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Comments	Section		
	Title and Abstract Title to include: A concise indication of the research question/problem. Abstract to include: A concise summary of the empirical study undertaken.		
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CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

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CARDIFF SCHOOL OF SPORT

DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (HONOURS)

SPORT AND EXERCISE SCIENCE

**CAPITAL AND THE COACH/ATHLETE
RELATIONSHIP: AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHY OF
PROFESSIONAL ACADEMY RUGBY**

**(Dissertation submitted under the discipline of
COACHING SCIENCE)**

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RELATIONSHIP: AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHY OF
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Abstract

This study explores the ambiguous capital and power dynamics within the coach/athlete relationship. Specifically, it utilizes an autoethnographic approach in order to examine the professional sport academy context and the relationships that characterize this environment from an inside perspective. Three progressive narratives were told that centred on critical incidents over the course of a rugby season. These stories originated from data that was logged from noteworthy interactions, conversations and memories throughout the season. The three narratives were analysed immediately after each was told to demonstrate the ever changing capital and power relations and to guide the reader in and out of each story with theoretical signposts (Jones, 2006; Tsang, 2000). They were analysed through Bourdieu's concept on capital (1977, 1984) alongside appropriate alternative social power theory to further our theoretical understanding of the uncertain nature of the social dynamics that determine the coach/athlete relationship. Findings illustrated the varying characteristics of capital and power within a professional sport academy and built on research from Cushion and Jones (2006) within a similar context. Conclusions show that coaches should be aware of the capital and power dynamics inherent in the coach/athlete relationship. Additionally, coaches within the professional sport academies need to be aware of the consequences their actions have on athlete's potential professional careers.

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Coaching, and the ability to coach others has always been an important feature of sport and competition as it is concerned with the improvement of performance at all levels. A historical view of coaching illustrates that it dates back to Roman and ancient Greek times (Robinson, 2010) however, only recently has it become a recognised profession with more and more sport clubs, schools and organizations needing a coach (Robinson, 2010). The role of a coach can be defined as delivering a series of planned, coordinated and integrated activities and interventions that are created with the purpose of improving an individual's or team's performance (Lyle, 2002).

The importance of sports coaching has led to many studies and investigations exploring the roles and responsibilities of a coach and resulted in coaching research initially adopting a traditional view of coaching as an unproblematic process (Jones and Wallace, 2005). However more recently, literature has acknowledged its difficult nature, noting that the variables that a coach is expected to consider and manage are many, dynamic and ambiguous (Cushion and Jones, 2006). Jones and Wallace (2005) suggest that it is inevitable that many tensions and issues epitomise the coaching experience and that intended outcomes are never a forgone conclusion when one considers its uncertain nature. Indeed, even traditional representations of coaching highlighted its complexities by identifying the need to consider the personality characteristics and interpersonal relationships that are associated with the coaching environment (Cote, Salmela, Trudel, Baria and Russell, 1995; Lyle, 2002).

Chiefly, the disciplines of psychology, physiology and biomechanics are involved within the practices of a sports coach (Robinson, 2010), however, it is suggested that in order to become a more rounded coach, these disciplines need to be integrated in a socially valued manner (MacDonald and Brooker, 1995). Lemert (1997) acknowledged the importance of the coach's social competencies as he described coaching as taking place during the 'comings and goings' and the 'givings and gettings' with the athlete. Despite this, it is postulated that sociologies relevance to coaching is an underappreciated ingredient in a coaches' repertoire (Jones, Potrac, Cushion and Ronglan, 2011). However, in more recent research,

the social aspect of coaching has received greater interest as the consequences of what, when and how to say to who are considered (Jones *et al.*, 2011).

As a consequence of the increasing acknowledgement of sports coaching as a social activity (Stanley, 1993), the ways social structure, power relations and social trends shape those involved have been investigated (Jones, Armour and Potrac, 2002, 2003, 2004). The interactions between individuals within the coaching environment can occur at any time and therefore, highlights the importance of the affirmed social skills required in a coaches' knowledge. Such skills relate to behaving appropriately in context, to maintain and improve the coach/athlete relationship (Jones *et al.*, 2011).

One of the concerns with the coach/athlete relationship is the exploration of power as it is proposed that all social interactions are inherently associated with relations of power (Touraine, 1981). Power is largely recognised as the ability to influence others to behave and act how you want them to (Lukes, 1993) and has been theorised by many in the coaching research domain (Bourdieu, 1977; French and Raven, 1959; Foucault, 1977; Giddens, 1984). Some frameworks state that power is wholly bestowed by the coach, whereas, others observe a variety of ways in which power can be utilised. Thus, the power dynamics within the coach/athlete relationship prove multifaceted (Cassidy, Jones and Potrac, 2009). As a result, it is advocated that coaches should be aware of how they exert power over their athletes and how this effects the coaching environment (Jones *et al.*, 2004). Additionally, they should be mindful that athletes are not powerless in this relationship (Giddens, 1984). In this respect, coaches should be mindful of how the interactions with their athletes shape the social world they reside in and how these affect the power relations within the coach/athlete relationship (Cassidy *et al.*, 2009).

The aim of this study is to investigate how critical incidents disturb the power and capital relations within the coach/athlete relationship through an autoethnographic approach. These critical incidents will then be explained in light of Bourdieu's (1977, 1984) conceptualization of capital to provide an in-depth understanding of the behaviours and actions that affect the coach/athlete relationship. Additional

social power theories will also be placed alongside the narratives when appropriately linked in order to support conclusions drawn.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature Review

Early attempts to conceptualise the field of coaching has focused on evolving methods and models that concentrated on sports performance and the 'technical' aspects of delivery (Abraham and Collins, 1998; Franks, Sinclair, Thomson and Goodman, 1986; Lyle, 1999; Mosston and Ashworth, 1986; Saury and Durand, 1998). While these publications were driven by the recognition that academic writing had little or no influence on coach education, they failed to engross themselves in the search for a conceptual framework that represented coaching adequately (Cushion and Lyle, 2010). Indeed, in a review of coaching research, Gilbert and Trudel (2006) recognised over 1000 coaching-related publications that reveal a considerable range of theoretical and empirical insights into coaching and its processes. In spite of this, Cushion and Lyle (2010) concluded that the in depth and multifaceted nature of coaching is yet to be fully understood and that the conceptual underpinning that could inform practice is absent. Moreover, irrespective of the efforts of many scholars, research seems as far detached from unanimity and lucidity about the nature of coaching as ever (Cushion, 2007; Cushion, Armour and Jones, 2006).

