

## Matching Coping Strategies to Athletic Retirement Stressors among Japanese Female Athletes

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**Abstract :** Retirement from sport can be stressful to athletes for many reasons. Accordingly, it is necessary to match coping strategies depending on the stressors. One of the athlete career assistance programs for Japanese top athletes in Japan, the Japan Olympic Committee Career Academy (JCA), has focused on the service contents regarding occupational supports which can be said to cope with financial and occupational stress; however, other supports such as psychological support were unclear due to the lack of psychological professionals in the JCA. Tailoring the program, it is important to match the needs of the athletes at athletic retirement with the service contents. Japanese Olympic athletes have been found to retire for different reasons. Especially female athletes who competed in the Summer Olympic Games were found to retire with psychological reasons. The purpose of this research was to investigate the types of stressors Japanese female athletes experience as a result of athletic retirement. As part of the study, 44 female retired athletes from 13 competitive sports completed an open-ended questionnaire. The KJ method was used to analyze stress experienced as a result of retirement. As a result, nine conceptualized stressors were aggregated such as "Conflict with athletic identity", "Desire to live as an athlete", and "Career plan after retirement". In order to match the coping strategies according to the stressors, each stressor was classified with the four types of adjustments; psychological, social, financial, and occupational changes. As a result, the stressor relating to psychological adjustment accounted for 69.0% of coping-related needs, the financial and occupational adjustment was 21.8%, and social adjustment was 9.2%. In conclusion, coping strategies according to the stressors are suggested.

**Keywords :** athletic retirement, coping, female athlete, stress

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