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A PSYCHO-EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON FAMILIES WITH ADOLESCENTS ACHIEVING IN SPORT

by

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RAND AFRIKAANS UNIVERSITY

SUPERVISORS: PROF CPH MYBURGH
PROF M POGGENPOEL

September 2003
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UNIVERSITY OF

WINSTON CHURCHILL
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I WISH TO THANK

My heavenly Father, who through His Son Jesus Christ, showed us all what Love, Support and Winning is all about. With Him all things are possible - Matthew 19:26.

My parents, Vernie and Jessie Knoetze, who helped me to become a national champion and an international athlete in the Olympic sport, Modern Pentathlon (running, swimming, fencing, pistol shooting and show jumping). To my brothers, Vernon and Fred, and my sister Irene van Biljon, who endured it all. You too are high achievers!

My husband Paul, for his endless support and love, not just for me, but for our children too. For cooking and washing and transporting the kids when I was competing or studying. You deserve a gold medal!

My children, Olivia and Jon-Paul, may you both develop your own gifts and talents to become the people God created you to be.

To my coaches, every one of them - thank you for never giving up on me. The lessons you taught me in sport and life are embodied in this study.

To the UIPM (Union International de Pentathlon Moderne) for international opportunities afforded me as an athlete and official. And to the South African Modern Pentathlon Association of which I am currently the vice president - for opportunities to invest in our athletes as coach and administrator.

Dad and Mom Raper, Mary Khoury, Evangeline van den Berg, Retha Knoetze, Doctor Jason and Judy Fawcett, Brian and Hazel, Phil and Heather, Mervyn,
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Oom Tommy, Karen and Ken, Harriet and Hannes. Tannie Elsa, Janet, Rosemary, Dr Pieter Conradie and the Fellowship at Hebron Theological College; thank you for your support and prayers during this study. God heard them all.

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ABSTRACT

South Africa was excluded from international sport for many years. Competing at Olympic Games and World Championships were dreams lost to a whole generation. Today, some of these former high achievers or sports lovers are now parents helping their children or others competing with the rest in the world and some are even winning medals!

For parents of current adolescent high achievers in sport the road might seem steep with many high’s and low’s, but the investment made through their support and others, in their children and the family as a whole, could be very rewarding and fulfilling.

Sport plays an important role in the physical and mental development of a child. It creates healthy children that are mentally alert and quicker to learn. A major study in the 1960s in Vanves, France, clearly demonstrated that increased levels of physical activity improved scholastic performance. The results were substantiated through various repeat studies in other countries. Sport promotes unity and equality. It is a socially acceptable way for the youth to spend their time and energy. In South Africa 3,5 million of the approximately 5,5 million that are between 13 to 18 years old participate in sport to some extent, even if only socially. Sport also creates leadership skills, develops the ability to think strategically and teaches children to work in teams (Sports Information and Science Agency 2000:22). With this in mind the researcher looked where it was all possibly leading to.

"In one year from now, our athletes will be displaying their talents at the greatest sporting arena – the 2004 Athens Olympic Games. I want to wish all of our athletes, their coaches and their families who are putting in so much effort, the best of luck."
The families play a major role. Their support goes unnoticed. But NOCSA is aware of the trials and tribulations they undergo in supporting our athletes."


The purpose of this study is not about those on their way to Athens, but about those who are between the ages of 13 - 18 years who are dreaming of one day getting to the Olympics. It is, to use Ramsamy's words: about the trials, tribulations and support of the family.

Two questions were therefore asked:

What does the life world of families with high achievers in sport look like?

How can this study be utilised to describe guidelines for a psycho-educational programme to facilitate mental health among such families?

The researcher used an exploratory, descriptive, contextual and qualitative design to obtain the purpose. The phenomenological interviewing method was used to obtain data from purposively selected families. The interviews were then transcribed according to Tesch's model (Creswell, 1994:155). These were coded and tabled in major categories and sub-categories. The transcribed interviews were given to an external coder. Once consensus was reached on the categories, member checking with all three families was done. A literature control was conducted to identify the similarities and the uniqueness of the study.

The results of the interviews were organised in four major categories:

1. When there is a high achiever in sport in the family, the whole family is affected.
2. Acceptance of the circumstances of being a high achiever in sport makes life easier.
3. As younger siblings ("the other child") grow older they strive to find their own niche in the family.

4. Coaches become just as important to children as their own parents.

The following proved to be the most important findings: Families with high achievers are high achieving families trying to live a balanced life. Their children are more focused, disciplined and future directed than most other adolescents or even some adults. Not only the children, but even the parents, are in need of social support systems. Although the families are constantly talking to each other, there is a need for development in interpersonal relationships and communication skills.

Guidelines to facilitate and promote mental health for families with high achievers in sport are discussed in Chapter 4 based on the findings as indicated.

**OPSOMMING**

Suid-Afrika was vir baie jare van internasionale sport uitgesluit. Vii 'n hele generasie was drome om by die Olimpiese Spele en Wêreldkampioenskappe te kompeteer verlore. Vandag, is sommige van hierdie uitmuntende presteerders of sportliehebbers ouers wat hulle kinders of ander persone help om met die res in die wêreld te kompeteer en sommige selfs besig om medaljes te wen!

Vir ouers van die huidige geslag adolescente uitmuntende presteerders in sport mag die pad steil lyk met baie hoogte- en laagtepunte, maar die belegging wat deur hulle en ander se ondersteuning in hulle kinders en die gesin as 'n geheel gemaak is, kan baie lonend en vervullend wees.

Sport speel 'n belangrike rol in die fisiese en geestelike ontwikkeling van 'n kind. Dit dra by tot gesonde kinders wat geestelik wakker is en vinnig om te leer. Sport bevorder eenheid en gelykheid. Dit is 'n sosiaal aanvaarbare manier vir die jeug om hulle tyd en energie aan te wend.
In Suid-Afrika neem 3,5 miljoen van die ongeveer 5,5 miljoen wat tussen 13 - 18 jaar oud is tot 'n sekere mate aan sport deel, selfs al is dit net op sosiale vlak (Sports Information and Science Agency 2000:22).

"In one year from now, our athletes will be displaying their talents at the greatest sporting arena – the 2004 Athens Olympic Games. I want to wish all of our athletes, their coaches and their families who are putting in so much effort the best of luck. The families play a major role. Their support goes unnoticed. But NOCSA is aware of the trials and tribulations they undergo in supporting our athletes." (Boodskap van Sam Ramsamy, president van die Nasionale Olimpiese Komitee van Suid-Afrika, Olympic Update, September 2003: Voorwoord).

Die doel van hierdie studie is nie oor diegene op huile weg na Athene nie, maar oor diegene wat tussen die ouderdome van 13 - 18 jaar is wat daarvan droom om eendag na die Olimpiese Spele te gaan. Dit is om Ramsamy se woorde te gebruik, omtrent die toetse, beproewinge en ondersteuning van die gesin. Twee vrag word gevra:

Hoe lyk die leefwêreld van uitmuntende presteerders in sport?
Hoe kan hierdie studie gebruik word om riglyne vir 'n psigo-opvoedkundige program te beskryf om geestesgesondheid by sulke gesinne te fasiliteer?

Die navorser het 'n verkennende, beskrywende, kontekstuele en kwalitatiewe ontwerp gebruik om hierdie doelstelling te bereik. Die fenomenologiese metode van onderhoudvoering is gebruik om data van doelgerig geselekteerde gesinne te verkry. Die onderhoude is daarna volgens Tesch se model (Creswell, 1994: 155) getranskribeer. Dit is in hoofkategorieë en subkategorieë gekodeer en getabuleer. Die getranskribeerde onderhoude is aan 'n eksterne kodeerder gegee. Nadat konsensus oor die kategorieë verkry is, is deelnemerskontrole met
al drie gesinne gedoen. 'n Literatuurkontrole is uitgevoer om ooreenkomste en die uniekheid van die studie te identifiseer.

Die resultate van die onderhoude is in vier hoofkategorieë ingedeel:

1. Wanneer daar 'n uitmuntende presteerder in sport in die gesin is, word die hele gesin daardeur geraak.
2. Aanvaarding van die omstandighede van om 'n uitmuntende presteerder in sport te wees maak die lewe makliker.
3. As jonger broers of susters ("die ander kind") ouer word streef hulle daarna om hulle eie nis in die gesin te vind.
4. Afrigters word net so belangrik vir kinders as hulle eie ouers.

Die belangrikste bevindings is: Gesinne met uitmuntende presteerders is gesinne wat uitmuntend presteer en wat probeer om 'n gebalanseerde lewe te lei. Hulle kinders is meer gefokus, gedisiplineer en toekomsgerig as die meeste ander adolesemente of selfs sommige volwassenes. Nie slegs die kinders nie, maar selfs die ouers, het sosiale ondersteuningstelsels nodig en alhoewel die gesinne met mekaar praat is daar behoefte vir ontwikkeling in interpersoonlike verhoudings en kommunikasievaardighede.

Riglyne om geestesgesondheid vir gesinne met uitmuntende presteerders, te faciliteer en te bevorder gebaseer op die bevindinge soos aangedui, word in Hoofstuk 4 bespreek.
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CHAPTER 1

RATIONALE AND OVERVIEW

1.1 INTRODUCTION

South Africa, because of Apartheid, lost a whole generation to international sport between the years 1960 -1992. Athletes, black and white, were barred from World Championships and Olympic Games when South Africa was expelled by the International Olympic Committee due to its policy of racism (Mbaye, 1995:245). Sadly for some, re-admittance to the Olympic Games in 1992, in Barcelona, came too late for many former top athletes who were already now too old to compete in the greatest sporting event of the world.

During this time some however saw opportunities for themselves or their children and sought international assistance. South African sports personalities like Zola Budd (world champion - athletics), Penny Heyns (Olympian and world champion – swimming) and Marianne Kriel (Olympian - swimming) became world known as their parents, with the assistance of sponsorships, helped them to expand their borders to international locations, coaching and participation.

According to several authors in Schoon (1994:30) parents are primarily responsible for the education of their children because the children are part of the family. As parents' attitude towards physical activities play an important role in their children's participation in sport, their self-conceptualisation, self-worth and success, the value of positive sports involvement from the parents' side cannot be overestimated (Schoon, 1994:10).

Parents' effective involvement can influence not only sport achievement but the mental health of the child and the family as a whole.
1.2 RATIONALE

(Anita DeFrantz, Vice-President, International Olympic Committee and former Olympian in Rowing emphasises the following (De Frantz in Perspectives, 1999:17):

"Sport belongs to us all. It is something we do as human beings. Sport involves a powerful form of thoughts as the mind directs the body through the dimensions of time and space. And, sport is a powerful force for community throughout the world. The language of sport is universal. The desire to have one's children enjoy and experience success is also universal."

Parents of children who make serious commitments to sport face a difficult challenge to raise a happy, healthy and successful child. It is not a responsibility that can be taken lightly, and certainly not a simple one (Rotella and Bunker, 1987: xv).

The role parents play is even more important when their child is a potential elite athlete. The decisions parents have to make can cause a lot of uncertainty. Sometimes they do not know where to get professional help, do not know who to approach for financial assistance and do not know when to release or when to hold back. In this ever-changing world, parents and children are facing today, the family must remain flexible yet stable.

Some of the parents' closest friends will have strong viewpoints against or for raising champions but it is the parents who eventually have to make the decision to adapt to a lifestyle accommodating their high achiever (Rotella and Bunker, 1987:8). However, Brown (2001:279) warns that underneath the fleeting gift of sports talent is a normal child who needs the love, time, attention and discipline that parents and coaches should give to all children, talented or not.

Every adolescent therefore, and not only the high achiever, can experience the educational value of participation in sport. Steyn (2001:11) warns that professionalism, substance abuse, early specialisation, overemphasis on
winning and other ethical issues have contaminated the playful spirit of sport. Research shows that many children rather want to fail in the classroom than on the sports field.

It is thus very important for professionals dealing with athletes to be aware that not only physical health but also mental health of adolescents should never be underestimated.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The researcher was one of the "mothers in waiting" scenario – mothers who spend hours each day waiting for their kids, supporting them next to practice and competition fields. She therefore decided to find out if other parents have the same experiences as their family - the tremendous effort, politics, finances, time and planning that go into helping a child achieve his/her best.

Côté (1999:398) states that a large number of studies have reported the important supporting roles of parents in children's involvement in sport. However, few authors have attempted to study the whole family dynamic and how this dynamic is affected by the children's participation in sport. Investigations on home influence have provided only limited information on how families create, sustain and discuss their own realities when one of the members is committed to high-level performance. Thus there is a need to examine more in-depth the whole family environment of athletes. The present state of knowledge of family influence on talent development in sport, indicates the need for an inductive research approach that will provide flexibility and freedom to explore the family dynamics of successful athletes. According to Byrne (in Lee 1993:41) much has been written and said about the roles and responsibilities of the coach, but there is little to be found about parents. The researcher therefore trusts that this study will prepare the way for more such research to be conducted.
Coming back to these "mothers in waiting", what then is this phenomenon all about, especially when the child-athlete is a high achiever?

Responsible parent involvement is part of continual growth and meaningful adaptation to the challenges of the here and now (Barnard in Schoon, 1994:10).

According to Rotella and Bunker (1987:19) family schedules will have to be adjusted and care should be taken that no one in the family is neglected, not the spouse, not the brother or sister, no one should be neglected because of the athlete's needs. Doctor Yukelson, a sports psychologist (Brown 2001:90), says that when the parents at home favours the sports star over brothers and sisters they have done a disservice to their child-athlete. This can lead to behaviour problems all-round.

Byrne (1993:39) is of the opinion that as much as ten years of the family's life can be organised around the demands of training and competing for children who aspire to excellence. According to Gilroy (in Lee 1993:22), the family undoubtedly is therefore one of the key elements in the child's involvement in sport.

Special effort should be taken to maintain commitment when the child's sports career is not going as well as planned. This is especially true when some parents are only interested and happy when they can live their own sports' ambition through their children (sometimes subconsciously). When the child fails the parents' disappointment is just so much bigger (Kruger in Schoon 1994:43). Children are often not mature enough (physically, socially and mentally) to cope with competition or to make long-term decisions. Further more, parents/adults often try to fulfil their own sporting ambitions through their children. It thus becomes too serious and work like (Gilroy in Lee, 1993:24).
In South Africa, the high achiever also has to deal with post-apartheid issues. Although apartheid officially was replaced with democracy in 1994, South Africans sometimes now have reverse discrimination to some extent. The media reports are numerous, with only older South Africans really understanding what it is all about. Often especially male talented youth athletes are left out of teams because of race, even if they are the best.

One such athlete, in fact, was left out of the national school team in favour of an athlete of colour. He won a bronze medal at the national schools championship where the athlete of colour finished fourth. As an 18 year old he is currently number two in South Africa in his event, amongst the top 50 in the world and seventh senior in his event in South Africa. His parents decided to let their child repeat Grade 12, but in another school, just to give him a chance to make the South African schools' team through another system. This however would also allow him to upgrade his marks in two subjects. What effects will this have on his sporting career and his family? Stories like these form part of the mental health assessment in this research study.

The research questions of this study are the following:

- What does the life world of families with high achievers in sport look like?
- How can this study be utilised to describe guidelines for a psycho-educational programme to facilitate the mental health of families with high achievers in sport?

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

In this study the researcher will explore and describe the life world of families with high achievers in sport. The aim will be to describe guidelines to facilitate mental health for such families.
1.5 PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVES/ ASSUMPTIONS

"A paradigm is a set of beliefs that constitutes the researcher's perceptions regarding the nature of the reality of the world" as well as "the researcher's perceptions of where he stands in reality to the world" (De Vos, 1998:240).

The paradigmatic perspective of the research study is based on a holistic approach. A human being has a spirit, soul and body. Because a person is whole, his/her mind influences his/her body and spirit (Poggenpoel, 2002: Class Notes).

This research will be done on the assumption basis that humans are created by God for a purpose and have a God given destiny.

The researcher acknowledges the complexity of the research phenomena and that equality exists between the researcher and the research respondents.

1.5.1 Meta-theoretical assumptions

Meta-theoretically, the researcher believes that a person is unique and can make his/her own choices. This assumption will be based on the theory of Frankl (1992:98, 99,101). This theory states that man is primarily a spiritual being that posses freedom and responsibility. Man is free to make choices and direct his destiny, therefore a man's genetic components or environment does not dictate his future. It is also based on the theory of Rogers (Corsini, 1995:129), stating that on a practical level, the person-centred approach is built on trust that individuals and groups can set their own goals and monitor their progress towards these goals.

People do not need to be victims of their circumstances, they have a choice how they will respond to it, as the Irish say: “You've got to do your own growing, no matter how tall your grandfather was” (Mason, 1996:70).
The facilitating process could play an important role in developing skills to practice this freedom to make choices and take responsibility for it.

