THE EXPERIENCE OF
WITHDRAWING FROM PROFESSIONAL SPORT

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ABSTRACT

A case study approach was used to generate a description and an understanding of the experience of withdrawal from a career in professional sport. The informants were ten males who had withdrawn from their careers during the years from 1976 to 1987 inclusive. The informants were selected from team and individual sports, involving four key informants from each of hockey and thoroughbred horse racing, plus one subsidiary informant from each of football and racquetball. Narratives rich in description were derived from personal interviews and were validated by the respective informants. These narratives were synthesized into a general story of voluntary withdrawal from sport which reflects both common experience and turning points for varying plots. This general story was validated by the informants as well as an expert authority who has been professionally involved in sport for some thirty-six years.

Withdrawal from sport was a process which frequently began soon after the athletes became engaged in the career. When confronted with a variety of catalytic events which reminded them that the career was short-term, they addressed the potential for withdrawal in varying fashion and typically re-immersed themselves in the career. The potential eventually became more immediate, more urgent but frequently arose in the context of an enlarged perspective on the self and the profession. Thus, they were confronted with both internal and external pressures for change. As they began to
assess their prospects for life after sport, they often became concerned about perceived limitations. They experienced a period of great confusion and indecision which was the most difficult and trying component of the story.

In the middle of the story, the athletes frequently sought direction in their careers, scrutinized the profession more carefully, and uncharacteristically reached out to others for ideas and support. Eventually, a culmination point arose, resulting in a decision to withdraw. The athletes were typically relieved by this decision because they were weary of their confusion and often were weary of the physical and emotional demands of the career. A variety of new career opportunities were available to them. Some were planned and some were unexpected. Chance encounters played an important part in the process of leaving sport.

The story ended with the establishment and acceptance of a post-sport career and lifestyle. In reflecting on the decision to withdraw, the athletes were typically glad that they quit when they did, even though they were reluctant to do so at the time. Their withdrawal allowed them to preserve health, self-respect, and the regard of others. It also allowed them to develop other competencies and to express a more nurturant dimension of themselves as their interests had turned toward their emerging family lives. Most have found the transition to a new career and lifestyle relatively easy, frequently accepting a more modest lifestyle than they had experienced as professional athletes and usually finding some
means to continue their participation in sport in a recreational or leadership capacity.

The study includes several theoretical implications which reinforce the importance of contextual considerations, the significance of chance encounters, and the changing personal meaning of work in life paths. The study supports criticisms of the traditional expectations that a career should follow a rising trajectory, as well as criticisms of the application to this topic of theoretical perspectives borrowed from social gerontology and thanatology. Furthermore, the study finds no evidence to support the contention that this experience is extraordinary and traumatic. Rather, the experience seems to be characteristic of transitions in general. The study supports and offers extensions to Schlossberg's (1984) model of transitions.

The practical implications of the study include the utility of the general story as a model, knowledge base, and alternative perspective for individuals experiencing similar transitions and their helping practitioners. Recommendations for interventions include the use of Schlossberg's content-process model as a framework to assist individuals through a transitional experience such as leaving professional sport.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

General topic
What happens to professional athletes when their competitive careers end? Do they merely continue their careers happily and prosperously, shifting to coaching, managing, broadcasting, or other facets of the sport industry? Or do they lose themselves in a wasteland of alcohol, drugs, and crime, as exemplified by ex-hockey player, Brian Spencer, recently fatally shot. Both patterns seem to be prevalent. Both are generalizations based on the public experience of a few prominent sportsmen.

The popular press often paints a dismal picture of the former athlete's experience. For example, the introduction to a recent *Sports Illustrated* article stated:

Among the sorriest figures in contemporary society is the old athlete adrift in a world outside sports he can neither cope with nor fully comprehend. In another time, the ex-jock might be found recounting past glories in some neighborhood tavern, possibly his own, an all-but-forgotten relic revived from time to time by nostalgic stories in the newspapers. Now, when financial security is virtually assured for all but the wastrel few, the adjustment to life after sports is more psychological than economic (Fimrite, 1989, pp. 110-111).

While such portraits are colourful, the brush strokes are too broad, too sweeping. Perhaps anomalies are presented as the general experience.

The academic literature informs this question but little. In fact, most of the literature reflects the assumption that 'retirement' from competitive sport is a
universal, major, and traumatic life crisis (e.g. Lerch, 1984; Ogilivie & Howe, 1986; Orlick, 1980, 1986; and Rosenberg, 1984), an experience involving deep feelings of loss and disillusionment which is considered analogous to that of the dying person (e.g. Hallinan & Snyder, 1987). In drawing these conclusions, researchers have not adequately investigated the perspective of those who have the experience.

Previous investigations

The types of investigations typically used to study the experience of termination of an athletic career have employed quantitative methodologies with an attendant emphasis on measurement rather than understanding. These survey investigations have perpetuated a set of assumptions about athletes and their careers, having relied primarily on non-representative anecdotes and literary accounts for the descriptions of athletes' observations, beliefs, and feelings (e.g. Bouton, 1971; Kramer, 1969; and Plimpton, 1973). Such descriptions are neither rich nor thorough and, given that they are targeted toward a popular or mass audience, their credibility is questionable.

Nevertheless, the reported trauma seems to involve two major concerns - career development and emotional or psychological adjustment to a major life transition. Accordingly, research has adopted a narrow focus on the perceived problems of social-psychological adjustment to career termination, indicating norms which are not rich in
terms of identifying obstacles and facilitators in this experience. Furthermore, these studies have utilized theoretical perspectives borrowed, perhaps inappropriately, from social gerontology and thanatology. Recent authors have begun to challenge the assumptions underlying these conceptualizations (e.g. Coakley, 1983; Greendorfer & Blinde, 1985) and it has been argued that current popular notions regarding sport retirement may not adequately capture the process of leaving competitive sport (Blinde & Greendorfer, 1985).

Research question

There is a dearth of information which describes the athletes' experiences in a rigorous and systematic manner. This study addresses the general question: 'How can the experience of withdrawal from a career in professional sport be described and understood?' Subsidiary issues involve the identification of facilitators and obstacles which affect the former athlete's efforts to establish a new career. Current research into the post-sport lives of athletes seems caught in the context of explaining an assumed negative experience without paying adequate attention to discovering what that experience may be about.

Rationale

The rationale for this study is that the information gained could contribute to both theoretical and practical knowledge. Theoretically, the research and literature to date indicate that investigations are in the initial stages
of examining contradictions in the study of athletic retirement. These contradictions are expressed in the "sometimes yes and sometimes no" answers to such questions as those listed by Coakley (1983):

Is retirement from competitive sport a problem, or does it provide new opportunities? Do athletes experience trauma during retirement, or do they experience relief? Is the transition out of the role of active player experienced as a withdrawal, a move back, a retreat, a failure? Or is it experienced as a period of growth and development? (p. 2).

Examination of this experience may inform general career development theory because careers are traditionally assumed to develop in a smooth manner, following a rising trajectory (Ochberg, 1988), whereas athletes have the opportunity for a bimodal career curve (Pawlak, 1984), with a predetermined chance for success in two careers. By nature, an athletic career is usually short-term, concluded at a relatively young age, leaving the individual many years of potentially productive time to develop a second career. Given the recent changes in technology and the world-wide economy, many careers are likely to be short-term. Increasing numbers of persons are likely to develop bimodal career patterns with experiences perhaps similar to those of athletes.

Furthermore, this study should contribute to the general literature on transition experiences. The movement from an athletic career to a second career may be a special case of transition experience that serves to validate, invalidate, or qualify various models of transition experiences. As George (1980) has noted, there is a need to examine the meaning
events have for individuals, as well as the specific coping strategies that individuals might use to manage these transitions.

This study also has practical or clinical importance because knowledge about how some people become established in second careers might provide a better position to facilitate that transition for others. Ogilvie and Howe (1986) have noted that while some people handle this experience better than others, most are confronted with existential dilemmas and identity crises in a transition that "is never easy and is occasionally fatal" (p. 373). How some athletes deal with the transition from one career to another may well be informative for athletes and non-athletes facing similar shifts in careers.

The theoretical and practical implications of this study are relevant to the discipline of counselling psychology. Counsellors are among the professionals who are expected to help people manage their social-emotional problems (Egan, 1986). As Ivey (1980) has stated, "Intentionality, the creative generation of new responses to life and living, is considered...as a central goal of all approaches to counseling and therapy" (p. 1). The ideas and information generated by this study may assist athletes and others live more intentionally.

Approach

The approach to this topic is through field research methodology, specifically utilizing a form of case study in


order to gain a detailed description of the experience and a potential enhancement of our understanding. The appropriateness of using case studies arises out of the desire to understand a complex social phenomenon (Yin, 1984), the experience of those people who have withdrawn from careers in professional sport.

Ethnography is a specific type of research which is concerned with "the meaning of actions and events to the people we seek to understand" (Spradley, 1979, p. 5). Unlike other methodologies, ethnography is more interested in gaining understanding rather than prediction of an experience (Agar, 1986). In this work, the primary source of information is personal interviews with former athletes. The information is re-written in the form of life stories. Thus, this work describes the athletes' points of view or perspectives on their experiences of career termination. Given that the literature has largely adopted a set of controversial assumptions, this approach seems to be appropriate to this topic because a major value of ethnography is:

its capacity to depict the activities and perspectives of actors in ways that challenge the dangerously misleading preconceptions that social scientists often bring to research (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, p. 23).

This type of research is of particular value because it brings great 'richness' to the investigation. An individual's self-explanation provides extraordinary access into that person's subjective experience. It represents the image that person holds of him or herself, an image which has
enormous power in shaping self-conduct and self-understanding (Ochberg, 1988). When individuals tell their own life stories, we gain greater understanding of an experience because we learn the individual's personal contexts in which the experience took place. As Cochran (1986) has explained:

Events take on significance from the perspective of the person for whom they matter. One can no more comprehend a person without his or her story than one can comprehend the story without a grasp of the person. There is no one place to start. One enters the circle and builds toward an understanding (p. 15).

Social researchers have been challenged to utilize their work to serve the needs of humankind (Spradley, 1979). This may be accomplished through a critical analysis of the experience. Sullivan (1984) has recommended a negotiation of descriptions with informants and an emancipatory praxis of interpretations and suggestions for change to enhance human agency.

This type of research involves intensive interpersonal work in which it is advantageous if the investigator has clinical experience. The research should result in useful knowledge which may also have a pragmatic effect on people's identities, the intimate connection between what people know and how they live (Rosenwald, 1988). Wiersma (1988) has offered an example of the impact of this new knowledge on the people involved in her investigation:

During the interview process subjects necessarily experienced some profound modification in their ideas of who they were, which, of course, had and will continue to have consequences for their future actions and experiences of themselves (p. 234).

This investigation sought informants who were good
examples of the general experience of withdrawal from a career in professional sport. That is, informants were selected because they appeared to have some diversity of experience and because they could provide clear and distinctive information, representing the typical experience with atypical clarity (Rosenwald, 1988). Their experiences are presented as illustrations that show what may be the case for others in similar circumstances. This type of research can be described as a rigorous endeavour, a disciplined attempt to capture adequately, succinctly, and creatively the lived experience and needs of a certain group of people (Swanson-Kauffman, 1986).

In both topic and methodology, this research appears very timely. Gallmeier (1989), guest editor of the journal Arena Review, has encouraged sport sociologists to use ethnographic techniques rather than the "hyperempirical" quantitative methods which those researchers typically employ. Furthermore, Allison and Meyer (1988) have stated:

in future investigations of sport retirement, we must begin to develop methodological strategies that will allow us to view more completely the inner workings of the sport world...future methods must allow us to identify the perceptions and experiences of athletes as they move through their competitive phases...and perhaps most important, in order to further our understanding of the sport experience our methods must allow the athlete to describe the day-in and day-out routine of the competitive life...By allowing athletes to personalize and reflect on their experiences, both positive and negative, we can come to understand better the objective reality of their sport careers (pp. 220-221).

In adopting a case study approach, specifically ethnographic interviews, this research attempts to address these concerns.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Career Development and Transitions

Turbulent social, economic, and political conditions are characteristic of a world which Collin and Young (1986) have described as one "in which occupational certainties are being eroded" (p. 837). Technological advances are rapidly changing the nature of work and creating the prospect of long-term structural unemployment. Notions of continuous employment within a single company, industry, or even field of skills or knowledge are no longer appropriate if, indeed, they ever were. The traditional expectation that a career should follow a rising trajectory (Ochberg, 1988) to retirement seems inappropriate. In addition, work itself is in question as people wonder about its meaning in their lives (Young, 1984b). According to authors such as Capra (1982), Naisbitt (1982), Toffler (1980), Yankelovich (1981), and others, the rules for career development have changed and there is a need for a different foundation for career guidance, with models which take into account this new and complex reality.

Career development researchers have recently called for greater consideration to be given to the environmental influences on vocational choice and development (Gottfredson, 1982; Law, 1981; Super, 1980; Vondracek & Lerner, 1982; Young, 1984a). The interaction between the individual and the social and cultural environment was acknowledged by early
career theorists but was not developed in an integrated way. Instead, two major perspectives on career development have evolved in near separation. One is psychological, placing emphasis on personal variables, and the other is sociological, examining career development from a larger perspective. Most research work has focussed on the individual, particularly with a scrutiny of personal variables which might influence career development. These two diverse perspectives are an indication of the tension in the area of career development. This tension is a common one that is generally apparent in the social sciences: "the pull between the subjective creative human being acting upon the world and the objectively given social structure constraining him or her" (Young, 1984a, p. 153).

Collin and Young (1986) have offered five conclusions in an analysis of the career literature. First, most of the career literature lacks rigorous definition and clarification of its basic concepts, such as 'career', 'development', and 'maturation'. Second, the design of research in this area has certain limitations, such as samples which are predominantly middle-class males. Third, career theory has focussed on individual, rather than contextual factors. Four, career literature is concerned primarily with the objective career, the observed progress of the individual rather than the subjective career, the individual actor's perspective, such that "the perceptions, feelings, and values of the individuals concerned, and the relationship between
job and the rest of life, are ignored" (p. 841). Last, career theories have been derived from the orthodox, positivist view of the social sciences, whereby human behaviour is considered determined by measurable factors or influences.

Neither personal nor situational influences operate as independent shapers of the course of human lives (Bandura, 1982). Thinking about careers requires a multi-disciplinary consideration of ideas drawn from such social sciences as economics, psychology, sociology, and their related sub-disciplines. In addition, Collin and Young (1986) have noted a need to move toward a contextual approach which considers the situational features with which the individual interacts, plus the individual's subjective experience, the explanation the individual applies to the experience.

Historically, the work role appears to have been a critical, meaningful, and central life activity in Western society, taking up a large part of workers' time and energy, providing a major source of income, and serving as the chief source of contact with society at large. Cross-culturally, work also has significance beyond economic compensation, although individual cultures vary in the extent of valuing work. In contemporary Western society the importance of work may, in fact, be declining and there is some doubt as to the influence of the work role on self-concept or self-identity (Kasl, 1979). Several studies of the unemployed have noted that financial difficulties, rather than the absence of work,
are the more powerful influences affecting well-being (e.g. Kasl, 1979; Payne & Hartley, 1987). What may be observed here is a growing distinction between two types of work, paid and unpaid. Following Hartley (1980), there is a conceptual difference between employment, an exchange relationship involving payment for work, and work as an activity which may be performed either within or without an employment relationship. The study of careers will be enhanced by understanding the meaning individuals find in certain types of employment.

Maslow (1968) has described human needs in a hierarchy. Borgen and Amundson (1984) found that unemployed people in their study had no idea that work had allowed them to fulfill those needs until they lost the opportunity to work. As Payne and Jones (1987b) discovered, unemployment seems to make most aspects of employment more important to the displaced worker. The loss of the psychological and material benefits of paid employment seems to constitute a primary set of causal processes which account for the reported decrements in psychological well-being experienced by some unemployed people.

There is considerable conceptual overlap amongst the theoretical positions of Havighurst and Friedmann (1954), Jahoda (1982), Kelvin (1981), and Warr (1984) regarding the meaning of work. Apart from financial resources, these may be summarized by the notion that work contributes to the development and well-being of the individual in three ways:
by providing a context for belonging and expanding one's interpersonal relationships, by contributing to the formation and development of a sense of identity and meaning, and by providing a structure for one's time and activities. These work derived benefits correspond to what Toffler (1980) posits to be three basic human needs: community, meaning, and structure.

Despite the fact that work does not have the same meaning for all individuals, varying according to personal preference and interpretation, Havighurst and Friedmann (1954) have argued that individuals may find any and all of the above elements in their work. In retirement, individuals are considered to experience a sense of loss to the degree that these elements are no longer available to them. Perceptions of loss are personal and are likely to be influenced by the particular meaning individuals attach to their experiences of career termination. Thus, the study of careers will be enhanced by understanding the meaning individuals find in both a particular type of employment and the transition of disengagement from that employment.

For many people, the complexities of modern society have resulted in a "rapid acceleration in the number of transitions encountered in all aspects of living" (Hopson, 1981, p. 36). The termination of a career is one of the many transitions people may experience in their lives. Stress frequently accompanies change, yet, even very stressful transitions in life, shifts in status and role, need not lead
inevitably to negative consequences. Although these transitions often involve losses that require adaptation, that adaptation can bring challenge, freedom, and opportunity (George, 1980). Transitional experiences, then, are extremely complex, simultaneously carrying "the seeds of our yesterdays, hopes and fears of our futures, the pressing sensations of the present which is our confirmation of being alive" (Hopson, 1981, p. 39).

Thinking about transitions is closely allied with thinking about human development. Until recently, researchers have considered that qualitative change in human development ends with the passage of adolescence (Troll, 1981), that adulthood represents stability and certainty. These ideas were conceived in times less complex than today and it is now widely recognized that adulthood is marked by intense growth and change (Schlossberg, 1984).

While theorists agree that adults continuously experience change, they hold differing perspectives on adult development. Accordingly, the diverse models which attempt to explain the causes and consequences of change in adult life hold varying positions on such issues as: the degree to which change originates in the individual or the environment, the extent to which change is linked to age, and the specificity of conditions under which change is and is not experienced as a crisis (George, 1982). In addition, these models sometimes hold diametrically opposed positions on issues of predictability and variability in the life course.
(Schlossberg, 1984). For example, Levinson (1978) has proposed four-year sequential intervals of experience and Neugarten (1976, 1979) has emphasized variability according to gender and age, with a particular note that as lives grow older, they grow different from each other.

The criticisms of career work summarized by Collin and Young (1986) are equally applicable to work on human development and transition experiences. For example, the design of research has limitations which particularly include small, non-representative samples and cross-sectional studies rather than longitudinal studies. Despite noting the interaction between the individual and a wide array of environmental influences, transition theory has focused on individual rather than contextual factors. Much of the transition literature has been concerned primarily with the objective adjustment to change rather than the individual actor's perspective on that experience. And work on transition theory has focused on measurable factors in an effort to determine causal influences. Accordingly, researchers such as Schlossberg (1981a) have noted that studying transitions requires the simultaneous analysis of a wide variety of individual characteristics and external occurrences.

Although there are a myriad of potentially influential factors involved in transitional experiences, those pertaining to personal resources, social support, social status, and socialization experiences have been emphasized
(George, 1982). The interaction between the actor and these diverse factors is barely acknowledged. The result, despite brief cautionary notes about the prospect of individual differences in experience, has been the development of phase and stage theories and models "which can begin as analytic help-mates and, all too often end up as iron plated pigeonholes into which human experience must somehow be made to fit" (Hopson, 1981, p. 37).

Individuals differ in their experience of transitions. The same event can involve both positive and negative aspects for an individual and can have different meanings for different individuals. Transitional experiences are highly complex and must be understood through the perspective of both the individual contexts in which those transitions take place and the life history of the individual experiencing the transition. Because the effects of a transition are not solely determined by either personal characteristics or factors external to the individual, it is important to maintain a perspective of the individual responding to and acting on the environment, thereby shaping the course of one's own life. As George (1980) has noted: "We live in a capricious environment, but it is an environment on which we can exert influence" (p. 131). However, there has been little research consideration of the perspective of the individual who has experienced a transition.

The significance of personal perspectives has been partially addressed. For example, Hopson (1981) has noted
that his earlier model (Hopson & Adams, 1977) might benefit from the addition of assessments of the individual's perception of change (Schlossberg, 1981a) and has revised the model to include the differentiation between perceived positive and negative experiences. Brammer and Abrego (1981a) have argued that coping with change involves a complex, reciprocal interaction between the individual and the environment. One of the factors considered to be involved in coping is the perceived meaning the experience has for the individual. However, existing models have not fully explored the meaning individuals find in their experiences.

Schlossberg (1984) has proposed a model which strives to account for diversity in the experience of transitions. The model is dynamic, incorporating other perspectives. Rather than being mutually exclusive, these perspectives are considered to overlap, interact, and build upon one another. Imbedded in this model is the acknowledgement that certain themes in life appear to be universal, despite the fact that individuals are highly variable in their development, encounter a diversity of experiences, and become increasingly differentiated as they grow older. An extension of the work of Erikson (1950) has led to the inclusion of the six themes of identity, intimacy and/or attachment, autonomy and satisfaction, generativity, competency, and belonging. These themes are not sequential, tending to recur and overlap without regularity. The recurrence of these internal themes
contributes to the experience of transitions throughout adulthood and influences the meaning of those experiences.

Schlossberg's model, presented here as Appendix A, has three components. The first of these considers the transition event in terms of its type, context, and impact. The types of transitions are described as anticipated, unanticipated, chronic hassle, and non-event. The context of the transition involves the relationship of the person to the transition and the setting in which the transition occurs. The impact of the transition on the individual's life consists of the degree of disruption in relationships, routines, assumptions, and roles.

A second component of the model considers the transition as a process, the various ways an individual appraises and reacts to the situation over time. Schlossberg has underscored the significance of the old saying that "It never rains but it pours." People in the midst of one transition frequently experience other transitions, thereby increasing the complexity of the experience and making coping especially difficult. Adults are forever solving their problems only to find that the solutions require re-examination. Thus, the transition process includes phases of assimilation and continuous appraisal which are in interaction with the transition event and the third component, the individual's various coping resources.

An individual's coping resources, the balance of present and potential assets and liabilities, are considered to
include variables which characterize the transition, the individual, and the environment. Because human life appears so complex, it is likely that other potentially influential variables could be added to this model with the benefit of further research. For example, Schlossberg has acknowledged that the effects of an individual's racial and ethnic background, mediated by such factors as value orientation and cultural norms, should not be underestimated. Likewise, it is probable that research regarding the lifestyles of certain groups of individuals, such as professional athletes, may contribute useful information about the influence of an individual's social world upon the experience of transitions.

From Schlossberg's perspective, then, a career transition from professional athletics to another endeavour will vary according to the interaction of various characteristics of the event, the process, and the individual's coping resources. For example, an individual's experience might be unanticipated, very meaningful, and highly disruptive in terms of life routines and assumptions about self and the world. The individual's initial reaction might be one of shock, followed by eventual acceptance over time as other events are added to the experience. And the individual's coping resources might include convenient timing of the event, coinciding with youth and good health, as well as strong social support. In short, Schlossberg's model specifies a number of variables that are thought to account for diversity of experience in transitions such as leaving a
Termination of an athletic career

What happens to athletes when their competitive careers are over? Both academic and popular literature are replete with examples of traumatic experiences associated with retirement from sport. Certain authors, perhaps less than responsibly, have promoted the notion that this trauma is a universal experience of athletes, regardless of the level of competition in which they have been involved and regardless of the circumstances or contexts in which retirement takes place. These claims have been made despite the fact that there is little research evidence to support them.

Disengagement from a sport role has been described frequently as a traumatic experience involving deep feelings of loss and disillusionment (Blinde & Greendorfer, 1985). This trauma seems to involve two major concerns - career development and emotional or psychological adjustment to a major life transition. Sport psychologist Dr. Cal Botterill has considered the search for post-retirement employment to be the most common problem of former athletes (Van Oosten, 1985). In regard to psychological adjustment, management consultant Mike Corey, of Professional Athletes Career Enterprises (PACE) Incorporated, has provided a comment that seems representative of the kind of trauma retired athletes are considered to experience: "An athlete's pride is taken away after retirement. Athletes develop great frustrations.
There are too many horror stories; drugs, alcohol, marital breakups" (Stark, 1985, p. 57). Griffiths (1983) has provided an explanation of these problems:

The biggest quandry for athletes when they retire is that they can't simply be shoehorned into a non-sport life. Picking up where they left off isn't possible because competition has made them different from other people. The athlete feels superior because people make him think he is. Athletes only need to concentrate on their sport and it is very difficult to get used to directing their single mindedness into the business of every day life. When an athlete is no longer competing the illusion of superiority evaporates and may even be replaced by a strong sense of inferiority (p. 9).

A critical review of the literature on this topic suggests that these popular understandings of the experiences of former athletes are distorted. Several issues contribute to this distortion: selective attention to problematic experiences, a variety of assumptions about athletes, adoption of inappropriate theoretical perspectives, reliance on anecdotal reports, focus on the experience of career change as a 'problem' rather than a 'process', over-emphasis on social-psychological adjustment, and a variety of research design problems. These issues are discussed briefly below.

**Selective attention to problematic experiences**

Discussions about former athletes usually emphasize retirement as a negative event (e.g. Ball, 1976; Hallinan & Snyder, 1987; Hill & Lowe, 1974; McPherson, 1980; Mihovilovic, 1968; Ogilvie & Howe, 1986; Orlick, 1980, 1986; Rosenberg, 1980a, 1980b, 1981a, 1981b). Coakley (1983) has noted that retired athletes are described as "unwilling victims of circumstances causing them trauma,
identity crises, loss of economic status, and the loss of meaningful social support from friends and fans" (p.2). However, while the literature provides isolated examples of various difficulties experienced by certain individuals during the termination of their athletic careers, "it is not known to what extent if any these outcomes or examples represent normative behavior" (McPherson, 1984, p. 217).

Several research efforts have adopted vague definitions or descriptors of 'difficulties' which seem to lack substance. For example, one of the earliest and often cited studies of this experience is that of Mihovilovic (1968) in which 44 former Yugoslavian soccer players reported changes in such behaviour as smoking, drinking, weight monitoring, and socializing. These responses were translated into the conclusion that retirement from sport was a negative experience. In another often cited study, Svoboda and Vanek (1983) surveyed 163 former 'superior' Czechoslovakian athletes and concluded that retirement stress exists for some athletes. Although no measurements were apparent, these authors speculated on such supposed symptoms of maladaptation as hypertension, cardiovascular problems, intrusive and repetitive thoughts, frustrations and aggression, apathy, drug and alcohol use, neurosis, psychosis, suicidal states, psychosomatic disorders, suspicion, jealousy, and mistrust. In addition, both research reports inferred that aging athletes' renewed efforts to remain competitive were symptoms of trauma.
More recently, Ogilvie and Howe (1986) have described the termination experience as "a major life crisis for which the athlete is not prepared" (p.365). Athletes are assumed to experience existential dilemmas and identity crises in a transition which "is never easy and is occasionally fatal" (p.373). The authors have considered the experience to be marked by a series of losses: activity, discipline, way of life, identity, social recognition, and income. These losses affect not only the athlete but the athlete's family, particularly the spouse and children, as well as the athlete's parents. Ogilvie and Howe have claimed that many marriages do not survive this crisis.

The discussion of the difficulties associated with the termination of an athletic career is similar to those of the negative reactions which have been found to be associated with the experience of unemployment. These reactions include a sense of inadequacy, depression, lowered self-esteem, increased stress, social isolation, an increased tendency toward minor psychiatric morbidity, a higher incidence of physical illness, erratic mood shifts, and a progressive loss of optimism about finding employment (Amundson & Borgen, 1987; Borgen & Amundson, 1984, 1985, 1987; Brenner, 1973; Cohn, 1978; Feather & Barber, 1983; Gurney, 1980a, 1980b; Hartley, 1980; Hill, 1977; Jahoda, 1982; Kasl, Gore, & Cobb, 1975; Liem & Rayman, 1982; Perfetti & Bingham, 1983; Shaw, 1979; Shelton, 1985; Sinfield, 1981; Stokes, 1983; Stokes & Cochrane, 1984;
Tiggemann & Winefield, 1984; Warr, 1983; Warr, Jackson, & Banks, 1982). In addition to these reactions, increases in parasuicides (Platt & Kreitman, 1984), mortality rates, suicides, imprisonments, mental illness, abuse, and general family discord have been associated with rising rates of unemployment (Shelton, 1985).

A major weakness of research into these psychological costs of unemployment involves the question of causality (e.g. Furnham, 1984; Kasl, 1979; Stokes, 1983; Stokes & Cochrane, 1984; Winefield & Tiggemann, 1985). Research is often unclear as to whether the investigation is being made of the antecedents or the consequences of job loss. Thus, investigations into the impact of being without work may be plagued by such complexities as pre-existing personal conditions, situational or societal conditions, and problems of measurement and comparison groups. Furthermore, as Payne and Hartley (1987) point out, a fundamental problem with much of the literature on the experience of unemployment is that it fails to provide an adequate theoretical framework, resulting in literature which is predominantly descriptive and fragmented. Perhaps this is because the experience is extremely complex, involving an intertwining of such factors as those relating to work, economic security, basic human needs (Shelton, 1985), societal and historical events (Feather & O'Brien, 1986a), and other situational or contextual issues (Kessler, House, & Turner, 1987).

The complexities of this experience become clear when we
investigate anomalies. While damaging reactions to unemployment are common, not all people who lose their jobs experience negative effects (Merriam, 1987). Some studies have found fewer negative effects associated with unemployment than with employment. For example, Fryer and Payne (1984) studied the impact of unemployment on a select group of men who were proactive in their coping behaviour. For these individuals, the overall pattern of unemployment was, on balance, an improvement of their life experience, although containing some negative elements. Gore (1978) found that those people who were able to find alternate ways to satisfy their work related needs suffered less psychological ill-effects while unemployed. Similarly, Amundson and Borgen (1987) found that some people were able to find ways to cope, enduring:

a painful experience more successfully than others by gaining access to personal and institutional support, maintaining a sense of personal power and control, and engaging in meaningful activities connected with the goal of employment (p. 104).

The range of the experience of termination of an athletic career has been characterized by Loy, McPherson, and Kenyon (1978):

The reaction or adjustment to this state can range from satisfaction, if the process is voluntary or planned for in advance, to traumatic psychological life-style adjustment problems, if the process is involuntary (p. 245).

However, the discrimination between voluntary and involuntary termination seems far too simplistic to adequately understand individual reactions. As Coakley (1983) has pointed out, in
describing competitive sport the literature emphasizes the rigidity of sport organization, exploitation of athletes, and threats to athletes' autonomy and personal well-being. Athletes are noted to complain about their training regimes, the duration of their competitive seasons, and the lack of control over their own lives. It would seem reasonable to conclude that some athletes might welcome and be relieved by release from such aversive circumstances, even if termination was involuntary. For example, Orlick (1986) described a study which found that most of the surveyed athletes reported an increase in their sense of personal control following retirement and Werthner and Orlick (1983) noted that some athletes were happy to see the tedious, time-consuming training end. Allison and Meyer (1988) found that 50% of their respondents reported relief as their first psychological/emotional response to retirement. Thus, the fact that some athletes might experience positive reactions to their termination is an additional complexity in the experience.

Conspicuously absent in the literature on the termination of athletic careers are investigations involving those former athletes who experienced either little or no difficulties or who simply accepted their career termination as another challenge. For example, recently retired Olympic gold-medalist and rythmic gymnast, Lori Fung, has described her circumstances as follows:

I'm 25 years old, but I'm starting out at about age 15. I've got to start living my life as a
15-year-old. I missed everything normal from that point on in my life. I didn’t go roller skating with my friends. There’s a lot of things I missed. But now is my chance to catch up (emphasis added)...I plan to do whatever I’ll do with the same kind of attitude, the same kind of discipline (as she has demonstrated). I’m not going to live off my gymnastics career. I’m going to start a new one (McMartin, 1988, p. 81).

It would appear that while Fung is well aware of the need to make some dramatic changes in her life, career termination is not necessarily a negative or traumatic experience. How former athletes like Fung have addressed these changes has yet to be investigated.

Assumptions about athletes

Some authors have conveyed the assumption of near universal trauma following the termination of a sport career, regardless of the level of competition. The definition of this "trauma" is vague. For example, Ogilvie and Howe (1986) have stated that the "emotional and psychological responses to this career crisis are nearly universal, and they are much like those experienced with any major loss" (p. 368). Ogilvie and Howe also refer to a withdrawal phenomenon, "the effect of declining motor activity as a form of sensory deprivation", which they consider "an almost universal complaint among athletes who were terminated before they were psychologically ready" (p.374). Andrews (1981) has claimed that the "elite athlete never seems to be able to adjust well to withdrawal from his active occupational role" (p.61). Furthermore, Stark (1985) has cited Corey in offering a so-called classic profile of the professional athlete:
After being cut from the team his first reaction is shock. He takes off time and relaxes for awhile, then he calls up old friends, but nothing happens. He gets desperate and takes any job, which he soon quits. He ends up going from job to job (p. 57).

There are two major errors in this assumption of near universal trauma. One is that all athletes' experiences are the same. The other is that these traumatic experiences are common to all levels of competition. Although research is scarce, studies of former interscholastic and intercollegiate athletes (Dubois, 1980; Greendorfer & Blinde, 1985; Sack & Thiel, 1979; Sands, 1978; Snyder & Baber, 1979) clearly refute the notion that withdrawal from competitive sport is typically a traumatic and identity-shaking process. Rather, for these people it is "simply seen as a part of other normal developments such as leaving high school, entering college or the labor force, and settling down into new relationships associated with family and career" (Coakley, 1983, p. 3). As Greendorfer and Blinde (1985) have noted, former athletes may not totally withdraw from sport but change their level and degree of competition, along with shifting priorities of interests, in a process which appears more gradual or transitional than other literature suggests.

There has also been very little research in regard to amateur athletes, although there have been a number of commentaries decrying the difficulties in finding employment and feelings of loss (e.g. Botterill, 1983; Broom, 1983; Dickie, 1984; Jollimore, 1986; Orlick, 1980, 1986; Van Oosten, 1985; and Werthner & Orlick, 1983). However, it may
may be that amateur athletes are able to cope quite well with the personal adjustments accompanying termination of a competitive career. Curtis and Ennis (1988) found no evidence of lasting negative consequences of disengagement among former Canadian Junior hockey players. Svoboda and Vanek (1983) noted that "some athletes go through the period of retirement without difficulties, with only understandable feelings of nostalgia" (p. 166). Some athletes may not only experience few difficulties but may enjoy considerable success in their post competitive lives (Coakley, 1983). For example, a study of 240 Polish Olympic athletes concluded that retirement was "a period of productive activity" (Pawlak, 1984, p.175).

Nevertheless, generalizations about the experiences of amateur athletes are less easy to draw than those about interscholastic or intercollegiate athletes. In the latter case, retirement is usually associated with other transitions in a young person's life but the amateur population is much more diverse in terms of age, experience, and financial support. Additional research in this area is required.

There is more research about former professional athletes than any others but there is still considerable confusion about the dynamics of the retirement process. One reason for this confusion may be that accumulated individual experiences of adjustment difficulties are mistakenly presented as the norm. These experiences may be more unique than common because the research, although fraught with
problems of its own, does not support the notion of universal trauma. This research has involved former athletes drawn from the sports of baseball (Arviko, 1976; Bookbinder, 1955; Haerle, 1975; Lerch, 1981; Rosenberg, 1981a), boxing (Weinberg & Arond, 1952; Hare, 1971), football (Reynolds, 1981); hockey (Roy, 1974; Smith, 1987, Smith & Diamond, 1976; Wilcox, 1986), soccer (Houlston, 1984), and tennis (Allison & Meyer, 1988).

The strongest evidence of retirement trauma is found in the two studies of professional boxers. Weinberg and Arond (1952) examined the post-retirement careers of 95 ex-champions and leading contenders and found that retirement was followed by a dramatic decline in income and prestige and by emotional problems derived from efforts to find employment. However, most of the problems appeared to be linked to injuries, carefree spending habits initiated during their competitive careers, and heavy past dependence on managers. Coakley (1983) cited Hare's (1971) study which examined other factors in the retirement experience of boxers, their minority status and the low socioeconomic status of their families, both of which were found to be significant. These ex-boxers experienced difficulty in adjusting to retirement because they encountered discrimination in the job market and because their low income families lacked the resources to provide them with material support during retirement. Thus, it may be argued that the trauma experienced by these former boxers was less a function
of retirement from competition than a function of the social conditions in which they lived.

Embedded in the literature is anecdotal evidence of individual distress, difficulties in attaining and maintaining second careers, and a lack of preparation for the inevitability of retirement. However, it is likely that there are other elements in this experience. As Coakley (1983) has pointed out, it is:

naive to use just this negative information and conclude that former professional athletes in general are overwhelmed by retirement-induced stress and are unable to cope constructively with the adjustments required by moving out of active sport involvement (p. 6).

While there are isolated examples of traumatic problems associated with retirement from sport, the experience by itself "is not the major cause of those problems" (p.1). There are numerous other factors involved in this transitional experience. Furthermore, McPherson (1984) has noted a counter side to this issue:

A similar number of cases could likely be cited for those who attain higher status positions than would be expected of former professional athletes (e.g. become successful doctors, lawyers, politicians, or businessmen (p. 217).

Rather than experiencing trauma, it is probable that many former athletes excel in their post-sport careers.

Although there has been little research on the process of leaving sport (Blinde & Greendorfer, 1985), there is evidence which refutes the notion of universality of trauma. In fact, research is now indicating not only that disengagement from a career in sport is not traumatic
(Allison & Meyer, 1988) but that there are no lasting negative consequences of the experience (Curtis & Ennis, 1988).

Another misleading assumption found in the literature is that of athletes' continuous aspiration or desire for continued competition. It is assumed that all athletes aspire to attain and maintain the highest possible level of competition. Faced with diminishing opportunities to compete, "each and every athlete must be prepared for the consequences of functioning in a Darwinian sports world" (Ogilvie & Howe, 1986, p. 366). For example, a recent cover story in Time (Gup, 1989) noted that while there are nearly 20,000 college basketball players in the United States, only 40 will make the professional league. Such comparisons are dramatic and colourful. They are also misleading. Neglected in such statements is the probability that the vast majority of participants may not only be aware of the unlikelihood of a professional career, but may also have other aspirations or interests which would preclude such a career even if they had the required skills and talent.

Although some athletes may have unrealistic expectations of their careers, there is no evidence to show that such expectations are problematic. Blann and Zaichkowsky (1986) found that 73% of their respondents planned to play professional hockey for 5 or more years, despite the fact that the average hockey career lasts 4.8 years. It may be argued that such expectations are simply reflections of
healthy optimism.

Termination of an athletic career is considered to be largely an involuntary process, a result of de-selection, age, or injury (Ogilvie & Howe, 1986). Even voluntary retirement is often seen as partly forced because "faced with certain retirement, one will rationalize it into a self-selected option" (Rosenberg, 1984, p. 252-3). Thus, even when retirement is chosen by the individual it is usually seen as the result of the athlete's inability to perform rather than his diverging interests.

The literature seems to find fault, to consider pathological, an athlete's attempt to compete in post-prime years. McPherson (1980) has noted that because retirement is often involuntary, an imposition on the players, "there is a conscious attempt to extend the playing career as long as possible" (p. 136). The implication is that at some stage players should simply surrender the competitive qualities which have been a factor in their athletic success. Rosenberg (1980a) has made this point in his comparison of athletes and businessmen:

The businessman often retires at or near the peak of his earning power. It's a rare athlete, however, who quits while he's ahead. Many athletes hang on too long, either because of their love of the game (which outlasts their major-league abilities) or their lack of alternatives (p. 20).

Nevertheless, the decision to continue a career may be made for many reasons which, in fact, can lead to a satisfying choice for individuals. An example may be drawn from a player's remark in Faulkner (1975):
The National League is not the only league to play in. Believe me, I've given it a good shot but the going up and down like a yo yo, the moving of the family, and all that. We've paid the price, but it's a good life here. Even right here (in the minors) where else can you make this kind of money and meet the people you do? I enjoy my friends here, I have no complaints because not everyone gets the chance to have the life we've had. I want to play a few more years, and like I say, it's been good to us (p. 545).

Rather than appreciating the many factors involved in a player's career decision, McPherson (1980) has suggested that many athletes never leave their sport, seeking insecure and lesser status roles in the organization because "faced with an identity crisis which often leads to maladjustment in the nonsport culture of mainstream society, they retreat to safety within the sport subculture" (p. 132). Furthermore, McPherson has said that an athlete attempts to maintain some form of involvement with sport "in order to satisfy an ego which has been fed by adulation from the masses" (p. 136). Perhaps this is too sweeping a generalization because there may be many reasons an individual may wish to continue association with sport. One reason may be simply to make a contribution at another level, which can hardly be considered symptomatic of an identity crisis or trauma.

Whenever an athletic career is terminated, the literature tends to assume that it represents failure. Although Andrews (1981) has suggested that the athlete's own perception of failure may be determined by the voluntary or involuntary nature of his withdrawal, any retirement seems to indicate that the athlete just cannot handle the competition any longer. Hill and Lowe (1974) have stated:
Eventually, the athlete has to accept that the decline in his physical skills and stamina is due to the onset of aging...(He) is obliged to grow old before his time...although in the prime of his life, he carries the stigma of an old man in the eyes of the younger players (p. 20).

Drawing on the anecdotal reports of a few selected individuals, Ball (1976) has described two types of group reactions to the failing individual: 'degredation', a dramatic and public separation of the individual from the group, and 'cooling out', a routinization and private, subjective estrangement of the individual. The former process may be considered typical of outright dismissal, particularly prevalent in football where there are no minor leagues to which players may be demoted. The latter may be considered typical of such sports as baseball or hockey where the individual may be demoted to a lower league. In the case of hockey, Smith and Diamond (1976) considered this type of failure to be endemic because most players terminated their careers in the minor leagues. And yet, Faulkner (1975) has noted that journeymen players revise their personal expectations and consider their careers in the minor leagues as relative success because they can attain a fair measure of recognition and enjoy significant material rewards. It is likely that the negative feelings some individuals experience may be more the result of a dehumanizing social process than the actual winding down or termination of the athletic career.

A second form of assumed failure is the concern for former athletes' downward social mobility (e.g. Houlston,
McPherson (1980) has claimed that many former athletes go through more than one occupation in the search for a meaningful career and are often employed in low status white collar or blue collar positions. When a former athlete is unable to maintain the income and life-style of his competitive days, he is considered to have failed, just as in the example cited by Rosenberg (1981a) of Henry Carr, a 1964 Olympic gold medalist and former professional football player who was found working as a janitor. The literature does not address factors other than sport which might contribute to an individual's career path. For instance, as Coakley (1983) has noted:

> It may be that retired black boxers have no more problems than those experienced by other 30-year-old black males who grew up on the streets of large inner cities, received little education, and had few resources to assist them in career development or job training (p. 8).

The simple fact that former athletes find second careers with lower salaries and less prestige than they found in sport should not define them as failures or victims of retirement. Just because ex-athletes become similar to those they resembled when their sport careers began does not necessarily signal trauma, identity crises, or serious adjustment problems (p. 10).

The uniqueness of an athlete's life is assumed to lead to later trauma. The athlete's early lifestyle often includes a heavy training and competitive regime which may restrict opportunities for the patterns of personal growth and development experienced by age peers, as previously noted in Fung's comment (McMartin, 1988). According to McPherson
future professional athletes begin to base their self esteem on athletic performance...their lifestyle for most of their first twenty to thirty years has been restricted almost exclusively to sport and interaction within that social world (p. 128).

In addition, the occupational lifestyle may include high wages, lavish fringe benefits, public adulation (Smith & Diamond, 1976), considerable travel (Andrews, 1981), uncertainty, age-grading, unusual working hours, and portability from franchise to franchise (e.g. McPherson, 1980). Furthermore, Hill and Lowe (1974) have claimed that retirement from this unique lifestyle could be the first major stress point encountered by the athlete because he:

is shielded by his club from the anxieties which accompany leaving the protective climate of the home and school in order to assume the responsibilities of family life and an occupation. Thus the professional athlete, like the soldier, has day to day responsibilities taken away from him in order to ensure a more efficient performance of his 'job'. The athlete is viewed as a thoroughbred who must constantly be cosseted and never troubled by the mundane matters which are the lot of the typical working man (p. 8).

Without comparisons with the experiences of non-athletes, the assumption that this 'unique' lifestyle automatically creates problems is unwarranted (Blinde & Greendorfer, 1985). This point is particularly apparent given that athletes are considered to have developed qualities that are valuable in other life pursuits: discipline and dedication, self-confidence, self-awareness, self-respect, competitiveness, determination to succeed, pride, and ability to work on a team (Orlick, 1986; Stark,
Apart from promoting the idea that athletes are different from non-athletes, the literature has also promoted the notion that athletes are quite similar to one another (Coakley, 1983). Ogilvie and Howe (1986) have claimed that through commitment to sport, the athlete lacks the opportunity to develop a rounded, full personality or to explore other options and aptitudes, resulting in "a one-dimensional personality structure" (p. 380). Retirement from sport is usually discussed from the perspective of perceived unidimensional persons struggling with the loss of their roles and identities. However, a different perspective may be gained if athletes are considered as complex individuals with diverse backgrounds, interests, relationships, and expectations. As Coakley (1983) has noted,

former athletes probably do not have as much in common with one another as they do with non-athletes of the same gender, race, age, educational level, and socioeconomic background (p. 9).

The literature tends to assume a future with limited opportunities for the former athlete. Athletes are considered to be handicapped by having failed to plan for their retirement and by not having an education or suitable training for a second career (McPherson, 1980). While a recent survey of active hockey players has supported the contention that many athletes do not plan for a subsequent career (Blann & Zaichkowsky, 1986), whether or not lack of planning becomes a handicap for these athletes remains to be seen.
Nevertheless, athletes are assumed to have difficulties in establishing satisfactory second careers. For example, Houlston (1984) concluded that continuation within the soccer organization was the only alternative in terms of the maximum utilization of a professional player's skills. Ogilvie and Howe (1986) have painted a particularly bleak future because "no activity can ever be experienced as intensively satisfying, fulfilling, and rewarding as their involvement in sports" (p. 371). Such assumptions may be questioned by the continued successful lives of those former Olympians studied by Pawlak (1984), and Coakley's (1983) observation that some sports may provide opportunities for individuals to develop non-sport social contacts, activities, interests, and careers. Moreover, as has been noted above, sport encourages the development of qualities which are potentially transferable to other careers.

Athletes are assumed to be drawn from a low socio-economic background. Hill and Lowe (1974) have stated that: "Typically the athlete has experienced economic insecurity in his childhood and he views a career in professional sport as the best way to improve his station in life" (p. 8). Houlston (1984) has observed that professional soccer provided short-term social mobility for active players and Rosenberg (1980a) has noted that sport has provided many athletes extremely rapid upward social mobility. This generalization appears far too sweeping because some sports, such as golf and tennis, draw athletes from upper class
backgrounds (Coakley, 1983). Nevertheless, the experience of social mobility can hardly be considered unique to athletes, nor should it be concluded that it makes athletes "susceptible to personal disorganization" (Rosenberg, 1980a, p. 21).

Along with a low socio-economic background, retired athletes are assumed to have overwhelming financial difficulties. Ogilvie and Howe (1986) have claimed that:

Terminated professional athletes and their families must also deal with new economic realities...it is the rare athlete who is able to maintain the same life-style that he or she enjoyed as a professional. Therefore, most (emphasis added) athletes become overwhelmed as the financial pressures compound the interpersonal problems precipitated by their termination (p. 372).

While the research on retired boxers (Weinberg & Arond, 1952; Hare, 1971) has provided some supportive evidence for this claim, again, the generalization appears far too sweeping.

The experience of career termination is assumed to be one of loss and deprivation. Athletes are assumed to suffer the loss of activity, identity, social recognition and attention, and self-respect (Ogilvie & Howe, 1986; McPherson, 1980). Retirement has been considered to mark "the first time in the athlete's life when he is deprived of the satisfactions which sport has always given him" (Hill & Lowe, 1974, p. 6). Rosenberg (1984) has linked this assumption with that of unique and negative experience:

Upon retirement, even in the best scenario, the athlete is deprived for the first time of the rewards his or her sport has showered on him or her since childhood. For the first time he or she is fully saddled with such adult responsibilities as managing
finances, arranging travel, or doing laundry. He or she is now likely to perceive him or herself a decade or so behind non-sport age peers in career development. Thus, regardless of economic status, retirement is a status transition of considerable social and psychological stress for the athlete (p. 246).

While a sense of loss has been considered to be normal upon retirement from sport (Orlick, 1986), the same might also be said about the completion of any significant activity, such as a doctoral dissertation, without the event necessarily resulting in trauma.

The final apparent assumption in the literature is that athletic retirement is similar to occupational retirement, whereby people are often forced by age to withdraw from their careers. Lerch (1981) has noted that athletes rarely retire in this economic sense but, nevertheless, has considered that the 'stepping down' from an athletic career, a career change, is potentially synonymous with retirement. Ball (1976) has perceived that athletes' experiences of adjustment difficulties, such as loss of status, downward mobility, identity crisis, and loss of sense of purpose, are similar to those said to be experienced by regular labour force retirees. However, 'retirement' is an inappropriate term to use in the sport role (Blinde & Greendorfer, 1985) because the experience is more closely allied to the concept of mid-life career change than to the process of old age retirement (Reynolds, 1981). Furthermore, the expectation of general retirement adjustment difficulties is also inappropriate because "for the most part, retirement appears to have little significant impact on broad levels of social adjustment and
Adoption of inappropriate theoretical bases

Probably the earliest theoretical model applied to the retirement experience of athletes is Sussman's (1972) analytical model of retirement, adapted by Hill and Lowe (1974) and virtually ignored thereafter (Rosenberg, 1981a). This model has identified five clusters of variables which might be influential in the retirement experience. It has some potential in understanding an individual's experience because it suggests factors which might contribute to the athlete's context. However, as in the experience of unemployment research noted below, the experience is so complex that a single model is likely to be too cumbersome and restrictive to adequately explain the experience.

Much of the general research on the experience of unemployment suggests that there are significant differences according to such factors as sex (e.g., Banks et al., 1980; Banks & Jackson, 1982; Feather & O'Brien, 1986a, 1987, Kessler, House, & Turner, 1987; Stokes & Cochrane, 1984; Warr, Banks, & Ullah, 1985), age (e.g., Jackson & Warr, 1984), race (e.g., Bowman, 1984; Stafford et al., 1980; Warr, Banks, & Ullah, 1985), and social class (Hepworth, 1980; Marsden & Duff, 1975; Payne & Hartley, 1987; Payne, Warr, & Hartley, 1984; Platt & Kreitman, 1984; Shelton, 1985). Furthermore, Warr (1983) has defined 9 features of the unemployment experience which may bring about reduced psychological well-being, along with 8 variables which might
independently and jointly influence the experience. In addition, Payne and Jones (1987b) have recently provided a reminder that there are enduring individual differences in mental well-being and values, differences which have an influence on perceptions and attitudes to work and which appear to transcend such transitions as employment status. This comment echoes that of Kasl, Gore, and Cobb (1975):

Studying intensively and longitudinally the effects of one stressful life event, such as job loss, is an exceedingly complex business. Different outcome variables may show strikingly different patterns of changes and all appear to be sensitive to characteristics of the person and of the social situation. Moreover...the period of anticipation of an event can be at least as stressful as the event itself (p. 121).

In other attempts to understand athletic retirement, perspectives have been borrowed from social gerontology to link the experience of aging and old age with that of an athletic career. Rosenberg (1981b) has discussed the applicability of six approaches: disengagement, activity or substitution, subculture, continuity or consolidation, social breakdown, and exchange theories. From these perspectives, life satisfaction becomes a critical variable in considering the social-psychological adjustment to retirement (Blinde & Greendorfer, 1985). Although it can be argued that aging plays a significant role in the decision to retire from sport, the applicability of the analogy to old age retirement is questionnable.

Retired athletes still have the vast majority of their working lives ahead of them and they cannot afford either
financially or socially to withdraw from society as social gerontological perspectives might imply. Despite the wear and tear of a rigorous career, the retired athlete may be some forty years younger and healthier than the retired worker. The former athlete is likely to seek a career after his playing days are over and this may well be the first real career if professional experience has been brief. The careers of many professional sportsmen are so short that "most were never really in the game long enough to call it a career" (Vamplew, 1984, p. 73). Thus, it would appear inappropriate to apply to athletes the social gerontological concepts which have been used to explain the experiences, the adjustment or life satisfaction, of retired people who have experienced a full occupational career.

Another approach applied to the study of athletic retirement is that of thanatology, the study of death and dying (Rosenberg, 1984). Selected comments from athletes give credence to the death analogy because retirement becomes very significant when sport is considered to be more than a career, as 'The game...is my life' (Lerch, 1984, p. 259). Unlike ordinary people, the athlete is assumed to have two lives, one as an athlete, another as a person. The concepts of thanatology have particularly been applied to situations in which an individual is considered, or perceives himself, to be 'socially dead' (Ball, 1976; Hallinan & Snyder, 1987; Lerch, 1984; Ogilvie & Howe, 1986; Orlick, 1986; Rosenberg, 1984; Werthner & Orlick, 1983; Wilcox, 1986). This
condition usually results from social isolation or ostracism from other individuals. Credibility for the application of this notion to disengagement from sport seems to have come from the journalistic accounts of a few former athletes who may have experienced unusual difficulties in adjusting to the termination of their careers.

The comments of other athletes have been considered to fit the seven-stage model of the experience of coping with death, offered by Kubler-Ross (1969). However, this literature may be criticized not only because that fit is, perhaps, too convenient, but because the model has become overused and, in the light of more recent research, appears too simplistic to adequately explain the complex experience of loss and grieving. A much more detailed understanding of the complexities of this general experience has identified 33 different themes (Cochran & Claspell, 1987). Nevertheless, as Blinde and Greendorfer (1985) have noted, the descriptions of 'social death' associated with termination of an athletic career are dramatic, graphic, and poignant. They may, however, provide an overly negative portrayal of the experience and the generalizability of this portrait to the experience of the vast majority of athletes is highly questionable.

In sum, the concept of 'retirement', a term primarily concerned with disengagement and the relinquishing of formal roles, appears inappropriate to describe the complex experience of termination of an athletic career, particularly
because former sportsmen are likely to move on to other careers and other roles. Furthermore, the underlying assumptions of social gerontology and thanatology are not adequate to describe this experience (Blinde & Greendorfer, 1985) because analogies to aging, death, and dying are not sufficiently accurate or comprehensive for this topic.

Reliance on anecdotal reports

A significant problem with the literature in this field is the excessive reliance on anecdotal reports, largely journalistic accounts of the athletic careers of a few individuals. Popular sport literature, such as Bouton (1970), Kramer (1969), and Plimpton (1973), has been informative in that it has provided some depth, colour, and meaning to the experiences of certain individuals. However, its validity and reliability are highly suspect. Not only are the author informants usually celebrities, whose experiences may differ from those of less well-known athletes, but their intent is to provide marketable copy rather than academically valid information. Likewise, when the literature draws on newspaper reports, it is utilizing information which is likely to be biased toward newsworthy stories about prominent sportsmen or dramatic and unusual experiences, neither of which can be appropriately considered to represent the norm. Because the comments of individuals are considered to generalize to all athletes, similar criticism can be made of the anecdotal reports found in survey studies.
Focus on experience as a 'problem' rather than a 'process'

The sport retirement literature typically assumes that adjustment problems are intrinsically related to the sport experience itself (Blinde & Greendorfer, 1985). Viewing sport as the sole cause of such difficulties automatically restricts and confines any attempt to understand the process of terminating an athletic career. And yet, as other reviews have noted (e.g. Coakley, 1983; George, 1980; McPherson, 1984), even general retirement is seldom viewed as a normative 'problem', a precursor of stress or an identity crisis involving social, physical, or mental health problems. In order to gain an adequate understanding of this experience, the perspective must be broadened, replacing the problem-oriented approach with a process-oriented approach (McPherson, 1984).

Related to a process-oriented approach is the consideration of retirement as a role transition or status passage (McPherson, 1984). For example, while retirement from sport is typically considered as an event, an abrupt termination of a role in athletics which presupposes that identification and involvement with sport ends, there may be other possible scenarios. Blinde and Greendorfer (1985) have speculated that a more appropriate possibility is that former elite athletes experience a transition from formal and institutional levels of competition to informal and casual participation, a consideration which has been ignored in the research. Thus, a more accurate understanding of the
experience of leaving competitive sport may be gained through the more longitudinal perspective of the individual athlete's life story.

**Over-emphasis on social-psychological adjustment**

Social-psychological perspectives on perceived adjustment difficulties have totally overshadowed other perspectives (Blinde & Greendorfer, 1985). One perspective which seems to require more consideration is that of the psycho-physiological features of withdrawal from competition. Some authors (Ogilvie & Howe, 1986; Svoboda & Vanek, 1983; Werthner & Orlick, 1983) have mentioned psychological adjustment problems and physical pain due to decreased activity following retirement. In the German Democratic Republic it is standard practice for a retired elite athlete to undergo a two-year, medically supervised, down-training programme to assist physiological adjustments to reduced activity levels (Broom, 1983). It would appear that such physiologically based issues may be relevant to a retiree's well-being.

Another perspective which has received scant consideration is that of the social-structural influences on the retirement experience. The literature has acknowledged such detrimental factors as the ephemeral prestige bestowed on athletes by fans who are often quick to relegate their former heroes to obscurity (Rosenberg, 1984). Sporting fame is "a rapidly depreciating currency" (Vamplew, 1984, p. 75). Even the sport establishment itself pays little attention to
its former heroes as Rosenberg (1981a), for example, discovered that professional baseball teams had very little current information about former team members.

Not only is the professional sport establishment unlikely to help provide services for athletes who will soon face retirement (Ogilvie & Howe, 1986), but the literature provides examples of how that establishment often imposes barriers that impede athletes' preparations for other careers. Professional teams may discourage their athletes from undertaking further educational or occupational experiences during their playing careers, perhaps even requiring them to seek permission to establish any kind of business or commercial venture. A highly respected and successful soccer manager has explained this position: "I prefer players not to be too good or clever at other things. It means they concentrate on football" (Houlston, 1984, p. 62).

Coakley (1983) has stated that the nature of the sport retirement process "is primarily grounded in the social-structural context in which it occurs" (p. 9). While references to the above social-structural features are readily available in the literature, there are many other features which have been neglected. For example, ethnicity and educational level were found to be the most significant determinants of post-retirement occupational attainments among former Israeli professional soccer players (Semyonov, 1984).
The transition out of sport should be considered in light of such factors as age, race, gender, education, socio-economic status, the existence of social, emotional, and material support systems, the existence of various forms of discrimination, and the circumstances and concurrent transitions experienced by athletes at the time they leave their careers in sport (Blinde & Greendorfer, 1985; Coakley, 1983). The array of potentially influential factors is bounded only by the individual athlete's life experiences. Consideration of such features, along with the peculiar meaning they have for each individual involved in the retirement experience, has been neglected in the literature.

Research design problems

Apart from the issues noted above, it appears that some researchers have generalized inappropriate conclusions from problematic evidence, particularly concerning the representativeness of the various studies. One problem is that of definitions. As noted above, a major assumption in the literature is that all athletes are the same. Nevertheless, it seems warranted that the literature should offer some distinction between the different types of athletes. Studies have distinguished interscholastic and intercollegiate athletes (Dubois, 1980; Greendorfer & Blinde, 1985; Hallinan & Snyder, 1987; Sack & Thiel, 1979; Sands, 1978; Snyder & Baber, 1979). However, the literature offers no distinction between the experiences of such athletes as North American professional baseball, football,
and hockey players and those in the often cited studies of Yugoslavian soccer players (Mihovilovic, 1968) and 'superior' Czechoslovakian athletes (Svoboda & Vanek, 1983). Furthermore, no attempts have been made to distinguish between athletes on contextual issues.

Another definitional concern is that of 'retirement' itself. Despite the numerous factors that might lead to an individual's personal decision to withdraw from a given level of competition, as noted above, the literature assumes that all athletic careers are terminated involuntarily. Research has not differentiated between the experiences of those people who leave their sport because of choice, injury, management decision, or an offer to enter management.

Another problem with research on this topic is its lack of comparisons. No contrasts have been drawn between those people who experience significant adjustment problems and those who do not. Furthermore, there have been few comparisons of the experiences of athletes and their non-athlete peers. Studies have compared former athlete and non-athlete college students (Dubois, 1980; Sack & Thiel, 1979; Snyder & Baber, 1979), in which no significant differences were found. Similar comparisons were made among former high school students (Otto & Alwin, 1977; Phillips & Schafer, 1971) in which former athletes achieved greater success on a number of variables. For adults, the exception is Faulkner's (1975) comparison of the careers of musicians and hockey players, in which similar 'career contingencies' were noted.
Athletes are not the only people to be involved with careers that may be considered to be 'age graded'. For example, fashion models, lawyers, scientists, industrial executives, strippers, dancers, actors and actresses, teachers, engineers and technical specialists, and astronauts have been "urged to recognize and face up to the career dilemmas of becoming occupationally and biologically older" (p. 552). In order to make conclusive statements about the adjustment difficulties involved in retirement from competitive sport, comparisons with non-athletes and with other transitional experiences are essential.

A related problem is the need to consider cross-cultural differences. While the available research is predominantly American, studies from Czechoslovakia (Svoboda & Vanek, 1983) and Yugoslavia (Mihovilovic, 1968) are relied upon heavily in the literature. In addition, there are studies from Britain (Houlston, 1984; Vamplew, 1984), Canada (Werthner & Orlick, 1983), Israel (Semyonov, 1984), and Poland (Pawlak, 1984). There are undoubted differences in the sport systems, not to mention the social, political, and economic environments of these countries, particularly differences between those of the West and the Soviet bloc. These studies have potential for adding to the information about the experience of retiring from sport but appropriate comparisons and contrasts should be drawn before the literature assumes that the studies can be generalized to all athletes.

Another problem with the research is its lack of
comparisons of experience according to gender. The research
has a virtually exclusive focus on the experience of male
athletes (Blinde & Greendorfer, 1985; Coakley, 1983).
Notable exceptions are the work reported by Allison and Meyer
(1988), Pawlak (1984), Werthner and Orlick (1983), and Brown
between the retirement experiences of male and female
athletes are lacking in the literature.

The methods employed in the investigation of retirement
from an athletic career are typically quantitative. This
approach has not been adequate for the topic. One reason is
that researchers have experienced limited success in tracing
the whereabouts of former athletes, a population which
appears to be highly mobile and elusive for survey purposes.
Furthermore, respondents are likely to be a select group and
are not necessarily representative of the general population
of retired athletes.

A second reason this approach has been inadequate is
that much of the research has striven to establish cause and
effect relationships in the retirement experience. For
example, Hill and Lowe (1974) have used Sussman's (1972)
model to explore the various influences involved in the
experience. Likewise, Reynolds (1981), with little success,
has devised a model of a number of factors which might
influence the second career job satisfaction of retired
athletes. In addition, two sets of research hypotheses have
recently been offered. Rosenberg (1984) has adopted a social
psychological approach and Coakley (1983) has offered a set of hypotheses from the perspective of social-structural considerations. While the enumeration of potentially influential factors may be helpful in adding to the understanding of the context of an individual's experience, these approaches strive for prediction of an outcome. Research into the experience of unemployment has followed similar strategies but, given the numerous factors which may affect such transitional experiences, it has become apparent that attempts at prediction are premature. As Feather and O'Brien (1986a) have noted:

It is becoming evident that simple generalizations that apply to all people will not be possible given the range of variables that can moderate the effects of being either employed or without a job and the fact that neither the employed nor the unemployed can be assumed to be undifferentiated or homogeneous groups (p. 122).

The consequence of the mistaken notion that a string of coincidental factors can define an experience is that the experience is known only in terms of those factors and is not known for itself.

Quantitative approaches are, by nature, inappropriate for gaining full descriptive accounts of a life experience such as retirement from a career in sport. Some researchers have included qualitative efforts in their studies (e.g. Allison & Meyer, 1988; Bookbinder, 1955; Faulkner, 1975; Houlston, 1984; Mihovilovic, 1968; Smith, 1987; Smith & Diamond, 1976; Weinberg & Arond, 1952; Wilcox, 1986). However, the intent of these researchers has not been to
capture a full description of the experiences of their informants.

Allison and Meyer (1988) have been emphatic in stating the need for qualitative methodologies to be employed in investigations of this topic. Furthermore, there has been a very recent call for the general use of ethnographic methods in the sociology of sport (Gallmeier, 1989). To gain a better understanding of the experience of retiring from sport, an ethnographic approach may be more helpful because it is more concerned with understanding an experience than predicting (Agar, 1986).

Another issue is that research has not shown concern for individual differences in experience. Particularly lacking is consideration of the personal and the social circumstances in which an individual's retirement takes place. Thus, there is a need for research which examines not only the effects of retirement from sport but the contexts in which retirement occurs.

Further to this point is a need to move away from cross-sectional studies and toward longitudinal studies, which will place the retirement experience within a lifespan developmental context. Toward this end, McPherson (1984) has proposed a list of some 16 potential research questions.

A final and major confound to research in this area is that the response rates and the sampling strategies of the various surveys have often been disappointing, casting further doubt on the representativeness of the work (e.g.
Houlston, 1984; Lerch, 1981; Pawlak, 1984; Reynolds, 1981). Rosenberg's (1981a) response rate in seeking information about retired baseball players was so abysmal that he could only conclude that the teams had no information on three-quarters of the 400 cohort members he was investigating.

While low response rates alone question the representativeness of survey findings, some researchers have acknowledged the possibility of bias in their samples. For example, Reynolds (1981) inferred that low self-esteem subjects were non-respondents in his study and Svoboda and Vanek (1983) and Mihovilovic (1968) assumed that athletes who experienced the greatest difficulties in adjusting to retirement were not participants in the studies. It seems reasonable to conclude that the research results are, at best, inconclusive.

Summary of termination of an athletic career

This survey of the literature and research on the experience of retiring from an athletic career clearly indicates that the generalizations drawn to date are inappropriate. It would appear that lessons drawn from the research on the experience of unemployment may inform research in this field. Such research has noted that the study of life events is exceedingly complex, involving diverse features such as individual differences and contextual issues. It would seem that these features should also be given consideration in research on athletic retirement, an experience which appears to be much more
complex and peculiar to the individual than the literature usually suggests.

While this review has questioned the notion of universal trauma as a consequence of termination of a career in sport, it has by no means suggested that the transition is easy or without difficulties. It would appear that individuals experience this transition differently and, accordingly, they cope with their experiences in different ways. Future research which provides a detailed description of individual experiences and coping strategies may prove valuable and informative to other individuals in similar circumstances.

**Field Research**

Field research is one of the main styles of research used by empirically oriented social scientists (Burgess, 1982b). Undertaken by investigators from such disciplines as anthropology, sociology, and education, this research may be referred to by a variety of names including ethnography, case study, interpretative procedures, and qualitative research. All of these endeavours are characterized by intensive first-hand investigation, involving a phenomenological perspective whereby the researcher aims to study real-life situations from the participant's point of view, in an attempt to understand the meaning of events for the people involved (Burgess, 1984a).

The case study is a sound alternative for attempting inferences from events outside of the laboratory. The noted
research methodologist, Donald T. Campbell (1984), has acclaimed the humanistic validity-seeking case study as a needed addition to social science methodology because "while making no use of quantification or tests of significance, (it) would still work on the same questions and share the same goals of knowledge" (p.8). Traditional experimental research has an intolerance for the ambiguities of nonlaboratory settings, but Campbell has pointed out that context, unavailable in the laboratory, plays a crucial role in the achievement of knowledge. The case study methodology provides a means of exploring that context.

The case study addresses 'how' and 'why' questions about a contemporary set of events. More precisely, it has been defined as an empirical inquiry in which multiple sources of evidence are used to investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not already evident (Yin, 1984). Three typical criticisms of this methodology have been noted and addressed by Yin. One is lack of rigor because case studies are often regarded as sloppy and involving bias. However, sloppiness and bias can also be found in the conduct of experiments and surveys. The second criticism is that case studies offer little basis for generalization. However, case studies may be generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations. The third criticism is that these studies often result in lengthy, unreadable documents. This need not be the case, dependent on the skills of the
researcher.

An important factor in the consideration of case studies is that they are extremely hard to do. Five prominent statisticians cited by Yin (1984) have stated that this is often overlooked because "most people feel that they can prepare a case study, and nearly all of us believe we can understand one" (Hoaglin et al., 1982, p. 134). Because neither view is well founded, case studies often receive a good deal of undeserved approbation.

Ethnographic field work has been described as "the disciplined study of what the world is like to people who have learned to see, hear, speak, think, and act in ways that are different" (Spradley, 1979, p. 3). Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) refer to this type of work as the most basic form of social research, drawing on a wide range of sources of information and bearing a close resemblance to the ways in which people make sense of the world in everyday life.

A major characteristic of this type of research is its self-consciousness or reflexivity. Morgan (1983) has noted that research is "a distinctively human process through which researchers make knowledge" (p. 7). Gouldner (1970) has argued that every method of social research makes assumptions about how research may be conducted:

Viewed from one standpoint 'methodology' seems a purely technical concern devoid of ideology; presumably it deals only with methods of extracting reliable information from the world, collecting data, constructing questionnaires, sampling and analyzing returns. Yet, it is always a good deal more than that, for it is commonly infused with ideologically resonant assumptions about what the social world is,
who the sociologist is, and what the nature of the relation between them is (pp. 50-51).

Investigators in the field recognize that research is both steeped in assumptions about the social world and influenced by the researcher (Burgess, 1984b). Field research assumes that human actions are influenced by social meanings involving intentions, motives, attitudes, and beliefs. The social world cannot be understood solely in terms of causal relationships or universal laws because people interpret stimuli and these continuously revised interpretations shape human actions. Significantly, "the same physical stimulus can mean different things to different people and, indeed, to the same person at different times" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, p. 7). Interpretation of events and their meanings to different individuals becomes a complicated process in which the field researcher must be sensitive to potential sources of influence, including himself, on those about whom he is striving to learn.

