

Continuers, Re-kindlers, and Late Starters: A Profile of Masters Athletes and their Experiences in Sport

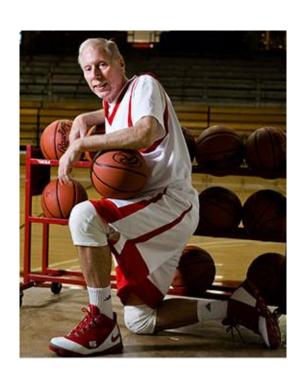
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Background & Purpose

- Masters athletes train and compete in sport for older adults (Reaburn & Dascombe, 2008), and are exemplars of successful ageing.
- Participation in competitive sport may provide benefits such as meeting new friends and giving meaning to life (Dionigi et al., 2011; Ogles & Masters, 2000; Smith & **Storandt**, 1997).
- However, existing research on the profile and experiences of Masters athletes is largely limited to the physical domain.







- The purpose of this study was to examine the perceived physical, social, psychological, and cognitive benefits of competitive sport for adults aged **50+.**
- Research questions:
 - 1. What is the profile of Masters athletes?
 - 2. What are the perceived benefits associated with training for, and competing in, Masters sport?

Methodology

- In-person, semi-structured interviews with Masters athletes (n = 19 women, 21 men).
- Participants ranged in age from 50 to 85 years.
- Open and emergent coding was undertaken independently and then collaboratively.

Profile of Masters Athletes

- Train and compete in individual and team sports (e.g., swimming, pickleball, basketball, athletics, dragon boating, slo-pitch, race-walking.)
- Compete at the local, provincial, national, and international events.
- Train/practice 3 to 5 times a week, for 45 minutes to 2 hours.
- Masters athletes are continuers in sport, re-kindlers after an absence, or late starters participating in sport for the first time.









Key Benefits



SOCIAL

- Family, friends
- e.g., stronger relationships, larger group of friends, closer with children



PHYSICAL

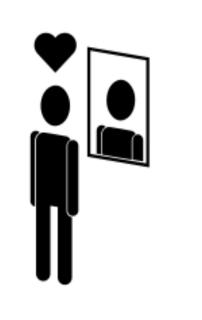
- Overall health, strength, energy
- e.g., improved strength, more energy for day-to-day activities

COGNITIVE



Improved mindfulness

• e.g., feeling of being more awake, having a clearer mind, improved problem solving



PSYCHOLOGICAL

- Improved sense of well-being, increased self-confidence, having a purpose in life
 - e.g., feeling happier and enjoying life more, a better sense of self

Implications

- This study contributes to the development of an interdisciplinary framework of enablers, constraints, and benefits of Masters sport participation.
- The perceived benefits illustrate that Masters sport may be promoted as a positive outlet for successful ageing, regardless of one's previous or recent experience in sport.

Sport and Social Impact Research Group (SSIRG)



