

Cardiff School of Sport
DISSERTATION ASSESSMENT PROFORMA:
Theoretical / Conceptual
(Including: Desk-Based, Secondary Data, Meta-Analysis) ¹

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Programme:	<input type="text" value="SC"/>		
Dissertation title:	<input type="text" value="AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE NOTION OF SHARED LEADERSHIP WITHIN A TEAM SPORT – RUGBY UNION"/>		
Supervisor:	<input type="text" value="CHRIS DAVEY"/>		
Comments	Section		
	Title and Abstract Title to include: A concise indication of the research question/problem. Abstract to include: A concise summary of the theoretical study undertake.		
	Extended Introduction ² To include: outline of context for the question; clear articulation and justification of the research question; indication of research expectations.		
	Research Methods/Process ² To include: justification of a secondary data collection approach; justification of inclusion and exclusion criteria and any search parameters utilised; process/procedure adopted; clear articulation and justification for the structure and development of the study.		
	Critical Review ² To include: a synthesised academic exposition and evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - factually relevant data - conceptual understanding(s) - theoretical account(s) - established line(s) of argument in relation to the research question(s)/problem posed by the study; logical structural divisions that evidence appropriate and thorough development in critical analysis; reasoned enquiry progressing towards the formation of a justified position in relation to the research question(s)/problem posed by the study.		
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	Presentation (To include: academic writing style; depth, scope and accuracy of referencing in the text and final reference list; clarity in organisation, formatting and visual presentation).		

¹ This form should be used to assess Theoretical/Conceptual dissertations. The descriptors associated with Theoretical/Conceptual dissertations should be referred to by both students and markers.

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	Introduction and literature review To include: outline of context (theoretical/conceptual/applied) for the question; analysis of findings of previous related research including gaps in the literature and relevant contributions; logical flow to, and clear presentation of the research problem/ question; an indication of any research expectations, (i.e., hypotheses if applicable).		
	Methods and Research Design To include: details of the research design and justification for the methods applied; participant details; comprehensive replicable protocol.		
	Results and Analysis ² To include: description and justification of data treatment/ data analysis procedures; appropriate presentation of analysed data within text and in tables or figures; description of critical findings.		
	Discussion and Conclusions ⁴ To include: collation of information and ideas and evaluation of those ideas relative to the extant literature/concept/theory and research question/problem; adoption of a personal position on the study by linking and combining different elements of the data reported; discussion of the real-life impact of your research findings for coaches and/or practitioners (i.e. practical implications); discussion of the limitations and a critical reflection of the approach/process adopted; and indication of potential improvements and future developments building on the study; and a conclusion which summarises the relationship between the research question and the major findings.		
	Presentation To include: academic writing style; depth, scope and accuracy of referencing in the text and final reference list; clarity in organisation, formatting and visual presentation		

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CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

Prifysgol Fetropolitan Caerdydd

CARDIFF METROPOLITAN SCHOOL OF SPORT



DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE

(HONOURS)

SPORT & PHYSICAL EDUCATION

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE NOTION OF SHARED LEADERSHIP WITHIN A
TEAM SPORT – RUGBY UNION**

(Dissertation submitted under the discipline of COACHING)

DAVID RHYS ROBERTS

ST08004861

DAVID RHYS ROBERTS

ST08004861

'Cardiff School of Sport'

'Cardiff Metropolitan University'

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE NOTION OF SHARED LEADERSHIP WITHIN A
TEAM SPORT – RUGBY UNION**

Cardiff Metropolitan University
Prifysgol Fetropolitán Caerdydd

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ABSTRACT

The reason for this study is to identify these influential aspects within contemporary coaching and team environments through a qualitative capacity. The perception of the team environment, influential factors and the practicalities of shared leadership will be investigated using the opinions of coaches. Using in depth semi-structured interviews; the purpose of this study was to theoretically identify and research factors that support the effectiveness shared leadership has in a team environment, and in what manner these factors possibly will have influenced situationally specific components of performance. The semi-structured interviews which included four male rugby union coaches were transcribed word for word, and information was made available for analysis to highlight themes. The findings from this study delivered awareness of factors which influence the effectiveness of shared leadership in a sporting team environment. Additionally, the literature review highlighted that shared leadership has a positive influence on a team environment and provides benefits such as an increase in greater performance on the pitch by improving game knowledge and a shared vision towards team goals. However, future research should look in more depth to the influence followership has on a team environment.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Leadership is perceived necessary for team efficiency (Cohen & Bailey, 1997; Hackman & Walton, 1986; Kozlowski, et al, 1996), with a number of researchers highlighting that leadership is the significant factor (Sinclair, 1992; Zaccaro, et al. 2001). Traditionally, only the individual team leader has been the main focus point of research regarding team leadership, overlooking teammates giving leadership support (Kozlowski & Bell, 2003; Stewart & Manz, 1995). However, uncertainty has been cast over the perspective that a single formal leader has the ability to successfully fulfil leadership tasks (Day, et al. 2004). Due to this, this study is focused on shared leadership in a team environment observing specifically the main factors which make this type of leadership method effective.

Shared leadership is an interpersonal method of sharing leadership amongst team members as they apply combined effort in the direction of the teams' aims and goals (Mehra et al., 2006). The concept of team members sharing leadership roles is not an innovative one (Berkowitz; 1953; Gibb, 1954; Robbins, 1952; Tannenbaum & Massarik, 1957). However, analysing methods of shared leadership consisting of the development of team assets that results in effectively influenced team members is. Early research argued the significance of shared leadership within a team environment (Gibb, 1954; Katz & Kahn, 1978). It has many similarities with the conservative model "vertical leadership" by Pearce and Sims (2002), highlighting the role of the manager to be found formally ranked above and an outward appearance to a team. This role has a formal authority over the team and control of the team's outcomes (e.g., Druskat & Wheeler, 2003; Hackman & Walton, 1986; Kozlowski et al., 1996).

Although the studies surrounding vertical leadership are detailed and widespread, it will be naïve to propose leadership as a singular function in a vertical capacity. Recent research has established relations between shared leadership and team performance (e.g., Avolio, Jung, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996; Ensley, Hmieleski, & Pearce, 2006; Pearce & Sims, 2002; Sivasubramaniam, Murry, Avolio, & Jung, 2002). Even though the studies have developed the perception of shared leadership, there is still minimal research done in which motivated the study.

This study, following the review of literature, will feature the perception on leadership in teams as an active process containing connections between team members and external team leaders (Kozlowski et al., 1996; Zaccaro & Klimoski, 2002). The two integral elements which are expected to influence the progression of shared leadership within a team are the internal team environment and the amount of external coaching support. Using these influential aspects of shared leadership, the limitations on literature discussing the connections between internal and external team leadership can be minimised. These are essential as the basic structures of leadership function alongside and combine with one another (Manz & Sims, 1987).

