***Statement of Purpose***

AeHyun Jung

This letter represents my intention to profess George Mason University’s master’s degree program in Sport and Recreation Studies. First of all, I feel honored for having the opportunity to apply to your university.

I fell very connected to a degree in Sport and Recreation Studies because my life up to this point has been intertwined with “Sport”. I have loved swimming from when I was young and it helped me to play an active role as a member of the Korean national team from 5th grade all the way through undergraduate. When I achieved my goal of becoming a Korean national swimmer, I trained harder than any of my fellow team member. As a result, I won medals in the East Asian Tournament in 2005 and in the Asian Championship the following year. However, just days before the Doha Asian Games in 2006, I suffered a shoulder injury from excessive training and was forced to step down from the Korea national team. Although, I did extensive rehabilitation training for the next year, my shoulder injury did not get any better and I had to undergo a surgery for it at the end in 2007. I was very discouraged but I did not give up hope and continued to receive rehabilitation, and as a result I made a comeback as an athlete of Gangwon-do, which is professional swimming team in south Korea, in 2010. However, I got injured again so I gave up my career as a swimmer. After that, I seriously considered what I should do in the future and I realized that I wanted to study about the theories behind Sports and why it is such an important part of societies around the world. For this reason, I stopped working as an athlete and entered Konkuk University in pursuit of a bachelor's degree in Sport and Leisure Studies. I was one year behind people my age in going on to college because if my swimming career so I tried for an early graduation. As a result, I ranked first in my initial year and received a scholarship. After that, I received scholarships every semester of my undergraduate and graduated in just three years. For these reasons, I feel confident that I am a very motivated and enthusiastic student.

Moreover, based on my experiences which include professional swimmer and bachelor's degree in Sport and Leisure Studies, I have got a goal which is relate to master’s degree in Sport and Recreation studies. My personal goal is changing the Korean elite sport society. This is mainly because I have seen the serious problems in Korean elite sport society. For instance, student-athletes do not attend the classes in middle and high schools. Therefore, when they retire from professional athlete life, they do not have many choices to get a job because of a lack of education. Moreover, some female athletes encounter sexual harassment from male coaches. For these problems in Korean athlete society, I want to improve Korean athlete society environment. Furthermore, I want to know why these problems have been happened in Korean elite sport society through the research. Consequently, I should get a PhD degree to achieve my personal goal. I believe that George Mason University can help me to achieve my goal. This is because Sport and Recreation studies provide five concentrations: sport management, international sport management, sport administration, sport and leisure studies and sport coaching. Specifically, according to the division of sport, recreation and tourism, the concentration of sport and leisure studies provide courses which are historical and socio-cultural foundations, ethical and legal issues, and social-psychological perspectives. I believe that these courses will help to build up the basic knowledge which can help to achieve my goal. Additionally, my interest which is the elite sport society is related to the current topics of my discipline. According to the professional organization, North American Society for the Sociology of Sport provides the current topic that is “Migration and Career Transitions in Professional Sports: Transnational Athletic Careers in a Psychological and Sociological Perspective”. This topic is related to elite sport. Moreover, the division of sport, recreation and tourism has several research centers. Specifically, I am interested in The Center for the Study of Sport and Leisure in Society because they research the role of sport and leisure in society. I believe that I can share my interest with other students or faculties through the research center of the Study of Sport and Leisure in Society.