bit easier but the outfielders and the pitching situations. So as a manager you've got to look at so many different things so it was just the way you have to look at things.

John's focus had to broaden over the course of his coaching career. As a hitting coach, John's focus was solely on helping his players when at the plate. Upon becoming a manager, his lens

had to widen to every aspect of the game as he was now responsible for not just the hitting but the pitching, position players, line up, etc. He is able to note the challenge was not present when working with catcher as that was his former position; however, looking to the other positions involved more thought and consideration. As stated previously, John was not the only one to acknowledge the challenge of thinking like a player to thinking like a coach. Ken also experienced this challenge and had to broaden his view of the game.

Now once I transitioned over into coaching it became now how do I help the 13 guys that I'm working with or the 25 guys that I'm working with. What am I watching right now at whatever level that may be cause I have to look at that through a coach's eyes not the player's eyes.

Ken's experience is similar to John's in that focus had to broaden. Ken provides a new perspective in that there was a challenge in focusing on all the players that he was working with. When playing, the focus is on the individual and my game and my at bat. On the flip side, as a coach, the game is about the team and how to make the team succeed. All of these challenges were not seen as impossible. While none of the coaches shied away from sharing these potential hiccups to their coaching careers, they also did not appear unconfident in their ability to rise up to the challenge. Each coach demonstrated mental preparedness in that they were confident in their ability to make the necessary adjustments in order to handle the challenges which arose. However, each was also willing to accept available resources as needed. More information on resources that were used when transitioning to coaching will be discussed in the next section.

*Resources.* Mental preparation, specifically acceptance, in the context of resources refers to acknowledging the need to seek outside support or services in order to manage mood or challenges. If an individual does not accept they need help, it can be a similar sentiment to not

accepting one's fate within retirement. They are fighting their circumstances hoping for a result they may be unable to acquire.

The term "resources" is purposely broad in order to allow the coaches to explain what they meant by resources without restrictions or assumptions being made by this researcher. As the coaches reflected on their transition into coaching many discussed the utility of mentors who aided in their development as a coach (Terrance, Ken, Riley). Mentors referred both to other coaches who could provide insight and support as well as remembering the coaches that were influential (or not) during their playing days. Terrance discussed the "impactful" people that he considered influential and how he was able to get the skills he needed to be a coach. Ken takes a slightly different approach in reflecting on the "bad coaches" and learning what he did not want to become. Riley provides some information into the study of coaching by discussing camps as a means to not only learn to coach but also to talk with mentors or in his words "older coaches" about their experiences.

Terrance was able to get what he needed from a development perspective from the mentors that he came in contact with.

I had some really impactful mentors from that point forward that were pillars in my development as a coach. Then I played for some guys that were amazing. I remember feeling like getting what I needed to get from those people.

He was able to view his mentors as a reliable sources of information. He goes so far as to call them "pillars" demonstrating the high regard he has for these individuals who supported him on his journey into coaching. While he was able to reflect on the positive coaching influences of his life, Ken took a different approach to the term "mentors" and "resources." For him, it was a resource to learn what not to do based on his experience with past coaches.

I learned a lot from some of the bad coaches that I had knowing that if I ever become a coach, that's not how I wanna be coached.

It can be just as valuable to learn what does not work as it is to learn what does. Learning from bad coaches gave Ken a sense of the type of coaches he did not want to emulate. He learned distinct traits and skills that could have a negative influence on his players perhaps, based on how he was impacted as a player. By being seeing this as a learning opportunity and a resource, Ken was able to develop the skills that he thought would help him succeed as a coach and avoid the behaviors would not.

Riley provided some insight into the educational process of becoming a coach as well as the use of mentors as helpful resources. He was able to reflect on the availability of camps which can teach you the skills to become a coach as well as the ability to discuss with more seasoned coaches about what works and does not.

Coaching, you do your study or your experience by participating in camps. Let's say I know a lot of organizations send their younger prospects or future coaches to spring training and they will send them to the camps that is being run in the Dominican, that's where every affiliate has one of those big camps for international players and it's always talks with the older coaches about the game about different types of situations, plays, techniques. It's a matter of that personal coach to take notes and get better at it.

Despite the difference in Riley's experience of resources, he still demonstrates the use of others as a way to learn and develop as a coach. When discussing resources in the "Disengagement from Baseball" section, there were coaches who had not thought of ways to make their retirement transition easier. Others shared the use of supportive persons. When getting into coaching and developing as a coaching, there are similarities in that the main resource utilized

was that of other people. Turning to those who had already been there in the form of mentors was the main resource discussed. This appears to show the connections which develop in the field of baseball and how one can learn much from the experiences of others to teach them both helpful and unhelpful routes to take.

***Summary of Mental Preparation.*** In summation, mental preparation is beneficial in allowing for a successful transition both out of and into athletics. The coaches were able to discuss how having a healthy outlook, acceptance, and confidence were part of their transition process creating a sense of ease. In having a healthy outlook, the coaches were able to think positively and see the future as a time for growth rather than fearing what would be next. In accepting it was time to retire and move forward, they were not fighting a losing battle attempting to remain in the field they could not excel in. The lack of acceptance experience by Ken shows how not being mentally prepared can create a negative experience upon the transition out. Additionally, a level of confidence helped the coaches feel capable and able to handle not only their transitions but any potential challenges which arose. This was not necessarily the case for a majority of coaches upon retirement; however, challenges did arise in pursuing their encore careers. Regardless of the need to find balance between personal/professional life or adjust one's viewpoints, none of the coaches felt unable to adapt as needed. Each was confident they could be an effective coaching and make necessary adjustments and if not, they were willing to accept help in the form of mentors or educational programs.

**Multilayered Motivation.** When making any career decisions, the coaches demonstrated that no singular force drives the decision-making process. The purpose of this study was to understand the transition into coaching as well as what prompted the decision to choose coaching above other avenues as an encore career. As the coaches reflected on their transition back into

baseball, the conversation included the motives which influenced the decision-making process to become a coach. For all the coaches, there was not a singular reason for choosing coaching and in fact, there tended to be multiple motives regarding the return to baseball. The motivations which emerged from the data were a combination of internal and external factors. As noted in Chapter 2, self-determination theory sees motivation on a continuum in which having no motivation is known as amotivation and the more one's behaviors or actions are internalized the closer the motive is seen to be intrinsically driven (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

*Passion.* Just as the coaches expressed a love for the game when it choosing it for their first career, that same passion was also present when it came time to choose a second career path. All the coaches still maintained a love for baseball. Words including "enjoy" and "love" were very much included as they reflected on their journey back into coaching. While passion may have ebbed and flowed for some of the coaches it was still always part of them. John, Justin, and Ken discuss having a love for the game and choosing to remain involved in baseball due to that passion. As discussed previously, John's passion for the game was present from a young age.

I grew up a Yankee fan and it's just seeing all that I was just, I fell in love with the game at an early age you know. So that was kinda one thing I just knew. I knew I wanted to stay.

Baseball was instilled in him. John internalized this sport as he grew up a fan of the game and as a result, he wanted to remain a part of it. This passion drove him to remain connected and attached to a sport he spent year in as a player. That was not enough. He eventually decided he wanted to get back in it. He "knew" his passion was still present and as a result, John "knew" staying was the goal. Justin also expressed a love for baseball and was direct in sharing the rationale for his continued involvement as a coach. It based in enjoyment rather than necessity.

“I’m pretty much doing this more now because I love it than I have to but I certainly enjoy it.

Despite all his years involved as a player, Justin still has passion for baseball. He found his way back into coaching after he took some time off to focus on his family. Once he did so, he was ready to reconnect with the enjoyment he maintained as a player. Now he was able to reclaim that as a coach.

In comparison to the other coaches discussed (John, Justin), Ken was one of the coaches whose passion shifted downward at the time of retirement. Additionally, he was the only coach to describe his transition out of the sport as difficult to the point where he was both "bitter" and "upset" at the sport. Once he found himself after some time, his passion was rekindled and he pursued coaching opportunities as discussed in "Career Adaptability" section. When reflecting on his decision to remain connected to baseball, he noted the happiness the field brought and continues to bring him.

Because that's what brings me happiness and that's what brings me joy and I have passion for and I love it (baseball).

While the level of passion may have shifted over the course of Ken's baseball journey, it was a resurgence of that passion which, in part, motivated his return. He continues to express a love for baseball. He goes even further to note that so long as he maintains said passion, he will stay involved in coaching.

Overall, passion and love for baseball is an internal or intrinsically motivated factor which drove the coaches to pursue a second career as coaches. Given their deep love for the game of baseball, it is no surprise that the coaches would choose to reconnect with that passion by getting back involved. While playing was the original passion that fueled pursuit of a

professional baseball contract, it is now the passion to coach which currently fuels the coaches' fire. As will continue to be seen in the following sections, the motivation which drove the decision to coach is not singular. The coaches views and experiences will be seen in multiple sections demonstrating motivation on a continuum.

***Identity and Motivation.*** Athletic identity played a role in the motivation the coaches had to choose their encore career. Identity is not limited to a motivational factor and will be discussed further later in this chapter. For the purposes of this section, identity references how the coaches' views of self in relation to their athleticism drove them towards baseball, more specifically coaching. Terrance, Ken, and John reflect on their athletic identity indirectly as they did not use this term at any point in the discussion. However, that does not mean they did not identify with their role as a baseball person. Terrance discussed baseball as a "suit." When it came time to retire, he did not take time nor space to adjust. Rather he went right from ending his playing career one season to becoming a coach professionally the next.