Therefore the reason for this study is to identify these influential aspects within contemporary coaching and team environments through a qualitative capacity. The perception of the team environment, influential factors and the practicalities of shared leadership will be investigated using the opinions of coaches. Using in depth semi-structured interviews; the purpose of this study was to theoretically identify and research factors that support the effectiveness shared leadership has in a team environment, and in what manner these factors possibly will have influenced situationally specific components of performance. The semi-structured interviews were transcribed word for word, and information was made available for analysis to highlight themes.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter will discuss the aspects of shared leadership using contemporary research to support discussion on the chosen topic. Comparatively little research has been carried out on the significant influence shared leadership has on a team environment (Carson, Tesluk and Marrone, 2007). Within a team environment team members are seen as having to successfully participate in their individual actions. Each member has specific roles and therefore the performance of every member delivers communal success. Team methods develop an important factor of team performance, which also impacts the influences of outside variables (Zaccaro, Rittman and Marks, 2001). Early research argued the significance of shared leadership within a team environment (Gibb, 1954; Katz & Kahn, 1978).

“This concept of ‘distributed leadership’ is an important one” (Gibb, 1954; pg 884).

Role of the Coach

Barić (2007) states that the coach is the central aspect affecting the growth and development of an athlete. The role of the coach is seen to be a very complex subject to define, where the task of a coach cannot be defined briefly or specified completely (Saury & Durand, 1998). It remains unclear on how to define the role within this field. It has been debated that no theoretical framework is actually present which effectively deals with the reality of working within the complex coaching environment (Jones, 2006).

The traditional role of the coach is extremely prescriptive, instructional or directive (Kidman 2001; Cassidy et al., 2004). The coach determines at what time and how athletes ought to carry out movements or specified skills (Kidman, 2001; Potrac & Cassidy, 2006). This has created the vision of seeing the coach as the source of knowledge, transferring this in a method or technique with athletes partaking in an inactive role in the learning process (Potrac & Cassidy, 2006).

The use of simplistic role description is a common approach in the early stages of coach education (Crisfield et al., 1996; Martens, 1997). Coaches are educated that the coach should aim to mould themselves to be a counsellor, scientist, motivator, friend and teacher in order to gain the best results from athletes. The main roles of the coach are to integrate and co-ordinate all of the ideas to the coaching process. However, to be effective, the coach has to influence a broad range of variables, which occur within the actual session (Lauder, 1991; Lyle, 1992, 2002). But through experience and through other kinds of education all coaches will develop personal views on coaching issues and interpersonal relationships within their sport (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001; Lyle, 1999b; Cushions et al., 2003; Cushions, 2006).

The behaviour of the coach should vary depending on different situations and different athletes. Arguably, effective coaches can concentrate on demands of specific athletes; thus shaping behaviour around the individual athletes' responses and progress (Lyle & Cushion, 2010). There is no 'one size fit all' style and the prime behaviour will rest on the characteristics of the athlete and also the situation. Irrespective of the 'style' in which the coach instructs, if it is observed by the athlete as imposing (the coach's emotion, thoughts or actions are not associated with the needs of the athlete) it will be perceived as a controlling attitude and would not be positively acknowledged (Lyle & Cushion 2010). The coach needs to be an authority rather than in authority while being active rather than passive in the coaching process (Bergman-Drewe 2000, Jones & Standage 2006).

Coach as a Leader

The coach being an authority figure, a leader, is seen as a behavioural method that is used to develop and raise athlete performance and satisfaction (Chelladurai, P. and Riemer, 1998). Over the years when examining the influence the coach has on the athlete, such a definition has progressed. The research done by Chelladurai (2007) has influenced the view on coach leadership. Chelladurai & Reimer (1998) define the coach's leadership behaviour as a method of influencing the specific and group of athletes that are determined towards set targets.

Additionally, current studies recommend numerous leadership styles that are appropriate for sports coaching, together with servant leadership (Rieke, Hammermeister and Chase, 2008), transformational leadership (Rowold, 2006; Callow et al., 2009), and altruistic leadership (Miller & Carpenter, 2009). The progress of understanding coach leadership and its development within coaching practice is a slow progression. Attempting to overcome the difficulty of defining coach as a leader is difficult due to a lack of consistency from researchers defining coaching behaviours. This highlights a negative aspect of a singular leader.

Coaching is a chaotic, complex and dynamic practice (Cushion et al., 2006) where coaches struggle to place their practice on positive frameworks and are therefore not able to account for the managing that is required (Jones & Wallace, 2005). That is why models of successful coaching have identified inter- and intrapersonal awareness as the foundation for coaching effectiveness (Côté & Gilbert, 2009). Due to coaching being a relational and social process, it stands to reason that effective leadership will become more highly linked with interpersonal skills than with a constricted range of recommended behaviours. Interpersonal skills research for coaches has said that the concepts are positively and considerably connected with coach leadership (Chanand Mallet, 2009). These concepts all relate to the complexity and downfalls of a sole leadership role within a team environment when the success performance of a team relies heavily on the interpersonal skills of a singular individual.

The significant importance of coaching behaviours in regards to defining coach leadership is not seen as a main priority. Particularly when coaching is characterised by organised, planned improvisation, a coach relies upon his knowledge whilst quickly and consistently judges the situation and creates suitable behavioural alterations (Saury & Durand, 1998; Jones & Wallace, 2005). It is shown within research that a coach would create a mental model of how her or his coaching will happen, as well as awareness of athletes' personal characteristics, professional knowledge, and related factors (Côté & Gilbert, 2009; Côté, et al., 1995). Resultant behaviours are a creation of these theories conveying a positive outcome to coaching leadership. An independent point of view and ideal is seen by some of these authors to be essential in defining the aims and goals of a team.

Coaching is perhaps established particularly by the philosophy of teaching sport-specific skills; coach leadership is established also by the ability of the coach to sustain confident interpersonal relationships. This capability is stranded strongly in inter- and intrapersonal knowledge. Intrapersonal knowledge consist of reflection and self-awareness, both revealed to impact the development of leadership (Mills, 2009) and coaching (Knowles, 2001). These behaviours earn the right for more debate in the coach leadership literature and its influence on a team. However this study seeks to investigate the effect of shared leadership and the opinion of coaches towards this topic.

Athlete Leadership

Majority of leadership research has focussed mainly on the coach (Chelladurai, 1994; Chelladurai & Riemer, 1998). This is no surprise as the coach is the one who has the responsibility of making final decisions to team matters such as: tactics, strategy and team selection. However there is a further source of leadership which is important within a team sport, the athletes. Gould et al. (1987) stated that coaches believe that in order to produce effective team performance, athlete relationship is a key element. However there is a requirement for coaches to have two or three athletes within the team environment to produce direction and motivation to their teammates (Glenn & Horn, 1993). This results in either coaches appointing a captain and vice-captains or allowing the team to elect their leadership team.

