



# THE COACHING PROCESS IN PROFESSIONAL YOUTH FOOTBALL: AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF PRACTICE

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## Abstract

Coaching and the coaching process are characterised by a number of complex interactions between the coach, the player and the club environment. Yet understanding of the coaching process as a complex, holistic process remains limited. There are 'gaps' in our existing knowledge, particularly in comprehending the dynamic relationship between the coach, player and club environment, and in understanding the implications of these interactions for practice and the coaching process. This research sought to examine and represent the complexity of the coach-player-club environment interface, and to understand some of the ways that they interact to construct and impinge upon the coaching process. The research was conducted on the premise that a sound understanding of the complexity of the coaching process drawing upon empirical research, rather than idealistic 'models', can inform the future development of coaching practice and coach education.

Within the framework of ethnography, the research took place over one season and used participant observation, unstructured interviews, semi-structured interviews and group interviews in one Football Association, Premier League Academy. The aim was to explore the coaching process and practical coaching context, as played out in the day-to-day experiences of coaches and youth team players. In addition to the main case-study club, semi-structured interviews were conducted with five coaches working with youth teams at other clubs. The research used concepts from grounded theory and also the work of Pierre Bourdieu to analyse and present the data.

In its findings, the study depicts a coaching process that is interdependent and interrelated and highlights complexity in each of the following elements: the club, sessions and games, players and coaches, relationships, and 'attitude'. The dynamism within and between each of these elements is illustrated in the ways that each can facilitate, constrain or even prevent 'effective' practice and the operation of the coaching process. Moreover, the research demonstrates the powerful nature of tradition and culture, highlighting their pervasive influence upon the coaching process and coaching practice.

Life at the case study club was characterised by authoritarianism and pressure, and was relentlessly directed towards winning. This backdrop strongly influenced the relationship between coaches and players, and impacted upon the coaching process. Importantly, the research presents evidence to suggest that coach education may be a

relatively 'low impact' endeavour in comparison to the coaches' other experiences which are presented as a significant force shaping both coaches' development and practice. To harness this experience and develop coach education, this research suggests that the governing body could consider embracing mentoring as part of coach education and, as part of this, coaches should be encouraged to engage in critical reflection in order to understand how cultural and other forces shape their practice. However, for mentoring to succeed, it must be grounded in a thorough understanding of the culture of football clubs, and the ways coaches draw upon their life experiences in football to direct their own practice and judge the practices and 'worth' of others.

Importantly, this research begins to answer some of the criticisms levelled at previous research by examining interaction and complexity within the coaching process *in-situ*. It highlights the problematic, interrelated and interdependent nature of relationships that construct and influence the coaching process and coaching practice. Importantly, it highlights the important and under-researched link between coaching practice, the coaching process and the immediate and wider social context of football.



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# CHAPTER ONE

## Introduction

The problems and questions that gave rise to this research were rooted in part, in my experiences as a coach and coach educator working in both practical, and academic settings. Gifted or cursed, I sit at the nexus between academic and practitioner, between theory and practice. From this position it has been possible to consider how these two distinct worlds, co-exist, interact, conflict, and serve one another. What struck me immediately was the bewildering variety of approaches to, and perspectives on, understanding coaching, the coach's role and the coaching process, a feeling shared in the literature in discussions regarding coaching (Lyle, 1992; Mathers, 1997; Woodman, 1993). This is not aided when key terms such as, coaching, coaching process and coaching context are used interchangeably in some instances and defined differently in others. The problems and questions that gave rise to this research were rooted in part, in my experiences as a coach and coach educator working in both practical, and academic settings. Gifted or cursed, I sit at the nexus between academic and practitioner, between theory and practice. From this position it has been possible to consider how these two distinct worlds, co-exist, interact, conflict, and serve one another, whereas, *coaching or coaching practice is the specific work of the coach in sessions or competition to enhance performance. The coaching process and coaching practice are situation specific and occur in a given context, namely, the practical coaching context. In essence, the practical coaching context involves the interaction of the coach, player and club environment (Cote, Salmela, & Russell, 1995; Cote, Salmela, Trudel, Baria, & Russell, 1995; Smith & Smoll, 1993; Saury & Durand, 1998). Moreover, the practical coaching context may itself vary between performance and participation settings, with participation being distinct from performance in that coaching practice is not directed toward competition, or preparation for competition (Lyle, 1999).*

Over time, it has been possible to witness and experience the remarkable complexity, intricacy and yet coherence of the coaching process. At the same time, I have been acutely aware of the myriad of individual variations that each coach, player and club environment adds to the blend, in the construction of the practical coaching context and the coaching process. Perhaps it is this complexity that has led to a

situation where "there has been little research that has explored the conceptual development of the coaching process and treated the coaching process as a problematic aspect of the research" (Lyle, 1999, p. 13). There seemed to be a dearth of critical analysis on the coaching process and a limited understanding of its inherent complexity.

Instead, within the existing coaching literature there is a tendency to claim priority for one aspect of the coaching process over others. For example, Fuoss and Troppman (1981) and Carreim, Da Costa and Pieron (1992) identify effective communication as *the* key ingredient of effective coaching. Indeed, Jones (1997) argues that, "there is no more important task within the wider coaching process than that of communication" (p.27). Furthermore, Carreim et al. (1992) contend that within the area of communication, it is the quality of *feedback* which is central to coach effectiveness a feeling shared by several authors (Horn, 1984, 1992; Mancini & Wuest, 1987; Solomon, Striegel, Eliot, Heon, Maas & Wyda, 1996; Stewart & Corbin, 1988). Tinning (1982) however, considers *instruction* to be the most significant aspect of the coach's role, while Fischman and Oxendine (1993) argue that, "at the core of successful coaching is an understanding of the motor learning process." (p.11). In yet another approach, Chelladurai (1993) focuses upon coach-athlete interaction and decision-making styles, reflecting a belief that coaching is "in essence the art and science of decision making" (p.99). The outcome of this research is expansive literature, emphasising coaching 'episodes', arguably at the expense of coaching practice, with the coaches broader and necessary skills relegated to the fringe (Lyle, 1999), particularly those involving an apparently 'intuitive' and 'craft' based delivery of the 'art' of coaching practice. Moreover, these various approaches to understanding coaching, whilst useful, remain limited, as coaching in practice is infinitely more complex and problematic than is frequently assumed in the literature. Intuitively for me, and this research, it seemed that key to understanding the coaching process was an understanding of the variables constructing the practical coaching context (coach, player, club environment) and how these interact to influence the coaching process and coaching practice. This is a sentiment shared by Jones (1997) who argues that, "at the core of any examination concerning coaching practice lies the complex inter-relationship between the coach, athlete and sport, and paramount within this structure is the interaction that exists between the three variables" (p.27).

Therefore, a key objective for this research was to examine the complexity inherent within each of the three 'variables' (coach, player and club environment) and, more ambitiously, to understand some of the ways in which they interact to construct, and impinge upon, the coaching process. Indeed, "improvements to coach education and to coaching practice depend on a sound understanding of the coaching process" (Lyle, 1999, p.29).

This research was conducted in the belief that studies on 'in-situ' coaching practice can present a contextually informed picture of coaching, which provides rich opportunities to inform coach education. Simply, there remains much to be learned about coaching practice (good or bad) particularly in performance contexts such as elite youth football (Cushion & Jones, 2001; Lyle, 1999), alongside the contribution of the practical coaching context and its interactions, in shaping the coaching process and, subsequent performance enhancement. The type of knowledge a sophisticated insight into coaching practice can offer is important because the practical context is *the* context in which the coaching process exists, thus this knowledge is fundamental to understanding how to enhance coaching practice, coach effectiveness and coach education (Cote & Salmela, 1996; Lyle, 1999).

My experience of taking part in and delivering coach education brought into clear view the meeting of the theoretical and the practical. Immediately apparent was that content understandably, was directed toward the promotion of athletic achievement, with a dominant focus on performance enhancement, a view confirmed in the literature (Luikkonen, Laasko, & Telamal, 1996). In these syllabi, coaching as a process received less attention than the study of performance. In addition, coach development programmes *sub-divide coaching into components relating to, for example, skill acquisition and areas of sport science*. This results in coaching broken up into parts to be re-assembled later. This is perhaps unsurprising since the expansion of empirical interest into coaching, as both an academic and practical subject, has been characterised by a focus on distinct and fragmented categories within the broad coaching field (Jones, 1999). Indeed, MacDonald and Tinning (1995) contend that this fragmentation of knowledge reflects an increasing 'product' view, resulting in coaching, not unlike physical education, being viewed as an "autonomous body of facts passed through generations" (McKay, Gore, & Kirk, 1990, p.62).

This rational and mechanistic approach to coaching results in a de-contextualised view (Turner & Martinek, 1995) where the coaching process is

presented as two-dimensional and compartmentalised, without offering any real comprehension of the dynamic human context (Jones, 1999). For example, the existing literature, as already suggested, has often tended to treat coaching as a composite of discrete (and convenient) 'elements'. This view presents coaching, for example, in coach education, as a logical set of 'episodes' (e.g. planning, communication, motivation, instructing, goal setting, etc.) that can be isolated for analysis then re-assembled later. This, of course, has implications for coaches, with coaching practitioners being regarded as "merely technicians engaged in the transfer of knowledge" (McDonald & Tinning, 1995, p.98) in a process that is viewed as unproblematic as long as the coach follows an appropriate systematic 'model'. Yet there are serious limitations to this approach. For example, it fails to acknowledge the possibility of coaching practice being socially constructed (Potrac, Jones, Brewer, Armour & Hoff, 2000). Furthermore, there is now growing support for the argument that the coaching process is, and must be understood as, an integrated and interdependent process (Cushion, 2001; Lyle, 1992, 1993, 1999). However, in much of the existing research the coaching process has been reduced in scale, and complexity, resulting in coaching practice being marginalized and "sadly under-researched" (Cross & Lyle, 1999, p.13). It can be argued, therefore, that there are some important 'blank spaces' not only in our knowledge, but also in our understanding of the process of coaching. One clear example is the topic of this research: the dynamic relationship between coach, player and club environment and the implications of this interaction for practice, the coaching process, and coach education. While these gaps in knowledge and understanding are increasingly being recognised, as is the need for empirical research in the field (Strean, 1995; 1998; Jones, 1999; Lyle, 1999; Potrac et al., 2000), as yet a limited number of studies have been undertaken.

In order to grasp the complexity of the coaching process, an understanding of the practical context of coaching appears essential, including the social relationships that tie coach, player and club environment together (Jones, 1999). Indeed, Schempp (1998) argues that, "our social world offers no immunity to sport fields or gymnasia". Yet despite increasing recognition of the social nature of the coaching process and the realisation that coaching is vulnerable to differing social pressures and constraints (Cross, 1995a, 1995b; Tinning, 1982), sociological research and analysis of the coaching process is relatively under-developed (Schempp, 1998; Potrac & Jones,



1999). Whilst existing socio-psychological theories of the coaching process and coach behaviour have proved useful in identifying frameworks for good practice, they have been found wanting in helping us to understand the dynamics that construct and affect relationships between coach, player and club, within the coaching process (Potrac & Jones, 1999). Indeed, the complexity and uniqueness of each practical coaching context strongly influences the coaching process in that setting (Gilbert & Trudel, 1999; Streat, 1995). This is particularly the case in elite or performance programmes where empirical data about coaching practice and the implementation of the coaching process remains scant (Trudel, Cote & Donohue, 1993; Lyle, 1999). Consequently, there is a need to move away from existing 'how to' coach models, toward an understanding of the factors which impinge upon the dynamic and multi-layered coaching process. This may demand a different way of approaching coaching research, requiring perhaps a conscious aim by the researcher to develop the quality of mind essential for grasping the interplay between society, other and self (Sage, 1987).

Yet, it is still the case that, what might be termed a process-product research approach, dominates the coaching practice literature. There appears to be a pre-occupation with establishing causal relationships between effective coaching and performer learning in a quest to find conceptual 'models' for the coaching process and coach effectiveness. Clearly, this empirical-analytical paradigm positions the social world and human behaviour within a positivist perspective (Schempp & Choi, 1994) where human behaviour is regarded as measurable, causally derived and thus predictable and controllable (Smith, 1989). However, Martens (1979) expresses doubts "that neatly isolated dependent and independent variables can provide a useful model of what goes on in the personal and social world of sport" (p. 56). Indeed, Millard (1996) warns that a failure to examine possible confounding contextual factors, such as coach and player age, experience, past participation, club and coach philosophy, club and coach culture and the coaching environment, must cast questions about drawing meaningful conclusions from such research. Furthermore, the premise that identifying what coaches do provides a sufficient knowledge base for developing models for coaching practice, may be based on the flawed assumption that expertise can be created through the acquisition of technical skills alone (Rink, 1993). Indeed, this may be why the prevailing 'models' approach to coach education and the fragmented nature of coaching research, whilst contributing to our knowledge, has

only revealed a small part of the complexity of coaching practice, and is arguably, unfulfilling for coaching practitioners.

This evidence leads to the conclusion that not only is a more detailed knowledge of the coaching process required but also that coaching and the coaching process need to be analysed in the context of specific environments. Crucially, this is where the coach's contribution to performance enhancement becomes dependent upon the coach taking into account the unique factors of that environment (Cushion & Jones, 2001; Douge & Hastie, 1993; Jones, 1997; Lyle, 1999). Nowhere is this more so than in the youth sport setting. Youth sport is an area in which the majority of coaches work (Weiss, 1993) and provides a backdrop against which the interaction of coach, player, and club environment, are brought sharply into focus. This is because the youth coach, particularly at the elite level, has a specialised task where expectations and demands of both performer and coach are different from other levels (Cote, et al., 1995; Liukkonen, et al., 1996; Woodman, 1993). For example, the quality of coaching behaviour, as well as the contingency and appropriateness of information given, are crucial to the holistic development of young players (Bortoli, Robazza & Giabardo, 1995; Petchlichkoff, 1993). As a result, coaches of young players assume a crucial role as significant others, affecting athletes' attitudes, self-esteem, and psychosocial development (Black & Weiss, 1992; Bortoli et al., 1995; Liukkonen et al., 1996). It can be argued therefore, that the coaching process in the youth sport setting, requires the coach to take into account a wide range of personal and developmental needs of the young athlete. Indeed, Smith and Smoll (1993) acknowledge that coaching in this context is a complex social system, and that an important consideration is the relationship between coach and player. However, at the elite youth sport level, as in coaching generally, existing research has largely been limited to quantitative descriptions of the behaviours of coaches (Cushion, 1998; Potrac, Jones, & Armour, 1997; Vangucci, Potrac, & Jones., 199 ; van der Mars, Darst & Sariscany, 1991): "much of the literature on coaching focuses on the technical aspects of coach behaviour" (McPhail & Kirk, 2001). There is a lack of in-depth empirical research examining the wider social processes impinging upon the work of elite coaches, in either game or practice settings (Trudel et al., 1993; van der Mars, et al., 1991). English football in particular suffers from a paucity of research in this respect, with the majority of studies concerned with youth football coaches having been conducted in North America (Miller, 1992; Wandzilak, Ansorge &

Potter, 1988), and largely concentrated on educational settings rather than elite performers and performance coaches.

Coaching is both an individual and social process, that is, meanings are both actively constructed within the minds of coaches and players and are also influenced by the participation in the practical coaching context (Langley, 1997). As has been argued thus far, insight into the practical coaching context that surrounds the coaching process is limited, perhaps because of its complexity and the difficulties inherent in both gathering and analysing data. However, it will be argued and demonstrated in this research that the work of Pierre Bourdieu appears to offer possibilities for grasping this complexity and presenting it in a useful way; specifically, Bourdieu's constructs involving social practice. These arise from an examination of what people actually do in specific social practices without losing sight of the wider patterns of social life: "This concern with the particular without losing sight of the general is one of the distinguishing features of Bourdieu's work" (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994, p.184). Within the scope of this research, Bourdieu presents a framework, and a common language, within which an analysis of coach, player, the club environment and their interaction might be conducted. Bourdieu seeks to examine "both the objective structures which unconsciously act to orient and constrain social practice and the subjective dimension which focuses upon the social genesis of mental structure" (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994, p.185). This therefore, appears in concert with the key purpose of this research: to engage in understanding, documenting and analysing complexity in order to better inform coaching practice and coach education.

The complexity of coaching is indisputable, and although understanding complexity is not exclusive to qualitative, interpretative enquiry, qualitative methodology is particularly well suited to the task (Peshkin, 1988). Moreover, possibly the most interesting but virtually untapped area for research, and potential for performance-related description, particularly in unravelling the complexity of the coaching process, is through accounts of the views, experiences and practices of high level coaches and athletes (Newburg, 1995; Cote et al., 1995; Streat, 1998): "...it is a matter of scholarly and practical interest to know more about the people who become youth sport coaches" and "the social contexts in which they work" (McPhail & Kirk, 2001). Indeed, description in good qualitative work provides the basis for an in-depth understanding of how people make sense of their worlds and the contexts in which they reside (Maxwell, 1996; Streat 1998). Ethnographic studies, in particular,

utilising participant observation and in-depth interviewing for example, can increase our understanding of the specific contexts in which persons act, and the influence that these contexts have on their actions. Therefore, this research seeks to present ethnographic data on an area of sporting life, namely the coaching process in practice, in elite youth football, where detailed data are scant.

### *1.1 Research Problem*

Coaching and the coaching process are characterised by a number of complex interactions between the coach the player and the club environment (Jones, 1997: Lyle, 1999: Smith & Smoll, 1993: Saury & Durand, 1998:) and whilst there has been a great deal written about individual aspects of coaching, understanding of the coaching process as a complex, holistic process is limited. Coach education in elite youth football draws upon existing literature and consequently, is similarly fragmented. It would seem that coaching research lacks an integrated and cohesive analysis of the coaching process in practice, which could generate data to inform practice and coach education. This research therefore, attempts to address these issues in the specific context of elite youth football.

### *1.2 Research Questions*

1. In the context of a case study of elite youth football, what can be learned about the nature and complexity, individually and in combination, of the key elements of the coaching process in practice; the coach, the player and the club environment?
2. Within the case study, how do the elements of the coaching process and the practical coaching context come together in practice, and interact to construct the coaching process?
3. How might knowledge of the coaching process in practice, as a complex and interdependent process, be presented and analysed to inform coach education and coaching practice?

### *1.3 Organisation of the Thesis*

This chapter is followed by the *Review of Literature*, which critically considers the existing research pertaining to the practical coaching context, in particular the coach, the player and the club environment, and the coaching process. It demonstrates limits in existing knowledge and how this knowledge can be built upon to further our

understanding of the coaching process and the practical coaching context. Next is the *Methodology*, an extensive chapter tracing the research process from developing further the ideas informing the research through to the write up. It considers in detail methodological choices, the research paradigm, data collection, analysis and presentation. It also discusses the quality of the research process and the positioning of the researcher within the research. The *Analysis and Discussion* chapter follows; presenting the key themes of the research findings as building blocks towards understanding the coaching process, its interactions, and complexity. It is intended that each section of this chapter should build on the last developing a thick, layered, understanding of the coaching process and the practical coaching context. Finally, the *Thesis Conclusion* considers the implications of the research from five interrelated but different directions, a reflexive conclusion, positioning the researcher and the research in the social *field*. Next, conclusions are drawn concerning the coaching process, the interaction of the coach the player and club environment impinging upon, and constructing, the process. These findings are then situated within the relevant existing literature demonstrating how they may contribute to that body of knowledge. The implications of the findings for coaching practice and coach education are discussed and finally future research directions are considered.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Review of Literature

#### *Introduction*

This review of literature serves a number of purposes. Firstly, it considers the existing relevant coaching research on the practical coaching context, identified as, the coach, the players and the club environment. In so doing, it attempts to demonstrate the complexity of coaching by identifying research topics which reveal a bewildering variety of approaches to, and perspectives on, understanding coaching, the coach's role, and the nature of the coaching process (Mathers, 1997). This critical analysis is vital in demonstrating both the strengths and limits of existing knowledge and, importantly, how this knowledge can be built upon to further understanding of the coaching process, coaching practice and coach education.

Coaches have probably existed, in the broadest sense, since people engaged in physical competition, and undoubtedly since the original Olympic games in Greece (Gummerson, 1992). Because of this, most people have "an understanding of the term coaching and the kind of activities that coaching entails" (Borrie, 1996, p.243). This clarity then, suggests that a review of the coaching literature should be relatively straightforward. However, coaching has been viewed as a unique occupation that lies somewhere between the conceptual dichotomies of art and science (Locke, 1989), and as "a little understood vocation" (Lyle, 1992, p.463). Therefore, one difficulty arises immediately from confusion over definitions and in the use of key terminology. For example, as previously noted the terms 'coaching', 'coach effectiveness' and 'the coaching process' are used interchangeably in some cases, and are defined differently in others. Arguably, it is difficult to discuss and analyse coaching and the coaching process literature when there is little consensus on what they are (Lyle, 1992). Therefore, for the purpose of clarity in this review of literature and this research, the coaching process is confirmed as an holistic enterprise within which exists a web of complex, context-dependent, and interdependent sub-processes. The term coaching, or coaching practice, on the other hand, describe specific activities undertaken by the coach within the broad coaching process that influence the performer directly or indirectly. It is felt that these definitions, being encompassing rather than de-limiting, best capture the nature of the coaching process.

Arguably, the scale and complexity of coaching practice and the coaching process has been reduced in an unrealistic way in the existing literature. This has resulted in a

fragmented body of knowledge, with coaching practice being sub-divided and viewed as a group of episodes that can be isolated into “individual areas for treatment” (Cross & Ellice, 1997, p19). This approach, whilst making a contribution to knowledge in some areas of coaching practice, clearly does the coaching practitioner a disservice because coaching practice is in fact an holistic, integrated and interdependent process. So, in the reality of coaching practice and the coaching process, it is inevitable that some of these episodes, represented in the literature as ‘individual and isolated’, will, in fact overlap, or may happen at the same time. Furthermore, there may be elements that are under-researched or even as yet undiscovered, and therefore not represented in the coaching literature.

The sub-divided nature of the literature also presents a stern challenge to the reviewer. The division of the coaching literature is an existential fact; for example, coach behaviour, coach-athlete interaction, coach effectiveness, the coaching process, coach philosophy, and coach expertise have all been the focus of research under the banner of coaching. It is difficult, therefore, to unite the disparate parts to fit under the umbrella of what is a broad research question. In the face of such difficulty, the approach taken in this case has been a judicious analysis of the existing framework, establishing where the boundaries of existing knowledge are, relative to the broader coaching process outlined in this section. Fundamentally, coaching is based on the complex inter-relationship between three key elements; the coach, the player, and the club environment (Trudel, Cote & Donohue, 1993). These inter-relationships may “vary in strength, empathy and extent” and “the nature of these interactions can shape the coaching process significantly” (Lyle, 1999, p. 45). Therefore, these three elements and their interaction are examined in this review of literature using the existing research divisions as a framework for organising the analysis. This framework, whilst not all encompassing, does offer one route into examining the broader ‘messy reality’ of coaching in practice.

Because the main purpose of this research is to further an understanding of the nature and complexity of the coaching process, it would appear logical to begin this review of the coaching literature with an overview of our existing knowledge of that process. As will be demonstrated, the coaching process and coach effectiveness are closely related, therefore, a review of coach effectiveness literature follows on from that of the coaching process. Drawing conclusions from research in these areas provides a backdrop against which to examine the three elements of the practical coaching context; the coach, the player and the club environment. Because research into coach effectiveness has largely been concerned with the coach and coach behaviour, these two are the next areas for review and

analysis. This is followed by a review of factors identified in the existing literature as impinging on coach behaviour, for example expectancy effects and coach philosophy. The section concerned with the coach concludes with a discussion on attempts to understand coach expertise, a line of enquiry representing the most recent coaching research endeavours. The data from the research in this area have also been used to consider the coaching process and coach-player interaction. Whilst not the specific focus of much coaching research, the player's role in the coaching process is considered in the research into coach-athlete interaction. The club environment is then analysed with reference to, for example, culture and sub-culture, in an attempt to understand how the club environment might impact the coaching process. However, a key focus of this research is to explore the interaction between the coach, player and club environment thus, the process of socialisation, which highlights interaction between the three 'elements' of the coaching process, is examined next. In addition, because the specific coaching context for this research is youth coaching in football, wherever it is available, the review will draw upon any relevant coaching literature in this specific area.

Whilst the structure for this review of literature appears logical and ordered, it is important not to forget the complexity of coaching and the fragmented approach to its research. For example, it is easy to suggest an analysis of coach behaviour, but coach behaviour has been used as vehicle to examine effectiveness, player preference and socialisation. Coaching practice in reality is complex and 'swamp like' (Schon, 1987) and attempts to unravel the complexity and identify individual areas to research appear may logical, but the outcome is that neat parcels of research, whilst not only being hard to find, are unhelpful when trying to understand an holistic, inter-dependent and inter-related process.

### 2.1.1 *Coaching Process*

The existence of the coaching process has been recognised in the literature for over a decade (Lyle, 1984, 1986, 1992, 1999). Yet, arguably, it still lacks a sound conceptual underpinning that could inform practice. This is, perhaps, unsurprising as Lyle (1996) reported that not only is there no consensus or clarity about the nature of coaching itself, but that no 'best' model of coaching exists to inform practice across sports (Cross, 1995b). This assertion is supported with research evidence by Gould, Giannini, Krane, and Hodge (1990), who found that a majority of elite U.S. Pan American and Olympic coaches indicated that there was an absence of a definitive set of concepts and principles for the



coaching process and effective coaching. Consequently, research has concluded that many coaches work without any reference to a coaching process model and, in reality, base their coaching on feelings, intuitions, events and previous experience that trigger actions (Lyle, 1992; Cross, 1995a; Cross, 1995b). This may be the case, but a word of caution is needed about these findings. Our understanding of coaching practice is limited by the extent of our current knowledge. It has already been suggested that there is a lack of consensus, clarity and a conceptual underpinning of the coaching process. Therefore, if coaches cannot position their practice within existing definitions of the coaching process, it does not necessarily follow that they do not operate within, or with reference to, a coaching process. Simply, current levels of understanding may be inadequate to conceptualise the process of coaching in practice. It could be argued, therefore, that there is limited empirical research specifically considering the wider coaching process and, consequently, difficulties arise when attempts are made to integrate a coaching process into sport settings (Mathers, 1997). This is particularly the case in elite programmes where there is much to learn about what constitutes good (and indeed, bad) practice (Lyle, 1999). Indeed, “this requires a sophisticated insight into the coaching process and its application in a variety of contexts” (Lyle, 1999, p.4).

Recognition of the complexity of the coaching process has implications for attempts to establish a blueprint for good practice that practitioners appear to crave. It is widely agreed that the conceptual features of the coaching process are wide-ranging and multifaceted, and that there is a need to clarify this process so that effective coaching methods can be established (Mathers, 1997). Indeed, without studies specifically oriented toward describing the complexity inherent in coaching, knowledge of the coaching process is likely to remain imprecise and speculative (Saury & Durand, 1998). Intuitively, the coaching process and effective coaching must be inextricably linked. Indeed, Mathers (1997) suggests that an understanding of the coaching process is an essential feature of effective coaching and, ultimately, improved performance. However the extent to which the coach is aware of, understands, and therefore becomes involved in the process will “have implications for effectiveness” (Lyle, 1996, p.23), including the essential elements of performance planning and, ultimately, effective coaching.

So what is the nature of current knowledge about the coaching process? Existing research attempts to describe, model and define the coaching process. For example, Borrie (1996) defines the coaching process as a series of stages that the coach has to go through to help the player learn and improve a particular skill. This definition would appear to position

the parameters of the coaching process around the coaching session. Indeed, under the auspices of this definition, and despite the wide range of activities and knowledge required by the coach, many authors agree that the process of successfully coaching both the child and the international performer is essentially the same (Woodman, 1993; Fairs, 1987). However, the coach, to be effective, has to manipulate a wide range of variables, which occur within and beyond the coaching session (Lyle, 1992; Launder, 1991). Consequently, this definition may be too narrow to capture the true complexity of the coaching process. Therefore, the definition must be broadened beyond the delivery of the coaching session.

Before examining conceptual models of the coaching process in detail, it is worth considering the work of Lyle (1999) who proposes a number of considerations that can be helpful when assessing coaching process models. He contends that models should represent the structure and function of a process. Furthermore, the model should identify the dimensions of the process, including assumptions and boundaries, and how these interact in practice. In addition, as suggested earlier, the model should differentiate between performance coaching and participation coaching. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Lyle (1999) distinguishes between two types of model: models 'for' the coaching process and models 'of' the coaching process. Models 'of' the process are based on empirical research investigating expert or successful coaching practice, whereas models 'for' the coaching process are idealistic representations that arise from the identification of a set of assumptions about the process and subsequent model that represents its structure and function (Lyle, 1999). It should be noted that within these frames of reference, this research aims to enhance understanding 'of' the coaching process with performance coaches.

In the existing literature there are two commonly cited coaching process models proposed by Franks, Sinclair, Thomson, and Goodman (1986), and Fairs (1987). Cross and Ellice (1997) suggest, in an examination of effective coaching, that the ability to identify, analyse and control variables that affect athlete performance is central to an effective coaching process. The work of Fairs (1987) acknowledges this and contends that coaching should involve a series of orderly and interrelated steps. This view is supported by Lyle (1986, 1991, 1996) who suggests that improved performance is attained through a planned, co-ordinated, integrated, and systematic programme. This is reflected by Fairs (1987) who proposed four identifying characteristics of the coaching process; dynamic, organised, systematic and deliberate. Fairs proposes a model of the coaching process that enables the coach to recognise, analyse, and modify coaching behaviours to meet the needs of athletes and match performance goals. This is done through five interrelated steps: data collection,

diagnosis, action planning, implementation of the plan, and evaluation of the plan. This depicts the coaching process as a continuous cyclical pathway, allowing procedures and outcomes to be assessed and revised constantly. However, the assumptions made emphasise a sub-divided approach to coaching, and seem to imply a short-term cycle. It appears difficult therefore, to envisage the model being used for long term planning (Lyle, 1999). Whilst appearing logical and interrelated, the model has been criticised for being simplistic on a number of levels (Cross and Ellice, 1997; Lyle, 1996; Lyle, 1999; Mathers, 1997). Firstly, it fails to recognise the complexity of performance; secondly, and importantly, it does not recognise the complex inter-personal nature of coaching relationships; thirdly, it fails to give the coaching process context and, finally, it does not adequately describe how the coaching process might operate in practice (Lyle, 1999). However, it is easy to criticise Fairs' work for things that it perhaps never intended to do. Its utility perhaps, lies in giving a systematic 'guide' to the structuring and delivery of specific coaching sessions.

The model proposed by Franks et al. (1996) was derived from a paper on coach effectiveness. It has one central assumption: that coaching is conceptualised as simply a teaching 'episode'; thus it could be categorised as an instructional model: "The model might be better termed an instruction delivery model, and this is reflected in its behavioural emphasis" (Lyle, 1999, p.16). However, it is a model that attempts to measure player progress through analyses of performance, including performance factors. The model has been developed to devise a computer-based system for analysing coach behaviour (Johnson & Franks, 1991; More, McGarry, Partridge, and Franks, 1996). In the same instructional vein, Sherman, Crassini, Maschette and Sands (1997), whilst acknowledging the difficulty of conceptualising and modelling the coaching process, attempt to re-conceptualise it into a sports instruction model. This model has been criticised along similar lines to Fairs (1987) for limiting our understanding of the coaching process through the adoption of a teaching episode approach (Lyle, 1999). Furthermore, the model fails to distinguish between performance and participation coaching, and once again largely ignores the interpersonal relationships developed and that occur within the coaching process (Lyle, 1999). Sherman et al's (1997) work is interesting because it tries to reduce the complexity of the coaching process into simply instruction. However, it proves problematic to isolate one element and call that the coaching process. The teaching or instructional 'episode' is simply part of a broader process. This perhaps confirms not only the inter-related nature of the coaching process, of which instruction is a part, but also that simply isolating one element of it is difficult.

Rather than isolate a single element to represent the coaching process, another approach has identified the coaching process but down-valued its importance. This has resulted with either the coaching process being assumed to exist, but in an unproblematic way, or, that there is no attempt to understand the workings of the process or represent them in the research. Two examples of this approach include the coaching performance model proposed by McClean and Chelladurai (1995) and the coaching practice model proposed by Cote et al. (1995). The work of Cote et al. (1995) is considered in detail in a later section (see Coach Expertise section, p.37). However, suffice to say at this point, that this model refers to the complexity of the coaching process and its context without representing this complexity in the research findings. McClean and Chelladurai (1995) consider an occupational and organisational model that proposes useful constructs to describe direct and indirect coach behaviour. However, whilst acknowledging the occupational context of the coach, the model does not examine the coaching process, yet it makes unproblematic assumptions about its existence (Lyle, 1999).

One of the strongest advocates for a re-conceptualisation of the coaching process has been John Lyle. Building on earlier work (Lyle, 1996, 1998), he has attempted to model the coaching process to represent it as an holistic, interdependent and interrelated enterprise. The model is a cyclical one built around a set of building blocks including for example; information base, knowledge and skills of the coach, athletes' capabilities, performance analysis, the competition programme, and preparation programme. Importantly, the model acknowledges external constraints, and recognises the coaching process as a set of interpersonal relationships. In addition, the whole process is subject to contextual factors, and there is a cultural dimension to it. This model undoubtedly represents a step forward in understanding the complexity of the coaching process. However it is very much a model 'for' the process. Despite the model's grounding in coaching experience (Lyle, 1999) and research on coach behaviour (Lyle, 1992) it has not been related to actual coaching practice. In addition, it appears systematic to the point of being mechanical, and it would be interesting to see it tested in the complex reality that is coaching.

With the possible exception of the, as yet, untested model of Lyle (1999), the existing coaching process models can be criticised for being too simplistic, and failing to encompass all essential elements of effective coaching (Cross and Ellice, 1997; Lyle, 1996; Mathers, 1997). However, the enormity of the task of modelling the complexity of the coaching process must be acknowledged, and these models represent steps on the way to a greater understanding. Therefore, in summary, it could be said that the contribution made by

existing models to our understanding of the complexity of the coaching process has been useful, but limited. Arguably, insufficient attention has been paid to fundamental social aspects and the claim that; “The effectiveness of the implementation of the coaching process will be dependent upon the quality of the interaction between the player and the coach” (Borrie, 1996, p.245). Thus a useful addition to existing knowledge of the coaching process would be to capture and understand some of the inherent complexity of such interaction.

This section has attempted to critically analyse current knowledge of the coaching process, and has discussed definitions, descriptions and models. In so doing, it has been suggested that current understanding of the coaching process in a practical coaching context is insufficiently broad and encompassing, particularly in elite sport settings. Knowledge and understanding of the coaching process is essential in developing principles of practice for coaching practitioners and coach education. Furthermore, the coaching process is an essential feature of coach effectiveness, to which this review now turns.

### 2.1.2 *Coach Effectiveness*

Despite the existence of a large number of publications on coaching, over 25,000 since 1975, there appears to be some difficulty in providing a satisfactory definition of coaching effectiveness that would apply across a wide range of sport situations (Cote, Trudel & Salmela, 1993; Cross, 1995a, Cross, 1995b; Mathers, 1997; Jones, 1997). What is relevant to this research is that there appears little agreement about what constitutes coach effectiveness in youth sport and in youth football in particular. Football is not alone as Cross (1999, p.47) suggests, “whilst some clarity emerges, no single objective measure of coaching effectiveness can be identified which is appropriate in all coaching situations”. This is not surprising since there is much debate surrounding the process of sports coaching and the methods to achieve effective sport performance (Lyle, 1996). It is generally believed that coaching is a process that aids athletes achieve their peak performance in competition (Woodman, 1993; Bompa, 1994; Morris and Summers, 1995). Moreover, any review of the coaching literature demonstrates that to fulfil this objective, the coach is engaged in a wide range of roles (Borrie, 1996; Jones, Housener & Kornspan, 1997). Indeed, as has already been suggested, the interrelated and interdependent coaching process encompasses a variety of tasks, including, but not limited to; skill teaching, planning and implementing training programmes, preparing athletes for competition and providing tactical and technical advice (Fairs, 1987; Launder, 1993). Further, Jones, et al. (1997), in an investigation of high school basketball coaches, identified 37 criteria that describe the

dimensions of the coaching process. This seems to confirm both the complexity of the coaching process and that the requirements of effective coaching are both wide-ranging and specialised (Blundell, 1985).

A simplistic definition of coaching effectiveness could conclude that effective coaching contributes to the performance of the athlete (Franks, Sinclair, Thompson & Goodman, 1986). However, for this research, such a definition is clearly unhelpful in analytical terms. For example, it does not highlight the dynamic nature of the coaching process and the range of social circumstances encountered in the performance pathway between the coach and the athlete (Douge & Hastie, 1993). Arguably, these are important 'blank spaces' in existing knowledge. Indeed, Cross (1995a) asserts that a satisfactory definition of effective coaching must take these dynamic variables into account. As a result, it can be argued that it is just such variables that have led to difficulty in constructing a universally applicable definition of effective coaching (Mathers, 1997). Consequently, definitions of coaching effectiveness were found by Mathers (1997), in a review of the effectiveness of professional golf coaches, to "remain specific to individual sport situations" (Mathers, 1997, p.24). Support for the notion that effective coaching behaviours may be sport- and situation-specific has led Cross (1995b) to conclude from interviews with elite field hockey coaches that, "there is not one best method of coaching but that different coaching methods and behaviours are appropriate at different times and in different circumstances" (p.27). The implications of these findings for practitioners is significant. Essentially, varying coaching approaches may be required across different sports, in different cultural environments, with different athletes such as youth and or elite, or even at different stages in the coach-athlete relationship. Indeed, although the 'principles of coaching' remain the same (Howe, 1990), different contexts place different demands on the coach to be effective. This conclusion also has significant implications for coaching effectiveness in that, to continue enhancing player and team performance, the coaching process may have to be inherently flexible to deal with varying pressures and constraints placed upon it (Cross, 1995b). Pressures may be, for example, ideological, institutional, cultural, social, and/or rooted in the age or experience of those taking part (Cross, 1995b, 1999). Thus, there is an inherent difficulty in defining coaching effectiveness and arguably the coaching process in terms of performance and preparation for performance, when evaluation of effectiveness occurs against a backdrop of constraint variables, the extent and influence of which remain unknown. It would seem therefore, that research investigating

these variables, and their influence, would be a welcome and necessary addition to the extant knowledge.

Despite the reservations expressed regarding the existing literature, qualities that are associated with effective coaching have emerged from a wide range of research projects. These projects have largely been carried out in the United States, involving interview, analysis and observation systems, designed to identify effective coaching from 'good' practice in a variety of sports, including; American Football (Claxton & Lacy, 1986; Lacy & Darst, 1985; Lacy & Goldston, 1990; Seagrave & Ciancio, 1990) tennis (Claxton, 1985; Claxton 1988) ice hockey (Trudel, Cote, & Bernard, 1996) archery (van der Mars, Darst, & Sariscany, 1991) and football (Vangucci, Potrac & Jones, 1997; Lacy, 1989; Millard, 1996; Miller, 1992; Potrac, Jones & Armour, 1997; More, McGarry, Partridge, & Franks, 1996; Wandzilak, Ansoerge, & Potter, 1988). From a review of a variety of observation systems Douge and Hastie (1993) argue that important components of effective coaching behaviour have been established. For example, they contend that effective coaches will; (a) provide frequent feedback and incorporate numerous prompts and hustles, (b) provide high levels of correction and re-instruction, (c) use high levels of questioning and clarifying, (d) are predominantly engaged in instruction, (e) manage the training environment to achieve considerable order. This list is by no means definitive, with Douge and Hastie acknowledging that coaching behaviours alone are not the only components of effective coaching. Indeed, Cross and Ellice (1997) and Cross (1995a), whilst examining coaching effectiveness in field hockey and swimming, recognised that the ability to observe, analyse, synthesise and modify coaching to meet the social situation and needs of those involved, is a key effectiveness characteristic. In addition, Sherman and Sands (1996) contend that to be effective, coaches should consider the principle of consequence, that is, coaches consider the possible outcomes of intended training.

In an earlier paper, Rushall (1980) identified 10 principles of effective coaching that he believed were essential to maintaining coaching quality. These include maximisation of the following; productivity, direction, intrinsic motivation, instruction, positive experience, social experience, information, content, the transfer of control to the performer, and finally planning. These could constitute elements of effective coaching and some have received support in the coaching literature (Bompa, 1994; Lyle, 1996). Rushall (1985a, 1985b) further outlined guidelines for effectiveness through combining principles of training with those of a coaching philosophy to inform coach behaviour. A different line was pursued by Sands & Alexander (1987), who identified principles for coach effectiveness based on a

socio-psychological approach including, for example, the coach providing a supportive environment, being able to diagnose, and promoting self-improvement. These varying approaches offer useful guidelines for coach effectiveness, and could perhaps be considerations for coaching practice. However, they are not in themselves necessarily a guarantee of effectiveness (Cross, 1999).

A fundamental problem in the pursuit of a concept of effectiveness is that effectiveness means different things to different people, and this is particularly the case at the elite or performance level (Cross, 1995b, 1999). Furthermore, “good coaching might not always be effective coaching”, and the omission of effective coaching guidelines in the coaching literature, “may indicate a lack of appreciation of the effectiveness concept and a lack of appreciation of the coaching process mechanisms” (Cross, 1999, p. 49). It could be argued that while coaching research continues to focus on individual elements of coaching and thus encourage a sub-division of coaching practice in the literature, it hinders coach effectiveness (Cross & Ellice, 1997). Put simply, treating the coaching process as interrelated and interdependent may lead to a more developed understanding of that process, and contribute to the development of optimal coach effectiveness.

This section has investigated current knowledge of coach effectiveness. The existing research demonstrates the close link between coach effectiveness and the coaching process, and presents evidence of elements that may constitute coach effectiveness. Importantly, it has been demonstrated that an understanding of coach effectiveness cannot be viewed in isolation and must involve an examination of the wider coaching process. It is interesting to note that whilst confounding variables and contextual factors are highlighted as impinging upon coach effectiveness, and indeed the coaching process, little research has attempted to identify and examine the extent and influence of such variables. The ‘principles’ of effectiveness outlined above generally are related to, and often involve the manipulation of, coach behaviour.

## *2.2 Coach*

### *2.2.1 Coach behaviour*

It seems obvious to state that the coach occupies a position of centrality and influence in the sporting arena, but for clarity, and not just for this review of literature but also for this research, it is worth stating the obvious. The coach is at the very heart of the coaching process; an essential part of the jigsaw, not a limitation (Cross & Lyle, 1999). Rather than embracing the complexity of the coach, the majority of coaching research has



been content to look simply at what the coach does. As a result coaching research has preferred to concentrate on observable coaching behaviours (Cushion, 2001; Kahan, 1999; Lyle, 1999; McPhail & Kirk, 2001; Solomon, Striegel, Eliot, Heon, Maas, & Wayda, 1996). The behavioural research, quite logically, acknowledges that through their words and actions, coaches influence both the players' performance and their social and emotional well being (Horn, 1992; Miller, 1992; DeMarco, Mancini, Wuest, & Schempp, 1996; Jones, et al., 1997). However, before considering the behavioural literature in detail, it is worth bearing in mind the following; firstly, this review of the coaching literature seeks to examine the limits of current knowledge and understanding; and secondly, data and research findings are only as good as the methods used to produce them (Schempp & Choi, 1994). Therefore, whilst examining the extent of the behavioural literature, attention inevitably is drawn to the methods used to collect the data; by its nature, the behavioural research cannot be critically analysed without touching on methods of data collection. Finally, as with much of the coaching research, the coach behaviour literature spills over into other areas of the coaching process, for example; the player, effectiveness and coach-player interaction. Therefore, studies will, inevitably, appear more than once in some sections of the review of literature.

The systematic study of coaching and teaching behaviour using descriptive-analytic systems and direct observation has been a prominent research methodology in the field of sport pedagogy for over 20 years (Kahan, 1999). However, the widespread analysis of observable behaviour in sport emerged from teaching, where research focussing on the description and analysis of physical education and sport instruction gathered momentum during the 1970's (Lawson, 1990). At the same time the development of valid and reliable observation instruments ushered sport pedagogy into "an era of legitimacy, innovation, and unparalleled activity" (Kahan, 1999, p.18; De Marco, et al., 1996). This research resulted in a wealth of information on the type and quality of teachers' instruction (DeMarco et al., 1996). Research in the analysis of coach behaviour has been related to, or extensions of, investigations of teacher behaviour (De Marco et al., 1996). Indeed, Claxton (1988) asserts that analysis into observable coach behaviour may have more meaning in a sport setting because coach behaviour can be related to coaching outcomes, such as win/loss. In addition, many authors have stressed the importance of using observation of coaches' and athletes' behaviours in order to establish an empirical base for the development of a science of coaching (Lacy & Darst, 1985; Lacy & Goldston, 1990; Seagrave & Ciancio, 1990; Potrac et al., 1997; Trudel et al., 1996). In fact, Trudel, et al. (1993) suggest that the emergence of

systematic observation was supposed to give birth to the science of coaching. This notion is supported by Lombardo, Faraone and Pothier (1983) who state “the emergence and widespread use of descriptive analytic techniques has provided the beginnings of a science of coaching, especially related to coaching behaviour” (p.4).

One particular feature of such research into coach behaviour has been the examination of the process of instruction. Tharp & Gallimore (1976) were pioneers in the direct observation of coaches and they used an 11 category coding system and recorded 2300 behaviours of UCLA basketball coach John Wooden. This study was replicated by Williams (1978), who studied a successful high school basketball coach, as well as by Langsdorf (1979) and Lucas (1980). In addition, Smith, Smoll and Curtis (1978) looked specifically at youth sport, by studying little league baseball coaches. These studies inspired other researchers to both develop and use systematic observation instruments for examining coaches' work in training and competition. Consequently, a number of observation systems have been developed specifically to analyse coaching behaviour (Crossman, 1985; Lacy & Darst, 1985; Langsdorf, 1979; Lucas 1980; Quarterman, 1980; Rushall, 1977; Smith Smoll & Hunt, 1977; Smith Smoll & Curtis, 1979; Tharp & Gallimore, 1976) including computerised systems for this purpose (Franks, Johnson, & Sinclair, 1988; McKenzie & Carlson, 1984; Metzler, 1983). These systems have been used across a number of sports and at various levels of competition.

The constant production of articles, some 1868 since 1975 (Kahan, 1999), from different authors, focussing on different aspects of coach behaviour, would appear to indicate that direct observation of coaches is an appropriate method for describing coaches' behaviour in training and competition (Trudel et al., 1993). Indeed, the studies conducted to date, using various observation instruments, have yielded insights that have contributed greatly to the body of knowledge in sport pedagogy (De Marco, et al., 1996; Jones, 1997). Furthermore, a wide range of literature exists describing coach behaviour in a range of sports (Bloom, Crumpton, & Anderson, 1999; Claxton, 1988; Lacy, 1989; Lacy & Darst, 1985; Lacy & Goldston 1990; Salminen & Liukkonen, 1995; Seagrave & Ciancio, 1990; Van der Mars, Darst & Sariscany, 1991) including football (Boudreau & Tousignant, 1991; Cushion, 1998; Dubois, 1981; Miller, 1992; Millard, 1996; Potrac, et al., 1997; Vangucci, et al., 1997). These studies represent the beginnings of a database of coaching behaviours, fulfilling in part the objective set by Lacy and Goldston (1990) that to be meaningful, observation should be conducted in a variety of settings.

Clearly, the range of sports where coach behaviour could be observed is considerable, and within sports there are inevitably many levels of competition, from 'grass roots' through to international or professional competition. Furthermore, even in a particular sport at a particular level of competition, coach behaviour could be examined in both competition and practice, and at different times in the season. In light of these considerations a closer examination of behavioural research reveals 'gaps' in existing knowledge. As has already been stated, the majority of coaching research has been conducted in North America in predominantly educational settings. It would be naive to accept that this body of knowledge can be blithely applied to coaches in England, with an assumed transatlantic 'validity'. Coaching knowledge, however labelled, can never be so culture-proof (Nicholas, 1983). Moreover, despite the wide range of behavioural literature, professional sport remains under-represented. Clearly, the demands, pressures and goals of professional coaches (performance coach) in professional sport, are quite different to that of other coaches. Thus, descriptions of professional coaches' behaviour are needed (Cote et al., 1993). It is interesting to note that researchers draw conclusions from coach behaviour, often regarding coach effectiveness, based on only a few hours observation (Horn, 1984; Kahan, 1999). Even research that has compared behaviours across a season (Portac et al., 1997), has been based on a limited number of observation hours. Clearly then, the existing behavioural research can be enhanced by observing coaches for longer periods of time in studies of a more longitudinal nature.

It is understandable that coach behaviour has been observed in practice settings more frequently than in games. Simply, there are fewer games than practice sessions, so practice provides greater scope to observe coach behaviour. This is reflected in the number of studies where both practice and game behaviours were studied; only 12% of articles in a review by Kahan (1999). Of the few studies that observed coach behaviour across game and practice situations, only 4 expressly compared behaviour across the two situations (Kahan, 1999). Chiefly, they found that certain behavioural categories register differently under game versus practice conditions (Chaumeton & Duda, 1988; Horn, 1984; Trudel, et al., 1996; Wandzilak et al., 1988). Coaches engage in comparatively less instruction and overall coach-athlete interaction in competition (Salmela, Draper and La Plante, 1993). Apart from the relative difference in the amount of time spent in practice compared with games, Liukkonen et al. (1996) argue that competition invokes a hardening of the emotional climate, and this could account for behavioural difference. It seems obvious that competition must be a factor that impinges upon the coaching process. Competition, it

should be remembered, is not only playing time, but the time in immediate preparation for competition, team talks, half-time, full-time, and other stoppages where there are opportunities for coach-athlete interaction. So the examination of practice time alone would appear, by definition, to exclude an important and, by its very nature, spontaneous and 'creative' part of the coach's work. This, along with the already reported differences in behaviour, would suggest that research examining coach behaviour that includes competition would be a worthy addition to existing knowledge.

In addition to the development of a database of behaviours, analysis of behaviour has been used to provide intervention strategies for a variety of sports including basketball (Lacy & Goldston, 1990; Smith, Zane, Smoll, & Coppel, 1983) American Football (Lacy & Darst, 1985; Tharp & Gallimore, 1976) Football (Dubois, 1981, Wandzilak, et al., 1988) and athletics (Salminen, & Liukkonen, 1996; Salminen, Liukkonen & Telama, 1992). However, there remain considerable differences in how the results of behavioural analyses using systematic observation are interpreted and applied (Abraham & Collins, 1998). Indeed, it could be argued that the resulting recommendations may have been "too absolutist for the complex coaching environment" (Abraham & Collins, 1998, p.65). For example, research conducted by Lacy and Darst (1985) and Smoll and Smith (1980) recommended that instructional feedback, encouragement and positive reinforcement were the most crucial for coaches. Whilst there remains little doubt of the efficacy of these behaviours for the coach, inconsistency exists within the literature in recommendations for their use (Abraham & Collins, 1998; Kahan, 1999; Jones, 1997). Smith et al. (1983) in their research with youth coaches, noted that reinforcement was not considered to predict either positively or negatively any of four player attitudes; liking for the game, team solidarity, coach evaluation, or self esteem. In addition, the frequency of these behaviours could change during the season (Lacy & Darst, 1985; Potrac, et al., 1997) without any reported change in coach effectiveness. Further confusion is added by the work of Trudel, et al. (1996) in a study of ice hockey coaches and Wandzilak et al. (1988) in a study of youth football coaches, both of which demonstrated that the behaviours of coaches changed significantly between match play and practice. This inconsistency in results has led Abraham and Collins (1998) to suggest that coach behaviour relates to the specific situation rather than to global rules. Indeed, attempting to apply the findings of behavioural analysis in prescriptive ways ignores the specific context under which studies are conducted (Dodge & Hastie, 1993; Kahan, 1999); an important finding, when considering the design and implementation of coach education.

Certain behaviours consistently permeate the findings of behavioural studies, in particular, high levels of instruction (Jones, 1997). This is also the case in the youth sport setting (Seagrave & Ciancio, 1990) including football (Lacy, 1989; Cushion, 1998). Indeed, Lacy and Darst (1985) contend that a high level of instruction is a prerequisite for effective coaching. However, a high level of instruction could suggest an autocratic coaching style (Abraham & Collins, 1998). This contradicts the work of Salminen and Liukkonen (1995) who noted a preference for a democratic coaching style amongst elite athletes, which itself contradicts the research of Terry (1984). Terry reported that team athletes prefer a more autocratic coaching style. Of course amending coaching behaviour may mean changing the frequency of use of a certain behaviour, but how does the coach know which to work on? Further, just because athletes prefer a type of coaching behaviour, will it necessarily be the most effective for the coach, or the most suitable for the demands of the sport? Interestingly, in a qualitative study, d'Arrippe-Longuville, Fournier and Dubois (1998) found in interviews with athletes that they didn't like an autocratic coaching style but acknowledged it to be the most effective. These findings hint at the complexity inherent in the coaching process, and perhaps demonstrate the need for coaching research to attempt to capture and analyse some of this complexity.

The underlying assumption of the prescriptive nature of the advice from behavioural analyses using systematic observation instruments, is that the instrument has the ability to differentiate good coaches from bad (Abraham & Collins, 1998). However, investigations involving the Coaching Behaviour Assessment System (CBAS), (Abraham, Collins, Smethurst & Collins, 1997; Sherman & Hassan, 1984) found that this instrument does not differentiate between expert and less expert coaches, and that observation instruments only measure direct styles of coaching (Sherman & Hassan, 1984). Furthermore, much of what transpires prior to, during, and after practice sessions or games is unobservable (Jones, et al., 1997) within the constraints of an observation instrument. Therefore, there have been calls to extend overly simplistic observation systems (Stearn, 1995). In order to fully capture the complexity of coaching, it is argued that direct observation techniques should be supplemented (Jones et al., 1997; Potrac, et al., 2000). This has resulted in the use of extended observation instruments (Markland & Martinek, 1988; Soloman, et al., 1996), and the use of qualitative methodology alone or in combination with systematic observation (De Marco, Mancini, & Wuest, 1996; Cote et al., 1996; Hastie & Saunders, 1993; Jones, et al., 1997; Trudel et al., 1996). This research seeks to add to existing knowledge by proposing an ethnographic framework to attempt to grasp the inherent complexity of coaching practice

and the coaching process.

The use of extended observation instruments has resulted in research being able to demonstrate differences between levels of coaches. Markland and Martinek (1988) noted that players of more successful coaches received more feedback than their less effective peers. This finding was mirrored by Solomon, et al. (1996) who, while investigating expectancy effects, discussed in a later section (see Expectancy Effects, p.29), found that head coaches and assistants differed in the amount of feedback given. Head coaches gave feedback based on mistakes, whereas assistant coaches delivered more general positive feedback. In an examination of expert and non-expert tennis coaches, Abraham (1997) compared the CBAS to an extended observation system. Interestingly, whilst the extended system found four differences in behaviour, CBAS only found one difference, which was more general communication from experts. Perhaps the most notable finding from the extended system, contrary to previous research, was that expert coaches used more questioning and would give less instruction than their non-expert colleagues. However, these results might support the specific nature of coach behaviour, concurring with the findings of Claxton (1988) who also discovered that expert tennis coaches used more questioning and less instruction. Whilst the behavioural literature gives a snapshot of coach behaviour, more sophisticated analysis, as demonstrated above, begins to identify inconsistencies in findings. This, perhaps, is understandable given the complex nature of the coaching process in practice.

There remains one final consideration when interpreting results from the behaviour-tallying method. Dubois (1981) argues that the less the coach knows about being observed the less likely it is that there will be bias introduced into the study. However, this assumption has been challenged by Franks et al. (1988) who argue that it is imperative that the observer knows the coach's objectives before the practice session, to determine whether the observed behaviour is relevant to the task. Abraham and Collins (1998) in a critique of behavioural assessment, posit this in terms of a question: "is the coach's behaviour appropriate to the aim of the session?" (p.66). This important contextual factor has never been considered in observation studies, but must be crucial for an accurate appraisal of coaching practice. Thus, research that attempts to match behaviour and objectives would appear warranted.

Abraham and Collins (1998) contend that, ultimately, the utility of applied research is its application to practice. There is evidence that in the youth sport setting intervention strategies have been shown to change coach behaviour. In work by Smith et al. (1979, 1983,

1993) sport coaches were asked as an intervention to increase their reinforcement behaviours to account for 25% of all behaviours. This was shown to increase the self-esteem of the players and the coaches were perceived by their players as better. However, as Boyd and Trudel (1996) argue, positive reinforcement is only one of many factors that impinge upon youth sport participation. Despite this, these findings remain important, as the coach in the youth sport context retains a position of centrality and influence. Indeed, youth coaches are responsible for the psycho-social development of their players and also have an effect on the youth performers' socialisation (Dubois, 1981).

Away from the youth setting, where the philosophy of the coaching process may be different, or with more competitive sports, the results of intervention strategies have proven to be equivocal. For example, Krane, Eklund & McDermot (1991) found that a target set for the coach to increase instruction from 14 to 30% was unachievable, because it was not conducive to the objective of the coach's sessions. In another instance, a swimming coach was asked to increase the amount of feedback given. Following analysis, this target was achieved, but at the expense of other behaviours, one of which was instruction (Rushall & Smith, 1979). This could prove problematic as instruction is, arguably, a prerequisite for effective coaching (Lacy and Darst, 1985). In a football-specific study, More and Franks (1996) set intervention targets for behaviours in future practice sessions. Coaches achieved the targets but did so inconsistently. As a result, behaviour was not changed. In addition, follow-up coaching sessions often had different aims, which meant that behaviour targets were not always appropriate to the specific session; a finding similar to Krane et al. (1991).

What the behavioural research confirms is that coaching behaviour is "very situation specific and dependent on the interaction of a myriad of influencing variables" (Jones, 1997, p.30) some of which are known; some as yet unstudied. It also demonstrates there is "no stereotypic coaching personality or set of behaviours which leads to success in coaching" (Markland & Martinek, 1988, p.299). Many reasons for this have been cited and the behavioural literature has assisted in identifying mediating factors. Some of these include for example; gender of coach and athlete (Lacy & Goldston, 1990; Millard, 1996), team or individual sport (Claxton, 1988) age of athlete (Lacy & Darst, 1985; Smith & Smoll, 1993; Seagrave & Ciancio, 1990; Wandzilak et al., 1988), type of sport (Claxton, 1988; Wandzilak et al., 1988), high or low expectancy athlete (Solomon, et al., 1996, 1998), skill level of athlete (Lacy & Darst, 1985), starting or non starting player (Markland & Martinek, 1988), aims of the coaching session (Krane et al., 1991), level in the coaching structure (Solomon, et al., 1996; Solomon, 1998) stage in the season (Potrac et al 1997; Lacy &

Darst, 1985), coaching philosophy and practice or game (Wandzilak et al., 1988, Trudel et al., 1996).

