# Cardiff School of Sport

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## Comments

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Career Transitions In Professional Football: A Case Study Of An Elite Player, Coach & Manager

(Dissertation submitted under the discipline of Psychology)

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I would like to thank the following people. Firstly my dissertation wouldn’t have reached its current level or explored the depths it has without the help and hard work of my dissertation supervisor, Dr Ian Mitchell. I would also like to thank my close friends and family for supporting me during the past few months, and finally I would like to thank the participant of the following case study, as without him, this whole investigation wouldn’t have been possible.
ABSTRACT

The current case study comprehended the transitional experiences of an elite level professional football player, coach and manager. The study paid particular attention to the cognitive, emotional and behavioral responses towards three different transitions. The single participant (n=1) was involved professionally and consecutively as a player, coach and manager during his career within football and the definitive transitions investigated in this study covered these three shifts in occupation. Semi-structured interviews were used to obtain in-depth data regarding the experiences the participant had during each transition. The transcripts were then inductively analyzed using content analysis. The results highlighted, the dynamic and complex nature of transition, emphasizing the role of coping/social support, awareness of transferable skills, perceived loss of identity and pre transition planning. From the current research it would appear that the transitional experience varies for each individual, with the highlighted components (social support, awareness of transferable skills, perceived loss of identity and pre transition planning) having differing implications. This study has made light of a number of implications practitioners could consider. It has highlighted the need to consider coaches/managers when regarding the retirement from sport and its effect on athletic identity. There is also a need to further research the relationship between social support and its impact on the negative emotions experienced with involuntary transitions.
CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION
1.0 Introduction

Psychology has, for many years, attempted to depict and scrutinize ways in which elite sports performers and coaches can comprehend the process of a transition. The current study will look to grasp an understanding of the transitional experiences of a single individual across three definitive transitions during an extensive involvement within professional football. Early transitional research was centered outside of the sport domain (Schlossberg, 1981, 1984), and much of the literature involves the performing arts and mainstream psychology (Lerch, 1982). Initially, research was centered on transitions from everyday life and it highlighted that human life was associated around everyday transitional occurrences (Schlossberg, Lynch & Chickering, 1989). Examples of these occurrences that cause a transition were emphasized as a change in career, having a spouse, moving house or getting married (Wylleman, 1995; Stambulova, 1997; Alfermann, 1998). Wylleman & Stambulova (1999) emphasized that any transition has the potential to be considered as a crisis, relief or a combination of both; depending on the individuals appraisal of the situation being experienced (Grove, Lavallee & Gordon, 1997).

The sport-scientific community has made an effort to conceptualize the career transition process based upon the repeated number of athletes requiring psychological aid during transition. In recent times transitions have become a more popular area of research within the sport domain (Dacyshyn & Kerr 2000; Chamalidis, 2000; Lavallee & Robinson, 2007). This has lead to the initiation of a special interest group for career transitions (SIG-CT) set up by practitioners and researchers alike which allows them to exchange information on investigations and applied research within the area. This has enabled many highly supported publications to be brought forward and enhance our knowledge of career transitions (Wylleman & Schilling, 1997). The extensive research done within the area has brought to light a number of themes that have commonly featured within the literature In particular, Identity (Lavallee & Robinson, 2007), coping strategies (Grove, Lavallee & Gordon, 1997), the role of social support (Bianco & Eklund, 2007), and crisis transition (Stambulova, 2009).
Despite the extensive research within the area, elite-sporting transitions appears to be an area that is remains underdeveloped and therefore warrants further exploration in both ‘within’ career and ‘out of’ career transitions.
CHAPTER TWO:

REVIEW OF LITERATURE
2.0 Review of Literature

2.1 Introduction

Career transitions are a popular area of research among psychologists due to their sometimes unpredictability and affect they could have on an individual who experiences them, especially those integrated within a sport setting. There have been two types of transitions that are investigated within the relevant literature: within-career and out-of career transitions. Within-career transitions involve the transitions athletes face moving from novices to experts within their respective sports. Whereas, out-of career transitions observe the ways in which athletes leave their respective sports. Within the research numerous individuals report difficulties when experiencing a sporting transition (Lavallee, 2000). This could be a contributing factor to the importance of needing future research on career transitions within a sporting context. Broadening the understanding of transitions could allow sport psychologists to make more effective resources available to athletes in order to make the transitions they face smoother and more successful.

The growth in evidence-based literature over the past decade has facilitated the definition of a transition. Schlossberg’s (1981) broad look at transitions stated that they could be seen as an “event or non-event that results in a change in one’s assumption about one self” (p.5). Whereas a definition from Alfermann & Stambulova (2007) took a more contextualized approach and suggested ‘transitions are turning phases in career development that manifest themselves by sets of demands athletes have to meet in order to continue successfully in sport and/or other spheres of life’ (p719). While research offers different descriptors of transitions a common theme reported within the relevant literature is that transitions occur across many different occupations, and are especially common in sporting careers Alfermann & Stambulova (2007). Webb, Nasco, Riley and Headrick (1998) stated ‘competitive sports retirement represents a unique period of life change, as, unlike retirement from other careers, it usually occurs early in life’ (p341). Research in this area has become a key topic of interest among sports psychologists over the past decade (Stambulova, Alfermann, Statler
and Côté, 2009) and the increase in focus on the area has lead to a revolutionized ‘holistic’ approach towards them. This approach has altered the way in which sporting transitions are perceived globally. Instead of treating an individual’s sporting career separately to the other things they do in life, it is now considered that an athletic career is an integral part of a life long career (Stambulova, Alfermann, Statler and Côté, 2009).

2.2 TRANSITIONAL MODELS

There are a number of models that have been presented in the relevant literature to further understand transitions. One of the most important models to provide a greater understanding of the multidimensional transition process is Schlossberg’s Model of Human Adaptation to Transition (1981). It considers the ‘characteristics of the individual, the transition and the pre and post retirement environments in determining adaptation success’ (Lavallee 2000 p76). The theory in its simplest form describes the complexities that humans face when coping with change. The model itself represents a framework that analyses all kinds of transitions (positive and negative, dramatic and ordinary) and allows for the possibility of interventions to be formulated. The model views adaptation to transition as a dynamic process, a movement through the various stages of a particular transition. In this model three sets of factors influence adaptation to transition: (1) the characteristics of the transition itself; (2) the characteristics of the pre- and post- transition supports, and physical setting; and (3) the characteristics of the individual (Schlossberg 1981). In an attempt to understand the career transition process of athletes, several researchers have utilized the transition model outlined by Schlossberg (1981) (e.g. Swain, 1991; Baillie 1992; Parker, 1994) has empirically supported the model agreeing that the characteristics of the transition and the individual involved as well as the characteristics of the pre/post transition support all have influence on the outcome of adaptation. However, while the model seems to be helpful in assessing the process of athletic retirement, Taylor & Ogilvie (1994) suggested the model doesn’t provide a flexible and multidimensional approach that is needed to adequately study athletic transitions. The multidimensional process of transitions within a sporting environment makes them difficult to measure and the literature
agrees that these transitions are specific to the individual that experiences them. Therefore, understanding the effects of a transition on an individual is as important as understanding the different type of transitions experienced.

