

1 primarily as an ‘objective’ source of information, one which is less open to subjective
2 interpretation than alternative methodologies. Recent research suggests that the delivery of
3 VFB may not be as straightforward or as simple as sometimes assumed (Stratton, Reilly,
4 Williams, & Richardson, 2004).

5 A number of recent studies have begun to shed light on the ways in which elite team-
6 sport coaches and athletes interact within applied video practice. Responding to the
7 dominance of (post)positivist research paradigms within existing VFB/PA studies,
8 researchers have adopted qualitative methodologies in an attempt to capture the reality of
9 how video-based performance analysis is delivered ‘in situ’ within applied practice (e.g.
10 Groom, Cushion, & Nelson, 2011); Groom Cushion, & Nelson, 2012; Mackenzie & Cushion,
11 2014; Nelson, Potrac, & Groom, 2014; Taylor, Potrac, Nelson, Jones, & Groom, 2015).
12 Using qualitative interviews, Groom et al.,(2011) examined football coaches’ perceptions of
13 video-based performance analysis, presenting a conceptual framework for its delivery within
14 sport. Their study revealed a broad range of contextual, environmental and psychological
15 factors influencing delivery sessions, and emphasised the importance of coaches treating
16 athletes as individuals, knowing what players liked doing and what they did not, and creating
17 an environment where athletes can be open in their responses without fear of judgement.

18 Recent evidence suggests that football coaches also need to be aware of the
19 asymmetrical power relationships can develop between coach and athlete within VFB
20 practice (Groom et al., 2011; Groom et al.,2012; Taylor, Potrac, Nelson, Jones, & Groom,
21 2015). Unintended consequences of these coaching behaviours can include players becoming
22 reluctant to give and receive critical feedback during video sessions, resistance to feedback
23 and a failure to learn. When the video was used to ‘replace’ the coach in Taylor et al’s study,
24 the athlete (‘Claire’) reported an initial positive impact, such as an increase in concentration
25 and in the intensity of her physical efforts. However, there were also negative effects, such as
26 the fear of making mistakes or showing weakness on camera, leading to her feeling anxiety in

1 the lead up to, as well as during, VFB sessions and being reluctant to voice her disagreement
2 with coaches or teammates interpretations of what was happening in performance. Her
3 experiences mirror previous research that has highlighted the subtle ways in which coaches
4 use their power to influence athletes' responses to VFB (Nelson et al., 2014). The findings of
5 these studies illustrate that delivery can be influenced by coaches' ability to obtain, maintain,
6 and further develop a level of trust and respect afforded to them by the athletes in coaching
7 contexts (Cushion & Jones, 2006; Potráč, Jones, & Armour, 2002). When mutual respect and
8 openness are present within the coach–athlete relationship, the athlete appears to have a more
9 positive experience (Nelson et al., 2014).

10 These recent PA studies have advanced our understanding of the influence that VFB
11 can have on an athlete's emotions and behaviours in elite sport. However, there remain a
12 number of gaps in this literature. Firstly, to date, no study has undertaken an in-depth
13 exploration of VFB delivery from a psychological perspective. This is surprising given that
14 sport psychology research has enumerated the positive benefits associated with delivering
15 video as a psychological intervention (Ives, Straub, & Shelley, 2002)). These include an
16 increase in confidence in pre-performance routines (e.g. Tracey, 2011), motivating players
17 returning from injury (Feltz, Short, & Sullivan, 2008), as a reflective tool for athletes and
18 coaches (e.g. MacKenzie & Cushion, 2014; Carson, 2008) and in association with mental
19 imagery (Holmes & Collins, 2001) and music (Bishop, Karageorghis, & Loizou, 2007).
20 While recent studies have provided insight into coaches' and athletes' perceptions of VFB (or
21 video-based performance analysis), the focus of these studies has primarily been on
22 understanding delivery from a socio-pedagogical perspective (in particular, the role of power
23 relations within coaching practice). It is important to understand athletes' and coaches'
24 perceptions and awareness regarding the psychological factors underpinning VFB. Research
25 has indicated that a lack of awareness of how athletes are responding to VFB may have
26 | negative consequences for player performance (Pensgaard & Duda, 2002).

1 | Given the recent focus on the coach–athlete dyad in VFB research (e.g. Groom et al., 2011),
2 | it is surprising that the perspectives of player and coach have not hitherto been explored in
3 | depth within the same study. Such an approach would extend our current understanding and
4 | allow for comparison between these dual perspectives. With these deficits in mind, the
5 | present study aims to provide a comprehensive examination of the psychological factors
6 | influencing VFB delivery in UK youth male soccer by exploring the perceptions of players
7 | and coaches within elite youth football. It is hoped that the findings of this study may provide
8 | greater consensus on the ways in which coaches and practitioners can incorporate these
9 | technologies and techniques into applied practice within youth football. The findings of this
10 | study can provide coaches and sport scientists working within sport with practical
11 | recommendations on how and when to use video in the youth football environment to help
12 | optimise the psychological and performance of this technology.