In qualitative work, the main instrument of investigation is the researcher (Burgess, 1982b; Woods, 1985). The project becomes "a learning situation in which researchers have to understand their own actions and activities as well as those of the people they are studying" (Burgess, 1982b, p. 1). A certain self-awareness is required of the researcher in order to acknowledge his or her impact on the study. Cottle (1982) has reflected on the subjective nature of inquiry that "what I observe and record is not only the material experienced by me, it is in part, generated by
me" (p. 125). The researcher is required to pay attention, implying:

an openness, not any special or metaphysical kind of openness, but merely a watch on oneself, a self-consciousness, a belief that everything one takes in from the outside and experiences within one's own interior is worthy of consideration and essential for understanding and honouring those whom one encounters (p. 125).

This type of research is extremely personal. It reflects the personal concerns, issues, and interests of both the researched and the researcher himself, who is required to become intensively involved in a manner which is "likely to force a heightened awareness of facets of one's personality which one had not been aware of before. This can be an emotionally devastating experience" (Gulick, 1977, p.90).

The reflexive nature of this type of investigation helps put the research on a broader plane of people's affairs and gives it depth (Woods, 1985).

Field researchers acknowledge the interactive character of research, "an integral part of all research involving live subjects and the findings which emerge from it" (Laslett & Rapoport, 1975, p. 969). Thus, field investigators see their work as a social process (e.g. Bell & Newby, 1977; Burgess, 1984b, 1982b; Williams, 1981) described by Sartre (1963) as:

a living relation between men...Indeed, the sociologist and his 'object' form a couple, each one of which is to be interpreted by the other; the relationship between them must be integrated as a moment of history (p. 72).

By its nature, field research is a collaborative enterprise between the researched and the researcher (Cassagrande,
Rather than a neat, step-by-step linear process, field research is a complex interaction between the research problem and all those people involved in the study. "Accordingly the project, and the methodology, is continually defined and redefined by the researcher and in some cases by those researched" (Burgess, 1984a, p. 31). This is in marked contrast to other forms of research which pose an hypothesis and then contrive means to test that hypothesis. Agar (1981) has noted this distinction:

"How do I write a research proposal?" It's not necessarily that ethnographers don't want to test hypotheses. It's just that if they do, the variables and operationalizations and simple specifications must grow from an understanding of the group rather than being hammered on top of it no matter how poor the fit. You can't specify the questions you're going to ask when you move into the community; you don't know how to ask questions yet. You can't define a sample; you don't know what the range of social types is and which ones are relevant to the topics you're interested in. None of this goes over well with the hypothesis-testing fanatics (pp. 69-70).

The complexities of this basic research are such that, perhaps, "nobody really knows how to go about field research ...(it) depends upon the researcher, the researched, the problems posed, the methods of investigation and the data which is gathered" (Burgess, 1982b, p. 9). The investigator is continually challenged throughout the research endeavour because there are no specific techniques to help the ethnographer acquire friendly and co-operative informants; no specific rules for translating raw data into information which is meaningful for analysis; and no specific techniques
to draw productive generalizations from the analysis
(Freilich, 1977b). It seems that "the way to learn to write
an ethnography is to write an ethnography" (Spradley, 1979,
p. 204).

Field research has no set rules, rigid procedures, or
fixed roles. It is characterized by flexibility (Burgess,
1984a). Its methods are often unstructured and open-ended,
providing opportunity for flexibility which allows
investigators to pursue data, ideas, hunches, and questions
as they arise. The methodologies employed in this research
often draw together a wide range of ideas and materials, such
that:

The field researcher is a methodological pragmatist.
He sees any method of inquiry as a system of
strategies and operations designed - at any time - for
going to certain questions about events which
interest him (Schatzman & Strauss, 1973, p. 7).

This approach is compatible with recent discussions about
research methodologies because it maintains "an essential
fidelity to human experience" (Van Hesteren, 1986, p. 201).

**In-depth interviews**

The in-depth interview, along with observation and
participant observation, is one of the most common strategies
of field research. It is a methodology so extensively used
by sociologists that that discipline has been referred to as
"the science of the interview" (Benney & Hughes, 1956, p.
137). Typical in-depth interviews have a style which is
informal and semi-structured or unstructured. The aim is to
encourage informants to develop their answers in a personal
manner, while providing the researcher with the opportunity "to probe deeply, to uncover new clues, to open up new dimensions of a problem and to secure vivid, accurate, inclusive accounts from informants that are based on personal experience" (Burgess, 1982e, p.107). Laslett and Rapoport (1975, p. 968) refer to this as 'interactive research', whereby the researcher, instead of avoiding, is sensitive and responsive to respondent reactions to the interview and to the experience.

Individual differences of experience are important to the field researcher because "an exception, a deviation, an unusual interpretation may suggest a revision, a reinterpretation, a new approach" (Dexter, 1970, p. 6). Unlike the standardized interview or typical survey which handles a deviation statistically, the in-depth interview treats each nuance as a potential source of valuable information. The field worker values every human situation as "novel, emergent, and filled with multiple, often conflicting meanings and interpretations" (Denzin, 1983, p. 132). Through the in-depth interview, the researcher strives to understand the core of these meanings and contradictions.

While the structure of a standard set of questions is too narrow and restrictive for the purposes of field research, the term 'unstructured' is quite misleading (Tremblay, 1982). In fact, there is a lot of structure involved in in-depth interviewing, commencing with the strategic selection of informants who can contribute
knowledge about the problem and followed by the progressive re-structuring of both additional informants and the varying questions which may be asked.

**Format of interviews**

As in the study of life histories, the format of in-depth interviews is to address such general questions as discovering the dynamic and adaptive aspects of the life experience, the relations between one stage of life and the next, the cumulative patterns of personal conduct, the relevance of personal experience to social institutions, and the impact of personal choice on social change (Mandelbaum, 1982). Interview questions are developed around a set of themes and topics which ensure that the problem is adequately explored. In some cases a set of questions is produced as a guide for the interview, a guide which may be shared with the informants as an orienting framework to support the collaborative work. "The essential element in the guide and its application is that it is a tool for systematic exploration" (Laslett & Rapoport, 1975, p. 969). In addition, questions are developed spontaneously in order to examine new ideas, information, or problems which may arise as information is gathered.

'Unstructured' interviews are flexible and controlled "conversations with a purpose" (Benney & Hughes, 1956, p. 102), which assume the appearance of a natural interesting conversation, but one which the interviewer "guides and bends to the service of his research interest" (Palmer, 1928, p.
171, cited by Burgess, 1982e, p.107). The interviewing technique develops as the research progresses because the methods can be refined over time in response to increasing knowledge about both the informant and the experience under investigation. This process stimulates the informant's memory and facilitates his or her ability to describe recollections (Tremblay, 1982, p. 99).

Relationships in interviews

Unstructured interviews involve the kind of conversation that is developed through a sustained relationship (Burgess, 1982e). This relationship between the researcher and those researched is crucial (Burgess, 1984a), an important component in the process of achieving quality information (Rapaport & Rapaport, 1976, cited by Ball, 1984). Laslett and Rapoport (1975) stress the de-emphasis of the hierarchical relationship between researcher and informant so that an attempt is made "to generate a collaborative approach to the research which engages both the interviewer and respondent in a joint enterprise" (p. 968). This view is supported by authors such as Dexter (1970), who see the informant becoming "a kind of member of the research team" (p. 8).

Qualities and preparation of researchers

Certain researcher qualities have been identified as important to the development of productive and collaborative relationships with informants. The researcher must be able to become a friend and confidant of the informant,
demonstrating interest, understanding, and sympathy for the life of another person. The researcher must be willing and able to share the informant's culture and to encourage the development of trust and confidence (Burgess, 1984a, 1982e).

The qualities encouraged in the profession of psychotherapy, where the establishment of rapport with clients is considered imperative, seem appropriate to the in-depth interview relationship. Patterson (1985), among others, has identified these qualities as including empathic understanding; respect, concern, compassion, liking, and warmth; genuineness and honesty; concreteness and specificity. In addition, the researcher needs to have a knowledgeable background to adequately understand an interviewee's frame of reference because:

the experienced person in any field knows that things happen in a subtle, confused, foggy, complex way, which cannot be stated or codified simply; the person without practical experience and without much contact wants to sharpen and simplify (Dexter, 1970, p. 20).

It would seem that the researcher also needs to be conscious, patient, and tolerant of ambiguity.

Researcher preparation is important to the progress of in-depth interviewing. The researcher needs a lot of independent knowledge about the informant's social world in order to make appropriate judgements in the selection of informants (Burgess, 1984a), listen to the informant's personal frame of reference, ask intelligent questions, understand complex answers (Dexter, 1970), and see and scrutinize relevant data (Burgess, 1982c). However, the
researcher must also be cautious with this knowledge, open to new information, and reflexive in understanding because: "The greatest enemy of good ethnography is the preconceived notion" (McCurdy & Carlson, 1984, p. 240). When the researcher is familiar with a situation, it may be appropriate to adopt an 'artificial naivete' and to expend additional effort to ensure that information is not overlooked or taken for granted (Burgess, 1984a). As information and knowledge develop, the researcher must be able to maintain an outsider's perspective in order to obtain an insider's view of the situation (Burgess, 1982b).

**Sampling strategies**

The selection of informants, or the sampling strategy, is an essential element of all social investigation. 'Sampling' is traditionally associated with survey research, and "is not something that is normally talked about by ethnographers" (Ball, 1984, p. 75). However, there are two major classes of sampling, *probability* and *non-probability* sampling. The former, in which "every unit in the universe under study has the same calculable and non-zero probability of being selected" (Burgess, 1984a, p. 54), is utilized in statistical research. The latter, whereby there is "no means of estimating the probability of units being included in the sample...no guarantee that every element has a chance of being studied" (p. 54), is usually used in field research.

There are several sub-classes of non-probability sampling. In *judgement* and *opportunistic* sampling, selection
is guided by the researcher's knowledge of a social situation and is based on certain criteria or experience which endows informants with special knowledge. In addition, in opportunistic sampling the researcher selects people who are available and with whom it seems possible to cooperate. In this type of sampling, selectivity may also be determined by certain considerations which are personal to the researcher, such as convenience or ready accessibility to the researcher (Ball, 1984). In snowball sampling, as its name implies, a small group of initial informants leads to others. In each of these cases replication is impossible because the researcher selects informants who are both available and willing to cooperate in the study. In theoretical sampling researchers observe groups with a view to extending, modifying, developing, and verifying theory (Burgess, 1984a) through a process of data collection "whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyzes his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p.45). In this case, sampling continues until 'saturation' is reached, a point at which no additional data can be found that contribute to the categories under consideration.

It is important to re-iterate that the selection of individuals in field studies is a very different procedure from that associated with statistical sampling. Burgess (1984a) has cited Mead's (1953) comment that sampling in anthropological field research is not "a version where 'n'
equals too few cases. It is simply a different kind of sampling" (p. 654). Informants are selected for their special knowledge regarding interests and concerns in a social setting, a knowledge which can contribute to the researcher's understanding of particular social settings, structures, and processes (Burgess, 1984a). Dexter (1970) has commented on the importance of selection by noting that:

> Concentration of a few key informants may...help the investigator to acquire a better picture of the norms, attitudes, expectations, and evaluations of a particular group than he could obtain solely from less intensive observations or through conducting a greater number of less intensive interviews, by themselves (p. 8).

The importance of an individual informant's personal knowledge is amplified by the following comment regarding the work of Mead (1953, p. 654):

> A single life history is representative of a community's culture to the degree that the individual it portrays has been involved in experiences common to other (not necessarily all) individuals. To that degree, the subject's life history becomes a model of his culture which the anthropologist can use in building his model (Honigman, 1982, p. 84).

Because each informant is likely to offer a different perspective, it is important to select a range of informants.

**Analysis**

The type of non-probability sampling employed in a study will depend on the type of analysis proposed by the research. In straight descriptive analysis, the researcher "accepts and uses theory and organizational schemes that are extant in the discipline" (Schatzman & Strauss, 1973, p. 110), simply arranging data in commonly recognized classes. In analytic
descriptive studies, "the organizational scheme is developed from discovered classes and linkages suggested or mandated by the data" (p. 110). Considerable novelty may be found in these types of descriptions and further development of the analysis may lead to substantive theory. Although implicit in any description, the development of new substantive theory requires the researcher to identify a metaphor or scheme from the data, transform that metaphor into sociological language, and establish the metaphor's identity (Schatzman & Strauss, 1973).

**Reliability**

This procedure not only works but is tolerably reliable because "a common culture is reflected in practically every person, event and artefact belonging to a common system" (Honigman, 1982, p. 83). Although sampling may be conducted opportunistically, it is by no means a haphazard process. Field researchers utilize numerous safeguards in their data collection, including cross-checking of information, comparing data, and examining that data for inconsistencies, contradictions, and incongruities. Following Mead (1953), this type of sampling is logical when the researcher does not try to answer quantitative questions such as 'how much' and 'how often', but focusses on qualitative problems such as discovering what occurs, the implications of what occurs, and the relationships linking occurrences. Tremblay (1982) concluded that the intensive interviewing of key informants over an extensive period of time is a technique which is:
pre-eminently suited to the gathering of the kinds of qualitative and descriptive data that are difficult or time-consuming to unearth through structured data gathering techniques such as questionnaire surveys (p. 98).

Validity

The validity of this kind of research is determined or rather, negotiated, through a process of triangulation, or comparison of a variety of sources including informant verification and the accumulated knowledge and experience of the researcher and subsequent readers. For example, Laslett and Rapoport (1975) recommend providing interviewees with drafts of the write-up as a way of both giving back something as well as checking on validity, whereby:

Omissions, factual errors and the like are corrected, and sometimes disagreements are uncovered about the way things are interpreted. These may be worked through and resolved (p. 974).

Where disagreements persist, options include omitting disputed items or incorporating a dissenting account. However, Elliott (1980) has taken a hard line on the role of respondent validation:

Mismatches between observational and participant accounts do not render the latter invalid. But they do call for free and open dialogue between observer and participant. And I would argue that it is only when an account has been agreed under these conditions of dialogue that its validity can be considered to be demonstrated (p. 17).

Sullivan (1984) has argued for a negotiated account in which discrepancies between researcher and informant are noted, thereby providing the reader the opportunity to participate in the evaluation.

Assessments of validity in this type of work must
consider that while the researcher strives to capture the informant's view of an experience, the information obtained is dependent upon what the informant sees and is willing to pass on at a particular time. At best, the informant's statement represents his or her perceptions as filtered and modified by personal cognitive and emotional reactions as well as verbal style (Dean & Whyte, 1970). Researchers are advised to collect information about the context in which the informant has undergone the reported experience (Mandelbaum, 1982, p. 147) as well as the context in which the experience is narrated. Whyte (1982) has noted a number of elements which must be considered in examining an informant's narrative: the informant's current emotional state, values, attitudes or sentiments, opinions or ideas, possible ulterior motives, desire to please the researcher, as well as various idiosyncratic factors relative to the specific situational environment. Whyte has cautioned that the interviewer should not expect the informant to provide consistent well-thought-out attitudes and values, nor rational and consistent descriptions of experience.

Research report

The final write-up of the research report is a creative process in which the researcher combines information gained from the informants with his own impressions, hunches, and interpretations. Speculative material must be distinguished from that directly supplied by the informants and must be supported by evidence (Laslett & Rapoport, 1975, p. 976).
The researcher's objective is "to render the familiar strange, and the strange familiar" (Atkinson, 1984, p. 169). This is no easy task, as Hammersley (1984) has noted:

One of the key problems in ethnographic analysis is finding an overall theme, model or argument which organizes the data in a coherent and forceful way... How ethnographers acquire such models is shrouded in mystery (p. 60).

Regarding his own experience of research, Hammersley observes that it was "a voyage of discovery and much of the time was spent at sea" (p. 60).

Often, as in the example of Fuller (1984), themes develop out of the researcher's own social, political, and personal perspective. For this reason, researchers are encouraged to write quasi-autobiographical accounts of their work, in order to relate:

the relationships between life experiences and intellectual work and the way in which social research involves a degree of untidiness as researchers direct and redirect their studies in response to the questions which they pose (Burgess, 1984b, p. 4).

Thus, the final report blends personal experience with theories and data in order to contribute to our understanding of an experience.

Summary of field research

The selected methodology for this study is based on the ethnographic or in-depth interview because this methodology is most appropriate to the purposes of the study. The aim of the study is to understand and to describe in careful detail the experience of withdrawal from a career in professional sport. The in-depth interview encourages former athletes to
reflect on and to describe their various personal experiences with career termination. This technique is appropriate for this study because ethnography is a general scientific approach which "yields empirical data about the lives of people in specific situations" (Spradley, 1979, p. 13). The analysis and critique of in-depth, ethnographic interviews focusses on understanding what people have to say, describing that perspective so that others might also understand, and offering recommendations for change.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

An important caveat to social research is the acknowledgement of the reciprocal effects of researchers and their methodologies, their reports, those they study, and themselves (e.g. Bell & Newby, 1977; Porter, 1984). It is an existential fact that we cannot escape the world in order to study it. As Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) have noted, "we are part of the social world we study" (p. 14).

Hammersley (1984) has emphasized the importance of providing a reflexive account of the study, which acknowledges the personal involvement of the researcher and provides:

recognition that the researcher always has some impact on the setting he or she is studying, that the selectivity necessarily involved in research activity will shape the data and findings, and that researchers are by no means immune to the effects of interests and values (p. 41).

Accordingly, the reflexive nature of this research necessitates a brief outline of my personal involvement and perspective on the study.

Personal perspective

Sport has been an important part of my life for many years. Although I am not a physically accomplished athlete, I have been an active participant in sport through various levels of administration and coaching positions. From secondary school through university experience, I have been a manager of sports teams, including two championship Canadian Intercollegiate Athletic Union basketball teams and the Canadian National Men's Basketball Team. That experience led
to a career in physical education, including completion of a master's degree in that discipline, plus teaching at the secondary and university levels in Canada and Australia. My interest in sport history led to a thesis in that area, as well as my selection as a Canadian delegate to the International Olympic Academy in Greece. For five years, I was a college basketball coach and athletic director. That career came to a sudden end when political and financial policies terminated the college programme in 1981.

The termination of my athletic career was quickly followed by employment in industry, specifically in life insurance sales where my background in administration, teaching, and coaching was highly valued. The demands of this kind of employment not only kept me very busy but were a ready excuse to withdraw myself from any involvement with sport. As it turned out, I believe I was rejecting and denying the life and identity which I had lost. After some three and a half-years, a profound dissatisfaction with both my new occupation and life style led to a complete reassessment of my career and options, followed by the decision to embark on a new career in counselling psychology.

Among the challenges and rewards of the counselling profession is the opportunity to work with other people seeking to redirect their careers. My own experience has provided a useful background for this kind of work and has spurred my interest in examining career development theory as well as the impact of unemployment experiences. Accordingly,
I have been employed to write three major projects related to career issues, a series of five structured group employment programmes commissioned by Canada Employment and Immigration, a chapter on programmes for displaced workers in a book on group psychotherapy, and a research proposal for a national study on the transition from school to work. In addition, I have taught a number of basic communication and counselling skills courses for teacher and counsellor trainees. And I have been an auxiliary counsellor dealing with career, education, and personal issues for students at three local community colleges. I am currently employed as a counsellor in the Vancouver school system and have worked with both elementary and secondary students.

Despite my background in sport and career development issues, when athletic career termination was suggested to me as a potential dissertation topic, I found myself both approaching and avoiding the topic. The research was a good opportunity to meld my personal knowledge, experience, interest, and expertise as both counsellor and sport historian. Yet, I was ambivalent. As I reflected on the process of getting started on this investigation, it became apparent to me that, to some degree, I was still disappointed by the loss of my former career. This awareness provided me a fresh sensitivity to both the specific experience of termination of an athletic career and the more general experience of career change.

The dialogue I have conducted with myself regarding the
preparation of this study, to some extent, has been therapeutic for me. Similarly, other researchers have found that their informants have appreciated the opportunity to fully describe and discuss their experiences (Claspell, 1984; Wilcox, 1986). Instead of denying my continuing interest in sport, which has been a significant part of my personal and professional life for some twenty years, I have found myself enthusiastically rekindling that interest. As I began this study, it was my hope and expectation that my research would provide former athletes an opportunity to enter a similar dialogue, to tell their own stories in a way that would help them and others gain a better understanding of the experience of career termination. The comments of my informants as they reflected upon our work together have been gratifying in that regard.

My objective has not been to study other people, but to use ethnographic techniques to learn from others (Spradley, 1979). Ethnography has concern for context and I am very much aware that my experience with career termination is imbedded within its own peculiar context. My challenge and opportunity has been to utilize this experience to help others to tell their stories in an accurate, detailed, and helpful manner. The tasks of this endeavour are twofold: to discover the experiences and to describe those experiences. Spradley (1979) has warned that ethnographers have a special responsibility because "cultural descriptions can be used to oppress people or to set them free" (p. 13). Thus, I have
utilized principles noted by Sullivan (1984), requiring a
critical negotiation of descriptions and the expression of an
emancipatory praxis, that is, interpretations and suggestions
for change which enhance human agency. By working with my
informants in a respectful but questioning manner, I have
striven to learn from others and to describe their
experiences without inappropriately imposing my own
interpretations.

This latter point is somewhat crucial in that it is
essential that I acknowledge my personal stance or position
on this topic as of the time I began the research. I found
my literature search to be both disappointing and annoying.
The frequent sweeping generalizations about the supposed near
universal trauma involved in this experience seemed
inappropriate to me, based on my own acquaintance with former
athletes and my understanding of life paths in general. It
seemed to me that the literature lacked documentation on
those athletes who did not experience extraordinary
difficulties. Despite this personal bias, I was very
conscious of the need to question and challenge my informants
on this issue for fear that I might too readily accept glossy
and happy stories of easy experiences.

Design

The general design of this investigation falls within
field research methodology, specifically utilizing the
ethnographic or in-depth interview technique to gain
information which is re-written as an analytical description
of the experience of withdrawal from an athletic career. The primary source of information has been the perspectives offered by individuals who have personal experience with this topic. Informants were selected through a non-probability sampling technique, incorporating opportunistic and snowball sampling within the framework of my own judgement. The information gathered from these informants was critiqued and evaluated through the principles of reflexivity, an on-going review throughout the study, and triangulation, involving comparison with information from other sources including other informants, the literature, and my own personal experience in conducting the study. The final report consists of a general story which describes the experience of withdrawal from a career in professional sport.

Procedures

Ethnography has been considered as "an ambiguous term, representing both a process and a product" (Agar, 1980, p. 1). Unlike many other forms of social research, the course of ethnography cannot be programmed because "its practice is replete with the unexpected" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, p. 28). Nevertheless, the research design involves the overriding principle of reflexivity, a process of on-going review, consideration, and analysis operating throughout every stage of the project. The flexibility of ethnographic work is advantageous and particularly appropriate to the topic of this study because it is concerned with discovering the nature of an experience. As Hammersley and Atkinson
(1983) have noted:

...the strategy and even direction of the research can be changed relatively easily, in line with changing assessments of what is required by the process of theory construction. As a result, ideas can be quickly tried out and, if promising, followed up. In this way ethnography allows theory development to be pursued in a highly effective and economical manner (p. 24)

This flexible approach of ethnography should not be misconstrued as simple open-ended observation and description. Ethnography involves five stages of research but, unlike the discrete sequential ordering of most social science investigation, this research requires constant feedback from one stage to another. The five stages noted by Spradley (1979, p. 93) must all go on at the same time.

1. Selection of a problem follows the general question of "What are the cultural meanings people are using to organize their behavior and interpret their experience?" (p. 93). In this study, the original general question was 'How do people live the experience of termination of an athletic career?' As the study progressed, it became apparent that I was not able to gain access to informants who may have been forced to leave their careers through no choice of their own. Thus, I chose to reframe the question to more appropriately address the experiences of those informants who were available to me, people whose departure from sport was in some way voluntary. The general question became 'How do people live the experience of withdrawal from a career in professional sport?' 2. Collecting cultural data begins before any hypotheses have been generated, unless there has been
previous ethnographic work in the specific field. In this case, there has not been such work and so, the task was to ask descriptive questions and make general observations. However, I did have a hunch that any trauma associated with this experience was less pervasive than implied in the literature. 3. Analyzing cultural data takes place as the information is gathered. In this study, I frequently re-read individual descriptions, comparing them with each other and the knowledge I had gained, as well as asking specific questions of informants to clarify issues as they emerged. 4. Formulating ethnographic hypotheses takes place as the data is collected and consists of proposing relationships between observations and posing new questions to test these relationships. 5. Writing an ethnography may be considered as a "refined process of analysis" (p. 94). In this study, the result of that process of analysis was a general story which describes the experience.

The general procedures for this study are listed as Appendix B. Fifteen steps were involved in finding informants, gathering data, and analyzing that data. These procedures took place during the ten months of November, 1988 to August, 1989. Briefly, after an informant agreed to participate in the study, we met in an initial interview in which he described his experience. I transcribed the audio-tape of that interview and prepared a draft narrative description, plus an addendum list of issues reflecting my understanding of his experience. In a subsequent validation
Interview, the informant edited and modified the narrative. I then revised the narrative and returned it to the informant before proceeding to an initial interview with the next informant. This procedure was followed in order to keep my thoughts and ideas focused on the experience of each individual. The procedure was repeated for all but the last two cases, in which time constraints necessitated the scheduling of initial interviews before the drafts of the preceding narratives had been validated. I re-read the ten narratives and addendum lists of issues and arranged those issues in clusters of tentative topic areas. I then drafted a general story which I circulated to several of my colleagues for editing before circulating it to the informants. A third interview was held in person or by phone as I sought the comments of the informants in order to revise and to validate the story. No revisions were required and the validating comments are included at the end of the general story in Chapter XIV.

A further component in the validation of the work has been a review by an expert on sport. Dr. Robert Hindmarch, the Director of Athletics at the University of British Columbia, has been engaged in a career in sports for some thirty-six years and is acquainted with many current and former professional athletes. He is a member of the supervisory committee for this study and his comments are included at the end of Chapter XIV.

The specific procedures relative to the informants,
interviews, and analysis evolved according to the principle of reflexivity as the research progressed.

**Description of Informants**

A non-probability sampling technique was employed in this study. The selection of informants was determined by such general factors as relevant experience, approachability, availability, and willingness to participate in the study. In addition, because the study has sought to explore the richness of this transitional experience, some diversity was sought in terms of type of sport background and reasons for withdrawal. Thus, to a large extent, informants were sampled opportunistically, according to my ability to gain access to them. That access was derived from the following sources: the contacts of Dr. Bob Hindmarch, the U.B.C. Athletic Director and member of the research committee for this study; the Vancouver 'Canucks' Hockey Club; The B.C. Jockey Club; my personal contacts; and the referrals of other informants.

In consultation with my research advisors, we decided to select informants who had distinctly different backgrounds in terms of type of sport, either team or individual. We decided to seek four informants from each of the sports of ice hockey and thoroughbred horse racing because we assumed that there would be a sufficient supply of informants readily available from these sports. In addition, two test cases were sought, resulting in the inclusion of a former player from football and one from racquetball. Thus, a total of ten informants were included in the study.
Selection of the particular individuals was determined by my own judgement, guided by the five minimal requirements of a good informant suggested by Spradley (1979, p. 46): 1. Thorough enculturation is defined as at least a year of full-time involvement with a cultural scene. The specific cultural scene considered in this study was that of the former professional athlete. While it is recognized that a considerable debate may be engaged over the definition of a 'professional', the definition used in this study is simply the common understanding of a full-time career athlete. 2. Current involvement for this study was originally defined as the period between approximately three and five years following termination of the sports career. This period was chosen because I assumed that this time frame would be sufficient for former athletes to have begun to establish themselves in more permanent second careers, perhaps following several short-term explorations of various occupations. Furthermore, I assumed that this period would provide optimal opportunity for reflection in that the informants would be neither too close nor too distant to the experience and would thereby be able to more accurately describe the full experience of transition. 3. Involvement with an unfamiliar cultural scene was assured because very few people experience a career in sport and the subsequent termination of that career. 4. Adequate time to participate in the study, an obvious requirement of the informants, included the possibility of three two-hour interviews, plus
time for reflection. 5. Informants were required to be both analytical and non-analytical in their descriptions of their experiences. Spradley (1979) has explained that informants can be very helpful in analyzing their own experience and culture, "provided it is always from the perspective of the insider" (p. 53), but they can be very unhelpful if they attempt to assist the ethnographer by providing analyses which draw on their understandings of psychology and the social sciences. The informants of this study maintained their perspectives as insiders.

I encountered difficulty in finding informants who met the time guidelines, noted in point two above, regarding the elapsed time since the conclusion of their careers. However, because my prime concern was to include informants who could illuminate the experience, I was flexible in the selection of informants according to this guideline. This flexibility is appropriate to this study because research on this topic has not yet reached a stage of theoretical formulation. As Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) have noted:

In the early phases of generating theory, which cases are chosen for investigation may not matter greatly. Later on in the process of developing and testing theory it may come to take on considerable importance (p. 45).

Given the quality of the information provided by the informants, I believe that my decision was worthwhile.

In large part, specific decisions about who to talk to, just as what to ask, what to record, and what was relevant, were determined by the information and ideas that were
generated as the research progressed. Nevertheless, there were three major dimensions along which sampling occurred: time, people, and context (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983).

Time: As noted above, informants were drawn from those former professional athletes whose career termination was reasonably current, allowing a time frame which would facilitate recall and reflection on the termination experience. The period under investigation is bounded loosely by the commencement of each individual's career path in athletics and by the final interview of this study.

People: The informants were those people personally involved with the experience, former professionals who were available for the study. Availability was influenced by such factors as their willingness to participate, their residence within the Lower Mainland of the province of British Columbia, and my personal access to them. Descriptive information about these people has been outlined in Appendix C.

In addition to these primary informants, certain subsidiary informants who had special knowledge or perspectives on this experience were incorporated. These informants were family members of some of the athletes in this study.

Of those potential informants who were introduced to the study, two were not included because others with more recent experience accepted involvement and three declined participation. Significantly, other informants provided
information which suggested that those who had declined participation had experiences which were particularly difficult or stressful. The reluctance of these individuals to participate in the study reflects the problems which other researchers using quantitative methodologies have encountered. In those studies the experiences of these people would be totally absent. However, in this study my informants were able to offer some information and ideas about the experiences of other people who were not participant in the investigation.

Context: Two contrasting contexts were specifically sought in this study, those of team and individual sports. In addition, a variety of personal contexts were apparent because of the diversity in individual life histories. For example, there was a range in experience and duration of athletic career, a diversity of interests and experiences in alternate careers, a variety of family and social networks, and a variety of reasons for leaving sport. The general context for the interviews was usually a one-on-one relationship between researcher and informant. Those general contexts have been described in each individual case narrative.

The role of the participants in this study has been to inform, to provide life histories, descriptions of their experiences with the event of withdrawal from professional sport. Because the ethnographic interview regards the informant as the authority on his experiences, the informants
had the responsibility for the production of relevant data and valid interpretations of that information. The informants acted as "highly effective research assistants" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, p. 188), reporting relevant data. In addition, the reflexive nature of the study required the informants to be involved in analysis of both their experience and the narrative which I prepared as my translated description of what they had told me.

In order for this process to take place, the informants were invited to enter a dialogue about their experiences. As Mischler (1986b) has said:

> If we wish to hear respondents' stories then we must invite them into our work as collaborators, sharing control with them, so that together we try to understand what their stories are about (p. 249).

The foundation of this dialogue was the relationship, the trust and rapport established between myself and the informant. This required some risk on the behalf of the informants because athletes are frequently subjected to the ill-informed judgments of others and, from their experiences with the press, they know how easily their words can be misinterpreted and misrepresented. The inclusion of the validation process was an important step in providing a safeguard for the informants and in demonstrating respect and regard for their experiences.

The development of the relationship was my responsibility. Here, my personal experience and professional training as a counsellor were an asset. As Van Hesteren (1986) has noted:
It is argued that the therapeutic orientation can be a decided asset in carrying out human science research. Counsellors and therapists, and perhaps particularly those with a person centred/existential orientation, are well equipped to establish a climate of trust that encourages an individual to fully tell his/her life story and to openly explore and make sense of life experiences (pp. 215-216).

This therapeutic orientation is also an asset in the care and consideration for the well-being of informants because, when informants begin committing their lives to record, they may experience some change of outlook which leads them to reassess their lives from a new perspective (Watson & Watson-Franke, 1985, pp. 2-3). This was typical of the experience of my informants because this study was the first time that they had reflected in a formal way upon either their careers, their transitions, or their current life circumstances.

Interviews

This study incorporated three unstructured, audio-taped interviews plus several brief telephone conversations with each of the informants. The extent and duration of these interviews varied with the informant and was influenced by such factors as the rapport between myself and informant, the nature of the informant's experience, the informant's willingness and ability to talk, and the informant's perceptiveness. The nature of this personal contact was important to the study. Mischler (1986a) has stated:

The one-shot interview conducted by an interviewer without local knowledge of a respondent's life situation and following a standard schedule that explicitly excludes attention to particular circumstances - in short, a meeting between two strangers unfamiliar with each other's "socially organized contexts" of meaning - does not provide
the necessary contextual basis for adequate interpretation (p. 24).

Thus, the personal contact in this study provided opportunities to build relationships between myself and the informants and to share contextual understandings.

The first interview with each informant involved the establishment of a relationship and the gathering of information regarding the experience. This interview typically began with the exchange of pleasantries, an introduction of myself which included information on my background and interest in the study, a review of the letter describing the project, Appendix D, discussion of any informant concerns, and completion of the consent form, Appendix E.

The issue of confidentiality was addressed. I reminded each informant that it was important for me to hear as much detail about his experience as possible and so, if there was information that he would prefer not to make public, it would be helpful to the study if he would share that information with me in confidence. Each informant expressed his comfort with this request and the guarantee of his editorial rights in regard to the write-up. In some cases informants did choose to speak in confidence and to edit minor parts of the write-up, resulting in revisions which presented the general issue or concern which was relevant to the study without mentioning personal details or referring to others by name. All of the informants were comfortable having their own names included within their stories.
Informants were invited to describe their experiences in three broad chronological phases of the inquiry: general development of the sports career, decision to withdraw, and subsequent experience. This invitation was extended in words similar to the following:

I am doing a study to understand the experience of leaving professional sport. People often have different reactions to transitional experiences such as this. I will be asking you some questions about your own experience of leaving your sports career. First, I would like you tell me a little bit about your career - how you got started, what excited you about the career, what you found challenging. Next, I would like you to think back to the time when it first occurred to you that your career was reaching an end. I would like you to describe this experience in as much detail as possible, as if you were telling me a story. That is, I would like to hear how the end of your sports career came about, how you re-established yourself in another career, and what occurred in the middle.

The objective of the first interview was to gather as much information as possible about the experiences of the informant. Questions were largely open-ended, although some were targeted for clarification or expansion of the individual's ideas or experience, as well as comparison with the literature and the experiences of other informants. The specific questions asked of informants varied according to the dialogue but some were common, based on concerns arising from the literature. Examples are: 1. How did you view yourself and others during your experience? 2. How do you view (think about, feel about) your experience now? 3. Would you consider this to have been a negative or traumatic experience? 4. How difficult has it been to adjust to a new lifestyle? 5. Have you experienced a sense of loss or a
The second interview was used to validate a draft narrative which I had prepared from my notes and a transcript of the audio-tape of the first interview. This interview also clarified and expanded the individual's description according to any other ideas, information, or questions which either I or the informant were able to bring to the dialogue. The third interview was used to validate the general story, to ensure that it included a valid depiction of the individual's experience.

Analysis and description

Analysis is not a distinct stage of ethnographic research. It begins prior to data collection, as the research questions are formulated, and proceeds through to the final write-up. In large part, "it is embodied in the ethnographer's ideas, hunches, and emergent concepts" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, p. 174). It is a continuous process throughout the research and is guided by the principle of reflexivity, which recognizes that:

all social research takes the form of participant observation: it involves participating in the social world, in whatever role, and reflecting on the products of that participation (p. 16).

To be a reflexive researcher, the ethnographer must remain self-conscious as an author. Accordingly, I strove to adopt positions which varied between involvement and detachment, writing and reviewing from the perspectives of empathic listener and objective observer.
Ethnographic analysis and reflexivity is conducted through a process of triangulation, whereby data from a variety of sources are compared. In this study, these sources included the literature, myself, the transcripts of the informants' interviews, the descriptions of the experiences of other informants, and the informants themselves. The informants assessed both the descriptions of their personal experiences and the general description. This final critique or validation by the informants was particularly valuable because:

participants involved in the events documented in the data may have access to additional knowledge of the context - of other relevant events, of thoughts they had or decisions they made at the time, for example - that is not available to the ethnographer (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, p. 196). Thus, validation by the informants not only confirmed the accuracy of the initial description but added new information as the informants gained trust and respect for my work and thought of additional content.

Because one intent of this research was to gather useful information, that is, information which may be helpful to the informants, other athletes, and the wider society who may also face career termination, a major feature of the analysis was to identify those experiences or events which may be classified as either facilitating or hindering to human agency. Mandelbaum (1982, p. 148) has recommended a means of ordering data prior to analysis of a life history: noting the dimensions or aspects of a person's life; the principal turnings and the life conditions between turnings; and the
person's characteristic means of adaptation. A list of those events which I perceived to have been facilitating or hindering in the experience of each informant was presented to the respective informants for validation.

The strategy for the analysis was to read and re-read the transcripts, identifying and coding the various topics discussed in the interviews. These topics were then organized into five chronological stages of experience: 1. athletic career development; 2. anticipation of withdrawal; 3. withdrawal; 4. transition; and 5. new career development. By utilizing this chronological organization, a consistent strategy for analysis of the data, a complete and adequate description of each informant's experience emerged. These descriptions sometimes added a different perspective or rounded-out the points of view of the informants because the analysis considered data which was in addition to the individual informant's transcript or raw description of experience. Nevertheless, the informants' own words were used as much as possible to convey a greater sense of their personal stories and characters.

The adequacy of these descriptions was determined by the principles noted by Sullivan (1984). An adequate account: 1. is negotiated between the researcher and the informant so that the informant is able to identify himself within the account. This does not mean that the researcher and informant must agree on every point, but discrepancies in the account should be noted in order to give "the reader a chance
to be part of the judgmental process" (p.146). 2. presents itself as an argument or plausible interpretation. Part of the argument is that the interpretation has practical significance, particularly in the "specification of a praxis of freedom" (p.147). 3. expresses an emancipatory praxis. This critical interpretation should have "the practical significance of enhancing human freedom" (p.147). The account should both interpret and suggest change by: a. showing how the immediate social and material conditions that determine the social world are mediated through the agency of actors, and b. showing how taken-for-granted self-understandings are socially mediated and may be otherwise. 4. is critical. Social scientific accounts are resymbolizations of an experience and not simply reiterations of the point of view of those who are interpreted. This resymbolization adds to the perspective, expands the scope of its horizons, by bringing something new to the situation. The critical account should accomplish two objectives:

First, in resymbolizing the world of others, it should sensitively reflect back to them and others their capacities and powers for intentional intervention. This expands the scope of freedom in a positive direction by naming those powers. Second, it also draws attention to the liabilities or impediments (both internal and external) to human agency (p.149).

These issues were addressed in discussions with the informants regarding aspects of their experiences which might have been changed if they had preferences. Furthermore, informants were asked to consider recommendations for others
who might be faced with similar experiences.

Regarding the final write-up of the research, Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) have noted:

there is no one approach to the organization of an ethnographic text that has unquestioned superiority over all others, and that can be recommended as a sure-fire guarantee of success (p. 230).

The final write-up often involves a conflict between the scientific worry about being insufficiently detached and the humanistic worry about being insufficiently engaged. As Geertz (1988) has explained:

Finding somewhere to stand in a text that is supposed to be at one and the same time an intimate view and a cool assessment is almost as much of a challenge as gaining the view and making the assessment in the first place (p. 10).

Ethnographers, myself included, frequently experience a pervasive nervousness about the process of writing the final report because "The gap between engaging others where they are and representing them where they aren't...has become extremely visible" (p. 130).

Nevertheless, the objective of the research was to create a heavily descriptive account, involving the selection and interpretation of the significant features of the experience. Hammersley and Atkinson have acknowledged that:

such accounts can be of great value. They may provide us with knowledge of ways of life hitherto unknown and thereby shake our assumptions about the parameters of human life or challenge our stereotypes (p. 176).

To meet this objective, I wrote a general story, a structured narrative of the experience.

According to Sarbin (1986), a narrative or story is:
a symbolized account of actions of human beings that has a temporal dimension...a beginning, a middle, and an ending...The story is held together by recognizable patterns of events called plots. Central to the plot structure are human predicaments and attempted resolutions (p. 3).

Stories are helpful descriptors of human experience because they present relevant contextual information and organize human action. Thus, the diverse experiences of the ten individual informants of this study have been synthesized into a general story, but one with turning points for varying plots.

Creating this general story was the most difficult and challenging part of the project as I tried to arrange diverse data in a fashion which was orderly yet demonstrated individual variation, as well as being sufficiently detailed, yet concise. I had read the individual narratives several times throughout the project, identifying specific, significant experiences. I gathered these experiences together and clustered them according to apparent themes or commonalities in experience. My first attempt at writing a general story was spectacularly unsuccessful because it lacked meaningful, critical organization.

The second attempt was guided by Cochran (1986): "the basic organizing principle of a story is a gap between two poles" (p. 13). This story comprises the gap between disruption of the sport career and establishment in another career. In the middle are attempts at resolution of the difficulty. The second attempt was a significant improvement over the first draft but the themes lacked clarity and
definition. I then re-worked the themes, merging some and separating others according to the actions of the informants, a process which led to the general story. Thus, this story begins with the recognition of the impending withdrawal from professional sport. The middle involves mobilizing resources in preparation for withdrawal from sport as well as action to launch a new career. And the story ends with the establishment and acceptance of a new career and new roles in life.

The next step was to seek external criticism. Accordingly, several student colleagues, my wife, and my research advisor were asked to review the story with regard to clarity, logic, and chain of evidence or argument. Their comments and observations gave me ideas and information which helped me to eliminate redundancies and to sharpen and amplify various points. The general story was then submitted to the individual informants for the same scrutiny they had given to their individual narratives.

Issues

The major issues or tests which confront case studies, or any other type of social science investigation, concern validity and reliability. In addressing these issues, it is important to remember that this research is a qualitative work, with research objectives which differ from those studies in which quantitative methodologies are more appropriate. Yin (1984) has listed and explained the specific case study tests which are appropriate for dealing
with these issues: construct validity, internal validity, external validity, and reliability.

The test of construct validity determines the soundness of an account or the adequacy of a description through the establishment of correct operational measures for the concepts being studied. Yin (1984) has identified three case study tactics for this issue. The first is the use of multiple sources of evidence, addressed in this study by the procedure known as triangulation. The second tactic is the involvement of informants in reviewing the draft case study report, a procedure which in this study was an on-going process through data collection and write-up because my interpretations were reviewed by the informants. The third tactic is the establishment of a chain of evidence which was addressed in this study by linking inferences directly with the collected data.

According to Hammersley and Atkinson (1983), the first requirement of social research is fidelity to the phenomena under study. In this type of interpretive study, the researcher is, in fact, very much a part of the research because of the background and perspective he brings to the study (Agar, 1980). As Van Hesteren (1986) has noted "the personal experience of the researcher constitutes a legitimate, necessary, and meaning-enhancing dimension of the qualitative data base" (p. 208). Thus, this research reflects my own experience as well as the informants. Accordingly, in each individual narrative I have described my
perceptions in working with the informants.

This study has sought understanding by examining and interpreting different, sometimes conflicting, perspectives on an experience. A social scientific account, such as this study, typically offers a different perspective from the points of view of the individual informants because it incorporates the principle of triangulation, through which additional information, such as the perspectives of other informants, the researcher, and selected literature, are considered in the description. To adjudicate these multiple perspectives, this work conforms with the conditions of an adequate account, involving negotiation of descriptions with informants (Sullivan, 1984).

To provide a sound description, the case study narrative must be well constructed, clearly emerging from the evidence at hand, rather than a simple recitation of dubious inferences. Thus, both the individual case narratives and the general story involve frequent references to the specific experiences of individual informants.

The second test, that of *internal validity*, is not appropriate to this study. Yin (1984) has noted that concern for internal validity, the establishment of causal relationships whereby certain conditions are shown to lead to other conditions as opposed to spurious relationships, is appropriate for explanatory or causal studies only and not for descriptive or exploratory studies such as this investigation.
The third test is that of external validity, the establishment of the domain to which the study's findings may be generalized. Case studies are often inappropriately criticized for their lack of generalizability to universes. Such criticism is relevant for statistical generalization in which information from a correctly selected statistical sample may be readily generalized to a larger universe. Case studies are not concerned with this actuarial notion of relating ideas to wider populations. Rather, case studies are concerned with analytical generalization, the use of logic to describe ideas and experiences. Each case is an analogue, providing a test for other accounts and leading toward a more adequate conceptualization, a deeper understanding of an experience. Likewise, the general story presented in this research is one account or understanding of the experience of withdrawing from professional sport.

The fourth test is that of reliability, described by Yin (1984) as the demonstration that the operations of a study can be repeated and yield the same results. The possibility of replicating this study exists because the informants have allowed their names to be published in this document. However, Yin's definition of reliability is not quite appropriate for this study because it is likely that different researchers would have access to different informants. Even if the informants were the same, the relationships between researcher and informant would likely be different and, as Agar (1980) has noted, it is likely that
different ethnographers might disagree in fundamental ways about the description of similar groups or experiences. Furthermore, as Rosenwald (1988) has commented, repetability "counts for very little because a particular (interview) protocol may subsequently be consulted from entirely unforeseen vantage points" (p. 260). Thus, the determination of reliability in this study will not depend on replicability.

Rather, the reliability for this study assumes the meaning of trustworthiness, the reflection of experience in an honest and accurate manner. This requires the researcher to explicitly acknowledge his assumptions, biases, and perspective. Giorgi (1975) has maintained that:

By means of this procedure he is able to communicate to other researchers the attitude that he assumes with respect to his descriptions. The point here is not so much that other attitudes cannot be assumed, they can. Rather, the claim is that if any other researcher assumes the attitude described by the researcher, then he should be able to perceive and understand the same meanings. One does not necessarily have to agree, but one must understand what he is disagreeing about (p. 78).

My own experiences with sport and career termination have been noted earlier in this chapter and, in each case narrative, I have described my understanding of the relationships I have had with the informants. The particular perspective I have tried to bring to this work is that of a critical appraisal, seeking to identify those issues and events which influence the experience of withdrawal from an athletic career. In addition, I have striven to maintain a 'quest' orientation, considered by Van Hesteren (1986) as a
requirement of human science research and described as:

an open-minded, broad-horizontal perspective of self in the world, a need to question and to explore the unfamiliar, and a strong motive force to confront and to work through existential issues and questions of meaning (p. 211).

In order to assist others in following and understanding this investigation, I have recorded and described the research as it has developed and unfolded. I have systematically recorded such items as the opportunities which arose, the procedures followed, the decisions regarding who and how many informants to involve, the experience of accumulating and questioning evidence, and the insights or issues which arose as the evidence was gathered.

The essence of ethnographic research is to gain detailed descriptions of experience which add information and contribute to our understanding. As Geertz (1988) has said, the basis of ethnographic work is that it is a literary enterprise which has the:

capacity to persuade readers...that what they are reading is an authentic account by someone personally acquainted with how life proceeds in some place, at some time, among some group (p. 143).

I trust that the readers of this document will be persuaded that the procedures I have followed in this study have resulted in a rigorous study involving the assessment and description of information which is relevant and informative to the topic.
CHAPTER IV

CASE 1 - DAVID HINDMARCH - HOCKEY PLAYER

On December 16, 1983, Calgary Flames left-winger David Hindmarch crashed into the goal in a game with the home team Vancouver Canucks. Although it seemed unlikely at the time, that was the last professional game Dave would play. Just over a year and a half later, following surgery to both knees and months of painful and frustrating rehabilitation, it became apparent that Dave would not be able to return to his former level of strength and ability. Faced with the inevitability of being unable to perform to his former capacity, Dave decided to retire from his five-year old professional career in September of 1985.

Describing himself as 'a little bit shy', Dave is an unassuming, thoughtful, and articulate thirty-year old who was born on October 15, 1958. His reminiscences on his hockey experience are filled with consideration and respect for both the game and the people involved. He has a broad perspective on both his own career and hockey in general. Dave might feel uncomfortable viewing his career as unique or different from those of his colleagues.

Involvement with hockey came easily. The Hindmarch family has an athletic tradition. Dave's parents have a long history of athletic participation, particularly Dave's father, a former collegiate athlete who has built a career as a university coach, professor of physical education, and athletic administrator. Dave really admired the athletic
ability of his older brother who, despite pursuing an academic career as an electrical engineer, served as a model. Dave's love of sports and physical activity was encouraged and supported by his family. Hockey was a great opportunity for him because, "mother always told me I was a little bit shy when I was younger, but that (hockey) was something for me to really channel my energy (into) and I really found a lot of enthusiasm for the physical aspect of the game."

Unlike the stereotype of the young, aspiring athlete with a heart set on playing professionally, Dave's early career seems to have been almost a surprise, evolving through a simple love of playing the game. "When I went from midget, I thought that Junior (he played for the Kerrisdale 'Couriers' in the last year of high school) was going to be a big challenge and I was just happy to be on the team, but I ended up doing quite well there. And the same was true when I went to the University of Alberta (for three years) because, with Claire Drake as a coach there...he certainly had built an outstanding tradition in hockey in the collegiate level in Alberta, so again, I was just happy to make the team and then to struggle to get on it, and it seemed that things took off for me again there. And the same thing with the Olympic team. I've never really looked too much farther than the season and the day that I was in and, in that sense, I guess you could say that I didn't have long-term goals. My goals were really more short-term."

By working hard and concentrating on the task at hand,
each step seemed to fall into place without direct planning. "I think that I was lucky in a sense. I had some excellent tutors along the way and I think that was a key. Just the education I got in hockey from some of the people that I was involved with from early on right through really helped me, in a sense, make those steps easier but...these steps did fall into place because I concentrated on the one step that I was taking...I didn't look much further. It just seemed to happen and I really concentrated on just what was happening at the time."

Although Dave says that he had "no big aspirations" in hockey, one major objective stands out. "What I really wanted to achieve was to make it to the Olympic team and be a part of the Canadian team. And going to the Olympics was a high goal that I set in hockey." This Canadian team was very special to Dave. When the Olympics were finished in February of 1980, the N.H.L. Calgary 'Flames', who had drafted him two years earlier, phoned to ask him to try out for the remainder of the professional season. This offer was turned down because Dave wanted to rejoin the Canadian team to play in the European Cup in Sweden.

Dave had given little thought to a professional career. "I can honestly say that earlier on I had no aspirations of turning professional...I can still remember to this day when I did get drafted and I didn't even know it. And I came home that night, my dad was still up and he said, 'you got drafted', and I basically didn't know what it meant." The
professional league held no mystique for Dave. "I think that I never really put professional above what I was doing. I just looked at it (as) a different category rather than a different level."

This seeming indifference to a professional career stemmed from a set of biases which were born of a broad perspective on the sport. "I found it a little bit ludicrous that the season was so long and you never really got a chance, it would seem to me, to develop as a hockey player...to practice what you could", in order to meet the player's potential. Furthermore, "I thought that some of the ways that people are treated in professional ranks didn't really lend itself for people to grow and enhance their actual person. I think that maturity, and especially maturity in sport, is always gained through progressive development." The restricted and, perhaps, inhibited opportunities for personal and athletic development, "took a little bit of the fun of the sport away."

The problem with professional hockey is that people see only the superficial aspects of the game. The illusion masks the underlying details. "I think...people see a lot of the image and not much of the substance. The substance being that there is a lot of bad things that happen and there's a lot of tragic stories in hockey. You don't see those. Those aren't the players that you see in the limelight. Those are the players who are either sent down or after their careers are over. When I was in the minors for the first two years,
professionally, I think I saw some of the tragic stories. Tragic in the sense that you get caught in a cycle that you can't get out of and (I) felt sorry (for those guys who) couldn't make a step into something else."

Despite this somewhat cynical perspective on the professional game, in the fall of 1980, Dave began his professional career with the N.H.L. 'Flames' organization, which had recently moved to Calgary from Atlanta. He had accepted a two-way contract which provided two different salaries, depending on whether he made the senior, N.H.L. team or was sent to the farm team, a minor league team in Birmingham, Alabama. Unsure of his expectations of a professional career, "I'm not sure if I had expectations. I always find that any expectation brings disappointment so, I tend not to promote or expect too much of the future", Dave wasn't quite prepared for the next step in his hockey life. "I got called into the office. They were very happy with my camp and they wanted me to stay around, in the minors! This was the first time I'd never made a team in my life and so... it was pretty tough. And trying to get down to Alabama, you know, where's Alabama and what does it have to do with hockey?"

Dave has put this experience into perspective: "I think that I went in a little naive to the system. I thought that you go to camp and the best players make the team. It just doesn't happen that way. And the politics, like anything else, when you get into big business its stronger, and money
talks. The players who signed big contracts are going to be there, because they have to justify why they're making that money to the owners...nobody likes to be proven to be an idiot in signing players. If the guy beside you is making twice as much money or has a one-way contract and you have a two-way contract, you can rest assured that, if your performance is similar, he's gonna be there and it doesn't matter how good of a camp you've had. The first year I was the last one cut and the fact that I was a college player, they weren't sure I could take the rigors of a long season."

Always a competitor, Dave accepted the challenge to prove his merit. The N.H.L., with its high calibre play and high salaries, is "where you want to be and that is where everybody is working to get." There is fierce competition to get into the N.H.L., "and that's one of the things people don't understand as they look at the t.v. and say 'I want to play in the N.H.L.'...they don't realize that for one guy that makes it there are a hundred or a thousand guys fighting and scratching to get to that position." Being cut from the 'Flames' increased Dave's determination to do his best to make the team. He realized that in the minors "you have to make your mark quickly...I knew I wanted to get back up and it wasn't a matter of saying, 'oh well, I'm gonna get there next year.' I'm gonna work hard here and every game so that at the end of it, if it doesn't work out, at least I can say that I worked my butt off."

Making a mark in the minors can be easy, but there is a
lot of social pressure which can either seduce or destroy the young athlete. "It's easy because a lot of the players who get sent down are going to be 'lifers' - they used to call them 'lifers' down there. They're in the minors and they're not going to come back up. It's easy to get down to their level and not work harder in practice or in the game but just kind of go through the motions and make your life down in the minors...It's easy to make your life down (there)...It's pretty good money, it'll get you through the year living a pretty good lifestyle and, you keep doing that year after year, and some of those guys, they know they've had their chance. They know they're never going to get back up and so, they don't want to see somebody else working harder than them...but if you want to get back up, you have to break out of that. At times it's hard, on some teams it's very hard, depending on how many 'lifers' they have down there because they can make it difficult." Dave was fortunate in that the team he was sent to comprised a lot of rookies, young athletes who had not yet learned to ease up on their efforts.

This two year initiation to professional hockey through an apprenticeship in the minor leagues was an opportunity for Dave to gain maturity and broaden his understanding of the career. "I think the nice thing for me was going to the minors so I could get a perspective for things when I did come up (to the N.H.L.) because I think a lot of the young draft picks, eighteen, nineteen years old...don't know the whole cycle and how it works. Being down in the minors was really
good for me that way. I think that was a really good development for me, in the sense that I really opened my eyes to a lot of things."

What quickly became apparent was the value of education and the importance of having career alternatives to hockey. For example, the kids who were drafted right out of the junior leagues often had not finished high school because they "had really invested their whole life to become a hockey player." This limitation could be used against athletes because they had little bargaining power. "When they were sent down (to the minors), just to get that next contract or to stay within the system, they virtually would take a lot of abuse." These aren't the players seen on television, making the big money. These are the players who "are making just enough to get by. And what's going to be up for them further down the road? That's the question...because sooner or later they're going to have to make a decision about their lives that they can't stay in the game and make a living because they have families. Those are the people I felt for, in a way, because their whole life had been hockey and they hadn't made the realization yet, that hockey only lasts for so long."

Sooner or later, the athlete has to grow up, to take responsibility for himself, and to make decisions for himself. But, "the game makes it easy for you to stay a kid." The organization, trying to efficiently manage a large group of people, makes decisions for the athlete and takes care of him, preparing travel and accommodation, getting him out of bed,
getting him on the bus and to the game. "You just have to walk out of your hotel room and virtually everything else is done for you. They hang up your equipment for you, they wash everything, they give you the meal money on the road. All those things...you are treated like a little kid...It's very easy to become selfish." This type of pampering environment does not enhance the personal development of the athlete. The individual who allows himself to become dependent on the team organization for direction and personal reinforcement can become vulnerable to the loss of this unrealistic sense of self-importance.

A professional career can be very transient. The athlete is not in charge of his own destiny but is subject to the whims of his 'owners'. "That's the fear you live with in the back of your mind, that one day you'll go to the dressing room and your stall will be empty...or you'll get called in...that's always in the background. I think anytime you approach a sport that's bent on economics, you have to realize that it comes with its own consequences. One of the consequences is that you could be traded, like that. You can be a commodity." A lot of athletes experience 'suitcasing', moving from team to team and up and down the leagues. "You can really be treated like a package, a piece of meat...(but) if you're going to be grabbing at that dollar, that's part of the rules."

The type of treatment a player receives depends upon the nature of the team management as well as how much they think of or like the player. Nevertheless, stories are
abundant and are often told by the older fellows on the team. One such story was of Lanny McDonald, who was traded from Colorado to Calgary on the night the two teams met in competition. He picked up his equipment from one dressing room and walked into the next to introduce himself and, a few minutes later, he was playing against the same guys with whom he had previously shared a dressing room. "Those kind of things, those are hard, those are the realities of the game. Those things happen. They can throw lightning bolts if they want to. If they don't like you, if you get on the wrong side of situations, they can throw pretty hard lightning bolts for sure. They can make your life miserable."

When players don't have the right temperament, the right style of hockey, or the right personality, they get traded, regardless of how settled or happy the player may be. "It happened to Mel Bridgeman, it happened to Phil Russell, (and) Willie Plett who I played with. All those guys were traded because there were personality conflicts or conflicting styles of play, not because they weren't performing. But that's part of the score. They (management) look for the team they want on the ice and if you're not part of that, just as I probably wasn't part of that in the first two years, then you're not there."

When a player is really disliked, the organization has ways of making life very unpleasant for him. "I've seen guys that could play N.H.L. who (were moved, sometimes) not even to the first farm team... (One guy was moved) right out to what
they called the Eastern League. When you were sent there, all the 'zulus' played in that league...the guys would say 'You're going to Nam, you'll get buried there. You're going down to Nam. You're going so far down Hockey News won't be able to find you.' It was true. They sent Brad Kempthorn, my roommate, a (former) junior player, a big lackadaisical guy...they thought he was going to come on, but they really got down on him because he wasn't (a real aggressive, work ethic type)...It was just his style. He was an easygoing type of guy...(The) first year he played with Birmingham, he had lots of ability for their league but, next year, they sent him down to the Eastern League, and I never heard of him again. Not in the sense that he died or anything, he just went to a league where he was at the bottom and he wasn't going up."

These stories and experiences contributed to Dave's increasing understanding of the professional game. Particularly, Kempthorn's experience "left an impression on me because I broke in (to the pros) with him and I roomed with him my first year pro, and I went one way and he went the other, and I asked the question well why?" Although there were probably a lot of contributing factors, one of them was the amount of effort or dedication the players were prepared to put into the game. This reinforced Dave's determination, not only to make the best possible effort he could to prove his value for the N.H.L., but to keep his career in perspective. "I think that I, maybe, walked into professional hockey...with a little bit more of a broader perspective than
a lot of people I played with...(and a willingness to accept
that) there's more to life and there's more you can get out of
life than having to be treated (like) some of the people I saw
(ware) treated. So, I don't think I would ever get myself to
that position. When I looked at their position, I couldn't
help but feel sorry in some sense."

For the athlete who is close to playing in the N.H.L.,
life in the minors can be very hectic. Not only are there a
lot of games and a lot of travel, but the apprentice is always
on call to replace injured N.H.L. players. "You get the call
and you have to go if it's in the middle of the night. I
remember getting called up to (play for) Calgary...and I got
called into L.A. and sat on the bench. They sent me down and
I just got (there when) someone got hurt and I had to come
back up and stayed with them for a week...One time, I really
got run down because I had gone back and forth about three
times. You stay in a hotel and you really get displaced.
Hotel life is alright, but after a week it drags!"

The length of an athlete's apprenticeship in the minors
can have more to do with the make-up and health of the senior
team than with the efforts and ability of the young athlete.
In his first year, Dave had been the last player cut from the
final Calgary roster, but was brought up as replacement
several times during the regular season and for the play-offs.
The next season, management chose to retain the same roster
because they were pleased with the team's performance and
prospects. Dave stayed in the minors, playing on a new farm
team in Oklahoma. As in the previous season, he was called up several times to play for Calgary. That year, the team was eliminated from the play-offs, encouraging management to make changes for the ensuing season and providing Dave a position in the N.H.L.

The move to the senior league was a positive experience for Dave. He even enjoyed the travel, flying to competition and staying in first class hotels, which was an easy transition compared to travel in the minors. The salary was certainly good, "the economic sense was almost laughable", as Dave's salary jumped from the twenty to twenty-five thousand dollar range in the minors to eighty thousand and later, one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars. While Dave considers that there was a certain amount of luck involved in the progress of his career, he firmly believes that "luck is where preparation meets opportunity. I was rewarded for the work I put in. It paid off for me." Although there was a lot of pressure in every game, Dave considered that it was similar to hard work, simply a factor which every athlete has to learn to deal with throughout his career.

Calgary was a good team to be with. Players needed to demonstrate their commitment and prove their value to the team but, once the player had shown that he fit in, he was treated well and could feel more comfortable. Various players had told Dave stories about their conflicts with management, but these were not part of Dave's personal experience with Calgary. "To this day I think that they treated their players
better than anyone else in the league. It filters down from the owners who I think are very classy people. I think they are dedicated people and I think they are warm people. It worked its way all the way down through management...I feel a lot of pride in that organization because I think it has a lot of people with a lot of integrity. I respect that and I feel good being part of that."

Just less than a year and a half after joining the Calgary 'Flames', Dave injured his knees in a game in Vancouver. At the time, the injuries did not appear to be severe but, on return to Calgary, Dave sought an orthoscope examination, minor exploratory surgery to determine the amount of damage to the knees. The verdict was accidentally revealed to Dave by a good friend and team-mate, Tim Hunter, who visited the hospital, unaware that the doctors had yet to tell Dave that surgery was required. "I found out that I was going to be out for the year...that really hit me hard."

Both knees were operated on, leaving Dave confined to "a wheelchair for two and a half-months and crutches for about six weeks and canes for another three to four weeks, before I could just start to walk by myself." The extent of his incapacity struck Dave as he sat alone on New Years Eve. "I couldn't move, my knees were sore, and I was just sitting there in my bed and everyone was gone, and I thought, holy smoke, I've got to go through two months of this...I had to get hold of myself...Just being still and not being able to be physical, not being able to be competitive, really was a hard
mental task for me."

While the first three weeks were particularly frustrating because the knees required absolute rest, Dave was in for a further shock to his self-image when his casts were changed. "I took a measurement of my knee. I put my hand there and I could reach around my whole leg and I thought that he'd (the surgeon) done the wrong operation and transplanted with a Biafran...That was just traumatic. I couldn't believe that it was so deteriorated, just the atrophy was incredible."

With new hinged casts, Dave was able to begin his own rehabilitation therapy through isometric exercises. "Once I could do that I felt like I was doing something and could make a contribution on my part. Before, it was the doctors doing the surgery and I felt like a bit of a lump on a log - helpless." Later still, Dave's father built a ramp down the front stairs. "I was able to wheel outside and I used to... take a stop watch and...go to the bottom of the hill on Olympic Street, which is a good hill, and I'd race against myself to the top. And I used to do that for hours during the days and try to beat my record...when I started, it was about three minutes and a half. I got it down to like a minute and fifteen seconds. I used to just scream up the hill."

While his personal rehabilitation was guided by determination and competition with himself, Dave drew inspiration from others. His parents were supportive, taking him back into their home and converting the dining room into a wheelchair accessible bedroom. His mother, who served him in
many ways, such as cook and chauffeur, "was extremely patient because I think I was extremely agitated and probably not the nicest person to be around at times during that period."

There were other people as well and Dave learned a new appreciation for friends, fans, and others. "It's surprising the kind of letters that people write. Fans, sometimes, or just people who were touched by something that happened to them that was similar and they were going to write and just (be supportive)...I wish to this day that I had answered more of them. There wasn't the time. There was almost a preoccupation with myself to get well and that was the only thing in my life right then."

His experience in the wheelchair taught Dave to view life differently. "Seeing other people in wheelchairs, what they go through, and seeing what it's actually like to try to go to the bathroom in a wheelchair and try to interact with people in a wheelchair. It's almost comical sometimes, I used to wheel along and people would be looking at the sidewalk because they didn't want to look at (me, and I'd say 'hello') and they'd say 'Hi' back, it was almost like they felt good about themselves because they'd said 'hello' to a cripple."

Through his surgery, Dave met a lot of people, both in the hospital and outside, who had a profound influence on him. One of them was an ex-police officer who had been shot and crippled for life. Dave was sitting beside him in the wheelchair section of a Vancouver 'Canucks' game. As Dave squirmed in his wheelchair, trying to reduce the numbness in
his legs, the former policeman commented that the chairs are hard to sit in but that you get used to them after twelve years. "And he didn't say it in a sarcastic way or anything like that, or with any intention of hurting. He just made me realize that I was getting out of this. You know I'd played hockey, I'd played a game that was so much fun...who was I to really sit here and complain and say that...I had hard times come by me."

Nevertheless, the process of rehabilitation was full of emotional ups and downs. Conscious of his vulnerable knees, Dave wanted to make his legs stronger than they had been before the surgery. But, no matter how hard he worked, each time his legs were tested on the Cybex machine, their weakness was recorded. These results were depressing and led Dave in a frantic search for ways to improve his strength. "I'd ask the doctors and ask people around me. I was always seeking new information, new ways to train, new ways to get them to respond."

Calgary had been very patient, allowing Dave to work on his rehabilitation without pressure. However, the need for a decision about Dave's career became apparent. Before the autumn training camp, Dave had his knees tested again and found them wanting. At that point, Dave had been out of professional hockey for nearly two years, a long time to be away from that level of play, and so, he decided to retire. The biggest factor in this decision was his inability to play to his former potential. "If I couldn't play at that level, I
didn't want to play hockey just for the sake of staying in. I had seen too many guys like that...(and) when I really looked at my career, I had met a lot of great people, a lot of friends, had a lot of good experiences and it was time to move on."

Apart from the inability to regain competitive strength, there were other factors which contributed to Dave's decision to retire. The doctors had told him that if he were to injure his knees again, he could be permanently disabled, a threat to his future lifestyle because "down the road I'd like to be able to go out and play catch with my kids and I'd like to be able to do other things in life...there's more to life than just chasing a puck around the rink." Furthermore, there were attractive financial considerations in retiring at this point. Dave was eligible for a substantial disability benefit through the N.H.L. and the Players' Association but, if he were to try to continue his career, he would lose that eligibility after participating in ten games. Given that his legs were not even back to pre-injury condition, the risks in terms of both health and finances were too great.

Despite the apparent logic in Dave's decision to retire, it was not an easy decision because of what he would have to give up. "I love physical competition. I had always thrived on that, the personal, physical challenges." Nevertheless, one of the things Dave had learned from his wheelchair experience was the value of health. He couldn't agree with the idea of total self-sacrifice, "that everything for the
game kind of thing... (such that) after ten years, you scrape yourself off the sidewalk and try to get in the house... I think you've got to look out for yourself because it's easy to be treated as a commodity and they (management) certainly don't have to worry about you down the road. You're the one who has to worry about yourself."

Despite the disappointments and frustrations throughout the period of rehabilitation, Dave developed a broader perspective on his career and his life. "What came out of it was the realization that I really was in the fast lane... a kind of glamour light." As a consequence, Dave came to the personal realization that he could readjust his priorities and his values to make a commitment to make his life more enjoyable. "I looked at it and said I'm gonna get back there and enjoy the little things in life even more so than I ever had before. And I still do to this day. I have no regrets about my hockey career and I think that one of the reasons for that is the experience I went through with my injury."

Whenever Dave starts to feel a little sorry for himself, he remembers the comparative hardships of other people less fortunate than himself. "I constantly remind myself of that and I think that because of that injury, because of the experience I went through, I think it was one of the most positive things that happened, (it) made me develop as a person in my life... it was an enriching experience."

The ability to view his life and his hockey career from a broad perspective has been an asset in Dave's transition to a
new career. "I never made the false assumption that I was
going to be in hockey for the rest of my life. I think that
is made by a lot of people in hockey and I think I look at it
as...a positive experience...a chance, an opportunity in life
to move on. In some way, I think that it was an easier
decision for me than for other people." The money, the
glamour, the public attention, and the pampering by management
are features of the career which some players find hard to
give up. "It's very easy to become selfish in those
situations and it's difficult to step out of that environment
...The guys who are stars have a lot more dramatic of an
adjustment to make than maybe people who...have just been in
it for three or four years...it can be tough to step out of
such a cycle."

The transition was relatively easy for Dave because he
viewed the career with a kind of humorous cynicism. "I always
used to laugh at...how disproportional the value of
professional sport really was." Dave views professional sport
as entertainment, with an over emphasis on glamour and style
and a lack of attention to substance. He is very aware of the
brevity of professional careers. The average duration of a
professional hockey career is about four and a half years.
Even a real veteran, still in the game at age thirty-two, has
at least half of his life yet to live after he leaves hockey.
Dave has loved and enjoyed the game, but considers that there
are many other more important events in life.