An official leader can be regarded as an individual who has been recommended and appointed the position by the coaches/team election. Appointing an athlete as a captain may be seen from a viewpoint as achieving a formal role (Loughead & Hardy, 2005). Still, being appointed the formal leaders within a team do not automatically fulfil team leadership needs. Glenn & Horn (1993) believe a formal leader's appointment does not ensure their leadership alone can be effective for the needs of team leadership. Mabry & Barnes (1980) highlight an informal role within leadership that an individual could occupy in a team environment. An informal leader appears as a result of the relations that take place amongst teammates (Loughea et al., 2006). Taken together, all athletes within a team environment can become a source of leadership within a team, be it a formal or informal role.

The lack of research and definition regarding athlete leadership has led to inconsistent measurement of the theory, leading to research findings unable to compare to one and other. In fact, there have been around 65 different categorisations used to define leadership (Fleishman et al., 1991). Despite the range of research into leadership, Northouse (2004) highlighted various components that are vital to leadership: (a) leadership involves influence, (b) leadership is a process, (c) leadership consist of goal achievement, and (d) leadership takes place within a group context. Reviewing these components, Northouse (2004) defines leadership as;

“a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (Northouse, 2004; pg.3).

When leadership is defined in this fashion it becomes open to everyone and not restricted to a designated leader(s) of a group (Northouse, 2004) i.e. a coach. For that reason athlete leadership may be seen as an athlete taking an informal job within a team that inspires a team to reach set targets and common goals.

Types of Leadership

Leadership is seen as complex and has been repeatedly defined according to the theoretic position of Avolio et. al (2009). Practically, all definitions agree with the concept that leadership consist of a process of influence (Vroom & Jago, 2007). The predominant theories of leadership has highlighted leadership as strategic relational complex social dynamic and avoid describing it as an individual characteristic (Avolio, 2007; Yuk, 2007). As within sport coaching, which has also been defined as a social process which is complex, leadership is established and sustained by a set of select interpersonal relationships and filled by contextual restrictions (Cushion, 2007). As the interpersonal skills in coaching are the same found in leadership are there have been numerous debates and differing opinions regarding the importance of leadership as a crucial element of coaching practice (Laios et al., 2003).

More recently, authors are seen to favour new models of leadership. Callow et al. (2009) and Rowold (2006) both present examinations of the transformational

leadership model with their qualitative work with its positive results and ease of practical application demonstrated. Other research of late recommended that the Servant Leadership Model (Appendix I) could also be suitable (Rieke et al., 2008). Servant leadership is well-defined by the main concepts of trust, modesty and service to others. The research offers specific understanding of effective coach leaders, but the understanding become inconsistent when looked to be the most suitable model of leadership for coaching study. Studies promoting altruistic transactional leadership (Rowold, 2006 and Carthen & War, 2006) and leadership (Miller & Carpenter, 2009) as suitable models are usually left exempt.

The Multi-dimensional Model of Leadership by Chelladurai (1984) stresses three behaviours of leadership; the athlete's preferred coach behaviour, the essential coach behaviour and concrete coach behaviour (Appendix II). Each state is influenced by three variables that symbolize the characteristics of the athlete, the environment, and the coach. The principle of this model is that the satisfaction of the athlete and the performance of the athlete are confidently linked to the similarity between the three states of coaching behaviours. On the other hand, Smoll & Smith (1989) suggest coach leadership is a cognitive-mediational model. The theory of the model is that adding to influence of cognitive processes, situational factors and individual difference variables will facilitate the relationship between the behaviours of both athlete and the coach.

Followership

Within a team environment there are two different types of roles played, but both with equal importance. The leadership-followership relationship is a symbiotic one. Some athletes play leading roles and some play following roles within the team environment (Deiss, 2006). The role of follower can be seen as both assessing and taking on leadership functions (Hollander, 1992), decision making, goal setting, communicating, adjudicating conflict and directing activity are all roles in which followers take on within an environment (Hollander, 1992).

Within Kelley's (1992) model of the different followers there are four types, one effective and three ineffective (Appendix III). The effective followers are defined as

“Exemplary Followers” seen to be independent, critical thinking and active. However the three negative and ineffective followers are; the alienated followers, the passive followers (sheep) and the conformist followers (yes people). All types range from passive, independent, critical thinking, dependant and uncritical thinking (all with positive and negative connotations). Chaleff (1995) also identified five characteristics of followers but conveyed in a more positive context. The author described followers as “courageous followers”. Courageous followers are characterized by; (a) the courage to serve, (b) the courage to take responsibility, (c) the courage to change, (d) the courage to confront leadership, and (e) the courage to take moral responsibility.

The role of an effective follower can be seen as key to the team environment and crucial to the effectiveness of the leader or leaders. Katz & Kahn (1978) put forward that team followers offer their influence in supporting team targets and goals. Katz & Kahn (1978) stated that the level of influence within a team environment from effective followers is believed to increase through shared leadership. The organizations that share more influential decisions around the environment are seen the most effective (Katz & Kahn, 1978). In order for effective followers to influence the environment roles such as decision making, goal settings, communication and adjudicating conflict to some extent all are required to be shared by the leader (Hollander, 1992). The environment within a team can benefit from effective followers developing skilful and credible athlete leadership skills (Deiss, 2006). Having developed a skilful followership by working alongside others the view of the leader as a superior figure could be dispelled (Deiss, 2006). Vanderslice (1988) argues the importance of splitting leadership roles from leaders;

“Not only is it possible to fulfil leadership functions without creating static leader roles, but also there may be negative organisational consequences to lead-follower distinctions... in fact, lodging leadership functions in leaders may actually undermine the very goals leaders are supposed to achieve.” Vanderslice (1988, p. 679)

Empowerment

A progression from athlete leadership is another concept that has been added to the leadership framework. This concept is empowerment (Kidman, 2001) formally known as 'nutrient' power (May, 1972). This is also defined as power that is there 'to help another person' (Kleiber, 1980; pg 35). The concept of empowerment is seen as the process in which athletes gain greater control over decisions which affect their overall training environment (Kidman, 2001; Thompson, 1998). The performers and the team come together in influencing the direction of the environment (Arai, 1997; Kidman, 2001).

Thompson (1998) defines empowerment where athletes have a voice. With coaches taking on the empowerment approach, they challenge the athletes to agree on the type of playing style or set piece moves they wish to apply to the team. The empowerment approach challenges the athletes to become more responsible for their individual performances and also the teams overall performance giving them ownership and making them accountable. The result of applying this approach to athletes is an improvement in their knowledge of the sport whilst encouraging them to explore opportunities that are available for them to have control over their own development.

The role of the coach within an empowerment approach sees the coach becoming a mentor to the team. In doing so the coach becomes a provider of informational and a knowledgeable figure to the environment (Kidman, 2001). However, this does not mean the coach hands over complete power to the athletes (Crozier, 1973). Arguably, coaches are seen to give athletes an illusion of empowerment, remaining in control of the 'agenda' items (Jones, 2001). This was noticed in early work by Bachrach & Baratz (1963, 1970) where the concept of second phase power was explored. This was summarised by other authors in further research but this concept is defined best by the following quote;

'a process whereby issues are excluded from decision making, confining the agenda to "safe" questions as it allows the more powerful actors to determine outcomes from behind the scenes' (Hardy, 1995, p. xvi).

