A Foucauldian Analysis of Parents and Players Experiences at Elite Youth Football Academies

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Abstract

One consequence of living in a 'surveillance society' is that it has legitimised viewing and treating the body as a machine within the high-performance sports environment (Mills & Denison, 2013). A dominant discourse that encourages normalised observation and surveillance is now rife in elite sporting academies, including those of Association football clubs in the UK (Cushion & Jones, 2006; Jones, 2019). One under explored area of sports research is how the parents of elite youth athletes feel about their children being exposed to the aforementioned constant surveillance and observation. This study has provided a critical insight and discussion into how parents perceive current coaching practices (and their effects) in elite academy settings. Specifically, this study utilised a post-structuralist framework, inspired by the writings of Michel Foucault (1977), to understand the players and parents' experiences of an elite Association football academy setting. Data was gathered through semi-structured interviews with four parent-academy player dyads. These interviews were then transcribed and analysed from a Foucauldian lens. Overall, two key themes were identified. The first theme revealed that a key symptom of the distribution of 'disciplinary power' in academies that leads to players becoming docile bodies (Jones, 2019) is that, consequently, parents also become 'docile'– and in so doing, also uncritically accept the machinations of the academy. Theme two highlights how although parents have become docile, they are still heavily invested in their child's sporting experiences and therefore do sometimes desire to intervene in areas within their current plane of understanding. In conclusion, this study suggests enhanced dialogue between academies and parents so that alternative practices, less reliant upon a disciplinary logic (Denison, Mills & Konoval, 2017) might mutually arise.

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1.0 Introduction

Throughout societies history, it has been argued that the body has been viewed as a target of power that is capable of being manipulated and, controlled (Foucault, 1991). Furthermore, contemporary critics have argued that today's culture could be articulated as a 'surveillance society', where the key to the organisation of these societies is surveillance (Lupton, 2016; Lyon, 2007; Murakami-Wood & Webster, 2009). One consequence of this observation of bodies is that it has legitimised the treatment of the human body, and in particular the sporting body, like a machine (Mills & Denison, 2013). This consequence of modernity is routinely observed in the everyday practices and norms of professional sport, where leaving the athletes unsupervised would be considered unthinkable (Denison, Mills & Jones, 2013). This has translated into the cultivation of sports settings where athletic human bodies are meticulously *observed, trained, and re-trained* with the help of numerous sports science and surveillance technologies, all in order to produce the most efficient performance outcomes in competition.

Due to this dominant discourse of sports coaching, in elite level football academies, youth athletes are contained in an environment where they are exposed to constant training and observation where they cannot escape this 'gazing eye', and the introduction of wearable technologies has only helped to maintain this (Jones, 2019). Players are under consistent scrutiny by coaches who review and evaluate their actions on and off the pitch (Cushion & Jones, 2006). One consequence of ubiquitous monitoring is that players develop a 'one dimensional identity' as the players feel the need to commit their entire lives to becoming a professional footballer and developing other interests is seen as a distraction and putting the athlete's future at risk (Brown & Potrac, 2009; Monk & Russell, 2000). Unsurprisingly, as a result of the dominant logic that pervades elite sport, sports science as a whole (which includes performance analysis methods such as video-based and wearable monitoring

technologies), now proliferates elite sports settings and is a normalised component of any elite athletes' working experience both at developmental and open age settings (Jones, Konoval, & Toner, in press). Performance analysis (PA) is now considered to be a vital element to understand what is required for maximum performance in sport (McLean, Salmon, Gorman, Read & Solomon, 2017). The main purposes of performance analysis of sport are tactical and technical analysis, analysis of players' physiological capacities, and the examination of an athlete's decision-making during performance (O'Donoghue, 2014). The implications of the normalised use of Performance Analysis, including surveillance technologies have recently been considered by scholars in the sociology of sport (Jones, 2019; Jones & Denison, 2018; Jones, Marshall & Denison, 2016; Jones & Toner, 2016). As a result, the findings from these key research papers have important implications for the current study and will therefore be explored in detail in the literature review chapter that follows.

However, despite this recent exploration, one under-explored aspect of the ubiquity of sports coaching and the use of disciplinary practices in elite youth sport concerns how parents feel about their children occupying these extremely tightly observed sporting contexts. While the current research will examine a heretofore poorly understood phenomenon, research does exist that has considered elite level football academy settings (Cushion & Jones, 2006; Jones, 2019; Manley, Palmer & Roderick, 2012). Past parental research studies have highlighted how parents are extremely influential in children getting involved in sport and in youth academy sport they are a vital social agent in this sporting environment (Côté, 1999; LaVoi & Babkes Stellino, 2008; Tamminen, Poucher & Povilaitis, 2017). The parenting literature in relation to their relationships with athletes and coaches in sport is widely available (for example, see Elliott & Drummond, 2015; Furusa, Knight & Hill, 2020; Gjaka et al., 2021; Harwood, Drew & Knight, 2010; Light, Harvey & Memmert, 2011), and provide useful information on parent's experiences in sport as well as being helpful to understand ways in

which parents experience their child's sport. However, the experiences of parents and their interpretations of these experiences through a social-cultural viewpoint is at this present time limited. In line with this point, current research surrounding parenting in sport has yet to sufficiently provide evidence and/or the resources to help educate parents to start critically thinking about how their children are engaging in sport. Therefore, this study intends to provoke a more critical discussion regarding how parents might understand normalised coaching and development practices in elite academy settings.

1.1 A word about Michel Foucault and his key text, Discipline and Punish: the birth of the prison

In the following literature review, many of the papers that will be reviewed rely heavily on the writings of Michel Foucault and his book Discipline and Punish (1991). Therefore, before we begin to move on to consider the research that is pertinent to this research project it is important to consider who Michel Foucault was and his theories. Michel Foucault was a leading social theorist throughout the 20th century (Denison, 2007; Pringle, 2007), his work has had a huge influence upon a variety of academic disciplines including sports pedagogy (Pringle, 2007). Foucault was particularly interested in power that was capable of controlling, judging and normalising, what he termed as 'disciplinary power' (Foucault, 1991). At the time that he wrote his book Discipline and Punish (1991), the main ideas from this book concerned how in society the human body was seen as an object and target of power that could be moulded, shaped and trained into whatever the people in power demanded (Foucault, 1991). Therefore, central to Foucault's beliefs on the functioning of this power was a unified system of control that was intended 'to make useful individuals' (Foucault, 1991). To explain the details that characterised this transformation of the

individual, four techniques illustrated how it is possible to control the operations of the body. These four techniques are the art of distributions, which involves how bodies are managed and used in spaces; the control of activity, which focuses on how bodies are shaped by time in these spaces; the organisation of genesis, this involves the way practises are categorised and grouped and the fourth technique is the composition of forces, this involves the way bodies are brought together to function as a machine (Foucault, 1991). Foucault observed how these four techniques worked together to exert their influence over the body through three particular instruments: hierarchical observation, normalising judgment and the examination. The collective power of these techniques and instruments assures the bodies subjection to docility (Foucault, 1991). In the sections that follow many of the papers that are reviewed have adopted these ideas to shed light on the disciplinary nature of elite level sport.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Overview

The following sections in this literature review will highlight and provide us with a greater understanding of the elite football setting. To do this the review will be utilising Foucault's (1991) writings on disciplinary power to explain the current logic of effective coaching in football. Following on from this, the literature review will explore research that speaks to the current understanding of elite football academy environments. This will include sections discussing how elite academy settings are structured (for example with extremely strict training curriculums) and how the academy structure can lead to athlete docility and its well-known implications, such as the risk of athletes developing a 'one dimensional identity' or 'performance-based identity'. Alongside this, the ever-increasing usage of performance analysis in academy settings will be discussed, including its perceived benefits as well as the potential consequences of the increased usage of surveillance technologies with academy settings. After an initial exploration of research into the elite footballing setting that has predominantly been explored using a Foucauldian lens, the literature review will then progress to focus upon providing a comprehensive section relating to research into parents in youth academy sporting contexts. This will serve to provide us with an understanding of how parents have an impact on their child's sporting career. This will include utilising research studies to gather what youth athletes prefer in terms of their parent involvement as well as also providing a parent's perspective on challenges and issues they face as a parent in elite youth sport. This review will provide us with the opportunity to highlight the current limitations with the current research available in this field and suggest why the research study on the parent-child dyad in elite youth sport is necessary.

2.2 The elite British football setting

Upon the development of the professional game, for many working class people, professional footballers have been identified as heroes and role models (Roderick, 2006a; Woolridge, 2002). With it being a dream for many to become a professional footballer (Mcgillivray, Fearn & McIntosh, 2005). However, even for those who do not achieve this dream, football is seen to provide a sense of belonging and community that they can feel a part of (Hornby, 1992). Nevertheless, and on the contrary to popular belief, elite level footballers live a precarious existence where their career advancements and prospects are never guaranteed (Roderick, 2006a; Stamp, Potrac & Nelson, 2019). In fact, the average career span for professional footballers is 8 and half years (Gearing, 1997) and they face the ever-present risk of career failure and rejection (e.g., being "let-go" or released from their clubs) (Roderick, 2006a). Their work is also characterised by considerable unpredictability owing to the risk of injuries, managerial sackings or other unexpected events that may change their prospects in an instant (Nesti, Littlewood, O'Halloran, Eubank & Richardson, 2012; Roderick, 2006b; Stamp et al., 2019). The sense of uncertainty and precarity that pervades their working lives means that footballers are eager to develop a sense of identification with their teammates and to create a social connection as soon as they can (Stamp et al., 2019). This enables players to at least feel a sense of connection and can play some part in whether their transition to a new club environment is to be a success as the players could better understand their decision-making processes in relation to their teammates (Stamp et al., 2019).

Hughson (2009) has argued that football has been a working environment within which the working-class population of Britain has been a target of a 'disciplinary' agenda, and that football helped the disciplining of the working class throughout the 19th and 20th centuries (Hughson, 2009). In a similar vein to the thoughts of Hughson (2009), Guilianatti

(1999) identified how the working professional football context can be understood using Michel Foucault's (1991) writings surrounding the imposition of disciplinary power, where he observed how football workers are exposed to a multitude of practices and normalised expectations in order to procure their compliance as 'docile footballing bodies' (Jones, 2013). This arrangement has been argued to have significant consequences both during and after a career (Jones & Denison, 2017). Furthermore, Guilianotti (1999) identified how football became a vital aspect of the British public-school curriculum in the 19th century due its ability to build character as well assisting in teaching important values such as discipline, leadership and loyalty. These values where therefore important in preparing young men to function as valued workers in society (Jones, 2013). This disciplinary agenda that has been recognised by Hughson (2009) has further been evidenced through the organisation of when football would be played most often on a Saturday afternoon and therefore arranging the public into a working week, where football has become the place for the working-class public to meet up and create a community, where the influence of power could be still be in force even when the public weren't at work (Jones, 2013).

2.3 Normalised perceptions 'effective coaching' in sports coaching

Significant coaching research has drawn Foucault's (1991) disciplinary analysis (outlined above) to explain how in modern society the human body has been seen as a target of power that governments attempt to manipulate, train and shape in order to create more efficient or productive bodies (Foucault, 1991). This arrangement has also been evidenced in sports settings, with coaches shaping athletes into whatever they require – compliant and obedient 'machine like' athletes (Denison & Mills, 2014). Therefore, throughout the history of sport perceptions surrounding effective coaching have been based around the notion that the coaches are perceived as the individuals with the knowledge and are therefore knowledge

givers to their athletes, who in turn are viewed as the receivers who require the knowledge to improve their own performances (Cassidy, Jones & Potrac, 2009). Furthermore, because of this dominant discourse as Johns and Johns (2000) discussed it has legitimised power relations that developing unquestioning and largely compliant athletes, a process that Foucault (1991) would call the production of 'docile' bodies (see above). Linking to this, past research on surveillance technologies such as Jones (2019), Jones et al (2016) and Jones and Toner (2016) have identified surveillance technologies as further ways of imposing disciplinary power and maintaining the status quo. This current dominant discourse in sport has therefore worked to develop a range of docile athletes (Jones & Toner, 2016), through the belief that the body is an object and can be analysed through methods such as surveillance technologies and then shaped to what coach's desire from them through what Foucault (1991) labelled as 'the means of correct training'. This has further influenced what is now perceived as effective coaching and what is required to create and develop effective coaches (Denison et al., 2013). As we will explore in the following sections, this ethos of athletic production remains deeply embedded as a means of producing and developing academy athletes.