In developing his perspective, Dave was assisted and
influenced by important people in his life. His parents were influential, as was his brother, who always seemed to find humour in events. Two coaches were particularly influential, Father Bauer, of the National Team, and Claire Drake, of the University of Alberta. Dave considers himself lucky because he "had some really good tutors of the game. Good tutors in the sense that they were educators and not...selfish, (looking) at hockey as for them. They looked at hockey with a little wider perspective." Through this wider perspective, Dave was able to "understand a little bit more about the game, what it meant to me in my life, and to examine some of those questions more than possibly some of the other people."

Dave is very conscious of the fact that the termination of his career was his choice. He was not forced to leave his career and does not feel traumatized by the experience. "I had the freedom of choice, I don't think it was traumatic ...I'm (not) going to phase out the rest of my life." The hockey career was an enriching experience but, Dave's fondest memories have little to do with his professional experience. "I love the game, I enjoyed it, but...I enjoyed the Olympic year probably more than any year. I enjoyed my collegiate years. I enjoyed being on the ice with two other guys and just playing slapstick hockey because that's what it's all about...playing pickup...just going out and playing two on two...that was fun, that was what I enjoyed...That's what I think about when I think about hockey. I think about friends and I think about the times that were unstructured...
Sometimes (sport) becomes so structured (that) the component of spontaneity and fun is not there like it is in play... That's when you really enjoy it." Dave was very aware that professional hockey was a job, tailored to "economic rationality", with a set of rules and requirements which limited the joy he had found in the game.

While the transition to retirement was easy for Dave, other people in his life may have had more difficulty. For example, Dave's father, Bob, reported that during the year following Dave's retirement, he had an unusually low interest in following the progress of the N.H.L. season because he no longer had any direct, personal involvement with the league.

The one significant loss that Dave has felt in leaving his professional career is the contact with his former teammates. "I think one of the things you miss is that you have...twenty brothers on a team and when you move off a team, when you've spent so much time with people like that, I tend to miss that." But, at the same time, Dave is well aware of other avenues of building and maintaining friendships. New friends can be made through involvement in new fields of endeavour and old friends can be maintained through different roles and relationships. Dave particularly values the continuing social and business relationships he has with former teammates who, like himself, have adopted new roles and careers in life. Furthermore, he also appreciates the efforts of the Calgary 'Flames' management to remember him and, sometimes, to include him in activities. For example, in
1987, the team flew Dave to Calgary in order for him to participate in a golf tournament and, more recently, they sent him his team jersey, an item which they could have easily sold to the hockey public. Thus, the relationships which are forged through shared endeavours can be maintained through the efforts of both the individual and the team organization.

At the time of his retirement, Dave had a plan for his immediate future, as well as a new career goal. "Education ...was always something that I wanted to finish. I don't think I put in the amount...(of) time and commitment...when I was playing hockey...I had wanted to go to U.B.C. and I've always wanted to make my home back in Vancouver, so I headed back...to university." Apart from furthering his own education, Dave has been motivated by a desire to contribute to others just as his mentors had contributed to his own development. "Deep down I knew that I always wanted to teach ...When I was on my way up, and when I had difficulties, one of the reasons...I was able to have success...(was) the help I got from people along the way. Those people made a commitment to people as human beings, not just as hockey players...(I wanted) to give back, to give somebody else the opportunities that I had. Maybe in some small way, I thought that maybe the cycle could complete itself."

Upon his return to university, Dave took on a new role in hockey, that of coach. For a year and a half, he coached a local midget team before assuming the position of assistant coach to the varsity U.B.C. 'Thunderbirds'. Dave has a lot of
respect for university hockey. "I think that the collegiate level is one of the best leagues to be involved in. It lends itself to people who...have a balance in...education and hockey...And I think that it diversifies a person...having to haul to school plus playing hockey tends to give people a little bit of character."

Coaching has not been without frustration because, working on the bench during games "you don't get to release some of the tension...(That) has been a change for me, although I really enjoy it because its been a bit of a challenge for me to be successful, to get the most out of myself in that area." The aspect Dave enjoys the most is the teaching part of coaching, "working one on one with people... (is) a lot of fun because you meet a lot of quality people...I think I can share experiences with them and they can probably benefit from it."

Following the experience of terminating his professional career, Dave has some advice for others who are likely to be in a similar position in the future. "The biggest thing is not to leave it with resentment...It's easy to leave the game with resentment. I think you have to examine...yourself, examine the reasons why you are leaving with resentment... Different people go into the game with different values and different priorities. I think it's important that you examine the ones that are important to you and really ask what is important to you in your life and to realize that hockey's not the end of your life. Even if you're the luckiest player
in the N.H.L., you're not going to be playing past thirty-five. So, you've got lots of life left...It's easy sometimes to blame our failures on other people, instead of looking at ourselves and being more self-critical. (Take) on personal responsibility for your own actions and realize that each action comes with something negative, but it also comes with something positive."

Dave has emphasized the importance of taking control of one's own career, choosing to leave at a time which is right for the individual, and having a further goal. "Get involved in other things off the ice. Become more involved with other careers...business, some type of love or hobby that you really enjoy and pursue those things...just pursue some things other than hockey. Start to establish those things early. On top of that, I would stress to keep your education going. It just leaves so many doors open and that's something that you can fall back on...Two or three courses during the year, even if its just finishing up high school for the junior guys, or upgrading your grades so that when you do finish pro you can get into an institution or college...Maintain options. Leave as many doors open as possible. Take a hard look at yourself, what things do (you) really enjoy and pursue those things."

In the second session, Dave offered a few corrections and extensions to the draft write-up and included the following remarks of validation: "I think you did a really good job. I like the way you write...all of it is how I feel. I'm used to things going in the paper, when I was playing, and they would
basically take some words and scramble it and come up with anything they wanted...(Here), it's nice to see your own words, your own thoughts, flow in a direction that you feel they went...There's a lot of attention to detail...You have an idea of what the person thinks and not just coming up with a sensational thing or a storyline that's gonna get other people to read it...I enjoyed reading it, especially with the time difference (between interviews)...there was a lot of detail which I'd forgotten."
CHAPTER V

CASE 2 — STEVE CLIPPINGDALE — HOCKEY PLAYER

Although Steve Clippingdale's retirement from professional sport in 1980 is not as recent as those experiences anticipated in the research strategy, it has been included because it provides two new perspectives. First, the majority of Steve's career was spent in the minor leagues and second, Steve is currently in transition to yet another career. It is ironic that this discussion about Steve's retirement from professional hockey at age twenty-four took place soon after he had terminated his post-hockey career. Steve had left his second career just two months earlier and this transition has involved "probably a harder adjustment than when I quit hockey because I'm used to having a large income and lots of security and more money than I know what to do with."

The interviews were conducted in the downtown Vancouver office of his newly acquired computer software franchise company. Our first session was punctuated by important telephone calls as Steve was trying to both raise venture capital and explore alternate employment opportunities. Nevertheless, the session flowed smoothly, undoubtedly aided by the fact that Steve had prepared for the interview on the preceding evening. Regarding my first draft write up, Steve commented "It is fine. It's the intent of what I was trying to say." This subsequent write-up has added a little more detail to the original narrative.
Steve is a handsome, soft-spoken thirty-two year old, born April 19, 1956, the youngest of four children. His home has been in Vancouver, except for the four years of his professional hockey career in the N.H.L. and minor leagues, when he lived in various parts of the United States. Steve is married to a woman he has known since high school. Steve's four children range in age from six months to seven years and three of them are already playing hockey.

Professional hockey had not been a career aspiration for Steve. "My goal was never to be a hockey player, it just kind of happened...I started playing hockey when I was eight years old...just enjoyed playing hockey...I graduated from high school at sixteen and got a scholarship to University of Wisconsin and (after a year, 1973-74) decided that I didn't like it at college, so I came back and played tier one junior (with the New Westminster 'Bruins' for two years, 1974-76) and then I got drafted (by the Los Angeles 'Kings'). I always had plans to get into business, not to be a (professional) hockey player...Not to say that I didn't want to be a hockey player, but I never saw myself as doing that...My parents and other people wanted me to play hockey and I just went along."

It wasn't as though Steve had been directly pressured or forced to pursue a professional career, but he did feel a sense of obligation or responsibility to play at that level if he could. "My father wasn't the type...that would pressure at all...he was a subtle person...You can just tell
when someone really wants you to do something, (although he) never comes out and says it...He would be the type that you could do whatever you want, but you could tell that he was thinking to himself the whole time, you know this is what he wants." Steve has no regrets or resentment about his hockey career and, for that stage in his life, would do it again. It's just that "I never really realized it until after but, when I got a little older, I said it really isn't what I want to do."

As Steve reflects on his own experience, with the added perspective of his observations of the experiences of other athletes, he emphasizes the importance of personal decision-making. "It's important to make your own choices. Decide what you want to do, versus what you're expected to do or what everyone else wants you to do...I don't think I was pushed (into the game)...Originally, it was my mother who started me playing hockey. After the first few years, (both parents) started coming to all the games...They really enjoyed watching the games but they didn't get involved that much like some parents do. Some parents try to run the team, yell at the coach because their kid doesn't get to play as much...Some kids are really pushed hard...You've got to face it. The odds are (that about) one in a thousand ever make it to play professional hockey and some kids are pushed really hard from the time they are four or five years old because their parents want them to be professional hockey players... The kids I coach, at four or five years old, they've got
fathers screaming at them, telling them to do this, do that. And they get mad if I don't put the score up on the board when they're playing another team. (They're) just trying to make it really competitive for the kids. It's not the kids. It's the parents...That's why a lot of kids these days...by fifteen, they've had enough."

Steve's professional career as a left-winger lasted four years, about six months of which was in the N.H.L., while the majority was spent in the minor leagues on the farm teams of various N.H.L. franchises. For the 1976-77 season, Los Angeles offered him a signing bonus and a two-way contract involving seventy thousand dollars (US) if he played N.H.L. and fifteen thousand dollars if he played in the minors. Steve was the last player cut from the team's training camp and was sent to the Fort Worth farm team in the Central League. He was called back to Los Angeles at Christmas time and spent the balance of the season in the N.H.L. "I didn't play very much, but (was) just happy to be there...it was a good experience...In the big league you're playing in front of a lot more people. It's the big time. You've got someone who packs andunpacks your bags for you, flying around by plane, making five times as much money, that's the difference. Down in the minors, you're riding the bus all the time, pack(ing) your own bags."

At the start of the 1977-78 season, Steve was again cut from Los Angeles and sent back to the farm team, which had been moved to Springfield in the American League. This
proved to be a marked contrast to his previous minor league experience. Travel in the minor leagues is particularly onerous but the Central League had been good in that little time was spent travelling by bus. "You flew more in the Central League than you did in the American League...I like new experiences and challenge...it was an experience...(but) it got old pretty fast...the time you spent on the bus in the American League was just awful."

This experience in Springfield was crucial in Steve's decision at the start of the 1978-79 season. When he was again cut from the Los Angeles training camp, Steve decided to quit. "I wouldn't go back to Springfield. The amount of time spent on the bus and it's just a depressing city as far as I'm concerned. It's just not worth it to go back there." However, a deal was made in which Los Angeles loaned Steve to the Vancouver 'Canucks' organization, who wanted him to play on their Dallas farm team. "Dallas was fun...A lot of the guys used to like being sent to Dallas, especially the guys who were coming down from the big league. They always wanted to come down and have a good time playing in Dallas. I think that's eventually why Vancouver moved their farm team out of Dallas...They wanted people to go to somewhere like Moncton, New Brunswick, where it's not fun. (People) want to get out of there." This deal seemed to offer new hope for Steve to resume his career in the N.H.L. "I was definitely thinking that I could still make it. If I was just (looking to have fun), I would have gone to Europe."
For the next and what proved to be his last season, 1979-80, Steve was traded to the Washington 'Capitals'. Here, he had a bad training camp and was sent to the minors in Hershey. He was recalled to Washington about half-way through the season and again played in the N.H.L. but, this time, only for about two weeks. On his return to Hershey and the minor league, Steve was injured and was not able to return to play until the final series of the league playoffs.

Relegation to the minor league is a disappointing experience, particularly after having played in the N.H.L. "Anytime you get sent down it's a blow. It's hard on the ego when you don't make it (on the N.H.L. team). But, I think once you adjust, it didn't seem to bother me. I didn't sit down there in the minors and say 'I should be playing up in the big time'...I would probably be more disappointed for the people who wanted me to make it, more than for myself. It's a hard one to explain. You know how much other people want you to make it, so you want to make it. You feel a sense of letting them down if you don't make it...Not so much that I failed, because I figure I gave my best." Steve's parents, although disappointed, were not shocked by his inability to retain an N.H.L. position. They were positive and encouraging, "supportive of whatever I wanted to do, whatever I thought was best."

Although Steve's attitude had been to make the most of his opportunities as they arose, he began to recognize the futility of extending the pursuit of his professional career.
"If I get my chance, I'll make the best of it. I didn't get too many chances. That's why after four years of playing, I said, you know, the odds are maybe one in ten that I'm going to get a shot, that I'm going to make it." There's always the hope that the next year might be a good year, that the player might be able to get "on the right line, with the right guys, and start to play in the N.H.L. (But) the odds are that the average N.H.L. player only lasts four years. Everyone only sees the big names that last ten years. There are very few of them. The average is four years. So, for the amount of time I played, half a year...the odds weren't there...(and) you lose your desire. After travelling around on the bus for four years you really don't want it as much...You just say, 'what am I doing this for?'

There were a number of additional considerations which conspired in Steve's decision to retire. "I could have gone on. I had another contract for thirty, thirty-three thousand dollars (US), but I thought 'why? why bother?' Time to start a career. If I didn't do it now, I was going to have to do it in three years." Steve had a new career to go to. He wanted to join his father's printing company, Agency Press, and eventually take it over. He had this career in mind for a number of years and hockey had seemed to be something exciting to do in the interim but, as the excitement wore out, Steve found it was "time to get on with it...I didn't want to play in Hershey another year...It was just time."
Contributing to this sense of timing was the injury which had kept him out of much of the 1980 season. It had added damage to a disk in his neck which he had injured in the preceding year. After spending a week in traction, he began to wonder if this type of injury would continue to occur and if continued play was worth that risk. Steve also had more than himself to consider. He and his new wife had been together since their teenage years but now, "it was time to settle down. We wanted to have a family."

Steve values his experiences as a professional athlete and has no regrets about his career. He simply acknowledges that after a while, "you lose the desire. As soon as I'd played in a few different cities, after four years, I had a good insight into what I was doing. It was a good learning experience and it was time to move on...I really try not to regret anything I do. It's just time to move on. (If) you sit there and regret what you do all the time, it's tough to move forward."

He is particularly proud of the last two years that he played because the teams were successful. "The year in Dallas, we won the Adams Cup and the year I played in Hershey, we won the Calder Cup and...both teams had come from behind. Both teams had finished fourth in the league and didn't really look like they had a chance of winning...Here we are in Hershey, some no names (who won over some real powerhouses in Nova Scotia), so that was quite fun." He also enjoyed successful seasons with previous teams, such as two
Memorial Cup finalist years in the junior leagues with the New Westminster 'Bruins'. "My whole hockey career, I got to play on winning teams, just being in the right place at the right times."

The professional hockey career was an education for Steve. "You learn a lot of things. You're away from your family and friends. You're in a different environment, living in different cities. You have to meet different people. You have to learn how to get along with different people on different teams. You have to learn how to sit on the bus and travel for thirty hours on a weekend." This education in patience, tolerance, and people skills has been of benefit to Steve, particularly in his business career. "It helped in dealing with people and maturing faster (by) being on your own." To emphasize how the professional career has been an asset in his later life, Steve recalls the following anecdote: "In the first month I started with Agency, they sent us on a sales seminar and the guy who sat up (at) the front was quite a well-known guy in the printing industry. (He) got up and said 'the worst God-damned thing they could do was take a guy out of pro sports and try to make him a salesman in the printing business'. I reminded him of it later, three or four years later, when I was selling five million dollars a year, that I didn't agree with that statement. He didn't remember saying it."

The transition from professional sport to a business career was an easy experience for Steve. "I didn't find it
that much of an adjustment. When I left, I was trying to figure out how I was going to make enough money to live, 'cause I looked at the printing business and how much commission you got paid and tried to look at realistically how much I could sell in the first year, and I think I came up with a number that I could make twenty or twenty-five thousand dollars. And I looked at how much it cost to buy a house and everything, and thought, how am I going to survive on twenty or twenty-five thousand dollars (significantly less than the earnings in Hershey) and higher expenses and the family, house, and all that kind of stuff...I had some money saved from hockey...The first month, I had a commission cheque of about two dollars. I didn't sell anything. But after that, it went very fast. I don't know what I made the first year but it was probably seventy thousand dollars, something like that...It was just just getting the right accounts and being in the right place at the right time...It just kind of took off from there. And I didn't have any trouble adjusting from that." Achieving early success in the new career was significant in easing the transition from hockey. "If I'd not made it, not been good at sales, struggled (with the new job), I may have thought, 'well, let's try it (hockey) again'. I was only twenty-four...that's your peak...But since it was going well, there was no way (of wanting to go back to professional hockey)."

Having some money put aside as a safety buffer for retirement is important. "It's different for the guys in the
N.H.L. to the guy that's been playing in the minors. The guys in the N.H.L, usually they've got a lot of money. They should have a lot of money saved, (although some) buy a new car every year and spend every cent they've got. And they're usually really, really in trouble...Guys in the minors haven't been collecting the big pay cheques, so they've got to plan something."

Several factors facilitated Steve's adjustment to a new lifestyle. It is likely that this experience was aided by the fact that he had a choice in his career change, the options of continuing to play hockey or accepting the ready availability of employment in his father's firm. His savings provided short-term funding to allow him time to get established and become successful in a second career. In addition, the stability found in a permanent residence, without the continual disruptions of out of town trips, was also significant as Steve was able to reconnect with both family and old friends. "A lot of my friends now are people I played hockey with when I was young. Some of my business associates I played hockey with when I was young...I kept playing hockey when I came back. I had more fun playing hockey in the beer league than I ever had playing pro. So, I had the sense of camaraderie, being around the guys playing hockey, anyways. I still had that." Steve is still very active in hockey, playing two or three nights a week plus coaching his children two days a week.

In weighing the costs and benefits of leaving the
professional game, to a certain amount, Steve misses "playing in front of the big crowds and trying to score the big goal...but, it's far outweighed by...not having to spend the time on the bus and not having to train all summer to get ready to go to training camp, and not having to move a family and pack up all your stuff and move to some city and not know where you're going, and on and on. The advantages of not playing far outweigh the disadvantages."

Steve has an insider's perspective on the game which differs from that of hockey fans. "Canada is nuts about hockey and, if you played, it helps a little bit (in terms of social prestige) but...it doesn't mean anything to me. I mean, it does but it's not...as glamorous as you think. It's a grind. There's nothing special about it...It's a tough game...I would say there's a lot more stress on a hockey player than there is on someone in business. It's a very stressful job. It's tough with all the travel and the physical wear and tear of the games and the pressure to perform and to score goals...You're really in top shape when you're playing hockey. You're working out every day. In fact, you take one day off, you can feel it. I mean, you went back the next day, you were huffing and puffing for awhile (to keep up)...There's a lot more (pressure) than in business. It's a grind. There's nothing glamorous about it except that it's nice as an accomplishment, to say that you did it. If someone asked me if it was worth it, I'd say for me it was, but maybe it's not, certainly not, the only goal
(in life)."

A longer term goal Steve had at the time he was playing professional hockey was to eventually take over his father's printing company. However, six months after he joined the company, it was sold to Southam Incorporated. "My dad thought the company could grow a lot better with a lot of money behind it. And Southams spent a lot of money. They spent seventeen, eighteen million dollars on the company which, in turn, gave the employees the opportunities they wouldn't have had if he had kept running it...It left me an employee of Southams. I would say in the short term, it probably helped my career because I was one of the top salesmen and made a lot more money than I ever thought I could have made. So, it worked out well until it gradually eroded as Southams got more and more involved, to the point that it was like riding on the bus again...boring and (I) just didn't enjoy it. (My sense of independence and challenge) was gone. I had no say in the way the company was run. When the new management took over it was a total autocratic type of situation. 'You do it my way or the highway.' It would have killed me to stay there, probably. It could kill me not being there though but, I don't know, I'd rather try something new."

Steve had found that his career in business involved experiences which paralleled his hockey career. Regarding his experiences with team management, "some I got along with, most I didn't. I found it easy to play for the coaches...
(who) would come up and pat you on the back and say, 'I need two goals. Go out and score a couple of goals for me tonight', (rather) than the coach who would jump up and down and yell at you and tell you that you're an idiot. I could never respond to that...that's what happened at Agency Press. That type of management came in. I couldn't work for them anymore. (It) just wasn't any fun anymore. (It's better to have) support, encouragement, and training. It's all in how you deal with someone. That's me, personally. Maybe...the way you deal with (some other people) is to hit them over the head. I don't know. I just know how I react to it. And most of the management I didn't react to. They didn't motivate me...I was probably a hard one to motivate...Some guys are easy to motivate...they just go one hundred percent all the time...Guys like the Sutters, they'll do anything and everything they have to. They just work so hard. They do everything. It's desire. Some people have a stronger desire than others. There's no question, I didn't have the same drive." And so, in both the hockey and printing careers, Steve's desire to continue participation became eroded to the point where he sought change.

Regarding his current transition, Steve misses his former high income and the sense of independence he had found in financial security. "All of a sudden that's gone and I probably didn't prepare well enough for it, although I'd spent a couple of years trying to, but it didn't quite work out. This company (his new computer software franchise)
could be an extremely profitable company, but I've got to learn the business and the computer business is a tough business. It's got a lot of potential. The top five most profitable companies last year in North America were all software companies. My problem right now is...the cost, the money it takes to develop the distribution is more than I've got, especially right now, so that's why I'm trying to raise finances." Although optimistic about his future, Steve considers that "odds are that it will be a different situation. I'll have a share of a company, or an ownership base, or I'll be in management...If I have to...I'll go back and just be a straight salesperson", but it is unlikely that he would choose to stay in a sales position for long.

As Steve contemplates the future careers of his young sons, he has advice for anyone who might aspire to a career in professional hockey. "Plan something else. Just in case you don't make it, plan for something else. Don't give up your education...I think that as soon as you start playing hockey, you should be prepared for the day you don't play. And whether you spend your summers taking courses, or trying to learn a business, or getting to know somebody in a city that you could go work for, or something. Set some money aside so you can start planning for your own business. Do something. Don't play golf all summer and think short-term. I would say most players tend to think short-term. Very few plan. You've got to look at hockey as a very short career."

Having spent most of his career in the minor leagues,
Steve has seen many people who have failed to plan for a career other than hockey. "Some people have nothing else to do... (Some people) figure that one day they're going to make it into the N.H.L.... and they'll play up until they're twenty-six, twenty-seven years old, figuring they're going to make it... And at that point, when they know that they're not going to make the N.H.L., they sometimes will stay on for another couple of years just because they've got nothing else to do. You know, it's a job, just a way of making money... A lot of guys... would retire and they would go try and work and they would end up in some lousy job, whatever it was. Digging ditches or something like that. And it was just too big of an adjustment for them to go from playing hockey and going back to having to dig ditches and they would eventually come back and play hockey again - for fifteen or twenty thousand dollars a year. So, they'd do it 'til they were thirty, thirty-two years old... And then, I think it's a real adjustment for them when they find that they're cut from the minor league team."

Another caution Steve offers other athletes is to manage one's lifestyle. "There weren't a lot of drugs when I played hockey, but guys get into drinking problems and stuff like that. You know, you can get away with it when you are younger... You're on your own (in the different cities and) you go out drinking every night and it isn't a problem when you're playing hockey (because you're so fit), but after you all of a sudden retire from hockey... It's hard to quit or cut..."
back...You can have the same lifestyle without drinking, but it's hard to tell a young kid that."

Although he recognizes that some people don't need any help, Steve believes that the hockey organization should establish counselling programmes to assist players in their career development. "Management should spend more time helping players to plan, to be ready if they're not going to play hockey, so that it's not quite as big an adjustment."
CHAPTER VI

CASE 3 - GARY LUPUL - HOCKEY PLAYER

Gary Lupul's story is particularly informative because his experience is more typical of the traditional image of the young Canadian hockey player. Growing up in a small town where hockey was his life's preoccupation from early childhood, boarding-out during his high school years in larger cities where he could play hockey at an advanced level, accepting a professional contract after playing junior hockey, bouncing up and down for seven years between the minor leagues and the N.H.L., and completing his professional career in the European leagues, he is now confronting his future, equipped with a personal resume comprised exclusively of hockey experience. At age thirty and with a new family which includes a baby daughter, Gary is in the midst of transition to a second career, his first non-hockey job.

His professional career was officially terminated on July 1, 1988, the deadline for acceptance of another contract in Europe. Rather than continuing for another year or more, Gary decided not to postpone his inevitable retirement and he is currently engaged in a trial career. This decision has not been easy. It was made after many sleepless nights and, despite his optimism, has resulted in a lingering sense of self-doubt and uncertainty about the future.

Gary is an amiable, frank, down-to-earth fellow, unpretentious about his professional career. He seems to have fond memories and respect for his small-town upbringing
and still counts his childhood friends amongst the most important people in his life. "The way I look at it... there's no friends like old friends." He is unassuming about his future career, with ambitions for a simple, but comfortable standard of living for which he is prepared to work because "you're used to working for what you want."

Having spent some forty minutes driving from his home in Maple Ridge, a Fraser Valley suburb of Vancouver, Gary was quickly at ease, reclining in an arm chair in my office at home, as we began the first interview. Describing himself as a "happy-go-lucky guy...I like to talk, I like to have fun", Gary talked freely about his career, his worries and fears about the future, and his advice for others who might want a career in professional sports.

At the start of our second session, Gary remarked on how he had enjoyed the first interview. It was "kind of like re-living my life...It was kind of a relief to talk it all out." He was "kind of apprehensive" about seeing the write-up, uncertain about how his "ramblings" would look on paper, particularly after he had spoken with Steve Clippingdale and found that Steve had prepared for his first interview. Nevertheless, after reading the first draft, Gary was pleased with what he had read. "It kind of puts into perspective your values and how your career came about. It's very interesting. It's very good. It kind of lets you know where you stand...You could keep that for years to come and your daughter or somebody could read it 'cause basically, it
outlines your thoughts, kind of tells about what kind of person you are...It kind of puts everything into perspective...It would be interesting to see where I'm at a year or two down the road."

Gary was born on April 20, 1959, in Powell River, a coastal town located on the Inner Passage on the B.C. mainland. The third of four children, Gary has such an appreciation for the support and lifestyle which his parents provided him that he hopes to offer the same to his family. "I couldn't 've had a better upbringing...my father worked in the mill and he still does to this day but...we had a comfortable home...they must have scraped a lot of time but...they always (paid)...I've always been into sports I wanted to do. If I wanted to go to a hockey school (it was arranged). You'd kind of like your kids to have that."

A professional hockey career was Gary's single ambition from an early age. He started out on skates at age three and was in minor hockey at age five. "When I was a kid, I watched Hockey Night in Canada every night...(I) always had a dream that I could play in the N.H.L....I always thought I could do it...there was no thought in my mind that I wouldn't do it." At age fourteen, in his ninth grade at school, Gary attracted the interest of a junior team, the Victoria 'Cougars', who had invited him to their training camp. He was invited back the next year and was one of the last players to be cut from the team. It was suggested that he spend some time with the 'Cougar' farm team, the Nanaimo
'Clippers' but, because this would mean leaving home, the family decided that he should complete grade ten in Powell River. In the following year, he took up the Nanaimo offer and moved to the Vancouver Island community to play tier two junior hockey and to take grade eleven. This was a very successful season as the team won the British Columbia championships and Gary was named 'rookie of the year'. "It was a good experience for me, coming out of a small town."

The next three years were spent in Victoria with the 'Cougars'. These were enjoyable years, satisfying in terms of the hockey career, but "as far as my education goes, it was tough...you're on the road all the time. We practiced from...8:30 to 9:30...and sometimes we'd go away for three weeks and I'd miss classes...There was a group of four guys that came up with me from Nanaimo that were all in the same grade so...we all went to school and...it took me three years to do it but I managed to slug it out (to graduate)."

Living away from home at age sixteen was not a difficult experience for Gary. "I lived with this family. They had two daughters that lived at home and a son (plus two other sons in the Navy)...I shared a room with him, two single beds, and the two girls had a bedroom...They had three dogs and...(when everyone came home with boyfriends and girlfriends) it was a full house. Never a dull moment. So, I guess it was good having all those people around...it was probably good that I always had somebody around me 'cause I was used to being around my brothers and sisters and stuff."
At that age, sometimes you miss your family and your friends, but the hockey was good and I had four or five guys on the team that were the same age as me and were in the same grade...My best friend for the next four years (was Mike Shields, who now sells cars in Victoria), we were together day and night... That's the good thing about going away. You meet a lot of people."

The move to Victoria started out a little tougher. "The first year in Victoria, I lived in a couple of homes. They weren't as good as the other one (in Nanaimo). My last two years in Victoria, I lived with a couple and they had a daughter...it was just like being at home...I still talk to them and see them to this day...They lent the car, they went to the games...The fridge was always open. It was like being at home."

The summer of 1979 introduced a new system of drafting players into the N.H.L., resulting in a brief disappointment for Gary which later turned out to be very advantageous to his career and lifestyle. This was the first year of the 'underage draft', that is, athletes could be drafted below the former age restriction of nineteen. That year, there were only six rounds of draft choices, as opposed to the twelve to fifteen opportunities which each team currently has to select players. The most popular draftees were the newly eligible eighteen year olds, leaving a stunned, twenty-year old Gary out of the draft. "All your career you've dreamed about playing, getting drafted in the N.H.L., and all of a
sudden I wasn't drafted. It was a knock at the time but, about an hour or so later, I started getting phone calls from a lot of teams...ten or eleven teams...invited me to go to their training camp as a free agent." Free agent status meant that Gary had a choice in his future, whereas if he had been drafted, his destiny would have been determined by the N.H.L. owners. "This way, it came down to Minnesota and Vancouver (who) offered me a contract so, I decided to go with Vancouver...I felt that I would have a better chance of making their hockey team."

As it turned out, the Vancouver 'Canucks' training camp was held in Powell River. This was an exciting experience for Gary, returning to his home town with an N.H.L. team. "It was kind of weird, going up on the bus and all the guys (saying) 'and where the hell is this place', you know. Then we got up there, I was a little nervous, all my friends and family there. I had a good camp. I played an exhibition game...in Victoria (and scored) two goals. So, it was kind of nice to do that, to go right back into Victoria and get two goals."

Gary has some distinct recollections of the excitement and confusion of playing with an N.H.L. franchise. At the conclusion of the training camp, he was sent to play on the farm team in Dallas. He was playing well in the minor league while the 'Canucks' were having a 'so-so' season in the senior league. His parents travelled to Dallas to visit him during the Christmas season and to watch him play. Right
after that game, he was called up to play for the 'Canucks'. He "flew into the Olympia (the old stadium in Detroit)...I was sent out (on the ice) with Bill Derlago and Curt Fraser. I played junior with Curt. He dropped me a puck and my first shot went in the net. It went by Rogie Vachon, so it was a good feeling. We played at Boston the next night. I scored another goal so then, we're coming back to Vancouver and here I'm...in the N.H.L.! Your friends are calling! You know, you're only twenty years old! You could handle it, but you didn't have the experience!" Gary spent the balance of the season with the 'Canucks', a season in which he could have used some guidance in adjusting to the N.H.L. lifestyle and the income that goes with it.

In the next season, 1980-81, Gary was sent back to the minors after the training camp. Except for a brief sojourn of seven scoreless games with the 'Canucks', he spent the season in Dallas. Half-way through his third professional season, 1981-82, he was again called up to the Vancouver team. During the first ten or eleven games he played that year, he was scoreless. "I hadn't scored a goal (in the N.H.L.) in a year and a half and I'm kind of thinking...is this it? Is it almost time to think of moving on?...And then I finally scored a goal...Everything snowballed that year and that's the year we went to the finals!"

Despite the team's success, Gary was again sent to the farm team, relocated in Fredericton, New Brunswick, for the start of the 1982-83 season. "Fredericton, where the hell's
that? The other side of the world. You know, it took a while to adapt." He played well in Fredericton and was eventually recalled to the 'Canucks', where he stayed for the next two and a half years. He spent the balance of his career moving back and forth between the N.H.L. and the minors.

The final year of his N.H.L. association was the 1985-86 season. "I came to training camp and they were all talking about how there was no way I was going to make the team...I was just starting to feel comfortable with the way I was playing and I knew the league a bit so, I went to camp, I had a really good camp. I was one of the leading scorers on the team. We come to the season. I never played the first two games, then finally, the third game, they called me up about 5:00 and said 'get down here, you're playing'. And I played good. The next night I got a goal...Then (we) go on a road trip, five game road trip, the first four games I don't play. The fifth game we go into Philly...at the time, they're probably one of the top teams in the league so, I knew what they were doing. I go out and play. We lose the game and I didn't get a point. They say 'see you later'.'" Gary felt as though he had been set-up, a scape-goat for the team's poor showing. He was sent back to the minors. "They had so many players. They didn't want to carry extra players and the guys they had were more or less on one-way contracts. I felt I could've done just as good a job or more than them, but you're the guy that goes." He was called back up and sent
down another three times that year. His final N.H.L. games were the last ten regular season games and four play-off games of that season. Once the team was eliminated from the play-offs, Gary was again returned to Fredericton for the minor league play-offs.

In his seven-year career with the N.H.L., Gary had played three hundred games in that league and had been sent to the minors some ten or eleven times. Such mobility between the major and minor leagues contributes to both financial and personal instability. Players with a 'one-way' contract earn an N.H.L. salary regardless of the league they play in but, those like Gary who were on a 'two-way' contract earned considerably less when they were relegated to the minor league. For example, in his first year, Gary's N.H.L. base salary was forty-five thousand dollars, a marked contrast to the fifteen thousand dollars he earned in the minors. Current minor league salaries may average between thirty and thirty-five thousand dollars, but they are considerably less than N.H.L. salaries. "You've always got to worry if you get sent to the minors. You get that drop in pay...(The) security's never there...It was always on your mind that, a bad game, will I get sent down?...You've never totally got both feet in the door." These so-called 'marginal' N.H.L. players have the added pressures of trying to build a statistical record of contribution to the team, despite experiencing irregular, inconsistent playing time. "You're not getting the ice time to produce...You kind of
knew what you were up against, so you had to perform but, it certainly is tough. Your conditioning's not quite there, your timing...it kind of wears on you after a while."

Adding to the instability is the fact that a player's status at a given time may have little to do with his own performance. "When you're the type of player I was, I could kill penalties, I could do the job but, when you're on a team that's losing, they make changes...The first two lines, if they're not performing, they're the guys on the one-way contract, they're not going to get sent to the minors. So, when they make changes, they send (to the minors) the bottom two guys...on the roster. They bring up two more guys in the same boat...But, if you're on the team where those guys are producing and you're out there killing penalties, filling in here and there, get(ting) some goals, I mean, you're golden. Everybody says you're doing a good job. But, when those guys aren't doing the job, it makes your job that much tougher and you're the guy that pays in the long run...If they're not pulling their weight, then you're in trouble...Sometimes you feel a bit short-shafted."

Demotion to the minors can trigger a lot of varied emotions, depending on the circumstances of the move. "It's different every time...The most disappointing one was after...we went to the finals...If you're not disappointed, you're not in the right occupation. But, once you're down there, you've got your dream again. You want to be in the N.H.L.... and that's what it's all about. (You) keep working and
(remind yourself that there are) a lot of guys down there in the same boat as you. (You) look in the paper and hope the score's 4-3 for the other team. You know, when you're down there, you like the guys (on the N.H.L. team) but you want to see them do bad because that's the only way you're going to get called up...You want your friends to do good but...if they're going good, you're not going to get called up." In addition, the player can always hope that his efforts and hard work will be recognized and rewarded by being called up to the N.H.L. team. "If you do good enough...you throw some stats at them...they've got no choice but to bring you up."

Rather than being resentful about the way he was moved around, Gary simply accepts it as part of the game and a function of his own abilities. "Actually, they (management) treat you pretty good, but...it's just that when you feel that you're not the guy that should be going (it's rough)... Sometimes you're not in the right situations...like some guys get the tough luck of being drafted on the wrong team, or the good team, or the coach doesn't like them, or...you get into the bad books (of management), but the majority of the time, if you're capable of putting on the uniform and performing, (if) you do a good job, you're going to be there...That's the thing about hockey, you either have the talent or you don't...It basically depends on how you do on the ice...It's a very small percentage of guys that probably have a career like I did, you know, being up and down. Most guys are either there or not there. There's just a small percentage
of guys that go through what I did."

Looking back on his career, Gary knows that it's easy to speculate on what might have been. A few good breaks and some more ice time may have made a difference. "I knew I could play in the league. I think I proved that. I think given...a little more confidence on my part and a little more confidence on their (management) part, but who knows?...The one year I played quite a bit, I scored forty-four points in sixty-nine games, seventeen goals, and that's not even really playing the powerplay (with the greatest opportunity to score) so, I think a full season playing regular(ly), I could've had sixty points and maybe twenty, twenty-five goals. You look at the standings in the N.H.L. now (and) there's not too many guys that have that. The top three or four on a team. So, I know that...there were signs that I could perform, but you weren't ever really let totally off the leash to do it." While his career may have been more successful under other circumstances, Gary also acknowledges the influence of his own efforts. "I could have done things a little differently myself. I think I could have gone on a weight programme and got just that little bit stronger."

Gary seems to have a realistic appraisal of his relative skills and abilities. Throughout his hockey career, he played all the positions on the forward line, although his predominant position was centre. He considers himself to have been a productive scorer, particularly in the junior, minor, and later, European leagues. His major asset was "I
could go on the ice...and get the fans going and maybe create something, and that's tough to do. Like, my style of play was to work hard...Some guys are smooth, but when I get on the ice, I look like I'm working. And that's just the way I skate and the way I play. I'm smaller and I know I've got to give a little more to catch people's eye."

Looking back on his career in the N.H.L., Gary is pleased with what he was able to do. "I'm happy with what I accomplished. You know, you might say that if this would have happened or that would have happened (things might have been different). Over-all, I would say that I was pretty lucky with the career I had. I had a chance to go to the finals. I played close to a town where I was born. A lot of my friends live here and I've met a lot of good people. So, I've got no grudges looking back."

After seven years in association with the N.H.L., Gary declined a move to the Philadelphia franchise. The 'Canucks' said that they were happy with the way Gary played but, looking to the future, they no longer had a need for him because they had a lot of younger people under contract. The Philadelphia 'Flyers' were interested in having Gary work with their farm team in Hershey where, "who knows, if you perform up to your capabilities, you might have got called up." However, by this time, he had had enough of moving up and down between the leagues. "I didn't want to do that anymore. It's not a fun thing to do." Instead, he accepted an opportunity to play in Europe.
In Europe, Gary had the opportunity to earn a good income, while also seeing another part of the world and meeting new people. During the next two seasons, Gary played in Italy, 1986-87, and in Germany, 1987-88. "I like to travel, so I got the opportunity to see Europe a bit...(I) saw basically the way it works over there...You can play almost anywhere over there and, if you're in the first league, you can make more money than guys make in the N.H.L. There's guys over there that couldn't quite make the N.H.L. and they're over there making big dough. We're talking a hundred thousand (dollars) tax free. An average guy, playing second division, (could make) fifty (thousand) tax free Canadian dollars. So, it's a myth that there's not money over there. That's a big reason a lot of guys go over there." For example, Kent Neilson was earning one hundred and fifty thousand dollars (US), tax free, while playing in Italy. In addition, at the end of the Italian season, he was paid forty thousand dollars (US) by the owner of the Lugano team, just to ensure that he was not picked up by a rival team for the play-offs in the Swiss league.

An additional benefit Gary found in the European leagues was the new people he met. In Italy, he played for a small town of twelve thousand inhabitants where, "I met a lot of good people." He places great value on this aspect of the game. "Half of playing hockey is meeting people...How you could get to know a guy so fast is one of the great things about the game. You're like a family. On a road trip, you
see more of (team-mates) than you'd see your wife or your mum and dad. You're on a bus for three weeks, or ten days, you're in the hotel and in the dressing room...it's a team atmosphere. You get to know guys pretty quick."

However, in the spring of 1988, it became apparent to Gary that it was time to put these experiences behind him. He was feeling torn. He had the opportunity to return to Germany for the next season but "I was in the process of getting married and we had a baby (to consider). It was kind of time to move on...I was getting older. I'd turned twenty-nine and (it was a) 'what am I going to do?' type deal...I could've went back, but I was wondering what I was going to do. You know, it was time to hang up the blades."

The question of what to do after the hockey career was over was not new to Gary. In fact, it had been a nagging question throughout his professional career. "After the second year, you start thinking, well, what are you going to do? What are you going to end up doing?...I would say, the whole time that I was playing hockey, I wouldn't go more than three or four days or a week without thinking once or twice, what am I going to do when I'm over? But, I never got myself out there and did it...You talk to the majority of guys...it definitely pops into their mind or (it's) brought up in conversation. What are you going to do when it's over?...And most guys don't know. The odd guy's got a little education (but the question remains)...Anyway, you're always talking like, what are you going to do? What are you going
to do? Well, I should do this, I should do that, and before you know it...your career's over. And (for) some guys, it could happen overnight with an injury...You look at a guy like Dave (Hindmarch), all of a sudden his career's over. I mean, he got some money or whatever, but it was good that he'd been to school previously. He'd been to U. of A. (University of Alberta)."

The question is not one confined to the players themselves. "You get that question a lot...(from) your family...people who recognize you...'What are you going to do? What are you going to do?' You hear that enough, it kind of grinds you...Even when you're playing...you get the assholes who come right up to you - 'well, what are you gonna do (when) you finish playing hockey? What are you gonna do?' And you go, 'I don't know.' Like, that's your answer. I don't know. I haven't really thought about it. You get that thrown at you all along...You've got a lot of people who resent you, just because you've played hockey...(There's a sense of failure, reduced status) Yeah, for all those years you're up there in the big time, in the limelight, it can sure sink fast. Barring what you've done, it's what you're doing now that counts. That's tough!"

Despite the number of years in which Gary had considered this question, it had been too easy to procrastinate, to let the question slide by without addressing it in a meaningful way. Now, because he had accepted the responsibilities of family life, the question arose with new urgency. "She (his
wife) was kind of wondering what I was going to do, and I was wondering myself. It wasn't like she was nagging me or anything. And I knew that I could go back to Germany but, I thought, jees, I'm just prolonging the agony one more year. Like, I mean, I'd be over in Germany right now. (I'd) come back and I'd be in the same situation all over again. I could probably have done that for another three or four years. (But, it was) definitely time to move on. I mean, those whole three or four years, I would have kept thinking, well, what am I going to do? Plus, the older you get, the tougher it is to make the change. I figure I'm thirty... you've still got a lot of working years ahead of you. You wait another couple of years, the older you get, who knows what will transpire?"

Gary's eventual decision to leave professional hockey was not easy. "(There were) three or four months there (of) sleepless nights. What the hell am I going to do? Jees, (I'd) wake up in the middle of the night. What's the decision? I had that German hockey team just hanging in front of my face, but then, you think, I don't want to come back and go through this again. How do you do it?...It's tough...when you go play hockey and you put in your whatever amount of years, you don't have the education. You haven't really been out in the work force. You're sitting at home and (thinking), OK, I want to get going. I want to get a job. But, how do I do it? Where do I go? Who do I talk to? Those are the questions you've got. I mean, one day leads to
two days. Two days leads to a week. You get into a rut. Your self-confidence goes."

For Gary, one of the most difficult aspects of trying to get started on a new career has been finding guidance and useful information. "Everybody's trying to give you ideas about what you're going to do...(but these ideas often aren't helpful) like, I've took aptitude tests before...(A few years ago, the N.H.L. offered a programme). Two guys came through. They talk about life after hockey. They give you the aptitude test. They say that maybe you should do this or that field. That's a crock of shit!...I wrote a life insurance thing one time...The aptitude test said I should be a car salesman...and, oh shit! I don't want to do that. So, it's tough when you're finished playing and you're kind of in limbo. The hardest thing is who do you go to? Who do you talk to that can lead you in some directions?...When you don't even have a clue what to do...You don't know who to talk to or who to tell you where to go. It's tough."

Gary had begun to make tentative steps toward a job search by applying to a few fire departments and he had some other ideas to work on. "I'm sure that if I'd just went out and knocked on doors, went to some sales jobs, maybe Molson's. Just talk to people I knew around town and say, hey, I'm out here looking for a job. This is...my resume, basically all hockey. I'm sure that if I'd put my nose to the grindstone, I'd have latched on to something." As it turned out, an old friend came to his aid with an opportunity
to get started, to learn something about the business world.

A long-time friend from Powell River, Fred Formosa, a successful home building contractor, offered Gary a part-time job as an assistant salesman, looking after a show home in a new sub-division in Maple Ridge. "I've been up there since probably the end of July...People come in and inquire about the area and my job, basically, is to get information about them and...(help) Fred's partner, who's a realtor...So, I decided I might as well apply for a real estate license."

Because he has been unable to start the licensing course until the spring of 1989, Gary has been taking tutorial classes to help him prepare for the six month long course. In the meantime, he is able to gain valuable experience by talking with people in the show home.

Although he is optimistic about his future, Gary is well aware that he might have difficult times ahead. "I'm just starting out on something new. I haven't even started the course, so this is all talk at the moment...(but) my goals are to get through this course and hopefully, my expectations aren't high...I mean, I don't want the sky. I want to be comfortable...(but) I've got a lot of ands, ifs, or buts ahead of me...(and) I've still got the cloud wondering where I'm going to be in a year...Everybody scares you about how tough it (the course) is but he (his sponsor) says if you've got a bit of a brain and you want to dedicate yourself to getting the assignments in, then you can get through it. That's what I'm up against...The unknown is still there and
that's a bit of the scary part."

While there is uncertainty about how the real estate career will develop, Gary sees it as a positive step in his transition from professional sport. Conscious that his education is limited to grade twelve graduation, Gary anticipates that he will gain confidence and knowledge through the real estate course. "It's like a step that if it doesn't work out, hopefully, it'll help me further down the road...it'll look good on a resume...If I go to sales somewhere, I can say I've had experience working in sales and I'll have this course behind me...This course will be good, like open my eyes about finances and all that stuff that you need to know. It's a step in the right direction...It's a start. It's like going to elementary school. You've got to start somewhere...(and) I've found now that it's getting closer to the course and closer to the starting (of) this thing, I feel a little better about myself...The key thing is just getting on with your life and...almost getting rid of that ex-hockey player label...(When people ask) 'what are you doing?', at least now I tell them I've got a plan. It's not that I'm not working...At least, it's a step in the right direction...it's good for the self-esteem too...(when) you're working and things are going good, I think that makes you feel better."

Gary has recently drawn comfort and confidence from the interest that hockey associates have shown in his career. For example, he has been approached about working in the life
insurance industry and in the hotel and hospitality industry. "It just shows that once your name is a little out in the community and people know that you're adjusting to a new career, there's people out there that are willing to help you." While Gary appreciates the reassurance this support and these options provide, he is well aware of his own responsibility to get on with his next career. "It all boils down to you and what you want to put into that opportunity."

Retirement from professional sport is not the only transition Gary is experiencing. His new family has brought him joy, stability, added responsibilities, and a new, long-range perspective on life. He used to live from day to day, simply going out and having fun, not worrying about the future. "When I played, I was never married or really had any serious relationships and it really changes you (when) you get married and have a child...It's kind of nice to wake up with a clear head and your wife beside you and your baby...I'm really enjoying that. The way it is now, I work mainly in the afternoons, so I'm spending a lot of time with the baby...I've learned more in this nine weeks about a baby than the average guy would learn because I've been right there and seen her grow and haven't been too pre-occupied with anything else. When I think about it, I'm really enjoying it. It's a good experience. I can help my wife...It's been good...Yes, yes (there's) a new sense of responsibility. It's not just you heading out the door and worrying about what you're going to do. You've got to think
of somebody else too. You start thinking of what you'd like them to have when they get a little older, you know, compared to what you're upbringing was."

Apart from the comforts and pleasures Gary derives from his marriage, he has a growing awareness of the support and motivation that he gets from Jennifer, his wife. "She sees me sitting around wondering what I'm gonna do and somebody's got to kick you in the butt, get you out of a rut... Sometimes she just says 'What are you doing? Where are you going?' She can't just say 'everythings going to work out'...(She) gives me a bit of a kick in the ass. She understands the situation but, it's tough on (her) too."

For the time being, Gary and his family are able to get by in reasonable comfort. He has bought a home, with a mortgage, and he has some money saved. He has a small salary at the moment and so, he is "not down at the soup line yet." He is aware that he will have to work hard in the next while and will have to change his lifestyle accordingly. "I'm at that stage right now where I've got to buckle down or a year from here I'll be saying, well, jees, I've just applied for the mill at Whonnock (a neighbouring community). I mean that's what you're up against. I hope my mind gets into it. It's going to hurt the golf swing."

As he grapples with his transition to another career, Gary has drawn inspiration from others who have made the change from professional hockey. "You look at a guy like Gary Bromley, thirty-one (former 'Canuck' goaltender)...
told me that when he became a Vancouver fireman, it meant as much to him as getting his first shut-out in the N.H.L. You know, hockey's fine, (but) gone! The biggest fear for somebody is what am I going to be doing? It's that moment of accomplishment - that feat of getting into the next field. I guess it's probably a feeling...(like when) I pass this course. I imagine I'll feel pretty good. (I'm) looking forward to that. I can see that feeling now! I'll be knocking back about ten (drinks) after. Up to that point, there's a lot of mysteries, but the key is just the feeling of getting on with your life."

Apart from the difficulties of finding an alternate career path, Gary has been able to identify some other issues that have made getting on with life a bit more difficult than he would prefer. One of these involves some unfortunate financial decisions he made during his playing career. It wasn't until near the end of his career that he found an agent who could help him manage his financial affairs responsibly. "What you need is an agent that's close to you, (whom) you trust...an accountant or money management guy...who pretty well takes care of your money...They put you on a spending allowance so you don't have ten, or twenty, or thirty grand sitting in the bank where you can just go get at it...Where you're kind of living above your means. You know, when you finish, you don't have those cheques coming in that you're kind of used to...and that's kind of the mistake I made...I'm not crying the blues but, I'm saying I could've
had more and I just hope that that'll be a lesson for me down the road...The lucky ones are...(those who) had good money management, had a good nest-egg behind them. You know, if you could have a house paid off and have a little money in the bank, (then) you've got a year or two to figure out what you want to do."

Another issue has been the ease with which he was able to deny and to postpone the necessity of planning for a second career. Despite the fact that most players realize that hockey is a short-term career, for many "it just doesn't sink in" to the point of motivating them to action. It's too easy to procrastinate. "Yeah, that's exactly what it is. You're having fun. You're in the limelight, playing hockey and getting paid well...You're thinking about it (another career). It's not like you're stupid (but)...by the time the season's over...(and) you go on a holiday, (then) play a little golf...(and) before you know it, training camp's there and you do that every year for five or six years. And the older you get, the less...ambition you get. It snowball's (so that), by the time you're over, you've got nothing."

Allied with this lack of planning for a second career is concern over lack of education. "The smart guys...have got their education...they've gone to school and when they're finished (hockey)...they kind of flow into something...a good way to go is the college route...Even if you could get two years under your belt, (but)...a lot of guys go there and do diddly-squat (which makes it unlikely they would get a chance
to turn professional)...I had lots of offers to go to college on scholarship...The way it worked out, I probably went the right way as far as my hockey goes, but who knows what would have transpired (with a college education)."

Another issue, perhaps less significant than those above, but still an irritant, is the adjustment to playing recreational hockey with people who try to prove themselves against a former professional. "I played out in Ladner for a bit last year...intermediate hockey. I was the leading scorer in the league...(not in shape, but other players had a bad attitude). They can skate, they're running into you - 'Hey, Lupul, who the hell are you?' I mean, what have you got to gain really?...My attitude about that is, 'Hey, buddy, I was there, you weren't. Fact not fiction. I've got the memories, so have your day. I've had more days than you'll ever dream about!' That's what I just think to myself - 'have fun' - (I'd like to just) give 'em a two-hander over the head and say 'see you later'."

Gary does not seem to have any pretensions about his professional career. He sees it as a significant but not an overwhelming accomplishment. "I can look back at it as an experience...it was a big deal! You know, you play in the Stanley Cup Finals. You play against a lot of great hockey players. You play against Gretzky. You play against Lemieux...How many percent of Canadian kids get to do that?...(But another perspective on it is) I wonder what it's like to be a major league ballplayer...You think that would be right on,
playing in the major leagues, just playing ball. I have the same questions for them that the average person would ask me. It's no different. Everybody has a fantasy. I feel pretty proud about seeing (my) dream come true, (but now) I like just going out on the ice, shooting around, passing the puck, not worrying about what shape you're in."

This perspective on his career has helped Gary maintain some very good friendships. "I've still got a lot of good friends that played hockey...(but) the bulk of my friends that I see from day to day are guys that I grew up with from Powell River...kind of hung around together...they know me good enough. I never really changed (with a pro career). There's things (about) the limelight you kind of shy away from. It's nice (that) you can go to a night club or something (and) people know who you are, but basically, I like to just keep a low profile. They know I never really changed. They saw me around team guys (and) they got to know them. Once in a while you might be a little in awe of someone...there's a little bit of celebrity or status, but once you get to meet somebody, I mean, everybody's basically down to earth no matter who you are...just one of the boys... I think that's the best way to be."

Gary has found that maintaining contact with other former hockey players has also been helpful because they serve as good models for his transition to another lifestyle, providing him with other perspectives about the experience of leaving professional sport. Once a week he plays with the
'old-timers'. "There's a lot of good guys there. It's good therapy too because all these guys finished playing careers and moved on to other things, so it's good to talk to them. They('ve) got good advice. The majority of guys have gone on and are successful...A lot of guys are in insurance, real estate, accountants, sell(ing) cars. One or two guys have had a few real problems but they're at a stage now where they're adjusting. It's good therapy. The guys look after the guys. They help you out."

Gary thinks that it is important for young professional players to get help and advice about preparing for life after hockey, but they are usually so involved with the excitement of their new careers and lifestyles that they aren't interested. And he speaks from experience. "There's guys that said that to me." But, he procrastinated rather than taking the advice. He now has several suggestions. Players should develop a 'game plan', at least a tentative strategy about where they would like to be and what they would like their lives to be like in the future. They should get some good career counselling, involving more than just aptitude tests. Their wives should be involved in a retirement counselling programme too because "a lot of the wives have a tough time adjusting. They have a tough time because they have some celebrity status too (while the player is a professional)". In addition, players should develop a savings plan, probably employing a financial advisor to make sure that they have a "nest-egg" when they retire. Players
also need to develop a network of contacts, people who may become business associates or advisors.

Primary advice Gary offers is to "start making use of (the) summers." Many players in the minor leagues are used to working in the summers because they need to supplement their incomes and, in Europe, many professional players also hold regular jobs while playing hockey. Gary thinks that the transition to a post-hockey lifestyle may be easier for these players because they have experience in the regular working world. He suggests that players have a holiday but also find a temporary job, no matter what it is, for a couple of months. "Go out there. Get a feel for something. You might not like it, but that two months experience will help you immensely...plus it will pay some bills, pay the rent, pay for some golf...At least you'll have a feel for...what the average guy gets, what three weeks holiday a year and you get four months?...Get in there and realize what it's like to get up at 8:00 in the morning and get home at 4:00...Then you'd probably appreciate the game a lot more...Even if it was a shitty job, (you'd learn) 'jees, I hate that! God, I tell you, I'm gonna get up tomorrow, I'm gonna run, I'm gonna lift a little weights...I wanna put my nose to the grindstone, make some money and...make an investment, get some business...because I don't wanna work, man'." If the professional hockey player wants to continue to enjoy his lifestyle after his career is over, he needs to take early steps to plan for his retirement from the game.
A major step the player can take is to remember to be personable, to develop social skills which can be transferred into later personal and career development. "Hockey is a people business where you're in the public eye. You're dealing with twenty individuals every day...You're always communicating with people...You've gotta deal with all kinds of people and look for the good points in everybody and learn about the bad...You've gotta try to be a likeable person... (but, most of all), be yourself...It's hard to do when you're always getting a pat on the back, you're a star...kids want your autograph, old ladies want to kiss you...(not to mention the young ladies)...If you can come across as more of a down-to-earth-person, that will help you in the long run."
CHAPTER VII

CASE 4 - DARCY ROTA - HOCKEY PLAYER

Just two days after playing in the 1984 National Hockey League All-star game, at the peak of his long career, Darcy Rota suffered a debilitating neck injury. Nine months later, fearing for his long-term health, Darcy announced his retirement in an emotional team meeting. His decision became public knowledge two days later at a press luncheon hosted by the Vancouver 'Canucks'. In attendance were his team-mates, the team management and owners, his family, and some fifty representatives of the media. This was a rare tribute to a hockey player who considers himself "just a hard working type of player that came to do his job every day, not the most talented guy by a long ways, but the kind of a guy that would do his job out there." Darcy had been doing that job for eleven years, playing his entire professional career in the National Hockey League.

It is unusual for retirement festivities of this magnitude to be held for players other than 'superstars'. "It was just an unbelievable way for a guy to go out...Not many players would experience how I ended (my career)...For me to get the reaction from my team-mates, from the media, and from my team management and owners, to have this luncheon for me, to have a retirement night for me a few months later, that's just fantastic. I'll treasure that for the rest of my life." Darcy was apparently held in high esteem by the local hockey community. Although his playing days were over, Darcy
was pleasantly surprised to find that his second career had already begun. During the press conference, Harry Neale, the general manager of the team, announced that Darcy would be serving in a new capacity as a member of the 'Canucks' front office staff.

I met Darcy in his office at the Pacific Coliseum in Vancouver. He describes himself as a people's person. His gregariousness and energy suggest that he is well suited to the variety of positions he holds, including Director of Media Relations and Public Relations with the Vancouver 'Canucks'. He has a big smile to off-set the big brown eyes which he jokes are one of the characteristics for which he is best remembered. He speaks with thoughtful ease about himself, his experiences, and his team and he says that he often uses himself as an example in the various public speaking engagements he undertakes. He is particularly fond of speaking with young hockey players because he hopes to encourage them to develop as human beings, not just as athletes. Darcy shares this hope with the current 'Canucks' management, who are very much aware of the brevity of a professional career and who encourage their players to prepare for life after hockey.

It took three attempts for Darcy and I to complete the second interview because our collaboration on this project coincided with the completion of the regular N.H.L. season and the commencement of the first round of the playoffs in which the 'Canucks' played through to the seventh game. The
excitement surrounding the extended playing schedule kept Darcy very busy and it became difficult for him to meet with me. He read and edited the first draft of this report while flying with the team to a game site. The result was a few minor changes to the write-up plus his validation of the work. "I thought it was very well done. It was very interesting to kind of re-live my career...It brought back a lot of memories, it really did, a lot of fond memories, a lot of difficult memories, a lot of tough times...It brought back the memories of what I was going through...It was very thorough. I'd just like to get a copy of that some time." I assured him that he would be receiving a copy of this final write-up.

Darcy was born in Vancouver on February 16, 1953. He is the oldest of two sons. While his childhood was spent in Vancouver and Kelowna, most of his youth was spent in northern British Columbia, in Prince George, where he moved at age eleven when his father took an opportunity to own a car dealership. Here, "all my young, important sport years took place", including involvement in baseball, football, soccer, golf, and, of course, hockey. "I played everything. I was a real jock but, being from Prince George (with long winters) and always wanting to be a professional athlete, I felt that hockey was where my best shot would be. I was able to skate outside after school until suppertime, then come home for supper and go back and skate 'til dark, and come back and do my homework."
The aspiration to a professional hockey career began in Darcy's childhood. His mother holds a momento of that early goal, an elementary school dictionary. "I wrote in my little Winston Dictionary, 'When I grow up, I want to play in the National Hockey League for the Chicago Blackhawks. Signed, Darcy Rota, grade 4.' Isn't that unbelievable? That's true! She kept that. It's all in my funny writing from grade four. I mean...it's not like the 'Blackhawks' were my favourite team...and yet, I ended up playing for them...(at) ten years old, I wanted to be a professional hockey player. I was one of the lucky few to make it."

Darcy's parents were very supportive of his hockey aspirations. They saw a lot of his early games and often travelled to watch him compete. They were very encouraging but never pushy, except when Darcy outgrew the Prince George hockey league and needed to leave home in order to join a junior team. His parents "demanded that I keep going to school because a lot of junior hockey players, when they leave home at a young age, they get living with another family and schooling takes a second part of their life."

From 1970-73, Darcy lived in Edmonton, completing grade twelve and two years of physical education at the University of Alberta, while playing for the Edmonton 'Oil Kings'.

As Darcy reflected on his experiences during this time period, it became apparent that he and I had experiences with two particular events, although we each had different perspectives. In 1971, Sport Canada initiated a scholarship
programme which was intended to provide some financial support to university athletes, an attempt to counter the increasing demands for the kind of support which was available to student athletes in the United States. I received a one thousand dollar scholarship for my involvement as a manager of the National Men's Basketball Team and the University of British Columbia 'Thunderbirds'. Darcy received a similar scholarship as a hockey player. Although the 'Oil Kings' were paying for Darcy's education, he had applied for the scholarship with the thought that he could save the team some money. One day, Claire Drake, the coach of the University of Alberta 'Golden Bears', stopped Darcy in the halls to congratulate him on his scholarship and to inform him of the team practice schedule. Darcy had been unaware that the scholarship was only available to those students playing on university teams. Because he was going to continue to play with the junior 'Oil Kings', his scholarship was taken away.

In those years there was considerable controversy over the relative merits of the junior and collegiate hockey programmes. This was of interest to me because I was a physical education student and very active in university sport administration. While on a road trip to the University of Alberta with the U.B.C. basketball team, I had the opportunity to see a hockey game between U. of A. and the 'Oil Kings'. Darcy remembers that game well. "Did you see that game? It was 10-3 for the University of Alberta. I
played that game. They killed us!...It was embarrassing. We were so bad that night. Oh, it was awful!...I mean, university players were older than us, nineteen, twenty, twenty-one. We were only seventeen, eighteen, nineteen...As a matter of fact, our coach was so upset with us that night, he wouldn't let us change or shower in the dressing rooms. We had to go and just take our skates off, put all our normal clothes, street clothes, in our hockey bags, carry them over our shoulder with our hockey sticks, go back to the Edmonton Gardens to practice. That's how mad he was."

Despite the outcome of this particular game, the Edmonton 'Oil Kings' had a very good national reputation as a junior hockey team and Darcy considered that playing with them was a major step toward his single goal of playing in the N.H.L. "They had a tremendous amount of pride and always had very competitive teams. A lot of players wanted to play for the 'Oil Kings' organization. I had that opportunity. As things were progressing, I knew that my chances of playing (professionally)...were better than if I were playing for some other team. I was getting great exposure, all our players were, and we had great fan support." During his first two years with the 'Oil Kings', "we went to the Memorial Cup twice. We were one of the top junior teams in Canada. In my third year, I ended up leading the league in goal scoring and, of course, (there was) more publicity all the time with reporters, for example, C.B.C. and Hockey Night in Canada. It was just one thing after another."
Darcy's involvement with hockey detracted from his attention to his studies. He was interested in gaining more education in case he got hurt playing hockey and "to expand my knowledge and get involved with other things too...I wanted to be a professional hockey player, but I didn't want to be so one dimensional." Although he was happy with the University of Alberta, "it's a great phys. ed. school there", it was a secondary thought for him. "I probably didn't do enough work as it warranted. I just got by because I had this desire to be a National League player. I was getting lots of publicity, being rated to be a first round draft selection in the amateur draft. So, it was tough to concentrate and, of course, everywhere I went, people wanted to talk to me...about hockey, hockey, hockey! So, it was difficult. I mean, they were positive about it, but it's just like here (the 'Canucks' office), people want to talk about the team and hockey and things like that, which is nice, but you've got other things to do too."

In the second game of the junior league play-offs of 1973, Darcy was injured. "I came in on a partial breakaway and a guy trips me and I go flying into the boards and separated my shoulder...I felt a tremendous amount of pain and that did me in for the rest of that year." Darcy had surgery to repair his shoulder and he was confident that it would heal well. Nevertheless, his agent didn't want to take any chances with the professional teams becoming worried over the sight of Darcy in a shoulder brace. Thus, Darcy was told
to stay away from the draft festivities, which were held in Montreal that year. "So, I stayed back in Prince George. That's how...I experienced the thrill that every young hockey player waits for, that's when he's drafted. I was drafted in the first round, 1973, by the Chicago 'Blackhawks'...(the team which he had written about in his grade four dictionary and which) had just been to the Stanley Cup Final and...(in all, it) was pretty exciting for me."

In addition to his N.H.L. draft, Darcy was also a first round selection of the World Hockey Association team in Houston, Texas. Thus, Darcy had the choice of two different leagues, an easy choice for him to make because the N.H.L. was always the prestige league. Having watched the Stanley Cup on television, Darcy felt very familiar with all the members of the 'Blackhawks'. "I felt I knew all these guys. It was a pretty exciting feeling for me." To get ready for the September training camp, Darcy attended a preparation camp which was organized by his lawyer in Denver. By the time he joined the 'Blackhawks', he was in the best physical condition he had ever been in. His intent was to make a quick and favourable impression. "They were short a left winger. So, being the first round pick, I was kind of the guy they thought would be slotted in...and I was fortunate enough to make the hockey team."

It was like a dream come true "to play with guys like Stan Mikita, Tony Esposito, Bill White, and Keith Magnusen, Dale Tallon, and many others, just a tremendous amount of
talented, veteran hockey players...And, in my very first
N.H.L. game, I scored a goal, so it was just one thing after another, boom, boom, boom".

Reflecting on the experiences of his new career, Darcy grinned over "quite a funny story that happened in my first training camp. My very first exhibition game...I was put on a line with Stan Mikita and today, of course, Stan is in the Hockey Hall of Fame and he's a dear, special friend of mine ...(but then) we were playing against the Boston 'Bruins', the big, tough Boston 'Bruins'...The first period goes by and I just want to get by without embarrassing myself. Just hang in there! The second period starts and the puck is dumped into our zone and I go back to get the puck, go behind the goal and stop. I've got the puck and now their players are circling. No one's making any attempt to stop in front of the net to make a challenge for me, so I start coming up. Well, I come up the ice and one of them comes in and I make a little move, go 'round him and I'm going 'I can't believe this! No one's making an attempt to even make a move on me. If this is the pace, I'll probably score eighty goals this year'. Another guy comes, I make a move on him. 'This is unbelievable!' This goes on real quickly. I hit the centre ice and still no one's around me. I can't believe it. Well, now I get more towards their blue line. Their defense starts backing up. I get just over the blue line and I just can't believe it! No one's come near me at all and I decide to take a slap shot. And one of my traits, I had a pretty good
slap shot. So, I wind up to take the shot. I get back to here (arm lifted behind him) and the next thing I remember is waking up downstairs. Terry O'Reilly, who now coaches the Boston 'Bruins', a big, tough, rugged guy, I guess he sees this rookie doing his thing coming up the ice, gets to the blue line, I wind up, and he just comes a chomping across the ice. He sees me and boom! He hits me and the next thing, I'm waking up downstairs. I had a concussion! They put me in the hospital that night...that was a rude awakening for me! My respect for the National Hockey League was never doubted again."

For the next six years, Darcy was proud and content to be with Chicago. "The way my career was progressing, I thought that I was going to be a Chicago 'Blackhawk' for my whole life. I thought that that was it, that I was going to wear the Indian head on my front and no other sweater would I ever wear again. And, one day in March, at the trading deadline of 1979, I came to practice and...was called into the coach's office and found out another part of pro sports, and that's the part of being traded! And I was traded to Atlanta. My first reaction was shock. I was stunned. I couldn't believe it!...I had some real good friends in Chicago. I thought that this was the place that I would probably be for the rest of my life and never thought - I knew other guys would come and we'd trade guys away but, I never thought I'd be traded...There was always jokes around the (time of the) trading deadline and I'd been through five
of them and so, I thought there's no way I'll be traded...And our trainer comes in after practice and I was one of the last guys off the ice and he says you're wanted to see (Bob) Pulford in the coach's office. And I said, 'Ah, Skippy, (Skip Thayer) who're you kidding? Don't pull my leg. Who're you kidding?' And I could tell from the look on his face, he wasn't joking."

Although Darcy at first felt devastated by the news of his trade, professional hockey requires players to make quick adjustments. "I looked at the positives, the fact that I was going to a team that really wanted me. I talked to the general manager, Cliff Fletcher at the time, and Fletcher told me he really wanted me to come to play hockey in Atlanta. He was looking forward to me coming there." The next day, Darcy flew to New York City to join his new team, along with two other players, Ivan Boldioev and Phil Russell, who had also been traded from Chicago. "So, you were getting guys that thought they'd be 'Blackhawks' probably for their whole careers, not just me. The other guys felt that too. I know they did."

Apart from his personal adjustment to his new status as a result of a trade, a player has to quickly adapt to the personalities on his new team. This can be quite a challenge, given the history which might exist between players of opposing teams. "We'd just played Atlanta about ten days before that and we had a bunch of fights that night and I was involved in a fight with one of their guys. Of
course, I knew this in the back of my mind... 'How's this guy gonna react to the fact I'm comin' and playing with him?'... It wasn't just that we'd fought, it was a mean fight... I wanted him bad and he wanted me bad. It was not like just your customary fight where you go to the penalty box. We got five and ten (minute penalties). We just wanted to keep going. So, when I flew to New York... the team had already had their pre-game meals so, we didn't have the chance to see any of their players until game time. So, when I walked into the dressing room, who have they got me sitting next to but this guy! That broke the ice right away. We became very close friends... Basically, when you get into the dressing room, guys are guys. Guys all have the same goal, try to win and (experience) the real camaraderie."