2.3 TYPES OF TRANSITIONS

Most of the transitions faced during an athlete’s career are foreseeable and preparation is allowed for them, however others can be unpredictable and not allow for any planning (Smith & McManus, 2008). Transitions are often defined as either normative or non-normative. Normative transitions are predictable events such as moving from junior to senior competition whereas non-normative transitions are more unpredictable events such as an injury experience. During a sporting career two types of transition have been identified, within career transitions (e.g. moving from one club to another) and out of career transitions (e.g. career termination). Within career research has looked at career patterns experienced by performers and looked at the microstructure of their careers, noting their evolution from one stage to the next (Helsen, Starkes & Hodges, 1998). Bloom’s (1985) study concerning within career transitions highlighted three consecutive developmental stages across the career of a number of expert performers from a sport, science and art domain. These stages were the early, middle and late years. The early years refers to the time when individuals were introduced to activities within their domain and received positive and constructive support from low level coaches and parents alike. The middle years were characterized by the performers becoming increasingly committed to their sport and receiving acclaim and recognition due to their retrospective successes and ability. During this time the individuals usually seek “more advanced forms of coaching” (Bloom, 1985, p.242). The later years involve even more accomplished coaches, and individuals that reach this stage are said to have adopted an urge to mastery in their performance domain. Despite this clear understanding of key stages within an individual’s career, several authors have highlighted the need for further research surrounding within-career transitions in order to aid athlete/coach development and minimize talent loss (e.g. Wylleman, Alfermann & Lavallee, 2004; Pummell, Harwood & Lavallee, 2008).
On the other hand out of career transitions have been well researched over the past two decades. Within a sport perspective out of career transitions can also be known as an individual’s retirement out of sport (Stambulova, 2010). It is inevitable that every athlete’s career within elite sports will come to an end sooner or later; the reasons for an individual’s retirement can be manifold. Oglive and Taylor (1993) looked at an overview of the career termination research and highlighted four main causes of career termination; de-selection, injury, age and free choice. Webb et al (1998) went even further and categorized these causes into two ‘those that are freely chosen and those that are forced by circumstances’ (p351). Problems faced by athletes associated with forced transitions stem from the lack of control an athlete has over the transition. As Bandura, (1997) stated controllability is strongly correlated to self-efficacy which in turn plays a key role with behavior change and adjustment. It is often the case that in the absence of sport, athletes can struggle to identify themselves outside of the domain.

2.4 IDENTITY

According to Giddens (2006) Identity is “the distinctive characteristics of a person’s character or a character of a group which relate to who they are and what is meaningful to them” (p1020). A specific type of identity within sport is an Athletic Identity. This has been described as “the degree to which an individual identifies with the athletic role” (Brewer, Van Raalte & Linder, 1993; Weichman and Williams, 1997, p645). Athletes with a strong athletic identity may experience premature identity foreclosure and emotional disturbance following non-normative transitions within and out of sport, particularly in the case of forced retirement (Zaichkowsky, King and McCarthy, 2000). Grove et al (1997) hypothesized that individuals with an exclusive commitment to the athletic role are less prepared for post sport careers than individuals who are less involved in sport. Within the literature it is suggested that owning an athletic identity can either be positive or negative for an individual. Having an athletic identity can give an athlete a sense of self, however if a troublesome event occurs, such as retirement, an athlete could struggle to adjust to an altered identity after having such a strong association with the athletic role. Once having lost an athletic identity an athlete can find
this a difficult process to overcome (Murphy 1995) and this can, in some extreme cases, lead to an identity crisis (Woodward, 1997). The degree to which athletes consider alternative role possibilities is a strong indicator of a successful transition out of sport (Blinde & Greendorfer, 1985). Therefore, an athlete is more likely to experience a smoother transition out of sport if they consider themselves to have other identities, different to their athletic one. This ‘dual identity’ is paramount to experiencing as little stress as possible during transitions within or out of a sporting career (Lally, 2006). The success of a transition for an athlete is also highly influenced by the coping resources available to them during transition (Pearson & Petitpas 1990).

2.5 COPING

Coping resources are fundamental to athletes if their adjustment to transition is to be successful. Coping has been defined as ‘constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding resources of the person’ (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984. p141). Theorists have also noted that those with superior coping resources are prone to experience less stress than those with fewer coping resources (Murphy, 1995). Resources are referred to as the various internal and external factors that facilitate the transition (Stambulova 2010). Stambulova’s (2003) athletic career transition model is an explanatory model that described a transition through the types of coping demands it placed on the athlete. It explains that the effectiveness of the transition relies on the relationship between resources and barriers (factors that interfered with coping) and the outcome is categorized as one of two transitional outcomes: Successful transition or crisis transition. Successful meaning there was a good balance between the demands of the transition and the athletes coping resources. Crisis transitions, on the other hand, are associated with ineffective coping and perceived need of psychological assistance or intervention (Samuel & Tennebaum, 2011).

Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel-Schetter, DeLongis & Gruen (1986), have taken a process orientated look at the topic and highlighted two broad coping strategies used by athletes: Problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping. The first strategy of coping refers to the cognitive and behavioral
efforts aimed at minimizing the effects of a stressful relationship between the individual and the environment. Whereas emotion-focused coping refers to an individual not intending to change the current situation but regulate their emotional response and decrease their emotional distress (Dias, Cruz & Fonseca, 2012). Within the literature different sexes have been shown to use different coping strategies during transitions. Holt, Hoar & Fraser (2005) showed men predominantly used problem-focused coping whereas women concentrated distinctively on using emotion-focused coping. Avoidance coping is a third coping strategy that was presented by Endler & Parker (1990). It described athletes who coped by attempting to escape the situation they found themselves in, or at best, distract themselves from the problems they currently faced. By looking in depth at coping strategies both sets of researchers agreed that coping was used during transitions that were deemed stressful. Within the relevant literature a number of theorists have discussed how coping resources influence the overall quality of adjustment to retirement from sport (e.g. Evans et al, 2000; Evans & Hardy, 2002). Within this body of research a key resource that has been identified is social support. (Holt & Hoar, 2006; Podlog, & Eklund, 2007; Rees, Mitchell, Evans & Hardy, 2010)

### 2.6 SOCIAL SUPPORT

Petrie (1993) states, “social support is one of the most important coping resources available to elite athletes to reduce the debilitating effect of career transition” (p261). Within the literature social support is described as “an exchange of resources between at least two individuals perceived by the provider or the recipient to be intended to enhance the well-being of the recipient” (Shumaker & Brownell 1984, p13). Social support may help to redefine the threat posed by a stressor, alter an individual’s perceptions of his/her available resources to cope, or lead an individual to feel more in control, which could all prevent a stressor from being appraised as highly stressful (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Schwarzer & Leppin, 1991; Cohen et al., 2000). The construct of social support can be described in three dimensions: structure, function and perception (Holt & Hoar, 2006. See Figure 1). Each of the three dimensions serves a specific purpose, for example, the structure of support describes the social ties an individual relies on to receive support.
Perceptions of support, concerns an athletes cognitive and behavioral perceptions. The functions of support, describe the types of functions that are served with an individuals interpersonal relations.

**Figure 1. Construct of Social Support**

Social support is conveyed through a number of behaviors (Albrecht and Adelman, 1984) that have been classified as: emotional support (includes listening support, emotional comfort, and emotional challenge), informational support (includes reality confirmation, task appreciation, and task challenge), and tangible support (includes material and personal assistance). These types of social support have also been linked with different coping behaviors. Emotional support is intended to encourage emotion-focused coping whereas, informational and tangible support look to sustain problem-focused coping (Bianco and Eklund, 2001). The main effects of social support during transition periods are positive towards an individual’s perception of a transition, and belonging to a support network can lead to improvements such as self concept, self efficacy and feelings of self control (Rees, 2007). Functional elements of social support are most commonly related with stress buffering. Significant research has indicated that social support can alter the relevant reaction of an individual once stress has been experienced (e.g.
Rees, Mitchell, Evans & Hardy, 2010). Social support therefore moderates the negative relationship between stressors and psychological responses to crisis transitions. Optimal matching theory (OMT) helps us to further understand how support buffers stress. OMT highlights social support is most successful at suppressing stress when the type of support matches the stressor an individual is experiencing. For example, offering an athlete emotional support after a non-normative transition (i.e. de-selection) could suppress the athlete’s feelings of stress and help improve their transitional experience, however this depends on the individual and their perception towards the stressor they are experiencing. Holt & Hoar (2007) state that matching a stressor to the correct type of social support can be the most effective way of increasing perceptions towards an adjustment.

Many studies have highlighted the importance of general social support during athletic transitions. Lavallee’s (2005) “Life Development” intervention work with recently retired soccer players reported a strong relationship between increased social-support and increased self-efficacy for athletic retirement. This was suggested to be down to enabling the individuals to more effectively benefit from their support networks (i.e. social support). Alfermann (1995) showed coaches were a strong social support agent towards West Germany former track and field athletes. Coping resources like social support have clearly been shown to contribute to successful transitions and this combined with other resources such as; pre-retirement planning and transferable skills are necessary coping skills for an individual to move successfully through a transition.