13 | **Methodology**

14 | In order to explore these questions in depth, a two-part qualitative study was conducted, with
15 | interviews utilised to investigate (i) coach and (ii) player perceptions of the subject.
16 | Following institutional ethics approval, players and coaches were recruited who were
17 | currently attached to a professional football academy and had experience (six months+)
18 | working with VFB. The coaches and players involved were contacted by telephone to inform
19 | them personally of the nature of the study and to elicit their participation. The authors
20 | approached this study from an interpretivist philosophical perspective – focusing on
21 | understanding the meanings, purposes and intentions that people attach to their actions and
22 | interactions. This approach assumes that reality is socially constructed by individual actors
23 | and should be interpreted rather than measured (Johnson & Waterfield, 2004).

24 | **The Participants**

1 The participants in this two-part investigation were eleven male football coaches (age,
2 $M = 38.4$, range = 29-52) and twelve male football players (age, $M = 17.1$, range = 16-18).
3 Nine of the coaches were employed full-time within English Academy Premier League clubs,
4 while two were employed as full-time coaches within the England Youth International
5 environments. The coaching group reflected a range of years of qualified coaching
6 experience in terms of time coaching. The coaches were qualified to UEFA 'B' ($n=6$) and
7 UEFA 'A' ($n=4$) license level, and their coaching experience ranged from 7 – 21 years ($M =$
8 12.5). All coaches had a minimum of 6 months of using VFB within their coaching practice.
9 The twelve players represented six different professional football academies in the English
10 Premier ($n = 8$) and Championship ($n = 4$) leagues and were either first- or second-year
11 scholars on full-time contracts. A range of experience within the academy football system
12 (years, $M = 5.4$, range 4 – 8) and playing positions were included. Eight of the players had
13 been part of a youth international squad (Under 16-19 level), and four had made their senior
14 professional debut at the time of the study.

15 **The Interviews**

16 A semi-structured interview guide was developed to explore participants' perceptions
17 of VFB delivery and ensure that the same questions/probes were asked of all participants
18 (Patton, 2008). The interview guide was developed from the existing literature and the
19 authors' experiences of working with video in professional football. The guide covered three
20 major aspects of video feedback delivery: *experiences of using VFB, the impact of VFB, and*
21 *optimising VFB delivery*. Pilot interviews were conducted with a sample of two players and
22 three coaches from a professional football academy (not re-interviewed in the main study),
23 which led to additional prompts being added to the guide. Rapport-building questions and
24 open questions (such as 'Can you tell me about a typical post-match evaluation session using
25 the video') were followed up by more specific questions such as 'How does it feel when you
26 watch yourself on video?' until saturation was deemed to have been achieved on a particular

1 issue. Clarification and elaboration probes were also used to encourage the participants to
2 expand on their initial responses in order to ensure an accurate, in-depth understanding of
3 what they were describing. None of the participants in the pilot study subsequently
4 participated in the main study. All the interviews were conducted by the lead author, who had
5 received training in qualitative research methods. In the majority of cases (ten coaches /
6 eleven players), these were face-to-face interviews; telephone interviews were conducted
7 with two participants due to the difficulty of organising face-to-face interviews. The
8 interviews lasted between 54 and 107 minutes (*coaches*, time 63-107, M = 83.3 min; *players*,
9 time 54-97, M = 74.1 min).

10 **Data Analysis**

11 Data from the interviews were transcribed verbatim and a hierarchical content
12 analysis was conducted by the principal researcher in order to identify and explore common
13 themes within the data. To facilitate comparison at a later stage, the interview transcripts of
14 the players were transcribed and analysed separately from the coaches' interview transcripts.
15 The process of data analysis moved from description through to analysing meaning, and
16 involved a progressive coding technique (Braun & Clarke, 2006) containing both inductive
17 and deductive elements (Krueger & Casey, 2000). A frequency analysis was conducted to
18 illustrate how often each theme was mentioned by the participants, to allow interested readers
19 to immerse themselves in the data and gain a fuller understanding of the perceptions of the
20 participants (e.g., Fletcher & Arnold, 2011).

21 The lead author's level of immersion in the topic area (as a practitioner working with
22 video within elite football at the time of data collection) was seen as a strength of the
23 investigation, potentially adding depth and richness to the data gathered. His experience
24 brought context-specific knowledge and experience of video feedback practice to the
25 development of the interview guide and the analysis phase of the study. However, a number
26 of self-correcting verification strategies were also employed during the analysis to reduce

1 potential researcher bias and optimise trustworthiness (Holt & Sparkes, 2001). These
2 measures included providing a sample of each participant group – four coaches and four
3 players – with the full text of their interview as a check for accuracy. A follow-up phone call
4 was made with one coach (C8) to clarify and elaborate on the points he made in his interview
5 regarding the use of video for punishment. To address potential researcher bias, the lead
6 author held regular meetings with two colleagues, both experienced academics, during the
7 data analysis phase. The role of these colleagues was to act as ‘critical friends’ (e.g., Smith &
8 Sparkes, 2006) and to encourage reflection on the data and exploration of alternative
9 explanations and interpretations. Finally, a summary of the author’s conclusions was
10 provided to the performance managers of each academy involved as a way of stimulating
11 feedback.

12 **Results**

13 The results derived from the data analysis represent the collated interview responses of the
14 participant coaches and players. The coach interviews (part a) yielded 421 distinct raw-data
15 quotes which were abstracted into 111 lower-order themes and 17 higher-order themes. From
16 the player interviews (part b), 490 distinct raw-data quotes were abstracted into 104 lower-
17 order themes and 16 higher-order themes. In both studies, these higher-order themes were
18 abstracted into the same three general dimensions – Psychological Responses to VFB, VFB
19 Delivery Strategies, and VFB Delivery Climate. To aid comparison, the player and coach
20 perceptions are presented together under these three dimensions. Where possible, the
21 language used in the participants’ perceptions have been used within the theme labels. Direct
22 quotes have been used to give an insight into the dialogue between the coaches, players and
23 practitioners involved in the study.

