REASONS FOR WITHDRAWING FROM SPORTS IN THE FORMERLY ACTIVE ATHLETES

Abstract
Reasons for withdrawing from sports are issues that experts in many countries address with special attention. In Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereinafter: BiH), these issues have not been previously researched. Therefore, this was a good ground for the author to assess what the most common reasons for withdrawing from sports for the BiH athletes were. 160 former athletes took part in the adapted survey for determining reasons for withdrawing from sports. The factor analysis produced eight factors (reasons for withdrawal). Besides determining the main reasons for withdrawing from sports for the entire sample, the T test was used to also examine the differences between male and female athletes (N=79 females, N=81 males), differences between athletes involved in individual and team sports (N=77 individual, N=83 team), as well as differences between athletes at the national and international level of competing (N=101 national, N=59 international) regarding favoring certain reasons for withdrawing. It has been determined that the BiH athletes find the following reasons for withdrawal most important: „interest in other activities“, „dissatisfaction with the coach/club“ and „money problems.“ When the results are compared with the results of athletes coming from other countries, we can notice some specifics in the BiH athletes regarding reasons for withdrawal, where the main factors seem to be „dissatisfaction with the coach/club“ and „money problems“.

Key words: WITHDRAWING / REASONS / FORMER ATHLETES

INTRODUCTION
Participating in a sport activity can have numerous positive impacts on a human being. Such an impact is especially strong in children and youngsters in terms of acquiring different positive physical and psycho-social characteristics such as body growth and development, physical readiness, responsibility, morality, self-confidence, perception of competence, as well as social skills (Bredemeier, Weiss, Shields & Shewchuk, 1986; Feltz & Ewing, 1987; Weiss, 1987; Martens, 1988; Smith, Smoll & Smith, 1989). Every year, a large number of youngsters enter sports, and a great deal of them stay in sport for a longer period of time. According to the research conducted by Ewing, Seefeldt i Brown (1996) in America, 48,374,000...
young people between the age of 5 and 17 participate in some sort of sport activities. However, the first researches also showed that a large number of them, up to 35%, leave sports permanently every year (Sapp & Haubenstricker, 1978; Pooley, 1981; Sefton & Fry, 1981; Robertson, 1981). Therefore, if we want to make use of unquestionable potential of sport activity for general (psycho-social-physical) personal growth and development, we would have to focus on two issues that are of primary significance. The first issue refers to the phenomenon of entering and staying in a sport – „what is it that brings young people into sports” i.e., „why do young people practice sports”. The second issue refers to the phenomenon of quitting practicing sports and analyzes the reasons (motives) for withdrawing from sports, what actually represents the primary aim of this research)

**Withdrawing from sports** represents a primary term of this research, and is introduced with the aim of examining the phenomenon of leaving sports i.e. assessing reasons stated by the athletes that seem to be crucial for withdrawing from sports. Many researches on this topic use different terminology such as fluctuation, dropout, burnout, retirement and due to that, the experts advise on awareness when using the suggested terms (Gould, 1987; Klint & Weiss, 1986). The term **fluctuation** in sport implies the transfer of an athlete from one team to another, or from one sport to another one. The term **dropout** implies voluntary premature dropping out of sport’s career i.e. sudden and unexpected quitting sport in a situation where an athlete did not use up entirely his/her potential (Salmel, 1994). The term **burnout** is used in case when an athlete, due to excessive physical and mental pressure, suffers from emotional exhaustion and stress; the consequence is a negative attitude towards sport practicing which then leads to leaving the sport activity (Smith, 1986). The term **retirement** is also commonly used and refers to athletes who voluntarily decide to leave the sport either for reasons of having achieved the sport goals or for reasons of having reached a certain age (Alfermann, 1995). All the stated terms according to their definitions, represent a specific way of withdrawing from sports.

Since the topic of this research is to determine all the reasons that affect the BiH athletes’ withdrawal from a sport activity, not a single term is completely adequate to totally embrace the observed area. Therefore, the term **withdrawing** is used in this paper as a general term for defining quitting sports and it encompasses all the above mentioned specific terms except the term **retirement**, since the stress in the research was on younger athletes (from 15 to 30 years of age). The term **withdrawing from sports** in this paper can be defined as a phenomenon of leaving sports by an athlete due to numerous potential reasons. What those reasons are, is the topic of the paper.