One of the key issues that this body of research calls into question is whether the method of analysing coach behaviour using an assay, usually systematic observation, is sufficient to capture the complexity of coaching. Clearly coaching behaviours do not stand alone as predictors of effective coaching (Douge & Hastie, 1993) nor do they “embrace the entirety of the coaching process” (Lyle, 1999, p.14). However, systematic observation has identified “tried and tested coaching behaviours” (Douge & Hastie, 1993, p.54.), albeit coaching behaviours “stripped of context” (Kahan, 1999, p.40). The behavioural literature gives a snapshot of coach behaviour, the results of which, when under more sophisticated analysis, begin to demonstrate inconsistency, understandably perhaps, given the complexity of the coaching process. As with much of the coaching research it is easy to criticise something for not doing what it did not intend to do. Therefore, observation which pre-defines behaviours will only capture those behaviours. Similarly, analysing ‘what’ coaches do will tell us what coaches do, not ‘why’ or ‘how’. It is important to learn that inconsistent or unexplained results from descriptive-analytical studies must call attention to other processes and variables exerting an influence over the coaching process (Lee, 1996). Kahan (1999) proposes a broader philosophical question when he suggests “it would seem that due to its nomothetic pursuit, systematic observation is incongruous with, and insensitive to, the peculiarities of coaching and the unique conditions under which coaches act” (p.42). It could be argued therefore, that a shift by researchers away from positivistic effectiveness studies that use systematic observation toward naturalistic studies that use multiple data collection methods might add insight into coaching behaviour, in particular what it affects, and what it is affected by (Kahan, 1999; Potrac, et al., 2000).

This section has reviewed relevant coaching behaviour literature. In doing so it has suggested that behavioural analysis has given insight into coach behaviour in a variety of sporting settings. However, this research does not provide a complete picture of the practical coaching context. Moving the literature forward requires research on coach behaviour that is informed by varied theoretical and methodological approaches, enabling research to look beyond a snapshot of the coach’s behaviour. This approach, logically, should include coach behaviour and its relationship to player processes. As a result, coaching research might be better able to explain the events, people, and mediating factors that form the coaching process. One factor already established as having an influence on coach behaviour and the coaching process is expectancy effects.



### 2.2.2 Expectancy effects (*The self-fulfilling prophecy*)

Coach behaviour forms a fundamental part of coach-athlete interaction. One factor that has been shown to influence coach behaviour is coaches' expectations or judgements of their players. Furthermore, "coaches' expectations or judgements of their athletes can influence the athletes' performance and behaviour" (Horn & Lox, 1993, p.69). In teaching and coaching, expectancy effects (Merton, 1948) are known as the self-fulfilling prophecy. This concept posits that coach expectations of athlete ability can serve as a prophecy that may ultimately influence the athletes' level of performance (Horn & Lox, 1993). The notion of the 'self-fulfilling prophecy' or 'pygmalion' effect has stimulated an impressive amount of research (Horn & Lox, 1993), assessing the power of expectations in influencing social interactions and human behaviour. This research has occurred not only in the classroom, but in physical education, and in competitive sport contexts (Cousineau & Luke, 1990; Horn, 1984; Markland & Martinek, 1988; Martinek, 1989; Martinek, 1981; Rejeski, Darracott & Hustlar, 1979). Several reviews of this literature have been completed (Brophy, 1983; Cooper & Tom, 1984; Harris & Rosenthal, 1984; Horn & Lox, 1993; Martinek, 1981, 1989). Based on a thorough examination of expectancy research, evidence for the self-fulfilling prophecy was found in numerous studies in the classroom, where teacher expectation impacted upon student academic performance (Brophy, 1983). However, the reviews are careful to note that the self-fulfilling prophecy does not occur in every instructional setting.

In the sport setting, an expectation performance paradigm was modified from education literature (Brophy & Good, 1970) by Martinek (1981). The design proposed a four-step model to illustrate the process by which coaches' expectations may affect athletes' behaviour and performance. The model suggests (a) coaches develop expectations of their athletes early in the season; (b) these expectations affect coaches' interactions with athletes; (c) the feedback that athletes receive from coaches influences their self-perceptions, motivation, and learning opportunities; and (d) athletes' performances tend to conform to coaches' initial expectations (Martinek, 1981).

Given the competitive and evaluative nature of sport, it is common for coaches to form expectations of athletes at the beginning of a season (Solomon, 1998). These are initial judgements or assessments regarding the physical competence or sport potential of each athlete, and are based on certain information available to the coach. Coaches' expectations develop from numerous factors, but generally fall into two categories, person cues and

performance information (Horn & Lox, 1993). Person cues include for example; the players' age, social background, ethnicity, and physical attributes. These cues are not used exclusively but are combined with performance information about the player that could include; past performance, physical test scores, ability, and other coaches' comments (Horn & Lox, 1993; Solomon, et al., 1996). Coaches also use initial impressions of athletes in practice situations informed by for example; observation of the player's motivation, enthusiasm, pleasantness, response to criticism, interaction with staff and team mates (Horn & Lox, 1993). In addition, it is possible, if not likely, for two coaches to form different sets of expectations for an athlete based on which of the available information they value most (Horn & Lox, 1993). These expectations are expressed to the athlete through verbal and non-verbal behaviours (Solomon, et al., 1996).

If the coach's initial judgement is inaccurate and also inflexible, in that it does not allow for the assimilation of new or contrary information, this will disrupt the athlete's performance, achievement and subsequent progress (Horn, 1984). Research, therefore, has been directed toward understanding whether coaches are inflexible in their perceptions or whether they are able to modify expectations upon receipt of new information (Solomon & Kosmitzki, 1996; Solomon, 1998). Investigations into 'perceptual flexibility' have provided equivocal results. Martinek (1981) whilst observing physical education teachers, found limited perceptual flexibility over a short period of time. In addition, research findings in both the classroom and sport contexts demonstrate that initial expectations might be modified but are contingent upon performance throughout the season (Brophy & Good, 1970; Horn, 1984). Horn (1984) further demonstrated that coach expectations were modified as information regarding player performance became available. Research examining coach expectations for elite athletes found coaches to be stable in the ranking of players' ability over the course of the season (Sinclair & Vealey, 1989). Solomon and Kosmitzki (1996) noted that only in the late season did coaches offer differential feedback, based on perceptions of ability. Evidence presented through player performance, successful or unsuccessful, may serve only to reinforce the coach's belief (Horn & Lox, 1993). This then sets the process in motion, affecting coach behaviour and influencing coach-athlete interaction. If the coach's expectancy message is conveyed consistently over time, and the athlete accurately perceives this message, then behaviour might conform to the coaches' expectation (Martinek, Crowe & Rejeski, 1982). It is argued, therefore, that in this expectancy cycle, coach's expectations can become predictive of athletes' perceptions and achievement (Solomon et al., 1996); hence the self-fulfilling prophecy.

Existing research examining coach behaviour and feedback patterns, and expectancy effects, is extensive and has tended to study and record, using systematic observation, the quality of instructional behaviour coaches exhibit toward players (Horn & Lox, 1993). Generally, the literature has looked for differences between the treatment of high and low expectancy athletes. The conclusions of this research have demonstrated that some coaches are 'pygmalion' coaches, with notable differences in the type, quality, frequency, and quantity of interaction and instructional feedback (Horn & Lox, 1993). In youth sport, for example, two pioneering studies have examined the self-fulfilling prophecy (Horn, 1984; Rejeski, et al., 1979), using the systematic observation system CBAS (Smith, Smoll, & Hunt, 1977). Rejeski et al. (1979) observed coach-player interactions and determined that high expectancy youth basketball players received more positive reinforcement than low expectancy players during practice; whilst low expectancy athletes received more general technical instruction. However, Horn (1984) found no difference in feedback patterns to high and low expectancy athletes in practice settings but in game situations, low expectancy athletes received greater amounts of general corrective instruction and positive reinforcement than high expectancy athletes. More recently, two studies were conducted in the college and elite contexts (Krane, et al., 1991; Sinclair & Vealey, 1989). In elite field hockey, Sinclair and Vealey (1989) reported that high expectancy athletes received more overall, specific and evaluation feedback while low expectancy athletes received more prescriptive feedback. In a football-specific study, Krane et al., (1991) found that high expectancy players received greater amounts of mistake-contingent technical instruction. In addition, an intervention strategy was implemented with a college assistant football coach, where the coach attempted to increase technical instruction to high expectancy athletes only. This was an explicit choice by the coach, to concentrate only on high expectancy athletes.

From the expectancy effects research, Solomon et al. (1996) argue that the findings in youth sport are equivocal but that the self-fulfilling prophecy phenomenon exists in the elite sport setting. The conclusions from this work have again shown that some coaches appear to be 'pygmalion', with differences between the quality and frequency of athlete-coach interaction (Horn & Lox, 1993). The effects of this differential treatment, if it occurs consistently during practice and games, could limit the athlete's ability to learn. As a result, it can be argued that players consistently given less effective and less intense instruction will not show the same degree of improvement as those given optimum learning opportunities. Therefore, differences in performance will be attributed to differences in ability. However, given the differences in instructional behaviour, it is likely that the

coaches' expectation determined, rather than predicted the level of achievement reached. The coach's expectations served as a self-fulfilling prophecy by setting in motion, a series of events that caused the original expectation to be fulfilled. In addition, inappropriate instructional behaviour can affect the psychological growth of athlete. This type of instructional behaviour is associated with changes in athletes' self-concept and perceived competence (Horn, 1985, 1987; Smith & Smoll, 1993). This is consistent with the notion that adult feedback is an important source for young athletes to determine how competent or incompetent they are.

How feedback is perceived has also been the subject of research. Indeed, the examination of both coach and athlete perceptions of feedback has mainly been conducted in the youth sport setting (Smith, Smoll, and Curtis, 1978; Smith & Smoll, 1993; Wandzilak et al., 1988). Smith and Smoll (1993) for example, found that players accurately described coach behaviour. Interestingly, players were more accurate at describing coach behaviour than the coaches were. In a football-specific study, Wandzilak et al. (1988) also found that coaches were only partially accurate in assessing their own behaviour. As Solomon et al. (1996) argue, this is a worrying trend from a self-fulfilling prophecy standpoint. If coaches are unable to accurately assess their own behaviour, are they even aware of the ramifications (both positive and negative) of their communicated behaviour? In addition, this lack of awareness must impact the coaching process and coach effectiveness. Clearly this research presents a strong case for including the assessment of player perceptions when evaluating coach-athlete interaction. Coaches could believe that they are treating or reacting to players in one way, while athletes hold different perceptions of their coaches' behaviour (Solomon, 1998).

The major sport research linking feedback and expectations has found that differential feedback issued to high and low expectancy athletes is evident but not consistent. Indeed, expectancy theory, applied to the sport setting, assumes that coaches' feedback patterns will differ because athletes are perceived as high or low expectancy (Solomon et al., 1996). However, this assumption is worth considering. Put simply, expectation effects are responsible for some differences in coach behaviour, but not all. In the sport setting, one of the goals of the coach is to provide information to assist an athlete's progression toward proficiency in sport performance (Solomon, 1998). The predominant mode by which coaches impart information is through the use of feedback. Solomon and Kosmitzki (1996) suggest that "feedback refers to the condition whereby coaches offer varying amount of information to athletes based on perceptions of ability" (p.1). But

perception of ability may not be the only basis. In accordance with the principles of behaviour modification and reinforcement theory, coaches ordinarily use performance feedback to cultivate and shape desired athlete behaviours (Sinclair and Vealey, 1989). Markland and Martinek (1988) used the Cole-DAS instrument (Cole, 1979) to assess the type and method of feedback among high school volleyball coaches. Successful coaches (determined by winning percentage) used more immediate and corrective feedback than their less successful counterparts. This research demonstrates another possible reason for differential feedback, namely the coaches' 'success'. Indeed, differential feedback and differences in coach behaviour have been attributed to numerous factors. These include for example, job expectation, interaction opportunities, differentiation of roles, the philosophy of the programme, and the goals of the sessions (Solomon 1998). Also, among assistant coaches there were no patterns of differential feedback evidenced (Solomon, et al., 1996). Furthermore, Solomon (1998) argues that the research into coach behaviour is biased toward the practice environment and that patterns of interaction could differ dramatically in game situations, *not least because games invariably take place in more public settings, and in a more charged emotional environment.* The coach, of course, cannot treat every player the same, and differential feedback may simply be the result of this. What this research does do is further demonstrate the complexity of the coaching process and coaching in practice. That said, it should be remembered that different messages in coach-athlete interaction have the potential to affect athletes' future performance.

A final consideration is this. Not all coaches are 'pygmalion' prone, nor are all athletes susceptible to the self-fulfilling prophecy. Research by Smith and Smoll (1989; 1993) suggests that the self-perceptions of some athletes are more easily affected by a coach's evaluative feedback. Those who are 'dependent' on coach feedback would be more easily 'moulded' by their coaches' expectations. Thus, even if a coach shows differential treatment toward an individual athlete, the self-fulfilling prophecy process will short-circuit if the player is resistant to the coach's bias (Horn & Lox, 1993).

This section has examined an area of coach behaviour, or perhaps a factor influencing coach behaviour and the coaching process, namely expectation effects. The research undertaken demonstrates that coach behaviour and the nature of coach-athlete interaction remain not only subject to varied pressures but are also crucial parts of coaching practice and the coaching process. The expectancy effects research focuses on observable behaviour, this produces a description of coach behaviour; it does not give a full insight into why coaches behave as they do (Potrac, et al. 2000). What is increasingly recognised

(Potrac et al. 2000; Sage, 1989) is that coaching practice, including coach behaviour, is influenced by numerous factors, of which expectancy effects could be one. For coaches, it can be argued that a combination of experiential, contextual and social factors ‘construct’ coaching and coaching practice. The coach’s experience of sport aids in the construction of a coaching philosophy, which itself can be a strong influence on behaviour.

### 2.2.3 *Coach Philosophy*

The sections on coach behaviour and expectancy effects have demonstrated two things, firstly; that there will be variations in coach behaviour from one setting to another, and secondly; that the practical coaching context is truly complex. This complexity and behavioural differences mean that it is difficult to apply the conclusions drawn concerning coach behaviour from one setting to another. Obviously, not all coaches coach the same way, nor do they share the same beliefs about coaching or treat their players the same (Lyle, 1999). It could be argued that, “the differences that are present in coaching practice allow for the individuality of the coach, the preferences of performers and the demands of different organisational settings”(Lyle, 1999, p.25). Moreover, the coach’s behaviour will, “often reflect more deep-seated values, and these will be subject to societal scrutiny” (Lyle, 1999, p.25). Indeed, coaching practice, an essentially social practice, does not occur in a vacuum and therefore cannot be value free (Schempp, 1998; Schinke, Bloom & Salmela, 1995; Lyle, 1999; McAllister, Blinde & Weiss, 2000). Values are always represented in coaches’ behaviour, which they may or may not be aware of (Crisfield, Cabral & Carpenter, 1996). All coaches will have developed a personal set of views on coaching, and on issues regarding their sport, and interpersonal relationships (Lyle, 1999). These views will have evolved over time, and will be derived from experience and other kinds of education (Schinke et al., 1995; Lyle, 1999; McAllister et al., 2000). These deep-seated values form and reflect a ‘philosophy of coaching’: “A coaching philosophy is a comprehensive statement about the beliefs and behaviours that will characterise the coach’s practice” (Lyle, 1999, p. 30). Interestingly, these beliefs and behaviours may reflect personal values held by the coach but may also reflect externally imposed expectations and broader structural pressures from the club environment to which the coach must adhere (Lyle, 1999; Schinke et al. 1995).

Martens (1987) contends that the coach’s philosophy is an integral and important part of coaching practice. Indeed, when engaged in coaching, knowledge derived from a philosophy more than other knowledge, will keep the coach from losing direction: “Having

a philosophy will remove the uncertainty about formulating training rules, styles of play, discipline, codes of conduct, competitive out-look, short and long term objectives and many other facets of coaching” (Martens, 1987, p.4). Furthermore, the ‘art of coaching’ (as opposed to the ‘science of coaching’ discussed earlier, p.10, p.21/22) is “using broad philosophical concepts in a skilful way” (Martens, 1987, p.4). These value frameworks not only indicate what the coach believes is important in coaching, but will affect, consciously or sub-consciously, many of the behaviours used

Coach philosophy informs and influences coaching practice, and therefore a comprehension of it would assist in understanding the complexity of the coaching process. To gain this understanding, it should be possible to delve into coaching practice and uncover the values and beliefs of the coach. However, the problem with existing research is that whilst considerable attention has been directed at coach behaviour, by comparison, very little has directly considered ‘coach philosophy’. Examples have been drawn from the behavioural literature of factors, that not only influence coaches behaviour, but might also be the basis of a coach philosophy, these factors include; gender (player and coach), experience (player and coach), maturity, age (player and coach), team or individual sport, environment, and athlete aspiration (Abraham & Collins, 1998; Kuklinski, 1990). In relation to coach philosophy, the key questions that arise from the research are firstly; to what extent do these factors interact with and influence coach philosophy? Secondly, what are the mechanisms and extent of the influence of coach philosophy on behaviour? Given our existing knowledge and comprehension of the complexity of the coaching process, this is where grasping an understanding of coach philosophy becomes problematic. Lyle (1999) for example, lays the blame for this with the behavioural research. In a comprehensive review of coach behaviour and coach philosophy he outlines a number of criticisms of behavioural research and suggests considerations when trying to answer the questions about a coach philosophy. The key points are summarised as follows;

1. That the difference between participation and performance coaching results in difficulty when comparing research on the two disparate coaching roles.
2. How free is the coach to allow a value framework to influence behaviour? For example, within an organisation with its own rules and ethos, the coach may have to behave in a certain way. The influence of the organisational rules or culture may be obvious, with formal or informal policy.
3. Current research assumes that coaching behaviour is observable as are the effects on it.

4. Research has, importantly, “failed to deal adequately with the subtlety and scope of athlete-coach interpersonal relationships.” (Lyle, 1999, p. 29). The settings investigated, particularly in the US, have been amateur youth or educational settings. Little research has examined high-level sport involving performance coaches and elite performers. This is problematic because it is argued that “the scale and intensity of the coaching process in elite athlete coaching circumstances might be thought to provide a more fertile ground for highlighting the potentially problematic relationship between values and social context” (Lyle, 1999. p.29).
5. There is frequently inconsistency between the reported coach philosophy and actual behaviour (McAllister et al., 2000; Martens, 1987). This has been attributed to coaching behaviour commonplace in the sport sub-culture being contrary to perceptions of what constitutes good practice. This may pressurise coaches to describe more ‘fashionable’ values than those witnessed in practice.
6. Research simplifies the complexity of the coaching process for the sake of research design. As result an aggregated approach may mask the subtlety of important variations in coaching practice.

Coaching practice cannot be understood without identifying the interpretation that the individual coach places on the role and patterns of coaching behaviour that are found in a given coaching context (Lyle, 1999). Interpretation is often dependent on the subtlety of the relationship between coaching values and behaviour. Indeed, to be effective it is argued that coaches need to understand their own coaching philosophy (Crisfield et al., 1996). This conclusion, if accepted, has enormous implications for coach education. In the context of this research, an objective of which is to understand something of the complexity of the coaching process and coaching practice, it is also important to identify how a factor, such as coach philosophy, affects coaching practice in reality. Indeed, specific practical coaching contexts require mapping and understanding but, more importantly, the precedence of factors in influencing the coaching process in specific cases is also required. Only then will a framework for understanding the complexity of the coaching process be possible.

This section has examined the notion of a ‘coaching philosophy’. It has demonstrated that coach philosophy has an important part to play in coach behaviour, coaching practice and the coaching process. However, the limit of current understanding means that there remains a difficulty in linking coach behaviour and coach philosophy. This



has, in part, been attributed to existing behavioural approaches, but suggestions have been made that may enable the current body of knowledge to be built upon. Whilst acknowledging criticisms of behavioural research, more recent studies have moved toward a more qualitative approach, thus moving away from descriptions of what behaviour the coach demonstrates, to a fuller understanding of 'why'. This research approach has been adopted particularly, in studies investigating coach expertise.

#### *2.2.4 Coach Expertise*

This recent research has attempted to place the coach at the heart of the coaching process. It has worked on the simple premise that to increase understanding of coaching, researchers should ask coaches what they do and why they do it. It attempts to probe the knowledge of 'expert' practitioners, grounding understanding in what is perceived as good practice.

Defining the criteria for expertise is not simple, partly because of the definition of expertise itself. Ericson and Smith (1991) and Posner (1988) suggest that an expert is someone who, in a particular domain, is able to achieve exceptionally high performance. However, whilst the athlete's performance is relatively easy to assess, the coach's performance is difficult to measure (Saury & Durand, 1998). Following the example of teaching expertise (Tochon, 1993), research in coaching expertise has utilised a combination of criteria to define expertise including; years of coaching experience, level of performance of athletes, personal level of competition as an athlete, and recognition by peers (Cote, Salmela & Russell, 1995). Using these criteria, these studies have sought to analyse coach expertise, its role within the coaching process, how it influences coach-athlete interaction and overall coach effectiveness (d'Arrippe-Longueville et al., 1998). Acknowledging the limitations of behavioural research (see Coach Behaviour section, p.18), these studies have sought to add to existing knowledge by using a combination of in-depth interviewing, participation observation and qualitative data analysis to examine the content and structure of expert coaches' experiential knowledge (Salmela, Cote, & Baria, 1994), in order to develop a model of coaching expertise (Cote, Salmela, Trudel, Baria, & Russell, 1995). In addition, this methodology has also been used to examine expert coaches' strategies and knowledge in competition and training (Cote, Salmela, & Russell, 1995) in organisational settings (Cote & Salmela, 1996) and to examine the efficacy of athlete-coach interaction within the coaching process (d'Arrippe-Longueville, et al., 1998; Saury & Durand, 1998).

In an examination of the content and structure of expert gymnastic coaches' experiential knowledge, Salmela, et al. (1994) concluded that their knowledge was a highly complex structure. Coaching expertise was underpinned by categories of knowledge that were then divided into sub-categories. For example, the general category of coaching strategy was divided into five sub-categories. In descending order of importance, these were teaching intervention, performance in training, programming dealing with performers' concerns, and performance in competition. The teaching intervention category was further divided into eleven sub-classes. This study presented evidence of different types of interrelated knowledge involved with coaching expertise, conceptually, these findings were supported in further work with expert gymnastic coaches by Cote et al. (1995), who developed a conceptual model of coaching expertise. The model confirmed the complexity of expert coaches' knowledge by producing a picture of adaptive, interrelated structures of knowledge concerning the coaching task, performance improvement; the mechanism of the coaching process (including organisation training and competition), personal characteristics of the athletes; personal characteristics of the coach; and situational factors. Results indicated that with an understanding of a particular performer or a specific coaching situation, the model generates options for intervention, with a consideration of the athletes' potential for progress being paramount.

These intervention strategies were the subject of further work with expert gymnastic coaches in training and competition (Cote et al., 1995) and in organisational settings (Cote & Salmela, 1996). The results indicated that the success of the intervention was dependent upon four key components; 1. intervention style, 2. technical skills, 3. mental skills, 4. simulation. Interestingly, these studies note that an inappropriate approach to dealing with contextual and situational factors will undermine the coaching process, and yet these factors are not fully described and are given a peripheral position within the consideration of coach effectiveness. In addition, Cote and Salmela (1996) make reference to the fact that the coaches were constantly involved in dynamic social interactions, without further description or analysis. As a result, the nature of the relationships is not described in detail, leaving unclear a complete understanding of the workings of the coaching process (Lyle, 1999). Therefore, whilst these studies demonstrate the utility of a qualitative approach to exploring how coaches construct and implement their knowledge, they have not furthered an understanding or conceptualisation of the dynamic and complex social environment of the coaching process. In addition, it seems unlikely that an analysis of gymnastics coaches alone can be easily generalised to disciplines with differing constraints and demands (Saury

& Durand, 1998). Indeed, gymnasts operate in a stable environment, and execute mainly closed skills (Gentile, 1972). In many sports, the situation is entirely different, where performers executing open skills in an unstable and unpredictable environment, with technical and tactical components play a determining role in performance (Saury & Durand, 1998). Because of these differences, coaches who work in such sports may not have the same types of knowledge, methods of intervention or, indeed, opportunities for intervention, as gymnastics coaches. Therefore, studies across a range of sports can only aid in the understanding of coaching expertise, effectiveness and the coaching process.

In response to this, two studies using similar methodology to Cote and colleagues have been recently undertaken. Firstly, Saury and Durand (1998) focused on the athlete-coach relationship in the French Olympic sailing team. These relationships were defined as being co-operative activities centred around collective goals. Saury and Durand outlined four main practical strategies used by expert coaches; an empathetic attitude toward athletes, use of tactful negotiation, defining a margin of autonomy, and employing a communal reference point for shared knowledge and experience. Secondly, d'Arrippe-Longueville et al. (1998) built on the work of Saury and Durand (1998) by including interviews with performers as well as coaches. This was a noteworthy addition to the methodology because a clear characterisation of the dynamic process of coach-athlete interaction must take into account the perspective of the performer. In addition, this also provided insight into the perceived effectiveness of the coach's interventions. Interestingly, the findings of d'Arrippe-Longueville et al. (1998) contradict the earlier research into expert coaches, (Cote et al., 1995, 1996; Saury & Durand, 1998) and the general coach behaviour literature discussed earlier (Terry & Howe, 1984; Smith & Smoll, 1993), by reporting that elite Judo coaches were highly autocratic and provided low levels of social support. This was found to be the case regardless of the age of the performer. The interviews with the athletes found that whilst this type of interaction was not enjoyed it was deemed to be effective. d'Arrippe-Longueville et al. (1998) explained this anomaly by suggesting that the culture of elite Judo firstly, expected coaches to behave in this way and secondly, ensured that the young performers developed coping strategies which left them relatively unaffected by any coaches' sometimes unpleasant behaviour and decisions.

Clearly, the findings of these studies have aided in a more comprehensive outline of coach expertise and coach-athlete interaction. Indeed, the qualitative methodologies used to study both coach and performer have confirmed the complexity of practical coaching and the coaching process as being embedded within social networks of society and culture.

However, whilst these studies have confirmed that the context in which coaches operate exercise a significant influence on their coaching, they have not explained *how* the context influences the behaviour of the coach or the player. Perhaps more importantly, these studies have not even identified specific contextual variables nor their precedence in the coaching process.

This section has examined recent coaching research that has used qualitative methodology to probe the experience and understanding of expert coaches. The findings of these studies confirm, particularly with performance coaches, the difficulty of grasping the complexity of the coaching process and coaching in practice. This approach to coaching research clearly has great potential to add to existing knowledge. Whilst obtaining the perspective of the player is not a new strategy, these studies confirm that the players, as the main recipients of coaching, are well placed to comment on the efficacy and implementation of the coaching process.

## 2.3 Player

### 2.3.1 *Coach-Athlete Interaction*

As the recipient of coaching, the player plays is an obvious part of the coaching process, and the practical coaching context. Research involving the player is considerable and varied and includes, for example; motivation, participation and withdrawal, self-confidence, self-esteem and perceived competence, and socialisation. However, little of the research involving the player positions itself within the coaching process specifically. Instead, the players are researched within a coaching context because this enables the variable under study to be investigated. For example, one area of research that considers players and places them specifically within a coaching context is that regarding coach-athlete interaction. Even then, the player has been seen as a 'by-product' of the research because the direction of research investigating coach-athlete interaction and indeed, coach behaviour, has for many years been concerned with identifying the 'perfect' or 'ideal' coaching style (Borrie, 1996). This approach has largely stemmed from work on leadership in settings away from sport, the underlying assumption being that the nature of the coach's task is essentially the same as any other leadership role, supporting Stogdill's definition from 1974; that leadership is the behavioural process of influencing the activities of individuals or groups towards specific goals. From this, leadership has been conceptualised to explore coach-athlete interaction (Chelladurai, 1993; Smoll & Smith, 1984; Smith &

Smoll, 1989). In addition, coach-athlete interaction has been viewed conceptually through coaches' instructional behaviour (Sherman et al., 1997; Tinning, 1982).

In recent years, many studies investigating the coach-athlete relationship have been carried out within the framework of the multidimensional model of leadership (Chelladurai & Carron, 1978). The appeal of this approach is that it considers the coach's 'style' whilst also considering the key elements of the practical coaching context. The model proposes that athlete performance and satisfaction depend primarily on the degree of congruence between the coach's actual behaviour, the coach's preferred behaviour by athletes, and the behaviour required by the situation. The Leadership Scale for Sport (LSS) is composed of five leadership styles (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1990); training and instruction, democratic behaviour, autocratic behaviour, social support, and positive feedback. This model has generated a wide range of studies in many sports and cultural contexts (Chelladurai, 1993). The impact of culture on the coaching process will be considered in detail in a later section (see Culture & Sub-Culture section, p.46).

Closely related to the multidimensional model of leadership is the mediational model of leadership, proposed by Smith and Smoll (1989, 1993). This model has been utilised as a framework for the examination of the coach-athlete relationship in youth sport, and has generated considerable research (Cote et al., 1993; Smoll & Smith, 1984). Smith and Smoll (1993) recognise that expansion in participation, and the development of coaching as a profession, means that the coaching process within the youth sport domain has developed into an extremely complex social system. They argue that an important determinant of the effects of participation lies in the relationship between coach and performer. In addition, the coach occupies a central and influential position in the sport setting, with this influence often extending beyond the practice field (Smith & Smoll, 1993; Smoll & Smith, 1993). The model approaches the coach-athlete relationship from two perspectives; firstly, the coach's behaviours and secondly, the perception and evaluation of these behaviours by the athlete. The framework of the model also allows for mediating variables. These include; coach and athlete individual differences, situational factors, and the coach's perception of athletes' attitudes. However, whilst Smith and Smoll propose that youth sport is a complex social system, it could be argued that the situational variables are not sufficiently encompassing for example, socio-cultural factors are not included within the mediating variables. In fact, both models have shown, when compared, to have similar content in terms of the leadership categories (Chelladurai, 1993) and it could be argued they are lacking sufficient in-depth consideration of socio-cultural factors. Both models utilise

either a paper and pencil (multidimensional model, mediational model) or systematic observation (mediational model) methodology to collect data. *These methods allow for collection of descriptive data but perhaps fail to give the data sufficient context (Abraham & Collins, 1998). Despite these possible problems, the use of these approaches allows the performers' coaching preferences (Terry & Howe, 1984) and compatibility of coach-athlete relationships (Horne & Carron, 1985) to be investigated. However, the models' design and methodology does not allow analysis of how and why coaches and performers interact in the complex social world of the athletic setting, nor do they provide means to investigate the dynamic processes involved in the coaching process (Cote et al., 1993; d'Arripe-Longueville, et al., 1998).*

Other models used to investigate coach-athlete relationship, focus on the teaching or instructional behaviours of the coach (Sherman et al., 1997; Tinning, 1982). Specifically, these have been developed from systems used to study the teaching process. For example, Tinning adapted Dunkin and Biddle's (1974) model to examine coaches' instructional effectiveness. The central components of this conceptualisation involved the examination of coach and athlete behaviours in training. Variables that affected these components were described as presage variables (coach's background and personality) and context variables (athlete and other situational factors). Whilst this appears, at face value, to be a useful model for researching coach-athlete interaction, it could be argued that it does not adequately represent the dynamic complexity of the coaching process (Cote et al., 1993). For example, the coaching process has competition as a backdrop which, as discussed earlier (see Coach Behaviour section, p.20), can often influence and impinge upon the coach and the performers, whereas, teaching is not conducted under the influence of competition, or at least to the same degree. The analysis of competition and its effects on the coaching process have been widely advocated (Horn, 1985; Franks, Sinclair, Thompson, & Goodman, 1986; Cote, Trudel, Bernard, Boileau, & Marcotte, 1993; Wandzilak et al., 1988). Indeed, as noted earlier, Liukkonen, Laasko, and Telama (1996) argue that analysis of competition is important because in a competitive situation, the hardening of the emotional climate may bring out features of coach behaviour, which may not be visible during training.

Despite claims made by their authors, Borrie (1996) argues that using coaching models to develop universal approaches to coaching analysis has failed. This leaves research such as this, to explore factors that interact with coaches' behaviour patterns to influence effectiveness and, contribute to the complexity of the coaching process. It is

widely accepted that there is no universal behaviour pattern that achieves optimal coaching effectiveness in all situations (Borrie, 1996; Cratty, 1973; Markland & Martinek, 1988). Indeed, Liukkonen et al. (1996) argue that the context dependence and unique contextual features of each coaching situation make it difficult to transfer coaching behaviour between different situations. The next part of this section considers the player in more detail.

Research has demonstrated that characteristics of the player such as, age, playing experience and ability, all influence the nature of coaching behaviour (Jones, 1997). This has been demonstrated to be the case in research involving youth football players (Liukkonen et al., 1996; Smoll & Smith, 1984). The influence of the player's maturity on coaching behaviour has been assessed on a number of occasions, and several models of the inter-relationship between these variables have been proposed (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969; Chelladurai & Carron, 1983; Case, 1987). Chelladurai and Carron (1983) defined maturity as; "the relative mastery of skill and knowledge in sport, the development of attitudes appropriate to sport, and experience and the capacity to set high but attainable goals" (p.372). These models are referred to as situational models and all relate maturity to the two basic dimensions of task and relationship-oriented behaviour. The literature clearly supports the notion that maturity is an important mediating factor in determining coach effectiveness (Borrie, 1996; Petchlichkoff, 1993; Weiss, 1993). However, the literature does not agree on the exact relationship between player, maturity, and coaching behaviour. Importantly, what the situational models do demonstrate is that the coach needs to vary coaching behaviour according to the maturity of the group (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969; Chelladurai & Carron, 1983; Case, 1987; Terry, 1984; Liukkonen et al, 1996). However, the proposed models have differed in the type of behaviour deemed to be most appropriate, and thus most effective, at the various stages of player development (Abraham & Collins, 1998). Because of this lack of agreement, it remains difficult to be prescriptive, but clearly it should be of great importance to the coach to be aware of the possible influence of maturity on appropriate behaviour. Given the context-dependence of given coaching situations, it would seem that existing knowledge could be built upon with research that specifically examines and applies data to that and similar contexts.

Despite the difficulties with situational models highlighted above there appears to be indirect evidence to support the applicability of the situational model proposed by Case (1987). The model suggests that at low levels of age/maturity, when young players are developing psychologically and socially, the coach's approach should be relationship orientated. Within youth football for example, this would mean that effective coaching

should highlight personal development, giving high levels of social support. This general concept is supported by a number of studies of youth sport coaching. A series of studies conducted by Smith and colleagues during the late 1970's (Smith, et al., 1977,1978,1979) demonstrated that young players responded favourably to coaches who created a socially supportive environment. This was found to be independent of the results of the team, suggesting, that for young sports participants, winning is not the most important part of their sporting experience. This research was replicated by Smoll and Smith (1993), with identical results. Thus, it can be argued that the coaches who improved the level of social support and rewarding behaviour received a more favourable response from their players, with the coaches also being perceived as better coaches. The players in these studies also reported that they had more enjoyment in their sport and had a high level of attraction for teammates. Children with low levels of self-esteem found their self-esteem improved and all players reported lower levels of competitive anxiety when coached by coaches with high levels of social support behaviour (Smoll and Smith, 1993).

Relationship-orientated behaviour has been supported by two football-specific studies. Dubois (1981) used systematic observation to study youth football coaches, and found a positive relationship between supportive coach behaviour and successful team performance. Interestingly, Dubois found that the higher the level of supportive behaviour the greater the level of team cohesion and performance. Wandzilak, et al. (1988) again used systematic observation in a similar study of youth football coaches. Whilst this study did not reveal a relationship between winning and supportive behaviour, there was a correlation between supportive behaviour and indices of player satisfaction. The football coaches from both these studies used a high percentage of positive remarks and encouraging comments in both practice and game situations. It is also noteworthy that in all of these studies the coaches themselves were found to be poor at perceiving their own behaviour patterns and that the young players were more accurate judges of the behaviour being exhibited by their coaches (Smith & Smoll, 1993). Consequently, the feedback from players gives useful insight into type and effectiveness of behaviour. Clearly, this provides further evidence to support the rationale for including the players in any analysis of coach behaviour, coach effectiveness and the coaching process.

When dealing with elite players, the Case (1987) model also advocates a relationship-orientated approach. He argues that the professional player benefits more from personal guidance and advice rather than direct instruction. This is not to suggest that instruction does not take place but that the nature of the coaching has changed, with the



primary focus moving away from the individual in isolation, toward considering the individual in relation to team-related tasks. No football-specific research supports this notion, but research in other sports looking at elite performers has shown a preference for high levels of social support (Chelladurai & Carron, 1983; Terry, 1984). In particular, Terry (1984) undertook a comparative study of club and elite performers of comparable age and found that the elite performers preferred a high level of democratic and social support behaviour, thus lending support to the Case model. Any discussion involving the influence of maturity on coaching behaviour must emphasise the fact that age alone is not the determining factor. Indeed it is important to remember that the concept of maturity proposed by (Chelladurai & Carron, 1983) combines age, experience and ability, and it is this combination that is important in determining behaviour. The Case model, whilst allowing for a consideration of the impact of maturity on coach behaviour, does not describe the extent of the relationship between maturity and coaching behaviour within football. Indeed, it could be argued that this type of model fails to capture the dynamics of the practical coaching context and the interactions between the player, the coach and the club environment. As a result, it remains impossible to identify exactly the type of behaviour that will be effective when coaching at different levels within youth sport generally and football particularly (Borrie, 1996; Liukkonen, et al., 1996). However, what this research does is to demonstrate that coaches must be aware of team and player characteristics when deciding the most appropriate method of delivering coaching. Indeed, to be effective within youth sport, including football, coaches need to be able to vary their coaching to suit the group being coached. This echoes the view of Jones (1997), who in a review of effective coaching literature concluded that coaching behaviour should be situation specific.

This section has examined coach-athlete interaction particularly because it is these studies that examine the role of the player, or more specifically, the contribution of player characteristics on coach behaviour and the coaching process. The findings of these studies, once again, confirm the situational nature of the coaching process and that coaching behaviour should vary depending on the players being coached. Moreover, within the practical coaching context, the complexity of just one of the three elements points to the enormity of the task ahead in seeking to understand the interaction of the three elements. The merits of the coach-athlete interaction literature, lies in its recognition of the interaction of the coach, the player and the club environment, and in highlighting some of the inherent complexity of each. The club environment as the third of the three, whilst touched on in this section, is now considered in more detail.

## 2.4 The Club

### 2.4.1 *Communities of Practice and Social Structure*

In the context of this research, the club environment is a key focus as it forms an essential part of the practical coaching context. The club environment, also doubles as a work organisation. Indeed, the club, as a basic organisational unit in sport, is as old as the origins of modern sport itself (Hargreaves, 1986; McPhail & Kirk, 2001). As a locus of study, the club has traditionally been examined in terms of organisational theory and in 'problem solving' for sport management (Slack, 1997; Verhoeven, Lapporte, DeKnop, Taks, & Vincke, 1999). Often overlooked within these lines of enquiry is the social structure of the club, which forms an important infrastructure (Skirstad, 1996) and, in the context of this research, appears worthy of further consideration. In sociological thinking, structure is a contested term (Jary & Jary, 2000), but for this research refers to both the enduring patterns of social relations and the rules, processes, and mechanisms hidden from view that underpin social life.

Through existing analysis of clubs and their social structure, it can be seen that sport clubs are "at one and the same time ubiquitous, complex and poorly understood" (McPhail & Kirk, 2001, p. 4). However, McPhail and Kirk (2001) do note, importantly for this research, that sports clubs are constituted and constructed by the practices of the groups therein, and that positions within an organisation comprise behaviours, values and expectations that influence those practices.

Moreover, the club has a 'role' to fulfil, as do the coaches and players within it. The term 'role' is considered, sociologically, as a more or less consistent pattern of behaviour associated with a position in a given set of social relationships (Coakley, 1987). The behaviour within a given role, in this case coaching, will reflect a number of factors, some of which have been discussed in this review of literature. Coakley (1987) further contends that the behaviour of coaches, and indeed players, will be subject to pressures from the organisational setting and general social and cultural pressures regarding how a coach/player should act, and what a coach/player should do in a given setting.

Developing understanding of roles or positions in a club means considering them in terms of being part of what Lave and Wenger (1991) describe as a community of practice. Simply, this is coaches and players participating in the club and learning from such participation. The social structure of such communities defines the possibilities for practice therein. This view brings to the fore the notion that social and cultural contexts significantly influence practice. Indeed, Templin (1989) contends that it is local community and

organisational norms that gain salience in the minds of coaches and players. Therefore, an understanding of these communities offers great insight into the transition of coaches and players through the club environment, the interdependence of each and the construction and constitution of the practical coaching context and the coaching process.

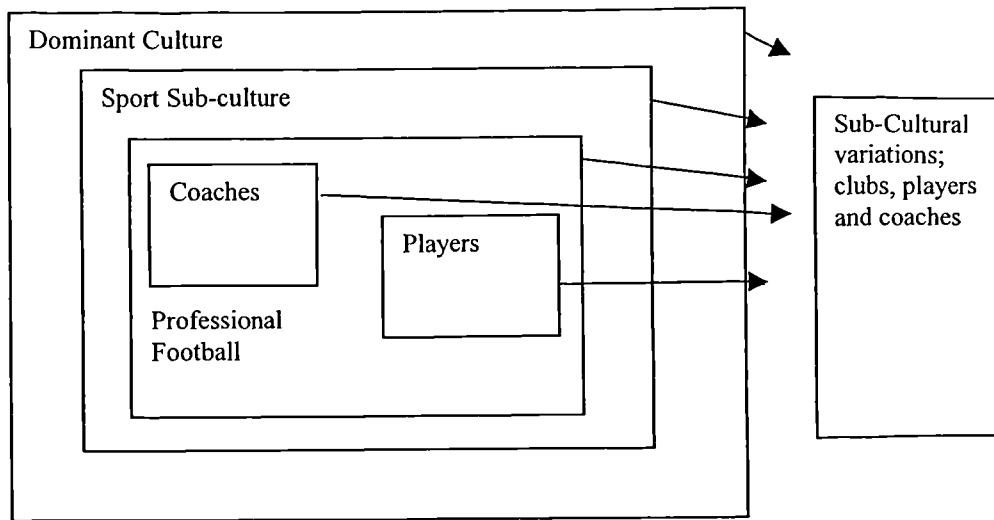
An important part of the structure of any club environment is the nature and pervasiveness of its culture or sub-culture. Indeed, analysing the culture and sub-cultures of organisations will partly explain how organisations and the people in them behave in different circumstances. As a result, under the auspices of the club, culture/ sub-culture is a further factor to be considered in the complex equation that is coaching.

Like other sub-cultures sport sub-cultures may be viewed as sub-systems within the dominant culture, and characterised by a somewhat distinct set of norms, values, beliefs and symbols (Leonard, 1991). These are common to, and shared by the members, giving them a distinct identity within the dominant culture. Consequently, central to the concept of a sub-culture are values, beliefs, identities (Donnelly & Young, 1988) and lifestyles that arise out of social interaction within a unique social situation, (Donnelly, 1981; Pearson, 1980; Williams & Donnelly, 1985): for example, the coach, the players and the club environment in professional youth football..

When examining the concept of a sub-culture it would seem not only relevant to identify its constituent parts but also its boundaries. Philips and Schafer (1976) for example, contend that all sports people comprise a sub-culture. However, it has been acknowledged that there are more specific sport sub-cultures (Snyder & Spreitzer, 1989; Scott, 1977) for example, football. Yet, these boundary definitions remain too general and arguably, unhelpful for analysing specific coaching contexts. It would, therefore, for the purpose of this research, be more appropriate to consider sub-culture as a, “a localised and bounded context of ongoing face to face interaction and not more general, less bounded, cultural sub-divisions” (Sugden, 1993, p.189). So, rather than looking for a broad ‘coaching sub-culture’ applicable in all cases, this allows for numerous variations. See figure 2.1 below.

In sport, Loy McPherson and Kenyon (1978) conceptualised three types of sub-culture, occupational (relating to work), avocational (relating to leisure) and deviant (relating to departures from the ‘norm’). The two relevant to this research are occupational and avocational. Although avocational relates to leisure, it is relevant when it becomes a pre-occupational sub-culture, that is, when sport activity is fashioned after the professional version.

Figure 2.1. Possible sub-cultural variations



For example, youth sport programmes are often considered to be the training environment for professional sport, as happens in football (McPherson, Curtis, & Loy, 1989). Indeed, youth participants learn about occupational patterns of behaviour, values, beliefs and symbols from their participation (McPherson et al., 1989). This view has received some support, suggesting that young athletes are encouraged to model their behaviour on the professional athletes in their sport (Vaz & Thomas, 1974; Ralbovsky, 1974a, 1974b; Voigt, 1974).

Research examining sport specific sub-cultures has been extensive and has examined a variety of sports including; boxing, (Weinberg & Arond, 1952; Sugden, 1993), baseball (Haerle, 1975; Brandmeyer & Alexander, 1982) tennis (Spencer, 1997) cycling (Leonard, 1991), rock climbing (Donnelly, 1979) rugby (Dunning & Sheard, 1979; Wheatley, 1986) wrestling (Rosenberg & Turowetz, 1975) horse racing (Scott, 1968) American football (Stebbins, 1987) hockey (Gallmeier, 1987; Vaz, 1982) the womens professional golf tour (Theberge, 1977) game officials (Rains, 1984; Snyder & Purdy, 1987) college football (Brislin, 1982) professional golf (Crossett, 1992, 1995) and body building (Klein, 1986, 1993). Research specifically concerning football sub-cultures has also been varied and has included investigations into for example; football fans (Bairner & Shirlow, 2000; Giulianotti, 1998) gender issues (Naul, 1991; Skogvang, 2000; Vibe, 1998; Whannel, 1999) player status (Jacob & Carron, 1996) the development of the sport internationally (Dawson, 1995; Sugden & Tomlinson, 1996) and the culture of professional sport and injuries (Roderick & Waddington, 2000). Interestingly, in the context of this study, Parker

(1996) conducted research on socialisation into professional football and examined, in some detail, the structure of the club and the nature of the sub-culture of professional youth football. His findings demonstrated the pervasive and influential nature of the sub-culture and how extensively it affected coach and player behaviour, as well as their day-to-day lives and practices. Parker (1996) likened the club environment to Goffman's (1961) total institution; a hierarchical, autocratic, power-dominated occupational sub-culture, not dissimilar, in many respects, to the military. His findings also support the work of Roderick (1991) and Tomlinson (1983) who also highlight the authoritarian nature of football sub-culture specifically in dealing with its youth 'trainees'.

The main findings on occupational sub-cultures suggests that professional sport teams must recruit and socialise new members, develop and maintain stability in the organisation, and require or permit members to leave when their skill declines (McPherson et al., 1989). However, little research has been completed that considers variation in coaching behaviour, nor indeed the coaching process, as a result of pressure from the sub-culture (Coakley, 1998). Indeed, the link between culture and action remains problematic because it is often assumed that culture provides a set of norms that directs human actions to some ends (Sparkes, 1989). This is because "a culture is not a unified system that pushes action in a consistent direction" (Swindler, 1986, p.277).

Research attempting to further understand the occupational sub-culture of coaching has been conducted in the United States in the educational setting (Massengale, 1974). According to Massengale, the occupational sub-culture of coaching influences behaviour through established formal and informal guidelines, which reflect a 'traditional' method of working. Those who do not follow these guidelines risk rejection from others in the profession. Therefore, established coaches provide support for new coaches who themselves follow the established behaviours for fear of rejection (Massengale, 1974). On the one hand then, the sub-culture provides support for coaches whilst on the other, it controls new entrants and discourages change within the profession.

Clearly, coaches and players, like anyone else, are inducted into certain cultures, such as social class, religious, ethnic, school or sporting cultures, by the process of socialisation (Sparkes, 1989). Through this process they come to be, and understand what it means to be, a coach or player. This review of literature has already noted the differences between coaches' behaviour across settings. Indeed, Sparkes (1989) contends that different behaviours support the notion, proposed earlier in this section, that rather than there being an homogenous culture in which there is uniformity of values, beliefs, orientations and

practices within coaching as an occupational group, there can in fact be many cultures and sub-cultures. Indeed, Feiman-Nemser and Floden (1986) note that coaches “differ in age, experience, social and cultural background, gender, marital status, subject matter, wisdom and ability,” and the club environments in which they work “also differ in many ways, as do the groups that they teach.” (p.507). These factors demonstrate the complexity of linking behavioural differences to the coaching or club culture. However, whilst it is inappropriate to over-homogenise, it is also wrong to over-heterogenise since, despite the differences, most coaches do engage in activity that is recognisable as coaching, across a variety of situations, often sharing similar concerns and facing similar dilemmas (Sparkes, 1989). Perhaps then, this is more a question of definition and application of terms for, as Gibson (1986) suggests, culture is an elusive and complex concept.

This section has proposed the club as a dynamic social phenomena, and, as an amalgam of social practices (McPhail & Kirk, 2001). There are a multitude of ways that a club can be understood, but through an analysis of culture and sub-culture this section has attempted to understand something of the, hidden from view, social structures that influence practice. It has demonstrated the complexity of sub-cultures by illustrating that there are numerous variations of coaching and football sub-cultures. Yet, despite these variations, “coaching sub-cultures exert considerable influence on the behaviour of coaches” (Coakley, 1987, p.202). Moreover, in some respects, the coaching sub-culture represents a relatively stable pattern of thinking and behaving (Coakley, 1987), and therefore must influence coaching practice and the coaching process. Despite the recognition that sub-cultures must influence behaviour of both coaches and players, the link between culture and practice remains problematic. Therefore, once again some insight into the process of interaction would seem worthwhile. A vehicle for that insight includes the work on socialisation which now follows.

## 2.5 Interaction; the club, the coach and the players

### 2.5.1 *Socialisation*

It has been consistently argued in this review of literature, that encounters between coaches and players are social encounters, with the way the interaction occurs and how the interaction occurs being part of a broader social context (Clarke, 1993; Rees, 1986). Furthermore, there is a recognition, not only here, but in the coaching literature, that the coach-athlete relationship is the epicentre of coaching practice, and any analysis of it should contextualise the relationship in the wider social system (Sabo & Parrepinto, 1990). Indeed,

a key rationale for this research is that existing research into coaching practice and the coaching process has, arguably, not increased knowledge concerning the dynamics that construct and affect relationships (Jones, 1999).

An area of research that may offer some insight into the complexity of interaction between the coach, the player and the club environment, is that concerning the process of socialisation. At first glance this area of research seems far removed from the coaching process, but it is relevant on a number of levels. Firstly, it is concerned with interaction; in particular, interaction between the coach, the player the club environment, the complexity inherent in each and wider societal pressures. These elements are in fact the constituent parts of the process of socialisation (Templin & Schempp, 1989). Secondly, because it is concerned with the individual (player, coach) and social structure (club environment), it provides a useful bridge between the disciplines of sociology and psychology (Jary & Jary, 2000). This is important because much of the coaching research discussed earlier in this review of literature has been fragmented along disciplinary lines when, arguably, the demands of coaching practice are inter-disciplinary. Finally, it could be argued that, in the search for a definition of coaching applicable specifically to professional soccer, the process of coaching and the process of socialisation are, in fact, the same thing. This is not as implausible as it first sounds when considering a description of the process of socialisation; i.e., as that process whereby the individual becomes a self aware, knowledgeable person, skilled in the ways of the culture into which they are introduced (Giddens, 1993). It is a dynamic process involving pressure to change from various directions as individuals assume roles and learn, and attempt to influence the role expectations within a given social setting (Templin & Schempp, 1989). The process of socialisation appears synonymous with coaching. Or at the very least, the coach is engaged in the socialisation process when working with the players, therefore, it would appear to be an implicit part of the coaching process. From the description above, it is clear that it is not only players that would be subject to socialisation. Coaches too, are not only agents of, but are also subject to, the process of socialisation. If the process of socialisation can be demonstrated to impinge upon the coach's behaviour, then its relevance to an analysis of the coaching process is further reinforced.

McPherson (1986) describes a number of substantive areas of research into socialisation. However, traditionally, the research pertaining to sport has been divided into three components (Coakley, 1993; Brustad, 1992). 1. Socialisation 'into' sport; investigating the relative influence of agents of socialisation on those who participate; 2.

Socialisation 'through' sport; investigating the acquisition of attitudes, values and knowledge as a consequence of sport involvement; 3. Socialisation 'out of' sport; investigating the factors that contribute to an individual's withdrawal from participation. A number of comprehensive reviews and critiques have been completed covering the three components (Coakley, 1993; Greendorfer & Bruce, 1989; McPherson, 1986; Nixon, 1990). This review of literature, however, is specifically interested in socialisation 'through' sport, and socialisation 'into' sport, as they would appear to be relevant contextual considerations impinging on coaching practice. For the purpose of this review of literature, Coakley (1993) provides a framework for analysing 'through' sport and 'into' sport socialisation that is helpful and is adopted where applicable. Furthermore, as this research is concerned with professional coaches and players, it would seem appropriate to consider the influence of professional, organisational socialisation and socialisation into a role. Before looking at these areas in detail, it is necessary to summarise the theoretical background to the process of socialisation.

### *2.5.2 Background*

The process of socialisation is intertwined with the concept of life cycle (Giddens, 1993). Much socialisation research is concerned with the process of becoming an adult and has concentrated on child development. This element of socialisation is often termed primary socialisation and has seen the development of a number of theories. These include, for example; Freud, and the role of the unconscious in the acquisition of moral and personal identity; Mead, and cognitive development and the acquisition of self through developing as a social being first through imitation; Piaget, and emphasis on cognitive development; Durkheim, and the internalisation of moral values and categories of the group; and Bernstein, and the development of social skills which sustain interaction in all settings, chiefly linguistic communication (Jary & Jary, 2000; Giddens, 1993). Theories of primary socialisation, whilst useful, have been criticised for not taking into account the social contexts in which socialisation takes place (Giddens, 1993), and therefore are of limited use for this research. Furthermore, primary socialisation deals particularly with young children who are not the focus of this research. Secondary socialisation, however, is primarily concerned with the general processes through which culture is passed on (Jary & Jary, 2000). This concerns the groups or social contexts within which significant processes of socialisation takes place. These are often referred to as the agencies of socialisation and are



more relevant to this research and therefore form a focus for this section of the review of literature.

### 2.5.3 *Agency and Structure*

From a conceptual standpoint, sociological research has focussed much attention on the social structure surrounding the socialisation process (Brustad, 1992). The early literature, in particular, has attempted to see how human beings were shaped by the influence and constraint of external or systematic forces (Coakley, 1993). Socialisation was seen as a process of ‘internalisation’ in which individuals were ‘shaped’ and ‘moulded’ by ‘society’ in deterministic ways (Wentworth, 1980). Research participants were viewed as passive and conformist when confronted by forces in their social environment. The problem with this approach was that the dynamics of interaction between individuals and the structures of the social world were generally excluded from the analysis. Coakley (1993) summarises the problem as “the autonomy, creative potential, self-reflective abilities and identities of individuals as active agents within their social worlds were seldom considered. Nor were the dynamics of control and power relations associated with the process of entering the social world” (p.572). This discussion forms part of a broader debate on social outcomes in sociology, that is the relative influence of two main determinants, social structures and individual agents (Jary & Jary, 2000). Socialisation theory, as with sociology itself, has varied assumptions about the extent to which the individual is actively involved in the process of culture production (Coakley, 1993).

A ‘structural’ or ‘internalisation’ approach to research has proven problematic. This is particularly the case when dealing with adolescents and adults, specifically, because these groups have the social resources to exert considerable power in the socialisation process, and the overall process of culture production (Coakley, 1993). As a result, an increasing number of studies have been based on a ‘socialisation as interaction’ or ‘agency’ approach (Brustad, 1992; Musgrave, 1987). This approach aimed to uncover the meaning underlying behaviour and the choices made by human beings as they actively enter, participate in, and shape social contexts (Coakley, 1993). In addition, the interaction approach has explored the dynamics of control and power relationships in social settings. In light of the purpose of this research, the interaction research, and its theoretical framework, appear to offer valuable insight. Its insight comes from assisting in an understanding of the role of the youth coach in an occupational setting. The coach’s role directly impacts coaching practice and therefore has implications for the coaching process. As already stated, the interaction approach, as its

name suggests, can delve into the dynamic of interaction between the coach, the player and the club environment in a social context, an aim in concert with this research. Finally, the interaction approach has demonstrated that in the quest for understanding and grasping complexity, qualitative methods, namely observation and in-depth interview, prove particularly useful. Generally, the socialisation and sport literature is divided along 'internalisation' and 'interaction' lines. Whilst considerable debate exists concerning the merits of each, for the purpose of this review of literature, both approaches bring useful findings and these findings are now discussed.

#### *2.5.4 Socialisation and Sport; Socialisation 'into' Sport*

In 1973 Kenyon and McPherson devised a two dimensional, social role and social system model to guide analyses of the social learning process associated with entering and performing sport roles, including elite performers. It included the following three main factors; 1. Psychological attributes of the person being socialised; 2. The encouragement and rewards provided by others especially significant others; 3. Social systems, such as, peer group and organisation in which those being socialised were exposed to and influenced by. The model emphasised the dynamic nature of the socialisation process, but never considered that individuals become active or resistant to the process (Coakley, 1993), and therefore viewed the process as being influenced by structure. However, Theberge (1984) argues that any discussion must consider individual autonomy. Despite this, the model has inspired considerable research related to encouragement and reinforcement from relationships with significant others and the social system (Coakley, 1993). Most of this research has been conducted using questionnaires, requiring the participants to recall instances, events and influential people surrounding their sport participation. Studies of socialisation using this model suggest a number of relevant findings. These include; participation into sport roles is positively related to the amount of social support coming from significant others (Furst, 1989; Greendorfer, 1977; Higginson 1985; Sage, 1980b; Snyder & Spreitzer, 1976; Weiss & Knoppers, 1982). Importantly, coaches are viewed as significant others (Snyder & Spreitzer, 1976; Kenyon & McPherson, 1973), thus locating the process of socialisation within the coaching process. The relative influence of significant others, including coaches, and the extent and type of encouragement received in a particular social system, peer group, or organisation will vary, by; race (Greendorfer & Lewko, 1978; Lewko & Ewing, 1980; Sage, 1980b, Snyder & Spreitzer, 1973, 1978), age (Butcher, 1985; Rudman, 1989; Snyder, 1972), place of residence (rural v urban) (Carlson, 1988) and

culture (Greendorfer, Blinde & Pelligrini, 1986; Yamaguchi, 1987). However, these findings remain general, and there is still confusion about the relative influence of different socialisation agents, including coaches (Coakley, 1993). In addition, there is no detailed information about the nature of the interaction that occurs as part of the socialisation process.

The socialisation-as-interaction approach has tended to emphasise that sport involvement is a process involving combinations of: participation choices made by individuals, the formation of an athlete identity within the context of a particular group and setting, the continued reaffirmation of that identity through social relationships with peers and significant others, including coaches (White & Coakley, 1986; Coakley, 1993). It is interesting to note that socialisation viewed from this conceptual standpoint does not view socialisation as an instantaneous conversion. Instead it is based on the assumption that socialisation is a series of shifting back and forth decisions, made within the structural, ideological and cultural context of the social world (Templin & Schempp, 1989). Therefore, an interactionist approach would assert that socialisation is inseparable from the context in which it occurs (Stearn, 1995). In addition, a noteworthy finding from this research is that formation of an individual's sporting identity occurs over time and depends on a number of processes; for example, the acquisition of knowledge about the sport, becoming associated with a sport group, learning the values and perspectives of that group, and earning the acceptance of those in the group so that one's identity as a participant is affirmed and reaffirmed over time (Donnelly & Young 1988). Thus, socialisation is a process that involves identity construction and confirmation, not just an outcome of exposure to significant others operating within social systems and interrelated sets of norms and roles (Coakley, 1993).