24 **Psychological Responses to VFB**

1 Coaches and players articulated a number of psychological responses which
2 influenced the VFB delivery sessions. Specifically, both groups identified six psychological
3 factors that influenced the effectiveness of VFB delivery – Self-confidence, Thoughts,
4 Emotions, Mental Toughness, and Visualisation/Imagery. The only differences were the
5 subthemes Focus (Coach-only) and Self-esteem (Player-only).

6 **Coaches' perspectives on psychological responses to VFB.** Improvements in
7 psychological outcomes, such as self-confidence and communication, were seen by the
8 coaches as a reason for using VFB in youth football. The players' receptiveness to VFB was
9 seen as influenced by their individual psychological state at the time of delivery. For
10 example, self-confidence was also highlighted by the coaches as an indicator of how a player
11 might respond to VFB. High-confidence players were perceived as less concerned about how
12 they were viewed by their team-mates and thus easier to work with. Similarly, players with
13 lower levels of self-esteem were viewed as less receptive to VFB:

14 So much about how they respond to anything in the academy, including the video, is
15 linked to how confident they feel about themselves as a person ... you know the ones
16 who struggle with esteem will also struggle with feedback, and will take things too
17 personally, too emotionally (C3).

18 The coaches felt that self-reflection – either coach-guided or unguided – could help
19 players to move beyond emotional responses, reflect more objectively on their performance,
20 and that using VFB could narrow the gap between the views of coach and player. The
21 coaches felt that players often tended to focus on their immediate emotions and failed to see
22 the 'bigger picture' relating to their development. While negative emotions were associated
23 with certain delivery styles (discussed below), the coaches generally associated the delivery
24 experience with positive emotions, represented by sub-themes such as 'Players often enjoy
25 first exposure to VFB', 'Positive emotions help players focus' and 'Player emotions become
26 less intense after VFB'. One coach reported using the video "to build his [the player's]

1 understanding of better choices and feelings to focus on under pressure ... how he would feel
2 doing it” (C4). However, a number of coaches also reported using video to deliberately elicit
3 ‘negative’ emotional responses from their players:

4 If I think they are getting lazy, and I want to get a response from my players, then I
5 use the video to hammer them, show them exactly how poor they were. It is often
6 more powerful when really negative, as when they train next they know they have to
7 train harder than ever before to correct their mistakes (C2).

8 The theme of Mental Toughness encapsulated the coaches’ perception of VFB as a
9 process which could both develop and reveal a player’s mental strengths, and was linked to a
10 wider goal of preparing players to handle the pressures of senior football. This element was
11 epitomised in the sub-themes ‘Video reveals character through pressure’, ‘Removed player
12 excuses’ and ‘Makes players more accountable for errors’. Observing how players handled
13 criticism, or how they responded to making a mistake in front of other players, offered some
14 coaches a measure of a player’s psychological coping skills. “When you take their excuses
15 away from them, it puts them under pressure, and you see their true character come out
16 (C11)”. Several coaches saw VFB as a tool they could use to aid their players’ transition to
17 senior football by making them more self-reliant and able to handle criticism, qualities seen
18 as essential for coping mentally with the less supportive and highly critical environment of
19 the professional game. To achieve this goal, some coaches felt they had to be prepared to be
20 tough on the players, in the same way their coaches had been with them as young players:

21 I know the players [in the academy] think that I am a bit harsh on them, I can see it in
22 the way they respond to me in meetings, but it is nothing compared to the way I was
23 treated when I was their age (C2).

24 Finally, the use of mental imagery was identified as a psychological skill which the
25 coaches felt was integral to building players’ confidence and optimising the performance
26 impact of VFB. Imagery was seen as a tool which could help the coach link the

1 psychological and emotional responses of the players to the performance he was looking for
2 in the game. In particular, using the player as his own model was seen as enhancing the
3 imagery process.

4 **Players' perspectives on psychological responses to VFB.** While delivery was
5 associated with positive psychological responses, it appeared to be a negative and
6 uncomfortable process at times for the players. In a similar way to the coach data, VFB was
7 reported as a tool which could build players' confidence regarding specific aspects of their
8 performance: "I watch little technique things, body shape, footwork, my first touch, important
9 stuff ... [VFB] helps me feel like a better player, I sort of believe in my ability to do these
10 things more when I see them" (P2). A link was also made between confidence and thought
11 patterns during delivery. Players discussed how holding onto negative thoughts, following
12 poor performance or criticism, could eat away at their confidence and negatively influence a
13 player's performance in the future:

14 I find that once I am thinking about the video it's almost impossible to let it go ...
15 especially if I have made a mistake and it has been replayed in the team meeting. It's
16 not like I wouldn't be thinking about my mistakes anyway, but the video seems to set
17 it in your mind, and it sometimes takes a few days to shake it off (P12).