Withdrawing from sports and reasons that cause that, first became the topic of interest during the seventies (Orlick, 1974 cited according to Weiss & Ferrer-Caja, 2002; Sapp & Haubenstricker, 1978), and then became especially important during the eighties (Robertson, 1981; Sefton & Fry, 1981; Gould, Feltz., Horn & Weiss, M, 1982; Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1984; Scanlan, Ravizza & Stein, 1989). The aim of the first research was simply to identify the reasons for withdrawing from sports. Later on, researchers have started to include other variables (culture, sex, type of sport, level of sport activity, etc.) in order to observe possible differences that would enable them to learn something new. Based on these and many other studies, regardless of sexual and cultural differences, as well as differences in terms of level and type of sport activity, the researchers have come up with conclusion that athletes stress out similar reasons for withdrawal from sports. The most common reasons that show up in the majority of researches are: interest in other activities, lack of fun and satisfaction, lack of success or advancement, not enough participation in competitions, competitive stress, dissatisfaction with the coach and program, boredom, lack of friends (Gould, 1987; Weiss & Petlichkoff, 1989; Weiss & Chaumeton, 1992). Apart from these reasons, in some research papers there are reasons such as lack of money and weak social support (Coakley & White, 1992).

The primary aim of this paper was to examine i.e., identify the reasons for withdrawal from sports in BiH in order to establish possible particulars in athletes from this region. Bearing in mind the importance of sport for young people and the current sport situation in the region, it is clear why this research is being conducted. If we understand the reasons for withdrawal of younger from sports in BiH, then
we can acquire certain precognition and be ready for better organization of sport activities and thus attract a larger number of young people into sports, and at the same time reduce the number of those who leave sports.

Led by the guidelines set out by Weiss and Petlichkoff (1989) besides the aspect „culture”, other social-contextual aspects such as sex, type of sport activity (individual or team) and level of competitive experience (national and international level) were also taken into consideration.

In this paper 160 formerly active athletes from BiH were examined in order to establish specifics in athletes in this region as well as potential differences between the male and female athletes, athletes from team and individual sports, and athletes with national and international experience when it comes to the reasons for withdrawing from sport. Taking into consideration the mentioned guidelines, results classification is in the part of the paper referring to the presentation of results, and the classification was done according to the aspects that were significant for the research. The results for the entire sample are presented first, and they refer to the reasons for leaving sports in the BiH and this is marked as the „cultural aspect”. The second aspect refers to differences between the male and female athletes when it comes to the reasons for leaving sports and it is marked as the „sex aspect”. The third aspect is the assessment of differences between athletes from individual and team sports, and it is marked as the „aspect – type of sport activity”. The last aspect is marked as the „aspect - level of competitive experience” and refers to the assessment of differences in pointing out the primary reasons for quitting sports between the athletes of national competitive experience (athletes who competed only in BiH) and athletes of international competitive experience (athletes who competed in BiH and abroad).

Therefore, it is evident that the paper is of retrospective type, like most of the related researches. It means that the sample is presented by the formerly active athletes i.e., athletes that met the criteria for this research (years of practice, hours of training per week, competitions) but who finished their sport career before taking part in this research, and their answers are based on their memory i.e. the retrospect of events.

Taking into consideration the previous researches that were conducted on this topic in some other countries, it was assumed that the BiH athletes would point out similar reasons for leaving sports. However, when taking social-economic situation in BiH into consideration, it was also assumed that certain specifics would be established in these athletes. This especially refers to the mentioned economic situation i.e. the impact of finances on practicing sports. Bad economic crisis in BiH and bad financial situation of sport clubs and people in general, consequently influenced sport processes and decisions whether to practice or leave sports. Based on that, it was assumed that the BiH athletes would point out the reasons for leaving sports, which are direct related to money.

**METHOD**

**Participants**

In this paper, 160 former athletes were examined (79 females, 81 males) from the Banja Luka municipality (BiH). Out of them, 77 participated in individual sports, and 83 participated in team sports (see Table 1). The examinees were chosen from 4 most popular individual sports (athletics, tennis, swimming and martial arts) and 4 most popular team sports (soccer, basketball, handball and volleyball) in BiH.
The criteria that the examinees had to meet in order to be taken into account refer to the age at the moment of examining, years spent in active sport practicing, regularly organized practicing within the week, participation in competitions, and the age of leaving sport.