The notion that the socialisation process occurs over time, would seem particularly important when considering the role of the full time coach within a coaching process. In relation to this research, the elite youth soccer coach works with a group of players over a period of years and plays a considerable role in the identity construction and confirmation of neophyte professional soccer players. The longitudinal nature of the socialisation process in youth sport has been illustrated by Siegenthaler & Gonzalez (1997) and Adler and Adler (1994) who traced children's athletic careers from spontaneous play through recreational, competitive and finally elite activities. As the youngsters progressed, the sport became more organised, rationalised, competitive, committed and professionalised. Thus, over time,

athletes participating in adult controlled and institutionalised youth sport learned the norms and values of that world (Adler & Adler, 1994; Sage, 1978).

#### 2.5.5 *Socialisation through Sport*

Between 1950 and 1980 there were many studies of socialisation through sport, examining possible connections between sport participation and participants' attitudes and behaviour (Coakley, 1993). Most of this research focused on children and adolescents, but some considered collegiate and elite amateur performers. However, as early as 1973, Loy and Ingham concluded that "socialisation via games, play and sport is a complex process having both manifest and latent functions, and involving functional and dysfunctional, intended and unintended consequences" (p.298). A key problem with research conducted in this area is highlighted by McCormack and Chalip (1988) who assert that research has been conducted under faulty assumptions, for example, that sport participation is a consistent experience similarly shared by everyone, that these experiences cause identifiable changes in sport participants, and that athletes act passively, internalising specific norms through the sport experience. Instead, it must be remembered that athletes have different experiences, and that athletes experience the same things in different ways depending on the differences in their relationship with significant others, for example, coaches (McCormack & Chalip, 1988). thus highlighting the importance of the coach-athlete relationship and interaction, and its position in the coaching process. Despite these possible limitations, analysis has contributed to the knowledge of socialisation effects, and their influence on coach-athlete interaction. The socialisation research specifically involving the coach will now be considered.

The influence of the coach and the importance of coach-athlete interaction have been demonstrated in research examining sport participation and academic achievement. It appears that sport will positively influence academic achievement when sport participation is coupled with academic support and encouragement from significant others (Hanks, 1979; McElroy, 1979) and when coaches provide performers with specific academic advice and support (Snyder, 1972). It would appear also that these conclusions are dependent upon the coach changing the nature of the relationship with the athlete by taking them more seriously and providing them with support and encouragement (Coakley, 1993). Indeed, Coakley (1993) argues that relationships are the vehicle for change, with sport participation causing the performer to be noticed by those who can influence their lives.

More recently, studies have considered sport participation and the development of individual traits and interpersonal orientations. In longitudinal studies involving soccer Dubois (1981, 1986, 1990) explored the youth coach as an agent of socialisation, and reported changes in player value-orientations (related to winning, sportsmanship, fitness, importance of relationships). This research was conducted under the premise that the youth sport coach can have a very substantial impact upon the social and emotional development of those players with whom they interact. This is because the psycho-social developmental status of youth sport participants renders them sensitive to the words and actions of others (Dubois, 1981). Indeed, Scanlan (1978) argues that the youth players may have limited experience to draw upon, and consequently are dependent on others for information about their reality and the adequacy of their ability to deal with this reality. In addition, Scanlan and Passer (1978) found the young performer to be sensitive to social evaluation, particularly in terms of demonstration of the prized ability of athletic prowess. Against this backdrop, Dubois (1986,1990) asserted that changes in player value-orientation were highly context-specific and depended, to a large extent, on the nature of the relationship with the coach, as well as the way sport experiences were mediated by the performers' past experiences. Consequently, Coakley (1993) points to the need to understand the experiences of the performer to *fully understand the effects of socialisation in connection with their sport participation*. Clearly then, both the coach and the performer must be the subject of investigation to understand sporting experience.

In an investigation of socialisation and youth sport culture Fine (1987) used an interactionist theoretical framework and collected data with a combination of participant observations and in-depth interviews. Fine (1987) demonstrated that coaches were the 'controllers of the moral order' in youth sport with players interpreting messages sent by coaches relating to how they perceived the coach's competence and fairness. This conclusion could have an enormous relevance for coaching practice. Furthermore, Fine noted that players evaluated coaches against their own rhetoric, and if the coach failed to live up to his (sic) own standard, the players lost respect for the coach and would not pay much attention to the messages that the coach was imparting; once again, a conclusion that could have implications for coaching practice. A further observation from Fine's work was that the players were socialised through involvement with their teams but, importantly, the players were actively involved, it was a dialectic process. Finally Fine noted that the coach, through overt behaviour, 'controls' the extent to which socialisation occurs, thus confirming the centrality of the coach in the broader coaching process.

In summary, Coakley (1993) suggests that continued research will;

“tell us how coaches become important in the lives of young athletes; important as sources of guidelines, as agents undermining or distorting development, as advocates who intercede in times of need, or as meaningless sources of constraint ignored or systematically demeaned and discredited by athletes” (p. 582).

Clearly, within the coaching environment, both players and coaches are recipients and creators of values and cultures, they shape and become shaped by their experiences (Popkewitz, 1976; Schempp & Graber, 1992). An important contextual factor in this process is how the players and coaches develop within a professional context.

#### *2.5.6 Professional/Occupational and Role Socialisation*

Socialisation theory has been used as a way of understanding how the role of teacher/coach is assumed (Lawson, 1983a, 1983b; Schempp & Graber, 1992; Templin & Schempp, 1989) an important variable constructing the complexity of the coach. Clearly this is a useful perspective for this research, which looks to provide a fuller understanding of coaching practice and how coaches interact with their players in practice and games within a full time coaching environment. The full-time coaching role is described by Sage (1989) as the moulding together of a group of performers into a team that will compete with teams from other clubs. This involves intense daily work over the course of a season. Analysis of this prolonged coach-athlete interaction has discovered that patterns of behaviour emerge from interaction with others, and that the coach's behaviour is shaped by various relationships and social situations, including the coach's professional background (Ping, 1993).

The study of work and occupation is intrinsically eclectic, drawing upon and integrating insights from various theoretical perspectives and value orientations (Sage, 1989). One such perspective is that of role theory that proposes that the social world should be viewed as a network of variously interrelated positions, within which individuals enact roles (Biddle, 1979; Hardy & Conway, 1978; Zurcher, 1983). Consequently, there are role expectations with every position and these expectations give rise to both organisational socialisation and professional socialisation. Professional socialisation is defined as the process by which occupational aspirants acquire the skills, knowledge, and sensitivities that are deemed necessary for job enactment (Lortie, 1975). A major function of professional socialisation is to impart enduring values and an ideology that will direct and guide the practitioner after completing a phase of preparation (Becker, 1961; Merton, Reader &

Kendall, 1957). This period of professional socialisation is understood to be the phase in which neophytes are induced to develop and identify with an occupation and develop a growing commitment to it (Sage, 1989). A prominent feature in professional socialisation, is an extended period of formal education or apprenticeship; indeed the most well known research considers this formal professional socialisation (Becker et al., 1961; Lortie, 1975; Sharpiro & Lowenstein, 1979). It is interesting to note that in most sports, including soccer, players undertake 'apprenticeship/ scholarship' but in coaching, formal preparation hardly exists. Instead, Sage (1989) contends that aspirant coaches have an opportunity for professional socialisation before formally taking up the role. Indeed, the years spent as a student in physical education and sport programmes have been theorised to provide influential social contacts for coaches (Dewar, 1989; Lawson, 1983a/b; Pooley, 1972; Zeichner & Gore, 1990). Here, as athletes, prospective coaches have an unusually good opportunity to observe many coaches plying their trade, and to learn about coaching from their own coaches (Sage, 1989; Schempp, 1989; Schempp & Graber, 1992). Coakley (1978) notes that these "experiences, combined with the anticipation of entering the ranks of coaching, are the channels through which the traditional accepted methods of coaching become integrated into the behaviour of aspiring young coaches" (p. 241).

In a way then, coaches serve an informal apprenticeship of prolonged observation (Lortie, 1975) that, unlike many other occupations, enables them to develop a familiarity with the task of coaching (Hutchinson, 1990; Sage, 1989; Schempp & Graber, 1992). It should be noted that the changing social relationships in which coaches continually find themselves prevent direct transference between observations made as players and their practice as professional coaches (Schempp, 1989; Schempp & Graber, 1992). Consequently, Schempp (1989) contends that professional practices of coaches are influenced, but not determined by, the apprenticeship they served as players. Coaches do not simply mimic the practices of their predecessors, rather the apprenticeship provides a first look at the work of coaches, which is often uneven in quality and is incomplete (Schempp, 1989; Schempp & Graber, 1992). Nevertheless, this apprenticeship represents a first introduction to coaching and because the exposure is often over a number of years, it is hypothesised to be a formidable and detectable thread in the socialising fabric of a coach (McEvoy, 1986; Sage, 1989; Schempp, 1989). It can be seen that the apprenticeship of observation represents collected and recollected experiences from days as a student/player, and the influence of these socialising experiences provides a continuing influence over the pedagogical

perspectives, beliefs and behaviours of coaches (Schempp, 1989; Schempp & Graber, 1992); perhaps key in the development of a philosophy of coaching.

This apprenticeship often extends into the coaching role itself. Indeed, Sage (1989) contends that coaches who begin as assistants are in effect serving an apprenticeship. However, this is not formally organised, as assistant coaches do not serve a specific time nor are they required to demonstrate particular skills to move beyond apprentice status. Indeed, Sage notes that observing the behaviour of more experienced coaches during practices and games, and listening during informal periods, makes it mark on new coaches. It is thought that through these types of experiences, collective understandings begin to develop, and the shared meanings about the occupational culture of coaching start to take shape. These findings are in line with the experiences of student teachers (Freibus, 1977; Schempp & Graber, 1992). Indeed, Graber (1995) contends that a single powerful individual may be more important in shaping beliefs than an entire program of courses. Therefore, much of what a new coach learns is learned through ongoing interactions as well as through a variety of informal sources (Sage, 1989). This provides continuity with the lessons learned during earlier socialisation (Locke, 1979; Schempp, 1987). Regardless of the method of entry, the technical aspects and the occupation culture are acquired through observing and listening to more experienced coaches (Sage, 1989). *It is through these experiences that collective understanding begin to form, and shared meanings about the coaching occupation culture take shape (Stroot, Collier, O'Sullivan & England, 1994).*

Lacy (1987) contends that “it is important to notice that the process of professional socialisation does not end at the point of entry into a profession, or at any arbitrary point during the early career” (p. 634). Indeed, Schempp and Graber (1992) contend that a number of agents of socialisation will continue to impact on behaviour and perspectives, throughout a career. A significant factor is the influence of the organisation, and contextual factors of the work setting (Stroot, et al., 1994). Organisational socialisation is the process by which a person acquires skills and supporting cultural ideology necessary to participate as a contributing member of an occupation (Van Maanen, 1976). The process begins and is at its most powerful during the entry period, that is the first few months, but is a continuing process (Van Maanen, 1976; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Van Maanen and Schein (1979) note that, from entry to the work place to leaving, individuals “experience and often commit themselves to a distinct way of life complete with its own rhythms, rewards, relationships, demands, and potentials” (p.210). Van Maanen (1976) highlights the ‘metamorphosis stage’ or the beginning phase. This is the transformation of newcomers into competent workers,



and involves more than simply learning the technical aspects of the job (Sage, 1989). It also involves learning the occupation's culture which consists of a distinctive set of shared understandings about critical aspects of the job, certain customs and rituals, and an ideology that helps shape the view of the occupation and its relationship to the outside world (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Smirchich, 1983; Stroot, et al., 1994)). Louis (1980) suggests two types of content in organisational socialisation; role related learning, and learning related to the appreciation of the culture of an organisation. An occupation's culture imparts how we do things and what matters (Ouchi & Wilkins, 1985; Morgan, Frost, and Pondy, 1983).

This section has argued that the processes of socialisation and coaching are closely linked. It is relevant to this research because it too, considers the interaction of the coach, the player and the club environment. The review of literature has demonstrated that the coach is a significant other involved in the socialisation of players, thus making the process of socialisation implicit as part of the complexity of the coaching process. The literature has shown that the process of socialisation involves all three elements of the practical coaching context, and that the relationship between them is a dialectic one. This means, importantly, that both coaches and players are recipients and creators in the process of socialisation.

## *2.6 Conclusion & Research Problem*

This review of literature has critically examined the relevant coaching research pertaining to the three elements of the coaching process and the practical coaching context; the coach, the player and the club environment, and touched, where possible, upon their interaction. This review suggests that existing research concerning the coaching process commonly fails to deal adequately with the subtlety and scope of the complex interpersonal nature of coaching. This is, perhaps, because coaching and the coaching process are embedded in the social networks of society and culture, which contribute to a dynamic and complex social environment. Therefore, important 'blank spaces' remain in existing knowledge, particularly in the social and contextual circumstances encountered in the performance pathway between coach, player and club environment. Consequently, there remains context and inherent complexity that both structure and are structuring the coaching process, the extent and influence of which remain unknown and, that require elucidation to move understanding of the coaching process beyond the, at times, imprecise and speculative.

It is noteworthy that the bulk of coaching research has been conducted in the United States, in educational or amateur settings. To uncritically adopt these research findings

grants them an assumed transatlantic 'validity', and leaves professional sport in England severely under-represented.

This research aims to obtain "a full, rich and accurate picture" (Schempp, 1998,p.3) of the complexity of the coaching process, the practical coaching context and the interactions therein. A varied methodological and theoretical approach would seem to be suited to better explain the inherent complexity of the coach, the player and the club environment, and their interaction in constructing the coaching process (Kahan, 1999). Indeed, qualitative methodology appears better able to grasp the subtlety of coaching practice and the coaching process. Yet, whilst the literature increasingly advocates such an approach (Jones, 1999; Streat,1998, Potrac et al., 2000), there remains little research that has actually 'grasped the nettle' and undertaken research into the complexity of the coaching process using qualitative methods.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Methodology: Researching Coaching in Elite Youth Football

#### *Introduction*

“Football clubs are jealously guarded worlds” (Tomlinson, 1983, p 151)

“Most players don’t trust specialist writers...they despise and dismiss all the outside experts” (Doogan, 1980, p.6).

“Clubs have been determined to keep nosy writers out of their dressing rooms”  
(Davies, 1985, introduction).

These statements seem to point to a preference for secrecy and closure within professional football clubs (Parker, 1996). Indeed, professional football clubs have a tendency to seek to preserve this insularity and statements such as those above are illustrative of the investigative climate in which this research was undertaken. Despite media coverage of the game, English professional football clubs remain highly restrictive organisations, particularly in terms of who they let inside their institutional bounds (Parker, 1996). In light of this, it is important to provide detail on how this research was undertaken and how the restrictive nature of professional football impacted upon the research process. This methodology chapter seeks to describe the research process undertaken, by highlighting the route and development of the research from conceptual beginnings to write-up. It provides a chronological insight into issues such as; the development of the research question, philosophical concerns, selection of methods, access, data collection, data analysis and the quality of the research. Whilst items are presented in chronological order, much of what is discussed reflects, in fact, a continuous and interrelated research process (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). A key feature of this research was that the person was at the heart, rather than at the periphery, of the research and so biography infuses the research process. As a result, the researcher is acknowledged as an active agent within the research process as a whole, thus challenging the notion of research as apolitical. Furthermore, presenting oneself in the work challenges accepted views about silent authorship and author-evacuated texts (Sparkes, 2000). In so doing, the way could be

opened for the writing to be defined as self-indulgent, and navel gazing (Coffey, 1999; Rinehart, 1991). However, presenting myself in the text is an essential part of the research process. It enabled the consideration of my status and position within the research and how this may have influenced the research process. Importantly, I wanted to ensure that there was a place in the ethnography that I 'did' for self-reflection and personal experience (DeVault, 1997; Krizek, 1998; Sparkes, 2000).

### 3.1.1 *Research Origins*

My interest in football began at age five when taken by my father to a Norwich City Reserve fixture. I remember that few people attended the game and the stadium seemed huge. I have no idea who won or even who they played, but the seed was undoubtedly sown. The first team games introduced me to spectatorship, the crush of the turnstiles and terraces, the smell of pies, beer, and tobacco. I remember in particular a cold mid-week game. I was standing near the front of the terrace. The ball went out for a throw-in and an opposition player, an imposing figure, ran across. Steam rose from his shoulders; muscular and athletic, his legs glistened with oil. He took the throw and moved effortlessly to join in the play. That early experience, not unlike others (Parker, 1996; Guilianotti, 1997) engendered dreams of footballing stardom.

My involvement with the game increased and, following recommendation and successful trial, I was signed as an 'associate schoolboy' with a professional club. I trained and played until the age of 16 but was not offered a full-time 'YTS' (Traineeship) place. I then became involved in the 'non-league' scene and played until the age of 26. I had always been troubled with back injuries and it was the need for surgery to remove a prolapsed disc in 1995 that finished me as a 'serious' player; as with Sparkes (1996), my injury had consequences for my life. Some five years earlier I had been given my first taste of coaching as player/assistant coach in a non-league club. I say 'coaching'; it would be more accurate to say that I took the players for training. From this, I got involved with youth development and my return to Higher Education in 1995 signalled a quickening of my journey into the coaching world.

Through both playing and coaching I have been interacting with soccer coaches for 21 years. More specifically, through my work as a researcher, a student of the phenomena of coaching and as an employee of professional soccer clubs, I have

been seriously observing coaches working for the last six years. I have endeavoured to take part in every coach education course available to football coaches through the sports governing body in England, the Football Association. I have worked in North America as a coach and have been involved in that country's football coach education programme. It would be accurate to say that I have drawn upon this experience to develop my 'coaching philosophy' and I have firm ideas about the difference between a 'good' coach and a 'bad' coach. My position within the football coaching community is established, but I would consider myself 'less knowledgeable' and, in terms of working with full-time players, less experienced than the respondents in this research.

Before this study and, before truly understanding the meaning of epistemology and ontology, or having to consider the implications of the issues they represent, I conducted a systematic observation of coach behaviours (Cushion & Jones, 2001) in a youth football setting with professional coaches. I used an observation instrument where the coaching behaviours were defined (see also, Literature Review, p.20). However, following the team's defeat and subsequent exit from an important cup competition, the coach's behaviour changed dramatically; enough to change the nature of the coach's behaviour as reflected in the observation results. When analysing the data for this coach it became clear to me that, while I had endless amounts of data regarding what the coach did behaviourally, I had no idea 'why' he did it that way. For example, in looking at the change in his behaviour following defeat, I began to wonder how did he know it would work? How did he know his behaviour was appropriate? Where had he learned this? Furthermore, the notion of context became an issue of concern to me. That is, what were those factors that influenced this coach's behaviour, and the process of coaching in this instance; were they just limited to the coaching sessions, what about in game situations or in the 'day to day' contact with the players?

At the same time, what became apparent to me was that using systematic observation instruments produced numerical data, but that these data were dependent on an observer interpreting coach behaviour. Essentially, this supposedly objective numeric data, whose validity was taken as almost a given, had a socially constructed character and so had serious sources of potential error built in. Furthermore, I questioned the use of statistical techniques perceived to be an infallible way of transforming these data into valid conclusions.

Together with my own past experience and wider exposure to coaching, this caused me to think more seriously about the context of coaching practice, and the methods used to understand it. I was intrigued by the relationship between the practical coaching context and the coaching process. How and why did coaches, myself included, practise the process of coaching the way we did? I also began to consider for the first time the methods that I was using to explore coaching. How could I get to the knowledge that I now sought?

As a result of these questions, the aims and objectives of the present research began to come into view. Moreover, whilst preparing the research proposal and reviewing the literature further questions came to mind. For example, how has coaching research explored these issues? What do we understand about coaching in practice? What is the practical coaching context and how does it influence the coaching process? What is the nature and purpose of coaching, particularly in elite youth football? How do the players experience their coaching? At this stage I had arrived at a somewhat lengthy purpose of the research:

To analyse and understand the complexity of the coaching process. To examine the elements that form the coaching context (the coach, the player and the club environment) and, in so doing, attempt to grasp the complexity inherent in each and in their interaction.

All I needed was a Club to provide a professional youth coaching context and coaches to analyse. In addition, I needed methods of data collection and analysis that would provide the insight I was striving for. My thoughts turned to both issues and, in reality, they occurred simultaneously in the research process. However, in terms of presentation here, I will begin with the choice and rationale for selected methodology and then follow with the questions of who would be the participants and how I would gain access to them.

### *3.1.2 Methodology: The Choices*

Methodology is often described as ‘bricolage’, that is, the choice of its practice is pragmatic, strategic and self-reflexive (Alasuutari, 1995; Nelson, Triechler & Grossberg, 1992). In this research, the methods I selected were those that appeared to be the most appropriate to study the practical coaching context and the coaching process therefore, the notion of bricolage seems apt. Indeed, the underlying principle behind this research methodology was to suit method to purpose subscribing in part to

what Patton (1990) describes as “methodological appropriateness” (p. 39). At the same time, I recognised that methodology and method do form part of the practical and philosophical issues that inform research. Indeed, methodology and method feed into one another and neither can be discussed in isolation (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). These issues tend to lead to discussion on the ‘paradigms debate’ essentially a philosophical discussion on how best to conduct research. In this research, the notion of methodological eclecticism (Hammersley, 1996) has been rejected concurring with Seale (1999) who argues that “the quality of research is enhanced if researchers engage with philosophical and methodological debate” (p.8). This debate frequently results in dispute and confusion over the nature of research and the methods used to answer research questions (May, 1999). For this reason, it was necessary to consider the notion of paradigm, how we gain knowledge of the social world, and the relationship that exists between paradigm and research.

### *3.2 Research Paradigm*

Since the publication of Thomas Kuhn’s ‘The Structure of Scientific Revolutions’ (1970), those involved in social research have given serious attention to the notion of paradigm (Schemmp & Choi, 1994). The concept of a paradigm is not a straightforward issue, with Kuhn himself using the term in more than twenty ways in his book (Masterman, 1970). With this in mind, a paradigm is generally regarded as a belief system through which one can see and make sense of the social world (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Patton, 1978; Schemmp & Choi, 1994). As with any form of belief system, the values and assumptions are learned and developed via the process of socialisation (Sparkes, 1992). For Popkewitz (1984) “learning the exemplars of a field of enquiry is also to learn how to see, think and act towards the world”(p.3). At the core of this socialisation is the taking-on of certain assumption regarding questions of ontology and epistemology (Sparkes, 1992).

Ontological assumptions address questions about the nature of existence; that is the very nature of the subject matter. As a result, researchers are faced with a basic ontological question;

“whether the ‘reality’ to be investigated is external to the individual- imposing itself on the individual form without- or the product of individual consciousness; whether ‘reality’ is of an objective nature, or the product of individual cognition; whether ‘reality’ is out there

in the world or the product of one's mind" (Burrell & Morgan, p.3, cited in Sparkes, 1992).

Linked to the issue of ontology is that of epistemology, which refers to questions about the nature of knowledge and the relationship between the inquirer and the known (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, 2000; Sparkes, 1992). Epistemological assumptions determine the issue of "whether knowledge is something which can be acquired on the one hand, or something which has to be personally experienced on the other" (Burrell & Morgan, p.2, cited in Sparkes 1992). Sparkes (1992) contends that any form of research that involves people in a social context involves assumptions of an ontological and epistemological nature, particularly regarding the relationship between people and their environment. A research paradigm, therefore, guides and shapes how a researcher formulates questions and selects methodologies (Schempp & Choi, 1994). In the case of this research, these issues needed to be discussed, and addressed because, as Guba and Lincoln (1994) contend, "*paradigms define for inquirers what it is they are about, and what falls within and outside the limits of legitimate inquiry*" (p.108). Indeed, how one answers each of the questions concerning, ontology, epistemology and methodology will constrain how the others will be addressed

The positioning of this research with regard to paradigm is discussed later in this section but, before that, key inquiry paradigms and their general features are identified. It should be remembered, however, that paradigms are human constructions and subject to human frailty; "they are all inventions of the human mind, and hence subject to human error. No construction is or can be incontrovertibly right, advocates must rely on persuasiveness and utility rather than proof in arguing their position" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.108). In addition, the paradigms discussed here are still the subject of debate with reference to definition, meaning and implications (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Indeed, both Richardson (1994) and Lincoln and Guba (2000) point out that even as we write, the boundaries between paradigms are shifting.

Despite the shifting face of paradigms, it can be argued that three central paradigms distinguish research in the sport setting (Carr & Kemmiss, 1986; Popkewitz, 1984). According to Habermas (1971) human knowledge and enquiry have been historically and socially guided by these three paradigms; 1. Empirical analytical sciences (positivism), 2. Interpretive sciences (constructivism) and 3.



Critical sciences. Many other paradigms exist and are often related to, or are a criticism of, the three central paradigms; these include post-positivist (Hammersley, 1992), feminist (Olesen, 2000), post structural (Lathers & Smithies, 1997) and post modern (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Each paradigm has its own basic beliefs regarding ontology, epistemology and methodology. The empirical analytical sciences have adopted a nomothetic approach to research and have generally employed quantitative methods. Ontologically this paradigm assumes an objective external reality that, epistemologically, enables the researcher to determine 'how things really are', and 'how things really work'. From this frame of reference, or paradigm, the purpose of research is concerned with manipulating and specifying relationships between specific variables to test hypotheses on causal laws, largely through an experimental and manipulative methodology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Henwood, 1996; Rink, 1993). Conversely, interpretive science has adopted an ideographic approach to research and has usually employed a qualitative approach. An interpretive methodology results in a clear distinction between the natural and the social world. The social world, it is argued, cannot be fully understood in terms of causal relationships or universal laws (Smith, 1989). This is because human actions are based upon social *meaning*, intentions and beliefs (Bredo & Feinberg, 1983). Ontologically, there are multiple social realities. People do not respond to stimuli but interpret them, and these interpretations guide action. Epistemologically, knowledge is created in interaction. Therefore, "knowledge is taken to be created in the course of human interaction. The purpose of research undertaken within an interpretive paradigm is understanding", this means understanding "social interaction, and the everyday patterns of communication that create, sustain, modify social rules and meaning" (Cornbleth, 1990, p. 195). These differ to the critical paradigm, which rejects that knowledge is either contemporaneous or solely the result of human interaction but is historically shaped and socially located (Cornbleth, 1990). Research within this paradigm, aims not only to report but also to critique and transform social structures (Schempp & Choi, 1994; Guba & Lincoln 1994).

The purpose of the research in this project was to gain understanding within a social context. It can be argued therefore, that the nature of this inquiry is ideally located within an interpretive paradigm, and it is necessary to critically consider this paradigm in more detail. Denzin and Lincoln (1994; 2000) describe a constructivist-interpretive paradigm, which assumes a relativist ontology (there are multiple

realities), a subjectivist epistemology (knower and respondent co-create understanding) and a naturalistic (in the natural world) set of methodological procedures. For these authors, such assumptions and methodological processes define the research process. Thus, the gendered and culturally situated researcher approaches the world with a set of ideas, a framework (ontology) that specifies a set of questions (epistemology) that are then examined (methodology) in specific ways. There is an intimate and inseparable relationship between the socially constructed nature of reality, the researcher, what is studied and the situational constraints that shape inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). However, both Bryman (1988, 1992a, 1996) and Hammersley (1996) argue that epistemology and method are in fact not related, and they reject the notion that paradigm influences choice of methods. Hammersley (1996) contends that research does not fall neatly into one or other belief system, and that multiple methodological dimensions involve a range of positions. In addition, Hammersley (1996) proposes a system of 'methodological eclecticism', which emphasises the practical nature of research, rather than a linear relationship between philosophical commitment, research topic and research strategy. Bryman's (1996) view is not dissimilar. He argues for a separation of the technical and the epistemological, a position that has received some support (Henwood, 1996; Patton, 1990). The selection of method, it is argued, should be based entirely on pragmatic consideration, so that any choice of method should not tie the researcher exclusively and ineluctably to a particular epistemological viewpoint (Bryman, 1996). For Bryman, the key question is not whether there is an appropriate fit between epistemology and method, but whether there is an appropriate fit between the research question and method. This approach, whilst appealing, does provide a "simplifying gloss" (Henwood, 1996, p.28) over issues that cannot be ignored. An individual's belief system or paradigm does not revolve around technical issues, because the techniques of research are flexible and no method of data collection is inherently linked to any one epistemological view (Sparkes, 1992). That is where I concur with Hammersley and Bryman. Indeed, Lincoln and Guba (2000) contend that 'qualitative' and 'quantitative' methods can be used appropriately with any research paradigm. Consequently, as Sparkes contends, techniques of data collection do not constitute the uniqueness of a paradigm. However, the key point that the approach advocated by Hammersley and Bryman appears to omit is that the choice of research strategy and technique is rarely independent of ontological and epistemological issues (Bulmer,

1984). Fundamentally, the researcher's basic assumptions concerning the nature of reality, truth, and the social world infuse all aspects of the investigative process (Earls, 1986).

The research in this project was conducted within an interpretive framework. The approach used is summarised by Woolcott (1990a) who asserts "I do not go about trying to discover a ready made world; rather I seek to understand a social world we are continuously in the process of constructing" (p.149). This paradigm enabled a recognition of the intimate relationship between the researcher and the researched and the situational constraints that shape enquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). This would force me to look beyond the surface to construct description that could move knowledge and understanding forward. This, I felt, would aid in illuminating the little known and understood practical coaching context and deepen understanding of the complexity of the coaching process.

In summary, it is important to note that there is no clear window into the inner life of an individual (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000), and no method can deliver on ultimate truth (Lincoln & Guba, 2000), or indeed, grasp all the subtle variations in ongoing human experience (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). *However, it might be argued that some methods are more suitable than others for conducting research on human construction of social realities (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This informed my choice of methods. Indeed, in this research, I deployed a range of interpretive methods designed to assist in a better understanding of the coaching process, and the practical coaching context. These methods and the reason for their choice are now considered in detail.*

### 3.3 *Methods*

There were a number of issues that I considered when deliberating on the choice of methods for this research, not least of which were those related to paradigm (see research Paradigm section, p.66). I wanted to be able to capture complexity as it happened, where it happened. That is, I needed methods that would chronicle and portray complex events and situations in language specific to the events themselves (DeMarco et al., 1990). I also needed the flexibility to be able to probe the meanings and varieties of shared experiences between the coaches and the players. As has been argued above, the uniqueness of a paradigm is not defined by its method, therefore, I could have used any methods to collect my data. However, I felt that quantitative methods, for example systematic observation frequently used to investigate coaching,

would not provide me with the detail that I required. This view was reinforced by examining existing research into coaching, and the methods used (see Review of Literature, p.10). For example, according to Kahan (1999) “it would seem that due to its nomothetic pursuit, systematic observation is incongruous with and insensitive to the peculiarities of coaching and the unique conditions under which coaches act” (p.42). Furthermore,

“what seems clear is that too many studies have adopted a quantitative survey approach. In addition, the need for the control of variables and reliable operationalisation of constructs has militated against a more insightful and interpretive investigation of values, behaviours and context” (Lyle, 1999, p.30).

There seemed to be a growing awareness that coaching research had paid insufficient attention to coaches’ and players’ thoughts and feelings and had not captured the subtlety and scope of the coaching process (Bloom, Durand, Bush & Salmela, 1997; Lyle, 1999). This, then, suggested “a shift away from positivistic effectiveness studies toward more naturalistic studies that use multiple data collection methods” (Kahan, 1999, p.43) a sentiment echoed in a variety of studies (Bloom et al., 1997; Lyle, 1999; Potrac et al., 2000; Cote et al., 1995). Furthermore, I wanted to ensure that the data I obtained avoided reducing the complex social responses or behaviours into a maze of statistical calculations (Powney & Watts, 1987). So it seemed that an interpretive and naturalistic methodology would produce, not only the kind of insight that I was looking for, but add to existing knowledge about the coaching process. Indeed, a field-based qualitative methodological approach has been widely advocated to examine the complexity inherent in the coaching process (De Marco et al., 1996; Jones et al., 1997; Potrac et al., 2000; Sage, 1989; Streat, 1998). But, as yet, not many studies of this nature have been undertaken. I was also aware of the work of Cohen and Manion (1989) who assert that the teaching-learning environment is so complex that a single method approach yields only limited and sometimes misleading data. Therefore, it could be argued that a combination of methods produces a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under study (Pawson, 1996). Intuitively, it seemed to make sense to look at the coaching process and the practical coaching context from differing perspectives, not only methodologically, but also from the perspective of the chief ‘members’ namely the coaches and the players. The relevance of triangulation to the task of facilitating the elucidation of a complex phenomena is well documented (Cohen & Manion, 1989; Denzin, 1988; Denzin, 1989;

Patton, 1990; Silverman, 1993). It is important to note that at that stage, my thoughts regarding triangulation were not driven by concerns over ‘validity’ in the traditional sense, but simply a concern to generate meaningful data about the complex multi-faceted coaching process. I consider ‘validity’ in some depth in a later section dealing with the quality of the research and methodological rigour (p.103).

These considerations then confirmed the final research design: I was going to use a multiple method approach, and also seek to obtain a variety of perspectives. To this end, I would adopt a case study approach in the first instance, and immerse myself in the practical coaching context and coaching process in a club environment. I would then obtain further perspectives on the coaching process, including obtaining the perspective of players and coaches at the case study club and coaches outside the case study club. This, I hoped, would “broaden, thicken and deepen the interpretive base” (Denzin, 1989, p. 247) of the research. Bearing in mind my research question, and the type of detail I was hoping to obtain, it seemed that ethnography, a “picture of a way of life of some identifiable group of people” (Wolcott, 1990, p.188), was an appropriate approach.

### 3.3.1 *Ethnography*

Ethnography involves an ongoing attempt to place specific encounters, events and understandings into a fuller more meaningful context (Tedlock, 2000). It is both a process and a product, because ethnographers’ lives are embedded within their field experiences. A key assumption was that by entering into close and relatively prolonged interaction with people in their every-day lives, I could understand the beliefs, motivations and behaviours of the participants better than by using any other approach (Hammersley 1992). Indeed, Fetterman (1989) asserts that this insider’s perspective “is instrumental to understanding and accurately describing situations and behaviours...and is crucial to an understanding of why people think and act in the different ways they do”(p.30). Furthermore, Woods (1986) asserts that groups construct their own highly distinctive cultural realities. To understand them requires looking from the inside, thus representing reality structured in all its layers of social meaning (Woods, 1986). Within the ethnographic framework, I decided upon the methods of participant observation, individual semi-structured and unstructured interviews, and group interviews. Each of these methods will be considered individually, highlighting why they suited this research. I will also consider the

implications of the choice of these methods, in particular, the issue of the researcher as research instrument.

### 3.3.2 *Research Instrument; Person as Instrument*

Interaction between the data gatherer and the participants is inherent in the qualitative approaches of participant observation and interviewing. Indeed, it is inherent in all experimental and quasi-experimental methodologies applied to human beings, despite the myriad of measures to control it (Campbell & Stanley, 1963; Seidman, 1998). One major difference between the nomothetic and ideographic approaches to data collection is that in qualitative research, there is recognition and affirmation of the role of the instrument; the human being. This research is no exception: “Rather than decrying the fact that the instrument used to gather the data affects this process, we say that the human can be a marvellously smart, adaptable, flexible instrument who can respond to situations with skill” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.76). Although I would strive to ensure that meanings were as much a function of the participants' construction, reconstruction and reflection, I had to recognise that meaning would be, to some degree, a function of the participants' interaction with me; the instrument (Seidman, 1998). Indeed, Patton (1990) argues that only through recognising this interaction and affirming its possibilities can the researcher use his (sic) skill to minimise possible distortion. Becker (1967) however, contends that social analysis is always from someone's point of view and is therefore biased. Indeed Kirk (2000) goes on to say “social researchers cannot stop the world and get off while they carry out their studies” (p.2). My background and experience has to mean I see myself as biased. What was important for my research was how I dealt with this. According to Kirk (2000) it is important to make values explicit, and engage in reflexivity as part of the research process. Further, Hammersley and Gomm (1997) contend that research should be pursued in the way that ‘anyone’ would pursue it who is committed to discovering knowledge, whatever their personal characteristics or social position. I set about ‘collecting’ data with these points in mind. Moreover, I was aware that because of my biography, I would be involved in ‘generating’ as well as ‘collecting’ data (Kirk, 2000). I was “part of the action” (Kirk, 2000, p.2) and therefore aware of my bias, but not prejudiced by it. In fact, my biography, my bias, as will be seen, proved to be a strength more than it was a limitation in the methods that I chose. These methods are now considered, along with the specific procedures

adopted for each. Finally, I reflect on my role in the data collection and research process, providing a rationale for my claim that bias can, in fact, be a strength.

### 3.3.3 *Participant Observation*

Participant observation is “an omnibus field strategy” (Patton, 1990, p.206) in that it “simultaneously combines interviewing of respondents and informants, direct participation observation and introspection” (Denzin, 1978b, p.183). It is a central method in ethnography (Sparkes, 1992). Indeed, Adler and Adler (1994) characterise observation as “the fundamental base of all research methods in the social and behavioural sciences” (p.389). May (1999) contends that knowledge comes from experience and the undertaking of detailed and meticulous inquiry through which we generate our understandings. With that in mind, Lofland and Lofland (1984) define participant observation as “the process in which an investigator establishes a many-sided and relatively long-term relationship with a human association in its natural setting for the purposes of developing a scientific understanding of that association” (p.12); a definition that suggested that this method would be well suited to the purpose of this research.

Patton (1990) contends that there is simply no substitute for direct experience through participant observation. The purpose of the observational data was to describe the setting observed, the activities that took place in that setting, the people that participated in those activities, and the meanings of what was observed from the perspective of those observed. Direct personal contact with, and observations of, the coach and players would have several advantages. As the research instrument, I would be better able to understand the context within which the coaching process operated. Understanding the context and its inherent processes is essential to gaining a holistic perspective (Patton, 1990). Observational fieldwork would also offer me the opportunity to see things that may have routinely escaped conscious awareness among participants. In addition, direct observation would allow me to learn things about the coaching process, as well as coach and player behaviours, that participants may have been unwilling to talk about in interview. That said, interviewing was seen as a valuable adjunct to the multi-method approach. Before going on to consider the interview in detail, it was important to note that participant observation, as with all methods, is not without its critics (Cohen & Manion, 1989). These revolve, chiefly, around notions of accounts being subjective and idiosyncratic, and the danger that

prolonged exposure in the field might lead to losing my perspective and becoming blind to the peculiarities under investigation. The first issue seems to be concerned with notions of 'validity' and that is discussed later in the chapter (see *Reflexive Analysis of Research Quality*, p.99). The second, given my background, was always going to be a consideration, and my steps to counter this are described in the section on observation procedure (see p.82).

#### 3.3.4 *Interview*

In addition to participant observation, interviewing was to be used because it would allow individual participants the opportunity to relate their personal understanding of events and their context (Powney & Watts, 1987). If I was to undertake interviewing, however, some questions now arose affecting the overall research design. I had already decided to adopt a multi-method, multi-perspective research approach, but how would this approach work in practice? In other words what would I do first and why? If I were to use interview, when would I interview, who would I interview and why? Thinking about the rationale for the research helped with this dilemma. I wanted to produce a picture as Lyle (1999) describes, 'of' the coaching process and practical coaching context, that is, a conceptual appreciation that was grounded empirically, not a 'model' 'for' the coaching process and the practical coaching context where concepts are theoretical. This meant that I would be lead by the data. In effect I wanted to mesh theory and data (Bryman & Burgess, 1994).

Bearing this in mind, it became clear that there would be a benefit to undertaking participant observation first. In addition to its value in providing collaborative evidence or triangulation, was that a layer of data and analysis were already in place when the in-depth interviews occurred (Miller & Glassner, 1997). Interviewing would serve two purposes; firstly, it would 'test' the data already collected and also add a new dimension, with perhaps new or contradictory data. Interviews were considered valuable because they yield rich insights into people's experiences, opinions, aspirations and feelings (May, 1999). Indeed, in-depth interviewing has been suggested as the ideal type of interview for eliciting information from elite players and coaches (Cote et al., 1996; Marshall & Rossman, 1989). This is, it is suggested, because elite performers and experts respond well to broad issues and open ended questions that allow them to draw upon and demonstrate



their knowledge (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). The interview process would allow for an in-depth collection of information (Patton, 1990), enabling the line of enquiry to be modified, and underlying motives to be investigated (Robson, 1995). This would ensure that the respondent and I explored themes together, making the process reflexive (Sparkes & Templin, 1992): “Such a perspective is of great importance in any attempt to explain why people act in certain ways rather than other” (Sparkes, & Templin, 1992, p.121).

May (1999) identifies four types of interviews: the structured interview, the semi-structured interview, the unstructured or focused interview and the group interview. I considered that the most appropriate, bearing in mind the objectives of the research, would be drawn from the semi-structured to unstructured end of the interview continuum (Mcbride, 1989). The term ‘semi-structured’ is a somewhat nebulous one but it occurs frequently in the literature (Pawson, 1996). Moreover, at the simplest level the interview technique I was going to use fits the definition, because, in between the unstructured and structured methods sits the semi-structured interview that utilises techniques from both. This type of interview meant that I would be able to specify a framework of questions but I would be free to probe beyond the immediate answers given. This would offer opportunity for *gaining qualitative* information about the issue to be recorded, enabling both clarification and elaboration on the answers given. These types of interviews are said to allow people to answer on their own terms, but still provide a greater structure for comparability over that of the unstructured interview (May, 1999). Unstructured interviews would be utilised during the observations to gain clarification on things observed. This would be important to me because I could simply ask the coach to clarify, or give detail on things about which I was unclear, or needed to probe further. Many qualitative researchers differentiate between in-depth, unstructured interviewing and participant observation (Fontanna & Frey, 2000). Yet, as Lofland (1971) points out, the two go hand in hand, and many of the data gathered in participant observation come from informal interviewing in the field. Unstructured interviewing is an important facet of conducting fieldwork, and proved to be so in this case.

To broaden the understanding of the coaching process and the practical coaching context, I have already stated a desire to obtain multiple perspectives. From the review of literature, a clear case can be made that to facilitate greater understanding, it would be essential to probe the shared experiences and meanings of

the performers, as well as the coaches (DeMarco et al., 1996; Jones, 1997; Sage, 1989; Sayury & Durand, 1998). Consequently, the player perspectives of the coaching process, and the practical coaching context, would be examined. Whilst an individual interaction could have been used to this end, O' Brien (1993) contends that within a sensitive environment, such as dealing with youth players, the group interview context can have more success in encouraging participants to talk openly. The group interview is a data-gathering technique that relies upon the systematic questioning of several individuals simultaneously in a formal or informal setting (Fontana & Frey, 2000). The term focus group is often used in this type of situation (Merton, Fiske, & Kendall, 1956). It was felt that group interviews constituted a valuable tool of investigation allowing me to focus upon group norms and dynamics around issues relevant to the coaching process. In addition, Morgan (1988) outlines the value of linking the focus group to individual interviewing and participant observation for triangulation purposes. Furthermore, focus groups are useful in investigating what participants think, but excel at uncovering *why* participants think as they do (Johnson, 1996). Stewart and Shamdasani (1990) summarise the utility of focus groups thus;

“The spontaneous interaction of focus group members often produces insights that are not obtained readily, if ever, in individual surveys or experiments. Focus groups are designed to help understand how individuals contextualise, and categorise phenomena” (p.141).

### 3.3.5 *Research Design and Methods*

In summary then, the final research design and associated methods looked like this. I would engage in participant observation at a club, watching the coaches and players engage in the practical coaching context and the coaching process. Unstructured interviews would be used during the fieldwork to gain extra insight and clarification. I would draw from this data, and develop themes that would then be tested, expanded, contradicted, or added to, with the intention to broaden the data and subsequent analysis. This would be done in three ways; firstly, through group interviews with players from the observed coaching context; secondly, through in-depth semi-structured interviews with the coaches from the observed coaching context and finally, through in-depth, semi-structured interviews with coaches from other

coaching contexts. With research design in place and methods agreed, questions of participants and access followed.

### *3.4 Access; Who to Ask, How to Get In*

The participants in this research were selected through consideration of two main criteria. Firstly, the criteria on expert coaches detailed in the work of Cote et al. (1995) were employed, that is, years in the job, level of coaching, number of players produced (see also Coach Expertise section, p.37). These criteria were applied by Cote in selecting participants when researching the expertise of international coaches in an individual sport, so whilst not directly transferable, they helped inform my selection decisions. The second criteria were the notion of purposive sampling (Cohen & Manion, 1989): that is, participants are selected on the basis of their typicality and relevance to the research. Having considered these two criteria and identified potential participants, the next issue was access. I felt that I had to become, to a certain extent, an active part of a football club. Just 'hanging around' would be impractical and simply not good enough. Gaining access to professional football was never going to be easy, so aware of the insular nature of the industry as a whole, and the likely reaction to pleas for assistance, I attempted to pursue several contacts within the professional game. However, some attitudes I came across were not dissimilar to Parker (1996) who had a response like; "I get loads of people like you coming to me wanting to do studies on football, an' I tell 'em all the same, there's nothing you can tell me about professional football that I don't already know" (p.282). I then had a lengthy conversation with a colleague who said that he would help me with access. However, even he, someone with whom I had worked and known for two years, was cautious about my motives, concerned that at the end of the season "you'll know all there is to know about our training methods, and this football club". Without a doubt my coaching work at another club, whilst in my eyes unrelated, was making some of my potential respondents wary of letting me into their inner sanctums; I might be a 'spy'. Therefore, I gave serious attention to the way I approached clubs. A judicious mix of approaches by letter, (with assurances about my research purposes stating as much about what I wasn't interested in as I was) along with strategically placed phone calls eventually bore fruit. A club, who shall go by the pseudonym Albion Rovers F.C., was interested in meeting me and discussing my proposed research. At the meeting, the Academy Director and his Technical Advisor acknowledged the

problems of organisational access within professional football. However, from the outset they displayed a genuine interest in my research, *although a feeling of quid pro quo*, whilst never stated, was always present; they were not going to give me access for nothing. The Academy Director, in particular, was keen to adopt ‘new scientific’ approaches to football, and saw my work as a way of informing this. At the meeting, I described the broad aims of my research, and again reiterated that I was not interested in ‘training secrets’. The Technical Advisor suggested that it would be useful for the club to have feedback from me on a reasonably regular basis. We discussed the format for this and agreed that I would produce a research report. I tried to get agreement on where I could go, especially regarding the dressing room areas on match days, which I knew would be an excellent source of data but also a very sensitive area at the club. Without a yes or a no, it was suggested we see how things went. I also asked about note taking and recordings, and with assurances about confidentiality it was agreed that I could utilise both methods. So with some ground rules established, forming a tacit access agreement, I had obtained access and a start date was agreed. Later on in the research, some 5 months into the fieldwork, a similar strategy was employed to gain access to interview participants from elsewhere and five top-level coaches agreed to take part in interviews.

#### 3.4.1 *Meet the Participants*

Albion Rovers F.C is a medium size football club that has been in existence for over a hundred years. Like so many other clubs it has seen better days but is very ambitious for the future. The club was one of the 38 Football Association (F.A.) registered Academies in the season 1999/2000. At the 92 professional football clubs in England, full-time youth sections are either a ‘Centre of Excellence’ or an Academy. To become an Academy clubs have to meet standards regarding their facilities, qualifications of staff, provision of education and welfare and so on. The training ground, where the majority of the observations took place, is situated in a leafy suburb away from the ‘main ground’. All the teams; the first team, the reserves and the Academy team trained at this facility. The Academy team, because of their ‘day release’ educational commitments at the local college, also trained at the college on a Tuesday afternoon. At Albion, I observed and interviewed the following staff.

- The Academy Director ‘Andy’, was in his early fifties and had been involved in football most of his life as a coach after his playing career was

cut short by injury. 'Andy' had coached and managed at a range of professional clubs at first team, reserve and youth team level.

- 'Greg' was 'Andy's assistant, and the coach in day-to-day charge of the youth team. He was in his early forties and been a very successful player in the F.A. Premier League with in excess of 500 league appearances. He had been an assistant manager at another League club, but was now working with youth players.

The youth section was divided into two age groups, those under 17 and those under 19. 'Andy', while being in overall charge, concerned himself mainly with 'Greg' and the under 19's.

- 'Pete' was in charge of the under 17's. He was in his early thirties, and had played in the United States and in England professionally before dropping out of the game to return to Albion Rovers as a part-time coach, but now was full-time.

As the under 17's constituted only 4 full-time boys, (the rest were school-boys, in their final year at school), the two groups were mixed together for training, so 'Pete' assisted 'Greg'. On match days and for training during the evening and in school holidays, 'Pete' was assisted by 'Bob'.

- 'Bob' worked part-time for the club. He was in his early forties and had been a full-time youth coach at other clubs on and off for 20 years.
- 'Dean' was the technical advisor who also oversaw education and welfare. He assisted, and in some cases led, sessions with both under 17's and under 19's.

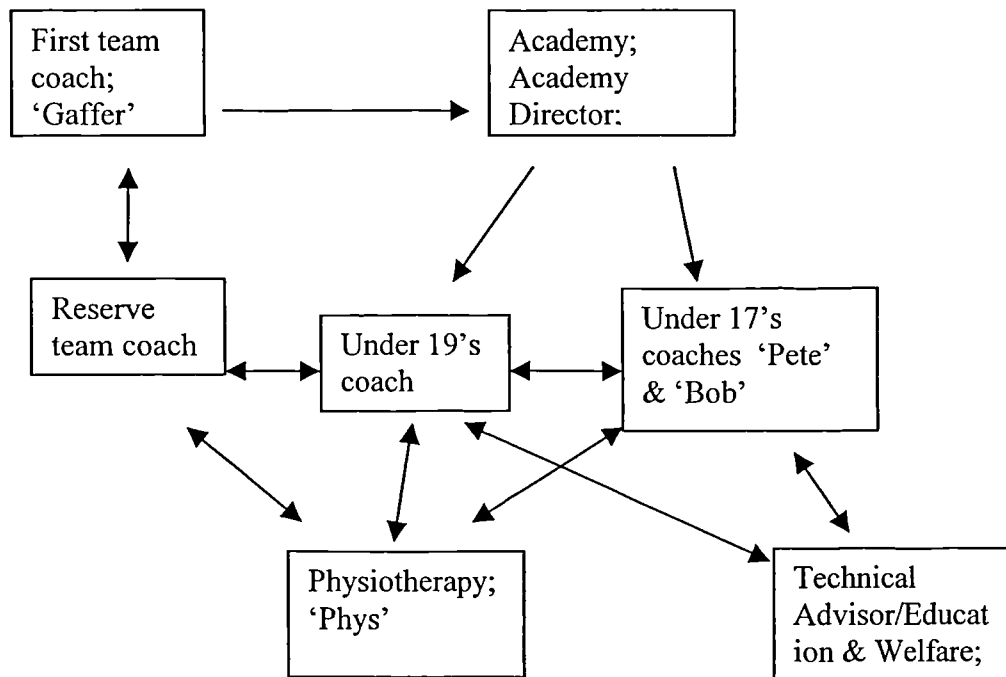
Other staff at Albion Rovers who interacted with the coaches and players, but were not interviewed, were the first team manager 'Gaffer', the reserve team coach 'RTC', and the Academy physiotherapist 'phys'. See figure 3.1 below.

The group interview participants came from the full-time players at the Academy at Albion Rovers. They were:

- S, a first year professional (3<sup>rd</sup> year after joining from school) but still under 19,
- M, a second year (from joining from school) under 19,
- A, first year under 17,
- T, second year under 19,

- J second year under 19,
- J, first year under 17,
- N, second year under 19 and
- R second year under 19.

Figure 3.1. Club Structure Albion Rovers F.C



The in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with following coaches from other clubs;

- ‘Paul s’ was in his late thirties and had been a non-league player and coach before getting his current position. At his club there was only one youth team, an under 18 side, and ‘Paul s’ had complete control. Paul s’s club was not an Academy but had remained a Centre of Excellence.
- ‘Jim w’ in his early thirties, had been a community based coach, then worked for the governing body the F.A., then returned to a club where he was now Academy Director, coaching both the under 17’s and under 19’s.
- ‘Jeff c’ was in his late fifties and had worked in youth development for a variety of clubs both in England and overseas, he had also been a national team coach at youth level. ‘Jeff c’ was also an Academy director, but now only coached the under 19’s.

- ‘Keith n’ was in his late thirties and was an assistant to the academy director at his club. He had been coaching youth players for 15 years, after failing to make a career as a player. He was the coach for the under 19’s team.
- ‘Derek e’, a current national team manager, in his mid-fifties, had worked at both youth and senior level in professional football in England and overseas. He was also deeply involved in coach development and education, working with the governing body the F.A.

### *3.5 Procedure; What I did*

#### *3.5.1 Observation Procedure*

Participant Observation involved the observation of the coaches and players from Albion Rovers during the course of training sessions and games over the 1999/2000 season, including pre-season. I arrived on the 26<sup>th</sup> July, and left at the beginning of May the following year. I observed between two and four days of each week, largely depending on the games, training and educational schedule of the players. A distinguishing feature of observational strategy is that, I, to some extent, was a participant in the setting being studied. The extent of participation is a continuum that varies from complete immersion as a full participant to complete separation from the setting as a spectator (Patton, 1990). There is a great deal of variation along the continuum between these two extremes. Indeed, the extent of participation can change over time. In this research, whilst I never actively coached the group, my participation usually involved assisting in organisational matters, for example, placing out markers for the boundaries of practices and assisting the coach with the organisation of equipment. More often than not I was more of a spectator.

I produced comprehensive written field-notes from observation and transcripts from audio taped sources. All field notes were descriptive, were dated and recorded key items such as; where the observation took place, whom was present, what the physical setting was, what social interactions occurred and what activities took place. As agreed at my meeting to gain access, I openly took extensive notes of the events at which I was present. Immediately following those sessions I would go back over those notes to fill in any missing detail and check on the comprehensiveness of the

observation. Often, usually during the evening following the day's observation, I found myself recalling instances or events or linking these with remarks made. I found myself always having my notebook nearby to continually add detail to observations. Thus, it was the field observations, as planned, which provided the focus for the subsequent semi-structured interviews. Taken together, these diverse sources of information and data gave a fuller picture of the wider context of the coaching process.

Patton (1990) suggests that it is impossible to expect to have the same degree of closeness to, or distance from, each group or faction within the research setting. I found that during the course of the season that my relationship with 'Greg' (Under 19 coach) and 'Andy' (Academy Director) changed. I think this was very much a two way process. The other staff reacted to my presence to varying degrees with 'Dean' (Education, Welfare and Technical Advisor) in particular, always taking an active interest in my work. Initially, however, I had serious concerns over relational rejection. In the words of Gans (1982) I lacked "the personal security to banish rejection fears to feel free to observe fully and to take in as much data as possible" (p. 58). As a result, initially, I was very neutral when asked for an opinion, but later on in the fieldwork, once I realised that my view was genuinely being sought and not some kind of test, I felt happier expressing an opinion about a given situation. In the early stages of the fieldwork I generally agreed or remained non-committal, and, in some instances kept negative opinions to myself, in effect withholding the truth. Of course this presents all sorts of ethical issues both professional and personal (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983; Fine, 1993). But as a beginning researcher seeking to secure long term acceptance in the club, the long-term research interests took precedence over such issues. Indeed, I was aware of the 'gate-keeping' (Silverman, 2000) power and potential of 'Andy' (Academy Director) and more particularly 'Greg' (Under 19 coach), that meant that he, more than anyone else, could quite simply demolish my research plans if I overstepped the relational bounds in play.

It has been agreed that an observer's presence, after a while, ceases to be novel enough to be disruptive (Angrosino & Mays de Perez, 2000). Certainly, I became able to move around the club and interact with the staff who learnt that I was someone who can be trusted. Indeed, my improved relationship with 'Greg' (Under 19 coach) in particular meant that he asked my opinion more and more and we developed a good rapport. It would be true to say that I became accepted and well known at the club, to



the extent that during my visits the security staff stopped issuing me with a pass. Furthermore, staff and players from the first team and reserves would acknowledge me around the club. With the Academy staff in particular, this level of acceptance manifested itself in several ways. Relations were enhanced by the fact that through my own coaching experience, I was well versed in the complexity and details of the sub-cultural language and 'shop talk' and, therefore, could be included in the range of discussions between the coaches. My own biographical experiences of football and coaching culture appeared to stimulate and increase the feeling of insider relational resonance (Hobbs, 1988; Parker 1996). It was upon this basis of mutual commonality that I was able to build more meaningful relationships with the coaching staff.

Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) note that there may be a danger of what they describe as 'over-rapport'. They describe this at two levels; firstly, an over identification with one group preventing social mobility, such that relationships, within a setting, become impaired. This happened to me to a certain extent, my relationship with the coaching staff resulted with me maintaining some distance from the players. This distance evolved rather than being any conscious decision on my part. Only four of the squad spoke to me in any detail, although the rest would acknowledge my existence in the setting with an "alright Chris". I believed, and this was confirmed in the player interviews, that this was due to my association with 'Greg'. Attempting to cultivate good relations with him meant, inevitably, that I associated with him the most (talking with him, eating with him and so on). This positioned me squarely in the 'staff camp'. My symbolic behaviour, and arguably, in the players' eyes, over-rapport with the coaches, impacted on the players' attitudes. I perhaps represented, in a very insecure environment where any 'new face' is looked upon suspiciously, perhaps as some form of occupational threat (Parker, 1996).

The second, and perhaps, more serious level of 'over-rapport' is where in the field I could over-identify with the respondents' perspectives and miss or misunderstand what was being observed. This would mean my biased view becoming a prejudiced one. I dealt with it in a number of ways, essentially a combination of methodological rigour (see Methodological Rigour section, p.103) and trying to maintain a more or less marginal position. Because of my biography I was, perhaps, over sensitive to the dangers of 'over-rapport'. I thought carefully about my relationship with 'Greg', sometimes turning down his offers to spend time with him

away from coaching sessions. I sought to maintain a relationship poised between stranger and friend (Everhart, 1977).

I actively cultivated what Patton (1990) describes as a key informant; this was 'Dean' (Education, Welfare and Technical Advisor). The key informant was used as a source of information about what I, as the observer, was unable to experience as well as a source of explanation for events that I had actually witnessed. I felt that the key informant in this instance, because of his position and experience, was particularly knowledgeable and articulate and his insight proved very useful in helping my understanding of events. Further, he yielded information regarding staff activity to which I did not have direct access, such as some staff meetings where I was not invited and particularly some team talks on match days where the players had not performed well. I was, however, ever mindful that the information obtained from the key informant represented his perception, rather than an objective truth. Indeed, there was an underlying tension between 'Greg' and 'Dean'. This stemmed from 'Dean' not being an ex-professional player and having to fight hard to obtain full-time work; whereas, the less qualified, (in coaching terms) 'Greg' could effectively jump over him in the hierarchy. As a result, *data from the key informant were clearly specified* as such in the field notes.

