



DUAL CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN THE NETHERLANDS

Entrepreneurial Learning in Sport to Support Athletes Employability Development
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THE NETHERLANDS QUICK FACTS

Sports

- In 2019, the population of the Netherlands grew by an estimated 132 thousand people to over 17.4 million (2021).
- 10 million Dutch people have practiced sports at least once a week for a month or more in the same year. This is approximately 65% of the Dutch population aged five to eighty.
- 5.2 million Dutch people were members of one or more national governing bodies affiliated to the Dutch Olympic Committee* Dutch Sports Federation (NOC*NSF).
- The Netherlands boasts 23,800 non-profit sports clubs.
- The country has over 5,000 commercial sport operators, such as health and fitness clubs or horse riding schools.
- The clubs and commercial operators have access to almost 8,000 sports facilities throughout the country.
- Almost 1.5 million Dutch people are involved in sport as volunteers.
- The total amount of unpaid work carried out in the sports sector amounts to more than 50,000 Full-time equivalent.
- There are approximately 7,000 Dutch elite athletes
- There are 3,263 athletes (ages 18-25) holding a recognized NOC*NSF status. Of these, 577 have A status (2018).
- There are 26,000 paid coaches (about 8,000 FTEs)
- Among the most popular sports in the Netherlands are football, tennis, golf, speed skating, field hockey, swimming, cycling, running and fitness training.

Education

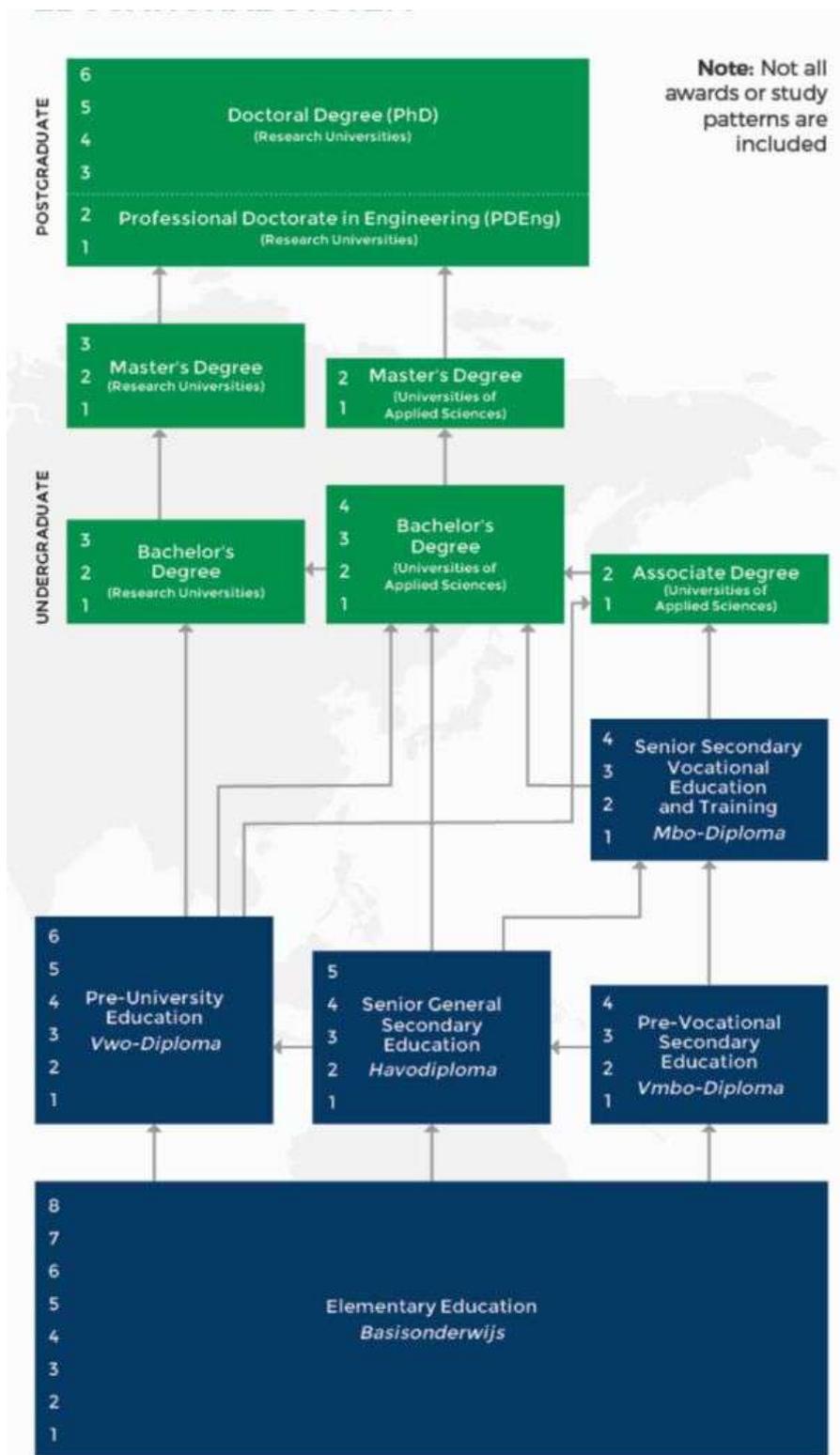
- Dutch education is state funded, 9 years compulsory (from the ages of 5 to 16)
- Academic year: September – July
- The World Economic Forum has ranked the Netherlands as the third most educated country in the world.

Secondary education

- Starting age: 12
- Duration: 4 – 6 years (depends on the secondary school educational pathways)
 - Preparatory vocational secondary education (vmbo) – 4 years in duration
 - Senior general secondary education (havo) – 5 years in duration
 - University preparatory education (vwo) – 6 years in duration
- Enrolment numbers: 1.6 million, 1 million at vocational school and 0.5 million at high school (2019)
- Enrolment rate: 136%
- In the renowned global Pisa/OECD rankings for 15-year-olds, the Netherlands is listed as one of the best performers.

Higher education

- Duration: 4 – 6 years (bachelor 3 – 4 years, Master 1 – 2 years, PhD 4 years)
- Enrolment numbers: 817,000 (2021)
- A third of Dutch 25-64 year olds hold a university degree.
- Tertiary enrolment rate: 85%
- Universities / Higher Education Institutions: 50 (14 research universities, 36 polytechnics)
- Over 50,000 international students. The vast majority of students come from Germany (over 22,000) and China (5,000)
- Most master programs and an increasing number of Bachelor programs are taught in English.
- All 13 state-funded Dutch universities typically score well in The Times Higher Education World (THE) University Ranking. 8 out of 13 research universities are in the top 100. All 13 research universities are in the THE top 200.



Source: wenr.wes.org

Figure 1: Main Flows in the Dutch Educational System

“A top sports career requires enormous effort and dedication from you as an athlete. If you are involved in top sport, I can well imagine that preparing for life after top sport is not your first priority. Yet that step will come 'someday' we want to offer you a helping hand to make the transition easier.”

Bruno Bruins the Netherlands' Former Minister for Medical Care and Sport

1. INTRODUCTION

Practicing sport and experiencing (top) sport together are an important part of society. Since the late 1990s, the social claim on the sports sector has become increasingly stronger. Since then, sport is no longer considered only as part of the leisure domain, but also as an activity that can be used to meet challenges in other sectors. Examples include the contributions of sport to health, school dropout and crime prevention, the welfare sector and loneliness reduction. The importance of human capital in 2018, the sports sector together with the national government, municipalities and other civil society organizations expressed its ambitions in the National Sports Agreement. This included an explicit focus on the formation of local coalitions of sport with other sectors (education, care, welfare, security, business) that could reinforce each other. Depending on the local need, parties work together to achieve common goals. The social expectations of sports are broader than just learning to run or play soccer. In fact, sports can make an important contribution to objectives in other sectors, such as in the field of prevention. This broad social value of sport has consequences for the demands placed on the people (paid and unpaid) working in the sports sector.

Dual career is described as a situation in which someone has two jobs. Dual career in sport is the successful combination of education, training or work with sport to provide an opportunity for an athlete to reach his or sporting, academic, work and life potential.