1.5.2 Theoretical assumptions (conceptual clarifications)

The researcher is of the opinion that the adolescent is part of the family unit and that adolescent athletes cannot function without the support of their families. According to Grobler, Myburgh and Poggenpoel (1999:36) interpersonal relationships with adolescents' sources of support like families, members of the community and especially peer groups must be maintained by adolescents during their adolescence in order to ensure continued support. This however, requires constructive interpersonal communication skills.

Grobler, et al, (1999:40) further state that adolescents have the ability to formulate constructive interpersonal communication skills if they are given the opportunity and facilitated correctly. The researcher supports this statement.

1.5.3 Methodological assumptions

According to Botes (1991:19) methodological assumptions are based on a functional approach. The two aspects of the post-modernism, namely logic and justification will be adhered to (Myburgh 2002: Class Notes). The knowledge generated by this research must be applied and acceptable in the international arena of sport. When peers accept it, it becomes justifiable.

Guba's (Lincoln and Guba, 1985:39-43) measures to ensure trustworthiness will be adhered to. This will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2.
1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

1.6.1 Research design

The research design for this study is qualitative. According to Burns and Grove (1993:27) it is an approach in research that focuses on understanding the phenomenon as a whole. It therefore attempts to discover the depth and complexity of a phenomenon within this holistic framework.

It is exploratory - qualitative researchers engage in explorative studies to investigate little researched topics (Polit and Hungler 1995:50).

It is also descriptive – the qualitative research interview seeks to describe and understand the meaning of central themes in the life world of the interviewee (Kvale, 1983:175).

Furthermore it is contextual in nature – the researcher will as far as possible study people in their habitat or natural setting in order to understand the dynamics of human meaning as fully as possible (De Vos, 1998:281). See description in Chapter 2.

1.6.2 Research method

A phenomenological method of data gathering through interviews (Poggenpoel, 1993:1-3) will be used. Narrative story telling will be utilised through semi-structured interviews whereby the researcher approaches the subject and the experience with an open mind accepting whatever data are given.

These interviews provide an opportunity for detailed investigation of each person's personal perspective, for in-depth understanding of the personal context within which the research phenomenon is located, and for very detailed subject coverage (Ritchie and Lewis 2003:58).
1.6.3 Phases

The research method will consist of two phases:

- **Phase 1** An exploration and description of the life world of families of high achievers in sport.

- **Phase 2** Guidelines for a psycho-educational programme to facilitate the mental health of families with high achievers in sport.

1.6.4 Sampling method

The sample will be purposive. According to Ritchie and Lewis (2003:78) this refers to sample units that are chosen because they have particular features or characteristics which will enable detailed exploration and understanding of the central themes and problems which the researcher wishes to study.

The sport code selected is athletics. The parents, their children, and not only the high achiever, and coaches (where possible) will be interviewed.

The criteria being that the athletes are between 13 – 18 years of age, compete in an Olympic sport, are willing to participate, are able to speak English or Afrikaans and fall within either of the following categories:

- future Olympic hopeful;
- among the 50 top athletes in the world;
- African Champion;
- South African champion;
- among the top three in South Africa;
- or achieved an outstanding world-class performance measured against the international standards of International Federations.
Data collection will be done through interviews and observation, audio-recordings and transcription of data as well as group discussions. Three families will be purposively selected for in-depth interviews.

Because of the length of data gathering interviews and the detail of the complete descriptions, the sample size is usually very small. According to Ritchie and Lewis (2003: 83 - 84) main reasons for a small sample size can be summed up as follows:

Firstly, if data are properly analysed, there will come a point where little new evidence is obtained from each additional fieldwork unit. Secondly, statements about incidence or prevalence are not the concern of qualitative research. There is no requirement that the sample is of sufficient scale to provide estimates, or to determine statistical significant discriminatory variables. Thirdly, qualitative studies are rich in detail. There are hundreds of “bites” of information from each unit of data collection. To do justice to these, sample sizes need to be kept to a reasonably small scale.

Ritchie and Lewis (2003: 84) concluded that it would be unmanageable to conduct and analyse hundreds of interviews, observations or groups unless the researcher plans to spend several years doing so.

1.6.5 Measures to ensure trustworthiness

Guba’s model (Lincoln and Guba, 1985:250; Krefting, 1991:214) based on the identification of four aspects of trustworthiness that are relevant to qualitative studies will be applied. These are: truth value, applicability, consistency and neutrality.

In qualitative research, truth value is usually obtained from the discovery of human experiences as they are lived and perceived by informants. This is termed “credibility”. Credibility is therefore demonstrated when participants recognise the reported research findings as their own experiences.
Applicability refers to the degree to which the findings can be applied to other contexts and settings or with other groups. This is referred to as transferability, which in turn demonstrates the probability that the research findings have meaning to others in similar situations. It depends on the degree of congruence between the “sending context” with which research is conducted, and the “receiving context” to which it is to be applied (Ritchie and Lewis 2003:268).

Consistency as the third criterion of trustworthiness considers whether the findings would be consistent if the inquiry were replicated with the same subjects or in a similar context (Sandelowski in Krefting: 1991:216). It is also based on the assumption of a single reality that there is something out there to be studied and used as a benchmark (Lincoln and Guba in Krefting 1991:216). Consistency is therefore defined in terms of dependability, which implies trackable variability that can be ascribed to identical resources.

Neutrality as the fourth criterion is the freedom from bias in the research procedures and results (Sandelowski in Krefting, 1991:216). Here one looks at the neutrality of the data rather than that of the investigator. Neutrality is therefore defined in terms of confirmability. If a study demonstrates credibility, auditability and fittingness (Streubert and Carpenter 1995: 26), the study possesses confirmability.

A detailed description will follow in Chapter 2.

1.6.6 Data collection

Data will be collected mostly through semi-structured interviews, whose purpose is to gather descriptions of the life world of the interviewees (Kvale, 1983: 173 – 174). Ordinary people are able to describe their life world in their own words, not like the multiple-choice questionnaires formulated by experts.
Field notes will also be used as form of data collection. It is not a summary of what is happening, it is the interviewer's observation, for example – the participant is always late and the first to leave. The field notes mirror the researcher's feelings as she/he shares in the participants' pain. It always adds to the methodological notes - the tape did not work, the battery gave in, the researcher could only interview half of the family - maybe her data were not saturated.

These notes are important for other researchers to learn from the researcher's mistakes or problems (Poggenpoel 2002: Class Notes).

1.6.7 Data analysis

In qualitative analysis several simultaneous activities engage the attention of the researcher: collecting information from the field, sorting the information into categories, formatting the information into a story and writing the qualitative text (Creswell, 1994:153). Tesch's coding will be applied (Creswell, 1994:155). A more detailed description will follow in Chapter 2. It must be remembered that the analysis of data in qualitative research takes a long time (Holloway and Wheeler, 1996:29).

1.6.8 Literature control

Previous research will be used to establish similarities as well as to determine the uniqueness of the present study.

1.7 ETHICAL MEASURES

The purpose selected for investigation must be ethical, which means that the researcher will make every effort to protect the research participants' rights and decisions (Burns and Grove, 1993:108).

A letter of consent to participants (see Annexure B) and signed by them before starting the research process, will ensure that the researcher has the
right to use their data for research purposes. Participation will be voluntary and participants will retain the right to withdraw at any time without any pressure or coercion. Each individual as well as each family will be assured of confidentiality and anonymity in oral and written reports. This implies that the dignity of interviewees should be respected (De Vos, 1998:306). The researcher will not share information from one family with other family members (Streubert and Carpenter, 1995:181).

Feedback will be given any time when requested. The title, methods of research, who will see it, and who will benefit from it should be explained to the respondents (Streubert and Carpenter, 1995:309). They will also be informed of the procedures to be followed, the type of participation expected from them and the sample selection that will be used. The researcher will not collect more data than necessary to reach the objectives of the study.

Approval of research with individuals or groups will also be required from the ethics committee (see Annexure A) who will evaluate the research proposal and consent letters for the research project (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003:63).

The researcher will arrange for a counsellor should matters arise from the interviews needing such attention (Streubert and Carpenter, 1995:309). The role of the researcher is not that of a counsellor. But ethically one cannot leave a person who is in real need and might leave the research because of emotional trauma and not come back (Poggenpoel, 2002: Class Notes).

1.8 COMPETENCE OF THE RESEARCHER

Qualitative interviewers are versatile in research methods. They are meticulous about their documentation. They are well prepared in their topic to pick up clues and follow leads. They are not discouraged when progress is slow, nor are hasty to jump to conclusions. (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994:226). The researcher in this present study has also been trained in research methodology and interpersonal skills.
1.9 RELATIONSHIP WITH PARTICIPANTS

There will be an equal relationship between the interviewer and interviewee. Interviewees will be met at their level and by accepting them and their life world (De Vos 1998:307). Ritchie and Lewis (2003:65) note that ‘matching’ researcher and participant on key socio-demographic criteria could be helpful to the dynamic of data collection. The issue has arisen particularly in relation to matching on gender, language, social class or ethnicity, or more generally for researchers having experiences in common or some knowledge on the topics of and with those they interview. The researchers’ perceptions here should not be a substitute for the participants’ own words, but they can help researchers to make judgements about how to explore issues in more depth.

It will also be explained to them that the benefits of the research might not be mutual. They will be informed of the researcher’s credibility to conduct this research and have access to contact numbers at all times. Feedback will be given when requested. The researcher will be as transparent as possible, treat the respondent/interviewee at all times respectfully and be well-prepared (Poggenpoel, 2002: Class Notes).

1.10 CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions will be formulated, limitations discussed and recommendations made in respect of findings in the research project.

1.11 DIVISIONS OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 Overview and rationale
Chapter 2 Research design and methods
Chapter 3 Exploration, description, results and literature control
Chapter 4 Guidelines, conclusions, limitations and recommendations.
1.12 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the overview of the study, problem statement, paradigmatic perspective, research design and method have been stated.

In Chapter 2 a more detailed description of the research method and design will follow.
CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The worth of any research endeavour, regardless of the approach taken, is evaluated by peers, grant reviewers and readers (Krefting, 1991:214). Research should make a contribution to society. It is giving information without making a moral judgement (Poggenpoel, 2002: Class Notes).

The researcher's choice to conduct the study will be inductive: "This method of reasoning begins with observation and not with a preconceived conclusion or major premise. To induce is to draw a conclusion from a number of particular facts also called the phenomena (self-exposing reality) or pieces of evidence. The conclusion in the inductive argument explains the facts, and the facts support the conclusion" (Conradie, 2002:16).

The qualitative research strategy therefore forms the basis of this research design and method. A qualitative design is appropriate when the researcher intends examining the properties, values, need or characteristics that distinguish individuals and groups (Du Plooy, 2001:83).

In this chapter the focus will be on the description of the rationale, the purpose, the design and method, trustworthiness and the ethical measures used.

2.2 RESEARCH RATIONALE

People who are goal oriented are always winners because they are moving forward, and it is the process of their performance that should be emphasised rather than the outcome. Therefore families with high achievers in sport, could mean that the family as a whole or at least more than one member are achievers.
For years parents and scholars have debated whether winners are "born" or "made." Today it is known that successful athletes are both born and made! With the increased pressure and rewards available to athletes, parents must understand how they can contribute to raising a child who is not only successful, but happy (Rotella and Bunker, 1987:4). Brown (2001:57) concludes that there is nothing in child-rearing manuals about raising kids who have sports talent. One can only hope that this study will help create awareness that it is not so easy for the family where there is a high achiever to raise such a child because of the many facets it entail.

To reach at least the top three positions in any country in an Olympic Sport is not a small achievement. The cost involved is tremendous. Cost in time, finances, effort, relationships and the future are just a few of the sacrifices to produce a winner. What is the impact on the mental health of the individual and family members? What is the extent of the emotional pain of family members versus the physical pain of the achiever? How does this affect the dreams of the other family members? Do they have a life of their own, or does it just revolve around the athlete? How does the family/achiever cope with stress? Can the achievers reach higher heights and faster times on their own or do they need the support of their families? How are the siblings affected? All this and more could be answered in this study.

2.3 RESEARCH PURPOSE

In this study the researcher's aim will be:

- To explore and describe the life world of families with high achievers in sport and to describe guidelines for a psycho-educational programme to facilitate the mental health of families with high achievers in sport.
2.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

According to De Vos (1998: 123), the research design is seen as the design or detailed plan according to which the research has been conducted, while Mouton (1996:107) describes it as a set of guidelines and instructions to be followed in addressing the research problem. Ritchie and Lewis (2003:47) state that it is a coherence between the research questions and the methods or approaches proposed and which generates data which are valid and reliable.

In this study the research design will consist of a qualitative, explorative, descriptive and contextual design.

2.4.1 Qualitative

Qualitative research originates from the social and behavioural sciences.

If the researcher intends to obtain answers aimed at providing knowledge that is exploratory, descriptive and that give in-depth and holistic descriptions, then the researcher has no option but to follow a qualitative research strategy (Myburgh and Poggenpoel, 1995:5).

De Vos (1998:282) is of the opinion that without the holistic injunction, there is little value to qualitative research. The most possible relevant information is obtained to enable the researcher to draw a clear picture and then is aimed to analyse this in-depth picture of the network of relationships within and amongst the various aspects relevant to the problem.

Burns and Grove (1993:27) endorsed this by saying it is an approach in research that focuses on understanding the phenomenon as a whole. It therefore attempts to discover the depth and complexity of a phenomenon within this holistic framework.
According to Leedy (1997:106) findings of qualitative research methodology are communicated in words as narratives using individual quotes in personal voice and in literary style, this raw data of in-depth interviews are usually recorded in a non-numerical form (Du Plooy, 2001:33).

To know how people understand their world and their life, the researcher will use the qualitative interview method minimising the distance between the researcher and the research participants (Creswell, 1994:6).

In qualitative research the researcher is the instrument as to the questionnaire being the instrument in quantitative research. In qualitative research it is about understanding and meaning and not as in quantitative research about testing, measuring and competing (Poggenpoel, 2002: Class Notes).

2.4.2 Explorative

The objectives of a qualitative design are to explore areas where limited or no prior information exists (Du Plooy, 2001:83). According to Dilthey (in Ritchie and Lewis, 2003: 7) qualitative researchers should explore lived experiences in order to reveal the connections between the social cultural and historical aspects of people's lives and to see the context in which particular actions take place.

The research respondents are the expert; he/she knows their story best. The researcher must have a humble (Poggenpoel, 2002:Class Notes), not knowing attitude inviting them to share their knowledge.

The researcher will be willing to explore the "unknown" because little information exists on the topic (Creswell, 1994:10). It will also be endeavoured to discover important variables to generate hypotheses for further research (Marshall and Rossman, 1989:78).
The researcher will explore the life world of families with high achievers in sport.

2.4.3 Descriptive

The qualitative research interview aims at obtaining uninterpreted descriptions. According to Kvale (1983:175) precision in description and stringency in meaning and in interpretation in qualitative interviews, corresponds to the exactness in quantitative measures. The qualitative research interview seeks to describe and understand the meaning of central themes in the life world of the interviewee.

The researcher will describe the guidelines to facilitate mental health for families with high achievers in sport.

2.4.4 Contextual

As this research will study phenomena, it is contextual in nature (Mouton, 1996:133). The researcher will as far as possible study people in their habitat or natural setting in order to understand the dynamics of human meanings as fully as possible (De Vos, 1998:281). It is generally believed that human behaviour is influenced in many ways by the milieu or setting in which it occurs (De Vos 1998:280).

The three families will be interviewed in their own homes as far as possible, using venues such as sports fields will not be conducive at this stage.

2.5 RESEARCH METHOD

The study will be conducted in two phases.
2.5.1 Phase 1: Exploration and description of the life world of families with high achievers in sport

The aim of the first phase is to explore and describe the life world of families with high achievers in sport with no preconceived expectations or categories.

Rather than the interviewer coming with ready-made categories and schemes of interpretation, the pre-suppositionlessness advocated in qualitative research, implies an openness to new and unexpected phenomena (Kvale, 1983:176).

2.5.1.1 Sampling

A sample is a part of the whole population, carefully selected to represent that population (Emory and Cooper, 1991:82) while Du Plooy (2001:100) states that the term "population" can also be defined as any group or aggregate of individuals, groups, organisations and events.

- **Sampling Method**

A purposive sampling method will be used in this research. According to Emory and Cooper (1991:275) judgmental sampling occurs when the researcher handpicks sample members to conform to certain criteria.