The criteria for the selection of examinees:

- **age** (the requirement is between 15 and 30 years): average age for the entire sample is $M=23.69$ years (min. = 16 years, max. = 30 years, $SD = 3.48$)
- **years spent in active sport practicing** (the requirement is minimum 2 years): the average value for the entire sample is $M = 8.48$ years (min.=2 years, max. = 20 years, $SD = 3.71$)
- **regularly organized practicing** (the requirement is minimum 5 hours per week): the average value for the entire sample is $M=11.66$ hours per week (min. = 7 hours, max. = 30 hours, $SD = 5.40$)
- **participation in competitions** (the requirement of taking part in competitions while actively practicing sports): 70 athletes participated regularly, 63 often, 27 sometimes
- **the age of leaving sport** (the requirement is that the athletes stopped practicing sports after 1995, i.e. after the war) all the examinees met this criterion.

Apart from the selection of the examinees according to sex and participation in individual or team sports, the selection according to the level of competition was also made: „national level” – athletes who only participated in competitions in BiH (N = 101) and „international” level – athletes who participated in international competitions (N = 59).

### Measuring instruments

The questionnaire which has been used for assessing the reasons for withdrawing from sports was obtained on the basis of „Questionnaire of Reasons for Attrition” (Gould et al., 1982) and frank questions about the withdrawal reasons, which were posed to the former athletes during the pilot testing. The questionnaire has 29 items where the examinees ranked the importance of different reasons for their withdrawal on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = I do not agree, 2 = I mostly do not agree, 3 = I mostly agree, 4 = I agree). For example, I stopped practicing sports because: the coach was incompetent; I had bad results; it was boring...Eight factors i.e. eight primary reasons for withdrawing from sports have been established through the factorial analysis, and they are: dissatisfaction with the coach/club, lack of progress/success, interest in other activities, loss of interest/lack of fun, lack of social support, lack of money, health problems/injuries and stress/exertion. These factors explain $54.4. \%$ of the total variant. The reliability testing of the obtained factorial structure shows that there is a satisfactory internal consistence for all 8 factors since Cronbach $\alpha$ ranges from the lowest value of 0.68 – the ‘lack of money’ factor and continues up to the highest value of 0.83 – the ‘dissatisfaction with the coach/club’ factor (Table 2).
Table 2. Items number, arithmetical mean (M), standard deviation (SD), correlation span between individual items and corrected total score on scale (rit), Cronbach α and percentage of variance explanation for subscales of questionnaires of reasons for withdrawing from sports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>number of items</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>span</th>
<th>Cronbach α</th>
<th>% variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dissatisfaction with the coach/club</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>.52 - .66</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>19.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lack of progress/success</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>.48 - .67</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interest in the other activities</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>.42 - .74</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>loss of interest/lack of fun</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>.52 - .67</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lack of social support</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>.49 - .57</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lack of money</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>.34 - .63</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health problems/injuries</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stress/strain</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>54.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>54.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Procedure

Since the examinees in this research are former athletes, the research is retrospective – the athletes were being contacted in many ways from mid February till mid March 2007. The first way of contacting was by going to sport clubs (all eight sports) and gathering information about the former athletes from coaches and the club management. The second way was by going to the Faculty of Physical Education in Banja Luka and contacting teaching assistants with the aim of getting some information about the students who used to be actively involved in sports. The third way was the so called ‘snowball’ method of gathering the sample examinees (Salganik & Heckathorn, 2004). The examinees who were contacted on the basis of information obtained in the sport clubs and at the faculty, gave information about their colleagues who also withdrew from sports.

The majority of examinees were contacted directly by the author. They filled out the questionnaire after being provided with some additional information about the research. Only few examinees were contacted indirectly i.e. they were given questionnaires by coaches or friends who passed on the additional information about the research and told them how to fill out the questionnaire.