Another adjustment the traded player must quickly overcome is to the on-ice playing system and style of his new team. Generally, the coaches brief the new player on certain set plays and systems for forechecking and bringing the puck out of their own end. But, "I tell you, the first game you always play, you're always like a stranger, strange uniform, 'what am I doing here? The uniform doesn't look right!', I'm just not used to it. It takes time (to adjust). That's how it was the first night when I played". Darcy adjusted quickly and well. "I'd played sixty-five games, I think, for Chicago and I had thirteen goals and then, we went down and played thirteen games with Atlanta, I scored nine goals. So, I just caught on fire and it was a pretty good team down in
Atlanta, so I knew that I was going to a better team and I was going with some big, tough guys, so I enjoyed the time I was there."

Eleven months after his trade to Atlanta, Darcy was on the move again, traded to the Vancouver 'Canucks' in February of 1980. This was another "dream come true because...I saw them play in the Western Hockey League as a young boy. (I) followed their careers in the National League...very closely. It was one team that, for whatever reasons, I just thought I would never play for. I guess, I thought that I'd be too lucky if it ever came true...and when I got traded back here, I think my career blossomed after that. Teamwise and individually! Just things went really, really well!"

Darcy joined the 'Canucks' at age twenty-six and, for the next five years, enjoyed a number of career highlights. "Our team went to the Stanley Cup Final. I made the All-star team one year. I scored over forty goals one year...I really accomplished the most things right here with the Vancouver 'Canucks' and it was really kind of nice. And, I think the biggest reasons was that I was so thrilled to come back and play for the 'Canucks' organization and I was given a great chance, a B.C. boy coming back to play and (having) lots of friends in Vancouver and...throughout B.C....(and) a lot of relatives. Every game that I played, I knew that I had friends and family at those games."

Darcy is very proud of his career peak in 1984. Unlike other hockey players, his career was getting better as he
aged, rather than the reverse. In his eleventh season in the N.H.L., Darcy was selected to play in the All-star game, held that year in New Jersey. He has a picture of that team hanging in his office. "It was a tremendous honour for me, so I took my father with me. I figured (that I am) just about thirty-one years old, I thought this would be the only All-star game I'd probably ever get a chance to play in." Later events showed that his thoughts foreshadowed the future but, in the one All-star game of his career, he played well, scoring a goal and an assist.

Two days later, Darcy was playing in the next league game, in Los Angeles. "I was playing on a line with Thomas Gradin and Stan Smyl. Back then we were really a hot line during the year we played together. And, the last shift on the ice, about a minute to go in the game, it was a real tight game. The puck went into the corner and, I can remember it very, very clearly, Gradin went to get the puck and Jay Wells, a big defensive (player) for Los Angeles was going to go and try to get Gradin. Well, I was going to run interference on Jay Wells and he hit me with a clean check. I have no animosity against Jay Wells. And, I fell on my shoulder and my neck and my head. And, I felt something give right away in my neck area but, in the heat of the battle, I knew something was wrong but I didn't pay much attention to it. And, I tried to get back up and concentrate on the game. The game ended just after that and I came to the dressing room. I knew that I had a sore neck, but I didn't know how
bad it was...I thought that with a couple of days rest, it would get better."

The next morning, Darcy had trouble getting out of bed but was able to fly back to Vancouver despite constant pain and discomfort. He visited a chiropractor and gained some relief which enabled him to resume playing, but "I came back because we were fighting for the playoffs. If I could help in any way, I'll wear a neck collar. (I) used to go and see the chiropractor almost every day. It was really a tough thing to go through." He eventually saw a neck specialist who suspected that Darcy had disk problems, but a more thorough examination would be required to determine the nature and extent of the injury. Darcy decided to postpone this investigation until after the season was over.

The subsequent investigation of Darcy's neck revealed that a spinal fusion was required to repair the damage. In this operation, "they take a very small bone out of your hip and they go through the front of your neck. And, they clean your disk out where the problem is and they just jam this small bone between the two vertebrae. It is a natural fusion." The doctor told Darcy that, following the surgery, he would probably be able to lead a normal, healthy life but he may not be able to continue with the physical contact of professional hockey. Darcy replied, "you know, doctor, for the last three months, I've been living with constant headaches, discomfort. I can't play golf, I can't do anything without this aggravation in my neck. And, I've had
eleven wonderful years in the National Hockey League and if it means that I will have a good neck for the rest of my life with the surgery and can't play hockey again, I'll have to give the game up professionally."

Although Darcy understood the warning about his career and the necessity of major surgery, "I still really thought that I was going to play hockey again. I really never thought that my career was over." The surgery was completed in June of 1984 and Darcy spent the next six weeks in a neck brace. By early September, he was back on the ice, skating on his own at the 'Canucks' training camp. "They had me on a real slow rehabilitation programme and I was following the trainer's orders (and) the doctor's orders." The target for his return to regular play was December. As the date approached, he began "practicing and scrimmaging with the team, doing everything with the team, and I was feeling great...I had full movement in my neck, I had no problems. And then...I had some slight discomfort, like I'd had before, before the surgery. And, it brought back (the concern)...And I got scared."

Darcy felt very torn. "The team was struggling...I really wanted to help the team any way I could...and all of a sudden I had this discomfort. I was scared. The fact is, if I come back, I don't want to go back to the way my neck was before and have the headaches, and can't sleep at night, and can't move, go and see the chiropractor three and five days a week. So, I was really quite concerned." Darcy was also
worried about how he might feel in the future. If he retired now, how would he feel about his decision a year later, when he felt fit and healthy? Would he have the nagging thought that maybe he could have continued to play? "But, in my own mind, I knew that with this pain in my neck, I didn't want to have to go through this again."

Finding someone to talk with about these kinds of issues, the player's thoughts and feelings about his health, personal life, or career, is not easy. The player must be careful to guard his confidentiality for a number of reasons, including internal team politics, which might impact on his career, and external media scrutiny with reporters who are always hungry to exploit rumours. Furthermore, the player is often mindful of the impact he may have on team morale. "You have to be careful who you talk to...You wouldn't go and discuss it with a team-mate unless you had a real close relationship. You'd discuss it more with your family, your wife, your friends."

Darcy sought advice from the medical professionals. He took the team doctor to lunch. "I said to him, 'If you were in my situation, would you play?' He said, 'with what you've been through, there's no way...you can live a normal life. You can do what you want. You can play fun hockey, play golf. I mean, look at the positives you have in your life'." Darcy sought further advice from the team trainer, whose response concurred with the doctor. Still, he sought more advice. "I really had to get into my mind whether or not
Darcy was reluctant to talk to his parents "because my mother, she saw what I went through before the surgery, (then) the surgery, (and) the recovery. It was brutal. It was no fun...I didn't want my mother to know what I was thinking about, retiring." He talked to the team orthopedic surgeon whose response was like that of others, "no way!" At this point, he decided to confide in his father. "He was a man I truly respect. I told him what I was thinking. I'm talking to people who are the experts in the area of medicine but, the bottom line (is), it's got to be my decision."

At this point, there was a lot of public interest and enthusiasm for Darcy's anticipated return to the 'Canucks' lineup. "The team was doing bad. There was pressure for me to come back. I knew this and I really felt that if I retire, I let the guys down. They're looking for me to come back with some leadership and some help. This was really weighing on me. But, I had to think of my health." To come to a decision, Darcy called a meeting with the team doctor and the surgeon who had operated on him. Confronted with the same question that Darcy had asked of his other advisors, the surgeon "looked at me like this (very intently). 'Are you crazy? Where you are now, you could live a normal, healthy life. You could do all kinds of things with your life. You're only thirty-one years old! You do what you want to do, but your surgery was a complete success. You're experiencing some pain because you're putting some constant
pressure on this, the hitting. If it was me, there's no way!' Darcy went home from this meeting and had a talk with himself. "Darcy, who're you kidding? Who are you kidding? You've had eleven years! The average life span of a player in the National League is 4.8 years. Your neck feels good. I mean, look in the mirror you idiot!"

Having reached his decision, Darcy now had to make it public. He met first with his parents and then with the team owners and management. Of the latter, he asked that he be allowed to tell his team-mates before his retirement was announced to the general public. The team management respected Darcy's concern for the manner in which his decision should be announced and they told him that they would hold a press conference for that purpose. "I was going to tell the team Monday. The team would play Monday and then, the press conference on Tuesday. For them to do that for me was fantastic!"

The team meeting was a memorable experience. When Darcy broke the news to Stan Smyl, the team captain, "he couldn't believe it. (He) started crying right there. It was unbelievable, really emotional. There was the stereo playing in the team dressing room...He turned the stereo off...He was mad because he felt bad for me. He wasn't mad at me or anything, he was mad because I was retiring...He called all the guys into the main dressing room...So, that's when I told the guys that my neck wasn't responding to the point where I thought I could help the team and that it was best to my
health that it was time for me to retire. And, you could hear a pin drop. Of course, it was quite emotional. I'll never forget Cam Neely came up after. He was a rookie at the time and he just said, 'I really enjoyed playing with you and I'll never forget this day for the rest of my life'. It was really quite emotional for a veteran player to come in and tell the guys what he was doing. All I told them was to keep it quiet. I didn't want to make a big deal of it."

Nevertheless, Darcy's retirement was a special event. Despite his efforts to keep his decision confidential, rumours were spreading in the media, on radio and television. "For two days, I was in hiding, basically. Never answered the phone...And then, on Tuesday, at this press luncheon, for any player to retire the way I did, I mean, you go out in just a classy way. The whole team was there. My family was there. Our owners were there. Our directors were there. There must have been forty, fifty media people there. B.C.T.V. broadcasted it that night...And that's where, during my little talk...it really stuck with me then, when I said that I was retiring. That's when it really hit me. I realized it was over!"

Not many players are fortunate enough to have their retirement marked and honoured in such a formal manner. "It's kind of nice and very appreciated by me for sure." Some other players "leave the game very bitter...(They) believe they can still play. They hang on. They just never think that their time is up. It's tough and I wonder about
that too. Would I have had the sense to retire, knowing I wasn't contributing as I could at one time? I think that's really tough for an athlete, when he's coming towards the end of his career and he still wants to play and yet, the team's kind of saying 'No, we're not playing you. We're not dressing you.' It's a very humbling experience. I would like to think that I would have had enough sense to realize that my career was over and it's time to go on to something else."

Darcy knows that the decision to retire from the game is not always easy, particularly if the athlete is still healthy and competitive. Yet, he seems to think that there is an undefined point where an athlete risks staying in the game too long and should move on to other endeavours. As an example, he has cited his contemporary, Lanny MacDonald, a player with the Calgary 'Flames'. "I think we were two of the oldest guys playing the game. We were born exactly the same day, the same year. When I talk about having the sense not to hang on, to retire, (I wonder about) Lanny, who's been a classy player all these years. He's still doing a good job but, the point is, when should he retire? When should he retire and go on to something else? He's thirty-six years old too and (at that age) you go through the grind of playing. He wants to win the Stanley Cup. He wants to get five hundred goals but, there comes a point in your life, if he doesn't get five hundred goals or win the Stanley Cup, what's he going to do? You have to have enough sense to retire." Just two weeks after the first interview with
Darcy, MacDonald became the fourteenth person to score five hundred goals during an N.H.L. career. Later, the 'Flames' won the Stanley Cup. With these objectives accomplished, it was only a matter of a few weeks until MacDonald would announce his decision to retire.

Some players have been known to leave the game with feelings of anger, disappointment, frustration, resentment, and general bitterness at the real or imagined injustices they have experienced. Such a player "leaves the game with this bitter taste with the fact that he was 'screwed over' for whatever reason it may have been." In contrast with some of these players, Darcy thinks that he may have more justification for feeling bitter because his career was concluded by injury while he was still contributing to his team. Yet, he says "maybe I should be bitter but I'm not...I have no bitterness at all". In fact, Darcy is very pleased and appreciative of the way in which he has been treated because "the team...looked after me. They supported me for insurance (and) paid my salary. They were very good."

Darcy considers that his acceptance and attitude toward retirement are largely due to his family background. "My parents aren't bitter people...I've always felt that bitterness makes no one happy. It's best to leave things like bitterness behind you." His family has been an important influence on him. "I think that I had the support of my family so much. It was such a crucial thing for me, the fact that they were always there. All through my life,
they were supportive, never pushed me, always encouraged me with what I wanted to do and to always do my best. And, I think I've always been very competitive. I think that's one of my father's aspects, he's such a competitive person, but I really to this day don't miss playing."

There are fleeting moments which are exceptions to this statement. For example, Darcy said that "the odd time I wonder what it would be like to be back on the ice. Like that seventh game Saturday night (final playoff with Calgary) and I think, Oh, gosh! It brought back memories but I know ...it will never happen again." Darcy's memories are very helpful in his current capacity with the team because he can readily empathize with the players. "I understand what they go through. I know the highs and lows, the tough times and the happy times, (and) how it feels to play injured."

One of the reasons that Darcy doesn't miss his playing career has been his continued association with hockey. "I'm lucky enough to be involved with the front office and (I) get involved in other areas, (such as) p.r. I scouted for a year. I was director of player development for a year. Now, I'm director of media relations and p.r. director, (and) do all the team travel (arrangements), which includes travelling with the team. So, I've had a great opportunity to stay involved in the game that's been such a big part of my life ...My biggest priority now is to contribute to the organization in a meaningful way and to have some say in the organization and see our team turn around to where we are
well respected. Where I see my career going, I have no end goal. I could be a general manager or something like that. That may happen down the road but I'm in no hurry for that." In addition to his role in management, he continues to enjoy playing hockey on a recreational basis, particularly with the 'Canuck Old-timers', who get together on the ice at least once a week.

Probably the major factor which has helped Darcy accept retirement from a playing hockey career is an appreciation of his general health, an appreciation which was enhanced by his experience of injury. "I'd like to think that I'll always look back on how my neck was and how my health was and just realize that whatever I do with my life, that I'm healthy. To me, that was the cruncher of all, the fact that my health was the most important thing and that I had so many plusses and fun things, enjoyable things, to draw from professional hockey that it was time to move on. I just knew it. I mean, I could have tried to play, tried to hang in there, but I like to think that I was sensible enough to realize that it's over. With a lot of guys with injuries, they try to play because they want to make the money. They think it's the glorified life but, to me, my health was the most important aspect...I just knew that my career was over. The fact is that my health is the biggest reason."

Darcy's adjustment to his post-playing life has been made easier by his acceptance that a player's lifestyle is brief and unusual. "I looked at it as...a dream world where
you make all this money...one hundred and fifty thousand dollars plus...you're the centre of attention...It's a nice lifestyle but it's not the realistic lifestyle that most people live under. (Now) I'm just making a normal salary and the biggest thing for me is I'm happy...I look upon those eleven years that I played...(as) a gravy train...The money was unrealistic...(and) is not comparable to anything else probably I'll do in my life."

Unlike many other athletes who retire when their performances are in decline, Darcy retired at the pinnacle of his career. "Yeah, that's a really good point...(because) here's a guy like me that's basically gotten better...(In Vancouver) I got to the point where I was one of the top players on the team, played in the All-star game two days before I hurt my neck, so I was at the top of my game. (I was) looked upon as a leader and it was a nice role to be in. ...But then, I just knew that I had to accept it. Injuries are part of the business...It's kind of ironic, to be at the top of your game (an All-star) and get hurt in the next game."

In some respects, Darcy has benefitted from the timing of his retirement because both he and his fans can remember his career at its peak, a point where he was satisfied with his accomplishments. "People...remember me as a player basically at the top of his game, not a player, like you say, on the way down, trying to hang on. They remember me as a player that was contributing and doing a good job and was cut
short because of a neck injury...at the top of his game...and that's what people remember me by." Even though he hasn't played professionally for over four years, he is often recognized in public. While he enjoys that acknowledgment, "the bottom line is that I realize that my career's over... When I announced my retirement, I haven't looked back."

Darcy's professional career was quite unusual in that the only league he played in was the National Hockey League. "That's a very good point...One of the biggest (highlights of the career) was that I never played one minor league game. Every game I played...was in the National League level...Not many players, as you mentioned, get that opportunity to do that. And, to me, I'm very proud of that. You look at...a lot of guys...towards the end of their careers, (they're) down in the minor leagues for two weeks conditioning. They're not playing much. Then, you see their records are blemished by five games in the minors and I never had that experience. Maybe, if I had, I would have hung in there (to try to prove myself), but who knows?"

Yet another factor which has been helpful in Darcy's adjustment to retirement has been his clear acceptance of personal responsibility in the decision to end his playing career. "There's no doubt about it. I really felt that it had to be my decision...(I) had dreamed of being a National Hockey League player like, probably, all these guys you're talking to. We all had the desire to be a professional hockey league player and I was no different...I was a guy who..."
disciplined and sacrificed for years because I had a goal of being a National League player...and making a name for myself and play(ing) a long time and then, all of a sudden, you have to give that game up, professionally. You've dreamed all your life of being a professional hockey player. (To retire), that's a big, big move and it had to be my decision. It had to be!"

Darcy knew that there was a risk that later on, when he might feel very healthy and strong, he might regret leaving the game and might think that he had retired prematurely. He had to consider his decision carefully. "I could take advice and talk to other people but, the bottom line is, it had to be my decision. And that's why I talked to a number of different people, just for wisdom." This process resulted in Darcy feeling confident that his decision to retire was correct. "There's people that say to me all the time, 'you must miss playing, you look great'. I try to keep myself fit, in pretty good shape, but I know the bottom line is, I can't play professional hockey anymore. I knew that after I was done! I've left the game behind - the professional ranks of playing."

Darcy's post-playing career came about in a very quick and unexpected manner. When he announced his retirement to team management, he had no expectation of finding continuing employment with the team. "I had no idea what was happening. I didn't know until when Harry Neale said that (I) was going to stay on in the organization. That was the first I'd heard
of it. It was a very pleasant surprise. I didn't know exactly what my duties were going to be." Over the years, Darcy had done a lot of public relations work for the team and "I didn't mind doing that in the short term, but I didn't want to make a life out of it, you know, going to banquets and things like that. I wanted some meat to a job."

A number of job opportunities were offered to Darcy. He had been doing some television work for The Sports Network and for the local station, C.K.V.U., which could have been continued. A number of sales jobs were offered him, particularly in insurance and radio station advertising. In addition, he received several business offers such as health clubs and muffin shops. However, Darcy wanted to have the option to return to the game in a different capacity, an option which is often very difficult once a person is removed from the scene. "I've seen guys who leave the game and get involved in something else and after three or four years they want to just get back into hockey. Well, front office people change, personnel change...their connections change and the opportunity to get involved is not there." Darcy considers himself fortunate that the 'Canucks' offer has developed into an enjoyable and challenging career whereby he has been able to develop knowledge and skills in administration.

Although he hadn't specifically planned it, Darcy's second career grew out of the volunteer work he had done in the off-season to return something to the community and to add to his personal development. Apart from running his own
hockey schools, "I was the one that always made himself available for different charitable organizations and gave time...I've always been a people's person...(and) I always made myself available to the team to do these things. A lot of players just didn't want to do it...but I was always the first one to volunteer for something. Most of our players, if you asked them to go out and give a speech to anybody, 'no way!', (they would) sign autographs or do something like that...but I relished (it)...When I first started, I was brutal. I'd talk for a minute or two and now, I just can't do enough. I just haven't the time. And I like to do one (speech) a month, at least, to keep yourself sharp, because it's a lot different getting up in front of people and talking and...you tell a joke and they laugh, I can't believe it! So, I enjoy that and I make myself available."

One of Darcy's favourite off-season activities melds his skills as an avid golfer with his interest in charity work. He proudly gave me a copy of a recent edition of the magazine 'Fore!', the cover page of which is a caricature of himself, dressed in a 'Canucks' uniform and swinging a hockey stick on a golfing tee. "I've got my own golf tournament, The Darcy Rota Red Cross Invitational Golf Tournament...(The Red Cross) asked me if I wanted to have my name associated with them in a golf tournament. My first response was (that) I was very honoured to think the Red Cross, which is a world-wide recognition organization, would consider me to be involved with them in a golf tournament...The second thing was to make
sure that we did it properly, in a classy way, in that we had the corporate sponsors and nice prizes...Well, the first year...we raised twenty-seven thousand dollars and last year, we raised forty thousand dollars, and I would anticipate that we'll raise forty thousand dollars again this year...I'm an avid golfer and I've got a great committee. I just like to put things back into the community. I'm not a taker."

Another public relations activity Darcy likes is to talk to youth and minor hockey groups, with whom he shares important messages based on his own experience as a professional athlete. "The biggest thing I talk about...is don't put all your eggs in one basket! I mean, hockey is a great way to make a living. It's got some great plusses to it. You've got your travelling. You're playing the game you love to play. You play with a lot of neat people...The money's good. The season's long, (but) you get the summers off. There's also some tough things about it. The fact is, it's a very insecure business. You get traded at any moment. I go back to my story, the fact that I thought I was going to be a 'Blackhawk' for my whole life. Then, boom, I was traded on the trading deadline. You can be sent to the minors. When you're in the minors, you have a big drop in salary. You have a constant pressure to produce every game. (If) you're not producing, there are players on the farm club that want to get called up...Injuries happen. Again, I use my experiences. I'm not talking about someone else, I'm talking about me. I'm talking about the fact that I retired because
of an injury. It happens to all of us, with injuries, some more serious than others. And, I say, the most important statistic is that the average life span as a player is 4.8 years...I mean, some players like Trevor Linden and Tony Tanti, they come into the league at eighteen, nineteen, twenty and by twenty-four, twenty-five, twenty-six, their careers are over. So, we (the 'Canucks') are very concerned about players expanding themselves beyond hockey, not just being so one dimensional. And, education is such a key thing, so we really stress the educational part."

Darcy cautions that there are two major concerns about retiring from professional hockey. "They leave the game bitter and they aren't prepared for when they leave. They focus their whole life on playing hockey and they have a good time in the off-season, but they're not prepared for when they retire. And, that's probably the whole story. And, it's a real big adjustment...(getting) away from professional sports because, in many cases, that's all they know...When they leave the game, they have no idea about business...they have money (which they might invest but which can) turn sour and, all of a sudden, boom! I've seen cases where guys have lost everything and now, what do they do? And now, when they were kind of idolized and recognized and wanted (before)...because they're not in the public eye, not in the papers anymore...all of a sudden, they're not in this demand. It's a tough situation for a lot of guys to handle. Real tough."

When players leave the game feeling bitter about their
experiences, it is not good for them. "They're not going to get on with their life. I've seen guys that are bitter. I'm not going to name names, but I just shudder at how bitter they are because of the way they left the game. And they've played for a lot longer than five, ten years...They're still bitter towards the game or people involved. They look behind, gosh! They think that the person's got something against them, personally, or whatever it may be, but you just can't let that affect you...(You have to) leave the game behind. Go on...In many cases today, they live in the past, 'well, I did this. I did that'. I mean, get on with your life!...What you did in your past, congratulations!...but move ahead man! That's how I look on life."

Although it may not be easy to do, players are advised to get involved in an interesting activity during the off-season. "I think that if a player can (in) six weeks, take a course or get involved with a company. See if he likes it. He'll be better off for when he retires. (But), a lot of guys get lazy. They just don't want to do it...It's tough to do when you've been under the gun for eight months of the year, in a pressure cooker to produce every game...there's a lot of pressure and you want those three or four months to have nothing to do. You're working-out yourself, weights, and running, and all of a sudden, boom, you're back at it again. It's an easy habit to get in. For about three years, I was like that and then, I started taking different courses. I took a real estate course, a Dale Carnegie course, an
accounting course, and other courses to develop myself but, I mean, it's tough...I probably should have taken more. Looking back on it now, it's always easy to say I wish I'd taken six weeks and done this but, at least, I did some things."

Players need to be aware that they will have to develop a second career. "They have to realize that careers don't last forever. And many young players, I was no different, twenty, twenty-one, I played with guys who were older than me (and I thought) I'll play forever. It just doesn't work out that way. All of a sudden, if you're not planning somewhat (you have no options but, if) you do a little planning...(do) something in the summer, even for a month, five weeks, at least you're making a proper step and it'll be a lot easier for you, when you retire, to step into the so-called real world and away from professional sports."

The Vancouver 'Canucks' organization is very concerned about the post-playing lives of players. To help them prepare for retirement, the team offers to pay the fees for educational programmes. "We don't care what it is as long as it develops them as a human being and expands his knowledge...something that will expand him in regards to his development as a human being and, somewhere along the line, help him with after his career is over." If the player shows proof of completing a course, "we'll pay for it, no questions asked. What we don't do (is pay before the course is completed)...It puts some pressure on the player."
Another programme the 'Canucks' offer is through their alumni association. "We have, I would say, as good an alumni as anywhere in the National Hockey League. Pat Quinn (the general manager)...a former Vancouver 'Canucks' (player), is very conscious of the alumni...(there are) real strong connections with the alumni and the current 'Canucks'." In the past, the alumni have helped out retired players who have experienced difficulties adjusting to post-playing life, offering them financial assistance and finding them jobs.

In concluding the interview, Darcy inquired about other former hockey players who are involved in the study. He relates with the experience of Dave Hindmarch, whose career ended as a result of an injury he received in a game in Vancouver. Darcy played in that game and remembers the injury as "brutal". Hindmarch eventually retired from the game because he was concerned about his long-term health, wanting to remain fit to enjoy the simple pleasures of life, such as playing ball with his future children. Darcy agreed, "that's what I thought too. I want a family and (to think that if I had tried to play longer and received further injury) all of a sudden, I lift my baby up and I've got a sore neck and a sore back. I mean, it's ridiculous!"
CHAPTER VIII

CASE 5 - FRANK BARROBY - JOCKEY

In the midst of the 1976 horse racing season at Vancouver's Exhibition Park, Frank Barroby reluctantly hung up his tack and retired from his sixteen year career as a professional jockey. Throughout his career, Frank had been plagued by a constant struggle to keep his weight down. That battle became increasingly difficult as he grew older. He found his career beginning a descending spiral. The number of wins became less frequent, precipitating declining opportunities to ride good mounts which, in turn, resulted in reduced probabilities for winning races. In his latter years, Frank often resorted to spending four hours a day in the jockeys' sauna, trying to lose the excess pounds which burdened his mounts and sometimes required him to step down in favour of lighter riders. It became apparent that this was one competition which he could no longer win and so, Frank decided to walk away from his career while he still had a respectable reputation.

Although Frank's retirement experience does not fall within the initial time parameters of this study, there are important reasons for its inclusion. His story offers the perspective of one of Canada's leading jockeys and a two-time rider in the prestigious Queen's Plate. His retirement experience is characterized by a mixture of personal struggle, anguish, and relief. He has been an activist, promoting better remuneration for jockeys and better health,
safety, and security procedures at the race track. Frank's current career as a leading horse trainer has rounded out his experience to include nearly thirty years as a prominent figure in Canadian horse racing. His story contributes considerable detail in the description of the career of a jockey.

While the focus of this story is on a man's career, it could easily be written as a description of a family lifestyle. The Barroby home and horse stables, named the Rocking Bar B Outfit, are located on a farm next to Trinity Western University, a bible school in Langley in the Fraser Valley. In the front yard is an old manure spreader, which seems to speak of the down-to-earth character of the family. The smell of horses lingers in the air. A pair of dogs roam the yard and guard the property. This is a rustic home, with a casual simplicity which is both comfortable and functional, cluttered with antique equipment, hurricane lights, rifles, and photographs of jockeys and horses. It is a working farm home which could be as easily located in the English countryside as in the Canadian prairies.

The Barroby are easy people to like. They are good-natured, with twinkling eyes which flash friendliness and enthusiasm, while also suggesting a little good-humoured mischief. While Frank and I sat on the bench seats of the split-log dinner table, his wife, Lynn, and two young adult children were at ease joining into the conversation or moving away to look after chores, making coffee and tea, answering
the phone, or tending a sick horse. Their comments offered additional information and perspective, as well as humour, as they found opportunities to tease Frank about his career and his competitiveness. For example, when Frank responded to my question about the big races he had been in, he was reminded of the 'Rocking Chair Derby', held in Edmonton for retired jockeys and, as his son quipped, "retired horses too."

In the first interview, the conversation flowed for nearly three-and-a-half hours. As the various stories unfolded, filled with the colour and language of the track and the problems faced by riders, trainers, and owners, I felt as though I was in the midst of a Dick Francis novel. That impression became resounding as I learned of the mystery and intrigue of the recent drug doping of some of Frank's horses at Exhibition Park Race Track.

The second interview was much like the first, with the same easy conversation and sociability as the Barrobys shared more about their lives in the world of horse racing. They were enthusiastic about the first write-up. "I enjoyed it...that was really good!...It really is (accurate)...so many things, you've put in the right word to make it come across the way it should be...I didn't think that it would be that factual or that close to being kind of the way it was. To be able to have a copy of that would make me feel good. I'm sure my mother would like to read that." I assured them that I would provide them with copies of the second write-up and they suggested other former riders whose stories would also
contribute to this study.

Apart from their personal pleasure in sharing their story and seeing it in print, Frank and Lynn saw how this report could have benefit for others. "You get reading certain things and you feel like it would be helpful, maybe, to somebody else too. Somebody starting out, especially some of the kids...that get led astray so easily...Even if some kid grasped some of it, it would have to help him (with) what to expect down the road. I know most of them figure it will last forever. It's pretty tough to tell a young guy, twenty-one, twenty-two, when you figure you have it all...but it comes to an end."

Both generations of Barrobys have grown up around horses. Frank had always liked horses and there were lots of them on his father's ranch. He met Lynn in Calgary, just before he started racing. She was also very familiar with horses. Her father was a former steeple-chase rider who galloped and trained horses, and her uncle was a horse trainer for E.P. Taylor, an industrialist and one of the leading thoroughbred breeders in North America. Taylor was the owner of 'Northern Dancer', the great Kentucky Derby winner who heads the leading sire line of several generations of successful race horses. Frank rode for Taylor when his developing career took him to Toronto. Lynn says she loves horses and "the (racing) atmosphere, once you're hooked". The two children, D'Arcy, aged twenty-two, and Jodie, aged nineteen, have travelled with their parents on the various
racing circuits in which Frank has competed and, more recently, have helped out with the training stables. Although he loves horses, D'Arcy doesn't share his father's passion for racing competition nor his understanding of the qualities of different horses. According to Frank, "D'Arcy could gallop as well as anybody but, (his) heart just wasn't there. Send him to the barn and he might not know one horse from the other." D'Arcy thinks that the risk of injury in racing is too great and, besides, he has other career interests. He is hoping to pursue a career as a police officer and his idea of heaven would be to serve on the horse patrol in Stanley Park. Jodie, on the other hand, is more attuned to horses and has been successful in show jumping competitions.

Frank was born on June 4, 1943, in Ravenscrag, Saskatchewan. He was the fourth of twelve children living on a remote ranch without electricity, running water, or telephone. "In the winter time, it was tough to get to school. The roads (were often) closed. For high school, (we would) sometimes walk three or four miles and then take another car with some other kids about another seven miles out to the highway and then we'd catch a school bus. A lot of days it was plugged right up (with snow)." Although he liked school, Frank's education was limited to partial grade nine, a function of poor attendance due to weather, his father's insistence that he help on the ranch, and the opportunity to take up racing.
Frank, "always the smallest kid in the class", began his dream of professional riding when he was about age eight. He was encouraged when "a neighbour boy, that was probably about four years older than me, went and became a rider and so... his father mentioned it to me... (and, because) I wanted to be a jockey... I followed. Somebody came down into our country looking for thoroughbreds... and he come out and asked if I wanted to go to the track. I said, 'yeah, as long as my folks'd let me go', 'cause I was only fifteen at the time. They figured it'd be all right. Mum wasn't too sure if I should be leaving that young but most of us, being such a big family, you know, was out off and on working so, I went to Lethbridge." Frank was used to being away from the ranch home. His older brother, Sonny, was working in an uncle's car body shop in nearby Maple Creek. "The body shop was the only thing that I could really go do to make a living right then so, Sonny needed somebody to work in the body shop with him so, I went." Frank had worked there for six months while waiting for an opportunity to go riding.

In the winter of 1959-60, Frank began two years of serious preparation for his career as a jockey. His new sponsor, Mike Cojocar, trained about four thoroughbreds as a hobby. Frank's first job was to look after the horses during the winter and to gallop them in the spring. Although he enjoyed the work, he was far from living in comfort. "Mike didn't hardly pay a guy anything. I stayed in the tack room there (with horses' equipment, saddles, bridles) and ate
weiners and beans." Frank later found out that Cojocar had no intentions of getting him ready for race riding, assuming that he was going to be too big and simply using him as cheap labour. This is a frequent occurrence for hopeful young riders whose dreams are exploited by owners and trainers. That spring, another trainer, Bud Greenwood, saw Frank galloping and asked him if he wanted to take another job. "Well, jees, I really did because I knew he had a pile of horses...about thirty head...and a person gets to gallop lots of horses. And he had an awful good guy riding for him right then that could really help a person out. And I took a liking to him too. So...I kind a hated to quit Mike, (I) felt a little bit obligated (but)...I started galloping for him, galloping and rubbing horses, but I was galloping quite a few right even that first year."

'Galloping' is an easy stage in a horse's exercise programme, "you just go slow, not really fast...'Breezing' is working horses, letting them run...'Breezing isn't as fast as what we call a 'work'. A work is where you're really letting a horse run. Seeing how much he can run. You do that lots in the morning. You work them three-eighths or a half, five-eighths, three-quarters of a mile". Galloping is also early training for a rider. "Not everybody can do it. They try to give you easy ones and even some of the easier ones are a bit tough because...you haven't got the know-how...That first year I got lots of experience because I got to where I was galloping...ten a morning...Pretty soon I was galloping
everything in the barn."

There's a big difference between galloping horses and riding them in a race. Frank found that out first hand in what proved to be a premature start to his racing career. When the stable's principal rider, Jerry Rasmussen, broke his collar bone, Frank was called to fill in. Although he was a good, promising rider, he required more training. "I hadn't even been to the starting gate and you've got to break horses out of there." His first venture at the gate was less than satisfactory and he returned to work the stables. Through the rest of that season and the following winter, which was spent training in Phoenix, Frank gained the experience necessary for him to make a real start on his racing career.

In June of 1961, Frank began race riding in Winnipeg. "I rode my first race and I tell you, the butterflies in a person's stomach!...As much as I'd galloped and knew I could do it, you still had that feeling...Just the start was really something. You talk about adrenalin!...And you're really worrying that you might make mistakes or you might bother somebody, 'cause it's a big responsibility and yet, you want to win so doggone bad because you're pretty sure them horses run faster for you than anybody else. You just know that from breezing in the morning...Anyway, I rode third on the first one I rode." After about seven or eight races, "I broke my maiden. I won my first one." By the close of the Winnipeg season, Frank was the leading apprentice rider on that track. He moved on to other tracks, Calgary, Edmonton,
Spokane, and Atokad, Nebraska. "I was leading apprentice just about everywhere I went." An apprenticeship designation allows beginning riders a weight allowance, which means that they pack less weight on their saddles than a full-fledged rider. This allowance lasts through his first racing year or until his forty-fifth win, whichever occurs first.

Maintaining a low body weight is an essential requisite of the riding profession. In a given race, all horses are assigned a baseline carrying weight of say, one hundred and twenty-two pounds, for rider, equipment, and added weights. Each horse is then handicapped, or allowed to carry less weight, according to various features of the race, the horse, and the rider. If the rider is heavy, the horse may not be able to take full advantage of the weight allowance provided in the race. "To do good, you should probably do about one-twelve (pounds) or so, in that range. When I had my apprenticeship, I done a hundred and seven. When I think back about it, I don't know how I did it. I just wanted it so bad." Frank currently weighs about one hundred and fifty pounds.

In preparation for his apprentice year, Frank had "started reducing" in a determined programme of weight loss. "Before I started riding, I was a little bit heavy. I started jogging and trying to keep my weight down. I was only eating a toasted bacon and tomato sandwich everyday, just faithfully. Just kept to the same thing everyday, and coffee...trying to keep the weight off. I never did go into
the sweat box (jockeys' sauna) as long as I had my apprenticeship. I never had to. I really had the will power because you're wanting it so bad that you push yourself away from the table."

The primary exercise or conditioning programme Frank followed for years was simply riding lots of horses. In the mornings, even on race days, he would get up early in order to be at the track by 6:30 and would spend the next four hours exercising the horses. A string of horses at the track would be exercised differently according to their style, conditioning, racing schedule, and the particular trainer's programme. For example, some horses might be taken for a short gallop on the morning of their race. Others might be worked hard, being 'blown out' or 'given air', a few days before the race and then walked in subsequent days. After a race, horses might be walked around the track for the next three or four days. So, Frank "would be up in the morning for a quick coffee and then gallop...(I'd) probably gallop fifteen head a day. I always galloped a lot of horses. I enjoyed galloping for people and I found it kept my weight down too...In the later year's, I'd even have a rain jacket on under my jacket so's I'd sweat...I felt good. I'd feel better once I'd got the weight off than I would in the winter time. I'd fill up to a hundred and twenty, a hundred and thirty (pounds) and I'd have to get down to one-thirteen, one-fourteen...As soon as I'd had my Christmas dinner, I'd really start watching what I ate. In later years, I'd go to
the health spa to work out and 'pull some weight'."

Frank returned to Winnipeg for the 1962 season. Here, he became the track's leading rider, having the most wins in the season and setting a record by winning seventy-eight races in the forty-two-day racing schedule. "I couldn't do anything wrong. You know, a horse'd be a long shot and I'd get on him and he'd just run super. Well, you just felt good about him and it almost carried it through to the horse you were riding...There's a strong relationship between rider and the animal...(The horse seems to pick up) when you have confidence." Frank raced in a circuit which included Calgary, Edmonton, Regina, and Saskatoon, becoming leading rider at each track.

To be a top rider, the jockey has to push the horse, himself, and, sometimes, the rules. "You've got to have a lot of nerve. A lot of us just don't have the same fear that other people do. I was probably known as fairly brave in riding most any horses. They could be a little sore or a little bad and I could handle them." As a very determined competitor, Frank strove for every legal advantage he could gain. "You're looking out for the other guy but you'd try to put the squeeze on him or box somebody in a little bit to beat him...There's little tricks for that. They can't say that you did it on purpose. You learn the edges that you can take. That's what makes the difference between good riders and bad riders...You'd get riding infractions 'cause you're trying hard." As a result, in Winnipeg that year, he was
twice 'set down', penalized for rule infractions. "The first
time, I figured I had it coming, but the second time I
didn't."

Although there are a lot of rules in racing to protect
both riders and horses, most jockeys are alert to the hazards
of the race. "You just naturally look after your fellow man
anyway because, damn it, it's dangerous! We never thought of
it...but you knew you could drop somebody pretty easy. It
just takes one little clip of the heels, the timing, and you
can cause quite a spill. (For example) going into a turn, if
you're in front of somebody and you come over too quick, your
horse's back legs are reaching out behind and his are
reaching forward. All it takes is just the slightest clip of
the heels and it just pulls the feet right out and they go
down hard...(and) it probably causes two or three other
people to go too."

Frank was indifferent to accidents. He averaged about
one spill from a horse each year "but, I think a person was
so fit...You knew you'd take 'em, but I never really worried
about it that much. You almost get to thinkin' you can't get
hurt...I felt that way until I hung up my tack." The worst
riding accident Frank had was in 1973 when he broke his heel.
His horse bolted and went through the outside fence of the
track. "I knocked out about ten feet of it and he knocked
out about ten feet. We both went through different parts of
it." Frank was given a heel transplant. The doctors said
that he would always have arthritis in that heel but, "very
seldom do I ever feel that it's much different than the other one."

The next most serious injury Frank suffered was a mild concussion. "That was the funniest thing because when they asked you what horse was you on, and I wasn't too sure, and then, they asked me my name and I couldn't think of it and well, then I knew. Well, holy cow! 'Cause I wanted to go right back out and ride, I thought I was fine. I was sending him (the horse) to the front and he really just, what we call 'pile drove' a person, just head first. He drilled me right into the ground. Two year old, doggone it! He knocked me out. Stopping and veering to the inside. Dumped me off, right on my head and my neck. They wouldn't let me ride that day. They left me a programme and I finally figured out who the hell I was and then, they let me go home. Jees, I ached for a couple of days!"

The year 1965 is outstanding in Frank's memory. Not only were he and Lynn married that year but he enjoyed such great success on the track that he very nearly ended the season as the leading rider in Canada. "I goofed it up by not knowing (the exact standings across the country). They didn't really keep a close tab between East and West and so, once we were finished at Calgary and Edmonton, I went hunting for a couple of weeks. If I would have checked, I was leading rider in Canada at that time, quite a few (wins) in front." After his hunting trip, Frank moved to the Toronto tracks to continue the racing season but, by the time he got
himself established there, he had lost his lead over other riders.

It is tough breaking into a new track, winning enough races to gain local recognition. "You don't really know anybody. (You) have to get a new agent, get the right rides." Frank found it particularly tough at the Woodbine Race Track because it was assumed that he could not be successful on the larger mile-long track. His record had been made on shorter, five eighths of a mile tracks and he seemed branded by that success as 'King of the Bullrings'. He eventually took advantage of his proven record by moving to the shorter Greenwood Race Track where he was able to get good mounts and resume his success. Nevertheless, by season's end "I got beaten by about five for top rider in Canada. It shouldn't've happened if I would have known. My one chance to have been leading rider in Canada! A few more races (instead of going hunting) and I would have had it. It would have been nice."

Frank spent the next couple of years in Toronto and must have been quite a character on the big city tracks because he liked to wear his western duds, cowboy hat and chaps, particularly after he found he could get a response from the locals. "They used to kid me about it. Once they did that, I couldn't take it off." He continued to enjoy success on the tracks. "I wasn't leading rider there but in the top ten. It was good to me. I rode for everybody."

After the racing season, the Barrobyys would pack up and
move to Phoenix. "It was a super place to winter. Sometimes there'd be about a hundred and ninety riders (there) 'cause it was such a nice place to be. (With) so many riders, it was tough to even gallop horses in the mornings, unless you were hooked up with a stable. I always done all right, but you had to work hard for what you got...wouldn't make a lot of money there, (but could) cover expenses and not dip into your bank account."

Although he liked the race tracks and the people in Toronto, Frank found the pace of the big city to be a bit too much for him. The humid climate and the racing schedule became too tiring and disruptive of the daily schedule Frank liked to keep. "I was a couple of pounds heavier and...it was early racing, they'd start about 1:00, so I'd get done galloping and have to run right over to the sweat box and so, (after racing) I wouldn't get home 'til late." The strain of trying to maintain a low body weight was also beginning to tell. "People'd invite you for supper (and) you just couldn't go really (because they would question) 'jees, is that all you're going to eat?'...they never seemed to understand...there was even the odd time that I'd use Exlax (to try to lose weight quickly)."

In 1968, Frank was invited to ride in Vancouver. This was a particularly attractive invitation because of his weight problem. "It was late racing here (later in the afternoon). That's why I came here. Late racing would give me the whole day actually to get that weight off." Apart
from the early morning riding he did, Frank had a novel way
to try to shed more weight. "I'd drive to pull more weight
...(I'd) dress up, put underwear on and a rubber suit, and
I'd drive in the vehicle with the heater on, blasting, and
you'd sweat...maybe for an hour or so...You'd pull five or
six pounds that way. That was easier on my mind...than to go
in the sweat box. I used to hit the sweat box a lot but I
couldn't pull a lot of weight. Other riders'd come in and
pull four pounds and maybe I'd pull a pound and a half. I
think it was because I was dehydrated at that point."

Frank continued to enjoy success on the track. In his
first two seasons in Vancouver, he was first and second
leading rider. He later moved back to the prairies for a few
years and again was one of the top riders there before
returning to Vancouver. "Just about everywhere I went, I
always done well...The years were good. The riding was good
to me. For the first ten years, I'd always win over one
hundred races a year out of five or six hundred. When you're
doing good, you ride the card, every race that's available,
usually about eight a day."

With this kind of record, Frank was able to earn what he
described as a good living. "We got used to living pretty
well. The racing's been good to us. I've never felt like we
were wanting for anything ever. Never had to worry about
where our next meal was coming." In those days, good jockeys
might be able to earn a comfortable living but, nothing like
that of today's top local jockeys, who might earn about
eighty thousand dollars a year. "It used to be (that) you just got a scale amount for how the horse finished, regardless of the purse. Like, I rode third in the Queen's Plate and the jockey's amount was maybe forty-five bucks and yet, the owners picked up thousands... Usually the win would be about thirty-seven dollars... (but) some people (owners) would come along and stake you fifty dollars for a win... Now, it's ten percent across the board... I helped get the ten percent rule in here and in the prairies... It's good money now. It was pretty good then too, if you were in the top ten. Some guys were really working very hard but they were just getting by. They probably would have been better off doing something else. The rider has to pay his agent twenty-five per cent off the top. By the time you're finished, there's not much. (But) you'd make a living on the circuit if you were in the top ten riders. About the top five would make a good living."

Even a top jockey's income can be unstable, varying according to the racing season as well as his performance on the track. Frank looked after his money well. He had bought some cattle which he was running with his father's herd. "If you got five or ten thousand in the bank, you had a little buffer. You'd go buy calves or a bailer for home for my dad to use (on the family ranch). I done well. I wasn't one to go partying like some guys. They'd have to go out and have a big party and they'd pay for the whole thing and they end up (their careers with nothing)... maybe driving cab."
As the years went by, Frank found it more and more difficult to keep his weight down and so, his performance began to decline. "It gets harder to reduce...I'd spend three hours or longer in the box. It would be cranked up hot. I got so I hated heat. I really did. You'd come out of there and have a cold shower, it felt so good. I'd ride and felt good, felt strong...(but, people would think) 'he's reducing, he's not as strong a rider'. It takes so much out of you but, I was conditioned to it...because I was always one for doing the same thing everyday, consistent."

Nevertheless, the number of rides available to Frank started to decline because the trainers like their horses to carry no more than one hundred and seventeen, one hundred and eighteen pounds. "If you're kind of heavy, you don't get to ride some of the fillies...sometimes it's not the trainer's choice because you're only allowed to pack five pounds overweight...and there's quite a few lighter riders too, good riders (who will get the ride and win on horses you've ridden before)...you don't feel good about that...I was still probably in the top five or six (riders) but, for me, (that) probably wasn't good enough neither. You know, when you're used to being so good...and then, first thing you know, you're not riding the best horses...not doing quite as good and so...you're wondering if it's worth it to keep punishing yourself."

Lynn saw Frank torturing himself in his efforts to keep the weight off. His diet consisted of a single daily meal of steak and salad, eaten near midnight. His efforts to lose
weight began to run serious health risks. "I smoked so I wouldn't feel hungry. I smoked because I knew it would help me keep my weight down. And I drank to pull weight. I'd have a mickey of gin and I'd take a couple of shots just to get sweating...I kind of hated to (but, I) knew that when I went into the box, I'd sweat lots." In addition, during the last years of his career, Frank treated himself with drugs. He took potassium along with Lasix, a diuretic drug, "to drain the liquid out of my body. I'd keep it to one tablet a day, but...you wonder if it's getting dangerous".

The supposed 'therapeutic' use of drugs by jockeys is quite frequent. To counteract the numerous aches and pains of a riding career, some riders take 'Bute', phenylbutazone, a potent antiarthritic, anti-inflammatory drug which should not be used in the treatment of trivial disorders. The medical warning for this drug advises that patients should not participate in activities requiring alertness or coordination. Nevertheless, jockeys will use it. Some will even use drugs intended for animals. "This kid was using horse 'Bute'. It's a pretty strong pain killer. If you've got a horse who's sore, you use it and he won't even limp a bit. (The jockey) was just a young guy...He was hurting a little bit but, sure enough, he ended up with a bone marrow cancer which they attributed to the 'Bute' he was using."

Frank had found himself locked in a vicious circle which he could not overcome. The constant battle with weight through diet, sweating, and the use of alcohol and drugs,
along with declining opportunities to ride quality stock and similarly declining numbers of winning races, all added up to considerable frustration. "It was just tougher to pull the weight and you get in not as good a frame of mind...I was getting ornery in the jocks' room, like with other riders. Somebody'd say something and I'd get snarly. Snarly to live with at home! Just because of the weight!...I don't like doing too much unless I can win. Lynn always says I'm not a very good loser (she quickly agreed). I used to come home and some days I'd win three (races) or something and I'd be cussing about the one I'd got beat. Towards the end, I think it was tougher for me because I'd always done so well and (now)...you weren't riding as good stock and you weren't doing as good as you usually had. And that bothered me!...I liked to win, I really did. Then you kind of wonder if it's not maybe you, if you're not winning...(It's demoralizing) if you're gonna ride three or four horses and not one of them look like they can win that day, or if you've got one that looks good and something happens, maybe he gets left at the gate or something, and there goes your only hope for the day! And you get to wonder, well damn it, is it really worth it for the punishment to pull weight?"

Despite his love of racing, Frank eventually gave up on a struggle which he seemed to have no chance to win. "It finally did get to be a grind. I would never've quit riding, never would have quit, if it weren't for the weight. That last year, I quit...for about a week...I wasn't too sure what
I was going to do. I'd thought of going back to Saskatchewan because me and my brother had some land and cattle and I thought, if I couldn't ride, I didn't want to be around the race track. You're used to the action. You're used to the competitiveness...and my agent talked me into coming back... and I won three that day and a stake race. I was still doing well...(but) between it all, I just knew (it was over. I) rode for another week or so and that was it. Just too much!"

With just three weeks left in the season, Frank decided to end the torture. "It got tougher as the weather got worse because I couldn't jump in the vehicle and pull the same weight...If it's sunny, it makes a big difference. You sweat more. If it's cloudy, you can't pull the same weight. You can't get it driving, so you've got to go spend (more time) in the sweat box. You're starting to spend four hours. There'd be days when I'd go in for four hours and I couldn't get enough off and so, you'd have to take off (drop from the racing schedule) the last minute and that would really bug me...(That last day) I tried pulling weight and couldn't make it. Had to give up mounts so, you're kind of leaving trainers hung up too, to put somebody else on, depending on who's open. So, you feel like you're not really fulfilling your obligations. I just finally said, 'Ah, to hell! It's not worth fighting the weight'. I know I felt so relieved! I felt super good! You do feel that you hate leaving the competitiveness of the racing and you wonder what you're going to do because you've done that for so long. Since a
kid, it's been everything...I guess I hated to quit so bad but, I actually felt relieved because I'd finally said that's it and there's got to be something else I could do." As Lynn recalls, "he ate the day he quit. A big meal!"

Frank has a lot of pride and it is important to him that he maintain a reputation as both a winner and a quality horseman. "I didn't want to go like some guys were. They were...almost begging for a mount. I wanted to...quit when I was still doing something good". A good jockey has to be confident, having the ability to lead his mount through a specific race strategy, while also being able to respond to changing conditions as the race unfolds. The race strategy is usually determined by the jockey and trainer. "You look at your racing form...and you figure out about where you should be laying and you know if there's going to be a fast pace. You plan it by the horses that are going to be in the race but...when the gate opens, you have to use your own judgement...You have to be kind of witty and smart...You push 'em too hard out of the gate and, the first turn, you've already lost it. The horse only has so much of a hard drive, maybe only a quarter of a mile hard drive. It's knowing your horse."

When some riders become desperate for a successful race, they may begin to try too hard, taking greater risks than usual with the safety of other riders and their horses, as well as making poor strategic decisions. "You just try too hard. You'll over-ride your horse maybe too early. Things
that normally you wouldn't do...I used to have to check myself for trying too hard because, you know that horse can only run so hard. If you start pushing too early, you're bound to come up empty with him because timing is so important. You'd just about have to have a clock in your head...Pace, I knew my pace really well."

Some jockeys become increasingly ineffective and dangerous because they become afraid of injury. "The nerve goes...You take a couple of spills, it can shake the confidence of some people. See, more so with a light rider that isn't maybe strong. The guys that are light and strong, with the upper body strength, they don't seem to have that trouble because they can handle their horses. But, sometimes you can't hold them. That's got to be a bad feeling...(When that happens) I know they never slept that night...I never had a horse that I couldn't (handle), that would really run off on me."

Older jockeys are likely to lose their nerve and begin taking the 'overland route' on the race track, working their way to the relative safety of less competitive and less congested areas. "Instead of taking a hole and sneaking through it so you could win races, taking a chance, somebody who doesn't have the nerve, maybe they're down on the inside (where you want to be in order to win), they're looking to get to the outside. The shortest way home is on the rail." Their defensive riding not only makes them less competitive but also more dangerous because they are moving against the
grain, in opposition to other riders who are striving to get to the inside of the track.

Another group of riders who can become a problem on the track are those with families who worry about them. "I've seen pretty good riders, they get married and right away, if the wife's worried about them...they start to get a little careful...pretty soon they get to where they start to do bad. ...(They don't get good rides because) word gets around so quick. They also put themselves into more danger by trying to get out of tight spots when they should be staying there. They might cause somebody else troubles because they're looking out for themselves instead of looking out for their fellow rider...They start thinking about 'Holy Hell, I'm in trouble!' They don't think about you." In this regard, Frank was very fortunate because he had the support and understanding of a wife who came from a racing family, someone who said she "worried more about him coming home on the freeway than what he did on the track." Frank says, "Lynn always knew what it required to be a rider." In addition, Frank seemed to think that he couldn't get hurt. At the end, "I had my nerve still, like when I was young, but the weight! It just eats you."

Competition is important to Frank and he hated to quit riding. "I'd always had in my mind that once I quit riding, I didn't want to be around the race track because I couldn't see anything else that I'd really want to do, not as much as ride. There's no doubt about it. I missed the riding, the
excitement, the competitiveness...When you win a race for even a little guy who's got only one or two horses, you'd feel so good if you won a race for somebody who really needed it. It just made you feel so good to win a race for that guy. It may be the only race he'd win all year but, he'd feel so good and you'd feel so good, just as good as if you'd like, win a stake race for somebody that had all kinds of money. And the competition of winning and maybe beating somebody by a nose...is really something. And there's no doubt about it, I don't like doing too much unless I can win...Even to this day, I miss my riding. I mean, I go to spring training races and ride and I'll win some and it feels good but, I miss the competition."

In a small way, Frank also misses the limelight, the celebrity status of being a top competitor. "I never really thought of it when I was riding. I never really liked the crowd. I really enjoyed like, going to a sport dinner, being at the head table, like with Bobby Hull and those guys, but I was scared when my turn come (to speak), I really was...I really enjoyed that, meeting them guys. I didn't like the spot-light on me too much. I'd like to win races for people and they'd feel good about it...I'd enjoy a good write-up in the paper or so." Despite his public acclaim in the big cities, Frank remained conscious of his rural roots and his strong family ties. "It was nice to go back to Saskatchewan. Everybody was quite proud of a person, my family was. I never really thought of it much (the celebrity status) at
that time, but when you think back on it, there sure was (a lot of attention)."

When he walked away from the track, Frank had other career options. In partnership with one of his brothers, he had bought the Maple Creek auto body shop that he had worked in for six months before beginning his racing career. "But, I didn't want to go back to the body shop. I'd been in that just before I came to ride...I always had been prepared for the day we would quit but, I really had figured on going back to Saskatchewan, and ranching, and buying my dad's place to go along with the land that me and Harold (his brother) had ...I had fifty head of cattle and...I loved cattle...I would have enjoyed that and Lynn would have enjoyed it. We would have made it but we wouldn't've had any extra money to spend on anything and we'd got used to living (pretty well)...We stopped and started figuring things out on paper...We thought about opportunities for the kids. It was a good life when I was there but, I know, with twelve kids, we lived on the family allowance and, gol'damn it, when the sugar was gone, the sugar was gone! When you run out in that month there's no more. Here, there's so much opportunity for the kids... school and everything...Probably, if it would have been just me, I would have been back ranching."

Frank didn't have to deliberate about a second career for very long. He had ridden for Bob Hall, of B.C. Interior Stables located in Kamloops, "and he called and asked if I'd like to train his horses. He had about seven and he'd put me
on a salary and a commission. It took about two months to make up our mind 'cause I wasn't going to be pressured to do it. So, I said, 'well, I'll go training'. And I can't say as I've ever regretted it." About four years ago, Frank decided to go public, taking on additional horses to gain security in case the single owner ran into financial difficulties which might result in reducing his string of horses. Since that time, Frank's stable, bearing the western name of the 'Rocking Bar B Outfit', has done very well, running between thirty and forty horses.

The career as a horse trainer has proven ideal for Frank, Lynn and their children because they all have loved horses and have enjoyed the opportunity to be engaged in the family operation. Frank has found satisfaction in "working with horses, getting to know their characters, breaking them to the saddle, and teaching them to race...(It's) awfully rewarding." In addition, it has allowed Frank to continue to be competitive. During the last three years, he has held every position of the top three trainers. "Lynn would say I care more about the win than I do about the money and it's true, I love to win." Lynn readily corroborated this statement, "he can't tell you how much money he's made but he can tell you how many races he's won."

Although it has been a satisfying career, Frank has recently been soured by a couple of frustrating and frightening experiences which have made him question his efforts. Some of his horses have tested positive for illicit
drug use. Near the close of the 1988 season, one of his horses placed second in a race and a subsequent test showed that the horse had been treated with Talwin, a banned analgesic drug. "Somebody'd got to one of my horses... there's a rule in our book that says that you are responsible for the care of your horses and so, right away, you don't have a chance. You're automatically guilty. Then the stewards...give me ninety days, ninety days that I can't even step foot on the race track! I appealed it and they cut it back to thirty days but, the bottom line is that I was responsible for the horses. And there's no way that you can prove that you didn't do it. Even if they just about know you didn't, you're still going to get it."

This was not the first time that one of Frank's horses had failed a drug test. During the 1987 season, one of his horses was found to have traces of Banomine, an analgesic which is legal to use as long as it is not active in the horse at race time. Frank has used the drug legally as a therapeutic, pre-race treatment for slightly injured horses. "If the horse is a little stiff or sore, sometimes I'll work him with Banomine. It's a pain killer. You need it here because we're running on a lot of sand and the horses get muscle sores. When they start off in the spring, when they're striding out, reaching to their potential (they are healthy but), by the middle of the summer, they're probably backed off to about three-quarters of their potential, just because of the sand and the hardness of the track. It just
doesn't seem to be the greatest of conditions. So, you treat them with Banomine and you make out the best that you can. You put him on Banomine and he starts to feel pretty good about himself, no more ache and he'll eat his feed. Probably the biggest percentage of us use it. I knew I'd treated in the legal time limit. I knew exactly how long ago I'd treated but, the test came back positive. It was our fault because we'd left the drugs sitting in the tack room, unlocked and, well, the horses' names are on the doors. It was about like asking for trouble! That time they give me thirty days and I appealed it and they cut me back to fifteen."

Frank is very bitter about his last experience. His penalty carries over into the 1989 season, affecting both his competitive standing and his reputation. "This year with the Talwin, no way! Like, it's a narcotic and Holy Hell!...I was leading trainer at the time (and was subsequently beaten by one race by his brother, who also trains)...Our reputation is really good...That's what bothers me. That's probably the worst thing because that's one thing that we do have. Like, if a person's well thought of and they give you ninety days, it's like saying you did it. And even, like, for the public, it's like saying that there's no doubt that I did it."

Frank has worked hard to gain a good reputation. "You didn't associate yourself with somebody who was a little bit of a rounder or something. You just naturally shied away from him...Over the years, that's why a person has stayed
clean. Something like this, it does ruin my reputation. It leaves doubt in people's minds. It don't seem fair!" This injustice was further re-inforced by the fact that, while Frank was barred from the track without benefit of a trial, another trainer, who was facing criminal charges for counterfeiting, was seen at the race track bar while awaiting his court appearance.

Subsequent events added to Frank's upset. He and several of his horse owners had posted a reward for information about the drugging of horses. "The last day of the racing, somebody come forward and said that they'd heard some people talking up in the bar about fixing races and that they'd hit horses with this (Talwin) and different stuff." The racing secretary was given a list of horses which were supposed to have been tampered with. These horses were to have been tested but, for some reason, the information was not passed on to the stewards and a proper investigation did not take place. "I was so God damned shook up!" To make matters worse, when Frank appealed the ruling against him, the informant was disregarded as being unreliable, because he may be a drug user and pusher himself, and the racing secretary said that he couldn't recall the details of the information he had been given. "It was so unjust...The stewards are the law, they call the shots. They've got so much power. That power can be abused...We almost took it outside to the R.C.M.P." Frank had a lot more to say about the way this matter was handled by the racing commission and
the jockey club but, it is not appropriate to record those opinions here.

These experiences have left Frank feeling very vulnerable and have caused him to question continuing his career. "What protection do we really have to stop this from happening again?" Frank, along with his brother Harold, who is the vice-president of the Horsemen's Benevolent and Protection Association, and a couple of other trainers had promoted a drug testing programme for backside personnel, those people with access to the racing stables. A drug rehabilitation programme has recently been scheduled but their efforts have been resisted. "There was a bunch of exercise riders and even a few trainers (who) stood there at the gap (entrance to the track) and tried to stop us from going on to gallop horses because they didn't think it was right (that) they should be tested. Because there was a few of them that were going to test positive. So, a guy did cause a few enemies there. Like, I also was on t.v. as being for it. I was all for cleaning up the backside. It's got quite bad. We've got young kids there and they're like, smoking pot and doing things that's not good. And I've been for cleaning it up. There's pushing and what-not. How in the hell am I going to keep my horses from being drugged if there are guys on the backside who're using drugs like cocaine and whatever?...(The Commission won't admit) that there was some fixing going on. It's admitting that they weren't really policing their backside like they should.
It's like admitting guilt."

"I knew it was getting bad but, I didn't think it was (as bad as this). They get to your horses. Everybody gets to know you're habits. If they want to get to your horses, there's no problem...(This has been) probably the worst winter I've put in ever...(for) something you didn't do! And I've spent really my entire life in racing. (It's been) more painful than leaving racing as a jockey. No comparison. I lost a lot of sleep a lot of nights, but I have to live with it. You try to think, 'who could have did it?' But, then, you probably start to look at more people than you should... (Lynn said, 'we have a lot of sympathy for Ben Johnson', a statement which is best understood in the context of the then popular hope that the runner had not knowingly taken drugs.) If they want me again, they'll have me!"

Feeling vulnerable to further attacks on his reputation and livelihood, Frank has considered another career option. He and Lynn have discussed the potentials of buying and selling young horses. "I love the training part of it...I could go to different sales and buy yearlings and, like I enjoy breaking horses, starting them out...I've got pretty good knowledge about what kind of horse to buy...I'd break them...and try to have them all sold by the time the races started...and step back and watch the races. That way, nobody can get to your horses or anything."

This career move would have an additional benefit in ridding Frank of an on-going irritant in being a horse
trainer. Horse owners are often very concerned about their horse's performance. "Our phone rings and rings say, when one of our horses runs bad...You get pressure from your owners...(They're) like me. There's good losers and there's bad losers. If a horse runs good, they'll stop at the barn and they're all happy and, next time (if the horse doesn't run well) they want a different rider or (whatever)...Well, being a rider myself, I'll stick up for a rider. It's not just like riding a car. You step on the gas and you do this or you do that...you have to answer to the owners (but, particularly with young riders) you've got to give them kids every break you can...I'm a little quick to say, 'well, if you really don't like it, you can take your horses'...(but, he says with a grin) I still end up with a lot of horses."

Although he is still very involved with racing, Frank misses the specific atmosphere which can only be sensed from the perspective of the jockey, the anticipation of the parade to the post, the excitement at the gates, and the thrill of charging down the stretch. The toughest part of Frank's retirement experience has been the lack of personal competition in riding. "I've found it tough watching races 'cause I've always wished I was out there riding. I really miss the action of the ride, the competitiveness of coming down the lane and beating somebody. I love to win. I'm not a good loser...There's been times when I'd love to be back riding and if it weren't for the weight, boy, there would have been times I would have went back to riding too. Not
that training hasn't been good but, I think with the riding, you put the pressure on yourself."

Reflecting on this interview, Frank acknowledged that "it brings back the good memories, it really does." While the whole experience is cherished, there is no single big moment that stands out in his career because each win is forgotten as soon as the next race is scheduled. Frank has fond memories and on-going relationships with a few of the people he rode with. With some riders, "you get really close...when they're out there (on the track), they're really competitive...but they get to be really good friends...

Probably the guys I got closest to were some of the guys I hit the sweat box with...'cause you're in there and, damn it, you talk and that...and some guys were extra good to you too, when you first came around when you were a kid. Some of the guys that kind of looked out for you. When (other) guys were picking on you and they'd stick up for you, you always was close to them...for the rest of your life it almost seems."

An example of such a relationship is the friendship which is still shared between Frank and Jerry Rasmussen, the first professional rider he worked with, now a long-distance truck driver who calls whenever he passes through the Fraser Valley.

Close friendships between jockeys are particularly special because the racing environment is not conducive to such relationships. Jockeys are discouraged from sharing the kinds of personal information which might lead to the
development of good interpersonal relationships because that information might be used against them. Not only are jockeys competing against each other in given races, but they are also competing for future mounts. Any sign of personal weakness, emotional or physical, might be exploited by other riders. Similarly, other riders might adopt strategies designed to counteract any knowledge of a rider's particular strengths or confidence. In a sport where substantial amounts of money are wagered, information is always sought about a jockey or his mounts. As a result, riders usually strive to keep their thoughts and feelings to themselves.

There is a considerable amount of stress in a professional riding career and the necessity of maintaining a high degree of privacy adds to that stress. Although riders need emotional support, it is often inconsistent. "Everybody's a hero when you are winning, but when you're not...people blame you". The blame and criticism can come from owners, trainers, reporters, and the general public, often people who do not have the knowledge to comment appropriately. "Jockeys can be hurt by people who turn on them." As Lynn has commented, "being a rider is a twenty-four-hour thing. You live it". When Frank was riding, she used to help shield him from emotional upsets by minimizing family squabbles. Not every rider is fortunate enough to enjoy relationships which provide this kind of consideration and protection.

For the most part, riders will "close ranks", talking
only amongst themselves about their ideas and opinions of other riders. While this practice affords some degree of security, in terms of protecting each other from public rumours, it can also become very vicious, an experience which is particularly damaging to young riders who have yet to develop their skills and confidence. Susceptible to criticism, they are also vulnerable to verbal attacks and competitive exploitation by older riders who intimidate them and take advantage of their inexperience. Frank has appreciated the help he received as he began his career and he has subsequently developed a particular dislike for those riders who pick on the apprentices.

As far as regrets are concerned, "like I've often said, if I had it to do over again, I'd take the same path. I might go to different places and ride, like Santa Anita (the major west coast race track at Los Angeles)...(I) always kicked myself now for not having rode there. When a guy did have the confidence, he was going good in certain places and that's where he'd go...but, a guy should have tried like, Santa Anita. I often wished a guy would have went to Kentucky and that. Just rode anyway, 'cause it didn't matter where a person went. You got going all right. And a lot of times you wouldn't even know anybody when you'd go to some of the places...you'd get going good. Should've just went...You'd always feel a little leary in a new place, but it wouldn't be long before a person would be doing good. I enjoyed it and I've enjoyed the training too."
Frank's experience as a jockey has been a great asset in his career as a trainer because he has learned to understand the characteristics of horses as well as the skills and stresses of the jockeys. As Lynn says, he is "a good judge of his horse and what's required" and so, he is able to match horses and jockeys according to their abilities and needs. A subsequent interview with Danny Williams confirmed this opinion as he said that Frank "was the best person to ride for because he'd been there as a rider." He knows what it is like from the jockey's perspective.

Based on his own experience, Frank would advise young jockeys to take on the challenges of more significant races and tracks, but also to select a time to retire so that pride and reputation can be maintained. "I tell them it don't last long. You really have to prepare for the time and you can't see that. When you're going good, you feel like it's gonna go on for a long time, you really do. I always was thinking about when was the time to quit. I think it was easier for me to quit that way because I didn't think it was always like (I could) keep winning...(I was) aware of the end because of fighting the weight. I was more aware than say, somebody who takes a spill and breaks a leg. That's got to be quite traumatic." Lynn said that "every year he would go into it thinking, 'well, if only I can have one more year'."

Frank advises jockeys to buy property, make an investment and put money aside. "I've seen so many that, damn it, have been good riders...race riders and driving the
big cars...('believing their own publicity', according to Lynn) end up with nothing." By comparison, the Barrobls had learned early to husband their money. "Brought up the way we were at home, not having a whole lot, you know, but damn it, a person was always putting away for a rainy day...(as a rider) I don't think I ever wasted my money." With retirement from racing an inevitability, it has been important to Lynn that "we never got in over our heads...we always tried to keep our lifestyle to where we didn't have (to face) a big drop."
CHAPTER IX

CASE 6 - TERRY LOMBARDO - JOCKEY

In 1979, after about six months of deliberation, Terry Lombardo decided that "there are other things in life you can do" besides horse racing. He had been in the sport for ten years, successfully working a very lucrative and competitive racing circuit on the west coast of the United States. During the last couple of years of his career, he had begun to lose his motivation and dedication to the career. He had grown tired of the racing lifestyle, the travelling from track to track, which did not fit in with his new aspirations for a family life. In addition, he was no longer willing to endure the constant struggle to maintain the low body weight required of a jockey. Terry's professional career is marked by very rapid success and an equally rapid acceptance of post-competitive life.

I met Terry through a referral by Darcy Rota, a former professional hockey player who is currently working in the front office of the Vancouver 'Canucks'. Darcy is a customer of the Lombardo family dry cleaning business, Service Cleaners, located on East Hastings Street, not far from both the Pacific Coliseum and Exhibition Park Race Track. I was interested in learning Terry's story because Darcy had told me of his apparent contentment with life after a very successful racing career. Our first interview lasted nearly one and a half hours and was conducted amidst the periodic whir of the store's conveyor belts as customers arrived to
claim their laundry.

Terry was born on May 20, 1948, the only child of parents of Italian descent. He is married to Cathy, a lady he lived with through several years of his racing career. Since his retirement, they have had two children, Joey and Lisa, aged seven and one. Terry has broad, muscular shoulders which suggest the height of a taller man. At a weight of about one hundred and forty pounds, he is some ten pounds heavier than when he retired and twenty to twenty-five pounds heavier than his racing weight. He appears healthy, fit, and solid at this weight, implying that it must have been extremely difficult for him to get his weight down to around one hundred and fifteen pounds for race days.