18 Self-reflection was seen as a skill which could help players avoid these negative
19 thought patterns. Players focused on themselves during team VFB, losing focus when they
20 weren't on screen: "I'm listening to the coach talk about the team shape, but I'm watching
21 myself, whether I have a good touch if I get the ball, or whether I look OK on screen" (P10).
22 Emotions such as anxiety, pride and embarrassment also played a central role in the video
23 delivery experience. Seeing themselves on video for the first time was a positive experience,
24 as was recalling good performances. For one player, video feedback helped him cope with a
25 long-term injury:

1 I had one game (at) home, I had an absolute *worldy* [best ever performance]. I
 2 watched [the video] so many times. It is weird though 'cos I got badly injured in the
 3 88th minute of the game. Watching it from time to time [during my recovery] helped
 4 me keep my head up and remembering the way playing well feels. (P2)

5 The players made a link between emotions experienced during VFB and in the game
 6 itself. Negative emotions felt at the time of an on-field incident – such as guilt,
 7 embarrassment or anxiety – were often recalled during a video session. This often prevented
 8 players from enjoying team meetings. Players who became overly emotional when watching
 9 VFB or receiving coach criticism were seen by some players as 'mentally weak'.
 10 Conversely, VFB could also develop mental strength:

11 I was playing for [the reserves] and wanted to show the boss I could handle the next
 12 level, but I was against a good player and got embarrassed by him really. I choked. I
 13 got hold of the tape and watched it over and over to see what I could have done better.
 14 I got another chance [to play for the reserves] early this year, and did better.

15 The player data also indicated that some players struggled to control when and how
 16 they would recall a negative video image they had previously seen in a team meeting, and
 17 reported experiencing negative emotional responses to coach criticism for a significant period
 18 following VFB (several days to a week). Visualization (the use of mental imagery) was seen
 19 as a psychological technique which was linked to VFB. It enabled players to recall their
 20 performances in greater clarity, helping one player to “build an image in my mind of what it
 21 would look like if I did it right” (P10) and thus translate coach feedback into action.

22 **VFB Delivery Strategies**

23 The second dimension focused on how VFB was delivered to the players. Similar
 24 emergent themes – Team-focused VFB, Team pre-match preparation, One-to-one focused
 25 VFB, Self-modelling, and Self-observation – were identified from the data analysis process
 26 for both the players and coaches.

1 **Coaches' perspectives on VFB delivery strategies.** The coaches welcomed the use
2 of video in the post-performance debrief, linking it to improved team performance,
3 communication, and group cohesion. For some, the video was the 'final word' on what
4 actually happened during performance, adding greater depth to the analysis process.
5 However, caution was urged by a number of coaches. Viewing their own mistakes in front of
6 their team-mates and the coach was seen by a number of coaches as a psychological barrier to
7 learning for players. VFB could be distracting, creating anxiety and a negative mood amongst
8 the group. If unmanaged, this negative mood was seen to carry over into training or the next
9 game, disrupting performance. Reading the mood of the group and managing negative
10 emotions was seen as a challenge:

11 The problem I have is when one kid falls over or something, and we all start laughing
12 ... some players get embarrassed and duck their heads down, their attention's gone.

13 You say, "*Look, we are doing this for a reason*" ...but they are gone, mentally. (C9).

14 There was some recognition that video could act as a motivational tool prior to
15 performance. However, the coaches admitted that controlling its psychological impact on
16 individual players was a challenge. There was consensus view was that it was important to
17 identify clear outcomes for using video as a pre-match preparation tool. The coaches spoke in
18 greater detail about the need to find ways of delivering VFB to maximise learning over the
19 long term. One-to-one VFB was one approach to targeting individual needs, and "a way to
20 connect with the player on a personal level" (C1). Private meetings with players improved
21 the level of trust and shared understanding between player and coach, and led to a better
22 relationship between them:

23 The team meetings give individuals a chance to hide a little ... they might have
24 thoughts they feel foolish to share in front of the lads ... [One-to-one] is perfect for
25 building confidence in what they think and say, their understanding of the game. It is
26 teaching them that their point is heard, not always correct, but always wanted (C7).

1 Withholding negative feedback and only feeding back positive performance
 2 accomplishments – known as positive self-review, a form of video self-modelling (VSM¹) —
 3 was linked to improvements in player confidence, focus and motivation. This approach was
 4 viewed by coaches as an alternative to delivering VFB within the team post-performance
 5 debriefs. For some coaches, the power of one positive example was seen as more effective
 6 than multiple negative ones. Coaches were also positive about strategies which encouraged
 7 players to take greater control of their own learning. The ‘ideal’ delivery scenario was one
 8 where the players didn’t need the coach during VFB. As one coach remarked: “[Video] will
 9 remain limited if coaches are not prepared to risk letting go of the process a little. Give [the
 10 player] the opportunity and motivation to do it for himself. If he leads, then you have the
 11 ability to take it deeper, and he takes the initiative” (C9).

12 **Players’ perspectives on VFB delivery strategies.** For the players, the mode of
 13 delivery – in a group, privately with a coach or on their own – created distinct psychological
 14 responses and outcomes. Team-focused VFB was linked to improved understanding of roles,
 15 enhanced group cohesion and improved team and individual performance. Video was also
 16 viewed as an ‘objective source of performance information’ by the players, one that could
 17 resolve disagreements:

18 When you are playing OK, but the coach thinks you’re not, you aren’t really in a
 19 position to argue back; you had no evidence [before video was introduced]. Now I
 20 feel he can’t ignore the evidence now ... but it goes both ways too and there’s no
 21 place for me to hide now either (P6).