Team empowerment is seen as a motivational theory defined as an understanding of stages of task motivation derived from team members' valuation of the team's responsibilities, giving the athletes potency, impact, meaningfulness and autonomy (Kirkman & Rosen, 1999). Team empowerment can be regarded as developing management that leads or follows team progressions, depending on the phase of development of the team (Marks et al., 2001). Utilising this theoretical concept, team empowerment could aid the development of shared leadership by engaging the whole team environment to exercise influence. However, a team may yet experience an external leader who provides most of the leadership power with a small amount of shared leadership practiced spontaneously by team members.

Shared Leadership

Shared Leadership is the main focus of this study. It signifies a form of joint influence fixed in the reciprocal actions among team members that can considerably improve team and managerial performance (Day et al., 2004). Pearce & Sims (2000) cited by Pearce & Conger (2003), state that shared leadership is a group process in which leadership is distributed between individuals and stems from team mates and coaches. Shared leadership is the coach allowing the athletes increased power therefore allowing the athletes more control of situations within training (Jones, 2006). Athletes are able to choose and put their opinion into practise, other than instructed, on aspects within the individual/team performances that requires improvement.

Kidman (2001) argued that allowing the shared choice in decision making for training structure athletes would show an increase in motivation to study and progress.

Athletes would improve in attributes such as confidence, greater retention, understanding of skills, tactics and decision making (Kidman, 2001). In addition, a team's work rate may increase when leadership is shared (Carson et al., 2007; Mehra et al., 2006).

The amount of improvement would vary depending on the level of involvement given to athletes by the coach. Jones (2006) believes permitting athletes to make decisions will improve teamwork resulting in greater performances on the pitch. Carson et al. (2007) believes shared leadership has a direct influence on a team environment. Agendas are accomplished through this and consequently change is driven by efficiently working through issues in collaboration with other people. Teams that are able to lead themselves by sharing influence, whilst also working dynamically, are able to be more adaptive, more responsive and develop better utilised knowledge (Carson et al., 2007).

To investigate this concept Pearce (1997) used questionnaire results from which five behavioural influence strategies of shared leadership were produced (empowerment, transformational, transactional, directive, and aversive). Within the five behavioural influence strategies that were found, there were two factors that closely resembled the transformational leadership (empowerment, transformational) and transactional (transactional, aversive, directive) aspects of leadership.

However, there are few difficulties that surround shared leadership for coaches and athletes alike. Both Chelladurai and Arnott (1985) and Chelladurai et al. (1989) believe by sharing leadership there is an uncertainty whether or not players will respond well, questioning their willingness to take on responsibilities given by the coach. There is also doubt around players ability to cope with leadership as a whole, asking whether the players have the maturity or experience to cope as a team (Cheater, 1999). There are also debates surrounding coaches that have little desire to pass responsibility to the players as it requires trust in the athlete's ability, knowledge and experience (Kidman, 2005). The research by Kidman (2005) also

questions both coaches and players' aspiration to welcome and attempt to practice the concept of shared leadership.

This literature review has highlighted the complexities of leadership, coaching, followership and the concept of shared leadership. As a pivotal influence of the direction of a team environment the aspects of the coach have been explored in detail in order to cast light on the possible attitudes/opinions that may be given by the coaches interviewed. Now that the contemporary literature has been discussed to expand on knowledge regarding shared leadership within a team environment, the following chapters will now outline the structure of this study concluding in lessons learned.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

There are two existing approaches to the nature of knowledge; (a) positivism, and (b) interpretivism, both with different theories of knowledge and existing theories, differing in suggestions to the methodology taken on, the type of data collected, and the understanding of such data by the researcher (Gratton & Jones, 2004).

Positivism takes on a scientific approach to research enabling to measure facts and develop laws of behaviour while the social scientist observes human behaviour. Positivists have the assumption that sporting environments is seen to be to fairly stable and inside such an environment the analysis and measurements of specified facts grants the development of theories. The early years of research relating to sport were led by the positivist approach, yet, other approaches are becoming more common (Gratton & Jones, 2004). Post-positivism speak of positivism, challenging the established view of the absolute truth of knowledge (Phillips & Burbules, 2000). Meaning our positivity towards our claims of knowledge cannot be done when studying actions and behaviour of humans.

‘Positivism does not account for intangible concepts, such as feelings and emotions, and the role of such concepts in explaining our sports behaviour’ (Gratton and Jones, p.19).

These general principles instead create the foundation of the interpretive approach. An interpretive approach sees primary data sources to come from people, and their perceptions, meaning, interpretations and understandings. Interpretivists are concerned with understanding the social world people have produced and which they reproduce through their continuing activities (Blaikie, 2000).

A researcher that carries out the interpretive approach is able to understand the participants from within allowing the difficult concepts, such as emotions or feelings, to be recognised. Nevertheless, as this study was interested with the interpersonal field of coach-athlete relationship and search to involve the sociology of coaching, interpretive approach was chosen as the most appropriate as this method of approach focuses on the processes and experiences one goes through.

Qualitative v Quantitative

There are two types of approaches that the researcher can apply when collecting data; Qualitative and Quantitative approaches. Commonly, the principal philosophy of qualitative research is interpretive while the primary philosophy of quantitative research is positivism. A quantitative approach generates information on a broader range when having a large sample of data. The results of the research are quite independent of the researcher' choice of data wanted, mainly precise, quantitative, numerical data. The researcher might create a situation that removes the confusing influence of a lot of variables, allowing one or more cause-and-effect relationship(s) to occur (Clark-Carter, 2009).

Denzin & Lincoln (1994) define qualitative research as a procedure that collects variety of empirical materials such as personal life experiences, observational, interview, interactional and visual data. A key advantage for this study by using a qualitative data is allowing individuals to express their emotions, thoughts and feelings, resulting in providing an increase in information rich interviews (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). In this study a qualitative approach was chosen in order to collect data via semi structured interview. The reason behind the chosen approach was that qualitative research is seen as the most effective method of attaining in depth knowledge of coaches'/athletes' routines, emotions, behaviours and experiences through interviews. Qualitative methods are appropriate in order to justify the coach-athlete relationship as a social interpretation spectacle as a high process-orientated nature (Poczwardowski et al., 2006).

If the quantitative approach was chosen for this study then the researcher would miss out on critical individual variations significant for in depth understanding of the phenomenon under study (Silverman, 2005). Differentiating themselves to quantitative researchers, qualitative investigators try to engage themselves in the groups or participants being studied (Hardy et al., 1996).

