

# Transitioning out of High-Performance Sport: A Parent's Guide

Every athlete will eventually transition out of Basketball. Whether it's due to injury, burnout, changing priorities or other life choices, the decision to transition out of sport can be emotional—for both the athlete and their family. As a parent, how you respond during this time matters.

Here are 6 core messages to help guide your support:

1

## Understand the “Why”

**Start by listening**—really listening. Is your young person feeling burnt out? Struggling with injury or non-selection? Or are they being pulled toward new opportunities like study, work, or travel? **Not all exits are negative**—sometimes it's simply time to pursue something different. Avoid rushing to fix the problem; instead, **explore their reasons** together without judgment.

2

## Support the Process, Not Just the Decision

**Transition is not a single moment**—it's a process. There may be uncertainty and emotional ups and downs. Be patient, supportive and empathise with your young person as they work through their decision. Be mindful that the decision to retire from sport may be **voluntary** (they make the decision) or **involuntary** (the decision is made for them through deselection from a team or career-ending injury). Involuntary retirement can bring some added challenges for your young person, as it often involves a loss of choice and can happen in a more unexpected or unplanned way. Regardless of the situation, the process of moving on from sport can impact an athlete socially, emotionally and physically.

3

## Celebrate What Sport Has Given Them

**Acknowledge their time in sport**, the experiences they have gained and the skills they have developed have contributed to the great human that they are. They have likely gained **personal strengths** like discipline, teamwork, resilience, and **physical strengths** like fitness, agility and core stability. These aren't lost when an athlete transitions out of sport; they are **transferable to life**, to physical health and to future career paths.

## Ask: What's the Next Step?

4

**Moving on** from high-performance sport opens up **time and space**. Help your young person explore what might be important to them, and how they want to spend their time—perhaps study, work, travel, social life, family time (this includes time with you). Remind them that **sport doesn't have to end here**. Sport can still be part of their lives in new and meaningful ways through social sport, health & fitness, coaching, officiating and other career paths in sport. Some may even be interested in considering a talent transfer opportunity into another sport. Importantly, don't expect them to have it all figured out—just **start the conversation** and **take small steps**.

5

## Redefine the Routine

With more time on their hands, young people may get lost amidst unstructured days. This is normal at first, but **finding some balance is key**. Help them re-establish healthy routines – including sleep and nutrition and encourage them to maintain physical activity to support their mental and physical health.

6

## Bring in the Right Support

You don't have to be the counsellor or a physical trainer. If your child is struggling emotionally to adjust to such a significant change, **reach out** to a wellbeing manager, sport psychologist, career counsellor or trusted mentor. If your child is struggling to adjust to the physical changes, consider engaging your GP, a sports dietician or a strength & conditioning coach to guide you and your child. Also be mindful that **you** as the parent or guardian **might also need to seek support**. Transition is a shared experience and often everyone needs time and guidance to let go, adjust and redefine the next chapter.