- **Sampling Criteria**

Sampling will be done according to the following criteria:
- families with athletes between 13 – 18 years of age;
- compete individually, not in a team;
- compete in an Olympic sport;
- are willing to participate;
- are able to speak English or Afrikaans
and fall within the following categories:
• Olympic hopeful;
• World Champion (youth/junior);
• among the 50 top athletes in the world;
• African Champion;
• South African champion;
• among the top three in South Africa; and
• achieved an outstanding world-class performance measured against international standards of International Federations.

• Sample Size

The sample size will consist of three selected families. The focus on a particular context usually means that in contrast with much quantitative work, holistic, qualitative work is also small-scale or "micro"-research (De Vos, 1998:281).

2.5.1.2 Data collection

Data collection will consist of the selected family members sharing their life world with the researcher. This will be done through phenomenological, semi-structured, in-depth audio taped interviews, field notes and group discussions.

• The interview

The purpose of the qualitative research interview is to gather descriptions of the life world of the interviewee with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena. This interview is theme-oriented and not person-oriented. It aims at obtaining uninterpreted descriptions (Kvale, 1983:174).

The first interview is the most important interview as it is an in-depth interview. The researcher will make sure that the audiotape-recorder is functioning properly so that all data can be "saved" for rechecking and validity, thereafter it will be destroyed. Each interview will be tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim (Burns and Grove, 1993:578-581).
Data saturation will determine the number of interviews to be conducted. Each interview will last one hour and will be conducted in the same manner by means of one central question: "PLEASE TELL ME HOW YOU EXPERIENCE BEING PART OF A FAMILY WITH A HIGH ACHIEVER IN SPORT?"

The basic steps involved in a phenomenological interview namely, bracketing and intuiting will be considered. Bracketing refers to the process of holding in abeyance any preconceived beliefs and opinions one might have about the phenomenon under investigation. The researcher will bracket out the world and any presuppositions in an effort to confront the data in pure form. Intuiting occurs when the researcher remains open to the meaning attributed to the phenomenon by those who have experienced it (Polit and Hungler, 1995:198).

- The role of the researcher

According Denzin and Lincoln (1994: 225-226) data collection in qualitative research requires skill, patience and wisdom to obtain information necessary to produce a rich qualitative study. The use of the researcher's personality is a key factor in qualitative research. Empathy and intuition are deliberately used and skills in these areas are activated by the researcher (Burns and Grove, 1993:80).

The following non-directive communication techniques will be used: non-directive communication techniques such as probing, paraphrasing, summarising, reflecting and clarifying to encourage respondents who are interviewed to freely articulate their views and findings (Okun, 1997:75).

Probing is an open-ended attempt to obtain more information about something and is most effective when using statements such as "Tell me more...I am wondering about that" (Okun, 1997: 75).
Reflecting refers to communicating to the interviewee's understanding of his or her concerns and perspectives. The feelings stated or strongly implied (Okun 1997: 75)

Summarising involves putting together into one statement several ideas and feelings at the end of a session. It is a type of clarification (Okun 1997: 76).

Paraphrasing is a verbal statement that is interchangeable with the client's statement, although the words may be synonyms of words the client has used (Okun 1997: 75).

Clarifying involves that the interviewer may ask for clarification when she cannot make sense of the interviewee's response (Okun 1997: 75).

- Field notes

As it is unwise to rely solely on one's memory to preserve data for analysis, note-taking, known as "field notes", helps memorise the observations during participant observation. These notes give an account of what happened and little or no interpretation is provided. The researcher will use it as a piece of evidence in the fund of recorded experience as a property of context or situation. Notes that will be used are: observational notes, methodological notes and theoretical notes (De Vos, 1998: 285-286):

Observational notes: These give account of what happened. Little or no interpretation is provided. It is the Who, What, When, Where and How of human activity.

Methodological notes: These notes are mainly reminders, instructions and critical comments to the researcher.

Theoretical notes: These are self-conscious, systematic attempts by the researcher to derive meaning from all the observational notes. The researcher thinks about what she/he has experienced and makes whatever
private declaration of meaning she/he feels will bear conceptual fruit. Patterns repeatedly found are identified and the researcher tries to explain the phenomenon under study with the models found in the relevant literature.

2.5.1.3 Data analysis

According to De Vos (1998:271) data collection and data analysis are tightly interwoven processes.

Data analysis will be conducted on the transcribed interviews according to Tesch's method in Creswell (1994:155). This will be done as follows:

- Read through each individual transcription in order to get a picture of the whole.
- Jot down ideas as they come to mind.
- Pick one short interview and ask yourself what it is all about – what's the underlying meaning. Write thoughts in the margin.
- Repeat this process with all the transcribed interviews and make a list of all the topics/themes. Cluster similar topics together. Arrange these topics into columns as major topics, unique topics and leftovers.
- Go back to the data with this list. Abbreviate the topics as codes and write the codes next to the appropriate segments of the text.

This preliminary organising scheme should be tried out to see whether new categories and codes emerge:

- Find the most descriptive wording for topics and turn them into categories. Reduce the total list of categories by grouping related topics. Inter relationships can be shown when drawing lines between categories.
- Make a final decision on the abbreviation for each category and alphabetise these codes.
- Assemble the data material belonging to each category in one place and perform a preliminary analysis.
- If necessary re-code the data.
A protocol for analysis of the data will be sent to an independent coder/external data analyst familiar with conducting qualitative data analysis. Once consensus has been reached with regard to the results, literature control will follow.

2.5.1.4 Literature control

A literature control will be applied to confirm the results of the investigation and description of the life world of the selected families with high achievers in sport. The reader should be constantly kept aware of how the literature being discussed is related to the problem (Leedy, 1997:80).

2.5.2 Phase 2: Description of guidelines to facilitate mental health for families with high achievers in sport

During this phase data collected in phase 1 will be used to describe guidelines to facilitate mental health of families with high achievers in sport.

2.6 TRUSTWORTHINESS

The researcher will assess the trustworthiness or merit of the study using Guba's model to ensure rigor without sacrificing the relevance of the qualitative research (Krefting, 1991:215).

The four criteria for trustworthiness are:
Truth value, applicability, consistency and neutrality. The strategies that will be implemented to reach the above criteria will be explained according to Krefting (1991:215-222).

- Truth Value

Truth-value asks whether the researcher has established confidence in the truth of the findings for the subjects or informants and the context in which the
study was undertaken. It is usually obtained from the discovery of human experiences as they are lived and perceived by informants.

The strategy for establishing truth value is credibility. This consists of: prolonged and varied field experience, time sampling, reflexivity, triangulation (various data collecting methods are used and confirmed to ensure that all aspects of the phenomena have been investigated), member checking, peer examination, interview technique, establishing the authority of the researcher, structural coherence and referential adequacy.

In this research where the interviewer has been an international and national athlete in an Olympic sport since 1974, the field experience gained could benefit the research.

Central to the credibility of qualitative research is the ability of informants to recognise their experiences in the research findings.

- **Applicability**

Applicability refers to the degree to which the findings can be applied to other contexts and settings or with other groups. In qualitative research one does not generalise as each situation is defined as unique and applicability is therefore not seen as relevant.

The strategy for establishing applicability is transferability. This consists of: the nominated sample; a comparison of the sample to nominated data; the time sample; dense description of the results and direct quotations of the participants.

Transferability becomes the responsibility of the person wanting to transfer findings. When the researcher presents sufficient descriptive data to allow comparison, the problem of applicability has been addressed.
• **Consistency**

Consistency of the data considers whether the findings would be consistent if the inquiry were replicated with the same subjects or in a similar context. It is the extent to which repeated administration of a measure will provide the same data or the extent to which a measure administered once, but by different people, produces equivalent results.

The strategy for establishing consistency is dependability. It consists of: a dependability audit, a dense description of the research methods, stepwise replication, triangulation, peer examination and code recode procedure.

• **Neutrality**

Neutrality refers to the degree to which the findings are a function solely of the informants and conditions of the research and not of other biases, motivations and perspectives.

The strategy for establishing neutrality is confirmability. It consists of a confirmability audit, triangulation and reflexivity (Krefting 1991:217).

This is achieved when truth value and applicability are established.

### 2.7 ETHICAL MEASURES

According to Bulmer (1982:3) researchers' responsibilities are not only aimed at the ideals of objective truth and search for knowledge, but also concerned with the subjects of the research.

Ethical measures have been discussed in detail in Chapter 1.
2.8 CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusions, limitations and recommendations will be based on the research findings.

In Chapter 3 the exploration, description, results and literature control be discussed.
CHAPTER 3

THE LIFE WORLD OF FAMILIES WITH HIGH ACHIEVERS IN ATHLETICS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the data analysis of the research will be explained. Each family signed a consent letter that explained the purpose of the study. They also expressed their willingness to partake hoping that others could learn from their experiences.

The tape-recorded data were collected through semi-structured phenomenological in-depth interviews with the informants' permission in the comfort of their own homes. The duration of the interviews was on average one hour long. The interviews were then analysed according to Tesch's model (Creswell, 1994:155). The collection and analysis of data took place where possible at the same time. Written field notes were made during and after each interview.

The transcriptions were coded line by line and the underlying meanings were written in the margins. This was done throughout the transcribed documents until all the topics were identified. These were coded and tabled in major categories and sub-categories. No computer analysis was used.

The transcribed interviews were given to an external coder after whom a meeting was planned to reach consensus on the categories. Once this was achieved member checking with all three families was done. The data was labelled and stored in a safe place to ensure confidentiality. Literature control was conducted to identify similarities and the uniqueness of the study.
3.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE

In this study three families with high achievers in athletics were purposively selected. These athletes were all adolescents and when selected were among the first three in South Africa, in their age categories as well as in their specific events. Two were selected from track events and one from field events.

The interviews were done over a period of three months. The structure of one family changed. This happened towards the end of the interviews.

When the researcher decided to select the families it was not to intentionally choose those with siblings close in age or where there were only two children in the family. It however turned out that in each family there were either just two children or that the age difference of the first two children was approximately three years apart.

Three families were interviewed. Two of these families consisted of two children.
Family one with two sisters, the oldest being the high achiever.
Family two with a brother and a sister, the brother is the oldest and the high achiever.
Family three with three daughters of which two were two years apart, the oldest being the high achiever and the third quite younger.

In this study more focus was placed on “the other child” as similarities among the three families concerning this sub-category were quite significant.

Only one couple, husband (father-coach) and wife, and the other father-coach, are actively involved with their own training and occasional competitions.
After ten interviews with the whole family together and certain members individually, rich data saturation was reached.
3.3 RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH AND LITERATURE CONTROL

The results were tabled (see Table 3.1) in major categories and sub-categories and were discussed by quoting the respondents as interviewed. The literature control followed directly to identify the similarities of the findings.

The following major categories and sub-categories emerged from the families’ descriptions of their life stories when there is a high achiever in sport.

3.4 DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The discussion of the findings will be based on the major and sub-categories set out in Table 3.1. When discussing results, relevant data from literature will be applied.

3.4.1. When there is a high achiever in sport in the family, the whole family is affected

The changes that families with high achievers have to adapt to will be described in three sub-categories namely how their lifestyles changed dramatically, the sacrifices the family members had to make and the advantages to the families.

3.4.1.1 Lifestyles of families with high achievers are dramatically changed

The lifestyles of families with high achievers changed quite dramatically pertaining to the following aspects of living: the parents’ youth, time perception, their social life, finances, illnesses, injuries, diet and nutrition.

The one aspect of living that however did not change was their belief systems and values and norms. This will be described later in this chapter.
Table 3.1 MAJOR CATEGORIES AND SUB-CATEGORIES

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Different lifestyles

The lifestyles of the families were quite different than that of the parents in their youth. One of the father-coaches had the following to say:

"Because of isolation we could not compete overseas yet I always had the need to compete with better and bigger guys and further a field than just South Africa, but it was not meant for me."

Another father-coach who was also a victim of the years of sports isolation because of the South African Apartheid system echoed his dreams:

"During the period of isolation, one of the dreams I had is very similar to what my daughter had of going to the Olympic games for gymnastics, but as soon as I started specialised training my father actually stopped my gymnastics. He did not believe in sport, I then started running and he wanted to stop that too, he never came to my races and never talked about it to me."

Today South Africa is well-established as a member of the International Family of Sport and both fathers are actively involved in a high professional manner, preparing their child-athlete for international competition as evidenced further in this chapter.

In conclusion a statement from one mother:

"When I was 19, I was almost married, that's what you did in those days but my son is getting out into a big wide world wider than we are used to, with better opportunities than what all of us had."

The era in which the child is growing up today as well as the families functioning within this era differs from the society of twenty or more years ago (Schoon, 1994:24).

Some saw it as not normal.
Although there are many similarities among the three families, two experienced their lifestyles as not normal.

The father of one such family said: "Our children are 60 times more mature than other children in a normal family." The high achiever of the same family agreed when saying: "if we were a normal family."

The father of the other family shared the same view: "You try and let them lead a normal child's life, they have a lot of other interests too."

For the third family however, this was normal: "this has been a way of life so for long, we know no other way."

According to a website of CNN (www.cnn.com/program/people/shows williams/profile) Richard Williams, father of the famous tennis superstars, Venus and Serena, tried to maintain some semblance of normalcy in his daughters' lives.

Grisogono (1991:10) agrees that the demands of a sport can be detrimental to normal family life. Often, the whole family life is dominated by the sporting ambitions of one or more of the children.

- Time management and future orientation

Time wise there are many positive but also many negative factors that play a role when discussing the lifestyles experienced by these families. Two kinds of time are recorded: chronical time which is measured by watch time or calendar time (Burgers, 1993:29) and future orientation.

Children who play competitive sport, and especially high achievers, are very time conscious. There are only so many hours in a day and what is missed is missed. The whole family has to adhere to the watch and time management to produce champions. Time is (Ben-Baruch, Myburgh, Wiid and Anderssen

One mother’s story is summarised as follows:

The father drives the kids to school, setting a positive note by reflecting on motivational quotes for the day. She and her husband works from home. She works for him in the mornings until 12h00. She then fetches the youngest child (who is in pre-primary school) and then goes back to the office until 13h30 when she leaves to fetch the middle child (still in primary school). At 14h00 she fetches the oldest (high achiever) one from the secondary school. The children then eat quickly. Then she drives to take this one to netball and that one to choir or wherever. Then she fetches this one and a little later the other one from another direction and so it goes on some nights to 19h00. Schoolwork is done from 19h00 until 21h00 and then off to bed.

Having a schedule can be useful, particularly in controlling stress. It also seems that most children respond well to routines (Rotella and Bunker, 1987:85).

One father (not the one who is a coach) has weekly discussions with his children to discuss the time he will be available to take them to training sessions:

“At any day when I’m here at 3 o’clock to pick them up and they’re not ready I’ll leave them at home.” For this family the day starts at 04h00. One training session before school and another in the afternoon. By 21h00 the family goes to bed otherwise they cannot cope the next day.

The families selected for this study followed a routine system and managed their time effectively.

For families with high achievers, time is also clearly directed towards the future. For them time is linear and finite – achievement-orientated. In research
conducted by Ben-Baruch et al, (in Poggenpoel and Myburgh, 2002:191-206) it is stated that persons with an orientation towards the future often deliver with respect to quality as well as quantity a higher degree of productive output than persons with another kind of time perception. One athlete endorsed this by sharing her dreams for the future:

"I want to win the Olympic Games in 2008 and 2012. I am going to break the Olympic record, I want to become a legend." This was further endorsed by another athlete: "I would like to take part in the highest level, even Olympic and World Championships. This will be in four years or so. I'd like to wait for 2008 then I'll be about 23/24 that is how long it takes to build up to that level."

Top athletes are excellent in planning for the future as confirmed by Serena Williams:

"It's our ambition to just take over tennis. We're trying and we're doing a decent job of it now" (www.cnn.com/CNN/Programs/shows/williams). This was echoed by Tiger Woods (Owen 2001:65) when he was young, "I want to win all the big tournaments - the major ones - and I hope to play well when I get older, and beat all the pros."

- These families' social life is affected

The social life of the family with a high achiever is drastically affected.

From the previous information given in this study one realises how busy the parents are juggling their time and responsibilities. Although they are for most of their child's sports activities surrounded by other athletes and their parents, they have a very limited social life. A father and mother described this as follows:

"During the week we are so busy with training, every afternoon and on Saturday mornings, training or competitions and when you get home you are tired and don't want people around you. On Sundays we go to church and..."
have a restful family day. It would be nice to have someone sometimes inviting you to lunch, but it doesn’t happen. You don’t have many friends, 50 acquaintances yes, but only three or four real friends.” However, his wife added that on Sundays they also do their own thing.

Social isolation according to Goleman (1997:179) is therefore serious. It is the sense that you have nobody with whom one can share one’s private feelings or have close contact. He concludes that this can double the chances of sickness or death.