Athletes follow intensive training programmes and participate in national and international competitions, which can be difficult to combine with the obligations and demands of the educational system and the labour market. Being able to bring together sport with the other important elements of their lives is essential not only for their well-being but also for their development in sports.

From talent level to high-performance sport to their athletic retirement, athletes face many challenges as they transition from secondary education to higher education and/or vocational training. On their way to athletic peak performance, the Netherlands assist the athletes through the various stages of their career and help them to acquire the competencies and skills required to not only develop as a high-performance athlete but also as an individual.

2. KEY ACTORS

Collaboration across sports sectors brings exchange of information and enables the efficient deployment of professionals. Cross-disciplinary cooperation between associations, national and local sports providers is a key starting points in the Netherlands. Here are the key policy actors on the stage.

2.1. Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport

Sport promotes health, provides social contacts and contributes to self-development. The 'sports mission' of the Ministry is to make it possible for everyone to play sports. In addition, the Ministry focuses on and funds top-level sports, so that the Netherlands can perform well at international tournaments.

2.2. Sports Directorate

A sporty society in which suitable and safe sport and exercise opportunities are available for everyone and in which excellence in sport is stimulated. That is the policy objective of the Sports Directorate. Focus areas of the Directorate are,

- Removing barriers and promoting that everyone in the vicinity can participate in sports and exercise.
- Promoting a safe sports climate in which everyone can enjoy sports and exercise without feeling threatened or unsafe in any way.
- Promoting fair sport and good sport governance.
- Strengthening the knowledge base for sport and exercise and stimulating innovations for sport and exercise.
- Top10 ambition in top sport for both able-bodied athletes and athletes with a disability.
- Realizing internationally appealing and national/regional/locally inspiring sporting events.

2.3. NOC*NSF

The Dutch Olympic Committee* Dutch Sports Federation, generally abbreviated NOC*NSF, is the overall coordinating Dutch sports organization that also functions as the Dutch National Olympic Committee and National Paralympic Committee. The mission of NOC*NSF is to connect and inspire the Netherlands with the power of sport. 93 national sports organizations (77 sports federations and 16 associates) are members of NOC*NSF and together represent almost 24,000 sports associations with a total of 5.2 million organized athletes.

2.4. NL Sport Council

Since 1 January 2019, the NL Sport Council has been advising, at the request of the Minister, on the social value of major sporting events in general and/or individual sporting events in particular including the development of new business models. In addition, the NL Sport Council takes a close look at the system of talent recognition and development. In subsequent years,

the NL Sports Council advises on the other topics mentioned: the feasibility of mega- and multisport events, the social position of top athletes and the continuity of commercial top sports. For the advising, the NL Sport Council has set up a committee of experts who assess grant applications for sporting events. For this purpose, the experts use the criteria and working method developed by the NL Sport Council in response to the amended Sports Events Policy Framework 2019-2020 of the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (2018). The NL Sports Council wants to explore with the industry what new (business) models can be developed for sport events. Council wants to make a lasting contribution to the utilization and improvement of the value of large sport events and the optimization of the preconditions (financing, cooperation, knowledge sharing, regulation, technology).

2.5. The Mulier Institute

Institute was founded in 2002 and is the only independent, non-profit, scientific sport-research institute in the Netherlands. As such, it is engaged in fundamental, practice-focused and policy relevant social-scientific sport research. It monitors the developments within the Dutch sports sector. It builds its own databases and trend series to this end, in close cooperation with academic and professional universities both in the Netherlands and abroad as well as with other research organisations and statistical administrative bodies, such as CBS Statistics Netherlands and Eurostat.

The institute aspires to enhance the quality of sport research and sport policy in the Netherlands. It therefore advocates the appointment of sports professors, and organises conferences and symposiums, such as the annual Sport Research Day (DSO). The Mulier Institute is a prominent member of many national and international research communities, including Measure, EASS and ISSA.

2.6. The Expertise Centre for Secondary Education & Top Sport

The Centre, formerly known as the LOOT Foundation, has been supporting schools since 1991. It enables the combination of education and top sport for athletes with a NOC*NSF and KNVB promise status. With its knowledge and experience, the Centre guides schools, provides advice, ensures knowledge development and monitors quality.

2.7. TeamNL

TeamNL is the sports team that represents the Netherlands at the international top level Championships. TeamNL brings athletes and fans from athletics to swimming through various channels closer together. TeamNL also plays an important social role and will make an active contribution to events and associations.

The NL Sports Council indicates in its advice that there is further need within the sector for cooperation in the area of professionalization. Insufficient cooperation and the lack of a shared vision is mentioned as the main weakness of the sector. Since the sports sector is organized in a fragmented manner, it is important to join forces in order to work towards shared ambitions and objectives in the area of human capital.

3. RECOGNITION

NOC*NSF considers it important that talented athletes can combine their sports career with education. Each phase of education therefore has facilities that help you to make the combination of sport and education easier. Always tailored to your level, skills and ambitions.

The option to combine school and top sport is intended for talented athletes with NOC*NSF status or KNVB promise status. These talents can make use of exemptions and other special facilities that you can offer as a school.

3.1. NOC*NSF status

There are two NOC*NSF statuses: talent statuses and top sports status. Talent statuses are most common in the age group of 12 to 18 years. Although there are also athletes who have NOC*NSF top sport status. It is sometimes possible that in a sport like gymnastics, where athletes break through at a younger age and reach the top.

These are the different statuses:

3.1.1. Talent status

Promise status: for promising talents. The promise status of national or international talent is valid for one season and must be reapplied for each season.

NT status: for national talents who belong to the top of the Netherlands in their age category.

IT status: for international talents who are among the world's best in their age category.

3.1.2. Top sports status

HP Status: For high potentials, who are expected to quickly, join the global top eight.

Selection status: for athletes who have been designated by their sports association and recognized by NOC*NSF as a top athlete.

A status: for athletes who have already achieved top 8 at a World Cup, Olympics or other top sporting event with a heavy international field of participants.

Federation status: for senior elite athletes who have achieved a global top 16 performance.

3.2. KNVB pledge status

The criteria for KNVB promise status are drawn up based on NOC*NSF guidelines. For the 2020/21 season, if an athlete plays for a BVO or plays in the first four divisions of the national youth competition (concerning competitions under 13 to under 21), he or she can apply for KNVB promise status.

The association confirms the requests to the club and forwards the player names of those who have a talent status to the Expertise Centre for Secondary Education & Top Sport (formerly LOOT Foundation). A school that wants to know whether its pupil has KNVB promise status can inquire about this with the Expertise Centre VO & Top sport.

4. SECONDARY EDUCATION

4.1. Talent recognition and development

Talent development in the Netherlands does not take place through schools, as in the Anglo-Saxon model, but mostly through the sports clubs and sports associations. In the competition, talents surface, which are scouted by the sports associations for the regional selections and receive their training through regional training centres (RTCs). The professional soccer organizations also scout talent for their own youth programs. The question is whether all talents are recognized (club membership is conditional in this system) and whether children and young people should not develop their talents more broadly to find out which sport suits them best. Because of the club system, children pre-sort for one specific sport at an early age, which can lead to more limited motor development and possibly also to dropping out of the sport sooner. It is also questionable whether all children and young people have an equal chance of talent development, given the investments in time and money that this requires. Based on literature and stakeholder interviews, the NL Sports Council intends to explore the developments surrounding talent development, the success factors and the bottlenecks that require attention.

In the Netherlands, people are obliged to follow education until 18 years old. Unless someone already has a diploma for mbo, havo or vwo. Attending education also means being present at all classes. That is of course not very convenient for a top sports talents.

During the age that athletes are developing rapidly and that sports are becoming more and more intensive. That they will train more often and for longer. They need those hours to grow. To realize their ambitions and become top athletes. That is difficult in combination with following education as is usual in schools.

That is why the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) offers ordinary secondary schools a LOOT licence with a number of criteria, the so-called Top Sport Talent Schools, the opportunity to combine education and top sport. This gives the school the opportunity to additionally facilitate young top athletes. For example, he or she can get time off for training internships and competitions.

