

SNB TRANSITION

French Basketball Players Union

THE LIFE AFTER PROFESSIONNAL BASKETBALL



June 2014

The Study : What you Need to Know



In general, **players feel incompetent** during their retirement from professional sport.

1/3 of players surveyed, did not choose their professional situation.

1/3 of players did not plan their transition

When it happens, it generally begins upon their arrival in the non professional Championships (FFBB)

50% of players were not able to obtain help

during their transition from professional basketball.



Those who received help were, for the most-part, more satisfied with the help of their close friends and relatives than that of clubs or Employment Agencies.

1/3 of players did not voluntarily end their career.

42% of players suffer from ongoing physical after-effects (chronic pathologies, permanent invalidity, etc.).



Career change = Addiction

Many of them claim to be suffering from substance dependencies (drugs, alcohol) during this period.

Only **a minority of players** (less than 25%)

exercised their rights to use in career professional training Rights to finance their retirement from sport.



Study Background

For player associations, dual career and transition has always been a high-priority issue and, today, the specific needs of a sporting career have been clearly identified : uncertainty of the sporting career, the high turnover rate, the fluctuating income over a short period of time, the difficulty of reconciling between training and studies, the transposition of skills into the different sector, etc.

All of which make them a unique, special and complicated group to deal with.

Created in 1988, the French Basketball players Union (SNB) has always brought a lot of attention on the issue of players' transition and the end of their sporting careers. A preliminary study in 2009, concerning the initial training of PRO A and PRO B players and their expectation for their future transition, has led to an emphasis on sectors which players seek to enter; Our goal was to adapt SNB training programs with players expectations

Before this study, there was no scientific data allowing us to create a precise inventory of decisive factors and difficulties facing athletes during their transition period.

For the first time, a basketball stakeholder in France has paved the way.

**It's called "SNB TRANSITION" :
The life after professional basketball".**

Our Partner

This study was performed in partnership with the "Master Ingénierie de la Formation et de l'Insertion Professionnelle" specialised in social and cognitive psychology at the Blaise-Pascal University of Clermont-Ferrand.

In spite of its published goal to facilitate "insertion of people in difficulty", the Masters degree has not, until now, had to address the problem of athlete transition.

This collaboration has provided us with the means to clarify the difficulties of players, in greater detail, during their transition and to help SNB to establish a viable action plan.



The specifics of our study :
METHODOLOGICAL RIGOUR

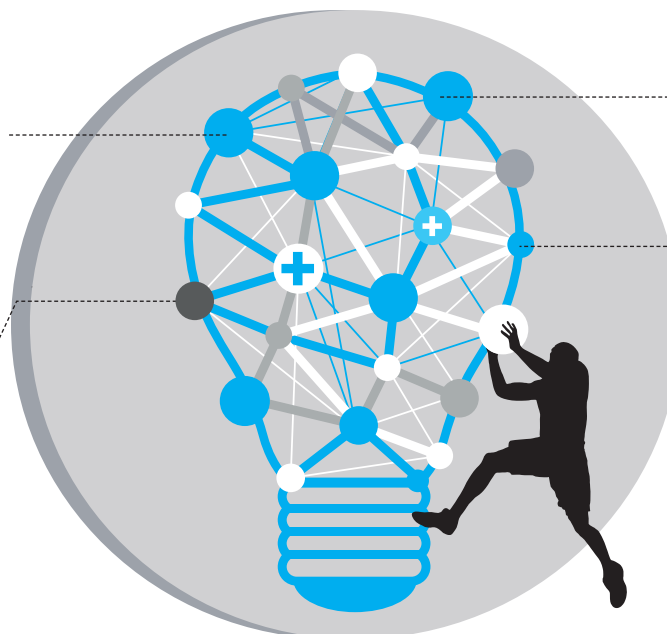
More than 150 telephone interviews performed using an interview grid based on scientific research in the field of psychology.

The results were processed using "Statistical Package", statistics analysis software which provided the ability to go much further than a superficial, descriptive analysis.

The Initial objectives

Find
former players from the LNB
from the early 2000's.