The fundamental criticism of early research is its representation of the coaching process: Models, diagrams and plans are only illustrated two dimensionally and consequently, tend to paint a rather straightforward, unproblematic portrayal of the activity (Cushion, 2007; Jones, 2006, 2009; Jones *et al.*, 2002, 2003, 2004; Jones and Wallace, 2005). As a result, the indefinite nature of coaching is not adequately captured or represented (Cushion, 2007; Jones *et al.*, 2004). For example, although work by Fairs (1987), Cote *et al.* (1995) and Lyle (2002) point to an appreciation that coaching is an interpersonal, refined process, it is their mechanical expression and model format that depict coaching in a rationalistic step by step manner; creating a regimented representation. This tendency to view coaching as uncomplicated and sequential implies that coaches can set achievable, unquestionable goals; that all resources required in order to achieve these goals are accessible and that the attainment of positive outcomes can be easily measured (Jones and Wallace, 2005). Therefore, coaches are encouraged to take charge and meticulously control the coaching process and environment (Seaborn, Trudel and Gilbert, 1998). Though this is perfectly suitable in theory, it is

far removed from reality as it ignores the many tensions and intricate social predicaments that are evident in coaching practice (Jones and Wallace, 2005).

Current research has intended to delve deeper in to the ambiguous world of coaching, helping to understand the social dynamics that determine the coach/athlete relationship (Cushion and Jones, 2006; Cushion and Lyle, 2010; Jones *et al.*, 2003, 2004; Potrac, Jones and Armour, 2002; Purdy, Potrac and Jones, 2008). The portrayal of coaching as a complex and dynamic being has been an increasingly recognisable feature of the recent literature (Cushion, 2007; Cushion and Lyle, 2010; Jones and Wallace, 2005) and despite the fact that coaching has been readily characterised as episodic, it is acknowledged that the interrelatedness and interconnectedness of these episodes are the factors that form and sustain the social environment (Jones *et al.*, 2011). In this respect, Jones (2009) contends that coaching is centred on the people, the interactions that they share and the relationship they form consequent to these interactions. Subsequently, traditional forms of research into the “what” and “how” to coach have been called upon to integrate the person back into the study of people (Martens, 1987). Thus, although scholars have demonstrated support for the need to coach holistically, a gradual shift of focus and emphasis in the research has been placed on the personal, emotional, cultural and social identity of coaching (Cassidy *et al.*, 2009; Cushion and Jones, 2006; Jones *et al.*, 2002, 2003, 2004; Jones and Wallace, 2005; Purdy *et al.*, 2008).

One of the social constructs that is immersed within coaching is power and it is suggested that in order to be effective as a coach, the development of power and its dimensions should occur (Laios, Theodorakis and Gargalianos, 2003; Potrac and Jones, 2009a, 2009b). Power is broadly documented as the capacity of one individual to influence another person or group of people (Lukes, 1993; Raven, 1986; Stahelski and Payton, 1995). Indeed, as “all social relations are relations of power” (Touraine, 1981, p.33), it is acknowledged as an ever present trait of social life, one that not only affects our feelings and ambitions, but also our relations with others (Cassidy *et al.*, 2009). In this regard, Kipnis (2001) suggests that individuals are obliged to exercise power on a daily basis as they are reliant upon others to fulfil their own needs and desires. Likewise, power is perceived as pervasive,

noting that its widespread nature could be both productive and inhibiting (Foucault, 1977; 1979).

The attempt to theorise and comprehend the notion of power has been one of the main concerns with recent sociological coaching research, as the importance of understanding the power dynamic and its ensuing effect on the coach/athlete relationship has proved necessary for effective coaching practice to occur (Cushion and Jones, 2006; Jones *et al.*, 2002, 2003, 2004; Jones and Armour, 2000; Jones *et al.*, 2011; Potrac *et al.*, 2002; Purdy *et al.*, 2008). Despite recognising its universal quality, settlement on the perception of power has not been so forthcoming (Jones *et al.*, 2011). Previous work depicts power as almost independently held by coaches over athletes (Johns and Johns, 2000). This is exemplified in Shogun (1999): where a Foucauldian perspective was adopted to scrutinise the ethical dilemmas that occur when athletes and coaches decide how far to push psychological and physiological aspects of sport performance. Here, the analysis illustrated how the communication of knowledge and expertise can lead to an unquestioning, compliant athlete (Jones *et al.*, 2005; Shogun, 1999). This notion is similar in Denison (2007), as it was determined that an athlete can become docile and an 'agent of normalisation' as a result of the coaches' total control over the training environment, timetable and race tactics. This conclusion cultivated from a poor competitive performance from the subject and peered through the lens of Foucault's work on disciplinary power (Denison, 2007). This form of power focuses on the discipline of bodies through the regulation of time and space and through the process of surveillance (Cassidy *et al.*, 2009; Foucault, 1979). This is also depicted in Foucauldian's notions of panopticon and gaze (Foucault, 1977).

Although work examining power in the coaching environment has retained athletes as passive beings who are subjected to it, there is growing contrasting literature that suggests otherwise (Laios *et al.*, 2003; Purdy *et al.*, 2008). These argue that power is not something a single individual can possess: Equally, it is contended that the amount of power and influence an individual possesses regularly fluctuates in light of the social interactions they share (Laios *et al.*, 2003). Giddens's (1984) notion on power supports this, suggesting that all individuals

within a social structure have the power to change or alter the social worlds that they reside in: Stating that the capacity to hold total power over another or others is a flawed concept. Shogun (1999) even granted that while coaches have organisational contexts that support their greater possession of power, athletes always have the ability to resist. This sentiment is emphasised in work by Purdy *et al.* (2008). Here, the athletes' under study openly resisted a coach's authority as they became disillusioned with what they felt was poor coaching practice. Similarly, young footballers in Cushion and Jones' (2006) study occasionally withdrew their best efforts in a bid to exercise a degree of control in a harsh discursive coaching environment. This expression of power denotes to the fact that power is not merely imposed from above, but also involves the active consent of subordinate groups (Cassidy *et al.*, 2009; McDonald and Birrell, 1999).

Interestingly, although the athletes in those studies exercised their power through resistance, their presence within the coaching environment still remained (Cushion and Jones, 2006; Purdy *et al.*, 2008). The work of sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1977, 1984) on capital could, in part, make further sense of this. Capital is identified as the capability of one to exercise control over their future and the future of others, therefore constituting a type of power (Ritzer, 1996). Bourdieu's (1977, 1984) conceptualization postulates that capital can occur in three broad forms: economic, cultural and social. Economic relates to control over financial resources such as money and assets, while cultural refers to an individual's education, knowledge and previous experience that give them an advantage in society (coaching qualifications, past professional careers etc). Thirdly, social relates to an individual's social status and the resources they can have based on social connections. While these types of capital are theorised separately, in the context of coaching, they intertwine and interchange fluently to affect social actions and interactions (Tomlinson, 2004). This notion is adept in Cushion and Jones (2006); as athletes in this study perceive their coaches to be the 'gatekeepers' to a future professional football career, thus resulting in their conformity to the working climate. Furthermore, the athletes' respect was also afforded to the coaches because of their previous professional careers and coaching experiences (Cassidy *et al.*, 2009).