Research Methods

Data collection is a component which is vital in managing research, which is also a hard and complicated task. O'Leary (2004) states that credible data is a hard task when collecting, remembering one method of data collection is not better than another. Qualitative data collection methods have been debated by many authors differently. Patton (1996), Denzin & Lincoln (1994) and Merriam (1998) acknowledged a number of qualitative research methods such as Case Study, Ethnography, Phenomenology, Historical, Action Research, Content Analysis, Grounded Theory and Generic Qualitative. Veal (1992) believes that it is crucial to select the right technique or approaches to find the correct, vital information in which searching for. Each technique has its importance; the researcher should be aware of each of the boundaries of certain methods, as it is important. Techniques are not seen to be essentially 'bad' or 'good' but are undoubtedly considered 'appropriate' for certain situations (Veal, 1992).

The interview method was taken on as it is the most common source of data in qualitative studies and has the advantage of being able to gain large amounts of data fairly quickly. There are three types of interview methods which could be used to collect data. The possibilities are telephone interviews, focus groups and individual interviews (Creswell, 2003). The individual interview option was chosen for this task. Individual interviews specifically have been found to produce important and detailed information from a small number of participants (Hanton and Jones, 1999). Kvale (1996) defined interviews as an interchange of views between two or

more people on a topic of mutual interest, sees the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production, and emphasizes the social nature of research data.

There are many advantages to using interviews in order to collect data. These advantages provide strong trends and aid in collection of data that is specific for what this study requires. The main strengths of using interviews are; the researcher can attain highly personalized data, there are opportunities for probing (which encourage depth of information) and a good return rate (quick data collection) which is important (Gray, 2004). There are different kinds of individual interviews, which include structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, unstructured interviews and non-directive interview. Semi-structured interviews were chosen as a method because it provides the most appropriate methodology for this study as they prevent many of the problems (what are the problems) associated with structured and unstructured interviews (Patton, 1990).

By using semi-structured interviews it enables the interviewer to probe, explore and ask more questions regarding the particular topic. This aids in building a better conversation within the chosen topic, establishing a conversational style, focusing on the predetermined subject (Patton, 2002). Adapting the semi structured interview method reduces the possible variation in the questions posed. However, the prospect of being able to pose probing questions in reaction to the answers given allows for both guidance for the interviewee and expansion of answers benefiting the researcher (Saunders et al., 1997). This benefit gives greater insight into the research topic.

In contrast, unstructured interviews were not appropriate due to the fact that they are less systematic and comprehensive if certain questions do not arise. Semi-structured interviews, therefore, enable the researcher to ensure that each topic was fully and accurately explored and also able to probe when needed (Mason, 2002). In this method (using the semi-structure interview) investigations and prompts were used during the course of each interview to increase the depth of answers and the richness of the data (Patton, 2002). What, how and when are examples of basic

prompts that were used as a resource of expanding on not only fundamental questions but also issues within the interview.

Sample

The sample (participants) chosen for this study consisted of four male rugby union coaches who all pass the following multiple selection criteria; they are currently employed as full time professional coaches, they all have experience of coaching regional rugby, and they each have in excess of five years coaching experience. Only four male rugby union coaches were chosen because the researcher believed there would be enough information gained through posing questions in semi structured interview. Focused sampling contains the selection of 'information-rich' circumstances that allows the researcher to address the research question (Patton, 2002). The criteria that the participants must have five years' experience and to be in full time employment was chosen in order to make certain the best coaching were chosen. By having five years' experience the coaches would have a vast amount of experience at the top level of rugby, but remaining modern and up to date with the latest methods of running a professional team by being at full time employment.

Interview Design and Procedure

Each participant was contacted firstly through email in which a destination and time was arranged between both parties focusing on convenience for the participant specifically. This resulted in the interviewer travelling to each coach ensuring they feel at ease in their familiar surroundings which according to Morse (1994) would increase truthfulness and meaningfulness. Interviews were also completed within a short amount of time of each other in order for the interviewer to remain familiar with the interview guide (see Appendix IV) and allowing the interviewer to prompt more capably. Participants were sent the questions via email once they had agreed to be interviewed. A copy of the questions was shown to participants prior to each

interview taking place. This approach benefits the study by enabling the participants to already begin to think of responses before the interview essentially began.

Prior to the interview the interviewer read an information sheet (see Appendix V) informing the participant of the purpose of the interview. It reiterated that anything said within the interview would be strictly confidential and only used inside the restrictions of the study. Each participant was informed that for whatever reason any questions become unanswerable, saying “no comment” was acceptable. All interviews lasted between 15-25minutes and were recorded using a Dictaphone and later transcribed verbatim with the consent of the participant. A Dictaphone is seen as the highest quality form of collecting information within an interview (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002).

Pilot Study

Prior to the main study a pilot study was conducted to evaluate the interview guide as well as the interviewer’s abilities in directing interviews. Implementing the pilot study was to give thought to the feasibility of the principle study and decide if the research protocol was practical (Gratton & Jones, 2004). By going over the interview guide and the interviewer gaining experience, minor variations were made in order to improve upon the interview guide and enabling the founding of effective communication patterns (Janesick, 1994). The minor variations were the vocabularies of the questions were changed as the questions were too complicated in terms of understanding. The interviewer must be certain that the level of vocabulary is appropriate for the interviewed participant (Thomas & Nelson, 2001).

Also the amount of probe questions was increased in order to because the questions were too vague and needed to gain more rich information on chosen topic of question. Finally, the term ‘Shared Leadership’ was not widely known within the pilot study and in order to eliminate this difficulty a glossary was sent to the chosen participants in order to give understanding of what was asked from the interviewer.

Validity and Reliability

Patton (2001) argues that validity and reliability are factors where any qualitative researcher should highlight their importance while designing a study, analysing results and judging the quality of the study.

Validity

Patton (1990) highlights the difference between quantitative and qualitative research, stating that the smaller samples used in qualitative research boosts the understanding of the cases. The results found from the research may be studied and the likelihood of the conclusions having general implications increases external validity. Hardy et al. (1996) believes that credibility can be compared to internal validity, which leads to credibility to be within the first question. Credibility mentions the precision of the area of focus' matter (Huberman & Miles, 1994). When bearing in mind validity in qualitative research Lincoln & Guba (1985) recommend alternative questions. Validity can be regarded as both external validity (transferability) and internal validity (credibility). Lincoln & Guba (1985) define external validity as research which has universal implications that transcend different types of people, settings and eras. In this authors definition the term internal validity is defined as;

“the extent to which variations in an outcome (dependent) variable can be attributed to controlled variation in an independent variable” (p. 290).

However, both Lincoln & Guba (1985) and Hardy et al. (1996) query the transferability which can be related to external validity The definition of transferability is how appropriate can results from one study be applicable to another (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

There were numerous approaches within the study to strengthen validity. The participants were informed only the researcher, participants and the supervisor had

access to the recordings. When transcriptions were complete, a member checking process was applied (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), a copy was then sent to the interviewee to read and check the accuracy of the transcription, along with the option to remove any data they wished not to be published prior to data analysis. The participants were requested to read texts of their interview so the understanding was not unreliable. The interviewer then became an internal validity by having the same fixed questions and the same structure in the interview; it improves the interviewer's confidence and knowledge of the questions reducing interviewer effectiveness (Patton, 1990).