A Top Sport Talent School is an ordinary secondary school that has met a number of criteria of the Ministry of Education, because of which these schools have received a so-called LOOT license. Contrary to popular belief, the Ministry's schools do not receive any compensation for these LOOT activities. The extra costs incurred by the school are therefore also for the account of the school. The LOOT Foundation (the umbrella organization of the Top Sport Talent Schools) has chosen not to pursue a policy with regard to the expense regulations that the Top Sport Talent Schools use. This means that there are differences between the contributions that the schools charge, ranging from no contribution to a contribution that covers the costs of the school.

As of January 1, 2021, as a young talent with NOC*NSF status/KNVB promise status, talents can also combine education and top sport at a regular school, where they can make use of extra facilities such as exemptions for subjects. For this, they have to submit a request to their

school. The school must agree to this and meet a number of conditions. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science creates these opportunities because it considers it important that every top sports talent can develop.

4.2. Combining secondary education and top sport

There are thirty Top Sport Talent Schools in the Netherlands. With an average of one hundred students with NOC*NSF status or KNVB promise status, the Top Sport Talent Schools are the optimal environment for talented athletes to combine sport and study at the highest level. These schools are united in the Expertise Centre for Secondary Education and Top Sport (formerly the LOOT Foundation).

Top sport Talent schools take athletes' sporting ambitions into account and are able to optimally attune these ambitions to education. They provide high-quality guidance for this and, where necessary, can deploy additional educational facilities to make this possible, such as:

- * A flexible schedule with space for training sessions and competitions;
- * Exemption (partial) from certain courses;
- * Postponing or reducing homework;
- * Facilities to make up for arrears caused by absence in connection with training and competitions;
- * Postponement or adjustment of rehearsals and/or school examinations;
- * Staggered exam over two school years;
- * Expert top sports talent supervisor(s) with short lines to the sport and a
- * Team of teachers who are attuned to the combination of top sport and study.

These facilities are available for top athletes with an A, Selection, or HP status and for talented athletes with IT (international talent), NT (national talent) or promise status.

The Expertise Centre has traditionally supported all Top Sport Talent Schools in the Netherlands and, among other things, assesses applications from candidate Top Sport Talent Schools. The Expertise Centre and the thirty Top Sport Talent Schools monitor, improve and guarantee quality in a three-year audit cycle, including annual reporting of educational results and satisfaction.

The Expertise Centre organizes training, study days and network meetings for top sports talent coaches, coordinators and school leaders. In this way, Top Sport Talent Schools can (continually) improve the quality of their guidance and tailor-made education.

The Expertise Centre also supports regular secondary schools that want to make the combination of school and top sport possible for talented athletes with NOC*NSF status.

Since January 1, 2021, in addition to Top Sport Talent Schools, regular schools can also offer facilities to individual talented athletes with NOC*NSF status. This is especially useful when the Top Sport Talent School is too far away or does not offer the right training. As a talented athlete, you request facilities such as exemptions from the director of your regular school. The school then goes through an application procedure through the Expertise Centre and the

Ministry of Education, Culture and Science to be allowed to grant the exemptions. The Expertise Centre for VO and Top Sport advises, informs and supports these exemption schools in guiding individual talented athletes.

4.3. Customized special facilities by Expertise Centre VO & Top sport

Unlike at a regular secondary school, athletes have various facilities at a Top Sport Talent School that make it easier for them to combine school and top sport. This helps them to develop on an intellectual level while pursuing their sporting ambitions at the same time. They have different facilities on different levels. Schools look at which facilities are relevant to the athlete.

4.3.1. Homework and tests

If an athlete has to train twenty hours or more a week, he or she can sometimes get in trouble with doing homework or a test. Everyone understands that at a Top Sport Talent School. That is why athletes have a personal supervisor who helps them to put their school and sports agenda together. Who, in some cases, arranges a postponement of a test, or free for competitions and tournaments.

4.3.2. A flexible schedule

Top sports talents are often invited for regional or national selection training or qualify for European Championships, World Championships or the Youth Olympic Games. Chances are that talents are often on the road because of this. In that case, a Top Sport Talent School with a flexible schedule will work for them. They can make up for the lessons they miss at another time. If for some reason this is not possible, the teacher will help them with a solution. It also regularly happens that groups of students from a Top Sport Talent School train in Regional Talent Centres (RTC). It is then attractive for the school to adjust the schedules in agreement with the sports association to the training times of the RTC. That is ideal. Then you do not miss any lessons and talents do not have to make up anything.

4.3.3. Less teaching time

At a Top Sport Talent School, talents can in necessary cases attend fewer hours of education than usual. This also applies to a school that wants to offer them exemptions on an individual basis. Teaching time can be reduced by up to 20%. This applies to all courses.

	Regular teaching time	Teaching time at TTS
VMBO	3700	2960
Havo	4700	3760
Vwo	5700	4560

4.3.4. Exemption from courses

As students with a NOC*NSF status/KNVB promise status at a Top Sport Talent School, athletes can receive one or more exemptions for participating in a school subject. They have no performance obligation for such a course. In other words, they do not have to get a grade for it. They do not just get an exemption. This is done in consultation with them, their parents and the school.

Prior to granting an exemption for a subject, there is always consultation with the sports talent and with his or her parents, because granting an exemption is not automatic. The Top Sport Talent School strives for personal customization. For the lower years (year levels 1, 2, and 3),

a Top Sport Talent School is entitled to grant exemptions for the core objectives of exercise and sport.

Exemption can be granted for students in VMBO for:

- Social studies
- Physical education
- One of the subjects from visual education, music, dance, drama
- One or more courses or program components from the free part

For HAVO students , exemption can be granted for:

- Physical education
- Social studies
- Cultural and artistic education
- The elective profile subject or the elective exam subject

Exemption can be granted for pupils in VWO for:

- Physical education
- Social studies
- General science
- Cultural and artistic education
- The elective profile subject or the elective exam subject

4.3.5. Staggered exam

Unlike their peers who go to a regular secondary school, talents have the opportunity to spread out and complete their final exams over several years. In that case, they take exams in a number of subjects in one year and the remaining subjects in the following year. Top sports talents who choose to complete their final exams via a VAVO trajectory, can include the results achieved (including the granted exemptions) in this.

4.3.6. Personal assistance

At a Top Sports Talent School, a whole team is ready for a talent that has a lot of knowledge and experience in guiding top sports talents. Talents also have a personal supervisor. This helps them, for example, to put their school and sports agenda together, to get rid of a learning disadvantage, to arrange free time for competitions and tournaments and more. And if they have any concerns, they can also contact him or her. Top Sports Talent Schools keep track of their study and sports results in a digital student tracking system. If things are not going well on either front, this will be signalled immediately and School can discuss what the right thing to do for the talent is. The coordinator and supervisor will also consult each other to discuss talents' progress or any problems.

5. HIGHER EDUCATION

For top athletes in higher education, NOC*NSF and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science have made agreements with various colleges and universities about the organization of education for top athletes. These agreements are included in the FLOT Action Plan (Flexible Education and Top Sport).

The action plan gives direction to higher education institutions to guide top sports students in such a way that it is possible to develop optimally both in the field of sport and in the field of study. Facilitating flexibility in education ensures a feasible combination between sport and study. This gives top athletes the opportunity to focus on their development as top athletes and at the same time to build a social career.

The Action Plan contains five goals:

Competency-oriented study choice: It is important that top athletes can study in a direction that suits their interests and competencies. Free choice of study and attention to top sports competences prevent dropout and excessive delay and also stimulate top sports performance.

Flexible education: Top athletes must be able to follow flexible education within reasonable limits. This allows them to combine training and competitions at home and abroad with study and examinations.

Financial feasibility: Financially they should be able to practice their sport at the highest level, without disproportionate additional costs for sport or study.

Transparency of the facilities offered: Creating a clear picture of the (im)possibilities in facilitation for top sports students at the various higher education institutions. So that a good assessment can be made about which study fits well in combination with top sport.

Guarantee in policy: To ensure that there is less dependence on the efforts of individual employees and to ensure that top-class sports students are treated equally within the institution, it is important to guarantee in policy. Practice shows that safeguarding in policy ensures equal treatment.

The FLOT action plan is in line with the EU Guidelines Dual Careers of Athletes and was prepared by FLOT partners with the support and approval of the Ministry of Education Culture and Science. NOC*NSF and Higher Education both undertake actions for the development of the top sporting student. Together, these actions lead to a better organized and facilitated dual career. The actions of Higher Education and the actions of NOC*NSF (including the sports federations and the CTO/NTC) are included in the Action Plan FLOT.