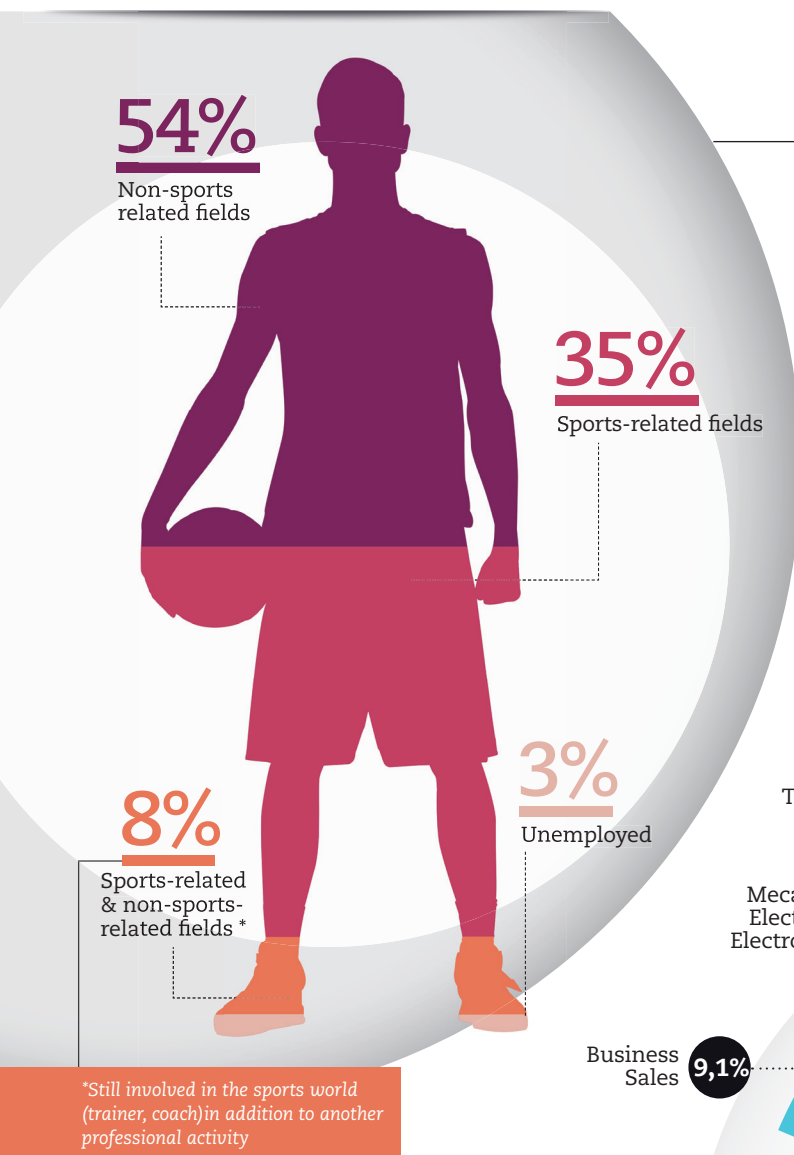
Know
The sectors In which
they transitioned.



Evaluate
The degree of difficulty
experienced during their transition
from professional sport.

Implement
concrete actions
for SNB members.