Validity within qualitative research has been examined and questioned due to its minor samples and the lack of random sampling. Even though, the study will become determined through the reader. Thomas and Nelson (1996) argue this and believe that user (reader) generalizability is more appropriate to qualitative research by evaluating the results of the study and questions what applies within the study.

Reliability

Reliability examines the repeatability of the research and the likelihood that the same results will be found (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). To achieve reliability within this study a description of all data analysis and methodological procedures used were given to the participant in depth. In order to ensure consistency within the interview stage of the study, an interview guide was made and read to all participants by the same interviewer.

A pilot study was conducted in order for the researcher to become at ease with the manner in which to conduct an interview, and also to become custom with the equipment used (dictaphone). Other reasons for conducting a pilot study was also to trial the questions and probe questions in their ability to obtain the 'rich' information needed from participants. Finally to ensure reliability the examination of the methods

and procedures carried out in this study and the results establish were surveyed by both the researcher and study supervisor.

Trustworthiness

Investigation of trustworthiness is essential to ensure reliability in qualitative research. Seale (1999) stated that trustworthiness for a research is at the centre of difficulties usually discussed as validity and reliability. Trustworthiness of data, if a fully understanding relationship between the researcher and the participant is not formed then the participant will be unwilling to part with true feelings, intentions and thoughts. As a result, the researcher will fail in gaining the required responses, consequently reducing the trustworthiness of data (Thomas & Nelson, 1996). The principles for trustworthiness consist of transferability (external validity), establishing credibility (internal validity), conceivability (objectivity) and dependability (reliability) (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Therefore the participant must feel content and understood without judgement in order for the study to fulfil its intentions and obtain all aspects of these principles. Familiarity between interviewer and participant was a strength as the relationship that was already established enhanced honesty and decreased obtrusiveness allowing to produce detailed information.

Analysis of Data

“The purpose of the data analysis is to organise the interviews to present a narrative that explains what happened or provide a description of the norms and values that underline behaviour.” - (Rubin & Rubin, 1995: pg 229)

There are many different methods in order to analyse data for example, narrative, domain analysis, discourse analysis, content analysis.

However, the method chosen being the most appropriate and beneficial to this type of study was coding. An explanatory method strives to both organize the data and

deliver a means to bring together the readings of it in certain quantitative methods (Miles & Huberman 1994). All interviews were transcribed word for word removing any potential bias, and also read then re-read a number of times, allowing the interviewer to become accustomed and 'intimate' with the data kept in check (Bell, 1999). Qualitative data collection pursues for a connection between category of data and statements and also to predict and encourage behaviours created on their happening in their natural settings (Patton, 1990; Marshall and Rossman, 1995).

A guide data collection was created so that all the excess and needless data were not collected (Morse, 1994; Rubin & Rubin, 1995; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). The decision to create a guide data collection resulted in the researcher retaining control rather than "drowning in data" (Morse, 1994, p.229). There were three steps within the guide data collection when conducting content analysis.

Firstly, the coding process was completed identifying persistent themes, words, phrases or concepts within the data when comparing all interviews. Again, transcriptions were read then re-read and sections of the text were highlighted when common and persistent themes, words, concepts and phrases were present. Secondly, categorizing the data took place by grouping all corresponding categories together which then resulted in a summary on each category. Within the data a major and minor categories were made based on their strength (how often the same answers came up or the sentiment attached to the answers) and weaknesses (the least amount of times the same answer was brought up). For example; if 'coach personality type' comes up in a lot of the answers that would be a major category. If a player's age comes up but not that often then it will be a minor one. The final step included the interviewer integrating the data (see Appendix VI) and finding themes on how the categories were related, what key patterns kept recurring within the data and what conclusions could be drawn.

To make certain each variable was analysed to its full magnitude, the researcher analysed and coded one variable at a time. Also when a connection among variables

was coded, the researcher made certain there was one trusting variable in the analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter sets out the data found in the transcribed semi structured interviews. These were categorised into themes which were highlighted during the data analysis process. The themes found enable this work to assess the mutual factors that influence a team environment when performing a shared leadership approach and in what manner this may impact on specific principles of performance. However, it should be noted that only the major themes were selected to be critically discussed due the lack of influence that the minor themes have on shared leadership within a team. The data from these themes and their connections to the current literature and research will be used to establish whether this new data is in favour or challenges the present information. Through the method of semi-structured interviews with four male rugby coaches; currently involved within competitive rugby, five important themes materialized when coding the data. Themes that influence the affect shared leadership has within a team environment are as follows; *(i) The necessity for coaches to be leaders/authoritative figures within their environment; (ii) How the experience of the players impact on using Shared Leadership; (iii) Effective Followers; (iv) The benefits from Shared Leadership; (v) The difficulties surrounding Shared Leadership.*

The necessity for coaches to be leaders/authoritative figures within their environment

Within the interview, there was a question inquiring whether coaches see themselves as 'leaders' within their environment. The significant similarity in opinions is clear in figure 1. All coaches felt it is a necessity for them to be a leading authority figure within the environment they coach. Not only did the coaches refer to themselves when answering specific question, but throughout the interviews all coaches were regarding themselves as the main leader within the environment. It is apparent that coach A stressed that being a coach automatically applies a leadership responsibility as an integral aspect of the role (Figure 1; A1). Coach B and Coach D shared this opinion stating by managing the environment it defines them as an authority figure with power (Figure 1). However, in contrast to the other 3 coaches, Coach C did not

mention that his leadership came due to the role specifically. Coach C believes his leadership must be earned through leading by example within his environment (Figure 1; C1).

THEME: - <i>The necessity for coaches to be leaders/authoritative figures within their environment.</i>			
COACH A	COACH B	COACH C	COACH D
<p>A1: - “Yes. I certainly have to lead the environment, my responsibility is to oversee aspects of rugby so undoubtedly I have a leadership role in that sense”</p> <p>A2:- “Obviously heading up the environment puts you into that leadership position anyway”</p>	<p>B1: - “I think you have to be and I think that as a coach you are a leader.”</p> <p>B2: - “certainly if you have a position of authority, a position of power in the environment, there is going to be a leadership element to that”</p> <p>B3: - “As Director of Rugby, yes, I’m in charge of certain areas of the game, so I would lead those areas of the game and have a game plan around them.”</p>	<p>C1: -“In all aspects. I have to behave in a manner which other people have to follow. If I can’t lead by example, I can’t expect other people to follow.”</p> <p>C2: - “Because I tend to take over and demand that things are done in certain ways; very often through advice from other people.”</p>	<p>D1: -“Yes, I feel I do lead.”</p> <p>D2: - “As a head coach you need to be a leader and have control of your players and coaching staff. You need to have a position of authority, a position of power in the environment.”</p>

**Above; Figure 1 – A table showing responses of the coaches in relation to the theme;
‘The necessity for coaches to be leaders/authoritative figures within their environment’**

How the experience of the players impact on using Shared Leadership

Throughout the interview a theme was highlighted regarding the players experience, age or maturity and the impact this has on leadership shared throughout the environment. It is evident that if players are older, more mature and have more experienced then leadership could be entrusted and passed on to them. However, if coaches are involved within an environment where players are young and inexperienced they find it difficult to part with leadership.