5.1. Purpose

The Action Plan gives direction to Higher Education Institutions to guide top sporting students in such a way that it is possible for the top sporting student to develop optimally both in the field of sport and in the field of study.

Top-level sporting students are generally particularly ambitious and driven talents, with logistical challenges of combining a full-time sports program with a full-time study program. Facilitating flexibility in education ensures a feasible combination between sport and study. This gives top sporting students the opportunity to focus well on their development as a top athlete and at the same time build a social career.

To make this possible, the following elements are considered of great importance:

- Competency-based study choice

In principle, it is possible for every student athlete to follow a study program that matches the competences and interests of the student.

- Flexible education

Top-class sport and study are both full-time programs that require flexibility from both sides. For Higher Education, this means that it must be possible, within reasonable limits, to provide top sporting students with flexibility in education in order to combine study and top sport.

- Financially Feasible Education

Studying involves costs, and an elite athlete, like other students, must be able to provide for that. However, practicing top-level sports also involves a considerable number of costs, plus additional costs due to (plausibly) longer study duration. In addition, top-level sporting students generally do not have the space to generate additional income. Financially, a top sporting student should be enabled to practice his or her sport at the highest level without additional costs for the study.

- Transparency of facilities offered

By creating a clear picture at the front end for top-level student athletes of the sporting facilities offered by a higher education institution, a top-level student athlete or prospective student athlete can make an informed decision about which course of study to take at which higher education institution. This will result in lower dropout rates and higher study efficiency.

- Assurance in policy

To ensure that there is less dependence on the efforts of individual staff members and to ensure that top-level sporting students within the institution are treated equally, it is important to secure this in policy. Practice shows that assurance in policy ensures equal treatment of students. Assurance of policy is also important within the sports organizations and NOC*NSF.

Within these five elements, the FLOT partners agree on actions that they will implement within their own institution, and they will also use a coordination and consultation structure within the organization to permanently anchor the facilitation of dual careers. In addition, the FLOT partners will work together structurally to share facilities and knowledge with each other.

5.2. Target group

When referring to top-level student athletes in this document, we are referring to top-level athletes who have a NOC*NSF-recognized talent or top-level sports status (A-, Selection, HP-

Union-, IT-, NT-, and Promise status) from the relevant sports association. As of October 1, 2018, there are 3263 athletes (ages 18-25) holding a recognized NOC*NSF status. Of these, 577 have A status.

Educational institutions have the room to also facilitate international top athletes with a talent or top sport status (similar to NOC*NSF statuses) within the top sport policy, provided that this is not at the expense of supporting the above-mentioned target groups.

5.3. Actions

For each element, actions have been formulated with the goal of facilitating the dual career for the student athlete.

5.3.1. Competency-based study choice

Top-level student athletes should choose their studies based on content and level, and not based on available top-level sports facilities. The (prospective) student's practice of top-level sport should not be a reason for rejection for a study programme.

Action

The relevant Higher Education Institutions shall provide top athletes with a study supervisor with sufficient sporting affinity and sufficient knowledge of a top sports career. This study supervisor is facilitated in attending NOC*NSF initiated knowledge meetings for study supervisors. The support of a supervisor with sufficient knowledge and sports affinity appears to be a basic condition for the successful support of top sporting students.

5.3.2. Student Counselling

It is important for top sporting students that they know who they can contact with sports-related problems in relation to their studies (top sport coordination).

Action 1

The knowledge institutions involved appoint a top-level sports coordinator with sufficient visibility and influence towards athletes, lecturers, policymakers and administrators. In practice, it appears that all Higher Education Institutions are organized differently. It turns out that it is especially important that a number of tasks are properly secured. Whether this should be done by one person or several people is determined by the institution. The size of the appointment of the top-level sports coordinator depends on the number of top-level athletes registered and the distribution of tasks/activities within the team. In order to execute these properly, the executors of the top-level sports policy must have sufficient time and space for this purpose so that the policy is guaranteed.

Action 2

Higher education institutions set up the supervision of the top student athlete in such a way that:

- Monitoring of study progress of the top-level student athlete is possible;
- Top-level sports status is awarded at a central point within the organization;

- The provision of information about facilities related to top-level student athletes is organized centrally;
- The top-level sports coordination is organized in such a way that top-level sporting students have access to adequate personal guidance (including an intake interview and progress interview). A minimum of 2 hours per year must be available for each top-level student athlete.

The NOC*NSF ensures that within recognized top sports organizations (Centre for Top Sport and Education (CTO), Region Top Sport Organization (RTO)) there is a contact point for top athletes where the top athlete can go with study-related problems in relation to top sport (educational coordination).

Through this action, there is a top-level sports coordinator from the education sector and an education coordinator from the sports sector with the goal of being able to guide the top-level student athlete through the dual career from both agencies.

5.3.3. Flexible education

To achieve successful flexible education, good communication within the educational institution appears to be important.

Action

Higher education institutions make known to relevant employees within the institution who the point of contact is regarding dual careers. Stakeholders within the institution (for example, student advisors, lecturers, examination committees, faculty/education directors, the Executive Board, the Board of Governors) are provided with an annual update by those responsible for top-level sport coordination regarding the progress of top-level sporting students, the developments within the facilitation of dual careers, and the developments in the area of dual careers both within the organization and at the national level. Staff charged with top-level sports coordination duties have an advisory role to student advisors, academic career counsellors, examination boards, etc. For the implementation of this action, the educational institution itself can look at where improvements are still needed. This action can ensure a more efficient implementation of the Dual Career Policy within the educational institution, thus recovering any costs for this action.

The NOC*NSF ensures that recognized top-level sports organizations (CTO/RTO) make it known to their top-level athletes and possibly also to the relevant higher education institutions (top-level sports coordination) who the central point of contact is for matters relating to the dual career.

Stakeholders within the top-level sports organizations (such as coaches, trainers, supervisors, Technical Directors) are provided with an annual update/report by the dual career counsellor from the top-level sports organization regarding the developments in the area of the dual career (in accordance with the legal framework; General Data Protection Regulation).

5.3.4. Distance learning and assessment

Action 1

Institutions involved jointly explore the technical possibilities, for example through ICT, to flexibly design the educational programs for top athletes. If desired, NOC*NSF is willing to facilitate the exchange of knowledge, experience and needs between the educational institutions. From an inventory among the Higher Education Institutions, it appears that all educational institutions to a greater or lesser extent can use ICT to make the program more flexible. There are costs associated with this. The educational institution itself must be able to decide whether and when it wants to use these facilities for top-level students.

Action 2

Higher education institutions shall offer, under predetermined conditions, facilities that make distance learning and testing possible for top athletic students.

5.3.5. Attendance

The obligation to attend educational activities is one of the biggest obstacles when combining education and top-level sports. In practice, creativity in finding a solution to this issue has proven to be of great benefit to the top sporting student. Educational institutions must be able to decide for themselves when this is or is not possible.

Action

Higher Education Institutions shall make it possible for top athletes to be able to miss lectures due to top sports under predefined conditions (which shall be made known to the student).

5.3.6. Facilities

For an elite athletic student, there is always a tension between the time available for education and the time available for sport. In some periods, more time is available or needed for education and at other times more time is available or needed for sport. Components are time-dependent therefore prove to be obstacles to a successful dual career. Flexibility in these time-dependent subjects yields a lot for the top sporting student. The educational institutions should also have the freedom to decide for themselves when something is possible or not. In practice, predefined conditions have been shown to lead to greater success because the student can consider this in their planning.

Action 1

Higher Education Institutions organize top-level sport coordination in such a way that top-level sporting students can receive postponement of deadlines and Binding Study Advice under predefined conditions.

Action 2

Higher Education Institutions organize top-level sport coordination in such a way that top-level sporting students can express preferences with regard to the lesson/college schedule (such as, for example, the arrangement of working lectures and the like) under predetermined conditions.

5.3.7. Financially viable education

The Profiling Fund can be used to support top athletes. All affiliated FLOT partners do this. The educational institution determines the way they do it

Action

Higher Education Institutions make it possible for top sporting students to claim the Profiling Fund under predetermined conditions (such as, for example, study delay).