I wasn't ready to shed the suit of baseball at the time that I was you know having to make those decisions. I still have a lot of passion for it so that passion continues.

Terrance, like Ken who as discussed in preceding sections, was one of the coaches who experienced passion decreases at the time of retirement. However, his experience was unique in that this all occurred at the time his father passed away adding to the shift in his passion. Outside of this, Terrance did not express hardship with retirement and as stated, it did not last long. He was not ready to let go of baseball or his identity as a baseball person. The "suit of baseball" can be viewed as Terrance indirect nod to athletic identity and his interest in maintaining that piece of him. Being able to hold on to this component, motivated him to stay involved as a coach.

Ken also took the quick route into coaching. He required space from baseball given the difficulty he had upon retirement. When choosing baseball again, Ken expressed interested in exploring the fit between the vocation and himself. This provided a more direct conversation about identity as Ken was interested in a congruence as well as expressed baseball being "a part of me."

I didn't really know what to expect but I wanted to give it a try and see if it was a good fit because I still loved the game. It was a part of me and I wanted to find a way to get back to it.

From Ken's quote, the passion is quite evident as well as how much he connects with baseball as part of him. It also fully demonstrates how multilayered motivational forces are in regards to choosing a vocation. Not only was passion part of the driving force but also Ken's athletic identity. He wanted to find a means to reconnect with his piece of himself and by getting into coaching, he was able to do that. Like Ken, John's quote related to athletic identity also provides references the multilayered decision-making process involved with an encore career. John grew up around baseball noting this from a cultural perspective and as a result, it was instilled in his being at a young age.

Kinda knowing that whole baseball part of it and it was always like instilled in me. It was like that's what I knew you know being from [country] baseball, baseball you know. So and I really loved it.

John notes how baseball was a part of him given how he grew up and he also held a love for the game. In becoming a coach, he found a way to maintain this piece of himself after he took an 8 year hiatus.

In summary, as discussed in Chapter 2, self-identity is the closest one can get to intrinsic motivation while still being an external force. The coaches were able to reconnect with their identities as athletes by pursuing an encore career. They were motivated by this piece of themselves which may have altered in salience over the course of their journeys; however, it never wavered to nothing. As a result, when the opportunity arose where they could rekindle their baseball selves, each pursued it in their own time and own way.

*Give to the next generation.* A majority of the coaches discussed an incentive to coaching was the ability to give back to the next generation of players. In doing so, they were able to teach these players about the game as well as share the lessons they learned from their own experience (Russell, Terrance, and Ken). There was only one coach who discussed giving back in a different way than the others. Justin discussed coaching as a way to connect, teach, and help his children while they were playing in little league. First, this researcher will present the experiences of Russell, Terrance, and Ken before presenting that of Justin.

Given each's own playing experience, there was an instinct to share prior knowledge and past experiences in order to instill lessons to those coming through the leagues now. Russell wants to be able to help current players learn lessons he wished he would have known looking back. He expands on this notion by saying the only to give back in this game is through coaching.

Yeah, so that's kind of the only way to give that back is coaching. I think a part of that is sort of the motive you know? That was part of the motive of coaching. At least I can help someone else maybe not make the mistakes or play in a smarter fashion than I did. With hindsight, Russell could consider important lessons and experiences that may have been helpful during his playing years. He can share that with current players so that they may avoid

potential missteps. He believes a motive not only for him to coach, but for many coaches, is the ability to share the personal knowledge and experience with current players. In doing so, he knows he was able to impact their journey. The idea of impacting others is shared also by Terrance. He held much knowledge through his time as a player and like Russell, would be able to use his coaching to share that information.

I knew that I wanted to help people and I knew that were ways that I could impact people. Then I knew that the baseball thing would be the vehicle to do that obviously because I was passionate about it.

Within his quote, Terrance reflects on his prior knowledge and passion for baseball as the "vehicle" to help others. His goal is being a coach allowed him to impart wisdom and be an impactful presence for those he worked with. It was something he "knew" he wanted to do. There is no hesitation in his interest in serving others through baseball.

Ken was the only coach who had discussed difficulties during his playing days as well as when it came time to retire. In becoming a coach, Ken was able to reflect on his experience with managing the many ups and downs of baseball as information he could share with current players. Additionally, by having these past experiences he could also understand his players.

I understand what these players are going through because I know I experienced every type of mental and physical emotion of that. And just testing it out to see if it was something that I could be either one good at but most importantly help someone else achieve you a dream of theirs.

Like Russell and Terrance before him, Ken wanted to be able to share his competence as a player and impart that wisdom onto the new generation of professional athletes. Not only did he possess knowledge, his quote demonstrates a greater understanding of the emotional trials which baseball

can place on an individual. Ken's motives for becoming a coach was to give back to the players he came in contact with on multiple levels.

Justin, also wanted to help teach current players about the game. His motives differed in that he was interested in giving back to his children who were participating in little leagues when he chose to retire. He was motivated to engage in amateur coaching in order to give back to his children who were also interested in playing baseball.

I had 2 boys and when they're walking around their dad's a major league all-star, obviously they wanted to play and they loved it too and I just really wanted to help them. It seems like Justin really wanted to spend time with his children and baseball provided a way to gain even more time together. Additionally, he wanted to help them develop within the little league program and their skills as baseball players. He does not provide insight into his sons' baseball endeavors after little league, but he does share wanting to help them at that time. Though not explicitly stated, it is possible Justin enjoyed the impact he had on his son's baseball performance and perhaps coaching at professional level allowed for that to continue thus motivating him to pursue a professional contract. However, it is important to note that his experience is different in that giving back for the next generation of professional baseball players was not a direct comment he made in his interview. Therefore he relates in the engagement of giving to others but not to the majority that the other coaches focused on.

Overall, giving back to the next generation of players (professionally, amateur) was a motive in regards to becoming a coach. The coaches were eager and excited to share their knowledge with those that played for them. Becoming a coach provided a means for them to impart that wisdom, share past experiences, and impact the journeys and lives of the players of today. Just as the smiles and happiness shown when discussing their playing days, the same

nonverbal behaviors were evident in discussing this motive to coach. While helping others was external, it is linked to a value each of these coaches possessed. This value is based on an altruistic concern for others. As discussed in Chapter 2, the more autonomous an action is based on the continuum, the closer to intrinsic the motive is despite it not being a strictly intrinsically driven.

*Second chances.* Within the opportunity to give back, was the motive of a second chance by still being part of the game or make things happen. This came up in the discussions between two of the coaches (Justin and Riley). The wisdom and knowledge the coaches would provide to their current coaches was a way for them to continue to impact the game as a whole. Additionally, by teaching current athletes they were both giving back to the next generation as well as indirectly getting another shot at the game through these individual. Also there was perhaps a chance to move through the baseball system to either get back to the big leagues or be there for the first time.

It is worth noting that Justin and Riley had different experiences both as players and when it came time to retire. Despite these differences, they were both still seeing how their involvement as coaches allowed them to impact the game itself. It was this second chance that also motivated their interests to get into coaching. In the below exchange, Justin discussed how he can now take ownership of every moving part associated with the game. As a result, he has a hand and influence on what happens on the field.

Justin: I can coach my team now and I can still have a chance maybe to do something in this game to win this game. I might make the decision on whose coming in to pitch, whose gonna bat, you know it on the line up and that kind of thing still gave me that competitive venue.

Interviewer: Okay. So it sounded like it related back to that person that you are. Coaching just fit who you are as a person, that competitive, motivated drive.

Justin: Exactly. It just gave me another avenue to get back into that. And that's basically what I knew best playing professionally for 15 years.

Justin made it to the major leagues. Additionally, he felt he had control over his disengagement from sport. While he might have been ready to leave as a player, he was still interested in making things happen in the game. This time instead of running the bases, he would have influence over who did. This sentiment was not limited to Justin's experience. Coming from a different perspective, Riley only had a minor league career despite hopes of getting to the "big leagues." Additionally, he was dropped from his team leaving no choice when it came time to retire. As mentioned, while there are differences between Justin and Riley's experiences both were still interested in the second chance coaching provided. Riley's perspective is presented below.

Riley: Being a big part of seeing kids come in through the system, helping them with the everyday routine, learning this is no longer, like a game for fun. It's part of now your job and see them going through some tough times and then having success and a lot of them making it to the big leagues and when I watch some game and I see some of them playing and doing well I go like that's good. You know I mean somehow I was part of it.

Interviewer: You had an impact.

Riley: And yeah. I was. I helped one guy to make it. Maybe I didn't make it myself but somehow there's part of me there playing too.

Riley saw it as a way to still be part of the game by the impact he has on those he teaches. This was his second chance. From the quote, his motives may be driven by his ability to make it to the big leagues through others and as a coach, one can also move through the various levels in

professional baseball. Overall, both coaches were able to reflect on their ability to impart wisdom and skills to athletes. For Justin, it was teaching and coaching his children while they were in little leagues. His journey began as an amateur. For Riley, it was teaching the "kids" he came in contact with once he joined the professional realm. When looking at these in combination, it is clear there are external forces across the continuum. Giving back is both related to a selfless interest and intrinsic desire to help as well as a potential reward awaiting for them by moving up the "ranks" and perhaps earning the role as major league coach.