22 When video was used pre-game as a motivational tool, the players experienced strong
 23 positive emotions (e.g., ‘the buzz’; P7) and increased self-confidence and psychological
 24 readiness to perform. When watching video with a motivational music track, more than half

¹ Video Self-modelling: A process whereby athletes learn from images of their own adaptive behaviour as seen on videotape, allowing individuals to view themselves being successful, acting appropriately, or performing new tasks.

1 of the players felt that it led to an increase in their arousal levels pre-match. However, such a
2 strategy had to be timed correctly as part of a home or away match plan:

3 We watched the first [video] before a [home] youth cup game ... it had everyone in it,
4 our best play as a team, and an amazing soundtrack, the room was bouncing ... we
5 went straight out and played a blinder. It [still] gives me goose bumps if I watch it
6 now. We watched another one on the bus [to the next (away) game] but an hour later
7 we were still on the bus...and were a bit flat by the warm up. (P12).

8 Many players reported that they had become demotivated by the team delivery
9 context. Too much emphasis had been placed on team outcomes by the coach, for some
10 players, and their individual needs were not being met. Buy-in by the whole team was key to
11 maximising effectiveness. Without such acceptance, the team format could become stale and
12 boring: “it’s the same thing over and over; it’s become pointless” (P9). It had also become an
13 uncomfortable process for many, creating anxiety during competition. One player recalled:
14 “As soon as the ball had gone past me [in the game], I thought ‘I hope they didn’t get that on
15 video’” (P7). Time spent focusing on their individual performance, however, was welcomed
16 by all the players, and associated with improvements in self-awareness, confidence, and the
17 coach–athlete relationship. The players felt that the coach’s delivery was more effective one-
18 to-one than in a team setting: “with each session I understood more what he expects from me,
19 and what I am capable of (P4)”. Again, using positive self-review (VSM) was associated
20 with positive outcomes such as increased self-confidence, enjoyment and motivation. The
21 benefit of observing successful performance was linked to situational-specific self-
22 confidence:

23 I had a tape from [my recent international trip]. I kept focusing on this one skill from
24 the tape. A turn, in the middle of the park. I must have watched it 25-30 times, I’m not
25 kidding ... like in a trance or something [laughs]. It made me feel brilliant, like I had
26 a trick that I knew I could use against anyone (P11).

1 **The VFB Delivery Climate**

2 The importance of creating the right environment or climate surrounding VFB
3 delivery was extensively reinforced by the coaches and players alike. Two sub-themes –
4 Coach behaviour and Coach education – were present in both the coach and player results.
5 The coaches also discussed the role of Peer-to-peer evaluation, Psychological understanding,
6 Individual differences, and Support staff role in their interviews. Three sub-themes – Control
7 of learning, Role of psychological support staff, and Goal setting – emerged from the player
8 data analysis.

9 **Coaches' perspectives on the VFB delivery climate.** Many of the coaches felt that
10 the delivery climate needed to be positively perceived by the players in order to maximise
11 player motivation and confidence levels:

12 [Coaches] might have all the information at their disposal, but you need to create an
13 atmosphere that encourages players to be positive; to go out and try things (C4).

14 The coaches acknowledged, however, that some players held a negative perception of
15 their VFB work, probably linked to their (the coaches') use of video as a negative tool, for
16 punishment or excessive criticism. Although this negative perception could have a damaging
17 effect on players' motivation to engage in learning long-term, it was important to try and
18 strike a balance between positive and negative content. Some coaches felt that there were
19 'receptive' and 'unreceptive' players, with the former possessing qualities which separated
20 them from their peers (e.g., a greater level of self-awareness or confidence). For the coaches,
21 these players usually found a way of using the video information productively, regardless of
22 the coach's input or the team environment:

23 There might be 5 or 6 players in here ... enjoying the banter, but there is often one kid
24 who is focusing intently on it; you know he's analysing it properly. I can pick out the
25 individual players that I know I can trust to self-analyse ... often that kid makes it [to
26 senior football] ... because of his attitude and passion to get better (C1).

1 The coaches wanted to create an environment where players felt able to critically
2 assess their own and others' performance in public (peer-to-peer evaluation). It was
3 acknowledged, however, that this open and honest setting was hard to create due to the
4 'traditional culture' within football:

5 We are fighting against the culture of football a little here, as honesty is in short
6 supply the further up the ladder you get. That doesn't mean our job [as academy
7 coaches] is to send players up who are selfish and self-focused, but to send players
8 who can be honest and have a positive impact on the teams they play for. That's what
9 first team managers want but don't often have available to them (C3).

10 The idea of the sport science practitioner taking a more active role in the development
11 of a positive learning environment around the video work interested some of the coaches. For
12 them, the psychologist brought a distinctive set of skills and abilities to the delivery process:
13 "I think good delivery is built around these two people – the coach and practitioner – and
14 might possibly hold the key. But, who does what depends on the relationships within that"
15 (C2). It was proposed that the involvement of a sport psychologist could benefit coaches and
16 their support staff. One coach said:

17 I have had good chats with our psych about this, and it has helped me see and
18 understand some of the factors involved from the player's viewpoint. We are
19 planning to get him more involved. Maybe I need to step back, and not be the one
20 leading all the time, maybe get others? It's worth a go, because this [video] could be
21 gold dust, but it's not really making the impact we think it can at the moment (C7).