### 2.7 TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

Athletes that have a successful transition are those that are able to capitalize on transferable skills (Blinde & Greendorfer, 1985). Transferable skills are those acquired through competing in sport that can be applied to other areas of an athlete’s life and to other non-sport careers (Mayocchi & Hanrahan 2000). Previous literature has highlighted the importance of an individual’s ability to make use of transferable skills in order to make a successful transition. Previous studies by McKnight et al (2009) have highlighted the awareness of transferable skills as a key point in aiding the
sporting individuals to cope with the transition they are faced with. The literature states transferable skills have been proven to facilitate an athlete’s adjustment process and influence skill transfer. Athletes are often made aware of transferable skills during life development interventions (LDI’s) which consist of a process involving; need assessment, education and training each of which are applicable to both sport and other spheres of life and have been particularly successful with sporting athletes experiencing transitions, especially for student athletes and retired athletes. (e.g. Petitpas et al., 1992; Lavallee, 2005) LDI’s also present an opportunity for practitioners to introduce other useful skills to athletes such as career planning within and out of the sport context.

2.8 PRE-TRANSITION PLANNING

Pre transition planning has increasingly become a key topic included in many of the LDI’s that exist within sport. This is due to the findings within research that has highlighted the benefits athletes take from utilizing it. Pre-transitional planning has been proven to aid athletes through transitions within and out of sport, making them less disruptive (McKnight et al., 2009). Alfermann & Stambulova (2007) also highlighted that the prevention of crisis transitions can be achieved by helping athletes with career planning to raise their awareness of the forthcoming transition demands and to enable them to develop all the resources necessary for effective coping. There is also evidence to show that pre-retirement planning during the competitive career of an elite athlete, in the form of varied activities, such as continuing education, occupational endeavors and activities related to athletes’ social network leads to a less problematic process of adaptation after retirement (Cecic, Erpić, Wylleman, & Zupančič, 2004). Nevertheless, despite the research behind the importance of athletes engaging in the process, the number of athletes who currently engage in future career exploration and career planning is limited (Stambulova, 2009).

2.9 SUMMARY

The literature in the area of athletic career transitions has focused mainly on the final transition; that out of sport (career termination), and little attention has
been paid to specific within-career transitions as athletes move up, down, or horizontally in the sport system (Lavallee, Wylleman, & Sinclair, 2000), thereby providing sport psychologists with little specific understanding of within-career transition experience. This study aims to contribute to the gaps in current literature, as it focuses on transitions experienced by a single case throughout a football career. The transitions being; from a playing career to coaching, from coaching to a management role and from a management role to being cut from the sport completely. It is hypothesized that the findings will highlight the benefits of pre transition planning, transferable skills and social support for the participant enduring transition. It is also hypothesized that the study will show negative effects on coping with a transition as a consequence of possessing an exclusive athletic identity.
CHAPTER THREE:

METHODOLOGY
3.0 Methodology

3.1 Method

The aim of this investigation is to explore an individual's experience of three definitive transitions during an elite sporting career. A case study is therefore the best method of collecting such data. ‘Case Study designs are used to gain an holistic understanding of a set of issues and how they relate to a particular group, organization, sports team or even single individual’ (Gratton & Jones 2004, p78). The results gained from the research are not for the purpose of generalizing across a population, but to help understanding of one individual’s transitional encounters. Kinugasa, Cerin and Hooper (2004) questioned the lack of use and dissemination of single case research into sport and exercise science given the nature of the topic. From analyzing the relevant literature, It is clear that this is a unique study, as no other researcher has looked at these type of transitions, all experienced by the same individual, all in the same investigation. The study hopes to enable the furthering of knowledge within the area by looking at the change in coping resources encountered by an individual experiencing transitions from: a professional football player to a professional football coach, a professional coach to a professional football manager, and a professional manager to unemployment.

3.2 Participants

The investigation will follow the design of a single case study and the sampled participant for this study is a male, 49 years of age, with a strong background in professional Football (n=1). The individual has over 30 years experience of top level football and has played in over 450 football league games, with over 15 years of professional coaching experience, and during that time 2 years experience as a professional football manager with an English League 2 side. The criterion fulfilled by the participant was chosen to ensure a wide range of transitional experience as well as varying transition types at an elite level in sport. This would allow the investigation to explore into different responses used by an elite individual towards different transitions and coping strategies in their retrospective sport. Stake (1995) defined a case study as the study of a particularity and complexity of a single
case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances. The individual chosen to partake in the study has experienced a number of transitions from player to coach to manager. The use of a small sample study will hopefully enable the investigation to gain an in depth understanding of each transition the participant was involved in.

3.3 Interview Guide

An interview guide was compromised from relevant literature to ensure maximum coverage of topics regarding transitions that the individual had experienced and to standardize all three interviews completed with the participant. Patton (2002) states ‘an interview guide provides topics or subject areas within which the interviewer is free to explore, probe and ask questions that will elucidate and illuminate that particular subject’ (p343). Probes were included (i.e., general, clarification, and elaboration) to obtain responses that were as consistent as possible, in terms of depth and complexity (Patton, 2002). See appendix C for the interview guide.

3.4 Instruments

The data will be collected using semi-structured interviews taking place between the participant and the author. This type of design is suitable as it allows an author to gather a large amount of biographical, experiential or attitudinal information on a relatively small sample group (Atkinson, 2012). According to Atkinson (2012) semi structured interviews allow the interviewer and respondent to dialogue back and forth, with the researcher picking up on and asking for the elaboration regarding new, exciting, important, ambiguous or conceptually intriguing information that emerges during the conversation (p122). Rubin and Rubin (1995) stated that the nature of the interview would be influenced by the level of detail within the interview guide. Broad and general questions will be asked at the beginning of each interview with the participant to create a relaxed atmosphere, as Patton (1990) states it is the job of the interviewer to provide a setting in which the individual will respond accurately and honestly. Each interview will be audio taped with permission from the participant.
3.5 Procedure

Before the interviews, with the participant, takes place, a pilot study will occur which will involve an interview with an ex professional footballer who has had experience of transitions at an elite level. Pilot studies can refer to ‘so-called feasibility studies, which are small scale version[s], or trial run[s], done in preparation for the major study’ (Polit et al., 2001, p467). Walliman (2005) suggested a pilot study is best tested on people of a similar type to the intended sample, so as to anticipate any problems of comprehension or other sources of confusion. This allowed for feedback to be given about the interview and enabled questions to be refined in order to get the most useful information effectively during the interview of the principal participant.

The individual involved in this study was asked to take part in at least 3 in depth interviews over a 3-week period. The three interviews will be needed to cover the relevant information regarding the research questions. The first interview focusing on the transition he faced whilst moving from the playing to coaching phase of his career, the second focusing on the transitional phase of coach to manager and the third concentrating on the transitional phase from manager to unemployment. The individual was also reminded they were able to withdraw themselves from the study at any point during the investigation. Any information or data gathered during the study will only be shared between the investigator the participator and the lecturer helping with the study, this ensures confidentiality which according to Andrews, Mason & Silk (2005) is one of the most important rules that interviewers need to respect.

3.6 Data Analysis

The data collected during the interviews will undergo qualitative content analysis; this can be defined as ‘A research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns’ (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p1278). Once the interview has taken place, transcribing the interview verbatim is essential. This then allows for inductive analysis to take place. 'Inductive analysis involves discovering patterns, themes and categories in one’s data. Findings emerge out of the data, through the analysts interactions
with it’ (Patton 2002, p453). The transcription of the interviews will allow for the next phase of analysis to occur, participant checking. This involves the participant involved in the study reviewing the interview and, most importantly, the responses given to ensure complete agreement and accuracy upon interpretation of the data. This procedure has been used in other studies such as Meyer and Wenger’s (1998), ‘cited under the broad heading of ‘establishing trustworthiness’, member checking was judged as a quality control process through which participants were allowed to review the researchers interpretations of data.’ The final phase of analysis is the coding of transcripts into common themes, ‘the purpose of coding and analysis is to make sense of the mass of data that rapidly accumulates’ Andrews et al (2005). This allows for a structured discussion to take place of all themes outlined from the transcripts.
CHAPTER FOUR:

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of the current case study was to analyze three different career transitions experienced within professional football, and highlight the behavioral, emotional and cognitive responses experienced by one individual across all three transitions. This section will follow similar approaches of previous research (Gordan, Lavallee & Grove, 2005; Alfermann & Stambulova, 2007; Petitpas, Brewer & Van Raalte, 2009; Stambulova, 2010) in which the results are presented with accompanying discussion. Due to the explanatory nature of this study, it is seen that connections and comparisons can more readily be made between the findings of this study and the extant literature. Thus best explain the experiences had by the participant throughout the three transitions. By combining the results and resulting discussion into specific sections lends itself best to the complex nature of this study (Wyllemann & Lavallee, 2004) and the discipline (Wyllemann, Alfermann & Lavallee, 2004).