Although recent studies has recognised the importance of capital and power within coaching practice (Cushion and Jones, 2006; d' Arripe-Longueville, Fournier and Dubois, 1998; Jones, 2006; Purdy *et al.*, 2008; Westwood, 2002), with the exception of Jones (2006) and Purdy *et al.* (2008), there has been a lack of direct connection to the lived experiences that are studied (Jones *et al.*, 2003). Scholars have been inclined to embrace an approach that observes the coaching environment from what Sparkes and Smith (2002) have termed as an 'outside-in' perspective, as opposed to an 'inside-out' one that could identify the chaotic actuality of coaching and personal feeling (Haleem, Jones and Potrac, 2003; Jones, 2006; Potrac and Jones 2009a, 2009b; Purdy *et al.*, 2008).

Recently autoethnography as a qualitative method has grown in value in sport research and has become a worthy means of exploring the many issues that are evident within the abstruse world of coaching (Denison, 1999; 2007; Jones, 2006; Purdy *et al.*, 2008; Tiihonen, 2002; Tinning, 1998; Tsang, 2000). An autoethnography requires an author to produce narratives that emanate from highly personal experiences (Sparkes, 2002a, 2002b). It allows the reader to delve deep into and emotionally relive the authors' story as ambiguities and contradictions can surface within the multi-layered texts (Sparkes, 2002a, 2002b; Tsang, 2000). According to Ellis and Bochner (2000) autoethnography can be defined as a genre of writing about the self and research that displays multi-layered awareness, connecting the personal to the cultural. Emphasis alters between the self (auto), culture (ethos), and the research process (graphy). Research has demonstrated that autoethnographical work can connect readers to the issues that have stemmed from the experiences of the author such as identity, gender, race, sexuality and impairment (Duncan, 1998, 2000; Fernandez-Balboa, 1998; Purdy *et al.*, 2008; Rinehart, 1998; Sparkes, 1996, 1999a, 2002; Tiihonen, 2002; Tinning, 1998; Tsang, 2000). Additionally, a variety of academic authors' have encouraged the use of autoethnography to investigate the issue of social complexity and power within the coaching process (Haleem *et al.*, 2003; Jones, 2006; Purdy *et al.*, 2008; Smith, 1990; Sparkes, 1995, 1998; Tsang, 2000). In particular, Haleem *et al.* (2003) and Jones (2006) suggest that by adopting an insider's perspective into the social world of coaching then a fuller, more holistic understanding will likely result.

Sparkes (2002b) articulates two main style of autoethnographies; telling and showing. Telling occurs when the author juxtaposes his/her narrative against their own academic interpretation as they intervene in the narrative and suggest how they feel about characters or how they construe events. In comparison, the showing style effaces the authors' academic voice. In this respect, the author lets the stories stand alone and leaves the reader to interpret the events without offering any guidance. Although autoethnography offers the reader a more personal view of the sociological issues that occur within sport (Duncan, 1998, 2000; Tiihonen, 2002), an apprehensive attitude towards its use is apparent (Charmaz and Mitchell, 1997; Coffey, 1999; Krizek, 1998): Suggesting that autoethnography is just self-indulgent writing under the pretence of social science and research (Coffey, 1999). Researchers' have acknowledged the need for caution towards the charge of self-indulgence and aestheticism (Hertz, 1997; Morrison, 1998; Pelias, 1999). Consequently, Mykhalovskiy (1996) challenges autoethnographers to connect personal experience to social science. Indeed, research that has engaged in the telling style of autoethnography has placed a theoretical voice alongside their stories (Denison, 2007; Purdy *et al.*, 2008; Tinning, 1998; Tsang, 2000). In doing so, it enables interpretation from theoretical standpoints; "offering theoretical signposts to help readers better interpret the author's account" (Jones, 2006, p.1012). Purdy *et al.* (2008) proposed that by including an academic perspective, it can decrease the possibility of aestheticism, "in which the writing exhausts itself in the pleasure of the text" (Sparkes, 2002b, p.230).

Giddens' (1984) work on power and agency was positioned alongside Purdy *et al.*'s (2008) autoethnography as a means of understanding the elements of her evolving relationship between her and her coach in the lead up to a rowing competition. Reference was made to Giddens' (1984) framework subsequent to each of her three stories in order to give the reader theoretical interpretations. Albeit Giddens' (1984) conceptualization of power resonated within Purdy *et al.*'s (2008) stories; research has illustrated that notions' of power from French and Raven and specifically, capital from Bourdieu (1977, 1984) are more suitably placed alongside stories within professional academy sport (Cushion and Jones, 2006). While Cushion and Jones (2006) use concepts of power and capital, their

use of an ethnographic method instead of an autoethnographic method is an obvious limitation (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Krane, Andersen and Streaan, 1997; Sparkes, 1995, 1998). In this regard, as both researchers were not directly involved within the relationship between the coach and players, it is advocated that concerns relating to whether or not they could amply represent the lived experiences of their subjects occur (Krane *et al.*, 1997).

The purpose of the present study is to employ an autoethnographic method to help portray my personal experiences as an athlete within the structure of a professional rugby academy. Progressive narratives will be told in order to highlight the varying nature of my relationship with my coach throughout the rugby season. The work of Bourdieu on capital (1977, 1984) will juxtapose against my stories as a means of offering a theoretical lens in which to interpret the events and in an attempt to build on research by Cushion and Jones (2006). Moreover, appropriate social power theory will also be used to support the conclusions drawn: Ideally, resulting in furthering our knowledge and understanding of the untidy nature of power and the affect it has on the interactions and relationships that are shared within the coaching process. Additionally, the general (other coaches' and athletes') can learn from and hold some value in the particular (my stories) and hopefully then become more informed when dealing with similar or comparable situations (Church, 1995; Freeman, 1993).

CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY

Methodology

Adopting a Qualitative Approach

When embarking on research it is important to utilize the most appropriate research method in order to obtain the most suitable outcome (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). The type of methodology chosen is dictated by the type, nature and direction of the study (Silverman, 2011).

Qualitative research concerns itself with findings that cannot be measurable by numbers, such as thoughts, feelings and experiences (Gratton and Jones, 2010). It is defined as multi-method in focus, involving an interpretative, naturalistic approach to its subject matter (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Literature states that qualitative researchers examine events that occur in their natural environments as a means of making sense, and interpreting phenomena in relation to the meaning people hold within them (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Therefore, qualitative research was chosen as a research method for this study. It is proposed that compared to quantitative data, qualitative data will provide a richer and more in-depth approach to real life events (Gratton and Jones, 2010) and is more likely to demonstrate a true representation of social phenomenon (Haralambros and Holborn, 2000).

Autoethnography

Case studies, introspection, historical, interactional and visual texts, life stories, personal experience, ethnographies and autoethnographies and many other different empirical materials that attempt to describe events in individuals' lives are concerned with qualitative research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).

Autoethnography was chosen as a method for this study as an attempt to connect the lived experience to those being studied. In this instance, I will write my thoughts and feelings of the coach/athlete relationship from directly within the situation, an element of autoethnography that is vital (Denison, 2002). Richardson (1994) delineates autoethnography as a form of evocative writing that generates highly personal and enlightening texts about an author's own lived experiences. Essentially, autoethnographic data is my own personal accounts which form the understanding and interpretation of the coaching context under study (Gratton and

Jones, 2010). The author is required to connect the reader to their story in order to allow the reader to emotionally relive their account as complexities surface, which need to be understood through a sense of 'being there' with the author (Gratton and Jones, 2010; Sparkes, 2002b).