Patton (1990) argues that feedback can be a major part of the verification process in fieldwork. This is discussed in detail in the section on data analysis and the quality of the research, however it did form a part of the observation procedure. Part of the reciprocity or the *quid pro quo* of the fieldwork was an agreement to provide the academy, via 'Dean', a descriptive report about what had been observed. To this end, an observational report was given twice during the course of the season. The benefits to the research were that it enabled me to share some evidence of what the data looked like and to learn from the reactions of those who were described in the data. From this, themes were modified and lines of enquiry came to the fore. Indeed, the participants, through this process, aided in finalising themes from which interview schedules were developed.

#### 3.4.2 *Interview procedure*

As the season progressed, and I collected and analysed more data, I had the structure and outline of questions that I would take to the interviewing stage of the process. I therefore began the individual semi-structured and group interview stage of

the data collection. In practice, interviewing individual coaches and group player interviews ran concurrently. But for the purpose of clarity here, I will describe the procedure for individual interviews first. Moser and Kalton (1983) propose three necessary conditions for successfully completing interviews. Although their comments were directed toward what they term the survey interview, the issues raised are worthy of general consideration and I applied them in this research. The first condition is that of accessibility; this refers to whether or not the interviewee has access to the information that the interviewer seeks. The use of purposive sampling (described earlier in the chapter) along with initial approaches by letter and telephone to clubs stating my research aims, ensured that this first condition was fulfilled. A second condition is that of cognition; that is an understanding by the person being interviewed of what is required in the role of interviewee. When coaches were approached to take part in this phase of the study, they were informed of the information that would be required of them and also what was expected of them during the course of the interview. This was, it should be noted, a condition to gain access to some of the participants. Indeed, both 'Keith n' and 'Jim w', in addition to my initial approach letter' required further information regarding the purpose of my research and the 'sort of things we'll be talking about'. I felt that this clarification was not only practical but made sound ethical sense. The third issue related to the above was that of motivation. Failure to maintain interest during the interview can affect the resultant data (Moser & Kalton 1983). To ensure that this matter was considered and acted upon during the course of the interviews, I used a range of questioning techniques. A combination of directive or closed questions was used, together with non-directive or open questions that allowed more latitude for the response. In addition probing, which is defined as "encouraging the respondent to give an answer or to clarify or amplify and answer" (Hoinville & Jowell 1987, 101) was used.

As a result of my past experiences in the world of football, I was acquainted with all but one of the coaches before interviewing them. The interviews lasted between one and two-and-a-half-hours. All of the interviews took place at the coaches' offices before or after a training session. I ensured that the same format was used for each interview. I began each interview by giving general information regarding the purpose of the research and then focussed on background questions. I probed the coaches' knowledge and experiences using a combination of closed, open ended and simulation questions drawn from the interview guide outlined in appendix

1. Although the interview guide provided the topics to be explored, any new issues that emerged from each interview and that were deemed relevant to the objectives of the research were explored and probed. This flexibility from the interviewer is essential when interviewing participants deemed to be high level or expert in their field because any restrictions placed on the informants can narrow the scope of the interview and interfere with the eliciting process (Reitman-Olson & Biolsi, 1991). Cote et al. (1995) argue that great demands are placed on the interviewer when working with experts because generally the interviewer has less knowledge on the topic than the informant. One of my roles as interviewer, therefore, was to establish my competence, and this was achieved by following the suggestion of Marshall and Rossman (1989) who propose that the interviewer should project an accurate understanding of the problem through “acute and judicious questioning” (p.94.).

To assure the authenticity of the coaches' responses, I regularly asked the coaches to identify specific situations from their training and competition experiences that highlighted the views they expressed. I attempted to probe the issues revealed by the coach until no new information, as far as possible, was provided. I used the terms, language, and frame of reference of the coach being interviewed. I ensured that no leading questions, giving hints as to what would be an appropriate or desirable answer, were asked. I appeared, as far as possible, neutral regarding the direction of the interview, and was caring and supportive toward the coach and the coach's willingness to share their knowledge and experience. I emphasised this during the interviews with body signs of verbal tracking such as nodding and with words of support and praise. This type of relationship during the interview helped to create a context where coaches felt comfortable and motivated to share their knowledge and experiences (Patton 1990). An additional method for encouraging interviewees to talk back was to encourage the coach to develop *cultural stories* (Miller & Glassner, 1997). This involved the coach being asked to weave their personal experience into a larger cultural story from their experience. So, rather than ask pointed questions, I attempted to get the coaches to tell stories about events, experiences or situations; then I probed these to get at further information.

A full verbatim transcription of each interview was completed as soon as possible after an interview was undertaken. Only minor editing procedures were performed on the data, deleting mainly names and references that threatened the anonymity of the coach's, or personal references to player's or coach's made during

the interview. As soon as a transcription was completed, it was read numerous times. This process helped me to ensure 1) familiarity with each coach's interview, 2) that continual checking of the credibility, plausibility and trustworthiness of the interview process was completed, 3) facilitation of the later phase of data analysis. This interrelated process of data collection and data consideration permitted a thorough examination of the issues perceived as important by the coaches. Arguably, this method gave weight to the concepts elicited because the concepts were grounded in the coach's reality as opposed to my reality or to other rigid methodological procedures (Glaser & Strauss 1967).

### *3.4.3 Group Interview Procedure*

I conducted two focus group interviews. Both lasted two hours and both were conducted at the Albion club training ground. The research guidelines with regard to group size were duly noted, however, as May (1999) suggests the size of the group will depend on circumstances over which the researcher may have no control as well as the aims of the investigation. In this study, the size of the group interview (in this case four participants plus myself) was largely dictated by the demands of Albion Rovers and the time that the players could be spared from their training schedule. The number that I used, four, is however, within the parameters recommended by Morgan (1988) for group interpretation. I did ask the club to ensure that those who participated in the group interviews were not solely from one year group, thus having representatives from first, second and third year scholars.

In addition to being audio-taped, the focus groups were video-taped to help me in identifying who said what, when more than one player was speaking. Apart from this difference, the procedure outlined in the interview section above was followed as "the skills required to conduct the group interview are not significantly different for individual interview" (Fontana & Frey, 2000, p. 652). However, I was mindful of two specific problems during the interview and took steps to minimise their impact. Firstly, I kept one or two participants from dominating the group. Secondly, I attempted to obtain responses from all members of the group to ensure the fullest coverage. This included encouraging recalcitrant participants to contribute.

### *3.6 Reflecting on Data Collection*

During the course of collecting the field-notes and interview data and, indeed, while analysing the data and even after the data collection had finished, I was aware of, and sensitive to, a number of issues regarding the process of data collection. These I came to realise were not abstract theoretical concerns, but real, practical issues concerning my role in the research process as a whole. This section reflects on the process of data collection in this research. In practice, reflection was a two-tiered process whilst collecting and analysing the data; firstly, reflection and introspection related to my experiences in relation to the data being collected and, secondly, the impact of my presence on the data being collected. The ‘validity’ of the data is considered in detail in a later section.

It did not follow that I would be able to comprehend the research as though it were uncontaminated by my social presence (Patton, 1990). Indeed, I could not assume that the data collected would have somehow naturally occurred without being mediated by my theoretical concerns and biography (May, 1999). However, to assist in understanding the social reality of the coaching process, I had to directly experience that reality (Bryman 1988b). For this research, the aim of understanding was actually enhanced by considering how I was affected by the social scene, what went on within it and how the coaches and players acted within, and interpreted, their social situations (Patton, 1990). Furthermore, being part of the social world which we study “is not a matter of methodological commitment it is an existential fact”. (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, p.15). My own cultural equipment was therefore used reflexively to understand social action in context. The idea of reflexivity

“implies that the orientations of researchers will be shaped by their socio-historical locations including the values and interests that these locations confer upon them. What this represents is a rejection of the idea that social research is or can be carried out in some autonomous realm that is insulated from the wider society and from the particular biography of the researcher” (Hammersley & Atkinson 1993, p.16).

In effect, as Angrosino and Mays de Perez (2000) contend, because I was a member/observer I was, therefore, an artefact of the very situation of cultural displacement that I intended to study. It was not, in fact, possible to resolve the tension between what I am and what I had to become in the field. Rather than fret about the tension, it may now be time to “find some practical use” (Wolf, 1996, p.

217) for it. Was, as Clifford (1983a) questions, observational objectivity either desirable or feasible as a goal? Perhaps the 'practical use' of my presence in the research is best explained because my coaching background did influence and shape the research process. For me, this background was in fact something of a research imperative. Failure to meet a degree of experiential criteria would have undoubtedly limited my access to the inner sanctums of the club and the coaches' worlds, and would have also limited access not only to subsequent interview participants, but valuable data. Furthermore, my coaching background did much to offset my 'academic' status, important in an environment where anyone with a university background is termed a 'boffin' or 'prof'. Moreover, I felt it enhanced my relationships with the coaches and prevented any feelings of aloofness and distance that, in turn, added a richness to the data collected. It certainly affected 'Greg' and the way he approached his work, although his manner and behaviour acquired over many years were not affected by me as these remarks may suggest:

"I think that having you here has kept me on me toes, I knew you would be watching so I tried a bit harder, I thought oh oh, that cunt's gonna be watching me again!"

(Field notes, 8th May 2000).

Probing this remark further.

"I 'd come in see you there and get me session down on paper, you know, look like I was organised"

(Field notes, 8th May 2000).

As far as the interviewing was concerned the issue of my social presence and background came to the fore, as did the nature of the data collected and what that data represented. Firstly, the issue of my presence. Miller and Glassner (1997) contend that qualitative interviewing should embrace the place and fullness of the interviewer's life within the interview context. Indeed, Smith (1987) argues that scholarship should preserve in it the presence, concerns and the experience of the researcher so that the subjectivity that exists in all social research will be a visible part of the project and thus available to the reader for examination. Furthermore, Harding (1987) notes that when the researcher appears as a real historical individual with concrete specific desires and interests, the research process can be scrutinised. Whilst reflecting on the data collection, I have attempted to be true to these sentiments by not producing an

author-evacuated text (Geertz, 1988), but by representing myself as an integral part of the research process.

Of a practical concern, as well as an epistemological one, was the issue of how interviewees responded to me based upon who I was in their lives as well as the social categories to which I belong (May, 1999). Interviewing took place in a social interaction context that is influenced by that context (Fontana & Frey, 2000). I attempted to recognise this fact and was sensitive to how interaction would influence responses (Procter & Padfield, 1998). Some researchers have argued that interviewers should be members of the groups under study in order to have the subjective knowledge necessary to truly understand their life experiences (Silverman, 1997; 2000). For example, Collins (1990) argues that in order to make legitimate knowledge claims, researchers should have lived or experienced their material in some fashion. May (1999) points to the importance of not only the role of the interviewer, but also the characteristics of the interviewer, suggesting that different background characteristics may illicit different responses from interviewees. He argues that homogeneity of characteristics between interviewer and interviewee will guard against the substitution of the interviewer's words for the respondents. With this issue in mind Miller and Glassner (1997) propose the concept of social distance between interviewer and interviewee. Arguably, one of the strengths of the interviews conducted in this research was that my coaching background ensured a narrowing of the social distance and, thus, enhanced the depth of the data obtained. Indeed, in the section describing the interview procedure above, I stated that I attempted to stay neutral in the interview process, however, the interviews, on reflection, were more robust, lively, encounters. Whilst I attempted not to direct the respondents' answers and, in that sense, was neutral, my knowledge and background enabled me to engage and probe deeply the coaches' experiences and knowledge.

Once I had collected the interview data, I had to consider what the data represented. Silverman (1993) highlights the dilemma facing interview researchers concerning what to make of their data. An interpretive paradigm, or more specifically a constructionist view, suggests that no knowledge about a reality in the social world can be obtained from the interview. This is because the interview is obviously and exclusively an interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee in which both participants create and construct narrative versions of the social world (Miller & Glassner, 1997; Fontana & Frey, 2000). Indeed, I realised that the interviews were not



neutral tools of data gathering but active interactions between two or more people leading to negotiated, contextually-based results (Fontana, & Frey, 2000).

The detailed nature of the research paradigm adopted in this research is discussed in full detail in an earlier section of this chapter (see Research Paradigm section, p.66), however, the dilemma presented by adopting a constructionist view is worthy of further consideration when reflecting on the interviews. Put succinctly, in order to use the interview data it has to be argued that knowledge about social worlds is, in fact, achievable through in-depth interviewing. It must be remembered that the purpose of the interview and indeed all of the methods that I used in this research was to “generate data which give an authentic insight into people’s experiences” (Silverman 1993, p.91). I have to accept that social research cannot provide a mirror reflection of the social world but that it may provide access to the meanings that people attribute to their experiences and social worlds (Miller & Glassner, 1997). Whilst the interview was an interaction between me the coaches and players, this should not discount the possibility that knowledge of the social world beyond the interaction can be obtained (Silverman, 2000). Indeed, it is only in the context of in-depth, qualitative interviews that recognise and build on interactive components that inter-subjective depth and deep mutual understanding can be achieved (Miller & Glassner, 1997). A key reason for choosing qualitative interviewing was that it provided a means for exploring the points of view of the coaches and players “while granting these points of view the culturally honoured status of reality” (Miller & Glasner, 1997, p.100).

As has been earlier stated, this research has been conducted from the perspective that individuals create and maintain meaningful worlds. To assume that realities beyond the interview concept cannot be tapped into and explored is “to grant narrative omnipotence” (Miller & Glassner, 1997 p.102). As Dawson and Prus (1995) and Schmitt (1993) contend the roots of these realities are more fundamental and pervasive. An illustration of this is found in the work of Charmaz (1995) when interviewing the chronically ill, it is argued that people experience sickness regardless of whether they participated in the interviews and, so, it can be noted about this study; the coaches conducted training sessions and interacted with their players whether or not they were interviewed.

Language shapes meanings but also permits inter-subjectivity and the ability of willing persons to create and maintain meaningful worlds (Dawson & Pruz, 1993).

By recognising this, the proposition that interviews do not yield information about social worlds must be rejected; instead I accept that two persons can communicate their perceptions to one another. However, as Denzin (1991) contends “there is no way to stuff a real live person between the two covers of a text” (p.130) but it is possible to describe truthfully de-limited segments of real person’s lives and experiences. Indeed, Denzin (1991) notes that the subject is more than can be contained in a text and a text is only a reproduction of what the subject has told us. He describes representation in the form of language as something that displaces the thing it is supposed to represent so that what is always given is a trace, but not *the* lived experience. In addition, the language of interviewing fractures the story being told. This is inevitable as a narrative can only ever be partial because it cannot be infinite (Miller & Glassner, 1997). The process of collecting and analysing interview data results in further fractures because ultimately people’s experiences are told in part and not presented in their wholeness (Charmaz 1995) (see also Data Analysis, p95). The interview data were not an ‘ideal text’, but an exploration of the subjective reality of the coaches and players. I sought an insider’s perspective, and attempted to place it within the broader practical coaching context and the coaching process.

### *3.7 Data Analysis, Synthesis and Presentation*

#### *3.7.1 Introduction*

Analysis, in reality, was not a distinct stage of the research process, indeed, qualitative research cannot be reduced to set stages or particular techniques (Bryman & Burgess, 1994). As Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) suggest, analysis actually begins in the pre-fieldwork phase in the formulation and clarification of the research question. So rather than happening at the end, analysis played a part throughout the course of the research. Moreover, during the fieldwork, data analysis and collection were inextricably linked, with analysis leading to new questions and meanings that were tested in the field and against other data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Karp, 1989). However, as Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) contend, the dialectic between data collection and analysis is difficult to sustain in practice. Thus, the overall analysis took the form of progressive focussing (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995), involving a gradual shift from data collection and analysis, to analysis and description, to writing up, analysis and theorising. I likened the process to moving up Dey’s (1993) “iterative spiral” (p.53). This process involved three levels, the edges of which blurred and often

overlapped. Firstly, the organisation of rich and diverse unstructured data from field notes and interview; secondly, that the organisation and classification produced a descriptive account of the coaching process. Description of this kind can be of great value (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995) providing us with knowledge about the coaching process in elite youth football hitherto unknown. These data connected to one another, interacting to represent the coaching process at Albion. This connecting is analytically powerful in itself (Dey, 1993), but importantly, does not bring us to understand 'why?' As a result, description, classification and connection were not ends in themselves (see also Analysis & Discussion Introduction p.110). Indeed, Geertz (1993) views this level of analysis as thin and uninteresting; one that fails to truly capture the complexity of a phenomenon such as the coaching process; consequently, the third level involved moving from concrete description, and required a narrowing of focus and an increased level of abstraction. Thus, theory was introduced as a resource to make sense of the data and transcend a common sense view of the coaching process. Importantly, it was not a prejudgement forcing interpretation of the data.

The overall analysis, therefore, provided a systematic and transparent link from data to theory. Through classification and description, the data provided understanding of the coaching process in a literal sense (see Session & Games p.142). The data also provided evidence in an interpretative sense supporting and augmenting the theoretical by explaining underlying processes in the coaching process (see for example, Sessions & Games: Embodying Culture, p.158). As a result, theoretical statements become more convincing because they were linked with the recognisable life experiences of the players and coaches, as well as being underpinned by research rigour (Seale, 1999).

### *3.7.2 Organising and Analysing Unstructured Data*

The purpose of this research was to attempt to capture complexity and establish a detailed understanding of the coaching process. This purpose was a driving force throughout the analysis. As such, the large quantities of rich and diverse data generated by this research, provide both a perspective on the process of coaching and the practical coaching context at Albion, but also may offer insight on contexts of a similar type (see Section 3.8 Generalisability, p.107).

A reality-grounded approach has been suggested as a useful tool for investigating such a complex domain as elite level coaching (Cote et al., 1995). Grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) is one such method of data analysis and is described by Bryman and Burgess (1994) as being “concerned with the discovery of theory from data” (p.4.), with theory being a system of ideas through which we can conceptualise experience (Dey, 1993). Grounded theorists focus on individuals' interpretations of their experiences and the processes by which meanings and knowledge are developed and used to guide actions (Jacob, 1987; Tesch, 1990). Indeed, it is a method that strives to understand people's experiences in as rigorous and detailed a manner as possible (Ryan & Bernard, 2000). As Bryman and Burgess (1994) suggest, however, there are rarely genuine cases of grounded theory that follow the analytical steps proposed in detail by Glaser and Strauss (1967). I, like a number of authors (Cote et al., 1995; Huberman & Miles, 1991) whilst analysing field notes and transcripts followed general principles underlying grounded theory. My objective was to build a system of themes that emerged from the unstructured data, before, during, and after data collection, that represented the practical coaching context and the coaching process in action. These themes had to be conceptually grounded in both the ideas and objectives informing the research and empirically in the observations made about the relationships in the data. This phase of the analysis is now considered in detail.

1. I began by developing a framework of potential themes based on two rich sources, the existing literature and my own experience (Ryan & Bernard, 2000). From this I considered that the following would be influential in the construction and operation of the coaching process, and may well develop into themes.
  - The coach
  - The player
  - The club environment
  - Coach-Athlete interaction
  - Sessions
  - Games
2. Observation and unstructured interviewing were followed by detailed examination of transcripts. I looked for common features in the text and from this began to

form categories, and see how these linked with the broad themes in 1 above. For example, categories that appeared to revolve around the coach included;

- Coaching experience
- Playing experience
- Coaching influences (club, culture, tradition)

Related to the coach but also linked to the players included;

- Coach behaviour in games
- Coach behaviour in practice
- Coach participation in practice

3. These categories formed the structure of the initial 'research report' to the club (see Appendix 1). The coaches read the report and I asked them to evaluate the categories for accuracy. This feedback came in part from Greg (U19 coach) but mainly from Dean (Education and Welfare). Their feedback assisted in the modification of the categories and I, once again, returned to the field. This interrelated process of data collection and data analysis, allowed a "constant comparative analysis" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p.8) of concepts and relationships. In addition, this method of data analysis attempts to add 'credibility' to the concepts elicited because as Cote et al. (1995) contend "the concepts are grounded in the coach's reality as opposed to the investigators' reality or rigid methodological procedures" (p.71.).

4. In the analysis repetition of an aspect took on weight and drew attention to itself thus, aiding in the process of reducing and sorting the data. Data also began to connect to each other, not only from different data sources but also from the same source across time. Consequently, in the field and as analysis proceeded, it became possible for categories to be compared and organised into larger components.

- Theme: Coach
- Component: Coach philosophy
- Categories; Coach experience, Influences on coach, Coach values, Objectives of club; Objectives of coach.

5. These components made up the structure of the second report to the club (see appendix 1), and the same procedure was followed as in 3 above.
6. Each component seemed to describe parts but was not all encompassing in describing the practical coaching context and the coaching process. Therefore components, bearing in mind step one above, were grouped into sufficiently broad themes that captured and described the practical coaching context and coaching process.
7. These themes, components and categories then formed the framework for the semi-structured interview schedule (see appendix 2). The interview transcripts were offered to the coaches for checking. As discussed in the next section, this was not undertaken as a test of 'truth' but as an additional method for insight and reflection. Apart from editorial changes, the coaches returned their transcripts with only minor changes.
8. At the end of the data collection, the categories were 'saturated', that is no more encompassing components emerged, and a stable set of themes emerged with all data coded in terms of these themes (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). These themes then informed the section headings for the analysis and discussion chapters.

Throughout this phase of the analysis, the data from each source connected strongly together, but it also began to connect to aspects of the literature because of the reading about coaching from a perspective independent of data collection. By reducing and categorising the data, this part of the analysis undoubtedly led to a deeper understanding of the amazing intricacies and yet remarkable coherence of the coaching process. It also began to give an insight into the difficulty in representing on paper an holistic, interactive, and interrelated coaching process (see also Analysis and Discussion Introduction p.110).

### *3.7.3 Theorising and Writing up*

Through categorising and reducing the data became fractured, and peoples' experiences became represented in part (Charmaz, 1995), thus I began to be concerned that there was a danger of losing a sense of how things hang together, and interact. Most seriously for this research I begin to be concerned that I would lose sight of important relationships and the sense of process. In response to this the first level of theorising I was concerned with was to facilitate a representation of the coaching process as a *process* thus seeking to highlight the important interaction of themes and components. I sought a framework to give direction and organisation and through which I could bring together the different concepts uncovered by the initial analysis. Dey (1993) argues that *when* theoretical ideas have arisen does not matter, they can arise before, during or, as in this case, after analysis; rather the primary concern is developing an overall view of the data. Being able to grasp and represent the complexity and interdependence of interaction in the coaching process, as well as offering another level of abstraction, meant that it was necessary to adopt a conceptual framework. Thus, using the concepts of Pierre Bourdieu enabled a move from description toward explanation, for the purpose of understanding the coaching process as a complex holistic process, and presenting an integrated and cohesive analysis to inform coach practice and coach education (See also Analysis & Discussion Introduction, p. 110). At all times I have grounded the theoretical in the data, linking them with recognisable life experiences, thus presenting layers of meaning to capture the complexity of the coaching process.

Because of the difficulty of representation (See also Analysis & Discussion Introduction, p.110), I reflected at length on the process of composition and compilation. Aware that I would not be able to mirror reality, I wanted to ensure that my constructed account demonstrated an explicit understanding of the complexity of the coaching process. However, the coaching process does not readily arrange itself into chapters and sub-headings. Indeed there could be many versions that could be constructed, each with a different emphasis. I also accept that there is no single best way to reconstruct and represent the social world. I wanted to ensure that I did not distance the reader from the participant nor use the participant's voices for my own purpose. At the same time, I have constructed an account on the basis of the purpose and presuppositions of the research. That is to develop understanding and demonstrate the complex interdependent and interrelated nature of the coaching process. A

perspective currently limited within our knowledge and understanding of the coaching process.

### *3.8 Reflexive Analysis of Research Quality*

A number of authors (Hardy, Jones, & Gould, 1996; Krane, Anderson & Streat, 1997; Sparkes, 1998; Streat & Roberts, 1992) contend that for qualitative inquiry to grow and fully contribute to understanding phenomena, such as the coaching process, different methodologies and the varying forms of knowledge gained from them “must be appreciated, encouraged, and embraced with theoretical tolerance and respect” (Sparkes, 1998, p.365). That, however, does not mean that qualitative inquiry is a ‘free for all’ and that ‘anything goes’. I concur with Seale (1999) who states “quality matters in qualitative research” (p.2). The difficulty for me in assessing and ensuring the quality of this research is that, arguably, there are no conclusive or uniform rules or criteria that resolve the question of quality, because there are always different interpretations of any social phenomena (Belgrave & Smith, 1995; Sparkes, 1998).

So where do I begin? It could be argued that the quality of research largely depends upon the evaluation and interpretation of the process and product of inquiry. Traditionally, this evaluation, in many cases, involved consideration of the validity, reliability and, the generalisability of the research. Indeed, any research methods textbook will provide definitions of these terms and in-depth guidelines for their application. For example, Kirk and Miller define reliability as; “The degree to which the finding is independent of accidental circumstances of the research.” (1986, p.20). Whilst, the validity of research concerns the interpretation of observations whether or not “the researcher is calling what is measured by the right name” (Kirk & Miller, 1986, p.69; Altheide & Johnson, 1994; Silverman, 1993, p.149) Generalisability refers to what extent the research findings can be applied to a wider population (Silverman, 1997).

These criteria, as a suitable means for evaluating qualitative research are being questioned on a number of levels. Janesick (2000) for example, questions the importance and applicability of this type of evaluation, pointing to an almost constant obsession with “the trinity of validity, reliability and generalisability” (p.390), whilst many researchers reject the epistemological assumptions that underlie these evaluative methods (Seidman, 1998). For example, many members of the critical



theory, constructivist, post-structural and post-modern schools of thought reject positivist and post positivist criteria when evaluating their own work. They see these criteria as irrelevant contending they reproduce only a certain kind of science, "a science that silences too many voices" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p.62). These paradigmatic differences have resulted in a serious rethinking of such terms as validity, generalisability and reliability, terms already re-theorised in post-positivist (Hammersley, 1992) constructionist-naturalistic (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) feminist (Olesen, 2000) interpretive (Denzin, 1997) post-structural (Lather & Smithies, 1997) and critical (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000) discourses. Others criticise the traditional idea of a universal objective truth that underlies validity and reliability (Kvale, 1996). Indeed, Lincoln & Guba (2000) contend that there are strong theoretical, philosophical and pragmatic rationales for examining the concept of objectivity, which they argue is conceptually flawed.

Bearing in mind these arguments, I began to feel that for this research, the traditional reliability and validity criteria were no longer adequate or appropriate to encapsulate the requirements for evaluation that *qualitative research presents*. Indeed, the criteria for evaluation of research quality were somewhat elusive because they are criteria that clearly cannot be attained through pre-specified methodological 'rules' such as reliability and validity. In addition, as Wolcott (1995, 1990a) reminds us, the term validity, which is the language of traditional inquiry, should not necessarily be accepted as the language of all research. Validity in the positivistic arena has a set of technical and micro definitions. Validity in qualitative research has to do with description and explanation and whether or not the explanation fits the description. For Kvale (1996) this means the notion of validity is socially constructed within specific discourses and communities, at specific historical moments for specific sets of purposes and interests. Furthermore, notions of 'validity' and 'reliability' are underpinned by what Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe as "naive realism and linear causality" (p.293). These assumptions themselves assume a "single tangible reality that an investigation is to unearth and display" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.294). Clearly, using traditional criteria would be an attempt to apply positivist criteria to a socially constructed consensus about meaning (Seale, 1999). That is, different epistemological and ontological assumptions inform qualitative research so "it makes little sense to impose criteria used to pass judgement on one upon another" (Sparkes, 2000, p.29). Therefore, the specific criteria used in conventional research were

inappropriate for assessing the quality of this research, although the underlying issue of research quality remained.

Once again, therefore, I return to the question of assessing the quality of this research. A number of approaches were available to me. For example, Seidman (1998) looks to 'methodological rigour' to ensure that the participants' comments are 'valid'. This approach is not dissimilar to Lincoln and Guba (1985, 1989), who use the term 'trustworthiness'. They argue that qualitative research must inform through the concepts of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. These five terms replace the conventionally discussed validity and reliability, and have been used in a wide range of qualitative research (Dale, 1996; Eklund, 1996; Gould, Tuffey, Udry & Loehr, 1996; Jackson, 1995, 1996). However, these criteria have been criticised as paying lip service to ontological and epistemological assumptions because they accept multiple constructed realities on the one hand, but still want to apply foundational criteria to distinguish between trustworthy and untrustworthy results on the other (Smith, 1984; Sparkes, 1998). Indeed, Smith (1997a) contends that these criteria are "an attempt to square the philosophical circle" (p.373) that, he argues, *does not work*. Furthermore, Sparkes (1998) contends that criteria revolving around 'trustworthiness' are not alternatives to, but parallels of, positivistic criteria. I agree with Sparkes (1998) when he suggests that parallel perspectives grew and have been used to a certain extent from a defensive posture, adopted by qualitative research in the face of a wider research community dominated by positivistic forms of research. I feel I was initially drawn to these criteria for the same reasons. However, the point for me became that these criteria should not become a method to establish contact with some external reality, nor were they necessarily a 'checklist' that, if completed, enhanced the adequacy of this research. Like the methods themselves, these criteria and processes were not tests but further opportunities for reflexive elaboration and enhanced understanding of the research process and my research findings (Bloor, 1997).

As far as the 'validity' of the findings is concerned, I argue the case for applying criteria that Sparkes (1998) suggests "sprang directly from constructivism's own basic assumptions" (p.378) but remain true to an alternative, not parallel, criteria and have no equivalent in positivistic assumptions (Manning, 1997). These are 'authenticity' (Lincoln, 1993) and 'believability' (Blumfield-Jones 1995). Authenticity is seen to have a fluid nature that is particularly applicable to a narrative

understanding of human experience (Sparkes, 1996). For Lincoln (1993) authenticity in this context implied that the text was not only faithful to the story-lines of the coaches' the coaching process and the practical coaching context, but also conveyed a feeling of the lives therein. This was best illustrated where the text itself admitted and invited the reader into a vicarious experience, however brief, of for example, the coaches' lives being described. Indeed, Lincoln (1993) emphasised that the reader might gain in experience of the coaches' lives, including a range of moods, feelings, experiences, situational variety and language. Thus, if authentic, the reader should have a sensitivity to the lives being depicted, the events, characters, and social circumstances of the context.

Believability is achieved if the narrative can convey convincingly that the events actually happened and were felt the way they were portrayed. "To assign believability, audiences must experience a congruence with their own experiences of similar, parallel or analagous situations. They do not have to derive the same meanings" (Blumfield-Jones, 1995, p.31). I shared the sentiments of Woolcott (1990), and Armour and Jones (1998) in endorsing Maxwell who states that "understanding is a more fundamental concept for qualitative research than validity"(1992, p.281).

I was a practical researcher engaged in what Sparkes (1998) describes as "the practical tradition of qualitative inquiry" (p.375). I was mindful of the need for a level of 'quality' in my research process. Therefore, I adopted criteria and processes of assessment, not with notions of 'validity' in mind, but to enhance methodological rigour and as an opportunity to be more reflective about the research process and the data collected.

### *3.7 Methodological Rigour*

Several authors note that there are a number of steps that can be taken to enhance the rigour of qualitative research (Le Compte & Goetz 1982; Patton; 1990; Seale, 1999). One such step is simply maintaining methodological consistency (Erben, 1998); other steps that I undertook are critically examined in this section in light of the criteria set out by Lincoln and Guba (1994). They include credibility, triangulation, and method audit. I conclude the section with a discussion of generalisability.

Firstly, credibility is discussed because it linked the process of data collection, to the data. Credibility, relates to consideration of the following; 1) prolonged

engagement in the field, 2) continued observation 3) triangulation exercises 4) exposure of reports for peer review, and 5) examination for negative instances to challenge developing themes (Seale, 1999). Each of these aspects will be analysed in the context of this research drawing upon illustrative examples. Firstly, I ensured prolonged and continued engagement in the field by maintaining a consistent observation schedule (limited of course, by the team's own schedule), throughout the duration of the season, from pre-season through to when the players were released for their summer break; in total 10 months. Indeed, Bruyn (1966) contends that the more time spent with a group the greater the adequacy of understanding. Along similar lines, he also suggests that prolonged personal engagement could have provided me with not only a better understanding of meaning and action but also how these were employed and shared within the culture. Furthermore, my prolonged stay at Albion provided access to a more private or, as Goffman (1984) describes, backstage world. I certainly felt, as time progressed, that my access and inclusion into previously private moments increased. For example, I was included in more dressing room team talks on match days and involved in more staff meetings.

Triangulation is a critical element in the practice of social science research adding one layer of data to another to build a confirmatory edifice (Fine, Weiss, Wesseen, & Wong, 2000). It was employed to add methodological rigour to this project through the examination and revision of evidence. Patton (1990) describes triangulation as checking the consistency of findings generated by different forms of data collection, and checking the consistency of different data sources with the same methods. In this research, triangulation was employed in a number of ways;

- i) Cross-checking information derived at different times and by different means, through examination and comparison of interview and observation and by comparing observations made at different times in the season.
- ii) Comparing what was said and done by the participants in public with that in private. This was particularly illuminating in two instances: 'Andy' (Academy Director) had a column in a newspaper where he discussed footballing and coaching issues, so I was able to compare a very public face with a more private one in and around Albion. Secondly, in relation to the consistency of what was said by the

coaches; about the players, to the players, and vice versa. The coaches often said one thing to one person but something else to another.

- iii) Checking consistency of what was said and done by the participants over time, in this instance, during the course of the season.
- iv) Comparing perspectives from different points of view (Head coach, assistant coaches, support staff, players). It should also be noted, bearing in mind the need to examine negative cases, I did not search for a simple, coherent synthesis of data or methods. Indeed, with a firm reliance on multiple methods there was a desire to cross over, converse with, and tap into the different kinds of data. There was a search for the very contradictions between data and methods that would most powerfully inform. Indeed, “methods are not passive strategies, they differently produce, reveal and enable the display of different kinds of identities” (Fine & Weis 1996, p.267). An excellent example came through an examination of the impact of team performance on the coaching process. In unstructured interviews during the field work, both ‘Greg’ (Under 19 coach) and ‘Andy’ (Academy Director) espoused a developmental philosophy where the player’s performance was paramount and results were not important to them. However, statements such as the following were prevalent throughout the season

“If you’re getting results you’re in a strong position contract wise”

(Field notes, September 1999).

“The 19’s are the flagship of the academy so they’ve got to be seen to be getting results”

(Field notes, March 2000).

As demonstrated above I quickly found that triangulation may not always lead to convergence and confirmation (Silverman, 1993). Indeed, a cautionary approach was adopted, where I accepted that triangulation could increase understanding, but that it was no guarantee of ‘validity’ (Silverman, 1993). I used it to assist in the building of evidence for key claims (and indeed, evidence denying key claims). A multiplication of methods then can deepen understanding of different aspects of an issue (Cain & Finch, 1981). As shown above, through observation and player interview, my understanding of the importance of team results to the coaching context

at Albion was deepened. Seale (1999) summarises the value of triangulation thus “if used with due caution, it can enhance the quality of a research account by providing an additional way of generating evidence in support of key claims” (p. 61). Interview alone would not have demonstrated the importance of results at the Albion Rovers Academy, indeed, it would have presented the very opposite view.

The process of ‘routine’ doctoral supervision enabled me to expose ongoing work and analysis to one level of peer review. In addition, I used a further ‘reviewer’ whose expertise in qualitative methods, sociological analysis and coaching research were well respected in the academic community and who had published on these subjects. Finally, a colleague who had no experience in my research area also reviewed my work. I wanted to ensure that a person unfamiliar with the area could follow my research process and that there was clarity in my analysis.

I employed member checking, where parts of transcripts and research reports were shown to participants so that they could confirm or deny the way that they are represented. As previously discussed, observational reports were provided during the season, and participants were asked to comment on the accuracy of observations. Furthermore, interviewees, prior to data analysis, were offered transcripts for review.

Finally, I undertook what Lincoln and Guba (1985) call ‘auditing’. A method audit is a systemised approach to reflexive methodological accounting to provide a critique of the procedures used and a check on their clarity and consistency (Seale, 1999). I continually engaged in a reflexive examination of methods and decisions that I made during the research process, of which, of course, this section is both part of and reports on. I considered a number of issues. Firstly, my status and position in the research process was identified and considered (see, *Research Instrument: Person as Instrument*, p. 73). Secondly, I said as much as possible about the data, where it came from (who, where and when), under what circumstances (training, game, interview etc), and how it was recorded (written, audio taped, video taped). Thirdly, I have tried to give as full account as possible, where applicable, of ideas informing the research and involved in coding the data. Finally, methodological reporting was continually revised ensuring detailed accounts of all methods used. This reporting formed the sections on method and procedure in this chapter.

In practice, I was involved in a method audit every day that I obtained data. Essentially this involved efforts to assure the accuracy and inclusiveness of recordings. I wanted to assure the quality of field notes and guarantee ‘public access’

to the process of their production. Working with tapes and subsequent transcripts eliminated, at one stroke, many of the problems associated with the unspecified accuracy of field notes and with the potential limited public access to them. Indeed, the tape recordings and transcripts based on them can provide for highly detailed and publicly accessible representations of social interaction (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1993) (In all transcriptions the identities and events are edited to protect the anonymity of the respondents). When tape recordings were not used, observations were recorded in terms that were as accurate as possible. I tried, as far as possible, to generate verbatim accounts of what people said rather than my re-constructions of the general sense of what a person had said.

### 3.9.1 *Generalisability*

The steps outlined above all contributed to the quality of the research process undertaken and, the subsequent data. However, it can be readily acknowledged that it would be difficult to apply the lessons of one social setting to another, particularly when dealing with a small sample. Arguably, this difficulty was compounded by adopting an interpretive paradigm. Indeed, because of the epistemological and ontological assumptions underlying this research, that is multiple realities and co-creation of understanding, it could be argued that principles discovered in this research would not be applicable to all coaches. Consequently, Denzin (1989) rejects the notion of generalisation, because of “inherent indeterminates in the lifeworld” (p.133). As a result, the movement from description to understanding, informing and improving coach education and practice is precluded because the context-specific environment makes all findings relative (Smith, 1987; Sparkes, 1989, 1998). From this position, research findings should be interpreted as unique, and similarity with other events would be coincidence (Williams & May, 1996). I struggle with the notion that action cannot be understood and guided through some form of generalisation. Indeed it creates a dilemma for enquiry into action, specifically coaching. I maintain that there is little point in conducting research whose significance cannot extend beyond the local context.

A number of researchers deal with issue of generalisation and propose solutions. For example Alasuutari (1995) argues, “if readers of a study can recognise a phenomenon from the description presented, then generalisability is not a problem”

(p.145). This is not dissimilar to Erben (1998) who suggests that this solution answers questions not only about generalisability but broader issues of ‘validity’;

“the validation of research is based upon the degree of consensus for those for whom investigation is thought to be of interest and relevance. The descriptions, organisation, conclusions and formulations represented in the research receive their validation by an experienced group of peers who regard the study as significant, worthwhile and in concert with its aims.” (Erben, 1998, p.4).

In an alternative approach, Hammersley (1996) does not look to the data but the participants. He argues that for a ‘theory’ to be true, then the population defined by its conditions is causally homogenous. Therefore, when a population, for example coaches, is homogenous in relevant respects then this is an adequate basis for generalisation. Perakyla (1997) approaches the issue from a different direction, proposing the concept of ‘possibility’, that is to say social practice that is ‘possible’. He argues that the possibility of various practices identified can be considered generalisable even if the practises are not actualised in similar ways across different settings. He contends that results are not generalisable as descriptions of what other participants carry out, but they are generalisable as descriptions of what any participant could do given that they had the same array of interactional competencies as the participants of the project.

These solutions, it seemed to me, did not quite tackle the philosophical debate surrounding generalisability. Indeed, an integral part of the research process should be a reflection on the philosophical issues underlying methodology. This, in turn, develops a methodological awareness that feeds into practice (Seale, 1999). It is not my intention to seek closure on this issue, nor as (Smith 1997a) suggests, “square the philosophical circle” (p.373). I do however, want to pick a path and attempt to position myself, this research and, its findings within the debate. So, while I acknowledge that a positivist approach ignores the reality of the participant, I would also contend that interpretive enquiry can focus heavily on individually constructed reality, and overlook the shared reality of participants in similar settings. To say that reality is the same for every participant in the complex coaching environment, or across coaching and learning environments, would be to ignore both the obvious multiple realities and context-specific interaction, and the situational nature of decision making (Rink, 1993).



However, “to suggest that every situation is totally unique would be to ignore the shared reality of coaching sessions and their participants. To suggest that one cannot know anything because one cannot know everything would seem to condemn the field to a perspective of chaos and relativism” (Rink, 1993, p.312). Indeed, although no two coaches will be exactly alike, it is unlikely that they will not echo common themes and concerns in relation to the given demands of an established programme (Erben, 1998; Jardine, 1992; Rampazi 1996).

So whilst adopting an interpretive paradigm, I accept the notion of ‘*moderatum* generalisation’ (Williams & May, 1996). It is unlikely that all coaches and performers share one reality. It is also unlikely that the reality of every coach and player is unique. The knowledge base of all the social sciences is based on an assumption of some shared reality (Rink, 1993). Indeed, as Rink contends “there is a sameness among our uniqueness” (p.312). For example, ‘Greg’ (Under 19’s coach) is recognisable as a coach, his work is recognisable as coaching but not all coaches are ‘Greg’, nor do they all coach the same way.

To move coaching research from description to understanding, informing and improving, we must accept that similar experiences allow similar interpretation, which in turn lead coaches to adopt similar strategies as they adapt to and negotiate the changing coaching environment (Schempp & Choi, 1994). Indeed, we must move beyond the confines of the data and the setting to think about application of the findings (Cronblach, 1980). One has to consider the likely applicability of findings to other situations, under similar but not identical conditions. This concept is logical, thoughtful and problem-orientated, rather than statistical and probabilistic.

### 3.9.2 *Conclusions*

This chapter has presented an in-depth analysis of the methodology undertaken in this research. I have attempted to identify various ‘phases’ of the research process and critically analyse the methods chosen in each. In so doing, I have considered the philosophical issues informing qualitative research, the complexities of researcher/respondent relations and how these may inform and structure data collection and analysis. In particular, the researcher was presented as an active agent in the research process as a whole.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Analysis and Discussion

#### *Introduction*

“Research without theory is blind, and theory without research is empty” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p.160).

The main purpose of this research project was to understand something of the complexity of the coaching process from an 'in-situ' viewpoint, that is, from within the practical coaching context at Albion Rovers. The practical coaching context has already been identified as comprising of three key elements; the coach, the player and the club environment (Smith & Smoll, 1993; Cote, Salmela, Trudel, & Russell, 1995, Cote & Salmela 1994; Saury & Durand, 1998; Lyle, 1999; Jones, 1997). Existing, analysis of the coaching process and coaching environments has tended to focus on the processes involved in coaching and learning, *understandably, given that the* coaching environment exists to provide structured opportunities for the development of players. However, coaching is an eminently esoteric practice that has every appearance of being exoteric. Indeed, the surface simplicity of the coaching process, as conceptualised by existing research, is deceptive. The coaching process is far from simple and is, in fact, a complex, interrelated and interdependent social process. Furthermore, the club environment, Albion Rovers, is more than a place for learning football; it doubles as a workplace and is, in its own right, an incredibly complex social system.

This chapter attempts to synthesise the research findings and explore the practical coaching context, its constituent parts and their interaction in the construction of a broad coaching process. However, in representing coaching practice and the complexity of the coaching process, and how these play out within this complex social system, a number of problems arise. These problems revolve primarily around representation. For example, if an attempt is made to construct a 'model' of the coaching process at Albion; one that seeks to further understand some of the interaction and complexity, only two dimensions can be shown. This limits a full representation of the practical coaching context and the coaching process. By definition, a 'model' demonstrates structure and is, therefore, limited in its ability to

illustrate the subtlety and nuance of how the practical coaching context might function in practice. Put simply, the coaching process and the practical coaching context are continuous and interactive (Lyle, 1999).

Data analysis for this research was conducted using principles derived from grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) the result of which was the identification of a number of themes, components and categories (see for example, Methodology Chapter, p.94). The continuous and interactive process between data analysis and collection (i.e. data analysis did not begin when collection ended, the process was simultaneous) was not directed toward generating theory *per se*, but toward research products in concert with the aims of the research, for example, capturing through description an understanding of the complexity of the practical coaching context and coaching process. In this chapter these themes, components and categories could be presented and discussed individually and in considerable detail. However, while this approach is appealing, arguably, it would place this research in a similar position to previous coaching studies that have sub-divided and reduced complexity in the broader coaching process. The sum of the parts would definitely not equal the whole, because the themes identified interact and co-act in a dynamic fashion. The interactive and dynamic nature of the practical coaching context and the coaching process, means that it is not only inappropriate to talk about themes individually, but also extremely difficult. Conversely, it would be problematic to attempt an analysis that tried to talk about everything all at once. This then leaves the problem of representing the coaching process and practical coaching context whose constituent parts constitute elements of a dynamic and interactive process.

To add further complication, the identification of themes (i.e. Club, Sessions & Games, Players, Coach, Coach-Player Relationship & Attitude) and their subsequent description can only represent part of the analysis. As the scope of this research has evolved, it has become increasingly clear that the e themes are in part a descriptive medium through which understanding and explanation should be drawn. So, whilst they assist with the identification and description of the complexity inherent in the practical coaching context, they alone do not provide understanding and explanation of the interactions that shape the coaching process. Undoubtedly, understanding their individual role in the coaching process is worthwhile in its own right, and certainly adds to current knowledge, but perhaps more crucial is to understand how and why they interact and the implications of that interaction for

coaching practice. Therefore, a conceptual framework is required that makes sense of the research findings in these terms, as Bourdieu suggests a "set of thinking tools visible through the results they yield" (Bourdieu, 1989, p15). Indeed, Bourdieu's most important 'thinking tools', *practice*, *habitus*, *field* and *capital* offer a conceptual framework for grasping and representing the complexity of interaction within the coaching process.

Two things are immediately appealing about Bourdieu's work; firstly, the focus upon the visible social world of practice, and secondly the attempt to transcend epistemological couples; agency-structure, micro-macro, subjectivism-objectivism (Jenkins, 1992; Jarvie & Maguire, 1994). In so doing, Bourdieu proposes a dialectical relationship between objective structures and subjective phenomena (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994). Perhaps the best way to illustrate this is to consider the example of the coach.

Despite the individual nature of each coaching position, coaches form a sub-society of interlocking groups "a community rooted in sport and what it symbolises, and they identify themselves collectively as a meaningful social segment" (Sage, 1989,p.88). This makes a social network or structure which enables the expression of similar attitudes and value orientations, and through which cultural traditions flow (Coakley 1986; Sage, 1989). This, therefore, represents a 'social structure' influencing coaches and the coaching process. But in the milieu of coaching practice, how do such structures and individual coaches come together and interact to define the coaching process? Schempp and Graber (1992) posit that the relationship between social structure and person is a negotiated one, and is in fact a dialectic relationship. Indeed, "the practice of social life is not ever so simple as an individual spontaneously proposing and organising a social coming together, nor is it simply a mechanical thing mass produced by society" (Lemert, 1997, p.45). Putting theory aside for a moment, and thinking about how things happen in the practical coaching context, it becomes apparent that practices are simultaneously "the force of social rules and their own individual flourishes" (Lemert, 1997, p. 44). Indeed, the practice of social things (Lemert, 1997), including the coaching process, does not come together at "some mystical meeting point between the individual and social structures, but in the variations in practice that individuals do or refuse to do" (Lemert, 1997, p.44). Social life, including the coaching process is a "mutually constituting interaction of structures, dispositions and actions" (Calhoun, LiPuma & Postone, 1995, p.4).

Structures therefore, shape and are shaped by social practice. Practice itself results from a process of improvisation that is structured by cultural orientations, personal trajectories or goals and the ability to play the game of social interaction (Calhoun et al., 1995). Lemert (1997) describes this practice as being what is original to oneself and at the same time common to those of a similar social kind.

The value of Bourdieu's conceptual framework for this research is in the first instance that he is "good to think with" (Jenkins, 1992, p.176). Importantly, using his concepts as analytical tools enables the examination of a social actor's behaviour, of social structures and of how these interact in practice. This then facilitates a common language through which complexity and interaction can be described and understood.

Whilst it remains impossible to write about everything 'all at once', the structure of the discussion is thus. Each theme is described in detail but key to this is that each will be used to demonstrate the interaction, interdependence and dynamic nature of the practical coaching context. Before this however, Bourdieu's concepts of *habitus*, practice, *field* and *capital* will be described, in the terms in which they are used throughout the ensuing analysis.

#### 4.1.1 *Habitus*

In his emphasis on social practice, Bourdieu proposes *habitus* as the bridge that links structure and agency. *Habitus* is a concept that proves challenging to define in strict terms and is something that is easier to characterise (Brubaker, 1995). Wacquant (1998) describes *habitus* as a system of durable and transposable dispositions through which we perceive, judge and act in the world. People are endowed with a series of internalised schemes and it is through these schemes that they produce their practices, perceive, and evaluate them (Ritzer, 1996). These unconscious schemata are acquired through lasting exposure to particular social conditions and conditionings, via the internalisation of external constraints and possibilities (Wacquant, 1995). Bourdieu describes this dialectically as "the product of the internalisation of the structures" (Bourdieu 1989, p.18) of the social world, and as "internalised, embodied, social structures" (Bourdieu, 1984a, p.468). Because *habitus* is acquired as a result of occupation of a position within the social world, (for example, the coach and the player) not everyone has the same *habitus* (Ritzer, 1996). However, those who occupy the same position within the social world tend to have similar *habitus* (Ritzer, 1996), "each person has a unique individual variant of the

common matrix” (Wacquant, 1998, p.221). The existence of a multitude of *habitus* means that the social world and its structures do not impose themselves uniformly on all actors. Therefore, *habitus* captures the practical mastery people have of their social situation while grounding that mastery socially (Calhoun et al., 1995).

As the mediation between past influences and present stimuli, *habitus* is at once structured; by the patterned social forces that produced it, and structuring; it gives form and coherence to the various activities of an individual across the separate spheres of life (Wacquant, 1998). Bourdieu defines it as ‘the product of structure, producer of practice, and reproducer of structure’ and the ‘unchosen principle of all choices’ or the ‘practice-unifying’ and ‘practice-generating’ principle that permits ‘regulated improvisation’ and the ‘conductorless orchestration’ of conduct (Wacquant, 1998). The *habitus* both produces and is produced by the social world. On the one hand it is a structuring structure, that is, a structure that structures the social world. On the other hand it is a structured structure, that is, it is a structure that is structured by the social world. In other words, Bourdieu describes *habitus* as the “dialectic of the internalisation of externality and the externalisation of internality” (1977, p. 72).

The *habitus* functions “below the level of consciousness and language, beyond the reach of introspective scrutiny and control by the will” (Bourdieu, 1984a, p.466). While we are not conscious of *habitus* and its operation, it manifests itself in our most practical of activities, such as how we eat, talk and walk or indeed, how we coach. The *habitus* operates as a structure but people do not simply respond mechanically to it, or to external structures that are operating on them. As a result, *habitus* forms an important link between psychology and sociology, because the body acts as a social memory, where the basics of culture are imprinted and encoded in both a formal and informal manner (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994). The occupation of a social position influences the development of schema or patterns of behavior, with the knowledge required to occupy that position requiring the development of a *habitus* (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994). Lessons are absorbed about manners, customs, style, deportment that become so ingrained that they are forgotten in any conscious sense (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994). This results in “the accumulative practice of same ensuring that the motor schema is drawn on intuitively” (Wacquant, 1992, p.221). Indeed, high level coaches would appear to do things almost unconsciously (Abraham, 1997).

*Habitus* then is the product of internalised social structure and embodied internalised schema that structure, but do not determine actions, thoughts and feelings. It is both objective and subjective and occurs at the dynamic intersection of structure and action; society and the individual (Calhoun et al., 1995). It could be argued that the coaching process involves a subtle blend of conscious and unconscious. The development of coach expertise means that the repetition of skills and coaching practices become deeply embedded within the *habitus*. Furthermore, Schon (1983, 1987) has concluded that intuition is a skill required by coaches to make decisions. Indeed, the review of literature has demonstrated that coaches in practice operate intuitively (Gould et al., 1990). Lyle (1992) contends that a subjective, intuitive sense of what is required can contribute greatly to coach effectiveness. It is argued, therefore, that the concept of *habitus* can be helpful as a conceptual tool for explaining the development and application of the coach's 'intuition', and how coaches work almost 'unconsciously'.

#### 4.1.2 Practice

Bourdieu focuses on practice because he perceives this to be the outcome of the dialectical relationship between structure and agency (Bourdieu, 1977). That is, day-to-day life (social interaction, social behaviour) is produced by the interaction of agent and structure: "Practices are not objectively determined, nor are they the product of free will" (Ritzer, 1996, p.537). Importantly, it is practice that mediates between *habitus* and the social world. "On the one hand it is through practice that the *habitus* is created; on the other, it is as a result of practice that the social world is created" (Bourdieu, cited in Wacquant, 1989, p. 42). Bourdieu expresses the mediating function of practice when he defines *habitus* as the "system of structured and structuring dispositions which is constituted by practice and constantly aimed at practical functions (cited in, Wacquant, 1989, p. 42). While practice tends to shape *habitus*, *habitus* in turn, serves to unify and generate practice.

For Bourdieu, culture is embodied, and the body is a site of social memory involving the individual culturally learning and evoking dispositions to act (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994). Although society is "written into the body, into the biological individual" (Bourdieu, 1990, p.63), the individual is still empowered to act back on the social world. Therefore, social practices are dialectic processes through which daily lives are lived. However, practice involves a blend between the conscious and

the unconscious, the intended and the unintended. Practice, therefore, becomes 'second nature'. Bourdieu uses the metaphor of sport to illustrate the point by describing 'a feel for the game'. Practice is the product of a practical senses, of a socially constituted feel for the game (Bourdieu, 1980a; Wacquant, 1989). Bourdieu summarises practice thus; "Practice, the locus of the dialectic between *opus operatum* and *modus operandi*, between the objectified and the embodied products of historical action, structure and *habitus*" (cited in Wacquant, 1989, p.43). An analysis of the coaching process, the site of interaction between coach, player and club, between agent and structure, is by definition an analysis of practice. Therefore, analysis of practice has the potential to reveal much about the nature of interaction in the coaching process.

#### 4.1.3 *Capital*

The system of dispositions that people acquire depends on the position they occupy in society; that is, on their particular endowment in *capital* (Bourdieu, 1986). The interplay of a person's *habitus* and *capital* will determine their position within a given *field*. *Capital* is described by Bourdieu as being the capacity to exercise control over ones own future and the future of others and is, in effect, a form of power (Ritzer, 1996). *Capital* can occur in at least four forms, economic (that which can be immediately and directly converted to money), cultural (such as educational credentials), social (such as social position and connections) and symbolic (from honour and prestige) (Calhoun, 1995; Ritzer, 1996). In soccer, social *capital*, cultural *capital* and symbolic *capital* all contribute to the social hierarchy, both formal and informal. Some examples include; social *capital* derived from the position in the coaching or playing staff (i.e. Head coach versus assistant, professional versus youth player); cultural *capital* could be derived from the qualifications and experience of the coach or player. A form of cultural *capital* also includes physical *capital*, embodied through social practice and could include physical skill that can be converted into other forms. Shilling (1997) proposes that physical *capital* could be a form of *capital* in its own right, he suggests that sports people could use their bodies for economic reward. Symbolic *capital* may come from prestige or renown as a player or coach.

Bourdieu asserts that society is structured along differences in the distribution of *capital*, with individuals constantly striving to maximise their *capital* (Calhoun, 1995). The position of any individual, group or institution is charted by two co-



ordinates; firstly, the overall volume of *capital* and secondly, the composition of the *capital* they have accrued. A third co-ordinate is variation over time of this volume and composition, which records an individual's trajectory through the social space, and provides invaluable clues as to their *habitus* by revealing the manner and path through which they reached the position they presently occupy (Wacquant, 1998). Within the coaching process, coaches and players will have and be striving for different forms of *capital*. As a form of power, the distribution and volume of *capital* will assist in identifying the nature of the hierarchy and the distribution of power within the football *field*. It should be noted that the nature of power (and its forms) in the coaching process contributes to the complexity of the relationships therein, and is further analysed and its relationships developed, with reference to for example, authoritarianism, symbolic violence, and power typologies

#### 4.1.4 *Field*

The social arena in which individuals struggle over or manoeuvre for access to *capital*, is described by Bourdieu as a *field* (Jenkins, 1992). Each *field* has its own logic and taken-for-granted structure of necessity and relevance that is both the product and the producer of *habitus*, specific and appropriate to the *field* (Jenkins, 1992). A field, therefore, is a structured system of social positions that defines the situation for its occupants, with the position interacting with the *habitus* to produce actions (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994; Jenkins, 1992). Coaches are, therefore, recognisable as coaches and act accordingly, as do players. Position within a *field* is not static but is determined by the allocation of *capital*. Consequently, the system is characterised by a series of power relations, where positions are viewed as more or less dominant or subordinate, reflecting the access to *capital* (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994; Jenkins, 1992). Each *field* is semi-autonomous, and is characterised by its own determinate agents, its own accumulation of history, its own logic of action and forms of *capital* (Calhoun, 1995). In addition, each *field* is immersed in its own institutional *field* of power, and forms part of the overall social space. Consequently, social reality is composed of multiple fields, with a relationship with one another where there are points of contact and overlap (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994).

The *field* therefore, is the crucial mediating context within which external factors or changing circumstances are brought to bear upon individual practice (Jenkins, 1992). The *field* is also a network of relations among the objective positions

within it (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p.97). The occupants of positions may either be agents (coaches, players) or institutions (the club, the governing body) and they are constrained by the structure of the field. There are a number of semi-autonomous fields within the social world (for example, football or coaching). All have their own specific logics and all generate, among actors, a belief about the things that are at stake in a field, thus, “the *field* is also a *field* of struggles” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p101). It is the structure of the *field* that both informs and guides the occupants of positions, individually or collectively, to maintain or improve their position and to impose the most favourable principle of hierarchisation (Bourdieu cited in Wacquant 1989). In other words, once in a position, it is maintained or improved upon. This is done by occupants of positions within the *field* employing a variety of strategies: “The *habitus* does not negate the possibility of strategic calculation on the part of agents” (Bourdieu 1993, p.5). However, strategies do not refer to “the purposive and pre-planned pursuits of calculated goals”, but to the active deployment of, “objectively oriented lines of action that obey regularities and form coherent and socially intelligible patterns, even though they do not follow conscious rules or aim at the premeditated goals posited by the strategist” (Wacquant, 1992, p.25). The strategies adopted by agents depend on their positions in the field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). However, it is power within the field that is of the utmost importance; the hierarchy of power relationships structures the field. Coaching and learning to coach are embodied processes that takes place within a given *field* with its own distinctive forms of *capital*. The learning of a specific *habitus* reflects the occupancy of a specific position within a *field* (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994). This in turn is embedded in the wider culture of social life that structure the learning experience (Cicourel, 1995; Jarvie & Maguire, 1994).