22 The idea of the psychologist leading the delivery, a role traditionally seen as the
23 coach's, was discussed by another coach: "I wouldn't like to say who the best person to
24 deliver video is because the role of the coach as expert, some might question. A practitioner
25 with expertise in psychology might be more beneficial for the players, more objective" (C11).
26 The coaches felt that a psychology practitioner could also work in tandem with the

1 performance analysis practitioner: “The analyst probably already has a better basic
2 knowledge of performance than the psych, but the psych understands the impact better. This
3 combination would be ideal for the coach” (C5).

4 **Players’ perspectives on the VFB delivery climate.** For the players, a positive
5 response was associated with higher levels of enjoyment, confidence and team cohesion.
6 Keeping the mood light and focused on enjoyment would help ‘mistake-conscious’ players to
7 stay positive:

8 If one of the lads attempted to try something fancy or make daft mistakes they were
9 generally laughed at, or mocked by others in a friendly way if we had won or played
10 well. When a player made the error in a match that we had lost, he was often left to
11 stew on it for days ... That’s not good for you (P11).

12 The use of video for punishment was generally disliked by the players, especially
13 when the coach used VFB to embarrass them in front of their team-mates. This approach was
14 linked to a loss of motivation and limited learning. At times the coach was believed to be
15 deliberately using video in a negative manner, to bring players “down a peg or two ... to stop
16 you getting cocky” (P4). Other players reported ‘switching off’ in response to what they saw
17 as overly critical reaction by the coach during video replay:

18 It got to the point where the players sit there, and [the coach] was stopping them and
19 picking poor play and mistakes ... and all I could think about was “Shit. He’s coming
20 to me again, I know it’s me next ... he’s making me look a right idiot” ... it became
21 routine to get picked on, [so] I switched off (P10).

22 The players talked about taking more ownership of the delivery process – moving
23 from a coach-led process to a more player-led process. However, they felt it was difficult to
24 be proactive where video work was concerned: “[the coach] has experience that I don’t have,
25 and sees what I need to do to be a senior pro ... but I also have goals of my own. I need to
26 access the video to review my own game” (P3). This was an issue of trust for many players:

1 “I’m not a kid ... [the coach] thinks we are thick ... what happens when we move up to the
2 first team and he’s not there to hold our hands?” (P2). Some of the players felt that there was
3 also a role for a psychology professional within the delivery process, for example, helping
4 improve the impact of pre-match motivational videos. One player also suggested that this
5 support could be aimed at the coach himself to help them reflect on their own coaching
6 behaviour: “Maybe if the psych could get [the coach] to watch the video and see himself the
7 way we see him, he might calm down in team meetings” (P12).

8 **Discussion**

9 The perceptions captured in this study provide a rich understanding of the role of
10 psychological factors within VFB delivery in youth football. While the value placed on
11 psychology by coaches in VFB is well established (e.g., Groom et al., 2011; Pain &
12 Harwood, 2007), this investigation provides the first comprehensive examination of the
13 factors involved in its delivery. The findings of this qualitative investigation supplement the
14 existing literature, which has highlighted the value that coaches place on VFB in the
15 psychological development of young football players (Groom et al., 2011; Pain & Harwood,
16 2007). The exploration of the perspectives of coaches and players in the same study extends
17 our current understanding and allows for greater comparison of these perceptions. There were
18 many areas of congruence in the two groups’ perception of VFB. In line with previous
19 research, both groups viewed video feedback as a useful tool to help the team prepare for and
20 reflect on performance and training (Groom et al., 2011; Mackenzie & Cushion, 2014). It also
21 played a role in developing team cohesion and communication (Pain & Harwood, 2007) as
22 well as targeting psychological outcomes such as confidence-building and pre-match
23 readiness (Tracey, 2011). However, coach and athlete views diverged on the role of team vs
24 individual VFB. While all the participants saw video as a positive psychological tool when
25 personalised – such as in one-to-one VFB and in self-modelling work (findings reported

1 elsewhere – e.g., Ste-Marie et al., 2011) – the coaches concentrated on the positive results of
2 team VFB. For the players, this approach was less effective, psychologically, due to
3 repetition and a lack of individual feedback. Overall, our findings support the need to take
4 account of athletes' individual preferences for receiving performance analysis (Groom et al.,
5 2011; Nelson et al., 2014; MacKenzie & Cushion, 2014).

6 An interesting finding from this investigation was that a number of the psychological
7 characteristics identified by both players and coaches – such as focus, goal setting, the use of
8 mental imagery, setting realistic performance evaluations and self-awareness – have been
9 identified as qualities or skills linked to success within elite sport (i.e., psychological
10 characteristics of developing excellence or PCDEs; MacNamara, Button, & Collins, 2010;
11 Orlick & Partington, 1988). Previous research has linked these PCDEs not only to performing
12 successfully at the elite level, but also in helping athletes reach the top of their sporting
13 disciplines (Collins & MacNamara, 2012; MacNamara et al., 2010; Orlick & Partington,
14 1988). The link between VFB and coping skills is a promising area for future research.
15 Collins and MacNamara (2012) have argued that natural setbacks and failures – such as poor
16 performance, deselection and losing – are a necessary part of a young athlete's development
17 pathway. The coaches and players in this study both saw self-reflection and self-awareness as
18 important aspects of this ability to cope. Reflective thinking, embodied in such practices as
19 seeking help (by, e.g., asking questions) and apologising for errors, was identified by coaches
20 as a desirable quality within VFB practice and has been shown to be a key regulatory strategy
21 used by high-level players in youth football (Gledhill & Harwood, 2015; Toering et al.,
22 2009). Self-regulated learning refers to self-directed processes that enable learners to
23 transform their mental abilities into performance skills (Zimmerman, 2008). It has been
24 identified as a key differentiator between elite vs. non-elite soccer players – the former are
25 able to cope successfully with the transition between youth and senior football (Toering et al.,
26 2009).