2.4 Elite academy settings and expectations

This section outlines research that has looked at the elite football academy context including how power operates in this setting and utilises disciplinary methods to create accepting docile players, furthermore this section will also look at how performance analysis technologies are increasingly being used in academy settings as disciplinary mechanisms. Elite field sport academies such as association football academies generally create and provide a structured training curriculum to facilitate the development of youth athletes in tactical, physiological and technical components of the game. They also seek to provide academic support and to educate individuals about their diet, nutrition and. their

psychological demands of sport (Cushion & Jones, 2006; Parker, 1996; Stratton, Reilly, Williams & Richardson, 2004). The majority of clubs in the four professional divisions in England and Wales develop highly skilled youth footballers from the ages of 8 to 21, in which players are separated into different age groups e.g., Under 9's to under 16's (Jones, 2019). Players at these varying age levels then compete with each other for a continued place in the academy (Cushion & Jones, 2006). Spots available in the academy are usually granted to individuals at younger ages through trials that are often arranged by the club's scouts (Cushion & Jones, 2006). At the age of 16 youth players are either released or awarded a scholarship into the under 18's squad to train full time, where they can gain the opportunity to join the development squad or they can be released by their club at the end of their contract (Cushion & Jones, 2006; Jones, 2019). Throughout an individual's time in an academy, players continue to be in a perilous position as the coaches constantly review and evaluate these players' actions on and off the pitch. Therefore, being consistently scrutinized by the coaches who themselves are mainly being judged by their results despite the official development ethos (Cushion & Jones, 2006).

Since 2011, all professional football academies in England have been required to fulfil the guidelines of the Premier League's The Elite Player Performance Plan (EPPP) (Hall, Cope, Townsend & Nicholls, 2020). The purpose being to 'promote excellence, nurture talent and systematically convert this talent into professional players capable of playing first team football at the club that develops them' (The Premier League, 2021). In line with the disciplinary ethos of British football, elite level football academies mirror an extremely particular social environment that reflects the routine and disciplined life of the people who commit their identity to elite sport (Manley et al., 2012). These academies are also renowned for choreographing their practices to impose disciplinary power upon their members, for example using wearable technologies such as GPS (Jones, 2019). However, because players

can voluntarily choose whether to attend the academy or not, it has also been argued that academies promote and are reliant upon these types of disciplinary mechanisms to produce players rather than 'enforcing' them (Manley et al., 2012; Scott, 2010). Nonetheless, while disciplinary mechanisms are merely promoted, and the athlete's willingness to accept these cultural norms put upon them can be explained by the willingness and cultural pressures to conform to a desired 'role' (Manley, et al, 2012), as they are restricted by specific characteristics that control their workplace environments (Roderick, 2006a). These characteristics are encompassed by the display of a 'professional attitude' which is distinguished by the ability to conform to the academy's rules and disciplinary codes, a willingness to obey their coaches unquestioningly and a will to win (Parker, 1996). Cushion and Jones (2006) further found coaches at a high-level professional football club are most commonly looking for players displaying professional ideals and values, e.g., looking at players attitudes ahead of their performance ability. Manley et al (2012) further discuss how a failure to conform or display the perceived 'norms' within the academy can be interpreted as representing a lack of commitment and can lead to players being rejected or excluded from the academy environment.

2.6 'One dimensional identities'

Given that the fundamental role of academies is to develop players for the first team or to create income by selling these players, researchers have argued that players are in danger of being exploited as commodities, which is becoming more and more associated with modern and increasingly commercialised sport (Van Rheenen, 2012). Youth football is now a highly regulated, systematic and standardised practise (Parker, 1995), characterised by tightly organised patterns of timetabled work (Parker, 1996). Due to this structured existence, certain

things begin to take precedence in a youth players life, these can often include the desperate

ambition to become a professional footballer, the risk of losing their athletic identity as a

footballer from teammates and surrounding family as well as the overwhelming constant

threat of being released from the academy (Christensen & Sorenson, 2009). This set of

conditions may contribute to the creation of a 'one-dimensional identity' as the athlete

defines themselves by their sporting performance which precludes them from cultivating any

other roles or interests that might create an alternate identity (Brown & Potrac, 2009). It is

clear, as Platts and Smith (2009) have identified, youth players who develop interests outside

of sport (such as showing academic ability or an interest in education) could risk their future

careers of becoming professional footballers. Many players fail to develop alternative

interests outside of the football academy bubble and this issue demonstrates what is really of

interest to the academies (e.g., sole focus needs to be on football) (Monk & Russell, 2000).

2.7 Novel approaches to academy development

While there has been a wide array of research into the disciplinary mechanisms of

coaching in elite academies, studies such as Avner, Jones, Denison, Boocock and Thomas

(2020) have revealed how contemporary academies informed by more progressive

pedagogies may serve to disrupt the traditional 'disciplinary' approaches that characterise

practices within the field. The study explored the experiences of athletes at an elite level

rugby union club who are being exposed to a problem-based learning approach known as

Beat the Game. This approach involves coaches designing and adjusting training activities,

while changing their interactions with the players in the hope of creating helpful challenges

that progress the players skilled understanding of the game as they look for solutions to these

challenges (Avner et al., 2020). Other Research has suggested that problem-based learning

and game-based scenarios combined with athlete questioning, encourages athletes to develop in areas such as critical thinking, problem solving and decision making (Jones & Turner, 2006; Ojala & Thorpe, 2015). Furthermore, it can be beneficial as it allows players to develop the required knowledge and abilities to deal with problems that occur in real game situations (Hubball & Robertson, 2004). In the study, Avner et al (2020) where able to identify how Beat the Game assisted in the making of less docile players and coaches by disrupting discipline that can occur in traditional coaching environments through guiding players rather than setting a myriad of rules and instructions. Coaches discussed how their exposure to this problem-based learning approach enabled a shift from being the sole decision maker (Avner et al., 2020). However, through utilising the Beat the Game method, coaches highlighted through developing thinking players who are able to make their own decisions helped impact how they saw their own role as a coach, which was now more removed as opposed to being redundant or too hands off (Avner et al., 2020). Furthermore, this approach encouraged them to reflect on their past practices and enabled them to understand the problematic effects it can have (Avner et al., 2020). Players were also found to link their improved decision making to the coaches limiting the instructions and rules imposed on them and when they go and play for other clubs they will try and problem solve rather than just act upon what the coach tells them to do (Avner et al., 2020). This also demonstrates players were identifying effective coaching methods to involve the use of athlete questioning and encouragement to think for themselves. (Avner et al., 2020).

2.8 Performance analysis in elite sport settings – applications and expected outcomes

As highlighted earlier the environments of elite sporting academies remain deep-rooted in routine and disciplinary mechanisms. Furthermore, the introduction of performance analysis technologies such as Global Positioning Systems (GPS) has further provided coaches

with the opportunity to impose disciplinary power over their athletes (Jones, 2019; Jones et al., 2016; Jones & Toner, 2016). Due to this increased usage and acceptance into the dominant discourse of sports coaching, it is important in the following section that we identify what performance analysis is and how it used, as well as providing an understanding of the potential consequences it can have on players and coaches in an elite sporting context.

Performance analysis, over time, has become an essential part of the coaching process (Carling, Reilly & Williams, 2005; Hodges & Franks, 2002; Stratton et al., 2004), and due to the increased application of video and computer technology in sport, has led to it becoming largely accepted within sporting circles with coaches, athletes and sports scientists highlighting it as an important feature in the feedback process (Drust, 2010). Because of the increased perceived importance and usage of performance analysis it is now an area of the coaching environment that has started to be further explored by researchers from a wide range of perspectives (Harvey, Cope & Jones, 2020).

2.8.1 Surveillance technologies

Both video analysis and Global Positioning Systems (GPS) are types of surveillance technologies. Both are widely used in elite sport, with video analysis being popularised over the last 20 years to collect data and provide feedback to athletes at a variety of age groups in elite sporting environments (Carling et al., 2005; James, 2006; Jones et al., 2016; Taylor, Potrac, Nelson, Jones. & Groom, 2017). In sports such as football, video-based analysis as well as GPS has become a staple at elite level clubs (including academies) both in the UK and across Europe, with GPS becoming an overly consistent and regular aspect of senior and academy players sporting life (James, 2006, Jones, 2019). The received wisdom amongst sport scientist is that video provides an important platform for obtaining, reviewing and then presenting information on athletic performances, to modify their on-pitch behaviours and

understanding of the game (Bertram, Marteniuk & Guadagnoli, 2007; Carling et al., 2005; Groom & Cushion, 2004). Through oppositional video analysis coaches can also identify their opponents' strengths and weaknesses (Groom, Cushion, Nelson, 2011; O'Donoghue, 2010) and assist with tactical strategies and decision making (Maslovat & Franks, 2008).

While video analysis allows coaches to watch back training and match performances, GPS devices have become a popular method of enabling sports scientists and coaches to have a better understanding and opportunity to measure the physical data of athletes (Aughey, 2011). Since February 2015, FIFA have allowed players to use GPS tracking devices in competitive football environments (Jones & Denison, 2018; Tierney, Young, Clarke & Duncan, 2016). GPS technology is a satellite navigation system made up of over 30 satellites which transmit signals that allow GPS devices to locate the satellites' location with the end process being that the GPS user's location can be identified (Hennessy & Jeffreys, 2018). GPS devices can be worn in training and competitive situations (O'Donoghue, 2014) and provide quantitative measurements of athletes' performance (McLellan, Lovell & Gass, 2011), which was first seen in 1997 and have since been used in many team sports such as rugby league, hockey and australian football (Bucheit et al., 2014; Cummins, Orr, O'Connor & West, 2013; Schutz & Chambaz, 1997; Scott, Scott & Kelly, 2017). This has enabled coaches and sports scientists to monitor athletes and players external match and training performances such as distance run and maximum sprint speed in a wide variety of sports (Aughey, 2010; Aughey, 2011; Jennings, Cormack, Coutts, Boyd & Aughey, 2010; McLellan et al., 2011) and to understand a variety of physical workload metrics that are linked to elite football (Hennessy & Jeffreys, 2018). For example, a study focusing on movement analysis of Australian National league soccer players, GPS technology was able to determine that over eight pre-season matches on average the percentage of time players spent performing high

intensity running decreased from 9.38% in the first half to 8.29% in the second half of games (Wehbe, Hartwig & Duncan, 2014).

In more recent years GPS been combined with micro-electromechanical sensors (MEMS) including accelerometers and gyroscopes (Hennessy & Jeffreys, 2018). This enables sports scientists to have a greater knowledge and understanding of the relationship between players workload and their risk of injury (Abade, Goncalves, Leite & Sampaio, 2014; Scott et al., 2017). Alongside this GPS technology is time efficient and allows for an immediate collection of workload data (Hennessy & Jeffreys, 2018). This provides coaches with the opportunity to give feedback to players in real time and, for team sports such as football, allows for multiple athletes to be tracked simultaneously (Scott et al., 2017).

2.8.2 Implications of performance analysis in sports coaching

While the benefits of performance analysis technologies have been well documented and highlighted above, it is also important to understand and evaluate the potential consequences of the constant use of the performance analysis technologies can have on athletes and coaches (Harvey et al., 2020). They argue that it is important that coaches are aware of the potentially problematic consequences that the miss usage of performance analysis technologies can have on the athletes and also on the practices of the coach (Williams & Manley, 2016).

Past research has noted that the physical, mental and emotional health of athletes may be at risk due to the abuse or misuse of contemporary surveillance technologies (Jones & Toner, 2016; Manley et al., 2012, Taylor et al., 2017; Williams & Manley, 2016). This has been further validated in recent studies by Magill, Nelson, Jones and Potrac (2017) and Manley and Williams (2019). In the study by Manley & Williams (2019) focusing on players

experiences of surveillance technology at a rugby club, it became clear the inability to escape the eyes of the organisation was an ever-increasing issue for the players. This is because of the increased pressure on them from surveillance technologies watching them constantly. This increased their anxiety, fear and insecurity about their position at the club. Furthermore, because the club were relying so heavily on performance analysis statistics to evaluate their players it was highlighted how players began to be solely focused on their own individual statistics, rather than focusing on what was good for the team, causing players to become more individualistic which to many, was seen as a detriment to the performance of the whole team (Manley & Williams, 2019). Alongside this, through interviews with two elite female footballers Magill et al (2017) were able to highlight further psychological consequences the pressure of surveillance technologies can have. For example, in one player's experience a group session utilising video to highlight poor performances caused the player to feel extreme anxiety and humiliation as they felt they had been hung out to dry in front of the entire team, further causing her to role as a professional footballer to feel under threat (Magill et al., 2017). Linked to this, Williams and Manley (2016) identified how coaches can become increasingly influenced by surveillance technologies, creating unthinking compliant players (which has been demonstrated above), whilst Taylor et al (2017) and Jones and Denison (2018) have argued that the use of these technologies can cause an unnecessarily controlling coaching environment and as such surveillance technologies within sport can act as 'instruments of discipline' (Jones & Toner, 2016). Causing players to be unable to adapt to the pressures associated with their athletic role (Jones & Denison, 2018). This has shown to be the case in elite football environments where the data collected through these technologies are regularly used to punish players who are not performing to the expected level (Groom et al., 2011; Jones, 2019; Jones & Denison, 2018). For example, it was highlighted by a couple of coaches in a study by Groom et al (2011) that when they were players, if they had lost a

game they would have to watch the game back during the week as punishment rather than for anything constructive as were only shown clips of them playing badly. Another example of this has been identified in research by Jones & Denison (2018) in which a player discussed how because of poor results the S&C coach presented their GPS data to the squad as a demonstration of a player not achieving the expected aims, even though the player thought he had been playing well, as a consequence the player was punished and prescribed extra running sessions away from the rest of the squad. As such a further consequence of mechanisation is that it validates the constant emphasis on the monitoring of athlete's physical performance output, while disregarding the many psycho-social aspects of athlete development (Jones & Denison, 2018). This end result has frequently been observed as a problem for the healthy development of players (Jones et al., 2016).