Like the other athletes I have interviewed in this study, Terry is very personable and at ease talking about his career. He has a ready grin and is quick to laugh at the memories of his career, his experiences and the people he has met. He appeared very open in describing his career and, despite the caution that "maybe I shouldn't say this", he mentioned some of the tricks which are frequently used by jockeys to push their mounts toward more successful finishes. Near the close of the interview, we were joined by an older family friend who dropped by the store. His appearance didn't interrupt the 'business' of our interview, although it seemed that Terry was just warming-up with his reminiscences about his career. I had the sense that if we had the opportunity for a few beers, I would have enjoyed a few hours
of entertaining stories.

Our second, validating interview also took place in the cleaning store. Terry read the report and chuckled several times at the narrative. This final report has simply amended the spelling of a few of the names in the story. Terry was surprised at the accuracy of the report, commenting that it is "very accurate. It's very well done. You did a very, very fantastic job." Terry enjoyed the opportunity to recall and talk about his career because "when you're around the race track, you don't really talk about it...(and you don't talk) that much with friends 'cause you'd feel like it was bragging...you don't really do that unless they ask you ...you tend to keep it low key, down-play it." Terry has been frustrated by previous efforts in trying to describe his experiences to people who did not understand. He appreciated and complimented me on these interviews because "you have to talk to somebody that really understands it...(and) you are very knowledgeable about it." He is looking forward to receiving a copy of this report because he knows that his wife will also be interested in reading it.

Terry began his career at the comparatively late age of twenty-one. Most riders will get started at about age thirteen and begin racing at the legal age of sixteen. Many of them will be finished by age twenty-one. Terry had been an observer of horse racing as a youngster because "our family home looks right down on the race track off McGill Street so, I used to look in there all the time." He worked
at his dad's business, "it's only about three blocks from Exhibition Park (and) we used to sneak in there...I've always loved horses. That was probably why I wanted to get into it." Family friends and customers encouraged Terry to become a rider but his father "didn't want me to be a rider. He said 'get an education'." Terry completed grade twelve and trained for a year as an aircraft mechanic. "Finally, I said 'hey, I just want to become a rider. That's it!'"

With his father's blessing, Terry sought the help of a customer, Curly Rentmeister, a former rider turned jockeys' agent, who introduced him to a number of trainers at the track. "I started right at the bottom, walking hots (horses which had just finished exercising or racing)...In the mornings, it'd be a half hour and the afternoons, an hour until they were cooled out...Now, most are walked by machines. (I was) mucking stalls...learning how to break yearlings, (and I) galloped horses...I was on a contract for one hundred dollars a month, that was it. You'd start work at 5:00 in the morning and you were finished with night racing at 11:00. You could sleep in between time but you were committed. You had to clean the tack, everything. He (the trainer) was supposed to clothe you and give you a place to stay so, he'd just give you the tack room but, I could just walk around to my home. So, I was lucky that way. A lot luckier than some of the kids starting out."

This was an exciting experience for Terry as he had an opportunity to take advantage of his size, "doing something
'cause I was small. All through school I was small. I played hockey right until I was about nineteen years old and I was playing against guys at that time who were a pretty big size and this was something that they couldn't do." Having played hockey since he was seven years old, Terry had developed strong legs, an asset to his new career.

Despite the fact that Terry did not have any real experience working with horses, he had spent a summer going on trail rides at a dude ranch, he learned to be a race rider within a year. "You learn your balance and that when you're breaking the yearlings...You just kind of get thrown up on them and you learn with them. You get thrown on the ground and you get back up and get on." A young rider can find lots of advice and assistance from both the horse trainers, many of whom are ex-riders themselves, and from the current riders. Racing people are eager to make sure that apprentices learn the trade quickly because inexperienced riders add danger to an already hazardous sport. People who were particularly helpful to Terry as he got started were Freddy Finlay and Bill Marsh. "You learn from these people. And they know. They watch you and right away from the first time you get on, they can say if you have the ability or not...They said, 'the kid'll do good. He's got the build... He's not scared'...I had the ability...what they call a natural seat." In later years, Bill Shoemaker, the noted American rider, commented very favourably about Terry's natural ability.
Terry's first race was at Prince George in what is termed a 'bush meet'. Neither the horses nor the riders at these meets are of high calibre. "Up in the bushes...the horses we rode were just, well (they) had three legs. They were like these horses they use at the Calgary Stampede for chuck-wagon races. A lot of them are ex-thoroughbreds... horses that were ruled off (barred from tracks because they are erratic and unpredictable) or broken down. You look in the stall and he'd be leaning against the wall."

Nevertheless, the first race was a great rush of adrenalin. "It was like you couldn't explain it. There were parts you remembered and parts you didn't...You can't think about things" because it happens so quickly.

His talent was soon directed toward more serious competition. After his year of stable work and bush meets, Terry was taken to Oregon, galloping horses at Salem in preparation for the meet at Portland Meadows. Utilizing his 'natural seat', Terry picked up his racing strategy from the horse trainer and simply tried to carry out his instructions. On the first night that he rode on a recognized track, he won two of three races. His successes suggested that he was an experienced rider and he surprised the local racers when he told them that this was his first real race meet.

Terry's move to the major tracks on the west coast of the United States resulted in a dramatic increase in his income. In those days, the jockey made a minimum of "thirty-five dollars just to get on the horse...and then you get ten
percent of the purse. The winning horse gets fifty-five percent of the purse and you get ten percent, and then your agent gets twenty-five of what you make...I paid really high income tax...It was good though. I really enjoyed it." A rider could make a good living if he was able to get two or three mounts a day. That was often hard to do because at some tracks "there'll be like two hundred and fifty riders and there's only ten races a day. At the most, say ten horses per race. Well, that's one hundred horses so, you've got one hundred and fifty guys that aren't gonna be riding. (Nevertheless) you can average...twenty-four hundred bucks a week and that's not winning a stake race or anything. That's just riding. You could do that almost all year long down there...Now they make a lot better."

Although his earnings were up, he worked long hours for that income. "If you're gonna go get on a guy's horses, you'll gallop him for nothing. That gives you the chance, maybe, to have that horse in the race. It was seven days a week. In Portland, the races ended at 11:00 at night and by the time I got out of the jocks' room and had something to eat, it'd be maybe 12:30 (or) 1:00 by the time I got to bed. And then, back to the track at 5:00 in the morning. It's not an easy sport. It's three hundred and sixty-five days a year." Unlike most other sports which are seasonal, horse racing can be a year round competition as horses and jockeys move about the racing circuit. Terry's career involved tracks at Portland Meadows, Longacres, Bay Meadows, Santa
Anita, Hollywood Park, Delmar, Golden Gate, Callente, and Aksarben.

The education of a jockey is an on-going process throughout his career. It takes place both formally and informally as the jockey learns his skills, certain 'tricks' in the sport, and the characteristics of his horses, the different race tracks, and the different riders with whom he must compete. Apart from the instructions of trainers, the formal education involves the review of racing movies, a requirement for apprentices and any jockeys who may be involved in a racing dispute. A steward of the track, usually a former rider, reviews the movies with the jockeys and points out errors in their riding.

Informally, often there are experienced riders who will help young riders along their way. "There's a certain rider who'll come into the room and kind of take over, like a dad sort of thing, and tell you things...There's always guys like Paul Frey. When I went to Seattle, he was like a dad. He was a good rider. He rode in the Kentucky Derby, a real top-notch rider, and I learned a lot from him. It got to the point where, on days off, he had a family and I'd go with him up to lakes and stuff like that. We talked and he taught me how to switch sticks faster (move the racing whip from hand to hand) and all kinds of things like that."

A strong sense of camaraderie and tolerance can develop among many of the riders. This was particularly the case at Longacres where "it was more like a family. Everybody kind
of watched out for one another. If a young kid was coming up and he shut you off (cut in front) or something, you wouldn't get mad. You'd come back to the room and say, 'you should have done this' and that's it. As long as he's making an attempt, it's o.k. but, if he doesn't, you have to school him...Your attitude towards other riders makes a difference. You go into the room cocky and a lot of the time they won't help you. And, if you go in there not humble but, you want to learn, respectful, and they'll really help you. You're protecting them as much as yourself if you learn to do things properly."

Although friendships may develop among the jockeys, those relationships are often superficial and the jockeys are very careful in what they talk about. Personal worries or concerns are not discussed because of the potential for gossip and the subsequent impact on the jockey's career. Talk about retirement would likely result in encouragement to leave the sport because jockeys would like to see the competition reduced. "You might retire the next day and they would never know. Just all of a sudden, you're gone. They don't know if you've gone to another track or what. You don't want to say that maybe I'll hang it up at the end of the year 'cause then...they'll think 'well, why does he want to quit? Is he getting scared? Like, maybe we shouldn't ride him because he's getting scared', which is ridiculous. You're not scared. You're older. You're smarter. It's like when you're younger, you're driving a car, you take chances."
An older jockey is likely to ride more carefully, with more strategy than when he was younger but, his behaviour, or his thoughts and feelings if they were to become public, are easily misinterpreted by others at the track. Thus, a jockey's confidante is likely to be his wife if he is married. "Without someone, it can be pretty lonely... Mentally it can be really hard on a person. That's why a lot of them are...kind of strange...maybe that's why, 'cause there's nobody to talk to."

Some relationships between jockeys are much less than friendly. In their efforts to win, jockeys will often try to intimidate each other and sometimes hatred can develop between them. Unlike sports such as hockey, where certain players are designated as 'enforcers' to protect their teammates, in racing "you have to stand your own ground...There, you're the enforcer yourself." In Terry's experience, looking after oneself was particularly important at Calliente, outside of Tiajuana. "They're very, very close knit there. I mean, like...all Mexican. They could speak English but...down there, they wouldn't even talk to you. And you really had to look after yourself. I think the first time I rode (there), the first trip, they tried to put me in the infield...(put me) over the fence. I didn't say anything. I come back to the room. Didn't say a word. Looked at 'em all. Looked at the re-run on the t.v. and, next time, I got the outside and did the same to them. I knew if they wanted to play that way, then fine."
It is important for a rider to learn the characteristics of each track he rides. For example, there are certain spots where the cameras switch over, leaving a short space in which post-race scrutiny can be unclear. It is in these spots that a lot of the action takes place, the tricks and illegal moves that jockeys may use against each other. Terry recalled one humorous experience where "a guy went by me and I reached out to hang on to his tail but I couldn't get my stick out. It wrapped around his tail." Other tricks involve hitting "the other horse in the nose with your stick so he'll back up...Or you'll hit a guy in the hands. Older guys'll do that to you. When you're first learning, you do something wrong, maybe you're bumping him...and all of a sudden, whap, maybe over the back. If you'd done something wrong, you understand it but, if you haven't, then you've got to stand your ground."

Injuries are frequent in horse racing. "Most guys get hurt every year...I've had broken toes, things like that, (and a broken) collar bone. For the amount of time I rode, I was really lucky...The way I fell and rolled or whatever. I was pretty agile. Some guys hit and they're just like cement, (and) that's it!" Terry's worst injury occurred at Hollywood Park. "(It) was kind of like watching a movie. You know, how you see all the horses hooves. I remember going down. I was trying to help my friend...he was in a spot where he was going to go down. He was on the rail...We hit the turn and they were all coming in...about four wide (and) the guy outside pushed this other guy into me. I had
him (my friend) outrun (but) you don't want to drop a guy intentionally. I mean, if I came over, he'd clip my heels and he'd be down so, I tried to hold off but, this other guy came over in front and shut me right off. My horse went down right away. I was running about third at the time so, I had nine horses go over the top. And a horse will not step on you intentionally. (He'll) always jump you. When I was rolling, the horses'd go over me. And the last guy was Rudy Campus. You know the overgirths, they have the names on and I looked up. I'm rolling and I see this name, Campus. I think, it's Rudy! He said, 'Terry, stay down!' I thought it was all over and I was going to stand up right in front of him. And, just as he went over me, just as he was striding ...he kind of hit me a little bit and pushed me underneath him and that was it. I jumped up outside the fence...and found I'd broke my shoulder."

Riders have got to be very fit, with strong legs, upper body and hands. Terry chuckles at memories of jockeys who have easily defeated much bigger arm-wrestling opponents. "You're out there in one hundred degree weather and you're riding at least five races, you've got to be fit." And in the heat of a race, a jockey has to have courage and strength. "You can't be scared when you're doing it. You have no time...You don't think of it when you're out there until after and you've looked at the video and you think, 'Holy!'" The excitement of the race gives the jockey additional strength. "The adrenalin is pumping and you're
just super strong. I know, in the morning there's horses that'll almost run off with me when you're galloping but, in the afternoon (races), it's (the strength is) just there."

Terry resents the comments of ignorant people who just don't appreciate the hazards and the hardships of racing. Many people seem to think that a jockey's life is pretty easy and that there isn't a great deal of skill involved in racing. Apart from the rigors of competitive racing, Terry has pointed out that "some of the horses are just dingbats. You don't know what they're going to do." One particular horse, 'Smiling Lad', "that son-of-a-bitch would turn and look at you" with a grin on his face and then go crazy, jumping and rolling. "On post-parade, he froze three times (locked his legs and you don't know what to expect) and that's scary."

The jockey has to learn that racing is actually a big business involving a great deal of money. He has to become alert to a number of things that go on within racing that most people are unaware of. A major issue is the politics of a track and the relationships between jockeys, trainers, and owners. The latter two are extremely powerful and can easily make or break a jockey's career, especially on the west coast where there are few tracks relative to the number of available riders. At Santa Anita, for example, "they've got horses down there worth a million dollars. It's a business, so you really have to watch what you say, and act, and everything. Just be a real gentleman. You dress different."
You go to the jockeys' room (wearing) sports jacket and tie."

An example of how easily a jockey's career can be ruined is the case of Stevie Cauthins, one-time leading 'bugboy' or apprentice in the nation. He had ridden 'Secretariat' to win the Triple Crown. When Cauthins arrived at Santa Anita, Terry's friend, Larry Gilligan, "a former leading rider in the nation in the early sixties, he said 'they'll bury this kid in a month here'. And, sure enough, on the first day, he rode like six horses, that week every day he rode six... (then) he had a falling out with an owner, (he) dropped him. Next week he started like three a day. The third week he got like two a day. He got to like one a day and that's where he got smart...(he got) a big contract and went to England. And the stories you hear, 'oh, he's lost his talent'. It's crazy, you don't."

With the stakes often very high in an expensive business, horse racing can be a very vicious sport. Apart from the tricks jockeys use against each other, Terry had witnessed a number of common tricks which are used to motivate the horses to greater speed. "Some horses you've got to shake them up, get after them. Mostly older horses, they've got the ability but...you've got to wake him up." To do this, some jockeys use 'machines', electrical devices with "coils of wire in it and two little prongs come out and, when you hit him (the horse), it just zaps him...You'd hit him on the shoulder, on the withers...You might touch him with it on the way to the post parade, just to let him know that you had
it...If you don't do it right, it shocks you too...Actually, you used to practice. If you ever saw a guy riding with a package of gum in his hand, you knew what he was trying to do. He was trying to learn how to use a machine...And some guys have them in their whips. I know one guy had one in the inside of his boot...If you got caught, you were ruled off (but)...you knew there were certain horses that were classified as 'machine' horses and they'd put on a certain rider. It wouldn't run anywhere but, you put on this rider and it wins easily."

Another way to wake up a horse is to 'one-ten' him. This is simply shocking the horse with the frayed end of a live electrical cord. Terry remembered seeing a tragic result of this brutal practice. A trainer had rubbed a horse with beagle oil, a common treatment to help warm up the animals muscles. When the horse was hit with the electrical cord, a spark ignited the oil and the horse bolted away in flames. Yet another treatment is to beat horses with a chain covered by a rubber hose. While the beating is taking place, a tiny bell is rung to develop an association between the bell and the beating. The jockey then carries the bell onto the track and lets it tinkle when he wants the horse's attention. Other tricks include doping, the treatment of horses with drugs. Although horses may be tested for drug usage, "I've known guys who'll shoot 'em with stuff that'll last a minute, minute and a half", just long enough to get them really moving.
A major issue on the track is concern for the jockey's weight. "There's always a weight thing on the track. You get tired of hearing about it. They're always bugging you about it (badgering and teasing). There was a thing, you'd go to the jocks' room and you'd never step on the scale in front of another rider. You just wouldn't do that...And, there's guys who'd take a penny and put pennies under there. They had it all figured out. Guys were like scientists, learning how to beat the system." One of the best riders was heavy but, he had a special routine to beat the scales. He would put his fibreglass whip on the inside of his pant leg and into his boot. When he stepped on the scale, he would lean back and push down on the whip, pushing it through a hole in his boot so that he could support some of his weight on the floor.

Another way to cheat on weight is by using special equipment. When a jockey is weighed, he is weighed with his riding equipment. Normal tack, including saddle and girth, may weigh about two and a half pounds. The crafty jockey can reduce this to about a pound. "You'd have cheating boots (and) a cheating saddle...only one stirrup, half of a girth." If this tack is held close to the body, it is hard to tell that it is not standard equipment. Thus, what is carried in as tack and what actually goes on the horse may well be different equipment.

Some jockeys have such a tough time with their weight that they 'flip' their food, regurgitating anything they eat.
"There's one guy who could regurgitate a peanut." This practice was undoubtedly hard on the stomach and "a lot of guys'd drink a lot of buttermilk...and I know some guys have died of stomach cancer." Terry recalled a story of one accomplished 'flipper' who challenged a restaurant to an eating contest. The restaurant advertised a free meal to anyone who could eat one of their full steak dinners. This particular rider challenged the restaurant to offer free meals to the party of ten people if he ate two of the steak dinners. The restaurant manager thought it impossible for such a little guy to eat one meal, let alone two. However, the jockey drank lots of water as he ate and he made frequent trips to the washroom to regurgitate his food. To the dismay of the manager, the two steaks were consumed.

Weight was a problem for Terry and it eventually served as the catalyst to his decision to retire. Even at the start of his career, he was heavy. "(I) weighed one hundred and ten pounds, which was too heavy for an apprentice because you mostly get in around one hundred and three, one hundred and five. I went to the doctor and went on a diet thing. Had some kind of vitamin shots. I was on an eight hundred calorie a day diet. I guess your stomach shrinks...You'd take a water pill and lose six, seven pounds. That's where it gets to be the hardest. You start reducing hard later on in your career. That's when it's tough...in the hot box (sauna). That is hard. I've seen guys come in like one hundred and forty and they did twenty, I mean, that's a lot
of weight (to lose). At the end of my career, I'd do ten pounds a day." Terry is amused by reports of athletes in other sports, like boxing, who reduce by only a couple of pounds before a competition.

"It got to be just a mind thing (watching my weight). I could sit there on the scale and take a popsicle that weighs three ounces and that's how much more I'd weigh when I finished the popsicle...or a bottle of pop that's twelve ounces. I'd be twelve ounces heavier as soon as I'd drank that bottle of pop. I took a lot of potassium. When you pull weight, we have this potassium mix and you'd drink that. Then you'd figure it out. You'd ride a race and you might pull half a pound so, you'd come back and drink half a pop or a cup of water. If you pulled more, if you rode say six or seven in a row, you'd sweat it off so, you'd drink a pop in between. In your first year, you were so dedicated (that) you wouldn't. Can't even have a drink. In the end, it got so you knew what you had to do (to get by) and you'd do it."

Toward the end of his career, Terry had lost his motivation to persist in an increasingly difficult battle with his weight. As he grew older, his body matured and his values and priorities in life changed, compounding his weight problems. "Another thing that made a change in my career, I took a winter off. I had some friends with horses in Yakima and, one winter, I got tired of travelling, so I went and broke babies (yearlings) the next year. And you don't want to get bucked off, so you get strong holding on to keep their
head up and I just started developing, (building muscle)... and I grew another inch."

Terry was enjoying the financial benefits of his success, living comfortably and working and riding less frequently. He and his wife moved to Alpine, a community outside of San Diego and about fifty miles from the track at Caliente. They lived on a five-acre spread across the road from his in-laws. "It was kind of like we were semi-retired...You'd go like five days off...but then, I'd really have to bust my butt to lose weight with racing only on the weekend. I'd get on the bike, full rubber suit on, and ride maybe ten, twelve miles, ninety degree weather and I'd just start reducing. That got too much 'cause then you'd have to go pull weight (in the sauna) beside that."

A number of issues contributed to Terry's eventual decision to retire. He wasn't enjoying the racing atmosphere at Caliente, nor the drive to the race track. "And it got to the point where I just didn't want to travel anymore. I wasn't getting as many mounts, although personally I think I rode just the same. (But) you know, you're timing is a little off. I would...only win maybe one where I was riding four or five (races) and you'd get one good horse. You know, you get rides where no matter what you do, you're not going to win...(And I started to think) Why am I doing this? Probably I thought about that for awhile, probably about six months. I'd keep (thinking)...hang on for a little while longer. But, it was ridiculous! I wanted to have a family.
I didn't want to have my kids travelling like I did, moving all over (every three months...I had different priorities, different values) There's other things in life you can do."

"I didn't want to do it anymore. I didn't want to ride and I really didn't want to train. I guess you get tired. It's political. You get tired of some of the people, what we call 'faces'...You get tired of them (and their lack of sincerity). Pat (you) on the back and next week (stab you in the back). Everyone loves a winner. I've got a friend who'll never shake anybody's hand (because he can't stand the insincerity)."

Terry found a new job from an unexpected source. "When I first did quit, I met this fellow...I was sitting there in Alpine, (in) a little place called the Log Cabin. I was sitting there at the bar and this great big guy, six foot five, and he's got hands on him like two of my fingers are the size of one of his. Just a huge man. His name was Curly. We were sitting there and he used to buy everybody a round and I said 'here, let me buy you a beer'...and we became friends. He says, 'well what do you do?' I said, 'well, right now, I'm riding and I'm thinking about packing it in but I don't know what I'm going to do'. He said, 'well, come and work for me'...He was a framing contractor in California...I said, 'well, I don't know anything about construction. I'm not a framer. I can't read plans or anything'. He said, 'well, you don't have to. You can just run the crew...It's not hard'. So, I did that for about a
Terry didn't see the construction job as something permanent. He laughed at the drop in his income. "I looked at it and I wanted a future. What am I going to do? Well, here it is sitting right here (the family business)! So, I came back and talked to dad (about running) this business here." Unlike many other riders, Terry had done some planning for his future. "I had a house up here. I just rented that out and my dad looked after it. I never touched anything up here. Whatever money I put up here just stayed. I took care of myself. So, I always had something to come back to. I had something in the bank. We come back and bought a home."

Terry's experience is in marked contrast to that of some other riders he knows. He was fortunate because "I always had a place to go when I didn't want to ride, where a lot of people don't...I know a lot of them have done really well and now they're sleeping in the tack room. That's all they know. (They've blown all their money) It's easy to do. You're in there with the big players, it's very easy. A lot of them will have like a trust account for them but, (when) they get to that age, they'll blow that too."

Reflecting on his racing career, Terry considers "it was a great, great life." He had been "amongst the better riders, like Shoemaker", on the west coast. His career had a lot of variety and excitement. "It's fun. It's different every day. There, you never know from one minute to the next
what's gonna happen. I don't think anything can give me the thrill that I had from riding, no matter what I do. Maybe getting chased by a grizzly bear, something like that (would give the same adrenalin rush)...I met a lot of nice people. I met movie stars and (some of those) people really are down to earth." The highlights of his career included "the first race that I won. And (in my first year) I rode six horses at Longacres and won five that day and it's still a record. And the first race I won at Santa Anita was just unreal. The crowd! You'd look up there and see like sixty thousand people. Wow! And yet, when you're riding you could talk to someone like (we are) just now. You don't even hear the crowd that much until you get down to the wire."

Terry has no regrets about having taken up a career in racing. "I'd do it all again." One thing he'd probably change is to take up the opportunity to ride in New York. He knew an agent who had arranged for him to ride for Maxine Factor, of Max Factor Cosmetics. "I should have went. It's the same thing. It's who you know." And that opportunity was rare. He had stayed on the west coast because he was comfortable there. He was well established and knew most of the key people. New York would have meant starting again, re-establishing himself.

Terry's career seems to be treasured in his memories, not on display. He has momentos, "in a box somewhere. I've still got my tack in a trunk." Every once in awhile, when his son asks about his dad's career, he will dig out the very
special souvenirs and say "look at this (but) don't touch that! It's an important part of my life."

About leaving racing, Terry has a little regret, but "it's out of sight, out of mind. I haven't been to the track. Well, I've been three times in ten years. I just don't go down there. I'm pretty sure that if I went down there, I'd want to go galloping." Terry enjoys watching a derby on t.v. because he can anticipate what the riders are going to do but it is not a priority in his life. Unlike other sports, the retired professional jockey can not race recreationally. "You can play old-timers hockey, soccer, baseball, or whatever, but this here, once you're retired, you're retired. There's no going down and saying 'come on son, let's get a couple of horses and go ride around'. I guess one of the closest things I could do would be to have a little farm, but that's about it (or go training like) a lot of them. That's all they know...I've noticed that with a lot of people who have been like racing families. Once you're in there, you get involved and it's hard to leave."

Terry appears to be content with his current lifestyle. His family is very important to him. Near the end of his career, he knew that racing and family life were an unlikely mix. "It's pretty hard on a marriage too, that kind of travelling and life. (There are) a lot of broken marriages, a lot of divorces...I guess at the time (we were first together) it was neat. We were young but then, it got old. We were living out of a suitcase and she (his wife) couldn't
really get a job because two or three months later we were
gone. I guess she got tired of it too but, she never said
anything. She never complained." In fact, Terry's wife had
provided support through both his racing career and his
retirement.

Terry has advice for young riders. "First of all, make
sure he gets his education because after you finish riding,
if you're not educated (and) you go looking for another job,
it's pretty hard unless you want to become a trainer after.
And you've got to love animals. You've got to love long
hours. You've got to be dedicated, very dedicated. I think
that's what happens to a lot of them, they start to lose it.
(If) you're not dedicated, it gets to be like it's a real
job. It's a lot of fun if you love doing it. You didn't
care. When I was younger, you could stay up. Go to bed 1:00
or 2:00 and get up at like 5:00 and you're raring to go but,
later on in life, ah, come on!"

Jockeys need to recognize that for most of them it is a
short term career. Most jockeys have to battle their weight
unless "you're a natural like Shoemaker. I think on his
heavy days he weighs ninety-six pounds. His light days, he
weighs ninety-four. That's it! And every once in awhile,
he'll come and sit in the box and look at you (with a big
smile), and here's these guys trying to pull weight and he'll
come in drinking a pop." So, young riders should look to
their family backgrounds to anticipate the probability of
them remaining small.
Being forced to leave professional riding can be quite a shock. "It's hard for a kid, sixteen years old, and he makes two, three hundred thousand dollars, you can do that, and (then) when you're eighteen, you're making nothing. There's this big pot of gold and all of a sudden there's nothing there. What are you going to do? And it's a mental thing. I mean (you think), 'I've done this and what have I got? What am I going to do?' So, it gets pretty scary in a lot of ways."
CHAPTER X

CASE 7 - MARK PATZER - JOCKEY

A month from the start of his seventh racing season at Vancouver's Exhibition Park, in the spring of 1986, Mark Patzer decided to stop punishing his body, to stop torturing himself with efforts to keep his body below its natural weight. Despite an extremely restrictive diet and a vigorous reducing programme, Mark could no longer achieve racing weight and his mind began 'playing games'. He was afraid of disappointing people and the impending decision to quit racing became "one of the most depressing times in my life." Nevertheless, within a week of his decision, Mark felt "one hundred percent better."

I met Mark at the track at 8:00 in the morning, after he had finished training horses. Seeking a private location for our interview, Mark led me to his tack room. His comment that we would be able to sit in a comfortable room if we were at Toronto's Woodbine Race Track echoed the complaints of local horsemen who are tired of the aging and inadequate facilities at Exhibition Park. The Vancouver track houses some twelve hundred horses in damp and drafty metal or wood stables. Despite the bright sunshine of a spring morning, the interior of the stable and the tack room was chilly and I developed quick empathy for the backside lads who frequently live in these facilities.

We met again at the track for the second interview. Regarding the draft report, Mark said "I think it is very
well written. It basically says what I believe and what I think." To recall his career in this fashion, through an interview and narrative, gave him "a very neat feeling. I thought of doing it right after my career was over...and to have something like this, if I could get a copy of this, would be really, really great 'cause it would bring back all of my memories real quick. It was real neat, nice to read and remember all that." This final write-up has altered the draft by simply adding these comments and making a few minor adjustments.

Mark is a quiet, soft-spoken, and respectful man of age twenty-six. He was born on February 10, 1963, in Winnipeg, and has spent most of his life in Vancouver. He is the youngest of four children, including three sons and a daughter. Racing has been his life since he was fifteen years old. It has been a career which, until recently, has provided him little time for a personal life. His current employment involves a split between training his parents' horses and working in the family sheet metal business, Do-it-all Metal, in New Westminster. Drawing a salary and working a regular schedule with days off, Mark has been able to develop his personal life and has recently become married to Colleen.

Being active in sport was always Mark's main goal in life. When he was a youngster, his brothers played a lot of sports and he just followed along, enjoying soccer, baseball, and hockey. He played hockey regularly until he was about
thirteen years old, at which time he quit because he was the smallest player on the midget 'A' representative team. "I was like half the size of some of those guys. They (could really) hit me." He was not only small within community sport but within his own family. His oldest brother, nine years his senior, was considerably bigger. "Nobody'd believe he was my brother 'cause he's about two hundred pounds heavier." His other brother is also a little taller and more heavily set. Horse racing was a sport in which Mark could capitalize on his small stature.

Mark's interest in racing was kindled by trips to the track with his family when he was about ten years old. Although he had no personal experience with horses, he loved the animals and quickly developed an enthusiasm for the races. "I was one of them little guys that stand at the fence, climb up on the chain-link fence and watch the jockeys walk by and hopefully, one day, get a pair of goggles or something and you'd go home and put them on, ride your bike around the block and beat on it with a tree branch...I was so much into riding that...I put mud on my face, with goggles, I got goggles from Andy Smith (a local jockey). I had a baseball hat (and) my mum had a silk jacket I put on. (I) got a tree branch and (cheered myself as I raced down the street) 'I come from behind this one!'"

By hanging around the fence at the track and talking with the jockeys, Mark arranged to meet the people who could start him on his career. "I got to know Tommy Wolski and
Andy Smith and I kept bugging them. They seemed to be two of the friendlier jocks. And, one day, I heard Tommy was on a (radio) talk show so, I phoned him up and I kept asking him a bunch of questions. Next time he seen me at the track, climbing up the fence, he asked me if that was me on the radio...So, I bugged him so much he finally talked to Dennis (Dennis Terry, a former jockey turned trainer) and arranged that I could work with him, just starting off walking hot horses to cool them off. And that's how it all basically started. One hundred and twenty dollars for a week...I thought that was great because I never made any money and yet I was doing something that I loved so much that I would have done it for free."

A particular incident fired Mark's determination to become a rider. A neighbour lady used to say that Mark would make a good jockey because of his size but his dad dismissed this support, commenting "oh, he'll never make a jockey. He'll be too big, but I've got to take him down (to the track) just to satisfy his thoughts and his mind 'cause he's just got it stuck in his mind that he wants to become a jockey." Mark says that he used this as an excuse, a way to motivate himself. "I think the whole thing is, I wanted to become a jockey, but if you want it bad enough, you can use any smallest, little factor to set you off, to set a goal and say 'I don't care what it takes, I'll do anything just to ride one race'. And that's how I started off. I just wanted to ride in one race." Once he got to work, that objective
was soon discarded as Mark realized that he had a career ahead.

His work on the backside of the track began during the summer holidays of 1978, when he was fifteen years old. Like all beginning horsemen, he worked very long hours that summer. In the fall, he returned to school and worked at the track during the evenings. By the spring break of 1979, Mark had turned sixteen, the minimum age for a new rider. Dennis Terry had spoken to Mark's parents and told them that he was a good prospect as a jockey, with a potential to make some good money. Because Mark's school was on a semester system and he needed only two courses to complete his grade ten education, he was able to arrange to work on these at home, preparing assignments without attending classes. His work at the track expanded to seven days a week and he often slept in the tack room, "walking horses after the last race for an hour and going to sleep and waking up at 4:00 to feed the horses." His trainer continued to teach him his new trade as he learned to gallop horses and, in the fall, he learned how to break young horses.

Apart from learning about horses, he also learned how to handle himself in a new social environment. "I was always very quiet in school. I always used to think the guys were grease balls 'cause they did drugs. I didn't even smoke. Shit, by the time I quit (school), everybody thought 'why'd he quit, nice guy like him, small, didn't bother anybody?' (I) never even hardly swore (but, I) get here and every
second word is 'f' this and 'f' that, son-of-a-bitch!" He had to learn to speak up for himself, like the time he had needed to take Wednesday evenings off from work to complete his confirmation classes. It was not easy for him to make this request because he felt intimidated by his trainer who "seemed like a rotten, mean man (and)...I was a real shy person. I never liked to talk too much to people. I was just quiet."

Mark's racing career, intended to begin in the spring of 1980, was delayed because he broke his ankle playing hockey with some of the stable hands. He received no sympathy from his trainer as, "I got a good kick in the ass for that. I even had to groom horses with my cast on." Nevertheless, as Mark healed, Dennis Terry had a strategy to ease Mark into his racing career. Rather than throwing him into serious competition, Dennis wanted Mark to ride horses that were really non-competitors, horses that "didn't look like they could win...the worst in the field." The objective was to give Mark experience without excessive pressure. "The first horse I ever shed-rode (walking the horse through the barn), the first race horse I got on, I (also) rode in my first race. He was an older horse. He knew what to do out there more than me. He was the boss's horse so, it made things easy (because he) didn't have to convince any owner to ride this 'bugboy'."

This strategy was very helpful because "the first few times you go out there...you don't really have a clue about
what you're doing." The jockey simply feels so excited and proud to be out on the track. Mark was full of nervous anticipation as his first race day approached. The excitement grew during the day because he had tons of time to think about the race. "Once you're out there and on the horse, you kind of keep pretty busy. I probably got pretty nervous on post parade 'cause they announce your name as riding for the first time and you happen to hear that but, once you get in the gates, that's it. You don't hear nothing (because your attention is on the horse) and the horses around you and dirt coming back, like wow! Did that ever hurt! (I) didn't think it was that much fun then."

Race riding requires a lot of energy and the jockey has to be very fit. Having played hockey for a number of years was helpful in providing Mark some leg strength but, "a guy could go jogging and work out as much as he wants to, be as fit as he wants to be and come to get on a horse, you're still going to get tired...you're balancing on your toes, you're using every muscle in your whole body. One of the neatest feelings is to be real fit. Jogging, raquetball, and getting on fifteen horses on a morning, you felt like one of the fittest persons around. -(I) had a ton of energy. You could lay down for fifteen minutes and feel like you'd slept an hour and a half...And every time you eat, you had energy 'cause you weren't used to eating. When you eat, boy, I could work again for another eight hours."

That first year of riding, 1980, turned out to be a good
year for Mark. "I learned lots and that was the whole purpose...just practice, practice switching sticks, getting comfortable out there being amongst horses, being able to think, start reading the form and look who's going to be going to the front and who's going to be coming from behind. Try to have a strategy. At least get your mind working that way". Mark won four races that year and Dennis strategically withdrew him from further races that season.

Apprenticeship status can be very valuable because it allows the jockey a weight handicap, an allowance of five pounds which the horse does not need to carry. An apprenticeship officially commences when the jockey wins his fifth race and continues to his forty-fifth win or one calendar year, whichever is the longest period. Thus, jockeys strive to utilize their apprentice status to maximum advantage. Dennis' strategy for Mark was to start his apprentice year in 1981 and to withdraw early from that season in order to get an extension into the 1982 year, which would provide Mark a weight handicap to get started on his record for that year. This strategy worked well because, in 1981, Mark was both leading apprentice and leading rider and, in 1982, he was leading rider at Exhibition Park.

The first year was so successful that, at the close of the 1981 season at Exhibition Park, Mark was a contender as the leading apprentice in Canada, with twenty wins ahead of his closest rival. Instead of moving on to Victoria's Sandown Race Track, where he was known by the trainers and
probably could have won another twenty or thirty races by the
close of the season, Mark moved to Toronto's Woodbine Race
Track. If he were able to establish himself on the eastern
tracks, he would earn substantially more money than riding in
Vancouver. However, getting started with new trainers is not
easy, even if the jockey can show an impressive record on
other tracks. Mark had some success getting winning mounts,
but ran into some bad luck. He was given a three day
suspension for a riding infraction which he successfully
appealed. However, a few days later, he was given another
suspension. This loss of riding time, due to the combination
of suspension and re-settlement on a new track, resulted in
his final standing as the second leading apprentice in the
nation.

There are several other career highlights that Mark
recalls. At one time, he came close to equalling a North
American record for consecutive winning mounts. The record
of nine wins dated back to about 1930. Mark rode seven
straight wins, placed in the eighth race, and then won the
ninth. Apart from the thrill of his own success in winning a
race, Mark found great satisfaction in pleasing other people,
particularly owners and trainers. "When you're in that
winner's circle and you can make them people that happy,
that's another good feeling... (It) just pleased the shit out
of me to make people that happy, to see them jump and
holler." He is particularly proud of having won thirteen
stakes races as an apprentice, "which is a hell of a lot for
a bugboy", because weight allowances are not provided to apprentices in these races. "You're riding with guys who might have ten years experience (so) it pleased me and made me feel good to show them that put me with equal weights and I still have good enough ability to beat them."

Mark considers that his success in getting good mounts was due to both a lot of luck and an attitude of hard work and respect for the investment that other people have in their horses. He was always prepared to gallop horses for people and he invited them to call on him if they needed his help, particularly if they needed him to fill in for a regular rider. He was also conscientious about meeting his riding commitments. "You don't want to leave a person high and dry (without a good jockey) because they need to get maybe another win or so because a win can pay for a few months of winter board...it's such an expensive sport." For similar reasons, he would always try to get his horses to finish as best they could, instead of easing up as some riders would do when they found that they had no chance of winning a race. He had learned that an accumulation of second and third finishes over a season can add up to a very helpful sum of money for the owners.

Through his dedication to his work, Mark became very familiar with the horses he raced. "I had to work every morning...get on those horses every morning. (I) didn't get paid for it but, a little bit down the line, I found that's a key factor...(you) get to know when they are cheating, or not
trying, or you know when they're feeling good...(you) just get to know them inside out." This understanding of horses is helpful in leading them to success and in protecting the health of both horse and jockey. If the jockey senses that the horse is breaking down, wearing out or tearing its legs, he might be able to pull up and withdraw from the race so that the horse might be trucked off the track and treated. "Usually you can feel that a horse is gonna break down 'cause they start wobbling and you take a hold of them so (that) when they go down and they hit, you're pulling on the lines and it shoots you away from them. When they don't show any indication (because the horse is treated with drugs and) you're not ready for them, (this) is when you get hurt."

Having a horse get injured can be an emotionally painful experience for the jockey, particularly if the horse's injury is so severe that it will have to be destroyed. "It's hard to take when you break down a horse and you're the rider." However, most jockeys hide their emotions or become indifferent to the animal's suffering. "I broke down three in one day...I hopped off and it was nothing...I've walked away stone cold...(but) after the third one, Dennis come up to me and touched my shoulder and said 'are you all right?' and I just burst into tears. That's all it took, just a little something to start me off."

Spending a great deal of time working with the horses, Mark often developed affectionate relationships with them. "And that's one thing you're not really supposed to do to be
successful in this business because...they're so expensive. They're not pets. The downright thing is this is a business for all these people that work here on the backside. It's an enjoyable sport for a lot of fans to watch but everybody's trying to make a living."

One of the things that has irritated Mark about racing is the lack of appreciation and understanding so frequently shown by ignorant owners and fans whose only concern is winning their bets. A good rider knows the track conditions, understands what is happening to his horse, and tries to help the horse stay on its feet to avoid a fall. This latter point can be crucial because if one horse falls in a race, it is likely to cause a pile-up of other horses. "One of the biggest fears of a horse is to fall down. How often do you ever see a horse that breaks down, fall down, unless they break it real bad? (Even then), I had one, broke it right in half and didn't go down. I hopped off and it's hoof (swung loose, held on by the bandage)...And that's the real yucky part about horse racing." Fans will often boo a rider for not pressing his mount but, they have no appreciation that he might be trying to protect horses and riders from further injury.

Despite his dedication and hard work, Mark was self-conscious about the way he presented himself to other people. "A lot of people can do better p.r. than me. They can talk. They know lots of nice words to say and can express themselves real good...I hated to read in school." He was
reluctant to go to major tracks because he felt intimidated by the personal presentation of visiting riders who had come from better tracks. Nevertheless, he did go to some of the eastern tracks in Canada and the United States. He had the good fortune to meet Angel Cordero, a highly regarded rider on the big American tracks, with whom he would sometimes go for a bowl of soup. Cordero helped him get an agent who arranged rides for him on the eastern tracks.

Although the purses and potential earnings were greater on the eastern tracks, Mark spent most of his career at Exhibition Park in Vancouver. Even here, a good jockey could earn a substantial income. "You could make a hundred thousand dollars if you had a good year." Mark was able to earn that much by supplementing his local earnings with a brief stint at another track plus working for a month at his parents' sheet metal business, "running around and picking things up." In his last year of riding, 1985, Mark earned over one hundred thousand dollars. He saw a huge portion of those earnings go to income tax and he began to wonder if there was "an easier way to make a decent living without working all the hours."

Mark had a very successful season in 1985 but the year got off to a slow start because he was receiving disability insurance through the second month of that year. He had broken his leg in a riding accident in 1984 and received a further reminder of the impermanence of his health when he broke it again while skiing that winter. "People think their
bodies last forever by they don't. Breaking my leg, it's never been the same. Gave me back problems...People here thought I was nuts, I'll never ride again. (I) rushed it back then, (exercising) to make it the next year." But, as the season drew to a close, he was in a tight race with Chris Loseth for leading rider. They enjoyed a friendly rivalry and, on the last day, Loseth sat in the jockeys' room and calculated that Mark needed to win three of the five races he was entered in. "I walked in and he started jumping up and down. He's got it all wrapped up. I knew I wasn't going to win three but I was going to make him work it out."

By this time, Mark was growing tired of his career and his constant battle with his weight and health. "I didn't mind it (losing to Loseth). I would have liked to have been leading rider but I looked at it (as) that year was getting to be a long year. And it was getting harder to diet, harder to lose more weight, and I was sicker. I lost I don't know how many racing days. I didn't show up or I had to take off because of sickness, either allergies or bugs." Mark was taken very ill on one occasion and was sent home by the track doctor. "He gave me a prescription...and I got out of the drug store and I knew I was in trouble. Everything went all white and black and I asked somebody to get me an ambulance and I just went down. It was real scary!" By trying to reduce his weight, he had stressed his body and impaired its resistance to disease. This is a frequent experience of jockeys who battle their growing bodies, as Mark cited,
"Danny Williams nearly died the last year he rode. He got so bad (that) he got rushed to the hospital."

Mark's battle with his weight began before his first race. He weighed one hundred and seventeen pounds at the start of his career and needed to drop ten pounds in order to take advantage of the five pound apprentice allowance. He found it relatively easy to lose this weight through exercise and the elimination of high calorie foods from his diet. It became more difficult to reduce as he got older and his body grew and matured, but he was motivated by stories of other riders who had dropped a lot of weight. For example, "Gene Sellis once got over two hundred pounds and he got back down to riding one year. Dennis (his trainer) used to get up to one hundred and forty-five and reduce. So, there's a lot of big guys that've done that before...If your desire to ride is there, you'll get it off." In retrospect, Mark considers that there are fewer jockeys able to keep the weight off. In days gone by, a jockey's career might last some thirteen years but "nowadays, you get me and Danny Williams and Eddie Wrayton, Thor Adcock, we didn't last for more than about five years. All too big!"

Reducing required a great deal of effort and was very stressful. "Even at the beginning, I did it the real hard way. I was told not to take water pills and not to do this and all the things that he (Dennis Terry) knew not to do 'cause he'd experienced them before. And so, I went jogging and did it all physical, (with) sweat suits on and clothes
underneath. My uncle lived in an apartment near Lougheed Mall (with)...a swimming pool, exercise room, sauna, whirlpool. So, he lived on the twentieth floor. I'd run up the stairs to see him, get the key, run back down, go do my exercise. (It would) take me about two hours. I'd go on the bike...get in the sauna, sweat, come out, ride the bike more, go in the sauna, sweat. Do that for darn near an hour and... have a nice cold shower (then), hit the sauna, get real hot, dive in the pool and do laps. I got up to one hundred and thirty laps a day...I used to sweat so much the day before riding and try to hold it off 'cause it doesn't matter how hungry you are, as soon as you dehydrate yourself, the hunger goes away and all you want to do is go quench your thirst. As long as you don't drink anything (your weight will stay off). I used to hold off, drink very minimal amounts of water or club soda. (I'd) punch a small little hole in the top of the cap on a bottle and suck so you get a lot of air and fizz and it fills you up faster. And that's a famous trick a lot of riders do."

Taking his exercise and saunas in private, Mark was able to keep his reducing efforts a secret during the early part of his career. At that time, "nobody knew I hit the box." Jockeys don't like others to know about their reducing efforts because their competitors are likely to taunt them, playing psychological games to undermine their confidence and motivation. In addition, owners and trainers can become concerned because they think that the reducing jockey may not
be sufficiently fit and strong to ride well.

As time went by, Mark had a greater struggle to reduce and he spent a lot of time with other reducing jockeys in the race track sauna. "The sauna was the main thing that kind of screwed up my body. Like, when you dehydrate yourself for that many years...every time you go to sleep, you wake up two or three times in the night...just thirsty. When you lose five pounds, that's eighty ounces. That's a lot!...And one day I lost nine pounds. I was in trouble. (It) took all day too. It was the day after my brother's wedding...Didn't eat very much at all. I just had a few drinks...Don't want to do that too many times."

This was another difficulty Mark experienced in his efforts to reduce. "I didn't have a personal life when I rode. Even when I did good, I couldn't go out and eat and celebrate after I ran. And (often)...after they've won a stakes race, the owner takes their trainer and rider and family all out for a big dinner and they'd drink and have a good time. (Other riders could) come back and ride the next day but, for me (I'd have to turn it down) 'cause if I went, I'd just be paying too big of a price the next day. Instead of maybe three or four (pounds), I've got to lose seven."

The struggle over weight got worse. "You get so you have to go into the box and drink something to make you sweat. Put in eight ounces and get out sixteen. It's weird ...(beer helped) you have a sip of beer and you could go in there and you'd sweat so easy...Back in the old days they
used to inject (gin) into their fruit and suck on it in the box. Nowadays, you don't want to get caught drinking (alcohol) or anything like that...'cause you do it once and you know that you're not gonna have no kind of career... Nobody's gonna ride you...and you do some other dumb things, like I took an Exlax pill and then you're taking more Exlax."

Another frequent practice among reducing jockeys is 'heaving' or 'flipping', regurgitating their food. "I did it for a little while...you can even taste the acids coming from your stomach lining...And I know people that went to smorgasbords for two or three hours and that's all they did was eat and go to the washroom...It's amazing what your body can do...(Food) is only in your stomach for maybe twenty minutes but, your body can take the nutrients and live off that...(but) a couple of years down the road...who knows what people's bodies are going to be like. That's where I think that old reducing jockeys are gonna come out with pretty bad health by the time they're fifty years old."

Mark started the 1986 season with an early race in Portland, but he was having great difficulty achieving his racing weight. "It was just such a struggle. Anybody can get the weight off but, I would have had to stop eating. I was down to two poached eggs and a dried piece of brown toast...and a frozen O'Henry bar (it takes longer to chew) at 11:00 at night...And I'd be going all day long, reducing doing exercise, substituting drinking water, very little juice 'cause juice has calories, some soda 'cause that's
nothing...You do that to you're body, you go under your normal weight, your mind can really play games...It's really hard to explain how your mind works and the games it plays when you are starving your body that much and you're not having good results at whatever you're doing. If you're having good results (seeing a drop in weight), your mind stays fine too and you can think better, but when things aren't going good, when you're dieting and you're suffering...it just seems that life isn't enjoyable. It sure as hell isn't! (He became miserable, hopeless) grumpy. You starve yourself for two or three days. You're not eating...and you jump on the scale and you haven't moved nothing! Haven't dropped a pound! That's hard to take after not eating."

He began to feel that life was senseless, that there was no point in going on with life because he couldn't imagine doing anything other than riding. "It could get down to that. You can almost get to a suicidal point. I don't know, if it's this hard, what are you going to do after? Don't want to become a trainer. Maybe you do but you're not going to make good money at it. It's so hard...One of the most depressing times in my life was when (it looked like I'd have to quit). I was so scared to disappoint so many people...and if I didn't have a good teacher, who knows what would have maybe happened."

Dennis Terry, Mark's horse trainer and mentor, understood what Mark was experiencing and offered him a new perspective on his career. Although he didn't say it
directly, he gave Mark permission to quit. "We were a month from racing here...and that's when he said a few things to me that made me look at it a little different...he was the one that more or less gave me the o.k. that, to him, he wouldn't be disappointed if I didn't ride...And that's the last thing he wanted to see but, he saw how much it was eating at me. He said that sometimes he wishes that...he would have learned that there was more to life than just race horning and being a rider. There's a lot of enjoyable things to do in life... Like, he's never, ever said things like that. He always talked about riding as the best thing and the neatest thing he's ever done. But, when it come time for me to quit, he let me know there are better things in life."

These comments made an impact on Mark and he started to develop a broader perspective on life and his career. "You think (that) if he's wishing that, you don't want to be put in that situation five more years down the line...wishing that you might have quit. And now, he even goes through health problems. If you keep your wits about you and you look around, you learn. You see old guys that were riders and you see what kind of health they were in. (You hear) stories of how they had to reduce...and you can sure see what their bodies are like down the road. It's not a pleasant thing and you can't change that once it's done. And that's the real sad part."

In addition to Dennis Terry, Mark had additional support in his decision to leave his riding career. "My mum by that
time was always hoping, always praying that I would quit. She never really liked me riding because she was always scared of me getting hurt...She always wanted me to quit. (She always asked) 'why don't you give it up?'

Reaching the point of retirement was "the hardest thing I ever did in my life...the emotional part." The struggle involved worries about disappointing others and finding a new job but, it was mainly the physically and emotionally exhausting battle against body weight. Once the decision was reached, Mark felt relieved. "After it was made, I felt a lot better. Seeing that people aren't as disappointed as what you all started thinking they were going to be and then, you're more relieved...The whole transition, if I stop to look back at it, it was very hard to do to stop riding. Once I did it, right after I did it, within a week, it feels a hundred percent better. It's just that first, the first time saying 'I quit riding as a jockey' or 'I want to stop'. But, there's so much before you say that...the last little part... (is) a real rough time."

Mark was fortunate in that he didn't have to look for employment. Having worked periodically in his parents' shop, he was experienced and able to work there more regularly if he chose to. Most retired riders are not so lucky and they are confronted with the problem of seeking post-racing employment without transferable skills or marketable experience. "That's more or less the whole thing of every rider. You can go around and ask Brian Johnson...he says
'yeah, it seems like I'm getting kind of old for this sport too. I wish I could be able to weld like Mark can or had a place to work like Mark does but, I don't and I have nothing else to do except to ride. I don't know anything else'. (He) started off really young and you don't really know or have any experience with anything else. Even if you went to college or something, after you've been here long enough, you're spending so much time (at the track) that you're not keeping up with that (information)...Unless you really can find time to do different things, you can't do it."

Many retired jockeys try to continue their racing lifestyle by transferring their skills to the training of horses. However, it is not easy to get established as a trainer. To be successful, to make the career financially feasible, the trainer needs to be in charge of several horses on a consistent basis. Because horses are susceptible to injury, a trainer with a few horses can soon find his season cut short because his horses cannot run. By contrast, "big barns, with thirty or forty head...when one or two get sore...there's two more to fill the stalls. These trainers keep running horses and winning races where little guys, with four or five horses, once they're done, they're done. There's no more to fill in."

Most owners are reluctant to send their horses to new trainers and, in addition, many of them are quick to move their horses to different trainers if they do not see the results they expect. Trainers hope to be selective about
whom they train for, aiming to eliminate the fickle owners whose expectations are unrealistic. However, "a lot of riders don't have people they can train for right away...It takes time once you quit, to let people come up to you and want you to train...(And then,) it's so hard to keep them happy 'cause if you start telling them all the problems, well, it's just like a bunch of excuses to them. It's very hard for some people to understand and if you don't have the right sponsor, well, look how many people switch hands."

When Mark's career as a jockey came to an end, he knew that he wanted to continue working at the track. However, he also wanted to modify his lifestyle to allow him to develop a personal life, an aspiration which included starting a family. "I knew I was going to start training eventually but I didn't want to start that year. I wanted to have a whole year off with just galloping in the mornings and going home, having the afternoons and the evenings to do whatever I wanted to do."

Former jockeys can find ready employment as exercise riders. "There's always a job of exercising horses. They always need their exercises...You've got to be a hard worker to be an exercise boy. For a big barn...they expect you to be out there seven days a week 'cause they don't want to put anybody else on...(they want consistent riders because) it's nice to know that if you've got a sore horse, if he's sore today or if he's better. If you put on somebody else, how do they tell?"
Although the pay is far below that earned by good jockeys, exercise riding can provide a comfortable income. "Usually you get about five bucks a horse, or seven bucks for two year olds. You get 'em in the early part, in spring training, you go training every day, you can get out twenty a day or some people get out thirty, so that's one hundred and fifty (dollars) a day sometimes...But, you're not going to be able to do that forever. You don't want to get on horses every day. After a while, when it's pissing down in the morning, raining, it's not that enjoyable anymore. You go buy your two hundred and fifty dollar rain suit, gortex, and make sure you're not gonna get wet and still, (it) doesn't seem as enjoyable as what it was before." Thus, exercise riding is a good transitional job, allowing the jockey "to see what else you can do. To give yourself time. At least he's got an income coming in."

Mark is now in his third year of horse training but, unlike other professional trainers, his livelihood is not dependent on the horses' success. He has total control of the horses and can consider training to be almost a hobby because his parents own the horses. His mother and father had been occasional visitors of the track when he was young and they became enthusiastic fans when Mark became a jockey. Their first venture into owning a race horse was motivated by their desire to have access to the backside of the track where their youngest son spent so much of his time. Since that time, they have acquired other horses and now, Mark
earns a wage by training them in the early morning, then working at the sheet metal shop until about noon to complete an eight hour day. During the winters, Mark gets someone else to look after the horses while he works in the shop. He is able to take weekends off and enjoys sleeping in.

This arrangement is ideal for Mark. "I can come down here and do anything I want with these horses and not have to worry about (what the owners think)...If I think this horse should be worked, I want to work him...(And) it's always nice to get on your own horses...It's nice if you've got any question (about how they are doing), you can hop up there and find out...That's the kind of enjoyment you can get out of training, it's knowing your horse so good."

Mark knows that he is fortunate to be able to enjoy continued participation in racing while earning a stable income and enjoying a regular lifestyle. "I'm very, very lucky to have it 'cause a lot of people don't have a second place to go to work. So, they don't have no other view, except racing. Their life has got to be horses. That's all they know. They don't have a mum and dad who have a shop... they just don't have that opportunity."

Reflecting on his career, Mark is satisfied because "I learned lots and I grew up lots just by doing what I did." However, he wishes that he had learned some of his lessons by listening to other people rather than by making mistakes. Too frequently, Dennis Terry "would tell you something, (and) no matter how many times a guy would tell you something,
you'd just go do it and you find out then yourself." From his own experience, Mark would like to find some way of communicating with young jockeys so that they would understand, "just so they would never make that mistake...I even thought of opening up a jockey school...I could teach kids...just help 'em a little bit."

Young jockeys would be well advised to pay attention to the real experiences of other jockeys. "Looking back at it now, I kind of regret some of the things I did do due to riding. Like, I didn't even go to (my brother's wedding ceremony). Lucky he had somebody videotape it. Riding! Riding was more important to me at that time. Don't want to miss a nice stakes horse...Now, if I were to do it over, I probably would have said, 'well, I'm taking this day off'."

The racing lifestyle kept Mark so busy that he didn't even have time to use the home stereo system he had bought. "I was so tied up as a jockey, so much dedication, it's phenomenal. I look back and I wonder how I reduced that long ...(I) just go half a day now without eating and it reminds me of how much I suffered, laying on the couch and just having pains of hunger." Mark assumes that his efforts to reduce his weight have also reduced his life expectancy. "I'm not expecting to live real long...but, I'll just make the most of it, as much time as I've got."

Other advice Mark offers to prospective jockeys is to take up the sport while they are young and to get a teacher, "somebody that's been there." They are advised to live a
balanced lifestyle, allowing for a personal life and avoiding drugs and partying around. Jockeys should "watch the bull-sht" because there are a lot of people on the backside who will try to deceive and exploit young jockeys, either trying to motivate them toward unrealistic expectations or, the opposite extreme, trying to undermine their self-confidence. Jockeys should also get a financial advisor, someone who will help them toward planning for the future and a disciplined approach to money so that they can invest it instead of wasting it.

Jockeys should also be attentive to their relationships with others, particularly owners and trainers. "I don't care who pisses you off or who says you've done something, you don't say nothing back to them. Don't burn your bridges or tell somebody that their horse is sore or you don't want to ride their horse...project yourself in the best and nicest fashion to people. If you do, you'll have the nicest career you'll ever dream of."

However, jockeys need to recognize that their career is likely to be very short. Jockeys are plagued with the problem of maintaining an often unhealthy, low weight and they are in a very high risk, dangerous sport. Mark cites some examples. "I got to know Lynn Estrada before she died. (I) met her about a month and a half before she come off and hit a rail. She was an apprentice. She was going around the backside, (a) muddy day, and for some reason, her horse went over the rail... she hung on too long and swung back into the
rail, into the metal post that was cemented into the ground ...She lasted a week in the hospital...(and) Ray Creighton ...he was just finished his 'bug'...and I was riding with him ...I'm dead last, another horse on the outside of me and I see him go down...these horses clipped heels...and he got hit right in the head, spun him around in circles and that was it. Just about died. They thought he was going to die. He was in the hospital for a hell of a long time...Hasn't rode since...And, there's a girl who was galloping on the farm. She come off a horse and she's paralyzed now, in a wheelchair ...There is a lot of danger and you never think of it when you're doing it 'cause it's so much fun."

Mark cautions jockeys to pay attention to their bodies. "Don't be intimidated by what someone else can do...Know what it is saying. Because somebody else did it for that long, don't think your body can handle it. Everybody's body is different...(but, if you get injured) then, five years down the road there's arthritis...Like, my body now feels like its forty-four years old and that's a joke. That's one thing, I'm glad I quit when I did because I hate to think that I would have starved my body or tortured it for more years...I'm still young. I'm twenty-six years old and (have a lot of years left but)...The problems I have with my health...aches and pains, allergies...I have bad allergies. If I had a million dollars and could buy my way out of allergies and could breathe good, I'd do it...my leg, my arms, my wrist (have been injured)...(I'm) taking Entrophen, de-inflammation
pills...I'm popping allergy pills every day, twice a day, and if I add my inflammation pills and...vitamin pills on top of that, that's a handful of pills every day. You get sick of it."

Mark is painfully aware of the punishment he has inflicted on his body over the years. His body is a constant reminder of his suffering through weight reducing and injury. Even now, three years after his retirement, his sleep is still disturbed by the habit of waking up throughout the night due to dehydration. And, living a more sedentary lifestyle now, he sometimes finds himself with more energy than his current activities require. As he reflects on his career, he is pleased with what he accomplished and learned. Although he would prefer to have done a few things differently, particularly in regard to his health and lifestyle, Mark has no regrets about his career. He used to enjoy the challenge and the strategy of the race, "I loved that. That's what I miss the most". But, he seems to have adjusted to that as he grins, "(I) have to carry it out on the highway."
Throughout his six year racing career, Danny Williams fought his growing body. At age twenty-two, he had abused himself through malnutrition, dehydration, and medication, and he eventually "got sick in a real, real bad way" in 1982. He was able to resume racing that year but he knew that his career was all but over. As the season drew to a close, he became very selective of the mounts he would ride. He scheduled his last race on 'Wanderkind', "probably the best horse that I'd been on, so I wanted to go out on him." He went out in style, winning that final race by six lengths, to the cheers of the track community who helped him celebrate his retirement.

Danny is tall for a jockey, now standing five feet, eight and a half inches and weighing a slim one hundred and forty-five pounds. He is clean-cut and healthy looking. He appears calm and relaxed, with a controlled energy which is in marked contrast to his self-description of his racing years. Danny was born in Vancouver on March 21, 1960. He is the middle child and has two sisters. At age twenty-nine, he lives with his wife, Norine, who had been his girl-friend during the last years of his racing career. He is currently exercising horses, a job which enables him to live comfortably, although he is growing bored with it. His enthusiasm and aspirations are directed toward training his own horse.
I met Danny in his suburban home in Coquitlam. He spoke with such comfort and detail about his career that I found it relatively easy to write this narrative. Our first interview lasted some three hours and so, this narrative is derived from a transcript of the taped interview, supplemented by notes of the latter part of our conversation.

As the interview wound down, Danny spoke of his motivation to participate in this study. He had recently read No Easy Trip, the tragic story of Danny Beckon, a jockey who had apparently committed suicide as a result of allegations about the use of narcotics. Danny had known Beckon, was familiar with much of his colleague's life story, and considers that public knowledge is incomplete. He thinks that the public should have more information about horse racing and the problems and issues involved in the sport. He thinks that changes should be made to improve racing and the lives of jockeys. After reading the book, "I realized that maybe we shouldn't keep things so close. So many times, jockeys are called 'pinheads' (and other names)...The only real respect they get is at the track. People not knowing what it is all about is not helping the business...(for example) we need to get this oppressive weight thing changed because people are getting bigger."

Regarding the first draft of this report, Danny commented that "it's really good. I think you did a really good job. It's got everything in order...You've got the whole thing covered." His wife, Norine, had been very
interested in reading the draft and Danny reported that she also found it to be an accurate representation of Danny's experience. "She thought I was real moody and she's glad that was in there (because it was important). She's glad that it (the career) is all over." Through the second interview, some minor corrections and clarifications were made to the draft and some information was added regarding Danny's recent thoughts about the direction of his post-racing career.

Danny was born into a racing family. "My father (Ronnie) was a jockey from 1952 to 1960, the year I was born...He had a very successful riding career and then he trained horses...(This) had a real big effect on me. Unfortunately, my father died when I was eight years old and ...I've always wanted to be just like my dad...a jockey...that's how I identified with him, just riding horses." When his father died, Danny lost his involvement with the track but he was able to continue working with horses. His family had pleasure horses which he and his sisters rode and showed. "I was always sort of involved with horses."

His grandfather, Cline Hoggard, was a breeder of horses, providing Danny access to thoroughbreds. "He had about a dozen running horses at the track when I was young...My father trained horses for him until he passed away in 1968...When I was old enough to go to the race track and work, like when I was thirteen, fourteen, I went down and I started grooming horses, walking horses, and then, getting on horses
and riding them around the shed rows. I started out just like you're supposed to start out."

As a youth, Danny was "very small, really, really small." He didn't enjoy attending classes through grade twelve at Richmond High School because he was picked on because of his size. The people he worked for at the track thought he would never be big enough to be a jockey, a contrast to the experience of aspiring riders who are usually too big. However, he had a lot of encouragement to take advantage of his size in racing and "everyone more or less geared me to being a rider."

Danny needed to find someone who could teach him to ride thoroughbreds. He couldn't ride his grandfather's race horses because both he and these horses were too young and inexperienced. Furthermore, his grandfather's trainer had not been a rider and would not be able to teach the skills he needed. Danny turned to his next door neighbour in Richmond, Bunny Johnson, who is currently the leading trainer at Exhibition Park. At age fourteen, Danny started exercising horses for Johnson. "I was only allowed to get on one or two, the real easy ones, because I was very, very small. At fifteen, I was getting on about six a day and, at sixteen, they were getting me on about a dozen a day."

At age seventeen, in 1977, it became apparent that Danny would have to speed up the pace of his learning because he had started to grow. He had grown to five feet, two inches and his weight had increased from eighty-five pounds to one
hundred. At first, he had difficulty finding mounts because most of the available horses were inexperienced two-year-olds, which apprentices are not allowed to ride. "I had to go around and really work hard to get on horses." As the year progressed, he found more and more mounts so that, by season end, he had been riding three or four horses each racing day. When Exhibition Park closed, he moved to Sandown on Vancouver Island, where he became the leading rider because the better riders had gone in search of higher purses at other tracks. His accomplishments at Sandown enabled him to gain a better agent, Nev Setter, and he had the foundation for a good year in the 1978 season, in which he would be able to continue to ride with the apprentice's five-pound allowance.

"I felt very good about 1978 and then, all of a sudden, things changed in my career." Although he had been very careful with his diet, he got heavier over the winter. "I watched myself. I dieted. I was very conscious of getting too big (because)...I had a taste of winning. I had a taste of the money and I knew that I could have a really good year, especially with the new agent." However, over the winter he had grown four and a half inches to five feet, six-and-a-half inches. "I had a horrendous time getting the weight off...I didn't know anything about it. I heard and seen a lot by being in the jocks' room...I seen the other riders reduce (but) I didn't know how to go about it...It was taboo to say anything about dieting. You always told everyone that
you weren't having weight problems because they want you to think that you're fit, you're strong, you're one hundred percent. They don't want to know that you haven't eaten for a week and you're dehydrated...(and so, without help) I found it very, very difficult getting my weight down. I had a difficult, terrible time doing it."

By opening day, Danny had been able to reduce. "I was tacking one hundred and nine (pounds), which is really good 'bug' weight but, I had a real terrible time, really oppressive problems keeping the weight off and I was experiencing, for the first time in my life, a lot of stress. Everyday I rode, (I was) worrying if I could get the weight off to ride." He was very dedicated to riding because he enjoyed it so much and he managed to keep his weight down. He was taken off a few mounts during the summer and he suspects that this was because some of the owners and trainers thought he might have lost strength because he was reducing too much. Nevertheless, he finished the season as the leading apprentice, with a very creditable seventy-eight wins and fifth place in the over-all standings.

During his early career, Danny lacked confidence in his riding ability. He felt worried about living up to the standard which had been set by his father. "My father had such a successful career. In 1952...he was the leading apprentice (and) the leading rider...(in what was) a real strong jockey colony...He won the (British Columbia) Derby three times. He won all the big races. I was very aware of
Everyone was very aware of that. They knew how good he was...I grew up looking at his scrap books and seen all these big races and when I started riding I was really shocked at how really, really difficult it was. It looked so easy." He thought that people were giving him mounts for reasons other than his own ability, such as his father's reputation, the benefit of his apprentice weight allowance, or simple obligation due to his hard work in morning exercises. However, by the end of his apprentice year, "I had confidence and I knew in my own mind that I could ride."

Circumstances during the 1979 season led to the promise of escalating success in Danny's career. He hadn't grown any more during the winter and kept himself fit and lean by playing a lot of sports, particularly racquetball. Because he no longer had the benefit of the apprentice allowance, he could afford to carry a little more weight on his body and he was now tacking one hundred and twelve pounds. After about a month of the season, he went down on his first major spill, suffering two fractures in his thumb, a broken collar bone, and a dislocated shoulder. This initiated a turning point in his career. Two days after his release from hospital, his agent fired him because he was faced with a recovery period of from six weeks to three months. His replacement was to be Kenny Skinner, a former leading rider who was returning from racing in New York. "I could understand why he did it (but) it was very upsetting to me. I really took it bad, being hurt and everything...(I felt abandoned) and I was really
feeling sorry for myself. I was really down in the dumps."

Danny walked around the track in his cast and sling and found a lot of support from other horsemen. "I'm race track family. They'd watched me grow up on the track, so everyone got behind me."

Danny was shocked to receive an offer from Roddy Morrison, the leading agent on the track who also represented Brian Johnson, the leading rider. This was a terrific opportunity because the agent who has the best rider is offered all the best horses. The leading rider can only ride one horse at a time, leaving high quality horses for the next rider. This meant that a lot of 'live' horses would become Danny's mounts. "I was really excited, so I worked really hard to rehabilitate myself to get back to ride. I rode six weeks from the day I went down. I wasn't even supposed to have the cast off for six weeks...I healed fast and I got myself fit. About five days before I rode (in a race) I went down to the track and started exercising. It hurt but there was this really live horse that was gonna run (and I wanted to ride him)."

This new relationship had rapid payoffs. Through Morrison, Danny gained access to "a barn that I always wanted to ride for. I always respected Harold Barroby. He was the leading trainer...He didn't like my other agent and I always wanted to ride for him. I understood him. We understood one another and he only rode Roddy's riders at the time." Danny won on one of Barroby's horses. "Then, Brian started a
three-day suspension and I got a lot of his mounts and they just won. That just set the tone there. Roddy was the hot agent. He had all the number one horses to ride and Brian and I just rode them." At the end of the 1979 season, Brian and Danny were the dominant riders at Exhibition Park.

The two riders worked as a team and became friends. "A lot of times the riders have to work together to help the trainers get the horses ready. I found it difficult with other riders that I worked with...Brian was much like me in that we would just look after the business at hand and let our agent worry about what horses we were going to ride."

They lived in the same apartment building in North Vancouver and did a lot of things together, travelling to the track, playing racquetball, and skiing in the winter. Although their experiences were contrasted "like night and day" because Brian wasn't a reducing rider, they got along very well together and the 1980 season appeared to be full of promise for continued success.