1 This investigation has highlighted the key role that players' emotions play in the
2 delivery experience. For many of the young players interviewed for this study, watching
3 themselves on video in team meetings was, at times, a highly personalised and emotive
4 experience. The players reported experiencing negative emotions, such as embarrassment and
5 anxiety, before, during and following these public VFB sessions, in response to seeing
6 themselves make performance errors in front of others – a finding observed with other team
7 sport athletes (e.g., McArdle, Martin, Lennon, & Moore, 2010; Taylor et al., 2015). While it
8 is not clear whether these emotional responses may inhibit the learning process, the coaches
9 and players interviewed for this study felt that they disrupted both team and individual
10 learning from VFB. While these emotions were experienced in the run-up to a team VFB
11 session (where fear of public embarrassment was a powerful factor), previous research has
12 shown that emotions such as anxiety, embarrassment and anger are often linked to an
13 athlete's primary cognitive appraisal of specific situations (e.g., winning vs losing, good vs
14 poor performance; Lazarus, 1991). Left unchallenged, these irrational beliefs – such as “I
15 need to perform perfectly and cannot make mistakes” – can generate dysfunctional emotions
16 which might subsequently influence a player's willingness or ability to focus during feedback
17 sessions. Through education, there is an opportunity to help players learn to replace irrational
18 beliefs by more rational assertions such as “I want to perform well, but everyone makes
19 mistakes, mistakes that I can learn from”. Research has shown that psychological approaches
20 such as REBT (Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy) may be helpful in reducing irrational
21 beliefs and anxiety in athletes (Turner & Barker, 2013; Turner, Slater, & Barker, 2014).
22 Trials of REBT within youth football (e.g. Turner et al., 2014) have shown that education
23 workshops can modify athletes' irrational beliefs about their performance, albeit temporarily.

24 Many of the coaches interviewed saw the development of players who could move
25 quickly to accept criticism, process emotional responses, and take responsibility for reflecting
26 on their own performance as key outcomes of VFB work. The sport psychology literature has

1 demonstrated that not only can these qualities be developed in players, but it has consistently
2 shown that players who possess these coping skills ('resilience' or 'mental toughness',
3 among other terms used) are more likely to get to the top and do better when they get there
4 (Collins & MacNamara, 2012; MacNamara et al., 2010). However, this study raises question
5 marks over the approach advocated by some coaches to pursue the development of these
6 qualities within video practice. Our findings illustrated how some coaches appear to advocate
7 unnecessarily critical, negative or belittling approaches with their players – a form of 'tough
8 love' seen as crucial to the development of players' psychological coping skills. According to
9 one respondent, coaches need to risk being seen as unpopular and even be disliked by the
10 players to prepare them mentally for the 'harsh realities' of senior football. Other coaches
11 (and players) perceived that there were 'receptive' and 'unreceptive' players, and that some
12 athletes were too 'weak' mentally to handle VFB effectively. These comments may reflect
13 what some researchers have described as an ego-driven climate within the professional soccer
14 academy environment, one which promotes the notion that results are all that matters
15 (Harwood, 2008; Mills et al., 2012). Mirroring recent research into team sports (e.g. Groom
16 et al., 2011; Taylor et al., 2015), the findings reported here indicate that young footballers are
17 likely to respond negatively to these dominant, power-driven coaching practices, with players
18 reluctant to share their opinions or challenge their coach's views out of fear that the coach
19 might embarrass them in front of their peers.

20 One strategy which the coaches in this study regarded as particularly beneficial in
21 developing players' critical reflection skills was peer-to-peer evaluation, involving players
22 offering critical feedback of their team-mates' performance during team meetings. The
23 benefits of encouraging players to take an active role in their own learning and engage in
24 collaborative learning activities have support in the sport psychology literature (Kidman,
25 Thorpe, Jones, & Lewis, 2001). However, the notion of critiquing team-mates or challenging
26 the coach was not positively perceived by the players, a finding reported elsewhere in the

1 literature (Taylor et al., 2015). This reluctance to participate in feedback may in part be due
2 to fear of being criticised by coaches or looking stupid in front of their peers. The creation of
3 a positive supportive learning environment surrounding VFB appears crucial for optimising
4 players' engagement in learning activities. This finding is supported by recent research that
5 makes the link between this supportive learning environment and self-regulation with
6 adolescent football players (Gledhill & Harwood, 2015).