2.8.3 Summary

Sport in the past has often been utilised to impose discipline over society (Hughson, 2009). Furthermore, this review has identified in society that the human body is a target of power that can manipulated and shaped like a machine (Foucault, 1991). This has also been found to be the dominant discourse in the coaching environment (Denison & Mills, 2014). This is due to the coaches being perceived as the knowledge givers and this dominant discourse leads to the creation of docile unquestioning athletes (Johns & Johns, 2000). From this understanding it is clear that routine and discipline are also dominant in elite level football academy environments. This discourse is accepted by players because of their desperation to be identified as a professional footballer (Manley et al., 2012). Alongside this, it has been identified how academies are increasingly reliant upon the use of performance analysis technologies and that whilst this technology might serve a number of benefits (e.g.,

identifying injury "risk") it can also act as an 'instrument of discipline' (Jones & Toner, 2016) that can assist in creating unthinking and dependent machine-like athletes (Jones & Denison, 2018). In the following chapters of the literature review, research into parents' experiences in youth sport will be considered and understood…

2.9 Parents in sporting contexts

In the second part of this literature review I will now move on to consider the parent-child dyad, which will include research in relation to the parent's role in a child's sporting experiences. This will include researching areas such as the pressures parents experience as well as identifying child athletes' preferences in terms of how they would like their parent to be involved. It has become quite clear that parents comprise a huge contributing factor in children's sport (Côté,1999). For example, participation in sport would often prove impossible without a parents financial and logistical support (Holt, Kingsley, Tink & Scherer, 2011) and achieving one's potential in sport is often dependent on the emotional and informational support a child receives from their parents (Wolfenden & Holt, 2005). Given this, it is important for the current study to review existing research that has considered parental involvement in youth sport. The following section reviews a range of psycho-social factors that influence youth participation in sport including motivation, youth athletes' preferences in terms of parental involvement. This section concludes by considering parents' perspectives of their children's involvement in sport.

2.9.1 Implications for athletes

2.9.1.1 Athlete motivation & parental support

Studies have found parents to be highly influential in encouraging children to join sports clubs (Light et al., 2011), and in youth academy sport (especially in the early years of a child's sporting development), parents have been found to be the first and vital social agents in the sporting environment (Côté, 1999; LaVoi & Babkes Stellino, 2008; Wuerth, Lee & Alferman, 2004). Moreover, children's participation in sport has been found to be motivated by a variety of factors, with it being suggested that enjoyment has been recognised as a key reason for children beginning and continuing to participate in sport (Visek, Achrati, Mannix, McDonnel, Harris & DiPietro, 2015). Sources of enjoyment can be intrinsic or extrinsic in nature and parental influence is considered to be representative of the latter form of motivation. This extrinsic source has an important bearing on a child's enjoyment of sport (Furusa et al., 2020) as parents support their children's ambitions. Fredricks and Eccles (2004) argued/found that parents perform three vital roles in their children's sporting experiences (provider, interpreter and role model). Firstly, as the provider to their child they give them the opportunity to participate in sport by transporting them to venues. and paying for their participation, i.e., performing the role of supporter. Secondly, parents play the role of the 'interpreter' of their child's sports experience for example by emotionally reacting to competition in adaptive manners. This in turn, influences their child's perception of competence and how much they value sports involvement (Fredricks & Eccles, 2004). Thirdly parents act as a role model by trying to demonstrate the ideal attributes and behaviours that their child should replicate in sport, such as how to perform a sporting skill and potentially how they interact with others involved in sport such as coaches, officials and

their peers (Fredricks & Eccles, 2004; Lauer, Gould, Roman & Pierce, 2010b). How much parents are able to fulfil these three roles can therefore influence their child's beliefs and furthermore their motivated behaviours and athletic performance (Harwood & Knight, 2009).

2.9.1.2 Pressure

Despite the findings discussed in the above section, while the role of the parent is significant and is important in providing support to their child in the early period of the sporting development, research findings indicate that parents can also exert a negative influence on the sporting experience (Dorsch, Smith & Dotterer, 2016; Elliott & Drummond, 2015). To illustrate in a study of 132 junior tennis coaches focusing on parent's involvement, 36% of parents were seen to negatively influence their child's development (Gould, Lauer, Rolo, Jannes & Pennisi, 2006). For example, some parents have unrealistic expectations of their child and can therefore become overly invested and even potentially view their own worth based on their own child's success (Gould, 2009). This increased rise of parent expectations on a child can also create other problems for a youth athlete such as burnout and a high rate of overuse and acute injuries which can in turn lead athletes becoming disinterested in physical activity (Bremer, 2012).

Dorsch, Smith and McDonough (2009) have previously identified that the relationship between a parent and child is fluid and dynamic. This is because the relationship can benefit and be improved from being in a sporting environment, however in this environment the relationship can also at time suffer and develop friction (Lauer, Gould, Roman & Pierce, 2010a). Regular and unsolved debates can lead to a worse relationship in later years and cause negative consequences that include issues such as previously mentioned athletes

feeling as though there is a lot of parental pressure (Lauer et al., 2010a), for example due to parents viewing their own success through their child (Gould, 2009).

Alongside studies that report parents as having unrealistic expectations from their children in sport there have also been studies looking at parental 'sideline behaviours' in youth football. From these studies it has been identified that many parents demonstrate a range of aggressive behaviours that include muttering, yelling comments, walking away from events, making offensive gestures and confronting other spectators (Goldstein & Iso-Ahola, 2008). Further research by Holt, Tamminen, Sehn and Wall (2008), observed the nature of parental involvement in youth football games and found that while 35% of parents verbal behaviours where positive there were still approximately 13-15% that consisted of negative verbal behaviour in nature that for example included calling a child 'pathetic'. These types of behaviours by parents can further add pressure to their child as well as negatively impact their sporting experiences (Holt et al., 2008). Alongside these 'sideline' behaviours' parents can also add subtle further pressure onto their children through incentivising participation (Elliott & Drummond, 2015). Gould, Laurer, Rolo, Jannes and Pennisi (2008) have suggested that some parents offer children monetary incentives to get their child to increase their performances. In addition, it was reported that parents put added pressure onto the children by telling them they need to work hard because parents do not want to be 'wasting their money' (Gould et al., 2008). While this method may seem to work for children who are motivated by the chance to gain extrinsic rewards, by providing extra incentives to a child to get them to increase their performance output can consequently lead to children feeling further increased pressure and anxiety to perform well, further affecting their overall sporting experience (Fraser-Thomas, Côté & Deakin, 2008).

2.9.2 Perceptions of parents

While there have been a number of studies focusing on parents' relationships with athletes and also with coaches, there has also been research that has focused upon identifying parents' experiences in youth sport, such as identifying stressors that parents have experienced due to their child being involved in sport (Clarke & Harwood, 2014; Harwood et al., 2010; Newport, Knight & Love, 2020). The demands on players to be present at an increasing number of training sessions has meant that parents' commitment to their child's football experiences has increased (Clarke & Harwood, 2014; Newport et al., 2020). Therefore because of this pressure parents have previously described their decision to continuing to support their child at an elite football academy as a 'life choice for me' (Clarke & Harwood, 2014; Newport et al., 2020). From this research it has also become clear that a major issue that parents have and worry about while their child is at a football academy, is the security of their child's place in the academy. What is more and most notably, parents have fears about the child signing with an academy due to potentially exposing them to failure by being released and damaging their self-esteem (Harwood et al., 2010). Parents highlighted how they feel it is there responsibility to protect their children from negative emotions that they can feel from deselection (Neely, McHugh & Holt, 2017). Furthermore, Neely et al (2017) identified how parents felt negative emotions and the deselection of their child had a negative impact on them as well, with one child highlighting when they got dropped, they think it was harder for their parents to get over than themselves. Another interesting finding that may be key to the current investigation is that some parents of youth academy players experienced difficulties due to a lack information they received before and during their child's time in the academy as well a lack of regular and consistent feedback on their children's progress (Harwood et al., 2010).

2.9.3 'Parent debriefing'

The preceding section indicates that there is the potential for parents to negatively influence a child's sporting experience during or before the sporting events. There is also research identifying how negative influence can extend beyond the completion of the event and to what is known as the 'debriefing' stage in particular. Debriefing involves parents summarising and assessing their child's performances as well providing their opinions on their performances and has been identified as a well-practiced aspect of the sport-parenting role (Elliott & Drummond, 2015; Elliott & Drummond, 2017; Sutcliffe et al., 2021). Elliott and Drummond's (2015; 2017) studies revealed how parents considered debriefing to be an important part of their role as it allowed them to assist in improving their child's performance and gave them an opportunity to highlight areas where improvements could be made (Sutcliffe et al., 2021). Furthermore, parents have highlighted how the drive home was there preferred setting to discuss these improvements with one parent stating they'll have the debriefing as their own little chat on the way home (Elliott & Drummond, 2017). A way in which parents prepared to debrief their child included making mental notes during the events while other recorded their observations on the phones (Elliott & Drummond, 2015). However, many parents have also acknowledged that the drive home can be a sensitive time to discuss the game for both parents and their child (Elliott & Drummond, 2017). Furthermore, parents have highlighted due to potential difficulties of some debriefing sessions that it is important for them to consider the emotional well-being of their child athlete and would therefore regularly attempt to camouflage critical comments (Elliott & Drummond, 2017) often through a technique known as a 'compliment sandwich' (Elliott & Drummond,2015). Parents discussed how this method successfully 'hides' constructive criticism inside the more positive and encouraging comments (Elliott & Drummond, 2015).

2.9.4 Perceived positive parent behaviours'

As highlighted above, parents can have a negative influence upon their children's sporting experiences through negative comments both during the event through sideline behaviour and also during the 'debrief'. However, other scholars have identified that positive and or encouraging comments can also have a potentially damaging effect for children (Knight, Neely, & Holt, 2011; Omli & Wiese-Bjornstal, 2011). For example, many parents of children in sports look to provide tactical and technical advice to their children before, during and post event, however research has found that with some children this type of information can cause anxiety and also confusion for the young athletes (Knight, Boden & Holt, 2010).

While the findings reviewed so far are beneficial in relation to the current research study, at this point. It is important to note that the majority of the research in this field has been undertaken from within the discipline of sport psychology. For example, recent research papers such as Gjaka et al (2021) in which they highlight the educational needs of parenting athletes that are involved in sport and education, the key emphasis on articles such as this are to educate on areas such as an athlete's dual career. However, while it must be acknowledged that parental research such as this are indeed helpful, they can divert attention away from educating parents about the implications of entrenched coaching and sports science practices in environments such as elite academy settings. Unfortunately, few studies have explored the experiences of parents of youth athletes from a sociocultural perspective. Therefore, current parental research has not yet provided sufficient evidence or resources to then educate parents of athletes on how to think critically about their children's engagement in sport.

2.10 Youth athletes perspectives on parental involvement

As highlighted previously, enjoyment both intrinsic and from extrinsic sources is a vital aspect in motivating children to continue participating in sport. There have been a number of studies over the past ten years examining youth and child athletes' preferences for parental behaviours and involvement in sport (Knight et al., 2010; Knight et al., 2011; Omli & Wiese-Bjornstal, 2011; Furusa et al., 2020). Furusa et al (2020) highlighted four key preferences for parental involvement. These included showing you care about your child's sport, listen and learn from your child to ensure you can engage in informed conversations, support your child's pre, during and after competition preferences and recognise your child beyond their sport. A key component the children identified that showed to them parents cared about their sport was through facilitating opportunities to participate by providing the resources for them to take part such as sports equipment and kit (Furusa et al., 2020). Furthermore, parents can show they care through prioritising their participation for example, one child explained that in their opinion parents should always help them get 'to as many matches as possible' (Furusa et al., 2020). By prioritising their child's participation, the parents are demonstrating their understanding and also that they value their child's sports participation (Furusa et al., 2020).