In the fall of 1979, after the Vancouver season was concluded, Danny had another experience which further bolstered his expectations for his career. He went to Alberta for the remaining three weeks of that racing season. His colleagues, Brian Johnson and Chris Loseth, were also going to Alberta because "they had gone the year before and just did phenomenal, really, really, good." Danny did well and it was a good experience for him to spend time on new tracks, "just to get away from the people that I felt
comfortable with, that I grew up with more or less on the race track...It made me do something that I wasn't doing before. It made me approach people." He realized that it was good business to get out and meet people who might have good horses for him to ride. He learned to be more gregarious and outgoing, more socially aggressive. When he told his Vancouver agent about this, "that really tuned Roddy up. He just loved to hear that 'cause...it was going to be a great year the following year."

In 1980, his weight problems became much more severe. In previous years, he had to work to reduce to racing weight and then to maintain it throughout the season but, over the winter of 1979-80, he got big. "I started to fill out. I was starting to put on weight where I wasn't putting on weight before, my shoulders and stuff. I was partying a lot. I was drinking a lot. I was eating a lot. We were all living the good life. I was hanging out with riders that were doing good. We were off on ski trips, chasing women, drinking, and having a good time. And it came time where I had to start reducing and I started to get really, really, worried." As spring training progressed, "I was starting to feel like I wasn't going to get my weight down. I was starting at one hundred and thirty (pounds) stripped." Reducing became extremely difficult because his body was solid, without flab. He was used to being able to lose weight quickly but now, "I couldn't stand a plateau when I was losing weight. I couldn't stand staying at a certain
weight day after day after day. When I'm working at it, I like to see results. It wasn't happening. My weight wasn't coming off. I worried that I had put on too much muscle."

Danny was feeling torn up because he knew that he had an outstanding year ahead of him. In the previous fall, Harold Barroby had said that he liked the way that Danny was riding, saving ground by getting the horse to the rail on the first turn. He wanted to use Danny on all his horses in 1980. "That just blew my mind because I knew that if I could ride for him, I had a real good shot to be leading rider." As he watched these horses improve through their spring training, he became increasingly anxious. "I was really, really having a lot of problems emotionally. I was going out of my mind trying to lose weight. I was starting to do a lot of drugs (amphetamines and cocaine) to try to help me get the weight off...I was really in a bad way."

A week before opening day, the track holds a 'play' day of trial races, enabling trainers to test their horses with competition. Danny had worked hard at reducing and, on this day, he worked the morning exercises and sat in the sauna to lose a few more pounds. He didn't want to weigh himself because there were a lot of people standing near the scales. That day he rode five or six trial races, including a horse which was a legitimate contender for the Canadian Derby, worth one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars, in Edmonton. This was a race that Danny's father had failed to win and Danny wanted it. The horse excited him. In the
trial race, "he ran super. I guided him around and he just
did everything fantastic. I can remember after it was
over...I said 'this horse is gonna make me a lot of money'."

After showering, Danny was the only person left in the
jocks' room so, he stepped on the scales to find that he
weighed one hundred and twenty-two pounds. He had just one
week to lose a further twelve pounds. "There was no one
there. I went back into the hot box and sat in there. It's
like 5:00 in the evening and I sat in there and I said, 'I'm
not gonna make it this time. There's just no way!' And
then, I thought (that it's) just one more week in my life, I
might as well give 'er. And it took a lot just to come up
with that 'cause I was so far down, I felt so thin. I looked
at myself in the mirror and I was so thin. I was so
dehydrated, I just couldn't see it coming from anywhere and
so, the only thing I knew...I just can't eat anything. I've
got to just drink water and waste myself."

Danny knew that his battle with his weight had taken on
a new dimension. For the next week, Danny was totally
dedicated to losing the weight. "I drank water and put a
rubber suit on and played racquetball, jogged, everything.
And, I never ate anything for five days straight. Never ate
a thing. I was continually weighing myself and I was losing
like a pound a day. One, two, three, I started to count.
Opening day I was one hundred and seventeen stripped and I
was totalled...You couldn't get anything more out of me I
didn't think but, I just went into the jocks' room that
morning...after I'd done all my work and I started at about 10:00 in the morning and I tacked one hundred and sixteen that night. I got it off and I won three...And I said this is it! If I can make it today, I can make the year, I know I can make the year...(But) the weight problem that I had before was nothing like it was now...(Before, I was) reducing and disliking it but rewarding myself with the riding, whereas now, all of a sudden, things had changed. Now, it was a twenty-four hour a day job. This was something that wasn't going to leave me. This weight problem was oppressive. It was big."

The 1980 season did prove to be a success for Danny. He won one hundred and eight races in Vancouver and ended up as the third leading rider. He had been in a close race with Brian Johnson for the leading rider title—but experienced a few costly suspensions, particularly a three-day suspension near the end of season which resulted in Brian taking his horses and winning eight races on them. Danny was trailing Brian by two wins and "if I was to ride, there's a lot of 'ifs' in this business, I would have been ahead of him in the standings and that would have been for the first time (that) I'd hit the lead. It made a big difference." Nevertheless, Danny had a tremendous year.

At the close of the 1980 season, Danny's career took another twist. His agent, Roddy Morrison, decided that he wanted a lifestyle change and left the track. The team of Danny and Brian was broken up as they each selected different
agents. Danny joined an older, established trainer, Johnny Lawrance, who had represented a number of leading riders over the years. "I'd known him all my life and I knew of the years when he was king...I went with him in 1981 and I had a super year. We kind of stumbled through the year in a lot of ways." Again, Danny was a close contender for leading rider but the title went to Mark Patzer, an apprentice that year and a rider with whom Danny had a close association. Apart from the advantage of his apprentice allowance, Mark "was a very good rider and probably deserved to be leading rider by...the fact that he worked very hard for it."

Due to his continuing efforts to reduce, Danny could no longer work as hard as he had done in the past. "I was incapable of working hard. Exhaustion, total! For me to get up in the morning was a real effort." The result was an almost partnership relationship between Danny and Mark Patzer. Both riders enjoyed a close relationship with the trainer, Dennis Terry. They rode a lot of his horses and he taught them both a great deal. "He really liked Mark...took Mark under his wing and he was going to make a rider out of him. I used Mark to my benefit in a lot of ways. I got Mark to do a lot of work for me in the mornings, like exercising for instance. One horse...'Ladnesian', earned one hundred thousand dollars that year and I rode him the whole year but, Mark exercised him every morning for me. But, Mark got his reward because I looked after him in the jocks' room."

The jocks' room can be a very unfriendly, unpleasant
place to be. "(It) is a very tough place for a kid to go in. I was very intimidated by the other riders when I (first) went in there. I only knew one rider...and I was scared of the other riders. They push you around and yell at you and stuff. There's a real pecking order...(So, the understanding with Dennis was that Mark) was going to be lockered close to me and I had to keep an eye on him. By that time in my career, I didn't take no shit from nobody. I was established and, I mean, I was going to back up whatever I had to say... There's a lot of pressures. A lot of riders don't make it... because they can't handle the jocks' room. They can't take the (other) riders...Certain riders you don't say anything to. They'll beat the shit out of you. And other riders'll drop you in a race. Other riders are crazy. You've got to know how to deal with all kinds. I was more or less looking after Mark and he was looking after me in the mornings. He was doing a lot of morning work for me."

This relationship seemed to be of mutual benefit. "It was good for his career and it helped me out 'cause half way through the year, I couldn't come out in the mornings. My agent didn't want me to...He knew about my weight problem. It was obvious to him. He would rather have me at home in bed than to show up and ride. That helped a lot...He knew that I'd be strong in the afternoons if I didn't work in the morning." This, the second to last year of Danny's career, was probably his most successful financially as he rode a lot of good horses, won a lot of races and awards, and earned
about eighty thousand dollars.

To maintain his racing weight, Danny had a daily routine of exercise and time in the sauna. "I had it down to an art...to get the weight off every day. After the races were over, I'd hydrate myself, fluids, fluids, fluids, 'cause that's all you want. You'd think that all us riders are so hungry (but), more than anything, you're thirsty. We want water! That's all you crave. That's all you want. I would just hydrate myself like crazy. I had no control over how much I would drink. I should have controlled it more. It would have helped more but I just didn't...After the races were over, I would fall asleep. I would get up, not even knowing it most of the time. I would get up and go over to the refrigerator, open it, and I would drink everything in there. No matter what I had in there the night before I went to bed, when I got up in the morning, it was gone. It was just uncontrolled. (Norine) said (that I'd) get up every twenty minutes. Every twenty minutes I'd be up to the refrigerator!"

His routine was disrupted by his trip to Calgary to finish up the season. The top riders from Vancouver had decided not to go to Calgary this year, leaving some very good prospects for Danny. Even though he really didn't want to go because he was too tired, he decided to try to "pick up some live horses and make some easy money." But, "back there it's a little bit different than here. You have to work hard in the morning. They make you exercise all the horses that
you ride. It's just crazy! It's like a lot of work. If you want to do good, you've got to do it." He had some initial success, winning some good races. "And that's when I thought, forget it, I'm doing good. I'm just gonna stay in bed. It's snowing. It's cold. I just can't handle this kind of weather so, I stopped coming out. (And then) I don't ride anything...(They took) me off everything...so, oh shit! I've got to go out."

Danny's problems with weight reduction were exacerbated by the combination of morning work and cold weather. "It was cold and it was very inclement weather. I couldn't keep myself warm. It made me a lot hungrier than I ever felt so, I was having trouble controlling my eating. I could normally control my eating. If I overate, I'd just heave. That's what riders do. If you have to eat, go eat and heave. Now, I wasn't a good heaver. I didn't do it that much. Mark and a lot of these kids, they kept their careers going because they could heave. They were really good at it. I wasn't that good. My father was a heaver. He was great at it. It just wasn't my thing. My thing was discipline. I will not eat. I will not eat anything and I would stick to it!" But, his experience in Calgary "really threw me out of whack. I got really big. I had a few days off after the first week there. I ate and drank, partying, and I got big. I got real big! I had to pull twelve pounds to ride the next day. So, I decided to start the night before. I knocked off about four or five pounds. The next day, I had to pull eight
pounds to ride."

It was crucial that Danny ride the next day because he knew that he had 'live' horses which would win. "The more you're in this business, the more you learn...There's some days you just can't take off your mounts (turn down a race) 'cause if you take off your mounts and someone wins on these horses, you don't get the horses back. If you're riding a lot of horses for a very prominent trainer, you don't want to ever take off your mounts. It makes them angry at you...I had to ride this day."

Like a lot of reducing jockeys, Danny had resorted to pharmacological assistance. "I took a lot of Lasix when I rode. We all used to take 'water pills' we called them." Lasix is a diuretic which is intended to be used exclusively by patients with severely impaired renal function and under strict medical supervision within a hospital setting. Yet, "after four years, I was becoming immune to them. They're really strong. They're forty milligram pills, very strong. So now, I was at the point where I was taking three a day, every day." These pills take about forty minutes to induce urination. Danny would set his alarm clock for 4:00 in the morning, wake up and take a pill, then get up at 4:45 to "take a leak."

On this day in Calgary, Danny took his Lasix pill, although he considered against it. "I'm feeling a little light already. I've got eight pounds to go but I'm feeling all sucked up, dehydrated already. So, I go down and do my
morning work and my water pills were hurting me... By now, I knew my body really well and that hurt me today. I ate too much solid food the day before. I didn't have the water content that I needed so, the water pills were hurting. They weren't working that good. Stupidly, I took some more 'cause (I was) worrying about how much weight I've got to get off... I continued in the hot box that afternoon and then, I started urinating blood. At first, I didn't know I was doing it and then, I realized. I was urinating blood!" This was the first time that Danny actually felt afraid for his health. "I think that was the first day when I knew this is over. You're pushing it too hard... It was the first time that I (was scared). I'd fainted, passed out (before). Nothing really scared me until that day. And that scared me!"

With this experience, Danny started to consider a different perspective on his life. "I looked at things in a different light. All of a sudden, I realized you've got to start taking a little bit better care of yourself... (and) you'd better look for another job pretty soon 'cause... the writing was on the wall. I was big! I was big! I put my hands up to the other riders (in comparison)... I was just bigger." In the past, Danny had tried to ignore this reality, using the continuing careers of other big riders as a model. However, now "it was probably the first time that I did a real analysis... and accepting the fact that I was gonna have to change occupations really, really started to wear on me. It really bothered me a lot because I didn't want to."
wanted to get away from the torture in the worst way...There was so much stress on me...the weight part of it was so stressful that it was really, really weighing heavy on me. I was getting very short tempered, (with) uncontrollable rages of anger. (It was) very hard on my family, my sisters and my mum, (and) my girl friend."

By the time that he returned to Vancouver, Danny figured that he had a couple of years left to his career, if he looked after himself. He planned to put himself on a new programme for the winter, starting a new routine without using Lasix. He and Norine spent a few weeks of holidaying, travelling around and skiing. The next time he weighed himself, he was one hundred and thirty-five pounds. After a few days, he thought he had dropped some weight but found that he had gone up to one hundred and thirty-eight pounds. He again started reducing. "I went at it hard. I never, ever in my life worked at anything so hard just to get the weight off." He worried throughout the winter and, right down to the day of spring racing in 1982, he didn't know if he could make weight. Somehow, he made it, dropping twenty-five pounds. "I was packing one hundred and seventeen, which is like one hundred and thirteen pounds stripped. After the first week of racing, I felt pretty good. (I) got off to a reasonable start and had live horses to ride. I felt pretty good about the year. I was happy to be back riding...Things were looking good."

The 1982 season did not stay good for long. He got a
three-day suspension for interfering with Mark Patzer's horse. "I taught Mark a lot of things and I taught him something that I should never have taught him...how to make something look bad. He made it look bad and I got days! I was furious! I was very, very upset. They made a bad call. (I told the stewards) I can't take days! They don't care. They don't listen to anything I had to say. They gave me days. Everything fell apart. Just everything fell apart. I worried so much about getting them. I don't know why but, I got myself in such a fret over it that I started getting unbelievable pains in my stomach. It was just driving me crazy. I couldn't stop it. (I was) always thinking that it's hunger all the time but, it was a burn, it was a real burn!"

Danny didn't like going to the doctors because they always thought he was trying to get pills to diet and they told him that he shouldn't be riding. During his early career, Danny had been able to obtain a Lasix dosage of one pill per week from the track doctor. As the years progressed, he wanted to use the pills more frequently and sought out people who had heart problems because they had access to Lasix prescriptions. Amphetamines were much harder to get, and so he was always seeking new doctors who might sympathize with his efforts and prescribe a small dosage, while warning him of the importance that he use them infrequently. However, his excessive usage of amphetamines, for both reducing and promoting the energy to race, resulted
In a need for sleeping pills, particularly valium. Thus, he was on a daily cycle of 'uppers' and 'downers'. He felt sorry for himself when doctors would refuse his requests for drugs, but he now thinks that "it's a good thing they didn't give me all I asked for" because he would have used everything available. He avoided his long-time family doctor, who frequented the track, because he knew that the doctor would be appalled by his condition.

His stomach problem forced him to acknowledge a health problem to the doctor and he was diagnosed as having ulcers. "I had the most horrific time. I tried to look after myself a little bit better on the few days off. Eat a little better. Try to cool the fire in my gut because it was always there. And, I just got big! I got big. I meant to pull the weight and it wouldn't move...I felt I had it chalked to my stomach from all this crap that I was taking." He managed to get back to riding weight but, "had doubts about how long I was going to make it...After a few days of riding, going through just absolute hell to get the weight off, I was even starting to say to Norine (that) I don't know if I'm going to make it."

Norine tried to encourage him to keep working because she was worried about how hard it would be for him to quit. "She knew that I must love it a lot to kill myself the way I was." But, Norine only knew part of what he was experiencing. When she asked how much he needed to lose, he would quote only half the amount. When she offered words of
encouragement, saying that she had heard that another jockey
had pulled five pounds and looked good, "I'd be just like
ready to freak!...I hid a lot of it from her...because that's
the way we were taught. We were taught not to tell anyone.
Keep it to yourself...There were some people who did know how
bad the weight thing really was but, the important people in
your life don't. The most important people, my girl-friend
...my mum, I was close to, she didn't know. They all knew
about my weight problem...but, they didn't know the extent of
it...(It was hard with Norine because) I didn't want to go
out with someone and tell them how hard I was reducing
because...I was warned...you don't tell anybody because if
they tell someone else, it will hurt your career."

There were good reasons for not sharing one's personal
difficulties with other riders. Most would offer no
sympathy. "They'd rather say (that) you're too big. Walk up
...in front of you and eat something. These little guys were
drinking all the time in front of you. It's a game, mind
games...The jocks' room is full of games and they just try
and work on you to make you snap, to try and get it out
'cause if they can get it out of you, if they can make you
show it everywhere else, then they can...(say that you're)
not fit to ride. The pressure is unbelievable in that place.
Not just having to go through getting the weight off, it's
all these people around you. You have to hold everything
inside (and) pretend that it's not really that bad. Pretend
that you're not really working that hard at it. Pretend that
you're not really pulling that much weight. You have to put on all these fronts, all these images, (to) everyone around you...(And so) a lot of the other riders...didn't know how much weight I was pulling and they didn't want to ask either because they were scared to know." Other reducing riders were happy to maintain this conspiracy of silence because they were afraid of drawing comparisons which might cause them to push themselves to further weight loss.

In many respects, the jockey's life can be very lonely because of this reluctance to talk about and share feelings and experiences. However, some riders do become close friends. For the riders who shared the hot box, "that's where the bondage comes in. Those are the guys that we looked after one another. We were the ones that (supported each other)...Those are the people that educated me to be able to be the master that I was at losing weight...(We would be honest with each other, Mark Patzer, Delbert Rycroft, and I)...We all knew...how bad each other's weight problems were 'cause we were doing it with one another every day."

Danny refused to discuss personal issues, particularly his weight, with other race track people. He had always kept conversations focussed on business, on horses. "I loved it, race track talk. It was everything to me all the time. Whenever anyone tried to (talk personally)...I would directly change it. I would never talk about myself in the way that I knew that there was a leading question toward dieting...I had to keep it horses. I never wanted anything to be directed
towards me." This was particularly difficult when Danny couldn't take the horses for morning exercises because he needed to save his time and his strength for reducing. He had to make up excuses for missing the morning workouts and, when that would result in his being taken off a live horse, he would "just about break down...There's so much that you can't say that it really, really affects you. (You) keep it bottled up and the only way you can get it out is to go out there and ride and that's how I would get my release all the time."

Danny started to "become very, very critical of myself. I was watching myself ride and I was saying 'I'm not riding right. I'm not looking strong. I'm just not looking like I used to on a horse'." And he realized that for the first time, he was listening to the criticisms of the trainers. Instead of trying harder, he developed "a bad attitude towards it" and began to surrender to the futility of struggling against his body. "I was more or less...facing what was happening."

Every day of racing he questioned whether or not he was going to be able to make weight. "It got to where I was pulling nine or ten pounds a day. My last few months of racing, (I was) just not feeling good at any time, always not feeling healthy. Always had a cold, always sniffling, coughing, just never feeling good. No strength because of the dehydration...but, I always seemed to get the job done if I had to."
In the fall of 1982, Danny "got sick in a real, real bad way...I wasn't even barely hitting the hot box 'cause I was sweating so much...I had bronchitis and I had a fever...(but) it was a day I could not take off my mount. Absolutely could not. No matter what, I'm gonna ride...I knew that the next horse I rode, all I had to do was sit on it to win 'cause it was just gonna run its own race...I passed out...When the doctor took my temperature, (he) took me off my mounts. I was almost relieved because I was scared I was going to pass out on one of these horses. (But) I was upset that I got taken off the horse (particularly as) I'm watching the running of the race on the t.v. and here's my horse, he just smokes!" Danny had been scheduled to ride two stakes horses that day and he considered that he had lost them. "Once a person wins a stakes, they're not going to take him off. I'm not going to get them back."

It seemed that Danny's career was over. As Norine drove him home from the track, Danny commented that "this might be it." Despite her encouragement, he said "I'm scared that when I am healthy enough to ride, I won't be able to get the weight off...I might as well quit." Three weeks later, he was back riding but, he was receiving mixed messages from people at the track. Some were offering encouragement that he shouldn't worry because he was looking better. Others expressed concern that he didn't look very well at all. He managed to complete the year, selectively riding only horses that looked like potential winners with a heavy weight. "The
last few weeks of the races, I just rode a few horses" and, each time they won, he questioned whether they would run again and whether or not he should quit.

He wanted to finish his career riding a winner. His major horse that year was named 'Wanderkind'. "He was my great horse. He was winning the big races and I wanted to finish the year out on him because I knew he could win a couple more...The last week before the races were over, I for the first time started admitting to people that it was over. I told a lot of the riders that I wasn't going to ride the following year...I told my agent that I was going to quit. He was happy for me. He said that he thought it was a really good move. He was gonna miss me but he said 'your health! You've got to think of your health'. So, it was common knowledge, the last few days, that it was going to be it. I wanted to ride 'Wanderkind' the last day...'cause I thought that he was probably the best horse that I'd been on so, I wanted to go out on him...(that last race) he won by six lengths and I thought, 'this is it!' 'cause that's the way I want to go out. It's time! It's time!"

Some years before, Dennis Terry had told Danny that he would know when it was time to quit. Dennis "knew how hard I was reducing. He was counting the pounds down with me...he'd been through it all." When Danny felt discouraged and wondered about quitting, Dennis had encouraged him to persist until he had enough. That moment had come. "I knew that it was over...'cause I'd had enough. I didn't have enough of
the riding but I'd had enough! It was such a pressure release. It was phenomenal, it really, really was! It was just like a burden that I could not bear any longer. It was affecting everything in my life...It was affecting my relationship with my family. I was unreasonable, very unreasonable. I was scared to go out. I was scared to do anything...When it was over, it was just like a weight off my back."

The meaning of riding had changed for Danny. "When I started, it was everything I'd ever wanted. It was the whole ball of wax. It was fun...riding the better horses and being recognized...as being not Ronnie William's son but as Danny Williams and that was the big thing...The thing that's really weird now is I didn't really realize how good my last few years were because all I think of is what I went through to ride. The suffering and the torture just became so bad that it even has really affected my memory. I look back at...the form charts...and, a lot of times...I don't remember winning on that horse...I relate everything now...to what I went through to ride that day...'this was the day I pulled nine pounds...this was the day I pulled eight and a half pounds and I only had five hours to do it.' That's how I remember it all."

He remembers his last race, the end of his riding career, very well. "I couldn't think of it ever happening any better than the way it happened...Everyone used to call me 'Danno' (from Hawaii 50) in the jocks' room (and) when I
walked out there, they were slapping me, shaking my hand, hoped I'd win. Stuff you don't normally see. A lot of times riders'll win a race and...they'll get no congratulations from anyone. Some riders don't have the other riders' respect. I had a lot of it and that meant a lot to me...It was the first time that I really realized it...The whole jocks' room was outstanding by the rail as I galloped out after the race. They were screaming, cheering, throwing things in the air. And that brought tears to my eyes 'cause I realized that all the time I'd been competing with these guys, we'd done so much together...(They) were just happy to see me in one piece when it was all over 'cause they were always worried that something would happen along the way, (like) pass out when you were riding, fall off and hurt yourself, something like that. A lot of those guys had seen the worst, seen me pass out, (seen me) look bad day after day after day."

"After I got off the horse in the winner's circle and was walking back to the jocks' room, I had people coming from everywhere. People that I had recognized as fans but I had always walked by with a blank look on my face and tried to ignore 'cause they (would ask) 'is this horse gonna win? Is that horse gonna win?' A lot of times when I'd be cranky and they'd say something smart, I'd start bickering with them, swearing at them. I had guys throw things at me, beers and drinks and everything. (Now), they were shaking my hand. And I seen people with tears in their eyes. As I got closer
to the jocks' room, more people kept coming up and then, it was just a barrage of trainers that came up and shook my hand, one after another. It just brought tears to my eyes. I couldn't believe (it). Most of the time, when someone (quits)...it's done in a different way. They just quit and they're gone. Whereas, (people were saying to me) 'you did your best and you tried your hardest. You've just got to put it behind you. We know how much you really like it'. It made me feel accepted for anything I wanted to do at the track. No matter which way I wanted to go at the track, I felt accepted, which was really important...I got a really nice write-up in the paper...(and) my wife had a big party that night and all the riders came over...I was really happy that my career ended that way...it was really a nice way to end it."

Danny has no regrets about his riding career. "I was really happy with the career that I had. (I) think that I gave it the best shot. I really do. I maybe rode too long. Maybe I didn't. If I quit earlier than I did, I know I would have tried a come-back. I just know I would've. I would've seen other riders do the come-back thing. I've seen riders as heavy as I am right now...one hundred and forty-five pounds...make it back. But the (way) I look at it, when they're this big, they've got fat on them somewhere. But, with me, I'm just big. The last few years, even when I was twenty-two, I was growing just a little bit more."

When he decided to retire, Danny knew that he wanted to
stay on the race track, but he didn't have any clear plans for his next career. The week before his last race, he had gone to talk with his grandparents. They had been very influential in his life. He was perhaps closer to them than he was to his mother because he spent a lot of time with them after his father had passed away and left his mother a widow with three children to rear. He was offered his grandfather's horses to train, but he declined because he didn't think that he was sufficiently knowledgeable. He wanted to find a good horseman to work with so that he might learn to train well. So, when people asked him the normal question about what he was going to do after racing, he said that he would exercise horses for a year and, eventually, start training.

During the winter of 1982-83, he looked after his grandfather's horses and, as planned, found a good horseman to work with during the 1983 season. He had been hoping that a quality trainer would seek him out and Don Morrison did just that. "I rode for him. I really respected him...(and) I was really excited (because)...this guy is perfect. I liked everything about him."

However, the years since his retirement have not developed his training career in quite the orderly fashion that he had hoped. He has been buffeted by a number of unforeseen circumstances which have disrupted his planning. In February of 1983, his grandmother passed away. She had been suffering from cancer for some time, a fact which had
contributed to Danny's difficulties during his last year of racing because he frequently visited her in the hospital, even though he needed to spend the time in the sauna. After her passing, his grandfather became quite lonely and encouraged Danny to begin training a special horse which he had recently acquired in southern California. Danny passed the examination for his trainer's license and worked with this horse, 'Braznesian'. Both horse and trainer did well. "I ran him eleven times. He won three and won the handicap at the end of the year."

The prospects for the 1984 season looked good. Danny had claimed his own horse, 'Delta Laddie', and he had his grandfather's horses to train. However, "I was nervous about taking on my grandfather's horses because I was twenty-four years old and, if I go bad now, it's gonna be damaging for the rest of my career...I think I was putting more pressure on myself than I needed to, but I was geared up to do it." The season went well and Danny started to feel optimistic about his developing career.

People were noticing him and he received a number of requests to train horses for the 1985 season. But, "for one reason or another, I had this thing in my head...(that) I didn't want to take any horses that weren't half decent." He wanted only quality horses, and so he turned down the requests. A string of fifteen good horses were offered to him but, he turned these down as well because the owner appeared to be having financial difficulties and Danny was
afraid that he might get caught with a lot of unpaid bills. He knew that he had his grandfather's twelve horses to work and so, he felt confident in declining horses which he considered to be unsatisfactory.

As spring training drew near, Danny and his grandfather were in conflict. His grandfather was worrying about dying and the future of his estate. He had been working on a forty-year old dream to run good horses and he wanted that dream to go on. He also wanted his son, Les, and Danny to work together in a close relationship. He wanted Les to be the general manager of the horses and Danny to be the trainer. Les did not have any experience with race horses, but he was influencing his father to give instructions to Danny which Danny found unacceptable. "Being that I didn't have a lot of discipline when I was young, my mannerisms...it really came to a head at this time of my life. I put down my foot and said 'this is the way it's gonna be or else I'm walkin' 'cause I can work for anybody and that's the way it is'. I left them the ultimatum...(to) do it my way or forget it." Danny and his grandfather had frequently argued before. "We used to get into it all the time. Even when we were doing good, we'd argue about everything but...we would come to some sort of agreement. There was no agreement here!"

About two weeks before spring training began, Danny was offered a job by Ron Brock, a prominent trainer. Brock had just been offered the Canadian rights to a string of horses from the stables of John Franks, a wealthy American oilman.
who was the leading owner in North America. Brock had gained this contract because he was a friend of Franks' stable manager. However, just before the horses arrived from the United States, the manager died from a heart attack and the new manager shipped the horses elsewhere. Danny's hopes for working with a major string of horses were dashed. Even if he were to rebuild his working agreement with his grandfather, those horses were no longer available to him for this season because they had been moved to another trainer.

As the 1986 season approached, Danny had expectations of resuming his training career. His relationship with his grandfather had improved and he was ready to take the horses back for the season. However, his grandfather died that year and the subsequent settlement of the estate required that the horses be sold. Danny resumed his employment as an exercise boy, training his own horse on the side, and continued in this capacity through 1987. He enjoyed being without pressure and found this an "unbelievably good feeling."

In 1988, after three months of galloping in the rain, Danny felt that he was stagnating. "For the first time in my career, (I was) not learning." He began to consider looking for a whole new career because it seemed to him that the horse racing industry in Vancouver was experiencing a very tough time. Not only had economic conditions reduced the number of owners, but the deteriorating conditions of Exhibition Park were driving important owners to other tracks. Danny then accepted a one-year job to work with a
Canadian trainer who was running horses at Santa Anita. He learned a lot working on the premier track on the west coast but, there was not enough to keep him fully occupied because he was restricted to working only for a Canadian trainer.

Danny is currently back at Exhibition Park, exercising horses. His primary job is to teach two-year-old horses how to work at the starting gate. He had been earning the usual rate of five dollars per horse, working about thirty horses a day, six days per week. He has recently chosen to work less hours and to draw a straight salary of two thousand dollars per month, plus benefits, throughout the season, an arrangement which enables him to spend time with his wife. He finds this employment comfortable and easy, but boring. "It is just a job." He is finding it increasingly difficult because he is not able to utilize the full measure of his knowledge and expertise. While he has trouble because his "competitiveness is getting in the way", Danny has learned to keep his ideas to himself. He knows that owners frequently become very emotionally involved with their horses, making unwise decisions because they do not have enough knowledge about horses or the racing business. Trainers have to be very careful about offering advice because such owners do not often appreciate information which is counter to their expectations.

Another lesson he has appreciated is to be satisfied with a modest lifestyle. He saw that his grandfather's money had not brought happiness to the family. Danny credits
his wife, Norine, who works as a hairdresser, with having taught him not to worry about money. The remaining savings from Danny's racing career were invested in their home, leaving them a small mortgage payment and the ability to live comfortably.

Danny's career as a trainer seems stalled at the moment because he doesn't have the degree of responsibility and control he would like. He finds himself frustrated and teased by the horses he is currently working with because he is not allowed to work them as he would like. Yet, he has been surprised to find greater satisfaction in training horses than in riding them as a jockey. He considers that training requires greater commitment and dedication because of the long-term strategies needed to guide horses to their potentials, while also considering the business and financial implications of the racing industry. Although he does not yet have a string of horses to train, he has his own to work with. He maintains and dreams about this horse in what is "the typical race track way, to have an interest and to play with one big horse."

He continues to have a passion for the race track and hopes that racing will improve over the years. He thinks it important that the public understand the racing industry so that changes will be brought about. Particular changes he would like to see include different rules about the weight of riders because people are generally bigger and heavier than in previous generations. He thinks that changes should be
made to the way that the track stewards operate. Most of them are ex-R.C.M.P. officers, with little racing background. The rule book clearly states that the stewards' word is final, enabling them to be a law unto themselves, and denying horsemen any opportunity to challenge their authority. Furthermore, he hopes that the facilities, the physical conditions on the track, will be improved to promote better racing and to minimize the "unnecessary, ugly wrecks" which can maim or kill both horses and riders.

Danny considers that an unfortunate reality of professional sport is that it is so "peak and valley". When the career is going well, there is lots of excitement, success, and money. When the career is over, ex-athletes may be left with nothing. "The shame of professional sports is that we're so geared towards youth...If you've got a chance for professional sports, you're gonna go for it...The money that goes along with it is so attractive (but, for young athletes)...the education's gone. There's no chance for education."

Aspiring athletes are advised to take the opportunity for a professional career but to remember that it is likely to be of short duration. Young athletes need to look toward the future so that, when their professional careers are over, they can accept that reality and move on to something different. Danny has seen several former athletes who have not been successful in moving on. "There were a lot of hockey players who used to come to the track...Now their
careers are washed up, I see them come around the track. I got to know some of them a little bit and they...just haven't made any steps. It's something that a lot of them haven't accepted...and there are a lot of riders that are the same way."

Not only is the professional career likely to be short-term, but the former athlete's prospects for employment in physical occupations may be impaired because of injury. "A lot of (ex-riders) are really screwed up physically. They end up with bum knees and stuff and I think that really hinders them a lot too. There's jobs, trade jobs, that you have to be really physical at and those are ruled out. I know a lot of them have back problems. (They can have real difficulties) if they're not educated, (they can't work at physical jobs), and they're not willing to go out and look for anything else."

Another career option Danny is beginning to consider is that of jockey's agent, a career which would make use of his experience and knowledge, as well as allow him to continue to enjoy the race track lifestyle. "Norine thinks that with the amount of time I spend at the track, I should be an agent and she's probably right...I know all the riders...If I was offered again (because he turned down the idea before) a really good rider, I'd look at it real careful because...the riders can make more money than when I was riding...the purses are bigger. Good riders can make close to a hundred thousand (dollars). If you had a couple of those riders, you
could do fairly well...thirty or forty thousand dollars." He thinks that he would have an edge over other agents because his riding skills would allow him to do some substitute exercise riding for his jockeys, as well as testing out the condition of the horses.

Another factor which would be an asset to him as an agent is his experience with rejection. "The rejection factor is unbelievable in this business. That's something that I never touched on (in the first interview)...You never really realize...how tough it is to deal with rejection. When I started riding, I was being rejected right off the bat, but I expected it. You don't expect people to start throwing you up on all these great horses. You have to work your way up...I'd ride a horse in morning exercise and then watch somebody else ride him in a race and I'd get really mad at my agent but...I knew I couldn't really expect to ride. That's one type of rejection."

The other rejection occurs when an experienced rider is taken off a horse because the horse didn't perform as well as the owner or trainer had wanted. Frequently, owners and trainers have unreasonable expectations of their horses and will inappropriately blame jockeys for failure. Likewise, because they fail to understand the relative condition or development of their horses, they can also heap undeserved praise on jockeys whose success might more realistically be due to the fact that the horses were ready to perform. "You can have one guy pat you on the back when you leave his barn
and this guy thinks you're the greatest thing that ever walked... because you somehow made his horse win...and you walk around to the other side of the shed row and there's another guy throwing things at you."

Owners and trainers are often fickle and so jockeys are frequently fired from a stable and rehired at a later date when the replacement fails to perform the miracles expected. Thus, jockeys have to learn to keep their feelings and their opinions to themselves, rather than jeopardize the opportunity to regain the lost mounts. "You don't want to burn your bridges because you might get those horses back."

Danny experienced this type of rejection on a near daily basis and considers that this experience would be helpful as an agent. "I could take the rejection because I've taken so much of it. I know the people so well that there's not many who could really hurt me."

Danny sees his experience as a bit different from a lot of the ex-jockeys who are working as exercise riders. "I still enjoy getting on horses. I really do. And I'm glad 'cause a lot of the guys don't enjoy getting on horses any more, but that's all they can do. If they can't find anything else to do, that's kind of sad."
CHAPTER XII

CASE 9 - LINDSAY MYERS - RACQUETBALL PLAYER

After dominating Canadian racquetball for ten years, Lindsay Myers left the game in 1985 because he thought he had nothing more to win. At age twenty-six, he had been playing the game for just over twelve years and had won seven national championships. Three years earlier, he had made his decision to retire at this time because he could feel himself losing motivation. He wanted to retire as the number one player in Canada. "I didn't want to have it taken away from me." That decision was reinforced by a serious injury, which prevented him from playing in the national championships for 1985, and by dissent in the Canadian Racquetball Association, which terminated the professional tour. Lindsay has been working as a stockbroker since that time and finds himself frustrated because he does not have any control over the results of his efforts and because he misses the thrill, the adrenalin 'rush', of winning.

Although I hadn't officially met Lindsay until our first interview, I knew of him because his mother and step-father used to own the Supreme Court Racquetball Club, where I had played recreationally for a number of years. Lindsay readily agreed to participate in this study and he came to my office in my home. It very quickly became apparent that he "has no problem saying what's on my mind." As we discussed the nature of the study, particularly the inclusion of representatives from both team and individual sports, he
asserted his opinion that the experiences of these two types of athletes are different. Furthermore, he considered that jockeys are not good representatives of individual athletes because, although he acknowledges their skill and effort, he perceives that it is the horse, rather than the jockey, which is the athlete. The jockey is the pilot of the duo and the horse does most of the physical work in competition.

As we discussed the differences between journalistic interviews and this type of study, in which the informant has the opportunity and the responsibility to edit, correct, and validate the report, Lindsay described how he had developed skills in controlling newspaper, radio, and television interviews. "I didn't leave them much room (to take things out of context. From a young age,) I was always very cautious about people taking things and twisting things...You hear that people talk about you an awful lot, especially when you're number one in your sport and you're the most proficient player, the most talked about player, the most prolific name. People tend to say various things and I didn't want them to...they would say things that were so out of context that, to me, they were ludicrous." In this report, I have respected Lindsay's restriction regarding certain family information and, with this exception, I have the impression that he has been as candid in his remarks as the other informants with whom I have worked.

Lindsay frequently laughs and smiles with a humour which reflects the intensity which seems to have pervaded his life.
He feels driven by the challenge to conquer his body, to make it do what he wants of it, to move it in total co-ordination. He says that he has "an awful sense of responsibility" and is very hard on himself. As a player, Lindsay had a "nasty attitude. I was mean." He showed little respect or regard for others and his on-court tantrums led to his reputation as the racquetball equivalent of tennis star John MacEnroe. He was often very defiant, obnoxious and rambunctious, and "my popularity suffered because I didn't care what people thought." Lindsay was determined to present himself as an imposing package which would intimidate his opponents. Nevertheless, he says that he is not an insensitive person and it is likely that his public behaviour disguised his real feelings.

In our second interview, this more sensitive or personable side of Lindsay became more apparent. I had the impression that he felt more at ease after he had read the draft write-up and had seen proof that I had reported his story with accuracy and without judgement. As he added some clarification about his interpersonal relationships, it became clear that he is best understood when one can see the more friendly, pleasant, and likable person beneath his presenting facade of defiance. This final report includes some additional information about his interpersonal relationships.

Regarding the validation of the draft write-up, Lindsay was very complimentary about its accuracy and its meaning to
him. "It's good. It's neat...I didn't realize I was going to be quoted that often...It turned out well, it's very chronological...In going through it, there are so many flashbacks that I had...It helps trigger the (memories)...It all adds together and makes up the person at that time...It's a compilation of my thoughts from beginning to end...Your analysis of many things is right on...I would say that you've got everything that I could possibly say with some details...some good examples. I think it's a success."

Born on February 11, 1959, Lindsay is the eldest of two siblings. He has an extended family through his mother's two subsequent marriages. He is currently single, having divorced his wife of a two-year-old marriage. He describes himself as a loner. "I have very few friends. I don't want many friends. I want three (or) four. I like my privacy. I don't want to chase. I don't want to be out in the open." Nevertheless, he says that he is not afraid to talk with people, a marked contrast to his early youth when he was very shy.

Beginning at about age four and lasting throughout his childhood, Lindsay participated in several sports, particularly soccer, swimming, baseball, hockey, football, and basketball. "But, I found that I really got frustrated when 'Charlie Brown', out in left field, would drop the ball and I'd lose the game. And this went on for years. Maybe I just didn't have the good fortune of being on a winning team to feel what it was like to win the title...I decided I
wanted to be on one of those teams and I didn't want to have to wait so, I went out and found something that I could do on my own. It ended up being racquetball. It could have been tennis." At about age thirteen and a half, his step-father, with whom he was then enjoying a good relationship, gave him his first racquet. "Because he liked racquetball, I played racquetball."

Lindsay's athletic career could have gone in other directions. "If my parents had stayed together, my father would have had me playing either golf or tennis and I could have been a multi, multi-millionaire and wouldn't be here right now...Because my father and I didn't get along at the time...I decided I wasn't going to do what he wanted me to do, which was a pretty natural tendency for a young kid...I was obviously defying my father's wishes, but he didn't even live with me. As far as I was concerned, he was a terrible guy. I didn't like him. I didn't like what he said, what he did. He didn't really back me. Didn't tell me that he was proud of me. He may very well have been. He never told me. Other people told me that he was proud of me but, so what...He just didn't know how to do it. I just had to accept what other people said and that didn't really make a big impression on me." In later years, as Lindsay began to establish himself as a world class racquetball player, his father tried to get him to quit. "He said, 'here's ten thousand dollars. Quit the God damned sport!' That's no real sign of promotion or backing...What could I say? I did
what I wanted to do."

"If I was friends with my father at the beginning, things would be different, totally different. (I) have a relationship with him now, can do things with him, talk to him without getting my head chewed off...Not that he was any kind of monster but, I guess in his own way he was. He was a pretty tough guy to deal with. He's mellowed out. All of a sudden, I've turned thirty and bingo! I'm a man! I wish it was (at) twenty, instead of being pulled by the ears somewhere."

"Things could have been different. I should have played hockey. When I was eight years old, I was playing with the fourteen-year-olds 'cause I could skate like crazy. They couldn't catch me, so I knew I could do that. But, one day, I got hit in the middle of the face with a puck and I said, 'what the hell am I doing here?' Here I was, eight years old, and these guys were towering over me. My mother should've stuck me back on the ice, but she didn't. She was too much of a caring mother. And that was the end of my hockey career. I was eight years old and I should have been out there...Back then, I didn't know any better...(I had) a lot of aggression. A lot of aggression. I should have stayed in hockey. Nobody told me, but I would have been making a lot of money."

It would seem that Lindsay is disappointed that he missed opportunities to pursue sports which might have led to a more lucrative career than racquetball. However, "I think
about it, but I've decided it's not worth resenting anyone for it. I've certainly enjoyed my life as a professional racquetball player. The places I've been to, the things that I've done, are things that most people dream of. Even without the money, it would be worthwhile."

During his childhood, sports were Lindsay's emotional outlet. He experienced a lot of tension due to the tumultuous relationship between his natural parents. "The sports were my release, my way out...I was hyper." He had tried tennis but, "I found it so slow and I needed something that was fast. I needed that ball to move and I needed to chase it...I needed something that was explosive...I took all of my energy, and I had energy for ten, and I would just rip anything in my way apart. And that's how I went after racquetball. It's because I had control." He had taken up racquetball because "I needed it. I got hooked. Adrenalin is a drug. I needed it and racquetball provided it for me. The pressure, the intensity, the explosiveness, the characters that I hung around, the nature of the game, the overall atmosphere was just charged. I was just hooked on adrenalin. I'd get near a club and (my heart would) start to pound in anticipation, not in fear. Get me in there! This is what it was like for me all the time."

Lindsay worked very hard at racquetball and the sport took him into a new lifestyle and a new social world. As an elementary school student, he had attended a Jewish private school, Talmud Torah, and was very involved in the traditions
of his religion. On Friday nights he would observe 'Sundown' and he attended shul, the synagogue, on Saturdays. However, when he started to play racquetball, his only opportunity to get on a court at the Men's Athletic and Recreation Club, in downtown Vancouver, was on Saturday mornings. As his skills developed, the Club allowed him admittance at any time and he was then playing for two hours every day after school. Tournaments were held on the weekends and, so he was soon spending his time in racquet clubs instead of the synagogue.

Racquetball was a very new sport at the time and junior players were rare. "My contacts were all twenty years older than me, all the guys at the MARC and the Y, ex-handballers and new racquetballers. I used to play with guys like (Herb) Capozzi, (Nelson) Skalbania", noted Vancouver entrepreneurs. He also played with professional football players like Jimmy Young, Dave Easley, and Garrett Huntsberger. He described Huntsberger as "just a moving wall. He was huge and I'd dive through his legs after shots. I could run around him in circles...It was like David and Goliath, it was so funny." Although these people were considerably older than Lindsay, he considered them his friends. "They were people I would hang out with. It was great for me because I was very shy as a young kid...They helped me mature from a boyhood, which I didn't have a hell of a lot of, into being able to handle myself in and amongst people twice and three times my age and I handled myself pretty well. I didn't make a fool of myself too often. I listened a lot and I'd speak a hell of a lot
less. It was really good for me to grow up that way and getting to tournaments brought me out of a shell."

With his buddies from the MARC, he rode to his first tournaments sitting on the back seat of Tevle Smith's '37 rumbler. "Here I was, a young kid, travelling with these adults who were between twenty-five and forty. At fifteen, (I was) hanging around with these 'rounders'...They used to troll me through the bars and pick up women, using me (as bait). I mean, Basil Pantages...the oldest teenager in Vancouver, at age fifty-whatever...used to get hold of me (and we'd go out). And it was fun. I used to have a great time. I used to be down at Pharoah's Retreat (a popular night club)...I had quite an education. Get out on the road and then girls and all that sort of shit started to happen. You'd get the groupies and the hangers-on sort of stuff. (I) didn't look back."

At fifteen, his main racquetball rival was a year older than him and had played six months longer. The two frequently played-off against each other in tournaments and "the whole racquetball city was watching as to who was going to come out on top after all these battles." In the British Columbia Junior Closed Tournament of 1974, "I smoked him, 21-7 and 21-7, and that was the end of his career...Everybody was betting against me, except my coach, Dale Pond (a stock broker). He's a good dude. He and I are still friends. He had a major influence on me...And I just went on from there."

Lindsay quickly rose to national prominence in the
Within three years of taking up the game, he had captured a number of junior titles in British Columbia, western Canada, and the western United States. By age fifteen and a half, he had finished in third place in the 1974 National Men's Open Tournament. At sixteen, he was ranked in the number one position but did not win the national title until 1977, in Montreal, while he was still aged seventeen. "I was pretty well on my way."

He learned an important lesson in a 1977 tournament in Michigan. Instead of playing in one event, he competed in both the junior and the men's open events. There were one hundred and sixty-four entrants in each event. He ended up placing second in the junior and third in the men's open events. "I was playing five hours a day...(It would have been) better to have picked one event and won it. Nobody remembers who came second or third. The fact is, I made a splash because...my name was appearing everywhere. They couldn't figure out how somebody was going to end up at the end of both rounds. Well, I didn't but, I managed to get close, which was good but not good enough...I had no coaches following me around. I had no manager or anything like that...So, I learned. You play one event and you win it." A year later, in 1978, he won the International Amateur Open Championships in Denver.

Lindsay turned professional in 1978, at age eighteen, when he won his second Canadian National 'Open' Championship. This tournament was held in Edmonton and a cash prize was
offered for the first time. He won one thousand dollars, "pretty small stuff...mind you, for a weekend, I couldn't think of much better to do as a kid. Go out there and beat a few heads and pick up a grand. I didn't have any problem doing that." By this time, he had won three national 'closed' championships and had competed three times in San Diego, where he had practiced and played with some of the top players in the United States. "Steve Strandemo taught me. (I played with) Charlie Brumfield. Marty Hogan and I used to go hang out at the beach and chase girls."

In order to spend more time in California, Lindsay needed to obtain a United States student visa. He had graduated from Eric Hamber Secondary School in Vancouver but, his grades were low because he had missed many classes in order to compete in his numerous tournaments. He spent a semester at the Langara Campus of Vancouver Community College in order to raise his grade point average. Having demonstrated sufficient grades to earn a student visa, Lindsay attended San Diego College. He took introductory business courses but, attended only about a third of his classes, making special arrangements with his instructors to complete assignments and write exams at times which would permit him to continue playing in racquetball tournaments. After a year and a half, he withdrew from the college because "I was doing one hundred and fifty thousand miles a year in travel and trying to attend school. I knew that it was only going to get worse in the years to follow so, I ended up
leaving the education behind...and continuing on with sport."

He had decided to live in California because he could find both better competition and better prizes there. Typical purses were two, three, and four thousand dollars. His parents helped him financially for the first few months but, when he won his first American professional tournament, he was able to phone home and tell them to stop sending cheques. He had won the 1979 Los Angeles Open and "I knocked off a number of names, which got me noticed right away." The most outstanding performance of his career came later that year, when he won the United States professional title. Nevertheless, it was not easy to earn a living at the game. "It was very unfair in the States. It was very weighted at the top. The number one and two players got the bulk and everyone else starves. So, it wasn't the easiest of times down in San Diego, albeit it was sunny and fun. I didn't become a millionaire."

Lindsay's income was dependent on his tournament success because he did not have a promotional contract. He had been sponsored by Leach Industries, equipment manufacturers, since he was age fifteen. This sponsorship had come about through an introduction to Bud Leach by one of Lindsay's friends from the MARC, Tevle Smith. However, "I never really signed a major contract with any firm because they didn't want to give me what I was looking for. I'd rather not sign than give myself away for nothing...They gave me what I needed...per diems and travel...but I never signed for money." This was a
business decision, guided by Lindsay's father. Even though he wanted his son to quit the game, he discouraged him from signing a limiting contract. "They weren't putting anything on the table...I ended up having to win my own money."

During the near four years he spent in the United States, Lindsay did very well in his raquetball career. "I managed to make my way down there as an outsider...(At first) you're cannon fodder for all these top names. I got my butt blown around for the first year. I was in the qualifying draws for the first twelve months...I was beating all the locals, all the top amateurs in the nation. I was wiping them off the board and then making it to the main rounds and meeting one of the top four. What a way to break in for the first year!" As his career developed, he became ranked among the top eight players in the world and, at the time the professional tour was shut down in 1983, he was ranked number five.

As to his training programme, "Oh, gosh! That's a story. My day started about 7:30 in the morning...(I was) at the courts by 9:00 and I'd have four matches lined up. Four hours! 9:00 to 12:00, take lunch. I'd come back and play another match and then...I'd spend two hours on the weights and a solid half hour on the life cycle and, after a snack, I'd go take an aerobics class...Sometimes, if I wanted a day off, I'd go running on the beach...And I ate like a machine. My food bill was more than my car and my rent combined. (I was) one hundred and eighty-five pounds. (My) body-fat
content was three and a half per cent...You could see through me."

He learned the game mostly through competing with better players. However, he did get a coach in California. "Bud Meuhleisen, he's the father of the game, he took me under his wing and taught me an awful lot about the game. He's won more titles than you can shake a stick at. He's won every title that's available. He's mid-fifties, a dentist, and he has been one of the most outspoken players of the game since its inception. He was an excellent coach, (had) an excellent eye for athletics."

The disruption of the professional tour resulted in a dramatic change in Lindsay's career and ultimately led to his retirement from the sport. The tour was plagued by internal strife between the management, directors, and players. There were "all sorts of conflicts of interest. Guys with egos the size of buildings (were) trying to run this thing and they were in conflict with players and others. It was a mess. So, the tour shut down...I was on my way up and the tour shut down." Because his visa expired when the tour closed, Lindsay had to leave the United States. When the tour re-opened in 1985, the format had been changed to a twelve-man invitational tour. Lindsay was not one of the twelve invited to participate. "I had a personality conflict with the directors of the tour...I'd say what was on my mind...and it probably got me into some trouble...I never liked kissing butt...(I was) ranked number five and not being selected as
one of the top twelve...but, what am I supposed to do? I'm a Canadian. I could start legal procedures but, what the hell for?" As it turned out, the new pro tour had a short life. The game had hit its peak and is currently in decline.

When Lindsay returned to Canada in 1983, he set to work to single-handedly start a Canadian tour called CPRO, the Canadian Professional Raquetball Organization. "I just made a bunch of phone calls around the country...I knew the competition was out there. I wanted to compile it. I wanted to be the instigator of a national body of professional raquetball players...(I) got it off the ground and played eight stops a year." Lindsay considered that the organization of the Canadian professional tour was much better than its American counterpart, although finding financial support was extremely difficult. "The problem was that there are fools down there who'll throw their money at the game...while, up here, no one will throw their money at the game." Nevertheless, some funding was arranged. "We had somewhere in the range of forty-five hundred to six thousand dollars per stop, for sixteen guys, broken down so that even the first round losers got something...Actually, I'd created CPRO so I could play in it so I could make a living, which is what I did for three years while I was preparing to leave raquetball."

Lindsay had made up his mind three years in advance of his actual retirement. He wanted to get CPRO started and "then bow out and leave somewhat of a legacy type of thing
...I could play but there wasn't really a hell of a lot to play for...I'd been winning in Canada ever since I was sixteen. Seventeen was my first national title but, I had won everything, every tournament that I stepped into when I came back from San Diego. It was just like a cake walk. I'd come back here and I'd walk through the rounds. I'd go through the motions and I'd win time after time."

An example of the ease with which he defeated his Canadian competition is the way he readily handled his closest rival in the 1981 and 1982 championships. "The next best player...was Ross Harvey. He'd always been the number two player in Canada, behind me, and everytime we'd meet, I'd smoke him...Everybody he played, he'd beat the daylights out of them. When it came to playing me, I just had his number ...In 1981, he was seeded ahead of me and I was kind of miffed at this. I beat him 21-4, 21-5. He didn't make ten points and the match was over so fast that people were still coming to sit down. By the time they all sat down, it was over...There were eight hundred people sitting around this court and...I was just explosive. Like my attitude, I was nasty. I was really nasty, mean. I wanted the game and I wanted his hide. I just tore him apart. And I did that the next year too. I tore him apart in front of national t.v. (with scores of 21-6, 21-3) And that was embarassing. The tape was only twenty minutes long and they had to fill it in ...I just had it in for this guy because he was my biggest threat, the next best player. I'd just turn on the jets for
His domination of the Canadian competition caused him to lose motivation. After having won the Canadian 'closed' title, the most prestigious title in Canada, for six years in a row, "finally, one year, I got so bored, I'd reached the finals and fell asleep and a guy beat me, or, rather, I didn't win." This was in 1983, in Windsor, Ontario. "I was reading a book and somebody said 'you're on', so I shut the book and I ended up not winning. I wasn't there. I figured (I'd) just go through the motions and I just didn't put it all together."

Lindsay had no regard for his victorious opponent. "At the function afterwards, this guy had already had two bottles of champagne, just a complete waste-case by the time he made it to the podium to thank everybody, to go through the motions that I had been doing for so many years, and by that time I was quite proficient at it. I could stand up and sound like an educated individual who knew what was going on. But for him, it was his first time up there and, being drunk, made him look like an absolute asshole, which he was. Everybody hated him, but everybody was cheering for him to win...they all wanted me to lose for years. But, this guy finally won and, as much of a piece of garbage as he was, they all cheered for him because anybody that could beat me was going to be their hero for a day...I got up to the podium and I said...'Brian played a hell of a game and I think he'll be a hell of a champion for a year. I'll be back in three
hundred and sixty-five days, mark my words.' I was."

Lindsay has momentoes of this lapse in concentration and effort. During the next year, whenever Lindsay was on a racquetball court, he wore the same pair of running shoes that he had worn in his losing game. "I wore them every day ...I went back in the next year and played the same tournament in the same running shoes. I won. The next day, I took them home and bronzed them. They're on my shelf." He also has the newspaper clippings of that 1984 championship. They included a statement to the effect that "it was sort of a foregone conclusion that Lindsay was going to win it back after loaning the title out to Brian for a year."

By this time, Lindsay's interest and motivation in the sport was dwindling. The ease of his victories was diminishing the thrill of winning and he knew that his performance was likely to deteriorate. "My physical attributes are as good now as they ever were. I could still be the number one player in Canada, without any doubt, if I were to continue to play and had people to keep me sharp... (but) there was nobody in Vancouver that could test me or keep me sharp and I knew that everybody else was gaining as I was coming down and it was getting tougher and tougher for me to maintain my number one position."

During the 1985 season, he began to make concrete plans for his retirement at the end of the schedule. He started to study the Canadian securities course, the prerequisite for his license as a stockbroker. "I didn't tell anybody. I
just super strong. I know, in the morning there's horses that'll almost run off with me when you're galloping but, in the afternoon (races), it's (the strength is) just there."

Terry resents the comments of ignorant people who just don't appreciate the hazards and the hardships of racing. Many people seem to think that a jockey's life is pretty easy and that there isn't a great deal of skill involved in racing. Apart from the rigors of competitive racing, Terry has pointed out that "some of the horses are just dingbats. You don't know what they're going to do." One particular horse, 'Smiling Lad', "that son-of-a-bitch would turn and look at you" with a grin on his face and then go crazy, jumping and rolling. "On post-parade, he froze three times (locked his legs and you don't know what to expect) and that's scary."

The jockey has to learn that racing is actually a big business involving a great deal of money. He has to become alert to a number of things that go on within racing that most people are unaware of. A major issue is the politics of a track and the relationships between jockeys, trainers, and owners. The latter two are extremely powerful and can easily make or break a jockey's career, especially on the west coast where there are few tracks relative to the number of available riders. At Santa Anita, for example, "they've got horses down there worth a million dollars. It's a business, so you really have to watch what you say, and act, and everything. Just be a real gentleman. You dress different.
thanked them because it had been really rough. I was the president, the secretary, the treasurer, and I also wrote all the articles for the tournaments. I wrote articles and sent them into magazines with ghost names. Nobody knew who wrote them. I ran the whole show myself."

Lindsay had grown disappointed with professional racquetball and the struggle to earn a reasonable income. "I made a living at it, but it became like work. That was how I paid my bills. It wasn't like...I'm going to be a millionaire at the end of the year and I'll live off of that...It was a job and that was how it ended up being. That's why I was so relieved when the whole thing fell apart or when the plug was pulled for me...I just felt like it was a ton of weight lifted off my shoulders...At that time, I had my (broker's) license. I could do something else. It wasn't like I was left with nowhere (to go)."

Although his injury prevented him from playing in the 1985 championship tournament, Lindsay gained some satisfaction in helping a friend win the title. "He was a young kid...(who) didn't know what he was going to do (to beat his opponent)...'cause he'd lost to him every single time...I took him aside before the game and said...'You do the playing. Every now and then, just have a peek outside and I'll show you some hand signals 'cause I know how to play this guy'...I sat on the outside of the glass and I sort of coached Roger through the game...He ended up winning the national title, virtually stole it right away from the other
guy and I just felt great about doing that. It was peachy to help somebody (win)."

Since that time, Lindsay has played very little racquetball. He competed briefly in August of 1986, helping the Canadian National Team win the world title in Florida. In February of that year, he had attended the National Team selection tournament in Winnipeg. "I just went there as a shoo-in and played a couple of rounds...I said to the coach, 'I'm on this team, right?' 'Yeah, no problems'. So, I just went in there and played the games and got out of there 'cause I wasn't going to break my ass to make the team 'cause I was already on it...I lost but, I put no effort into it...I hadn't played for five months prior to that and I didn't play for five months after that, except at the tournament in Florida."

With his career over, what Lindsay misses the most is the winning. "I don't miss the in-between stuff. I hated the travelling. I hated flying. I got sick of it...After doing one hundred and fifty thousand (miles) a year, it was just boring. And the tournaments weren't any different from the tournament before...very repetitive. The exciting parts were the last point of the last match...I miss the winning because that was the pump. When I could feel somebody getting tired, I got stronger. I got stronger as the match went along...It felt good to beat people, to feel that supremacy and to know that I have that power to dominate. I could play with these guys on their level, but I could also
turn on the jets and I had an extra twenty per cent that I could turn on in power, speed, and agility that they just couldn't match. I'd usually pull away from two-thirds of the match, unless I really wanted to blow the guy out and then, I'd just go from point one, which wasn't very often."

In describing the relationships he experienced during his career, Lindsay said that there were conflicts but he also had lots of friends. He noticed a difference in the way he was received by Canadians and Americans. "I had a more enthusiastic following in the U.S. than I did in Canada. I mean, they actually liked me down there...Up here, after you've won, they hate you 'cause Canadians are notorious for wanting an underdog from somewhere to beat the guy at the top. It's my opinion that most Canadians have this feeling because they don't see themselves as a winner. They see themselves as losers and want to be winners. And here, they have this winner that they don't support. They knocked me from here to kingdom come. 'Lindsay Myers is this, he's that. He's cocky. He's a jerk'...They didn't want me to win. They didn't want me anywhere near the winner's circle. I was always there...I guess I used that to my advantage and my popularity suffered because I didn't care what people thought. I used it to spite them."

Showing an example of his defiance, Lindsay has cited a "great story" about the 1981 Canadian Open title in Edmonton. "The local guy, Wayne Bowes, who I knocked off in '77, he was the four-time champion in a row before I showed up, he
managed somehow to get to the finals and I was sort of slobbing around in the finals. We were in the last game of a two of three round and he had me, 9-1. The game only goes to 11 and, two points and he wins the title for the year. The crowd's going bonkers. I'd get in and it's 9-2, and he knocks me out, and he goes 10-2. The crowd's on their feet and I'm still wandering around like it's no big deal. This is when I could turn the jets on just at the flick of a switch. There's five hundred people behind this glass and it's loud in there. I stood there and I flipped up my protector glasses and I looked out and (waved them) to settle down, it's not over yet. I turned around and beat him 11-10, straight points, and they just sat there dumbfounded. I walked off and flipped up my glasses and just said 'thanks'. They hated that. They didn't appreciate it. There was no applause. They hated it. And what more can a person do. As far as I'm concerned, shit on them 'cause they want somebody else to win. He's taking away my living, my money...I don't care what they think. And it obviously doesn't matter if I go pat a kid on the head and be nice 'cause they're still gonna think I'm a jerk anyways."

Lindsay described his style of play as "reckless abandon. I loved it. I needed it. I mean, the adrenalin was going. I didn't feel it when I broke my fingers after diving for a shot. I'd go crashing into the wall and I'd get right up again...It's like watching Sylvester Stallone fight the Russian (in the 'Rocky' movie series)...Believe it or
not, it's a dangerous sport...I go full out. Take two steps and I can dive twenty-five feet in the air and the court's only twenty feet wide, forty feet long. So, (I) ended up going into the walls and stuff like that. I had many injuries, dislocated shoulders, broken ribs, broken face. I went chasing after a ball once and I looked up and the wall ran into me. Knocked myself cold."

He played without regard for his opponents. "It's a contact sport. To everybody's surprise, you can get contacted and you can contact. I usually did the contacting. It was just my aggressive nature. I'd get out there and if he was in the way, I'd knock him down. I'd go for the ball, but if they were there, they were toast. I wouldn't gandy around and say, 'well, excuse me, replay please'. A squash player will listen to this and say 'what an animal'. (In squash) it's like 'let! Oh, please let me replay that'. In our game, it's like 'you get the fuck out of the way. You put it there, you get out of the way. It's my turn to hit the ball'. It's a much more aggressive sport in that sense...In racquetball you're chasing after a ball that's moving one hundred and fifty miles an hour. And, you have to be able to think, move, and create something from what you have, on the fly...It's a lot faster and it's a lot more explosive...It's like hockey. I'm not allowed to take a guy out on the boards, type of thing, but, if in during the play he happens to be in my way, I'll knock him down. Not with intent to injure but with intent to get to the ball."
Lindsay did not show any respect or consideration for others who were involved with the sport. "None! In fact, I'd sometimes go the other direction. I'd be obnoxious. I was pretty rambunctious. I was very hard on myself on the court...not winning was not a favourite pastime of mine. And I rarely used that term, 'losing'. I never lost, I just didn't win that game...I had tantrums with myself and sometimes, if the referee got in the way, he'd catch a good piece of my mind. I was likened to MacEnroe quite a bit, like regularly...Once I looked up at the referee after he'd made what I thought was a poor call. The crowd thought it was wonderful 'cause it was going against me. And I turned around and said 'ref, what's the score?' He read off the score and I said, 'no, what's the score?' (as I tapped my temple) I could be pretty abusive sometimes but, there were some people in the States that just loved that sort of stuff ...those are the kind of people that know what it's like to be a professional athlete, know what it's like to go out there and sweat your butt off to be proficient at something, to make a living off it."

As his career drew to a close, Lindsay modified his attitude. "In the last two years of my career, I ended up losing more matches. Aside from the fact that my intensity was waning, I also did not want to leave the sport as 'Myers the rat', 'Myers the shit-head', or whatever they called me ...I won a lot of praise for being a nice guy and cool and calm, no problem. That's what people in Canada like. 'Oh,
he's a nice guy. So he came in second, oh well, he's still a nice guy.'...I just said I'm still gonna be number one so, I could afford to relax a little bit."

When asked about feeling lonely through his career, Lindsay agreed. "Oh, very much so. I was a loner anyway. Right from the beginning, I had my own fun, did my own thing. (I) rarely hung around the troops. They called me aloof. They called me self-centred. They called me everything. Mostly, I was just quiet. If somebody took the time to get to know me, I'd be happy to share my thoughts with them on a personal level. And I'm not an insensitive person...some people found that out...(But) I was in a position where most people came up to me and asked for my autograph, not to try to get to know me, and so, when that happens, you behave yourself and you sign something." On any pro circuit, there are always 'groupies', women who are eager to make themselves available to athletes, but Lindsay didn't take a lot of advantage of their company. "I certainly wasn't a priest on tour but I wasn't out there keeping score with the world. The depth of these people! Their interest wasn't maybe thicker than a piece of paper."

Lindsay's interpersonal relationships were confounded by his determination to present himself as being tough and emotionally invulnerable. He saw this facade as essential to his career because most of the people with whom he associated were also racquetball players. "I think it had to do with the fact that these people were my competition, off the court
as well as on the court." He was afraid that others might find some weakness, some vulnerability which could be used against him. Thus, he was extremely guarded when he was around other racquetballers. "If I learned how to do something (in practice or a game)...you don't talk about stuff like that...(And) you don't talk about your personal life...because it can be used against you."

Apparently, Lindsay behaved very differently when he was away from his racquetball competitors. "I had different attitudes when I was around different people...(With non-racquetball people) I was always much more friendly, more relaxed. I was never uptight around people who didn't play racquetball, but get me around a group of racquetball players and my intensity level rose...The pressure just builds. I could just feel the energy."

Coaching in clinics and private lessons provided an opportunity for Lindsay to meet other people as well as to modify his public image. He taught clinics in the United States and in every major city in Canada. "It actually brought me into social contact with other people...and I would have to adjust to different people, their different styles, the kind of person they are, the business they're in, their aggressive level...I'd teach women and children (and adjust my style accordingly)...After they took a clinic with me, they didn't hate me so much...They saw a different side, a more personable side...(They would tell other people) 'well, he's not so bad'...I could relate to them...They
weren't my competition...I didn't have to be guarded and a number of them got to know me and I got to know them. I can call them at any time now and they'll actually talk to me. They won't hang up on me."

The coaching was gratifying to a point, but Lindsay eventually grew tired of it because there was no challenge in teaching people who were so far from his calibre. He eventually gave up teaching by pricing himself out of the market, charging fifty dollars per hour. However, there was one potential exception to the non-competitive nature of these coaching relationships. "There was one kid (but) I got out of the sport in time and I told him so. He's one of my best friends. He's seventeen now. Mark Van Hees. We're good friends and we'll be good friends for life. I told him I'll teach you, but you'll never get the chance to beat me."

His sense of loneliness was heightened shortly after his racquetball career was over. As he approached retirement, he had begun to think of raising a family with his new wife. Then, in the midst of his struggling first year of a new career as a stockbroker, his wife suddenly left him. This was a devastating experience and he felt abandoned.

His decision to become a stockbroker had been "based on all the contacts that were closest to me throughout my life." These contacts included his mother's second husband, Harry Miller, who was a broker when Lindsay was eight years old, his first coach, Dale Pond, who was a broker at Canarim, a major Vancouver investment house, and when he moved to San
Diego, one of his new friends was also a broker. "I liked this lifestyle...It allowed me to have some freedoms. I figured all you had to do was make a few phone calls and work a little bit...I knew that there was hard work. You have to get out and pound the pavement, make cold calls, and try to put deals together but, (it sounded good)...that's what made me decide to go into the brokerage industry...and I took the course...somehow I got through...(and was pleased that) I can do something other than play racquetball for a living."

Lindsay has enjoyed the excitement which can sometimes be found in business but, he has mostly found his new career to be frustrating because the activity is so sporadic. "Especially in my business, it's like feast or famine. And when it's famine, it's famine! It's like the Sudan in the middle of summer...I sit there for eight hours really. You can't do a hell of a lot of stuff, depending on the type of...niche (you are in). The one I happened to pick, if it's dry, it's dry! If it's hot, it's hopping...The disappointment in the whole thing is that I have no control over it. I don't have control over the market. It's like playing team sports. God damn! It's not me. I didn't do it yet, I'm still losing...When I win...I may feel good about it...but, even then, I didn't do it."

This lack of personal accomplishment is very distressing to Lindsay because he is used to seeing the results of his efforts on the racquetball court. "I can't win anything. There's nothing for me to win...Nobody's giving me a prize."
There's no money at the end of the trail. Business can be (rewarding) but it hasn't been...The success ratio is much more tempered. It's all a matter of keeping score. It's dollars instead of points. It's the deal instead of the game...(Like racquetball) there's a lot of luck involved. You can't create luck, but the trick is to be in as right a place as possible for luck to fall in your lap...(But) I don't have the same control in business as I did on the court. It was me against my opponent and I could manipulate him. I cannot manipulate my business."

He is currently considering looking for another career. "Of late, quite regularly, I'm looking for things to do. Something I can control. Either that or I'll try to set up a couple of businesses, various types of investments, and get some stores going or something that'll generate some cash flow which will allow me to do certain things." One of his problems is that stockbrokers are prohibited from working at other jobs, a regulation which becomes a real financial hardship when there is little business activity. "There's a lot of people in my shoes and a lot of people have gone already (left the brokerage). Even the good guys, the high guys, can't maintain their overhead. They're forced out. My overhead's not that bad so, I've managed to hang on a little longer...(It's) unbelievably frustrating. It still drives me up the wall. It means I'll reconsider my direction as to what I'm gonna be. I mean, 'when I grow up I want to be a fireman' kind of thing. Trying to put a few things together
and see where they lead. If it comes to a time when I've cleared my books, all my holdings with my clients, and made amends wherever, then I'll make a move."