Statistical Analysis

As previously mentioned, the exploratory factorial analysis of the main axes was used in the paper, in order to extract factors (for both questionnaires) with the advantage being given to the parallel analysis (in contrast to the method of keeping the factors according to ‘eigenvalues’ larger than 1.0), and this is why 8 factors were kept. After establishing the number of factors, the oblique rotation (of promax type) was done in order to simplify and clear the solution structure. The factorial structures obtained for both questionnaires are shown in the Table 3. Descriptive statistics was a starting point for the results analysis for the entire sample, and it consisted of arithmetic medians and standard deviations for all subscales. Differences in reasons for withdrawing from sports according to the sex variables and type of sport activity (individual-team sports) and level of competitive experience (national-international level) have been assessed with the Student T-test. Two-factorial ANOVA has been used in order to check interactions for variables sex – team/individual and sex-national/international, however none of the possible interactions has shown statistical significance and therefore the results have not been presented.

All the statistical data processes have been done with the statistical package SPSS for Windows (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, Version 15.0).
Table 3. Factor loading for items in scale – reasons for withdrawing from sports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I stopped practicing sports because…</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24. ... the club atmosphere was bad.</td>
<td>.796</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. ... the organization in the club was bad.</td>
<td>.711</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. ... there was no team work.</td>
<td>.657</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ... the coach was not competent.</td>
<td>.652</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. ... there was no team spirit.</td>
<td>.642</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. ... I had certain problems with the coach.</td>
<td>.588</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. ... I was getting bad results.</td>
<td>.805</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. ... I was not as successful as I wanted to be.</td>
<td>.797</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. ... I did not progress enough.</td>
<td>.735</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. ... I was not getting enough awards.</td>
<td>.532</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. ... I was not getting enough rewards.</td>
<td>.420</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. ... it was taking a lot of my time.</td>
<td>.884</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. ... I did not have enough time for school (university)</td>
<td>.809</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. ... I had some other tasks.</td>
<td>.675</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. ... I did not have enough time for friends.</td>
<td>.402</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. ... I was not interested any more.</td>
<td>.790</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. ... I was bored</td>
<td>.754</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. ... it was not fun any more.</td>
<td>.584</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. ... it was not exciting enough.</td>
<td>.476</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. ... my parents/friends wanted that.</td>
<td>.728</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. ... My parents were not supportive any more.</td>
<td>.667</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. ... I stopped meeting new friends.</td>
<td>.600</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. ... I could not be financially independent.</td>
<td>.837</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. ... I could not earn enough money.</td>
<td>.715</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. ... it required a lot of money.</td>
<td>.403</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. ... I had health problems (sickness)</td>
<td>.807</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. ... I hurt myself.</td>
<td>.739</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. ... it was stressful.</td>
<td>.732</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. ... it was strenuous.</td>
<td>.553</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: absolute values less than 0.30 were omitted

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Cultural Aspect**

On the scale of reasons for withdrawing from sports, the BiH athletes stress the “interest in other activities” as the first reason (M=2.04; SD=0.83) and it goes without saying that the athletes were mostly leaving sports because they wanted to spend their time in some other activities (school, job, hobby, etc.) that were more important to them (Figure 1). This reason seems to be the primary one in the research conducted in the USA (Sapp & Haubenstricker, 1978; Gould et al., 1982) where it was marked as the “inter-
Primary reasons for withdrawing from sports in the Formerly Active Athletes

Most of the researches in the world, as well as the research made by the former Spanish athletes (Marquez, Salgueiro, Molinero, Tuero & Alvarez, 2006) whose main reason was „I had some other tasks to do“. Besides this reason for withdrawal, almost equally important reasons pointed out by the athletes were „dissatisfaction with the coach/club“ (M=2.00; SD = 0.78), and „money problems“ (M = 1.96; SD = 0.90).

These three primary reasons for withdrawing from sports have somewhat lower average values which might mislead to conclusion that these are not the only reasons for the withdrawal. The evidence that these are the primary reasons, lies in the fact that the athletes, just like in the other researches, when stating the reasons for withdrawing from sports, state several reasons that altogether influence the withdrawal from sports. The consequence is the larger number of reasons with approximate but lower values.

