

Supplementary Table 1. Overview of study characteristics from the 22 studies included in this review

Author (date)	Country of origin	Study design	Study aim (e.g., to identify, examine, describe, explore, document, report, compare...)	Study population	Population Number	Postpartum period studied	Level of sport athletes returned to postpartum
Quantitative							
Zaharieva (1972) ³⁹	Bulgaria	Self-report/ Observational	... the conditions, effects and outcomes of pregnancy and childbirth	Elite and first grade athletes active between 1952 and 1972	N=150	Not reported	Unclear
Nose-Ogura et al., (2023) ⁴⁰	Japan	Survey	... medical problems during pregnancy and postpartum in athletes who aimed to return to competition after childbirth...	Former elite, national, and local level female athletes who became pregnant with their first child and gave birth during their active sports career.	N = 328	Not reported	Unknown
Qualitative							
Appleby et al., (2009) ¹²	USA	Interviews	... the experiences of returning to competition following birth	Elite and national distance runners who returned to the same level of competition	N=10	Not reported	Elite and National
Darroch, et al., (2019) ¹⁴	Canada	Interviews	... the perceived support of corporate sponsors and athletic governing bodies during and post-pregnancy	Elite distance runners who achieved the minimum USA Track and Field 2012 Olympic Trials 'B' entry standard	N=14	<5 years	Unknown

Darroch et al., (2017) ¹⁶	Canada	Interviews	... the ways motherhood influenced athlete identity; and how motherhood and competition were negotiated	Elite distance runners who achieved the minimum USA 2012 Olympic Trials 'B' entry standard	N=14	<5 years	Unknown
Giles et al., (2016) ⁴⁵	Canada	Interviews	... the experiences of breastfeeding whilst training and competing	Elite distance runners who achieved the minimum USA 2012 Olympic Track and Field Trials 'B' entry standard	N=11	<5 years	Unknown
McGannon et al., (2022) ⁴⁴	Canada	Interviews	... the experiences of running post-pregnancy	Competitive distance runners	N=5	Not reported	Unknown
McGannon et al., (2018) ¹¹	Canada	Interviews	... how athlete and mother identities are negotiated and what implications exist	Elite and national level athletes	N=7	Not reported	Unknown
Palmer et al., (2009) ¹³	New Zealand	Interviews	... how motherhood impacts athlete identity, how mother and athlete identities and roles are negotiated, and what support systems are used or created	Past and present elite mother athletes	N=9	Not reported	Elite (N=7) Unknown (N=2)
Tekavc et al., (2020) ⁴¹	Slovenia	Interviews	... the transition of athletes into motherhood and how athletes combine their career with being a mother	Elite athletes who returned to elite sport following birth	N=8	Not reported	Elite
Martinez-Pascual et al., (2014) ⁴⁶	Spain	Interviews/ Letters/Diary entries	... the experiences of maternity and sport	Elite Spanish sportswomen, who	N=20	Not reported	Elite

				returned to sport for at least one year			
Massey et al., (2022) ⁴⁸	United Kingdom	Interviews	... how motherhood influences perceived personal and physical identities	Elite athletes training to return to elite sport postpartum	N=2	>2 months	Currently training to return to elite sport postpartum
Freeman (2008) ⁴³	USA	Interviews	... the experiences of training and competition	Elite mother-athletes who gave birth within six years prior to competing in the 2004 Summer or 2006 Winter Olympic Games	N=8	<6 years	Elite
Cook (2013) ³⁷	Greece	Interviews	... the experiences of training and competition	An elite athlete who returned to elite sport following birth and her support network (i.e., partner and mother)	N=3	Not reported	Elite
Batey et al., (2014) ⁴⁷	United Kingdom	Interviews	... the sporting experiences and psychological needs of mothers	National and local mothers who play in team sport	N=7	Not reported	Unknown
Debois et al., (2012) ³⁸	France	Interviews	... key events/transitions periods and how athletes deal with them	An Elite level female fencer	N=1	Not reported	Elite
Pedersen (2001) ⁵¹	Denmark	Interviews	... how a sport career and family are combined	Elite and national level athletes	N=12	Not reported	Elite
McGannon et al., (2019) ⁵²	USA	Auto-biographical Narrative Inquiry/Analysis	... what resources were used to construct athlete mother identities, and what social and psychological experiences occurred in relation to training and competition, ...	An elite British runner	N=1	Not reported	Elite

Baldwin (2022) ⁵⁰	USA	Narrative Inquiry/Analysis	what is normalized and obscured in three media representations of mother runners	Elite and recreational mother runners	N/A	Not reported	Not applicable
Davenport et al., (2022) ¹⁵	Canada	Interviews	... experiences of returning to sport following childbirth	World class and elite level athletes	N=18	<5 years	Elite
Mixed Methods							
Beilock et al., (2001) ⁴⁹	USA	Cross-sectional Survey/Interviews	... the physiological and cognitive components mediating a successful return to training and competition postpartum	National to local level athletes with 4+ years competitive experience	N=26	<10 years	Unknown
Sundgot-Borgen et al., (2019) ⁴²	Norway	Cross-sectional Survey/Interviews	... the conditions and outcomes of pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period	Elite level athletes who aimed to return to the same level competition postpartum	N=34	<1 years	Unknown

Level of sport informed by McKay et al., (2021): A Participant Classification Framework.⁷⁴