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The Strategic Delivery of Video-Based Coaching: A Season-Long Investigation in One English Youth Soccer Academy

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Abstract

This article presents the findings of a season-long investigation of video-based coaching (VBC) practices in an English youth soccer academy. During the period of fieldwork, the lead author immersed themselves within the academy setting, in which they observed 22 VBC sessions and day-to-day interactions between coaching staff relating to these activities. In addition, 18 interviews were conducted with 5 coaching staff, totalling 8 hours of in-depth interview data. The fieldnotes and interview transcripts were iteratively analysed, utilising Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical writings and Groom et al.'s (2011) grounded theory of VBC. Our analysis produced two overarching themes. These were a) how the coaching staff concealed that VBC sessions were principally designed to develop 'high priority' players and b) how the coaching staff purposefully withheld critical thoughts and feelings about their player's performances, preferring instead to strategically focus on the provision of positive messages during VBC sessions. These findings not only contribute towards the limited investigation of this aspect of coaching but demonstrate the importance of educating coaches to acknowledge how VBC can be influenced by and used to respond to workplace demands and expectations.

Keywords: Video-based coaching, performance analysis, coach education, coach development, dramaturgy.

30 **Introduction**

31 As technology and accessibility have developed, VBC is now a key feature of practice
32 in high-performance and youth development contexts.^{1,2,3} Despite widespread
33 applications of VBC there remains comparably limited research into its applied delivery
34 in coaching environments. Some consideration has been given to the pedagogical
35 practices of VBC and the potential to positively impact the learning, development, and
36 performances of athletes.^{4,5} However, little is known about the strategic delivery of
37 video-based coaching, as well as how workplace pressures and demands influence
38 delivery.^{1,3} Through the completion of a season-long investigation into the VBC
39 delivered in an English youth soccer academy, the present study extends our
40 understanding of these important but under-investigated features of VBC.

41 Previously, research has focused on athletes' perceptions and experiences of
42 VBC.^{6,7,8,9,10} For example, through their investigation of a case-study ice-hockey
43 player, Nelson et al.⁷ identified that the trust and respect athletes afford their coach
44 impacted on the (non)learning from VBC sessions. Here, athletes were shown to be
45 more open to learning from those coaches who delivered visually appealing and well-
46 prepared sessions, shared their expert knowledge, and encouraged group discussions.⁷
47 In contrast, athletes were less likely to learn during poorly prepared and ill thought-out
48 VBC sessions. Furthermore, Wright et al.¹⁰ found that football player's level of debate
49 and interaction with coaches differed greatly during VBC, but it was central to self-
50 reflection and learning. Despite the positive outcomes, research also highlights the
51 potentially harmful and controlling impacts of coaches' applications of VBC.^{8,9} Indeed,
52 Magill et al.⁶ identified that football players felt culturally obligated to manage their
53 public displays of emotion and associated thoughts during VBC sessions to appear
54 professional, protect their working relationships, and avoid sanctions associated with a
55 lack of emotional control. This research shows that the actions of coaches can impact
56 how athletes experience, engage with, and (non)learn from their participation in VBC.

57 In addition to athlete-focused research of VBC, scholars have also begun to
58 investigate the pedagogical practices of those coaches responsible for the delivery of
59 video sessions.^{11,12,13,5} For example, Raya Castellano et al.⁵ observed the coaches'
60 behaviour during VBC in junior-elite football and identified feedback as the most
61 prevalent intervention. Groom et al.'s¹¹ grounded theory revealed that when designing
62 their VBC activities, national team youth soccer coaches considered targeted outcomes,
63 delivery designs, session designs, and presentation formats. Importantly, these

1
2
3 64 decisions were also framed by coaches' perceptions about the qualities of their athletes,
4 preferred coaching and delivery styles, as well as perceptions regarding the contextual
5 65 expectations, demands, and pressures experienced in their workplace environments.¹¹
6
7 66
8 67 Groom et al.¹² then analysed the coach-athlete 'talk in action' during VBC sessions,
9
10 68 revealing that the dynamics of social interactions that occur during these sessions were
11
12 69 significantly influenced by the actions of the coach, further emphasising the role and
13
14 70 influence of the coach within the application and delivery of VBC sessions. This is
15
16 71 demonstrated by Booroff et al.¹³ who reported how an Academy soccer coach
17
18 72 strategically used VBC to fulfil various objectives and outcomes expected of him at the
19
20 73 club. This included 1) focusing on the "better" players, 2) fostering respect,
21
22 74 professionalism, and discipline, and 3) preparing players for being released from the
23
24 75 academy.¹³ This foundational research identifies the importance of developing an
25
26 76 improved understanding of how pedagogical decisions and practices relating to VBC
27
28 77 are influenced by coaches' perceptions about role expectations, inclusive of pressures
29
30 78 to fulfil performance targets which include player development objectives and
31
32 79 outcomes. Simply put, VBC is a mechanism that coaches can and do increasingly utilise
33
34 80 in response to how they are judged.