Ellis (1999) suggested that in order to produce a "heartful autoethnography" the following characteristics should be evident: the researchers' exposed emotional self; evocative stories that portray reality and tangible experience with meaning; demonstrate a concern with the ethical consequences that could manifest; feature multiple voices and dialogue with others; and connect the lived experiences with social science literature and implication for practice. As the objective of the study is to further our understanding of the ambiguous nature of power and the affect it has on the interactions that are shared within the coaching process, allowing access to the multiple voices within the coaching context and the dialogue shared within that context will be essential. By producing heartful autoethnography, it is hoped it can bridge the gap between the researcher and the participants (Denzin, 1994). In addition, it is hoped that the narratives will provoke the reader to act critically and reflexively as they can offer deeper complex meanings (Markula and Denison, 2003).

In order to produce an autoethnography that contributes to research and the wider coaching society, the narratives will contain truth like experiences that the reader can relate to and hold some personal value in. Richardson (2000) notes that portraying reality within the stories allows for a more valid investigation in the coaching context. Additionally, it is postulated that the absence of reality within the stories will not allow the reader to relive the authors' experiences and therefore, their knowledge and understanding of the issues presented may not be furthered.

Critiquing Autoethnography and Judgement Calls

Although autoethnography as a method for research has been advocated recently (Anderson, 2006; Ellis and Bochner, 2000; Sparkes, 2002b), many in the domain still adopt a hesitant and hostile stance towards its venture (Krizek, 1998). The critique is based upon the charge that autoethnography can become self-indulgent as opposed to self-knowing, self-sacrificing, self-respectful, or self-luminous (Sparkes, 2002b). Rinehart notes that as traditional forms of research focuses on writing in the third person, in a passive voice, as an anonymous essay, the view that autoethnography is self-indulgent is “grounded in the deep mistrust of the worth of the self” (1998, p.212). In this regard, the value of the self in others is questioned. Church (1995) and Freeman (1993) challenge these assumptions as misplaced: Stating that it is possible to learn from the author experiences as it can be both subjective and personal and objective and general.

Another issue that arises with writing autoethnography is how this new way of writing can be judged (DeVault, 1997). It is suggested that assessing new writing practices such as autoethnography is at the heart of the legitimizing problem (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Sparkes (2002b) states that reviewers use different criteria to pass judgement and therefore, do so differently. In addition, it is suggested that most reviews represent the traditionalist view of science, one that is committed to “rationality” and “objectivity” and calls on traditional, standard criteria to pass judgements. Thus, new writing practices such as autoethnography usually fall short in this respect. However, Garratt and Hodkinson (1998) question the merit of judging the quality of an autoethnography text, as they are inherently considered by its uniqueness and subjectivity. Hence, assessing autoethnography on its relevance to existing research is flawed (Garratt and Hodkinson, 1998). Markula, Grant and Denison (2001) supports this by proposing that unconventional forms of inquiry needs to be judged using criteria that is relevant with its own internal meaning structure and purpose.

Position of the Researcher

In the study, the principal investigator, I, will be the main participant. As a 'complete member' of the social world being investigated in the study, it allows me to present such lived findings (Edwards and Skinner, 2009). The club under study, "Ravens Rugby Club" (a pseudonym), is an RFU Championship club and has been a former National Division One team for fifteen years. The academy structure has teams from under 10's right through to the under 18's and presents a pathway to the professional ranks. The youth team (under 18's) has a squad of thirty 17-18 year olds and are all competing for places in the team and ultimately, for a professional contract. As the coaches in the academy set up are seen as the "gatekeepers" of careers in the professional sport (Cushion and Jones, 2006), players are constantly scrutinized and judged throughout the season on their potential as a professional rugby player. In this regard, one is likely to be replaced or released if another player comes along and proves to have greater potential in the coach's eyes. Interactions between players and coaches would usually be limited to training sessions and matches however, as the captain of the Under 18's team, my interactions with the coach extended to more than this. In this respect, interactions expanded to personal opinions on my teammate's form and psychological state and on team selection and tactics.

Construction and Literary Framing of the Stories

In an attempt to recreate my experiences and interactions as a member of a professional rugby academy and to give the reader a sense of the progressive, ever changing relationship I share with the coach, three separate autoethnographical stories will be told. Tsang (2000) suggested that by producing multiple narratives it can provide the reader with a fuller picture of the author's experiences. In addition, it will help guide the reader through the different emotions and feelings that occur throughout different times, contexts and critical incidents during the season (Sparkes, 2002b).

The three step process of description, interpretation and explanation was followed to construct the three stories (Sparkes, 1999b). The description stage involves stating the incidents that occurred. The interpretation stage is related to identifying

the meaning of the actions and lastly, the explanation stage is concerned with the reasons why the participant's behaved in such a way.

Critical incidents and events were recorded throughout the season in the form of a training diary. The entries focused on my initial thoughts and feelings and how they changed my attitudes towards the coach and consequently, my relationship we shared. The data collected was ordered chronologically throughout the season in order to give the reader a logical account of my experiences. The three critical events that the narratives are based on were chosen as they demonstrate the on-going changing relationship between me and coach. In addition, these events illustrate how the coach's decisions and actions can affect not only me but the rest of the team as well.

The data collected will be represented through the form of three short stories and will be analysed through Bourdieu's (1977, 1984) theoretical view on capital but also alternative social power theories will be drawn upon when associated appropriately. The data will be analysed alongside theory to develop a critical understanding of the coach/athlete relationship and to appreciate the inherent capital and power dynamics that affect this relationship. Placing theory after the narratives will draw the readers in and out of my experiences and interpretations and allow the reader to look past the surface of the stories (Tsang, 2000). Making sense of them and giving deeper meaning to them with theoretical signposts will help the interpretation of the authors accounts (Jones, 2006). This will enable the reader to gain greater understanding of not only the social situations that are told but also the thoughts and feelings of those involved within the stories.

One way of analysing the stories can be to first let them stand alone. This then lets the characters reveal things about themselves without any academic analysis or guidelines that could influence the reader's interpretations (Sparkes 2002b). The analysis can then precede the final story in order to offer the reader theoretical signposts that interpret the events from the authors point of view. However, the analysis of the stories will be present immediately after each story as they each represent different critical incidents throughout the rugby season and therefore, include different thoughts, feelings and experiences and thus should have its own

analysis in terms of capital and power. Additionally, as previously stated, it will draw the readers in and out of the stories and the theoretical interpretations (Tsang, 2000).

Ethical Considerations

Due to the nature of the study being the exploration of capital and power within a coach/athlete relationship, certain ethical issues should be considered (Sieber, 1993).