Lindsay considers that his debate about leaving the brokerage is very different from the debate of professional athletes who may be considering leaving sport. "It's different for a professional athlete because they're...making money...to me, it's whether or not I make my next rent cheque. If I were getting paid fifty thousand dollars or a hundred thousand dollars a year, (I'd think) 'oh, gee, I wonder if I'll make a score next week. Oh well, so I didn't'. It's not quite the same thing. But, the problem is (in the brokerage, there are so many things on the go that) ...making the decision to get out of the industry is a tough one."

An example of his dilemma is the potential work he has on a primary issue of three hundred thousand shares which were brought to the market four months ago. Trading on these shares has been halted for two months, pending a reverse take-over bid by one of the partners. "It's off the board and I can't trade it...I'm frustrated...But, I know (that) when it comes back on, I'll be able to trade it again and get some cash flow. I can't just leave that." In another example, a couple of his friends have offered him the opportunity to broker shares in their new company, but that company has yet to go to the market. When it does, he will have the opportunity to earn money, but in the meantime, "I
just hope I can last until (they're) ready...I've had to scramble and scratch and scrape to try and get accounts." In the brokerage business, a lot of opportunities arise with good potential "just around the corner." However, Lindsay has looked back on his brokering career to find that "I've been 'just around the cornering' for a year now. I haven't done anything."

His dilemma is to find an opportunity to earn a good income while also enjoying the thrill of releasing his energy through physical challenges. "It has been very frustrating for the last year. I've been going up the wall, absolutely up the wall...I still seethe (with energy). I still burn up inside because I miss the adrenalin. I throw the weights around (in a gymnasium workout) and I go skiing on the weekend and I just beat the daylights out of the hill...I get my adrenalin rush on my bike (motorcycle) when I drive it to Whistler. I go right into them corners. I get it out there. I get it out on the ski hill 'cause I just ski like the demon ...I'll ski down hills that are like the wall...And that is a rush! You look down eight hundred feet...and that gets your heart going. I need to do that." Lindsay has recently taken up ski racing and "can feel the adrenalin coming back." He wants to get his physical and mental skills together to overcome his fears of the hill and the racing gates. He dreams about attacking those gates more aggressively and intends to use a helmet so that he can smash them aside with his head.
Although he does not have a concrete plan of action, there are some other specific things that Lindsay wants to accomplish. "I have to learn how to fly a helicopter 'cause I know that will get my adrenalin going. I know that will challenge me. I need that kind of rush. I mean, it takes a lot of co-ordination and I want to test myself...use all four limbs in harmony." He has rejected learning to fly an airplane because "anybody can do that in their sleep." He would love to have a career as a jet fighter pilot but has been told that he is too old. "I want to get a couple of businesses going and I want to get my teaching permit for ski instructing and for motorcycling and...sort of round myself out and do things that I haven't been able to do for the last four years (due to lack of time and money)."

While he is proud of his accomplishments in his racquetball career, Lindsay feels unfulfilled because he is not accomplishing anything in the present. He draws little satisfaction from his past successes because he is not content to reflect on history. He is more concerned with the present. "I got to the top of my sport. I left before they could take it away from me and I think that I've left somewhat of a legacy now...Someone once told me 'you play racquetball like Jimmy Page plays guitar'. That was a hell of a compliment...That's all fine and dandy...I've got a racquetball resume that runs off the edge of the foolscap, both sides, (but) it doesn't do me any good now...I talk to so many people who couldn't give a shit about what I've done.
It doesn't matter. It shouldn't matter. I don't make a dollar off of what I did...(My record) kind of tells people what I've accomplished. Past tense!...After all is said and done, what have I done? I've hit a billion racquetballs against a wall and so what? I've got a few trophies. I've got lots of memories and I think about them a lot...because I don't have anything else to think about. I have no other personal victories since. Real victories, things that I can really sink my mitts into. This is mine and hold it up!"

Lindsay's perspective on his athletic career is largely based on how it contributes to his current life. "Every now and then...some girl will walk by and say, 'aren't you Lindsay Myers?' I've never seen this person in my life...It feels warm, kind of nice but, you can't live on that forever. It's just like a warm breeze from somewhere...somebody remembers. That's kind of nice but, you can't make a living off of it. That's the crucial thing...If I was Caesar Maniago (former N.H.L. goal tender) and opened up a sports shop, sure (it would mean something today), but I had the opportunity to open racquetball clubs, own racquetball clubs, own fitness clubs. I just said 'get away!' I'd had my life of clubs. I don't want to see another locker room."

Despite the fact that Lindsay is disappointed that he did not achieve greater financial reward or develop other opportunities through his professional career, he has no regrets about what he did in racquetball. "I don't know that I would do a hell of a lot different. I guess I could have
suckholed, kept my mouth shut, (to avoid) political problems ... I guess the whole thing is, if you're gonna play sports, you play the sport and you keep your damn mouth shut. Somewhere along the line, someone will pick you up and do something with you. Just behave like 'Dicky the Dunce' and play your sport the best as you can."

Other advice he offers to aspiring professional athletes is to "get someone to handle your affairs for you." He thinks that athletes should make use of agents to deal with contracts and investments. He also advises athletes to plan the timing of their retirement to meet either financial or personal goals. These plans should be realistic and athletes need to be strategic in their decision making, alert to their competition. "You have to take a good look around you. Look over your shoulder 'cause you may be the best now but, a few years down the road, there's a kid that's gonna beat your ass."

In examining Lindsay's current frustrations with his career as a stock broker, he says that he may have selected the wrong career. It might appear that he is disappointed and disheartened because he has not found the same challenge, excitement, and success that he had experienced in his former athletic career. However, rather than a contrast in experience, the closing years of his racquetball career were similarly unfulfilling. Lindsay has drawn a parallel between these two periods in his life. As his competitive career drew to a close, he felt constrained because he had limited
prospects for the future. Once he had selected the stock market, he felt relieved and hopeful. "Before...the decision to take my securities course, I was like in a big huge funnel going like this (hands moving down and closer together). It was getting real tight down there...and I felt sort of squeezed. After that, I went through and flushed out (into) a big huge ocean again. I can go do what I want. So, now I'm coming down to that funnel again." It seems likely that Lindsay will feel relieved when he can leave the stock market to pursue other opportunities.

Unlike the other former athletes in this study who have reported contentment with the physical accomplishments of their careers, Lindsay feels frustrated because he wants to challenge his body further. This contrast in career termination experience parallels the contrast in the motivation these people had for careers as professional athletes. Although all the athletes in this study have shared the desire and commitment to excel in their sports, to strive toward their personal potentials, the other athletes also felt a very strong attraction to their sports, an external pull or passion for the activity motivating them to continued participation. It seems that in Lindsay's case, rather than being drawn to the sport, he was motivated more by an internal drive or passion to win and to dominate. The other athletes had a love for their sport. Lindsay saw his sport as merely a vehicle for self-expression.
CHAPTER XIII

CASE 10 - ALAN WILSON - FOOTBALL PLAYER

Just prior to the start of his sixteenth season in the Canadian Football League, British Columbia 'Lions' centre, Al Wilson, had several conversations with his coach regarding the continuation of his career. He had a contract to play the 1987 season, but he was coaxed into recognizing that the time was right for him to leave the game. The back-up player in his position was ready to assume the starting role and Al simply "accepted that I physically couldn't do what they expected of me and I'm glad...that I got out before I embarrassed myself." He left his career having accomplished all the goals he had set for himself, becoming a league all-star, winning the prestigious Schenley Award as outstanding player, and winning the league championship Grey Cup. He had been the acknowledged leader of the team and had earned the high regard of his team-mates, the media, and football fans.

Although Al didn't like the idea of leaving the game that he had loved to play, he considers the experience to have been far from traumatic. In fact, he doesn't consider the experience to have been unpleasant because he knew that he had to face up to reality. He acknowledges that the first year and a half after quitting football was a financial struggle because he did not have a ready source of income. However, he accepts that struggle as being a fact of life and he sees his difficulties as being no different from those of other people trying to establish their own businesses. Al
describes his current career as that of an entrepreneur, seeking opportunities in a variety of areas, such as commodities trading and real estate. Apart from generating an income, he strives to have fun in his business dealings. He wants to focus more of his energy on his family, his main source of satisfaction these days, consisting of Robin, his wife of eleven years, and their three children.

I had met Al some ten years ago when he and some of his teammates joined in a pick-up game of basketball at the B.C. Institute of Technology, where I was then employed as the athletic director. I remembered him as being very cheerful and boisterous, and so I looked forward to his participation in this study. Our first interview was held in Al's office, located in a new tower in downtown Vancouver. The interview was both informative and entertaining as he spoke of his career experiences and introduced me to his business associates. Our interview was frequently interrupted by his partners because they stopped by his office for quick discussions on deals they were putting together. Each discussion was filled with good natured teasing and joking and it is apparent that Al and his colleagues enjoy a sense of camaraderie and have a good time while working together.

At first, Al expressed some concern about having his name appear in this document because he wants to achieve a lower profile, out of the public eye, so that he can focus on his private life. He said that over the years, "the public has had a lot of Al Wilson" and he is now determined to make
sure that he has time for his family and his personal life. Nevertheless, he seemed content to reserve that decision until he had read the write-up. With that caveat, he assured me that he could describe his experience in candid detail.

In our second interview, Al was eager to read what I had written. As he worked through the draft, he pointed out a few minor revisions and, with those addressed, he felt comfortable letting his name stand in the report. In addition, he had the following validating comments. "(My) general reaction is good. It expresses how I felt and you've got the same reaction, (the response I had) when I explained to you (my experience)...I felt the same way when I read it so, it's emotionally correct...I think that's the way I live and the way I feel about things." Al was a little concerned about how others might react to some of his language but, he knows that those words, "the guttural response", convey his feelings. He is looking forward to receiving the final copy of this report so that he can share it with his wife.

Al had a reputation as being an emotional player and, in our interview, I gained a sense of the range and depth of those emotions. He speaks with a lot of inflection, adding expression and purpose to his words. His voice is sometimes forceful, loud and quick, frequently punctuated by easy laughter as he finds humour in circumstances and his own experiences. At other times, his voice is soft and slow as he speaks about issues which are of personal concern to him. His public persona is that of the rough and tough, macho
‘jock’ who enthusiastically threw his energy into a very violent game. But, the public would not see him in the locker room, holding the hand of an injured team-mate to comfort him through painful medical treatment. While he is at ease in a physical world, he is also a man of quiet compassion who cares about his family, his team-mates, and his society.

Al was born on April 6, 1950, in the small city of Duncan on Vancouver Island. He is the oldest of a family of five children and his experiences in that family have promoted the development of his strong values in personal effort, independence, leadership, and ethical relationships. The family life was turbulent and his mother had to work very hard to provide for her children. "I came from a labouring family...although my mother turned out to be a Royal Bank manager in the end...There wasn't all those advantages. (For instance), mother did not have time to sit and read (or) make sure that I did my homework as much as she was trying to put food on the table and keep her children alive...I was the oldest of five and I became a father figure that raised those (other) children in lots of ways...Although I don't think I ever lacked any academic skills, mine were more in survival and more physical."

Al considers himself to be the most successful of the children and he attributes that success to the survival techniques he developed in his family. As a result, he sees his life's aspirations and motivations to be a little more
complicated than other people who he considers might be
deepener thinkers. "I think you go through a lot of confusion
in life without guidance because you have to go by role
models." Unable to see his father as a role model, he has
been learning to deal with life through his own experiences.
He has developed a strong sense of individuality and personal
responsibility. "All my feelings are very primitive. I
don't think they're very sophisticated."

His mother's death re-inforced his determination to be
self-sufficient. "(She) passed away when she was fifty-two
years of age and I watched her work all her life, all her
life, to raise those five children. And the struggle she
went through! She was going to take early retirement (at)
fifty-five...She had a nice bank pension...and she passed
away. And I said 'not for me'...I'm not gonna wait for
anybody to give me a pension...Although I'll prepare for
tomorrow, I'm not gonna gear my life for it."

As he grew up, he "had no inclinations...to be a
professional football player." He simply enjoyed "going out
there and playing with the boys." Al had not planned on
attending university and, in fact, had not given any thought
to career options. "(Careers) never crossed my mind. Never.
You're talking about a kid that grew up in a mill town...
There were lots of jobs, summer jobs. The easy money was
there to be picked up. Some people, depending on the family
background, I guess, were more goal-oriented or more career-
oriented, and I wasn't career-oriented." It wasn't until his
senior year at university that he became goal oriented and started to aspire to a career in professional football.

As a child, Al had a natural affinity for sport. He enjoyed success in whatever sport he took up, including baseball, soccer, and particularly, basketball. Duncan is a small community and the high school did not have an established football programme. When Al was sixteen years old, a team was started in the city, but he did not play. The next year, while he was in grade eleven, he was invited to turn out for the team. He played for the next two years and one of his coaches sent him to the professional B.C. 'Lions' development camp for high school players. "I wasn't the best football player on the team...but, he felt that I had the most potential...The scouting report that came out of that camp said 'he had great hustle, lousy technique'. Well, the truth of the matter is, I had never been taught how to play the game." His coaches, Tom Yano and Jim Ryan, had limited football knowledge but, they "conditioned the hell out of us...and gave me the physical capabilities and the heart of how the game was played."

His potential was recognized by others and Montana State University offered him a full-ride scholarship to play football. Although he had not been a poor student in high school, he had not aspired to a university education. "I didn't want to go to school. I went to school because it was a necessity of getting the job done, just like the administration work with this stuff (his business).
Someone's got to do it. Someone's got to deal with the lawyers, the accountants. It's dry, boring. The fun part is raising the money and putting something into operation but, you have to do all the other bullshit and, to me, school was the same way. It allowed me to go do the things I wanted to do, play football, be sports-oriented...(that was) the reason I was in Phys Ed. I was sports oriented.

His lack of interest in his academic work became apparent in his second year at Montana. "(I) almost flunked out in my sophomore year, living the good life of being in college, (being a) football player, and everything else. Joe Tiller, bless his heart, called me into his office, sat me down and he says to this cocky little kid...'I ought to knock you right out of your chair...You want to play football here, you start going to class. You need a tutor, you let us know'...He'd just got out of the pro camp...He was big and powerful and I sat back because I knew he was capable of it and mean enough to do it...So, from then on, my grades came up and I graduated."

He has a lot of regard for Joe Tiller and respects the contribution this coach made to his career. The position he had expected to play at university was defensive end but, "when I went up to varsity, the two starting defensive ends...were Eric Wheeler and Gary Gustafson...two all-conference ends. The two best ends in the conference were on the team I was playing on, so there was no way I was going to dislodge them." He was assigned to the offensive line and played
right guard for his remaining three years at university. He considered Tiller to be an excellent line coach. "He taught me how to play the game. He made me competitive and tough...I was the best right guard, so I got to start...and, every spring, you had to (earn your position and scholarship and) beat whoever they brought out...I did it the entire length of my career before I turned pro."

In these early years of his football life, Al describes himself as being "still small, always behind in my development, always catching up knowledgewise and sizewise but always doing well." He grew a lot from his high school days through his professional career. When he was offered his scholarship by Montana, he weighed one hundred and ninety pounds. In the fall of that year, he had grown to two hundred and one pounds and, at the end of his university career, he weighed two hundred and twenty-eight pounds. This size, at six foot one, proved problematic for his prospects as a professional because the National Football League teams thought that he should play the linebacker position but, although he had good speed, he was not fast enough for that position. To play professionally, he would have to turn to the Canadian Football League. Even in this league, he was comparatively small. When he retired from the game, his weight was up to two hundred and sixty pounds but, his replacement was two inches taller, ten pounds heavier, and was still the smallest member of the offensive line.

Al believes that his comparative small size became an
asset to him because he had to try harder than other players. "I was always behind physically in my development. I was never the biggest man...I was smaller than most people I went against so, I had to work harder...Maybe the biggest thing I got out of pro football was my work ethic, just keep dogging at it. Don't quit. Persevere!"

His professional career began at age twenty-two, in 1972. This was the last year of what was known as 'territorial protection' in the Canadian Football League. The rights to a player were automatically owned by the team in the geographic region in which the player grew up. Thus, Al was owned by the B.C. 'Lions'. "So, I came up here. They offered me the princely sum of ten thousand dollars and two hundred and fifty dollars signing bonus. I told them I needed more, so I think they gave me five hundred dollars...I made the team...but, again, undersized...I didn't start my first year 'til halfway through the season when the starting centre got hurt. He was six foot five, two hundred and sixty pounds...I went in and started playing and the rest is history...By my tenth year of pro, I was where I should have been when I went to college in (terms of) physical maturation but, as far as knowledge of the game, I had some excellent coaches."

As his career developed, Al became a leader of the team. His family background had given him experience in this role. "I was forced to lead...By age and birthright, I had to lead...There were a lot of things as I grew up that I didn't
control and the thing I wanted to do, I wanted to start to control what I could do...In sports, I control that position or I control that area. It was all a control factor. I was good at that. I had control of my destiny...I look back and a lot of it was very self-centred, self-serving, but that was what pushed me on...not to a selfish point, because I know I shared, but first I had to be good at what I did. The only way I could survive, I had to be good...I wanted to lead. I wanted the recognition. I wanted to control."

His position as centre on the offensive line was an ideal position for him to exert personal control and provide leadership to his team-mates. "I didn't want to be the quarterback of the team. That's not where I wanted to be. I didn't have to be the runner or the glory person but, whatever I did, I wanted to control the space around me. I wanted to be the best at that and I wanted to have influence...(Centre is) a control position because you made a lot of the calls...I liked to tell my guards what to do and worked with (them)...I don't think in a bossy way, though they might view it a little differently...because they used to call me the 'grouch' and other things but, I felt that I was right and did the best I could."

Al claims that goal-setting is a relatively knew skill for him. He doesn't think that he was very good at setting goals until he started to set objectives for himself as a professional athlete. "I must admit that I wanted to be the best. I wanted to be an All-star. I wanted to be a Schenley
(and) win the Grey Cup. Those were all goals." He was able to achieve these objectives, particularly winning the 1977 individual Schenley award for the most outstanding performance in his area, and in 1985, his team won the Grey Cup Championship. He is proud of these specific accomplishments and pleased with his long professional career. "It gave me notoriety, fame, and (some) money. You never get rich playing in the C.F.L., unless you're Anthony Davis...I don't know any offensive linemen that made enough money to retire on."

There were a number of factors which contributed to Al's decision to leave the game. These included increasing outside interests, declining motivation to play, declining physical ability, and, particularly, increasing competition for the position. When coach Don Matthews first approached Al about the possibility of retiring, he was not surprised. "He wanted me to make the decision. I don't think they were going to stop me from coming out there but, virtually, they would have liked me to step down....I actually had signed a two-year contract (and)...I was thinking about playing the sixteenth season but then, I knew that I'd have to give one hundred and ten percent to do it anyways. I was so caught up in my business side of it that I couldn't (give my best) and I knew that the opportunity was there with the young player who was better physically. (He) may not have known the position as well as I did but, certainly (he) was a lot superior physically and his time had come. It was a
combination of things. I was fading fast and the rising star was there. So, it was time to make the move. No, it wasn't surprising."

Throughout most of his professional career, Al had been involved in a variety of business activities during the off-season. "I think there were only two, maximum three years, beginning years of pro football, that I didn't work. (In those years) I actually took the six months and I'd go to Hawaii and Mexico...Then, I started looking for jobs and I worked in the off-season...I was always in sales jobs. I was a minority partner anywhere from selling stereos to wire rope, (to) manufacturing (and) underwater salvage. I got involved in the (stock) market because I had some spare money around from a condominium I sold. I would work...I don't know why. Maybe I had this great fear (of being without a second career). Everybody was always (talking about) you have to have something to fall back on. You can only last five years. Then I last ten. Then I last fifteen. It just got ridiculous!"

His business ventures started to infringe on his football career. "(They kept me) out of the gym, out of the preparation. Like anything you do in life, if I learned anything out of football, preparation is ninety-five percent of the job. Once you come out of that tunnel and went out to play the game, knowing your plays, physically ready, playing the game was a joy 'cause you were well prepared. And probably (it's) the same thing with business. If you prepare
well, your chances for success are extremely high. If you
don't, you're doomed to failure. And that's just the way it
is in anything. I wasn't prepared as well."

Having attained his career objectives, his motivation to
play the game was not as strong as it had been in earlier
years. "I know up until the time we won the Grey Cup, I
worked extremely hard...What really kept me going was I
wanted to win the Grey Cup and once I'd won a Grey Cup...
maybe I coasted...I even knew my last year I played, in '86,
after the Grey Cup, I'd worked out in the off-season but
maybe not with the same fire...The fire became smoldering
instead of a raging fire. It probably showed. I've watched
myself on film and I'm going 'Holy Christ!'. Guys that five
years ago couldn't carry my boots were beating on me on a
move and I'm watching it and I've seen that move one hundred
times and I know how to counter it but, I'm not moving fast
enough to counter it. The step had gone. The desire, the
will to win (was there)...but, if you forget to prepare, the
will will not carry you through the game. I was getting to
that point, so it was time for me to step down."

It had been a long career and Al knew that there was
someone ready to take his place. "As age creeps up and the
size gets bigger, you can't hang on to your position...I
guess I beat off the challenge of several young men over the
years and finally, one came along, Ian Sinclair, who's
probably the best physical specimen I've ever seen play
centre. At the time, I was six foot one, two hundred and
sixty (pounds), and I was the smallest offensive lineman we had. When he replaced me, he was six foot three, two hundred and seventy (pounds), and he was still the smallest offensive lineman on the team. But, his time had come. He'd backed me up for a year and a half. I was slowing down and he was ready...So, through some humming and hawing over a four or five week period of discussions (with Matthews), I said, 'o.k. time to go'."

Al didn't enjoy making the decision to leave the game. "It's tough to go, especially after you've played a long time and I can truly say, I loved the game. It was more than just a career and a childhood fantasy because I had never dreamed of playing pro football...(I) didn't like it (retiring). Didn't like it at all. In fact, I hated it but, the truth, the reality was there. I had to accept that and the expression, 'you're a big boy', (hit home). The time had come and you have to accept that."

To Al, the transition out of the game was simply accepting the reality of the situation. "I think I accepted that I physically couldn't do what they expected of me and I'm glad, when I look back, that I got out before I embarassed myself and didn't play that extra year. I'd accomplished everything that I wanted to. There was no reason for me to be out there anymore, especially if you couldn't live up to your own expectations." As it turned out, Al was fortunate in the timing of his retirement because the Canadian Football League began to experience a lot of
tumour and uncertainty. "The league went through a hell of a change after that anyway. I took one of the last big cheques."

The experience of leaving his career was far from traumatic. "I wouldn't even say it was unpleasant. It was facing up to reality. I can remember the press conference they'd called...Everybody knew what was gonna happen... Everybody was waiting for the tears and I said, 'there's nothing to cry about. I had a great career. I enjoyed it. I loved it and now it's time to go and that's all there is to it'. And I remember the looks on a lot of those reporters' faces 'cause they knew that I was a very emotional person. They thought it would affect me."

This cool, matter-of-fact acceptance of reality seems to suggest that the experience became quite impersonal for Al. This is far from the truth. "I remember driving out for the conference. I went out by myself...my wife asked if I wanted her to go and I said no, I'd go by myself. And I know I had moist eyes at the time but, those were for memories. (They) had nothing to do with retiring. The memories are so good. It was a forty-five minute drive and I think I must have smiled and laughed and had a tear in my eye over a dozen different incidences."

Al's emotions became more apparent to the public later on. "When they retired my jersey, I couldn't hold it. My children saw me cry for the first time and they couldn't understand why their daddy was crying and I was telling them
that daddy was happy. It was a hard thing to explain. I couldn't hold the emotions, a crack in the speech. It was an excellent time. I have no regrets!"

One of the factors which helped Al to accept his retirement was the respect and regard which he enjoyed from his team, the media, and the public. "That was probably fortunate too. If I'd played the sixteenth year at sixty percent capacity, I would have tainted that a little bit and I don't think I did. I think everybody thought it was time for me to go, which is fair enough but, the fact that I went the way I did was the way they expected me to go too." He went with dignity, which was characteristic of the way he had dealt with his team and the media. This was in contrast to some of the other ball players who would fight in the media. "That's not good. I mean, you do your fighting behind closed doors. You never won a battle in the media. Never. I've screamed at general managers and fought for contracts and threatened 'trade me' and everything else but, never in my career was that in print...I made a couple of booboos that ended up in print but, I went in to the office and owned up to them. I remember a classic one with Vic Rapp (a former coach)...he was almost dumbfounded that I would admit it. I find that the things that you don't own up to...end up causing more problems."

When asked about his memories of his career, Al noted that he was asked the same thing at the press conference. "They talked about was the Grey Cup the pinnacle? I said it
was a goal that was attained. It wasn't the pinnacle. I completed the package. I was an All-star. I was a Schenley. I was a Grey Cup Champion. I wanted all those things and I've got them all. The package was complete, but there were a lot of individual plays, moments shared with players, (such as) making a block that no one knows about, but we watch the film later on and smile 'cause we did it without talking to one another...all we did was react. That's satisfying."

Among his memories are the enduring relationships which outlast the personal changes brought about by trades and retirement. "(There is) a lot of transition (but, there is) no effect on the quality of relations. (For example, I) still am a good friend of Joe Paopao...He got traded to Saskatchewan and ended up his career in Ottawa. We'll be lifelong friends...Joe's actually living at my house now and will for the next two months until his family comes up 'cause he just got rehired by the Lions to be a quarterback coach... (And) John Blain, I don't see him socially but, he's still a friend. We lived together for ten years on the road and now we're doing this (commercial for a diet product) together. I'm gonna borrow his truck this weekend...so I can haul away all the crap in my yard. We always will be friends. The ties are always there (with former team-mates)...Our business paths don't cross...Our lifestyles are different, that doesn't mean you're not friends anymore. Everybody always thinks that as a team, you hang out with your buddies. Well, we've all got to work for a living too."
The relationships which develop through association with a team can be very intimate and discussions amongst teammates are often of a personal nature. Discussions and speculations about such issues as retirement were frequent amongst groups of players. "At times (we talked) without that person there. 'Do you think he should retire?' 'Has he got one more year?' 'He has to pick up this.' 'Man, he had a good game this week, didn't think the old goat had it in him.'...(We discussed) all issues from your relationship with your wife, to your children, to drinking, the whole (thing) ...The stories that we would share. The poker games. The women. The bars. The families...Being part of a professional team for a long time, you shower together, you drink together, you party together...not the entire team, maybe in groups."

The nature of a team sport is such that people work together, strive together, and share experiences that lead to a deep understanding of each other. "Sharing certain things with guys. Highs and lows. Sometimes you get to know someone when they're really low a lot better than you ever do when they're really high...From five to ten years, we literally lived in each other's suitcases...In professional sport, the emotional swings (are great)...It strips away a lot. I've seen big, powerful men, that you call them a cry baby (and) they'd rip you from one limb to another, with tears running in their eyes before they're getting introduced. I mean, the emotion is so high...(An example of)
the things that affect you, when the city hates the dying team. 'You're a bunch of God damn losers!' You know, everybody talks about the Grey Cup, that was (only) one year...How'd you like to have everybody in the city...think that you're a door mat? The only people that are your friends are maybe your relatives and even your relatives will say 'what the hell's wrong with the football team you're on?'...And then, when you win, everybody loves you and you bathe in the glory...(You) get used to a fickle public...A lot of people will boo you. A lot of people will cheer you. A lot of people will hang on...And you stand by each other through thick and thin and that's what you do...Yeah, you get tight."

There are a lot of special moments shared by team-mates. "You learn a lot about a guy. You see him play injured, see what they're made of. I'm not talking about injured, I'm talking about hurt. Injury, you should come off the field. Hurt, guys with breaks and tears, they gut it up. I tell you, you watch a team-mate who's hurt, spit and gut it up, it gives you a sense of pride too because you know he's giving everything he's got and that, that's special. You feel his pain...I can remember holding a guy's hand, a quarterback, and his lip was split wide open and he was shaking as they were suturing it up at half-time, with no anaesthetic. I held his hand and I winked at him...He didn't need his hand held...and he played in the second half. God damn lip (torn). Those are macho things but they're also very
emotional things. I've seen people with their knees torn out and you know that might be the end of their career. (You) go visit them in hospital. You're put in stressful situations and you're forced to share them with people who are not your blood relatives. They are your team-mates and that's a very special person."

Although he has numerous fond memories of his career, there is one personal memory which stands out. "I could go into maybe thirty, forty specific incidents, but the overriding experience was coming out of the tunnel. Every time I came out of the tunnel, I had a rush. It didn't matter if it was at home or away, but I always looked forward to coming out of the tunnel...I loved the introduction because I knew that I was ready...Used to give me a hell of a rush to go out there and perform. It may be what some actors call the 'applause' or the 'laughter'."

Now that he no longer has the opportunity to perform before the public, Al doesn't miss that thrill because he is content with the memories of his accomplishments. "Don't need (it)! It's funny, you go through that with my football career (and now) I don't need to perform. I've had enough recognition. Still get recognition. Don't desire it. Enjoy it. The glow will always be there. No matter what happens to me now to the day that I meet my maker, what I did will be always remembered." To reinforce this recognition of the past, Al related the essence of a motivational speech he gave to some high school students. "(I told them what I had seen)
...A lot of guys with potential (who) would say, 'I could have been this, I could have been that'... (and) the only profound thing that I'm ever going to say to you (is)... 'be known for what you've done and not what you could have done!' And I hope that sunk into a few of them. Like I say, what I did in football can never be changed, never be altered. Whether I'm a success in business or not is irrelevant to what happened before so, you'll always bask in that glow, though it may never make you a dollar or it may never comfort you, it's always part of your past. It's very nice and warm. (The satisfaction,) it's always there. It's done. The job is done."

Although the emphasis of Al's values has shifted from his football career to his family, there is a consistency in his matter-of-fact perspective on life. "I guess my physical performance has nothing to do with my business performance... I don't want to keep score with dollar bills. I'm at a completely different stage of my life. I want a certain lifestyle. I don't need to tell anybody about it and I don't need for anybody to keep score on what I do anymore. I don't need to tell anybody whether I've got ten dollars or a hundred dollars. It's not important to me now. (Money) was never a measure. I'd tell football players you can fight and argue for your contract but, when the gun goes or the whistle blows, (your opponent)... doesn't care if you're a hundred thousand dollar centre and he's a fifty thousand dollar rookie. He's still gonna try to take your head. So, the
money had nothing to do with what you are doing. So, now in business...the idea is profit in the end, but big deal. We've all got to make a profit. We've all got to eat and live. (Making a profit)...there's no way it has the satisfaction of what I have done before. I don't think I'll ever replace how I felt about football and I'm not looking to. Now, my satisfaction is in my family."

Through his professional career and his observations of others, particularly his mother's experience, Al has learned some valuable lessons about his lifestyle. His values are now focused less on personal achievement and more on the quality of his life. "I was playing football and I was working. That's all I was doing. I've done that. I plan to work hard. I don't mind working weekends, nights, whatever, but I am gonna take some time to...'smell the roses'...Play and work and enjoy life...An experience I had about my third year in pro football, I was dating a girl...she went off to Europe in the fall. I was still playing football. I was going to meet her in Switzerland for Christmas and we were going to travel in Europe. Well, there's not too many things I regret in my life but, this is one thing I do regret. I had twenty-five hundred dollars put away for that trip...and I put it in an RRSP and I didn't go. And I've regretted that decision to this day...I subsequently lost it in Dome Petroleum...(I learned), I went to Europe last year with my wife, (to) Paris, Belgium, Amsterdam. Had the time of my life and I'm just gonna take more time to travel...(and)
enjoy my life the best I can."

Independence is a characteristic of the quality of life Al strives for. He considers that his sense of independence, coupled with the length of his professional career, was detrimental to his opportunities to develop a second career with another organization. "I think a lot of football players, if they play five years and get out of the game, they're fortunate because (they can fit into a company)... When I came out, I was thirty-seven years old. I was unemployable. I'd been too independent...I wouldn't be a good employee...I'm not saying I couldn't do the job...It would have been detrimental to...my own happiness...I'm just not an employee...I can't imagine working for (say) Crown Zellerbach, hoping I'm gonna become vice-president...I'm not degrading...anybody's ambitions, but I wouldn't be good there...Everybody talks about security. As far as I'm concerned, security is yourself. The government pension plan isn't there, let's face it. They might blow us up. Everything's polluted and tainted, so I don't live for tomorrow...I'd rather struggle...So, I had to start at the bottom again, but be independent again. It didn't matter if I earned twenty grand or two hundred grand, I had to have my independence."

Retaining his independence meant that Al had to be selective about the activities with which he got involved, and in that process, he turned down opportunities which were presented to him. "I didn't want a sales career. I didn't want a manager's job. I wasn't looking for a pension and a
company car...I had interviews with CKNW (a local radio station), they were thinking about me being a sportscaster and stuff like that and, Christ Almighty, the farthest thing from my mind was to get behind a mike. They were trying to sell me on the...opportunities to do other things and I said, 'yeah, you'll want me from 9:00 to 3:00' and I could just see the trap was coming, could feel the walls that they were building. I thanked them very much, but in my own mind, I wasn't going there."

In an attempt to sort out his feelings, to try to find some balance between money, emotions, career, and personal satisfactions, Al sought some professional help. "I don't know if you were to put a pie plate in front of me, how to describe...what is the most important thing...I've gone to career counselling. Quite frankly, I don't want to say it's a bunch of garbage but, I can't see someone else telling someone what they should be doing. 'According to my chart, you'd make a great salesman for Coca Cola.' Thanks a lot, I don't even drink the stuff and I don't want to start. I might be happier in a janitorial service or something, a little independent business."

Al describes his new career as being an entrepreneur, looking for opportunities. "I'm not interested in building a sky scraper. I might buy a couple of condominiums here or there but nothing I'm tied into. The only thing I'm tied into is my home and my family. Everything else is disposable...At first, I thought it would be great to have one million
dollars but, one million dollars will get you so far, then five, ten. I don't have anything set. All I know is what I want to be able to do in my life. I want to own my own home, provide a good education for my children, maybe give them a kick-start. I want to travel the world. My business dealings have to fit into that...What the next five, ten years hold, I don't know. Everytime I do something, I like to think I'm building on something, but who knows where it's going to go...I want to be able to float enough (be flexible) that if an opportunity comes...then I can move with it, take advantage of the opportunities that are put in front of you."

Unfortunately, Al did not have a strong financial base to launch his entrepreneurial endeavour. "In fact, it was the opposite. I'd sunk a lot of money into our home. Actually, (I) had lost a fair amount of money in the market at that time. I had a little bit of money, but no, I did not have a big pool of capital. As I came out, assetwise, everything had gone down and my cash flow was squeezed. Financially, it was a very inopportune time...It made it even tougher not to take the temptation to go looking for a job...I was really put to the test. I did not have an income. I had no money coming in and capital reserves were being dwindled. I actually sold off some investments. I sold our land in Arizona to take the cash to live...Quite frankly, my philosophy and how I felt was put to the ultimate test for about a year and a half. It's only been probably the last three or four months that I've come to a point that I can
start free-wheeling and cutting a deal here. I actually live by my credo...Ask my wife, she knows...(that the transition period) wasn't easy financially. It was a struggle. (Plus), I made some bad decisions here and there, but mentally, I knew where I wanted to go."

Al had anticipated that starting a business endeavour would be a financial struggle for a period of time. However, between liquidating some assets, his own work, and his wife's employment, his family has been able to live quite well. "My children are happy. They eat well. They dress well. They have piano (and) horseback riding. They've been to Hawaii... They're not deprived in any manner. Life goes on...(Getting established) took some effort. I think it will be very profitable now that I'm in an atmosphere that I want to be in. And I enjoy it."

He can now look forward to success in his business but, he recognizes that the future is uncertain. "It's risky sometimes. Not everything goes smooth. I mean that container (a deal which he had just been discussing with his partners), someone might lose the damn thing or it might break or (the deal might) only last for a couple of shipments...You do all these nice little numbers...but, who knows, maybe (the product) will be taken off the shelf or there's an embargo, or people don't like it. Those things happen too but, for now, we think we can make a dollar. That's the entrepreneurial spirit. Try and grab a little and roll with it...Being a competitive person, we'll go out there and do
the best we can and hope we don't fall down too many times. But, the thing is, if you fall down, you get up again. I've been knocked down a lot of times in a football game, but I've never stayed down. And, we'll develop our own little philosophy and I will get by."

While football had provided Al a lot of opportunities, another detrimental feature of his career was that he had not been able to gain experience in establishing normal business relationships. "Football...also put up a lot of fences and walls 'cause you became the 'guest'. You are the ultimate guest. Everybody wants you to be at an autograph session. I mean, that's super, but step out in the business world and find out...that you have to earn your own spurs out there. And I'd rather fight on their level than be anybody's guest."

One of the difficulties he experienced in trying to establish his second career was in developing genuine business relationships and understanding the rules by which business is conducted. "I think I understood my capabilities and I understood my limitations...(The) difficulties were in being in the right atmosphere, not knowing how certain people got to certain levels, not being exposed to them, maybe not groomed to their etiquette, their language. (I'd) feel maybe uncomfortable, incompetent because you don't know enough about what they are doing. Someone says something to you and you take it verbatim, as opposed to (working with it, learning) how far you can push a certain deal...I was always in awe of that. It's the same thing on a football field."
You're not allowed to hold. Well, I knew how to hold, when to hold, how long you could get away with it. And I was good at my job but, I cheated. People do it in business. They don't call it cheating, they call it business acumen or he's shrewd. He's shrewd (and) he's knifed the other guy. Those games you had to learn to play but that's all part of the business world."

Another football analogy describes how Al is learning to select people with whom he can develop trust in a working relationship. "The trust factor that you build on a football team sure as hell doesn't work in a business situation until you go through a lot of bad experiences. (It's hard) to find a group or team that you...don't have to worry about...if you're out of the room...One of my biggest failures...is my judgement of the people I was dealing with. If I said I was going to do something, God, I was going to do it the best that I could. If I didn't get there, there would be a damn good reason. Other people...weren't even thinking about getting there...(Sometimes, it seems like you can't) trust anyone that doesn't wear a uniform."

Al says that he has always sought models to guide himself. These models can often be examples of what he wants to avoid. "I look for examples...I'm very black or white. Do I like this guy or do I like that guy? My God, I don't like this guy so, I'll mold my activities toward (that guy) ...If you read Donald Trump, 'The Art of the Deal', he brags about screwing somebody out of eighty million dollars ...'I
beat him up so badly'. What a nice thing to brag about and put it in print. But, that's what they do...You have to learn the rules of the game...With my partners, we always talk about things openly. When we came into this business, we all decided that we'd be part of everybody else's deal but (we know) that in certain situations, there might not be enough room for everyone and no one feels bad...I'm not interested in owning anybody. I'm not interested in anyone owning me."

Another model Al has used is local business tycoon Jimmy Pattison. "I'm not interested, even if I had the capability, even if I had the opportunities, I do not want to be Jimmy Pattison. Now, Jimmy Pattison is a workaholic. I envy him, no, I admire the man, what he did with Expo and everything else. The level that he deals on is fantastic. He does a wonderful job with his executives...but, they were very harsh on the salesman. The last salesman ends up fired every month. He created a very competitive situation and he has a rewarding situation. I don't want that. I don't care if I've got a hundred grand or five million. That's not the goal. The goal is to be happy. I guess the ultimate end is just to be happy with what you're doing and the people you're dealing with. I guess that's what I'm looking for. I think I've found areas I can deal in and enjoy."

In some respects, Al has developed a playful attitude toward his life and his business. "Yeah, serious play. Some one might misinterpret play. When I play, I play for keeps.
This is not a little softball game where we meet on a Saturday afternoon and don't care about the score. I mean, we still want to win. We're here to win (but), to have fun doing it."

In coming to this business philosophy, Al has drawn on the experiences of other models. "I talk to some of the most successful businessmen around. I know a number of them and they say (that, after the banks were paid, business) had to be fun...You'll put up with a lot of grief and bullshit while you're trying to get to a certain stage but...once the bills are paid, once you've reached a comfort level...a lot of decisions are made on fun. I can make a dollar but, is it fun? If it's not fun, I don't have to tolerate it. Fuck it! Don't do it if it's not fun...I don't care if I make money at it, but if it's an aggravation, I don't need it."

Al is prepared to make calculated risks in his business but he insists on working with honourable people, people who share his ethics or sense of sportsmanship. "(Successful businessmen) want to deal with people they can trust. They may lose but, they went in to win. They went in to have fun, to play. We all get burned up at certain times and, hopefully, we don't become toast. I just hope to make a living and enjoy it. If all the bills are paid and I'm having fun, what more do you want?"

There are certain qualities in life that Al is determined to maintain for his family, and although he is willing to work very hard, he is equally determined not to be
enslaved by work. "I'm not a nine to fiver. I'll work from six o'clock to ten o'clock, but if I want to take the day off, I'll take the damn day off. That's the freedom that I want...I also want to be able to go home when I want...go do what I want. Making money to me is just the freedom of that choice...That's like all the entrepreneurs out there, the small businessmen. They work on Saturdays and they do their books at night...then, when they take three weeks and go to Europe, they earned it. They took the risk and they put in the hours...most small businesses take time to develop...You work your ass off to get there."

Al considers his experience with developing a second career to be a little different from the experiences of some of his team-mates because he didn't have a specific occupation in mind when he retired. "Some guys were prepared and knew what they wanted to do. (For instance) John Pankratz and John Blain wanted to be teachers. Glenn Leohard came out and he's a fireman. He also worked at Porteau with (delinquent) kids...Other people have gone into sales...Everybody looks for something that (fits them). My experience was more of a roller coaster, I guess. I was going for a ride. I was going for the thrill...For some guys, life has to be really smooth...I'm more of a risk taker. Don Matthews (used to have a saying about) living on the edge...that's the way he played football, take gambles, calculated gambles, and they'd win big and sometimes we'd get our butt kicked, but he was a very successful coach. And I
guess I do that in a lot of my business dealings...But, I like stability...I'm not out there throwing the dice every day. Even when opportunities walk in here, I always run through it again and again."

As stated earlier, Al has no interest in renewing physical competition because he has achieved his athletic objectives. He has been inactive since his retirement and is now beginning to realize that he must get some vigorous physical exercise simply to maintain his health. "I haven't done a lot in the last couple of years. I used to play a lot of racquetball, some pick-up basketball, and run and lift (weights). My wife gave me an exercise bike...I want to get back into my racquetball, but when I did that, I always had the team. We'd do things together and go for a beer after. I don't have that. Now, I'm in my business circle but, I have to get back into that exercise. Jogging is a little boring quite frankly. Riding the bike's not bad, put a t.v. in front of me and you can burn off maybe thirty, forty minutes on a bike. But, I don't do a lot right now. I'm a classic heart attack (potential) unless I lose weight and get fit...I'm an endomorph, a propensity to put on some weight. A high stress level job...and I fit the bill to a 'T', so before I'm forty, I want to get down to weight and eliminate some of the stress...(I just) haven't made the time. And I can make the time. I mean, if I can make an hour and a half, two hours for you, I can make the time to go work out. And I'll have to start doing that. I have to start looking after
myself a little more. That's all part of your well-being."

Establishing a new career, a new business, and a new lifestyle takes time and effort. Al has acknowledged the difficulties involved as well as his responsibility to overcome them. His attitude is philosophical and he takes the difficulties and responsibilities in stride. "Everything isn't bliss, but everything is positive. And that's the way I feel about myself. I haven't thought anything differently. I guess, like any human being, I have my own apprehensions and fears. You wake up and you wonder how did I get here? What am I going to do to solve this? We'll see. I think I'll make it. You get up and you fight every day. That's part of life. You didn't like practicing, but you sure liked playing those games so, it's part of life."

A part of his life that he would like to change is to adopt a lower public profile. "I think I've shared enough of myself with other people...Quite frankly, the public's had a lot of Al Wilson. They've had their piece...You can make a life's career of looking after charities, but I always try and do a little of that too...People ask 'do you still do things with the Lions, with charities?' I say, 'not very much', but the truth of the matter is that my God damn phone rings every time and I do what I can, but I'm very selective 'cause I don't have as much time (as I used to as a player). I go home. I want to spend time with my children too."

As much as he would like to enjoy some more privacy, Al gets drawn into public activities because he is concerned
about what he sees around him. For example, he is on the executive of the 'Lions' Alumni Association which, apart from its activities to promote the team within the community, is planning to become involved in a prevention programme for drug and alcohol abuse. "I have young children and it scares the hell out of me. It (also) concerns me 'cause our water's polluted. It concerns me 'cause we can't eat God damn apples ...(It concerns me 'cause) we're gonna blow ourselves up because we can't agree not to kill each other 'cause we don't trust each other. And...I don't know if it comes with middle age and having children...these things concern me more and more. There's so much to be done out there. How the hell do you solve it?"

When asked to consider what he would have liked to have done differently in either his playing career or his separation from it, Al was emphatic that he wouldn't do anything differently. "I don't know if I could have savoured it any more. I guess, I could have worked harder in the very beginning and at the very end. I could have worked maybe a little harder, but what the hell. I think of those fifteen years, a minimum of eleven or twelve, I worked my ass off to be there. I don't think I could have done it any differently...(I) loved what I was doing. One of the reasons I was good at what I was doing was 'cause I loved it. I threw myself into it...If I could have played football 'til I was fifty, I wouldn't have thought about another career. I wouldn't have thought about another job. (But) because it's not the job
that you can go the distance in, there's always that nagging thought that you've got to be able to do something else."

Throughout his career, he had tried other jobs in the off-season, hoping to find something suitable as a second career. "I didn't know what I wanted to be...I'm happy where I'm at now. I wish I could have found my mode a little quicker but, then again, to be good at anything, you've got to put the time and effort into it too, and while you're playing, you can't put time and effort into it." A professional athlete must spend a lot of time in the off-season getting himself in physical condition for the next season. "How can you serve another master while you're playing and excel?...No, I wouldn't do it any differently. I had to go and search out through the jobs that I did. I eliminated some...I've been able to recognize situations I don't want to be in so, that narrows the field down eventually to where you will be happy."

Al has some clear advice for other professional athletes. First of all, learn from the experiences and the wisdom of others who have had professional careers. A sports career is "an accelerated lifestyle and career...(and may have involved) a lifetime of experiences, personally and jobwise and everything else (because) so much stress and tension and acclaim came in such a short period of time...We are grandfathers of our sport. We understand what we went through and, through that experience, yes, we do come out with pearls of wisdom...Experience gives you wisdom, and when
it comes to the end, you're probably smarter because you've had time to reflect...I swear you know a hell of a lot more two years after it's finished than you did while you were playing."

Athletes are advised to "assess yourself on how good you are. Be as good as you can be, but be realistic. How good am I? Am I a starter? Am I a back-up? Am I a fringe player?...Am I the best in the league? Am I in the top two in the league?...Am I undersize or oversize?...How long can I play?...Can I play five years?...Always be looking for something (else) to do. If you don't have an idea what it is, go try something...Don't discount it. If nothing else, at least you've eliminated that job. You'll find what you want. And that's coming from a person who didn't know what he wanted to do...I just went out and tried a few things...Always keep educating yourself...I took my mutual funds ticket. I took my stockbroker's course...Eventually, you'll find out (what to do)."

In addition, Al encourages people to feel positive about themselves and to seek careers which provide them more than simple monetary reward. "Don't do a job (just) for the money...If you can avoid that...do it because you're happy with what you're doing...Seek the personal satisfaction and the money will flow...Don't make money the criteria of why you're doing something."

In summary, Al reflected on the transitional experiences of other athletes he has known and concluded that leaving a
career in professional sport is not, in itself, a traumatic experience. While some individuals might experience a lot of difficulties adjusting to life after sport, it is likely that those people had difficulties before their careers ended. "People who were troubled in football were troubled outside. It's no surprise. Whoops! His career ended and life's a bitch. Well, it was a bitch when he was playing."

For the most part, Al considers that in leaving sport, just like leaving any other career, "you go on. You've got to adapt and adjust...I'm sure people who go through bankruptcies or start new careers go through the same transitional period as a sportsperson does." The prime difference he sees in the experience is that leaving sport may be more dramatic than leaving other careers because the sports world contains levels of energy, emotion, and public attention which are not typically found in the business world. Nevertheless, the transition to a non-sport career is far from a traumatic experience.
CHAPTER XIV

THE GENERAL STORY OF WITHDRAWING FROM PROFESSIONAL SPORT

In the ten preceding chapters, individually validated experiences have been presented. These experiences have been drawn from the team sports of hockey and football and the individual sports of horse racing and racquetball. The informants used stories to tell their experiences, conforming with the narrative principle proposed by Sarbin (1986) that "human beings think, perceive, imagine, and make moral choices according to narrative structures" (p. 8). The narrative helps people make sense of their experiences because it is:

- a way of organizing episodes, actions, and accounts of actions; it is an achievement that brings together mundane facts and fantastic creations; time and place are incorporated. The narrative allows for the inclusion of actors' reasons for their acts, as well as the causes of happening (p. 9).

While each narrative reflects individual and diverse experiences, the aim of this chapter is to synthesize the personal experiences of those ten individuals into a common story for men withdrawing from professional sport, but a story with turning points for varying plots. Although this story may suggest generalizations to other athletes, it is more appropriately confined to the experiences of those who participated in the study.

Stories are life dramas which have a beginning, a middle and an end. According to Cochran (1986):

The basic organizing principle of a story is a gap between two poles... Scholars have used various terms to describe the beginning, such as disequilibrium,
problem, disturbance, or upset. The path toward resolution of difficulty is the middle of the story. And the story ends when the initiating disturbance is calmed...(p. 13).

This story comprises the gap between disruption of the sport career and establishment in another career. Thus, this story begins with an ending, the impending withdrawal from professional competition. The middle involves mobilizing resources in preparation for withdrawal from sport and action to launch a new career. And the story ends with the establishment and acceptance of a new career and new roles in life. The story is outlined in Appendix F.

Prior to the beginning of the story, however, it is important to set the scene by briefly describing some of the background features of careers in professional sport.

**Background**

In order to understand the experience of withdrawing from professional sport, it is helpful to gain an understanding of the social context in which athletes compete, how immersion in sport may impact on the lives of athletes, as well as the influence of big business on professional sport. This background provides the general context for the experience of leaving the career.

**Social context**

More than a quarter of a century ago, Boyle (1963) wrote that:

*Sport permeates any number of levels of contemporary society and it touches upon and deeply influences such disparate elements as status, race relations, business life, automotive design, clothing styles, the concept of hero, language, and ethical values.*
For better or for worse, it gives form and substance to much in American life...(pp. 3-4).

The social significance of sport is certainly not limited to the United States because many other parts of the world share an enthusiasm for sport which sometimes borders on fanaticism. Significant amounts of time, energy, and emotion are devoted to sport and billions and billions of dollars are spent each year as people take part through active participation, watching, or betting. People are attracted to sport, and athletes are acknowledged, appreciated, and honoured through various levels of competition. It is within this social context that some individuals are able to establish careers as professional athletes.

**Immersion in sport**

Although there may be individual differences in experience, at some stage in their lives, professional athletes have become so immersed in sport that it is their dominant, and frequently their exclusive, interest in life. Their immersion in sport involves the inter-relationships of several elements in their lives: motivation to participate in sport, desire to become a professional, lifestyle, meaning of sport, education, social contacts, and career options.

Athletes usually have a history of childhood involvement in a variety of physical activities which eventually become focused on one particular sport. Their motivation to participate in this sport may evolve from several factors but for many athletes the primary motivation is simply love of the activity. Frequently there is something about the
particular sport itself which draws the athlete to it. However, there are other factors which are more internal to the individual, including: the opportunity to use energy and skills; the expression and assertion of self; the enjoyment of challenge and risk; the thrill of competition; the desire to excel and achieve personal potentials; the need for control, mastery, dominance, or recognition; the satisfaction of shared experiences and camaraderie; the opportunities available; and the influence or example of others. These factors may be combined in ways which are peculiar to the individual, as in the case of Frank Barroby, who was "always the smallest kid in the class", grew up on a ranch where horses were available, and was encouraged to take up horse racing by the example of an older neighbour. Sometimes these personal factors are the strongest motivators of participation, as in the case of Lindsay Myers who, rather than being drawn to sport, used sport as a vehicle for self-expression.

The desire to become a professional athlete emerges in different ways. For some athletes, that desire begins in early childhood and is referred to as a dream. For example, Gary Lupul began playing minor hockey at age five, followed the N.H.L. teams on television, and held the single ambition of playing in that league. Darcy Rota focussed on hockey because that sport gave him the best opportunity to fulfil his ambition of "always wanting to be a professional." At ten years of age, he wrote in his grade four dictionary that
he wanted to play for the Chicago 'Blackhawks' when he grew up. Mark Patzer had a childhood dream of being a jockey and tried to bring his fantasy to life by racing his bicycle down the street. For Danny Williams, becoming a professional was a matter of following in his father's footsteps because he had always wanted to be just like his dad. For Lindsay Myers a professional career was an essential step in achieving maximum performance. And for others, such as Dave Hindmarch, Steve Clippingdale, and Al Wilson, a professional career did not become an objective until adulthood, when the opportunity simply arose as the next logical extension of their athletic development. Sometimes individuals might discard plans for another career in favour of professional sport, as in the case of Terry Lombardo who, at age twenty-one, left his training as an aircraft mechanic to begin his apprenticeship at the race track.

Although the literature assumes that athletes aspire to professional careers as a means of advancing their socio-economic status, it is apparent that the professional athletes in this study came from varied backgrounds. Those backgrounds reflect diversity in economic status, ranging from financial constraint through affluence. In some cases, it may be that young athletes become further motivated to pursue the career because of the financial commitments their parents may have made toward their athletic development. For example, Gary Lupul was very aware of his parents' efforts to provide him with early training and competitive experiences.
However, there is considerable variability in this experience because, in other cases, it may be that an affluent family background makes it easier for someone to attempt a professional career as a personal challenge rather than an economic opportunity. Such was the case of Lindsay Myers whose parents provided the initial funding to enable him to move to California and get started in the professional racquetball tour. Lindsay's professional career cannot be considered an advance on his socio-economic background.

Frequently, athletes receive early support and encouragement for their athletic aspirations from their parents. However, support differs among individuals. For example, Steve Clippingdale has reported on the excessive parental pressure and demands for performance placed on the youngsters he coaches. On the other hand, Lindsay Myers and Terry Lombardo have reported that their fathers discouraged their pursuit of professional careers. Although many athletes seem to enjoy family support and encouragement, even family dysfunction and discord can sometimes contribute to an individual's motivation toward development of an athletic career, adding to his desire to gain independence and personal control, perhaps teaching him to persevere and survive difficult circumstances, and driving him to seek success.

Athletes share exposure to a very unique lifestyle in which they can often become enmeshed. Their involvement in sport is very intense. Sometimes right from early childhood,
many hours are spent in daily formal and informal practice and competition. Long hours are particularly the experience of jockeys who, beginning in their early teenage years, often start their working days at five o'clock in the morning and finish near midnight. As Mark Patzer noted, he bought a stereo but did not have time to enjoy it because horse racing consumed so much of his time. Because of the intensity of their involvement in sport, athletes may lack experience with other activities and interests which are familiar to the general public and, as a consequence, some may become intimidated by the non-sport world or perceive limited opportunities for themselves outside of sport. On the other hand, some may take steps to counteract the limitations of immersion in sport, like Darcy Rota, who tried "to expand my knowledge and get involved with other things too...I didn't want to be so one dimensional."

From an early age, the athlete's life may be different from that of non-athletes on such simple measures as: daily schedule; commitment and dedication to other people, task, and skill development; appraisal of performance; challenge and threat to physical and emotional well-being; public attention and regard; and opportunity for reward and travel. He is frequently pampered and catered to by people who honour his success and celebrity status, yet he is alternately chastised and despised for his failure to perform as others would wish. And the potential for discrepancy increases when the athlete becomes a professional. For example, the
athlete's schedule frequently keeps him out of synchronization with others because he has free time while others are working, and vice versa. His schedule can involve a grueling pace which includes a travel itinerary which keeps him away from home. He is often protected from the mundane hassles of daily living because his coaches and managers organize his life to minimize the distractions which might interfere with maximum efficiency and productivity. His income is potentially considerably greater than the general norm, described by Dave Hindmarch as "almost laughable", and is earned in an occupation which he thoroughly enjoys. Furthermore, his celebrity status provides him social opportunities to mix with people with whom he might not normally associate, as well as temptations, liaisons, encounters, and distractions which he might not normally experience.

Although very rewarding, this lifestyle is also very demanding and stressful. It often levies a high toll in physical wear and tear as athletes' bodies are abused by injuries and unhealthy practices such as those often used by jockeys to keep their weight as much as thirty or forty pounds below normal. It is filled with emotion, the struggles, disappointments, hardships, pain, and sacrifices of overcoming adversity and striving to excel, as well as the joy, elation, and satisfaction found in success. Athletes enjoy the excitement and challenges of their careers and some, such as Al Wilson and Terry Lombardo, have said that
they can't imagine ever experiencing again the same thrills that they had found in professional sport.

However, because individuals respond to this experience in different ways, there appears to be diversity in the degree to which athletes become enmeshed in the lifestyle. For example, some may mature through the experience, accepting personal responsibility for their own behaviour and performance. Conversely, others may remain immature because, as Dave Hindmarch has said, "the game makes it easy for you to stay a kid." Some may become engrossed in the fast pace, joining an excessive round of parties, drugs, and alcohol, or they may participate in these activities to seek escape from the stress of the lifestyle. Some athletes may become intimidated or inhibited by the attention and opportunities they receive while others may have a similar response, feeling unprepared and inexperienced when they are confronted with a "normal" lifestyle. Some may be so consumed by the lifestyle that they have difficulty understanding and relating to other walks of life. And others, as Gary Lupul has claimed, remain unchanged by the professional experience because "there's things (about) the limelight you kind of shy away from."

It is apparent that the meaning of sport will vary between individuals, although many see it as the most important feature of their lives. In fact, some seem almost prepared to sacrifice their lives or, at least, their health for the opportunity to participate. Numerous athletes will
strive to compete while seriously injured. For example, Darcy Rota was prepared to wear a neck brace if it would help him continue to play hockey. Others, such as Al Wilson, are prepared to play while hurt but somehow figure that there is a point where "(you have an) injury, you should come off the field." And, apart from injuries, jockeys typically suffer considerable agony through malnutrition, dehydration, and the various mechanical and chemical tricks they use to keep their bodies below their natural size.

Some athletes have a respect for professional sport which borders on awe, while others may consider it to be simply "a different category rather than a different level" of participation. And some may acknowledge the uniqueness of the career, perceiving it as a "gravy train" and appreciating it while it lasts, but recognizing that it is "fast" and unrealistic.

Although there is considerable diversity in the levels of education achieved by athletes, many of them describe their education as being incomplete, curtailed by involvement in sport. This is particularly so for jockeys because the concern for light weight encourages them to commence a professional career at a young age, before the athlete has reached physical maturity. Jockeys can begin professional racing at age sixteen but their initiation into the career often begins at an earlier age as they work in the stables, becoming comfortable with horses and learning to ride. Thus, Frank Barroby, for example, left school with a partial grade
nine education and began his work in thoroughbred racing. In other sports, particularly the body contact sports of football and hockey, physical maturity is a necessity. Hockey players are frequently drafted in their late teenage years. Some do not finish high school and others may have some post-secondary education but, in either case, the quality of their education may be impaired by the rigors of their practice and playing schedules, as well as their focussed interest on their sport. For example, Gary Lupul left home at age sixteen to further his hockey development, taking three years to struggle through his last two grades of high school. Darcy Rota also left home before completing his high school graduation but his parents demanded that he continue his education, resulting in the completion of two years of university before he was drafted to become a professional. Nevertheless, the attention he received from his classmates frequently imposed on his privacy and became very distracting, interfering with his studies. Similar experiences are likely in other sports such as football, in which athletes may be exposed to at least some post-secondary education because universities are frequently considered as the training grounds for professional teams. Thus, Al Wilson for example, completed a university degree in physical education before beginning his employment in professional football.

Diversity is again apparent in terms of continuing education because several athletes choose to pursue further
studies during their professional careers. They take advantage of opportunities for part-time study in both formal and informal settings so that they may expand their knowledge, skills, and interests. In comparison to horse racing, there is greater opportunity to participate in part-time study in sports such as football and hockey because the competitive schedule leaves more free time and there is an off-season of several months which can be utilized. In horse racing, the daily schedule is very long and the combination of spring training and extended racing seasons at other tracks results in little off-season time. However, among those who have the time to continue their education, some do not avail themselves of that opportunity.

While athletes often have the opportunity to make a wide variety of social contacts, the athlete's lifestyle tends to inhibit close relationships with non-athletes. Some athletes experience an inauthentic sense of themselves in public, particularly when they appear in the role of what Al Wilson has described as the "guest". Athletes are often aware that public regard is highly superficial, applauding the position rather than the individual, and is very transient. They are very familiar with being considered heroes when they are successful and "bums" when they are not. The public memory is very short and the accolades and applause of yesterday can soon give way to scorn and indifference. Thus, the athlete can feel a little alienated and out of touch with the non-sport world. He is likely to lack sincere contacts and
models outside of sport and he may feel particularly awkward, incompetent, and intimidated by people in the business community because he may lack knowledge of the rules and etiquette of that environment. The potential for alienation from non-athletes is particularly great for those athletes who experience a lot of mobility because any social networks they have been able to establish are disrupted.

Of course, individual differences are apparent but many athletes experience a very guarded, secretive, and non-genuine presentation of themselves, even when in the company of their colleagues or loved ones. This is contrary to their usual appearance as friendly, social characters who, with varying degrees of gregariousness, seem to get along well with others. Darcy Rota has described this casual acceptance of others as a laissez-faire attitude of "guys are guys." However, this camaraderie may well be superficial, existing through the expedience of working together. At times, there can be considerable mistrust and even outright hostility between colleagues, particularly those in individual sports who compete directly against each other. However, to some extent the same is true even for team-mates because they may compete as candidates for positions, awards, or public attention.

Beneath their outgoing style, many athletes feel uncomfortable and insecure, refusing to share personal information within even their most intimate relationships. This secrecy can be derived from the sometimes well-founded
suspicion that others might use this information to their detriment, in such terms as media exposure, management decisions, or direct competition. For example, the details of Danny Williams' struggle with weight reduction were kept from his mother and girl-friend because "We were taught not to tell anyone. Keep it to yourself...You don't tell anybody because if they tell someone else, it will hurt your career." Furthermore, athletes might deny their feelings, worries, and concerns for fear that they might upset or disturb other people, whether colleagues or loved ones. Thus, many athletes are likely to feel particularly lonely in times of personal crisis.

Nevertheless, the most likely source of close friendships for an athlete is among his most recent colleagues, people who have common interests and concerns. Trust and rapport often grow between people who share similar struggles and triumphs. The jockeys who sweat together in the "hot box" often understand and support each other in their exertions. The team-mates who work and strive together share highly emotional experiences which can forge strong bonds of friendship. As Al Wilson has said, "Sometimes you get to know someone when they're really low a lot better than you ever do when they're really high...And you stand by each other through thick and thin...Yeah, you get tight!" These relationships are likely to endure.

Those athletes who are able to retain long-term friendships may gain personal stability through those
relationships. As Gary Lupul has said, "there's no friends like old friends." Frequently, these old friends are people who have left sport at various levels of competition and have established themselves in non-sport careers. These friends can serve as important models for athletes, as resources and informants about the external world, and even as potential employers or business partners when the athlete's career is concluded.

There is some diversity in terms of the career options athletes hold at the time they commit themselves to a career in professional sport. Like other people, athletes hold varying perspectives on what a career is all about. People seem to regard careers as something between a simple labour-monetary exchange relationship and an important source of personal meaning and satisfaction. A few athletes, such as Dave Hindmarch and Steve Clippingdale, have definite plans for long-term careers, considering professional sport as a temporary employment opportunity, an exciting life experience, and a pleasant interlude or pastime before moving on to more important interests and life tasks. However, many athletes seem to have no other career interests beyond sport, even though they are aware that a professional career typically lasts no longer than five years. It is tempting to conclude that an athlete's immersion in sport inhibits the development of alternate career aspirations but undoubtedly there are many other factors which contribute to an individual's plans and expectations for his future. For
example, Al Wilson said,
(Careers) never crossed my mind. Never. You're talking about a kid that grew up in a mill town... There were lots of jobs, summer jobs. Easy money was there to be picked up. Some people, depending on the family background, I guess, were more goal-oriented or more career-oriented, and I wasn't career-oriented.

Other people, such as Mark Patzer or Terry Lombardo, may give little consideration to planning a career because of the ready availability of employment within a family business.

**Sport as big business**

Although many athletes may not recognize it when they embark upon the career, sport is a major industry and professional sports are big businesses. As Hoch (1972) has noted, "The character and scale of sports today is the child of monopoly capitalism" (p. 39). Accordingly, professional athletes are the skilled labourers who are employed to produce a marketable product. In exchange for their services, many acclaimed athletes enjoy superior incomes which frequently exceed even those of the most skilled and talented administrators, doctors, lawyers, dentists, and scientists. And there are other rewards, including the glamour and excitement of a highly publicized, highly celebrated lifestyle, not to mention the camaraderie, exuberance, and thrills of the competition.

Blinded by the brilliant prospects of professional sport, aspiring athletes are frequently in such awe of the career that they fail to see its shortcomings. As in other industries, apart from the high priced talent, professional
sport also employs an army of athletes who toil unnoticed for inferior earnings. There is a marked discrepancy in the income and acclaim earned by someone like Wayne Gretzky and a "lifer" in hockey's minor leagues, or someone like Willie Shoemaker and a "bush meet" jockey. It is a myth that all professional athletes earn high incomes but reality is often overlooked because athletes have their sights set on a dream. Sonmor (1988) has provided an example from thoroughbred racing:

In potential earnings a jockey would never class himself with a store clerk, even though over the span of a career their earnings might be parallel. As a store clerk you can predict your job trajectory with bleak certainty. On the track, every new day, anything's possible. Because hope and possibility thread through everyone's existence like spun gold, a life lived on the track is richer, with more highlights, than most others (p. 81).

To many athletes their earnings, regardless of how big or how small, are a perquisite or side benefit to the real reward which is simply the opportunity to participate in such a high level of competition.

The reality of the employee-employer relationship which exists between professional athlete and management is not readily apparent because athletes are used to having their performance and, to a large extent, their lives directed and managed by a sports organization. But at the professional level, the rights to an athlete's performance are owned by the organization and he becomes a chattel to be marketed, bought, sold, traded, transferred, or terminated. Decisions about his career and his life have little to do with the
person. They are business decisions.

Unlike most other careers, the professional athlete's career is very uncertain. His health, performance, status, income, and even residence are constantly at risk and his lifestyle is insecure because his participation at a given level is never guaranteed. His career and lifestyle cannot be considered under his own control, being instead subject to the whims of owners and managers who may be fickle, ill-informed, or functioning on an agenda which excludes the interests of the individual athlete.

It is within this context that withdrawal from professional sport takes place.

Prologue

The story which follows has been broken into several descriptive units. Each unit provides information about a particular type of experience within the general story. These units are presented in a somewhat sequential fashion, more a literary convenience to emphasize commonality than an exact ordering of events in individual experience. In a life story, numerous events and sub-experiences are likely to take place simultaneously or vary with the individual. Here, the sequencing of experiential units reflects the apparent shifts in emphasis or focus within the general story.

Beginning

The beginning stage of the story comprises the impending withdrawal from the career. Typically, the potential for withdrawal arises from several sources and is addressed in
different ways. Athletes then re-immerse themselves in the career until the potential reappears with greater urgency, frequently in the context of an enlarged perspective on self and the profession. Athletes then begin to question the immediate future, frequently becoming concerned about perceived limitations and experiencing a period of great confusion and indecision which is the most difficult and trying component of the story.

Seeing the potential to withdraw

Athletes are frequently plagued by early thoughts of retirement. A nagging sense of the impending and inevitable end seems to persist throughout an athlete's professional career. From the start, many athletes recognize that very few people are offered the opportunity to be a professional, that the highly competitive selection process regularly terminates careers with the changing seasons of sport, and that careers are very vulnerable to sudden changes in health, performance, and management. The impermanent, transient nature of a professional career is commemorated in the stories of the old-timers, the mythology of the sport, and the rumours generated and spread by sometimes worried, sometimes malicious sportsmen and the ever-eager newsmen. And it is re-inforced by frequent observations of the rapid changes in the careers of others. Although many may not apply the norm to themselves, athletes often know that even successful careers are brief, rarely lasting beyond about five years.
A variety of personal experiences can remind the individual that his own career is provisional. Personal setbacks provide one set of examples. Jockeys are constantly monitoring their weight and any sudden gain is cause for anxiety and worry that they might not be able to reduce. Any perceived decline in health, performance, or opportunity to compete can set any athlete to wonder about the longevity of his career. Mobility within the sport, the "suitcasing" of team trades or demotion to the minor leagues, reminds the athlete that he is a commodity with variable value and marketability. This point is further re-inforced through struggles over contract negotiations. And personal successes provide other examples. The sometimes high incomes may bring awareness of discrepancies with the average working public. High income tax payments can give pause for consideration of alternate lifestyles. The achievement of personal goals, such as being named an all-star, can cause the athlete to wonder if his career has peaked. As time goes by, advancing age and the very longevity of a career remind the individual that time is running out on both the career in sport and the opportunity to address other life tasks and interests.

The personal potential for withdrawal from a professional career may emerge in several ways. Frequently, athletes report an increasing weariness toward the end of their careers. They grow tired of the physical wear and tear, the abuse of their bodies through preparation, competition, and travel, which is a requirement of their
careers. Some, like Terry Lombardo, find that the sports environment and lifestyle become oppressive and confining. However, others find that there is at least one particular experience, a catalytic event, which leads to serious consideration of the potential for retirement. Some may endure a series of these experiences. There appear to be two particular categories of these catalytic experiences, management decisions and health concerns.

