Research on Supporting Dual Career for Japanese Paralympians

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In the world of sports, not only game results but the viewpoint of career is significant to the life of an athlete. In the "Sport Basic Plan" that was adopted in 2012, it revealed to the sports instructors and sports organizations that while securing the required environment for athlete life (such as performance and training) as a top athlete, they should enlighten awareness of "Dual Career", which is educating and giving vocational training necessary for the athlete's career after retirement as an athletic player to provide for the future, and policy objectives were set out to support career formation for the athletes. In the athlete career transition model by Wylleman and others (2004), it states that the career of a top athlete is analyzed not just from the athletic period, but from the whole life and whole character perspective. It states that not only performance but the influence of a plurality of each elements such as mental development, psychopathic development, academic development and career development, and financial basis develop the athlete's individual careers.

Studies concerning non-disabled athletes have advanced and many career programs are offered. On the other hand, when it comes to Paralympians, there are often more uncertain points from the initial process of career development. Paralympians possess the equal "independence" as nondisabled persons, and there are actual situations where there are an extremely low number of people who advance to become able to consider the career of both occupation and competition. This research will focus on Paralympians and aim to clarify their individual career consciousness. In this research, a general survey was conducted to investigate the career of Paralympians. To be more specific, qualitative survey (interview) was conducted to 10 active and retired Paralympian athletes (3 males, 7 women) for the purpose of researching the consciousness towards career in Japanese Paralympians and the obstructive factors upon selecting their career.

3 results were obtained from this interview survey, (1) Social Identity concerning the Paralympic Movement, (2) Aim to combine Sports and Career, and (3) The Importance of Education.

As the development of athletes has been becoming enthusiastic in preparation for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, the athletes should continue to make use of the unique career techniques that they have achieved during this period and take advantage of it after the Olympic/Paralympic. There is a compelling need of an establishment of a human resources development system that reflects the concept of Olympic Legacy where athletes are required to contribute to society in a long term.

This research clarified the current situation of dual career support for Paralympians from an academic approach. The results of the main investigation using qualitative survey make it possible to clearly articulate and actualize the challenges of the dual career support, and lead to the challenges of the dual career support, and lead to specific measures. The improvement of an environment where Paralympians can concentrate on their competitions and the development of a program where they can seek career support after retirement are essential to sports organizations. Moreover, it is an urgent need to secure a place where beneficial information can be proactively offered and shared to Paralympians so that it can help solve the problems that Paralympians face upon making career decisions.

Key words: dual career, career of Japanese Paralympians, career transition, career process