***Financial.*** Compensation can be a motive for anyone to become involved in a particular vocation. Given the need to live is based on one's ability to pay for basic needs, this does make logical sense. Money is a reward for one's hard work and therefore an external motivational force. The financial component of coaching did emerge within four of the coaches' interviews. Two of the coaches discussed the financial element in terms of liking getting paid to coach or seeing it as a necessity before deciding to take the job (Justin, Riley). For the other two coaches, they were adamant that money did not play a role in their decision to pursue coaching (Russell, Ken). First, the views of the coaches who saw money as a reward; therefore, it was an extrinsic motivator to becoming a coach will be presented before sharing the experiences of those who denied any interest in the financial benefit from their second career.

For the two coaches who discussed money as part of their reentry into the baseball world, it was not the sole factor as previously discussed. Motivations to pursue coaching involved a multilayered decision-making process that was driven by multiple factors; however, it did emerge within the interviews just the same. Justin holds a passion for the field of baseball and by becoming a coach, he was able to reconnect to a piece of his personality. He did not elaborate on the financial component but did speak to watching his money when he played. In doing so, he

managed his finances well so as a coach considered the paycheck a nice bonus to doing a job that he also enjoys.

I didn't have to have all the fancy things and fancy cars and that kind of stuff and I think that might've helped me a lot there so...took care of my money and I'm pretty much doing this more now because I love it then I have to but I certainly enjoy it and like the paycheck too.

Justin is honest that coaching was not a job he got involved in out of necessity but rather due to enjoyment. Therefore, a paycheck is viewed as a bonus to being a coach rather than the main deciding factor. The passion for the sport sparked reconnecting with baseball as a coach and being able to get paid for it is an extra piece to the puzzle that Justin can also enjoy.

Differently, Riley's focus after his playing career terminated was his family and making sure the needs of his wife and newly born daughter were met. Consequently, upon his return home, finances played an important role as his thoughts were around providing financial support given medical bills, food, clothing, etc. He shared participating in part-time coaching, construction, driving, and whatever else he could to provide. Given that Riley would help out local coaches and was still involved in baseball in some way demonstrates Riley still enjoyed the game. He reflected on the fortuitous phone call which brought him back to the professional arena but he could not commit without asking an important question despite his love of baseball.

When I got the call like you wanna get back in the game? Baseball? And I said well am I gonna get paid for that? And they told me that yeah...you can actually be part of the game and get paid so I said well let me try it.

As Riley continued to reflect, finances played a role but he always held a passion for the sport. However, he had more to consider in his personal life before he could agree to a job. This is

different from Justin's experience in that he had saved money throughout his career that it was almost a nonissue for his next career. He did not discuss asking about the paycheck before taking the job. Justin could say yes to a job he was passionate about if it felt like a good fit. In comparison, Riley had to make sure the benefits were going to be what his family needed despite loving the game. In all, Riley had more to think about. It is worth noting these two coaches had different lengths of careers and Justin did make it to the major leagues. Given those differences, the financial outcome of playing would also have looked different when considering number of year getting paid to play as well as a major league salary in comparison to a minor league salary.

On the contrary, there were two coaches who discussed finances; however, their conversations took a different turn in that both vehemently disregarded money as part of their decision to coach. Russell highlighted the realities of a professional coaching paycheck in addition to frankly stating the work he has done was not because or for the money.

Sure you get paid on the professional level but a lot of the coaching I mean I've done over the years it certainly wasn't for the money. We don't get paid a lot.

As Russell disclosed previously, altruism and helping others was a big motivating factor for him to be a coach. He disregards the financial element so much to say that the paychecks are minimal. Ken maintained a similar mentality to Russell in that there is more to coaching for him than money. He wants to make sure if he is going to be involved in coaching it is still fulfilling in the sense of the impact he has and his own personal growth. This is evident in how he describes success by three key areas.

I look at my success not necessarily in the sense of all the teams that I've coached or the players I've coached and what have they done. I think my success becomes looking at the

overall picture on 1) how am I getting better?, 2) how am I learning more about the game?, and 3) how am I impacting my players?

Nowhere in his discussion on success does he elude or discuss finances. In fact, he proceeds further stating that he would not stay involved in baseball just to collect the paycheck.

I'm gonna give it my best and if not then I'm not gonna be in it. I'm gonna walk away and pursue something else because I don't want to just do it for the sake of being...to collect a paycheck or to check boxes.

Coaching is not about a paycheck for neither Russell nor Ken and never entered their minds as a rationale to become a coach. However, both discussed money if not to at least highlight its lack of influence.

Amongst these experiences, the role that money played in the decision varied between these four coaches. Despite any of these differences, these coaches played at different times, for different lengths of times, major league versus minor league salaries, and personal considerations that appear to have influenced how money could motivate. When you have to think about the financial security of your family, it is necessary to know what one's salary will be before agreeing to a job. This is common practice for many non-athletes to inquire about salary, benefits, bonuses, etc. during the interview process or when an offer is made. However, just like the previous motivation sections have noted, there is not a singular reason to become a coach for any of these gentlemen. Within the financial aspect, the coach may have thought the paycheck was a nice bonus, believed financial security was important, or it was a non-issue, it still emerged in the conversations. It drove their actions even to some degree.

***Summary of Multilayered Motivation.*** As can be seen from the preceding sections, multiple factors played a role in the coaches choosing to pursue professional coaching as their

encore career as opposed to other endeavors. There was no singular motivator as many things drew them back to baseball. While each already held a love and passion for the game from their playing days, they had other considerations in mind. The opportunity to give back to the next generation appealing to all the coaches as they could share their past experiences and provide insight. Additionally, they could have a second chance to achieve something within baseball as coaches that they may not have been able to do as players. For example, only two of the coaches (Russell and Justin) made it to the major leagues and by returning, it is possible the other coaches could reach that level. While this identity was a motivator, it cannot be assumed to be the most important factor in the decision to pursue coaching and appears to be another piece to the puzzle. Additionally, from a practical standpoint, coaching is a job. Consequently, knowing salary/benefits motivated some as they were focused on providing for their families while for others was not even on their radar. Overall, various intrinsic and extrinsic factors influenced the coaches' decision to pursue their encore careers.

**Identity is not Stagnant.** A purpose of the current dissertation was to explore how the coaches described their identity in terms of their experience and decision to become coaches. Athletic identity refers to the degree to which an individual identifies with the athlete role. For each of the coaches, baseball became a part of their identity when they first got involved. It's salience has ebbed and flowed across the coaches' vocational life-span based on where they were in their lives. As players, it was how they saw themselves: professional ball players. Upon retirement, letting go of the importance of this identity was necessary in order to focus on other life roles. Getting back into baseball as coaches, they were able to reconnect with this piece of themselves. However, the key was baseball and identifying with the athlete role was only a piece to their holistic view of self. The coaches reflect on being at a point where they did not want to

be only baseball as there was more to them. This evolution will be showed in the following sections.

*Creation of Athletic Identity.* The emergence of an athletic identity is believed to take place the moment engagement in sports occurs (Baillie and Danish, 1992). In developing this aspect of their identity, the coaches were connecting with the career path each was determined to take. While questions were included about identity in the interview protocol, the coaches were more indirect in their discussions of the emergence of their athletic identity in comparison to how they viewed themselves as individuals.

Participating in multiple sports helped to build Russell's identity around athletics. Additionally, he was able to discuss the gravitational pull he felt towards baseball which led him to shift his viewed of self from an athlete to a baseball player.

Baseball as a team sport always was attractive to me. Although I love individual endeavors anything I've done in my life has always been better when it has been involving a team or a group. So that gravitated me to baseball right from the beginning. As can be seen, baseball was beginning to be ingrained into Russell's sense of self as a team player. He describes his connection to baseball as a force that he felt pulled towards even while participating in other sports. Given that Russell made it to the major leagues, developing this part of his identity seems to have been especially beneficial in allowing him to achieve his overall dream of a professional contract and getting to the big leagues. Creating his identity as an athlete and baseball player fit with the person Russell wanted to be on a personal and professional level.

Baseball becoming a part of one's identity was not limited to Russell's experience. Ken discussed that his focus was on making the major leagues. Consequently, his professional dreams consumed his identity and he was focused on achieving that goal.

My life...at that moment, living in the moment, living in the present time it was solely on baseball.

The vocational self-concept begins to emerge in childhood as an individual works to answer the question of "Who am I?" Ken's answer was based on his interest and passion for baseball. His life was based on living in the present moment and in that time frame, blinders were on to any other aspects of self. His athletic identity surfaced and like Russell, it fueled the vocational self-concept which connected to his career choice.

*Shifting Life Roles.* A developmental task required of those who retire is relinquishing their vocational self-concept. The level of salience placed on the worker role now shifts to that of other life roles given the work is no longer at the forefront. In terms of athletic identity, letting this piece of oneself go is believed to be beneficial to the out of sport transition experience. For the coaches, there were differences which arose related to this particular theme. For some of the coaches, they were ready to let go of the worker role/athletic identity and focus on other aspects of their life (parents, spouse). However, this was not the case for all as two coaches went immediately from retirement from playing to their encore career.