#### 4.1.5 Outline of the Discussion

The Analysis and Discussion Chapter from this point takes shape thus. Each section represents a key theme, a layer building toward understanding the coaching process, its interaction and, its complexity. The sections are; Club, Sessions & Games, Players, Coach, Coach-Player Relationship, and Attitude. It is intended that each layer should build upon the last, importantly at this point, it is worth emphasising that the coaching process is continuous and interactive and in demonstrating this interaction inevitably sections, at times, overlap.

It is hoped that each individual section will highlight how that theme influences and is influenced by the coaching process. More importantly, each section will demonstrate how understanding complex interactions are essential to move forward an understanding of the coaching process. As the Chapter develops, each section becomes more illustrative of interaction, culminating with the Coach-Player Relationship and Attitude sections that highlight clearly complex interaction.

The first section is the Club environment, which is the framework for the coaching process. Interacting with the Club, its culture and objectives are the coaches and players within Sessions & Games, which is the second section. Next are the players who, individually and collectively through their sub-culture, impact upon the Club and Sessions & Games. The Coaches follow who, with their history and tradition are influenced by and influence the Club, Players and Sessions & Games. The Coach-Player relationship demonstrates interaction and complexity in the interdependent and dialectic relationship between the coach, the players and the club. The chapter ends with a section entitled Attitude, a somewhat nebulous concept, which is presented as an important mediating factor in the interaction of the coach, the player and the club environment. Therefore, the Chapter examines how coaching practice and the coaching process were shaped by social and institutional structures, and, more than that, how through interaction social structures shaped the coaching process and experiences arising from the process acted to embed structure into the *habitus* of those involved. At the same time, through individual variation, the coaches and players influenced practice and the coaching process.

During the Analysis and Discussion Chapter all data will be presented indented and single spaced with direct quotes denoted as such by the use of quotation marks. Data sources from Albion will be referenced as 'field notes', 'interview' or 'focus group', and the coach interviews conducted outside the case study club will be referenced as 'club coach interview'. The first section introduces the Club.

## 4.2 Practical coaching context: THE CLUB

### *Background*

The national governing body of football in England, the Football Association (F.A.), delegates the responsibility for developing professional footballers to the clubs. The clubs, in turn, delegate the detail of development policy and function to the youth sections. Clubs vary in their requirements for youth development. There are differences in the number of teams clubs have, the numbers of players that are signed as 'professionals' 'trainees' or 'trialists', and the volume of training that they undertake. Variation also exists in the specificity of the content of programmes, the credentials and backgrounds of the coaches assigned to youth teams, and in the resources the club allocates specifically to youth development.

Despite these differences, the youth sections within clubs are tasked with providing a structured training programme for their youth players that should include an educational and vocational package comprising of on-the job training, access to further education and work experience (Harrison, 1994; Parker 1996). The main benefit to clubs is that the programme enables them to lay a foundation in terms of player (and ultimately financial) investment (Parker, 1996; Rudin & Naylor; 1990). Each year approximately 600 individuals enter football clubs as full time 'trainees' (Garland, 1993).

The F.A.'s Charter for Quality, published in 1998, introduced widespread reform in "the way we look after our young footballers" (Wilkinson, 1998, p.1). The Charter outlined a set of mandatory requirements that a club had to fulfil to obtain Academy Status, including factors affecting facilities, staff, learning programmes, player feedback and games programmes. The Charter places great emphasis on the needs of the players as these extracts demonstrate:

"The charter for Quality places the needs of the performer at the centre of all recommendations".

"The programme of activities should be organised in the best interests of the players' technical, educational, academic and social welfare"

"Academy Directors will also be mindful of the impact of the programme on educational and social development"

(Football Association, 1998, p.1-7)

To ensure that clubs are meeting the standards set by the Charter, the FA organises inspection visits three times per year and an annual quality audit carried out by the club's respective league. Albion Rovers obtained a licence to operate a Football Academy at the end of May 1998.

#### 4.2.1 *The Club as an Organisation*

When considering the construction of the practical coaching context and the coaching process, it will become increasingly clear that the coaching process emerges in response to social interaction and the interpretative processes within the framework of environmental variables constituting the work setting (Sage, 1989). Albion Rovers, as a professional football club is a work organisation. The concept of 'organisation' fits well with the notion of a coaching process in that it comprises of a group of individuals who interact with one another in an interdependent relationship. The individuals within the organisation work towards common goals and the way they relate is determined by the structure of the organisation (Duncan, 1981). This section will consider the structure of Albion Rovers and its impact on the practical coaching context and the coaching process. Considering the organisation in these terms might, at first glance, appear simplistic not capturing reality of this social phenomenon. However, as the section unfolds, the nature of *organisational complexity at Albion Rovers* will become clearer.

Key people employed by the organisation, the players and coaches, are expected to work towards the achievement of common goals, and the club structures and processes are designed to co-ordinate activities in pursuit of those objectives (McKenna, 1994). This section will consider the organisational goals of Albion Rovers and how these impact and influence the coaching process. It also considers the tensions caused when goals and priorities of the club and its staff do not coincide, and the implications of this tension for the coaching process.

Organisational culture is described by Fine (1984) and Gibson Ivancevich and Donnelly (1994) as a major feature of organisational life. Indeed, "an organisation is barren without a culture" (McKenna, 1994, p.434). Considering the prevailing culture provides an opportunity to think about the behaviour of and in an organisation. It also provides a perspective with which to grasp what is occurring within the club environment. Therefore, organisational culture and its influence on Albion Rovers and the coaching process is an important consideration.

Moreover, interwoven throughout, and using the concepts of Pierre Bourdieu, an attempt is made to understand and explain the nature of interaction between structures and social actors; in other words how the club, the players, and the coaches interact through, and in practice. Considered first is the club's structure.

#### 4.2.2 Club Structure

The practical coaching context at Albion Rovers was organised along hierarchical lines. This hierarchy played a part in the construction of the practical coaching context and impacted, on a day-to-day basis, upon the coaching process. Figure 4.1 below illustrates the club structure for the coaching and playing staff.

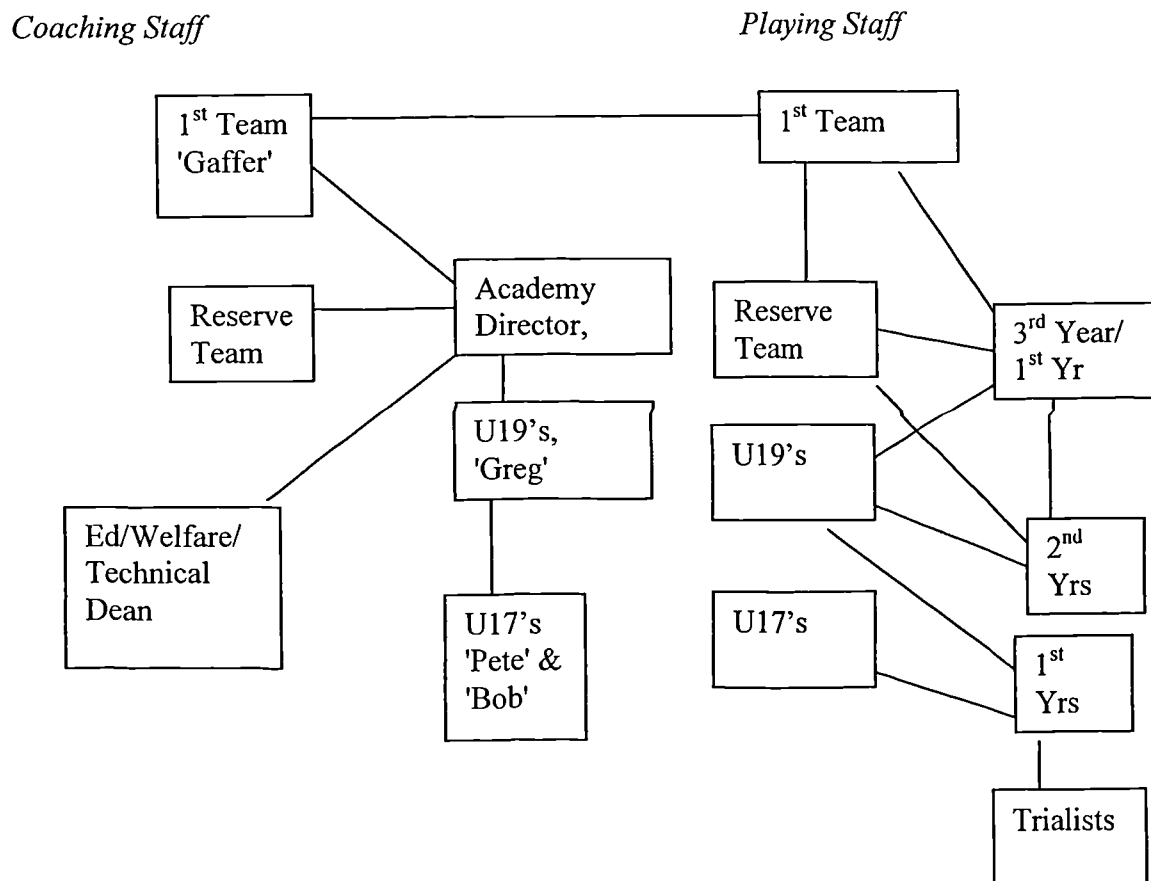


Figure 4.1. Hierarchical club structure at Albion Rovers 1999/2000 season.

#### 4.2.3 Positioning the Academy

“The first team will always be first, and I think that’s how it should be”  
(Club Coach Interview, Kn, 2000)

“The first team do what they do and everything is affected by them”  
(Interview, Pete, Under 17 coach, 2000)

Each day the Academy players had to report to the training ground by 9-30am, with training commencing between 10-15am and 10-30am. The club dining area was open from 8-30am where any of the playing and coaching staff could have breakfast; a buffet of cereals, fruit and toast. The trainees were able to mix with the coaching staff and professionals, although they each tended to sit with their own team or group i.e. staff with staff, Academy players with Academy players. After breakfast and changing, first year Academy players undertook a series of chores prior to training. These included cleaning, filling and distributing water bottles to the respective training area for each of the three training groups; first team, reserves and Academy. In addition, they had to count out balls and bibs, ensure that the balls were inflated and, along with other items of equipment such as cones, poles and hurdles, ensure that each training area was stocked. On completion of these tasks the players would join the rest who were either still in the changing room, or were drifting out to the training area. The staff, the professionals, and the Academy players each had their own dressing room. The training pitches were allocated daily, with the Academy players being allocated a pitch last depending on the needs of the professionals. The Academy players and teams never trained or played on the ‘stadium pitch’ that was used for reserve team fixtures and clearly symbolised the ‘next level’ in the hierarchy. In the following data, the reserves and first team implicitly are ‘above’ with these higher levels in the hierarchy also demanding a higher playing standard.

Greg (Under 19 coach) speaking to a player in training; “I, I let you off some of those touches, but if you move up to there or up to there (indicating where the reserves and first team train) they won’t.”  
(Field notes, 11<sup>th</sup> October 1999)

It was not uncommon to see the Academy team move training area to accommodate the needs of the professionals.

Greg (Under 19 coach) comes out and speaks with me about the Christmas plans. He then indicates that the equipment should be moved to another pitch, the first team are currently training on that pitch. “We’re training over there. When they’ve finished, they want to use this area”. The players move the equipment and stand watching the first team training. Pete (Under 17 coach) jogs over and as he arrives

Greg takes the players jogging around the ground. When they return they move to a half of the pitch not being used by the first team and use the width of it. (Field notes, 24<sup>th</sup> December 1999)

Whilst the coaching sessions will be discussed in detail in another section, (see Sessions & Games p.142) club hierarchy affected the Academy's training. For example, the numbers that the coaches had for their sessions would fluctuate according to the needs of the other teams. If the reserve team had a fixture then the third and second year Academy players involved in that game would train with the reserves. Also, if the first team squad was affected by injuries the numbers of reserves would be reduced and they would join in with the Academy players.

As training was about to start Dean (Education/ Welfare & Technical) and I walked from the academy office out onto the playing fields. As we walked Dean explained that the first team squad currently on a pre-season tour of Scotland had taken a squad of 20 players, which left some 1<sup>st</sup> team 'rejects', reserve players and the academy players. This coming weekend the club had fixtures on both Saturday and Sunday, so the days' training groups were being sorted according to the demands of the fixtures. (Field notes, 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1999)

Once again the coaching groups have been split. The first team were away at City the reserves were away at Town. Some of the Academy players were involved with the reserve fixture. This group was doing a light session. The balance (12) were training with Greg. (Field notes, 28<sup>th</sup> July 1999)

Pete (Under 17 coach) has five academy players plus one trialist. The balance of the academy players is in the squad for the reserves. This then represents the players on the fringe of the action. (Field notes, 25<sup>th</sup> March 2000)

Despite the often greater number of Academy players, the first team and reserves still had priority on facilities. The following extract from field notes illustrates the distribution of players and how the hierarchy, through group sizes, impacted upon sessions.

There will be three training groups this morning. The first team squad, the reserves (rejects) who played in the game the previous afternoon and those academy players who played in the same game, and the remainder of the academy players plus 10 under 16 players who are coming into training during the school holidays. In reality, this group is further split with Pete and Bob (under 17 assistant coach) taking the younger players and Greg and Dean taking the balance of the academy



players. All the training groups warm up by jogging around the playing field and occasionally stopping to do stretching exercises. I position myself to observe Greg and Dean who have half a football field while the younger group have the other half. The reserves and first team have a pitch each.

(Field notes, 26<sup>th</sup> July 1999)

The hierarchy and its influence on the coaching process at Albion was not unique. Several authors report similar findings (Guilianotti, 1999; Parker, 1996; Tomlinson, 1983; Taylor and Ward, 1995). Indeed, the interviews conducted with coaches from other clubs revealed a similar hierarchical structure and similar implications for the coaching process.

Ps: “ The first team take priority, then it’s the reserves then it’s the YT’s (Youth Trainees). At our club, obviously, you know, sometimes the first team take the goalkeeper, or two or three boys, probably the biggest problem we’ve got is when boys are taken for the reserves, and we’ve got games ourselves”.

(Club Coach Interview, February 2000)

The Academy at Albion was also affected by an ongoing campaign by the first team manager to reduce the number of professionals, especially those who were not in his future plans. This group, often with only five or six players, would have to train on its own. Also, the reserve team manager, using *his seniority, could apply pressure on the Academy coaches*, which meant that the reserves would join in with them. The extract below provides another illustration of the position of the Academy in the hierarchy.

Andy (Academy Director); “When was the last time we did some coaching, this game is catering to the needs of the reserve team. It seems to me that since Christmas we’re not really doing any structured coaching sessions”. The players come out. Greg sends the keeper to warm up the group “15 minutes good warm up please” Greg then asks me what I thought of this morning’s training. I said it depended on what the objective was.

“I get ambushed by reserve team coach who says do you want a game, I don’t really but he is the reserve team manager reporting into the first team manager so I’m caught having to agree with him. I think because he only has 5 players he gets caught out a little about thinking what to do with them. The manager wants them gone as soon as possible so it must be hard for him, trying to keep the manager happy”.

(Field notes, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2000)

At the end of training, the ‘signed professionals’ that is the third year Academy players who have a professional contract, and second years who were also signed, could leave the training area immediately. The first and remaining second years were

required to collect all the equipment from the three teams' training areas and return it to the equipment store. Once Greg was happy that this had been done, the players could shower and have lunch. However, entry into the dining room was subject to the first team having left. At no time during the season did the Academy players and the first team eat at the same time.

Greg summons the group to follow him. He then takes the warm up, a series of running and limbering exercises across the pitch while Andy (Academy Director) sets up some cones. While the players stretch: "Good light session today boys, might go on a bit cos of the 1st team eating, but lets get it right. Set up the set pieces and get em right"

(Field notes, 13<sup>th</sup> August 1999)

Academy players were presented with individual squad numbers and personalised items of kit. The kit clearly distinguished the Academy players from both the professionals and trialists who each wore a different colour; as did the coaching staff whose kit carried their initials rather than a squad number. Coach and professionals' kit whilst distinguishable, adhered more closely to the general club colours, whereas Academy player's kit and trialist kit provided a stark contrast. Whilst symbols can have different meanings for different people and are multi-vocal (Turner, 1967), the different colours offered a *highly visible and tangible symbol of* achievement and status (Light, 1999). This differentiation of players was also carried onto the pitch. Simply waiting for training to begin would demonstrate the hierarchical nature of the club, and the professionals' view of the hierarchy and, their place in it, as these data demonstrate.

The players are out on the field without the supervision of any staff. They are in groups of 4 and 5. Some stand around, some are passing a ball to one another. There is occasional laughter from the players. There is one trialist with the group who has a ball and practises alone. Today the five rejected professionals are practising with the Academy players. They stand to the left of the youth players and pass a ball amongst themselves. Andy and Greg walk over and watch an improvised 'circle keep-ball' take shape. Initially the professionals do not join in but after a brief pause they decide to join in. Andy interrupts the players and divides the group into two. The five pro's and those who did not play on Saturday go off and warm up alone. Greg takes the balance for a warm up, they represent the starting 11 from Saturday's game. Greg snakes off around the ground.

(Field notes 13<sup>th</sup> September 1999)

The players' circle has got smaller with 5 of the players now not taking part, and are sitting to the left of the circle about 5 yards away. Greg stands next to me and points out, "4 out of 5 of the professionals are not taking part" I ask him why, Greg pauses "they must think that they are above it"  
(Field notes 28<sup>th</sup> August 1999)

Whilst patterns of interaction are dealt with in greater detail in another section (see Sessions & Games, p.142; specifically Coach-Player Relationship, p. 195) the nature of communication reflected the hierarchy on a more personal level. For example, the Academy players could refer to the coaching staff, namely, Dean (Education/Welfare & Technical advisor), Pete (Under 17 coach), Bob (Under 17 assistant coach) by their first name or nickname (usually an abbreviated surname or adding an 'ey' to the surname). Whereas, Greg (U19 coach) Andy (Academy Director) and the reserve team coach were referred to by name alone. The first team manager was referred to as 'Gaffer', in appreciation of his position of authority and their deference to him. Thus, players developed a "hierarchical awareness" (Sabo & Panepinto, 1990, p.121) or what Chodorow (1978) refers to as a positional identity. This was reinforced with the Academy players being addressed in terms of their inferiority. They were known to the staff as 'boys' or 'kids', a reminder not only of their youth but also their subordinate position in the hierarchical club structure.

Andy: "That kid at the back, he's 19, what's that doing for his development? The club have bought him, he's fuckin useless, not his fault mind you. I've asked as he's under 21 if he can join in with us. Then the manager says keep your nose out he's a pro. He hasn't trained in the afternoon for eight months, he could join us on a Tuesday afternoon in the Gym. He's not learning anything over there". Andy resumes setting up the field then returns to me. "It's interesting, management, not just football the first team manager calls me at home, and always says that it's the gaffer calling. All the managers I've ever worked with, I've always called them by their first name, but he's pulled me the other day and asked me why I don't call him gaffer".  
(Field notes, 29<sup>th</sup> October 1999)

The ball goes out for a corner and Greg sets up to practise corners. During one of the practices Greg says that the players not selected should pay attention "you boys in orange, could be you tomorrow"  
(Field notes 10<sup>th</sup> September 1999)

Greg refers to the younger group who have lost. "Last season we were losing 6 or 7, we won't see success from that group for another two or three years. All of these boys were taken on when Albion were a lower division club".  
(Field notes, 30<sup>th</sup> October 1999)

Through analysis of the hierarchical organisational structure it has been possible to demonstrate how the club environment impacts upon the practical coaching context and the coaching process. Thus, the coaching process at Albion Rovers was clearly shaped by the social context and social structure in place. To deepen the level of analysis, the Club and its structure will be analysed using the concepts of Pierre Bourdieu. It is through this level of analysis that an understanding of the nature of the club structure and its interaction in the coaching process can be grasped, and possible conclusions regarding coach education and practice be reached.

#### 4.2.4 *The Club; Social Structure and Field*

The social arena in which individuals struggle over, or manoeuvre, is described by Bourdieu as a *field* (Jenkins, 1992). Each *field* has its own logic and taken-for-granted structure of necessity and relevance. A *field*, therefore, is a structured system of social positions that defines the situation for its occupants (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994; Jenkins, 1992); in these terms Albion can be identified as a *field*. Coaches are therefore recognisable as coaches and act accordingly, as do players. The system is characterised by a series of power relations, where positions are viewed as more or less dominant or subordinate, reflecting an individual's access to *capital* (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994; Jenkins, 1992). It is power within the *field* that is of the utmost importance, because the hierarchy of power relationships structures the *field*. The organisation of the club, as has been demonstrated, was indeed along hierarchical lines. The first team manager was the most 'senior' in the coaching hierarchy, with the first team professionals the most senior in the players' hierarchy. The Academy at Albion was a hierarchy within a hierarchy, with Andy being the most senior staff member (but perhaps not the most powerful). Among the players, the signed pros' were senior to the 'second year Academy players', who in turn were senior to the 'first year Academy players', who in turn were senior to all trialists.

In Bourdieu's terms each *field* is semi-autonomous, and is characterised by its own determinate agents (players and coaches), its own accumulation of history, its own logic of action and forms of *capital* (Calhoun, 1995). The occupants of positions may either be agents (coaches, players) or institutions (the club, the governing body) and they are constrained by the structure of the *field*. In addition, each *field* is immersed in its own institutional *field* of power, and forms part of the overall social

space. Consequently, social reality is composed of multiple fields with a relationship between one another where there are points of contact and overlap (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994). The football club environment was composed of sub-*fields*, organised around the teams in the hierarchy. The *field* therefore, is the crucial mediating context wherein external factors or changing circumstances are brought to bear upon individual practice (Jenkins, 1992). As has already been suggested, the club environment, the *field (s)*, is where the interaction of the coaching process occurs. Social structure is present in discursive interactional encounters, determining the time and place of discourse, who is included and who is excluded (Collins, 1995).

So whilst the structure of the club environment at Albion can be likened to Bourdieu's *field*, how did it shape and control the process of coaching? Another of Bourdieu's concepts, *capital*, assists, in part, with answering this question. *Capital* is described by Bourdieu as being the capacity to exercise control over one's own future and the future of others and is, in effect, a form of power (Ritzer, 1996). As was noted earlier (see Analysis and Discussion Chapter, p.116) *capital* can occur in a number of forms, economic (that which can be immediately and directly converted to money), cultural (such as educational credentials), social (such as social position and connections) symbolic (from honour and prestige) (Calhoun, 1995; Ritzer, 1996) and physical (the development of bodies in ways recognised as having value) (Shilling, 1997).

In football, social *capital*, cultural *capital*, symbolic *capital* and physical *capital* all contribute to the social hierarchy, formal and informal, for both coaches and players. For example; social *capital* is derived from the position in the coaching or playing staff (head coach versus assistant, professional versus Academy player). Cultural *capital* is derived from the qualifications and experience of the coach or player, while symbolic *capital* may come from prestige or renown as a player or coach. Symbolic *capital* was described by Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) as a culturally arbitrary symbolic system of meanings, that is, what is valued in the *field*, is determined by the dominant power group. At Albion, the possession of a 'good attitude', discussed in detail in another section (see Coach-Player Relationship, p. 195; specifically Attitude p. 214), was a form of symbolic *capital*, as was performance and effort. For the Academy and the club, winning and the importance of winning, were held in high esteem and were remarkably influential parts of the culture (see Session & Games, p. 142; Coach p. 180); a significant form of symbolic *capital*.

This is summed up simply in these extracts from Andy (Academy Director) at Albion, and in an interview conducted at another club.

Andy; "...you can get more if you win."

(Field notes, 27<sup>th</sup> August, 1999)

"The results are important for the team's credibility, the coach's credibility, the group's credibility."

(Club Coach Interview, De, 2000).

Bourdieu asserts that society is structured along differences in the distribution of *capital*, with individuals constantly striving to maximise their *capital* (Calhoun, 1995). Social position is charted by two key co-ordinates, firstly the volume of *capital*, and secondly the composition. This has a temporal dimension as the distribution of *capital* can change over time. First, Academy players for example, have insufficient social *capital* in their position, and are striving to gain symbolic and cultural *capital*, and enhance the physical *capital* that has assisted their entrance to the *field*. The trialist has the least *capital* both in terms of volume and composition.

The structure of the *field* (s) at Albion, through selection and indoctrination, contribute to the production and reproduction of the *field* of power. The club, Albion, controls access to a professional contract for the trainees. In effect, it controls, through the coaching process, the production of players. The players are striving, more or less successfully, to gain not only a sufficient volume of *capital* but also the appropriate composition, to become full-time professionals. This, however, takes time to achieve, and results in a dynamic between those who hold the *capital*, the club and the coach, and those who aspire to it. This level of understanding helps to explain some of the driving forces and complexity behind interaction in the coaching process. It also gives an insight into the possible significance of the composition and volume of *capital* acquired and required by those involved in coach education.

#### 4.2.5 Organisational Objectives

A club's objectives serve to orient it toward singular or multiple purposes and, could be outcome-centred or player-centred. A club's organisational goals will reflect and fuel the organisation's orientation (Lawson, 1989). The Football association Charter for Quality (see 4.2.1 above, p.120) presents an over-arching desire for

player-centred development. This, however, did not appear to be the primary concern of Albion and those in authority there. What seemed to matter most was that a steady stream of players continued to emerge from the Academy to support and supplement the needs of the first team and reserves. The approach was clearly club-centred, not player-centred and, as these data reveal, this seemed to be the case both at Albion and other clubs

“The objective for the club and first team manager is to get players for his team”  
(Interview, Dean, 2000)

“Our goal is producing players for the first team”  
(Club Coach Interview, Jw, 2000)

“Our objective is to try and get people into the first team”  
(Club Coach Interview, Kn, 2000)

The objectives of Albion and its Academy were not formalised or written down, nor was there a specific plan or curriculum that might lead to the club's goals. A curriculum is defined as “a prescribed course of learning and performance for players, together with the experiences and activities which are intended to facilitate such learning and performance” (Lawson, 1989, p.158). Arguably, Albion's coaching programme should reflect the explicit objectives or philosophy of the club: to develop players for the first team, and in part it did do (see Sessions & Games, p. 142). However, although never formally stated and in fact frequently denied, winning and understanding the importance of winning were central objectives at Albion, and were reflected in the coaching process. In the extract below, Andy (Academy Director) is rejecting the idea that the training is affected by results.

I asked Andy if the win on Saturday would affect the training week. He said that he didn't think that it would because the things that they would be doing and the time spent training was about right. That everything they did had a purpose, and they would be doing the same things regardless of the results.  
(Field notes 6<sup>th</sup> September 1999)

This approach suggests a developmental approach, where the goal of training would be to improve the players. It was a view also expressed in a newspaper column written by Andy who describes the Academy at Albion as "now starting to address the issue

of player development seriously” (Andy, 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 1999). However, with deeper probing and observation a different picture became clear where, for the club and the coaches, winning and the importance of winning were of overriding importance too.

“I think it's important for the lads at this age to know how to win a game now, cos the next step is reserve-come-first-team football. So it's vitally important for them to know, not just about techniques but how to win a game. So I think I've been quite effective, getting that point across to them and they've come up with the goods more times than not”.

(Interview, Greg, 2000)

Andy (Academy Director) addressing the players before a training session: “You know you can't win 6-0 every week. First thing the reserve team coach said this morning was "good result" didn't even see us play and wasn't bothered. We are in the winning business that's the mentality that we have to adopt. So 20 minutes with Greg today is working down the sides of teams. I don't want to be in the dugout on Saturday having to tell people what to do.

(Field notes 31st January 2000)

At the end of the session Greg speaks with the academy players

“All of you are going to be here at least one year, it's about getting into good habits. Do we want to win every game... yes we do. Doing the right things at the right times”.

(Field notes 27<sup>th</sup> July 1999)

Greg; “Short and sharp on a Friday, we shouldn't have to chase you on a Friday. I don't want to run you the day before the game, but we will. It's about being right and ready to get the job done.

Andy; “We've done our closing down, we've done our keep ball, we've had our day off. We know what we have to do to win the game. We have a game plan, I know and you know what our jobs are, I know if we stay on our feet, if the back four stay together we'll win the game. I know if we stop crosses we'll win the game. We all know how we're gonna win the game. We know and you know”.

(Field notes, 23<sup>rd</sup> October, 2000)

As the players stretch

Greg; “This morning, short and sharp, get last week out of the system, 5-2, City here we come. Not enough people wanted to win the gam , George Graham on Wednesday night, didn't mention passing or shooting, just that not enough people wanted to win the game.

(Field notes, 29<sup>th</sup> November 1999)

These views are supported in interview away from Albion.

*Interviewer: How much are objectives or goals guided by results, winning the game?*



De: “Umm (5) you don’t want to lose the game, no coach wants to lose the game. The results are important for the team’s credibility, the coach’s credibility, the group’s credibility.  
(Club Coach Interview, De, 2000).

A longer excerpt of data highlights the importance of winning, not only to the staff but to the players as well. Being a part of a winning team seems to be important to the Academy players' career progression.

Greg “Get our minds on this game tomorrow. Who wants to win that fuckin’ game tomorrow. I know Andy does, I know I do. Let’s have that mentality, starting from now, when we finish here in a minute. Have your shower, have your lunch. Prepare properly, don’t be sloppy, you want to be right, be ready for the match. Can we kill a team like this off?

Andy. “I mean hopefully it really is what we are paid to do now. That is the truth of it. You know like everything else is secondary. You know it’s been a good pre-season, wave of tactics, good fitness levels, Gibraltar trip, whatever.

We haven’t beasted you, you know we haven’t asked you to come back in the afternoon and do things that were just for the sake of doing them. We have taken chances and just do the mornings, get the lines right, use Monday to Friday just to take on board information, that is all Monday to Friday is. Not about knacker yourself. Just learn a little bit then to get the technique a bit better. Get the pattern right. Taking on board information. Saturday is about winning. No more no less it is about winning. You can't learn while you are out there in one game. You might learn over fifty games but you can’t learn in one game out there. So all you can do is win the game. You know that it’s what we should be doing next week. You know planning, I mean Monday a little chat, we shouldn’t have done this, and Tuesday, Wednesday you know again Wednesday off, get away from it all get a game of golf in. Thursday, Friday, Saturday is payday. I can get people contracts at this club more if you are winning than if you’re not. Take it from me that it is the truth.

You want away, you can get more if you win. All this crap it doesn’t matter about winning. Fine, it doesn’t matter Monday to Friday and in the long term of your careers it won’t matter. You know, but while you are trying to fight to get something i.e. results, it puts you in a stronger position. You know whether you want to go away to Rovers, we can we’re successful. Get unsuccessful you are stuck in the minibus not because I want to do it. That is just the way the world is. Travelling up at 8-o clock in the morning.

That is what you are trying to get out of or what you are trying to achieve. Our first three games, let’s concentrate. Rovers away, Town at home. If you are taking it properly tomorrow, and going to every game differently and the sixteen in the squad have got the right atmosphere we get nine points out of that. They are three winnable games aren’t they? Tomorrow, Rovers away, Town at home. Three winnable games, but it starts from tomorrow that will build the success”

(Field notes, 27<sup>th</sup> August 1999)

These data, not only highlight the value and importance and winning, but also begin to give an insight into the motive and methods behind socialising Academy players into the professional game.

#### 4.2.6 *The Club; Culture and Socialisation*

Like any work organisation Albion attempted to socialise its members, indeed it was, arguably, an implicit objective of the club. A significant factor in socialisation is the influence of the organisation, and the contextual factors of the work setting (Stroot et al., 1994). Louis (1980) proposes two types of learning in organisational/professional socialisation; that is learning those things related to the role, and those related to the culture of the organisation. These two strands of learning, whilst never explicitly stated or indeed separated, were understood as necessary by the coaches at Albion, and indeed at the other clubs in the study.

“I think on the training ground we should be trying to teach them all you can about football, about professional football, about life, about life in general.”  
(Club Coach Interview, Ps, 2000).

“We aim to improve them as players, their techniques and understanding, the physiological side, so they become better educated and better players. It’s also about life skills, social skills, representing yourself as a professional footballer. Ultimately the club will be accountable in a few years time on how those boys became professional footballers from here or other clubs, um, so you have to always have that on your mind because you are going to get measured”  
(Interview, Dean, 2000).

Training with the Academy at Albion, was a period of formal apprenticeship, and can be classed as a period of professional socialisation (Lortie, 1975; Shapiro & Lowenstein, 1979). The club was concerned not just to develop competent workers equipped with the technical skills to do the job of professional footballer, but also to ensure that the players had learned the club’s and indeed the occupational culture. A major function of socialisation was to impart enduring values and an ideology that would guide the players after their time with the Academy. These aims were reflected in coaching practice and influenced the coaching process.

“Yeah techniques, we do all that, but the main job is to try and get round, to understand their role as a footballer as quick as possible. To give them everything a player has got, you know, on and off the pitch”  
(Interview, Greg, 2000)

“Obviously we do all the football stuff, like technical work, but there are other things in terms of developing people within a football environment, who can take responsibility, can make decisions, treat people right within the confines of football”.

(Interview, Bob, 2000).

“If they fail to reach professional status I would like to think that it was down to the individual for not seizing the opportunity or down to the fact that god hasn’t given them what is needed to become a professional player and not down to the club didn’t give us this or that or the coach never taught us that”

(Club Coach Interview, Jw, 2000).

From the data it can be argued that becoming a professional footballer involves the construction of an identity, an appropriate *habitus*, over time and depends on a number of processes. These include; acquisition of knowledge and skills associated with the game, learning the values and perspectives of the club and professional football, earning acceptance from the club, the coaches and the players, and ensuring that the players' identity is confirmed over time. Thus, the socialisation process bears a striking resemblance to the coaching process, in that it involves interaction between the coach, player and the club environment over a period of time. As in the coaching process, interaction is the key, as socialisation is not merely a matter of exposure to significant others (players and coaches), the social system and its interrelated culture.

The relationship between the club, the culture, socialisation and the coaching process was a complex one. The day-to-day activities of the players and coaches were produced as a result of interaction between agent (the coaches and players) and structure (the club). Through participation in social practice, culture became embodied and reproduced. The practices that reproduced culture; the sessions, games, and the routine of life at the club, were not objectively determined nor were they the product of free will. Practices were produced by the interaction of the structural social context (the club) and the social action of the players and coaches. However, the coaching process at Albion was “ideologically laden” (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994, p.184). Practice both constrained and enabled individuals. Embodied actions structure how a player thinks, feels and acts. The production and reproduction of these practices within players reflected them being part of, not only the profession, but also the club.

The socialisation process can usefully be seen as part of a hidden curriculum (Kirk, 1992) within the coaching process that proceeded on the basis of interaction and learning. The coaching process was assumed to take care of much of the professional socialisation that the players needed, and therefore was not given direct attention in planning, organisation or delivery of sessions. Thus, the objectives of socialisation were communicated unconsciously and, unavoidably, as a consequence of taking part in the formal and routine activities of the club (Kirk, 1992). As a result of this, the socialisation process can be viewed as a series of 'opposites' to the coaching process. For example, the coaching process was formal whereas the socialisation process, as outlined above, was informal. The sessions and games were sequential whilst socialisation was random and characterised by a lack of order. The coaching had a well-developed and, reasonably fixed timetable, whilst socialisation had no fixed time frame as such. The players were coached and given direct advice regarding their performance, whilst socialisation was characterised by disjuncture (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979), that is, the players either took on board the socialisation messages or not. Consequently, because the socialisation process had no rational plan, and the socialisation tactics employed were not matched with pre-determined outcomes, the culture of the club, its customs and traditions were as much responsible for the socialisation of the players as *the coaches were*.

#### 4.2.7 Culture at Albion

The first team has returned from its tour of Scotland, and there's a great deal of interest around the training ground. A number of spectators have come to watch the first team training and to look at the club's new signings. The handful of spectators stand in the visitor's area under the watchful eye of a single security guard, they dutifully remain behind the 'staff only beyond this point' sign, craning to catch a glimpse of their heroes.  
(Field notes 26<sup>th</sup> July 1999)

Insider accounts of English professional football, its youth sections and the practical coaching context, have been hindered by the insular atmosphere created and perpetuated by those living and working around the game (Parker, 1996; Tomlinson, 1983; Walvin, 1975; Ward, 1983; Wagg, 1984). Despite encouraging wider support on match-days, many teams choose to go about their week-day business amidst an atmosphere of relative seclusion in an attempt to keep the players and their training

activities away from public and media gaze (Tomlinson, 1983; Parker, 1996). At Albion Rovers, visitors were allowed on site, but had to gain a visitor's pass, and could only venture into a specific 'visitor viewing area'. Indeed, before becoming a familiar face at the training ground, I was often stopped by security and asked who I was and where I was going. Through the treatment of visitors, and broader attitudes toward 'outsiders', the culture and organisation gave the feeling of discipline, control and authority.

Day to day life within the club environment at Albion was strongly influenced by the organisational culture.

“Any organisational culture consists broadly of long standing rules of thumb, a somewhat special language, and ideology that helps edit a member's everyday experience, shared standards of relevance as to the critical aspects of the work being accomplished, matter of fact prejudices, models for social etiquette and demeanour, certain customs and rituals suggestive of how members are to relate to colleagues, subordinates superiors and outsiders. Such cultural forms are so rooted in the recurrent problems and common experiences of the membership in an organisational segment that once learned they become viewed by insiders as perfectly ‘natural’ responses to the world of work they inhabit” (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, p.210).

As Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) description suggests, a club's culture is largely unwritten; it consists primarily of deeply embedded assumptions about the club and its functions that are widely accepted (Lawson, 1989). Moreover, Gibson, et al. (1994) suggest that culture within an organisation is the product of the interaction of its power relations, behaviour, structure, processes and the larger environment in which it exists. Indeed, culture remains "one of the most complex and elusive concepts" (Gibson, 1986, p.66). This complexity arises because the organisational characteristics and functions at Albion Rovers are both creators, and parts of, the organisational culture. Yet, Deal and Kennedy (1982) suggest that an organisation's culture is built over many years by the dominant group, therefore, the culture reflects what the club was, built up over years, and what the club is, and its deeply embedded assumptions. As a result, the culture simultaneously represents both the past and the present. So descriptions of the practical coaching context and the club environment, with their objectives and hierarchical structure, both represents the culture at Albion, while at the same time creating it. Thus, the coaching process is influenced by the

prevailing culture; a culture that is pressurised, emphasises the power and authority of the coach, winning, control, hard work, and obedience (see later sections, Sessions & Games, p. 142; Coach, p.180; Player, p.162; Coach-Athlete Relationship, p.195). Yet, at the same time, the acting out of the coaching process contributes to that culture. The culture infuses the coaching process. The coaches are not just passing along the products of football (the technical and tactical), they are instilling attitudes, values and beliefs and giving players experiences that will construct a *habitus* suited to professional football, thus reproducing the existing culture. For Bourdieu, the imposition and inculcation of culture through periods of training, is known as symbolic violence.

#### 4.2.8 *The Club Environment; Symbolic Violence and Institutionalised Education*

Symbolic violence is the imposition of systems of symbolism and meaning (culture) in a way that ensures they are experienced as legitimate (Jenkins, 1992). The primary medium for this imposition at Albion was through the coaching process, specifically during sessions and games (see Sessions & Games p.142). This process of symbolic violence involves engagement in pedagogic action, which Bourdieu describes as a cultural mechanism (Ritzer, 1996), for reproducing the arbitrary culture of a *field*, and also reproducing the power relations reflecting the interests of the dominant group; for example, the coaches. Pedagogic action involves the agents, in this case the players, experiencing what Bourdieu describes as misrecognition, "the process whereby power relations are perceived not for what they objectively are, but in the form that renders them legitimate in the eyes of the beholder" (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977,p.xiii).

In the case of symbolic violence, the recipients are complicit with the process (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) for as players they attend the club each day and take part in sessions and games. As Bourdieu puts it "one is only hooked if one is in the pool" (1984b, p.89). Pedagogic authority is required for successful pedagogic action. Pedagogic authority is an arbitrary power to act, misrecognised by its practitioners and recipients as legitimate, for example the position of coach. Pedagogic action is experienced by the players as neutral, or even positively valued, for example, as helping them reach their goal of being a professional footballer, a goal shared by all of the players as this extract illustrates.

*Interviewer:- Why are you here?*

Try to be a professional.  
(Focus Group Interview, 2000).

To become a professional  
(Focus Group Interview, 2000).

To get our contracts  
(Focus Group Interview, 2000).

To become a professional  
(Focus Group Interview, 2000).

Importantly, no pedagogic action is neutral or culturally free (Jenkins, 1992). The club is an agent that, through its coaches, exercises pedagogic action. The Academy has symbolic strength in that its capacity to successfully inculcate meaning is a function of its weight in the structure of power relations. For the players, the Academy and its coaches sit at the top of the social and cultural hierarchy.

Pedagogic action is achieved through pedagogic work, which could be likened to the goals of the club, and indeed the process of youth training. Pedagogic work is;

"A process of inculcation which must last long enough to produce a desirable training, i.e. *habitus*, the producer of internalisation of the principles of cultural arbitrary capable of perpetuating itself after pedagogic action has ceased and thereby of perpetuating in practices the principles of internalised arbitrary "

(Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, p. 31).

The long-term function of pedagogic work is, at the very least, the production of dispositions which generate correct responses to the symbolic stimuli that emanate from the club and its coaches, the agents endowed with pedagogic authority (Jenkins, 1992). The legitimate culture in the *field* is thus experienced as an axiom; players no longer question "why?"

The club sought, through symbolic violence, to impose its language, meanings, symbolic system, and its culture, thus reproducing existing power relations. The training of players was misrecognised, and while imposition of the culture is accepted as legitimate, the culture adds its own force to the power relations. Further data to support this notion is in the later Coach-Player Relationship section (p.195).

#### 4.2.9 *The Club Environment; Some Conclusions*

In every job, the working individual must comply with specific constraints, and to better understand the worker's (coaches') actions these constraints must be analysed. Therefore, this section has described salient features of the club environment that influence the coaching process, including; organisational structure, objectives and culture. Through its interaction with the player and coach, the club environment is both part and, creator of, the practical coaching context and the coaching process. Arguably, this section has demonstrated that to further an understanding of the coaching process, coaching research needs to take into account the forces that actively shape the coaching process, shaping what is coached and why it is thought these things are important (Kirk & Tinning, 1990). The professional football club environment is clearly a rich source of such forces.

The club environment has been likened to Bourdieu's *field*. In the coaching process it is the relationship between the *habitus* of the players, coaches, and the *field* that is key. The coaching process was influenced by the social structure of the *field*. The *field* acts to condition the *habitus* of the players and coaches, and that *habitus*, in turn, constitutes the *field* as something meaningful: "The dispositions constituting the cultivated *habitus* are only formed and only function and are only valid in a *field* in the relationship with the *field*" (Bourdieu, 1984a, p. 94). It is out of the relationship between *habitus* of players and coaches and the *field* that practice and, thus, the coaching process is established. Experiences from the coaching process act to embed the structure, logic and culture of the *field* within the *habitus* of the players. In addition to experiences, it was proposed that the club was an agent of pedagogic action, engaging in symbolic violence to impose the culture of the *field* upon the players. The power relations of the *field* are misrecognised, and viewed as legitimate by the players. Importantly, pedagogic action is viewed positively, but is not culturally neutral. The club and its agent, the coaches, communicate not only technical and tactical knowledge, but principles and assumptions regarding the culture, which serve to reproduce the culture, its arbitrariness, and the power relations within the *field*.

Clearly this analysis reveals that a sensitivity to social structures, while paying attention to the detail of coaching practice, and the interconnections that run between the two (Kirk & Tinning, 1990) reveals much about the construction and complexity inherent in the coaching process. This complexity, revealed in the interaction of the



club environment, the coach and the player is further developed, as is the notion of symbolic violence, in the next section which analyses this interaction through the lenses of training sessions and games.

## 4.3 Training Sessions and Games

### *Introduction*

This section examines the nature of training sessions and games at Albion and the ways in which they illustrate the interaction of the coach, player and club in the practical coaching context. Training sessions and games are key elements of the coaching process (Cote, et al., 1993; Cote et al., 1995; Lyle, 1999), where the coach has the most direct impact on the players' development. Whilst not only being useful to a fuller understanding of the coaching process, analysis of training and games in this context provides an in-depth view of coaching practice; a useful insight for the development of coach education. As well as being fundamental to the practical coaching context, training sessions and games are clear elements of practice where agent and structure intersect, and are elements of the coaching process where without interaction between the coach, player and club, the coaching process would not function. Sessions and Games thus provide a structure through which analysis of interaction is possible. This in turn, facilitates insight into the complexity of the relationship between coach, player and club environment.

In developing an understanding of training sessions and games, their contribution to the construction of the process of coaching and to demonstrate the interaction of coach player and club environment, a number of issues are considered. These include; structure, content, duration and frequency of training sessions and game preparation, the nature of the objectives set for sessions and games and the purpose sessions and games served in the coaching process.

### 4.3.1 *Sessions*

During the course of the 1999/2000 season, each day at the training ground followed a predictable format. Morning training sessions for the Academy players commenced between 10-15 am and 10-30 am, and finished at any time between 12-30pm and 1-30pm. The duration of the session was not only dependent on the needs of the group, but also the sometimes competing demands of the first team and reserves (see Club p.120). Every session would commence with a circle keep-ball (the players form a circle, two players are in the middle and act as defenders) that the players would initiate, but which would become formalised with the arrival of a coach. Greg (Under 19's coach) would join in the circle, often as a player, which

would serve to 'formalise' the practice. The circle would vary in duration each day, but would be the precursor to the 'physical' warm up, i.e. running and stretching. The following extracts of data not only show the structure of the circle practice, but also begin to demonstrate the controlling nature of the coaches, and the pressures on the players to perform.

The players are standing in small groups by the day's training pitch. Some are kicking a ball, some just stand. Andy (Academy Director) and Greg (U19 coach) come over and stand away from the group, which ignores them. Andy and Greg stand and talk, occasionally pointing. The players organise themselves into a circle, into which two of them go and try to intercept the ball being passed around the edge. I overhear Greg and Andy discussing the day's session.

Greg walks over to the players and Andy goes back to the building.

As he walks towards the players "last person on someone's back". The players rush around looking for a partner. The last pair are asked to go into the middle of the circle. Greg joins the circle and sets the rules of the game. "One touch, try for 20 passes". The players begin passing the ball around the circle. Each pair of players gets a go in the middle of the circle. The pair who allows the most number of passes gets the punishment in this case 10, 10, 10 (sit ups, press ups, and burpees).

"And have a stretch" The players stretch in silence as does Greg.

"Threes!" Greg shouts and the players try to get into groups of three. The last to do so once again begin in the middle of the circle. The first group win the ball quickly, as do the second group, Greg interjects; "Get down the fucking lot of you, 10 press ups, game tomorrow"

Greg changes the rules to allow two touches of the ball. The game starts again, and a player plays the ball first time. "Get down J, concentrate, game on tomorrow"

"have a stretch boys" signals the end of this round. The players again stretch in silence. Greg starts the next round, calls out the number of each pass as it is made "Lets get lively boys, game on tomorrow".

The game ends and the players pair off at the request of Greg, they then snake off around the pitch, doing various exercises as they go, high knees, jumping to head, roll over thigh, backward running. The players stop and sit and stretch, Greg walks among them speaking with them as they stretch, giving advice about tomorrow's game. "Back four, clear and push out"

"Get your success on the right hand side"

"Get your success on the left hand side"

(Field notes, 20<sup>th</sup> August)

The players have begun an informal keep ball in a large circle. Andy, Greg, and Dean (Education Welfare & Technical advisor) stand and watch the players and discuss the possible starting line up for the game on Saturday. The conversation swings to discuss the length of time a trialist should be at the club. Greg complains that things are going the unorganised way of last season. He suggests that they could decide on a trialist within a week. Andy and Greg agree that they could probably decide after only one session.

The players' circle has got smaller with 5 of the players now not taking part, who are sitting to the left of the circle about 5 yards away. Greg stands next to me, Dean points out one of the players who is sitting on the ground "Es' warm up is ideal!" Greg responds "he'll be doing it in a minute".

Greg walks over to the group "Last person on someone's back"

The players respond by getting into 2's and Greg formalises the circle.

"No gaps, if it goes through you, you'll be in"

"make sure you're on your toes"

Dean and Greg join in the practice.

Players get sent into the middle of the circle for not being on their toes.

The player who was earlier sitting down, gets into the middle three times for that offence. Greg stops the practice. "last person on somebody's back" the last two to respond become the first two into the circle, as Greg changes the rules "one touch, count the passes". The first effort results in only 2 successful passes.

"We've been warming up for 15 minutes with the ball, keep the ball"

The game ends and the players stretch, in silence apart from a couple of groups of 2's and 3's.

(Field notes, 28<sup>th</sup> August 1999)

Andy, Greg and the reserve team coach stand 60 yards away from the players talking. The players are in groups of four and five. Some have a ball among the group, some have a ball each. Those sharing the ball pass it among themselves. There is the low buzz of conversation and the occasional burst of laughter.

Andy and Greg walk over to the group and without prompting the players form a circle and begin a game of impromptu keep ball. The circle is approximately 20 yards across and one player acts as the defender. Andy and Greg stand 10 yards from the circle and observe with arms folded saying nothing.

Greg walks into the circle and shouts "*last one on someone's back*". The players respond quickly. Greg; "two touch.... on ya toes round the outside" and he puts the last pair to achieve mounted status in the middle. Andy adjusts his position and again stops 10 yards from the circle and watches arms folded. Greg takes part in the practice.

"Count the passes, 1,2,3,4,....." the ball is passed around the circle easily "21,22,... is there anybody in there? 24, 25" Greg questions with a tone of sarcasm.

The next two enter the circle, and Greg resumes counting with the occasional remark

"on ya toes"

"keep it easy"

"ah come on M, sloppy" the same player makes another mistake "ah M, sloppy son!"

"Game on this afternoon, let's liven up"

M again makes a mistake giving the ball away "4 on the trot M, liven up, game on this afternoon"

The defenders interchange with players on the outside when they have won the ball, although Greg quickly remarks on mistakes "C!, fuckin on ya toes.....start thinking about this afternoon".

The end of this segment is marked by "have a drink boys" Andy takes the three first year players and the u16 to move a goal. Greg sorts the rest into pairs and jogs off in 'Indian file', the younger players run and catch up when they have moved the goal. The group does lengths of the pitch with the players being asked to run

from front to back and back to front. The players stop and stretch and Andy calls them over after a few moments.  
(Fieldnotes, 24th February, 2000)

After the circle keep ball and the warm up, the body of the session usually consisted of a technical or functional practice with a theme. The themes were consistent throughout the season and included; passing and possession, pressurising and defending, and crossing and finishing. On the sessions the day of, or sometimes the morning prior to matches, 'pattern of play' or 'phases of play' were practised, usually in the form of defence versus attack. These pre-match sessions would also contain practising of set pieces, corners and free kicks. This extract from data illustrates a 'passing' session, and also once again, illustrates the pressure on the players to perform, with the consequences of poor performance. Noteworthy is the relative lack of technical instruction.

Greg marks out the practice area, and carries over the players' water bottles "I think I'm going soft in my old age" he says to me. The players walk over and Greg divides them into two groups facing each other about ten yards apart. Pass the ball and follow

"One touch pass"

"nice little touch"

"nice little set up for your mate"

The passing is mixed

"A, two gone astray already"

"Change of pace, R, that means quicker"

The passing still is mixed in quality

"going sloppy, get it back, only a ten yard ball"

"Ah A, sloppy son"

"Let's not go through yesterday"

"Hold it there!! 10 press ups, not fuckin good enough, we've walked through it 6 times"

The players do their 'punishment' and resume passing. Greg stops the practice and the players stretch.

The practice is developed to incorporate a 1-2 pass requiring two players to leave the line at once, one to close down the other to offer an angle. The players are not responding well and are not reacting to the passes quickly enough, causing the practice to breakdown.

Greg remarks; "Not got going yet today"

Two players go the same way and Greg responds "organise you two, fucking shambles."

The practice is developed once more. This time three players are involved; one closes and two players create an angle for a 1-2.

'B', one of the first year Academy players keeps getting his bit wrong.

Greg holds his head "we'll keep doing it until 'B' gets it right".

'B' completes a correct play, to ironic cheers. He gets another attempt correct and Greg shouts; "2 right, must be a fluke", the group are now concentrated on B's attempts.

Again, Greg shouts; "fuckin look at 'B' that's three on the trot".

The players stop and drink, again Greg sets up a grid and organises a 2v2 practice. He joins in the practice.

This is developed into 3v3. Greg again is involved.

The players take turns and each turn Greg responds with "well worked"

The players finish and again have a drink. Greg walks around them "well worked, hard if you haven't got the ball".

Unusually, the players are allowed to pick the teams for the next practice, a 7v7 practice, with three touches on the ball allowed.

Greg is playing in the game. 'A' plays the ball out and gives it away, the opposition score as a result. Greg shouts to 'A' ; "We've been playing two hours, its 2-2 and its the cup final, you might not think like that but someone might, pass and give information"

(Field notes, 11<sup>th</sup> October 1999)

Depending on the day of the week and on the performance of the players (in terms of results in games, how they played in games or the perceived effort put into training and games), sessions could contain a conditioning element. The players noticed a relationship between winning games and the amount of running in training. Examples of their comments were:

A: "If we have a good result, training's sort of..."

T: "Training's a bit easier, yeah."

M: "Yeah training's easier"

*Interviewer:- How is it easier?*

T: "Less running"

A; "Yeah less running"

M: "If you win its totally different than when you lose"

(Focus Group 1, 2000)

The impact of poor performance of the players was not restricted to performance in games but also included training performance, where lapses were punishable with verbal chastisement and exercise. This was either running, usually against the clock, or body weight strength training; press-ups sit-ups and so on. The conditioning for training, as opposed to punishment, was undertaken at the end of the session. This extract from data illustrates some of the types of activities that were used for conditioning, and gives a flavour of the intensity of the physical side to training.

The practice ends this time with a drink break. The players move to the shade to drink; some sit, some stand. Greg joins the group and reinforces the key factors to

the players. The players now are divided into 3 groups, different from the playing groups. The groups have to run one lap of the pitch in 60 seconds, Greg says he will whistle after 30 seconds. The first group set off Greg whistles, as they come down the back straight "51,52,53" "54,55,56 well done good running" as the players recover Greg says that this time the groups will go on the 30 second whistle.

(Field notes 28<sup>th</sup> July, 1999)

Greg calls the players in and hands out the bibs. He explains the rules of the SSG. "3 touch, 7 minutes each way" Both Pete (Under 17 coach) and Greg play in the game.

Half-time, players come in to drink. As they drink Greg walks around them "spent 1/2 an hour with Pete (Under 17 coach) on passing, too many passes going astray, taking too long for us to liven ourselves up" Greg then explains the conditioning run, who goes where and when. Greg and Pete observe the players as they run. The players return and they are put back into the game. Greg and Pete play. Towards the end of the half, Greg announces "next goal the winner". It is duly scored and the players come in.

Andy has walked over and stands to the side observing the players. Greg speaks about the poor passing and the slowness with which the players come to life in sessions. Pete speaks to the players; "What was really disappointing was that we spent the first part of the session on receiving the ball and giving information but you don't do it in the game. Try to take what you do in these practices and into your game".

The players do more conditioning, pyramid runs against the clock. There is silence during the rest period. The trialist drops out and goes to the bathroom to vomit. When he returns Greg remarks "at least you didn't throw up on my training ground". The players giggle, but the trialist (who is Italian) doesn't understand the joke, despite several players trying to explain it to him. Greg picks the slowest runners for an extra lap, offers this to the others who, after a brief pause all volunteer to go again. The reserves have finished training and the balance of the group are walking past. Someone shouts and receives derision from those still working. The players finish the run, drink and stretch.

(Field notes 4<sup>th</sup> October, 1999)

The reserve team coach consults a piece of paper and starts handing out bibs. Greg and Pete go and move a goal to face the pitch. The players are then out into an 11v11 game. The reserve team coach instructs the players "work hard to get the most out of this and watch the challenges". The players then play while the three staff watch the game. They let the players play and say nothing.

At the end of the game the reserves are taken away by their coach.

Greg then takes his group for running, two sides of the pitch in 25 seconds then 3 sides in 45 seconds. The players are then divided into pairs, one completes shuttle runs whilst the partner does press ups, then they swap. They finish with a sit up and press up 'pyramid', 10, then 9 then 8 etc. Greg tries to encourage the players to greater effort reminding them that they have no game this weekend. When the players have finished Greg tells the players to enjoy the weekend and to take it easy.

(Field notes, 8<sup>th</sup> October 1999)

Instruction has been mooted as a key ingredient of effective coaching (Jones, 1997; Lacy & Darst, 1985), and existing research into effective coaches suggests that effective coaches not only give feedback to their performers containing numerous prompts and 'hustles', but provide high levels of correction, instruction, and re-instruction (Dodge & Hastie, 1993). The nature of coach behaviour and interaction is considered in detail in a later section (see Coach-Player Relationship p.195). However, coaching sessions, while containing drills and repetitive practices, contained little corrective instruction. There were demands for better quality and effort, telling and showing players where to go and what to do. The players were frequently told what they were doing wrong and were often punished for this, but there was little or no corrective information or instruction. This rather more extensive extract from data covers a large part of a training session. It provides a good illustrative example not only of the structure of the session but also the lack of corrective instruction. Also, look out for the threat of physical punishment.

Pete takes the players and sets them up around the centre circle.  
Greg puts poles out along a line, linking the cone of each penalty box.  
Pete does not take part in the practice, but walks around the outside of the circle occasionally speaking to the players.  
“M take care that’s sloppy”  
“well done T”  
“Now go to the left”  
Pete continues to walk around the outside of the circle.  
“Well done M”  
Greg still marking out the pitch shouts “Up on ya toes”  
Pete “nice and lively”  
Pete stops the practice  
“First touches are poor, slip it in to him. There’s balls flying all over, we’ll be out here all morning”  
The players carry on  
“Hold it there”  
Pete demonstrates what he wants “Nice and lively, last 30 seconds”  
“And relax there, have a stretch”  
The players stretch where they stand  
Pete moves to the middle of the circle and also stretches.  
Pete “Up ya get”  
“This time set it back, go either way, last little bit, first touches need to be improved, or we’ll be going for a little lap”.  
Pete and Greg both watch  
Pete “Can our body shape tell him which way we’re going?”  
Greg “First touch C!”  
Greg and Pete stand together and watch the rest of the practice in silence.



Pete "Better fella well done, Relax, taken 10 minutes to get going, should be on it at the start"

Pete demonstrates "quality, strike through it with confidence, either foot"

The players play again

Pete "C, strike it with the left!"

Greg "On ya toes round the outside"

Pete "Do it right foot M, well done"

"Well done N"

Greg "Don't get sloppy"

Pete whistles "relax there have a stretch, got sloppy at the end"

Some players stretch some get a drink. Greg sets players up inside the pitch that he has marked, for a crossing and finishing practice.

He describes what he wants from the players but does not demonstrate. The players begin the practice. After a few attempts;

Greg "Fuckin hold it there, sums our movement up at the weekend" Greg demonstrates how he wants the players to move.

The practice recommences.

Greg and Pete observe. Greg comments during and after every attempt.

"Shit ball out, that's what you get"

"Have 2, get used to having 2 touches"

"Into his stride"

"Finish, finish!....ah!"