35
36 81 Considering the limited research addressing applications of VBC, the aim of
37
38 82 this study was this study aimed to undertake a season-long investigation of VBC within
39
40 83 a professional English youth soccer academy. More specifically, this investigation
41
42 84 sought to develop rich insights into 1) how the coaching staff delivered VBC sessions,
43
44 85 2) why they delivered sessions in these ways, and 3) how understandings about
45
46 86 workplace expectations and pressures influenced the VBC decisions and actions of the
47
48 87 coaching staff. In doing so, this article provides novel insights into the individual and
49
50 88 collective strategic performances of coaching staff in response to their learning
51
52 89 objectives and pedagogy. This contributes to limited scholarship addressing VBC and
53
54 90 highlights the importance of educating coaches about this increasingly prevalent and
55
56 91 unavoidable feature of contemporary coaching work.

57
58 92

59 93 **Methodology**

60 94 ***Dramaturgical Approach***

61 95 This study was conducted from a dramaturgical perspective. Our decision to adopt
62
63 96 dramaturgical analysis as a guiding framework is founded on our belief that coaching
64
65 97 (including VBC) can be a performative, social, and relational activity.¹⁴ Hence, it has

98 been argued by coaching scholars that dramaturgy offers a particularly useful means of
 99 getting a greater purchase on the realities of this inherently social endeavour.¹⁵ Here,
 100 emphasis was placed on investigating what Shulman¹⁶ refers to as the constituent parts
 101 of the sociological analysis of nonfiction from a dramaturgical perspective, namely, the
 102 consideration of a) places of performances (i.e., where VBC interactions are
 103 performed), b) players in the performances (i.e., which stakeholders are involved in the
 104 provision of VBC), c) presentation in the performances (i.e., actions and expressions of
 105 those involved in VBC sessions), d) purpose of the performance (i.e., reasons for
 106 delivering VBC in desired ways), and e) product of performances (i.e., intended and
 107 unintended consequences of VBC). This framework provided a coherent analytical
 108 approach to guide the investigation.

109 ***Context and Participants***

110 Using purposive sampling, three full-time head coaches and two full-time performance
 111 analysts in one English Category 2 Football Academy agreed to participate (Table 1).
 112 These 5 participants were male, and the only members of staff directly involved in the
 113 delivery of VBC to players in the Professional Development Phase (PDP, i.e., U18 and
 114 U21 age groups) within the academy. A case study approach allowed rich insights into
 115 how the participants organised, delivered, and interacted with each other and their
 116 players on VBC to be established. To ensure anonymity, all participants were given
 117 pseudonyms (Ben, Phil, Adam, Tom, and Billy), and ethical approval was granted by a
 118 University Social Sciences Ethics Committee [ETH2122-0302].

120
 121 Table 1. Participant demographics

<i>Participant Pseudonym</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Experience</i>	<i>Qualifications</i>
<i>Ben</i>	<i>59</i>	<i>Lead PDP U18 and U21 Coach</i>	<i>44 Years (9 Professional Football Clubs)</i>	<i>UEFA Pro License</i>
<i>Billy</i>	<i>41</i>	<i>Lead U21 Coach</i>	<i>23 Years (6 Professional Football Clubs)</i>	<i>UEFA A License</i>
<i>Tom</i>	<i>43</i>	<i>Lead U18 Coach</i>	<i>25 Years (4 Professional Football Clubs)</i>	<i>UEFA A License</i>

Adam	27	Lead Academy Performance Analyst	5 Years (1 Professional Football Club)	UEFA B License and MRes in Performance Analysis FA Level 1 Certificate, BSc Sport Coaching, and MSc Applied Sport Performance Analysis
Phil	23	U21 Performance Analyst	4 Years (4 Professional Football Clubs)	