As mentioned, some of the coaches engaged in the developmental task of relinquishing their vocational self-concept and other life roles became more salient. The coaches who engaged in this task talked about their families as the new focus of their everyday lives. This is not to say that their parents or spouse roles were not important or salient, but rather it was not in competition with the lifestyle of professional athletics anymore. As a result, these men now

shifted attention from getting RBIs and an insurmountable time away from home to less traveling. Justin noted this shift in the following encounter.

Interviewer: So what actually got you thinking about it [life after sports]? When did that happen?

Justin: Actually, I retired. My kids were 9, 8, and 5 and I'm looking at it like I just pretty much missed most of their lives so far so I went home.

Justin appears to be very much aware of how the worker role's salience in comparison to the parent role occurred over the course of his playing career. Therefore, he was ready to retire in order to be more present with his children and have time with them. Part of this process included him becoming their little league coach. Similarly, Riley did not have time to even think about missing sports because he was preparing for the salience of the parent role with the birth of his first child. Like Justin, he was prepared to relinquish the worker role in order to focus on building on life with his family.

There was not much time for me to be thinking about myself, like my career. I'm not playing no being depressed or nothing. I was more thinking about how I'm gonna get money. How am I gonna support my daughter?

One's athletic identity can become salient upon becoming involved with sports. For these two coaches, their athletic identity was also connected to their job and role as a worker. Upon retirement, the life role that was more salient shifted due to retirement. Consequently, these coaches shifted their identity less around being a worker and more around being a parent.

On the other hand, there were two coaches who did not decrease the salience of their worker role. Terrance and Ken discussed the brief break between no longer playing and entering coaching. During the time of disengagement, these coaches did not relinquish their vocational

self-concept around athletics or the worker role. Instead both found ways to get reinvolved. Ken, who had experienced hardship when he could no longer play, needed to take time before choosing to keep his worker role most salient.

Once the dust settled and I kind of picked up the pieces and said okay hey time to move on, don't let the bitterness ruin what could be coming in front of me and handcuff me that's when I started reaching out to teams looking for an opportunity to coach for [year].

Ken's quote demonstrates how he decreased the importance of the worker role and his athletic identity after he could no longer play. After he took time to mourn the loss of his playing career, he appeared determined to reengage in the worker role; however, it was in a different capacity. Similarly, Terrance also took a break between a professional playing career before his encore professional coaching career. In comparison, Terrance was mourning more than the loss of his playing career given his dad passed at the same time.

So when that whole traction thing started up again. I kinda revamped what I had originally thought which was playing in the big league to I'm gonna manage in the big leagues and I started that climb. So it was a quick kind of little interim thing where I was down and out and then quickly rebounded in and you get caught up in this vortex and once you get in this thing you know from being around it your whole life that it never goes away and never lets you go.

Terrance demonstrates that the worker role did not fully dissolve as it did with Ken. He just changed his trajectory of how he would maintain his salient role. He would instead shift his attention from playing in the major leagues to coaching. Both Ken and Terrance's stories show how the worker role does not necessarily dissolve for all those that encounter retirement. Rather, they maintain it in order to find an encore career. More information about this stage of their

journey will be discussed in the following section. However, it is worth noting how different individuals approach disengagement from their first career.

*Baseball is a Piece.* Baseball and ultimately the worker role has not remained the most salient part of the coaches overall beings highlighting how athletic identity has ebbed and flowed across the coaches' lives. When it came time for retirement, all but two (Terrance and Ken) took time off to pursue other interests, many of which was family. Consequently, their life roles shifted in salience or importance as noted in the proceeding section. When it came time to return to the forge as coaches, they had to pick up that worker role but it appears other aspects of their life maintain high levels of importance. As a result, baseball and their athletic identity only consisted a piece of who they were. Russell, when asked about describing his identity, began by describing personality traits. He saw his actions as a baseball man reflected in a different answer.

I'm a happy, joyful, faithful, self-accepting man. That's who I am. And what I did is a whole different question or a different answer. What I did is kind of explained on the back of my baseball card I guess. But who I am as a person. My nature is to be happy and joyful and certainly faithful.

Baseball was what he did and he makes a note of referring to his baseball for those type of stats. He is adamant that himself as a player or even a coach are not defining features. Nor does the sport encompass him as an individual. He saw himself as much more than an athlete. He is not alone in this sentiment. In fact, John directly notes that this (baseball) does not define him. He also saw himself as more than just an athlete. Baseball may follow him on and off the field given it has provided many lessons but he also holds the salient roles of father and spouse that he noted upon retirement.

As far as my identity this doesn't define me. You know baseball isn't me. It's a part of me you know.

From John's above quote, baseball is merely a piece to his individual puzzle. Focusing strictly on him as a former baseball player or current coach would not allow one to see the whole picture. Does he maintain his athletic identity and connection with baseball? Yes. Is he more than baseball? Also, yes. It seems that he is also noting his disinterest in being defined by baseball especially as he reflect it is not me. It is almost a similar sentiment to Russell in that it is what he does, rather than who he is.

Ken also does not see himself as "baseball." He provides some insight into the struggle that this part of his identity can have on him given the consuming nature of the sport. As a professional athlete, others see and know you from that arena. As such, it can be hard to not get sucked into that vortex. However, Ken is certain that he does not want to be "consumed" requiring him to remind himself of other identities and pieces to himself that he find important.

I have to keep myself in check to realize that too because sometimes baseball consumes me over...I wouldn't say overwhelm in a negative way so I think consume is a good word and I think I get so caught up and consumed with baseball that you know the saying is I don't...baseball is not who I am it's what I do and I think there are times where I feel like baseball is who I am and I don't want that to take precedent of where my belief system is that no I'm not baseball.

While Ken was one of the two coaches (including Terrance) who went into coaching almost immediately after his playing career concluded, he shares similar feelings about the salience of his athletic identity in the grand scheme of his being. Perhaps, the distress he experienced during

his retirement stage actually helped put life into perspective thus showing him there was more important things to life than simply working and baseball.

*Summary of Identity is not Stagnant.* Overall, it is clear that the coaches want to be viewed in a holistic sense. They do not see themselves as one dimensional in that baseball and their identities as athletes is the most salient. Given their open and honest reflections during the interview, it may be that they would want others to see themselves in this same light. Their connection to this part of their identity may have been a motivator, as discussed in the "Multilayered Motivation" section, but it is by no means the most salient part of their beings. Over the course of their journeys, the worker role's importance in their life has ebbed and flowed with the inclusion of other life roles that have grown in their importance. Each appears to have some sense of balance between the piece which baseball holds and the other aspects of themselves which each holds dear.

### **Conclusion of Findings**

The purpose of this dissertation study was to gain an understanding of the athlete to coach transition experience. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 6 current, elite baseball coaches to explore this phenomenon. After analyzing the data from a phenomenological lens, three main findings emerged: **Mental Preparedness**, **Multilayered Motivation**, and **Identity is not Stagnant**. Within the interviews, all the participants reflected on these findings in both indirect and direct ways. The coaches were able to speak to an ability to mentally prepare for impending transitions. Mental preparation was the most constant form of adaptability among the coaches as opposed to variations in the level of concern for the future, curiosity and engagement in exploring other career paths, and level of control or personal responsibility experienced. The coaches' ability to mental prepare in the form of maintaining a healthy outlook,

having acceptance, and being confident aided in experiencing a successful transitions despite any challenges that arose. Additionally, there was a willingness to accept available resources through mentorship or coaching workshops allowing them to feel capable and able to engage in their work.

None of the coaches discussed a singular rationale for becoming a coach. Rather multiple factors aided in that decision-making process ranging from intrinsic to extrinsic motivators. Lastly, athletic identity is not stagnant as it tended to ebb and flow for each of the coaches based on the vocational developmental stage they were in as well as how their view of self shifted. As players the coaches appeared to hold high athletic identities which decreased upon retirement in order to make room for other salient life roles. Upon their return to baseball, athletic identity played a role in this decision but its salience appeared to even out given the coaches did not want to be seen as only baseball. They developed a more holistic view of self in which baseball was a piece. In the following chapter, the researcher will provide insight into the overall essence of the athlete to coach transition as well as discuss these findings in connection to previous literature and theory.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

This chapter provides a summary of the current dissertation including the purpose of the study, research questions, and methods. In addition, "Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion" will discuss a summary of the findings as well as expand upon their implications in sport psychology and vocational psychology. Also, limitations of the research, recommended future directions and final remarks are presented.

#### **Summary**

Athletic transitions have been a topic of research focusing on the experience of those who leave sports. When this occurs, studies have revealed a potential negative impact due to retirement which can arise in the form of adjusting to new life, missing sport or competition, body changes, social status changes, and vocational responsibilities (Wylleman & Reints, 2010). For athletes, in comparison to non-athletes, the time of retirement can occur much sooner as the longevity of one's playing career will in no way lead into an individual's 50s or 60s. In fact, the average age of retirement for professional athletes is 33 (Wylleman & Reints, 2010). Consequently, vocational concerns can surface to the forefront as there is still plenty of working years left leaving these former athletes to find another vocation which may or may not be related to sport. Within the vocational literature, this would be referred to as an encore career (Hartung, 2013). One possible career choice is coaching given the former athlete would know this area well and their identity as athletes would be allowed to stay intact.