5.3.8. Transparency

In order to achieve a successful dual career, the management of expectations is very important. In practice, a realistic picture of the possibilities, but also the impossibilities, ensure that the combination of top-class sport and study can be made in the most successful way. There are still improvements possible.

Action

Higher education institutions place on the website an overview of facilities offered to top sporting students, in order to give the top sporting student a clear picture of the (im)possibilities of combining a study with top sport. If there is a difference in the accessibility of the facilities at different programs, this is also indicated on the website. In addition, the search term "top-class sport" refers directly to the correct page.

NOC*NSF is responsible for keeping its website page about FLOT up-to-date.

5.3.9. Intake interview

With only information on the website, the expectations are not yet properly managed. An intake interview ensures a tailor-made match. For institutions that do not yet do this, this requires more capacity in the initial phase, but that capacity is regained at a later stage of the study.

Action

Higher Education Institutions offer top sporting students an intake interview in which top sporting status is granted, expectations of both the student and the Higher Education Institution are expressed, the top sporting student presents a schedule for the relevant academic year, and the predefined conditions (referred to in this Action Plan) are made clear.

5.3.10. Receiving a top sports certificate

In recent years, it has become apparent that it was difficult for top athletes who managed to complete the combination to make this visible to the outside world. A top-level sports certificate was therefore developed that is signed by both the higher education institution and NOC*NSF. This positive action should be continued.

Action

Higher Education Institutions make it possible to give top sporting students a top sport certificate (in cooperation with NOC*NSF) after completing a Bachelor's or Master's degree.

The certificate can also provide an explanation for any study delay incurred.

5.3.11. Assurance in policy

Regardless of the number of top-level sporting students at an institution, it is important that the possibilities for helping these students are secured in policy. In this way, students are treated equally within the institution.

Top-level sports regulations embedded in policy

A change in the law has taken place so that the position of the top athlete can be included in the Education and Examination Regulations. The legal frameworks have been created. It is now up to the educational institutions, where this is not yet the case, to ensure proper safeguarding.

Action

Higher education institutions will draw up a top-level sports policy which will be linked to the Student Charter and/or the Teaching and Examination Regulations in order to give top-level sports students an insight into the possibilities or impossibilities of combining top-level sports with studies.

Embedding in the organization

In addition to embedding the policy (regulations or similar) and coordinating the implementation of the policy (top-level sports coordination), it has been found that added value is created when there is a point of contact within the College or Board of Directors.

Action

All higher education institutions involved have a point of contact in the General Board or Board of Governors specifically for Top Sport and Education.

5.4. Additional action items for sports

In addition to the points already described in the FLOT Action Plan for sport, additional action points follow below.

With support from the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, NOC*NSF is committed to an optimal combination of Top Sport and Education. From the perspective of sports, investments are made in various ways to make a dual career possible. The most important starting point is that through early awareness and continuous guidance and support, all athletes in the Netherlands with a status, are acquainted with the importance of transitions. This will enable them to make as smooth a transition as possible to their next career.

National policy and the sports federations

Just as the embedding of policy on dual careers at educational institutions is important, sports organizations also attach great importance to embedding dual careers in policy.

Dual career policies are organized and embedded within sport organizations in the Netherlands at both national and regional levels. In the Sport Agenda 2017+, dual career is included as a specific spearhead:

Programs and adequate guidance for top athletes, which not only improve the athletic performance level, but also all other factors that contribute to a longer successful career (dual career); NOC*NSF sees it as its role to realize the necessary preconditions within sports and optimize knowledge of those involved.

From this spearhead, the TeamNL@work facility was born. This facility is aimed at raising awareness among athletes that top-level sport is a temporary profession. The top athlete goes through a number of major transitions in his (top sport and study) career. The starting point in coaching is to prepare athletes for these transitions from eight years prior to the podium through the final phase of the athlete's career. In addition, the dual career within the sports federations' policy has become a permanent part of the top sports and talent programs. This topic also forms one of the fixed critical success factors (CSF), which can be addressed in the progress talks with NOC*NSF. The Technical Directors ensure that the career after (the) sport is a continuous point of attention within the programs of the sports association.

5.5. Top-level sports organizations

There is an important role for the Centres for Top Sport and Education (CTO) regarding the realization of preconditions of the dual career. NOC*NSF invests a large part of the top sport funding in the CTOs each year. Unique to these centres is the combination of training, studying and living in one location. Minimal travel times allow athletes to fully engage in their sport. On and around the centres are training accommodations, educational facilities, housing, (para)medical guidance and the deployment of TeamNL experts strength & conditioning and TeamNL experts performance behaviour. The combination of top-level sports and education is therefore an integral part of the top-level sports organizations.

The CTOs have established partnerships with educational institutions in their immediate vicinity to make dual careers possible at every level of education. Parents of talented athletes who live away from home can also qualify for double child benefit. The condition is that these talents follow a sports program at one of the CTOs in combination with a Top Sport Talent School or a training course in (preparatory) vocational education.

Each CTO/ (NTC) employs one or more TeamNL Top Sport Lifestyle Coaches and/or Study Intermediaries to support athletes in their dual careers and preparations for their next career.

Regional coordination takes place through Regional Top Sport Organizations (RTO) with local educational institutions. Where necessary, the RTOs can mediate between NTCs, RTCs, individual talents, top athletes, and educational institutions to remove any obstacles and realize customization.

5.6. Knowledge sharing and guidance

NOC*NSF and the top sports organizations facilitate and organize structural consultations between the various sports and education parties in the region. The purpose of this is knowledge sharing.

Early awareness and ongoing guidance on the transitions is a spearhead. One of the important topics is the phase in which a talent transitions to a performing top athlete simultaneously with the transition from VO to MBO, HBO or WO. Important changes occur in the personal development of an athlete at this age. In order for this to go well, guidance with an eye for the various aspects (sport, education, and personal development) is necessary.

It is therefore important that the transitions of top athletes are well understood by the Top Sport Lifestyle Coaches, coaches and Technical Directors.

TeamNL trains these target groups in this respect. Expertise from TeamNL is used to optimize the guidance. Some examples of this:

The development of the performance behaviour curriculum. This learning line will be used for the coaches of the programs with topics such as optimal balance top-level sports and personal lifestyle and planning.

- Knowledge sharing about the transitions within the Master Coach training program and during TeamNL days.

- Workshops for the supervisors of talents and top athletes in the area of career guidance, so that the step from top sport to the next career goes as smoothly as possible. Examples include the development and use of workshops from GEES (the international study Gold in Education and Elite Sport).

- Workshops and locker room sessions offered on the various transitions for the supervisors, talents, parents, top athletes and coaches from the TeamNL@work. Of course, within TeamNL@work there is also attention for the top athletes in transition to the next career.

- Knowledge sharing for the supervisors of the Top Sport Talent Schools, focusing on the choice of study in relation to the top-level sports programs.

In short, a wide range of training and knowledge sharing is being deployed from the sport on the topic of dual careers.

5.7. Staff deployment from the sport

In order to continuously draw attention to the dual career policy, but also to share and facilitate knowledge, the top sports organizations have one point of contact per region for the subject of top sports and education: the Dual Career Coordinator. In total there are seven coordinators working in this field.

In addition to the aforementioned commitment from sport, NOC*NSF will continue the deployment of a full-time dual career employee on a structural basis.

For the year 2019, NOC*NSF has attracted capacity (directed by the Ministry of OCW) to support the FLOT. The goal is to investigate whether there are (even more) gains to be made by making existing regulations more appropriate to the specific situation. In addition, it is important to deepen the FLOT action plan, whereby the broader context is also examined in terms of alignment across the entire education column (university/higher education, secondary education (LOOT Foundation) and MBO). Finally, the availability of data on top-class sport and education is a spearhead for the coming period.

In addition to the points described in the FLOT action plan, NOC*NSF, supported by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, sees it as its task to create the necessary preconditions within sport for dual careers and to optimize the knowledge of those involved.

NOC*NSF and the (educational) institutions listed below agree to the Action Plan Flexible Education and Top-Level Sport (FLOT), supported by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, to improve higher education and the career prospects of top-level athletes. Parties are committed to implement the formulated action points and to cooperate in the developments included in the FLOT Action Plan.