"Go get it, knock it in his stride"

"Touch, cross... good lad"

"hold it up, spin, tell him, touch, cross"

A player misses the goal with a relatively straight-forward attempt.

"gotta be finishing them boys"

"1st touch out ya feet...ah!"

Pete stops the practice and demonstrates the movement of the front players "come onto the ball, give an angle"

As Pete jogs out of the area "Nice and lively"

Greg "great ball T"

A player hesitates on a shot, looking to switch the ball to his dominant side, Greg

"Right foot swing it, one touch, don't get that much time"

Greg steps into the practice and demonstrates the movement live.

He returns to stand with Pete.

"Great ball...ah, they've got to go in"

"Wide men too quiet"

"In the channel"

"Hold it there, have a stretch boys"

Greg takes one of the front players to one side, and demonstrates the movement, and explains the reason behind it.

"Let's go again, centre halves in, pick your runs out"

The players start again.

"Out ya feet too sloppy"

"Hold it there, partly N, party J, that's not going to beat anyone, match pace!"

"Wide men have a look"

"Hold it there, in ya come, have a drink"

The players gather round the drinks station.

Greg calls the players around.

“The most important thing is information, we know where the ball’s going to be played, but we have to give the player on the ball information. Sometimes we just have to look. I said to S on Saturday, open your body and have a look. I can remember doing sessions as a kid, where we couldn’t speak so we had to have a look, good little sessions them. So we need to think about giving information and having a look”

Greg divides the players into 2 teams, Greg and Pete are playing, and leave to the players to decide which coach plays for whom. Despite this intent, the coaches still decide what team to play for.

Greg to Pete “What side you want?”

Pete “I’ll go yellows that means I can kick E”

Pete jogs onto the pitch and turns to me” You didn’t hear that did you?”

Greg and Pete play in the game, a player misses Greg shouts “Hey, we’ve gotta score there, gotta go and attack that”

At 1/2 time, Greg reiterates the rule, “all in opponent’s half to score, 3 touches in your own half, well done”.

Andy comes across and he and Greg call the players in. Andy calls across “stomachs” Greg responds “Greens press-up position, reds on ya backs, warm the arms up for this afternoon”

The players exercise and complete the pyramid. Greg instructs them to shower and be ready to leave at 1-15.

(Field notes, 1<sup>st</sup> November, 1999)

Whilst the coaches at Albion used relatively little corrective feedback, a strategy that was used frequently, was anecdotes based on their own experiences. Andy and Greg particularly, would have certain former and current top professional players with whom they had previously worked, who would be used during sessions to illustrate the coaching points that they wanted to make. These extracts of data give some examples.

Andy calls the players in once more, this time they will work briefly on corners.

Andy speaks to the players “I still can’t believe that we don’t score more from corners”.

Greg and Andy set the players into positions

Corners come over and the players fail to score, Greg stops the practise, and speaks to one of the players; “Give you a little tip, Alan Shearer gave me this one. When the ball goes over your head, think like a goalkeeper, get in line with the ball”

(Field notes 6<sup>th</sup> February, 2000)

Andy addresses the players at the end of training “No-one speaks to the staff, those of you not getting a game, do not speak with the staff. When I was a manager if we lost I had Ian Wright in the dressing room asking why I’d picked that player or played in that way”.

(Field notes, 23<sup>rd</sup> August)

Andy can be heard shouting at the players; "YOU, not fucking good enough, YOU not fucking good enough, YOU not fucking good enough. E I've worked with Ian Wright and Mark Bright in my career, now I'm fucking stuck with you".

(Field notes 11<sup>th</sup> September)

Greg stops the game and speaks with S: "With that ball over the top honestly Shearer scored more goals from either me, midfield players, just one touch, doesn't have to be fuckin' tight, if the front man's switched on, help it over the top then they're ready for it. They've just got to know, Shearer knew that I wasn't going to fuckin' bring it down".

(Field notes, 13<sup>th</sup> December game)

Greg believed this to be a valuable part of his coaching, and during interview was in no doubt that anecdotes influenced the players, but their effectiveness depended on whether the Academy players knew who the player was.

"The players receive it well, it depends on who the player is. Andy probably does it more than me, because he's dealt with people like Ian Wright. Then again I've worked with great players like Shearer, I suppose I use him, I could mention a lot more, but they probably wouldn't know who they were. I use the players that are recent that are still playing. I use them because they would be able to recognise them".

(Interview, Greg, 2000)

However, efficacy of this as a coaching strategy was not shared by all of the coaches, as these examples of data suggest.

"I do use it, but try and use things the players would have seen, I think that if you start with 'when I was a player, blah, blah, blah', that's a waste of time"

(Interview, Bob, 2000)

"I don't do it because the players in the end say, 'oh, here he goes again', so they don't relate to it"

(Coach Interview, Jc, 2000)

"I love parallels, trying to get them to visualise, I did some running today and told them to imagine that they were Ryan Giggs. So its not really anecdotal, I don't pluck people from my coaching, players from the past"

(Coach Interview, Jw, 2000)

The players seemed indifferent as to whether using anecdotes influenced them, as these extracts of data demonstrate.

*Interviewer: "I know that when Andy and Greg speak that they often talk about the players they have worked with, Wright, Shearer, what do you think of that, does it help you?"*

Group: Laugh

J: Shakes his head

N: Sometimes they get too big-time

R: No it doesn't

(Focus Group, 2000)

*Interviewer: Does it really help you?*

A: "Nah"

T: "I get what they're saying"

M: "I don't really think about that, why think about what they've been, cos you're a different player"

A: "Everyone's different, everyone's an individual"

(Focus Group, 2000)

Arguably for the coaches having worked with these 'top' players represents part of their renown in the *field*, their cultural *capital*. It could be interpreted as the coaches demonstrating and asserting their power in the field. This source of power has been described by French and Raven (1959) as 'expert power'. Moreover, Potrac et al. (2000) suggest that in football, this type of power is essential to gain and hold the respect of the players. Power of this nature is not just knowledge based but also founded on player perceptions. Tauber argues quite simply that "the greater the perception...the greater the power" (1985, p.6). These types of anecdotes then could be an attempt by the coaches to manipulate the players' perception of them, thus enhancing their position in the *field*. The enhancement of the coaches' power also has implications for symbolic violence (see Club section, p.138). The strength of the coaches as agents of pedagogic action, to successfully inculcate meaning, is enhanced through increased 'weight' in the structure of power relations (Jenkins, 1992). Whilst the players seemed to demonstrate indifference toward the use of anecdotes as a coaching strategy, they seemed to support this notion of respecting those who had 'done something' in the professional game, as these extracts of data illustrate.

*Interviewer: What are you looking for in a coach?*

J: "I liked K, because of who he is, what he is. Been there and done it"

N: "Someone who's played before, who knows what its like, definitely gets more respect"

R: "Someone who knows what they're talking about. Obviously, someone who can do what they're saying"

(Focus Group, 2000)

The sessions, as part of the framework of the coaching process, illustrate interaction between the coach, the player and the club. Whilst paying attention to the detail of day-to-day coaching practice in sessions, it has been possible to examine some of the wider forces shaping the coaching process and the interconnections running between the two. However, games too were also an important part of the framework of the coaching process.

#### 4.3.2 *Games*

Although subject to slight variation, game day routines were consistent during the course of the season. For home fixtures, the players had a 9-30am report for 11 am kick off. On arrival at the ground the players were left to their own devices. Some walked out onto the pitch, others sat in the dressing room perhaps drinking water. On match days the players still changed in the youth team dressing room. The coaches came in and out of the dressing room, they had to complete team sheets and submit them to the officials. At home fixtures, Greg and Andy would return to the Academy office and consume tea and toast. The players would be left in the changing room, which would become a hive of activity. Some players would get 'strapped' by the 'phys' or have rub-downs. Some changed into their kit, others sat and watched the activity, perhaps applying last minute polish to their boots. For games, the players wore kit identical to the first team. Thirty minutes prior to kick off, Greg would take the players for a warm up. During the breaks for stretching, he would talk to the players as a group. The players returned to the dressing room, for a drink and the final team talk, given by Andy and Greg.

During games Greg stood by the bench, Andy stood opposite the bench on the other side of the pitch. The substitutes sat on the bench. Greg ignored the substitutes unless he wanted one to strip and get ready to play. Half-time team talks were conducted in the dressing room, the content of which will be discussed in detail in the section on interaction, nevertheless, the tone and content was dependent on the score and the effort the players were putting into the game. All team talks contained broader messages than just technical and tactical information. They were seldom culturally neutral, and frequently carried implicit and explicit information pertaining to the qualities required to become a 'pro'. This extract of data from a half-time team talk, mixed in with game-related information, is an illustration of the need for 'toughness'.

Andy; "Stay on ya feet, battle it out, show plenty of bollocks, you might get something out of the game. Keep your concentration going keep your crosses going in, the two forwards, be prepared for each of the little fellas who are going to be niggling you all the time, stand up and take it. Someone comes to kick you T you have got to stand up and take it, that's the way your career might go.

(Field notes, 15<sup>th</sup> January 2000)

At full-time, the players would return to the dressing room for a team talk, again the content would vary depending on the outcome of the game, then come back onto the field to carry out a cool down. This section of data shows where the coaches were and what they did during the course of a game.

The game was played on the pitch furthest from the office and all the buildings at the training ground. The weather was broken cloud with a fairly stiff breeze blowing across the pitch. The game kicked off late at 12-20.

Andy stood at the side of the pitch nearest the office, at the junction of halfway line and touch-line. He stood alone, but was amongst a small number of people (no more than 10) who were watching the game.

The coaching staff Greg and Pete stood at the opposite side of the pitch but to the right of the halfway line level with the half of the pitch that their team was defending. The substitutes (3) and other academy players (5) who were watching were behind the coaching staff some sat and watched while a small group whose members revolved with those sitting played with a ball. *The coaching staff did not interact with these players during the course of the game, and only spoke to individuals when a task had to be done 'go get that ball back' or when that player was about to be involved with the game.*

The coaching staff rarely moved from their position, and despite the frenetic activity on the pitch rarely spoke to individual players and offered brief snippets of feedback such as "on his toes", "relax", "pass", "well done", "stay on your feet".

(Field notes 26<sup>th</sup> July 1999)

For away fixtures, the routine was almost identical with the addition of a pre-trip meal in the club restaurant, usually beans on toast, then a coach journey to the opposition's ground, as illustrated by this excerpt.

I eat with the staff in the dining room. We sit at one table and the players spread themselves out in groups of four and five around the room.

Greg checks his watch, stands and reminds the players that they only have five minutes until the coach is due to leave. I walk back to the training ground with Greg, and Dean. We go into the Academy office, and Andy and the 'phys' are about to leave by car, there is an exchange of conversation regarding the most appropriate route to go. Greg and I leave the office and get aboard the coach. Greg checks that all the players are on board, while he does this two more players climb

aboard. He is happy that everyone is aboard, and the doors close and the bus eases its way out of the training ground. Greg sits at the very front of the coach, directly behind the driver. He does not speak to any of the players during the entire journey, which takes an hour and twenty minutes. The non-white players sit together, spread over six seats near to the front whilst the remainder of the players, have tried to get a seat each and are spread right through the bus. The players either read newspapers, listen to music, or sleep. The coach's radio is played very loud during the journey, but the players remain quiet.

We arrive at the training ground, and the players begin to become restless, standing up and moving around. We get off the bus. Andy, Dean, the 'phys' and the kit-man are already in situ. The players are directed to portacabins at the rear of the training ground building, where they are to change. Greg urges them to change quickly, and get out onto the pitch, where the opposition are already warming up. Greg takes the players for a structured warm up then for five minutes they are free to do their own thing. Andy and Greg then move around the players talking to them individually.

The game kicks off.

The subs sit along the concrete edge of an artificial training area, which is about 5 yards from the touch-line. Andy watches from the opposite side of the pitch where Dean joins him. Pete joins Greg and stands just behind him. Albion create an early chance. Greg urges "put him in!", the pass is over-hit. Greg looks down at the floor and shakes his head.

Half-Time: Albion lead 2-0.

The pattern of the game is similar to the first half. Greg tries to give verbal cues to the players

"stay on ya feet"

"get together"

"Have a look N"

The opposition are coming more into the game as it draws to a close. A player makes a mistake Greg looks down and turns away. Andy becomes more agitated, "They're winning too much in there" shortly after this remark the opposition score, but this is closely followed by the final whistle.

Andy calls the players in, and there are congratulations all round, he asks about the opposition goal, and there is unanimous agreement about a loss of concentration. He says they should look forward to having their weekend off.

The players change quickly; those who live locally leave. The 'phys' points out to Andy that one of the non-playing academy players left at half-time.

Greg the 'phys' and a reduced number of players begin the journey home. The players are spread around the bus and there is more conversation interspersed with the sound of mobile phones going off. Greg goes and sits with one of the players, then moves to sit with another then returns to the front of the bus, where he remained until the return to the training ground. The first years unloaded the kit and equipment whilst the rest dispersed.

(Field notes 17<sup>th</sup> September, 1999)

With the exclusion of the ninety minutes the players were playing, games not unlike sessions, contained large amounts of routine (although see later in this section re-playing style). Interactions between coaches and players contained explicit

messages (technical-tactical), and implicit messages (qualities needed to become a professional) (for detailed analysis of interaction see Coach-Player Relationship p. 195). However, further analysis is required to understand the implications of Sessions & Games in shaping and being shaped by the coaching process.

#### 4.3.3 *Training Sessions and Games; Becoming a 'Pro'*

The inculcation of the 'football *habitus*', that is the specific set of bodily and mental schema that define the professional footballer, requires that the player engages in training sessions and games. They are the practices through which acquiring and displaying physical, symbolic and cultural *capital* are possible. The acquisition of *capital* thus affects the position of the player within the field, and ultimately progression into the professional ranks. To assess the progress of the players, the coaches kept a record of their performance in training and games, which was supposed to objectify the coaches subjectivity regarding the players' display and acquisition of physical and symbolic *capital*.

"What I do at the moment, I have weekly reports. I report on each training session, um I grade each training session, um, I have match reports and I do like a graph of their match and their training mark"  
(Interview, Pete, 2000)

However, for Greg it was his subjective view of player performance in games that was paramount. To get into the team the player had to play well. So a good performance in training would not get a player into the team (also see Player p.162).

"To see if they're improving, I keep a record of each game, emmm, on paper and I record each training session on paper. But I tend to pick the team, not so much what they've done in training, but how they've performed during the week before"  
(Interview, Greg, 2000)

Thus, physical *capital* was important for games, to get into the team and stay in the team, but other symbolic *capital* such as 'attitude' were important in training (see Attitude p.214).

Wacquant (1992) when describing becoming a boxer suggests that performers had to "appropriate through progressive impregnation a set of bodily and mental dispositions that are so intimately interwoven they erase the distinction between the physical and the spiritual" (p.224). Indeed, football skills emerge from a "bio-psycho-



sociological complex of body techniques" (Loy, Andrews, & Rinehart, 1993, p.72). Training sessions and games transmit in a practical manner, by way of direct embodiment, a mastery of the fundamental corporeal, visual and mental schemata required of a professional football player (Wacquant, 1992). Fundamental to this is the repetitive characteristic of training sessions. The different phases (circle keep ball, passing, closing down, crossing and finishing, pattern of play, set pieces) were repeated on a weekly cycle, week after week. The content of training sessions, i.e. the practices for each phase barely changed during the course of the season. Thus, for the coaches these sessions were the practical tools for producing professional football players.

The selection of the content of training sessions is presumed to be based upon the explicit objectives and philosophy of the club. This has already been identified as outcome-centred as opposed to player-centred (See Club section, p.130). In addition, tacit, and often highly valued, objectives such as winning games also influenced training content. So whilst the themes of training seldom changed, nor indeed the content, the order of activities depended chiefly on the outcome of the weekend game, as illustrated here by Greg.

"I'll see what happened on Saturday, whatever, if we were poor or whatever. I think I look back not just on the Saturday before, but we do do that or don't do that, have a reminder. It depends if we've lost on that Saturday"  
(Interview, Greg, 2000)

Therefore, the content of training and thus, the coaching process, were affected by the club environment, through both explicit objectives (getting players for the first team), and implicit objectives (the desire to win games). In addition, training sessions were directed by the coaches, and whilst organisational objectives influenced content, this part of coaching practice was affected by the coach's disposition. Whilst the coach is considered in a later section (see Coach p. 180), the proximity of coach with sessions and games, and their interaction with the players in the coaching process, means that some analysis of data on the coach is relevant here. Arguably, coaching practice is structured improvisation, which Calhoun (1995) suggests is *habitus*, therefore, it could be argued that practice reflects an expression of *habitus*. While it does not determine individual actions, *habitus* does structure them. Consequently, the coach's *habitus* was a significant factor shaping training. "The *habitus*, the product of history produces individual and collective practices, and hence history, in accordance with

the schemes engendered by history " (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 82). So a coach's history, in part, influences practice, as illustrated by Greg, himself a successful former professional player.

"I coach very much still as a player. So I did try and put things on that involve every player. Which can be difficult at times. Apart from when we're getting ready for a game, but the rest of the time I try and put something on, that I think I would enjoy as a player, and also what they're learning from".

(Interview, Greg 2000)

As was also noted in the introduction to this chapter (p. 110), whilst the coach's *habitus* is also acquired as a result of occupation of a social position, the nature of that position means that not all *habitus* are the same. However, those who occupy a similar position, such as coaches, tend to have a similar *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1990), thus, the practices they engage in within a *field* would tend to be similar. Therefore, sessions involving Dean, Bob and Pete as well as Greg and Andy tended to be similar, in structure, content and delivery.

Sessions, as well as games served a broader purpose within the coaching process than simply developing the technical and tactical, they were involved with players learning the values and perspectives of the club and professional football. Therefore, the interaction of coach, player and club, within the framework of sessions and games, can be usefully seen serving that dual purpose.

#### 4.3.4 Sessions and Games; Embodying Culture

Within the coaching process, sessions and games, not unlike the *habitus*, are both structured and structuring. The coaches' *habitus*, which itself is shaped by history, social context and social structures including the club, interacts with both the player and club, which in turn serves to structure sessions. Simultaneously, sessions can be seen as structuring in that, through interaction with the coach and the club, they both impact the development of the player *habitus*, and the correction and adjustment of the coach *habitus*, either consciously or unconsciously.

In the coaching process in youth football, the link between sessions and games is a strong one, put simply;

"practice follows on from games, and games follow on from practice".

(Club Coach Interview, Jc, 2000)

In other words, games are part of the coaching process, not something that the coaching process prepares for. In this context, games are a part of the programme of player development. Like sessions, games within the coaching process are both structured and structuring. The outcome of games and the players' performance shapes sessions and hence the coaching process, whilst the immediate preparation surrounding the game and playing in games, as with sessions, shapes both the player and coach *habitus*. And, as suggested earlier this is underpinned by repetition. Thus, through training sessions, the skills of the game through the acquisition of bodily, and mental schema, became so absorbed that they are forgotten in any conscious sense. The practice of being a footballer, though originally learned as part of a conscious learning process, is remembered as a habitual response. Importantly, however, this learning is not culturally neutral, therefore the logic of the field, and the culture, is incorporated bodily. The routinised work of training sessions produced a ritualised and standardised culture, through which the club and the coaches reproduced football culture (Jenkins 1992).

Ritual is organised action (Sabo & Panepinto, 1990) and this can be seen as a clear link between sessions and games, and the interaction of coach, player and club environment. Giddens (1998) defines ritual as "formalised modes of behaviour in which the members of a group or community regularly engage" (p.584). There is a distinction between ritual behaviour and ritual action. Ritual behaviour is devoid of meaning and rigid, whereas ritual action is imbued with shared social meanings that are culturally transmitted (Jary & Jary, 2000). Ritual is an essential aspect of everyday social exchange and ritualised codes of behaviour facilitate social exchange and social interaction (Goffman, 1967). The regular pattern to the content and structure of sessions and games, although subject to some variation over the season, conformed to Giddens' (1998) definition of ritual as formalised modes of group behaviour. Hence, the ritual of sessions and games can be seen as a dynamic process that reproduces the structure and cultural ethos of the club and professional football and, at the same time, enables the coaches and players to embed themselves in their own identity (Sabo & Panepinto, 1990). Engagement in the ritual action surrounding games and sessions ensured that the culture was confirmed and reinforced; the ritual linked the players to the culture, editing their everyday experience. This excerpt of data illustrates the

repeatedly stated objective of winning linked to the ritual nature of training, and the repetition of coaching content.

Greg; “Short and sharp on a Friday, we shouldn’t have to chase you on a Friday. I don’t want to run you the day before the game, but we will. It’s about being right and ready to get the job done.

Andy; “We’ve done our closing down, we’ve done our keep-ball, we’ve had our day off. We know what we have to do to win the game. We have a game plan, I know and you know what our jobs are, I know if we stay on our feet, if the back four stay together we’ll win the game. I know, if we stop crosses we’ll win the game. We all know how we’re gonna win the game. We know and you know”.

(Field notes, 23<sup>rd</sup> October, 2000)

Playing in games gave the players the opportunity to accrue and display physical *capital* through improving skills and playing well, and was instrumental to their professional progression. The playing style of the team also served as a powerful force influencing the development of the players' identities and values. Light (1999), Bangsbo and Pieterse (2000), and Guilianotti (1999) argue that team playing style reflects a wider culture. The playing style at Albion Rovers could be characterised as 'direct' and 'high pressure'. It emphasised closing down, collectivity, fighting qualities and the desire to win. By accepting this style of play, an acceptance required to be in the team, the players' playing experiences shaped the *habitus* and served to embody the club's culture. To be successful with the team, the players adopted a playing style that was contributing to the development of a *habitus* in line with that of the club. Therefore, playing in the team was fundamental for the player to progress.

The learning of the culture, and developing the professional player habitus were not just matters of experience. Indeed, sessions and games were a form of symbolic violence exercised on the players with their complicity, as noted in an earlier section (see Club section, p.138). Indeed, sessions and games were a process of pedagogic action; a process of inculcation producing a habitus and the subsequent internalisation of culture, which was capable of perpetuating itself after the training had ceased, i.e. it was durable. Sessions and games were able to serve as pedagogic action, imposing culture, through their consistency and repetition over time (Jenkins, 1992). The sessions and games and the actions of the coaches seem motivated by the ideal of improving players. Thus, symbolic violence is misrecognised by coaches and players resulting in the social structure with its existing power relationships is reproduced in the process of cultural reproduction.

#### 4.3.5 *Some Conclusions*

This research set out to examine something of the complexity of the coaching process and the interactions therein. In their own right, session and games are both key frameworks for coaching practice and the coaching process. In particular for this research, they are an excellent medium that facilitate an understanding of the complexity surrounding the interaction of coach, player and club environment, in the coaching process. Moreover, this section has illustrated that a critical analysis and understanding of sessions and games offers important insight into the forces that are shaping knowledge, attitudes and behaviour within the coaching process, as well as shaping the coaching process itself.

This section illustrates that it is through engagement in particular practices, within social *fields*, that dominant culture becomes embodied. Through the process and experience of training sessions and games, more is embedded in the *habitus* than the technical and tactical know-how or the 'movements, reactions, and postures' to play football (Light, 1999). The learning is not value neutral and is inter-woven with specific culture. These process and practices are not always concerned with the player centred development as espoused by the governing body, the Football Association (see Club section, p.120). Indeed, evidence here seems to suggest that it is local objectives, such as winning, that gain salience in the minds of the coaches; and through daily production and reproduction these messages are passed to the players. Moreover, evidence from this section suggests that sessions and games reflect the interplay of the personal, institutional and the cultural, therefore any attempts to influence coaching practice must bear this in mind. It could be suggested that a 'singular model' of coach education and development does not cater for coaches working across a wide range of settings, and perhaps a more needs based approach could be advocated. Importantly, to overcome elements of practice embedded firmly in the culture, it could be argued that coaches need to be more self-aware and understand how their practice is shaped to either facilitate or constrain player development, and their own effectiveness.

## 4.4 The Players

### *Introduction*

Through an emphasis on practice Bourdieu is concerned with what individuals do in their daily lives. Despite the coaching process being constructed of a series of interpersonal relationships (Cushion, 2001; Lyle, 1999), the practical coaching context and the coaching process cannot be understood as simply the aggregate of individual behaviour. The player's football *habitus* existed in the football *field*, through practice and because of practice. It was constructed through the player's interaction with each other, the coaches and the club environment. This section is concerned specifically with the players, their experiences, behaviour and objectives, and how these interact with the coach and the club environment to form part of the coaching process and the practical coaching context.

The coaching process affects the players, not only in terms of skill development, but also in their experience of participation, the behaviours they engage in, the values and attitudes they learn, and the goal priorities that are set (Smith & Smoll, 1993). Therefore, an understanding of the players' experiences provides insight into the nature of the coaching process, and into the relationship between player, coach and club environment. For example, it demonstrates the impact, on the players, of the club, its structure, culture and objectives and the effects of sessions and games alongside interaction with the coach. Importantly, these relationships are dialectic; the coaches and the club shape the players' experiences, whilst the players' experiences act back on the coach and the club and, ultimately, influences coaching practice and the coaching process.

### 4.4.1 *The Players' Experience*

As soon as the players entered the club each morning they were expected to change ready for training. As was noted in an earlier section (see Club section, p.121) the first years would then carry out a routine of pre-determined chores in preparation for the day's training. These revolved around the preparation of equipment, ensuring that each training area was stocked with bibs, balls, cones and any other equipment, according to the needs of the coach, and that each of the three training areas had drinks. Each squad had a set of bottles, and also a large container that had a 'sports drink' in powdered form that had to be mixed and then carried to the training area.

The Academy player year groups were integrated for training, subject to the demands of the reserve team (see Club section, p.121). At the end of training, however, the group would be split. The first years and non-contract second years would have to return the equipment to the equipment store, whereas the rest of the group, excused 'jobs', could go in. When completed, the first years would return to the rest of the group, to shower and change for lunch.

On a day-to-day basis, players were given little autonomy and were treated by the staff like members of an undifferentiated group rather than individuals. Indeed, the restriction of individuality was evident around the club, and wherever players moved their team-mates usually moved with them. Individual activity was conducted only under specific instruction, for example, the daily 'jobs' or rehabilitation from injury, which was usually undertaken individually. Alongside a curtailment of individuality came a lack of privacy; changing, showering, and eating were communal experiences. Although the youth players were allowed to frequent all rooms at the club (except the professional and coaching staff dressing room) few opportunities existed in the daily work routine for personal escape from the collectivity of the youth squad, or the supervision of Greg (Under 19 coach).

The players had no input to, or choice about, their daily routine. The coaches decided what training they would do, and how long that training would last, as the following to extracts of data illustrate:

Following consultation with the medical staff the coaches decide that today the players are undergoing fitness testing. The players complete the bleep test and go for a jog around the pitch with Greg. They then do an individual sprint test. Andy and Greg again stand back and observe. At the end the players are sent for a jog and Andy and Greg check the sprint scores for the fastest players. The players ready themselves for another bout of tests, but Andy (Academy Director) looks at his watch and announces that they should take lunch and resume that afternoon.  
(Field notes, 25<sup>th</sup> August 1999)

While the players engage in the circle keep ball, Andy and Greg discuss the day's training, principally whether the players need to do pattern of play. They decide that the session will end with pattern of play.  
(Field notes, 29<sup>th</sup> October, 1999)

During the season, team-selection and game tactics too, were entirely in the hands of the coaching staff. In addition, during training, and before and after games, the coaches asked for little direct input from the players. Consultation with the players

was characterised by coach lead team 'talks', sometimes including a seemingly perfunctory request for player input. But the players were reluctant to say anything, in fact, such requests were frequently treated with silence by the players, possibly because an opinion expressed out of turn i.e. 'answering back' was treated as a misdemeanour and subject to verbal chastisement and worse. Whilst demonstrating this lack of player response and the feeling toward 'talking back', the first excerpts also shows the culturally laden nature of team talks, with broader messages about winning and desirable player attributes.

The players are sitting gathered around a wall chart that has been brought outside, Greg and Andy are standing. Andy: "All the staff here have equal authority, anyone talks back when they are asked to do something then they will be gone that day, I don't care how good a player they are they will be gone". Andy draws the players' attention to the chart. "Looking at this we would have nine points that is about mid-table, which is about where we are. I think I would give us about 5 out of 10 so far is that about right?" None of the players respond "Greg's about right when he says we aren't that good yet".

"Looking at this you would say that we are well organised, we're not getting hammered every week. There are games that we should of won, and the goals that we have conceded are down to individual mistakes. Full back letting the ball go across the goal, goal keeper not attacking the ball, players not hitting the target. T and N both blazing over the bar."

Andy talks about the reliability of players "You E, leaving the game with twenty minutes to go, I'm fining you £15, by the way, double the next time it happens. I'd have thought that looking at this goal scoring record you'd have stayed watching the game working out where you could have scored the goal. We need players to be reliable, N the only reliable thing about you is that when you get the ball it will be a goal kick. I just turn my back now, I already know that you're going to miss. Individual mistakes and unreliable players get dropped and get managers the sack. We want you to follow instructions, G, I tell you to pass the ball forward and right in front of me you pass it back twice. Why do this, what does it say about you as players that you want to buck the system? I don't mind if you say to me Andy, I did it because of this and this but none of you do.

I might not be very good at anything but I am reliable, if I turn around and say that I'll do what I want or Greg does we get the sack. I don't have to stay and watch the game, I could go with 20 minutes left, get in my Mercede and go to Paris for the weekend and not come back until Monday, what would you think of that? The players say nothing.

(Field notes, 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1999)

At the end of the game Greg sits the players down whilst he stands. "Well done, after the warm up, done very well. He emphasises the importance of playing just three touch. At the end he asks "anything to come back at me?" The players say nothing.

(Field notes, 10th August 1999)



Andy: "It's unforgivable to speak back to any of the staff, its just a fuckin....I don't care who you are you won't be at the football Club".  
(Field notes, 3rd December 1999)

In essence, the control exercised by the coaches and the club resulted in the players being denied all decision-making about their professional and occupational experience and, whilst within the confines of the club, their social experience. The players recognised their lack of choice, as these examples illustrate;

"what choices?"  
"we don't get a choice".  
(Focus Group, 2000)

Interestingly, they perceived this as being denied responsibility;

T: "if things go wrong it would be our fault, we'd have decided, but we don't get any say do we".  
A: "The only responsibility for me is to make sure the balls are out, and the drinks"  
S: "I think its good, responsibility"  
T: "Yeah if you don't make it, it's your fault really ain't it"  
(Focus Group, 2000)

In addition, whilst not under direct control of the coach or the club, time-off was subject to guidance from the staff who frequently reminded players that they should, 'look after themselves' and 'look after the nuts and bolts' through correct diet and adequate rest. This was particularly emphasised prior to matches.

Andy: "Prepare properly, and it's good food, early night. You know, hard work tomorrow not play time."  
(Field notes, 27<sup>th</sup> August, 1999)

Andy; "Don't go out on the piss. We did on Wednesday because we'd just won the game, but not on a Thursday, Friday or Saturday".  
(Field notes, 14<sup>th</sup> April 2000)

The key objective of the club, as noted earlier, was to provide players for the first team (See Club section, p.130). Yet, if any player displayed signs of over-confidence about their entitlement to progression they were labelled 'big time'.

At the end of the game, Greg addresses the group. "Some of you are learning and sticking together". A player is still complaining about one of the goals that was scored "Fuckin' shut up T!!... Listen son or we'll be doing this tonight at 6 o'clock.....It applies particularly to you, you've calmed down since Christmas, but

now you've had a bit of success and gone fuckin big time, arguing has cost you 2 goals. Think about what's brought you success against City, Town and Rovers, that's what you'll need against United"

(Field notes, 19<sup>th</sup> April, 2000)

The staff speak about S a youth team player who has played with the reserves, the coaches reflect that the move up has caused him to become 'big time' and that Saturday's return to the youth team was perceived as a game being 'beneath him'

(Field notes, 2<sup>nd</sup> August, 1999)

There were those, not 'big-time', but who were perceived by the staff to have 'good attitudes' and who were performing well with the youth team. Therefore, they were expected to do well at the club, and progress as professionals, although not necessarily with Albion. Their places in the team were 'sacrosanct' and were commonly looked upon by their peers as 'favourites' (see also later section Coach-Player Relationship, p.195, that further develops the implications of being a favourite, or not). The notion of staff favourites could not be concealed from the players as these extracts illustrate:

"They have their favourite players"

"Yes indeed, yeah"

(Focus Group, 2000)

This was despite a spoken desire to support teamwork, developing players, and stating that winning was not important (see Club Objectives, p.130). Invariably, Greg and Andy picked their 'strongest team' i.e. that team most likely to win. This, once again, supports the notion of a club-centred approach and demonstrates winning as a priority and an important and symbolic part of the culture. This is demonstrated in this excerpt from data. Greg's first concern is about the likely damage to the team's prospects of winning, rather than the 'problem' player, who was also a strong and influential player, whose ability affected the team's results.

At the end of the game I speak with Greg. "We're trying to get rid of E after Christmas. I don't think it will hurt the U19's, we've played City and United twice and they're the strongest teams".

(Field notes, 24<sup>th</sup> December, 1999)

Changes in the team line up were more likely to be due to player injuries, rather than any notion of giving squad players playing time, or players having earned a place in the team through improvement in training. Greg often spoke to players during sessions when he thought they were improving and doing well in training. But although he said they were 'unlucky' not to be in the team, he seldom gave them a chance.

Greg : "I was thinking of playing J, I felt sorry for J, done well in training, unlucky not to be in the team, especially after R's performance on Saturday".  
(Field notes, 7<sup>th</sup> February, 2000)

The situation is summarised well by Dean:

"Here, I don't think at the under nineteen level we look at the developmental process, we don't rotate players, and you get players that play all season"  
(Interview, Dean, 2000).

Whilst players arrived at the club familiar with the routines of playing and training from their previous experience of club and amateur football, their experiences did not seem to equip them well for the tense and pressurised atmosphere surrounding being an Academy player. The players in interview expressed surprise and concern at the highly pressurised atmosphere and its consequences.

"God I look back and I think I've got worse since I've been here. Like when I was playing Sunday League, no pressure, doesn't matter if you make a mistake. I was playing good football, I think how the pressure has got to me. Thought I'd get used to it but no. Something that perhaps you don't expect is being put under so much pressure".  
(Focus Group, 2000)

"Everything is always pressure. For young people sometimes its a bit too much".  
(Focus Group, 2000).

The players were under pressure from the constant scrutiny of the coaching staff. Their skills were clearly visible to others and subject to constant judgement by the coaches and, indeed, fellow players. Thus, there was a constant pressure to perform. This contributed to a fear of failure and, players became reluctant to attempt new things (a difficult technique or use of non-dominant side), because they knew they would be criticised and sometimes mocked by coaches and peers alike. The following extracts clearly highlight the pervasive fear of failure.

J: "Sometimes you think 'I've got to hit the target or I'll get shouted at'. So that's sometimes why I use my right foot cos I know it's safe"

A: "Like I never use it....cos I haven't got a left peg, and if I use it I look even worse"

M: "Just want your shots on target, to go in, working on the other side, gonna be a struggle to go in or get on target".

(Focus Group, 2000)

The players with Greg begin shooting. 'A' shoots the ball, with his weaker foot out of the training ground and repeats the feat with his next attempt to ironic cheers and sarcasm from the group. Greg sends him to retrieve the ball. He reaches the fence and looks back at the group. "How do I get over?" "How about climb" Greg retorts. After a short while 'A' returns carrying two balls Greg asks "how many did you get?" "two" 'A' replies missing the obvious joke. Greg remarks "gets 'em every time". After re-joining, 'A' attempts to score off a rebound again with his non dominant side. He rushes the effort and the ball balloons over the cross bar "nice clearance trig" Greg quips.

(Field notes, 6<sup>th</sup> August 1999)

"When I first started, cos I'm a first year, that's how it was, every time I made a mistake, everyone's on your case. It gets to you".

(Focus Group, 2000).

Finally, the pressure to win, which was not always explicit, would manifest itself through the coaches' desire for players to 'be first' or to 'win your individual battle'. The need for the players to be winners, both mentally and physically, was constantly espoused by Andy and Greg, in an attempt to inculcate what they saw as desirable professional values. These collective pressures, although varying in intensity and frequency, were for the players concerned with achieving a professional contract, and for the coaches, it concerned who should be given a professional contract. This was recognised by the coaches, but was deemed to be part of the process of becoming a professional player.

Andy; "It's all still in your hands boys. It doesn't make any difference to us who stays or goes, the more of you we have means a stronger squad for next year. As I said, it's the same for us, we want a contract like you do, we have the same pressures as you do, so don't say 'it's different for them' because it isn't. So make sure we do it right over the next 3 weeks".

(Field notes, 14<sup>th</sup> April, 2000)

The coaches and club, through differential treatment of first, second and third year Academy players ensured a system of status elevation. Whilst reinforcing the lowly position of the first year, it also had implications for the occupational conditions

of the older players. Symbolising the ensuing prospect of progression, it constituted the next step on the hierarchical ladder for the players, and served to reinforce the existing power structure and player sub-culture. So although the Academy players could be viewed as an integrated group, they were in fact explicitly arranged in a tiered system (see also Club section, p.122). Organisational demand and expectation differed according to year group status. This, of course, is most accurately illustrated in the allocation of 'jobs' around the ground.

The practice finishes and Greg sends the players to get a goal. The players slowly walk to the next pitch to get a goal. The signed professionals sit on the floor as their contracted status means that they don't have to do 'jobs'. The trialist starts to walk after the group and then drops behind them and sits down but not with the pro's.

(Field notes, 26<sup>th</sup> August, 1999)

In addition to differences in daily duties, third years holding a professional contract and those in other year with that status were excused 'ball-boy' duties for reserve team fixtures played on the 'stadium pitch', even if they were not involved in the game. The experiences of the players, highlighted thus far in this section, created a response from the players. The players 'acted back' against their treatment and conditions, the implications of which impacted their interaction with the coaches and the club, and helped shape the coaching process.

#### *4.4.2 The Peer Group and Player Sub-Culture*

A direct consequence of the way in which the Academy players were treated was the construction of coping strategies. For example, mimicry and humour played a major role as a coping strategy, with players re-enacting the manner of their coach and reciting to one another the exact content of popular rebukes.

Greg organises the group into three teams, and they do relays with the ball. One of the teams makes a mistake, a player calls out one of Greg's oft used phrases, "Liven up, game tomorrow" there is laughter all round. Greg then organises a 5v5 +5 possession practice.

"Well done, good attitude in the middle"

"Have a stretch boys put it in your minds, little touch, little set"

The play restarts, and some bad tackles are exchanged between the players, Greg says nothing. One of the players, again mimicking Greg "Fuckin hell, game tomorrow" Again laughter all round "I've been dying to say that".

(Field notes 18<sup>th</sup> February, 2000)

Another consequence, arguably, was the development of a peer group at Albion which was strong and represented an influential part of player sub-culture. Key to this was dramaturgy (Jary & Jary, 2000) or impression management (Goffman, 1961). Using impression management, the majority of Academy players presented themselves as submissive and compliant workers whilst at the same time partaking in both physical and verbal forms of peer group resistance. A simple example of this was skipping classes at college.

Spoke with Greg “They all bunked off their core skills, Dean's turned up and the United boys are there but none of our lot. He's called me at home, so I've said get them in for 5 'o' clock. Dean said what shall we do. I said nothing. He spoke with them at 5-30 and said that Greg will be down in a minute, 7-30 I went down. Told em they've let the club and themselves down, that it shouldn't happen again. You've never seen a dressing room empty so quick.

(Field notes, 7<sup>th</sup> March 2000)

Dean “Some of the players got off lessons early and were seen going to MacDonalds for lunch” Dean speaks to two of the players who have allegedly ‘cut’ classes. They protest their innocence.

(Field notes, 19<sup>th</sup> October, 1999)

A central focus for peer group resistance was the concept of being 'busy'. For the players, being busy meant conserving effort while training; essentially impression management. Any player who "acts too eager" or "does too much like" (Focus group, 2000) was labelled as 'busy'. Like instances of 'output restriction' observed in the wider industrial sphere (Collinson, 1992a; Parker, 1996) arguably, these means of player regulation were a means by which collective resistance could be expressed towards Greg's control of the coaching process.

For some players being 'busy' extended to "making a good impression" (Focus Group, 2000) with the coaches.

Players appear on mass at 10-20 and walk down to the furthest pitch. They form a circle and half-heartedly play. One of the players suggests “let's get it sorted, marathon (players' unofficial name for Greg) will be out in a minute”. Someone else remarks “eager beaver, busy cunt”

(Field notes, 10<sup>th</sup> March 2000)

From the coaches' point of view, the peer group influenced behaviour to the detriment of some of the players, although a 'good attitude' appeared to offer immunity for some others (see Attitude p.214).

Dean speaks about the group dynamic and the influence of peer pressure. "Peer pressure is a problem, anyone who asks for help with their game or even does demonstrations for the staff is labelled as 'busy'. This he feels has a big influence on the group. "The best players with good attitudes seem to be least affected by it all, the less able players... treat it almost like an excuse to do badly"

(Field notes, 9<sup>th</sup> August 1999)

The fear of being labelled busy was an instrument of sub-cultural control, stopping players from volunteering and asking questions. For others it extended beyond peer group resistance and into the realms of the ongoing struggle to strengthen their position;

"I think it's just an excuse for people to rip into you".

(Focus Group, 2000)

Because this feature of sub-cultural control was governed by a limited number of players, any notions of output restriction and collective resistance in fact only served to reinforce the positions of those players. Yet, to obtain peer group credibility, i.e. symbolic *capital* within the group, players had to adhere to peer group values, essentially not doing anything that would attract the label of 'busy'. Nonetheless, some players failed to recognise that the acquisition of this particular form of symbolic *capital* was not central to their professional progression. In fact, their desire to make it to the first team on the one hand, and not be 'busy' on the other, would in the long run prove to be untenable.

The player sub-culture influenced the work of coaches, sometimes making it easier; sometimes making it harder. For example, certain groups of players were viewed by the staff as more or less coachable.

When a 16 year old comes in he's very coachable, very motivated and wants to do anything the coach says. A year or so later when he's been exposed to the peer group he is the complete opposite I would say".

(Interview, Dean, 2000)

The sub-culture also impacted the functional coaching programme; what was actually taught to and learned by the players.

"Before you even think about the objective of the session you have to affect the attitude to get to the objective, get them to work in the session at a higher level to defend properly and to attack properly".  
(Interview, Dean, 2000)

Thus, the player sub-culture impacted the effectiveness of the coaching process, although the practice of the coaches and the coaching process, alongside the prevailing culture of the club, arguably contributed toward the player occupational sub-culture (Guilianotti, 1999). Indeed, Pete (under 17 coach) concurs, suggesting that the culture at Albion, and the behaviour of the coaches contributed to the formation of a strong player sub-culture;

"I think the players sub-culture, the peer group is strong because, well its almost the fear factor, of the coaches, of making mistakes, the players unite. The staff do set the tone, a lot of negative stuff means that people unite"  
(Interview, Pete, 2000).

Once again the relationship between coach, player and club and the coaching process can be seen as a dialectic one. The coaching process and the practical coaching context influence the players' sub-culture and vice versa.

The player sub-culture, and players themselves were powerful transmitters of differential treatment and values. Patterns of discrimination between the players occurred, based on age, status, personality and skill. The experience of the trialist particularly highlighted this, with the players ignoring their presence and making no attempt to integrate the trialist within the group. The following extracts from data, demonstrating the plight of the trialist also shows differential treatment within the group and its consequences.

Dean: "The players won't talk to a trialist, unless it's someone they know from another club". He points to one of the signed players sitting down "He doesn't say a word, the players slaughter him every time he opens his mouth". The trialists are given club kit but it is a different colour to the signed players. He says that there is a trialist in this group, and asks what I think of him, I try to be non-committal. "I should speak with him, he's an American lad but he's lodging with a couple of the others"  
(Field notes, 25<sup>th</sup> July, 1999)

Two new trialists have joined the group. One in the trialists' kit the other in his club kitt. No one speaks to them. The group forms up and begins the warm up. The players are in pairs. The two trialist boys are paired together and are at the back of the column.



(Field notes, 2 August 1999)

I notice a player and realise that he is a trialist. He stands five yards away from the group and no-one speaks with him. The players are divided into 3 groups and one group does the bleep test, the others sit at either end of the course. Andy stands and watches, talking to a couple of first team players who walk over in curiosity. Greg encourages the group to stay together and encourages individuals. Players sit and watch and do not encourage one another. Andy and Greg speak with the trialist in turn but none of the players speak with him.

(Field notes, 25<sup>th</sup> August 1999)

Dean: "We've had problems with the young pros this week. Ts' has sworn at one of the physios, another one hasn't turned up for a game so he'll be getting his marching orders. We've had L put back with us, he played a couple of games for the first team last year. The manager did that, spur of the moment thing, you train with the first team for six weeks. So now he's back with us, how does he feel? He looks up at the group jogging round and asks me who is the boy in green? I reply, "A trialist I think"

Dean continues to look at the group "Why hasn't he got any kit? How does he feel?" I say "Well even in kit it would be a different colour anyway"

Dean laughs and nod his head.

Greg brings the players back and some stretch and some get a drink.

The trialist stands five yards away from the group, with his arms folded. No one speaks to him.

Andy calls the group in, "You all know CR he's going to be doing the session today. He's a good coach and what he's going to do will be relevant to our game on Saturday against Town. It's important that we start to get our minds focused on the game on Saturday"

CR takes the group and Greg joins in.

Andy stands by me and then turns and speaks to me "Chris I'm going to get that trialist some kit"

CR stops the group frequently and has drink breaks to adjust the size of the grid.

At every break the trialist stands distant to the group and no-one speaks to him and he makes no attempt to speak with anyone. Dean returns with a shirt for the trialist and during the drink break he changes into his official but, different coloured kit.

(Field notes, 26<sup>th</sup> August 1999)

Players begin an impromptu circle keep ball and decide "youngest two in the middle" another player says "no, two trialists in". Sounds of agreement from the group. A player gestures to the two trialists for them to go into the middle of the circle.

(Field notes, 7<sup>th</sup> March 2000)

Playing ability, and the expression of that ability in games and training, had a property-like nature amongst the players. It was a form of symbolic *capital*. It imposed a perception upon the players, that when they recognised and observed symbolic *capital*, i.e. playing ability, it became transformed to cultural or even economic *capital* within the *field* (Cicourel, 1995). The lack of this *capital*, in part,

accounted for the treatment of trialists by the players. Moreover, the treatment of trailists highlights the social *field* as Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) suggest, one of struggles, where the players were continually trying to manoeuvre to improve their position.

"They're (trialists) never any good. They are trying to threaten us, threaten our place. If they're any good then fair enough, but most of them are crap so just rip into them really".  
(Focus Group, 2000)

"I think, and I know a lot of people think place challenged or whatever. If I make the trailist feel like crap, it will affect their game, then no threat. Its dog eat dog really, you've got to look after yourself".  
(Focus Group 1, 2000)

This was a strategic calculation on the part of the players. They are as Wacquant (1992) suggests deploying "objectively oriented lines of action that obey regularities and form socially intelligible patterns" (p. 25). It is a strategy whereby players seek "individually or collectively to safeguard or improve their position and impose the principle of hierachisation most favourable to their own products" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p.101).

The club and the coaches interacting with the players, contributed to the formation of a strong player sub-culture at Albion. The sub-culture, in turn, influenced the coaching process and, depending on their position in the *field*, the players' experiences. The players' position in the field, and their subsequent social trajectory, as determined in part, by their acquisition of capital was ephemeral and can be conceptualised as a transition from Academy player to professional.

#### 4.4.3 *Culture, Learning and Transition*

Van Gennep (1960) suggests that rites of passage mark both biological changes and changes in social position for individuals, whilst Ho lands (1990) has highlighted how sub-cultural practices have traditionally constituted some kind of rite of passage. The Academy players' experience from first years to professional status at Albion Rovers involved separation from their previous social condition, a marginal or transitional phase and a time when the player is incorporated into the new status, that of being a professional footballer. This could indeed constitute a rite of passage. In a process of transition, the players through their interaction with club and coaches are in

a liminal state (Turner, 1967;1969) or a marginal state of cultural identity. The players are excluded from the fullness of the professional player's lifestyle, and have an inferior and often ambiguous role. The players are considered to be between symbolic statuses: not amateurs; not professionals, they are in transit across the symbolic boundaries of the two (Jary & Jary, 2000). Turner (1967) goes on to suggest that this represents, for those who are subject to its consequences, a period of youthful growth and transformation. The routines of football traineeship, historically, are replete with examples such as these (Parker, 1996), and the experiences of the players at Albion Rovers would appear far from atypical. Indeed, rites of passage and sub-cultural practices such as enforced alienation and inferiority amongst young workers are not incongruous with those evident in the wider industrial sphere, nor within cultural or institutional sport contexts (Parker, 1996). For example, Scott (1971) notes how trainee jockeys have been conventionally expected to follow a comparable subordinate occupational role, as have golfers (PGA, undated).

Nevertheless, as been illustrated in numerous ways, in this section and others (see also Club, p.121; Training Sessions & Games, p. 142) the experiences of the players at Albion were not exclusively about developing as a player. They had to endure the drawbacks of hierarchical insignificance in their transition from trainee to professional. It was their experience of this, their socialisation, that contributed to the formation of their sub-culture that, in turn, influenced their individual experiences and the coaching process. Moreover, the transition from trainee to professional, the rite of passage, not only involved a marginal state of cultural identity, but a subjugation of the body.

#### 4.4.4 *Becoming a 'Pro'; habitus, body and culture*

For this research, the interpretation of the relationship between player, coach, and club has strong parallels with those of both Bourdieu and Foucault regarding body subjugation and discipline (Guilianotti, 1999). The club environment moves the players from routine social relations and relocates them in a somewhat confined social space. The body of the player is subjected to a familiar but more intense and rigid discipline of training and games and is subject to examination by 'experts' for example, coaches (Foucault, 1977; Goffman, 1961; Guilianotti, 1999). In this sense the body, in the football *field*, is a bearer of symbolic value. For Bourdieu it is an unfinished entity that develops in conjunction with various social forces, and is

integral to the maintenance of social inequality (Shilling, 1997). Because of its unfinishedness, acts of labour (for example, football traineeship), are required to turn bodies into social entities and these acts influence how people develop. The players' interactions with the coach and the club environment in the coaching process is intended to influence their development. This development of the social entity is complex and lengthy and can last for many years (Connell, 1983), not unlike the coaching process in youth football.

According to Wacquant (1995) the football player is an entrepreneur in bodily *capital*, a young man self-employed through his feet. Bodily or physical *capital* is central to the player's relationship with the club, the coaches and his own footballing identity. Within the club environment there is a relationship between the development of the body and social location, with the body being central to the acquisition of status and distinction. Thus, first years and trialists have undeveloped bodies relative to the *field*, therefore possess limited amounts of *capital*, and suffer the consequences in terms of status. For the players, the production of physical *capital* is essentially about developing the body in ways that are recognised as having value in the social *field*, and revolve around playing ability and physical fitness. This physical *capital* is the gateway to other important forms of social, symbolic and cultural *capital*.

When they first arrive at the club, the players have different *habitus*, different social histories and different socio-economic backgrounds. Embodied *capital* for trainees is initially limited to playing ability; it is physical *capital* but also symbolic because it has not been tested or scrutinised by peers or coaches, thus its exchange value is limited. It has, however, served initially to provide access to the *field* and, as already suggested, the opportunity to accrue other forms of *capital*. Acquisition of this *capital* along with the correct *habitus* determines social trajectory, or career progression

Embodied *capital* is accrued through training and playing and is converted to the advantage of the individual player in his struggle for resources in the social space. The *capital* accrued by the players to progress, had to constitute a *habitus* in tune with the *habitus* of the club. Essentially, the players must develop personal characteristics that match the characteristics of the club, what Bourdieu would describe as a 'class specific' *habitus* (Jenkins, 1992). [Bourdieu, unlike Marx for example, does not define class exclusively in economic terms (Wacquant, 1998). For Bourdieu, class represents a shared position in the social space and shared disposition (Bourdieu, 1984a)]. This

process is a complicated one, as there are substantial inequalities in the symbolic values accorded to bodily forms (Shilling, 1997). For example, coaches 'stack' players according to corporeal assumptions. Thus, a player, deemed as having 'no pace', or not 'big enough' will have reduced opportunity to accrue *capital*. And whilst physical attributes may influence physical possibilities of play, the cultural contribution around these assumptions cannot be underestimated (Guilianotti, 1999). Furthermore, the club bestows symbolic value on specific bodily forms, activities and performances, thus defining for the players the boundaries of physical *capital*.

The practical coaching context is the setting for the struggle between players to define, develop, and appropriate the most prestigious physical *capital*. An important structural principle in this competition is age (Featherstone, 1987). There is competition between age groups at the club to define their bodies as possessing the greatest symbolic value. However, this is neither a fair struggle, in which the players have equal resources because each player has varying volume and quality of *capital* to begin with; nor is it a stable struggle, because what is required of each player is not explicit and may change during the course of the season.

The players will bear the indisputable imprint of their social class (Bourdieu, 1984; Shilling, 1997). In that the player's *habitus* is formed in the context of their social position at the club and it inculcates them into a world view, based on, and reconciled to these positions (Shilling, 1997). However, as Giddens (1984) suggests, the individual player is not completely helpless and at the mercy of social forces in this process: "Structural constraints do not operate independently of the motives and reasons that agents have for what they do" (Giddens, 1984, p. 181). The players want to become professionals and want to improve as players, a view expressed clearly and with enthusiasm..

M: " Just wanna get into the first team, get a better contract"

S: "Become a pro, play well in the reserves, score goals, do well in the reserves"

T: "To become a better player each day, to become a professional"  
(Focus Group, 2000)

In pursuit of their own goals, the players engage in social practices in the coaching process that contribute to the maintenance of existing culture and help to reproduce it. In so doing, they reproduce existing relationships of power and inequality in a struggle for *capital*, during which cultural meaning is contested, yet works to favour

dominant interests (Light, 1999). Those in power, the coaches, control the players, who as earlier noted must be docile and submissive, and are in fact complicit. This complicity is also an essential element of symbolic violence (see Club section, p.138), which can only be exerted on a person predisposed through the *habitus* to feel it. The players are endowed with *habitus* that provides "the *sens pratique* to react and to act correspondingly" (Krais, 1995, p.172); thus the culture is experienced as an axiom (Jenkins, 1992).

#### 4.4.5 *Some Conclusions*

Interacting with the coach and the club environment, the player is a key element of the coaching process. This section has presented evidence to demonstrate the interconnected and interdependent nature of the player with the coach and the club environment, and that these relationships are complex and multi-faceted.

As well as being involved with the complexity of interaction constructing the coaching process, the player is also an element of the practical coaching context, and as such, brings a myriad of variables to the blend. In an attempt to understand these variables, their extent and influence, this section has analysed the players' experiences, objectives and behaviours. As the recipients of coaching the players' experiences offer great insight into the nature of the coaching process. In this case, there is evidence to suggest that the coaching process is characterised by autocratic coaching, high levels of pressure and is primarily concerned with winning. An important part of this is an internal struggle between players to ensure their own career advancement.

The section has highlighted the relationship between the players and the coaching process to be a dialectic one, where the players impact the process and the process impacts the players. The players have to structure their behaviour around a range of club and coach defined dictates, both explicit and implicit. Through this, they the players, seek to confirm and improve their places in the culture. The day-to-day activities of the players can be recognised as them living out their identities, transition and culture. The players' experiences represent the interpretation of and, contribution to, the existence and continuation of existing power relations and culture within the coaching process.

Previous research suggests that coaches are poor at describing their own behaviour, or the messages that their behaviour conveys. While conversely, players

describe coaches behaviour very well. Yet, in this research direct feedback from player to coach, on any matter, was infrequent at best, and most of the time did not happen. Given their insight into the coaching process, it could be suggested that players need to be included in any assessment of the coach. However, this is with the caveat that because players do not like certain behaviour, it is not effective, nor effective in a given situation. What certainly remains true, and there is supporting evidence in this section, is that there is a significant relationship between coach behaviour and players' evaluative reactions and their overall sporting experience. A more relationship-orientated approach has been shown to improve players' self-esteem, and motivation while enhancing the coaching environment (Case, 1987: Smith & Smoll, 1993), indeed, such an approach was advocated by the players in this section. While the dialectic nature of the relationship between player and coach in the coaching process is illustrated in this section, the coach remains at the heart of the coaching process, and is considered next.

## 4.5 The Coach

### *Introduction*

"Being an elite coach is not an easy job" (Isberg, 1993, p.233)

It would be highly unlikely that any two practical coaching contexts would be identical. Moreover, since the practical coaching context reflects the interaction of the coach, the player, and the club environment, it is also unlikely that, in given settings, coaching practice and the coaching process will be the same. The differences that are present within different coaching settings are a result of, and allow for, the individuality of the coaches, the individuality and collectivity of the players, and the demands of different organisational and club environments (Lyle, 1999). Thus far, this analysis has described and considered the impact of the players and the club environment on the practical coaching context and the coaching process. This section builds on these and now considers the coach.

The coach is at the very heart of the coaching process (Cushion, 2001; Lyle, 1999; Sabo & Panepinto, 1990), and is a nexus between club and players through which the coaching process is constructed. At the elite youth level, the coach is responsible for more than the direction of coaching sessions (Pyke, 1992; Woodman, 1993); the coach has an expanded role, taking responsibility for the players in the practice/competition environment (see Sessions & Games, p. 142), socialising the players into professional football, and dealing with the multifaceted demands of the hierarchical club environment (see The Club, p.122; p.134). Thus, to function effectively relative to the *field*, the coach must have sufficient *capital* and have developed an appropriate *habitus*. The internalised schemes of the *habitus* produce coaching practice, but are acquired from exposure to social conditions and conditionings, via internalising external constraints and possibilities (Ritzer, 1996; Wacquant, 1998). Within the practical coaching context and the coaching process, therefore, analysis confirms coaches as both recipients and creators of values. As a result, this section examines the coach from two perspectives; firstly, as one who shapes the coaching process and secondly, as one who was and is shaped by the coaching process. These two perspectives are not mutually exclusive and as the discussion develops it will be seen how the coaches' *habitus* has formed and served



then to guide action. This section examines the coaches' backgrounds, jobs and positions in the hierarchy at Albion; it then explores how the coaches' *habitus* develops through their personal history and experience and how the coach, through the *habitus*, influences the coaching process and coaching practice. The section concludes with preliminary consideration of the findings in relation to coaching practice and coach education.

#### 4.5.1 *Coaches' Background, Jobs and Hierarchy*

The histories of the coaches at Albion Rovers and those who took part in the coach interviews, was one of long standing involvement in the game of football as both coaches and players. With the exception of Greg (Under 19 coach) who played professionally in the top division in England and accrued over 500 league appearances, few of the coaches' playing careers were at the highest level, but all involved engagement at some point with a professional club. Their coaching experiences were diverse in terms of duration (4 to 30 years) but all involved coaching at a professional level in England or overseas either at youth, senior or a combination of the two levels.

