SKIING SCHOOL STUDENTS’ ACADEMIC EDUCATION AND ATHLETIC SUCCESS.

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Skiing boarding schools provide an opportunity to combine academic education and an athletic career. Many athletes select to go to a boarding school at an age of 16 because they have poor local training possibilities, however, this physical move away from home will give many challenges. The purpose of this study was to analyze academic education and athletic success of skiing school students in Finland.

The participants were 49 students (15 girls and 34 boys) with an average age of 17 years. They came from three skiing boarding schools, two cross-country and one alpine school. Sixty percent of the alpine skiers were members of the junior national team while only six percent of the cross-country skiers. All participants completed a survey about study success and athletic performance.

The results showed that 80% of the students extended their high school studies from three to four years. About 50% of all students were satisfied with their academic success. Fifty-four percent of alpine skiers and 15% of cross-country skiers indicated that their best athletic success were in international competitions. Almost all students perceived that skiing school helped by combining sport and school. However, only 40% of the alpine skiers and 62% of the cross-country skiers were satisfied with their present athletic success. Seventy-three percent of the alpine skiers felt that sport participation affected negatively their success in school. Success in sport, good training possibilities, skilled coaches and caring friends were reason for enjoying life in skiing boarding schools. These findings tend to support the concept of skiing schools but suggest that there are many factors to consider when combining education and an athletic career.

Keywords: Education, Skiing, Success

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