

# Generating An Insight on Retirement Process of Football Players

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**Abstract.** The retirement process of professional football players represents a significant life transition that often entails various challenges, including financial instability, career uncertainty, and mental health issues. This article explores the obstacles that retired players may encounter, including the lack of financial literacy and career planning, football-related injuries, and mental health and identity reconstruction issues. By addressing these challenges and implementing proactive financial planning strategies, retired football players can navigate the complexities of retirement more effectively and secure a successful and sustainable future beyond their playing careers. For the provision of psychological support, it is essential for clubs and sports organizations to offer access to mental health resources such as counseling and therapy. Establishing a community for retired athletes can facilitate connections and establish a support network, aiding them in adjusting to their new lives. In terms of physical health, it is crucial to prioritize ongoing medical care and rehabilitation programs. Regular check-ups and availability of physiotherapy can assist in managing chronic conditions and promoting overall well-being. Encouraging retired players to participate in physical activities that they enjoy can also contribute to maintaining fitness and health.

**Keywords:** Retirement; football players; transition.

## 1. Introduction

As football players' professional careers come to an end, many of them are confronted with a significant turning point in their lives. They must navigate the transition from professional sports to other fields, often experiencing psychological stress and financial distress along the way. To address these stresses, the following perspectives can be analyzed: the primary challenges faced by retired players, the need for additional support and assistance after their careers conclude, and the remedies available to aid them. Research on the retirement process of professional football players can provide valuable insights into the re-employment challenges, financial difficulties, and mental health status they encounter. This research can systematically analyze the underlying reasons for these phenomena, offering a theoretical foundation for their psychological adjustment, financial management, and re-employment prospects. Ultimately, it aims to support players in adapting more effectively to their new life circumstances.

Furthermore, the football industry represents a substantial sector within sports. By examining the post-retirement employment status of players within this field, researchers and practitioners can gain deeper understanding of employment opportunities and development trends within the sports industry as a whole. This knowledge can inform efforts to enhance humanistic care and welfare security for retired players while facilitating effective human resource allocation. Thusly, provides reference points and guidance for improving both the football industry specifically and broader sports industry environments—ultimately promoting healthy development within these sectors while contributing to societal well-being.

## 2. Obstacles that Retired Players May Encounter

Retirement from professional sports is a significant life transition that athletes often struggle to navigate due to various challenges, including financial instability, career uncertainty, and mental health issues. In a study by Van Ramele et al., the mental health of retired professional football players was analyzed, focusing on a 12-month incidence of adverse life events and the support available to

players. The research highlights that retired athletes often encounter various life stressors, such as financial instability, relationship issues, and health problems, which exacerbate their psychological distress [1]. The transition from a career in sports to life after retirement can be particularly challenging for athletes who have devoted their entire lives to their sport. As such, there is a growing body of literature examining the career development and transitions of athletes, with a focus on the financial literacy, career planning, injuries, mental health, and identity reconstruction of retired athletes.

### **2.1. Financial Literacy and Career Planning**

One major obstacle that retired football players may encounter is a lack of financial education and planning during their playing careers. Many athletes rely on financial advisors and agents to handle their money, often without fully understanding the implications of their financial decisions. This can leave them vulnerable to financial exploitation and mismanagement. Without the necessary knowledge and skills to make informed financial decisions, retired players may struggle to secure their financial future and achieve long-term financial stability. The study by Hong and Fraser highlights the need for high-performance athletes to develop financial literacy and self-management skills to prepare for life after sports [2].

In addition to these challenges, retired football players may also face external factors that can impact their financial literacy and career planning. The media scrutiny and public spotlight that often accompany professional sports careers can create additional pressure and stress for retired players, making it difficult to focus on building a successful post-football career. The lack of support and resources available to athletes transitioning out of professional sports can also hinder their ability to navigate the challenges of financial literacy and career planning. Wendling and Sagas apply the social cognitive career theory model to college athletes' career planning for life after sport, emphasizing the importance of proactive career management and planning [3].

Retired football players face numerous obstacles in achieving financial literacy and career planning success. From the abrupt transition to retirement to the lack of financial education and planning during their playing careers, these athletes must overcome a variety of challenges to secure their financial future and find fulfilling post-football careers. By addressing these obstacles head-on and seeking out the necessary support and resources, retired football players can better navigate the complexities of financial literacy and career planning and build a successful and sustainable future beyond the gridiron.