A number of themes emerged from within the data that include athletic identity, coping, social support, transferable skills and pre-retirement planning. Each of which have been well documented within the transition literature. The following sections consider the emergent themes from each separate interview and goes on to provide a comparative section considering the differences between the findings.

4.1 Interview One: Player to Coach

The first interview considered the transition from player to coach. This was a voluntary transition and the findings in this study agreed with the literature, which convey voluntary transitions as being less emotionally and cognitively demanding than involuntary transitions. (E.g. Alferman & Gross 1997; Alferman 2007). The individual in this study suffered little to no negative emotions regarding making the transition from player to coach. He stated, “There was no downheartedness through finishing with the playing side because I was still involved to some degree”. This suggests that the participant was ready and willing to move away from the athletic side of his sport, in order to pursue a different career path. This is similar to the findings
of Swain (1991) who also reported that a dominant reason for the voluntary retirement of professional athletes was down to future job opportunities.

It was clear from the data analysis that the participant held a very strong bond with the club that he was involved with. This relationship with the football environment contributed to the successful coping efforts made by the individual and it was highlighted that social support was a large aid for him to make a successful transition. For example, the participant recalled: “I was still in the football environment and around footballers so that never changed”. This agrees with earlier research by Bussmann & Alfermann (1994), Sinclair & Orlick (1994) who reported that ‘athletes who feel comfortable with the social support/encouragement and the social relationships they are involved in tend to adjust better to career transitions’ (pg 52). Other than feeling supported within the work environment, the participant noted a strong sense of social support from close friends and family during this transition, especially his wife. As the individual suggested;

…From a personal aspect, it felt good that my wife was happy for me to go down that line, as she knew I couldn’t do anything else other than football. We could talk about options after football, and as I’ve mentioned I only really wanted to do one thing. She was aware of this, which helped the situation…

This emotional support agrees with Uchino (2009) who noted immediate family members are a very effective source of support for an athlete going through a transition.

As well as being well supported, the individual benefitted from being aware of and utilizing certain transferable skills that were developed during his playing career. “As a leader I was vocally dominant. It gave me a voice that got me respect among other coaches and players. It also allowed me to build up a good relationship with the manager” This agrees with Stambulova (2010) who emphasized that an individuals awareness of internal factors such as competencies and skills can positively facilitate a transition.

Relevant literature demonstrates that athletic identity foreclosure might lead to athletes’ one-sided development and also cause identity confusion regarding career transitions (Lally 2007; Stambulova, Alferman, Statler & Cote, 2009; Stephan & Brewer, 2007; Warriner & Lavallee, 2008). This was
partly evident within the first transition as the participant noted a decrease in his own perceptions towards his athletic identity following the transition. He stated, “I would say it dropped. I no longer got to play on the pitch in front of thousands of people at the weekend. So I was not a known name anymore”. This change in perception towards his athletic identity agrees with the current literature. Being involved in professional sport lays down the foundations for which an athlete goes on to construct their own athletic identity. Stephan, Bilard, Ninot & Delignieres (2003) noted that elite athletes engage in a powerful commitment with sport both emotionally and physically and the majority of their achievements are made within the public eye. Therefore they draw their identity and well being from positive social recognition. With the individual giving up his playing career this support was no longer available and therefore lead to some difficulties with regulating a change in his athletic identity.

It has been asserted that pre-transition planning is an effective coping skill for elite athletes going through retirement (Gorbett, 1985; Oglive & Taylor, 1993) and for those experiencing within-career transitions (Stambulova, Alferman, Statler & Cote, 2009). The participant within this study reported that he was aware of the up and coming transition “Thankfully I was one of those that didn’t reminisce and I knew my playing career was coming to an end” and had consciously engaged in actions towards preparing for a coaching career after his athletic career had finished “I gained my UEFA A license while I was still playing thankfully which at the time was the highest accolade you could get for coaching”. This forward thinking shown by the individual is an example of previous recommendations made by Stambulova, Alfermann, Statler & Cote (2009), who reported ‘career research confirms several normative (predictable) athletic career transitions for which athletes can prepare for in advance’ (p98). By taking part in this transition planning/preparation the individual found a balance between the current demands he was facing as an athlete and the future demands he would face after leaving his athletic career. This prepared him for a normative career transition from player to coach, and prevented a transition crisis from occurring.

Overall, the normative nature of the transition combined with the participants pre transition planning allowed for a smooth and unhindered shift
from playing to coaching. The participant reported a loss of identity immediately after making the transition; however this was anticipated given the current literature available on athletic identities (e.g. Lally, 2007). The participant demonstrated successful coping strategies following the transition such as showing awareness and capitalizing on useful transferable skills. A reason for this could be due to the almost identical pre and post transition environments, which the participant also drew valuable social support from.

4.2 INTERVIEW TWO: COACH TO MANAGER

The second interview concerned the transition from coach to manager, which was portrayed as a voluntary and normative transition. Due to the nature of this move the individual perceived himself to have sufficient social support throughout and this helped oppose any stressors that acted upon the participant during transition. He recalled “It was easier purely because I had the same personnel around me and with the people there it was a good environment”. This highlights a diverse amount of social support and disagrees with Hughes (2009) previous study within football, that demonstrated colleagues within sport should be considered as short-term acquaintances and should not be relied upon for support during a transition. The perception of available support has been proven within the literature to have a close link to greater self-efficacy in individuals (Rees, 2007). Those with higher levels of self-efficacy are also proven to be more capable of overcoming stressors within transition periods (McKnight, Bernes, Gunn, Chorney, Orr & Barrdick, 2009). During the transition the participant sourced personal, informational and emotional social support from close friends and family members,

…I looked to friends for support in decisions to make, especially those who your working with on the coaching side…My wife, for example, she would always listen and help me reason with myself as to why I was doing what I was doing...

In opposition to this, the transition from coach to manager also brought negative issues surrounding the lack of social support from key groups of people within the football and transition environment.
…At the time we had a big number of board members and there was a split in the decision as to whether I should become manager…It obviously knocks your confidence, but it just meant that when things went wrong within the club you have to answer to too many people… This lack of support during the transition caused obvious negative emotions that lead to unwanted stress being placed on the individual.

From this interview it was clear that the participant’s athlete identity still remained very high although retirement from elite sport had occurred many years earlier, which suggests remaining in the elite sporting environment after the end of a playing career allows an athlete to sustain his identity. He stated, “…I was happy that I could still coach and demonstrate to the best of my ability.” The individual benefitted from self-confidence within his own ability, which agrees with Jones & Wallace (2006) who drew attention to the important association that coaches made between their current athletic identity and their ability to perform skills and techniques successfully in their retrospective sport. Furthermore, during this transition an increased sense of identity was referenced immediately after the transition occurred. The participant conversed “Well it becomes higher, id say 4 or 5, because you’re in the limelight more often, your seen on the tele, in the local media and even nationally through the media”. This again agrees with previous literature that suggested those who move from athletic retirement straight into coaching and managing roles, without considering any other career options, display higher levels of athletic identity. (Shachar, Brewer, Cornelius & Petitpas, 2004).

Due to the similar nature of the career environments before and after the second transition, the participant was able to capitalize on transferable skills that, although were very specific, would help and enable the individual in his new career pathway. He suggested “Well being assistant manager at the time, I was around the team”… “I learnt first hand about the problems the manager has to deal with and how he has to cope with the work”. This confirms the findings of Stephan, Bilard, Ninot & Delignieres (2003) who highlighted the importance of a coach’s awareness and ability to use transferable skills, learnt from their previous careers, in their new role in management.
On the whole this transition was similar to the first, a normative transition that the participant chose to make, enhancing the quality of coping highlighted within the interview. Although pre-transition planning didn’t occur some transferable skills were benefited from and the athlete saw an increase in his identity immediately after making the transition due to the nature and publicity surrounding the occupation. Nevertheless it presented some problems with regards to the social support or lack of it, which was experienced during this transition. This brought to light the interesting nature of transitions into football management with regards to the perception of support received from influential groups of people found within a football club (i.e. board members and supporters).