Dissatisfaction with the coach’s work, club organization, relations and the atmosphere in the team are the specifics of this paper, as there are not too many researches that have established larger significance of this reason for withdrawal. Out of numerous researches of this type conducted in the USA that have established the importance of this reason for withdrawing from sports is the research by Martin (1997) and Bussmann (2004), and with regards to Europe, that is the research conducted by Marquez and associates (2006). The explanation of significance of the reason „dissatisfaction with the coach/club” lies in the recent BiH history, which has, due to the war, lost the qualified staff, and on top of that, the bad economic situation has caused insufficient investment in sport and highly qualified sport institutions that should produce new experts.

The problems with money i.e. the lack of financial means for serious work and inability to earn for normal living through sports, also presents an important reason for leaving sports in BiH. This reason, especially, presents the specifics of this research because rare are the researches such as this one or the research conducted by Coakley and White (1992) where the lack of money was identified as an important factor for leaving sport. In most researches, this factor is not being mentioned at all. The explanation of importance of this reason lies in the economic situation which has already been mentioned and lack of money in all social spheres, and especially in sports. Large expenses of practicing sports professionally, force athletes to look for jobs that they can make a living from or that can enable them to continue going to school, which could later on help them have better living conditions, and all this as a trade off with a sport activity which eventually falls behind.

Besides these three primary reasons, the athletes also point out some other reasons which are far less significant such as „health problems” (M = 1.62; SD = 0.96), „loss of interest/lack of fun” ( M = 1.55; SD = 0.67 ), „stress/exertion“ ( M = 1.54 ; SD = 0.75 ) and „lack of progress/success” (M = 1.46; SD = 0.55). The last one seems to be the „lack of social support” (M= 1.15; SD = 0.36) and is the least significant for withdrawing from sports.

Figure 1. Reasons for withdrawing from sports – average values for the entire sample

PHYSICAL CULTURE, BELGRADE, 63 (2009) 2
Gender aspect

Three main reasons for withdrawing from sports that often show up for the entire sample of examinees are usually true for male athletes as well as for the females but with the difference that the male athletes stress out „money problems” \((M = 2.05; SD = 0.86)\) as the first reason for withdrawal, and then come the „interest in the other activities” \((M = 1.95; SD = 0.81)\) and „dissatisfaction with the coach/club” \((M = 1.90; SD = 0.77)\). In female athletes, „interest in the other activities” \((M = 2.13; SD = 0.85)\) comes in the first place, „dissatisfaction with the coach/club” \((M = 2.09; SD = 0.77)\) comes second, and „money problems” \((M = 1.87; SD = 0.83)\) comes third. „Health problems/injuries” is in the fourth place in both sexes, however the „loss of interest/lack of fun” also comes in the fourth place in females and is in the seventh place in male athletes. The fifth and sixth places are „stress/exertion” and „lack of progress/success” in male athletes while these two reasons are in the sixth and seventh place in females. The „lack of social support” is the last on the scale in both sexes and has very low values compared to the other motives.

Since there are differences when it comes to ranking reasons for withdrawing from sports in male and female athletes, the T-test was done and it has been established that the given differences are not statistically significant. In order to solve the problem of withdrawing from sports in BiH, it is necessary to focus on reasons for withdrawal that have been established for the entire sample since taking into consideration the sex aspect or having a special approach to solving this problem in male or female athletes will not have such a great significance.

Aspect – type of sport activity
(team – individual)

Team sport athletes usually find „dissatisfaction with the coach/club” \((M = 2.12; SD = 0.79)\), „interest in the other activities” \((M = 2.03; SD = 0.83)\) and „money problems” as the most significant reasons for withdrawing from sports. These are also the most important reasons for the entire sample. The athletes from individual sports also state these three reasons as the most important ones, but with the difference that the „money problems” \((M = 2.08; SD = 0.94)\) is in the first place, „interest in the other activities” \((M = 2.08; SD = 0.94)\) is in the second place, and „dissatisfaction with the coach/club” \((M = 1.85; SD = 0.75)\) is in the third place. Other reasons such as „health problems”, „loss of interest/lack of fun”, „stress/exertion” and „lack of progress/success” are not as important as the first three reasons and their values are similar in athletes of both types of sport activity – team and individual. The last and the least significant for both type of athletes is the reason „lack of social support”.