- Tilburg University
- Hogeschool van Amsterdam
- Universiteit van Amsterdam
- Technische Universiteit Eindhoven
- Avans Hogeschool
- Rijksuniversiteit Groningen
- CAH Videntum Hogeschool
- Saxion
- Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam
- Hogeschool van Rotterdam
- Stenden Hogeschool
- Fontys
- Technische Universiteit Delft
- Haagse Hogeschool
- Universiteit Leiden
- Hanzehogeschool Groningen
- Universiteit Utrecht
- Hogeschool Arnhem en Nijmegen
- Hogeschool Inholland
- Hogeschool Leiden
- Wageningen Universiteit
- Hogeschool Utrecht
- Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam
- Hogeschool VHL
- HZ University of Applied Sciences

- Radboud Universiteit
- Hogeschool Windesheim
- Universiteit van Maastricht
- Open Universiteit

6. CASE STUDIES

6.1. Tilburg University

Tilburg University is proud of its students with Dual Careers (such as sports, performing arts or entrepreneurship). The university supports these students in the best way possible in order to facilitate the successful combination of their two careers. The dual career regulations are part of the Tilburg University Student Charter and concerns those students in the following categories:

- Student Athletes
- Sport Coaches
- Sport Officials
- Entrepreneurs
- Gamers
- Performing Artists

The University offers various facilities to talents and top-level athletes, such as extra supervision, financial support and special educational arrangements. Students can be acknowledged by Tilburg University as Dual Career Students (and can, therefore, apply for a Talent status) if they are in one of the mentioned categories. All students applying for a Talent status must meet with the Dual Career Officer.

The Dual Career Officer is the central point of contact for dual career students. Students discuss their personal situation with the dual career officer at the start of the academic year, taking into account any issues relating to their study or second career schedule and find solutions. The dual career officer will keep an eye on their study results and invite them for a chat if he or she sees reason to do so.

Education Coordinator is another contact that students make appointments to make a study schedule and find solutions for specific problems. An example of this is exemption from compulsory attendance, dates or methods of examination (such as an extra retake or a replacement assignment). The education coordinator examines how and which solution can be created within the options that the faculty offers and makes specific agreements in this regard.

If there are changes to students' schedule or if problems arise such as injuries or disappointing study results, students report these to the dual career officer and, where necessary, make appointment to discuss possible solutions. Students report expected problems before they occur; a solution cannot be found after the fact if, for example, they are unable to attend an exam because they have an important competition. Still not everything is always possible.

Naturally, students can also inform the dual career officer if things are going well or if they have made outstanding sporting achievements.

Binding Recommendation

Students are expected to achieve the standard for the binding recommendation. In consultation with the dual career officer at the start of the first academic year, agreements will be made about students' expected study progress. The dual career officer will advise the Examination Board about the binding recommendation that will be taken by the Examination Board at the end of the first year.

Financial support in the events of delays

If students' dual career activities prevent them from graduating within the first 48 months of their enrolment in higher education, they may be entitled to receive a maximum of 12 months' financial support based on their talent status. This financial support is granted from the Profile Fund and amounts to €290 per month.

As soon as students have received 48 months of Dutch 'DUO' grant or after 48 months in higher education, an assessment is made to determine how much financial support will be paid. (Three months per year in which study delay has occurred. Students were in the possession of a talent status with a maximum of one year for a talent status lasting four years). Delays caused by dual career activities will only count in the first four years of student's first course. Dual career students who have already completed higher professional education and made full use of a student grant can by definition therefore no longer claim financial support. Students with an income from their dual career activities (contract players, entrepreneurs, professional performers) are excluded from this financial assistance.

Tilburg University also offers financial support for participation in international competitions and traineeships. Each student is entitled to receive up to 500 euros a year. This facility is not available for rowers that are not part of the RTC program or national program of the KNRB.

Sports Facilities

The Sports Centre offers extra facilities, such as different training hours, a training area and cardio fitness facilities. Dual career students might be eligible for re-imbursment of the costs of a Sports membership. Reimbursement for a sport membership is only available for those students of which works outs at the sport centre are necessary for their dual career.

Medical facilities

Students with talent status at Tilburg University, due to sports, are treated at the Sports Medical Centre Tilburg within 24 hours (also in the weekend). Students must specify that they have top-level sports status when they make the appointment.

There is a separate Canvas page for students with a talent status. The purpose of this page is to inform dual career students about topics that are relevant to this group. The page also contains an overview of all relevant procedures.

Tilburg University invests a lot of time and energy into supervising dual career students. Therefore, it expects students to take their study seriously, to communicate openly with all university staff and to understand that not everything is possible. Furthermore, they are expected to be available for Tilburg University's publicity activities and - when requested - assist with (sports) activities; for example give a clinic or demonstration.

6.2. Amsterdam University

From March to November 2015, the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences (HvA) in partnership with Birch Consultants, the Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme (TASS), the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) and the European Student as Athlete (EAS) network conducted a study on "Minimum Quality Requirements for Dual Career Services". The main objective of this study was to develop a set of requirements to function as a reference point for national dual career services and facilities across the EU member states. The findings are presented in the form of a quality framework offering transparency, and quality, safety and security guarantees for athletes. This includes a labelling and/or accreditation system for facilities and services at national and European levels. Recommendations for future developments in both policy and research are also included.

Additionally, the HvA published a policy document with the intention of clarifying the options available to students who play top-level sport and are following a study programme at the university. The goal is to provide top-level sportspersons with the best possible support in combining sport with a full-time study in order to excel in both areas. In order to successfully organize and implement this, the Top Sport Academy Amsterdam (TAA) has been founded within the HvA. The Netherlands has five Centres for Top Sport and Education (CTO). Here the combination of top sports and education is made possible. These centres are certified by the government on their qualities and the extent to which a sport career and education can be successfully followed. Other places are Eindhoven, Heerenveen, The Hague/Rotterdam and Papendal.

The Top Sport Academy Amsterdam (TAA) offers top athletes the opportunity to combine their sports career with an AUAS education of their choice. The TAA is the crucial factor between elite sport and education. The TAA makes it possible for top athletes to obtain a HvA diploma and to be successful in their sport at the highest level.

After receiving the AUAS Top Sport Statement, students receive support and guidance with the combination of top sport and study. Students think of extra study guidance when planning their study and training schedule, the option of remote tests, indicating preference for timetables or possibly financial compensation for a study delay incurred because of their dual career. Facilities offered differ per study programme. The top sports coordinator of the faculty inform students about this.

HvA also took part in the following Erasmus+ Projects on dual career.

The Developing Skills & Competences Resulting in Employability through Sport (SCORES) project was an exciting new initiative within the field of Dual Careers (DC) of athletes, tackling employability and supporting services for young athletes seeking careers outside the sport field.

Project closely collaborated to

- Deliver a Matrix of values, skills and competences identified and recognised in the practice of sport,
- Produce a report on Job placement opportunities for athletes,
- Facilitate training to sport trainers/coaches/mentors,
- Set up a MOOC platform to take advantage of e-learning technologies for a highly replicable and inclusive education for all key stakeholders,
- Test the implementation of a non-formal and informal learning certification for athletes as well as other athletes,
- Undertake permanent monitoring and evaluation, and
- Promote an Observatory of "Sport-Knowledge-Business" for dissemination purposes, amongst other.

The Innovative Clubs for Dual Careers' (ICDC) project aimed to combine a successful educational and sporting career of athletes by bringing them the right supporting services from their own clubs, and hence contributing that at a later stage of life they keep a balance between sports training and employment. The project developed an innovative club-based pilot programme to support Dual Careers. The programme facilitates an optimal combination of high-quality training and education to young athletes practicing elite sports. The Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences conducted this pilot programme.

The pilot clubs want to use the programme to change the ad hoc approach and problem solving method into a pre-emptive method of working. Through a strong cooperation with schools and other specialists, they optimize results, create a better connection to the labour market and reduce talents stress and dropout rates.

The STARTING 11 project created the first European Dual Career Toolkit. It is composed of 11 self-applicable online tools, which facilitate and professionalise the implementation of dual career services in the member states. Based on research, these tools are tailored to the specific demand of dual career service providers in the EU. In an integrated approach, STARTING 11 empowers key actors in all three dual career sectors (sport, education and the labour market) to provide high quality services to athletes. By means of the toolkit, the dual careers of athletes are supported in all stages of their sporting career, spanning from the school level to the stage of retirement from sport.