- They experience criticism

People who do not have high achievers in their home do not understand how these families function. One mother said:

“They do not really accept you, they don’t really want to be part of your group, they regard you as too important for them, that you’re stuck up when you do not want to visit them, they also criticise you a lot.”

Rotella and Bunker (1987:4) stress that parents constantly find themselves open to criticism. Those parents surely messed up that child or they tried to live through their child. That child is also spoiled. They mentioned that one hears far less talk about successful parents or that they did a lot of things right for their child.

Richard Williams said in an exclusive interview that from day one others attempted to tell him “a better way” to raise his daughters to be champions: “When people criticise you, I don’t care how much you say it doesn’t bother you, it does.” He said that this criticism only brought the family closer together (www.findarticles.com Ebony, June 2000).

Dealing with criticism is important because it can be hurtful and cause inferiority if one allows it. One of the families coped by doing the following:
"We have taught our children to speak their minds. This helps."

It thus seems that the whole family, and not only the high achiever, as will be described later, suffer from impaired interpersonal relationships and/or communication at times.

- There is a financial burden

Financially parents experience it to be quite tough to have a high achiever in the family.

One father admitted: "When the money runs out at the end of the month, I'll go and buy vitamins for the children before I buy a beer." Another stated: "We did not have the finances to send him to a normal university so we are quite excited about his scholarship to go and study and run in Nebraska, USA".

The third family confirmed that it is not only the trips to various competitions "...but also the visits to doctors, physiotherapists, chiropractics and homeopaths. Within three months the medical aid funds meant for a year can be easily depleted."

Special foods and vitamins are also very costly as are entry fees, the cost of petrol, the cost of equipment, shoes and clothing (Rotella and Bunker, 1987:34) The cost of special lessons and instructional books, cameras and videotapes can be enormous. Brown (2001:92) says that before parents and coaches decide that the child they are working with is going to be a sports star, they should take a realistic look at the cost and then decide if they can afford it. However, Côté (1999:406) in his research on "The influence of the family" found that committed families would somehow find the financial resources necessary by often making sacrifices in their own social or recreational life.
Health and injuries

When it came to issues on illnesses and injuries one family expressed denial of such possibility:

"I definitely don't think it will happen, there is no way it can happen." Another mother when asked how she or the kids will cope if she should get sick answered: "I just don't get sick, so far so good." One athlete who already experienced setbacks and disappointments of not making the team because of an illness said: "I was very disappointed, I felt like, must I really carry on if I'm going to keep on getting sick before big events, but then you realise, there is always another time, always another competition every year."

According to Côté (1999:410) a high level of emotional support provided by parents in times of stress and anxiety is an important family characteristic. He added that generally emotional support represents the ability to turn to others for comfort. This strengthens the child's sense of competence or self-esteem and gives motivation to continue participation in their sport.

It is however very important to realise that the dangers of serious injury in sport are real and that anyone who takes part in sport experiences failure, disappointment and frustration, but learning to deal with such situations and the resulting feelings is actually one of the true benefits of sport (Rotella and Bunker, 1987:100 and 179). Being able to deal effectively with injury, fatigue, pressure, failures and loss of interest are important characteristics of the athletes' high performance years. Parental support is an important factor in this regard (Côté 1999:410).

Physical health is one side of the coin, but when it comes to mental health regular exercise can cause wellness for the whole family. One mother who has been going through a very depressing time said: "I also want to get back into sports, maybe that will make me feel better as well."
In an article by Steyn (2001:11) he notes that regular exercise can have a beneficial effect in reducing anxiety and depression as well as the ability to cope with stress. Leith (in Potgieter 2003:195) confirms this when he says that exercise can be used effectively as a Band-Aid approach to reducing anxiety. In fact, he said that there is every reason to believe that exercise may prove as effective as a minor tranquiliser for reducing situational anxiety.

- Emotional disturbances

Like any other teenager, high achievers also are affected by impaired marital relationships of parents.

When one family structure changed the mother described it as follows: “My children did not perform so well. They also did not eat regularly, they didn’t take their vitamins. We just bought any kind of food and lay in bed eating. It wasn’t a good thing, but it’s better now, everything is getting back to normal.”

Divorce, separation, or ongoing parental conflicts undermine the security of an adolescent’s love (Narramore and Lewis, 1990:254). So do passive, uninvolved parents or workaholic parents who are physically present but emotionally absent or unavailable.

The changes the families have to adapt to go hand in hand with many sacrifices.

3.4.1.2 Sacrifices the families of high achievers must make, affect each member of the family

Supplying appropriate stimulation for a talented child may involve a good deal of effort, and possibly sacrifice, on the part of the parents, and can put considerable strain on family resources. In the early years these parents devote much of their time and energy to the children (Lansdown and Walker 1992:402).
• Each family member suffers in one way or the other

Each family member suffer in one way or the other as a result of a changed lifestyle which is evidenced through the following quotations:

“When it comes to big athletic meetings – we all have to go to bed early, must be very quiet so that Ousus can rest. When it is cold, nobody can go out because Ousus might catch a cold. Everybody eats what Ousus must eat because she has to perform” said one mother.

Often the whole family life is dominated by the sporting ambitions of one or more of the children (Grisogono, 1991:10). However, Brown (2001:90) warns that if at some point athletes are unable to continue playing their sport, due to age, injury, loss of interest, work, or diminishing skills, they (and their parents) need to have developed an identity that is not dependent on athletic achievement.

• Travelling

Another big sacrifice is the travelling aspect of achievement - many hours per week are spent travelling to training sessions, competitions, racing from one place to another, trying to accommodate every child’s schedule.

One mother confirmed this: “Getting the two children to their venues is quite a story, when they were smaller I was Mom’s taxi, it was my duty, it took a lot of my time.”

Transporting one’s child around town or the province is not an easy task according to Rotella and Bunker (1987:33). Chances are that one might become a full-time transportation specialist. One mother concluded:

“So yes, to find a weekend off or a day off or whatever for yourself, it is almost impossible.”
According to Owen (2001:82) Kultida, the mother of Tiger Woods was an infinitely patient chauffeur, rising long before dawn to drive him to distant tournaments (and reminding him to bring his pillow so that he could go back to sleep in the car). He further wrote that Tiger’s parents did not take a vacation in twenty years, because every spare dollar was needed to transport Tiger to and from tournaments.

This seems to be a universal role of all the mothers with high achievers in sport. Although millions of mothers are transporting their children to and from the sports fields each day, the travelling needs of top athletes seem to be excessive.

A bumper sticker that someone found in Australia (Coakley and Donnelly 1999: 112) became quite applicable to this study: “If a mother’s place is in the home, why am I always in the car?”

One father thought they lived a very unselfish life on which his wife commented: “Yes for the kids and us because there is a lot to give and take from both sides.”

According to Rotella and Bunker (1987:20) “You must be willing to make sacrifices because your ability to prepare for and joyfully live with your child’s pace and schedule will be crucial in your child’s success and happiness.” They concluded one will have very little time for oneself, and when one finally has free time, one will be ready to collapse. Heaven helps one’s child or other children.

- **Teamwork**

It seems than to function effectively with regard to organisational structures parents must work as a team. One athlete explained it as follows:

“So if my mum finds it difficult to travel, my dad’s right there, they’re used to working as a team.”
According to Malina (1984:225) the process of bringing performance up to a high level and keeping it there demands a premature planning of lives and a consistent self-organization that children cannot handle by themselves. That therefore requires the assistance of parents, educators, coaches, doctors, clubs and associations. Saviano (in Brown 2001:63) remarks that every athlete should have a development plan – a blueprint for success. The high achiever also has to have a developmental team leader. It could be a parent, coach or friend. One that monitors the athlete’s developmental needs on a daily basis. This role is significant, but time consuming.

- Marriages

The team work and sacrifices of parents putting their child’s/children’s needs before their own seems to also take its toll on their marriages.

While doing the data analysis the researcher was reflecting on the absence in two family interviews on how their marriages were affected by having a high achiever child/children in the home. When discussing this with them in the member checking appointments, one of the parents admitted:

"There is no time for us." Another one said: "The last few years of our marriage was not good." One husband commented: "My wife and I make deliberate appointments with each other at least once a week if possible, this is our time."

Narramore and Lewis (1990:242) are of the opinion that parenting is a high calling that takes enormous energy and commitment. However, it is not a human being’s only responsibility, nor is it a lifetime task. The first time children are mentioned in the Bible, the parent-child relationship is pictured as eventually giving way to the intimacy of the husband-wife relationship (Genesis 2:24). The marriage relationship is to be the enduring one, not the parent-child. Although parents want to enjoy their children’s companionship throughout life, our primary responsibility is to launch them into adulthood.
That which the researcher was wondering about seemed to be a reality for the parents of golfing superstar Tiger Woods. The sacrifices they made with regards to his sports career took a toll on their marriage, so much so that they have been living apart for several years now although not divorced. Raising Tiger wore both of them out (Owen 2001:82-84).

According to Covey (1997:154) the quality of the marriage relationship governs the quality of family life.

The state of marriages of parents with high achievers in sport was not studied and therefore the researcher could not reach a verified conclusion pertaining to this matter. As there seems to be very little literature available on this it could become an interesting phenomenon to research in future.

Coming back to the parents, whether married or divorced, both fathers and mothers in this study, cater for the child’s needs, and have an overall feeling of responsibility for the organisation of childcare being shared between them (Backett, 1982:229).

- **Mother’s dreams and desires**

All three mothers have to pay a price with regard to their own dreams and desires. One athlete’s mother said the following about her own sport:

"You have to give up your own training, but it is not that I did not achieve. I had to prioritise, so I said this is important to me but not beneficial for the whole family, but uhm, I am not sorry that I actually ploughed the time back into the family."

Another mother said: "As far as my own career, we felt it would be easier if I work from home so that I can be more available to take them where they need to be. It is a lot of commitment from our side."
The third mother also shared the same sentiments: "I so wanted to be a teacher, but it is not possible, now I only work in the mornings and is 100% available for our kids."

Thompson (in Coakley and Donnelly 1999:112) got the following answer on how a mother supported her son and husband in their sport: "They have a particular diet, one for pre-match and one when they're playing. Then there is always their gear, making sure their gear is ready, their whites white, their shorts and T-shirts and track suits, washed and ironed, and their meal and their drink and their towels."

According to Backett (1982:226) this is a universal occurrence. The mother has to organise the children an awful lot more than the father. The result is women continuing to be typified as mother first and as a person second. A study done on retiring athletes (Coakley and Donnelly; 1999:200) is also applicable on mothers after providing years of social and emotional support to athletes and living in the shadow of reflected glory. They too now have to face their own challenges and problems in connection with their child-athlete's transition into the rest of their lives.

- **Diet and nutrition**

Going from mothers' careers to kitchens providing for nutritional needs is one of the most important elements in the development and nurturing of a child/teen athlete and also the most difficult to handle (Rotella and Bunker, 1987:181). For convenient sake the same menus are served, which is not so well-accepted by some of the other family members. One high achiever had the following to say:

"A lot of sacrifices are made by the others. If we had to get an orphan visiting who is in standard 5 (grade 7), she'll die, normal people eat nice things. I don't drink milk so there is never milk in the house."
Although these families have to adapt and suffer in various ways, the research has also shown that they also benefit in various ways.

3.4.1.3 Various advantages for families with high achievers in sport

- The importance of sport

Youth sports according to De Knop, Engström, Skirstad and Weiss (1996:280) can give many children a lifelong interest in physical activity as an important part of a healthy way of life and as a source of joy and relaxation. They can also provide a platform for future elite sportsmen and -women and become a means of self-realisation and success for young people with a talent for sports.

The most important advantage the researcher found was that all three families realised the importance sport played in the lives of their children.

This is evidenced when one “other child” said: “I enjoy running, I like it, it keeps me busy, it keeps you away from all bad things in life.”

One of the high achievers confirmed this: “You have to have that willpower, when kids offer you alcohol and cigarettes, I tell them one day I’ll be winning medals at the Olympics than your lungs are going to be smoked up” and “when people see me perform, they think I’m using steroids or something to make me big and strong. But I think it’s my goals that will give me the records not drugs.”

According to Rotella and Bunker (1987:212) when athletes are compared to other individuals of similar backgrounds they are less likely to be deviant in their social behaviour possibly because athletes learn to follow rules and are generally more conventional in their lifestyles.
Children from the families interviewed in this study were all well disciplined, had a goal and a purpose for living. However, there are also other advantages:

- **Other advantages**

Another advantage is sponsorship for high achievers as one explained: “I've got a study bursary, I hope to get my degree and run on the European circuit.”

Although the families interviewed by the researcher are not superstars yet, they dream of what is to come, of what the advantages would be for them as a family.

One sister said about the opportunity to travel to far away exciting places: “So I don't mind so much any more that my sister is getting so much attention.”

For the fathers who are coaches it could mean overseas travel to Olympic Games or “who knows.” A father of a high achiever who got an international sports scholarship said: “He might even be able to organise me a job as a coach there, if he does, I'm gone, that's for sure.”

While the influence of a coach can be great (Grisogono, 1991:10), it is magnified if one also happens to be the child's parent. Grisogono further had the following to say:

“Sometimes the parents' motivation is selfish, although this is generally unconscious. Parents might find reflected glory in their child's aspirations and success in a high profile sport. The child is given the responsibility of achieving ambitions which the parents feel they missed out on in their own youth. The possibility of vast earning power can tempt parents or coaches to put a child under great pressure because of its potentially high rewards, even if the child happens to prefer another sport. Some may even unscrupulously
ensure for themselves a share in the child's future earnings before the child is capable of understanding contracts or business dealings." The families in this research seem to be aware of these above-mentioned pitfalls and endeavour to stay clear of it.

Advantages for significant others are a universal phenomenon as evidenced in the Williams family. They started very humbly in Compton, a violent Los Angeles suburb where the tennis courts were rotten, torn up with no nets. A clothing sponsorship deal early in the tennis stars Venus and Serena's careers, allowed the whole family to move to a nearby home in Palm Beach Gardens, away from Compton. (http://wimbledon.willhill.com/serena_Williams_1 (Serena Williams biography part 1).

Today Serena and Venus have according to (www.cnn.com/CNN/Programs/people/shows/williams/profile.html) become cultural icons, their style and athletic talent making them two of the world's most visible and wealthiest women so much so that their father, Richard boasts that he can buy the Rockefeller centre.

- Parents rewrite stories

Another interesting phenomenon for the researcher was to see how the parents were able to rewrite their own stories to benefit their families.

As these parents reflect on their lives they reconstruct their stories and relive their experiences. One mother told her story as follows:

"I have decided to be a friend to my children. Although my mom and I had a good relationship, we did not really discuss matters such as boys or private physically things. I want to know everything about my kids, I will discipline them, but I want to be their friend."
One of the father's said: "I tried various things, studied various things, it is as if the puzzle is now falling into place. It is as if God destined me to be in the place where I am now. I can use all of my experiences and contacts of the past for the next ten or more years."

Earl Woods, father of Tiger, believed that the birth of his son had been planned by the Man upstairs. Looking back on his life (Owen, 2001:61) he detected a pattern of trials and tests and close escapes from tragedy, and decided that God had been grooming him for something big. He is of the opinion that the true purpose of his life is the creation and nurturing of Tiger Woods.

According to Holloway and Wheeler (1996:60) narratives are interpretations: telling the story, people gives meaning to that which happened to them.

To conclude this part of the research an anonymous quote found in Elmore (2001:131) summarizes the above rewritten stories:

"You cannot change your ancestors, but you can do something about your descendants."

As the lives of all family members are interwoven with that of high achievers, it is important to see how this affects them.

3.4.2 Acceptance of the circumstances of being a high achiever in sport makes life easier

In this category the researcher found too much rich data to be discussed in this chapter alone and decided to cluster some of the points and then summarise it.
3.4.2.1 Parents' support is essential for the success of high achievers

Throughout this study it was evident that the support of the parents in all three families plays a crucial role. One thing talented people shared were an enriched home life with enthusiastic and appreciative parents (Lansdown and Walker 1992:403).

One mother said: “There are things we cannot do for them, we cannot run for them, we can't do their homework for them. We are the supporters who give them a lot of guidance in the right direction. Our child made this decision to run, she never needs encouragement to train."

Another athlete said: “As a small child you are always interested in what your parents do, you want to be like your father. If my parents were not runners I would most probably have taken up something else."

Another mother mentioned: “The way we brought him up was to live by his own choices.” She added: “You can lead a horse to the water, but you cannot make him drink. We have taught him our morals and beliefs, if he does not want to follow that, there is not much we can do.”

Children accept the norms and values for sports participation of their parents and make it their own (Gottlied and Chen in Schoon 1994:42).

