

Academic Journal Review – Sports Management

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Title of Work: Journal Review 1
Author: Sugimoto 2017
Reference:
Date of Article:
PERSONAL REVIEW
<u>Review Suggestions</u> ▪ Give an overview of the article. ▪ What are the key points in this article? ▪ Who is intended audience – academics/ practitioners – why do you come to that conclusion? ▪ Does the author define any terms? Are the definitions specific, useful, circular? ▪ What are the key findings? ▪ What did I find striking or interesting about these key points? ▪ How has this article influenced me in thinking deeply about my values, beliefs and assumptions? ▪ Does the author suggest areas for further research or discussion?
<u>Personal Review (300 words)</u> Sugimoto et al. (2017) explore the impact of early sport specialization on youth athletes in their article published in Strength and Conditioning Journal. The paper investigates the increasingly popular practice of young athletes committing to a single sport throughout the year and considers the consequences for both performance development and injury risk. While many consider early specialization to be a pathway into elite level sport leading to potential scholarships and even professional status, the authors argue that the current evidence does not strongly support these assumptions and is inconclusive. The association between single sport specialization and increased injury risk due to overuse is a central finding discussed within the article. In comparison to multisport athletes, findings suggest that those who go for the early specialization option demonstrate higher rates of sport related injuries, in particular repetitive stress injuries. The authors emphasize that a prior history of injury is itself a significant risk factor for future injury, creating long-term health concerns which can potentially become a barrier to elite level participation. Data presents that only a minor proportion of elite level athletes specialized early, indicating that diversifying your participation within sports may be better for long term success. The article also highlights the psychosocial risks, these include burnout and dropout from sports. Adolescent athletes are constantly undergoing growth and maturation, the authors stress the importance of adequate recovery and a balance within training loads. Designed resistance training and structured conditioning programmes are recommended to reduce the risk of injury. The intended target audience for this article appears to be for young athletes and their parents / coaches as within the article it discusses the transportation aspect and how that may be a factor in decisions regarding multisport exposure. One thing which I found particularly surprising is that serious sport related injuries, particularly overuse injuries are much more common within the age range focussed on than they were previously, which may be correlating with the popularity of early specialization. Although the authors provide practical recommendations, they highlight the need for further longitudinal research examining the long-term performance and health outcomes associated with early specialization.