It has also been highlighted how important communication is with parents as it allowed them to share their sporting experiences. For example, children liked it when parents talked to them about their participation and when they gave them some input into their own involvement, further allowing them to have a say in what activities they continued to participate in (Furusa et al., 2020). It was also discussed how it is important for parents to

learn about the sport or draw upon their own experiences to enable informed conversation

between each other, which the children enjoyed having, whereas it was highlighted if parents

lacked knowledge of the sport, then it could limit these conversations and provide frustration

for the children (Furusa et al., 2020). This also links to previous research in which youth

athletes have identified that they do not want technical or tactical advice from their parents

apart from under very specific circumstances such as if there parent was extremely

knowledgeable about the sport such as being a coach, this is because athletes have

highlighted that often parents can contradict what their coach has been telling them which

can cause children to become distracted and confused (Knight et al., 2010; Knight et al.,

2011; Omli & Wiese-Bjornstal, 2011).

Linking in to listening to your child, it has been further highlighted the importance of

parents understanding their child's pre, during and post event preferences. For example, they

highlighted the need for parents to understand their physical and psychological needs to help

them perform well and be able to enjoy themselves, such as through providing suitable foods

for them so they are in the best condition and helping them to get ready and be on time

(Furusa et al., 2020; Knight et al., 2011). Some athletes highlighted a desire for parents not to

discuss performance before an event and many highlighted a desire for parents to help them

relax, however if parents do not understand their child's needs in terms of mental preparation,

then it has been suggested that it can cause anxiety and increased nervousness (Knight et al.,

2011).

Receiving support and encouragement was considered important an aspect from youth

athletes in all of the studies, with it being discussed that most children prefer parents to focus

and comment on their effort rather than their performance as well interact positively with

them during the game rather than anything negative, this was highlighted as important to the

young athletes as negatives comments and focusing on performance too much adds more

pressure, whereas putting emphasis on effort and positive comments increased enjoyment and decreased athlete pressure to perform (Knight et al., 2010; Knight et al., 2011; Omli & Wiese-Bjornstal, 2011). However, it is important to understand that each child has different perspectives on what they consider to be appropriate and what would benefit them, for example most children wanted their parents to be present at the events however some highlighted that they wanted them to be silent as their presence was enough, whereas others said they enjoyed their parents cheering them on during the event (Furusa et al., 2020). Ferusa et al (2020) also discovered that it was key for parents to not define their child to their sports and to be able to recognise that sports is just one part of their life and that they enjoyed other things away from their sport Furthermore the children discussed a desire to sometimes disengage from sport once they were away from that environment as they felt this helped them to enjoy their sport once they were back in the sports setting (Furusa et al., 2020).

Overall youth athletes want their parents to be involved in their sporting experiences in a supportive manner as the majority of youth athletes identified parents if they behave in the way the children expect then it can enhance their enjoyment of sport (Knight et al., 2010). Furthermore, from a child athletes' perspective it is clear to see from all of these studies that youth athletes do not want technical or tactical advice from their parents unless they are extremely knowledgeable in that sport as parents' advice can contradict their coach's feedback and cause confusion for the children (Knight et al., 2010; Knight et al., 2011; Omli & Wiese-Bjornstal, 2011).

2.11 Factors affecting parental involvement

On the other hand, while there have been a few research studies identifying youth athletes' preferences for parental involvement, there has been very little looking at factors

that can help or hinder parents being able to be involved as preferred by youth or child athletes. In the same study by Furusa et al (2020) that illustrated preferences that child athletes had for parental involvement, the study also identified potential barriers that can affect whether parents are able to comply with the demands that their children expect from them. These barriers where split into three categories; personal considerations, social considerations and contextual/environmental considerations.

A key personal consideration that was identified from the parents was their work commitments and schedules alongside their sporting knowledge and experiences which they highlighted as either a barrier or facilitator as too whether they were able to prioritise their child's participation, engaging in informed conversations and being able to understand their sporting needs (Furusa et al., 2020). For example, many of the parents discussed how due to their strict working schedules this impacted on their ability to provide sporting opportunities to their children as well as often and therefore because they are often unable to attend their child's sports events it makes it harder for them to understand and fulfil their child's sporting needs before, during or after competition. It is also clear that parents with limited sporting experiences and knowledge highlighted their struggle in fulfilling their child's competition preferences because they do not know much about the sport and therefore can struggle to provide any beneficial feedback to their child (Furusa et al., 2020).

Social consideration was another key aspect of whether parents were able to meet their children's needs, for example the number of parents, siblings in the family, access to extended family and relationships with other parents where all highlighted as important factors as to how much a parent could support their children (Furusa et al., 2020). Parents illustrated that if they had more than one child involved in different sports then it can often be difficult to support their child in terms being able to take them all to every session, this is

where parents who had larger support networks where able to overcome this hurdle as they were able to call upon extended families to take their children to sessions (Furusa et al., 2020).

The final barrier that was discussed was contextual and environmental considerations, for example where the parents lived in comparison to the sporting venue, the nature of the child's sport was key areas that influences whether a parent is able to fully support their child (Furusa et al., 2020). Interestingly parents of elite level youth athletes such as in Furusa et al (2020) study where not allowed to watch their children practice, which consequently means that they have little idea what their children where learning or how they were doing. As a result, it meant that parents of these children were unable to provide feedback to their child or to engage in conversation about an activity. This is particularly problematic in dyads containing a child who values the latter form of interaction and communication (Furusa et al., 2020). Furthermore, parents of these higher-level athletes also indicated that due to the hectic and intense training schedules, the time available for outside activities can be limited and because of this even when there was time for outside activities the children would often be exhausted from the regular training anyway and the parents would choose not to encourage their children to participate in these outside activities (Furusa et al., 2020).

It should be noted that there currently appears to be a limited amount of research focusing on what can help or hinder parents to be able to support their child as potentially preferred. Which is why in this section the work of Furusa et al (2020) has been highlighted most. Moving forward, it could be recommended that more research should be done looking at the perspective of the parent as well as focusing on the perspective of the child/youth athlete. What is more the current studies participants are former or current elite youth academy players who were in an elite academy between the ages of 8-20 and their parents, whereas the study by Furusa et al (2020) focused on parents of children aged between 8-11

and so is not fully representative for the current study. However, while this may be the case it is still able to highlight many important challenges that/barriers that parents in academy settings can face and therefore it was considered valuable to be discussed in this literature review.

2.12 Literature review summary

Overall, this literature review has discussed and covered a wide-ranging amount of literature in areas such as the elite British setting, academy contexts, surveillance technologies as well as research focusing on parents' involvement in youth child athletes' life. Most notably it was discussed how in the elite British football setting players become a target of a 'disciplinary agenda' and the athletes compliance leads them to becoming docile bodies (Jones, 2013). Alongside this the review discusses the normalised perception of effective coaching in which coaches utilises practices to shape players like 'machines' and individuals see the coaches as the 'knowledge givers' who are all knowing and this dominant discourse has led to unquestioning athletes (Cassidy, Jones & Potrac, 2013). As well as focusing on the elite football setting, the review also focused on the elite football academy environment highlighting how youth players are subjected to choreographed, structured practises and are always under review (Cushion & Jones, 2006; Jones, 2019), however players are compliant and rarely question this due to their desire to conform to a 'desired role' (Manley et al, 2012). Furthermore, it is discussed how in more recent years surveillance technologies such as video analysis and GPS have become commonplace in sports coaching and have been utilised to further push this disciplinary power onto the players (Jones & Toner, 2016; Jones, 2019). What is more the review also discusses alternative coaching practices most notably problem-based learning such as Beat the Game (Avner et al, 2020).

The second section of the literature review focused on the parent-child dyad including looking at the how parents play an important role in their child's sporting experiences (Côté,1999), the youth athletes' preferences for parental involvement, the pressure parents feel as well highlighting factors that affect parental involvement. The review highlights how parents play three vital roles in their child's sporting experiences (provider, interpreter and role model) (Frederick & Eccles, 2004). While these roles are evidently important, we also have gone on to discuss how parents can also be a negative influence through times such as the 'debrief' and through some 'sideline behaviours' (Elliott & Drummond, 2017; Sutcliffe et al., 2021). Moving towards the end of the literature review child athletes' preferences are discussed before moving towards highlighting factors that can affect parental involvement such as work commitments, social considerations and environmental consideration such as travel distance and knowledge of the sport (Ferusa et al., 2020).

While all of the literature that has been discussed has provided valuable insight into the elite level football contexts and coaching practices as well parental and youth athletes perspectives in youth sport there are some limitations that must be noted. In the section focusing on youth athletes' preferences the articles that are mentioned mainly focus on younger age then the participants in this study and so are not fully representative of the athletes interviewed for this research study. Furthermore, many of the literature articles focusing on parents are very useful to give a base understanding of parents in youth sport but many of them do not specifically focus on parents in elite youth sport which this research project does. However, most notably in the parental research discussed, most of the studies have come from a sports psychology standpoint and there are currently very limited amounts of research focusing on parents of youth athletes from a social cultural perspective and therefore do not provide parents with the knowledge and education of issues with engrained

coaching practices in areas such as elite academy environments. Therefore, this research

study will aim to provide a socio-cultural review on parents in elite youth football academies.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Research philosophy

This research study has utilised a post-structuralist framework to understand the parent-child dyad in elite sporting academies and their experiences in that environment. In the past, researchers have turned to poststructuralism in sports sociology (Markula & Pringle, 2006; Shogan, 1999), including within the coaching research field (Avner, Denison & Jones, 2014). As has been identified by Markula and Silk (2011) post-structuralist researchers try to make changes in the world through the rejection of dominant truths and by analysing problematic dominant knowledge and thinking. In the past decade or so researchers such as Denison (2007), Denison and Avner (2011), Jones (2019), Jones et al (2016) and Lang (2010) have drawn upon the work of post-structuralist researcher Michel Foucault to critically examine high level coaching and elite performance sport.

Post-structuralist theory marks a strong shift away from the main beliefs and theories of knowledge that are assumed by positivism and interpretivism and their descriptions of power, knowledge, truth and reality (Avner et al., 2014). For example, positivist researchers identify knowledge, reality and truth to be objective and singular. Markula and Silk (2011) have helped understand that positivist researchers choose to take themselves away from the phenomena they are researching and search for answers that are often away from their own pre-conceived opinions on that situation, leading to an objective reality determining a universal truth. Because of this, positivist researched relies on controlled data collection, the maintenance of distance between the researcher and subject matter, and a testing of the hypothesis and statistical analysis to prove the causality. Interpretive researchers, on the other hand, have a more subjective epistemology where they see all knowledge as fundamentally subjective, therefore causing the research process to be a subjective and interactive process

(Coe, 2012). Interpretive approaches all argue a subjective ontology and cannot be used alongside a positivist approach that is based on objectivity and believe that objectivity is impossible (Markula & Silk, 2011). However, it can be argued that this type of research focuses too much on individuals' experiences and because of these individual meanings are only affected by people who are knowingly controlling their experiences, this ontology does not have the scope to consider that lived therefore these experiences are not affected other factors in life (Markula & Silk, 2011).

Post-structuralist theoretical framework relies on its own particular epistemological ontological beliefs about the nature of reality and truth, therefore, for example, post-structuralist researchers can see how knowledge is contextual with the realities and truths being multiple and subjective (Avner et al., 2014). As highlighted above past studies have shown to us the benefits of utilising a Foucauldian post-structuralist approach to identify problematic issues in the currently accepted coaching practices in high performance sport (Avner, Markula & Denison, 2017). Because of the positives of this approach the current study has once more adopted a Foucauldian post-structuralist lens to examine and understand players and parents' experiences within the context of elite football academies.