122

123 **Data Collection**124 **Participant Observation**

125 The lead author immersed themselves in the academy setting over a season-long period
 126 of fieldwork as a performance analyst within the club who was conducting the
 127 observations and interviews as a research project. Observations were employed to learn
 128 about how the participants performed their roles within the context of the
 129 investigation.¹⁷ Field notes were completed to provide insights into the day-to-day
 130 interactions of coaching staff and performance analysts regarding VBC, and to provide
 131 descriptions of specific events in chronological order. These field notes were aligned
 132 with the dramaturgical categories a) places of performances, b) players in the
 133 performances, c) presentation in the performances, d) purpose of the performances, and
 134 e) products of performances to help inform, explain, and understand the contextual
 135 demands of the Academy (working) environment. Throughout, all notes were made
 136 promptly in situ, to ensure the accuracy of observations, and were later expanded on to
 137 provide greater detail and contextual description.¹⁸ In total, 22 VBC sessions and
 138 numerous day-to-day interactions over 231 days, between coaching staff relating to
 139 these activities were observed. The field observation notes were then used to inform the
 140 interview questions as the study progressed.

141

142 **Semi-Structured Interviews**

143 Throughout the completed fieldwork, the lead author engaged in regular day-to-day
 144 discussions with the PDP staff. In addition to these informal discussions, 18 formal
 145 (semi-structured) interviews were conducted, totalling 8 hours, lasting between 22 to
 146 37 minutes. Interviews were informed by the collected field notes and the broader aims
 147 of the study. Interviews permitted the development of richer insights into staff VBC
 148 decisions and actions. ‘How’ and ‘why’ questions were used as probes, with prompts
 149 for specific examples.¹⁹ All formal interviews were conducted face-to-face in a

1
2
3 150 classroom at the football Academy and recorded on a ‘voice memos’ device before
4
5 151 being transcribed. As the research and data collection progressed, previous interview
6
7 152 findings and field notes iteratively informed subsequent data collection.
8

9 153

10 154 *Phronetic Iterative Data Analysis*

11 155 A phronetic iterative approach was undertaken, which is defined as an abductive,
12
13 156 problem-based approach that continuously switches between the emergent data
14
15 157 findings, existing research questions, theories, and the literature.²⁰ This process started
16
17 158 with engaging in primary cycle coding (e.g. who, what, when, where), which included
18
19 159 using first-level descriptive codes to capture the essence of the data.²¹ During this stage,
20
21 160 discussions between the authors offered initial codes that were descriptive and basic.
22
23 161 Following this, secondary cycle coding (e.g. how, why, because) was undertaken,
24
25 162 which involved the consideration of past theory and literature that best illuminated an
26
27 163 understanding of the video-based decisions and actions of the observed coaching staff.²¹
28
29 164 This principally involved the use of Goffman’s²² dramaturgical theorisation as outlined
30
31 165 in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* text and Groom et al.’s¹¹ grounded theory
32
33 166 of VBC. The research team met on several occasions to cross-check and to give
34
35 167 consideration as to which data was important, and how the codes were to be developed
36
37 168 in ‘secondary cycling’ where our understanding of performative, social, and relational
38
39 169 activity proved useful for interpreting and building theoretical explanations. As such,
40
41 170 additional questions emerged and new connections between theory, video-based
42
43 171 coaching and empirical data were developed progressively leading to refined focus and
44
45 172 understanding.²³ It is important to acknowledge that this iterative process was far from
46
47 173 simplistic and linear. Rather, cycles of etic and emic readings of the data occurred
48
49 174 throughout as well as after the completed fieldwork. Data collection and data analysis
50
51 175 informed each other, with the analysis of findings continuing into the writing-up of this
52
53 176 manuscript. That is, the writing of this paper included all the authors and was an
54
55 177 analytical process in and of itself, whereby the meanings of our findings took form
56
57 178 through an iterative process of thinking, writing, ongoing discussion, and re-writing.¹
58

59 179

60 180 **Results**

61 181 Our iterative analysis of the interview and observation data resulted in two distinct but
62
63 182 interrelated themes. The first explores the Academy’s aims to progress players to the
64
65 183 first team resulting in VBC sessions focusing on the development of the ‘high priority’

1
2
3 184 players. The second shows how the coaching staff focused on the delivery of positive
4
5 185 VBC sessions to players, despite negative assessments of team and individual
6
7 186 performances during private coaching meetings.
8