Activity Sectors in which former player can be found

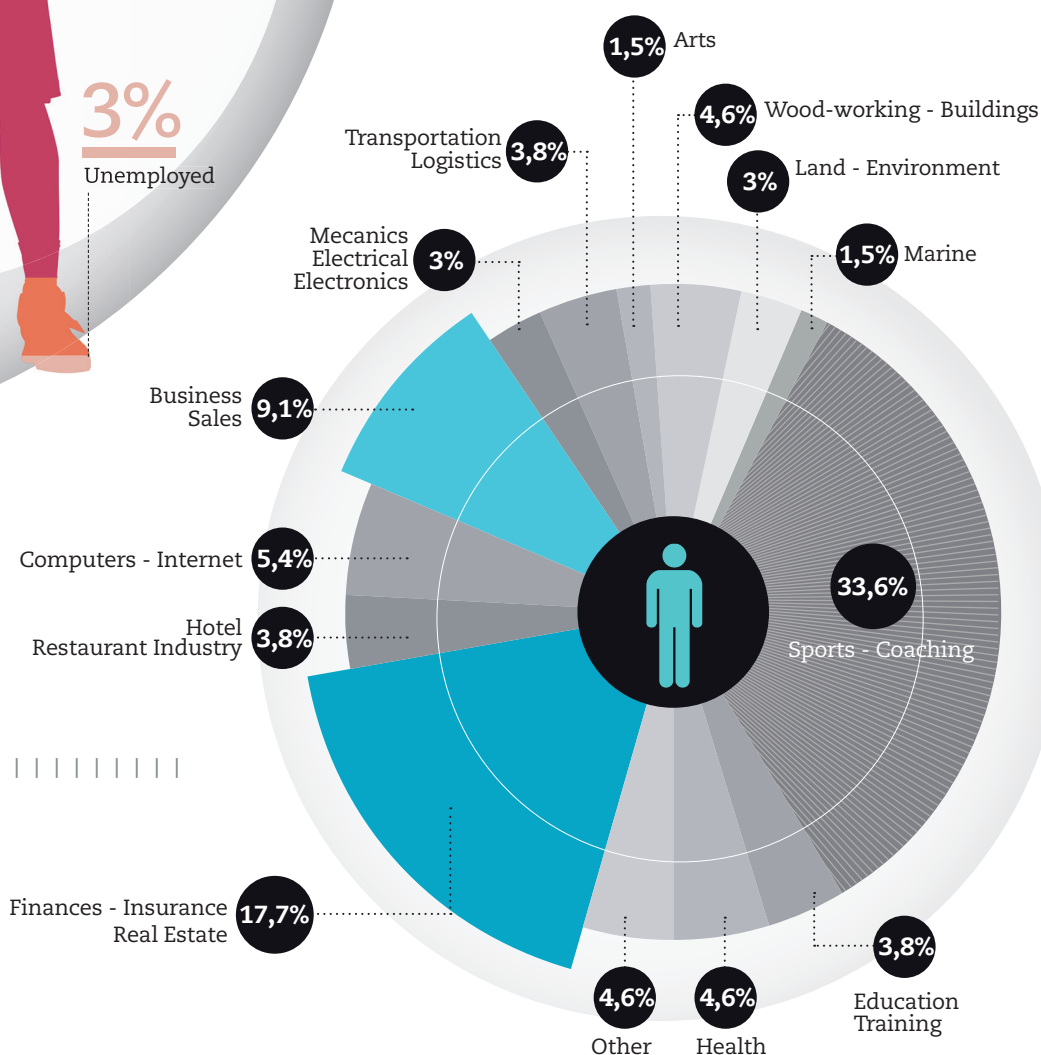


Activity Fields

A majority of players (54%) are relocated into non-sports-related fields.

There are no pre-defined sectors for transitioning basketball players (many different sectors are represented).

There are no pre-defined sectors for basketball player retraining. Sectors are especially popular.



Support during the transition period

During their transition period, at least half of all players do not have support in terms of counselling, information, concrete assistance (financing or other services) or encouragement in terms of their existing skills and worth.

It is the inner circle of friends and family that provides most of the support rather than clubs.

In a general manner, **they were most satisfied when this assistance came from their inner circle** rather than a club or employment agency.

The fact that they were able to obtain help minimised their apprehensions about their potential future.

A majority of players **have never benefited from financial support over the professional training rights acquired during their career.**



What we have put together

Using the results of our research, we constructed a brochure that lists the various jobs of more than 150 former players. They have all accepted the idea of helping current players by making themselves available to provide them with advice or concrete assistance for their transition.

It was essential, for the SNB, to create an inter-generational assistance network to help athletes to transition, the idea

being to rally former players to provide additional support to today's players.

This unprecedented database will help the SNB to provide counselling, assistance and direction to all players in a most effective manner.