Parents must convince their child that their love is unconditional, that whatever they choose, they will still be loved (Rotella and Bunker 1987:26). They also stressed that parents with a talented child should not be forced to participate. If sport is no fun kids will leave it. The most important aspect is that gifted children also need a way out. Continuing to play must be the child's decision. If the child wants to quit, that should be okay, and no one should hold grudges.
Power struggles were evidenced between some of the high achievers and the mothers and even some spouses. "My child never talked to me, but now we're friends" and from the same family: "They always complained to me about what he says they must do."

Another mother said: "My child sometimes says disrespectful things even in front of people."

Dinkmeyer and McKay (1982:10) say that this happens when a child cannot defeat the parent in a power struggle and pursue revenge. They want to hurt because they feel hurt.

The researcher got the impression that some of the child-athletes sometimes said/meant: to say to their father-coaches: "Look at me as your child and not as an athlete."

Although conflict is very present in homes where there are teenagers, recent research (Papalia and Olds, 1995:390) has shown that rebellion does not have to be a hallmark of adolescence. In America they found adolescents to feel close to and positive about their parents, have similar values on major issues, and value their parents' approval. They found that a reason for lack of conflict was that parents and adolescents spend very little time with each other.

In this study however, where the families of high achievers are rather closely knitted and spend a lot of time together, the researcher found very little rebellion displayed overall by the children.

The parent is the primary educator of the child because the child is part of the family (Leonard; Burns in Schoon 1994:30). Because of this responsibility, the parent is involved with everything that happens to the child. Research further showed that positive aspects of development of the adolescents are reached during their involvement in sport if they have parents or a coach who care about them (Weiss in Schoon, 1994:38).
Parents need to realise that their child must be able to think for him- or herself to achieve in sport. The child will need to be able to self-direct both mind and body in highly competitive situations. Parents should be very supportive and encourage their child's talent without using pressure (Rotella and Bunker 1987:116, 140). This is true, but there is also an opposite: Competition is everywhere in life and today's young people will benefit by experiencing it early. Athletics give children an opportunity to learn the competitive spirit. If it is in the child's best interest, and not the parents, some pressure would be considered positive (Pry in http://www.youth-sports.com).

According to Byrne (in Lee, 1993:43), coaches should hold parent orientation meetings prior to the start of the season as this will get parents into the comfort zone on the parental involvement continuum (Figure 3.1).

To illustrate what the parental involvement continuum of Jon Hellstad is (in Lee, 1993:43), it will be described as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disinterested parent</th>
<th>Misinformed parent</th>
<th>The comfort zone</th>
<th>Excitable parent</th>
<th>Fanatical parent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under-involvement</td>
<td>Moderate involvement</td>
<td>Over-involvement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.1 The parental involvement continuum
• *Under-involvement:*

**Disinterested parents:** Parents are heavily involved in social activities in the community and drop children at clubs and leave it all to the coaches. *These children will not reap the full benefits in sport participation.*

**Misinformed parents:** Parents stay away from practices and competitions because they think they will distract their children. *Children however want to please their parents and show them what they can do.* Sport allows for smiling faces of parents when kids are successful and hugs to console when defeated. *It also brings the family closer in an area the child values.*

• *Over-involvement:*

**Excitable parents:** They seem to be the coach's dream. They attend everything. Unfortunately they get caught up in the moment and could hurl verbal abuse at the coach, the child, other competitors or officials. *Parents should be seen but seldom heard and when they do speak it must be positive.*

**Fanatical parents:** The parents were themselves either successful or unsuccessful in sport. Their desire is however for their child to be a hero/heroine. The children of such parents practice hard but do not enjoy it. They also have difficulties to sleep or eat before competitions due to pressure from parents.

By encouraging the more officious parents to praise children and to focus their attention on performance rather than outcome, many of the problems can be overcome (Byrne in Lee 1993:43).

*Although the high achievers feel very much part of the family, they also want to be independent and take responsibilities for their lives within limits.*
Adolescent high achievers are no different than other adolescents. They might have some strong points with regard to physical and mental abilities but, what they also ask, is:

"All I really want of life is to have someone who can accept me as I am." (Ginott, 1973:14).

They are more than the sum of their gifts: he/she is a whole person, who need to be loved and accepted as they are, with all their weaknesses as well as their strengths (Lansdown and Walker, 1992:403).

Adolescents, says (Berger, 2001:407) are naïve, idealistic, troubled by their own introspections, and supersensitive to criticism, real or imagined. Lansdown and Walker (1992:402) however, see the talented adolescent as usually sociable, well adjusted and successful.

The data indicate that two high achievers were very shy when they were younger: "I was incredibly shy, very uncertain of my self." Another one said: "I keep to myself."

Young people need to adapt to and cope with an increasingly complex society. To be successful, they must be equipped with the necessary skills to confront difficult social circumstances and to do so with self-confidence and competence (Stiffman and Feldman, 1986: 111).

One shy achiever is exceptionally tall and has a big bone structure. Her mother confirms that when taking drama lessons this respondent's whole life changed to one of "confidence, recognition and super popularity." Sport achievements only came later and enhanced the popularity. To confirm this one of the siblings had the following to say:
“It's cool, there are 80 SMS' from boys on that cell phone.”

According to various researchers (in Schoon 1994:21), feelings about one's body are equal to feelings of one self. People will have a positive self-concept when they are positive about their bodies. Steyn and Goslin (in Schoon, 1994:33) confirm that parents should not ignore the way children feel about their bodies or any eccentric personality behaviour. They should handle it with empathy because children can either experience their bodies as an opportunity or as a disadvantage.

Achieving also means enormous recognition, which they would not have had otherwise: "I have a whole book full of newspaper articles."

They seem to be very humble and never talk about their achievements. One parent said: "It's only us telling people about them."

All of them became very self-confident since starting to achieve, and two became more introverts. One parent said: "she has so much confidence, she makes good decisions." Self-confidence will be enhanced when athletes are willing to take control over events in their lives and are able to attribute their successes and failures within their control (Morris and Summers 1995:329).

They see themselves as more mature than their friends: "I was much more mature when I was in standard five."

They have made the belief system, morals and values of the parents their own. One high achiever said: "You have to be a strong believer in God, you have to pray that God help you in your races." Her mother endorsed this: "We've told them from very small to pray before they go, I would whisper a little prayer in their ears." The high achiever also said: "Before I compete my dad holds me and says a little prayer for me."

According to Ginott (1973:106) adults' responsibility is to set standards and demonstrate values. Adolescents need to know what adults respect and what
they expect. This is enhanced by Doctor James Dobson (1997:615):
"Children are for a season, entrusted by their Creator, the perfect parent, to human fathers and mothers who are anything but perfect. Their children are a gift to them and they are a gift to their children. Their acceptance, attention, values and role modelling will have a profound influence on the person their child becomes."

Fawcett (1999:9) introducing God's plan for the family explains it as follows:
"Christian families are the cells in the Body of Christ which contain the spiritual DNA of His Body, the essential characteristics of the cell which have the ability to replicate itself. Natural DNA ensures the continuity of the characteristics of the species it represents in the next generation. Likewise the spiritual "DNA" replicates the essential character of Christ in the Christian home and family."

All indicated that they cared about "the other child": "I really love my sister, I don't want her to feel bad" and "I want to be a good example to her."

Adapting to new things and friends did not come easy. When commenting about new friends and new school, the answer was: "It sucks." Commenting on competition overseas one respondent said: "It was overwhelming, the food, the people, if it was the Olympics, I would not have been able to handle it."

Inexperienced athletes can be taught how to deal with new situations (Morris and Summers, 1995:333).

They worked on having a strong mind, practised visualisation before competitions, exercised positive thinking and did mind exercises, as one father said: "My kinders sê ek toor met hulle" (My kids think I brainwash them).

They also have their own ideas: "It's a good thing to go out on your own and grow up."
These high achievers are very knowledgeable with regard to training, achievements and their own body, mind and soul. In fact they do their own research or get it from their coach-fathers. One athlete said:

"I do a lot of research, I want to get my brain stimulated" and a father said: "We experiment a lot. Read a lot. We want to be ahead in this field."

All three kept records of their performances and could work out for themselves why they did not achieve as wished at any given time. "Even when I run bad, I know something went wrong which I overlooked."

A teenager’s task is tremendous, and the time is short. Too much is happening at once. There are great spurts of physical energy, psychic urges, social clumsiness and painful self-consciousness. Adolescence is a time of curative madness, in which all teenagers have to remake their personalities. They have to free themselves from childhood ties with parents, establish new identifications with peers, and find their own identities (Ginott, 1973: 11).

Apart from all of this, high achievers must also cope with the constant pressure of high performance, their motivation being intrinsic and extrinsic. Potgieter (in Steyn, 2001:12) stresses that research suggests that both are important but that intrinsic motivation is superior to extrinsic motivation.

Sports people, coaches, parents and sports managers should put their primary focus on winning A factors (intrinsic) and use winning X factors (extrinsic) in a momentary and supplementary fashion to complete the full motivational package for the participant. Herewith the process and outcome goals in sport as explained by researchers of which some are already evidenced in the families in this study.
Winning "A" (intrinsic factors) - The gaining of essential life goods, with or without winning X

Technical and self-improvement, exercise and health, enjoyment of the game, development of concentration, the ability to remain calm and task-orientated under pressure, the development of self-confidence and determination, the development of self-knowledge through sport and the expression of physical and personal potential on all levels.

Winning "X" (extrinsic factors) - The by products, sometimes achieved, sometimes not

Trophies and prizes, prestige and recognition, approval from others, dominating and defeating others, proving oneself, pleasing parents, educators, coaches and friends and the prestige of the school.

It seems as if these high achievers in this present study are learning the skills explained in winning A factors.

The researcher who was an international high achiever in sport too, was amazed to hear how much these athletes knew, how much they have internalised about theories and how well they applied some. It was as if the interviews were done with much older and more experienced athletes. Although there many advantages and rewards for a high achievers, they also pay a price as seen in the losses in the next sub-category.

3.4.2.3 High achievers in sport are able to choose their reactions to losses

Socially these high achievers have a very limited social life.

During the week they go to school, train afterwards and only have limited time for homework. Then it is off to bed. They do not visit in the week and nobody visits them. Friday nights if there are no competitions and none the next day, the parents are more lenient.
Sport should not be the only leisure activity of the child. Days should not be filled with just school and sport, nor weekends with just competitions or workouts (Grupe in Malina, 1984:232).

However, one respondent said: “It has happened on a Friday night with my friends at the movies that my parents fetches me halfway through, because it was my sleeping time. I also never get to go to a mass sleepover and am not allowed to travel by bus or with some one else in the car. When I’m at parties and do not want to smoke or drink they think I’m a square. Well I have to go out on Saturday evenings, that is my social time. I also need lots of friends, if I have only just two, I’ll die.” Grupe (Malina, 1984:232) says the child must develop social relationships outside his or her athletic group.

- Being different and special could cause athletes to fear rejection from peers.

Top-level and even lower-level competitors tend to be isolated: The need for determination and concentration, combined with the constant travelling involved in most modern sports, make it difficult to sustain close relationships and friendships (Grisogono, 1991:8). The athlete who wants to have a normal circle of friends (as opposed to other athletes, exclusively) has to work at it (Brown, 2001:88).

One mother mentioned: “My child (high achiever) trains just as well on her own as in a group. Yet my other child cannot train on her own she needs her friends.”

Children questioned between 11 to 14 years old said their most important reason for participation in sport was to make friends and be accepted by them (Putter, 2001:28).
However, another high achiever said: "I have many friends they are also runners, but they can't come to my house, they can't come and ride horse because they might get hurt and then they can't run."

What parents do not seem to understand is the need for the child whether a high achiever or not, to have friends. They need other interests too. They have got to live a balanced life. They need personal freedom. If the parental control is too rigid and confining, it will stifle rather than facilitate (Stabenau in Thomas; Gecas; Weigert and Rooney 1974:25) and the athlete as well as the parents will suffer from burnout.

Rotella and Bunker (1987:45) sum it up as follows: "Your child athlete will be practicing while others are socializing. They must be up early in the morning, while others are sleeping late, they may avoid drinking and drugs while it is part of others leisure time. Your athlete may have delayed or limited experience with dating because of chosen emphasis on athletics."

One respondent confirmed this: "If I did not do athletics I would have more male friends, I would have had boyfriends, but one day, not now."

When considering the above, it was also important to see what achievers thought about schooling:

3.4.2.4 Academics take second place in the here and now

For all three athletes, schoolwork came second to athletics. One loved school because of the friends: "I have lots of friends." This respondent who also achieved high academic marks had also the following to say:

"I'm already getting in the 75/80%, but I miss a lot of school work due to competitions, academics are last on my list of priorities."
Another high achiever found it a means to achieve higher points for university entrance and did a post-matric. The last one started home schooling due to time constraints:

"It's extremely difficult to do an academic career and an athletics career," she said.

They found it difficult to cope with so many hours of training, hours at school and then still have to find time for homework. One achiever who is also an excellent scholar said:

"I miss a lot of work when I go to competitions, my teachers do not always understand. How I'm going to cope with school, I don't know."

Tiger Woods' mom apparently used to say that in their house, education comes first. He was not allowed to hit practice balls until his had finished his homework (Owen, 2001:81).

In the Williams household it was quite similar with the mother home schooling their daughters. At one time when they were juniors their father pulled them from tournaments to concentrate on school. Both were A students. After finishing school they went on to study at the Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale and took an intense interest in fashion. Their mother said that that was part of preparing them for life after tennis (www.venusandsarena.homestead.com, (Venus' Biography) and www.kidzwerld.com/site/p1294.htm).

According to Grupe (in Malina, 1984:232) the intellectual and cognitive development of children, which is particularly apparent in their school career, must not be permanently impaired by top-level sport. He concluded that this development is so important for the future of the child that it should not be neglected.
All three high achievers in this research realised that they needed a career for life after athletics. One wants to become a sports psychologist, the other an electrical engineer and the other one wants to study business management.

For now they just wanted to focus on sport and become professional athletes.

If children are to have a happy, successful life (Rotella and Bunker, 1987:212), they must possess good social skills and positive personality traits as well as academic ability. The Vice-president of the International Olympic Committee, Anita DeFrantz, herself a former Olympian expressed a wish that all student athletes get the opportunity to gain valuable academic education while pursuing their goals in sport. (DeFrantz, 1999:20) There are many positive advantages gained from this pursuit. She concluded that those advantages do not simply materialise. As in everything else in life they must be earned.

3.4.3 As younger siblings ("the other child") grow older they strive to find their own niche in the family

The phenomenon of this major category was quite interesting. However, it was difficult to find specific data other than general remarks on possible sibling rivalry in the literature control.

The most outstanding topics will be discussed in the following sub-categories:

3.4.3.1 Prominent feelings "the other child" felt

- Feelings of rejection:
In two families the “other child” felt rejected by the parents and siblings and felt that they were not important enough: “My brother is not interested in my sport, but it does not bug me anymore.” She said to her mother: “You competed the same day as me and could not be there.”
Another one said: "It is not so bad, I mean I don't care, I'm not one to always want my mom there, when I play tennis or sing okay, then I would like to have either my mom or dad there, its not necessary for both of them to be there."

Grisogono (1991:10) urges parents to not only concentrate on one child who is specially talented or keen, as the other child may feel neglected. Younger siblings who have not yet established their niche within the family are especially susceptible to negative comparison with their sibling (Côté, 1999:411). Benjamin Bloom, a prominent American researcher who did a study on talented people felt that there could be grave drawbacks to favouring one child at the expense of her brothers and sisters (Lansdown and Walker, 1992:403).

- **Feelings of jealousy:**
  "Even if she gets the hugs and I don't, I just carry on, I know they love me but she's got the talent, they must do everything for her."

- **Feelings of resentment:**
  "There's never money when I need clothes, it all gets used for her travels."

- The **parents feel very guilty** for not giving so much support, time and energy even clothes to the other child:
  "I felt very heart-sore for leaving you with someone else when I had to compete," and "he does support her, it's just that we're all into running, we understand it better than her sports."

- The **high achiever feels guilty** because so much attention was given to him/her:

However, it does not mean that the other child is not an achiever. The parents are just more focused on athletics. It is a field they are more familiar with and they can see the bigger picture in terms of the future for the high achiever.
One athlete said: "I never really talked about this to my sister. I just hoped that she is not living in my shadow, if it was me I would not have been able to handle it, I would have died. The teachers place a lot of pressure on her because I'm her sister." The pressure from people outside of the family can be very burdensome.

- **Feelings of acceptance:**
  It seems that the other children while growing up start to realise that they have to accept the situation: "I know my mom and dad love me, it's just that she has this big talent, she needs all the help." Another one said: "When I was younger it used to bug me when he didn't want to come and watch me, but now I understand why, so it doesn't bug me anymore. I love him, I'm going to miss him, it will be lonely without him."