At Albion, Andy was the Academy director. In his fifties, he had briefly played then, following injury, moved into coaching. He had predominantly coached first team and reserve team players during his twenty year coaching career. Andy was involved with the training of the under nineteen team on a day-to-day basis and, while Greg chose the content of the sessions, it was in consultation with Andy. Greg usually led the sessions but Andy sometimes took groups of players and was always on hand to pass comment. Andy was well respected around the club and in football generally, to the extent that he was invited to write a newspaper column and was often the guest on football related radio 'talk shows'.

Greg (under 19 coach) was relatively inexperienced as a coach, having had only two coaching jobs prior to coming to Albion that lasted for a total of four years. His coaching experience was with first team and reserve team players, but he was in his second season at Albion with the youth team. He had a long and successful career as a player playing in the (old) English First Division, and the F.A. Premier League, Despite being forty, he retained his playing status and played for Albion Reserves and, in his words "was not there to make up the numbers". However, Greg perceived his coaching job at Albion as a stepping-stone back to first team coaching. Thus,

coaching youth players was for him a career contingency (Lawson, 1989) the impact of which will be developed later in the section. Greg led all the training sessions and was in charge of the team on match days. In consultation with Andy, Greg picked the team.

Pete (under 17 coach) was in his mid thirties and had also been a professional player in England and overseas. His coaching background was entirely with youth players. He was responsible for the first year Academy players but as they trained full time, they were under Greg's control for training, but Pete's for games. Pete's team was made up of first year Academy players and schoolboys in their final year at school. Pete did not lead whole sessions, but might take parts of a session. He had a particular passing practice that Greg liked and he was asked to do that on several occasions during the season. Generally, Pete is best described as Greg's assistant.

Bob, in his forties, was Pete's assistant. He worked part-time at Albion and was involved mainly on match days, but came in to the club at least one day a week. He had 20 years coaching experience and had previously been employed full-time at the youth level. Bob was the most highly educated of the coaches holding a Master's degree in Sport Science, and he was employed by the governing body, the F.A, to deliver coach education courses.

Dean was not employed as a coach he acted as Education/Welfare and Technical adviser to the Academy. He was a former physical education teacher who had worked for the Football Association delivering coach education courses and been involved with the National schools' representative teams. However, Dean was often on the training field, was present at all games, and he assisted Greg with training. Like Pete, Dean did not lead sessions but took parts, for example conducting a practice that Greg liked. There was a tension between Greg and Dean. Whilst never publicly stated, Dean did not agree with Greg's emphasis on winning, nor did he see Greg's playing reputation as a substitute for 'real' coaching experience. An insight to this came in interview, with these veiled comments about Greg, who had not turned up for a Football Association in-service training day.

"I think it's important that all coaches attend in-service training and are committed to that before they work in this philosophy. You need the type of people that are always forward thinking and want to improve themselves everyday. So we look for coaches who are in that mould and not that don't turn up to service training, or see

it as beneath them because they were a 'great player'. We want a coach that would discuss it and read about it and aren't so bloody bored shitless".  
(Interview, Dean, 2000)

The club was hierarchically structured (see *The Club*, p.121), with the most obvious difference being between coaches and players. However, additional rankings existed between the coaches, (see figure 4.1, *The Club*, p.122) starting with Andy as Academy Director at the top, then his assistants Greg (u19 coach), Pete (u17 coach) Bob (u17 coach) and Dean (Ed/Welfare & Tech advisor). Authority at the Academy was concentrated with the coaches, they controlled the players, but also had control over one another. While the individual 'styles' of the coach varied, they all exerted a great deal of control and insisted on conformity from the players. There was, as Rink (1993) suggests, 'a sameness about their uniqueness'. Consequently, it could be an illustration of Ritzer's assertion that those who occupy a similar position within the social world tend to have a similar *habitus* (Ritzer, 1996).

Analysis of the Academy and club hierarchy, in the context of the coaches, is complicated. This is because the Academy is both a social hierarchy (reflecting the power of the club, and its social stratification) and a cultural hierarchy where symbolic *capital* such as, renown as a player or coach, have significant value in the *field*. Whilst Andy was Greg's boss in the social hierarchy, in the cultural domain, Greg and Andy were on a par. In some instances, for example, when considering the loan or movement of certain players, it was Greg, not Andy, whom the first team manager (the Gaffer) consulted.

Spoke with Greg: "The Gaffer's pulled me today, and asked me what I thought about bringing in LT on loan. I said that he would definitely help the midfield. I reckon if I called him up he'd come, he isn't getting in United's side at the moment, on the bench at best".  
(Field notes, 8<sup>th</sup> December 1999)

Dean, and to lesser extent Pete, whilst having strong positions in the social hierarchy, had limited cultural *capital*, because of their lack of 'top level' coaching and playing experience. This was reflected in the actions of Andy and Greg who would often include Bob (a former full-time coach at the 'pro' level) in their discussions, but would involve Pete and Dean to a lesser extent. Within the football *field*, the study highlighted a struggle for power between those who have social power derived from

their coaching position and those who have cultural power derived from the renown they have achieved in the professional game. This struggle was recognised by Dean;

"You have to fight against not being a 'pro', that the professional knows better cos they played x number of league games, and I'm a teacher and what do teachers know about football"  
(Interview, Dean, 2000)

This is not peculiar to Albion, as the experiences of this interview coach suggests.

"I suppose, playing the bulk of the time non-league, as a young coach working with 'pro' players and 'ex pro' coaches, I had to battle and overcome the stigma about 'have you played the game?' I suppose you could almost have an inferiority complex about that. I have a young lad working for me now, and sometimes that's thrown in. Really you need experience and credibility, but it's two way, getting into people, into their way of thinking".  
(Coach interview, Jw, 2000)

Thus, the cultural hierarchy is related to the social hierarchy and is itself both hierarchical and hierarchising. Whatever the type and volume of *capital* the coach had, it took time to achieve it; as too does the acquisition of the long standing and deep rooted dispositions of the *habitus*, which Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) describe as being a "historical transcendental bound up with the structure and history of a *field*" (p.189). Therefore, to understand a coach's *habitus* one must understand something of the coach's history.

#### 4.5.2 *Becoming a Coach; The Influence of History*

The body acts as a social memory (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994). The unconscious operation of *habitus* means that 'what coaches do' signifies a great deal about their personal history and occupancy of a specific social position. Coaches' knowledge and action are both the product and manifestation of a personally experienced involvement with the coaching process. They are linked to the coach's own history and are attributable to how they were learned.

Becoming a coach involves developing a personal set of views on coaching, issues in sport and a view on 'how things should be done' (Lyle, 1999). These views evolve over time and are a result of education (formal and informal) and experience. For the coaches at Albion, and the interview coaches, the two most important knowledge sources were experience and other coaches. In almost all cases, the

coaches were influenced by several mentors or experienced coaches, who demonstrated to them the ability to effect change within the coaching process. In some cases, partial lessons were drawn about certain aspects of coaching from different mentors and sometimes they noted things that they *would not do* with their own players.

Arguably coaches serve, what is described in physical education, as an apprenticeship of observation (Sage, 1989; Schempp, 1989; Schempp & Graber, 1992; Lortie, 1975). In coaching this can be divided into two phases, firstly, being observers and recipients of coaching as players and secondly, as neophyte coaches or assistants working with and observing experienced coaches.

As players themselves, coaches had an unusually good opportunity to learn about coaching from their own coaches. Coakley (1978) notes that these experiences "are the channels through which the traditional accepted methods of coaching become integrated into the behaviour of aspiring young coaches" (p.241). Coaches, therefore, serve an informal apprenticeship of prolonged observation, which enables them to develop a familiarity with the task of coaching. The first two excerpts from the data illustrate the thread from experiences as a player, watching and taking part in coaching sessions, through to their current coaching.

"B was my manager at the later stages of my career, I think when my career was coming to an end, I actually started thinking, I like that way or I don't like that way"

(Club Coach Interview, Ps, 2000)

Noteworthy are Greg's comments about how he valued the lessons learned from coaches who themselves were ex-professional players.

"At an early age 'G' was me manager, 'C' was me manager, 'I' was me manager. They were probably three out of the first five managers I had, all ex players, all good players, and I learnt so much off people like that, in just v8's and 6v6's. I learnt more from older players and the manager, and people like that. I used to look at the players when I was a player, especially later on, and think oh yeah, they're getting something from this. A few things I have now, I thought I do this because I did it then, as a player".

(Interview, Greg, 2000)

For Bob (under 17 coach) his playing experiences clearly carry forward to his coaching. In particular, he recollects a negative experience.

"One thing that has affected me as a coach was experience as a player. I played against a fella who went on to play for United. He was really quick and I played against him three or four times, and he was just too quick for me and the coach used to rip me apart at half-time, but never thought about stopping it happening. That affected me."

(Interview, Bob, 2000)

Neophyte coaches and assistants too are, in effect, serving an apprenticeship. However, this is not formally organised, as assistant coaches do not serve for a specific time nor are they required to demonstrate particular skills to move beyond apprentice status (Sage, 1989). Observing the behaviour of more experienced coaches during practice and games, and listening during informal periods, makes its mark on coaches. It is largely through these types of experiences that collective understandings begin to develop, and the shared meanings about the occupational culture of coaching start to take shape. Therefore, much of what a new coach learns is through ongoing interactions in the practical coaching context, as well as a variety of informal sources. This enculturation provides continuity with lessons learned earlier, as a player no matter what the level. As these data illustrate, the coaches are able to identify with the notion of learning about coaching from experienced coaches early in their coaching careers.

"Having been involved with this club under three managers since my short time, I have obviously learned a lot from all three of those, who had different qualities I felt in coaching and in management of players"

(Club Coach Interview, Ps, 2000)

"M Springs to mind, when I first got into the job as his assistant, we had no real stars but he could get them organised and working hard. So when I came here I thought similar situation, no stars no-one who could turn the game, I'd have a look at this mob, and like M get 'em organised and working hard"

(Interview, Greg, 2000)

"My first job, M was my boss, he was my original inspiration um not so much on his coaching quality, um but on his motivational methods, he was an inspirational guy in the way he conducted himself,"

(Club Coach Interview, Pc, 2000)

"when I started out I picked up things all the time. You know S at City was caring, caring about the staff also F at City he was poorly organised. J at Town was good at talking to the players. K at United, dedicated, got people to work, didn't really praise"

(Interview, Bob, 2000)

"When I first came here, at 22, K was the youth team coach, I worked alongside him. I learnt an awful lot about how to coach on a professional level. I was on a

steep learning curve particularly in terms of content, me style, derives I suppose from the sort of person I am and my experiences. I have seen things, I don't like, that or wouldn't do it like that but possibly in a negative way".

(Club Coach Interview, Jw, 2000).

"Two people have significantly influenced my thinking about the game, two people, one is still a significant mentor"

(Club Coach Interview, De, 2000)

"To start off with, I worked under a man M, who's now at City, now M was a very umm hard disciplinarian, but an excellent coach, put on excellent sessions but demanded high standards, he had a big influence on me. In the way that I approach players and set high standards. One thing he once said to me, that did have an effect, he once said to me 'you've got to treat players like bastards. Like a bastard' he said because sooner or later they will let you down. From his point of view he set high standards, because he was in the winning game. I think I tried, not necessarily like bastards, or be a bastard to the players but I was probably a little more over critical and a little more louder than I should have been. Because I wanted to do well myself, and seeing players and not accepting they had limitations was a big fault of mine, and probably people will say 'well you have still got that fault'."

(Club Coach Interview, Kn, 2000)

Consequently, through participation and observation from a player through to becoming a coach, methods of coaching are experienced and witnessed. These methods are steeped in culture with the effect that coaching culture is internalised and embodied. It is worth noting also that the experiences may include things that were not present in coaching. As Dodds remarks "ignorance is not neutral" (1985, p.93). Indeed, Kirk (1992) suggests that things that are, intentionally or unintentionally, left out of practice are significant in passing on messages about that practice.

The expression of the coach's dispositions or *habitus* through training sessions and games, and interaction with the club and players produces the coaching process and the practical coaching context. Conversely, *habitus* is produced through the history and experiences of the coach within the coaching process, and the practical coaching context. Clearly, the coaches' early experiences form a screen through which all future expectations will pass (Schempp & Graber, 1992); they come to see and experience things in the coaching process that they like or do not like. Yet, past experience is uneven in quality and is incomplete; nevertheless, these experiences influence and carry far into a coach's career, and provide a continuing influence over perspectives, beliefs and behaviours. This, as will be seen, has implications for the efficacy of coach education. Regardless of the method of entry into the professional coaching *field*, via playing or as an assistant, the technical aspects of the coaching

culture were acquired through observing and listening to more experienced coaches. As a result, it would seem that a large part of football coaching at the elite level is based on the coach's experiences. However, not all experienced coaches are working as elite coaches, but to become an elite coach, it would appear that significant experience is required, and this experience serves to influence practice.

#### 4.5.3 *The Coaching Process & Coaching Practice; Habitus and Tradition*

"Social practice is the outcome of a dialectical relationship between agency and structure" (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994, p.186). Furthermore, "there is a strong correlation between social positions and the dispositions of the agents who occupy them" (Bourdieu, 1984a, p.110). Therefore, it is out of the relationship between *habitus* and *field* that practice is established. For Bourdieu, the production of social practice and, in the context of this research coaching practice, involves a balance or blend between the conscious and the unconscious. This underpins the understanding that coaches have 'coaching strategies', yet acknowledges that what coaches do involves the utilisation of 'second nature', what is routinely labelled as the 'art' of coaching (Woodman, 1993). The 'art' of coaching is a "practical mastery, a mastery acquired by experience of the game, and one which is outside conscious control and discourse" (Bourdieu, 1990, p.61). Thus, the coach's disposition in the coaching process lies at the intersection of the conscious and unconscious, while the coach's practical mastery is developed and maintained by a deeply embodied *habitus*.

The coach's *habitus* is a set of dispositions that is created and reformulated in the unification of objective structures (within the club environment) and personal history (experiences as a player or coach) (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994). So, the coach's *habitus* is structured through social practice, perhaps through day-to-day engagement in the coaching process as a player or coach, and it is the coach's *habitus* that structures action. Therefore, *habitus* is the point in the coaching process where agency and structure interact.

A coach's ability and mastery of practice within the football *field*, is dependent upon their *habitus* and the possession of *capital*. The football *field* is a *field* of struggles for the coaches. The struggle within the *field* at Albion can be seen at two levels. Within the broader football *field* the Academy sought to improve its position through the acquisition of *capital*; the specific symbolic *capital* of winning. The win/loss record of the team became important for the building of the Academy's



reputation within the broader football field, and subsequent attraction of young players.

"Attracting the best young players to our club has become increasingly important"  
(Andy, Newspaper Column, 31<sup>st</sup> October, 1999)

"Winning is seen as important, the under nineteens is our shop window"  
(Interview, Dean, 2000)

The symbolic value of winning was understood by Greg in particular, and to a certain extent Andy. They saw their jobs at the Academy as a stepping-stone to first team coaching. They, too, needed to build a reputation, symbolic *capital*, for their own career progression.

"I will move on, hopefully I will move on to bigger and better things"  
(Interview, Greg, 2000)

Greg's position in the *field* interacted with his *habitus* to produce actions. He wanted to improve his position relative to the *field* and this influenced the coaching process at Albion. One outcome was that player 'development' was not the primary concern of the coaching process, and this resulted in different behaviour and practice to a coach for whom development is the primary objective (Bain, 1992; Placek, 1983; Lawson, 1989), thus helping to create and maintain a certain coaching process. Indeed, Roderick (1991) and Parker (1996) suggest that the desire for the team to win will inevitably be at the expense of individual player development and performance. This has been demonstrated, for example, in the repeated selection of the strongest team (see Player p.162). Certainly the pre-occupation with team success overshadowed the players' broader development, a feeling shared by the players who recognised that the desire to win displayed by the coaches was not linked to their development, but was in part, to enhance coach symbolic *capital*.

T: "Andy just worries about winning"

A: "Yeah, they're not bothered about bringing players on, they're bothered about their rep. They treat the Academy like a first team"

M: "Yeah, first team"

S: "You look at teams like, Town, stuff like that, they put their youngsters into the nineteens to bring um on a bit. Whereas with them it's not about bringing them on it's about the result. Get the best result you can"

(Focus Group, 2000)

The pressure to win was enforced in all aspects of coaching practice. Thus, sessions and games became significant forces shaping the development of the player *habitus*. Little coaching went on in games (see Player, p. 162; Sessions & Games p.142), it was about winning. Lessons on winning and losing were drawn and integrated into training sessions.

As the players stretch

Greg; "This morning, short and sharp, get last week out of the system, 5-2, United here we come. Not enough people wanted to win the game, George Graham on Wednesday night, didn't mention passing or shooting, just that not enough people wanted to win the game.

(Field notes, 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1999)

The players' ambition was to be a 'pro' (see Player p.162). They were convinced that success on the field would enhance their position in the *field* and subsequent career progression.

J: "If you're a successful team then they'll look at you more, than if you're losing every week.

N: "Suppose so"

J: "Yeah if you're not getting results, well that's what we're paid to do"

(Focus Group, 2000)

This notion was repeatedly reinforced by the coaches throughout the course of the season, and these data give a feeling for the types of messages conveyed.

Andy; "The Gaffer's watching this game, a good chance for you to impress, and we've conceded 3 goals. That doesn't put you in a strong position in contract terms. I can't defend you if you are conceding goals and gonna lose a game like that".

(Field notes, 20<sup>th</sup> December 1999)

Andy; "Saturday is payday. I can get people contracts at this sub more if you are winning than if you're not. Take it from me that it is the truth. You want away, you can get more if you win. All this crap it doesn't matter about winning".

(Field notes, 27<sup>th</sup> August, 1999)

The symbolic meaning attached to winning at the club, and its acceptance by the players, can usefully be seen as a process through which engagement in coaching practice within a specific practical coaching context, over time, developed dispositions in the *habitus* of players.

As described earlier, winning had symbolic meaning in the football *field* for both players and coaches, and can be regarded as a prerequisite that had to be achieved if both were to make their way in the *field*. However, winning was not expressed in the Academy's explicit aims of player development. It could be argued that winning was part of what is described in physical education as the hidden curriculum (Jackson, 1968); that is, the knowledge, values, attitudes and behaviour that players learn as an unavoidable consequence of participating in the formal and routine activities of the coaching process (Kirk, 1992) (see also Sessions & Games, p.156). For the coaches and players, the day-to-day coaching process at Albion was filled with routine (see Player, p.162). Whilst the substance or focus of individual sessions changed, the routine and the interactions between the coaches, players and the club remained remarkably consistent. The hidden curriculum can be described as those things that are taught from the "institutional regularities, the routines and rituals" (Weis, 1982, p.3; Bain, 1990) of the coaching process and coaching practice.

Many of the routines and rituals that the coaches engaged in at Albion were more to do with tradition, than coaching. Weber conceived of tradition simply as respect for "that which has always been" (1922, p. 36), and as simple continuity rather than the more complex project of cultural reproduction. In the truer etymology of the word *traditio* (Shils, 1981) it refers to passing on or handing down of information. Tradition for present purposes can helpfully be seen as a mode of transmission of information. For the coaches' *habitus*, the information need not be rendered discursive; it may be tacit knowledge, even knowledge embodied in modes of action (Calhoun, 1995). Therefore, tradition informs the coaches' practice, and is also part of the hidden curriculum in that from the routines of practice undertaken in the coaching process, a specific culture is conserved and reproduced. Thus, ways of doing things develop as the traditional way, and therefore validate current practice by connecting them to a selectively remembered past (Light, 1999).

Most tradition is not passed down in specific situations. Crucially, passing on and affirmation of culture takes place in the course of interested actions in which people pursue a variety of ends, both conscious and unconscious (Calhoun, 1995) i.e. the interaction of coach, player and club environment in the coaching process. The traditional practices engaged in by the coach, within the coaching process, provide culturally specific experiences for both coach and player, thus, tradition becomes embodied in the *habitus*.

#### 4.5.4 *Some Conclusions & Implications for Coach Education*

From the outset, this research has suggested that the coach is at the heart of the coaching process. Clearly understanding something of the complexity of the coach, aids in an understanding of the complexity and construction of the coaching process and practical coaching context. Coaches undoubtedly occupy a position of centrality and influence in the coaching process. They are indeed, the nexus through which the coaching process is constructed and, as has been illustrated, the coach, through the *habitus* is both shaped by, and is a shaper of, the coaching process.

Something of the complexity of the coach can be understood by placing the coach in a context. Thus, evidence has been presented to suggest that the coach operates in a football *field* that is both a social and cultural hierarchy. A social trajectory through the *field*, to improve the coaches' position, requires a specific volume and blend of social and cultural *capital*. At the same time, a 'practical mastery' is required but it can only be acquired through experience of the game. The coach's *habitus* is acquired as a result of experience as a player and a coach, through tradition, and through adjustment and readjustment following interaction with the players and the club in the practical coaching context. Given the interconnectedness of coaching, the body and culture, the coach and the coach's practice take on enormous significance as a moment in the process of cultural production and reproduction (Kirk & Tinning, 1990). Therefore, the acquisition and development of the coach *habitus* has serious implications for both coaching practice and coach education.

To develop coaching praxis, the aims and content of coach education must deal with the coach's experience, ranging from the lack of experience of the neophyte coach, through to the extensive experience of the established coach. An established coach arrives at coach education courses with a long-standing and deep-rooted *habitus*, which guides actions and is tempered by years of experience in the sport. In the first instance, it would be naive for coach education to believe that these coaches are waiting to be filled with the 'professional dogma' (Schempp & Graber, 1992) of coaching theory. It could also be argued that coaching courses, with their 'parcelled' and specific ways of knowing and communicating (Saury & Durand, 1998), are unable to compete with an established *habitus* conceived from experience. As result, with their experience acting as a filter (see this section p.181) coaches may contest directly or indirectly some of the principles the coach education programme attempts

to instil. However, because of the power of the coach educator, through their responsibility for certification and position in the football *field*, coaches have much to lose by directly contesting the programme. Therefore, the critical scrutiny necessary to do things better, and to create the possibility of changing practice if the need arises, is driven underground and the coaches give an outward appearance of acceptance while harbouring and restricting their disagreement with, and rejection of, the official coaching orientation. So whilst coach education may give the appearance of being subject to a so called wash out effect (Zeichner & Tabaachnick, 1981), many coaches probably never accepted or appropriated the programme behaviours and beliefs but, out of necessity, merely appeared to (see Coach section p.180, particularly the relationship between Greg U19 coach and Dean, Education/welfare).

Evidence in this section points strongly to the need for coach education to encourage experienced coaches to question the assumptions underlying both their own coaching practice and coach education. Unless coaches reflect on and reinterpret their past experiences of coaching, they remain in danger of leaving coach education untouched by new knowledge and insight. As Kirk and Tinning (1990) suggest;

"By opening up our professional practices to scrutiny, by ourselves and our peers, we create the possibility of turning these areas of practice into 'sites of contestation' (Kirk, 1988) where we can begin to address, practically and specifically, issues and problems" (p.9).

Indeed coaching, not unlike physical education lacks a critical tradition (Kirk & Tinning, 1990). Coaches "view conflict and criticism as always destructive, and intensely personal, rarely objective and never constructive. We seem to be more concerned with following trends" (Kirk & Tinning, 1990, p.2), and this may be as simple as conforming to club, or sporting traditions.

Evidence from this section suggests that both the experience of the coach and encounters with experienced coaches are fundamental to the shaping of the coach *habitus* and coaching practice. It would seem logical therefore, that influencing the experiences of neophyte coaches would influence the acquisition of the coach *habitus*. One method of doing this would be for coach education to embrace mentoring within its framework. Mentoring, according to Merriam (1983) is derived from Greek mythology, where a father trusted his son to learn from a wise old man 'Mentor'. Indeed, sections of the coaching literature have argued that coach education should incorporate sources of experience other than the 'coaching

manual' (Gould et al., 1990). This is explored in more detail later in the Thesis conclusion (p.224).

This research demonstrates the importance of the coaches' experiences in development and their subsequent impact on the coaching process. Therefore, enhancing the quality of the experience of coaches' and thus, influencing the *habitus* can only improve, and have impending positive repercussions on, coaching practice and the coaching process in the future. Evidence from this research suggests that coach education programmes might benefit from integrating periods of field experience, reflective practice and structured interaction with mentors.

## 4.6 Coach-Player Relationship

### *Introduction*

During the course of the season the players and coaches at Albion spent many hours together in and around the club environment, engaging in daily practice, developing physical skills and performing in games. The players' relationship with the coaches, and vice versa, was a dominant part of their every day lives, and a fundamental part of the coaching process. Indeed, the nature of the coach-athlete relationship within the coaching process is of primary importance (Cushion, 2001; Sabo & Panepinto, 1990; Smith & Smoll, 1993). Furthermore, several authors have argued that the effectiveness of the implementation of the coaching process will be dependent upon the quality of the relationship and interaction between coach and player (Borrie, 1996; Jones, 1997; Lyle, 1999; Kahan, 1999). Analysis of the coach-player relationship and subsequent interactions is therefore, of fundamental importance in helping to understand how the coaching process operates in practice. Moreover, and perhaps more importantly for this research, the coach-player relationship provides a medium through which the interaction of the coach, player and club environment can be explored, and the complexity of practical coaching context demonstrated.

Arguably, the analysis of the coach-player relationship could be framed simply in terms of their interaction. This term, defined as the process and manner in which social actors relate to each other, especially in face to face encounters (Jary & Jary, 2000) seems apt. However, interaction seems to imply that communication is two-way and, as has already been demonstrated (see Player, p. 169; Session and Games, p.142) this is not the case. Moreover interaction, whilst being an integral part of the coach-player relationship, for this analysis, does not seem to be sufficiently broad to capture the full extent of the coach-player relationship, which, not unlike the coaching process, exists in the realm of "communication and meaning making, in a symbol world of action, gesture, word, intonation and sound" (Kirk, 1992, p. 42). Therefore, a term that might prove more useful is 'discourse'. Kirk (1992) views discourse as not only what is said verbally, what is written and what is done, but also what is not said, done or written. Moreover, he considers discourse to be "larger than language, because it embraces all forms of communicating rather than simply the verbal or written word. It refers to all meaning-making activity, whether this be

intentional, conscious, unconscious, explicit, tacit or reflexive” (Kirk, 1992, p.42). Indeed, Kirk's (1992) definition is useful for this discussion since it recognises all aspects of 'meaning-making activity' in the way people communicate (Rossi & Cassidy, 1999).

In considering the coach-player relationship, this section firstly, considers the nature of discourse and relationships in the coaching process at Albion. Next follows an examination of the perceptions and expectations of the club and coaches and how these shaped discourse and the coaching process. An analysis of authoritarian discourse, symbolic violence and the coaching process follows, and finally, the section examines the nature of the coach-player relationship, the players' perceptions and the implications for coaching practice.

#### *4.6.1 Discourse, Relationships and Authoritarianism*

The discourse between coaches and players in the practical coaching context at Albion can be characterised by authoritarianism. Authoritarianism is a system whereby an individual or individuals (the coaches) control, while others (the players) are controlled (Jary & Jary, 2000) and is closely linked to domination. Weber (1968) defined domination as the "probability that certain specific commands (or all commands) will be obeyed by a given group of persons" (p. 212). The coaches at Albion dominated the players. This back-drop ensured that discourse was coach led, thus shaping the contours of the coaching process, and affecting how coaches and players behaved toward each other within the club environment.

It is also clear from commentaries and accounts concerning life within professional football, that the utilisation of authoritarianism has long featured as a highly pervasive facet of football man-management (Butcher, 1987; Farmer, 1987; Nelson, 1995; Parker, 1996). This authoritarianism has manifested itself, at Albion and other clubs, through a combination of violent and abusive language, direct personal castigation and physical exercise and threats of physical exercise. The excerpt below comes from a biographical account of a former professional.

“Butcher you pansy, Butcher you’re like an old woman, Butcher you’re pathetic. Not chants from opposition fans, this was Bobby Ferguson the Ipswich reserve team coach. He made my life so miserable that I came close to giving up football” (Butcher, 1987, p.15).



These extracts from data illustrate the harshness of the language used by the coaches at Albion.

The players are sitting, at the edge of the pitch in a semi-circle, around Andy and Greg, who remain standing. The game has ended in a draw and a player's mistake has led to the equalising goal: Andy, "Well I was about to say well done, I mean that fucking game D, well the fucking, I mean the game was another minute on the corner, it didn't have to come to that you just fucking knock his head off. You know I am not being funny you can use your fucking hands. The only thing he can use is his fucking head and he's got there before you. His fucking head should have been flying off somewhere. That should have been in our hands and that came from a silly, like, the fuckin' drop ball, wasn't it and there's everyone going to sleep, it bounces in the fucking box, he don't come off his line, fucking three points fucking out the window. Thank God it has happened this week. You know that happened there tonight, I mean I don't know what you are arguing with Greg about that fucking one handed thing either, you know it's two hands come and get it....."

Greg speaks to D the goalkeeper; "Before you start don't ever fucking answer any of the staff back. I saw it going in. Fifty yards D we are talking. Don't think that was a fucking good save.

D. "I misjudged it".

Greg. "Misjudged it ?. So why do you fucking answer back?" Before the player has a chance to answer.

Greg; "I couldn't give a fucking shit! You catch it and you throw it to your full back. Right !!!!! Too many of you are fucking answering the staff back. Pack it in now or else you can fuck right off and I couldn't give a shit. We aren't that fucking good and I have been saying it for too long now. To answer him back, me back, the physio back. Right.....

Bunch of fuckin tarts. That's how we got beat today, almost got beat.....

I can't believe that was a game we should have won 4 - 0. No not us, we fuck about with it. We'll let them get back into the game. We'll make it hard for ourselves..... Why don't we get fuckin' something that they had, they made it hard for you. No fuckin' great player among them but they made it hard because they stuck at what they were good at. Fuckin' hard work, shutting down and putting the ball where it hurts. Not us, we want to do little fucking nutmegs".

(Field notes, 21<sup>st</sup> August 1999).

In terms of everyday experience, explicit outbursts varied in frequency and intensity. Whilst the harsh language was present in every training session, personal castigation and abuse occurred most during team talks, during or after training or games. During sessions in particular, the coaches would stop the players to make their points. These stoppages could occur at any time, not just at natural breaks like the end of a segment or session and, invariably, they were a reaction to some perceived deficiency in the players' actions or approach to the task. The first excerpt from data

illustrates the coaches' reaction to a player's failure to carry out his pre-training 'job' of filling water bottles.

Andy walks over to the session and calls Greg over, they converse for a moment and then Greg stops the practice and calls the players over, they sit down, some stretch, some drink from a water bottle. Andy and Greg stay standing.

Andy "Nobody's against ya, nobody's got the hump with ya. Fuckin R's been asked to do the fuckin most minor job, that anyone could do, fuckin disgrace.

Those water bottles can be filled in fuckin two minutes. You're fuckin too fuckin bone idle to do it and ya start fuckin arguing with someone. I'm not 'avin it man. I don't fuckin care whether it's you, you, or you. Not fuckin well 'avin it (pause, 3 secs.). Fuckin well grow up will ya.

(Field notes, 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1999).

This excerpt is concerned with reaction to poor player performance during training, and the players' reaction to it.

Players have begun a circle keep ball. Greg arrives in the hall and formalises the practice by nominating two players to begin in the middle of the circle as defenders. The players miss-place passes and lose possession of the ball frequently. Greg stops the practice "circle shit, 5 minute warm up shit....no, shit's too kind...Game Saturday against United, if we start like this against them fuckin god help us" Greg organises a passing practice where the ball is passed via the four corners of the hall. One of the players controls the ball badly, loses possession and then jokes about it with another player. Greg stops the practice, "E, if you want to fuck about, get into the car park, I couldn't give a shit", the rest of the players get press-ups and 'shuttle' sprints as punishment for their mistakes.

(Field notes, 18<sup>th</sup> January 2000).

The authoritarian nature of discourse can be seen as an illustration of the complex nature of interaction between the coach, players and club environment. The club environment, through its culture and traditions, influenced the disposition of the coaches (see *The Coach*, p.181). For example, Robson (1982) and Parker (1996) have argued that in football though aggressive, such methods of traditional institutional discourse have become recognised as a kind of occupational hallmark, a feeling confirmed in these excerpts from coach interviews.

"I think it's the easiest way when you feel under stress and pressure and I've done that. I would like to think I don't do it that much, I certainly don't, I certainly now-a-days I have done that when I was younger. I think that's part of the culture we all

come up in as well, that was certainly done to me in my life as a player not all my life but a significant part was. I think it's probably a weakness in coaching."  
(Interview, Bob, April 2000).

"It's the tradition really its things they have experienced in the past, I think that's the bottom line."  
(Interview, Pete, April 2000).

This view was also shared outside of Albion, as these data illustrate.

"Coaches or coaching departments are very conservative with a little c not really open to change and I think things are changing quite dramatically but um, managing people is not a strength of a lot of people actually working in football. And I think threatening people has been the traditional way of doing it um, a lot of time people don't carry out those threats and what tends to happen is um, in a lot of clubs the relationship between the manager and the players isn't what you get in industry it's not sort of management and staff it's management and sometimes quite school-boyish, old type school-boyish, do as you are told."  
(Club Coach Interview, Jw, May 2000)

As these data suggest, the formation of authoritarian discourse is closely associated with having experienced authoritarian treatment (Jary & Jary, 2000), either as a player or coach. Indeed, this notion has received some support, for example, Anderson & Gill (1983) in a study of male basketball coaches found that coaches predominantly had significant experience as players, suggesting that male coaches of male teams are socialised into a specific set of beliefs and methods, that are typically demanding, autocratic and competitive. Furthermore, Pratt & Eitzen (1989) suggest that coaches who have extended experience as players become socialised into an ideal of holding and wielding power and authority. These experiences are then carried forward into coaching. As Sage (1989) notes, observing and listening to the behaviour of experienced coaches will make its mark on coach behaviour. Indeed, Graber (1995) contends that a single individual may be more important in shaping beliefs than an entire programme of courses (see Coach section p.181).

As has already been stressed, the coaches' *modus operandi* or practice is an expression of their *habitus*, which is in turn structured by experience and practice (see Coach, p.188). Interestingly, Wacquant (1998) suggests that *habitus* is the mediation between past influences and present stimuli. He also notes that *habitus* is structured (by the patterned social forces that produced it) and also structuring (because it gives form and coherence to the activities of an individual). The *habitus* is acquired through

lasting exposure to particular social conditions and conditionings (Wacquant, 1995 , and reflects the occupation of a position within the social world. The coaches' *habitus* is "the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product" (Bourdieu, 1990e, p.56). Noteworthy also, is that this process of learning, of inculcation, is cumulative (Jenkins, 1992); the *habitus* acquired as a player is the basis for receipt of the coaching 'message', which in turn, is the basis for the response to all subsequent cultural 'messages' (which also has implications for coach education, see Coach section, p.192). Thus, the construction of an authoritarian discourse can be usefully seen as a process through which engagement in social practices as players and coaches within the social context of the coaching process, over time, embeds certain behaviour in the *habitus* of coaches.

Although the coaching process can be seen as the meeting place of club, player, and coach, it is ultimately directed through the *habitus* of the coaches. However, it is constructed and defined through interaction with the players' dispositions whether explicitly or implicitly. Thus, the nature of discourse and the coach-player relationship was dependent on the coaches' perceptions and expectation of the players' effort, achievement, acceptance and enthusiasm.

#### 4.6.2 *The Team, Perceptions, Expectations and Discourse*

Authoritarianism served a number of purposes within the coaching process at Albion, one such purpose was developing the club and coach concern with team cohesion and 'team spirit'. Team spirit was a term most commonly used to describe and encapsulate an official desire to have solidarity amongst Academy players. At the club, the good of the team came first. Togetherness and team spirit, for the coaches, were essentials of team success.

At the end of the game.

Greg addresses the group. "Some of you are learning and sticking together, that makes you stronger, tougher to beat."

(Field notes, 19<sup>th</sup> April, 2000)

The coaches attempted to increase the depth of working relationships between players with respect to their footballing skills and team play, through the adoption of a seemingly taken-for-granted belief that working together would result in closer 'mental understanding' between players. Both Greg and Andy would stipulate that certain players or groups of players worked together. This was particularly the case on

Fridays or pre-match sessions, when the group might be broken up, Andy would work with the 'back four' defenders, Greg the 'midfield four', and Pete with the 'strikers'. This would then be carried into the 'pattern of play' and 'set pieces' where the 'first choice' players would play alongside one another thus enhancing team-mate familiarity.

Discourse too assumed a prominent role in the everyday conditioning of the players toward cohesive practice. Crucial to togetherness were principles of equality, that everyone had a good and equal chance of becoming a 'pro', and it was in their hands. However, this notion seemed to be at the rhetorical hub of togetherness and team spirit. Contradictions appeared throughout, including differences in occupational demands placed upon year groups (see Club, p.120; Player, p.162), and the predictability of team selection and its bias toward the strongest team, the team most likely to win (See Session & Games, p.153). These were examples of explicit differentiation by the coaches. Through discourse, however, a more implicit differentiation became apparent that shaped the nature of the coach-player relationship, and that affected the nature of the coaching process. There were instances of coach partiality and selectivity that demonstrated strongly that togetherness and cohesion were often a matter of paying lip service to stated club policy, rather than everyday action. Through the nature of coach-player relationships and the subsequent discourse it was possible to identify sub-groups of players, distinct from the official hierarchical year groups. These sub-groups were themselves hierarchically organised and termed in this research as the 'favourites', then the 'peripherals' and lastly the 'rejects'. The ups and downs of team and player performance along with injury status during the course of the season meant that the status of the 'peripherals' and 'favourites' remained reasonably fluid, however, the 'rejects' group was less susceptible to change. Membership of each group meant a differing relationship with the coach, and a different experience from the practical coaching context.

To be a 'favourite' brought favourable conditions and rewards. These manifested themselves chiefly through repeated selection for the team, virtually irrespective of personal performance as long as the team was winning (see Player p.162). Also, it was seen in the way the coaches, Greg and Andy in particular, addressed the players in and around the training ground, during sessions and games, as these data illustrate.

T: "The way some people are spoken to is different"

M: "Off the pitch as well, just walking round the place. Andy will speak to some people more, Greg will speak to some people more"

A: "I've noticed that Andy will say alright to everyone, but to some player it will be a bit more, it will be alright, and how's the leg, and will you be back for Saturday"

T: "In games and training too, player A makes a mistake no problem, player B makes a mistake all over them"

S: "Yeah"

T: "Yeah N makes a lot of mistakes"

M: "Yeah"

A: "But a mistake someone else makes will get ripped, But he does it and it's alright"

(Focus Group, 2000)

Such practices were not insignificant in terms of shaping the coach-player relationship

Research indicates that coaches appear to have a positive bias towards players who are "conforming, co-operative orderly and high achieving" (Martinek, 1983, p.65). Indeed, displaying the ideal features of a 'pro', the 'favourites' personified the epitome of the club's desire as regard the fulfilment of 'professional values'. Thus, by living out everything that the coaches advocated and stood for they necessarily increased the levels of relational intimacy between the coach and themselves (Parker, 1996). The player's embodied symbolic and cultural *capital* were accrued and converted to the advantage of the individual in his struggle for resources in the social space. The *capital* developed by the players thus ensured a *habitus* that meshed with the culture of the club. The coaches became comfortable with those who shared similar values and behaviour; those with a similar *habitus*.

In addition, Tomlinson (1983) has identified the 'Darwinian' principle upon which player-coach relations have been based in football. The coach, to progress, requires symbolic *capital*, a strong win/loss record (see Coach section p.184). He therefore, relies on the players who can produce success on the field. As a result, the players that can bring that success become favoured, while those who cannot are rejected.

For the 'reject', their relationships with the coach were different to the 'favourites' and 'peripherals', as was their experience in the coaching process. The 'rejects' engendered a negative coach outlook, which at times bordered on hostility. Greg and Andy perceived them to be limited in fooballing ability, and crucially in

attitude (see Attitude, p.214). This resulted in rejected players being pulled up for making minor mistakes, and receiving public chastisement. This frequently had the precursor, 'not picking on you but...' (see Player, p.162). These extracts from data illustrate Greg's feelings toward certain players, and how one player seems to get singled out, then is told that he is not being picked-on.

Greg sets up cone and reflects on Saturday's game. "We were fuckin' awful first half. Did you see C. We might as well have had 10 players, well Ry 9 players. RB 8 players. I sat em down at half time and saw RB, couldn't fuckin' remember him playing".

Greg and Pete speak as they watch the players.

Greg calls the players over and divides them into groups of 4. One at each end with 2 in the middle. Greg explains the practice and demos "nice and light, 'jacks' shout, play it in"

The practice commences.

"change the 2 in the middle, well done"

"When you're ready let's go"

Pete takes part, and Greg stands to the side watching

"Hold it there, change the two in the middle"

GC changes the rules and demos. The players start and make a mistake.

"RB not fuckin' listening"

"Punch it in, move towards the ball, end players 2 touches"

"well done, like it"

"Sort that touch, RB"

"well done, like it"

"well done, change the 2 in the middle"

"RB run straight to the ball"

"Hold it there" Greg stops the group

"Don't want to pick on you RB, but that fuckin movement "

GC explains the required movement.

"Hold it there, have a stretch boys well done"

The players stretch, some drink

"yeah,.... here we go again, change it"

(Field notes, 6th December 1999)

These extracts from data are an example of a team-talk during training, where certain players, once again, seem to be singled out by Greg, after re-assurance that they are not, in fact, being singled out.

The second game finishes, and Andy and Greg call the players over. The players sit and the staff stand. Greg speaks first. He says that that the players are not thinking enough about the game and that they think too much about themselves and not the team. He singles out 'I "Not picking on ya, but you were just doing it in your little area, there's four goals, you just stayed over on one side. What about when we didn't have it, you've got to come over and join in". Greg stresses. that "there aren't enough people who organise, I want to be able to hear you. Even if

you aren't getting much of the ball, but you're telling people where to go, you feel like you're having a good game, you are having a good game because you're organising players". He singles out RB "Its not just you, you've got great technique at times, but what are you doing when you're not in the game? You need to add that to your game"

(Field notes, 17<sup>th</sup> August, 1999)

When selected for games, a 'reject' seemed to attract more criticism, and a less enthusiastic response regarding his overall work rate and skill. Indeed, in one instance as shown in these data, a player was substituted shortly after the game had started

'I' has been given a chance in the starting line up. The game is a close one with both sides creating chances to score. After only 20 minutes 'I' is substituted. He walks away and sits next to the bench, he does not speak to anybody. At half-time the teams go to the dressing room, but 'I' stays out and sits alone on the bench.

(Field notes 5<sup>th</sup> March 2000)

Other examples are provided in these brief excerpts from data. They illustrate criticism directed at players, and a lack of any kind of corrective feedback from the coaches (see also Sessions & Games, p.142). The first excerpt of data is during a game the second, is an example of a team talk at half-time.

RB plays a poor free kick, GC turns away "Fuckin hell", as the players run back past the bench Greg shouts to the player. "RB, that's the worst fuckin' free kick I've ever seen."

(Field notes, 25<sup>th</sup> September 1999)

Andy; "'M', and 'J', shit down the left, that's why we don't get any goals from that side".

(Field notes, 11<sup>th</sup> February 2000)

This is in direct contrast to the type of discourse encountered by those not considered as rejects, as this extract from data illustrates.

At the end of the game Andy and Greg call the players in. They sit and stand around. Andy walks around the edge speaking with individual players, patting some on the back. Greg also speaks to players and picks out individuals who have done well and gives advice; "L, if you're in the box and the ball doesn't come then count 1,2,3 then spin out and let the back post man in".

(Field notes 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2000)



The players too, noticed the differences in behaviour towards certain players compared with others. In this extract from the players' group interview, a player recognises the treatment of a 'reject', and contrasts it with his own treatment.

"If someone does something wrong, then they don't get grilled. They (the coaches) might try to encourage others. I think that 'I' gets hammered. I sometimes give the ball away, you know, make mistakes and Greg doesn't moan at me. But 'I' gets moaned at loads more."

(Focus group, 2000).

In physical education Dodds (1986) identifies 'motor elitism', where skilful performance is a valued commodity. In the football *field* it is a significant form of symbolic *capital*. This results in only high ability players receiving high quality instruction. Expectancy effects research suggests that those who are perceived as low ability receive less praise, more criticism and less content-related information (Horn & Lox, 1993; Martinek, 1980; Martinek & Karper, 1984). The nature of discourse in the coaching process at Albion would lend weight to that assertion.

Given the highly competitive and evaluative nature of professional football (see Club, p.130), it is unsurprising that the coaches formed expectations about players at the beginning of the season (Solomon, 1998). These initial judgements regarding the physical ability, or sporting potential of each player, were based on certain information available to the coach. Coaches' expectations as earlier noted, develop from numerous factors, but generally fall into two categories, person cues and performance information (Horn & Lox, 1993). Cues related to the person include, for example; the players' age, social background, ethnicity, and physical attributes. The coaches do not rely on these cues exclusively but they are often combined with performance information about the player that could include; past performance, physical test scores, ability, and other coaches' comments (Horn & Lox, 1993; Solomon, et al., 1996). Importantly, as already noted, coaches also use initial impressions of athletes in practice situations informed by, for example; observation of the player's motivation, enthusiasm, pleasantness, response to criticism, interaction with staff and team mates (Horn & Lox, 1993). In football terms, this would fall under the broad umbrella of attitude (see Attitude p. 214). The following excerpts from data illustrate some of the judgements made about players and the criteria for these judgements.

Greg speaks with me about some of his players. He picks out R “he thinks all that he has to do is turn up and he’ll get fit”. He then speaks about RB “he turns up with a face on him that looks like he doesn’t want to be here”  
(Field notes, 9<sup>th</sup> August 1999)

The players leave Greg, Andy, Pete, and Bob sit and talk about the players. They reflect on some of the players Andy comments on Greg's relationships with RB and Je: “RB, you can’t get into his head, we don’t know what he’s thinking. Look at Je, you can get into his head , so you do”  
(Field notes, 2<sup>nd</sup> August, 1999)

These extracts from data are illustrative of some of the criteria used by coaches to form judgements about their players.

"What their attitude’s like, their physique and movements and the techniques they have"  
(Interview, Dean)

"I tend to look at consistency I suppose. That's how I looked at meself, and I was quite a consistent player, never the greatest and never the worst."  
(Interview, Greg)

"The first thing I look at is attitude of the player, not only on the pitch, off the pitch, in training, that's the first thing I look for. Then skill and athletic ability."  
(Interview, Bob)

"It's in their approach to training their attitude, attitude definitely.  
(Interview, Pete)

Away from Albion, the coaches looked for similar things, as this excerpt from data illustrates.

"I like to see a boy with good attitude, and I mean everyone would say that, good attitude to work, to his peers, the way he conducts himself off the pitch, the way he conducts himself on the pitch in terms of work rate, they're the things I look for"  
(Club Coach Interview, Keith n, 2000 )

As noted earlier, if the coach’s initial judgement about a player is inaccurate and also inflexible, in that it does not allow for the assimilation of new or contrary information, this will disrupt the athlete’s performance, achievement and subsequent progress (Horn, 1984). Research interest has been geared toward understanding whether coaches are inflexible in their perceptions or whether they are able to modify expectations upon receipt of new information (Solomon & Kosmitzki, 1996; Solomon, 1998). Investigations into ‘perceptual flexibility’ have provided equivocal

results. Martinek (1980) whilst observing physical education teachers, found limited perceptual flexibility over a short period of time. In addition, research findings in both the classroom and sport contexts demonstrate that initial expectations might be modified but are contingent upon performance (Brophy & Good, 1970; Horn, 1984). Evidence presented through player performance, successful or unsuccessful, may serve only to reinforce the coach's belief (Horn & Lox, 1993). These extracts from data suggest limited perceptual flexibility, and illustrate how players' performance reinforced coach perceptions.

The players drink and stretch and Pete calls them over and sets them into small 5x5 yard boxes facing a partner. The players have to mimic the actions of their partner. The practice becomes more competitive and Pete offers advice on how to move effectively and lose the opponent. Each segment of practice ends with a stretch. Dean walks over and speaks with me. "You can guess the ones who will lose in this game" he says pointing out a couple of the players who then lose. "Played the whole game last night me and Greg centre midfield, had J and R up front, T right mid, they were useless, you can see why they aren't playing at the moment"  
(Field notes, 15<sup>th</sup> September, 1999)

*Interviewer: "What does a player do to change your mind about him?"*

"For me it would have to be in training, he's got to show it, and his enthusiasm in training, and his sharpness and then through a run of performances".

*Interviewer: "In reality how often does a player change your mind about the way you think about him?"*

(pause 4) "Not much, thinking about it here"

(Interview, Dean)

*Interviewer: "How would a player change your opinion of him?"*

"Not even his ability, his attitude would make me change, from what I see in a player. For example I see S, you know I've been a big fan of S. I said you're a scurrer, and you look good when you do that. The sooner you get that in your head and perform like that, not just in games in training, you'll be better for it. And he does look better for it, now he's got it in his head what sort of player he is.

*Interviewer: "So how often does a player change your mind about him?"*

With this lot, over the last year, emmm over the last year none of them have changed me mind. I always had high hopes for some and not so high hopes for others"

(Interview, Greg, 2000)

Limited perceptual flexibility was not confined to Albion as this excerpt from data illustrates.

"I try and give people the benefit of the doubt, I'm open minded about people, and as I say if they show me the right attitude the right desire."

*Interviewer: How often have you changed your mind about a player?*

"In 20 years, I could probably count on one hand, two hands, not very often."  
(Coach Interview, Keith n)

If through discourse in the coaching process the coach's expectancy message is conveyed consistently over time, and the player accurately perceives this message, then behaviour might conform to the coaches' expectation (Martinek, Crowe & Rejeski, 1982). It is argued, therefore, that in this expectancy cycle, coach's expectations can become predictive of players' perceptions and achievement (Solomon et al., 1996; Solomon, 1998); hence the self-fulfilling prophecy. The conclusions from these studies have again shown that some coaches appear to have developed a 'pygmalion' approach, with differences between the quality and frequency of athlete-coach interaction (Horn & Lox, 1993).

At Albion, discourse demonstrated differential treatment of players, in terms of the quality and frequency of *interaction in the coach-athlete relationship*. Whether this behaviour became a self-fulfilling prophecy is difficult to assess. Certainly Greg, had his 'favourites' and he treated them differently. This extract from data illustrates Greg basing his coaching practice on his subjective view of the player's capabilities.

"I don't try and give them anything that, yeah, I don't think I ever ask a player to do something that they're not capable of. So through working with that player I have a pretty good understanding of what they will become".  
(Interview, Greg, 2000)

It is noteworthy that the members of the 'reject' group were all released by the club at the end of the 1999/2000 season.

To change coach perceptions, the data suggests that the players' performance was important, but the attitude they displayed was more so. Within the coaching process the coaches attempted to influence the players in this respect.

#### 4.6.3 *Discourse, Symbolic Violence and the Coaching Process*

Parker (1996) argues that a key role of the club and the coach is to assist individual players adjust to the physical and psychological rigours of professional football. Thus, in the preparation of their bodies and minds for the harsh realities of the professional game, the players were required to demonstrate a high degree of

psychological adjustment and maturity. It could be argued that, paradoxically, the authoritarian, harsh, and aggressive nature of discourse in the coaching process might be regarded as part of that maturation process. Indeed, Roderick (1991) suggests while most coaches are aware of the possible detrimental effects of authoritarian, harsh, and aggressive behaviour, the strategies are employed to stimulate a reaction from young players, and is closely related to the key theme of attitude (see Attitude, p.214). As has already been seen this is closely linked with the tradition and culture of the club, and can be seen as a demonstration of the complexity of the interaction between the club, coach and club environment.

Commenting on the way that coaches might accommodate various types of 'attitude', and clearly linking current practice to history, the Football Association Coaching Manual of 1939 for example, states that, in order to "spur on" those players who "give up easily" and demonstrate some "weakness in moral fibre" a "lack of backbone" a "really sharp word may be necessary" from the coach concerned (Football Association, 1939, p.10-11). Those players who counter this behaviour with a "positive I'll prove him wrong attitude would, in the view of the coach be more likely to get on and progress" (Roderick, 1991, p.70). In interview, Greg saw his harsh, aggressive and, sometimes threatening discourse as part of his coaching; a specific strategy to get the best out of the players.

"I just think that I say that because I think they've got a great chance, of making a great living at a great job. And I think that if you try and say things to them that if you don't do it right, not always my way, but if they don't show the right attitude, you know, not necessarily be at this football club but they're not gonna be at any football club. So when I say things like that I think I mean, I don't mean them personally aren't going to be at Albion, personally they aren't going to be a footballer. If they're not prepared to work hard, errr, try and do the right things, and in a way its what I think are the right things not what they think are the right things, cos they are only fuckin' lads you know. So I think I'm that way cos I want them to be still in football I want them to enjoy the life that I ad. It's a great way of making a living, and I think that's probably why I do it".  
(Interview, Greg, May 2000).

This idea that an authoritarian and harsh discourse was a legitimate coaching strategy was also supported outside the club, as these extracts from data illustrate.

*Interviewer: "Do you see threats and punishment as a necessary part of the game?"*

"I use, probably, threats and punishment with lack of enthusiasm and sort of bad attitude in training, to get the best out of the players"  
(Club Coach Interview, Ps, Feb 2000).

*Interviewer: "How do you see threats and punishment?"*

"When they aren't doing it they'll get a kick up the backside um and it's difficult to say to kids um, 'great you're doing well but you've got to work harder', some will respond to that others will just carry on in their own little enviro.., in their own little world, sometimes you've got to give them a kick up the arse."  
(Club Coach Interview, Keith n, 2000)

One instance particularly demonstrated that Greg did not think his behaviour was negative, but instead a challenge to the players to respond in a controlled and positive manner, possibly in an attempt to prove their worth and strength of character, in a similar fashion suggested by the Coaching Manual of 1939. Noteworthy is Greg's view that the player did it by himself and he does not link his behaviour to the player's progress.

"I pushed him and pushed him, it could have made him or broke him, and at the moment it has made him. He's sorted himself out, and decided I am going to get through this. He's come through and I thought good lad. And I like that, it would have been easy for him to go back home and say 'fuckin don't like him'. So that is one definitely that has changed. At least for him, not because of what I've said to him. I suppose you could relate the two but he brought himself through, he made that decision to stick at it."  
(Interview, Greg, 2000).

This discourse ties in well with the notion of symbolic violence (see Club, p.138; Sessions & Games, p.158). The authoritarian nature of discourse imposes the culture on the players and is viewed, by the players, in a legitimate way. It is this legitimacy that obscures the power relations that permit the imposition to be successful (Jenkins, 1992). Symbolic violence reinforces the position of those in power and obscures what they are doing. It is a form of intimidation when displayed that is not aware that it is intimidation, with the intimidating person denying any intent to intimidate (Bourdieu, 1991). The discourse in which coaches engage appeared to be undertaken in the interests of the players; it was, in a sense perceived by the coaches as a motivational tool. Thus, symbolic violence is misrecognised, and social structure reproduced in the process of cultural reproduction (Jenkins, 1992).

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The players have to demonstrate the common sense to react and act appropriately in a way that is perceived by the coach and the culture to be appropriate. Those in power, the coaches, control the players who must be docile and submissive. To succeed the players must conform and respond in the correct way. As Andy comments:

"I am always hammering home to my youth players the importance of respecting authority"  
(Andy, Newspaper Article, 9<sup>th</sup> April 2000).

The pervasive nature of discourse within the coach-player relationship has been demonstrated as authoritarian. It would appear logical to examine the implications of this discourse for coaching practice and the coaching process.

#### 4.6.4 *Authoritarianism, The Coaching Process and Coaching Practice*

If the assumption that the effectiveness of the implementation of the coaching process is dependent on the quality of the relationship and interaction between player and coach is true, it is important to consider how this discourse influenced and shaped the coaching process at Albion Rovers, and whether it was an efficacious strategy on behalf of the club and the coaches.

Neale (1990) describes his own experience of authoritarian discourse in professional football, and recalls that he felt compelled to develop a 'mental toughness' to adapt to the abrasive nature of his environment. Furthermore, Wilshaw (1970) reported that 75% of the professional players sampled in his research said that the tough approach drove them into action, whilst 89% admitted that they responded better to a more positive interaction with the coaching staff. Lineker (1993) questions the efficacy of persistent bouts of verbal rebuke. Indeed, the logic that players should respond positively to often negative and authoritarian comment has been questioned. For example, Farmer (1987) suggests that an abrupt and vehement style can often have the opposite effect to that intended. Indeed, research into coach behaviour has shown that an authoritarian approach can have an alienating and detrimental effect upon some performers (Smith, Smoll and Curtis, 1978; Smith & Smoll, 1993). Indeed, Douge (1997) suggests the coach-player relationship will become strained if it is underpinned by an authoritarian approach. In addition, with youth players in particular, self-esteem and feelings of self-worth are influenced adversely by unsupportive behaviour (Smith & Smoll, 1993) while Salminen and Luikonen



(1996) noted a preference for a positive and supportive interaction amongst elite athletes. For example, d'Arrippe-Longuville (1998) found in high level Judo that the players did not like the authoritarian behaviour of the coaches but acknowledged it as effective for their sporting situation.

During interviews with the players at Albion what became apparent is that they did not appreciate the level of authoritarianism in their relationship with the club and coaches. The manner that the players were spoken to caused them to feel uncomfortable. Particularly problematic was the use of violent and derogatory language. This was highlighted when discussing what the players thought about the characteristics of a good and bad coach.

A: "Just the language, the way he you know, obviously the language is a lot harder. As I say it can be embarrassing sometimes".

T: "Probably the same as A, not encouraging ya when you make mistakes, the same, language as well really".

Interviewer: "When you say language what do you mean?"

T: "Just the harshness of his voice and the tone of his voice when he says it".

(Focus Group,2000)

In this excerpt from data the players sum up their feelings about whether they believe that the harsh negative criticism is an effective coaching strategy for them.

A: "I don't mind being told stuff. It's just the way they do it (2) It's as though they want to embarrass ya".

T: "There's a lot of feedback on the negative side but not a lot of feedback on the positive side. I think, myself, if I get a lot of feedback of positive feedback it makes me a lot more confident".

(Focus Group, 2000)

R: "I don't think it should be threats though, to make you play better".

Interviewer: " *What would make you play better?*"

R: "Not sure, encouragement".

JE: "Yeah a bit of praise, bit of praise".

R: "I don't think that threats is the way to go about it".

(Focus group, 2000)

#### 4.6.5 *Some Conclusions, Coach-Player relationship and Coaching Practice*

As part of the coaching process the coach-player relationship provides an excellent medium through which to examine interaction and complexity. This

section demonstrates that the coaching process is in fact underpinned by interaction, and the analysis of the coach-player relationship once again illustrates clearly the interplay of the personal, cultural and the institutional.

Analysed through the concept of discourse, the coach-player relationship is characterised by authoritarianism. This authoritarian discourse derived from the complex interplay of the culture, history and tradition of the football *field*, and the coaches' *habitus*. This discourse sought to inculcate the arbitrary culture of the field into the players. However this was an uneven process, with differentiated discourse, and the players' subsequent experiences largely dependent on the coaches' perception of them.