9 187

10 188 *Strategic Focus on 'High Priority' Players*

11 189 Before observing VBC sessions, at the commencement of fieldwork, it was apparent
12
13 190 that the academy was particularly proud of the successful outcomes it had achieved.
14
15 191 Adorned on the walls of the main corridor of the Academy facility were framed pictures
16
17 192 of those players who had graduated to the senior squad and made professional debuts
18
19 193 for the first team, which was reinforced by Ben the Lead PDP coach: 'The ultimate for
20
21 194 every Academy coach or manager is obviously to get a player into the first team. So
22
23 195 yeah, I would say the main goal and target is to get players into the first team'. The
24
25 196 importance the Academy placed on achieving these ends was reinforced by the
26
27 197 observation that certain U18 and U21 players were listed in black and others red, on a
28
29 198 whiteboard located in the coaches' private office. When questioned about this
30
31 199 distinction, the coaching staff shared that those listed in black marker were 'high
32
33 200 priority' players (sometimes also referred to as 'grade A players') who were recognised
34
35 201 as club assets, whereas those listed in red were 'the others' (sometimes also referred to
36
37 202 as 'grade B players'). The significance of this distinction was articulated by Billy
38
39 203 (Under 21's Lead Coach) who explained that the PDP coaching staff 'prioritise the
40
41 204 higher achievers' and provides them with 'special attention' as 'they could either play
42
43 205 in our first team or be a potential sellable asset for the club.' When asked why these
44
45 206 players receive special attention, Tom (Under 18's Lead Coach) went on to explain it
46
47 207 was 'to keep us all in jobs because it's the grade A players that are either going to be
48
49 208 playing in your first team or the club will sell them on, which continues to fund the club
50
51 209 and the academy as well.' In short, coaching staff focussed on developing the 'high
52
53 210 priority' players as 'the success of the PDP is how successful we are at readying the
54
55 211 young footballers for first team football. The priority is to get players into the first team'
56
57 212 (Adam – Head of Performance Analysis).

58
59 213 This contextual information provided a useful lens for understanding the
60
214 observed VBC sessions. During VBC sessions the 'high priority' players were more
215 often involved in the video clips that were shown and reviewed, they also received
216 regular individualised feedback as well as greater recognition and praise for their
217 contributions, as shown in the below field note:

1
2
3 218 Today, I observed a post-match meeting that included all the U21 players, the
4
5 219 U21's head coach, the PDP coach, the goalkeeper coach and the U21's analyst.
6
7 220 The head coach continually highlighted the 'high priority' players for good
8
9 221 practice in the post-match video. The head coach is standing at the front of the
10
11 222 classroom next to a screen where video clips of the last game are played one by
12
13 223 one. The other staff are sat at the side and back of the classroom. The players are
14
15 224 all sitting around the screen carefully observing. "That's brilliant Anthony
16
17 225 (pseudonym) keep doing that. Look how much space you've created for everyone
18
19 226 by doing that". Another video of a successful performance is played on the screen.
20
21 227 "I love that Chris (pseudonym). That's really good play by you two. Once we lost
22
23 228 the ball, the reactions top notch boys. Well done (Chris and Anthony)" (Field
24
25 229 Note: May 2022)

26
27 230 In contrast, 'the others' involvements in the observed VBC sessions were clearly
28
29 231 different to those of the 'high priority' players. 'The others' tended to receive less
30
31 232 individualised feedback and praise, with their VBC involvements focusing more on
32
33 233 helping these players to understand how they might aid the team's overall performance
34
35 234 in preferred tactical ways. When coaches were asked why they interacted with 'high
36
37 235 priority' players in subtly different ways to 'the others,' Tom (Lead Under 18's Coach)
38
39 236 provided the following response:

40
41 237 'There are definitely weaker players who are not likely to progress into the first
42
43 238 team but to play games you need a full squad of players that facilitates a games
44
45 239 programme. Having a full squad allows your best players to experience all sorts
46
47 240 of opportunities and games that will help with their development into the first
48
49 241 team. So, if we give the weaker players help and guidance it can have a good
50
51 242 impact on our better players.'