While my stories are based on actual events, Erben (1993) notes that it is a rare autobiography that excludes biographies of other people who figure within the pages of the narrative: Similarly, Stanley (1993) states that personal experiences are not accumulated in a social vacuum and that autoethnographic writing will involve the experiences of others through the eyes of the author. In this respect, as my narratives are based on the coach/athlete relationship, the risk of exposure is apparent. The issue of voluntary informed consent is cloudy within autobiographical work as there is a certain ambiguity about who the participants actually are. Hence, the need to seek consent from them is unclear (Mellick and Fleming, 2010). Another concern becomes apparent if the narratives are written retrospectively and therefore, in some cases it may be impossible to seek voluntary informed consent (Mellick and Fleming, 2010). Therefore, in a bid to minimize the risk of harm and in an attempt to protect the identities of any characters implicated in my stories, anonymity will be achieved by using pseudonyms. However, it is important to take into consideration the occasions when other identifiable features within the narratives are apparent (Lee, 1993). This may include personal descriptions that make the stories distinguishable or when the author engages in self-disclosure elsewhere (Mellick and Fleming, 2010). Consequently, pseudonyms were also used for the club and the place of the stories to protect its status and to limit the chance of exposure by association further (Yow, 1994).

In spite of this, Homan (1991) states that it is essential to consider the belief that an individual holds the key to their own privacy and to ponder the distinction between private and public actions within each of those spaces.

CHAPTER FOUR
STORY 1 & DISCUSSION 1

Story 1: In with the first team

“...Oh and Gally, you’re not training with us today; you’re in with the first team”

A huge sense of relief rushed down my body. ‘Finally’ I thought. Having never been at a professional club it always felt like I’d forever personify the cliché “big fish in a small pond”. But this was it... This was my chance.

I was 17 years old and this was my first year with Ravens Rugby Club. However as I was in the supposed second year of the youth team, this was to be my one and only year to try and win a professional contract with the first team. The pressure was high and I was under more scrutiny than ever before. There were more sessions, heavier weights, more repetitions and harder graft. But it felt like this was how it was supposed to be done, this was a real professional set up after all. I could hardly believe my luck to be honest. The facilities here were top class; I mean the gym made “Globo Gym” from Dodgeball look second hand at best. The coaches, medical staff, nutritionist, conditioners and the sports science team. No stone unturned. What more could I want? What more could I wish for?

Halfway through pre-season with the club and I felt like I belong. 8 years I’d been playing Rugby and this was the first time I had a coach who instantly demanded my respect. The fact that he just qualified as an RFU Level 4 coach meant he was the best coach I ever had. At last a coach who knew what he was talking about I thought. The content of his sessions, the way he addressed the team: It was a breath of fresh air. I was learning something new every day; I was improving as a player every day. I knew this was what I needed to make the big step up in to the professional game. It was all here for me, it was right here for the taking.

The day started like any other: I arrived at the training ground at half 9 in preparation for a half 10 training session with the team. We youth players always had to turn up an hour early because we had duties to complete that clearly defined our ranking within the hierarchy of a professional rugby club. Sweeping changing room floors, pumping up first team rugby balls, sorting out training kits and cleaning out the gym were high on our list of priorities before the first team arrived at 10am. But as a team we all understood; this was the system. This was how it was supposed to be.

Like any other day, flying around the changing room like an over excited wasp was the banter between the lads: Jokes about new haircuts, new clothes and gym routines were a constant in this environment. Then 10am arrived: The first team were in and the wasp disappeared.

The boys looked around at each other and knew that this was the part where the first team coach picked who was going to train with them today and normally for the rest of the week. A more serious atmosphere overcame the room and the competitive nature of thirty 16-17 year old lads was more evident than ever. Whenever the first team came in, it was like the banter switch turned off for twenty minutes while we waited impatiently for the news of whose training with whom today. As I sat there taping up my ankle an uncontrollable smile beamed across my face: A sense of great belonging came over me. I looked around the room and knew that this was where I wanted to be; where I needed to be and most importantly, where I was supposed to be.

Our coach came in and the boys all shuffled in their seats.

“Can I have a word in my office Gally?”

I lifted my gaze and did as I was told. What did he want I thought? Usually he would just come in, tell the players who was training with who and then tell the rest of us when we'd be leaving. But this time he singled me out. He wanted a private chat. As we walked he asked me how my family were, how I'd settled in and what my thoughts were on Saturday's friendly. I had to ask myself – was this guy too good to be true? He had all the technical knowledge in the world, had the qualifications and now he's showing a great interest in my personal life alongside my form for the team. Did he really have the whole package? Still I wandered the real reason behind this chat...

“Gally, you've been doing well lately and I wanted to let you know that we'll be going with you as skipper this weekend...”

Joy, pride, responsibility and importance: Just a few emotions that ran through my mind as he spoke. I tried to listen intently as coach continued but all I thought about was that armband. And then as I was leaving his office. The words I'd waited for.

“...Oh and Gally, you're not training with us today; you're in with the first team”.

This was it I thought. This was my chance.

Discussion 1

The following discussion will analyse the story through Bourdieu's notions of capital however, when appropriate, alternative social power theory will be used to further explain behaviours and feelings and support conclusions drawn.

My initial support for the coach was very much based on my belief that he behaved and acted in a way I expected. I had never played for a professional academy before and seemed almost overwhelmed at the professionalism that was in place at the club. Jones *et al.* (2011) stated that when entering a sporting environment both the coach and athlete will strive to gain cultural capital and indeed, I instantly afforded respect to the coach because I knew he was so highly qualified. Bourdieu (1977) notes that cultural capital is based on forms of qualifications, knowledge and experiences that give an individual an advantage in society and with this in mind, my early compliance with the coach's way of doing things may have been because I had never been coached by an RFU level 4 qualified coach before or in fact been a member of a professional academy coach before. Similar to the views of Nyberg (1981), who postulated that consent, known as an individual accepting the power enforced over them as the coach acts in a manner that is expected (Purdy *et al.*, 2008), occurs because the power claimant is someone an athlete wants to gain knowledge and learn from.

French and Raven's (1959) work on legitimate and expert power also offer an explanation for this. In this regard, legitimate power is initially given to the coach because of his position within the organisation. However, my confidence in the coach was maintained because of the content of his sessions and his high qualifications. Jones *et al.* (2004) considered the projection of knowledge and expertise as essential for coach's effectiveness and thus, as I highlight my relief at finally having "...a coach who knew what he was talking about", it also alludes to my appreciation and conformity to this part of his coaching repertoire.

My positive attitude towards the coach's regime was clearly influenced by his decision to make me captain. This gave me a sense of responsibility and value and rebuffed any doubts I originally had about being a member of a professional academy finally. This show of support furthered my feelings of belonging and

therefore, it is not surprising that I perceived the coach's behaviours as "the way it was supposed to be". This perception could be explained when comparing results from a similar study. Cushion and Jones (2006) noted that individuals within a professional academy are more concerned with behaving in a way that can improve their own capital against one another. Hence, when coach handed me the captaincy, my outward appreciation and show of good attitude towards him was a form of cultural capital that could have potentially been turned into economic capital if I was to receive a professional contract at the end of the season. Additionally, my feelings of satisfaction and my positive response to the coach's approach can be linked to reward power (French and Raven, 1959). In relation to this, Cassidy *et al.* (2009) proposed that an athlete will respond better to rewards and praise if deemed worthy and consequently, would be more likely to believe in the coach's actions. Thus, I felt like my involvement in the coach's training programme led to improvements as a player, which were then recognised by receiving the captaincy. This in turn, reinforced my position as a supporter of the coach's regime.