Certain decisions by management, either singularly or accumulatively, can cause the athlete to consider the possibility of withdrawing. Sometimes management decisions have little to do with the individual but more to do with sport politics. One example is the scheduling of competitions, as in the case of Lindsay Myers, where the professional racquetball tour fell into disarray. In thoroughbred racing, trainers and owners frequently make decisions which are political or strategic, intuitive or fanciful. Whatever the decision, the jockey is at the mercy of the powerful. Other times, decisions may be related to the particular fit between athlete's abilities and management's specific and current interests. For example, Al Wilson was approached by his coach because a younger athlete was ready to assume Al's position. Sometimes management will even attempt to sabotage an athlete's career, as in the case of Stevie Cauthen at the Santa Anita Race Track, where attempts were made to discredit the prominent rider's reputation. Thus, opportunities to perform, perceived
decline in an athlete's performance, and relegation to a lower level of professional competition are disappointing and frustrating experiences which do not necessarily reflect a decline in the athlete's actual ability. Specific trades or demotions to the minor leagues, as in the cases of Gary Lupul and Steve Clippingdale, can cause the athlete to begin to consider leaving the sport.

The other major set of catalytic experiences pertains to the athlete's health. Frequently a serious injury, possibly involving surgery and a long rehabilitation programme, as experienced by Dave Hindmarch and Darcy Rota, leads the athlete to wonder not only about his ability to resume his career but about the risk of long-term disability. Similarly, the severe illnesses experienced by Mark Patzer and Danny Williams, as a result of their efforts to reduce weight, are examples of how athletes can be suddenly confronted with their own mortality. An athlete's inability to force his body to comply with his wishes will inevitably force him to deal with the harsh reality of career termination. Such was the case for Frank Barroby who had to walk away from his mounts because he could not make weight for a day's racing.

Very few athletes earn such huge incomes that they can afford traditional retirement at the conclusion of their sport careers. Although most will need to find alternate sources of income for the balance of their lives, frequently their thinking is short-term, simply from competitive season
to season. While many will recognize the potential for withdrawal, some will make early plans for life after sport. Others will not. For example, there is considerable variation in the way athletes approach financial planning. For some, their money disappears in the maintenance of a fast lifestyle or is lost in poor investments. Some employ financial advisors and some do not. A few are able to invest their money in secure or profitable ventures. Those who have both the wisdom and the good fortune to accumulate some sort of sound investment portfolio are in a better position to assess their options as their careers draw to a close.

Athletes also vary considerably in terms of their plans for alternate employment. Despite the nagging sense that time is running out on their careers, many seem to procrastinate on developing firm career options, hoping that they can compete a little longer because they perceive themselves to be sufficiently healthy, strong, and able to continue. And some may be deluded by the assumption that their own careers will be never-ending. On the other hand, some make tentative plans for life after sport, laying the foundations for alternate careers through education even before their professional careers begin. Other athletes will actively explore alternate careers in the off-season while some of their colleagues enjoy recreational pursuits. These people further their education, take on temporary employment opportunities, or become involved in their own businesses. In some cases these off-season activities can detract from
the athletic career because the athlete becomes so involved that he neglects to maintain his off-season physical conditioning. Still others may establish a definite date for their future career termination, building a strategy for a second career accordingly.

**Re-immersing self in career**

Regardless of the early plans an athlete might initiate for life after sport, his immediate response to the potential for career termination is often much like that of employees who are confronted with the inevitability of corporate failure. Rather than seeing the prebankruptcy period as a time to prepare for the death of the organization, including the consideration of personal career options, employees frequently invest themselves more fully in the quest for corporate survival, often deceiving themselves with optimism (Lopez, 1983). Similarly, an athlete is likely to re-immersse himself in his career, developing renewed hope for his survival in professional sport.

Renewed hope for one's career can develop in several different ways. For example, because assessment of one's relative athletic skills and potentials is very difficult, some athletes hope that by working harder, they might be able to prove their merit and continue their careers. Following an injury, commitment to a rigorous rehabilitation programme may lead to the hope that full recovery is imminent, that the body will not only be repaired but made stronger. Hopes are reinforced by the example of other athletes who have
prolonged their careers. A particularly good personal performance also reinforces self-confidence and determination, while reflection on one's past success and the comforts one has achieved may provide added determination to persevere. And there is always hope that movement to a different team, position, or location might yield new opportunities to prove one's ability. Sometimes an athlete's renewed hope may be simply self-deception or a desperate bid to hang on to the lifestyle. Regardless of the source, many athletes find some hope of extending their careers for at least another season.

Reconsidering the career

Over time, some athletes begin to reconsider their careers in light of enlarged perspectives on life and on sport, leading to points of shift in the story, varying plots as athletes individuate. Particularly, they begin to acknowledge a shift in their personal values and they may begin to examine the meaning of sport in their lives.

The personal values of some athletes begin to shift toward a future orientation, with increasing thoughts in the long-term instead of only the short-term. They begin to realize that whenever their careers end, they are likely to have at least half of their natural lives yet to live. They begin to examine their relative responsibilities, particularly to team-mates and colleagues, management, family members, and themselves. Their focus is likely to begin shifting away from issues of personal performance toward
those of quality of life. Rather than taking their physical fitness for granted, they may begin to place increasing value on general good health as they realize their own mortality and the concomitant need to take care of themselves. They may begin to lose their desire to compete in sport, becoming tired of the lifestyle and accepting the challenge of other emerging life tasks and interests, such as rearing a family or developing a business or profession. Sometimes they place increasing value on education and the development of career options. And, as they begin to see their careers as finite, with limited remaining opportunities to prove themselves, they place greater value on maintaining the respect and regard of others, as well as their own self-respect.

As athletes develop an enlarged perspective on their careers, they may begin examining the meaning of sport in their lives, particularly looking at the contradictions they experience. On the one hand, they reflect on their past experiences and appreciate their trials and tribulations. For example, Dave Hindmarch saw his injury as an enriching experience because it exposed him to a new challenge and Darcy Rota found satisfaction because his career had lasted considerably longer than the norm. On the other hand, they may feel frustrated and become critical of professional sport and their roles within it. For example, they may begin to see the lifestyle as superficial, 'fast' or 'unreal', and they may adopt the sort of humorous cynicism by which Dave Hindmarch viewed professional sport as part of the
entertainment industry. They may grow tired of an insufficient income or the instability and the unrelenting, sometimes unfair and unreasonable, pressure to perform. They may see the futility in persisting in their efforts, as Steve Clippingdale saw that his real opportunities were limited and Danny Williams recognized the reality of his body being too big for his sport. Others may begin to question why they continue to suffer and abuse their bodies. And others, such as Lindsay Myers, may simply begin to recognize that their desire and motivation have declined.

In examining the meaning of sport, athletes frequently gain awareness that a professional career is just one component of one's life course. Some athletes begin to realize that there is more to life than a professional career and that they have responsibility for their future lives. Sometimes they begin to sense that time is running out on the opportunities to establish a 'real' career for the lifetime ahead.

Questionning the future

As the potential for withdrawal appears more urgent, a function of the individual's changing thoughts, feelings, and experiences, many athletes will begin to question the immediate future. They may worry about their career options and whether or not they should try to extend the career a little bit longer. This component of the experience is parallel to that at the outset of the story but it is much more severe and critical because withdrawal is no longer a
distant prospect. It is at this point that athletes are likely to become particularly sensitive to their limitations and to experience considerable confusion and indecision.

The limitations athletes perceive will vary greatly between individuals. Typical issues involve education, transferable knowledge and skills, social contacts, apparent employment opportunities, career aspirations, financial considerations, and general plans and preparation for life after sport. Even though some may be comparatively well equipped to initiate a second career, others will be very concerned about their prospects for life after sport.

The toughest and most trying component of the experience of leaving the career seems to begin when the athlete finds himself pushed in one direction and pulled in another. It is a time of confusion and indecision because he is grappling with uncertainty and torn between competing interests. Some of these issues include: uncertain ability to regain strength and skill after an injury, compounded by the threat of permanent disability; fatigue with lifestyle; questionable opportunities in sport; possible opportunities to move on; lack of employment options; responsibilities to family; responsibilities to team-mates; reflections on what has been gained, the experiences and friendships which will be missed; fear of disappointing others; and financial considerations.

Athletes may be particularly confused because self-evaluation of athletic skills and potential is not an easy task and they are often hard pressed to determine when they
have reached the extent of their capabilities. An individual's performance is not readily assessed and it is always relative to others. Furthermore, it is heavily influenced by any number of factors which have little to do with the athlete himself. In addition, there are always the examples of others who have prolonged their careers, tempting and, perhaps, threatening the individual. Athletes are often more afraid of withdrawing too soon than too late. There is considerable uncertainty in an athletic career and frequently there is no clear measure to determine the appropriateness of termination.

Unlike the previous, comparatively casual responses to the potential to withdraw, this period is usually experienced as at least unsettling and, perhaps, very disturbing. Darcy Rota was worried regarding how he might feel about his career in the future, that he might regret not having tried to continue. Gary Lupul spent some four months of anxious, sleepless nights grappling with his issues. He became extremely irritated when questioned about his career and Danny Williams became generally irritable and grumpy. Terry Lombardo spent some six months of wondering what to do and Mark Patzer described himself as being near suicidal because he was not successful in his reducing efforts and couldn't imagine a future without racing. Typically, the athletes feel worried, confused, lost, and lonely because they have no clear answers and often no one with whom they feel comfortable sharing their concerns. They lack guidance and
information to help them discover and examine their options.

Middle

In the middle of the story, athletes frequently seek direction in their careers, scrutinizing the profession more carefully and reaching out to others for ideas and support. Eventually, a culmination point is reached, perhaps another catalytic event which results in a decision along a continuum of voluntary and involuntary withdrawal. While some athletes may have career termination imposed on them, those who commit themselves to withdrawal feel relieved, thereby ending the most difficult part of the story. The middle is concluded with action steps to launch a new career.

Seeking direction

There is a point where athletes grow weary of their indecision and confusion. Although they may not yet be ready to make a firm decision, they are likely to assert personal responsibility for their future career paths and to become more systematic in their approach to the dilemma. On the other hand, some might simply ignore the issue until withdrawal is forced upon them. However, for others, this stage is particularly marked by increasing scrutiny of the career, a further enlargement of perspectives which they may have begun earlier. They are likely to become more realistic and analytical in the assessment of their circumstances and potentials and they are likely to pay increased attention to the experiences of others, seeking new models and re-assessing old models.
Athletes have observed the tragic experiences of other sportsmen. Examples are the "lifers" who no longer have N.H.L. opportunities but appear trapped in hockey's minor leagues, or the aging exercise boys who no longer ride as jockeys but live back in the tack rooms where they started their careers as youngsters. There are stories of people who have squandered their earnings, invested poorly, abused their bodies through over-exertion, drugs, and alcohol, lacked education, skills, or job options, resorted to "lousy" jobs or begged for opportunities to return to sport, refused to accept reality and clung bitterly to the past, lost their marriages, and more. These all serve as negative models which can worry athletes and sometimes motivate them to ensure that they do not have similar experiences themselves.

As they lose naivety and become a little wiser than in their youth, some athletes re-assess the models to whom they were attracted earlier in their careers. They may have striven to emulate the old-time athletes who have lasted longer than the norm, perhaps having prolonged careers despite serious medical problems such as injuries or weight reduction. At this stage, they begin to see the debilitating consequences which might be suffered by others who have over-extended their careers.

They also look toward more positive models who may be found both within sport and in the wider community. Athletes often speak of having been influenced at various times by such people as former coaches and teachers, parents,
siblings, wives and girl-friends, businessmen, and community leaders. Sometimes these models are actively sought as personal mentors. Other times they appear co-incidentally, as in the experience of Dave Hindmarch who, while temporarily confined to a wheelchair, was influenced by a chance meeting with a crippled former policeman who inadvertently reminded him of his relative good fortune. In addition, athletes might seek models in literature.

Frequently this stage is marked by reaching out to others, turning to others for advice and paying closer attention to what others say. Their collegial discussions about careers are likely to become more serious and they may seek out the help of significant people in their lives. Specifically, they are likely to turn to medical doctors, family members, mentors, and other trusted individuals. This reaching out for support and advice is frequently a new experience because athletes have learned to keep their most intimate worries, concerns, and feelings to themselves.

Reaching a culmination point

Emerging from the quest for a decision is a general sense and acceptance that the time to leave the career is at hand. It might be said that "the writing is on the wall" but the date of termination is yet to be established. The athlete is hovering on the brink of decision, awaiting a final experience, perhaps another catalytic event, to confirm commitment. Examples of that final experience include: management's request for a decision, relegation to the minor
leagues again, acceptance of responsibilities to family, overwhelming logic if one wants a quality future, inability to make weight for a given race meeting, a job offer through a casual bar conversation, "permission" from a mentor, injury, medical prohibition due to illness, politics of sport, and the readiness of a young replacement. These types of experience provide a culmination point at which the athlete commits himself to leave the sport.

It is apparent that withdrawal from a career in professional sport seldom involves purely voluntary or involuntary termination. Rather, the experience seems to occur on a continuum ranging from the individual's totally free or voluntary choice, through to forced or involuntary withdrawal. Once a culmination point has been reached, some withdraw in favour of other, more personally preferable career options. Few athletes have such commanding control over their sport and their careers that they can plan their retirement several years in advance, as in the case of Lindsay Myers who dominated Canadian professional racquetball as both athlete and administrator. Many athletes seem to withdraw in a largely voluntary, although reluctant manner as a result of numerous issues which discourage them from continuing. However, others have no choice in the matter as they suffer incapacitating injuries or simply lose the opportunities or contracts to compete professionally. Their experiences may well vary from those whose retirement involves a voluntary decision.
Committing to withdraw

The experience of those who commit themselves to withdraw involves variation in terms of planning and privacy. Some athletes will make a private and almost spur-of-the-moment commitment, as in the case of Frank Barroby, who, when he left the race track because he couldn't make weight, simply went home and ate a big meal, confirming that there was no longer a need to restrict his diet. Others may make a simple, private announcement to family members, friends, and colleagues. Those who enjoy a particularly high profile in their sport, such as Darcy Rota and Al Wilson, may terminate their careers in a public and formal manner, announcing their decisions at a press conference. And some may orchestrate their retirement to coincide with the attainment of one last goal or special experience. Such was the case of Danny Williams, who cautiously paced himself so that he could finish his career riding his best horse in a major race.

The acknowledgment of the decision to leave sport concludes what is frequently the most difficult part of the experience of career termination. As Mark Patzer has said, coming to the decision to terminate his career was "one of the most depressing times in my life." However, athletes are likely to feel relieved once they have committed themselves to leave the sport because they are weary of the indecision and confusion. Mark Patzer found that within a week of his decision, he felt "one hundred percent better." Other athletes, like Darcy Rota, have reported that they gained
confidence in having made the right decision. When Danny Williams won his last race on 'Wanderkind', he knew "this is it!...It's time! It's time!"

**Launching a new career**

There is considerable variability in the clarity of the alternate career paths available to athletes at the time of their announced retirement from sport. Some athletes cannot see any ready options. Others have several possibilities to consider and a few have definite plans. For example, Gary Lupul had no idea what he wanted to do but began some tentative exploration by applying for jobs with several fire departments. Darcy Rota, Al Wilson, and Frank Barroby had various opportunities to examine. Dave Hindmarch had plans to resume his education and Lindsay Myers had completed his securities course in preparation for work as a stock broker. Other athletes have the opportunity to join family businesses. Such was the case for Steve Clippingdale, Terry Lombardo, Mark Patzer, and Danny Williams.

The actualization of a new career after leaving sport will vary according to the plans and opportunities perceived by the individual. For some it is simply a matter of following through a previous decision. For others it is a matter of assessing options and making choices. These tasks can be relatively easy, as in the cases of Darcy Rota and Frank Barroby, who were able to select a match between career opportunity and desired lifestyle. On the other hand, these tasks may be very difficult, as in the case of Al Wilson, who
suffered the frustration of professional career counselling which sought to place him in a job without exploring the lifestyle he desired. And Gary Lupul began to lose his self-confidence because he wanted a job but did not know how to go about finding one:

The hardest thing is who do you go to? Who do you talk to that can lead you in some directions?...When you don't even have a clue what to do...You don't know who to talk to or who to tell you where to go. It's tough!

Some athletes may assume temporary employment, such as working for a friend or exercising horses, while they consider and make plans for more long-term careers.

Ending

The story ends with the establishment and acceptance of a post-sport career and lifestyle. This process involves getting established in a new position, adjusting to a new lifestyle, developing new perspectives, immersion in life activities and interests other than sport, and feeling settled with one's life.

Getting established

It is apparent that opportunities for post-sport employment are readily available for many athletes, regardless of the specific plans they have made for life after sport. Some have the opportunity to get involved with family businesses, a possible career choice even if they had not pursued careers in professional sport. Several athletes have reported that friends, acquaintances, and assorted business people, some of whom they may have met as a result
of their athletic careers, have presented them employment or business proposals. The availability and nature of these opportunities will vary between individuals, influenced by chance and features of both the person and the sport. For example, the particularly restricted lifestyle of jockeys may provide less opportunities than those available to higher profile hockey and football players. Nevertheless, there are opportunities which can lead to permanent employment or, at least, can provide an alternate source of income while more long-term careers are considered. Then again, sometimes former athletes can experience difficulty in developing employment aspirations or strategies, sometimes becoming trapped in dead-end occupations without developing plans or hope for alternate careers.

Many athletes seem unaware of the formal support services of helping professionals who can provide guidance and counselling through the transition to a new career. Athletes typically employ agents to help them achieve their contracts in sport but they do not find services to help them achieve second careers. Although these services are available, athletes like Gary Lupul have no idea how to access them. Then again, as Al Wilson experienced, some of these services may be inappropriate. Nevertheless, some athletes have reported that it would have been helpful if they had received personal counselling at the start of their careers so that they could evaluate and plan their career paths as they progressed. Similarly, the provision of
counselling services to include the athlete's spouse might facilitate greater understanding and communication between the partners. In addition, many athletes seem to lack the services of financial advisors, people who can be trusted to help the athlete develop a disciplined approach to money management, as well as to plan and invest for the future.

Many athletes gain their guidance and direction from the various models available to them. They find opportunities to learn through simple observation of their colleagues or others they meet, people who provide examples of successful and unsuccessful experiences, wisdom or folly, and desirable and undesirable behaviours. Some will also find models in literature, particularly when they are able to read about life experiences which are unfamiliar to them. Frequently athletes will turn to mentors, particularly coaches or older sportsmen, who adopt a leadership role and show interest and concern in the athlete as an individual. For example, jockeys often talk about the guidance they have received from horse trainers, frequently ex-riders who understand the jockeys' circumstances. Similarly, the alumni associations of the 'Canucks' and the 'Lions' include many individuals who have established themselves in careers outside of sport and are willing to help others do the same.

Adjusting to a new lifestyle

In adjusting to a new way of life, athletes are exposed to a variety of difficult or trying experiences, as well as a number of easy or supporting experiences. Among the
hindering experiences is a sense of loss of some of the features of the athletic career, such as: intense physical activity, challenge and competition, thrilling atmosphere, performing in front of large crowds, seasonal rhythms and the routine of the lifestyle, and association with other athletes and celebrities. On some occasions, athletes might experience quite a strong yearning for features of their former careers, but these are frequently fleeting, wistful moments of wondering what it would be like to have the opportunity to participate again. Some, particularly the jockeys, are frustrated because they do not have the opportunity to continue participation in their sport on a recreational basis. Without regular, vigorous physical activity, some former athletes feel frustrated because they have yet to find an outlet for their energy. And others, such as Al Wilson, slip into a level of inactivity which they come to regard as unhealthy.

Sometimes former athletes experience some sense of alienation from other people. For example, Gary Lupul found that he could not enjoy participation in recreational hockey because other participants would not accept him as just another recreational player. Lindsay Myers ended his career as the top professional racquetball player in Canada and considered that he would not find any pleasure in recreational play. Terry Lombardo has found difficulty in sharing stories about his career because he is afraid that other people won't understand or appreciate his experience
and they might even think that he is boastful. In another example, Al Wilson considered that his age and, particularly, his sense of independence, made him a poor candidate as an employee.

Other difficulties which have been reported include: lack of direction, guidance, or counselling services to assist with career planning; insufficient finances; a sense of frustration and stagnation due to underemployment or inability to accomplish goals; a sense of social failure due to lack of employment status; lack of marketable skills; worry and fear about an uncertain future; and various misfortunes, such as divorce, death in the family, and even sabotage of a business.

Sometimes other people in the athlete's life experience difficulties with his change in status. For example, some wives and girl-friends have been reported to have difficulty accepting that they no longer enjoy associated celebrity status when the athlete leaves his sport. In another example, Dave Hindmarch's father reported an unusual disinterest in the National Hockey League during the year following his son's retirement. The impact on the athlete of the difficulties of others will vary with the circumstances.

Former athletes also experience a number of pleasant or facilitating experiences which counteract difficulties they might have found. For example, they frequently find that second careers provide excitement and challenge, as well as enjoyable working relationships. In addition, even though
It may take them some time to select and establish themselves in long-term second careers, many find alternate business and employment opportunities readily available. These may be only temporary positions, such as exercising horses, labouring, or part-time sales, but these are opportunities to earn an income while considering other possibilities. These positions also serve as bridges between careers, providing individuals the opportunity to shed the "ex-athlete" status which some find to be demoralizing. Simply having a plan, even in the short-term, is seen as helpful in bolstering the individual's sense of confidence and optimism.

Other facilitating experiences include: the continued appreciation of good health and physical activity which might have been placed in jeopardy by continued participation in professional sport; the enjoyment of the physical challenge and camaraderie found in recreational sport; the realization that the individual no longer has a need or interest in performing for others and receiving public attention; the enjoyment of a family lifestyle with time to spend with one's loved ones; the continued support of family, friends, mentors, and team-mates; and the continued involvement and inclusion with the sport organization. On balance, it would seem that former athletes find that the facilitating experiences outweigh the hindrances in establishing a new lifestyle.

Frequently athletes will use sport as a metaphor for life. For example, the day-to-day hassles of working life
may be considered as the "grind" of a training schedule or
dull and boring experiences as "riding the bus in the minor
leagues." And when confronting life's difficulties, one
"gets up after being knocked down."

While sometimes these metaphors are helpful in the
athlete's understanding of the non-sport world, there are
also times when they prove problematic. For example, the
assumption that business relationships will reflect teamwork
can be disappointing when one finds that one's colleagues
have conflicting agendas and commitments. Likewise, in
seeing business as an opportunity for individual competition,
the athlete can be surprised to find that he has much less
control and independence than he had expected, resulting in
an experience which Lindsay Myers has described as being
"like playing team sports again." Similarly, in seeking to
"learn the rules of the game" in business, one may be
disillusioned to find that business may be much more ruthless
than sport.

Developing new perspectives

As former athletes find stability in second careers,
they are likely to develop new perspectives on life and
sport. In particular, they often develop a new sense of
self. Rather than being focussed on their physical
performance from season to season, they realize that there is
more to life than sport and they develop a long-range
perspective on their goals in life. Many of them find
particular enjoyment in family life, a marked contrast to the
fast-paced single life they may have experienced as a professional. In addition, they are frequently satisfied with lifestyles which are more modest than their earlier experiences. With a stable residence and more permanent and diversified friendships, they experience a different sense of community than in the often transient brotherhood of professional sport.

In reflecting on their former careers, many athletes acknowledge new meanings of sport. They usually have very fond memories of their professional years and often experience a new appreciation of the respect and regard which they had been shown by other athletes and the general public. However, they also realize that in some respects professional sport is a dream world which can provide a lifestyle of income and public attention which is unrealistic in comparison to everyday life. Darcy Rota has said that the career can be like "a gravy train", probably not comparable to anything else in regular life but a very temporary experience from which athletes must move on. It can provide fun, excitement, variety, and thrills but, beneath the glamour, professional sport is a "grind" of very hard work which is both physically and emotionally demanding. Frequently former athletes will acknowledge that they now realize that in the latter part of their careers, they had less drive or motivation than in their younger years. Some even wonder how they were able to handle the professional lifestyle for as long as they did. And, particularly for the
jockeys who had to fight their growing bodies, some reported that the meaning of their sport had changed dramatically for them, representing suffering and torture instead of the joy they had initially found in the sport.

Former athletes often look back on their careers as being valuable learning experiences. While they may have learned some helpful skills which carry over into later life, such as patience, tolerance, and other "people" skills, they may also have learned some very important principles and attitudes. For example, they frequently gain a new appreciation of their health and they realize that because they have much longer to live, there are other goals in life which are more important than sport. They often realize that the commitment and dedication they may have made to sport can be transferred to those other goals.

**Immersing self in life**

In their earlier years, athletes were typically immersed in sport to the virtual exclusion of other activities and interests in life. That imbalance is usually redressed following withdrawal from the professional career. Former athletes are likely to become immersed in a variety of activities and interests in life, although sport frequently retains considerable significance and influence.

One way that sport persists in the individual's life is through certain continuities between careers. Many former athletes seek second careers which specifically give them personal satisfaction and, as a result, they approach their
work with a matter-of-fact acceptance of the tasks at hand, which is a carry-over from the effort and detailed preparation which they may have put into their athletic careers. For those with a background in team sports, an emphasis in their second careers is often placed on rapport with co-workers or business associates, much like the camaraderie and team spirit which they enjoyed as athletes. For individual athletes, emphasis in their second careers seems to be placed on the transferability of personal skills such that jockeys, for example, might try to take their knowledge and understanding of horses into careers as trainers.

In some cases, former athletes have found less favourable continuities between their careers. For example, in striving to assert his personal control in business, Lindsay Myers found his work resulted in the same sort of frustration he had experienced in playing team sports, whereby his personal efforts were not rewarded with success. In addition, he began to feel constrained in his second career in much the same way that he felt constrained near the close of his professional career because he could not see expanding opportunities for himself. And Steve Clippingdale found that his employers adopted an authoritarian management style similar to the coaching styles he had found objectionable. His job became a drudgery, much like riding on the bus in the minor leagues.

Former professional athletes often adopt new roles in
sport which bring them enjoyment and satisfaction. All the hockey players in this study have continued to play recreationally, sometimes finding more fun and camaraderie in the beer leagues or "old-timers" teams than in their professional careers. Lindsay Myers no longer plays racquetball but he continues to be competitive in sports, particularly developing his skills as a ski racer and squash player. It is different for former jockeys because they do not have the opportunity to compete recreationally and so, many of them adopt new roles as professional horse trainers. In these positions, they sometimes have the opportunity to ride thoroughbreds. For example, Danny Williams says that he still enjoys getting up on horses and Frank Barroby enjoys riding in the spring training races.

Several of the athletes are very appreciative of the support they received in their professional careers and have striven to make contributions back to their sport or to their communities. For example, Darcy Rota has assumed a management position in professional hockey, Dave Hindmarch is coaching part-time at the university level, Steve Clippingdale is very active coaching his children's community teams, and Lindsay Myers has helped develop young racquetball players. Similarly, some of the former jockeys have adopted informal teaching or coaching roles as Mark Patzer and Danny Williams offer advice and encouragement to young riders. And Frank Barroby has become a particular model for others, not only in the considerate and professional manner in which he
conducts his horse training, but in the leadership he has shown in the racing community. Similarly, Darcy Rota advises young athletes through reference to his own experiences and Al Wilson passes on his wisdom to others, encouraging people to "be known for what you've done and not what you could have done." The alumni association of both the 'Canucks' and the 'Lions' are particularly active in promoting their sport, supporting other athletes, and contributing to their communities.

Many former athletes are able to retain and develop social roles with other athletes. Both team and individual athletes have found enduring relationships with former colleagues. It may be easier for team athletes to get together on occasion because the team organization persists despite changes in personnel and because there are associations, such as alumni, which organize activities to encourage continued interaction. Individual athletes may have more difficulty re-connecting with former colleagues but former jockeys can maintain informal affiliation through the race track community. Furthermore, for athletes, just as for other people, good friendships persist regardless of proximity and frequency of contact.

Feeling settled

For many athletes, being settled in a post-sport career involves a sense of resignation to the realities of life. Al Wilson would have liked to have played football for the rest of his working days but he accepted that this was impossible.
Terry Lombardo knows that thoroughbred racing still holds an attraction for him and so he avoids temptation by staying away from the track. Darcy Rota would have liked to have continued playing hockey but he has said that it is important for people to move on.

Feeling settled in life after sport also involves a sense of satisfaction both with what one has accomplished in sport and with what one is currently accomplishing in the new career. In terms of sport, satisfaction appears to involve the ability to reflect with pride on what was accomplished, particularly acknowledging that the individual "gave his best shot" at the career under the available circumstances. It involves the ability to realistically appraise and appreciate the individual's own efforts and to cherish fond memories of his involvement. And rather than bitterness over lost opportunities and perceived injustices, it also involves the ability to accept that the past is concluded.

In regard to the new career, satisfaction involves contentment with the available challenges, opportunities, rewards, and accomplishments. In some cases, athletes see the potential for more satisfaction in their new careers than in their old ones. For example, Danny Williams has been surprised to find greater satisfaction in training horses than in riding them as a jockey. On the other hand, some athletes do not look for comparable satisfaction, as Terry Lombardo and Al Wilson have simply resigned themselves to the assumption that nothing in life will be as rewarding as their
athletic experiences.

Most of the athletes in this study reported general satisfaction with their current lives. Although two of them, Gary Lupul and Danny Williams, have yet to establish themselves in second careers, they both reported feeling satisfied with the termination of their careers in sport. Steve Clippingdale is currently unsettled as he is in transition to a third career but he is satisfied with his separation from sport. The exception is Lindsay Myers, who, although content with his decision to leave professional racquetball, finds little satisfaction in reflecting on his sports career and is frustrated because he cannot find satisfaction in his current business and because he misses the thrill of winning.

Reflecting on the transition

The most difficult aspect of withdrawing from a career in professional sport appears to be in the decision-making process, the stages of assessing prospects, seeking direction, and reaching a culmination point. Several athletes have reported this to have been a very painful, lonely, and confusing experience because they were torn between conflicting emotions and concerns which they did not feel comfortable sharing with others. In addition, they frequently found themselves feeling insecure and ill-equipped to deal with a non-sport career, particularly because they lacked information and ideas regarding their current careers and the alternatives available to them. However, they were
able to reach out and seek advice, information, and support. Once the decision was finalized, athletes typically felt relieved to terminate their careers, even though they might have done so with some regret. As they reflect on that decision, they often consider that they are glad that they quit when they did, before doing permanent damage to health, self-respect, or reputation.

Regarding the transition to a second career, most of the athletes in this study found the experience relatively easy, although a few have experienced some difficulties. For example, Gary Lupul has felt some anxiety and uncertainty while striving to define an employment alternative. Lindsay Myers has been frustrated because his second career has not developed as he had hoped and expected. Al Wilson has struggled with financial issues during some eighteen months of establishing his own business, but he likens this experience to that of any other entrepreneur trying to build a new venture. On the other hand, both Steve Clippingdale and Frank Barroby have described their establishment in second careers as easy and much less difficult than other transitions they have undergone. It would seem that a major reason that many individuals have found this transition relatively easy is that they did not hold aspirations to maintain the same lifestyle that they had experienced in their professional careers.

Perhaps the best summation of the experience of coming to the decision to withdraw from a sports career and to
establish an alternate is provided by Al Wilson. He said it may be more dramatic than other career transitions because professional sport commands so much energy, emotion, and public attention, but the experience is far from traumatic. While some individuals might suffer personal difficulties in adjusting to life after sport, it is likely that those people had difficulties before their careers ended. "People who were troubled in (sport) were troubled outside. It's no surprise...His career ended and life's a bitch. Well, it was a bitch when he was playing."

Summary

The experiences of those who decide to withdraw from professional sport can be portrayed in a general story. Individual plots are likely to vary according to specific circumstances, particularly influenced by the athlete's immersion in sport, involving such inter-related issues as motivation to participate in sport, desire to become a professional, lifestyle, meaning of sport, education, social contacts, and career options. The story comprises the gap between disruption of the career and establishment in another career. A variation of the story may well be appropriate for those individuals who leave their careers involuntarily.

In the beginning of the general story, the potential for withdrawal arises and is addressed in varying fashion. Athletes typically re-immerser themselves in the career until the potential reappears with greater urgency, frequently in the context of an enlarged perspective on self and the
profession. Confronted by both external and internal pressures, athletes then begin to question the immediate future, often becoming concerned about perceived limitations and experiencing a period of great confusion and indecision which is the most difficult and trying component of the story.

In the middle of the story, athletes frequently seek direction in their careers, scrutinizing the profession more carefully and reaching out to others for ideas and support. Eventually, a culmination point arises, resulting in a decision to withdraw. Athletes typically feel relieved once they have committed themselves to withdraw because they are weary of indecision and confusion and, in fact, may be weary of the physical and emotional demands of the career. The decision to withdraw concludes the most difficult part of the story and leads to steps to launch a new career. The story ends with the establishment of a post-sport career and lifestyle to which the former athlete adjusts. Athletes often develop new perspectives on themselves and on sport. Rather than being immersed in sport, they become immersed in broader life experiences.

In reflecting on the decision to withdraw, these athletes are typically satisfied and glad that they quit when they did, even though they were reluctant to do so at the time. Their withdrawal allows them to preserve health, self-respect, and the regard of others. Most have found the transition to a new career and lifestyle relatively easy,
frequently accepting a more modest lifestyle than they had experienced as professional athletes. Nevertheless, it would seem that athletes and their partners could benefit from personal counselling services which might be initiated at the outset of their professional careers to offer guidance in planning and developing both their sport and subsequent endeavours.

Epilogue

There are many ways to tell a...story. You can tell it from the viewpoint of each of the (participants); you can tell it through the eyes of a partial or impartial observer; you can tell it omnisciently as if through the mind of God; you can study it anthropologically...you can interpret it sociologically...you can analyze it psychologically from the premises of any number of a dozen schools of thought. All these approaches produce their own truths, even though some may be contradictory. Each version becomes a lie only when it masquerades as the only way of telling the story, the only truth (Fraser, 1987, p. 190).

This story is a compilation of the narratives and experiences of ten individuals, their reported observations of the experiences of others, as well as my own observations and understandings. Although undoubtedly there are other specific stories to tell, particularly those of individuals who had no choice at all in the termination of their careers, this story appears to be a reasonably accurate description of the general experience of men who withdraw from professional sport.

Informants' validations

Dave Hindmarch: It's really great. I think you did a tremendous job, an excellent job. I liked the narrative...You sure put a lot of work into it...It
fits well for my experience... I really enjoyed reading it. It was an interesting story. It was important to have the personal side (of a study on athletes). It does it by far better than anything else I've seen... It intrigued me to read about real people... how different people related their ideas to that experience... It was important to bring everyone together (in a single description)... It is really worthwhile because it meant something to me... I had gone through it (the experience) and I think for someone else to read it they will find it really worthwhile.

Steve Clippingdale: I found it fairly interesting. Any of the quotes you made, they seemed to fit. There are no glaring errors from my standpoint... It was my experience... I was interested in (reading about) the other people, especially the jockeys. I found that interesting to see 'cause I always thought that a jockey was an easy job. You just got on a horse and rode it... It never dawned on me (what they go through).... I got a good feeling for each guy's different situation. And I know quite a few of the guys. All the hockey guys I know... Like I say, it was interesting. I didn't see anything that I would add. It was well written... I'd say it fit my experience and it was interesting to see other people's experiences.

Gary Lupul: I think it's very well done. It's good that you've got all different types of athletes - older, younger, different sports. I think it's a fairly accurate reflection of what occurred... With the ten people, you can get a fairly good idea what each person went through... You get a good idea of what it's like to move to another career.

Darcy Rota: You've done a fabulous job! Very impressive! ... I tell you, you've spent a lot of work, not only on this but on each case. It's very, very impressive... You did a lot of work to research this... I can't imagine the amount of hours you must have spent... I thought it was very well arranged, very well put together. I'm just amazed at the effort you put into it...

It was very interesting reading... I thought you used the athletes that you talked to in good ways. You brought comparisons of their situations into your assessment. It was really good... I thought it was really interesting... to see how other guys deal with the situation too... and the difficulties they've experienced... (It's accuracy) was good. I mean, I can relate to a lot of the things that go on here... the discipline the jockeys go through to watch their
weight and Terry (Lombardo) and a couple of the other
guys you mention don't follow their sport anymore...
(I know) there's guys like that...and the confusion
and indecision that go through an athlete when he
first retires and the questions about playing more
and what's going to happen if he moves on. Just
super stuff! Really good!...

From all of this, to me, an important thing for
an athlete to do is not become one dimensional...
If someone could read this...(they'd understand)
don't be so engulfed in your sport...Make sure you
have some other avenues or options. Like just so
many guys in here, it's an adjustment...I think it's
critical for athletes to be prepared because you
never know what's going to happen...You've got to be
able to leave the game behind...

(There is) a lot of good stuff in there...As a
matter of fact, I couldn't put it down. That's how I
felt about it. I started reading it and I couldn't
put it down...I'm so impressed by this...(that) I
don't know where I could fit in but I'd be happy to
support it...I'd be happy to come down to (your
presentation to the university) and talk to them
about how I feel about this...because I think the
work and effort you put in to this was immense. I
was really impressed by it!

Frank Barroby: It's good. I think it is, really
(accurate)...It's realistic. It really is. That's
the way it is...Like the other one (the personal
story) it was actually good for me to read it...
I see things that you don't quite, you know, you
don't quite admit but you read it and you know it
was that way...You have lots of mixed feelings
about it (the experience)...When you've been
successful, you get a bit afraid about what you're
going to do next. Will you be as successful?...
Once the decision is made, you are...very much
more content with yourself....Even when you read
about the other guys, you can tell they had to go
through the same thing...(They were) very parallel
to my situation. You can tell the feeling was
there...You can tell it was tough, in a way, but
guys would do it...To make the transition, it's
hard until you've done it.

...(The experience) depends on the person -
the way you can cope with it...Attitude is so
important...you maintain a good attitude, day in
and day out...you try hard...and you'll do alright.

...In professional sport, if they had the
guidance there to help people along the way...they
wouldn't end up in some of the situations that the
kids, some young guys do, like with their money
or the drinking...or drugs...Maybe, if somebody
was there...a person to talk to you...an ear (it would be helpful).
[Lynn, Frank's wife, said] (It was) really interesting...Reading that, I just see so much of individual attitudes...expectations of life...It wouldn't matter what field they were in. It's the attitude that comes through...It helps to keep things in perspective... (And) a large part of it is just blooming luck, being in the right place at the right time...You do have to get lucky to get the right breaks.

Terry Lombardo: That was very well done. I can't see anything wrong with it at all (or) anything to add...Very good! A very good job. A lot of work...All good points. Right on! (My wife read it and) her comments are the same as mine - that's exactly the way it is!

Mark Patzer: (It is) very well written - brought up a lot of real good points that younger people might take a look at (before starting the career). If somebody gave you something like this, it would be a really good thing...It's nice to know that a lot of people in different sports go through the same sort of thing, especially when there aren't any services available at the time that you know of... (It was) interesting and I really enjoyed reading it.

Danny Williams: It seems good. It seems like you've somehow got all of our careers together and summarized it all...It all seems to tie in...We all seem to have the same kinds of things going on in our careers and after...Everyone's professional career comes (along and we) jump in and don't realize the next step until it's over - kind of worry about it when it comes up...I liked it...I quite enjoyed reading it.

Lindsay Myers: It was really interesting...I got some insights (to others' experiences)...It was interesting to hear what they had to say. It was interesting to hear where their weaknesses were (and) where their strengths were. Some of the quotes...I can relate with the examples they give of their experiences. I can relate to them (but) I can't say I feel them...but I appreciate their experiences. Definitely! I've seen a lot of people in my sport go through what they have felt.

(The report is) very good! (But) I'm the odd man out...I saw the report basically pointed and directed at team players...I'm the only individual athlete in there (I don't consider jockeys as athletes)...I don't fit very well...Because they're
a team player, they don't know what it's like to be an individual and they have a very difficult time making decisions for themselves...(My experience was unique because) I got out as the number one player, so my thoughts are somewhat different from these people who were at the end of their careers. I was five years from the end of my career, maybe seven years from the end of my career (in terms of physical ability). I could still play today. That's five years later...I got to pick and choose...what I did. I made my selection about where I would play...(My success) allowed me to do a lot of things with the sport and a lot of the other retired professional players didn't have that luxury so you'd probably get some different answers from them.

Many of them had (fears about what to do after leaving sport) and I just didn't have those fears...Other (individual) players wouldn't agree with me. I did not experience confusion and indecision about leaving the career...I was satisfied leaving a legacy, knowing that my accomplishments in my sport will be goals to attain by all comers.

I have shown (my story) to some friends and they really liked it...(The study) is interesting...and I'm glad to have been part of the project.

[Since the completion of this report, Lindsay has moved on to another career as a business promoter. Rather than selling stocks himself, his new career involves providing stockbrokers with information and ideas about the various companies he represents.]

Al Wilson: I liked it!...My wife read it too and she thinks it's well written, well researched. She enjoyed reading it...It's a good reflection of the people who have made the transition. (It shows) that people can make the transition successfully...These people were the more stable, goal-oriented people...(but) what about those who weren't successful? I know other guys, I won't mention any names, but there's an alcoholic on skid-row in Florida and guys who were stockbrokers, (they) lost their wives...Football protected a lot of people. They had found a niche (until they had to leave)...There was no realization of going into the 'real' job market. They were still operating like they were in high school, with limited skills...The re-focus of energies (into another field) is what they needed to learn.
Expert's validation

Dr. Robert Hindmarch: I'm impressed with the representation of athletes from all walks of life...It is not a study of superstars...I know six of these athletes personally and I regard this study as an accurate portrayal of their experiences...(The general story) reflects what I think happens in an athletic career...The more I see things in professional athletics, the more I see them as part of our cosmopolitan background. Athletes have difficulties in life just like other people but they get more attention...Because sport has a higher profile, there is a (public) tendency to see athletic experiences as being greater than they are.
CHAPTER XV
DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the findings and the limitations of the study are presented. Implications for theory, practice, and future research are also discussed. The chapter is concluded by a summary of the research project.

Findings

The case stories or narratives of these former athletes do not reflect the tragedy or the trauma which the media, the popular press, and much of the academic literature have portrayed as the experience of leaving professional sport. Nor do these stories reflect the death metaphor which has been used to describe the experience. Rather, the individual stories tell of a quiet human drama as individuals work through a transitional experience.

Individual narratives varied and it appears that personal experiences such as withdrawal from a career in professional sport are best understood within the context of their occurrence. The contexts of a given experience will vary between individuals, influenced by any number of factors of circumstance and individual difference. For example, in order to understand this experience we need to appreciate how an individual's career developed, including information about personal interests, hopes, aspirations, and accomplishments. We need to know how the career came to an end, as well as the thoughts, feelings, and behaviours of the individual at that time. We need to gain an understanding of concurrent experiences such as family, social, and financial concerns.
Furthermore, we need to know what transpired after the decision was made, such as the ease or difficulty in attaining alternate employment.

It is apparent that the meaning of an experience such as this will not only vary between individuals but will vary for an individual over time. For example, some individuals may have viewed their careers as a short-term opportunity prior to undertaking other life tasks while others may have focused exclusively on their sport. The decision to withdraw was more significant to the latter than the former athletes. Similarly, individuals may have been reluctant to leave their careers at the time, but in reflecting on the experience from a distance, most are satisfied with their decision.

Each of the ten cases or narratives presented in this study is a finding on its own, describing the specific experiences of each individual according to his own unique circumstances and interpretations of events, thereby adding richness to the investigation. Each of the narratives has provided interesting insights and information about individual careers as well as background information about the particular sports in which the careers have taken place. And each of the narratives has provided recommendations for change, the personal advice which former athletes have offered to others who are likely to experience withdrawal from careers.

The adoption of a "process" perspective on the
experience rather than a 'problem' perspective has resulted in a sequence of events, a general story which describes and helps us understand the commonalities in the experience of withdrawing from professional sport as well as unique points of difference.

Individual plots in this general story are likely to vary according to specific circumstances and particularly by diversity in immersion in sport, involving such issues as motivation to participate in sport, desire to become a professional, lifestyle, meaning of sport, education, social contacts, and career options. In addition, a variation of the story may well be appropriate for those individuals who leave their careers involuntarily.

Withdrawal from sport was not simply an event. It was a process over time which frequently began soon after the athletes became engaged in the career. No matter what their hopes and aspirations, the athletes had some degree of awareness that professional sport was a short-term career. They addressed this potential for withdrawal in varying fashion, some actively preparing for career change, some passively ignoring or denying the inevitable departure from sport. The athletes typically re-immersed themselves in the career when confronted with a variety of catalytic events which reminded them of the potential for withdrawal. As their careers progressed, that potential reappeared in a manner more immediate and more urgent, frequently in the context of an enlarged perspective on self and the
profession. The athletes' values and interests had often begun to diverge from those of the sports world. As the athletes began to assess their prospects for life after sport, they often became concerned about perceived limitations. They experienced a period of great confusion and indecision which was the most difficult and trying component of the story.

In the middle of the story, the athletes frequently sought direction in their careers, scrutinized the profession more carefully, and uncharacteristically reached out to others for ideas and support. Eventually, a culmination point arose, resulting in a decision to withdraw. The athletes typically felt relieved once they had committed themselves to withdraw because they were weary of indecision and confusion and often were weary of the physical and emotional demands of the career. The decision to withdraw concluded the most difficult part of the story and led to steps to launch a new career. A variety of new career opportunities were pursued by the athletes. Some opportunities were planned, some were unexpected, some allowed continued involvement with another dimension of professional sport, some were difficult to reach, and some were temporary positions which provided an income and an opportunity to consider future directions.

The story ended with the establishment and acceptance of a post-sport career and lifestyle. In reflecting on the decision to withdraw, the athletes were typically glad that
they quit when they did, even though they were reluctant to
do so at the time. Their withdrawal allowed them to preserve
health, self-respect, and the regard of others. It also
allowed them to develop other competencies and to express a
more nurturant dimension of themselves as their interests had
turned toward their emerging family lives. Most have found
the transition to a new career and lifestyle relatively easy,
frequently accepting a more modest lifestyle than they had
experienced as professional athletes and usually finding some
means to continue their participation in sport in a
recreational or leadership capacity.

Limitations

The limitations of this study are that the findings
cannot be generalized to a population for the following
reasons. The number of informants was small, consisting of
ten male ex-athletes who were available for the study. The
study is also limited by race (all informants were
Caucasians), by sport (a focus on hockey and thoroughbred
horse racing), by how retirement was initiated (for example,
voluntary withdrawal rather than involuntary termination),
and by gender. The study is also limited to the information
that the informants could consciously and willingly express.
Because it is possible that transitional experiences involve
issues that people are only dimly aware of, those issues have
not been addressed in this study.

Despite these limitations, the study is helpful in
examining the applicability of theories to this experience,
since each case provides a test for how adequately theories account for the experience. Because these case studies are concerned with generalization to theory, they can be used to support a provisional model of the process, a model that might be confirmed by future research.

Theoretical implications

The transition from sport appears as a very complex life process. Just as in studies of the unemployment experience (e.g. Kasl, Gore, & Cobb, 1975; Payne & Jones, 1987b), individual differences in experience are apparent. Thus, this study supports an emphasis on contextual considerations instead of predictive, analytical models in examinations of this type of experience.

This study supports Blinde and Greendorfer's (1985) criticism of the application to this topic of theoretical perspectives borrowed from social gerontology. Although aging frequently plays a role in athletes' decisions to withdraw from sport, the people in this study were very aware that they could expect to live and work for many more years. When they left sport they were not so much in a process of disengagement from work and society as they were in a process of engagement, the seeking of new careers and roles in life.

Blinde and Greendorfer's (1985) criticism of the application of theories of thanatology, the study of death and dying, to this topic is also supported. It is significant that none of the informants in this study used or made reference to any of the "death" images which frequently
appear in the literature to describe the negative experiences and adjustment difficulties which athletes are assumed to go through upon withdrawal from their careers.

In terms of career development theory, the experiences of these former professional athletes contradict what Ochberg (1988) has termed as the traditional expectation that a career should follow a rising trajectory. Not only did these athletes experience brief and bi-modal careers but some experienced post-sport careers which were less personally challenging and rewarding and more financially modest than their athletic careers.

Career development theories typically focus on either personal or situational influences. The experiences of the individuals in this study support the significance of chance encounters in life paths. Luck in the guise of both fortune and misfortune was particularly apparent in the decisions to withdraw from sport as well as in the ability to establish alternate employment. However, responses to chance encounters varied between individuals, reflecting the fact that neither personal nor situational influences operate as independent shapers of the course of human lives (Bandura, 1982).

Young (1984b) has noted that people question the meaning of work in their lives. This study supports the notion that the meaning of work may change for individuals over time. Significantly, many of these athletes found pleasure and satisfaction in the non-professional roles in sport which
they established after leaving their careers. This supports the importance of the conceptual distinction between paid and unpaid work (Hartley, 1980) because many of the benefits which are traditionally attributed to employment (e.g. Havighurst & Friedman, 1954; Jahoda, 1982; Kelvin, 1981; Warr, 1984) may be found in activities which do not involve financial remuneration. It is apparent that these former professional athletes were able to fulfill these needs in activities which are external to their original careers.

The general story arising from this study fulfills a function of ethnography which Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) have stated is a major value of ethnographic work, challenging the preconceptions which social scientists often bring to research. This story addresses the controversial assumptions which are apparent in the literature on this topic. Accordingly, the following assumptions are not supported by this study: the universality of trauma in leaving sport, the desire for continued participation, the experience of failure, the limited opportunities available to athletes, the low socio-economic background of athletes, and the similarity of the experience to occupational retirement. Furthermore, the study adds richness to assumptions about the athletic lifestyle and the experience of loss and deprivation.

Many researchers of retirement in sport seem to have regarded the experience as extraordinary, special, and generally quite unlike other experiences. The terms used to
characterize the experience are likewise extreme, such as trauma, death, failure, and loss and deprivation. Thus, retirement from sport is regarded as a crisis, a matter of dying, grieving, living with failure, or being dispossessed. However, this study finds no evidence to support these contentions. While retirement from sport has its own unique sorts of contextual influences, it also seems to reflect transitions in general.

Experiences of career or role change such as withdrawing from professional sport are examples of important life transitions. There are two basic forms of transition theory. One view holds that there are a fixed set of stages or experiences which all individuals are expected to go through (e.g. Hopson & Adams, 1977). The second view, while open to the general commonalities which may be observed in transitional experiences, has sought to identify factors which account for complexity and diversity. For example, Schlossberg (1984) has noted that transitions might be very easy or very difficult, depending on relevant factors. However, for fixed stage theorists it appears by the stage characterizations that transitions are regarded as difficult or varying only in the degree of difficulty.

Although elements of the fixed stage perspective were apparent in this study, such models do not capture the experience of these athletes. Nearly all the informants experienced difficulty in reaching the decision to withdraw from sport and a commonality of experience was observed in
that a general sequence of experiential units was apparent within the general story. However, this sequence lacked the precision which stage theorists might seek. For example, the seven phases of movement from immobilization to internalization of the transition, described by Hopson and Adams (1977), simply did not occur. Rather than experiencing the transition as a response to an external event applied to the individual, these informants experienced internal changes which precipitated their withdrawal from sport.

This shift in the personal values of these athletes during their careers is very significant to their experience of the transition. Their increasing concern for health and family life and their questioning of the meaning of their sports careers and social roles reflect the kinds of internal changes which Erikson (1950) might anticipate. These sorts of shifts have been observed to recur over the life course, contributing to transitions throughout adulthood and not just at one stage in personal development. The dynamic model of transitions proposed by Schlossberg (1984) incorporates these internal changes.

In Schlossberg's model, transition is regarded as a process involving on-going appraisal of three stages of assimilation. In the beginning, one is preoccupied with changing. In the middle, one is unsettled and disrupted by change. And in the end, one integrates the experience. Individual transitions show great diversity and complexity due to the coping resources available to the individual,
involving the interaction of characteristics of the transition (e.g. timing, source, prior experience, and concurrent stress), aspects of context (e.g. social support and options), and individual differences (e.g. socioeconomic status, age, health, and commitments and values). While this study supports Schlossberg's three phases of assimilation and confirms several variables that account for diversity and complexity, it also contributes to the model through emphasis and addition.

First, this study confirms the significance of certain variables. Changes in personal assumptions, relationships, roles, and routines are considered to be significant in determining the impact of a transition. The athletes in this study often made dramatic changes in these four variables. Timing of the transition was important because all the informants wanted to be sure that they withdrew at the right time, a point where they thought their best efforts were behind them. Prior experience of similar transitions was very significant to these athletes because they had frequently adjusted to the imposition of sudden changes in their careers and lives. Ego development, which gives rise to an individual's frame of reference, was very significant because these athletes adopted an autonomous stance early in the transition, adjusting their assumptive worlds to make decisions about their careers. And social support was very significant. Athletes frequently felt alienated from non-athletes, each other, and even loved ones. Reaching out to
others for support and advice was uncharacteristic of them.

Other particularly significant features apparent in Schlossberg's model involved source, concurrent stress, and commitments and values. Hypothetically, "the individual more easily assimilates transitions in which the source of the transition is internal" (p. 73) and, in this study, it would seem that internal shifts in the athletes' personal values led them to grow weary of their careers and/or to develop other interests, thereby providing an internal impetus for change and contributing to the ease of the transition experience. In addition, there were concurrent pressures for change which involved different sources. For example, individuals were also confronted by the external demands of their sport careers, demands for either high performance or termination, which existed independently of the internal pressures for change. Concurrent stress was further apparent as individuals experienced concern over such issues as relationships and the health of self and loved ones.

Second, the study provides a different emphasis for the basic pattern of assimilation. For example, in Schlossberg's account, there tends to be a great deal of emphasis on the middle of the story, bridging the gap between the beginning and the end. However, in this study, emphasis was on the beginning of the transition, where individuals began to wrestle with the various conflicting internal and external pressures of decision-making. The eventual decision to withdraw was very important and powerful, altering the whole
story in comparison to what could have happened if these athletes had stayed in the career until retirement was imposed upon them. Thus, rather than in the traditional notion of transitions occurring as a response to an event, these athletes experienced transitions as a response to changes within themselves. For Schlossberg, transitions involve assimilating the future, but for these athletes, assimilation was partially a closing-off of the past because they did not want to be haunted by their former careers.

Furthermore, this study also adds emphasis to the consideration of transitional experiences as a process. Schlossberg has regarded transitions as being precipitated by events which can be distinguished as either anticipated, unanticipated, nonevent, or chronic hassle. For many of the athletes in this study, the experience is best described as a combination of types. For the most part, career termination was somewhat anticipated, although the exact timing was frequently unanticipated, and was also a chronic hassle because several of the athletes were growing weary of the career. Thus, the experience of career withdrawal was not so much a single event as the culmination of a process of leaving the career.

Third, the study adds to the variables affecting diversity and complexity that Schlossberg has suggested. Among the personal characteristics of the individual could be education, skills, activities, and interests. The individuals' assessments and sometimes perceived lack of
these characteristics were important to the athletes in this study. And the list of variables characterizing the environment could be enhanced by the addition of chance encounters. Within the individual stories of this study, chance encounters with significant individuals and events were abundant. They influenced the paths of sport careers, providing both opportunities and roadblocks. Likewise, they influenced the development of second careers. For instance, some individuals were offered unexpected employment or business opportunities and others had opportunities snatched away from them by misfortune. In some cases, these chance encounters contributed to additional transitions, as in the case of those athletes who lost important relationships while leaving their sports careers.

**Practical Implications**

The primary goal of helping professionals is to assist their clients to solve their problems and to enjoy more effective living, loving, working, and playing. Toward this end, this study has several practical implications.

Adults trying to cope with transitions are frequently disadvantaged by beliefs that adults should be mature, competent, and able to make adjustments. Furthermore, the athletes in this study often compared their own experiences with those of models who were subsequently found to be inappropriate. Thus, a major practical implication of this study is that the general story may be used as a more helpful model which both "normalizes" the experience, indicating that
some of the athletes' concerns and difficulties may be shared by other athletes, and offers hope for successful progress through the transition.

A second practical implication is that the transition model provided by Schlossberg (1984) may be helpful to athletes experiencing the transition from a sports career. The model demonstrates that the experience is similar to other transitions and that the difficulties in the experience are susceptible to analysis and a problem-solving format.

A third implication is that Schlossberg's content-process model provides a framework for intervention to assist individuals through a transitional experience such as leaving professional sport. This model integrates the transition model with Egan's (1982) model of helper skills by aligning appropriate helping goals with a transition knowledge base and appropriate helping skills. Thus, the content-process model consists of encouraging exploration of the transition event by providing an unbiased relationship, promoting understanding of coping resources by providing a new perspective, and fostering coping in the transition process by influencing action.

In terms of the counsellor-client relationship, an implication of this study is that counselling services are likely to be facilitated by practitioners who can readily establish trust and rapport with athletes. Because the athletes in this study frequently reported that they felt alienated from non-athletes, practitioners who are familiar
with sport and the experiences of athletes may be particularly well-equipped to gain the confidence of these clients.

In regard to the coping resources of the individual athlete, counselling may be particularly helpful in assisting the individual to gain a new perspective on the experience and to expand the individual's coping repertoire. Although coping resources are usually very situation specific, consideration of the various hindering and facilitating experiences which were evident in this study may be useful. Many of these experiences are related to relationships, roles, and routines, factors that are significant in terms of the impact of a transition. Forewarning of the potential of these experiences may prove helpful to others who are likely to face similar transitions.

Among the hindering experiences is a sense of loss of some of the features of the athletic career, such as: intense physical activity, challenge and competition, thrilling atmosphere, performing in front of large crowds, seasonal rhythms and the routine of the lifestyle, and association with other athletes and celebrities. On some occasions, athletes might experience quite a strong yearning for features of their former careers but, for the most part, they experience fleeting, wistful moments of wondering what it would be like to have the opportunity to participate again. Some, particularly the jockeys, are frustrated because they do not have the opportunity to continue participation in
their sport on a recreational basis. Without regular, vigorous physical activity, some former athletes feel frustrated because they have yet to find an outlet for their energy. And others slip into a level of inactivity which they come to regard as unhealthy.

Other difficulties which have been reported include: a sense of alienation from others; lack of direction, guidance, or counselling services to assist with career planning; insufficient finances; a sense of frustration and stagnation due to underemployment or inability to accomplish goals; a sense of social failure due to lack of employment status; lack of marketable skills; worry and fear about an uncertain future; and various misfortunes, such as divorce, death in the family, and even sabotage of a business. In addition, sometimes other people in the athlete's life, particularly partners, experience difficulties with the change in status.

Among the experiences which have been considered to facilitate the transition are: second careers which provide excitement and challenge, as well as enjoyable working relationships; readily available alternate business or employment opportunities; availability of temporary positions which provide opportunities to earn an income while considering other possibilities, as well as opportunities to shed the the "ex-athlete" status which some find to be demoralizing; and simply having a plan, seen as helpful in bolstering the individual's sense of confidence and optimism.

Other facilitating experiences include: the continued
appreciation of good health and physical activity which might have been placed in jeopardy by continued participation in professional sport; the enjoyment of the physical challenge and camaraderie found in recreational sport; the realization that the individual no longer has a need or interest in performing for others and receiving public attention; the enjoyment of a family lifestyle with time to spend with one's loved ones; the continued support of family, friends, mentors, and team-mates; and the continued involvement and inclusion with the sport organization.

A further practical implication of this study is that counselling interventions for athletes and their spouses might be very helpful in the early stages of the athletes' careers. There are several reasons. One, athletes might actually begin the transition out of sport early in their careers, experiencing uncertainty, insecurity, and alienation while beginning to make changes in their assumptions about themselves and the world. Two, many athletes are uncomfortable sharing their concerns and feelings with others, including their intimates. Three, early career planning may reduce the worries which might interfere with the athlete's performance. And four, the athlete will likely gain personal confidence by having a plan for post-sport life.

Because the athletes in this study reported being unaware of the availability of counselling services and because most people are apprehensive about seeking such
help, it would seem important to find a method to inform and encourage athletes to participate. Some professional organizations, such as the Vancouver 'Canucks', have expressed concern about the personal and career development of their players. Their interest in assisting their players could be actualized by providing counselling services as part of the players' benefit package in much the same way that educational opportunities are encouraged.

Another practical implication arising from this study concerns the provision of counselling services to the general public. Because turbulent social, economic, and political conditions are eroding the occupational certainties which people have traditionally expected, the rules for career development have changed (Capra, 1982; Naisbitt, 1982; Toffler, 1980; Yankelovich, 1981). The experiences of athletes who make the transition to new careers and lifestyles may serve as models for others who experience similar transitions.

Implications for future research

Several implications for future research arise from this study. First of all, the case study methodology employing ethnographic interviews and individual narratives appears to be an effective method of gaining very rich information about this topic. In addition to generating important information about the personal experiences of each informant, this method also gathers information about the experiences of others who are not directly involved in the study. This is particularly
helpful because certain informants are under-represented in investigations of this topic. Survey studies have failed to gain any information about these individuals because they appear reluctant to respond, resulting in data which are likely to be skewed in favour of the experiences of more willing respondents. The methodology employed in this study has at least gained some ideas and impressions about the experiences of those individuals.

Secondly, future research should specifically strive to target the experiences of those under-represented informants who seem to fall into two, perhaps overlapping clusters, those individuals whose careers have been terminated in a completely involuntary fashion by debilitating injury or management decision and those individuals who have experienced extreme difficulties in adjusting to post-sport life.

Thirdly, future research might test the wider applicability of the model presented here. Given the present model, survey research might provide an appropriate way to test its general applicability.

A fourth implication is that future research might be directed toward exploring the withdrawal experiences of others, notably women, athletes from different sports, and athletes of different calibre and career duration, such as "rookies" and "superstars".

A fifth implication for future research is the need for longitudinal studies. For example, it would be interesting
to explore the life histories of former professional athletes as their sport careers fade into the distant past.

A sixth implication for future research is the need to explore the discrepancies and commonalities between the experiences of athletes and those people who withdraw from other types of careers.

And a seventh implication for future research is the need to explore the specific situations and circumstances under which individuals experience great personal difficulties in leaving sport. For example, research could examine the scenarios which are associated with athletes who regard retirement as failure. It may be that for these individuals the athletic role is the only meaningful one. Exploration of such difficulties may lead to a description and definition of the "trauma" which some athletes have been reported to experience.

Summary

A case study approach was used to generate a description and an understanding of the experience of withdrawal from a career in professional sport. The informants were ten males who had withdrawn from their careers during the years from 1976 to 1987 inclusive. The informants were selected from team and individual sports, involving four key informants from each of hockey and thoroughbred horse racing, plus one subsidiary informant from each of football and racquetball. Narratives rich in description were derived from personal interviews and were validated by the respective informants.
These narratives were synthesized into a general story of voluntary withdrawal from sport which reflects both common experience and turning points for varying plots. This general story was validated by the informants as well as an expert authority who has been professionally involved in sport for some thirty-six years.

Withdrawal from sport was a process which frequently began soon after the athletes became engaged in the career. When confronted with a variety of catalytic events which reminded them that the career was short-term, they addressed the potential for withdrawal in varying fashion and typically re-immersed themselves in the career. The potential eventually became more immediate, more urgent but frequently arose in the context of an enlarged perspective on the self and the profession. Thus, they were confronted with both internal and external pressures for change. As they began to assess their prospects for life after sport, they often became concerned about perceived limitations. They experienced a period of great confusion and indecision which was the most difficult and trying component of the story.

In the middle of the story, the athletes frequently sought direction in their careers, scrutinized the profession more carefully, and uncharacteristically reached out to others for ideas and support. Eventually, a culmination point arose, resulting in a decision to withdraw. The athletes were typically relieved by this decision because they were weary of their confusion and often were weary of
the physical and emotional demands of the career. A variety of new career opportunities were available to them. Some were planned and some were unexpected. Chance encounters played an important part in the process of leaving sport.

The story ended with the establishment and acceptance of a post-sport career and lifestyle. In reflecting on the decision to withdraw, the athletes were typically glad that they quit when they did, even though they were reluctant to do so at the time. Their withdrawal allowed them to preserve health, self-respect, and the regard of others. It also allowed them to develop other competencies and to express a more nurturant dimension of themselves as their interests had turned toward their emerging family lives. Most have found the transition to a new career and lifestyle relatively easy, frequently accepting a more modest lifestyle than they had experienced as professional athletes and usually finding some means to continue their participation in sport in a recreational or leadership capacity.

The study includes several theoretical implications which reinforce the importance of contextual considerations, the significance of chance encounters, and the changing personal meaning of work in life paths. The study supports criticisms of the traditional expectations that a career should follow a rising trajectory, as well as criticisms of the application to this topic of theoretical perspectives borrowed from social gerontology and thanatology. Furthermore, the study finds no evidence to support the
contention that this experience is extraordinary and traumatic. Rather, the experience seems to be characteristic of transitions in general. The study supports and offers extensions to Schlossberg's (1984) model of transitions.

The practical implications of the study include the utility of the general story as a model, knowledge base, and alternative perspective for individuals experiencing similar transitions and their helping practitioners. Recommendations for interventions include the use of Schlossberg's content-process model as a framework to assist individuals through a transitional experience such as leaving professional sport.
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## APPENDIX A

**SCHLOSSBERG'S MODEL: THE INDIVIDUAL IN TRANSITION**

*(Schlossberg, 1984, p. 108)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE TRANSITION</th>
<th>COPING RESOURCES</th>
<th>THE TRANSITION PROCESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>event or nonevent resulting in change</td>
<td>Balance of assets and liabilities</td>
<td>Reactions over time for better or for worse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TYPE</strong></td>
<td><strong>VARIABLES CHARACTERIZING THE TRANSITION</strong></td>
<td><strong>VARIABLES CHARACTERIZING THE INDIVIDUAL</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Anticipated</td>
<td>- Event or nonevent characteristics</td>
<td>- Personal and demographic characteristics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Unanticipated</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Socioeconomic status</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Nonevent</td>
<td>- Trigger</td>
<td>- Sex role</td>
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<td>- Chronic hassle</td>
<td>- Timing</td>
<td>- Age and stage of life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Event or nonevent</td>
<td>- Role change</td>
<td>- State of health</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>CONTEXT</strong></td>
<td>- Duration</td>
<td>- Psychological resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Relationship of person to transition</td>
<td>- Previous experience with a similar transition</td>
<td>- Ego development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Setting in which transition occurs</td>
<td>- Concurrent stress</td>
<td>- Personality</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>IMPACT</strong></td>
<td>- Assessment</td>
<td>- Outlook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Relationships</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Commitments and values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Routines</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Coping responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Assumptions</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Functions: Controlling situation, meaning, or stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Roles</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Strategies: Information seeking, direct action, inhibition of action, intrapsychic behavior</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

GENERAL PROCEDURES

Recruit and select informants

Initial interview

Transcription of tapes

Draft of individual narrative

Validation interview

Revision of individual narrative

Return narrative to informant

Repeat for other informants

Reread narratives and identify issues

Cluster issues

Draft general story

Circulate draft to external editors

Circulate draft to informants

Validation interviews with individual informants

Revision of general story
### Descriptive Overview of Informants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Current Age</th>
<th>Current Year</th>
<th>Current Year</th>
<th>Length of Career</th>
<th>Years Away</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>David Hindmarch (Hockey)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>1985</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Phys Ed Student</td>
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<td>Steve Clippingdale (Hockey)</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>1980</td>
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<td>Gary Lupul (Hockey)</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>1988</td>
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<td>Darcy Rota (Hockey)</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>31</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Frank Barroby (Jockey)</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1961</td>
<td>1976</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>31</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Mark Patzer (Jockey)</td>
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<td>23</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Daniel Williams (Jockey)</td>
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<td>22</td>
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<td>1982</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1972</td>
<td>1987</td>
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<td>motivation, interests, replaced</td>
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</table>
APPENDIX D

LETTER OF INFORMATION

Department of Counselling Psychology,
University of British Columbia,
5780 Toronto Road,
Vancouver,
V6T 1L2.

date:

to:

This letter is to invite you to participate in a research project entitled: The Second Period: Coping with Career Change from Professional Sport. As the title suggests, the purpose of this study is to examine and describe the experience of leaving professional sport and establishing a new career. In addition, the research will strive to identify factors which helped or hindered adjustment to career change, as well as various coping strategies which people have used during this time.

This research is important because the termination of an athletic career is assumed to be a stressful event, despite the lack of research which adequately describes the experience from the perspective of the athlete. The description of how athletes have coped with the transition from one career to another will be helpful and informative to other athletes who will eventually face a similar experience, as well as to the general public who are increasingly experiencing multiple careers.

Your participation in this project is requested because you have recently completed a professional career and, therefore, you are an authority on your personal experience with this transition. As a participant, you will be asked to recall and, in a series of three approximately two hour interviews, describe your experience of leaving your career. After each interview, I will strive to adequately summarize your description in a more formal written format. You will then be asked to examine this summary to verify, correct, or add to it. In addition to your own recollections, I will be seeking information and ideas from other sources, such as the literature and other athletes. You may also have suggestions about other sources of information or perspectives, such as a personal diary, newspaper clippings, family members, friends, coaches, or employers.

This type of research differs markedly from other types of interviews which you may have experienced. Rather than the writer interpreting and describing your remarks as he or she sees fit, each stage of my write-ups will be offered for your review. This method provides you with a considerable degree of control and in-put into the final outcome of the
APPENDIX F

OVERVIEW: THE GENERAL STORY OF WITHDRAWING FROM PROFESSIONAL SPORT

Beginning

Seeing the potential to withdraw
  Early thoughts
  Catalytic events
  Early plans for life after sport
Re-immersing self in career
Reconsidering the career
  Personal values
  Examining the meaning of sport
Questioning the future
  Limitations
  Confusion and indecision

Middle

Seeking direction
  Increasing scrutiny
  Reaching out
Reaching a culmination point
  Catalytic event
  Voluntary or involuntary termination
Committing to withdraw
Launching a new career
  Alternate career paths
  Actualization of new career

Ending

Getting established
  Post-sport employment
  Support services
  Models
Adjusting to a new lifestyle
  Hindering experiences
  Facilitating experiences
  Sport as a metaphor for life
Developing new perspectives
  New sense of self
  New meanings of sport
Immersing self in life
  Continuities between careers
  New roles in sport
Feeling settled
  Sense of resignation
  Sense of satisfaction
Reflecting on the transition