### **2.2. Mental Health and Identity Reconstruction**

In their pursuit of excellence, footballers often encounter numerous mental health challenges that can significantly impact both their professional and personal lives. Firstly, the competitive pressure is a primary factor affecting athletes' mental well-being. Athletes are frequently subjected to immense expectations from coaches, team management, the media, and fans to excel at the highest levels of competition. This constant pressure can lead to mental health issues such as anxiety and depression. Injuries also pose a significant challenge to the mental health of football players. The lengthy recovery process not only affects their physical condition but also can leave athletes feeling isolated, adrift, and helpless, further adding to their psychological burden. Additionally, the short duration of their careers places athletes under stress with an uncertain future; many experience identity crises and struggle to adjust to life after retirement which may result in more serious mental health issues such as anxiety disorders and depression. The social lives of football players are often constrained by professional training and competition schedules while lacking adequate support networks which may exacerbate the occurrence of mental health problems. Therefore it is essential to focus on the mental well-being of football players and provide necessary psychological support and interventions in order for them to effectively cope with these challenges.

Goutteborge et al. examine the mental and psychosocial health of current and former professional footballers, highlighting the challenges faced by athletes in maintaining their mental well-being

throughout their careers and in retirement [4]. Mannes et al. conducted a systematic review examining the prevalence and correlates of psychological distress among retired elite athletes. The findings reveal that retired athletes frequently experience anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues. One significant factor contributing to this distress is the loss of identity that often accompanies retirement. Many athletes have dedicated their lives to their sport, and leaving that behind can lead to feelings of emptiness and confusion regarding their self-worth and purpose [5].

Agnew and Drummond explore the reconstruction of masculine identity following retirement from elite Australian football, shedding light on the psychological impact of retirement on athletes' sense of self. The sudden loss of the structure, routine, and camaraderie that comes with being a professional athlete can leave retired players feeling lost and adrift. Without the daily grind of practices, games, and workouts, many retired football players struggle to find purpose and fulfillment in their post-playing lives [6]. This loss of identity can lead to feelings of depression, anxiety, and isolation, as retired players grapple with the question of who they are now that they are no longer on the field. Retired players may struggle to find fulfilling and sustainable career opportunities that align with their skills and interests, further complicating their transition to post-football life.

### **2.3. Injuries**

The physical toll of a professional football career can present challenges for retired players in terms of career planning. Many athletes face long-term health issues and injuries that can limit their ability to pursue alternative career paths. Barth et al. provide a social sciences-based examination of retired professional soccer players from a long-term perspective, raising concerns about the risks associated with professional sports careers and the impact on athletes' lives post-retirement [7]. Koch et al. identify football-related injuries as the major reason for the career end of professional male football players [8].

Unexceptionally, retired football players often suffer from previous injuries. Throughout their careers, football players put their bodies through intense physical strain, leading to a variety of injuries that can linger long after retirement. These injuries can range from minor sprains and strains to more serious issues like concussions, torn ligaments, and chronic pain. As these players age, the toll of their injuries can become more pronounced, leading to decreased mobility, chronic pain, and the need for ongoing medical care. Dealing with these physical limitations can be frustrating and challenging for retired football players, who may find themselves unable to engage in the activities they once loved or struggling to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

## **3. Suggestions**

### **3.1. Network and the Concept of Sport Entrepreneurship**

In today's highly competitive and fast-paced sports industry, the need for professional athletes to make smart financial decisions during and after their playing careers has never been more critical. With the average career span of a professional athlete being relatively short, it is essential for players to have a solid financial plan in place to secure their future once they hang up their jerseys.

Recent literature has emphasized the importance of establishing a network of advisors to guide professional athletes in making sustainable financial decisions post-retirement [9]. This network of advisors can assist players in managing their investments, budgeting, and long-term financial planning to ensure they have a secure financial future. These advisors can provide valuable guidance on managing investments, creating budgets, and planning for long-term financial security. By working closely with a team of financial experts, athletes can make informed decisions that will set them up for success in the years to come. Additionally, researchers have explored the concept of sport entrepreneurship as a viable career transition option for retired football players, allowing them to leverage their expertise and connections within the sports industry [10]. By rethinking traditional career paths and considering alternative avenues such as sport entrepreneurship, retired football players can enhance their prospects for a successful retirement process and long-term financial

stability. Sport entrepreneurship allows former athletes to leverage their knowledge and connections within the sports industry to create new business opportunities. Whether it be starting their own sports agency, launching a fitness brand, or investing in sports-related ventures, sport entrepreneurship provides a unique pathway for athletes to continue their involvement in the industry while also building a sustainable income stream. By embracing alternative career paths like sport entrepreneurship, retired football players can enhance their chances of a successful retirement process and long-term financial stability. Rather than relying solely on their playing career earnings, athletes can diversify their income sources and tap into new opportunities that align with their interests and skills. This not only provides a sense of fulfillment and purpose post-retirement but also ensures a more secure financial future for themselves and their families.

The importance of making sustainable financial decisions post-retirement cannot be overstated for professional athletes. By establishing a network of advisors, exploring alternative career paths like sport entrepreneurship, and staying proactive in their financial planning, athletes can set themselves up for a successful transition into retirement and a secure financial future. With the right support and strategies in place, retired football players can continue to thrive beyond the field and build a legacy that extends far beyond their playing days.