This initial affirmative outlook towards coach was further strengthened by his demeanour within his coaching sessions and the way he acted outside these sessions. Singling me out in the dressing room for a discussion and going onto show interest in my family life, opinions on the team and the upcoming fixture gave me a sense of importance and worth. In keeping with findings from Purdy *et al.* (2008), the coach's seeming interest in me on a personal level as well as his readiness to listen to my view on the team was crucial to my early consent to his methods. Work by Nyberg (1981) supported this notion; as it was advocated that if an athlete is merely treated as an operational unit with no regard for their sense of purpose and human qualities, then their presence within the power relationship would be temporary and withdrawn. In contrast, if an athlete understands what is going on within the coaching environment, why it is going on and their role within that environment, then they are more likely to engage and cooperate with the coach's methods.

My desire to accumulate capital within the coaching environment further dictated my actions as I took it upon myself to volunteer for extra duties before and after training. Comparable to the athletes in Cushion and Jones' (2006) study, instead of questioning the reasons for cleaning bathroom floors and sorting out dirty training kit, I ensured I didn't get on the wrong side of the coach by complying. This demonstrates my interest in behaving in a manner that related to my coach and the context.

CHAPTER FIVE
STORY 2 & DISCUSSION 2

Story 2: Confused, dismissed.

“For fuck sake lads, hurry up”

It was the middle of our warm up before a Tuesday evening training session and the mood around the boys was volatile to say the least. I remember rolling my eyes and shaking my head in distaste at another pointless jibe from coach. It had become a regular occurrence though. No need I thought. No need at all.

Winter had kicked in and we had lost on the weekend to a team we definitely should have beaten. I remember coming off the pitch and thinking ‘how the fuck did we lose? We were all over them!’ It was a joke. Before the game some of the older boys had been bickering about coach’s approach and I didn’t understand. I stopped myself from getting involved up to now. This guy had more knowledge and expertise on the game than any of us had put together - he was Level 4 qualified for god’s sake. I convinced myself I was doing the right thing. We were the ones who were supposed to be endorsing him after all; his tactics, his selection, his philosophy. I told myself this was the way it should be. I’d never been a professional rugby set up before. So what did I know?

But how long could I really hold my tongue for? Was I not allowed a voice? I was the captain – if anyone was able to approach coach and talk about stuff like this it should have been me. But even though I knew something was wrong, I never dared show it. I never told the coach. I never felt brave enough to voice my opinion and it was as if he had some sort of untouchable status about him. I thought back to when this guy was asking me about my family, asking me about the team. Where had this approachable, open guy gone? Nothingness had filled the void between us and coach. There was a disconnect. It felt like every time we lost, it was our fault. Nothing to do with how he went about his job. I thought we were all supposed to be in this together. *‘All for one and one for all’* and all that bollocks.

Coach called the lads in and talked to us about the aims and objectives of the session. Normal coaching jargon ensued but as usual after a defeat, a snappy aggressive tone engrossed everything about his aura. Throughout training you

could sense the frustration in the team. Mistakes were aplenty and blame was thrown around like some rag doll. Coach wasn't happy. We were toiling. The ground was sinking around us and there was nothing we could do. We weren't only letting coach down, but letting ourselves down. We just couldn't get it right. The drill continued and as the ball moved down the line I saw an opening on my inside. I went for it... YES. I just played the pass of the session. I popped the ball off into a team-mates path and he broke the defensive line and scored a point. That felt great. I turned around expecting to see the coach elated with me. This would definitely change his mood I thought. Some of the lads applauded and gave praise which is always nice but really I was waiting for the coach. I imagined that he would be stood there delighted. But I was wrong.

"What the hell are you doing Gally? What are we working on?" Coach just snapped.

It took a few seconds to actually take in what had happened. I played a pass, a good one at that, we broke through the defence and we scored. And the coach still decides to have ago at me? A massive sense of disbelief came over me. What session was he watching I thought? He should have congratulated us. We had done everything he said and scored from it and he still wasn't happy. In fact he was angry.

"Gally, answer the fucking question."

"Coach, I've just played a fucking killer pass, I saw a gap, went with it and we scored from it didn't we?"

"I don't care if we scored from it Gally, we working on not taking any risks? What if your pass didn't come off?"

"But it came off coach. We scored. I saw the opportunity and we fucking scored from it. What else do you want?"

I looked around at the lads expecting them to give me a volley of support backing me up. But nothing. They were already back in their starting positions, looking on as I argued my case.

“Just set up again Gally, and keep it fucking simple.”

Dumbfounded, I turned away. What the hell just happened? I racked my brain, searching for an answer. Was I wrong? No, I couldn't have been wrong. We scored. The lads applauded me. What did coach want I thought? He has just humiliated me in front of the whole group. I felt powerless. Frustrated.

I walked off alone. Confused, dismissed.

Discussion 2

Despite my initial unwillingness to become entangled with the negativity surrounding coach just a few months later, our relationship had clearly begun to decline. The cultural capital that coach had was still apparent as I still held his expertise and knowledge highly. However, it was his way of interacting or lack of interacting that changed our relationship. My early appreciation for coach's approachable nature had seemingly evaporated and the importance of my views and opinions had disappeared. At the beginning of the narrative I illuminate to the fact that coach's demeanour had become snappy and aggressive so I didn't feel "brave enough" to challenge his methods. This hesitancy could be explained with Bourdieu's (1977, 1984) concept that individuals are constantly striving to increase their own capital within the environment they reside in. Indeed, these findings echo those of Cushion and Jones (2006), whose athletes complied with an authoritarian coaching discourse because it was the coaches who held the power over their future within the professional sport. In this respect, I was fully aware that my coach was the decision maker on my possible professional contract and as a result, I behaved in a realm of conformity.

My acceptance and endorsement of the coach's values culminated in an accumulation of symbolic capital as my position in the team was what I deemed valuable. This view builds on previous research as athletes with a "good attitude" were perceived to have symbolic capital (Cushion and Jones, 2006; Wilson, Cushion and Stephens, 2006). Martinek (1983) proposed that coaches have a positive bias toward those who demonstrate cooperative compliance; hence, my initial supportive actions could then have been converted into symbolic capital. This notion was present in Cushion and Jones (2006), as coaches viewed athletes who complied to their methods favourably. My actions thus far then were grounded in the belief that even though something was clearly wrong, my own chances of being perceived positively by the coach increased with my outward engagement.