52
53 243 Coaching staff were acutely aware that a full squad of players was needed to aid the
54
55 244 development of the 'high priority' players and that instructing 'the others' was a
56
57 245 necessary step in this process. Therefore, staff strategically utilised VBC to focus on
58
59 246 the development of the 'high priority' players while progressing 'the others' in ways
60
247 that would benefit the staff's ability to achieve organisational outcomes. When
248 preparing VBC sessions the coaching staff considered how their design and delivery
249 could facilitate these desired ends. However, it is important to note that neither the 'high
250 priority' players or 'the others' were made aware of the categorisation system, nor how
251 this impacted the VBC sessions they attended. Rather, the coaching staff purposely

1
2
3 252 concealed this information from the players to maintain the engagement of all players.
4
5 253 Coaching staff believed identifying ‘the others’ could negatively impact on the
6
7 254 development of the ‘high priority’ players. Conversely, coaching staff believed
8
9 255 identifying ‘high priority’ players could cause a level of complacency among these
10
11 256 assets, again leading to a drop in engagement that could negatively impact their
12
13 257 development:

14 258 ‘Mainly to keep the grade B players emotionally engaged [...] If the grade B
15
16 259 players thought they were less valuable, then their efforts and engagement levels
17
18 260 would decrease. If this happened, it would have an effect on the grade A players.
19
20 261 Not to mention the grade B players might perform really well and give themselves
21
22 262 a chance of progressing and being valued as a grade A player so we can’t
23
24 263 disregard them’ (Adam – Head of Performance Analysis)

25
26 264
27 265 ‘Obviously being in academy football, all the players are fighting for the same
28
29 266 thing, to be retained and get a contract. They’re all in the same position and they
30
31 267 all have the same goal. You don’t want the grade B players to think, well I’m a
32
33 268 grade B player so I won’t get a contract, but you also don’t want the grade A
34
35 269 players thinking they have already got a contract.’ (Phil – Under 21’s
36
37 270 Performance Analyst)

38 271

39 272 ***Strategically Positive Approach***

40 273 An important observation during the completed fieldwork was that staff regularly held
41
42 274 pre-video meetings away from the players. These meetings tended to occur in the
43
44 275 coaching office at the academy facility. During these meetings staff candidly discussed
45
46 276 the individual and collective performances of their players and made decisions about
47
48 277 the content and delivery of VBC meetings. Observations of these meetings, as well as
49
50 278 informal office conversations between coaching staff, revealed the frustrations that staff
51
52 279 regularly experienced about the poor performances of their players and a lack of
53
54 280 perceived development, as shown in the below fieldnote:

55 281 Today I observed the coaches and analysts in the coach’s office. The U18’s
56
57 282 coach and U18’s analyst were openly sharing their frustrations about poor
58
59 283 individual performances. I also noticed that the coaches and analysts were
60
284 annoyed that basic mistakes were occurring regularly within games. The U18’s
285 coach expressed “We’ve worked on this training, how on earth can we still get

1
2
3 286 it wrong?" "Every week it's the same mistake, we are not learning from our
4
5 287 mistakes" (Field Note: March 2023).
6
7 288

8 289 The frustrations that staff collectively experienced in response to their negative
9
10 290 evaluations of their teams and individual performances were often in stark contrast to
11
12 291 the positive analysis and feedback that staff presented to players during VBC sessions.
13
14 292 Unlike the observed pre-session meetings, VBC sessions consistently focused on
15
16 293 highlighting positive aspects of play and were generally upbeat in tone, as captured in
17
18 294 the below fieldnote:

19 295 Today I attended a video meeting that included all the U21 players, the U21's
20
21 296 head coach, PDP coach, the goalkeeper coach and the U21's analyst. From
22
23 297 watching the U21's game 2 days before, a CB was at fault for both the goals
24
25 298 that they conceded. I wanted to see how the coaches would highlight his mistakes
26
27 299 in front of the group but there was nothing mentioned about either of the goals
28
29 300 that they conceded. The negative conversations that had occurred in the
30
31 301 coaches' office, with the same members of staff, were not communicated to the
32
33 302 players. "Well done though lads, were moving in the right direction. There're
34
35 303 positives we can take from that game, we move on to Tuesday now" (Field Note,
36
37 304 March 2023).
38
39 305

40 306 When asked to comment on why the observed VBC sessions tended to present players
41
42 307 with a more positive analysis of squad and individual performances, including overall
43
44 308 progress, staff variously shared how they purposefully adopted this approach for a
45
46 309 variety of pedagogical reasons. That is, they chose to strategically deliver positive VBC
47
48 310 sessions to develop a constructive learning environment that aimed to enhance player
49
50 311 and squad efficacy, motivation, learning, and development. The coaching staff were
51
52 312 mindful of the consequences that could result from the delivery of negative, critical,
53
54 313 and pointed VBC sessions. Namely, how negative feedback aimed at individual players
55
56 314 within a group session could hinder their development and promote a toxic learning
57
58 315 environment where players are fearful of the feedback they may receive from
59
60 316 teammates as well as coaching staff. For example, Tom and Phil shared the following:

57 317 'I think we try and aim to work off positives, that's personally where I feel we
58
59 318 can have the best impact. Another thing to consider is that we are working with
60
319 U18 players so I believe that working off positives makes a bigger impact on

1
2
3 320 them and then they can perform better [...] You must be very careful what you
4
5 321 present to the group of players in the meeting itself. The relationship between
6
7 322 you and the players is really important. Each player learns in different ways and
8
9 323 as a coach working with them daily, you should know how to deal with each
10
11 324 individual. So, for the video-based meetings you need to be really careful what
12
13 325 clips you show to some of the individuals because it could affect many different
14
15 326 things like confidence, team morale and the team's image of an individual [...]
16
17 327 We always look for positives to try and produce confidence. Everyone performs
18
19 328 better with confidence, so we try to keep the meetings positive to try and build
20
21 329 everybody up so they have the confidence to go out and perform' (Tom – Under
22
23 330 18's Lead Coach)

24
25 331
26
27 332 'You're always trying to encourage players, to try and boost their confidence
28
29 333 because ultimately, we believe that's the best way to get a good performance
30
31 334 out of the players. Having a positive environment with lots of encouragement
32
33 335 will always push them and make them perform better than slating them for
34
35 336 making a mistake [...] The analysis needs to be used wisely because it can be
36
37 337 detrimental to a player if you do it in the wrong situations at the wrong time.
38
39 338 You don't want to make it a toxic environment for players to go in to, if you
40
41 339 constantly draw up on one mistake that a player keeps making then it will affect
42
43 340 their performance when they play [...] You always enhance the positives that
44
45 341 they do. If you keep homing in on the poorer aspects it will create a toxic
46
47 342 environment and players will fear coming into the meetings. If someone feels
48
49 343 uncomfortable, stressed and not confident they won't perform well. So, building
50
51 344 up someone's confidence through the positive clips will only enhance their
52
53 345 performance' (Phil – Under 21's Performance Analyst)

54
55 346

56 347 **Discussion**

57 348 The main findings of this study are that coaching staff strategically focused on the 'high
58
59 349 priority' players as well as the provision of positive VBC sessions in response to the
60
350 perceived workplace demands and expectations. Specifically, staff hoped that these
351 strategies would facilitate the development of players who could progress to first-team
352 football, either at the club or sold to another club for a profit. These findings can be
353 understood in relation to Groom et al.'s¹¹ grounded theory of VBC, which shows that

1
2
3 354 coaches' pedagogical decisions are often framed by the demands of the social
4
5 355 environment in which they conduct their coaching work. In this research, the coaching
6
7 356 staff's targeted outcomes, priorities, and positive approaches to VBC delivery were
8
9 357 shaped by their understanding of the context. Like the coach in Booroff et al.¹³, staff in
10
11 358 the present investigation were acutely aware of how the performance of the Academy
12
13 359 and their respective roles within it were judged by senior members of the football club.
14
15 360 In the present study, focusing on the pedagogical provision of positive VBC sessions
16
17 361 was principally aimed to focus on the development of 'high priority' players to try
18
19 362 to fulfil these expectations.

20
21 363 A dramaturgical analysis of these strategic uses of VBC helps to gain further
22
23 364 purchase on how and why they were pedagogically implemented by the coaching staff.
24
25 365 According to Goffman's²² analysis, social interactions often comprise identifiable
26
27 366 teams. The settings in which these team interactions occur are typically assembled and
28
29 367 managed by one of the teams, known as the *performers* (i.e., staff). The performers put
30
31 368 on a show for the other team, referred to as the *audience* or the *observers* (i.e., players).
32
33 369 Indeed, mirroring Britton²⁴, the present study identified that VBC is not always an
34
35 370 individual coaching endeavour, rather VBC performances are collectively prepared and
36
37 371 delivered by a team of coaching staff who conceal information from their player
38
39 372 audience in response to organisational demands and expectations.