- They all seem to love each other a lot:
  They have just not communicated these deep feelings or dealt with them. On the researcher's question of how they perceived opening up and each sharing what was in their hearts during the research interview, one high achiever said: "It was very interesting, I have never realised how my sister ("the other child") looked at things, this was the first time our family talked like this, yes, we talk a lot about goals and athletics but not like this" ("this" referring to the research interview).

It was as if healing of deep-rooted emotional pain in every member of the family could begin if pursued.

According to Lansdown and Walker (1992: 26) when a brother or sister has a good relationship they can be of a great support to each other, especially when family problems arise, or when there are quarrels among parents leaving children emotionally abandoned by both mother and father. A brother or sister often provides a degree of emotional protection and to some extent substitute emotionally for parents. Siblings often become close friends for life.
The growth of the friendship in this study between siblings was seen especially when the siblings grew older and they made peace with themselves and accepted the other for whom she or he was.

Although no one mentioned rivalry, subtle feelings were shared by the other child.

3.4.3.2 Subtle rivalry as shared by “the other child”

Looking at the famous sisters again it was interesting to note that father Richard would try to skirt sibling rivalry by preventing his daughters from playing competitive matches against one another. Some even accused him of fixing matches so that both get to win big tournaments. This he denied.

Serena Williams said: “It has the best potential to be a great rivalry. The best part is that we’re sisters, and we live together, and nothing like this has ever happened before” (www.cnn.com/CNN/programs/people/shows/williams (Venus and Serena Williams - A perfect match).

One father said of his other child: “She does not want to do athletics, she does not want to go through the pain barrier, she gives up easily.” The mother said the following of the same child: “She will sing for hours, she never gets tired of it.” The father said he wanted to make of her a South African champion too: “but I can’t tell her how to sing.”

According to Rotella and Bunker (1987:21) it is easy for parents to feel disappointed in the child for not being as ambitious and goal-oriented as their athletic sibling.

In all three families, the “other child” wanted to be recognised for their own achievement and desires. When the father or sibling came to watch a match, this child would reject all forms of advice: “Leave me alone, stop shouting advice at me.”
Children may react in various different ways to rivalry (Rotella and Bunker, 1987:22). Some would not even try and compete. Another child may seek out a different sport or non-sport activity. Côté (1999:411) found that by pursuing different interests and abilities, siblings minimise direct competition. A child often becomes good at something a brother or sister cannot do well (Dinkmeyer and McKay, 1982:34).

It was interesting to note that although two “other children” did compete in sport, their hearts’ desire was to do drama, acting and singing. The third one did other sports first, but now wants to run like the sibling. She wants to be part of the family where everyone but her made it their sports’ priority. This is how she put it:

“It wasn’t really to run, like, to be part of the family, because I always felt part of the family. I just want to run, it’s something I want to do.”

Another interesting fact was that although one “other child” also did athletics, another coach was selected, not by the father but by “the other child.”

From the literature available it seemed that the Williams sisters had equal chances and equal attention. The reason for this may be because they played the same sport. No feelings or talk of rejection, rebellion or jealousy were found in the third family where both children did the same sport, practised together and competed in the same events when chosen although in different age groups. This could be a topic to be researched in future.

3.4.3.3 Parents are more lenient with “the other child”

The parents are much more lenient with “the other child.” They hardly put pressure on these children. These children in all three families were left to make their own choices. One mother said: “She is not even a champion, but she could choose her own coach.”
Although they were included in the motivational talks, had to set goals and discuss it with the family if they did not meet deadlines, life just went on as usual. Their parents definitely saw them as different to the high achiever.

In all three families, the parents did attend “the other child’s” sporting or cultural event, but was sometimes late. Only one parent could make it, but both felt guilty, especially where the father was the coach of the high achiever. The parents also felt guilty about not having equal amounts of money available for this child: “I would like to give equal amount of money and time, but I can’t at present.”

Côté (1999:411) found in his study on the influence of the family that although parents were consciously aware of the uneven distribution of resources between their children, their belief about the high level of talent in their child-athlete was strong enough to determine and validate differential behaviours between children. But Lansdown and Walker (1992:403) felt that talented children do not have an automatic right to the lion’s share of their parents’ time and money. He felt that parents should make careful judgements and sometimes even painful compromises.

However, in all three cases however the parents, especially the mothers, loved the other child just as much and realised that they had their own dreams and desires. The parents would have liked to have supported them more than they have until now. One mother said: “I’m definitely going to give them more of my support.”

Changing focus to coaching and the role the father played as coach will be described next.

3.4.4 Coaches become just as important to children as their own parents

Coaching and related experiences will be seen from the perspective of the families and members of the families in this present study. Other coaches
were not interviewed, as this was the life world of these families and how they experienced it.

In two families the fathers coached the high achievers and in the other one the father had to find the right coach for his children.

3.4.4.1 What high achievers experience when the father is not the coach

One father said: "Finding the right coach for your child is very difficult. Not that there are too few, they might just not suit your child."

It is well worth one's time and energy to find a coach, one who will help one's children feel good about themselves, one who can work with children, one who has a reputation for teaching. Whether one's child becomes a star, an average athlete or give sports up for another activity, one will have instilled a positive attitude about learning (Rotella and Bunker, 1987:101).

One achiever said: "Our coach is like a father to us, he is very committed, he drives us around, he makes us part of his life." Another who has a female coach in one item said: "She is like a second mother to me."

According to Ligthelm (1987:27) coaches are right up there with the ministers in the concern they have for others. Coaches try to do what a lot of fathers have not done or would not do. One would not see anybody try harder than the coaches.

According to Professor Tim Noakes one has to look after the coaches too and not only the athletes. He said that there is a saying: "To athlete, the coach is God." The athlete is much more likely to listen to his or her coach than to anyone else (Proceedings of National Symposium, June 1993: 31).

According to Goncalves (1998:181), coaches play a central and essential role in the sport setting of young people, which can have a deeply positive (or negative) influence on their personal and social development. They have an
added responsibility of taking on an educational function, which has an effect beyond sports. The coach should therefore be someone with the same values as the parents (Rotella and Bunker, 1987:88).

Goncalves (1998:187) reports that research found that some coaches ban parents from practices and competition because of pushing their children too hard, frequently interfering and not behaving correctly at competitions. He concludes that the sporting triangle as found by Byrne (in Lee, 1993:41), the interrelationship between the coach and the child, the coach and the parent and the parent and the child are important components of the balance necessary for successful sporting experiences. Coaches should keep parents informed on what is expected of the child. The child is part of their family, not the coach’s (Lee, 1993:178).

![Sporting triangle diagram]

Figure 3.2 Sporting triangle
Byrne (in Lee 1993:40-41) also found that a number of adult groups (see figure 3.3 in the Circle of Influence) are actively involved in sport and can have an influence upon the athlete, the parents and the coach being the most important.

![Figure 3.3 Circle of Influence](image)

3.4.4.2 High achievers find it difficult to differentiate between roles when the father is the coach

Two fathers in this research were the coaches of their high achiever children. What was most significant was that the athletes saw the father and coach as one. The fathers however could separate their roles. One father said: "I told my child when I wear this cap, I'm Dad, when I wear that cap, I'm Coach."

This did not make sense to the child who confused the roles: "The worst thing for me is to disappoint my dad in my sport. He keeps reassuring me that he will love me regardless of my achievements, but when I have a bad competition, he feels it's his fault, he did something wrong. When he gets "that look" after I did badly, when he says nothing, does not smile, I hate it, I hate it. My dad plays a big role in my achievements, a BIG ROLE."
Putter (2001:78) says that the invisible language of the parent is very visible to the searching eyes of the child. The child will do anything to get a look of approval to know: "My dad thinks I'm great."

The mother later responded to this: "I think our child knows that her dad expects a lot and deep within fears that these expectations cannot be met."

Putter (2001:78) continues that children are very sensitive towards the expectations of the parents. A child desperately wants to be accepted by the parent and will try to live up to however high the expectations are. When the child constantly feels that he/she is not meeting the parent's expectations one hundred percent even though trying his/her best, it will lead to feelings of disappointment, failure or anxiety.

Doctor Frank Smoll (Brown, 2001:95), professor in psychology, thinks that the most serious problem is role confusion between being a parent and being a coach. He emphasises that there has to be an understanding between the parent and the child that parenting behaviour and coaching behaviour will be different. He further suggests that the parent-coach gets the child's perspective on the situation and also think that one should not coach one's own children for more than two years in a row. They need to adjust to other leadership styles.

Even in the case of Serena and Venus Williams others believed they needed outside coaches too (www.ottawalynx.com/SlamTennisArchive/apr1_is.html). Their father was their only coach until late in their careers when they started specialising in certain techniques. This was also the case in Tiger Woods' career (Owen 2001:125).

The following is a summary of statements made by these two high achievers with regards to their fathers as their coaches:

- "We have a very good relationship;"
- "We never fight;"
- I really trust his judgement;
- I trust him, he's my father;
- He is better than anyone else, he'll stay my coach;
- We get to spend a lot of time together;
- My dad is very committed to my sport;
- My dreams are his dreams too;
- Without him being there I would have failed;
- He understands me best;
- During these interviews I saw how he sees me and saw myself as he sees me, it was actually a compliment, I'm glad he realises that I'm trying my best I really am;
- He prays with me before competitions;
- We talk a lot;
- He's like my psychologist, I however wish I had a real one, I'll tell him things I can't tell my dad;
- He'll always be there to give me guidance;
- He's just a call away."

(The above were taken from verbatim interviews of the families in this study.)

What has Superstar Serena Williams have to say about her father-coach? "He has a great influence upon me. He has given me everything that I have right now or else I would have been struggling somewhere, I am very, very happy, he loves me, he has done everything he can for me"

The researcher thinks that the most important though is a statement made by one father-coach in this study: "We don't really accept or see him as a high achiever, we see our child as a human being that is still being developed to his full potential."

In conclusion a statement made by the father of Tiger Woods who was his first coach: "Tiger was not created to be a golfer, he was made to be a good person, and that was first and foremost in our family" (Owen, 2001:51).
To be a successful parent-coach, the following should be adhered to:

- The parent-coaches' should be able to let their children feel good about themselves.
- Positive feedback is crucial in the developmental years.
- Constant corrections can discourage almost any child.
- Do not allow your dream to dominate otherwise you will push too hard and too early, then the child might play for you and become very unhappy or stop altogether with sport.
- Communicate on your child's level. Get into their heads.
- Be enthusiastic rather than serious.
- Keep emotional control.
- Do not blame the child later at home.
- Teach the advantage of being prepared for every possibility.
- Deal effectively with stress and anxiety because your child will follow your example.
- When you are hurting, do not let your body or facial expressions show it.
- Ask your child if you should rather get another coach. Consider the commitment well before you take on the task of being a coach (Rotella and Bunker, 1987:127-129).

3.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the findings of the study were discussed in terms of four major categories:

1. When there is a high achiever in sport in the family, the whole family is affected.
2. Acceptance of the circumstances of being a high achiever in sport makes life easier.
3. As younger siblings ("the other child") grow older they strive to find their own niche in the family.
4. Coaches become just as important to children as their own parents.
These major categories should not be seen in isolation but interwoven with each other. The literature control gave substantial evidence of the similarities and uniqueness of this research.

As a result the guidelines, conclusions, limitations and recommendations to facilitate mental health for families with high achievers in sport will be discussed in Chapter 4.
CHAPTER 4
GUIDELINES, CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

During the Summer Olympics of 1992 the following scene enfolded in front of millions of people, some watching the 400m athletics race in the stadium and others on their television screens.

Derrick Redman, lined up, he was one of the fastest men in the world who qualified for the Olympics in spite of enduring twenty-two surgeries on his Achilles tendon prior to the race. He was called "Miracle Boy." The race started, but tragedy struck once again. He suddenly grabbed his leg and fell to the ground. The commentators announced: "He's out of the race" and the cameras followed the rest of the winners to the tape.

However Derrick knew his country did not send him to merely start the race but to finish it. He got back up and hobbled with agony, little by little moving forward.

Sitting in the stands however was his father and mentor, Jim Redman. The one who prepared him for this race, bought his spikes, the one who got up early and cycled and ran with him. Jim felt compelled to get involved. He pushed his way past the crowds, jumped a fence and sped past two security officers until he got to his son.

The crowd watched in fascination as the father moved on. He put his hand gently on his son's shoulder and the son turned around sobbing as he fell on his father's chest. His father looked at him and asked: "Do you want to finish this race?" Derrick nodded.
Newspaper articles recorded his now most famous words: “Son, we started this thing together, we’re going to finish this thing together.” He then put his arm around his son, and his son’s around his shoulder and they finished the race together (Elmore, 2001: 41).

In Chapter 3 one gets some idea of how parents in this study are saying: “We’re going to make sure you finish your race well.” In this study, the researcher is not only talking about the athlete as high achiever, but about a high achieving family. The whole family is committed to a central goal of helping high achievers to reach their full potential in sport. Everyone is prepared to pay the price, see it as a challenge, rewarding and even fulfilling, but not easy.

The researcher found that the focus shifted from the known family system (see Figure 4.1) to the high achiever taking centre stage (Figure 4.2).

![Figure 4.1 Known family system](image)

![Figure 4.2 Family with a high achiever](image)

The family members now moved to the periphery. When the father is also the coach, he becomes part of the centre (see Figure 4.3) but still not the centre. The parents adapted a new lifestyle which is centred around the activities of the high achievers, placing their own needs last.
Families with high achievers seem to live under constant pressure to perform. The children have the opportunity to alleviate their stress through physical activity and with other interests, but the parents had little or no time for themselves. A balanced lifestyle is something the whole family longed for. In fact when children have other interests it seems as if the families are more relaxed.

Some experienced their lifestyle as "not normal" and some children described themselves as "not normal" too. At times the lifestyles became overwhelmingly hectic, causing friction and even marital problems in some instances. Financial worries were often a matter of concern, especially when facing international sports tours.

The respondents were very focused on the here and now in view of their ultimate future directed goal. In all three families it meant consistent daily training and competing to qualify for the athletics world circuit and eventually the Olympic Games.

The families talked a lot, discussed training schedules and competitions, but seemed to lack constructive interpersonal communication skills. In fact, the researcher got the impression that they did not even realise this.

The parents furthermore gave a lot of support to their children especially to the high achievers, but they themselves were deprived of it. Interpersonal relationships became impaired due to their lifestyles. The results however
showed that there was lots of caring, concern, moral support and positive expectations for the future. All the respondents expressed their hope that the findings would not only benefit them but other suchlike families too.

The vast amount of major and sub-categories that emerged from the results were therefore carefully clustered together, but without losing the significance of the rich analysed data. Four major categories as Tabled in 3.1 were:

- The first major category explains when there is a high achiever in sport in the family, the whole family is affected. It captured how the lifestyles of families changed dramatically, what sacrifices they must make, but also highlighted the advantages for the whole family.

- The second category shows life becomes easier when high achievers accept their circumstances as being a high achiever. The role of the parents, needs of the adolescent, the losses they experience and their comments on academics were discussed.

- The third category focuses on the experiences of “the other child” with regard to the feelings they felt, subtle rivalry between siblings and the role of the parents.

- The fourth category is about what high achievers experience about coaches - coaches when not part of the family structure and when the father is the coach.

In the following paragraphs guidelines based on the results from Chapter 3 will be described to facilitate mental health for families with high achievers in sport. A literature control will be integrated in the guidelines.
4.2 GUIDELINES TO FACILITATE MENTAL HEALTH FOR FAMILIES WITH HIGH ACHIEVERS IN SPORT

Before the guidelines are discussed, it is important to explain the context in which it will be implemented.

4.2.1 Context in which guidelines will be implemented

The adolescents discussed in this study are all born between 1984 and 2001 and are called the millennial generation. They are optimistic as a whole, many actually believing they can change the world (Elmore, 2001: 15,20).

Their outlook is post modernistic and existential in the core: For them life is a cafeteria. They pick and choose everything, from music to religion. They function very much in the here and now and is also future directed. They make their own decisions, choosing how they want to react to experiences. This is very scary to parents, some feeling a bit inadequate about parenting.

They are at a point in history where change is happening so fast even the grandparents' heads spin. One person can make a move and impact millions before the day is over! Although you can only lead your child as far as you have grown, you can get a coach/mentor in life and then coach your children. “Our goal would not be to clone ourselves, but to foster the leadership/special gifts our kids already have” (Elmore 2001:8,9).

The daily news parents remembered are ancient history to their children, because so much has changed. The words Apartheid and Isolation are foreign to them, and when left out of teams due to colour accept it as just another disappointment to overcome.

They talk about world circuits and Olympic games with the same ease as about national championships. They are future directed and think globally. They plan to travel worldwide just as they have already done on the Internet. As one father said: “They are years ahead of some adults.”
It is with all this in mind that the parents seem to function with such urgency not wanting their children, and especially high achievers to miss opportunities they never had, yet dreamed of.