4.3 INTERVIEW THREE: MANAGER AND OUT

The final interview regarded the transition that involved the individual shifting from a professional sports management role out of the sport completely. This transition was involuntary and non normative which is fairly common among professional football management positions (Spinks, Reilly & Murphy, 2002). Due to the nature of this transition the individual experienced numerous stressors, none more so than with the lack of pre transition planning. He revealed;

…I had to face the fact that within a few weeks id be coming out of an environment that id been involved with for over twenty years”… “Well prepare for what? Because I didn’t know any other form of life to prepare for…

This is evidence of the harsh nature of the football management environment, and shows the lack of pre-transition planning that the individual engaged in, which is a common problem with athletes involved in elite level sport (Stambulova, 2010). The significance of career planning for individuals going through transition is supported mostly by athletic retirement studies, where retirement planning was shown to be a factor facilitating adaptation to the post career (Alfermann, Stambulova & Zemattyte 2004; Stambulova 2007).
The participant’s coping assets were obviously tested during this difficult transition and numerous resources were drawn upon to limit the amount of stress experienced.

…I portrayed an image that everything was okay but deep down as a family you know the truth…Well I couldn’t predict what was going to happen to me regarding what to do next so I just had to play a waiting game...

This quote could possibly suggest that the individual struggled to cope with the realization of leaving the sport he had been so associated with, showing emotions like shock, sadness and lack of confidence. These emotions have been found in numerous other studies where forced retirement had been considered (Cecic Erpic, Wylleman & Zupancic 2004; Fernanadez, Stephan & Fouquereau 2006; Alfermann & Gross, 2007).

Although coping was repressed during this transition due to its harsh nature and unexpectedness, the participant still perceived to have adequate social support and acknowledged some benefits from having this support. When asked about who he thought offered the most support during this transition period the participant mentioned the support he received from family and close friends. He recollected

…Well my close family encouraged me to get out and find jobs back in football, they kept their belief in me…Friends offered support in terms of putting work my way and helped with finances… “The encouragement I received kept my beliefs up...

This agrees with early research such as Botterill, (1981) and Werthner & Orlick (1986) who highlighted that this encouragement from family and friends can often ease the degree of disruption within the transition. Other forms of coping involved “keeping busy” and “…taking my mind off it”. The findings are similar to research completed by Bilard, et al. (2003) where the participants in their study involved themselves in other activities to avoid the feeling of loss.

The participants struggle with his loss of athletic identity was another negative aspect regarding this transition. The findings found once the transition out of the sport had happened, the participant felt at a loose end. He recalled “I was worried about what I’d be doing next as I wanted to stay in
football” – “But now I have no idea or experience in another line of work”. This lends support to the argument of Lavallee and Robinson (2007), where the participants in their study also felt directionless once retired. The previous quote also highlights the lack of awareness towards transferable skills that could be used in life outside of the sporting domain, agreeing with McKnight et al (2009) who demonstrated this was a common factor in elite sporting individuals. The participant in the current study still held a very dominant athletic identity that was allowed to remain due to the continuation of remaining within the professional football environment after retirement from his playing career had occurred. This proved to be a hindrance upon his ability to accept the non-normative transition out of the sport completely and was made apparent by phrases such as “When its your life, and that’s all you know, it’s a massive jaunt to come out of football”… “It was hard leaving the environment”. The length of time spent by the participant constructing this exclusive athlete identity obviously made adjustment to life without sport more difficult. This agrees with Adler & Adler (1989) who argued the greater amount of time an individual’s dominant identity is their athlete identity, the harder it will be for them to adjust to anything different. The responses given by the participant have been similar to and agreed with previous findings from other studies e.g. Sparkes (1998), Dacyshyn & Kerr (2000), Stier, (2007) and Lavallee & Warriner, (2008). The similarities being the individual/s negative responses to stressors such as the struggle they faced with their loss of identity.

The unpredictability of this transition made the participant aware of the lack of pre transition planning that he had undertaken. This in conjunction with other stressors including the struggle with identity loss and lack of awareness towards transferable skills each contributed to a highly stressful transition. Meanwhile coping was aided through a social support network that offered efficient aid during and immediately after the transition. Relevant literature states ‘out of sport’ transitions are often most stressful for athletes which is substantiated when comparing the three transitions looked at in this study.

4.4 SUMMARIES OF THE THREE TRANSITIONS
After analyzing each interview’s findings separately it is necessary to compare the findings against each other to highlight some of the possible differences and similarities experienced by the participant during each transition. This will then allow us to gather an overall representation of the data collected and get a clearer picture of the responses shown by the participant across each transition.

The three interviews give a detailed description of the individual’s experiences during three different transitions experienced amongst a professional football environment. It was clear that throughout each transition the participant had a strong network of social support surrounding him, and this aided his adjustment in all three transitions. During each transition support was drawn particularly from his wife, as she was reported as a source of beneficial emotional and esteem support. Within the research these types of support are linked to feelings of comfort, security and increased self-esteem to overcome the existing challenges (Rees, Mitchell, Evans & Hardy, 2010). This is evident within the current study as the participant reported feelings of “encouragement” towards making lifestyle adjustments due to the transition he was facing.

Due to the similar environments that surrounded the transitions from player to coach and coach to manager, the participant found coping to be unproblematic for the first two transitions as he remained in an environment of which he’d been associated with for a many number of years. As well as being able to rely on the same social support network for these transitions to aid his coping, the similar nature of career roles allowed him to capitalize on transferable skills. This gave the participant a confidence going into his next career path. This is similar to some of the earlier research done by Petitpas & Schwartz, (1989) and Petitpas et al (1992) who summarized that athletes who realize they already have skills to aid them in other occupations become empowered. However, this is somewhat different to the feelings experienced during and after the third transition, out of elite sport altogether. During the final transition the participant failed to note or highlight any skills that were of value to and could prevent him from “feeling lost”. This could further support the findings of McKnight, et al (2009) who noted that elite and successful
athletes can often have a focus that is so narrow it can effect their judgment on how certain skills can be effective in the non-sporting environment.

Whilst the first two transitions (player to coach, coach to manager) were voluntary and normative, the final transition (manager and out) was involuntary and non-normative. This was reflected in the struggle the participant experienced with his athletic identity during the final transition as opposed to the first two. The final transition placed a substantial amount of stress on the participant with regards to a change in his exclusive sporting identity. The literature states that when an individual experiences a ‘change event’ in their life the degree to which they associate themselves with their sport, i.e. their athletic identity, can often be the deciding factor on whether they perceive the event as positive or negative (e.g. Samuel & Tenenbaum, 2011). Brewer et al. (2000) suggested that athletes’ ‘strong and exclusive identification with the athletic role might hinder the development of other self-aspects, and lead to low self-complexity and heightened risk of emotional extremity, when facing stressful career-related events’ (p93). Samuel & Tenenbaum (2011) also highlighted that different change events in a sports career can have different effects on an individual’s identity. Interestingly, they confirmed that an event such as a change in field position would not be as detrimental to athletic identity as would the complete loss of involvement within a field. This could explain the differing responses and ability to cope with identity change, between the first two transitions and the last one.