Wylleman and colleagues (2004) were aware of the vast literature on athletic transition and the need to explore specific transition types. The current researcher took this suggestion by focusing on not just what happens when an athlete leaves sports, but the experience of returning

to sport in a different position: athlete to coach. The aim of this research was to explore and understand the shared experience of transitioning from athlete to coach as previous literature as tended to stop pursuing at the point of retirement. Therefore, little is known about the second career that follows athletes and what this looks like for current coaches. Given these insights, the current study was framed as exploratory in nature. Additionally, it was viewed through a vocational lens as the transition from athlete to coach is a job change at heart. Additionally, a motivational framework of Self-Determination theory was also included given the transition experience explored the driving forces behind choosing coaching above other vocational options. Thus, data was analyzed using a phenomenological lens which was helpful in capturing the essence of the coaches' shared experience: becoming professional coaches. Participants consisted of 6 current professional baseball coaches. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews with participants via in phone and in person, based on preference, in order to address the below research questions.

### **Main Research Question**

1. How do former athletes interpret and explain the experiences of the transition from athletics to coaching?

### **Sub-Research Question**

2. How do former athletes describe their identity in terms of their experience and decision to become coaches?

The findings resulted in three main themes which were most salient in capturing the shared experience of transitioning from athlete to coach. First, the theme of Mental Preparation highlights the ways in which the coaches mentally and emotionally prepared for the transition out and back into sports. This included having a healthy outlook, acceptance of the situation

and/or circumstances, and confidence in one's ability to manage the transition process as well as potential challenges. Next, the theme of Multilayered Motivation references the forces which drove the coaches to pursue their vocational interests as coaches. Within this theme, it appeared the motivations to engage in a vocational transition was multilayered in that the coaches' actions were not limited to a singular motive but rather multiple factors which consisted of both internal and external influences. Lastly, the theme of Identity is not Stagnant notes the evolution of the coaches' athletic identity over the course of their journey within athletics and baseball. Their athletic identity was created upon becoming baseball players, shifted in salience upon retirement, and played a small role in the decision to return to baseball as coaches. It only encompasses a piece to the coaches' holistic view of self and it was not of interest for them to be seen as solely baseball. It is merely a part of themselves and their story. Each of these themes will be further discussed in the following sections as well as how these emerging themes relate back to the literature and the theoretical framework.

### **Discussion of Findings**

**Mental Preparation.** Athletic transition literature has noted the impact leaving sports can have on an individual including missing sport or competition, body changes, social status change, and vocational concerns (Wylleman & Reints, 2010). While the distress can occur, Wippert & Wippert (2010) did find it does decrease over time. According to Super's life-span, life space theory of career (Hartung, 2013) which provided a theoretical framework for the current study, having a successful transition involves career adaptability. The four domains which encompass career adaptability are concern, control, curiosity, and confidence. The findings from the current study demonstrated the coaches maintained an ability to handle challenges which arose and maneuvered through career transitions; however, the domains of career adaptability were

inconsistently present. In fact, concern for the future was sometimes seen as a hindrance as it could impede one's ability to be in the present moment. Additionally, the level of control the coaches experienced regarding their transitions were also different with some feeling they had more of a say than others. Lastly, there was little curiosity or exploration of other possibilities as being pulled to other vocations was not experienced. The one domain all the coaches were able to reflect on was having confidence resulting in the theme of Mental Preparation.

Mental Preparation refers to the coaches' abilities to prepare both mentally and emotionally for the transition process. This type of preparation arose in the form of a healthy outlook, acceptance of current situations/circumstances, and confidence. It is necessary to have a "healthy" or open outlook of what is to come even if focusing on the present moment is needed at the time. By being open to what is yet to come, it allows one to look forward to the future rather than fearing it. Additionally, having acceptance of the circumstances or situation one is in can help to not fight what is occurring. Within mental preparedness, the findings also show a need to believe in oneself and be confident in the ability to succeed despite any obstacles which may arise.

This theme relates to Super's theory of career development as a branching off point from one of the domains: confidence (Hartung, 2013). Additionally, the transition literature has highlighted coping skills can be helpful in managing the potential distress (Lally, 2007; Lavalley, Gordon, & Grove, 1997). Coping strategies from previous literature has discussed accounting making and confiding (Lavalley, Gordon, & Grove, 1997), reaching out to former teammates for support (Lally, 2007) and engaging in other physical pursuits (Lally, 2007). These findings highlight a component which could be included in the preventative programs that are in existence or potentially make an argument for their incorporation. The programs and resources that are

available focus on turning to others for support to confide in (Samuel and Tenenbaum, 2013), exploring other parts of one's self outside of athletics (Sugerman, 2011), and career counseling (Mateos, Torregrosa, & Cruz, 2010; Stambulova & Ryba, 2014). Based on these findings, it would be prudent to also include discussion of these mental components which can aid or hinder the transition process. It is likely athletes maintain a lot of confidence given their decision to pursue a professional career which does not include many individuals. Teaching them to generalize this confidence to other areas of life including how to prepare for retirement and to engage in a second career would be beneficial.

Only one coach experienced high distress due to retirement from baseball: Ken. He had plenty of confidence in himself to compete and perhaps reach the major leagues. He was also approaching a period of acceptance that retirement was coming as he did not want to play just for the sake of playing if his team's staff did not also see him as a valued member of the team.

I wanted to play because I still felt I had enough in the tank to keep grinding it out and hopefully get a chance to [inaudible]. At that time, the organization I was playing for told me they were going to bring me back in the next following season

From his statement, Ken demonstrates there was no need to accept or mentally prepare for retirement given he was told he would be returning. However, that was not the case resulting in "bitterness" and anger towards the sport upon retirement. Having no chance to prepare mentally, Ken experience high emotional distress. Despite other coaches who shared similar mindsets in the form of present focus or experienced involuntary transitions, he was the only one to experience hardship demonstrating the importance of this finding in future work with athletes.

Ken's experience with transitioning provides some support for the assumptions made by the researcher about the distress which can manifest from transitions; however, it was not a

shared experience amongst all coaches. All four domains of career adaptability were not experienced which could suggest, the coaches did not maintain career adaptability. However, they did manage challenges and feel their transition into coaching was successful overall which would suggest the opposite. As confidence is a domain, having mental preparation in the forms described (healthy outlook, acceptance, and confidence) may suggest this is important even when the other three domains are not as present. Referring to the main research questions: How do former athletes interpret and explain the experiences of the transition from athletics to coaching? The transition experience is interpreted and explained in terms of focusing on what one needs to do in order to be successful and preparing as needed for the next stage of life.

**Multilayered Motivation.** Self-determination theory also provided a framework for the current study. The initial assumption made by the researcher was that athletic identity would play a major role in the decision to pursue coaching. While identity was part of the decision, it was not the singular influencer. The motivators to become coaches were found to be as follows: Passion, Identity, Giving back to the next generation, Second chances, and Financial. In connection with self-determination theory, this study found that multiple factors played a role in the action to choose coaching as the coaches were able to reflect on many things which made them want to be a coach. Additionally, the action was influenced by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors which is common according to Ryan and Deci (2000). The motives coincided with the continuum of motivation which was developed and was structured based on the level of autonomy believed to be associated.

Becoming a coach was not a purely intrinsic behavior which would be described as based on enjoyment and interest (Ryan & Deci, 2000). All the coaches were passionate about baseball and the ability to connect back to an area of interest. Having enjoyed their time as players as well

as maintaining a love for the game definitely fueled their interest to return as coaches. Their athletic identities, which emerged during their first engagement with sports also motivated the decision. Inconsistent with Shachar, Brewer, Cornelius, and Petitpas (2004), athletic identity did play somewhat of a role in the decision to become coaches and would be defined as integrated regulated as it relates to the coaches' views of self. They were able to relate to this part of themselves and to other athletes given this experience and identity as an athlete. As this dissertation was qualitative in nature, there is no way to know the significance although, it appeared minor in comparison to other factors.

Many coaches described themselves as individuals who like to help others and want to give back. All the coaches had developed competence in baseball from their years of participation and experience. As a result, the ability to give back and teach someone would be based in a skill-set they were familiar with: baseball. Ryan and Deci (2000) noted engaging in a behavior which is congruent with one's sense of self is integrated regulation. As discussed in the "Results" chapter, this motive encompassed the ability to get a second chance in the game by being a coach. Getting a second chance through the work of others, is more external than athletic identity and giving back is. Engaging in a behavior which is more externalized like getting a second chance is introjected regulation. Ryan and Deci (2000) described this type of extrinsic motivation as a way to experience feelings of pride. The coaches which expressed this motivation (Justin and Riley) are able to feel proud of the work they do as coaches based on what their athletes accomplish.

The last motivator discussed is also the most extrinsic based on the SDT continuum: financial. An externally regulated behavior is one based on rewards/punishments. Getting a paycheck is a tangible reward for engaging in the world of work. Though a normal component,

research has also shown how detrimental such rewards can be on intrinsic motivation; although given all the coaches still maintained passion this may have not been present since multiple factors were playing a role and not just the paycheck. The findings are consistent in showing how multiple intrinsic and extrinsic factors can motivate a behavior, in case becoming a coach. Additionally, the coaches were able to achieve satisfaction and well-being as their needs were met (Ryan & Deci, 2000). They were able to feel competent in the field they were in, related to those they worked with, and were autonomous in the decision to become a coach.

These findings are partially able to address the sub-question: How do former athletes describe their identity in terms of their experience and decision to become coaches? The following section will provide greater insight into how the athletes describe their identity related to the experience. However, this theme does show the decision to become coaches has some basis in athletic identity, but as can be seen there is much more to the decision to coach than one driving force.