In discussing guidelines for the above-mentioned families to promote mental health one has to look at how mental health and psycho-education are defined.

4.2.2 Definitions of approaches, models and strategies

- For the purpose of this study mental health is defined as a holistic approach to wholeness. It is the assessment of the whole person. The pattern of interaction between the internal environment (body, mind and spirit) and external environment (physical, social and spiritual) determines the individual’s mental health status (Poggenpoel, 2002: Class Notes).

According to the Oxford Dictionary of Sports Science and Medicine (1998) mental health is defined as follows:

- A mental state marked by the absence of personal discomfort and socially disruptive behaviour. Those in good mental health have the capacity to adapt to environmental stresses and they work productively with others or alone. They are usually able and willing to attempt to improve society’s condition as well as their own personal condition.

- The Mental Health Model for successful elite athletes is a model proposing that successful elite athletes generally have greater mental health than unsuccessful athletes. It is based on the observation that many (but by no means all) elite athletes exhibit the psychological profiles of mentally healthy individuals.

- A psycho-educationalist or a facilitator using a psycho-educational approach focuses on the development of human potential. This approach
is directed towards the self, the influence on others and the future. It developed from the need to help people without necessarily using therapy. It therefore aims to be pro-active and to equip people before problems develop (Roos; Taljaard and Lombaard 2001:1, 2). It is thus concerned with the well-being, mental health of human beings.

When looking at the phenomenon within the world of sport, which is highly complexed, competitive and enormously diversified, the researcher realised that more than one model or strategy could be used. The following was decided on as will be explained in this chapter: It is important to note that guidelines will be interwoven and not written for each category as seen in Chapter 3.

4.2.3 The consultation model through a psycho-educational approach and other supportive strategies

The current programmes initiated by the National Olympic Committee and Athletics South Africa, might be well described and intentional but lacking in its effectiveness to reach the target group in this study. The past has shown that where they were reached, many promises were not kept and parents and athletes were left very despondent.

One father had the following to say: “They sent us a grand fax explaining that our child has been accepted in the national athletics development programme, they explained what it entails, all the benefits available. But nothing has materialised. When we phone them, nothing happens. It’s all on paper. We don’t know if they have the money they’re talking about. We are funding our child’s sport ourselves, maybe its better, this way they can’t exercise control over our child.”

Research in this study shows there is a definite need to reach not only high achievers but also the whole family. It would be important that guidelines should be applied on a national, regional and local level to all cultures and ages. Although this study focused on the adolescent, it could be applied to
primary children as well as student-athletes who are still dependent on their parents for their livelihood. These guidelines could be applied to other sports codes.

4.2.3.1 Departure point for the guidelines within the following conceptual framework (Figure 4.4) to promote mental health

- The Consultation model should be used for individuals, a one-on-one relationship (with any of the family members) to ensure confidentiality and establishing the need. The Consultation model should also be used with the family as a group. Only one family at a time should be consulted as an experiential, learning process for each member.

- The researcher suggests informal meetings with families to establish Workshops and that ultimately a national forum should be implemented to create awareness that such a need exists and also to determine the extent thereof. The nominal group technique (Roos, et al, 2001:13) a non-threatening approach, would be an excellent tool to facilitate these meetings and establish what they want to discuss.

There is no order in which these strategies should be applied. The need will determine if families first come for consultation or whether they need to first be made aware through workshops that other families experience the same problems. They might all share the need to enhance their life skills as well as looking for answers to their many questions in this quest for stardom of their children.

- The family meeting (Dinkmeyer and McKay 1982:97-105) - a third strategy that the family can practice weekly in their own homes.

As there is a lot of rivalry within the Family of Sport, the consultation model will ensure confidentiality and implies that the dignity of the family or individual members of that family is respected (De Vos, 1998:306).
- The **nominal group technique** involves people with diverse backgrounds and opinions in assessment and priority-setting activities. It guarantees each person's access to the process. (Roos et al, 2001:13). These families with high achievers are very goal-oriented yet lack time and energy to go for long group therapy sessions.

  This technique will get them to the point where they feel they have control, yet expose them to the interaction of other likeminded families, which can then also serve as a support system.

- The **family meeting** will help families on a regular basis to not only plan their week, training and competition schedules as usual, but also add vital missing ingredients by discussing concerns and share positive experiences and feelings ((Dinkmeyer and McKay, 1982:97). It will enhance their interpersonal relationships as well as their communication skills. This strategy could be taught to parents by the consultant so that they in turn could facilitate it effectively in the comfort of their own homes when it suits all family members.

- The **aim of a psycho-educational approach** is to optimise the well-being of individuals and communities with innovative and alternative interventions that are developed in co-operation with members of the community and other disciplines. Programme development is underpinned by the principles of psycho-education (Roos, et al, 2001:1).

  The researcher used this approach because it addresses problems or possible problems in a preventative manner. Individuals and groups of people are trained in skills, insights and competencies (Herbst in Roos, et al, 2001:1). This training focuses on making their lives more meaningful and purposeful Schoeman (in Roos, et al, 2001:1).
4.2.4 The consultation model as preferred approach

4.2.4.1 What is consulting?

Consulting is the process (Lange, 1987:4) in which a consultant with the requisite knowledge, skills, programs, vision and methodology helps or influences the client to solve a problem. It is the client that must solve the problem and not the consultant so that the client needs to be equipped how to solve other problems in future (Bowers, 1989:37).

According to Lippitt (1986:12) there need not be pain or a problem but a desire to increase one's competitive advantage and effectiveness, but also one's self-image.
As families with high achievers are used to organised programmes, coaching techniques and high performance, the kind of consultant/facilitator they choose is important.

4.2.4.2 Who can facilitate this process?

The successful consultant must possess a degree of mental agility, be highly analytical and be able to evaluate situations quickly. At the same time, consultation demands excellent communication and social skills. (Lange, 1987:7,8).

A sports psychologist, a sports teacher, a coach, a family counsellor or a psycho-educationalist could best do the facilitation. A parent with a high achiever in sport from another family could also do it, but only if trained as a facilitator and preferably from other sports codes. This will prevent rivalry and bias between the mentioned families. In the sports world a consultant’s reputation, specialisation and good ethical values will make him/her a sought after facilitator.

4.2.4.3 Structural phases of consultation

The following phases will be discussed: Entry, goal setting, problem-solving, decision-making and termination.

- Phase 1. **Entry** – how the first contact is made is very important. It is time to ask questions, review capabilities and identify problems. The consultant must take time early in the relationship to promote feelings of acceptance and warmth wherever possible to make the clients feel comfortable to share their feelings (Lange, 1987:131). A contract between client and consultant about what is expected and how it will be achieved should be drawn up and signed.

- Phase 2. **Goal setting** – this begins with a clear definition of the problem and specific aim or outcome that must be assessed. Goal statements provide a blueprint for the action that follows.
- **Phase 3. Problem-solving** – this is the creative stage of collaborative consultation. This phase indicates what must be done, how and where. Resources that can assist with this process are also identified.

- **Phase 4. Decision-making** – in this stage the client is responsible for taking a necessary course of action. The consultant helps clients to develop their own strategies for goal attainment. The consultant's role is reduced when the client is able to function independently.

- **Phase 5. Termination** - Closure should bring a feeling of satisfaction to both the client and the consultant. The process should now be evaluated and summarised and the findings must be shared.

The consultant should have an effective referral system should families need specialised help.

In the small group (family) consultation, the focus is on the task to be accomplished. The understanding of group theory and function is of vital importance to any consultant.

4.2.4.4 The small group consultation process

The main focus within the group is knowledge and skills training for constructive interpersonal relationships and communication skills.

Human beings are not born instinctively knowing how to interact effectively with others. It takes training and it takes practice (Johnson, 1997:3, 16). Johnson further remarks (1997:105) that to live is to communicate. Through communication people learn to understand others as individuals and they help others to understand them.

The structural phases of a family group are as follows:

- **Entry or relationship phase**: The consultant, now referred to as the facilitator, will apply group principles and observe how the members react, connect and integrate the process. The facilitator should create an
atmosphere of warmth and acceptance by producing non-threatening aspects. The clients must know that they can trust the facilitator, that he/she is part of the process working towards achieving a goal. The work of any professional helper requires the constant exercise of discretion and judgement. Ethics are very important (Lippitt and Lippitt, 1987:152). The group will decide on the goal and draw up a contract of when they want to achieve it.

- During the **working phase** information will be given about interpersonal relationships and effective parent-child communication. This will happen over a time period of weeks as determined by the group.

When facilitating just **parent-groups** the following subjects (Dinkmeyer and McKay, 1982:3) could be discussed:

- Understanding children’s behaviour and misbehaviour; understanding more about oneself and one’s child; building the child’s confidence and feelings of worth; how to listen to one’s child; expressing ideas and feelings to children. These groups should also focus on the self-image of the parents, stress management and how to have a happy marriage.

- The **child groups** should entail the following: Who am I? - questions; identify their style of communication with the self and others; managing possible conflict situations; problem-solving and interpersonal social skills as well as decision making skills.

- The **parent-child groups** should be an experiential learning process where the above two sessions can be practised. According to Johnson (1997:21) all human beings learn from their experiences by reading about it and by practising it.

- In the **Termination phase** evaluation and questions should bring a closure to the program.
The outcomes of a program to develop constructive interpersonal relationships and communication should help high achievers and their families to go for Gold!

4.2.5 The nominal group technique as a supportive strategy in workshops to promote mental health

In order to create awareness to promote mental health informal meetings or workshops could be organised for families with high achievers in sport as there seems to be a need in the market place. This could be advertised in all forms of media, sports clubs and schools. If such awareness meetings or workshops were planned in a small town or for a specific community, it would be wise to call a few medical practitioners or physiotherapists, chiropractics and churches, as they could also provide interesting facts about families. They could be asked if any cases of for example, anorexia, bulimia, continual stress fractures to mention but a few, have been reported. These professionals could also be nominated to head an ongoing task force or act as facilitator for a volunteer programme within the community.

The consultant could use the nominal group technique to facilitate workshops effectively. There are many variations, one of these variations suggested for application is:

- Ask the gathered participants to give three to five needs to be addresses on a separate piece of paper.
- The facilitator collects all the papers and categorises them according to specific items (for instance education, health and parental guidance).
- Each of these headings is then written on a flip chart of board. The problem descriptions given by the individual participants are listed under each heading.
- Participants then discuss whether some descriptions can be eliminated or integrated with others because of overlap and duplication. After this step there may seem seven or eight items in one category, therein the next and so forth.
The facilitator asks each person in order of seating arrangements to argue forcefully which anyone of the items listed should be acted upon or ignored. At this time there is no group discussion. When the first person finishes the second person is given a chance. This continues until everyone has had an opportunity to speak. Then everyone votes. The results of the voting will clarify the action priorities under each category and where to start (Roos et al, 2001:13).

This technique could help the families and/or just parents' or just children's groups to find out how other high achievers and their families function. It could be very therapeutic and supportive. The sporting triangle (see page 70) coach - athlete - parent relationship should also be addressed in these workshops.

From the outcomes of these initial meetings, workshops could be planned and various disciplines be asked to present topics that the parents would like to know more about. Families could now be invited to see the consultant for private interviews or group sessions as need be.

Experts should be invited to give knowledge and teach skills on: new trends in training and techniques; diet and nutrition; supplements; injuries; available sponsorships and bursaries; preparation for international competition; media interviews; financial management and contracts; life after athletics and schooling; how to inter relate and communicate on a constructive level with parents; peers and other cultures; self-concept/self-worth; and how to be a role model/leader in society.

Workshops should be conducted in such a way whereby apart from gaining knowledge, the role players, including the high achievers, could interact with each other. These workshops or forum activities could be very supportive, especially for families who are normally not informed of what is expected of their high achiever on an international level. Team building exercises as family outings could be planned where experiential learning exercises could be practised.
The last strategy the researcher would like to suggest as a supportive strategy to facilitate effective interpersonal relationships and communication skills is the family meeting which could be practised on a weekly basis.

4.2.6 The family meeting as a supportive strategy to promote mental health

The consultant will organise workshops for the purpose of direct training of parents for effective parenting (Dinkmeyer and McKay, 1982:101). According to Schoeman (in Roos et al, 2001:33) direct training implies the training of individuals and other systems in specific skills, insights and competencies.

How is a family meeting constituted? It involves the whole family. It is a democratic process whereby parents should delegate within limits decision-making responsibilities to the family as a group in which each member has an equal voice.

A proper agenda is set up. each person, children included, gets a chance to be the chairperson or secretary and take minutes. The following week the minutes are read and discussed to see how effective this method was in terms of the desired outcomes.

In summary, the family meeting provides the following opportunities (Dinkmeyer and McKay: 1982:98):

- being heard;
- expressing positive feelings about one another and giving encouragement;
- distributing chores fairly among members;
- expressing concerns, feelings and complaints;
- settling conflicts and dealing with recurring issues; and
- planning family recreation.
The family meeting is endorsed by Covey (1997:136, 146) when he says that outside of making and honouring the basic marriage covenant, no single structure will help prioritise the family more than a specific time set aside every week just for the family. The main focus being a family. He concludes by saying that dramatic change in society makes it imperative that people really teach and communicate as families in their homes. If they do not teach their children, society will and they will have to live with the consequences.

Family meetings can take many forms, but the guidelines as described have proved to be a highly effective tool to stimulate interpersonal communication, effective relationships and planning of a balanced life, which are all skills families with high achievers need.

4.3 CONCLUSIONS

When the researcher, who is also a parent of a high achiever, decided to change schools in order to find the right coach for her child, the responses of friends made her wonder what other families in the boat experienced. This led to this study whereby two research questions were posed:

- What does the life world of families with high achievers in sport look like?
- How can this study be utilised to describe guidelines for a psycho-educational programme to facilitate the mental health of families with high achievers in sport?

A qualitative, exploratory, descriptive and contextual research design was used to find answers to these questions. Families were interviewed using semi-structured phenomenological interviews that complied with the purpose of the research. The description of the analysed data found in Chapter 3 reflected positive and negative experiences.

Guidelines were described from data in Chapter 3 to facilitate and promote mental health for families with high achievers in sport.
The conclusion can therefore be made that by answering the research questions the objectives of this study have been reached.

4.4 LIMITATIONS

One of the biggest problems the researcher came up against in this study was for the families selected to find time for the interviews. Their schedules were already so full that some of the interviews had to take place on weekends and after 21h00 at night.

Scarcity of resources on the topic posed another limitation. When coaches or lecturers in the field of sport were asked for available literature that could be used for this study, they had none, and said there was a need for such information. This made the researcher decide to give as much detailed data and guidelines as far as possible to assist facilitators in the field of sport and family counselling. The length of these two chapters could be another limitation.

The fact that the researcher has extensive knowledge of the field of study herself being a former high achiever and now the parent of one, proved to be an advantage. Throughout the study the researcher however had to divorce herself from preconceived ideas and expectations in order to maintain objectivity.

A further limitation was the fact that the researcher knew most of the participants. Where the participants did not know the researcher, they shared their feelings more openly. Some of the participants opened up more when individual interviews took place. The researcher felt that this was an important aspect. All the high achievers were interviewed alone, but time prevented “the other child” to be interviewed on his/her own. Interviews with coaches who were not part of the family were also not interviewed. The researcher felt that this was a limitation that other researchers should be aware of.
The following recommendations based on the research will be explained next:

4.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations by the researcher are made in the field of sport and related areas, education and research.

4.5.1 Sport and related areas

Sport has become a major industry in the world. In South Africa with its sport mad people it is also fast becoming so specialised and commercialised that parents and children alike can become trapped in their quest for achievement and stardom. It is thus up to parents, coaches and schools to maintain a balance, putting the interest of the child first. The parents should be the gatekeepers in upholding the values and norms of families in society.

A national Forum for Families with High Achievers in Sport, not only adolescents, are recommended, where all parents, athletes, coaches, educators, sports psychologists, consultants, family counsellors and general practitioners, regardless of race, religion, language or financial status could be empowered to assist families with high achievers and so add to the well being of the nation. A national Forum Conference should be held yearly, with many workshops being held through the year. A website and newsletter should be made available to the members.

4.5.2 Education

It is recommended that parent evenings for top school athletes become part of the quarterly school program. This should not only be held during the athletics season, but could also include all sports and become seasonal meetings. Many children in other sports will also be or become high achievers and this learning process will be an investment for life. During these meetings a skilled facilitator could give lectures on interpersonal
relationships and communication with the main focus being parent-child-interaction. Parents and children should be given a chance for experiential learning whereby the new acquired knowledge are practised under supervision of the facilitator and later at home. Other topics should include: effective life skills, self-concept, a well-balanced diet, a well-balanced lifestyle, decision-making, time management, conflict management, the importance of academics and career guidance for a high achiever.