What Remains to be Done

It is essential to remind professional clubs of their obligations towards their employees in terms of continuous professional training during the career. It is important to train and teach administrative staff of clubs to improve the use of existing professional training funds in order to coach and assist players in their reinsertion into the workforce.

To establish in high performance training center an obligation for all players, at the end of their training period, to undergo an evaluation of their skills and capabilities in order to evaluate their training objectives especially for cases in which they do not become professional. (This system already exists in football).

To reinforce collaboration between the SNB and the federation for training purposes throughout the athletes' careers.

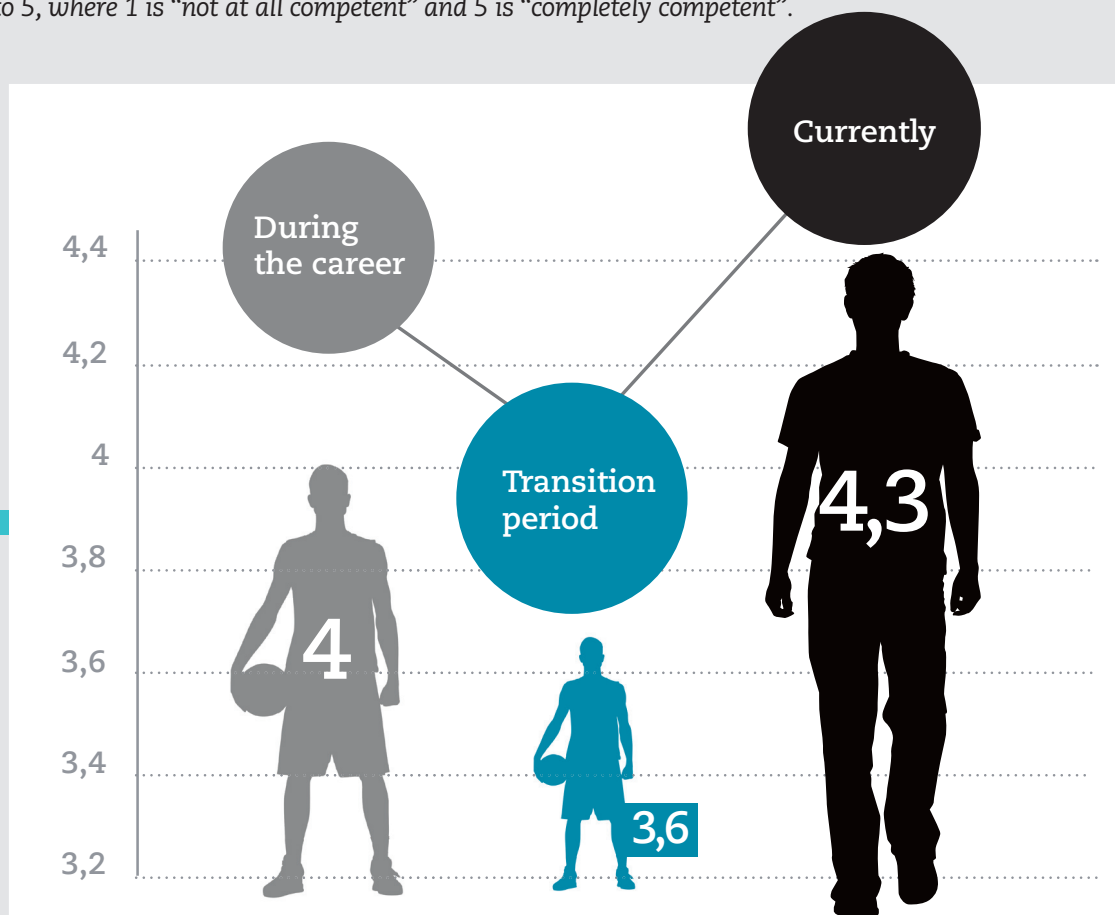


Many studies have shown that social support provides de **a significantly-positive effect on the physical and psychological well-being** of individuals.

Players' sense of competence

The following diagram illustrates the players' average feeling of competence before, during and after retraining.

Scale 1 to 5, where 1 is "not at all competent" and 5 is "completely competent".