3.2 Qualitative research within the poststructuralist paradigm

As this study is utilising a poststructuralist position, a quantitative approach in the hope of identifying any objective measurement of players and parents experience would not be considered appropriate (Jones, 2013). Therefore, more fittingly, this study uses a qualitative methodology as it allows the researcher to subjectively analyse any practices or beliefs that have been experienced by the participants and allows for numerous meanings around the player-parent dyad in elite academy sport to be uncovered (Jones, 2013). It has

been suggested that a strong way of conducting qualitative research involves small scale sample sizes and uses data collection such as interviews that require close contact (Snape & Spencer, 2003). The benefits of using a research method like this are that it puts the researcher into the environment they are researching and has been suggested that research findings from qualitative research allow a wider variety of understandings to emerge (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Van Manen, 1997). Therefore, because of the benefits of a poststructuralist qualitative research method and using Foucault's (1991) analysis of discipline (his 'anatomopolitics') a Foucauldian inspired semi-structured interview guide was created (Avner et al., 2014). This was to encourage parents and players to be open as possible to help us uncover/map their experiences in relation to their time at the elite football academies while the sons were academy players.

3.3 Data collection

3.3.1 Sampling and participant criteria

Participants were identified through a process of purposeful sampling (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Past research has highlighted how in qualitative research purposely selected samples are often utilised as they are well known for providing strong findings (Kvale, 1996). The purpose of purposeful sampling is to select information rich participants that best provide insight into the research and therefore be able to convince the audience of the research (Emmel, 2013). This involves identifying and selecting individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced in the area of interest (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011). All the participants were identified as having a number of years of experience of being signed to an elite level football academy and would therefore be able to provide a wide array of valuable information and experiences while at an elite level academy. The participants had

between eight to thirteen years' experience at an elite academy setting. Prior to any interviews taking place all participants were required to read an information sheet about the project and also signed a participant consent form. Overall, a total of eight participants constituting four player-parent dyads. It is also important to note that all of the participants in this study where over the age of 18 and therefore where not required to sign a parental consent form to participate.

3.3.2 Interview process

For this study each participant was interviewed once with interviews lasting from between 30 minutes to an hour. As mentioned earlier one-to-one semi-structured interviews where utilised for this study, the benefits of using this interview method are that it allows the researcher to create an interview guide which can be used to help guide questioning whilst also providing an opportunity to be flexible with questioning to be able to explore new information that may come out during the interview process (Purdy, 2014; Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Furthermore, semi-structured interviews can allow the participant to reveal far more about the meanings they link to their experiences further providing the interviewer with deeper knowledge about them than could potentially be achieved from a structured interview (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). The researcher established rapport and did his best to create an environment within which the participants felt comfortable to share their experiences of academy football, and of parenting elite footballers.

The interview questions were designed with the intention of developing a fuller understanding of the day-to-day role of an elite academy players' exposure to disciplinary power and routine surveillance. What is more to allow us to explore the implications of routine exposure to sports science as 'a means of correct training' in the academy context. In

terms of parents the interview questions were intended to consider the challenges for parents of academy footballers, and to explore parents' interface and dialogue with the academy staff. Furthermore, the questions allowed us to explore how parents' experiences of parenting academy footballers can be understood using a Foucauldian lens. It should also be noted that each participant was interviewed one-to-one rather than in their dyads as the research team wanted to get as much information on their experiences and opinions. It was felt that if both the player and their parent were interviewed together there potentially could have been a risk that their responses to questions could have been influenced by what the others said, therefore it was important for the study that all participants were interviewed on a one-to-one basis. Two of the interviews were performed in person face to face and six of the interviews took place online due to the coronavirus pandemic. All of the semi-structured interviews were conducted and thereafter transcribed by the author.

3.4 Ethics

3.4.1 Data analysis

Throughout the interviewing process the interviewer was continually attempting to understand and assess what was being said using techniques such as follow-up questions to enable the interviewee to go into greater detail (Markula & Silk, 2011). However, while the researcher was interpreting the data throughout the interviews, the process of analysis fully began once the interviews where transcribed (Markula & Silk, 2011). The data analysis for this thesis was performed in order to answer the question: how do the relations of power that frame the academy football arrangement shape the experience of parenting elite academy footballers? To achieve this aim, our empirical data was scrutinised using Foucault's analytical tools in order to expose the detailed workings and effects of discipline (Jones &

Denison, 2017) as they relate to parenting footballers within an elite football academy setting. Specifically, in terms of data analysis techniques, the interview transcripts were first read and analysed by the lead investigator and then subsequently by the supervisory team. As highlighted by Markula and Silk (2011), the Foucault themed interview guide assisted the researcher into being able to highlight key themes discussed by the participants. The observations of all concerned were then collated, and where quotations or participant responses that spoke to one or Foucault's cache of concepts associated with anatomo-political power identified. With Foucault's concepts in mind once all the transcripts had been red through and these key concepts highlighted, they were all grouped together into a group of themes that could be further analysed. These responses were then highlighted and discussed amongst the researchers. It was clear that while reviewing the transcribed data there were similarities between all of the themes found and originally three themes were identified to be discussed. However, in the next phase of this process and upon further analysis, the researcher was able to identify two dominant themes and concluded that the previous third was too closely linked to the other two themes and consequently was added as a sub theme alongside the other sub themes. This was achieved through selecting the responses that were thought to be indicative of the workings of anatomo-political power and are outlined in detail and discussed below.

Using Foucault's (1991) disciplinary framework has allowed us to understand that academy footballers are individuals who occupy a "disciplinary context", where "disciplinary power is heavily integrated into a footballer's everyday role" (Jones, 2019). As the results will go on to show, this research has indicated that this Foucauldian stance has proven useful when understanding the experiences of parents of this unique population of young men. In the discussion and analysis of the themes generated by this data collection, in the sections that follow, we have considered how Foucault's tools have help to shine a light on the

complex experiences of parenting footballers who become 'docile footballing bodies' as a result of the relations of power that govern their space (see Jones, 2013; Jones, 2019; Jones and Denison, 2017).

3.4.2 Ensuring quality in poststructuralist research

It is of vital importance that when performing any qualitative research that the conceptual framework created is held accountable to appropriately provide findings to the paradigmatic traditions from within where the research originates from (Avner et al, 2014; Jones, 2013). Therefore, the clearer the researchers are about the paradigmatic assumptions the easier it becomes to provide a correct assessment of the work (Markula & Silk, 2011). In post-structuralism there is no consistent or dependable reality to understand, and therefore no overall way to validate post-structural research (Jones, 2013). Because of this the historical concepts of reliability and validity that have been used to regulate the quality of quantitative research cannot be applied to this poststructuralist qualitative research study. However, it must be made clear that although this may be the case it does not mean that the quality of this research study is not something that should be focused on, and instead different processes must be created to ensure poststructuralist studies are of sufficient quality. According to Jones (2013) to guarantee that research from within the post structural paradigm is of quality, the researcher must be required to be able to highlight how the study is theoretically coherent and contains logical, and appropriately used theoretical logic in line with the position of the original theorist. Therefore, this study which is utilising Foucauldian theory must show a good understanding of Foucault's work which must be clear throughout the entire research study such as when discussing the data analysis and chosen method (Avner et al., 2014; Jones, 2013).

4.0 Results & discussion

A Foucauldian reading of parents and players' experiences while at elite academy football settings

From the interviews conducted with both parents and players, two key themes have emerged from the collected data. The first theme reveals that the distribution of 'disciplinary power' in football academies leads players to assume the role of 'docile footballing bodies' (Jones & Denison, 2017). More importantly however, as a consequence of this, theme one will proceed to demonstrate that a knock-on effect or symptom of the players' docility is that it renders parents similarly docile. In addition, theme one will also discuss how the 'discourse of expertise' is still highly prevalent and how it exerts great influence in elite footballing academies. This includes how both the parents, and the players accept that the coaches are the experts, and that this belief means that they are unwilling to question coaches – a clear symptom of their docility. In the second theme it will be highlighted how although the parents have been shown to be 'docile' in many respects, they are still heavily invested and care about their child's sporting experiences and therefore do want to wish to intervene. Theme two also identifies that, due to a lack of awareness, parents are often only able to show concern for the most visible and immediate pressures and issues experienced by their sons. As a consequence of this focus upon immediate issues, parents are precluded from asking other critical questions, perhaps about the nature and use of monitoring and other normalised sports science practices that have been recently questioned in the coaching literature (Kuklick & Gearity, 2019). Once I have presented my findings and discussion, I provide a conclusion chapter where several implications of this 'parental docility' will be discussed and followed by some potential suggestions as to how parental and player docility can be reduced or removed in future academy practice.

4.1 Theme one: 'If he was happy, then we were happy'

In line with findings from existing academy football research undertaken from a socio-cultural perspective, the participants in the current study experienced the workings of disciplinary power during their time in the academy (Roderick, 2006b; Manley et al., 2012). Importantly, not only did the study reveal that players are rendered docile as a result of exposure to disciplinary techniques (Cushion & Jones, 2006; Denison, 2007; Jones, 2019; Konoval, Denison & Jones, 2018; Mills & Denison, 2018), but *the parents* from the study, observing their child's compliance, also rarely, if ever, questioned the practices and expectations placed upon their sons. In what follows, in section 4.1.1; I first briefly highlight how the players have been subjected to disciplinary techniques before proceeding, in section 4.1.2; to explore how the docility of academy players' is also connected to their parents' compliance with the prescribed academy experiences. Importantly, given that one of the key aims of this study is to look upon the experience of parenting in football, this first theme suggests that the relations of power that shape the players' docility are not disconnected (but rather prescient and relevant) to the behaviours and responses exhibited by the parents behaviours and responses that on further inspection also reveal compliance and docility.

4.1.1: 'Docile academy players'

As mentioned above, the responses from the players interviewed in this study were consistent with existing findings that reveal elite academy footballers to be accepting of normalised coaching practices within the elite football academy setting, practices that render them as 'docile footballing bodies' accepting of normalised coaching practices (Jones, 2019; Jones & Denison, 2018; Jones & Toner, 2016). When asking players about their experiences

throughout their time at the academy and more specifically their experiences and knowledge of sports science practices at the academy, it started to become clear how the players where being subjected to the imposition of disciplinary power.

> **Player 4:** Every day we fill out a wellness sheet so say my legs are feeling sore before training in the morning I'd put a three out of five… everyday online as soon. As you wake up you have to fill it out yeah…so your mood, health, erm I should know this I have been filling it in every single day for the last four years! Mood, health, soreness, fatigue, sleep quality, so if you've had a restless night you would put in a two or a three.
>
> **Player 1:** Every session, every match, you'd have your own vest and your own little monitor, and it would be up to you before every session to put it on and turn it on… So, it's kind of like an ammo box like on Call of Duty! And you would take yours out and you'd be in trouble if you forgot to put yours on for any reason
>
> **Player 3:** By the end, we were there most nights doing different stuff as well as training, gym work and stuff and then they changed to playing Saturdays so we had the Sunday we'd be off, so by the end yeah like under 16's it was pretty much every night… I think you've got to commit, or you know what I mean or else you're not going to, like a big thing like even from when you're young they want commitment…
>
> **Player 3:** Yeah, I think they have to be regimented in certain ways because of what's coming from the head of the academy mind of wanting all of the teams to play in the same way and stuff, so a lot of the sessions are like the same…

That these quotes reveal conditions where disciplinary power works upon academy players to train and render them useful footballing bodies comes as no surprise given the fact that

physical capabilities of the players is the key to a productive relationship with the club (Giulanotti, 1999). According to Guilianotti (1999) and McGillivray et al (2005), techniques of surveillance are used to ensure that players' bodies are trained and regulated to be in line with the expected normalised standards. In this case, routine practices employed by the academy, such as making players fill out wellness forms, enforced wearing of GPS devices and heart rate monitors and regular video analysis sessions, are characteristic of what Foucault called 'hierarchical observation' which operates by imposing a form of 'disciplinary power' onto the players (Foucault, 1991). Hierarchical observation, according to Foucault (1991), was the first disciplinary instrument that ensures that the dominant discourses that are established as the 'right way' continue to remain fixed and in place and this correct way remains in place due to 'hierarchical supervision'. By using surveillance technologies as regularly and consistently as the academies currently are it could be argued they are acting as 'supporting eyes' and consequently they are providing the academy hierarchy with the opportunity to be able to observe and monitor the players at all times and therefore giving them even more opportunity to impose discipline over their players (Foucault, 1991; Mills & Denison, 2018). These surveillance technology practices are furthermore acting as Foucault (1991) would describe as a 'perfect eye', or a 'normalising gaze' (Taylor et al., 2017), that no individual being observed can escape. What is more, through this imposition of disciplinary power, the players interviewed clearly began to highlight docile behaviours when talking about their specific experiences and opinions on coaching practices, (including performance analysis methods) as these quotes from players one and three demonstrate:

> **Player 1:** It was a bit painful sometimes when the focus is on you and it's something you've done wrong but obviously everyone had to go through it, and it was nothing personal on one took it personally *it's just football isn't it* (italics added) …

Player 3: I guess they were just trying; it gets you used to it for when you are like in the academy for your apprenticeship…towards the end it was you know you was analysing your game all the time because you know that's what it takes to become a professional…

These quotes once more reveal how academy footballers accept and do not question the standardised coaching practices they are exposed to daily. The preceding examples showcases that players are perhaps unaware of what surveillance is and therefore it has just become the norm to accept these methods as just every day standard practice – practices that previous research has identified as contributing to player docility (Jones, 2019; Jones & Toner, 2016). The language used by the players, for example, 'This is football' and 'that's what it takes to become a professional' further highlight the players acceptance that the traditional coaching methods and the use of performance analysis practices as a standardised coaching tool are 'best practice' and are a normal part of their routine (Jones, 2019) imposed by expert coaches (Cassidy et al., 2009; Mills & Denison, 2018). This is perhaps best summarised by player four who when discussing video analysis sessions noted,

They're good because they go through things that I wouldn't maybe spot on my own so like with defending something and just think oh we defended well there, but then they say what could have been done differently because *obviously they know more than us* (italics added)

'Obviously they know more than us' highlights the players' belief that coaches are always right and evidence how the players, as a symptom of their docility, refrain from questioning any of the practices they are expected to perform/receive.