A final contributing factor to the differing stress levels experienced during each transition is the amount of pre transition planning the participant engaged in. The within career transitions, from player to coach and coach to manager, were normative and allowed the individual to engage in some aspects of pre transition planning. Whereas the final transition occurred unexpectedly and out of the participants control. Whilst the transition out of sport was inevitable for the participant, the lack of planning for life after sport was emphasized and caused great stress when the transition occurred. Previous studies have highlighted that individuals who do not prepare for retirement out of sport often engage in ‘existential questioning’, which leads to athletes asking themselves, ‘what’s next’? This can have very negative effects on an athlete’s confidence and self-esteem and was evident in the current
study. Subsequent to the last transition the participant was left pondering on what to do next rather than having a plan or idea on future career possibilities.
CHAPTER FIVE:

CONCLUSION
5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 MAIN FINDINGS

The present study gained an insight into the three definitive career transitions experienced by one individual within his professional football career. The transitions had varying effects on the participant involved in the study. Transitions within and out of sport should be considered as complex, ever changing processes, whereby the interaction of factors proceeds to impact upon an individual. The factors, which may be physical, psychological, social, educational, occupational or financial, can cause forms of distress when athletes are confronted with stressful transitions depending on the individual's perception and appraisal of the current situation. The transitions covered by the study showed many similarities to current literature and demonstrated a contrast of responses. The data collected from the interviews suggested that adaptation to transitions depends greatly on the nature of them (i.e. voluntary vs. non-voluntary) as well as the individuals directional perception towards them (positive vs. negative). The benefits of social support were obvious during each transition suggesting that a successful network of support is one that is perceived to remain available throughout an athlete's life. However, the reported struggle with the loss of athletic identity during the final transition out of sport, suggested that while it may be beneficial to an individual to remain in the elite sporting environment as a coach/manager, there could be severe negative psychological effects when they eventually leave the sporting domain. This study agrees with current literature (e.g. Chamalidis, 2000; Alfermann, 2000; Gordon, Lavallee, & Grove, 2005) which state that it is important to recognize that elite sporting transitions can be unique, dynamic and potentially debilitating to an individual and shouldn't be compared to everyday transitions.

5.2 STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

The present study had a number of strengths and weaknesses. The use of semi-structured interviews was a key strength of the study. Using a standardized set of questions allowed the interviewer to adapt and provide a flexible rationale for the participants. Probes enabled further in depth data to
be collected that benefitted the study, as it enabled the participant to talk about his own experiences and identify important characteristics. The richness of the data that emerged from the qualitative study has furthered our understanding of mechanisms that drive and hinder successful career transitions within elite sport. Petitpas & Champagne (1988) suggested that transitions within sport could be very specific depending on the type of sport an athlete is involved in. Therefore this study has effectively added to current knowledge upon transitions within the elite football environment. However, the findings of the present study also should be considered in light of a possible limitation. Specifically, the findings may have been contaminated by the inaccuracy of the participant’s recall as a result of memory decay and the potential confounding effects of the recovery outcome (Tracey, 2003). As the transitions occurred over fifteen years ago, the participant might have struggled to recall his exact responses to the transitions at the time, therefore the accuracy of his answers during the interview could be questioned.

5.3 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS / FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings have a number of implications for practitioners and future research. The information highlighted within this current study could inform and contribute towards future transitional intervention studies that may aid former players, coaches and managers through a smoother transition. As authors such as; Petitpas & Champagne (1988), Mcknight et al (2009), stated it is important that further investigations are used to inform future intervention methods in order to supply athletes with a greater awareness towards transitions and coping resources, to make the transitions they face as smooth as possible. It is evident from this and other studies that an exclusive identity can have detrimental effects on an elite athlete’s departure from sport (e.g. Collison & Hockey, 2006; Lally, 2007). The majority of research involving exclusive identities has worked with athletes and their retirement from sport (e.g. Collison & Hockey, 2006; Lally, 2007; Brewer, Cornellus, Stephan & Raalte, 2009). Little work has been done on a coach/manager’s retirement from elite sport. Therefore, it is important for practitioners to recognize the implications of coaches/managers having one exclusive sporting identity and the distress that can be caused when their identity is challenged during
transitions. Through recognizing similar pathways of future players/coach/manager's, practitioners could distinguish and assist individuals through smoother transitions within and out of sport. This is important especially within the elite football environment as these transitions are common and regularly made unassisted, without individuals having an awareness towards the negative impacts of making such transitions. Further research could also enclose studies on transferable skills and pre transition planning with regards to their effectiveness towards the adjustment within and out of the elite sporting environment. Moreover, types of sport are different with regard to their demands on athletes and the capacities they require for performance excellence. In addition, they are also different in terms of the ages at which the athletes usually begin to specialize (Stambulova, 2009). There is potential for future studies to compare experiences between participants from different sports that have experienced similar transitions to those analyzed in this study. This will provide a more complete outlook on career transitions in elite sport, and give practitioners a better insight into the areas where athletes/coaches/managers need transitional aid the most.
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APPENDICES
APPENDIX A:

INFORMED CONSENT
Hello, I’m Nicholas Glover, a third year student, studying for a BSC (Hons) Sports and Exercise Science degree at Cardiff Metropolitan University. I have a strong interest in the experiences of elite athletes within the sport domain which lead me to do this study.

The purpose of this interview is to further research by examining three definitive transitions during the participant’s career in professional football, focusing on the cognitive, emotional and behavioral differences experienced during each transition.

As a participant in this study, you have several rights. First, your participation in this interview is entirely voluntary and you are free to decline to answer any question or stop the interview at any time. It is important that you know that there are no right or wrong answers to the questions. The purpose of the interview is to learn as much as possible from your transitional experience. Therefore I would appreciate it if you could take your time to answer each question and if you are uncertain about anything, please ask and I can attempt to clarify it. Also, if you do not feel comfortable in answering any questions, then you can decline to comment and I will move on to the next question. Please be as honest as you possibly can and avoid giving me answers that you may think I want you to give. The more information and detail you can provide the better.

Should at any point during the interview you feel the need to end the discussion you are free to do so. To ascertain absolute anonymity, at no point during this research project will your name be used. Every piece of information obtained from this interview will remain strictly confidential. However, I may select a number of quotes from this interview in order to illustrate ideas, these will still remain anonymous. I will be using a Dictaphone to record and acquire accurate and complete information. At the end of the interview there will be an opportunity for you to add anything that you felt was important and not covered within the questions asked.

Recorded

Do you have any questions so far with what we have spoken about? As you can see from the interview guide, the interview comprises of several sections. The first section is concerned with demographic information.

If you are happy to participate please sign below

Signature..................................... Date...........................................
APPENDIX B:

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET
**Participant Information Sheet**

**Project Title:** Career Transitions In Professional Football: A Case Study Of An Elite Player, Coach & Manager

Principal Investigator: Nick Glover

Dear participant,

**Purpose of this information sheet**
This information sheet has been written to provide you with a better understanding of an up and coming psychological research project run by myself who is part of the Cardiff School of Sport, at Cardiff Metropolitan University. The information in this document will help you decide whether you wish to participate in the study describing the procedures and aims. It is important that you understand that taking part in this study is a voluntary decision and that you are free to withdraw from the project at any time if you do not wish to continue.

**Aims of the research**
The aim of this research is to investigate three definitive career transitions you experienced during your time spent within professional football. This will be achieved using semi-instructed interviews to investigate the main hypothesis. Which states there will be noticeable behavioural, cognitive and emotional differences shown between each transition.

**What will happen once you agree to participate in the study?**
All testing will take place in the comfortable setting. We will collect personal data and gather in-depth knowledge of your history within professional football. The interviews will be conducted over a period of three weeks, where you will be required to partake in a 45-60 minute interview on one day in each week. The interview will take place at a venue and time that is convenient to you. A table will then be formulated using the results collected from the interview.

**What type of participants are we hoping to recruit?**
The investigation is looking at an elite level professional player, coach and manager. Therefore you will be the only participant of the study.

**What are the risks of participating in the study?**
The risks associated with this study are minimal; as you wont be required to undertake any strenuous activity of any form.

**Benefits to us, the researchers**
This research will help us gather evidence to support or contradict current literature upon the same topic area. It will allow us to see the stress or lack of caused by transitions within elite level football and hopefully will inform future studies and practitioners when trying to aid those going through similar transitions.

**What will happen to the data and information collected during the study?**
Anonymity of the individual will be maintained during the research, meaning we will not share your results with anybody else. You will receive a copy of your interview transcripts to check and confirm there are accurate.

**What next?**
Please feel free to ask any questions to a member of the research team at any time. If you would like to take part in the study, please complete the Informed Consent Form and return to me as soon as possible.