When discussing these topics in primary schools, parents should be made aware of the need for their children to play and enjoy many different sports. This enhances their physical development and can also prevent injuries.

A high performance centre or sports school where academics and sport are more integrated could benefit the high achiever, if it suits the child’s personality to become a boarder in case the centre or school is out of town.

These centres should also initiate yearly summer camps where athletes will not only be taught specific techniques related to high performance, but a class in business management, media relations, cultural differences when travelling abroad, international travel and what is to be expected at international competitions and Olympic Games. Learning life skills, and specifically skills on how to deal with the media, popularity and disappointments, would be included in the programme contents.

Home schooling is also an option, but this depends on the role parents can play with regard to their child’s academic career and only if the child’s personality allows for it. Parents who are already overtaxed should consider the implications before taking their children out of the formal education system.

Both the Forum/workshop and school meetings could become instruments of support to families who are becoming socially isolated due to the pressures of high performance.
The national media could be used to create awareness for such a Forum as strategy for empowerment and nation building.

The National Olympic Committee of South Africa (NOCSA), Athletics South Africa (ASA), the South African Sports Commission, the National Departments of Sport and Recreation and Education, universities and the United School Sports Association (USSASA) could all make a valuable contribution either in terms of funding or providing professionals who can educate and facilitate strategies for parents and high performance athletes. Although there is currently a programme through NOCSA (Operation Excellence – OPEX), addressing the needs of South Africa's leading Olympic medal contenders for the next Olympic Games and ASA (centres of excellence for juniors), the families in this study have not benefited by it.

The creation of a sports psycho-educationalist as facilitator/consultant could become the driving force between government, the school, the private sector and families to ensure high visibility of psycho-educational programme development to promote mental health for families with high achievers in sport.

4.5.3 Research

Further research is recommended on experiences with families of high achievers and in other sports codes. This will confirm whether there are similarities and differences and could contribute to enhancing family life and well-being of high achievers in those sports codes.

Because of limited resources on "the other child/children" (siblings of the high achiever) and the parent-coach as well as the influence on marriages, further research could possibly bring rich data to the field and play an important preventative role in the mental health of the whole family.

The researcher of this present study endorses the idea of an integrated or
multi-disciplinary approach to youth sport research to analysing adolescent lifestyles and the role of sport within the process of their socialisation. It seems although there is talk thereof, few was actually doing it (Weiss, 2000:103-106). Weiss furthermore stressed that in order to depict the interactional nature of these characteristics on the young athlete, the wheel of child development (Figure 4.5) is meant to represent a model or schematic around which an integrated sport science approach can be organised.

![Figure 4.5 Child in sport: "Wheel of child development"](image)

Lastly, the researcher would recommend that the findings of all research done on elite athletes and/or families with high achievers in sport should be widely publicised in all media and not just research journals. In this way parents, coaches, educators, sports officials and the high achievers themselves will become better informed.

### 4.6 SUMMARY

Great performances as recently shown by South Africa's Penny Heyns and presently Hestrie Cloete have made them household names, creating pride amongst all South Africans. The country is now competing with the best of in the world, and beating them.

However back home where high achievers are silently waiting in the ranks for their turn, it does not come without cost to their parents and siblings. Yet in
spite of it, the support is tremendous, all working together in some way whether perfect or imperfect to help each other fulfil their God given potential.

The researcher trusts that many parents, children and coaches will become aware of trustworthy consultants and therapists who could give help when problems arise. As athletes need coaches, people need mentors.

May all who are able to facilitate mental health through their expertise or profession become proactive to build healthy families with high achievers in sport, healthy in body, mind and spirit.

The researcher concludes with the following quotes in support of all those high achieving families who are helping to produce role models and sports ambassadors:

Winners thrive on challenges and find it almost impossible to sit and watch when obstacles or challenges are looming (Olivier, 2002:87)

Champions are a rare breed, they see beyond the dangers, the risks, the obstacles, the hardships Doctor Lester Sumrall (Olivier, 2002:18).

The last quote is from the Bible:

But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They soar on wings like eagles, they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. (Devotional Study Bible. Isaiah 40: 31).
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www.ottawalynx.com/SlamTennisArchive/apr1_is.html

ANNEXURE A

CONSENT FROM THE RESEARCH COMMITTEE
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT: “Life stories of families with high achievers in sport.”

RESEARCHER: J.G. (Knoetze) Raper

SUPERVISORS: Prof. M. Poggenpoel
Prof. C.P.H. Myburgh

The Committee for Academic Ethics of the Faculty of Education and Nursing of the Rand Afrikaans University evaluated the research proposal and consent letters of the above research project and confirms that it complies with the approved Research Ethical Standards of the Rand Afrikaans University.

The study supervisor and researcher demonstrated their intent to comply with the approved Ethical Research Standards during conduct of the research project.

Yours sincerely

MARIE POGGENPOEL (PROF)
CHAIRPERSON: FACULTY’S COMMITTEE FOR ACADEMIC ETHICS
ANNEXURE B

CONSENT FORM OF THE PARTICIPANTS FOR THE RESEARCH STUDY

UNIVERSITY
OF
JOHANNESBURG
LETTER OF PERMISSION
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
AND NURSING

Dear Parent/Athlete

REQUEST FOR CONSENT FROM PARTICIPANTS

I am an MPhil student at Rand Afrikaans University in Johannesburg, presently engaged in a research project entitled "Life Stories of Families with High Achievers in Sport" under the supervision of Professors Chris Myburgh (Department of Education) and Marie Poggenpoel (Department of Nursing).

The purpose of this study is to explore and describe the life world of parents and adolescent "super" sport stars in the making in the South African context.

I want to invite you to participate in this research project because your story with the other participants could be used to facilitate mental health for your family as well as others in the quest for super star status and so contribute to national and world sport. This could lead to the development of a mental health programme in future to assist such families. Your contribution will therefore be highly valued.

If you agree, a period of an hour or two will be made available for you to tell your life story at a private, comfortable venue convenient to you. Sometimes alone or in the company of your other family members or even in groups. For this research to be successful, an audiotape will be used to collect the data. To verify and validate the interview content, the tape will be played back to you. If so desired, the audiotapes will be destroyed after completion of the research project. We might at any time communicate by letter writing or email. All confidential measures will be applicable.

To protect your identity, no names will be used or referred to during the whole phase of the interview. You have the right to withdraw your consent at any time during the phase of the research project, as it is clearly understood that you are under no obligation to participate in this research.

Research results will be made available to you, the media and the South African Minister of Sport and Recreation, if requested.

Should you have any questions with regard to this project, feel free to contact me at: Tel/Fax 011 965 1710, cell 072 104 2284 or email at jonvia@intekom.co.za.

Thank you. Your consent will not only add value to South African sport, but global interest too.
Sports greetings

JESSICA APPEL (MPhil Student - RAU)

Prof Chris Myburgh (Education)

Prof Marie Poggenpoel (Nursing)
ANNEXURE C

PROTOCOL TO THE INDEPENDENT CODER
PROTOCOL TO THE INDEPENDENT CODER

Dear Colleague

Thank you for agreeing to assist with my research on THE LIFE STORIES OF FAMILIES WITH HIGH ACHIEVERS IN SPORT. Please use Tesch's (De Vos 1998:343) 8 steps to analyze the data:

1. Read through each individual transcription in order to get a picture of the whole. Jot down ideas as they come to mind.
2. Select the shortest interview and ask yourself what it is all about. What is the underlying meaning. Write the thoughts in the margin.
3. Repeat this process with all the transcribed interviews. Make a list of all the themes/topics. Cluster similar topics together and arrange them into major topics, unique topics and leftovers.
4. The list is compared with the data and the topics abbreviated into codes. The codes are written next to the appropriate segments of the text. New categories and codes might still emerge.
5. Find the most descriptive wording for topics and categorise them. The list of categories is reduced when related topics are grouped. Draw lines to show inter relationships between categories.
6. Make a final decision on the abbreviation for each category and alphabetize these codes.
7. Data material belonging to each category is assembled in one place and preliminary analysis is performed.
8. Recode the data if necessary.

Once consensus have been reached with regards to the results, the final categories will be concluded and the literature control will follow.

JESSICA RAPER
M Phil Psycho Educational Programme Development student
ANNEXURE D

EXAMPLE OF A VERBATIM TRANSCRIPTION OF ONE OF THE INTERVIEWS
ANNEXURE D

TRANSCRIPTION OF AN INTERVIEW
FIRST INTERVIEW WITH MOTHER AND “OTHER CHILD”

INTERVIEWER = INV
MOTHER = M
OTHER CHILD = OC = D
HIGH ACHIEVER = HA

INV: Thank you so much that I can be here today. We’re going to discuss the
dlife stories of families with high achievers in sport. (Turn to the mother)
Maybe you would like to tell me how it is to be the mother of one or two high
achievers of sport in your family?

M: We have our athlete, and we have our daughter, who is a gymnast or who
used to do gymnastics and is a dancer. So to find time between, getting the
two children to their venues is quite a story sometimes although the
competition days are not always necessarily the same day. I don’t find myself
really running around any more because they’re big first of all, when they
were smaller, that was my duty. I was Mom’s taxi, but that doesn’t happen
anymore. Although having them participate in sport, getting them to various
events does take a lot of your time and sometimes especially with our H/A
with the athletics and the way the organisers go these days it can take you all
day, so ja, to find a weekend off or a day off or whatever for yourself, it is
almost impossible.

INV: (Turn to daughter) “And for you?”

D: Well, some days, like on a Saturday, you have to be at the athletics all day
and I do find my brother doesn’t really ... not care, but he is not interested in
my sports like when I have a competition he won’t come watch me, but that
doesn’t bug me that much any more now and that. M interrupts: “that’s for
your athletics or your? D: no that's the dancing M: "Oh well, dancing is a different thing

D: and for my gymnastics, he always used to say "Why do I have to go and sit there, but for athletics it's OK now. I am also interested in the sports so I go and watch him and support him."

M: I'm sure he'll support you the moment you get to like umh, ...because at the moment she's just started and umh, if I can put it that way, he still sees her as not important

(INV wanted to ask if she sees the her achievement as not so important yet, but I let it pass by to see the reaction of the D. I was unsure whether I should wait or jump in so I waited).

M: But I'm sure the moment you get somewhere or achieve something, or win a race or whatever, he'll be behind her hundred percent. He's just like that (mother supportive of her daughter). Defends her son...I know he supports us when we run cross country, because that is the only sport old people can do, the only sport we can still participate in. Because of the 5 yr age groups and all that, and he is always there to cheer you on and stand on the side "Go Mom. You're laying some whatever position, ja. So he will do that, he doesn't take all the attention for himself, and like specially today I mean, I was there all day with him and when we were finished he said to me: Thanks for being here, thanks for sitting with me, thanks, for just supporting me, so he appreciate that, I must be honest.

(Mother was really sun burnt but so was her husband when I saw him later. I did not interrupt and ask where he was sitting when her son thanked her, or did he also thank his dad? Ask that next time...why. Because maybe mom wants to also feel special that she is making a contribution to his success, maybe only the dad as the former coach is recognized?)
D: I have started to support our H/A more now, because he is doing better, he needs my support now, he also supports me now, he doesn't ignore me, he does support me.

M: One thing is for sure, you can't really, as I said before, TIME WISE you've got to give him more time, because for any achiever you have so much time to achieve what you really want to do. If you don't support that and don't give that everything at the time and it's happening then you've missed it. So ...um...Yes, you have to sacrifice things like, give up your own training, and when I say, talking about your own training, achieving, I mean both my husband and I ran provincially until recently, we have both been to world champs so we KNOW what it takes and the TIME that it takes to put in the training, the time, the effort everything to achieve that kind of level, and if he wants to do that, you have to support it.

(At this stage it seems that H/A has the desire himself to achieve and parents support it. He wants to.)

He is not at the stage where he can cart himself round or do everything for himself, so yes, he needs that and of course the moral support when it comes to You have to just be there, you don't have to say a word or do anything you just have to be there, it actually helps them. And of course another point of view is that where you can look where it affects the family is that you've got to look at his diet, you got to look at his sleep, you got to look at his lifestyle as a whole, so you really have to adapt to all of those things and assist him with that.

D: interrupts: the whole family has to adapt to that M interrupts: the whole family has to adjust eating wise whatever way to support him in that area

LONG PAUSE. M: I don't know what else to think of...he is an easy guy, although he is achieving, winning whatever, he is not demanding, so what you do you basically do out of love for him, because you want to support him.
I don't know, we've like always lived with a family full of sport it is not really a big change it has always been...INV interrupts... "like a lifestyle?"
D: Yes something like that.

M: If it has not been the father, it's been the mother, and now the brother everybody gets their turn, (everyone laughs).

INV LOOKS AT D AND SAYS IN SUPPORT... and yours are partially there,
D: ja (yes)

M: no, no the sister too, I remember there were times
When the sister was pulled off the gymnastics floor (D laughs), was it championships? (D leaves room to answer phone call) and she was literally raced from the one apparatus to the next allowed to compete first, I took her from there off to dancing, I stopped in front of the door, she went in and as I parked the car, I walked in, she was on the stage dancing, it was like a matter of 15/20 minutes to get her to do her sport and with the dancing it is different because it is not the same sport as athletics it is only a short period of the year that you actually spend doing that. The rest of the time they train, it does not really affect anybody, and everybody is busy with their own thing. But when it gets to like August/ beginning September it's high season for gymnastics and dancing so you're literally racing from one venue to another. It could be Pretoria to Kempton and Kempton to Kempton or sometimes they compete for Gauteng champs or normally locally it could be quite a shlep to get her there. I remember one time having to do make up, coming back from gymnastics, in the car trying to make the kid look like a snake (D laughs and seems to enjoy her mom speaking about her), you just have to do it, you have to get to the next venue, so that period you can't give too much attention to the next one you know to the other son. (Meant child) because the only competition he really has is the cross country SA Champs which is something that does not need as much support, it does need support but not as much as with track.
D: On those days he is very supportive he does come watch when I have Eastern Gauteng, so he has supported me

INV: How old were you when you did that? Was it last year?

D: It was the last three years that I had to race like that. Yes, the last four years

INV: How old are you now?

D: I'm fifteen and in Gr 10.

M: H/A is actually doing a post-matric at this stage.

INV: has he already turned 18? M: he turned 18 in December.

10 MINUTES WERE UP AND INV STOPPED TAPE. MOTHER WANTED TO ACTUALLY GO ON ABOUT SOMETHING THAT TRIGGERED HER MIND. ASKED ME TO WRITE IT DOWN, I SAID WE'LL DO IT NEXT TIME SHE SAID SHE MIGHT FORGET.

INV SAID: OK LET'S USE A FEW MINUTES MORE.

M: Something that affected the family before that should not be a problem anymore is because of the mother, the father and the son being involved in athletics, and they could understand that, the daughter being involved with modern dancing and gymnastics did feel at one stage that there wasn't enough support, that's why I think she said in the beginning that her brother didn't really support her and that kind of thing, because

Firstly they don't understand the sport and secondly because the competition time is so short and not like we have a track season, a cross country season, D: interrupts: it's once a year. M: it's all year round, she's got like five competitions a year if that, including Sac's. Which makes it a very small competition competitive wise to the running and she did feel a one stage that
we were supporting him more but my feeling were that because we were so much involved with athletics ourselves, that's why it happened. And I sure to that will change now that she has decided to start with running.

INV TURNS TO D AND ASKS" ANY COMMENT? M: ANSWERS NOT AT THIS STAGE

D: Yes it was like that, I don't know each time I just started realizing that it isn't that way but it's because you guys don't really understand the sports and its is a lot different to go and watch gymnastics than to be in a race, so then I accepted it basically.

M: A lot of the races she did were one the same day as important races for us. That was basically the main thing. It was always either Gauteng champs or SA's or I remember leaving every year and this one had to be an important dancing competition like chamois dancing chaps like medal testing

D: Interrupts: like when I did Eastern Gauteng and champs on the same day as you. Did CGA, No SA's D: SA's M: yes, because I had to go away and I still remember leaving you at somebody else, goodness, like a friend and that was not nice you know. Because it is a mother little daughter type thing, it wasn't nice it was actually very heart sore and heartbreaking, but what can you do? You're representing the province and she got to be in places.

INV. TURNING TO DAUGHTER " AND HOW DID IT MAKE YOU FEEL?

D: I can't actually remember how I felt, but if I had to think about it now, now I will understand it, but then I was probably very sad and M: interrupts: "rejected"
D: rejected

M: Ja, (yes) my mother doesn't care, but mean while she does (D laughs) M: the hearts breaking to be there, but she knows what she's got to do as well.