When questioned within the interview; ‘*How much power do you share within your environment?*’ three out of the four coaches (Coach A,B and C) stressed that within their environment they couldn’t share the leadership to their players believing they couldn’t adopt the roles and responsibilities that are required to lead (Figure ?? - A1, B1, C1). In contrast to the other three coaches, Coach D could share leadership with players due to their experience of playing at a high level (Figure??, D1). Also, as seen in figure ??, C3 and C4, Coach C states that leadership could be shared when coaching within an adult environment.

THEME: - <i>Experience of the players impacting on Shared Leadership</i>			
COACH A	COACH B	COACH C	COACH D
<p>A1: - “we would want the players to lead more effectively at times, be more comfortable in those roles, by the very nature of their being young, it doesn’t happen as often as we’d like. “</p> <p>A2: - “we want players to step up and be comfortable in</p>	<p>B1: - “in an environment where there are lots of young, fairly inexperienced players they perhaps reluctant to take on those roles.”</p>	<p>C1: - “very often I have to lead quite strongly and give out leadership skills, because they’re not mature enough, very often to be able to adopt leadership roles themselves.”</p> <p>C2: - (Q.14) “It’s limited (sharing power), mainly</p>	<p>D1: - “Being involved in an environment filled with players and coaches of experience of premierships and regional level, they have a lot of power.”</p> <p>D2: - “As a coaching staff we obviously plan the training sessions (time, venue, drills), then the players drive the standards</p>

<p>those leadership roles, but I'll come back to the age of the players here and their level of maturity and development; it's not something they easily fit into."</p>		<p>because of their age."</p> <p>C3: - (Q.14) "But very often coaching men's sides, if you have to impart things to them, you put a small group together and they'll be in charge of the rest of the group."</p> <p>C4: - (Q.15) "Open to all members of the squad (leadership), if I'm coaching a men's side."</p>	<p>and intensity of those sessions."</p>
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Above; Figure 2 – A table showing the responses of the coaches in regards to the theme;

‘Experience of the players impacting on Shared Leadership’

Effective Followers

Interestingly, the greatest proportion of major themes in terms of importance for shared leadership came from ‘Effective Followers’. It is clear to see in Figure 3 the significant similarities in opinions between all four coaches that effective followers have a major influence in the shared leadership approach. It is apparent that effective followers are seen by all coaches as the driving force to a successful team environment. It is evident that all coaches have a positive outlook regarding this player role, each stating in their own words that the environment will only benefit by establishing these roles within a team. More specifically the role of the effective follower is similarly defined as a “positive influence” by three out of the four coaches (Figure 3; A1, B2, C1).

Also there are similarities of opinion between three coaches stating that effective followers undertake this role for the greater good of the environment and not for personal benefits (Figure 3; A1, C1, D1). Not only did coaches state the influence of followership on the environment but also defined what makes them influence in a positive manner. Three out of the four coaches specifically defined effective followers as those who are continually “driving the environment”, who “challenge the environment” and “question the environment/ coaches” (Figure 3; B3, C1, D1).

THEME: - <i>Effective followers</i>			
COACH A	COACH B	COACH C	COACH D
<p>A1: - “However, followers within a team environment are key for successful leadership. Effective followers that is. Effective followers will have a positive influence within the environment.”</p>	<p>B1: - “effective followers are often better than having a team of leaders, because if you understand what an effective follower is, really they can bring much more to an environment”</p> <p>B2:- “So I think seeing the players in that way, and I’m trying to get them to understand that being an effective follower isn’t a negative thing”</p> <p>B3: - “Effective followers do challenge the environment, do question the environment, but are trying to drive the environment forward in doing that; trying to be a real positive influence in the environment.”</p>	<p>C1:- “I try to mould players into the positive followers in which is defined “effective followers”. Every successful team has effective followers; they have a massive influence on the environment, even greater than the captain. They are roles for players who don’t just nod their head just for the sake of it, they put their opinions across, question coaches methods, and above all get behind the targets/goals and direction of the club. They have a massive positive influence in an environment, always wanting what’s best for the club.</p>	<p>D1: - “Effective followers are people who do what’s best for the environment. They bring their own ideas to the environment, questioning decisions made within the team in a leadership-type involvement. They aim to improve the environment without being involved in a formal leadership role.”</p>

	<p>B4: - “it’s more important for players to be effective followers, to understand what we’re trying to achieve as a team and being prepared to listen to the instructions, the calls of the people who perhaps are in leadership roles in the team and being able to carry those out effectively.”</p>		
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Above; Figure 3 – A table showing the responses of the coaches in regards to the theme; ‘Effective followers’

Benefits from shared leadership

Whilst interviewing coaches, they were all questioned to see if they believed there are benefits when adopting a shared leadership approach within a team environment. All coaches responded similarly in a positive manner believing there are benefits and when probed gave examples of benefits for both coaches and players. Both Coach A and Coach D share exactly the same opinion on the benefits. Both believed that players would improve their game understanding as a result of shared leadership (figure 4; A1, D1). It is also clear when looking at figure 4 that Coach A and Coach D stress that another benefit from shared leadership for a player is the improvement of their game related decision making skills (Figure 4; A2, D2). Confidence can also be viewed as another benefit with Coach C and Coach D believing players will improve their confidence not only in themselves but also in team mates around them (figure 4; C1, D3). However, Coach A and Coach D are the only two out of the four coaches to give examples of benefits to coaches and not only players. They believe coaches can also benefit from shared leadership by enabling them to develop their coaching style (Figure 4; A1, D4). In contrast, Coach B is seen to be the only coach to relate these benefits to the improvement of the environment as a unit and does not refer to. Coach B stresses that through shared

leadership the environment as a whole will have shared vision striving for the same goals (Figure 4; B2).

THEME: - <i>Benefits from shared leadership</i>			
COACH A	COACH B	COACH C	COACH D
A1 - “better game understanding”	B1 - “players can adopt professional attitudes”	C1 - “I think they become more confident”	D1 - “Better game understanding.”
A2 - “they’ll be more comfortable on the field, in making decisions and being more effective.”	B2 - “No, I think there are huge benefits to be gained in the environment if you have a good solid environment, where you have this shared vision and shared leadership towards that goal”	C2 - “the fact that they are leaders on the field, also helps them with leadership factors off the field. It makes them more confident people”	D2 - “Improving game related decisions.”
A3 - “coach can use to develop their coaching style.”			D3- “Improving the players’ confidence in each other.”
			D4 - “I think it’s something that the coaching staff can use to develop their coaching style.”