### **3.2. Early Career Planning, Comprehensive System of Mental Health Resources and Mutual Support**

Carapinha et al. provided a retrospective analysis of the retirement experiences of football players in Portugal. This study utilized qualitative methods to explore how athletes perceive their transition out of sports. The findings indicate that many retired players struggle with feelings of nostalgia and regret, often wishing they had prepared better for life post-retirement. The research suggests that early career planning, including educational opportunities and life skills training, can significantly mitigate the challenges faced during the transition. The authors call for increased awareness among coaches and sports organizations to prioritize these aspects in their programs [11].

Van Ramele et al.'s study underscores the importance of providing adequate support systems, including counseling and community engagement, to help athletes cope with these challenges [1]. The authors advocate for proactive measures that can be implemented during an athlete's career to prepare them for retirement. In order to provide effective psychological support, it is necessary for clubs and sports organizations to establish a comprehensive system of mental health resources, including professional counseling and treatment services. These resources can not only help athletes cope with the psychological distress of retirement but also provide a safe space for them to share experiences and emotions, thereby reducing internal stress. Additionally, it is particularly important to build a community dedicated to serving retired athletes. This community can promote connections and communication among athletes by organizing regular gatherings, workshops, and social events. In this process, athletes can share each other's experiences, express their feelings openly and build a network of mutual support. Such a support network can help them better adapt to their new lifestyle, reduce loneliness, and enhance a sense of belonging and community integration more smoothly into society.

Stamp et al. further discourse by highlighting the relational dimension of identity reconstruction. Their findings suggest that social support networks, including family, friends, and former teammates, are vital for helping retired players navigate their identity transitions. The emphasis on relational aspects also points to the potential for community-based interventions that foster connections and support among retired athletes [12].

### **3.3. Ongoing Medical Care and Rehabilitation Programs**

Regarding physical health care needs are equally essential as well. Retired athletes may suffer from various physical injuries during their careers; therefore, ongoing medical care and rehabilitation programs are crucial for early detection potential health problems that may arise due to the physical effects of long period's intense training competition felt after retirement.

Koch et al. also underscores the importance of injury prevention and management [8]. The prevalence of chronic health conditions highlighted by Carmody et al. suggests that there is an urgent need for medical professionals to develop tailored health management plans for these individuals. The study underscores the need for targeted medical interventions and health monitoring for retired footballers [13]. The provision of professional physical therapy services can help manage chronic diseases, relieve pain, promote physical recovery, and overall health maintenance. Furthermore, encouraging retired players to continue participating in sports they love also plays an important role in maintaining their overall well-being.

#### 4. Conclusion

The article explores the retirement process of professional football players, highlighting the challenges they face as they transition from professional sports to other fields. The research aims to provide valuable insights into the re-employment challenges, financial difficulties, and mental health status encountered by retired players. It systematically analyzes the underlying reasons for these phenomena, offering a theoretical foundation for their psychological adjustment, financial management, and re-employment prospects to support players in adapting more effectively to their new life circumstances.

The discussion focuses on obstacles that retired players may encounter, such as financial literacy and career planning, football-related injuries, and mental health and identity reconstruction issues. The lack of financial education and planning during playing careers can leave athletes vulnerable to financial exploitation and mismanagement, leading to significant financial setbacks in retirement. Injuries sustained during their football careers can limit retired players' ability to pursue alternative career paths, while the loss of identity post-retirement can lead to feelings of depression, anxiety, and isolation.

Recommendations are provided based on recent literature, emphasizing the importance of establishing a network of advisors to guide professional athletes in making sustainable financial decisions post-retirement. Additionally, the concept of sport entrepreneurship is explored as a viable career transition option for retired football players, allowing them to leverage their expertise and connections within the sports industry for long-term financial stability.

While this study offers a valuable perspective on the multi-faceted development of retired football players, it is not without its objective limitations, including inadequate sample data collection and a lack of consideration for athletes from diverse cultural backgrounds. Consequently, future research should delve deeper into how to establish more effective support systems across various countries and regions, tailor personalized intervention strategies for different categories of athletes, and conduct long-term follow-up studies on the evolving quality of life of retired athletes. This would enable the formulation of more targeted recommendations and solutions for the holistic development of retired athletes.

In conclusion, the article underscores the critical need for retired football players to make smart financial decisions and explores alternative career paths to ensure a successful transition into retirement. By addressing these challenges and implementing proactive financial planning strategies, athletes can navigate the complexities of retirement effectively and build a sustainable future beyond their playing careers. Ultimately, the research aims to contribute to the healthy development of the football industry and broader sports industry environments while promoting societal well-being.

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