Entry into the transition phase leads to a general sense of incompetence.

This is exactly opposite to how they feel "during their careers" and "once they have a new job" and is a disturbing result since feeling competent can be more deterministic than actually being competent.

Players may very well have all the necessary skills to succeed in an activity but if they are not aware of it, it doesn't help them.

What we have put together

With the help of our partner MGS reconversion, a structure that is specialised in the evaluation of athlete skills and abilities, for the first time we are helping player to better define their goals and interests after sport, the objective being to better target our efforts.

In addition to this mandatory step, we also provide players with testimonies from other former players concerning their transition success, videos which are distributed in order to enhance players' feelings of competence. These positive "role models" will help current players to find the means of succeeding in their career goals.

What Remains to be Done

We must reverse this trend.

Careers must be developed so that they become a "booster" to an "after-career" and players capitalise on their skills and experience. By developing a skills evaluation geared towards athletes and ongoing assistance during the VAE (validation of prior experiences and skills) cycles, we have two effective solutions to increase this general sense of competence.

It is necessary to have professionals who can provide full-time assistance to players throughout this process. A more effective use of professional training funds and partners will provide the SNB with new resources to finance these service.

A Feeling of Autonomy

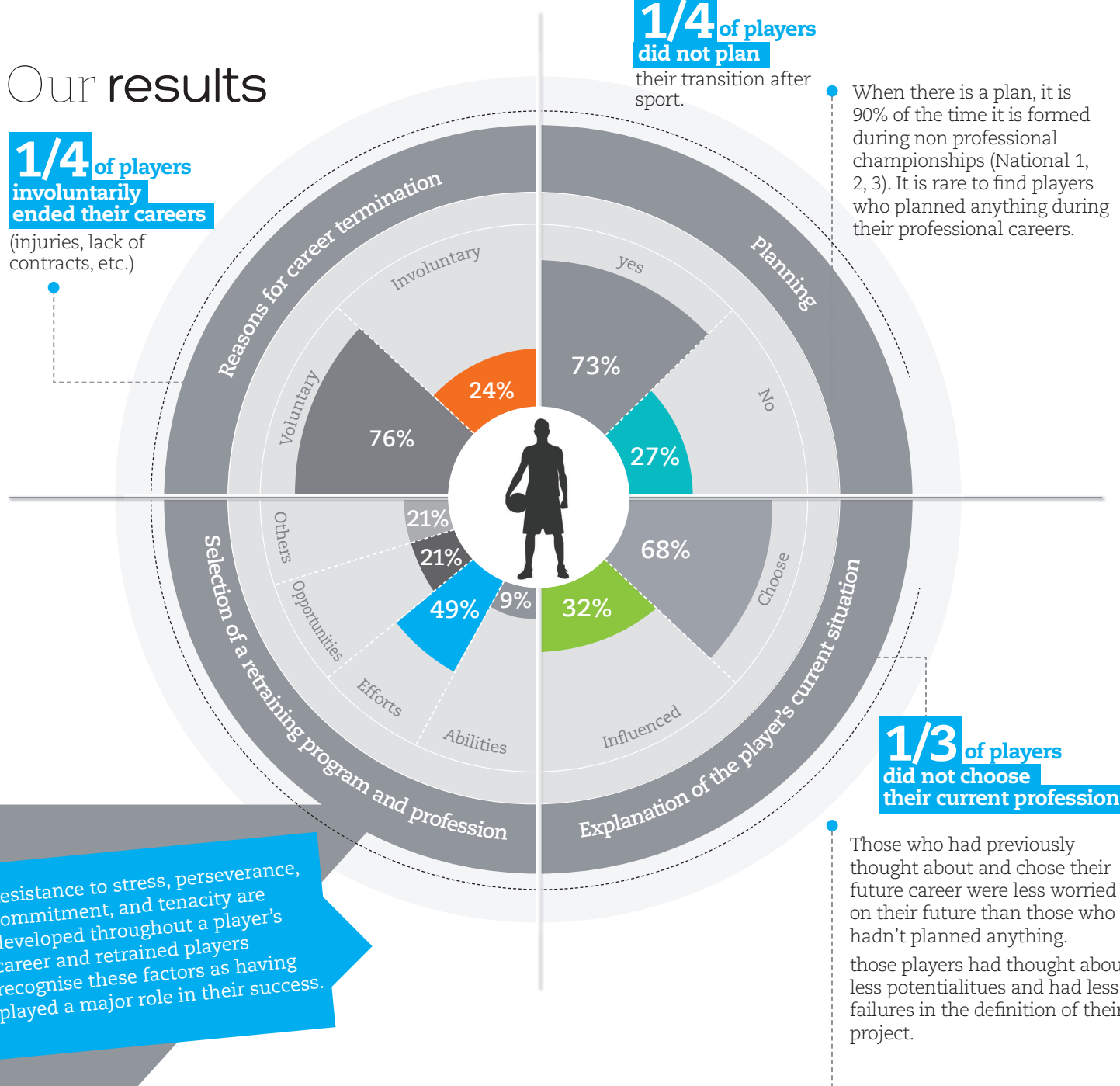
Our results

1/4 of players
involuntarily
ended their careers

(injuries, lack of contracts, etc.)

1/4 of players
did not plan
their transition after
sport.

When there is a plan, it is 90% of the time it is formed during non professional championships (National 1, 2, 3). It is rare to find players who planned anything during their professional careers.



Resistance to stress, perseverance, commitment, and tenacity are developed throughout a player's career and retrained players recognise these factors as having played a major role in their success.

1/3 of players
did not choose
their current profession

Those who had previously thought about and chose their future career were less worried on their future than those who hadn't planned anything. Those players had thought about less potentialities and had less failures in the definition of their project.

What Remains to be Done