Many thanks,

**Nick Glover**

Principal Investigator
APPENDIX C:

EXAMPLE INTERVIEW GUIDE
Hello, I’m Nick Glover from the Cardiff School of Sport at the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff. Firstly, I’d like to thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview study. As part of my final year dissertation project I am conducting some research into the psychological affects/responses towards transitions during an elite sporting career. The purpose of the interviews is to explore some of the topics and issues raised within the relevant literature and gain further understanding of career transitions during a sporting career. In relation to this interview, I am hoping to get a better understanding of your experiences during the various transitions you faced as an elite athlete/coach/manager.

The information gained from this particular study will be used in part of my Independent project during the third year of my university degree. The source of any information gathered will be kept utterly confidential even though I may still use some direct quotes from it. I am using a digital recorder in order to record the interview and to retain accurate information after the interview is complete. Again, the recordings will remain confidential and only used to transcribe your interview.

As a participant in this study, you have several rights. First, your participation in this interview is entirely voluntary and if you to decline to answer any question or stop the interview at any time. It is important that you know that there are no right or wrong answers to the questions. The purpose of the interview is to learn as much as possible from your transition experiences. Therefore I would appreciate it if you could take your time to answer each question and if you are uncertain about anything, please ask and
I can clarify it. Also, if you do not feel comfortable in answering any questions, then you can decline to comment and I will move on to the next question. Please be as honest as you possibly can and avoid giving me answers that you may think I want you to give. The more information and detail you can provide the better.

Please feel free to ask me any questions at anytime – I'll be happy to answer them as best I can. The interview contains several sections relating to the different phases of your career and within each section is several subheadings relating to the components of transition that this investigation is interested in. At the end of the interview, there will be an opportunity for you to add anything that you felt was important and not covered in the interview.

(Recorded)
Do you have any questions so far regarding what we have spoken about? If not, then we can proceed with the interview. As you can see from the copy of the interview guide, the interview comprises of three sections. The first section is concerned with demographic information regarding your career within professional football. The second section consists of questions based around the type of transition you faced and the third section includes questions on some of the psychological cognitions and emotions you experienced during this transition.

**Demographic information (Section one):**
Just to start the interview, I would like to ask you some questions on your athletic involvement in professional sport.

- Could you inform me of details regarding your career as a professional footballer?

  Probe: Apprentice, Appearances, Honors, Level of performance, Clubs played for.

- How long in total did your playing career last?
o Are there any personal highlights you could share with me from during your playing career?

    Probe: Why is that a highlight?

During the next two parts of the interview I would like to concentrate on the first of your major transitions during your career, from player to coach. Specifically the type of transition and the psychological emotions and cognitions your experienced during this time and the coping resources you utilized during this transition.

**Features of transition (Section Two):**

o At what stage in your playing career would you say you were in when your transition from player to coach occurred?

    Probe: Standing in the game? Level of playing career? Age?

o Could you describe the events leading up to your retirement from professional football?

    Probe: Think about the first time you thought of retiring and start from that point, note key points that aided or hindered your retirement?
    Probe: Was it a forced transition?

o Were there any sacrifices that you had to make to go through this transition?

    Probe: Could you give a practical example of this?

o Would you say you engaged in pre-retirement planning? Did this help you in anyway? If so, how?
o Had you always thought coaching was an option for you after you had finished playing?
   Probe: When did you realise that this transition was inevitable? How did this impact you?

**Psychological cognitions and emotions (Section Three)**

o What were initial thoughts/feelings when you retired from your playing career?
   Probe: what did you find stressful?
   Probe: Did you miss anything from your old role as a player? If yes, what? How did this affect you?

o How did you feel towards your ability to coach?
   Probe: How did this affect you and your performance?
   Probe: What did you do to become confident in your ability if you weren’t already?

o How did you feel towards your ability to cope with the transition before it had occurred?
   Probe: Did this benefit you in anyway? How?
   Probe: Could you give a practical example?

o Did you find going from a playing career to coaching career was difficult?
   Probe: Why?

o Did you feel in control of the Transition?
   Probe: How did this affect you?

o Did you benefit from any external support networks like the PFA?
Probe: How?
Probe: Practical examples?
Probe: How did this affect you?

o In your opinion did your choice of remaining within a football environment affect your ability to cope with the transition of retirement?
  Probe: How?
  Probe: Did you benefit from still being a part of the football environment?

o Did you rely on anything or anyone during the transition?
  Probe: What/Who did you perceive to be able to help during this time?
  Probe: How were they helpful?
  Probe: How did their help benefit your transition?

o Did you perceive your decision to move from playing to coaching was fully supported?
  Probe: Could you give me any practical examples?
  Probe: Were those you were close too during your playing career still close to you after you became a coach?
  Probe: Did the support network change when you became a coach?

o Have you experienced any negativity regarding your decision to make the transition?
  Probe: If yes could you expand?
  Probe: If no, how did this affect you?

o Have you experienced any benefits since making the transition?
  Probe: if yes, could you expand?
  Probe: Have any opportunities arisen that weren’t there before?
o Did this transition affect your social life?

   Probe: If yes, could you expand?
   Probe: Did your social ties change in anyway? Did this benefit your transition or make it more difficult?
   Probe: How did this affect you?

o On a scale of 1-5 (1 representing a weak identification, 5 representing a strong identification) how connected were you with your identification as an athlete?

   Probe: Do you identify with yourself differently now? If yes could you expand?
   Probe: How has this affected your ability to cope with the transition?
   Probe: Did you perceive your self differently after you’d made the transition?

o Looking back at it now as the transition choice to go from playing to coaching the right one?

   Probe: Can you give a practical example of this (i.e. No – Loss in fitness, Yes – Less stressful lifestyle)?

o Looking back at it, is there anything you would have done differently regarding this transition?

   Probe: Could you give a practical example of this?

o Do you think anything could be done by Football clubs or Football governing bodies in the future, to help people who go through similar transitions to the one you went through?

   Probe: Could you give a practical example of this?

Thank you for your cooperation during this interview.
APPENDIX D:

DATA ANALYSIS
THEMES

1st INTERVIEW

RAW DATA

“When coming into the coaching side at Port Vale I realized the wages were not brilliant”

“The only thing I did worry about was the financial side of things with us having to change our lifestyles as we were no longer comfortable through playing”

“The only change to my life was on the financial side of things. I suppose I a way that affected what I could or could not do on a social level”

“But when you actually come onto the coaching side of things I felt at the time I hadn’t learnt enough to warrant that type of position”

“I wish I had done more with the academy at a younger level to learn the trade, as they say”

“Well it’s a confidence thing initially, I wasn’t used to having to step up in front of a group of boys and coach them”

“I was still in the football environment and around footballers so that never changed”

INTERPRETATION

STRESSORS

Financial Worries

Lack of experience

COPING

Pre and post transition environments aided coping

Same environment
“Staying at Port Vale gave me a head start”

“It was probably one of the safest jobs in football, when you working with the kids”

“There was no downheartedness through finishing with the playing side because I was still involved to some degree”

“Yes, because as I say, I always had belief in my own ability, and I wanted to take that into the coaching side of things”

Participant had belief in his own ability to cope with transition

“Working alongside the head of youth, I could work and bounce off him and it allowed me to see what the job entailed”

“It allowed me to talk to someone and gain valuable information with regards to coaching and decision making within the club”

Working closely with colleagues enabled for a smoother transition.

Social Support
- Informational
- Tangible
- Personal

“I also had others to rely on, with the reserve team coach, assistant manager and first team coach, so there was enough people to pick ideas from”

Felt supported by work colleagues.

“You have friends throughout football, as well as meeting people in the same boat as you on courses you have been on. I got advice from those types of people and was able to pick their brains as to ways of

Courses offered other sources of Informational support to the participant.
which they go about doing things”

“We could go to training sessions with the academy on week nights and weekends together”

“From a personal aspect, it felt good that my wife was happy for me to go down that line as she knew I couldn’t do anything else other than football. “We could talk about options after football, and as I’ve mentioned I only really wanted to do one thing. She was aware of this which helped the situation”

“As a leader I was vocally dominant. It gave me a voice that got me respect among other coaches and players. It also allowed me to build up a good relationship with the manager”

“Having these skills gave me confidence in coaching and confidence to make the transition, because I thought I had something to offer given my experiences”

Carried over skills from playing career that allowed him to be a successful coach

“Respect from those within the environment meant the participants strong identity was allowed to remain high.”