**Identity Is Not Stagnant.** Both athletic transition literature and Super's Life-Span, Life-Space theory of career discuss relinquishing one's identity to focus on other life roles in order to manage the transition experience. Lally's (2007) study demonstrated how the participants proactively withdrew their identity away from gymnastics in order to manage the potential distress. As part of the disengagement stage of vocational development, the vocational self-concept, which in this phenomena would be athlete, is encouraged to be surrendered in order to focus on other life roles. The finding of Identity is Not Stagnant highlights how the athletic identity which the coaches possessed ebbed and flowed as needed across their vocational careers. In answering the sub-research question, this finding provides greater insight into how the coaches described and interpreted their identity in terms of their experience.

As a reminder, athletic identity is defined as "exclusivity and strength with which people identify with their role as an athlete" (as cited in Benson, Evans, Surya, Martin, & Eys, 2015, p.303). When the coaches found sports and baseball as areas of interest, their athletic identities began to emerge. Connecting with a part of themselves added to their passion and enjoyment of being involved in the game. Consistent with Super's life-span, life-space theory of career (Hartung, 2013) and suggestions from previous literature (Beamon, 2012; Lally, 2007), it is beneficial to decrease the salience of one's vocational self-concept (aka athletic identity in this case) as distress can be associated with the loss of one's identity. Four of the six coaches took time between their playing days and return as coaches and all four, were able to focus on other life roles outside of their athletic self. They were able to decrease their athletic identity despite having varied experiences with retirement (involuntary/voluntary, length of career). One coach in particular (Riley) even spoke to his focus on his new role as a father upon retirement which kept him from focusing on the loss of sport. This was a necessary step for retirement as it allowed the coaches experience no emotional turmoil during retirement and focus on other life roles which were also important: spouse and parents.

When it came time to return to coaching, it appears the salience of the athletic identity was not nearly as high as it was when they were playing. A difference between the participants as players versus coaches, is their lives were not just baseball. After a professional baseball career, each appeared more aware of the impact a "just baseball" mentality and identity can have. As a result, none wanted to be seen as baseball. The coaches developed a holistic view of themselves encompassing their life roles, other passions, and cultural identities (i.e. faith). Even the two coaches (Terrance and Ken) who went into baseball immediately, found other aspects of their lives that were just as worthwhile, which may have come with maturity and age. Terrance

became a husband and father and maintained enjoyment of other hobbies outside of baseball. Ken shifted his athletic identity to being most salient to that of being a child to his parents and a child of God which defined him above anything else. This finding supports both theory and literature regarding how one's athletic identity or vocational self-concept needs to lose its salience upon retirement (Hartung, 2013; Lally, 2007).

**Essence of the Phenomena.** All of the coaches share an experience: transitioning from a career as an athlete to a career as a coach. By utilizing a phenomenological lens to explore this experience, the current dissertation was able to gather structural and textural descriptions based on the insight provided by the coaches. These descriptions noted how and what was experienced as each of the coaches transitioned out of baseball and returned in a different capacity. Creswell (2013) informed a composite encompassing these descriptions leads to the "essence" of the phenomenon which provide the underlying structure of what it means to have this experience. In providing this underlying structure, the reader will be able to walk away from this studying feeling they have a better understanding of what it is like to experience transitioning from an athlete to a coach.

Choosing to pursue a professional athletic career requires determination and resiliency. The process is not simple and there is no guarantee of success. Even the idea of choosing a professional playing career can be met with uncertainty and doubts about the ability to actually achieve this dream. The coaches of this study were required to do this on two occasions: once as a player and second as a coach. The transitions which occurred were riddled with challenges both on a personal and professional basis (i.e. loss of a loved one, being released, injury). There were feelings of readiness, acceptance, anger, bitterness, and loss associated once playing was no longer an option; however, this did not stop the coaches in their tracks from moving forward

with their lives. To manage these emotions, many coaches were willing to turn to a support network or mentor. These challenges were not limited to retiring from sport but also upon the return. At this point, there was excitement and joy about the prospect of returning to a field each coach had called home prior. In addition, there was some uncertainty and nerves as again, there was no guarantee of returning to baseball as a coach even with the past connection each coach had. Adjustments in perspective from player to coach and finding balance between life on and off the field were necessary to be successful. They were able to return to their passions, reconnect with a piece of their identity, give back to the next generation of players, and be financially stable. Overall, in becoming a coach, these men were able to find a holistic view of self which they had not known in their playing days. While playing, they were baseball players. When they retired, they were "former players," parents, children, spouses, etc. Now as coaches, they could encompass every part of themselves both who they were as individuals and as baseball professionals. Their determination and continued resiliency to face whatever challenges arose and be the individuals they wanted was evident throughout their journey from athlete to coach.

### **Limitations**

There are a handful of limitations associated with the current study. First, as is the nature of qualitative research, this study cannot be generalized to all athletes that transition from playing to coaching. The themes and findings which emerged may be experienced by other former athletes now coaches, but that cannot be stated with certainty. Another limitation was the sample size was small despite reaching saturation. More participants could have been included; however, this was challenging given the population was current, professional baseball coaches who were also in season and engaging in their career at the time. Also, when some coaches expressed initial

interest, they were less responsive to follow up communication. Finally, while there was cultural diversity achieved within the sample, greater diversity in the form of ethnicity, time since retirement, and age could have been beneficial. The only coach who experienced distress as well as mentioned mental health coaching was also the youngest coach. Given mental health coaching or sport psychology is still relatively new, it is possible younger coaches may have also reflected on this possible resource.

### **Significance of Findings and Study Implications**

This dissertation was exploratory in nature as literature has not explored the encore careers of former athletes. Much of the literature has sought to understand the transition out of sport and the potential distress which can be experienced. This dissertation took the advice of Wylleman, Alfermann, & Lavallee (2004) which was to research a specific type of career transition. In doing so, there are implications demonstrating the place where vocational and sport psychology come together.

The hope behind this study was to see if possible resources could be found which athletes would actually utilize and if they would be helpful. The coaches were able to provide insight into what is most helpful when experiencing a vocational transition. First, turning to supportive person is the most used resource the coaches noted. However, interest in turning to a "professional" was not suggested. In fact, many of the coaches wanted to talk to others who had also experienced the transition or potential mentors. This implies that talking to a psychologist or counselor may still be met with stigma; although the age of the coaches and periods in which they played could be playing a role. It may be helpful for teams to create a mentor program between younger/older players or with alumni of teams in order to create the support network which the coaches preferred.

Another major implication for practice where both the vocational and sport literature agree is the impact athletic identity can have on one's transition. Decreasing the salience of one's athletic identity or vocational self-concept is necessary. Additionally, exploring other life roles which have significance can be helpful to having a former athlete there is more to them than what they do: play sports. When the coaches had other areas of interest or life roles (parents, spouse, child) that was of significance to them, they were able to handle the potential distress that could arise and/or focus their attention on other obligations/responsibilities. This is where a psychologist could come into play because talking about other interest or other life roles does not have detract from their lives as athletes. It is merely asking them what they do on their down time if they are not engaging in the sport. As mentioned, there may be a stigma or a lack of interest in talking with a professional. As a result, this would fall on individual teams and their player development teams to assist in this by engaging in these discussions.

A final implication for practice is the importance of preparing mentally and emotionally for career transitions. This study highlighted the specific skills of a healthy outlook, acceptance, and confidence. Coping strategies can be taught by psychologists perhaps in a team format. There are professional teams which house a mental skills coach on staff. If an individual approach may be less attended, it is possible to assume team workshops of these skills can be beneficial. An approach that may make teaching these skills more valued is explaining how this can benefit them both on the field as well as off.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

In addition to the practical implications noted, the dissertation is also applicable to future research. This researcher believed it was important to explore the experiences of young baseball professionals who may not have engaged in the developmental task of exploration (Hartung,

2013; Ruck, 2011). While exploration and curiosity was not engaged in by the coaches in this study, it was not seen as a hindrance or even related to their decision to pursue coaching. Future research should consider exploring other sports to see if similar findings arise in the transition to coaching. Additionally, baseball is an all male sport therefore female or non-binary voices were not heard. Future studies should explore other sports which have variations in these demographics.

As noted in the "Discussion of Findings" section, there was some diversity in regards to the age and length of time since playing. Future studies would benefit from talking to coaches who have recently transitioned into their new career as the shift would be more fresh in their minds. Also, this researcher wondered if "newer" retirees who have been surrounded by mental skills coaching as part of the team, may also demonstrate a greater interest in talking with a professional or willingness to utilize resources compared to the older generation of baseball.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Within the world of work, an individual maneuvers through vocational stages of development from the time he/she first learns about careers, exploring potential paths, establishing and maintaining a stable vocation, until the moment of disengagement where work is not longer the focus of one's life (Hartung, 2013). Within the sport realm, these stages are also represented; however, the time is not as much across the life-span as Super had noted retirement occurs at a younger age. This means there are many years of working life left with some choosing coaching as a second or encore career.

This study was able to provide some insight into this specific transition of athlete to coach. It highlighted how being prepared mentally and a willingness to explore life outside of sport can help in dealing with the distress literature has spoken about. This study combined both

vocational and sport psychology given that each was saying similar things but rooted in different areas of psychology. Prepare for retirement and explore life roles that can provide fulfillment outside of one's career and in this case athletics. Overall, this research is important to helping psychologist or mental skills coach know what can be valuable information to share with athletes who are on the verge of retirement, currently retiring, or considering a second career in coaching.