New tools must be developed and made available to players in order to facilitate better planning and better preparation to mitigate the brutal effects of a sudden career termination. At the same time, these tools must also help players to make their own choices. In order to do this, we want to develop the Activation of Vocational and Personal Development (AVPD) program which is a process to help people to determine their future career goals. Very well-developed in Quebec especially, it has been proven effective

in many business sectors and is quite suitable for athletes especially during long periods of inactivity or injury rehabilitation. The LNB, through its medical commission, should be able to encourage the development of this protocol, in partnership with the SNB, for players benefiting from a break due to an injury of at least 4 months.

This will make more effective use of the times of inactivity that occurs throughout an athletic career.

Physical and Mental well-being

Among players, we discovered that they have a general feeling of having been treated like "chattel".

Such strong terminology is consistent with a lack of interest on the part of a variety of parties when players no longer project peak athletic performance.

The Use of addictive substances

is a topic which often comes up during player interviews. We think it is a means by which athletes replace the sports addiction

42%

(which represents about 1/2 of all players)

have chronic physical problems developed during their careers.

This ranges from minor pains experience in the mornings, to serious chronic illnesses and even permanent handicaps. Depending on the nature of their sports careers, the effected body parts can vary but, for the most-part, it involves ankles, knees, backs, and shoulders. This has a significant impact on their transition success if they cannot exercise certain jobs due to these recurring physical problems.

A Change in Body Perception

(weight gain, muscles loss, etc.) also take a toll on the psychological well-being of players being retrained, a factor whose importance we did not foresee when we began our study. Now we plan to collect more data on this subject so we can quickly grasp the issues we have identified during interviews and deal with them as factors which play an important role in a successful transition program.

What Remains to be Done

As practiced today, we feel that professional sports make unreasonable demands of players. Basketball is a prime example of this with an increase in the number of games and extended championships, all coupled with reduced recovery times. These are also factors which have a long-term influence and we have seen it here in the transition process.

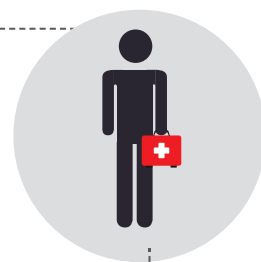
This effect was less evident, at first, but this study has demonstrated the link between physical and mental integrity and a successful transition and we have the evidence.