While testing differences between these two groups of athletes, it has been established that there is a statistically significant difference (level of significance 0.05) only for the subscale „money problems” with the coach/club” \((t = 2.254; p = 0.026)\). The fact that the team sport athletes find this reason more significant is due to their stronger bonding i.e. dependence on the club which is not the case in individual athletes whose career and organization of sport activities primarily depend on their personal and their parents’ engagement.

Apart from these reasons, „money problems” should also be pointed out as no statistically significant difference has been established for it, however the difference of average values is evident. The individual sport athletes find this reason more significant due to their private organization i.e. personal financing of sport activities and poor engagement and support of other sport clubs to these individuals.

Aspect – level of competitive experience
(national – international)

The „national” level athletes emphasize „dissatisfaction with the coach/club” as the most important reason for withdrawing from sports \((M = 2.03; SD = 0.79)\), and then the „interest in the other activities” \((M = 1.95; SD = 0.78)\), and „money problems” \((M = 1.79; SD = 0.83)\). These three reasons are also of the highest importance in „international” level athletes, but with the difference that the „money problems” \((M = 2.27; SD = 0.92)\) comes first, followed by the „interest in the other activities” \((M = 2.19; SD = 0.90)\) while „dissatisfaction with the coach/club” \((M = 1.94; SD = 0.76)\) is in the third place. The T test has been used and it has been established that there is a statistically significant difference (level of significance 0.01) only for the subscale „money problems” \((t = -3.461; p = 0.001)\). The explanation why this motive is considered more significant by the „international” level athletes is due to the difference in financial investment. The contests at the interna-

200
tional level require much more financial investment for trips and competition expenses in other countries, as well as for more and better quality training. Therefore, the problems with money i.e., the lack of financial means can be crucial for leaving sports, especially in the country such as BiH where the economic situation is very bad.

**CONCLUSION**

After establishing the reasons for the BiH athletes withdrawing from sports, the figures obtained are used to make comparisons with the athletes from other countries and to establish their particulars. The first and most significant reason for withdrawing that the athletes acknowledged was ‘interest in the other activities’ such as school and hobby which seems to be one of the most significant reasons for withdrawing in athletes from other regions.

What seems to be interesting when stating the reasons for withdrawing is the significance of reasons “dissatisfaction with the coach/club” and “money problems”. That should be the guideline for the ones responsible in the state institutions, as well as for those in private sport organizations. They should invest money in the education of human resources and make a financial plan of financing perspective athletes in order to prevent their leaving for the lack of money-reasons. The hypothesis set out at the beginning of this research that the bad economic situation in BiH can be one of the factors that brings about the particularity of reasons for withdrawing in athletes compared to other regions. The research has acknowledged and therefore draws attention to the financial problems in athletes at the ‘international level’ of competition. The athletes who have reached a higher sport level by competing outside the borders of BiH, have stated the ‘money problems’ as the most common reason for withdrawing, which is not the case in athletes competing at the ‘national level’. The higher expenses of sport activities at this level cannot be financed through private family funds. The only way to finance them, however, is to involve both public and private institutions that have an adequate financial plan, and thus can prevent top athletes withdrawing from sports due to lack of funds. The phenomenon of top athletes withdrawing from sports due to lack of money is almost unknown in the majority of countries where such types of research were conducted.

Bearing in mind that this research is one of the first of this type in BiH, one of the objectives is to draw the researcher’s attention to these issues, and to have more researches that would include larger numbers of sample examinees and also take into consideration the presence of all the regions when choosing the examinees, and not have only the Banja Luka region. It would also be desirable if the future researches took into account the sport entry and exit statistics at the annual level since that would give us a good insight into the future of sport in BiH.

In developed countries, one of the interest areas, which should find its place in this region as well, is emotional-economic-social state of top athletes after their withdrawal from sports and their adapting to new lifestyle and possibilities that the society offers.

One of the guidelines for future researches refers to tracking motives for practicing sports in active athletes and establishing their reasons for withdrawing from sports in a prospective way which could not be assessed in this paper due to the time and financial restrictions. That would not only enable precise information, but also more adequate reactions to the negative trends of youngsters leaving sports.
REFERENCES


Reasons for Withdrawing from Sports in the Formerly Active Athletes


Dusko Lepir, MA
Jovana Ducica 84
78 000 Banja Luka, BiH
dusko_l@yahoo.com