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Appendix A: Demographic Information

Gender \_\_\_\_\_

How long did you been play baseball for (at any level)? \_\_\_\_\_

Ethnicity: Hispanic African American White Asian American

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you been coaching? \_\_\_\_\_

Was leaving sport (please circle) Voluntary Involuntary Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to be contacted to provide feedback or additional thoughts after this interview?

Yes No

If answered yes, contact me at via:

phone: \_\_\_\_\_

email: \_\_\_\_\_

other: \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix B: Development of Interview Protocol

Interview Questions	Research Question
Tell me a little about yourself.	How do former athletes interpret and explain their experience with transitioning from athletics to coaching?
<p>Tell me about your experience as a player.            Tell me about your experience as a coach.            Tell me about your experience transitioning from a player to coach.            What did it look like? Feel like?            Struggles or challenges?</p> <p>Tell me about your experience as a coach compared to a player.            Can you recall any critical moments when you felt these differences?</p>	How do former athletes interpret and explain their experience with transitioning from athletics to coaching?
<p>How would you describe your identity?            Tell me about your identity as a player.            Tell me about your identity as a coach.            Tell me about how your identity has evolved during the transition of player to coach.            How is your identity impacting other areas or roles in your life?</p>	How do former describe their identity in terms of their experience and decision to become coaches?
<p>What (contexts or situations) influenced or affected your transition into coaching?            Your decision to coach?</p>	How do former athletes interpret and explain their experience with transitioning from athletics to coaching?
<p>How would you describe your feelings about this phase of your career?            Compared to your playing career.            If different, what do you think influenced (or affected) this difference?            Successful transition? Why or why not?            What lessons do you carry over from having been a player into your coaching or other life roles?</p>	How do former athletes interpret and explain their experience with transitioning from athletics to coaching?
<p>What (if anything) would or could have been helpful during the transition process?</p>	How do former athletes interpret and explain their experience with transitioning from athletics to coaching?
<p>Is there any other information I should know in order to understand your transition to coaching better?            Any thoughts or comments on our conversation that would be helpful for understanding your experience?</p>	

## Appendix C: Interview Protocol

- 1) Tell me a little about yourself.
- 2) Tell me about your experience as a player.
  - a. Tell me about your experience as a coach.
  - b. Tell me about your experience transitioning from a player to coach.
    - I. What did it look like? Feel like?
    - II. Struggles or challenges?
  - c. Tell me about your experience as a coach compared to a player.
    - I. Can you recall any critical moments when you felt these differences?
- 3) How would you describe your identity?
  - a. Tell me about your identity as a player.
  - b. Tell me about your identity as a coach.
  - c. Tell me about how your identity has evolved during the transition of player to coach.
  - d. How is your identity impacting other areas or roles in your life?
- 4) What (contexts or situations) influenced or affected your transition into coaching?
  - a) Your decision to coach?
- 5) How would you describe your feelings about this phase of your career?
  - a) Compared to your playing career.
    - I. If different, what do you think influenced (or affected) this difference?
  - b) Successful transition? Why or why not?
  - c) What lessons do you carry over from having been a player into your coaching or other life roles?
- 6) What (if anything) would or could have been helpful during the transition process?
- 7) Is there any other information I should know in order to understand your transition to coaching better?
  - a) Any thoughts or comments on our conversation that would be helpful for understanding your experience?

## Appendix D: Recruitment Email

Good morning (afternoon),

My name is Jamie Moore and I am a doctoral student working on my dissertation under Dr. Stephen Wester, Ph.D. at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. I am emailing to ask for your assistance in locating participants (yourself or others) for my dissertation study about the transition from participating in sports as an athlete to becoming a coach. Eligible participants include current professional baseball coaches (18 years old or older) who had a baseball, athletic career (at any level) of at least 10 years.

If the individual decides to participate in this study, he will be invited to partake in a 45-60 minute interview via Skype, phone, or in-person that will be audio-recorded. Participation is completely voluntary.

If you or someone you know may be interested, please pass along the attached flyer and my contact information. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [moore295@uwm.edu](mailto:moore295@uwm.edu).

I appreciate your help in contributing towards the advancement in psychological research.

Thank you for your time.

Jamie Moore

Counseling Psychology Doctoral Student

University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

## Seeking Participants for a Research Study

**The purpose of this study is to understand the experience of the athlete to coach transition.**

To participate in this study, you must:

- Current baseball coach
- Have an athletic career (at any level) of at least 10 years.
- Willing to participate in the requirements of the study

Participation in the study involves:

- a 45-60 minute interview via Skype, phone, or in-person

**To learn more information about this study, please contact Jamie Moore, M.A. at [moore295@uwm.edu](mailto:moore295@uwm.edu)**

Study Title: From Playing to Directing: A Qualitative Inquiry into the

Athlete to Coach Transition

Principal Investigator: Stephen Wester, Ph.D.

Secondary Principal Investigator: Jamie Moore, M.A.

## Appendix F: Informed Consent

### University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee

#### Consent to Participate in Interview Research

**Study Title:** From Playing to Directing: A qualitative inquiry into the athlete to coach transition.

**Person Responsible for Research:** Stephen Wester, Ph.D., Jamie Moore, MA

**Study Description:** The purpose of this qualitative study will be to explore the athlete to coach transition as described by current professional baseball coaches who participated in an athletic baseball career prior to their role as a coach. Approximately 15 subjects will participate in this study. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to participate in an interview. During this interview you will be asked questions about your transition out of athletics into coaching. This will take approximately 45-60 minutes of your time. The interview will take place in a private location or via Skype/phone and it will be audio recorded.

**Risks / Benefits:** Risks that you may experience from participating are considered minimal. There are no costs for participating. There are no benefits to you other than to further research.

**Confidentiality:** During the interview your name will not be used. Your transcripts will be coded using pseudonyms based on your first initial and number interview you are. Your responses will be treated as confidential and any use of your name and or identifying information about anyone else will be removed during the transcription process so that the transcript of our conversation is de-identified. All study results will be reported without identifying information so that no one viewing the results will be able to match you with your responses. Direct quotes may be used in publications or presentations. Data from this study will be saved on a non-networked, password-protected computer in an offsite location for 6 months following the end of the project. Only the PI (Stephen Wester, Ph.D.) and SPI (Jamie Moore) will have access to your information. However, the Institutional Review Board at UW-Milwaukee or appropriate federal agencies like the Office for Human Research Protections may review this study's records. Audio recordings will be destroyed 6 months after completion of the study.

**Voluntary Participation:** Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to take partake in this study, or if you decide to take part, you can change your mind later and withdraw from the study. You are free to not answer any questions or withdraw at any time. Your decision will not change any present or future relationships with the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee. There are no known alternatives available to participating in this research study other than not taking part.

**Who do I contact for questions about the study:** For more information about the study or study procedures, contact Jamie Moore at moore295@uwm.edu.

**Who do I contact for questions about my rights or complaints towards my treatment as a research subject?** Contact the UWM IRB at 414-229-3173 or [irbinfo@uwm.edu](mailto:irbinfo@uwm.edu).

**Research Subject's Consent to Participate in Research:**

To voluntarily agree to take part in this study, you must be 18 years of age or older. By signing the consent form, you are giving your consent to voluntarily participate in this research project.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Subject/Legally Authorized Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Subject/Legally Authorized Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Research Subject's Consent to Audio-record Interview:**

By signing the consent form, you are giving your consent to the researcher to audio-record the interview.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Subject/Legally Authorized Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Subject/Legally Authorized Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## JAMIE M. ZALASIN, PH.D

### EDUCATION -----

*University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, School of Education, Milwaukee, WI* *September 2015 - August 2020*

❖ **Ph.D. Educational Psychology**

❖ Dissertation: *From Playing to Directing: A Qualitative Inquiry into the Athlete to Coach Transition*

*University of Denver, Graduate School of Professional Psychology, Denver, Colorado* *September 2012 – June 2014*

❖ **MA Sport and Performance Psychology**

❖ Master's Project: *Outside the box: The developmental and motivational factors that contribute to creativity*

*Aurora University, Aurora, Illinois* *September 2008 – May 2012*

❖ **BA Major: Psychology and Spanish**

### CLINICAL EXPERIENCE -----

*University of Missouri-Columbia, Counseling Center* *August 2019 - July 2020*

*Psychological Intern*

- Utilized brief CBT, DBT, and interpersonal individual therapy (10 sessions or less) to college student population. Completed 3 initial evaluations per week in order to determine level of care: group, skills-based classes, individual therapy, and/or referral to community.
- Received webinar training through APA on telepsychology services. Conducted telehealth services due to covid-19 pandemic including individual therapy and initial evaluations.
- Received specialized training through participation of a year-long focus area. Provided clinical services to clients who had experienced a trauma (i.e. sexual assault) and wanted to address its impact on their functioning in therapy.
- Conducted crisis evaluations for students seeking immediate assistance through walk-in hours. Provided phone/in-person consultation for student, faculty, staff, and family members who had questions about services or available resources.
- Co-facilitated Multiple Co-Leaders (MCL) Interpersonal Process group with cohort members and senior staff fall semester (2019). Plan to co-facilitate MCL IP group and a second interpersonal process group in spring semester (2020). Participated in conducting pre-group screening sessions with potential group members to assess goals and fit for group.
- Participated in disposition meetings to develop case load. Attended monthly staff meetings. Participated in weekly seminars on topical areas and professional development.
- Received weekly supervision sessions with primary supervisor (2 hours) and focus area supervisor (1 hour) to discuss case load and competencies. Received weekly group supervision session (1 hour) to discuss group sessions. Met monthly with training director to discuss the internship process.
- Diagnosis served include: mood, anxiety, trauma