My feelings of confusion and disbelief are mainly due to my early outlook on the coach's methods and my beliefs of where he held me during those early months and how my perception of his view had changed. Bourdieu's work on capital

makes further sense of this change, as it is advocated that the two coordinates that chart an individual's capital, volume and composition, can vary over time and changes as a result of the actions and behaviours that take place throughout the social space. Bourdieu stated that capital was the capacity to exercise control over one's own future and by previously handing me the captaincy, my perception of my own control over my future had increased. Jones *et al.* (2011) makes further sense of this, as it is suggested that by occupying a superior position (coach, captain etc.) and subsequently having more social capital, one would have more control on the rules that determine success. This perception nonetheless, had clearly deteriorated throughout the narrative as I acknowledge the "disconnect" that was evident between myself and coach.

Krais (1995), when construing Bourdieu's conceptualizations, suggested that the unquestioning compliance athletes demonstrate presupposes a "doxic order". A doxic order represents shared beliefs between the dominant and the dominated. More simply, it is proposed that the actions of the dominant and compliant are because each party believes it serves their own best interests. It could be argued that this "doxic order" was evident within this context, however, this notion is briefly absent as an altercation between myself and coach ensued as the second story developed. Similar to Purdy *et al.* (2008), the dissent that I show could be a bid to regain my ontological security, known as the confidence and trust in the environment that secures an individual's being (Giddens, 1984). Something that is lost as I clearly disagree with the manner in which coach is acting in this situation. Such behaviours could prove significant in the evolving relationship that I shared with my coach as Giddens (1984) postulated that actions used by agents that attempt to sustain ontological security is of particular importance.

Unlike Purdy *et al.* (2008) though, my teammates didn't demonstrate the same dissent I did. The fact my teammates failed to back my argument against the coach initially dumbfounded me, but Bourdieu's work could clarify the reasons for their actions. An individual's concern with acting in a way that improves their capital status in relation to the others around them is undoubtedly illustrated here. Similar to my actions in the beginning of the narrative, they chose not to question the coach's judgement or actions because they may have felt it would harm their

own capital and place within the social environment if they did. Therefore, perhaps in a bid to uphold their capital within the coaching environment and as a means of staying in the “good books” of the coach, they maintained their silence and returned to their starting positions. This then could have served them well in the eyes of the coach.

CHAPTER SIX
STORY 3 & DISCUSSION 3

Story 3: Tears

It was a particularly cloudy evening, but the mood around the camp was upbeat. We had just gone for our pre-match meal and everybody was healthy and in high spirits having played well over the past few weeks. Our goal was to win tonight's match convincingly so that the big teams wouldn't want us in the next round. This was the cup. We had to start well.

It was about an hour before kick-off and coach had mentioned he would name the starting 15 once the lads had come back inside after inspecting the pitch. Superstitiously, I was always the last one to go back to the changing rooms. I don't know why; I just wanted to soak up as much pre-match nerves and feelings as possible I guess. I took a deep breath, looked around and took everything in; the stadium, the floodlights, the pitch. The crowd in attendance were trickling in and I remember feeling the buzz grow. I was charged. Ready for war.

As I made my way inside I noticed coach was already on the pitch setting up the warm up area. When I got back in immediately I could tell something was wrong. Whispers surrounded the changing rooms but I didn't know why. I looked up at the team sheet and it hit me. My regular half partner had been dropped. Me and Andy had played together all year and with no explanation coach just dropped him. I was gutted. How could he do this? The weeks leading up to this we'd been working as a pair in training and then out of the blue he decided to change it. Why do this now? Right before the biggest game of the season. It wasn't as if Robbie, Andy's replacement, wasn't able to do a good enough job for him though. It just felt like Coach had gone back on his word. At the start of the season he told us we could put our trust in him but at training a few Tuesday's back he confused me. He dismissed me with no explanation. And now Andy fell victim to Coaches' seemingly unreasonable ways. To be honest his absence from the starting line-up knocked the stuffing out of me. I stood there getting changed with an air of disappointment haunting me. Was I too obvious in my dissatisfaction? I didn't want my negativity to rub off on the rest of the team. Would this really affect our performance tonight? Would we still leave our mark? Little did I know by the end of the night those questions would be emphatically answered.

Despite the difference of opinions, the lads got on with it, and went out to start the warm up. Halfway through it though and I began to worry; it seemed like the doubts had spread through the whole team. We weren't doing anything the coach wanted. We were close to tipping point. Coach yelled "C'mon boys, hurry up. Show some bloody energy. Let's go."

Nothing changed. Not even a hint that it would. This couldn't be happening. We were 15 minutes from kick-off and we needed to sharpen up. Enough was enough I thought so I started barking out commands.

"C'mon lads, lets shape up. Fucks sake. This isn't good enough."

It didn't sink in. Bickering continued and I was seething.

"Wake the fuck up boys and start getting your minds switched on to the game."

I was harsh but even that didn't work. We were in the line-up before the match but the tension still simmered through our team. Our goal was to win and to leave an impression. We certainly achieved the latter. The game was a nightmare. No matter how painful we wanted it. No matter how hard we tried. It wasn't enough. Not once did we have an ounce of control; we completely fell flat on our face. It was the most humiliating 80 minutes of my short rugby career. There was a moment in the second half where time just stood still. I had come up from a ruck and I looked around at our team. The centres weren't in sync, the wingers were out of position and the flankers were nowhere to be seen. It was a catastrophe. Embarrassing.

I walked off the pitch completely drained and exhausted. My heart was heavy. I wandered where it went wrong? What did I expect I suppose. It was clear we weren't at the races even before the game. Was my lack of approval really that obvious? Had I infected the other lads in the changing rooms before the game with my unimpressed aura? Was I too severe in my criticism? Had I been the catalyst for this shambles? All questions running through my sweaty, tired head.

Once we had all showered and changed, we sat around the changing rooms waiting for coach's parting words. He acknowledged our sadness, our despair. But he failed to acknowledge the reasons why. I looked around the room, into the eyes

of my team-mates and as my gaze circled, I fixated on Andy, my former half partner. He was sat there shoulders hunched, glaring at the floor. Silent. Tears rolled down his face. His anguish was clear. My heart grew even heavier. He looked up and stared at coach piercingly. No words were exchanged but they both knew. I knew. We all knew.

Discussion 3

As the final story develops it becomes evident that the coach had lost the trust I had in him. His decision to remove Andy from the starting line-up was well within his jurisdiction and it is noted that team selection is one of the features that characterize the unbalanced distribution of capital between coach, who has a higher hierarchical position, and athlete (Bourdieu, 1977). However, this decision was unexplained and therefore, there was little chance to understand coach's reasoning behind it. From my point of view, Coach had unnecessarily demonstrated his power over the team. Bourdieu (1977) and Foucault (1977) argued that power relationships are not set in stone and can alter very quickly in terms of changing alliances and varying circumstances. This was evident within this context as the shared power relationship that I felt I was part of because I was given the captaincy at the start of the season; had been briefly taken away during the second narrative when a disagreement between me and coach escalated. But now I felt the power I was afforded back then had been fully taken away and I was left feeling disappointed and lethargic ahead of our biggest game of the season.