Injuries prevent basketball players from transitioning the workforce in desirable sectors.

In order to evaluate these risks in detail, it is necessary, in our opinion, for Federation and League medical commissions, to perform a larger study with the objective of evaluating current practices of professional clubs in terms of both the treatment and prevention of injuries and, on the other hand, to evaluate their influence on player transition.

Clubs urgently need help to reinforce their current medical staff and structure so that

- The level of medical treatment received during the career is appropriate with the intensity of the sport.
- A better player support is provided during extended periods of injuries and rehabilitation
- Psychological assistance groups to be created between clubs in order to assist players throughout their careers and even afterwards.



Concerning the Body Image and its Influence on Transition

It is imperative that this data is taken into consideration and evaluated in the future. We must be able to measure the effects and consequences of altered states of physical and mental health through a more in-depth study of this phenomenon. In concert with the League and the Federation, we must also develop tools to mitigate the sense of loss among players when their careers are terminated. In addition, It would be helpful to enlist the aid of nutritionists in this issue.



Concerning addictions

Considering the fact that addictive behaviours are often a side-effect of career transition which can hinder their goals, we have focused on this issue which had not, until now, been identified among basketball players.

This data helps us to evaluate a number of issues. First of all, the “repressive” model the French Anti-Doping Agency (AFLD) is using today. None of these players had used prohibited substances during their careers but began their addictive behaviours (mostly alcohol and drugs) from the time they left the sports sector. For this reason, it would be beneficial to create a new model focusing on prevention rather than sanctions to curtail this disturbing trend.

AFLD should encourage and promote this new policy based on prevention of risks. The objective must be simple and reasonable : all athletes must receive, in a clear, regular and sufficient manner, throughout their careers, information on addictive substances and their associated risks.

In combination with an intensive transition program, we are sure this would result in a significant decrease in players at risk at the end of their career.

We need to work more effectively in this manner, in concert with the CRJE (Center on addiction behaviours in Nantes) which treats such problems. In 2013, SNB and CRJE worked in collaboration on the issue of gambling addiction (on-line and off-line) among professional basketball players). Once again, we are going to request their help and propose a close collaboration to develop more effective methods and tools for the benefits of players.

Many countries throughout the world, including England and the USA, are currently dealing with this undesirable aspect of sports careers and we have the feeling that France must be a leader in this field searching for new solutions to such serious problems.

In conclusion

For many years, the SNB has reinforced its presence on the field

Yearly team visits in clubs have allowed us to perform truly individualised, in-depth work with all PRO A and PRO B players. By placing an emphasis on transition and employment, we are encouraging players to play a role in the success of their own futures.

Transition can cause a lot of stress and a significant identity crisis among players and this can induce negative traumatic effects ranging from illegal substance abuse to serious depression.

With BASKET PROMOTION, we have developed a network to help players through their career transitions by becoming professional training experts working on skills development and by signing agreements with universities and training institutions who help athletes gain access to important educational resources.

Our last study has shown us what we need to do in order to assist athletes in their transition efforts. We have identified many issues including mental and physical well-being.

It is important for the French Federation, the French League, clubs and the SNB, to work together to make player transition a success.

Many other disciplines have already done this: Gaelic football and Australian football have both developed innovative programs which integrate top-notch sports practices with successful transition programmes. These models are, in our opinion, easily transferrable if all of the stakeholders agree to work together.

By performing this study, we have unveiled **alarming statistics** and we want to work to :

- **Make the various stakeholders in the sports sector aware** of the fact that successful transition requires concrete data prior to concrete actions
- **Improve these disturbing results** by implementing specific actions
- **Join with other partners** to support the process
- **Further study and understand** other issues that we may not have yet identified
- **Recruit professionals on a full-time** basis to help implement our action plans
- **Ensure the continued** mental and physical health of players and their long-term success



Thank you



The SNB team would like to thank Melanie Mouillaud for having so successfully conducted this study as well as all the players who participated voluntarily and share their transition experiences. Without them, this project and its resulting recommendations would never have been completed. Our thanks goes out to all the people who helped us to locate from players.





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