The 'Handball 4 Dual Careers' (H4DC) project created comprehensive support service for the development of handball players' Dual Careers through a collaborative approach between sporting bodies (clubs and federations), educational organizations and private sector representatives. The Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences (AUAS) conducted this programme of services and developed specific training sessions for the staff of the three pilot clubs: BM Granollers, IK Sävehof and Club Fenix Toulouse.

6.3. Eindhoven University

Eindhoven University of Technology TU/e supports dual career students in various ways. To be eligible for this support, a student must pursue a non-academic career at the highest level. This means that student belongs to the (sub) top at national or international level in his or her sports or cultural career or entrepreneurship. Besides, he or she must work on top talent for at least 16 hours a week. University support consist of:

- An adapted study program
- An adjusted standard for the binding study advice (BSA) on the continuation of student's study
- A (partial) exemption from the attendance requirement
- Replacement assignments for mandatory meetings/assignments in the absence
- Adjusted assessment provisions (different form, different time, etc.)
- Postponement of deadlines
- A free sports card for top athletes
- A double career certificate upon graduation
- Financial compensation for any study delay caused by the combination of study and the exercise of top talent. This compensation is arranged through the Profiling Fund.

6.4. TeamNL@work

Within TeamNL@work, TeamNL experts work together with Fanbased, Sporttop, UWV and the TeamNL centers to offer various services to those who holds A status, HP status, Selection status, Athletes who had an A, HP or Selection status until 2 years ago.

To start the application top athlete initially signs up using the online form. He or she receives a response within five working days. Together with TeamNL@work they plan an intake interview. They determine needs and look at how to provide optimal support. Finally top athlete start of their personal program that covers the following services.

Career guidance: TeamNL@work provides career management support to high-performance athletes. This support typically accompanies the critical transition moments during the athlete's sporting career and helps to explore available options, set meaningful goals, facilitate decision-making and ensure tailored implementation all while including all relevant stakeholders if necessary. With one on one coaching, top athletes learn who they are, what they want, and what they can do in the workplace.

Labour market orientation: Top athletes get to know the labour market better by gaining work experience within work organizations or by doing (study-related) internships.

Psychological/psychosocial support: Top athletes are supported in the challenges that may arise in relationship with people in their environment, in preparation for, during and after termination of their top sport career.

Competency Development: Top athletes learn what their competencies are, where they can further develop them and which ones they can master.

Knowledge & expertise: Top athletes can use the knowledge and expertise of TeamNL and its network.

Group programs: Active and recently retired top athletes can gain competences, knowledge and/or work experience within a specific theme through the following group programs of TeamNL@work.

- Speakers,
- (Re) know yourself,
- Entrepreneurship: something for you?
- Personal branding,
- Sports marketing and media,
- International governance,
- Fit for the job!
- Process Guidance.

7. CAREER DEVELOPMENT

In a broad definition, the sport sector includes sport clubs, sport facilities, umbrella sport organizations (sport service/sport federations/NOC*NSF), swimming pools, sport in the community, government and entrepreneurial sport providers. This does not include companies that, for example, supply products for the sports sector (such as clothing and food).

The definition of human capital is used as the knowledge, skills and craftsmanship needed by the people working in sport (paid or unpaid) and the amount of people needed.

The sport sector has grown significantly in terms of the number of paid employees (in particular) over the past decade. The Mulier Institute's research into the labour market in sport shows that the total number of people working in sport has increased from 56 thousand in 2008 to 82 thousand in 2019. An important question here is whether the match between the supply of human capital and the demand for human capital in the sport sector is in balance. That match or mismatch between supply and demand, the possible bottlenecks and possible solution directions together form the Human Capital Agenda of the sport sector. High-quality human capital in the sector is a condition for further professionalization of the sport sector. The Sports Council indicates in its advisory report on the organization and financing of sport that with strong human capital the sport sector is better able to fulfil its social task and enter into partnerships with other sectors.

The study shows that nearly 3,500 Full-time equivalent of community sport coaches employed in 2020. Many of these professionals are involved in making connections between sport and other sectors. However, stakeholders indicate that more of these professionals are needed to facilitate cross-fertilization with other sectors in even more places. This would also require attention to the qualification requirements in the various sectors. This is only possible if the

sector becomes more attractive to continue working in and is able to bind, fascinate and retain people.

The stakeholders emphasize that sports providers with a good basis of human capital can better respond to local health, education and welfare objectives. The social role of sport can be increased with co-financing from other sectors by having professionals highlight the shared interests. Here the role of community sports coach is often mentioned who should be given more space by employers to undertake and extend the role of sport to other sports providers and other sectors. The local sport agreements offer a good basis for this. Although there are already many community sport coaches who make local connections, more professionals are needed who can walk the local networks and get collaborations off the ground in more places.

Talents and top athletes devote a great deal of time to their sporting careers. The proportion of top athletes who are involved in sports full-time is increasing. Many indicate that their sports career has had a negative impact on their school career. A large proportion also indicate that their income is limited. Almost half of all top athletes have a minimum income or earn below average. TeamNL@Work was established to support (former) top athletes. More and more athletes make use of this and many are satisfied with the guidance. Nevertheless, the transition from a top sport career to a social career remains a tricky point for many top athletes. In 2021, the Mulier Institute plans to gain more insight into the experiences of (former) top athletes and actors involved in support and service provision. Based on this knowledge development, the NL Sports Council would like to consider how advisory services could boost dual careers.

Developments in the area of human capital are also taking place in top-level sport. These developments focus on the recognition of top-level sport as a profession, good employment practices for top-level athletes, and training for top-level athletes and top-level coaches. For example, the position of top athletes who live off starting and prize money and top athletes with selection status can be improved, as can the compensation for national teams, improving regulations for athletes with income from abroad and top athletes and referees with additional income from sport. Employers have an important role to play here. Stakeholders also indicate the importance of training programs for coaches and the transition of athletes and coaches to social careers outside of sport. From NOC*NSF there is attention for these themes, for example with the continuous learning line for coach training and various programs aimed at the social career of top athletes. Stakeholders indicate that more attention should be paid to this for coaches.

Market needs

In cooperation with stakeholders from the sports sector, a so-called Human Capital Agenda (HCA) was drawn up for the sports sector. The goal of the HCA is a healthy sports sector with sufficient and competent (paid and unpaid) people and contains a joint vision of the sector on human capital, supplemented with action points to work towards this.

With the sponsorship of the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, the Mulier Institute conducted another labour market survey on the already present human capital in the sport sector. Based on, among others, CBS data and the labour market monitor sport 2020 the Mulier Institute has formed a picture of the labour market and volunteers in sports.

The research of the Mulier Institute shows that it is precisely the sports jobs outside the traditional sports sector that have grown in recent years. For this reason it is important that sport and physical activity are broadly approached in this broad consultation and that parties outside of sport, such as education, welfare and health care are also involved. In addition, it is essential that volunteers and professionals be involved in addition to umbrella organizations and advocates.

Stakeholders mention that the sports sector is a nice environment to work in; for this reason, many volunteers are active in sports. However, for professionals, they feel that the terms of employment could be better. The research shows that the professional group in sports is relatively young compared to other sectors. In addition, the turnover rate from the sector is relatively high. As a reason for professionals leaving for another sector, 38% of MBO graduates and 21% of HBO graduates mentioned a higher salary. Strikingly, stakeholders indicate that low salaries are the main reason for looking for another job.

About 40% of the professionals who leave the sport sector indicate that they find other work more interesting. Stakeholders also indicate that within the sport sector there is limited room to stimulate starters in their development, compared to other sectors. According to stakeholders this is partly due to the high degree of uncertainty for professionals, due to the many temporary contracts and self-employed structures. The research confirms that in sports, more than in other sectors, temporary or flexible contracts are used and that there is a relatively high number of self-employed workers. On the one hand, stakeholders find this positive because of the desire and need for job rotation of, for example, coaches.