Carried over skills from playing career that allowed him to be a successful coach

IDENTITY

“The advantages as a person came through still receiving respect from the club even after I had finished playing, being around the club meant I”
was treated with respect by those that worked there.”

“I only know football. Its my life” – “It was always a benefit to remain within football”

Remaining within football allowed participant to keep identity.

“I would say it dropped. I no longer got to play on the pitch in front of thousands of people at the weekend. So I was not a known name anymore”

This raises some slightly worrying thoughts, regarding the loss of his playing career.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRANSITION</th>
<th>PREPARATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Thankfully I was one of those that didn’t reminisce and I knew my playing career was coming to an end”</td>
<td>Aware that career was coming to an end this could of allowed thoughts of the future to occur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Being involved in the academy at the time I was helping and working alongside coaches there, learning different aspects of coaching”</td>
<td>Coaching whilst playing shows a thought into what to do after playing career.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I gained my UEFA A license while I was still playing thankfully which at the time was the highest accolade you could get for coaching”</td>
<td>“I would have probably learnt and done more courses prior to getting involved with the coaching”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Although preparation was done, given the nature of the coaching role, further preparation was needed</td>
<td>“I was lucky that people I classed as friends who I played with turned out to be coaches at the same time.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Friends remained close, as they all made similar transitions at similar times.
“Having personal friends who all had the same aspirations as me, to on the ladder in part of the club working as coaches, made the transition easy”

Social ties remained the same, as they all worked in same environment.

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**2nd Interview**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RAW DATA</th>
<th>INTERPRETATION</th>
<th>THEMES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“But when things turn you soon realize that you are on your own, I lost a good friend who was the previous manager when he left, and the coaches personalities changed who were working around me”</td>
<td>The transition caused social support and social ties to change and cause stress on the participant</td>
<td>Lack of/Loss in Social Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I felt alone sometimes and never thought things could change so much just by me taking on a new role, as manager”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I sort of got lost in the transition”</td>
<td>Pressurized situations lead to negative personal thoughts about the transition</td>
<td>Lack of Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The only hindrance I had during the transition was when results changed and the supporters started voicing their opinions”</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“At the time we had a big number of board members and there</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
was a split in the decision as to whether I should become manager” – “It obviously knocks your confidence, but it just meant that when things went wrong within the club you have to answer to too many people”

“Well it made it hard for me, I was angry, because I couldn’t do the job to the best of my ability without any financial backing”

“I was trying to appease people in a way because there was too many different opinions as to the way the club should be going forward”

“The kids had a hard time at school with other classmates” – “I could protect them in anyway or keep them away from it”

“I was easier purely because I had the same personnel around me and with the people there it was a good environment”

“Having a close relationship with half of them made the transition easier”

“It helped knowing I had those behind me

Focus on irrelevant issues rather than the job in hand

Distractions

Struggled with the thought of family members having to cope with issues because of the transition

Personal affect

Same environments with same sources of support available

Social support

COPING
“My wife, for example, she would always listen and help me reason with myself as to why I was doing what I was doing”

“I looked to friends for support in decisions to make, especially those who your working with on the coaching side”

“It was good for me to speak to them and ask them as an outsider how they perceived things at the club”

“I suppose I got advice and guidance from people that I met on different courses who’d been in the same predicament as me”

“It soon became a hard environment to be in and one I wasn’t ready for”

“Until your actually in the environment personally you think you can deal with situations until they really happen” – “Of course it affects you, it changes the way you perceive things, you often question yourself as to weather your making the right decisions”

“Well it becomes higher, id say 4 or 5, Perceptions of himself increased when the
because your in the limelight more often, your seen on the tele, in the local media and even nationally through the media”

“I wish I had changed how I perceived myself and I wish I had looked at myself as more of a manager and a big fish in a little pond, because I think that would of allowed me to deal with some of the things abit better”

“Well being assistant manager at the time, I was around the team”

“First hand experience of the managerial role before making the transition”

“I learnt first hand about the problems the manager has to deal with and how he has to work the work”

“Presumption that he was prepared for transition but once he had changed roles, realized he wasn’t”

“You think you are but in reality its completely different”

“Lack of preparation”

“You perceive different elements a lot differently when you’re a coach as you don’t see it though a managers eyes. When you actually come face to face with it in reality it’s a different ball game”

“Socially, I didn’t get to go out and go where I want to go because of who I was and what I represented”

“The transition caused the participant to have a limited social life”
“It hindered what I could do, although I wasn’t one who went out a lot socially I didn’t like the fact I couldn’t go where I wanted to go”
“I found I couldn’t and wouldn’t go out for meals with the family or I wouldn’t go to the pub just so I didn’t have to talk to any supporters about the game in my personal time”

“I think over a period of time you social life diminishes a little bit as you’ve relied on close friends to be there for you and that’s no longer there anymore”

Friends were lost due to the transition from coach to manager

3rd Interview

RAW DATA
“I was worried about what I’d be doing next as I wanted to stay in football” – “But now I have no idea or experience in another line of work”

INTERPRETATION
Wasn’t ready or willing to leave the football environment

THEME
Next line of work

STRESSOR
Awareness of the upcoming transition was an added stressor to the situation

Awareness of transition
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quote</th>
<th>Financial Worries</th>
<th>Loss on control with transition lead to further stress during the time</th>
<th>No longer would be receiving a regular income, and still had a family to support.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I was worrying about where money was going to come from” – “financially I found it the most difficult”</td>
<td></td>
<td>No control</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“It was down to other peoples decisions” – “Having to make that transition which was out of my control was difficult”</td>
<td>Loss on control with transition lead to further stress during the time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“It was hard leaving the environment”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The transition completely out of sport was not expected”</td>
<td>Non normative transition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Keeping busy was my main aim, taking my mind off it”</td>
<td>Keeping mind off things helped him cope</td>
<td>Actions taken to cope</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I portrayed an image that everything was okay but deep down as a family you know the truth”</td>
<td>Put on a brave face to outsiders</td>
<td>Disguise the struggle to cope</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Through my football career id learnt to cope with different situations. Id learnt to be a fighter during my career and this helped when needing to find other work”</td>
<td>Throughout his career coping skills have been used to cope in many situations, he saw value in those coaching skills when going through this transition.</td>
<td>Development of coping</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Well my close family encouraged me to get out and find jobs back in football, they kept their belief in me”</td>
<td>Valued the support he got from support network</td>
<td>Social support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Friends offered support in terms of putting work my way and helped with finances”

Tangible support from friends benefitted the participant.

“The encouragement I received kept my beliefs up”

Signs that the support was what the participant needed at the time.

“When its your life, and that’s all you know, it’s a massive jaunt to come out of football”

Shows a large connectedness with the sport.

“Identity

When its your life, and that’s all you know, it’s a massive jaunt to come out of football”

IDENTITY
Change in identity during transition

“When its your life, and that’s all you know, it’s a massive jaunt to come out of football”

IDENTITY
Change in identity during transition

“It was a big part of me for so many years”

“Not very strong, looking back at it now I probably identified with myself more as a coach than a manager”

Perceived his lack of identity as a manager as a negative thing.

“I couldn’t visualize with myself being a manager due to the negative environment I found myself in after such a short amount of time”

Describes the difficulties faced with identity and leaving the sport

“Moving out of football when its your life, you loose identification with yourself”

“When your in the football environment you think its going to last forever”

Presumption that the football identity will be with him forever.

“Well at the back of your mind your always aware it could happen, especially with the way results were going and the overall season had panned out”

Shows awareness that transition could occur.

TRANSITION PLANNING
Awareness
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quote</th>
<th>Lack of planning.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Well prepare for what? Because I didn’t know any other form of life to prepare for”</td>
<td>Lack of planning. Only ever know football environments wasn’t able to plan or prepare for transition out of football</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Well I couldn’t predict what was going to happen to me regarding what to do next so I just had to play a waiting game”</td>
<td>Lack of planning for transition due to the forced and non-normative nature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I wish I had learnt another trade during my sports career”</td>
<td>Highlights the participant is aware that pre-transition planning could have aided this transition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I think I drifted away from my football friends but people outside of football remained close”</td>
<td>Lost friends due to the nature of the transition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“We became less social because of it” – “We were tied to the house more”</td>
<td>The transition affected the amount of time which was spent being social this is closely linked to the financial stressors too</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>