4.1.2 Docile players and docile parents

The findings from section 4.1.1 are especially prescient when held alongside the responses provided by the parents of the players in the current study. In what follows, I highlight the relevance of player docility (discussed in 4.1.1), as it pertains to the experience of parenting in an elite academy football setting (section 4.1.2). The following quotes from the interviews with the parents of the academy players also seemed to show an acceptance of the academy and its practices. For example, when asked about the expectations and practices embraced by the academy the parents responded as follows:

Parent 1: Yeah, just know what goes on in football and you know that it is demanding. But he loved it and importantly he wasn't picking up injuries or strains, if he'd have been getting niggly strains and injuries, I'd of had a word with the coach and say 'you know this is a bit much' but I don't think it was you know he loved it. He just wanted to play football, wanted to train and. play matches, loved it…

I honestly don't think I did; I think we used to talk about it and obviously he had his schoolwork to do, and you know homework stuff like that, but he didn't really have any other interest in any other sports…his focus was football and his passion, and his love and he just wanted to be a footballer. So no at the time I didn't think it was excessive.

Parent 2: No, *as long as he's happy* and you know I can understand his sort of pathway to first team football then that's, *I'm happy with that really…*

In (child 2's) case he was around that age he got quite stressed about it all and we didn't realise and it made him sort of ill in a way, you know he was getting stomach problems and it turned out it was all down to whether he was going to be kept on or not next year you know… but I didn't realise at the time that (child 2) was putting himself under his own pressure and he wasn't speaking about it.

Parent 4: Yeah, yeah and he got further down the line and I can't remember how old he was but so far down the line he had to then give up his Sunday league which was a shame because obviously he'd got a group of friends at Sunday league and so that was a decision that he had to make but because he was so passionate about his football for him *it wasn't a hard decision…*

The pressure came the older he got but as in I wouldn't say pressure as in he didn't come home feeling pressure he went and enjoyed it, he never came home and said he's not enjoyed a session…

The most important thing to take away from these quotes is the potential evidence of how the players' docility influences their parents' orientation to their sons' academy experiences. For example, these quotes reveal that the parents looked to their children's responses to gauge the appropriateness of the academy context, and one could also argue prevented them from questioning the academy's practices owing to the child's acceptance. The quote below could be argued is evidence for this belief:

'Yeah, because you read about other clubs, and you just know what goes on in football and *you know that it is demanding. But he loved it and importantly he wasn't picking up injuries*… He just wanted to play football, wanted to train and play matches, loved it…

The findings suggest that players were exposed to increasing workloads, observation and scientific measurement as they advanced through the academy. However, because parent's felt that their sons were enjoying their time in the academy, they were disinclined to question the increased amount of training sessions and increased performance analysis practices that their sons became exposed to over time (see theme 2 below). Parental research such as by Visek et al (2015) has also identified how enjoyment is a key reason for children to continue participating in sport and this extrinsic source of enjoyment for the players can come from parents and can be a vital aspect of the players maintaining their enjoyment of sport (Furusa et al., 2020). Therefore, if the parents are from their perspective seeing their sons enjoying their time at the academy, then will most likely continue to support their child's ambitions to continue participating without feeling the need to question any practices.

Furthermore, when reflecting upon the parents' responses, it can be argued that a consequence of the players perceived enjoyment as well as acceptance and docility towards the academy coaching practices that they are subjected too is that it filters up towards the players parents as well who then also become unwilling to question the dominant discourse in the elite football setting and would therefore see them as unproblematic. And, vice versa, if the parent accepts the practices, then why would their children reject them? The following quote in relation to whether the parent believes that the camera ever affected their child also shows an unwillingness to acknowledge or understand that surveillance can perhaps impact

players performances, *'The camera certainly didn't affect (child's name) performance'*. What is more, if they still believe that their son is performing at the same level as they always have been, then it is of little surprise that parents failed to take issue with the further continued use of monitoring. As highlighted by Roderick (2006a), players and often coaches in sporting organisations are reluctant to criticise the normalised methods that characterise practice in these settings.

4.1.3 Don't question the experts!

As a result of the discussions with the four parents it became quite clear that on the whole the parents where fairly accepting of the academy structure and the academies coaching practices and were therefore generally accepting of the coaches being the 'experts' and their methods being best practice. For example, when asked about how they felt allowing the academy coaches to have such control over the development and destiny of their child the parents stated:

> **Parent: 4:** I think it was done just quite right really you know for how they were really, so I was quite happy with how much control they had to be fair.
>
> **Parent 3:** Overall in general I feel fine about it…because, from my point of view if I had any major issues or concerns in how (child's name) was being trained, I would have challenged it, thankfully we didn't.
>
> **Parent 2:** I've always been trusting of you know, erm because even when the lads where younger you're leaving them with blokes who you don't really know.

The above quotes evidence how parents, throughout their children's time at their respective academy, where very trusting of the coaches and the academy as a whole to be the best place to further develop their children. Furthermore parent 1 and 2 discussed:

Parent 2: I remember there being lots and lots of kids there and a limited number of coaches and you're thinking how are they going to do enough to get spotted out of all of these people, given the ratio of coaches to number of kids running around on these pitches, but obviously that's what they're there too see you know, *they know what they're looking for* and they can see it quickly.

Parent 1: It was more of a case of getting half decent training hopefully, more than he would if he wasn't going there.

These examples identify instances where the parents show a trusting attitude in the academy coaches and demonstrates a popular way of thinking in that that the academy environment and their coaches are the experts who will be best placed to look after and be able develop their children's sporting abilities. It has been observed by Foucault (1991), how regimes of truth are expressed through dominant discourses that create viewpoints where people understand knowledge, truths and social realities and these discourses are sources of power and knowledge that act over individuals in society causing docility. These quotes identifying how parents are trusting in the academy and their coaches to be the best environment for their children. This theme is unsurprising given what has been identified in past socio-cultural research as the perceived dominant discourses in the sports coaching contexts (Jones, Armour & Potrac, 2004). To clarify, a number of socio-cultural scholars have argued that coaches are often viewed as the 'knowledge' givers whilst athletes serve as passive recipients of

information (Cassidy et al., 2009). Furthermore, as has been argued by Mills and Denison (2018), coaches of elite athletes are the coaches that are the most respected and are listened to and because of this are presumed to 'personify' a discourse of expertise (Johns & Johns, 2000). In this vein, others have highlighted that this discourse of expertise wields a large amount of power in sports coaching (Cassidy et al., 2009), and as the data collected here indicates – one consequence of this arrangement is that parents rarely question an expert coach's practices or approaches. What is more this trust that the parents have placed upon the academy coaches could be seen as having an overall negative influence upon their child's sporting experience due to their expectations that their child succeeds and views their self-worth through their child's success (Gould, 2009) as well as not wanting to be seen to be going against the coaches, as this in their mind may impact the likelihood of their child being seen in a positive light and retained by the academy. This is because in sporting parental research it has been identified how a major stressor for parents is the security of their child's place at the academy (Clarke & Harwood, 2014; Newport et al., 2020) and it their job to protect their children from negative emotions that can occur from being dropped from the club (Neely et al., 2017).

In analysing the above quotes, it has become clear how the dominant discourse of coaching expertise has extended towards the parents of the elite academy players. As a consequence of this, using Foucauldian terminology, one could argue that parents themselves have become 'docile' compliant bodies who do not question the status quo. As a result, therefore, parents allow coaches to have influence and exert control over their children, and as we will go on to suggest below, this further legitimises the presence of certain practices, themselves designed to impose disciplinary power upon the developing athlete. In one example of this, during the interviews, parents were asked about their sons' exposure to sports science and performance analysis informed practices that took place during their

academy lives. The quotes presented below provide examples of the parents' responses when asked about how much information was provided to them regarding these practices such as video analysis and GPS.

> **Parent 1:** Probably not, I probably just assumed they were going to be watching how the team performed, the team shape but individuals as well.
>
> **Parent 2:** I don't know if it went into any detail it was more I suppose a tick box, a tick box exercise maybe, but again I can't really remember whether there was any additional detail there… Oh yeah yeah, you know he's been up there for years, they've always been great with all of the lads when they were there, and you know I've got no qualms about anything they do up there.
>
> **Parent 3:** None. No discussions were had.

These responses make it clear how parents rarely felt like they were in a position to question the academy's sports science practices and the deployment of these surveillance technology devices such as video analysis and global positioning systems. This is also further evidence as to how parents and others around elite sport have quickly become accepting of the presence of sports science practices and methods as 'best practice' and a normal component of their children's experiences in the academy environment (Jones & Toner, 2016). Therefore, as discussed above this is another example of the parents showing a general trust and compliant attitude towards the academy coaching practices and can be seen as a further symptom of the 'discourse of expertise' and highlights how parents are becoming docile towards their children's experiences at the academies.

Here, a Foucauldian lens can help to explain how this compliant, unquestioning attitude towards sports science practices embedded within day-today academy practice can

have significant issues and cause negative implications for their children. As has been identified by Foucault (1991), the body is an object and a target of power that can be manipulated, shaped, and trained into whatever is demanded of it by the hierarchy and therefore in time can be at risk of becoming a docile body if it exposed to this disciplinary power. In a recent research study, Jones (2019) highlighted how sports science practices such as the usage of wearable technologies like GPS harnesses can be seen to contribute towards the imposition of what Foucault would call 'disciplinary power' in elite academy football as coaches use these practices to discipline and punish players leading to the creation of unthinking, compliant, docile footballing bodies (Jones & Denison, 2017; Williams & Manley, 2016). Data from the players interviewed also pointed to this theme, as player 3 indicated.

> **Player 3:** Yeah, yeah it just builds up and then like at the end it's just like a normal thing, so at the beginning there was never really much video, they maybe, filmed it, but there's never really much analysis and then towards the end it was you know you was analysing your game *all the time* because that's what you know that's *what it does take to become a professional*, analysing your game and the little things which can make you better really.

This quote above is evidence of how players at the academy have begun to accept that the academy coach's sports science methods are 'best practice' and that using these methods is what is required if the players are to improve and have a chance of becoming professional footballers. In accepting these normalised practices, players become compliant 'docile footballing bodies' (Jones & Denison, 2017). Further responses from players also show to us how they see the coaches as the experts and are to them the 'passers of the knowledge' and

because of this belief it can be argued they are on the whole unwilling to question the usage of sports science practices due to normalisation of these surveillance technology practices in sports coaching (Jones & Toner, 2016), the perceived expertise that their coaches possess (Denison, 2007) and that in general people don't feel the need to question disciplinary methods due to its perceived productive nature (Heikkala, 1993). This lack of questioning and criticism of sports science practises from players should also come as no surprise as has been argued by Roderick (2006a) as he discussed how players and coaches are often reluctant to criticise the normalised practices that occur in their institution. It could be argued that a consequence of both athletes and parents being compliant and unquestioning towards the sports science practices is a cyclical scenario where the production of docile footballing bodies (Jones & Denison, 2018) is questioned by no one.

As the various components of theme one above have identified, from the conducted interviews with both parents and players, it became fairly clear how, as a result of their children's compliance and acceptance of academy practices and expectations, parents were, on the whole, also accepting of the methods and practices employed by the academy coaches and, what is more, that the parents generally accepted coaches as the 'experts'. Put another way, and to reiterate, this first theme has explored how parents of elite academy football players have themselves become docile and therefore unquestioning towards entrenched elite football coaching practices. I have argued that this is largely due to their acceptance of dominant discourse of sport in which coaches are perceived to hold the 'knowledge of expertise' (Cassidy et al., 2009; Mills & Denison, 2018).