*Supervisors: Kim Daniels, Ph.D., Christine Even, Ph.D., Angela Soth-McNett, Ph.D.*

*University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee* *September 2017 - May 2018*

*University Counseling Services at Norris Health Center*

*Practicum Student*

- Provided clinical services to college population including undergraduate, graduate, and non-degree seeking students.
- Utilized CBT, ACT, and DBT for individual therapy with students addressing mood, anxiety, gender identity, disordered eating, and substance use. Completed intake appointments in order to develop a case load.
- Co-facilitated process-group with post-doctoral fellow
- Participated in Let's Talk bi-weekly, an informal consultation meeting held on-campus for students to check in about struggles they may be experiencing and determine if further counseling may be good a fit.
- Received weekly supervision sessions with primary and secondary supervisors discussing case load, diagnoses, and therapeutic interventions. Attended bi-weekly case conference with post-doctoral fellow during fall semester. Attended monthly group supervision with licensed clinician to discuss various topics (i.e. sport psychology, AODA, psychosis).

- Presented formal case presentation during staff meeting.

*Supervisors:* Marina Tierney, Psy.D., Michael Matthias, LCSW, Lynn Mucha, LCSW

*Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center - Individualized Addictions Consultation Team*      *September 2016 - July 2017*  
*Practicum Student*

- Provided clinical services in a 8-bed residential substance abuse treatment program serving Veterans who were in a geriatric population, severe mental illness or other co-morbid disorders.
- Facilitated 5 psychoeducational evidence-based groups related to relapse prevention, mindfulness, social skills, leisure activities and daily meditation. Co-facilitated post-9/11 era process group with psychologist and post-doc fellow.
- Utilized CBT, person-centered, and prolonged exposure for individual therapy with residential and outpatient veterans.
- Created a 6-week mindfulness curriculum (Making the Moment group) with psychology fellow.
- Completed biopsychosocial assessments and incorporated the BDI, BAI, and PCL-5 to provide a diagnosis of present symptoms. Integrated the OQ-45 to monitor mood and progress at weekly intervals. Administered, scored, and interpreted a brief, neuropsychological screen (MoCA) at pre- and post- treatment intervals to assess progress of cognitive deficits of veterans after abstaining from substance use.
- Participated in weekly, interdisciplinary consultation meetings with I-ACT team (psychology, social worker, nursing staff).
- Attended weekly neuro-case conferences. Participated in training on Performance Based Interviewing for Interviewees. Received diversity and safe zone training. Received weekly supervision in which discussed competencies such as multicultural/diversity issues and ethical practice.
- Diagnosis served include: mood, cognitive, aging, anxiety, psychosis, combat, trauma, substance use.

*Supervisor:* Sarah Keating, Ph.D.

*Aurora Psychiatric Hospital - Mental Health-Intensive Outpatient*      *September 2015 - May 2016*  
*Practicum Student*

- Co-facilitated an adult DBT skills group which met 3 times a week for 3 hours. Program consisted of 12 topics which took 4 weeks to complete.
- Engaged group members in 2 phases: 1) taught the skill and a discussion of how patients can implement this in daily living to manage mental health symptoms; 2) process individual group member's goals from the previous session and identify new goals.
- Monitored distress level associated with mental health symptoms daily to assess mood and SI. Administered pre/post-test screen (PHQ-9) to evaluate progress from the beginning to termination of treatment.
- Received weekly supervision to discuss training and group dynamics.
- Diagnosis served include: mood, anxiety, personality

*Supervisors:* Mary Pelman, LPC, Marty Sapp, Ph.D.

*Norwegian American Hospital, Behavioral Medicine Unit*      *November 2014 - July 2015*  
*Mental Health Counselor*

- Managed milieu of a 3-unit inpatient behavioral medicine wing of a city hospital. The three units consisted of a 24-bed adult, acute unit; a 12-bed geriatric/special needs unit, and a 15-bed expansion unit which emphasized treatment for patients with co-occurring disorders.
- Provided patient care through brief individual checks in and 15-minute interval safety checks.
- Facilitated morning groups to discuss rules of unit and goals for patient progress.
- Diagnosis served include: mood, anxiety, psychosis, and personality disorders.

*Field Placement, Denver, Colorado*      *April 2013 – May 2014*  
*Sport Psychology Consultant, Center for Performance Excellence (CPEX)*

- Provided on-site outpatient, performance-enhancement therapy to high school student athletes in various sports
- Co-facilitated mental skills training groups on topics of positive self-talk, concentration, confidence, composure, and team building.
- Utilized counseling skills to build relationships, diagnose, and treat performance issues as defined by individual players and coaches.

- Observed practices and administered needs assessments to inform treatment plan.

Supervisors: Artur Poczwardowski, Ph.D., Mark Aoyagi, Ph.D., Steve Portenga, Ph.D., Jamie Shapiro, Ph.D., Kendra Dunn, Psy.D.

#### RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

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Moore, J. (2020). From playing to directing: A qualitative inquiry into the athlete to coach transition. Chair: Stephen Wester, Ph.D. (dissertation)

Kozlowski, M., Fouad, N., Moore, J., Heyrman, K., & Kessler, M. (2018). 110 Intervention Study in collaboration with Dr. Nadya Fouad's research team

Jornayvaz, L., Moore, J., & Sullivan, L. (2014). *Outside the box: Developmental and motivational factors that contribute to creativity*. Project Chair: Jamie Shapiro, Ph.D. (Master's Project)

Moore, J. & Millán, A. (2011). *Do college students hold superstitious beliefs regarding sports?* Faculty Sponsor: Christina Krause, Ph.D.

#### PRESENTATIONS

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Moore, J., Kozlowski, M., Santana, M., & Fouad, N. (2017, January). *Examining women in a multicultural workplace: A literature Review*. Poster Presented at the Annual Association for Women's Psychology Conference in Milwaukee, WI

Jornayvaz, L., Moore, J., & Sullivan, L. (2016, Aug. 4). *Outside the box: Developmental and motivational factors that contribute to creativity*. Project Chair: Jamie Shapiro, Ph.D. Poster presented at American Psychological Association Annual Conference in Denver, CO

Moore, J. & Millán, A. (2013, April). *Do college students hold superstitious beliefs regarding sports?* Poster presented at the AASP Regional Student Conference at University of Denver in Denver, CO

Moore, J. & Millán, A. (2012, May). *Do college students hold superstitious beliefs regarding sports?* Poster Presented at the Psi Chi Program at the Midwestern Psychological Association (MPA) in Chicago, IL

Moore, J. & Millán, A. (2012, April). *Do college students hold superstitious beliefs regarding sports?* Oral Presentation at Associated Colleges of the Chicago Area (ACCA) Student Symposium at Elmhurst College in Elmhurst, IL

Millán, A. & Moore, J. (2011, April). *Do traditions play a role in sports?* Poster Presented at the Annual Psychology Conference at Aurora University, Aurora, IL

Moore, J. (2011, April). *Holidays*. Poster Presented at the Annual Undergraduate Research Conference at Aurora University, Aurora, IL.

#### GUEST LECTURE

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Moore, J. (2017, January 17). Psychology Q and A. Guest Lecture at Ridgewood High School, Norridge, IL

Moore, J. (2015, February 16). *The ins and outs of sport psychology: One student's experiences*. Guest Lecture: PSY2210 Careers in Psychology at Aurora University, Aurora, IL

Moore, J. (2014, March 11). Graduate School Panel. Guest Lecture via Skype at Aurora University, Aurora, IL

Moore, J. (2014, September 29). *The ins and outs of sport psychology: One student's experiences*. Guest Lecture: PSY2210 Careers in Psychology at Aurora University, Aurora, IL

#### WORKSHOPS

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Moore, J. & Ross, A. (2014, March). *Conquering Fear*. Women's Gymnastics League Coaching Workshop in Aurora, CO

Moore, J. & Ross, A. (2014, March). *Instilling Confidence*. Women's Gymnastics League Coaching Workshop in Aurora, CO

**TEACHING EXPERIENCE** -----

COUNS403 Overview of Counseling Skills: Instructor	<i>September 2018 – December 2018</i>
EdPsy330 Introduction to Learning and Development: TA	<i>January 2017 - May 2017</i>
EdPsy220 Positive Psychology Applied to Culture, Learning and Development: TA	<i>January 2017 - May 2017</i>
EdPsy110 Exploring Your Major: Instructor	<i>January 2016 - May 2017</i>
EdPsy104 Pathways to Success: Instructor	<i>September 2015 – December 2015</i>
COUNS711 Foundations in Career Development: TA	<i>September 2015 - December 2015</i>

**SKILLS** -----

Proficient in Microsoft Office Suite, SPSS, Meditech, EPIC, CPRS, Titanium

**PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS** ----- *Member Since*

American Psychological Association, student member	<i>2012</i>
Association for Applied Sport Psychology, student member	<i>2010</i>