7 For the players, this may be linked to the fear of losing the social support of their
8 peers (Evans, Slater, Turner, & Barker, 2015). The full-time academy environment is
9 characterised by a group of adolescent males living away from home together, training and
10 playing together day in day out, and often developing close friendships. If coaches were
11 unable to cultivate a supportive learning environment around VFB, there is a suggestion that
12 players would be willing to risk losing acceptance amongst their peers (Ommundsen,
13 Roberts, Lemyre, & Miller, 2005). Edmondson (1999) has referred to the shared belief that
14 the team is a safe environment for interpersonal risk-taking – such as noting errors,
15 disagreeing with team-mates and challenging the coach's views – as Team Psychological
16 Safety. Although, intuitively, the benefits of learning collaboratively with one's peers would
17 seem to be a given, peer-to-peer evaluation may more accurately reflect coaches' preferences
18 for reflecting on practice (e.g., Williams & Kendall, 2007)

19 **Strengths, limitations and future directions**

20 Before examining the practical implications of this study, it is important to consider
21 the study's strengths and limitations. Given the interpretivist nature of this investigation, we
22 acknowledge that other plausible interpretations of the data may exist that are not being
23 utilised in a particular study. The rich data gathered comparing the perceptions of coaches
24 and players, the methodology adopted was seen as a strength of the current study. To
25 improve the trustworthiness of the data collected, all interviews could have been conducted
26 face-to-face and participants could have been provided with a copy of the interview guide

1 prior to the interview. Presenting participants with the analysis of the data and study
2 conclusions (rather than just the transcribed interviews) would also allow them an
3 opportunity to reflect and comment on the conclusions drawn by the researchers. While the
4 coaches and players were recruited from a range of academy environments, this study was
5 conducted within full-time, male football academies (16-18 age group) and so may only be
6 reflective of this environment and developmental stage. The author's experiences working
7 within youth football environments suggests that coaches and practitioners may apply VFB
8 differently at other stages of the player pathway, including younger and senior professionals.
9 Practitioners may also need to consider the experiences of female players into account, given
10 the male-dominated nature of football research to date (Gledhill & Harwood, 2014, 2015). We also
11 encourage future researchers to explore the impact of individual-focused video interventions
12 on psychological outcomes associated with performance within elite sport settings. Finally,
13 future research should also explore the role which video might play – positively or negatively
14 – in preparing athletes to cope mentally with the challenging times they will face in making
15 the transition to elite sport.

16 **Applied Implications**

17 The study findings have a number of relevant practical implications for psychologists,
18 analysts and coaches working with video in the performance environment from a
19 psychological perspective. The authors argue that coaches and practitioners need to provide
20 athletes with the resources and support necessary to utilise VFB in a positive and productive
21 manner. The skillset of the Psychologist, in particular, may add value to this area of practice
22 (Groom et al., 2011; Ives et al., 2002), possibly in an educational role aimed at raising the
23 psychological understanding of coaches and practitioners wanting to work with VFB in
24 performance environments. This recommendation comes in response to coaches reporting
25 that they lacked sufficient knowledge of their players' psychological responses to video
26 feedback, a finding reported elsewhere in the sport psychology literature (Ste-Marie et al.,

1 2012; Pensgaard & Duda, 2002). This may be linked to football coaches' low perceived
2 competence in the area of player development beyond the technical and tactical (Harwood,
3 2008). While the importance of athlete self-reflection has been reported in the context of
4 video practice (e.g., Groom et al., 2011), it may be that by using video to promote critical
5 reflection by coaches on their own practice (e.g., Carson, 2008), Psychologists can have a
6 positive impact on coaching behaviour. Hammond (2004) has argued that this shift toward
7 video for reflection purposes might encourage a more holistic evaluation of the instructional
8 process in sport. Recognising the role of psychological factors within video practice, there
9 may also be benefits in formalising the development of a toolbox of transferable knowledge
10 and skills that players are able to draw on in response to challenging experiences (Collins &
11 MacNamara, 2012) to gain the most out of each video session. By reflecting with athletes in
12 one-to-one sessions on why they displayed certain behaviours – such as communicating with
13 team-mates under pressure or responding to making an error – video could be used to focus
14 critical reflection, learning and future response to specific challenging experiences. Such
15 approaches may provide coaches with an opportunity to challenge players' behaviours
16 without the fear associated with public viewing of on-field errors. It is acknowledged,
17 however, that with the growing number of athletes in the academy environment (Evans et al.,
18 2015), expending more time and resources on VFB work may be logistically problematic.
19 Practitioners may benefit from immersing themselves within the delivery environment –
20 either as a Sport Psychology or Performance Analysis practitioner or in a dual Psychologist-
21 Analyst role – in order to influence coaching practice.

22 **Concluding remarks**

23 The rich corpus of data collected in this study illustrates the importance coaches and
24 players both place on psychological factors within VFB practice. It is clear that at times
25 coaches and athletes hold markedly different perceptions about how VFB should be delivered,
26 and that some coaches' feel they lack knowledge regarding their athletes' psychological

1 responses to VFB. The experiences reported by the players in this study are a reminder that
2 coaches need to understand the psycho-social complexity underpinning the use of VFB
3 (Groom et al., 2011; Taylor et al., 2015). This seems particularly important when working
4 with adolescent athletes, who may be sensitive to embarrassment when watching their on-
5 field mistakes in front of their peers in team meetings. As a result, we argue that decisions
6 regarding how VFB is applied may need to be part of an individualised process, informed by
7 such factors as athlete preferences, developmental needs, coach philosophy and access to
8 sport science support services. We recommend that future research build on the work
9 presented here and by others (e.g. Groom et al., 2011; Nelson et al., 2014), by exploring ways
10 of creating a positive, supportive learning environment seen as crucial for optimising
11 athletes' engagement with VFB.

12 **Acknowledgements**

13 This study formed part of a doctoral thesis funded by The English Football Association.

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