4.2 Theme 2: Parental involvement and a lack of understanding?

In theme one it was evidenced that Foucault's notion of docility was a helpful concept to explain why parents allow the coaches and the academy hierarchy, without question, to have full control over their children's sporting practices. It was also posited that this was in large part due to the acceptance of a dominant discourse where expertise is assumed to reside with the academy structure. In theme two, the ways in which parents *were seen* to engage with their children's academy experiences, and how, in particular, they expressed their concerns are explored and then analysed from a Foucauldian lens. For example, when asked about whether the parents discussed training and matches at the academy with their children the parents responded,

> **Parent 2:** Yeah, yeah sometimes the lads would offer it up and sometimes I'd be asking you know because I'm interested you know in football and in having the boys sort of do as best as they can while they were in them sort of structures and I still have those sort of conversations with (child 2) now, you know to try and you know he's his own man but you know I think he respects what I have to say so we often have conversations about how he's doing, how he's feeling.
>
> **Parent 3:** Very much so, yeah we actually had an hour car journey every time, so if it was just me and him, we would chat things through definitely… we were doing it as a much as anything just to see you know, suss out (child's name) state of mind, you know how he felt things had gone you know and just to help us monitor how he was feeling about it all.

> **Parent 4:** Oh yeah, yeah he'd come and obviously go through did you have a good training session, erm you know what went well what didn't go well in training and then especially after matches you'd go through, we'd have like a bit of like a pick to pieces sort of thing you know how well he'd done.

The above quotes reveal how parents *do* clearly want to be involved in their children's experiences at the academy and *are* regularly having or are attempting to have conversations with their children, for example, after training sessions and matches to gauge how their children are feeling. These findings support previous research studies into parents in elite youth sport that have highlighted how parents like to engage in a 'debrief' with their child after a session or game as this is the best opportunity for parents to engage with their child to discuss improvements that can be made and to many parents is an important part of their role as a parent (Elliott & Drummond, 2015; 2017). What is more, alongside this, the parents' responses also highlighted an understanding and concern about how the increased amount and intensity of training and matches as well as potential pressure could have had and did have an impact over their children…

> **Parent 3:** I think physically no, he never had that big growth spurt that might have clashed with that at all… I think if anything it was more the mental aspect of it, like I say how that would make him really tired and later nights and all that sort of thing, but physically we were quite comfortable with it.

> **Parent 2:** Yeah, yeah that's it yeah. It's probably he enjoyed it, but I think it probably did take the fun out of it a little bit more for him than it would have done for other kids who were playing in Sunday league because it's more relaxing and he always

said not so much (child 1) from what I remember but (child 2) would always say we prefer playing for school because there was less pressure around it.

Parent 2: Yeah, er you know they try to increase the sessions when they're doing their GCSE's you know they try to get day releases with the schools which I think some of the boys have done to have more time with the coaches up there. So, we had a bit of a chat about that, and I was reassured because as far as I was concerned his education was more important…

The above quotes further demonstrate how parents are generally aware and understand the increased demand and expectations that are placed upon their children when they sign for the academy at a young age and this understanding backs up past parental research were parents have highlighted how the increased expectations from academies that the players attend more training sessions means that the parents commitment to their child's footballing experiences has increased and the decision to support their children at this level of football becomes a 'life choice' for them (Clarke & Harwood, 2014; Newport et al., 2020). This includes how the intensity in volume, and expectation increases as they develop through the academy age groups due to them competing for limited places in the academy teams (Cushion & Jones, 2006). Furthermore, the concerns that parents had in relation to their child's education and general tiredness have also been found in existing 'parents in sport' research. For example, Harwood et al (2010) identified how the increased expectations of the academy and the pressures of schoolwork — most notably when their children were starting to prepare for their exams — was a stressor for them as their children often felt exhausted due to increased demands from the academy alongside their schoolwork. However, while it is clear parents do have a general awareness of the pressures their children can face and do want to talk to their

children about these matters, there is also evidence that shows that their understanding of these pressures is still not complete, and at times they may be unaware of underlying pressures that their children can be under at such a young age in an academy environment.

> **Parent 2:** In (child 2's) case he was around that age he got quite stressed about it all and we didn't realise and it made him sort of ill in a way, you know he was getting stomach problems and it turned out it was all down to whether he was going to be kept on or not next year you know… but I didn't realise at the time that (child 2) was putting himself under his own pressure and he wasn't speaking about it.

This quote hints at the considerable pressure faced by academy players and the negative affect this might have on their performances and general wellbeing. This can further be linked to what will be discussed below in terms of other implications that their children may be at threat from that parent may still not be fully aware of…

While the quote above from Parent 2 highlights how parents are not always fully aware of how their children are feeling and the strain that children can put themselves through, on the whole the interviews did demonstrate parents do tend to have a general awareness of the pressures and expectations placed upon their children during their time in the academy environment and want to be involved. However, what the Foucauldian framework employed here has helped to reveal, is that parents appear to lack an understanding or awareness of how the normalised high performance football coaching practices might be having dangerous implications for their children over the immediate and longer term. Put simply, the repeated concerns raised in contemporary coaching literature discussed in the above review, for example how many coaching practices have been derived from a problematic disciplinary logic (Denison et al., 2017) and can impact upon vulnerable

athletes (Johns & Johns, 2000), have yet to register in any meaningful way with this sample of parents of elite youth footballers. For example, when asked if they were provided with much information prior to the routine performance analysis practices taking place and if they knew what the academy were going to be doing with the information collected the parents stated,

> **Parent 1:** Probably not, I probably just assumed they were going to be watching how the team performed, the team shape but individuals as well.
>
> **Parent 2:** I don't know whether it went into the detail it was more I suppose a tick box, a tick in the box exercise maybe, but again I can't really remember whether there was any additional detail there…
> You know he's been up there for years; they've always been great with all of the lads when they were there, and you know I've got no qualms about anything they do up there.
>
> **Parent 3:** (Long pause) No … it's kind of like do you have a problem with us uploading information of your son on the portal, yeah it was that kind of thing.

These example quotes above are potentially concerning, as while data identified for this second theme has clearly established that the parents want to be involved in their children's' experiences at the academy, and furthermore, consistently claim to want to know what is going on and how their children are feeling, there is clear evidence to suggest that they have a distinct lack of awareness regarding the potential implications of certain normalised approaches and practices that have been problematised in coach education literature (Denison et al., 2013; Jones, 2019). In the above example of performance analysis coaching practices, it is clear (understandably) that parents do not consider the potential disciplinary

consequences that the misuse or overuse of these practices can have on their children (Jones & Denison, 2018; Jones & Toner, 2016; Williams & Manley, 2016). This is an issue because as identified and discussed in previous Foucauldian informed research the physical, mental and emotional health of athletes can potentially be at risk due to the abuse or misuse of surveillance technologies (Jones & Toner, 2016; Magill et al., 2017; Manley et al., 2012; Manley & Williams, 2019). This lack of awareness regarding the implications of these practices can perhaps be explained through factors discussed in theme one in which parents are often unwilling to question the coaching methods that are implemented by the coaches due to their perceived 'knowledge of expertise' (Cassidy et al., 2009; Mills & Denison, 2018), or perhaps as is more likely, a failure with regard to the dissemination of findings from contemporary socio-culturally informed research into the elite football academy experience. Because of this, it can be argued that the dominant discourse of 'coaching expertise' has yet to be interrupted in any meaningful way and continues to validate the presence of these performance analysis practices as a normal component of any elite level academy footballer's everyday life experience.

5.0 Conclusion

An important symptom of 'docile parenting' identified in both themes presented and discussed above is that parents rarely, if at all, felt any need to question the deployment of sports science practices, or surveillance technologies such as GPS monitoring and video analysis. Furthermore, parents were more than happy to allow the academy to utilise data collection techniques regarding the players freely, and in this vein, parents were unaware of any potential limiting outcomes that might arise because of the proliferation of these load monitoring/performance improvement practices. Furthermore, the second theme has also highlighted how parents *do* demonstrate a significant level of engagement and *do* want to be involved in their child's sporting experiences. However due to a lack of awareness, and the limited presence of dialogue or publicised information regarding the potentially problematic outcomes associated with docility and compliance on the part of vulnerable athletic populations, parents are apparently commonly able to exert their concerns towards traditional visible pressures associated with this role.

What is more, theme 4.2 demonstrates that while parents do have an awareness regarding the typical pressures that their son's may feel during their time at the academy, interestingly they simultaneously lack any awareness of how other practices derived from a disciplinary logic (Denison et al., 2017) at the academy may have implications for their child's development. For example, existing research has identified several limiting implications that can result from disciplinary practices (Barker-Ruchti & Tinning, 2010; Johns & Johns, 2000), not least the production of docility that leads to individuals becoming machine-like. These individuals are constrained and struggle to think for themselves or question any coaching practices to which they are exposed. This docility is a key factor that has regularly been highlighted as having damaging consequences for the healthy development of athletes. This scenario, married with constant emphasis on athletes' data can

cause coaches to ignore the psycho-social elements of athlete development. Furthermore, another key implication of athlete docility is that athletes can be compelled into adopting unhealthy expectations associated with their sporting role.

To reiterate, the parental docility (mapped in theme 4.1.2) precludes parents from questioning the commonplace, normalised and embedded coaching practices that their children are exposed to on a routine basis. This is important as it is clear that parents do express concerns regarding their children's academy experiences (see theme 4.2). Despite this evident concern however, our analysis helps reveal how one symptom of their docility is that their concerns may be being misdirected or obscured. In detail, while parents are keenly aware of many of the pressures that their children can face during their time in the elite football academy environment, what the current study has revealed is that there remains a lack of awareness from parents regarding some of the contemporary issues problematised in recent coach education literature (outlined in chapter two). Interestingly, during the interviews, parents expressed that they wanted to be involved in their children's experiences at the academy by understanding how they are feeling and trying to understand what is going on. This finding further highlights a need for parents to be educated in ways that might allow them to assist and support their children throughout their time at elite academies in a more informed manner. Below, I conclude by explaining how disrupting disciplinary logic might be used as a progressive approach in academy sports settings. I then move on to discuss the role of the parent in potentially disrupting this logic, before proceeding to make my suggestions for future socio-culturally informed research into the experience of parenting elite athletes.

5.1 Disrupting discipline

As has been demonstrated throughout this thesis, the production of docile athletes is still the routine and norm in elite sporting environments (Denison et al., 2013) and this production of docility in turn can have implications upon parents' experiences while their child is at an elite football academy. Therefore because of this routine, discussed below are some suggestions that have been inspired by past research that have demonstrated the value of disrupting disciplinary practices in sport. I include these as a preface to make some suggestions regarding how changes regarding the role of the parent in sport (as well as coaches' orientations toward the parent) might act to disrupt certain problematic entrenched practices and assumptions found therein.

The logic that determines the imposition of discipline that is rife in sports coaching contexts (Denison et al., 2013) can be disrupted, as has been suggested by Avner et al (2020). For example, there has been evidence to show that by reducing the number of rules and instruction placed upon the players during a practice session and by utilising a more fluid guiding concept by the coaches as opposed to telling players what to do can in fact assist players in starting to think for themselves, be able to problem solve in a variety of different situations and be able to 'think outside the box 'which in the current discourse of coaching practise's would not be something that is as easy to achieve. Discipline could also be disrupted in academy environments through the use of strategic questioning, multidirectional feedback and group decision making (Avner et al., 2020). By utilising these methods the academy would be helping to create thinking players and by encouraging the whole team to have an input and to hear their thoughts it allows players to feel as though they can express their ideas to the coaches be able to think of ways in which they can beat the opposition

without being seen as a problematic disrupting athlete as they would be seen as in the current dominant discourse of sports coaching (Denison & Avner, 2011). Such a democratic coaching method can also reduce the hierarchies that end up being created in traditional sporting groups and assist in helping the coaches to develop themselves and improve their understanding of the sport. What is more, these athlete-centred approaches that have been suggested could also encourage coaches to consider the constant need of performance analysis technologies and to begin to consider when and where is best to utilise these methods and how it is best to inform players of when and where they will be used. For example, by allowing all players to have a voice in the team coaches could begin to consider avoiding comparing the players data against each other and normative results as it can cause potential hierarchies to form and lead players to become increasingly docile (Jones & Denison, 2018). Coaches could be encouraged to be more transparent with the players over how the data is being used and why (see Jones & Denison, 2018; Nelson et al., 2014). Based on Groom et al's (2011) findings, a suggestion to coaches who have suffered negative experiences of performance analysis feedback when they were players is to consider how they felt at that time and identify ways in which this negative way of delivering feedback to them could have been rectified for example, being aware of the positive and negative clips that will be shown and always end the feedback on positive images (Groom et al., 2011). These and other athlete-centred approaches may enable coaches to be more transparent with their players and this transparency can also be applied to the parents too as will be discussed in the following section.