These feelings reciprocated those illustrated in previous autoethnographic and ethnographic work by Haleem *et al.* (2003) and Jones, Glintmeyer and Mckenzie (2005). Similarly, the coach/athlete relationship depicted in these studies turned dysfunctional as a result of uncaring practice. In this regard, I felt the coach, who had once actively concerned himself with my views before making some decisions, had lost interest in that mutual relationship I perceived we had and hence, I felt he didn't care for my judgements anymore. This notion corresponds with work by Purdy *et al.* (2008), who also found that an initial promise and follow through of a shared power relationship had been taken away over the course of a season.

My thoughts of dissatisfaction and disappointment had appeared to encompass through to the warm up as it was clear the team and I were withdrawing our maximum efforts and commitment. Different to the second narrative then and in line with Purdy *et al.* (2008), the players shared my feelings and subsequently demonstrated dissent by lacking interest in the warm-up. Coach's power over us as a team briefly disappeared as he tried to regain control over the situation.

Indeed, our non-responsive actions to his demands illustrated resistance; a concept that is resonated in Purdy *et al.* (2008). This expression of power elucidates the fact that power is not merely imposed from the coach and that athletes always have the power to alter or change the social world they reside in (Giddens, 1984).

In Purdy *et al.*'s (2008) work, a rowing crew deliberately disobeyed their coach's demands during a training practice. When discussing this further, it was noted that Purdy's coxswain role gave her certain influences between the coach and the rest of the crew and by siding with the rest of the crew in their struggle, this influence and power had been regained temporarily. As captain, my role can be perceived as similar to Purdy's, yet after initially showing disengagement and frustration, I eventually side with the coach and support his attempt to control the situation. This differs from Purdy *et al.* (2008) as I endeavoured to get the team back on track in the warm-up and let them know how I felt we should have been acting. My actions can once again be explained by my overriding motivation to stay on side with the coach. Similar to the athletes in Cushion and Jones (2006), my coach ultimately held the key to my future ambitions of becoming a professional sportsman.

My attempt however, ultimately failed radically as the teams superseding negative feeling pervaded into our match performance. This result is concurrent with previous research by Denison (2007) and Purdy *et al.* (2008), who also found that as a consequence of negative power relations, a bad competitive performance followed. This emphasises the importance of the power relations that characterize the coach/athlete relationship. Also, the dramatic nature of the feelings on display in the changing room following our negative performance highlights the extent of the consequences that can be felt because of the actions within the coaching space.

CHAPTER SEVEN
**IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE
RESEARCH**

Implications for Practice

It is evident that capital and power are both an ever present trait within the social milieu of coaching (Cassidy *et al.*, 2009). Results from this study further highlight the need for a coach within the context of a professional sporting academy to understand the role of social power. Specifically, coaches should be aware that athletes within this context may be conforming because their coach is the decision makers on a potential professional contract, rather than because of a natural engagement toward their methods. Furthermore, it is important that a coach behaves consistently with athletes as broken promises and unpredictable actions can result in an athlete feeling disappointed and angry; a belief that concurs with conclusions from Purdy *et al.* (2008).

Despite this, it is important to note that the present study doesn't claim to illuminate all of the issues of power and capital present within the coach/athlete relationship; as Denison (2007) suggests that coaches should act in a case-by-case manner. Instead, it offers guidance to those who hold some personal value in similar cases.

Recommendations for Future Research

To build on findings from this study, more emphasis can be placed on both the coach's and athlete's perspective on critical events. While the present study demonstrated a personal, in-depth look into the coach/athlete relationship, it is important to consider the single person perspective an autoethnography naturally portrays. Although it is argued that the general can hold some value in the personal (Church, 1995), it could be suggested that to enhance this type of research, the other individuals within the coaching context depicted can also have a voice. In doing so, it can provide different perspectives of the same situations and provide a greater understanding of the overall capital and power dynamics and the coach/athlete relationship under study.

CHAPTER EIGHT
CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Concluding Thoughts

This paper aimed to explore the inherent social power and capital dynamics within the coaching environment and how this affects the coach/athlete relationship. More specifically, it aimed to investigate how critical incidents disturb and change this relationship over the course of a rugby season, using an autoethnographic approach. The narratives were placed alongside work by Bourdieu on capital amongst other relevant social power theory as an attempt to build on current research and to increase theoretical understanding of the unique power relations apparent in the coaching context.

The progressive stories highlighted the ever changing nature of the capital and power relations between me, the team and the coach as a mixture of behaviours were apparent. My early enthusiasm and support for the coach's methods were based firstly on his knowledge and expertise of the sport. In my eyes, he demonstrated an expert persona as a result of the content of his sessions and his high qualifications. Similar to Shogun (1999) and Jones *et al.* (2005), this led to my initial unquestioning, compliant nature. Adding to these feelings, an early promise of a shared power relationship was evident as the role of captain was given to me. My perception of the importance of this role in the eyes of coach and the responsibilities and influences it afforded me further strengthened my early conformity and cooperating actions.

As the second narrative progressed it was clear the relationship I shared with the coach had changed. My initial understanding of the situation was that coach's aggressive demeanour was the reason I didn't approach him with my concerns. However, when placing it alongside Bourdieu's work on capital and comparing it to the athletes in Cushion and Jones (2006), my submissive behaviours could be explained as I tried to accumulate my own capital within the context. At the same time, my obedient actions were motivated by the knowledge that coach was the "gatekeeper" to my potential professional contract. A significant point of the narratives though was the disagreement that arose. This would ultimately be the beginning of the end for the shared power relationship I believed we had.

The expression of power as resistance was evident within the last narrative as coach continued to behave in a way that abused his standing among the team. This eventually culminated in a poor performance in one of the biggest games of our season. The extreme nature of emotions on display in this story highlighted the coach's inattentiveness to the feelings and perceptions of those he coached.

In many ways, these findings build on previous research that demonstrate the effects that the various capital and power dynamics has on effective coaching (Cushion and Jones, 2006; Denison, 2007; Purdy *et al.*, 2008). In this instance, the effects become negative as the coach failed to grasp the prominence of the insensitive interactions that he shared with me. Bourdieu's work on capital helped to further understand and explain the behaviours on display; as the coach's control over my future within the context ultimately led to my, for the most part, conformity. Bourdieu's conceptualization offered a critical yet reflexive outlook which aided me in making sense of my narratives. It allowed me to analyse the stories closer to the social, dynamic and complex perspective of coaching (Jones *et al.*, 2011).

Even though my actions concur with the athletes' actions in Cushion and Jones (2006), by using an autoethnographic approach, it portrayed the lived experiences from an inside position within the coaching environment as opposed to an outside perspective that characterizes an ethnographic approach. Thus, the present study builds on Cushion and Jones' research on the effect capital and power have on the coach/athlete relationship within a professional sports academy. An autoethnography allows the reader to emotionally relive the author's story and this is what I've tried to achieve here; by creating engaging, evocative narratives that highlight the ambiguous, ever changing nature of the capital and power relations which pervade the coaching context.

CHAPTER NINE
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