On the other hand, these self-employed are vulnerable to possible fluctuations in the market and run more risks, as was shown during the corona crisis. In addition, the Law on the Labour Market in Balance poses a number of challenges for the sport sector, due to the specific characteristics of the sector such as working in sport seasons and the desired job rotation among coaches. Due to the increasing social role of sport and its connection with other sectors, the demand for MBO level 3 and 4 and MBO trained professionals has increased in recent years in sport. The labour market research also shows that sports jobs outside the traditional sports sector (e.g. a sports job in the welfare sector) are responsible for the largest growth in sports jobs in recent years. Stakeholders indicate that these professionals are relatively durable and that it is challenging for employers to hire such professionals. This is also in line with the finding from the research, where especially college-educated people indicate that they started working in another sector because there were too few jobs in the sports sector at their level. Nevertheless, there are some good examples of closing business models, although the possibility of doing so often seems to depend strongly on the local situation.

Professionalization and labour market

It is important that the sports industry develops, innovates and professionalizes. More power is needed to expand the sports, exercise offerings, and make them suitable for groups that currently do not sufficiently benefit from them. Increasing the level of education, further professionalization and strengthening the labour market are the answer to the demands that are made when the sports industry will work more closely with other sectors. The NL Sports Council notes that there are no attractive career prospects in the sports industry, few full-time jobs and poor working conditions in the sports industry. The large gap that the sports industry

has on the labour market needs to be addressed by the entire industry. It is important that all parties in the branch find each other and jointly put the subject on the agenda with the national government and ask for support in labour market policy. Currently, the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport is having the current labour market in sports mapped.

Job prospects

The research on the job market in sport shows that the job perspective is limited in certain parts of the sport sector. The stakeholders confirm this picture. The research shows that the career perspectives for sports jobs are mainly moderate to poor in the subsectors of club sports, fitness, outdoor, recreation and security. Stakeholders indicate that this is related to employment conditions, Snipper contracts, development prospects and training.

Snipper contracts

The sports sector is a sector in which many workers have small appointments and have to combine many appointments in order to create sufficient job size, according to the study. This is particularly the case in the subsectors of sports clubs, fitness and outdoor. It is also true for some of the top athletes that they have several jobs next to each other. Employers and advocates say that this is an important reason for professionals to look for a job in another sector. Professionals themselves see this as less of a problem. This is also apparent from the survey, in which a relatively small percentage (14% of higher professional education graduates and 22% of vocational education graduates) cite the small job size as a reason for looking for another job. However, various stakeholders also indicate that working on different assignments side by side does contribute to the development of professionals with broad expertise and employability.

Stakeholders indicate that in some situations something can be done about the small appointments by enabling combined appointments. This allows the diversity of assignments to be maintained, but gives professionals a larger employment contract with a single employer. There are examples where a central hiring organization such as a sports service bureau solves fragmentation across multiple employers. Centralizing workplaces also creates room for specializations and secondments by, for example, offering collective bargaining agreements and strengthening cross-sector connections. This allows multiple small jobs to be combined into full-time jobs. It is important to realize that the diversity in the sport sector makes it complicated to arrive at a blueprint for solving this fragmentation.

Stakeholders also indicate that they find it relevant to improve the cooperation between different collective bargaining parties in sport in order to counteract snipper contracts. In this way, employees can more easily move from one sports job to another sector. Employers' organizations and unions in various subsectors within the sport already consult with each other, for example about (secondary) employment conditions. Stakeholders consider it important that more parties join this process.

Development perspective

Stakeholders indicate that professionals and volunteers need development perspectives and that this is a prerequisite for good job prospects. A professional wants to know what position they can advance to and what educational requirements or experience are associated with it,

whether they are trainers, coaches, managers or top athletes. It should be possible for people to work in sports throughout their lives, from training youth to seniors at sports clubs and enterprising sports providers. To realize this more uniformity is needed in the competence profiles used within a certain professional group. Such competence profiles have already been drawn up for community sports coaches, for example, and there is also a qualification system for trainers and coaches. By coordinating such profiles, including coordination with the training profiles used by sports schools in vocational and higher education, transfer within the sports sector is better possible. Employers could and should also invest more in continuing education of professionals, the stakeholders indicate. This creates career opportunities throughout the sport, students know what jobs they are being trained for and professionals know where they can work.

Training

The research shows that for MBO graduates (especially level 1 and 2) the connection between education and the labour market leaves much to be desired. For higher professional education (HBO) graduates, the match between education and the labour market is relatively good. Although study programs already cooperate with the field, stakeholders indicate that employers could be even more involved in the design of sports courses. Especially in themes where cooperation with other sectors comes into the picture, this connection is extra important, such as dealing with vulnerable target groups or cooperation with neighbourhood organizations. Entrepreneurial sport providers, among others, indicate that the training of professionals should pay more attention to the social tasks and opportunities outside the walls of the sports provider. This requires more intensive cooperation of the sector with educational institutions at the secondary and higher education levels. In order to stimulate job opportunities throughout the sport sector, stakeholders are thinking of jointly offering internships and traineeships at different organizations in the sport sector. Stakeholders indicate that there are many similarities in the content of the various sports training programs of unions, education and entrepreneurial sport providers. More cooperation in those generic parts of education and training could improve employment prospects and the possibility of growth through the sport sector. There are several initiatives that are working on this, such as NOC*NSF with the continuous learning line and the National Academy Neighbourhood Sport Coaches.

Further professionalization of sport organisations

Many mid-size sports clubs have difficulties to run their organization entirely on volunteers, for instance when it comes to administrative matters or club management. Stakeholders indicate that a professional who supports the work of volunteers could make an important contribution to making such organizations future-proof. Stakeholders also indicate that sport providers should strengthen their HR policies in order to be able to shape good employment practices. The National Sports Agreement is already working on this through for example board coaching and support by external advisors. Stakeholders see a need for even more professionals that actually work at the sports provider and can deal with these issues there. This should lead to stronger sports providers with better cooperation between volunteers and professionals. Stakeholders indicate that additional funding is necessary for sports providers to hire more and better professionals.

Making volunteering attractive

The research shows that volunteers make a substantial and stable contribution to organizations in sport. The often-indicated decline in volunteers is not reflected in the data. Volunteers thus make an important contribution to the labour force in sport. Stakeholders indicate that the training of volunteers is important. It is important that the courses for volunteers are as accessible as possible. The Sports Agreement is already working on supporting volunteer trainers and coaches, for example by using apps.

The sector indicates the need for a national guideline for the requirements for volunteers, for example in the area of training or experience. Sports providers could create a training plan for volunteers based on those requirements. When training volunteers, it is very well possible to work across sports branches, as is already done in the Sports Agreement.

The sector also indicates that training of professionals should pay more attention to the guidance of volunteers. In addition, employers should give professionals the opportunity to do this. By setting quality standards for professionals and volunteers, the level in the sector will go up as expected by the stakeholders. This applies to both sport supply by clubs and by entrepreneurial providers.

Further professionalizing collaboration with other sectors and sports offer

Stakeholders see the great social added value that sport can have for other sectors. However, they indicate that the voluntary organizations are reaching their limits and that more professionals are needed for this reason.

Research shows that volunteers often lack time and knowledge to get collaborations with other sectors and social investments off the ground. Volunteer administrators do not have the time and expertise to deal with for example the possible role of sport providers in care, rehabilitation and welfare processes. There is also often a lack of knowledge about social real estate and sustainability or the importance of broad motor developments. Although the voluntary nature of sport should be preserved, professionals could create an environment in which volunteers can operate more effectively.

One of the ambitions in the National Sports Agreement is for everyone to enjoy sports throughout their lives. Therefore, the Sports Agreement is already focusing on the knowledge that is needed to handle and enthuse various (vulnerable) target groups. The stakeholders emphasize the importance of professionals and volunteers acquiring knowledge to make sports and exercise as accessible and enjoyable as possible for various groups of people. They wonder if there should be common requirements for professionals and volunteers who deal with (young) children, such as requirements in the field of pedagogy, didactics and (social) safety. This is also important with a view to integrity in sport, according to the stakeholders.

The National Sports Agreement already supports volunteers and professionals at both sport clubs and commercial sport providers in the didactic, pedagogic and sport technical skills needed to make sport and physical activity attractive and enjoyable for everyone.

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“I want to become world champion again, but this time in the field of sustainability.”

Marcelien de Koning TeamNL chef de emission

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