40
41 373 The coaching staff's decision to prioritise the content of their VBC sessions
42
43 374 towards the development of the 'high priority' players is consistent with the findings
44
45 375 presented in Booroff et al.'s¹³ study of VBC in a football academy setting. Focusing on
46
47 376 the provision of positively framed VBC is also consistent with the findings of Groom
48
49 377 et al.'s¹¹ study, which found that elite soccer coaches often use VBC as a means of
50
51 378 improving the efficacy and motivation of their athletes while also being mindful of the
52
53 379 potentially damaging impacts negative feedback can have on these targeted outcomes.
54
55 380 Here, coaches clearly considered not only the psychological impacts of VBC on their
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57 381 players but also how the broader contextual demands of their working environments
58
59 382 shaped and influenced their delivery.

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61 383 The coaching staff's implementation of these strategies can be explained by
62
63 384 Goffman's²² theorisation of how social performances occur on what he termed
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65 385 the *frontstage* and *backstage* regions. The frontstage regions, according to Goffman²²,
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67 386 are those locations where performances are delivered before a scrutinising audience. In
68
69 387 contrast, he identified the backstage region as those 'place[s] where the performer can

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3 388 reliably expect that no member of the audience will intrude' (Goffman, 1959, p. 113).
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5 389 In the present study, coaching staff devoted considerable time in the backstage region
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7 390 critically planning the content of their VBC and how the video clips were going to be
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9 391 delivered with a focus on the positive messages they wanted to convey. At no stage
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11 392 were athletes made aware that the coaches' VBC sessions were strategically orientated
12
13 393 towards the development and progression of the 'high priority' players. Neither were
14
15 394 the players informed that the coaches strategically focused on the delivery of positive
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17 395 clips and associated feedback on the frontstage, despite being frustrated by individual
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19 396 and team performances when reviewing video and preparing VBC backstage.

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21 397 Learning about these deceptions would likely have damaged the athletes'
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23 398 perceptions of their coaching staff and potentially have resulted in the players
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25 399 withdrawing their best efforts. Coaching staff engaged in impression management to
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27 400 avoid these negative outcomes, which included concealing their pedagogical decision-
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29 401 making to avoid their athletes acquiring 'destructive information about the situation
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31 402 that is being defined for them' (p. 141). Current findings provide important insights
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33 403 into the performative nature of VBC delivery and pedagogical implications, which
34
35 404 require a more concerted empirical and theoretical investigation. Indeed, there is much
36
37 405 to be learnt about how coaches perform as part of teams, as well as what information
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39 406 coaching staff conceal from whom, how, and why. This includes the success of their
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41 407 performative efforts and attempts to retain information as part of staged performances.
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43 408 Future research should seek to explore these areas in greater detail, including how the
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45 409 performances of coaching teams are influenced by and enacted in response to perceived
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47 410 workplace demands and expectations.

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412 **Conclusion**

413 This study contributes to foundational critical social and pedagogical scholarship that
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415 414 seeks to investigate how coaches' understandings of workplace demands influence their
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417 415 VBC practices (i.e.,^{13,11}). It also adds to a growing dramaturgical analysis of sports
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419 416 coaching through its consideration of the performative features of coaching practice
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421 417 (e.g.,^{25,26,27}). The findings and analysis of this study also have important implications
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423 418 for the education and development of coaches. Coaches need to be taught how to
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425 419 become technically proficient with video analysis technology and software, as well as
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427 420 the analysis of performance. However, in line with this research, coaches also need to
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429 421 think about how they design and deliver their video sessions for strategic ends, being

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3 422 mindful of how players might respond to such delivery. In this regard, there is limited
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5 423 recognition of VBC within coach education programmes. This is problematic as
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7 424 advancements in performance analysis technologies have resulted in VBC becoming
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9 425 an integral feature of coaching practice. As such, those responsible for the education of
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11 426 sports coaches have a responsibility to appropriately prepare coaches for this aspect of
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13 427 their work. This study seeks to prompt further scholarship into the investigation of VBC
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15 428 as well as the need to inform the professional preparation and development of sports
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17 429 coaches in this area of practice. Current findings could be used by coach educators to
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19 430 encourage coaches to think critically about ‘how’ and ‘why’ they wish to design and
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21 431 deliver VBC in preferred ways. Here, coaches should consider how the organisational
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23 432 demands and pressures they face might influence their VBC decisions. Coaches should
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25 433 also reflect on how their decisions and actions could respond to the learning needs of
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27 434 their players, the environment in which these sessions are delivered, as well as how
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29 435 players might respond to these pedagogical approaches that they utilise.
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