Coaching research suggests that the emerging interplay between discourse and performer is critical to the rapport between coach and player (Douge, 1997) and this research seems to support that proposition. The notion that Academy players are required to learn to cope with an authoritarian discourse as part of their development could be problematic, as the quality of the coaching process is dependent on the quality of the relationship and interaction between coach and player. Paradoxically, Andy acknowledges this;

"In any team, if the bond between coach and players is taken away it will never work, it is not just about tactics. You need a special bond".  
(Andy, Newspaper Column, 30<sup>th</sup> April 2000)

There is clearly no discourse that guarantees success in coaching (see Review of Literature, p.17). However, coaches could possibly optimise their coaching by being aware of the forces that influence their coaching practice. As this section illustrates these forces predominantly emanate from their own history and experiences, the club and the players.

Identified strongly as an influence on coach perceptions, attitude appeared frequently in this section. The final section now develops this analysis by attempting to identify what was meant by attitude, what was the difference between a good and bad attitude and how this somewhat innocuous concept hugely influenced the coaching process and coaching practice.

## 4.7 Attitude

"Attitude is what will get a player 200 league games"  
(Field notes, 19<sup>th</sup> August, 1999)

*What are you looking for in a player?*  
"Attitude, attitude, attitude"  
(Coach Interview, Pete, 2000)

### *Introduction*

Attitude is defined as "a learnt and enduring tendency to perceive or act towards persons or situations in a particular way" (Jary & Jary, 2000, p.30), and has been highlighted by Doganis and Theodorakis (1995) as an important variable providing insight into the complex interplay between people their behaviour and socio-cultural conditions. On this basis, its potential value as a concept in this research appears self-evident. Indeed, attitude became a key concept in this research because it clearly demonstrated the complexity behind the interaction of the coach, player and club environment, whilst at the same time playing a part in shaping that interaction. Moreover, it also appeared as a mediating concept between the coach, player and the club environment. What certainly became clear during data collection and analysis was that attitude evolved into a key occupational and coaching concept. The club and coaches wanted players to have and develop the 'right' attitude, to the extent that it became a 'variable' affecting the youth players' career progression. In the coaching process the players, in dealing with the club and coaches, developed and displayed their attitude toward the day-to-day business of becoming a professional player. This affected the relationship between coach and, player and, consequently, influenced the behaviour of both.

This section considers the nature of attitude in the context of the coaching process at Albion and its importance to the career progression of the players. It looks at how attitude influenced the behaviour of coaches and players, and who at Albion had a 'poor' attitude and why? Against this framework, the section also examines the nature of attitude and the link between the *habitus* of the coaches and players, the club, and power relations in the coaching process.

### 4.7.1 *Attitude Behaviour and Becoming a 'Pro'*

At Albion, references to attitude were often framed in terms of what a 'good' attitude would mean to the player and frequently involved a link to future career progression. Indeed, next to overall ability, having the 'correct' attitude was seen as a requirement for professional career progression (illustrated in Coach-Player Relationship, p.200) (Roderick, 1990). Reinforcing this declaration Garland 1993 proclaims that in addition to hard work and acceptance of discipline, commitment and positive attitude were the most important facets of footballing life. Greg (Under 19 coach) illustrates this when, in this extract from data, he describes the value of having a good attitude.

"All I'm trying to do is give them something to make them better players"  
Greg remarked that a player had gone to United. "Jimmy Smith their manager phoned me and said that the player had a great attitude. Attitude is what will get the player 200 league games"  
(Field notes, 19<sup>th</sup> August, 1999)

All of the coach participants in this research had views regarding the influence and relative importance of attitude. It was regarded as an important benchmark, used by the club and the coaches against which progression could be measured, and future prospects assessed. In this extract from data, Pete (Under 17 coach) illustrates the consequences of having a poor attitude.

*Interviewer:* "Would the wrong attitude, or not a good attitude lead to a player being released?"  
"Um yeah I would release a player if his attitude wasn't right because it won't affect him it will affect others around him and I think that ultimately when he comes to difficult periods within the game he won't make it because he won't, he may not be with this club it may be with a different person he's going to hit hurdles constantly in football and if he can't approach them it affects others .  
(Coach Interview, Pete, 2000)

The attitude of the players undoubtedly influenced the behaviour of the coaches toward them (illustrated in Coach-Player Relationship, p. 195). These extracts from data demonstrate clearly how a perceived poor attitude affected the coaches' behaviour, their coaching practice, and ultimately the coaching process.

"If someone does something wrong and I think it's because of a poor attitude then I'm not very good at holding back sometimes. And I think I'm still not very good at that I could be a lot better at saying less and picking a better time for it."

(Coach Interview, Bob, 2000)

"I don't think there is anything wrong in particularly pulling people for having a poor attitude I would say because I think that effects everything else um. But it's not always wise with experience to pull people with a poor attitude all the time for it, because I don't think that is motivating for them"

(Coach Interview, P s, 2000)

"I talk to different ones in different ways. It might be that it's one of the poorer players because they are only poor at the moment because of an attitude problem"

(Club Coach Interview, Keith n, 2000)

This excerpt from data, is from Bob's interview, the question was about physical exercise as a punishment and the reasons for it, yet, once again it came back to the attitude of the players.

"I did it about 3 weeks ago [*gave the players running as a punishment*] out here. Um that's the only time in my recollection I'd done it this season but it was for a reason. The reason was I thought the attitude was poor that day, and it was quite specific. I knew why I'd done it".

(Coach Interview, Bob, 2000)

Gill (1986) asserts that attitude influences behaviour, and these data seem to support that assertion. Indeed, it seemed to the coaches that a certain type of player attitude had a corresponding player behaviour, interestingly the 'better' players also seemed to have a 'good attitude'. In addition, the coaches seemed to feel that a poor player attitude was infectious and could influence those around him, while a good attitude offered immunity to negative aspects of peer pressure (see also Player, p.169). The first two excerpts from data illustrate some of the behaviour associated with a poor attitude, and which players the coaches at Albion believed had a poor attitude.

Andy (Academy Director) calls the players in, the players sit and the staff stand. "You should know by now, what you have to do to win the game. 24 hours before you should be happy in your mind what you should have to do". Andy and Greg issue instructions to the players regarding the practising of set pieces, head tennis, and say that the video of the set pieces will be watched after lunch, they then both leave. This leaves Dean in charge of the group. He calls the players in, and takes 4 attempts to get them all around him. Four players then practise free kicks, one practises crossing while the rest play head tennis. The demeanour of the players and their body language has visibly dropped following the departure of Andy and Greg. Two players, playing head tennis, do not even attempt to go for the ball. When Dean is out of earshot, they question why they are still training. Dean calls

development of physical and mental 'character' and perhaps most importantly, the nurturing of appropriate attitudes (Parker, 1996). The message from this extract from data, whilst lending support to this assertion, seems to be quite clear: the right effort, the right attitude, and some performance improvement is not only the desired outcome, but will also influence Greg's behaviour.

"Listen in I'd like to think...that....an hour now we've been out...first time I've really had to say anything for a while, apart from games, in training. Come out with the right attitude and I don't fuckin say anything to ya boys..I'm not going to stop ya having a laugh, and ain't gonna stop ya havin' a joke, it's a fuckin good job to be in.. But when you work for an hour.. fuckin put it in, fuckin put it in, and I'm fuckin 'appy with that, I'm 'appy with that, not every touch is gonna be great cos of what we're working on. Hopefully as time goes on it will get better, I don't expect every touch to be great and that's why we're out here to work on things like that. But if you do it right, fuckin 'appy with ya. Once the circle got going and you seemed to be in the right frame of mind. I don't expect every pass to be fuckin perfect, the longer the passes go, but I thought you give it a go. Once I kept reminding ya. I'm happy with that."

(Field notes, 13<sup>th</sup> March, 2000)

The link between career progression and attitude was stated explicitly with Greg, in this extract from data, confirming the link between attitude and career progression, and he, once again, leaves little doubt who he considers to have a poor attitude.

Greg organises change soccer. One team has to play as skins, to much hilarity in the group. Greg plays in the games and makes little comment to the players letting them play. At the end of the session Greg calls the players in and sits them down. He stands. He picks out the two signed professionals and says that they will definitely not be at the club next season, that their attitudes are poor and that they do not work hard enough.

(Field notes 5<sup>th</sup> October, 1999)

The importance of attitude to the coaches is well documented yet the key question arising from these data is, what exactly was meant by attitude.

#### 4.7.2 *Attitude, Meaning and Boundaries*

Attitude was clearly a key occupational and coaching concept, mediating between the club, coach and player. The club required, and, in fact, defined certain qualities associated with the appropriate attitude necessary to progress in the *field*. From this, the coaches perceived attitude as a behavioural yardstick against which the players' progress and potential could be measured, and as demonstrated earlier, as

something that influenced their behaviour and coaching practice. While for the players, as already noted the possession and demonstration of the appropriate attitude contributed, not only to their future careers, but also, to the behaviour of the coaches toward them.

Yet, as a concept, attitude can be described as “polymorphic, supple and adaptable, rather than defined, calibrated and used rigidly” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1997, p.23). Indeed, at Albion and, in interview at other clubs, conceptually, attitude remained subjective, indefinite and failed to demonstrate exact bounds. This is illustrated in these extracts from data concerning the nature of attitude.

*Interviewer: "When you talk about attitude what exactly do you mean?"*

"Attitude I mean, about their, there's a whole lot of things, commitment to training um commitment to being a full time footballer, commitments to the games, commitment to the, the way they relate and treat each other, um themselves even, the start, the way they carry themselves their whole um... I think again, back to those boys that have made it who have come through and I think what their attitudes were like. They would do all the right things. They would carry themselves, there was nothing I could think of, even Player A with his problems, once he became player and got some money, where he was never a bad attitude or he didn't want to train. He always wanted to be out there, he was enthusiastic, he would want to stay out there he would work his max in the sessions he wanted to learn, to try things, he would talk to others he would be confident. And um I see our boys and think well, you might think you are doing, a lot of arrogance beyond your ability and do you really think Player B was like that when he trained? He certainly wasn't he might have let it be known he didn't like the training session but he always gave his maximum, so I would see attitude as being the, giving the maximum of yourself in all things you do at work".

*Interviewer: "So you have got almost a picture of what a player should be or what a player should have."*

"I think so, yeah I am not saying that it works for every good player cos players have become professional without that but, I am only going by players who I have seen to be successful".

(Interview, Dean, 2000)

*Interviewer: "A word used quite a lot, is attitude, a player ' got a great attitude. What is your definition of attitude".*

About a player? I think it's the way that he reacts to the circumstances that he's in. Yeah, so a player with a good attitude would come to you, would be with you, whatever it is your doing. He will say yeah I'll join in I will give you what I've got right or not good or bad I'll go with you, I'll have a go at that, I'll do that. He is just is a reliable trustworthy character on and off the field, doesn't let down off the field and doesn't let down on the field because he is reliable. Reliable, trustworthy, good work ethic gives you basically what you've got, carries no or carries very little personal baggage or personal agenda, he's prepared to commit to the task.

(Club Coach Interview, Derek e, 2000)

*Interviewer: "Talked a lot about attitude and I've heard it a lot over the last season what is it define it for me what is attitude?"*

"I think it's self motivation that's a huge component of it i.e. are you motivated to want to get better at it. I think its um, being resilient when whatever you're doing is quite hard work how resilient are you to keep wanting to do it and I think and I have to keep going particularly in training".

*Interviewer: "What is a good attitude?"*

"Someone who is willing to be open-minded a player. A player who is willing to take risks a player who, [5] will work, work hard at any given set of tasks um, a player who can be responsible when he's not around the club. I just mean, you know, will he eat the right things, will he live the right life style or his life styles. The ability to work at things, um, maybe when you're not initially enthused by them but but a willingness to work at it to see um, if you can improve if it works for you or whatever.

(Interview, Bob, 2000)

*Interviewer: "Many coaches talk about players attitude and you've mentioned it today. Describe what you mean by attitude".*

"Conduct yourself properly and conduct yourself um, with other people properly I think that for me is attitude how you what your attitude your feelings towards information being given to ya and your acceptance of information as well".

(Club Coach Interview, Jc, 2000)

*Interviewer: "A word that I hear a lot is attitude. What is attitude?"*

For me its players wanting to be the best in whatever sessions I put on. I 'm gonna give the best of my ability today in this session. What pleases managers, coaches, fans, team-mates, is the desire to work for yourself and everyone around ya. That's when I say attitude, giving it your best on the day.

*Interviewer: "Describe the type of person with a really good attitude".*

"On and off the pitch?"

*Interviewer: "Does off the pitch count?"*

Yeah I think so. On the pitch as I just said, willing to work hard not just for himself but for his team-mates, doing the right things at the right time. Trying to do the things that your coach, manager and team mate expects of ya. And off the pitch being polite to whoever comes your way. And acting acting in what I call a sensible way. I think getting the right attitude on and off the pitch can help you in more ways than one.

(Interview, Greg, 2000)

*Interviewer: "What is attitude, can you define it for me We talk about it a lot don't we but what is it?"*

"I think it's an inner desire to be the best whatever they do, it's an inner desire to want to achieve things".

*Interviewer: "That would be a good attitude?"*

"Yeah"

(Club Coach Interview, Kn, 2000)

*Interviewer: "We talked about attitude, it's a word you use a lot can you tell me what is attitude?"*



he's got a bad attitude. I would say, [3] I'd, like he looks lazy the way he does things and, and you see other players doing much more, giving much more of themselves and contribute much more to the team. Now whether you would classify that as attitude of not contributing to the team, I'm not sure, many people would say that B has got a bad attitude".

(Club Coach Interview, Jw, 2000)

Bourdieu describes the embodiment of habitus as *hexis*, which signifies the manner and style in which social actors carry themselves (Jenkins, 1992). In these terms, the players' attitude appears similar to this notion. It is in bodily *hexis* that the idiosyncratic (the personal) combines with the systematic (the social) (Bourdieu, 1977), it is the mediation between the individual's subjective worlds and the cultural world: "Bodily *hexis* is political mythology realised, embodied, turned into a permanent disposition, a durable manner....The principles embodied in this way are placed beyond the grasp of consciousness" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 93). So the way the players carry themselves, conduct themselves in their approach to and in carrying out training and games, represents the embodiment of their *habitus*.

#### 4.7.3 *Attitude, Habitus, Selection and Symbolic Power*

Attitude arguably, represents a system of 'knowing' for the coaches, the player's and club. It may well be subjective, with vague and inconsistent definitions, but through attitude each element of the practical coaching context 'knows' about the other. The coaches and club know about the players from their attitudes; and for the players, attitude demonstrated what they needed, what they knew about their professional progression (see p.214, above), and the type of experiences they would encounter in the coaching process. However, because of its indeterminate nature, attitude was symbolic, and not only an instrument of knowledge but an instrument of domination. As Bourdieu and Wacquant (1997) suggest, the operators of cognitive integration promote, by their very logic, the social integration on an arbitrary order. The coaches decided what was a 'good' attitude, who would progress, and how the social world of the coaching process should be perceived:

"The conservation of the social order is discursively reinforced by...the orchestration of categories of perception of the social world which, being adjusted to the divisions of the established order (and, therefore, to the interests of those

who dominate it) and common to all minds structured in accordance with those structures, impose themselves with all the appearance of objective necessity" (Bourdieu, 1984a, p. 471).

Indeed, Bourdieu and Wacquant (1997) argue that antagonistic social collectives (players and coaches) are continually engaged in a struggle to impose the definition of the world that is most congruent with their particular interests. Thus, the coaches impose the wide-ranging behavioural requirements of a 'good' attitude on the players. As Bourdieu (1987a) reminds us, "resistance can be alienating" (p.184). Certainly this seems the case for the 'signed professionals' (see p.214, above) who appear to resist the requirements of the 'good' attitude, and thus become alienated. Conversely, "submission can be liberating" (Bourdieu, 1987a, p.184), and gives the players who submit, more freedom and, a positive experience. The 'submission' of players to the requirements of a 'good' attitude is not a deliberate or conscious concession to the power of the coaches, rather it is an unconscious fit, a meshing between their *habitus*, the coach, and the football *field*.

#### 4.7.4 Some Conclusions

Understanding practice must involve the elucidation of "perceptual and evaluative schemata" (Bourdieu, 1989a, p.7) that social agents (player, coach, club) encounter in their day-to-day lives. Attitude, as an interpretative concept, constitutes an element of such schemata, which demonstrates the link between social structure and mental structure, and importantly for this research, assists in understanding the interaction of club, player and coach.

Attitude at Albion was a social taxonomy, an element of social division but, at the same time, was a mental and evaluative schemata. Bourdieu would contend that these are structurally homologous, because mental schemata are no more than the embodiment of social division (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1997). Thus, the coaches' cumulative exposure to certain social conditions instils in each individual the idea of what constitutes a good or bad attitude. The coaches' experiences are not uniform, thus, as the data in this section illustrate, notions of attitude while having some similarities are not uniform.

Whilst acting as a benchmark for both coach and player, attitude was defined differently by individual coaches, and its parameters whilst implied were not explicitly divulged to the players. Yet, this section has demonstrated attitude to be a

key factor influencing coaching practice and, the coaching process, as well as, crucially, affecting the players' career progression. It could be argued that coaching practice and the coaching process might be enhanced if the coaches and players communicated their expectations regarding attitude. Indeed, joint ownership of expectations and shared decision-making, have been identified as positively enhancing the effectiveness of learning environments (Templin, 1989). Moreover, this kind of empowerment is also a valuable counter to embedded sub-cultural practices (Lawson, 1989). Importantly for the coach, defining and stating parameters for attitude could prove to be a valuable exercise in reflection, giving due consideration to their experiences and assumptions underlying their philosophy and practice, thus contributing to a greater understanding of the powerful forces that effect coaching practice and the coaching process.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5. Thesis Conclusion

#### *Introduction*

This research sought to further an understanding of the coaching process. It aimed to do so by grasping something of the complexity of the coach, the player and the club environment, investigating their dynamic relationship and the implications of this interaction for coaching practice and the coaching process. In so doing, the research sought to demonstrate how that understanding might inform coach education and ultimately, coaching practice. This chapter considers the findings and implications of the research from five related but different directions. These findings are presented as follows: Firstly, following Bourdieu's research imperative of reflexivity, there is a reflexive conclusion that attempts to take a double step back, positioning not only the research in the *field*, but also the researcher as a competent social actor in the appropriate context. Secondly, a summary of what can be broadly described as the main findings of the research are presented. Thirdly, the research findings are positioned in relation to the existing literature, demonstrating how the findings contribute to the existing body of knowledge. Fourthly, a consideration of the implications of these research findings for the coaching practitioner, and how they might be used to inform coach education is detailed. Finally, the chapter ends with thoughts linking the research findings, and their implications, with possible directions for future research.

#### *5.1 Reflexivity; The Researcher and The Researched*

As was earlier noted, my motivation for carrying out this research was grounded in my experiences as an academic, a coach and a coach educator. These experiences as both an academic and practitioner, not unlike this research, have ebbed and flowed and retain a temporal quality. Thus, the experience of doing research is a significant one: the research has moved; I have moved. As part of the conclusion, it is important to reflect upon that experience. Intellectuals and academics, as producers of 'authoritative' visions of the social world, are at the epicentre of the games of symbolic power, requiring that attention should be paid to their social position,

strategies and objectives (Wacquant, 1998). As Bourdieu reminds us, to develop a rigorous science of social contexts and structures, it is necessary to understand what constraints bear upon the researcher: "How the specific interests they pursue as members of the 'dominated fraction' of the 'dominated class' and participants in the intellectual *field*, affect the knowledge they produce" (Wacquant, 1998, p.225). This highlights the idea of reflexivity and the notion that that the 'instruments of social science' (Wacquant, 1998) must be turned back on the researcher: "Every proposition that this science formulates can and must apply to the subject who produces it" (Bourdieu, 1991, p.8). This, Wacquant (1998) asserts, subjugates the distortions introduced into the construction of the research object, in this case the coaching process.

What is required is 'epistemic reflexivity' (Wacquant, 1998). This ensures that a self-analysis of the researcher as cultural producer becomes a reflection on the socio-historic conditions of possibility; a science of society (Wacquant, 1989). Its primary target is not what Bourdieu contends is narcissistic reflexivity, merely analysing the individual as such, but rather the social and intellectual unconscious embedded in analytical tools and operations (Wacquant, 1998). Essentially, the point of view of the researcher, like any other cultural producer, always owes something to their situation in the *field*. This brief section attempts to identify the position I occupied, not in the broader social structure, but in the *fields* that were involved in this research - the academic and football *fields*. This process should not involve the reflection of the subject on the subject, but entail the systematic exploration of the "unthought categories of thought which delimit the thinkable and predetermine thought" (Bourdieu, 1982a, p. 10). In summary, I am subject to the same critical analysis as the constructed object at hand. This section thus takes to a conclusion my position in the research, charting in part my own transition through the social space.

During the course of the research, I have occupied social positions in both the football and academic *fields*. Whilst conducting fieldwork at Albion, I was 'Director of Coaching' with another Academy, but dealing with school-age players. This position ensured I had social *capital*, and a degree of cultural *capital* within the football *field*. However, I, not unlike Dean (Education and Welfare/Technical adviser) in this research (see Methodology, p.79), had not had a professional playing career, and therefore lacked the significant and symbolic cultural *capital* a playing career bestowed. I could argue that my lack of exposure to the professional game had

hindered the embodiment of football culture and tradition. However, as Bourdieu (1996) points out, this thinking leads to presuppositions and a separation of the practical from the theoretical. Therefore, understanding my position in the football *field* was accompanied by the recognition that, as a coach in another context, I too put on my different coloured training kit, changed in the staff dressing room, and ate my meals at the staff table (see Club section, p.120). I also referred to players as 'boys' and looked for the 'right attitude' from the players (see Players, p.162; Attitude, p.214). I was part of the football *field*, its hierarchy, culture and tradition; I was a part of practice not an objective step away from it.

At the same time, I occupied a position within the academic *field*. Not unlike Bourdieu, I entered the world of the intellectual with what Wacquant (1996) describes as a primary *habitus*. My previous life in sport, the military and business made me feel a definite distance from other university staff whose "vision of the social world goes without noticing because of their class origin" (Wacquant, 1996, p. 45). The research tradition and teaching culture at the university embraced positivistic science in a universal and uncritical way, and this was reflected in both my work and my thinking for some time. However, the positivistic science dogma has, as this study has sought to demonstrate, proven not to be durable. Yet, its influence has, at times, left me 'bending' towards notions of objectivity and feeling defensive in light of criticism (see Methodology, p.103).

As researcher I have shaped my research process, however, I have also been shaped by the research. I, perhaps like other coaches reading this research, have seen the findings reflected in my own practice. I understand more about my position and *habitus*, particularly in the football *field*. This has impacted the research on two levels. Firstly, relationships with the participants were, in part, defined in relational terms by difference and distance (Wacquant, 1996). An example of this was upon my arrival at one of the Interview clubs. The coach Ps was expecting 'student' but instead he got, in his words, "a thirty-something football man". This surprised him. In his eyes I had a different mix of social and cultural *capital* to what he had expected, and my relative position in *his* football *field* instantly changed. Therefore, the power balance in our relationship and, thus, the nature of our relationship also instantly changed.

At a more practical level, as the research evolved, it was steered away from any notion of coach effectiveness, despite effectiveness being intimately linked with

the coaching process (see Review of Literature, p.12). In part, this was due to problems of definition. Of more importance was my position in the *field* that, of course, influences my point of view. My way of looking at the world, as a coach and an academic at that point between seeing the world and thinking about it, would have resulted in me judging Greg (Under 19's coach) and the other coaches. By turning an 'instrument of science' (Wacquant, 1998) upon myself I have attempted, not just in writing but throughout, to systematically critique the assumptions underlying the way I think about the social world, both in relation to my position in it and alongside my own and others' practice. As a result I believe that the research process and its subsequent findings have been strengthened; these findings are now considered in detail.

## 5.2 Understanding the Coaching Process

The findings of this research confirm that the coaching process, the coach, the player, the club environment and, indeed, coaching practice, are socially constructed and deeply embedded in social and cultural contexts (see for example, Club, p.128; Sessions & Games, p.158; and Coach p.188). The coaching process represents a constructed *relationship between* the coach, the player, and the club environment; between the *habitus* of the coach, player, the organisation, and the social *field*. The crucial part to understanding the coaching process is the *relationship between*, as neither, coach, player, or club has the capacity to unilaterally determine action. It takes the meeting of disposition and position, the correspondence between mental structures and social structures, to generate practice (Wacquant, 1998). Therefore, the coach, the player and the club environment (*habitus, field, and capital*) are internally linked to one another, as each only achieves its full potential in tandem with the other (see for example, Coach-Player Relationship section, p.195).

For the coaches and players, as Bourdieu suggests, only through being granted a name, a place and a function within the team, the club or indeed the profession can the individual hope to escape the contingency, finitude, and ultimate absurdity of existence (Wacquant, 1998). This requires the coaches and players to submit to the "judgement of others, this major principle of uncertainty and insecurity but also, and without contradiction, of certainty, assurance and consecration" (Bourdieu, 1997a, p.280). The resulting social existence, (the coaching process) thus rests on difference, (between players, between coaches, and between players and coaches) and that

difference implies hierarchy (see Club section, p.122), which in turn sets off the endless dialectic of distinction and pretension, recognition and mis-recognition, arbitrariness and necessity (Wacquant, 1998) that constructs the coaching process.

It has been demonstrated in this research that the coaching process is both constructed and influenced by a variety of factors; the club, sessions and games, the players, the coaches and their relationship, and attitudes. These factors and their constituents constrain, facilitate and can even prevent 'effective' coaching practice and the operation of the coaching process (for example, see Players, p. 162; Sessions & Games, p.156). More importantly perhaps, this research has demonstrated that coaches and players both inherit, and author, their practical coaching contexts and the coaching process.

Consequently, there is a need to question the usual conception of the coaching process (see Review of Literature, p.12) In particular, and in conflict with currently recognised models of coaching and coach education, it seems unlikely that coaching practice and the coaching process can be reduced to the application of generic rules, simply because the functioning of the coaching process and coaching practice is neither entirely reason based, nor planned. Indeed, the coaching process and coaching practice in this research can be characterised by "regulated improvisation" (Bourdieu, 1977, p.79).

In summary, general observations about the nature of the coaching process at Albion that may assist in a conceptualisation and understanding of that process are as follows:

1. The coaching process was not necessarily a cyclical process, but was continuous and interdependent and operated with objectives that exerted a continuous influence. These objectives derived from the club, the coach and the players (see for example, Club, p.130; Sessions & Games, p.156; Players, p.169; Coaches, p.180; Attitude, p.214).
2. The process was a continuous set of intra- and inter-group interpersonal relationships (see Club, p. 128; Coach- Player relationship, p.195). These relationships were a dialectic between agent and structure and therefore subject to a wide range of pressures. These pressures were grounded in the *habitus* of the players, coaches, and the club that, in turn, were embedded in culture and tradition.



3. The coaching process at Albion was encapsulated within external constraints, some of which were controllable, others were not (see in particular, Club, p.120).
4. The cultural dimension infused the process through the coach, the club, the players, and their interaction.

These findings are now positioned within the coaching literature, demonstrating how they contribute to the existing body of knowledge.

### *5.3 Positioning This Research, Pushing Back the Boundaries*

A core concept of the positivistic paradigm (see Methodology chapter, p.65) is reductionism. Reductionism is an attempt to understand the functioning of the whole through an analysis of its individual parts (Brustad, 1997). By its nature, this approach provides a 'mechanistic' guide to understanding. In addition, the positivistic paradigm structures the type of questions asked by researchers (Brustad, 1997). This nomothetic pursuit has resulted in the complexity of coaching practice and the coaching process being reduced by the simplifying nature of 'efficient' research design. Coaching research has, by and large, embraced the methods and assumptions of the positivistic model (Brustad, 1997; Kahan, 1999; Lyle, 1999; McKay et al., 1990) thus, arguably, preventing an understanding of the complexity of the coaching process.

As Bourdieu (1990) suggests, this stance causes the social world to be misconstrued as an interpretative puzzle to be resolved, rather than a mesh of practical tasks to be accomplished, a description that seems to encapsulate the task facing the coach in the coaching process. This leads to a disfiguring of the situational, adaptive, messy logic of practice and confusing it with the abstract logic of intellectual ratiocination (Wacquant, 1998). Bourdieu (1997a) contends that by assuming the point of view of impartial spectator, attempting to stand above the world rather than being immersed in and preoccupied by it, systematic distortions in conceptions of knowledge and understanding are created. In this case, rather than play down the complexity of the coaching process therefore, this research has, through "wading in the swamp of practice" (Schon, 1987, p.77) illustrated something of the scale and intensity of the coaching process in full-time, professional youth football. The findings highlight the sometimes problematic and highly complex relationship not only between the coach, player and club environment that shapes the coaching

process, but also between the coaching process and the social context. As a result, this research goes some way to answering the criticisms of previous research into the coaching process, and thus is a contribution to an updating of past conceptions of the process (see Review of Literature, p.12). In particular, previous models of the coaching process (for example, Fairs, 1987) have failed to recognise the complexity of competition and performance. Crucially, they have not embraced the importance of interaction in the practical coaching context, nor the impact of contextual factors, and have largely ignored the socially constructed nature of the coaching process in favour of emphasising "the skills of delivery and teaching" (Lyle, 1999, p.23). The findings of this research enhance an understanding 'of the coaching process precisely because they are based on empirical research, not on an idealistic model, thus they capture the process in practice. Consequently, the potential value of this research is twofold: firstly, in its attempt to embrace an holistic interpretation of the complexity inherent in the coaching process in practice and, secondly, in its attempt to redress the over-emphasis on the existing instructional episodic approach to coaching (Lyle, 1999).

As previously noted (see Literature Review, p.10), much of the previous research, through an 'episode' approach to coaching, has been concerned with coach behaviour and coach effectiveness. A persistent problem for effectiveness research is the contextual nature of the coaching process, resulting in coaching that occurs against a backdrop of constraint variables, the extent and influence of which are largely unknown. Whilst identifying effectiveness was never an aim of this research, it does highlight a number of constraint variables surrounding the coach, the player and the club environment, and demonstrates their considerable influence in the coaching process and on coaching practice. An excellent example of an influential constraint variable is competition. Frequently ignored in the behavioural literature, this research identified competition as a driving force, influencing the coaches, players and, club environment in day-to-day coaching practice (see Player, p.162; Coach, p.188; Coach-Player Interaction, p.196). Furthermore, the contradictory aims, the sometimes 'hidden' curriculum and the different goals of coaches and players identified at Albion, seems to confirm that effectiveness does indeed remain "specific to individual sport situations" (Mathers, 1997, p. 24).

Yet coaching research tries to identify and propose generic behaviours, strategies and coaching 'styles' that are deemed more 'effective' than others (Case, 1987; Douge & Hatsie, 1993). However, these are sometimes contradictory. Indeed,

when considering the findings of this research, it becomes clear that what happens in practice and what is recommended in coaching research and coach education often differs (see in particular, Sessions & Games p. 156). Furthermore, it is difficult to disentangle what Lyle (1999) describes as the 'model for' the writing of coach education literature (for example Crisfield et al., 1996; Lynch, 2001; Martens, 1997) from the messy reality or 'swamp' of coaching practice. Despite this, several authors advocate relationship oriented behaviour in particular, and positively link this with improved levels of performance, team cohesion, and player self-esteem (Dubois, 1981; Smith & Smoll, 1993; Wandzilak et al., 1988). This notion is supported by Saury and Durand (1998), who further reported that expert coaches are, empathetic, tactful, give autonomy and share knowledge and experience. This is in direct contrast to the findings of this research (see Coach-Player Relationship section, p.196). Not unlike the coaches in d' Arippe-Longueville et al.'s (1998) work investigating elite judo, the coaches in the present research were highly autocratic, showed low levels of social support, and used their behaviour as part of a 'toughening up' process for their players. d'Arrippe-Longueville et al. (1998) explain this by proposing that the culture of the sport influences coach behaviour. Indeed, not unlike, Parker (1996), Tomlinson (1993) and Roderick (1991) this research has confirmed the authoritarian character of the football sub-culture and its pervasive and influential nature in the coaching process. Consequently, this research seems to provide evidence that differences in the sport setting may indeed be reflective of "deep seated cultural differences, inherent differences in belief systems, value structure and underlying cultural patterns that are embedded" (Greendorfer, 1982, p. 198-199) within it. What is clear from this research is that there were coaching behaviours and practices commonplace in the coaching process at Albion and other clubs (see Coach-Player Relationship, p.196) that might be considered contrary to the principles espoused in the prevailing literature. Indeed, despite their historical and sub-cultural connections (see Coach-Athlete Relationship p. 208), within the context of youth development in football, it might be pertinent to consider whether these practices might be legitimately justified.

Whilst harsh and abusive language (See Coach-Player Relationship, section, p.192) is an explicit example of an authoritarian sub-culture, a more implicit example (yet with far reaching implications for the players' career development) concerns expectancy effects. This research illustrates that coaches develop early expectations regarding their players, and these expectations affect interaction, behaviour and the

players' learning opportunities (See for example, Coach-Player Relationship section, p.200). This resulted in an uneven experience for the players in terms of their relationship with their peers and with the coaches. Like Soloman (1998), this research illustrates that players were remarkably perceptive at detecting differences in treatment or reactions from the coaches; differences that the coaches themselves would at times deny. In this research there were favourites, peripherals and rejects within the group of players. Their socialisation into professional football, a key factor in the coaching process at the elite youth level (See for example Club, p.134), depended to a great extent on their position within these sub-groups. This provides evidence that socialisation involves identity construction and confirmation, and is not just a matter of exposure to significant others within a given social system (Coakley, 1993). The changing status of players perhaps demonstrates that this process occurs across time and reinforces the crucial role of the coach. Certainly for the players they, as McCormick and Challip (1988) suggest, have different experiences depending on their relationship with the coach. Whilst once again confirming the crucial role of the coach in the process of socialisation, this research also illustrates that coaches are both agents of and subject to socialisation. Whilst the players have formal preparation in the form of their 'scholarship', the coaches' professional preparation had been less formal; they had learned very much on the job (See Coach, section, p.184), as both players and coaches. Evidence from this research supports the notion of an 'apprenticeship of observation' (Schempp, 1989) and strongly supports the notion that, in coaching as in physical education (Schempp, 1989; Schempp & Graber, 1992), the coaches' experiences provide a long lasting and continual influence over pedagogical perspectives, practices, beliefs and behaviours.

In summary, this research has confirmed that at the core of the coaching process is the complex relationship between the coach, the players and the club environment. Importantly, that this relationship is a dynamic one, and that no one 'element' is ever static. It also illustrates that the coaching process in practice is a 'swamp' and even at the elite level does not conform to coaching principles established in the existing literature. Perhaps because the coaching process can never be absolute, it can only ever be contextual "like ever shifting sands constantly shaped by competing and complementary elements" (Rossi & Cassidy, 1999, p.195). What then are the implications of these findings for coaching practice and coach education?

#### 5.4 *The Coaching Process and Coach Education, Implications for Practice*

In an extensive study of high level athletes and coaches, Gould et al. (1990) identified that the two most important knowledge sources responsible for the development of coaches were experience and other coaches. This was also the case in football, with Salmela et al. (1993) also highlighting experience and other coaches as fundamental in coach development. A decade on from Gould's original study, this research once again confirms experience and other coaches to be significant forces in shaping the development of coaches and impacting the way they do things within the coaching process (for example, see Coach, p. 180; Session & Games p. 142). This aspect of the findings raises a number of issues relevant to coach education and ultimately coaching practice. Firstly, how has coach education impacted and changed the coaching process over time? The thread of history and tradition seen running through coaching practice and the coaching process in high level football during the course of this research (see for example, Coach, p. 181; Coach-Player Relationship, p. 211), presents a compelling argument that perhaps coach education has had a limited impact on the coaching process and coaching practice. Moreover, as Rossi and Cassidy (1999) remind us, coach education is a relatively 'low impact endeavour compared with the hours spent as a player, assistant coach, and coach. It could be argued, therefore, that coach education is unable to compete with the coaches integrated sporting and coaching experiences.

It would seem logical, therefore, for coach education to harness the obvious power and influence of experience and other influential coaches to work toward sound coach development objectives. One way of doing this is through mentoring (see Coach, p. 192). A key finding from this research is its demonstration that mentoring is, in fact, already very much in operation. The fact that experience and other coaches are still highlighted as the most important facet in the development of coaches bears testimony to this. Mentoring in its current form is however, unstructured, informal, and uneven in terms of quality and outcome, uncritical in style and, from the evidence in this research, serves to reproduce the existing culture, power relations, and importantly existing coaching practice.

In the educational field, mentoring is well established with a considerable body of literature devoted to it (Abell, Dillon, Hopkins, McNery & O'Brien, 1995, Bloom, Bush, Schinke & Salmela, 1998). In an exhaustive summary of the effects

of mentoring in education, Abell et al. (1995) found examples of successful programmes with positive outcomes for both the teacher and the mentor. Interestingly, the mentors received an educational benefit through critical reflection and observation and, because the mentor had a helping role rather than an evaluative one, programme effectiveness was enhanced. Whilst sounding like a statement of the obvious, in coaching, where a critical tradition is lacking, the difference between help and evaluation is more than a question of semantics. Similarly, in an investigation of training methods of coaches it was found that a formalised and structured mentoring programme was considered, by the participants, to be the most important factor in their development (Bloom, Salmela & Schinke, 1995). In light of this evidence it could be contended that more formalised mentoring programmes would be a worthwhile addition to coach development (Bloom et al., 1998). Evidence from this research highlights the importance of the coaches' experiences in the development of *habitus* and subsequent coaching practice. The significance of this experience should not be underestimated, therefore, it could be argued that the sport governing bodies may be advised to recognise the necessity of providing opportunities for developing coaches to acquire hands-on experience through structured educational programmes that include mentoring. Furthermore, as the research suggests, mentoring is not only beneficial to the developing coach, but also to the master coach who, as mentor, is able to expand and diversify their own learning experiences when working with apprentices (Abell et al., 1995; Bowers & Eberhart, 1988).

Importantly, the findings of this research also suggest what might make a mentoring programme more successful. It would seem imperative for mentors to have established the appropriate position in the social *field*: the football hierarchy. They would have to have the appropriate amount and mix of social, cultural and symbolic *capital* (see Coach section, p.184). The mentor would also have to hold 'expert power' (French & Raven, 1959) which is based not only on the knowledge of the mentor, but upon the perceptions of the coaches regarding that knowledge (Tauber, 1985) (see Sessions & Games, p.142).

The issue of power may also offer some insight into why coaching courses have appeared unimportant when research has been conducted into the development of coaches and why, perhaps, coach education has had limited

success in changing the face of the coaching process. These problems cannot be located entirely with the governing body. Governing body coach education courses and coach educators working in football harbour a genuine desire to increase the standard of coaching within the game (Football Association, 1998). Arguably, this objective is hindered by the nature of power relations between the clubs and the governing body, and within the clubs themselves. The governing body does not dictate (but does offer guidelines and sets out general organisational requirements) the scope and nature of youth development (see Club, p.120). As demonstrated in this research, for the working coach, the hierarchy and culture of the individual club are the most powerful influences, not the governing body (for example, see Club, p. 130; Sessions & Games, p.156). Therefore, the aims of the Football Association to promote the value of 'new' or 'different' methods amongst youth coaches appear to be diluted relative to the *capital* the advocate of such methods holds. This is exacerbated amidst the relatively change-resistant and 'anti-academic' conventions of professional football club culture (see Methodology, p.62; Club, p. 122; Sessions & Games, p. 142) (Parker, 1996).

Coach education content also contributes to this problem. The content of coach education defines what is necessary knowledge for coaches to practice. Tinning (1997) contends that this implies a choice between different views of what knowledge is essential for practice. This is a form of social editing, where some themes are eliminated and others are promoted (Lawson, 1993b). Therefore, the process becomes a political act, intimately linked with power and control, regarding what constitutes legitimate knowledge and who holds that knowledge in the culture and profession. Through this control the governing body seeks to maintain and improve its position in the *field*.

The nature of coach education in football has moved toward performance enhancement based on scientific principles, namely the 'New Generation of Courses' (Football Association, 1996). Within these courses, coaching practice and the coaching process are less of a concern and, it could be argued, have been marginalised. This approach could prove problematic. As Schon (1983) points out, professions that privilege, 'technocratic rationality' are finding graduates ill-prepared for many of the challenges and tasks practice asks of them. Moreover, the nature and variability of programme content within clubs means that coach education can not

correspond to all needs. This, then, results in a lack of perceived fit between coach education and practical needs that, in turn, weakens the impact of coach education.

One possible way to address this problem is through critical reflection, discussed in detail in the Coach section (p.192) and developed further later in this section. Another possible suggestion is to avoid treating coaches as empty containers to be filled (Freire, 1985). As suggested earlier, in traditional coach certification courses, the governing body decides what is to be learned, how it is to be learned and by when. Coaches have no ownership of the learning process, and perhaps courses should encourage the joint setting of questions and problems, and the critiquing of course content to ensure relevance to coach needs (see Coach section, p.192). This promotes dialogue and what Tappan and Brown (1989) describe as authoring, where learners come up with insight not attainable by any one individual (Sage, 1990). Liston and Zeichner (1991) claim that education programmes "...can serve to integrate prospective professionals into the logic of the present social order or they can serve to promote a situation where future professionals can deal critically with that reality in order to improve it "(p.xvii). The findings of this research point to a need, in coach education in football, to explore new knowledge and ways of thinking, and to be less concerned with guarding old ideas (Schempp, 1993). Davies (1994) contends that this process must begin with us, our knowledge, our language, reflecting on how professional subjectivity has been constructed.

Coaches then are part of the problem and part of the solution. The implications for coach education lie in understanding how knowledge and experience are passed on and become translated into the coaching process. This study, along with others, has linked significant others and past experience to the development of high-level coaches. It has also shown that through the *habitus*, coaches' behaviours and actions are often the expression of tacit beliefs that are so taken-for-granted that they cannot be recognised or verbalised. A major value of this research is that reading it (or sections of it) may provide coaches with a mirror in which they can see their own programmes and practices. Coaches need to see the ways in which day-to-day behaviours reinforce or challenge cultural beliefs and practices. Making coaches more reflective, can not only help in this recognition process, but can be a catalyst for change.

Indeed, making coaches more reflective could be a decisive move toward change. One way to become more reflective is for coaches to clarify and understand



their personal philosophies; the development and expression of *habitus*. Choices made in the coaching process can be grounded in the coaches' philosophies (Bain, 1993; Martens, 1997; Crisfield, et al., 1996) (see Coach, p. 184; Sessions & Games, p.158) and so coaches need to re-examine and reflect on them. The objective of this reflection is to define alternatives so that the choices coaches make are more conscious and intentional rather than based on "tradition or uncritical inertia" (Fernandez-Balboa, 1997, p. 128) as this research seems to indicate is currently the case. This leads to consideration of how knowledge is constructed and transmitted; the purpose, particularities and subjectivities of coaching depending on the situation, the circumstances and the context, along with the possible actions to take (Cutforth & Hellison, 1992).

Kirk (1986b) argued that "educators who lack the capacity for critical reflective thought and informed critical judgement may be in danger not only of confirming their low professional status, but also of leaving themselves open to political manipulation " (p.155). Critical reflection involves justifying what is said and done, engaging in what Mehan (1992) calls "active sense making" (p.1). It also involves dealing "consciously and expressly with the situations we find ourselves" (Dewey, 1934, p.264). Moreover, Fernandez-Balboa (1997) asserts that critical reflection should not just be about the past and the present, but discerning what could be, as such, it becomes a means for transforming the present and inventing the future.

How might coaches become more reflective? As Schon (1987) suggests it may take several years to create durable traditions. It requires those positioned within the cultural and social hierarchy who have power to influence to become committed to reflective practice. More immediately and specifically in coach education, considering the methods of assessment may be a step forward. Currently coaches are assessed in a practical 'test' scenario where their coaching either meets the required standard or not (Football Association, 1996). This type of assessment breeds anxiety, undermines individual self-esteem and creates an insular mentality (Fernandez-Balboa, 1997). Kohn (1994) argues that involving participants in assessment is both validating and empowering. Moreover, by assessing participants in coach education using self-assessment and peer assessment, coaches reflect on their own and others' coaching and become accustomed to giving and receiving constructive, but critical, feedback and "more often than not, powerful and compelling learning experiences result" (Fernandez-Balboa, 1997, p. 136).

While the influx of managers and coaches from abroad has seen a gradual shift of thinking in coaching in football, changes such as those suggested by this research would not be easy to implement. As Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) argue, the social *field* is a *field* of struggle and the football *field* is no exception. Clubs, the Football Association and individual coaches are constantly seeking to improve their position within the *field*, while the pervasive roots of culture and tradition run deep.

### 5.5 Future Directions

"In all disciplines, the generation of new knowledge is essential to the growth and professional advancement of the field." (Brustad, 1997, p. 87). By providing a relatively detailed analysis of the complex reality that coaches construct and within which they work, this research confirms that phenomena such as coaching practice and the coaching process are strongly shaped and influenced by the particularities of the situation. Importantly, this research has explored the coaching process, not using a 'snapshot' experimental design but using a longitudinal approach, thus generating detail and 'thick' layers of understanding. Clearly, further similar studies that elucidate the dynamics of the practical coaching context in other coaching situations would seem well warranted.

The framework within which coaching occurs has largely been ignored by coaching research (McPhail & Kirk, 2001). Consequently, there remains a limited understanding of the means by which cultural values and situational influences impact coaching practice and the coaching process (Brustad, 1997). As the findings of this research demonstrate, coaching does not occur in a social or cultural vacuum (Brustad, 1997; Schempp, 1998). Therefore, the immediate social situation or context must be examined "...as a matter of scholarly and practical interest" (McPhail & Kirk, 2001) to facilitate an understanding of the purpose and meaning of coaching practice. Yet Gill (1992) contends that, "our research and practice seems narrower and more oblivious to social context and process than ever before" (p.155).

To redress this, this research concurs with Schon (1987) who says we need to wade in the 'swamp of practice'. Ideas, such as mentoring and critical reflection proposed for coaching in this Chapter need to be tested in practice. Moreover, to establish a genuine dialogue with practitioners we need to demonstrate that "we, too, have struggled with (and in) the realities of practice" (Hellison, 1997, p. 200). This would seem particularly the case in sports such as football, where practice is

interwoven with complex hierarchies, traditions and cultures, and a voice requires a certain position within the *field* both to be heard and listened to.

Finally, not unlike physical education research, the positivistic paradigm dominates enquiry into coaching practice and the coaching process and, consequently, the development of coach education. This research presents evidence supporting the case for engaging in other forms of enquiry, not only to raise awareness of the "issues, myths and silences" (Fernandez-Balboa, 1997, p.132) implicit in the coaching process, but also to contribute to finding new solutions to problems encountered by coaches in their day-to day practice.

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# APPENDIX 1

## Observation Report 1

### *Observational Report*

*Proposed Research Title:* A Qualitative understanding of the Coaching process in elite youth soccer.

*Research Purpose:* The purpose of this research is to advance the existing 'mechanistic' view of the coaching process by contextualising the coach in action. Underpinning this is the assumption that through their words and actions coaches influence the learning and sporting experience of the player. In addition, despite the technical know how of the coach, it is contended that effective coaching remains dependent upon the quality of interaction between player and coach. Observation and questioning enables the experience of the coach and player to be understood on their terms and in their language, thus providing a contextually rich and deeper understanding of the coaching process.

Early observations, interactions and discussions have suggested that the following themes should be explored. It must be remembered that observations are not evaluative and are more concerned with description and understanding. The themes described here are not in any particular order, and although identified separately, they are all closely interrelated.

1. Coaching behaviour, fear of failure, the conflict between role of teacher and judge. Understanding the paradox of this situation. The staff encourage to 'try things' in training, for example the use of the non-dominant foot. However, mistakes resulting from this can be the subject of humour as well as displeasure from peers and staff. How do players reconcile this conflicting message, and is there a fear of failure resulting from players not wanting to show weakness or mistakes in front of those who will ultimately judge them.

## 2. Players as individuals within a group.

How do coaches view players in terms of their 'coachability' and their ability to improve as players? How does this view impact upon the coaching behaviour toward that player and on expectations of that player? Does this then affect the players' subsequent performance perhaps reinforcing the view of the coach, thereby maintaining the cycle. Is this evidence of potential incompatibility within the coach-athlete relationship?

## 3. Time as a constraining factor

How time influences the coaching process.

## 4. Session Objectives

How do the session objectives impact on coach-athlete interaction? How do the objectives give the session context? For example, following a poor or good performance in training or in a game.

## 5. Socialisation of Players.

Understanding the broader role of the youth coach, in not only developing the players' technically and tactically, but as *professional players and people*. Understanding how the demands of the coach's role blend, and how this influences coach-athlete interaction and the coaching process.

## 6. Link between coaching sessions and games.

Understanding this link and how it effects the context of coaching session. How this link effects coach-athlete interaction and the coaching process. Is there consistency in interaction in training and coaching sessions, why are there differences or similarities?

## 7. Inter-player interaction

Understanding the group dynamic, the formation of a 'team spirit' and a group identity. Understanding the transition of players from entry to exit, the influence of the coach and the peer group. What is the players' perspective including those who succeed and those who fail?

## 8. Understanding the experience of the trialist

From coach and player perspective. Treatment of the player by staff and peers. How early are judgements made and how does this effect subsequent coach behaviour.

#### 9. Coach participation in practices.

How this effects the coaching process in terms of practice intensity, feedback patterns and information given. Player's perception of coach participation, how does it influence them.

#### 10. Use of coaches own experiences/ anecdotes.

How does this influence coaching sessions and context? To what extent does this influence the coaching process? How and why is this a useful coaching tool or perceived to be so? How do players value the information?

#### 11. Use of humour

Positive and negative effects of humour in the coaching process.

#### 12. *Interaction Patterns.*

Frequency of interaction, direction of communication patterns (from staff to players and players to staff).

#### 13. Decision Making

Who makes the decision about sessions and practices, and during sessions and practices. Are decision making processes open. How are players aware of the decision making process? How are decisions communicated?

As the fieldwork continues, some of these themes will be developed and will evolve as central to the research purpose whereas others may be limited in development. Additional themes may develop as the season progresses. The next report will attempt to describe how key themes have emerged, and will provide further information as it evolves.

If you have any thoughts or comments on the *report*, or on my research, I would be delighted to discuss them, perhaps over coffee or something stronger!

## Observation Report 2

### **Observation Report.**

*Proposed Research Title:* A Qualitative understanding of the Coaching process in elite youth soccer.

*Research Purpose:* The purpose of this research is to advance the existing ‘mechanistic’ view of the coaching process by contextualising the coach in action. Underpinning this is the assumption that through their words and actions coaches influence the learning and sporting experience of the player. In addition, despite the technical know how of the coach, it is contended that effective coaching remains dependent upon the quality of interaction between player and coach. Observation and questioning enables the experience of the coach and player to be understood on their terms and in their language, thus providing a contextually rich and deeper understanding of the coaching process.

Following the initial observations and report, the early themes have been developed into the three broad areas which are divided into sub-headings. It must be remembered that observations are not evaluative and are more concerned with description and understanding. Although, the themes described here are identified separately, they are all closely interrelated.

### **Factors Impacting the Coaching Process**

#### **Coach-Player Interaction**

##### **Coach**

##### *1. Back ground of coach*

Previous playing and experiences of being coached

“when I was playing that’s the sort of practice I enjoyed”

“as a player I didn’t enjoy standing around too much”

How much does this influence what the coach’s do and why they do it?

##### *2. Influences on coach*

Playing experiences, coaches and managers

“My manager at Scunthorpe always used to say, think about them down the pit”  
How have significant others in the sport influenced the coaching process context?

### *3. Actual Behaviour*

What is the role of praise, motivation? Reinforcement? Influence environment?.

“Well worked”, “Well done, like it” “good touch”,

The praise is a mixture of general and personalised remarks. Why is praise given without information, is this effective? How do you know that it works? .

Encouraging players to greater effort is largely threat based “Some of you won’t be here in a year”, “You’re not as good as you think you are”. Motivational strategy exhibited largely extrinsic. Do the players respond to this? What behaviour maximises their motivation?

Direction of communication and decision making, staff driven, players rarely given decision making, and take initiative in communication. Exceptions, pre-match preparation to Charlton away, pick own teams in SSG. Is this a conscious decision or a response to the players (i.e. age, experience, knowledge, willingness to take responsibility?).

In games feedback tends to make decisions for players, “dink it to the front man” “Little dink far post” “Right back” “Hit J’s feet”. How does this affect the players’ own decision making capabilities? Coach dependency?

Use of value statements and general remarks. “liven yourself up” “better than that” “hit the target” That’s the worst free kick I’ve ever seen”. What is the role of these statements? With no information how do these influence the player and the coaching context?

Instruction given, pre, concurrent and post event. Information relates to immediate performance and transfers to game situations.

Anecdotes, used to link practice and games. . “Leeds, six minutes to go, set piece wins the game” “Man Utd bounce back because they hate to lose”. Why and how are these effective tools, how do the players perceive them?

Role of humour both positive and negative. Positive, keeping group together, relationship building, motivational? Negative, reinforces fear of failure?

### *4. Perception of own behaviour*

Is the coaches’ behaviour deemed to be effective?

“I think that the players have improved over last season, I think I handle them right, they seem to respond”

Decision making “It was interesting to see how the players responded to making decisions about the game. I don’t think it made much difference to the outcome of the game but it made the players feel responsible, whatever happened was down to them”  
How do the coaches assess the effectiveness of their own behaviour?

#### *5. Coach Perception of Players/ Evaluation of players potential*

Perceptions about individual players, perception appears to affect behaviour towards them, self-fulfilling prophecy. Do players become what we perceive them to be?  
Hardening of this attitude in competition, differential feedback to players, patience with player’s mistakes. Are these perceptions dynamic or fixed?, is it based on a measure of players ability, demonstrated or proven.

Recognition of ability/limitations/potential of players? How is this done, how does it influence the coaching context?

#### *6. Delivery of sessions*

Coach not taking part - Instruction, positive, encouraging, and patterned feedback.

I.e. Coaching incidents

Coach involved- Individualised feedback, but irregular, information given is general and in natural breaks in practice.

How do the coaches value playing in games? How does this affect the coaching process? Is it an effective strategy, why?

### **Players**

#### *1. Background*

Social

#### *2. Influences*

Previous clubs, coaches, the group.

#### *3. Perception of coach behaviour*

‘Team talks’ during and at end of sessions, HT and FT Content and Duration. How much do the players hear and remember? Do they listen and does it influence them?

Is the relationship perceived as ‘them and us’? Possible conflict with ‘authority figures’, role conflict with judge/advisor.

How aware of the decision making process are the players, would they want to be part of it?

#### *4. Player behaviour*

Do they say anything? Coaches often ask for feedback from players but seldom receive it, why? Reluctance to use non-dominant side during drills, fear of failure? awareness of role conflict with staff advisor and judge?

Effect of peer group? Busy!

#### 5. *Response to coach behaviour*

How and why do players respond the way that they do?

#### 6. *Objectives of player/ player ambition*

What are they trying to achieve? What do they want/expect from their experience as a scholar, young pro.

### **Coach Philosophy (Coach and programme influences)**

#### 1. *Coaches Background*

Does the process reflect the experiences of the coaches?

Does the coach, coach as he was coached?

#### 2. *Role of coach*

Develop players, socialise into the role

Role conflict, advisor/judge. Do the players ask what they need to improve and how to achieve this or just why am I not playing?

Who is responsible, the coach knows the players faults, should they come to ask for help or should the coach actively improve the player?

#### 3. *Programme objectives*

Player development, player socialisation, results.

#### 4. *Player Ability*

How does this affect the coaching process and delivery of sessions, would it be different with different players?

“its important that the coach recognises the players that are available, we play the way that suits our players. We are not technically strong, we can't bring the ball out from the back”. Is there a link between coach recognition and tangible changes in the coaching context.

Does a perception of the players' ability influence the coaching context?

#### 5. *Session Objectives*

Link between games and training “That's how I expect us to start, no way those three should get the ball, pass it off like you would in a game”

Does each session have a specific objective, how does this influence the coaching context?

#### *6. Coach Values*

“I know what I’d be doing if I were 17”

How do they influence the coaching context

#### *7. Principles that Guide Practice*

Are there overriding principles that guide the way the coaching process is undertaken?

### **Environment/Situation**

#### *Culture/environment*

YT Panto “It would be a good idea to break down the barriers with the pro’s. I always had to do it, I didn’t like it, but I know now why I did it”

Extending sessions to accommodate first team requirements.

Until recently three groups, first team, reserves, YT, distinct and separate.

Does this perpetuate the football club culture? How does it influence the coaching context?

#### *Performance outcomes*

How do results impact the coaching process context?

“If you’re getting results you’re in a strong position contract wise”

The players are loud and calling for the ball “results have a bearing on it”

How do results feedback into the session objectives and coaching context?

#### *Expectations, club, player, staff*

How do expectations impact upon the coaching process and coach/player behaviour

#### *Limiting Factors*

Injuries, time.

If you require any further information or wish to discuss any of the issues raised here, let me know.



## APPENDIX 2

### Interview Schedule

#### Background of coach

1. Describe your coaching experience
2. How did you arrive at your coaching job
3. How much has your experience as a player and being coached influenced what you do now.
4. What kind of things directly impact your coaching

#### Influences on coach

1. What or who have influenced the way you coach
2. What sort of influence have they had (good or bad).
3. What have you incorporated into your coaching.
4. Why are these important.

#### Actual behaviour

1. What is the role of praise, motivation and reinforcement in your coaching.  
From your actual behaviour I noticed that your motivational strategy is largely threat based. Why and how do you know that this works.
2. What is the role of humour in your coaching.
3. The direction of communication is one way. Decisions are staff driven, in games and training. Why?
4. Feed back from players is limited, why?
5. How do value statements influence the players.
6. Why do you use anecdotes.
7. How do you evaluate your behaviour, and how often.
8. How much do you think players remember of team talks. What is your goal with these talks.
9. How do you trade off the role of advisor/judge.

#### Coach perception of players.

How do you measure a players potential, actual performance.  
Do those conclusions affect the way you are toward players.

Do players become what you perceive them to be.  
How does a player change the way you think about him.  
Is it the players sole responsibility.  
How often does a player change your mind.

Delivery of sessions

What value is playing in sessions  
How does this affect sessions  
Why is it an effective strategy.

Players.

How does a players background influence his coachability.  
What is attitude  
What is a good attitude.  
How do you change a players attitude.  
How do you think the players perceive your behaviour.  
How strong is the influence of the group.

Coach philosophy.

How does the way you coach reflect your experience of being coached.  
What do you see as your main roles.  
Who is responsible for player improvement.  
What are your aims on the training ground.  
Is it just about football  
How does the ability of the players affect what you do  
If you had different players what would you do differently and why.  
Describe the link between sessions and games  
Do you have specific session objectives.  
How do you evaluate them  
To what extent are the objectives influenced by results.

Coach values.

Do you have any overriding values that guide you coaching practice

### Culture/ Environment

How does the culture of the club influence what you do.

Do you think you are reproducing the culture.

How do the expectations of the club influence what you do.

What are the limiting factors in what you do. How

### Performance

How do results influence what you do.

### General.

What do you understand by the term coaching process

Do you work to one

Define coach effectiveness.

What is the difference between a good and bad coach