Following on from these suggestions, there is now evidence to suggest that the relationship contexts between parents and players as well as parents and coaches is an area where is a further opportunity for the 'disruption of discipline' and in the following section some suggestions will be made.

5.2 Parental disruption to discipline

The findings from the current study suggest that in the future parents need to be, a) be better informed regarding understanding the potential consequences of certain dominant coaching practices can have and b) be better educated in ways to assist and guide their children throughout their time in the academy in a more informed and knowledgeable manner. Should these two factors be in place – I posit that the opportunities for undiagnosed, yet problematic practices, may be mutually highlighted and potentially disrupted by better informed parents and more open-minded coaches.

Based upon the docility disruption research, and the understanding collected through themes 1 and 2, it is the belief of the researcher that it is the responsibility of the academy leaders to provide this knowledge and education to parents. As has been discussed in section *5.1* it is imperative that the higher ups in the academy are more transparent with their players to develop trust and enable coaches to better understand their players. However, another benefit to this transparency with players is that it can provide the coaches the opportunity to be more open with the parents as well. If the coaches where to be more transparent with parents regarding their practices, then it can also build trust between the parents and coaches and allow for parents to have a much clearer understanding of the practices that are occurring in the academy alongside helping them understand why they are happening and being used. It is clear based on the findings that the changes suggested would be extremely beneficial for elite academy football, and it is also clear based on what has been discussed that parents must be more regularly communicated with from the academy to highlight what they are doing and the potential changes that would be implemented based on the solutions offered in this study. The lack of information that has currently been provided from the coaches towards parents has in the past been an issue that other sports parenting research has identified (Harwood et

al., 2010). While parents from this study do, on the whole, seem happy with the information provided to them and rarely suggested questioning it at the time, it is clear that they are unaware of a lot of the practices and reasons for why these practices are occurring. For example, the question of who has access to the performance analysis data collected on their children.

It has been discussed in section *2.9.3* how the car ride home can serve as way for parents to negatively influence their children or put increased pressures onto them, the car ride home could also be seen to be a useful opportunity for parents to be able to better understand their child's experiences while at the academy. Indeed, Knight (2020) has suggested that to create a more positive and helpful environment for the development of players it would be beneficial for coaches to create a "parent positive culture" in which parents are now viewed as an extra asset alongside the coaches instead of a hindrance and are an extra member of the team. This is because no matter how much time a player spends in the academy environment, they will still spend more time with their parents and are therefore still going to be heavily influenced by them (Knight, 2020). This has further been backed up in other parent-coaching research in which the current stock of knowledge supports the idea for more interpersonal and educative methods on working with parents (Kwon, Elliott & Velardo, 2020; Thrower, Harwood & Spray, 2019). Therefore, if coaches can help parents to be more knowledgeable and an asset to the players, then places such as the car ride home can be a great time for parents to have discussions with their children about their experiences and how they are feeling, especially as this space is already being used as an environment for parents to socialise with their children (Tamminen et al., 2017). Another suggestion for the leaders of the academy is to provide opportunities for more regular contact with parents. For example, regularly hosting social or informal sessions to provide information on areas such as training and competitions as well as updates on their children to help build trust and to

keep parents updated on future plans, allowing parents to prepare for what will come in the future as gives parents the opportunity to ask their questions (Knight, 2020). By utilising methods such as this it could be the opportunity some parents need to have more understanding of the practices that can occur in the academy so they can not only become more knowledgeable and have a better understanding of what their children are experiencing in the academy but also now provides the platform for them to question some coaching practices. This could potentially cause coaches to consider how they can adjust or adapt their methods moving forward. What is more by the leaders of the academy providing this understanding and knowledge of events such as future training plans and their child's progress to the parents it can help parents to have the ability to have more in depth and knowledgeable conversations with their children in relation to their sport and what they are experiencing which in past research has been highlighted as important for youth athletes (Furusa et al., 2020).

Of course, it should be noted that parental involvement is not a one size fits all approach and it is therefore important that the leaders of the academy consider some of the following suggestions. Academy coaches should perhaps begin to consider and attempt to understand the type of parental involvement the players themselves require and from this can then assist in encouraging the parents and players to have conversations regarding the parents' involvement e.g., what the player would like support wise on a matchday (Knight, 2020). Coaches could also facilitate conversations at times of transition for example at times such as when the player is completing their school exams or are moving schools to enable the players time and space to be able to talk about how they are feeling and also be able to suggest ways in which they would like their parents' involvement to change because of this. It is therefore important that the leaders of the academy are able to recognise that parents need to be involved in their child's sporting life as well as their home life and therefore be

able to consider ways in which parents can do this in a way that works well for both the parent and the athlete (Knight, 2020).

By providing these suggestions to academy leaders, the hope is that the coaches will understand the potential consequences of not only the current performance analysis practices but also the benefits of involving parents more in their children's sporting lives. Moreover, by disrupting the dominant discourses that currently influence coaches' practices as well as their existing interactions with parents, hopefully in future, coaches will work towards an empathetic and more understanding approach to parental involvement and dialogue (Elliott, 2021).

5.3. Suggestions for future research

Although this research study can be considered useful to educate both sports coaches and parents, there are some suggestions that can be made to enhance this area of research further in the future. Future studies in this field could utilise more parents and players from a wider variety of academies to allow for a greater collection of experiences, which in turn can help us to understand varying experiences of a wider variety of people. Further research could also look to consider and explore in detail parental knowledge of the practices their children are being exposed too. This could also be linked to a study where researchers explore parents' experiences of interacting with the coaches and their attempts to find out more about their child's experiences. We know that parents do occasionally meet with coaches, but do they ever try to communicate with them outside of this and how is this received? Also do parents know what it is like for their children to be "datafied" (i.e., "the transformation of social action into online quantified data, thus allowing for real-time tracking and predictive analysis" (Van Dijck, 2014, p. 198)? Have they ever properly

considered and spoken to their child about how often they are receiving data about their performance? Do they really know what data is being fedback to their children and how often this is happening? This study has told us that parents understand that performance analysis techniques are taking place, but what it has also told us is that perhaps they do not know the answer to the question; what are the implications of this ceaseless observation and judgement for my developing son?

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7.0 Appendices

Interview Schedule

Questions for players

1. I take it Performance Analysis was an aspect of life at the Academy, can you tell me about your experiences with it…
2. For example, at the academy, were you presented with performance analysis data at all or on a regular basis?
3. If so at what age did this start? How? When? How Long for? And what was the purpose of it?
4. Who presented this data to you and was this a regular thing? Where you presented with information in a group setting or in an individual setting?
5. How was the data collected on you? For example:
   - Were your matches/training sessions filmed?
   - Did you ever wear GPS vests?
   - Were you exposed to any other types of surveillance technologies?
6. When you were presented with data was it provided to you individually or is it available for the whole squad to see e.g. is it displayed on the coach's office or changing room walls?
7. How did you/would you feel about your teammates being able to view the data collected on you?
8. When you were presented with the data, how did this make you feel about yourself as an athlete? Did it influence your behaviour for example?
9. Do the players become competitive over the data statistics? What sort of conversations did players have about the data and information generated from performance analysis?
10. Have the coaches ever used the data collected to justify their original feedback to you as a player and /or parents?

Questions for Parents

11. What does performance analysis mean to you?
12. How aware where you/are you that this was a component of your son's experience? And that the academy was collecting performance data from devices such as video and GPS vests?
13. Where you as a parent required to give consent to allow the academy to use performance analysis data and film games?
14. Were you given any information about the performance analysis practices prior to them taking place at the academy?
15. Were you allowed to see the data collected on your child if you wanted to?
16. Did you or would you want to see the data collected?
17. Did the academy provide regular or even occasional feedback on your child's development?

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET

Title of study

Implications Surrounding the Application of Performance Analysis and Surveillance Technologies in Academy Level Football

I would like to invite you to participate in a research project which forms part of my postgraduate master's research. Before you decide whether you want to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what your participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of the study is to identify the implications surrounding the usage of performance analysis and surveillance technologies (e.g. Global Positioning systems and video) in academy level sport by exploring players and parents' experiences of this process. We will interview a range of current/former youth academy players and parents about their experiences/knowledge and explore their thoughts, perceptions and feelings about the use of technology in academy settings. These views may provide interesting insights which can potentially be developed to offer solutions and improvements into how performance analysis and surveillance technologies can be used and implemented in the future by coaches and players in academy football settings.

Why have I been invited to take part?

You are being invited to participate in this study because you have had experience over a period of time (as a player or as a parent of a player) in an academy sports setting.

What will happen if I take part?

If you choose to take part in the study, you will be asked to participate in one semi-structured interview which will be recorded on a phone. The interview can take place at your home or the primary investigators home with a third part present. However, if you do not feel comfortable with this then the interviews can be conducted at a neutral venue or online over Skype or Zoom if there are any other issues such as the lockdown due to the current pandemic. The interview will last between 60 and 90 minutes. As part of the interview process, you will be asked to share your experiences and thoughts on your time at the academy in relation to the usage of performance analysis and surveillance technologies.

Do I have to take part?

Participation is completely voluntary. You should only take part if you want to and choosing not to take part will not disadvantage you in any way. Once you have read the information sheet, please contact us if you have any questions that will help you make a decision

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University of Hull

Data Management Plan

(NB: This form should be completed <u>at the start</u> of all projects where data management is not dealt with otherwise). Shaded areas are considered essential, particularly when a data management plan is required for a grant application.

Date	19-03-20
Researcher(s)	Joseph Brooks
Project title	Implications Surrounding the Application of Performance Analysis and Surveillance Technologies in Elite Academy Level Football.
Brief description	This study involves conducting semi-structured interviews with current and former elite academy level football players and their parents to establish and understand both players and parents' perspectives surrounding the use of performance analysis and surveillance technologies at elite academy settings.

For detailed, updated explanations of the various parts of the document that require completion, please refer to the accompanying Appendices.

This University of Hull History Data Management Plan (HDMP) applies the DCC Checklist for Data Management (v3.0 17 March 2011).

1

Version number and date:

CONSENT FORM

Title of study: **Implications Surrounding the Application of Performance Analysis and Surveillance Technologies in Elite Academy Level Football**

Name of Researcher: Joseph Brooks

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read the information sheet dated.................... version............ for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had any questions answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason

3. I understand that the research interview will be audio recorded and that my anonymised verbatim quotes may be used in research reports and conference presentations.

4. I understand that the research data, which will be anonymised (not linked to me), will be retained by the researchers and may be shared with others and publicly disseminated to support other research in the future.

5. I understand that my personal data will be kept securely in accordance with data protection guidelines, and will only be available to the immediate research team

6. I give permission for the collection and use of my data to answer the research question in this study.

7. I agree to take part in the above study.

Name of Participant	Date	Signature
Name of Person taking consent	Date	Signature

FHS RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
RISK ASSESSMENT FORM

Title of the research	Implications surrounding the application of performance analysis and surveillance technologies in academy level football
Name of Principal Investigator	Joseph Brooks
Location of research	University of Hull, Home and Athletes residence
Brief description of research activity	

Using semi-structured interviews to identify implications of using performance analysis and surveillance technologies in elite academy level football

RISK IDENTIFICATION

Please identify all risks related to this research and indicate WHO is at risk and the measures that are in place or are required to mitigate these.

RISK(S)	MEASURES IN PLACE / REQUIRED *(e.g. alternative work methods, training, supervision, protective equipment)*
Training / supervision: *(e.g. information or training required, level of experience, supervisor's input and oversight)*	Mock interviews will be carried out as practice and to assess questions. Questions will be chosen with the help of the research supervisors. Both research supervisors have published qualitative research in peer-reviewed journals.
Location: *(e.g. remote area, laboratory, confined space, entry or exit, level of illumination, heating etc.)*	Interviews will be conducted at a neutral venue or with a third-party present if they are conducted at the participants or primary investigators home to minimise any negative risks. However, if meeting face to face is not possible due to the lockdown then Skype or Zoom will be used.
Research processes: *(e.g. use of electrical systems, gas, liquids, tissue, potential for contamination, flammability etc.)*	No risk in research process.
Equipment use: *(e.g. manual handling, operation of emergency controls etc.)*	Use of mobile phone for recording interviews.