Above; Figure 4 – A table showing the responses of the coaches regarding the theme;

Benefits from shared leadership

Difficulties surrounding shared leadership

Following the findings regarding the benefits through shared leadership, coaches were then questioned about what difficulties could be face when adopting a shared leadership approach. Three out of the four coaches were of the opinion that confusion between players and coaches within the environment would occur (Figure?? B1, B3, C1, D2). Confusion over player and coaching roles within the

environment, mixed messages within the environment and confusion over who within the environment is the dominant leader.

There is also a possibility that there can be too many leaders within an environment according to Coach C and Coach B (Figure 5; B3, B4, B6, C1,C2). The two similar opinions also relate back to the need for followers as well as leaders with the two coaches stating “too many chiefs not enough Indians”.

Coach D had a separate opinion to the other three coaches. He believed that difficulties can impact on shared leadership when the players experience and knowledge of the game are not at a satisfactory level (Figure 5; D3). Similarly Coach A had the opinion that shared leadership could have a negative impact on the environment morale if the leadership wasn’t handled correctly and was unsuccessful (figure 5; A2).

THEME: - <i>Difficulties surrounding shared leadership</i>			
COACH A	COACH B	COACH C	COACH D
A1 –“nature of the group; how much the group want to take responsibility. I think some players like being told what to do; I think some players like being directed. Some players don’t want those leadership responsibilities”	B1 - “I suppose confusion would be the big thing.” B2 - “too many leaders.” B3 - “leaders are giving out mixed messages.” B4 - “That if you’re not in this extended or leadership	C1 - “It becomes a “talking shop”. Sometimes when you go out there and you want to keep the tempo it becomes “I think this” - “No, I think this!” - They need to shut up and just get on with it. So the old adage of too many chiefs and not enough Indians – sometimes a person (generally me) has to say	D1 - “Coaches and players alike not have the same goals.” D2 - “Confusion surrounding who is the main leader within the environment, who has the last say, making the important decisions.”

<p>A2 - “If those players do try to take on those roles (Leadership) but aren’t very successful it could lead to a fairly negative environment”</p>	<p>“Yes, they’re leaders and they’re leaders and they’re leaders: what am I?”</p> <p>B5 - “but in my experience players don’t really want much power. Players enjoy being in an environment where they know what’s acceptable, what isn’t acceptable...I feel that what a lot of the players feel, (certainly in our environment, we’re a young environment) a lot of the players are reluctant to accept leadership roles,”</p> <p>B6 - “there’s a possibility with too many leaders that you can get conflict between leaders, groups within the group”</p> <p>B7 - “too many chiefs and not enough Indians in it”.</p>	<p>“Right! STOP! Shut up. You’re doing it my way, and that’s it!” ”</p>	<p>D3 - “I feel players experience and knowledge of the game is vital”</p>
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**Above; Figure 5 – A table showing the responses of the coaches in regards to the theme;
‘Difficulties surrounding shared leadership’**

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter is dedicated to supply a critical discussion of the results found through the data analysis process. A critical analysis will be carried out by comparing the results found to the literature that was reviewed in chapter two. The general aim of this study was to examine the factors that affect shared leadership within a team environment. As stated in the literature review featuring Carson et al. (2007), there is reasonably little research on the significant influence shared leadership has on a team environment supporting the importance of this study. Each category theme will be critically discussed individually, ending the discussion on the importance these themes have on the effect shared leadership has within a team environment.

The necessity for coaches to be leaders/authoritative figures within their environment

The findings from the results highlight the importance for a coach to be an authoritative figure within the team environment. These findings are backed from the work found in the literature review under the heading 'coach as a leader'. In the study conducted by Jones & Standage (2006) on leadership within the coaching process an authority structure in place within a team environment is crucial, however, players having a learning process role was also featured providing them with the opportunity to make decisions affecting the environment. Chelladurai and Riemer (1998) states that with a coach as an authority figure and leader athletes raise their performance and personal satisfaction.

Experience of the players impacting on Shared Leadership

The results featured in this study highlight the impact of players' experience has on a coach's confidence in sharing leadership with the environment. It is found within this study that coaches are reluctant to allow players to have leadership roles due to players' inexperience and immaturity. This lack of experience leads the coach to question whether players have the ability to cope with the demands of shared leadership. This mentality found in these coaches supports a study by Kidman (2005) which highlights a generalised trend of coaches' reluctance to share

leadership with players who lack experience as well as a player's willingness to take on a leadership roles. In the event of coaches passing on leadership roles there is doubt over whether it is done correctly. There is a discrepancy between players that are nurtured into leadership roles correctly and those who are handed leadership with little support or guidance. A study by Voelker et al. (2010) examining high school captaincy experience found that all 13 former student-athlete captains included in the research had no additional training or support by their coaches to fulfil a leadership role. The study concluded that due to this lack of training no further knowledge was gained and the captains had little confidence exercising advance leadership skills.

Another study which also supports this theme was conducted by Cheater (1999). This research reflects the opinion of the coaches in Figure 2 (A2, B1, C1) on the maturity of the players who are a major part of implying leadership onto players. Cheater (1999) found that sharing leadership amongst players must be conceptualised within a specific context i.e. "Right Time, Right Place – Maturity, Experience". Work by Tropp & Landers (1979) supports this further. The authors found that more effective peer leaders were identified when the players on the hockey team had more years of varsity experience. The conclusion of this study was that leaders were associated with being skilled and experienced, backing the mentality of the coaches found in this study that players throughout the environment need to be experienced in order to adopt shared leadership.

Effective Followers

When researching followership in regards to the literature review, it seems the importance of the type of involvement within the environment was underestimated. Some past research has cast negativity over the role of the follower within a team (Kelley, 1997). This is also prevalent within a practical environment where there is a stigma attached to the phrase. Although this view exists there has been significant documentation of the benefits within research when observing and thereafter encouraging followership (as seen in the literature review). Due to its co-dependence on other aspects of shared leadership the subject of followership is not a priority to researchers when considering the role as an individual subject within leadership

(Atik, 1994). When analysing the data provided by all coaches their opinion towards this subject is clearly positive. More specifically from the subject of followership, effective follower(s) was a very strong theme that was found within the results of this study. All coaches mentioned and stressed the need for the 'effective follower' (Figure 3; A1, B1, B2, B4, C1, D1) which can be related back to literature found in the literature review.

Kelly (1992) created four 'following steps' when defining followers. Within the four steps Kelly (1992) highlights followers having influence over the groups and its leaders. Findings can also relate to Kelly (1991) who describes effective followers in two dimensions. The first dimension identifies followers as critical thinkers and independent whilst the second dimension identifies followers as active followers. The aforementioned research states that effective followers influence the environment in a positive manner. This is supported by Hogan (1994) describing effective followers as an important component within good leadership. Hogan (1994) also outlined the skills leading to behaviours which can be related to some of the findings within this study; (a) Accepting all assigned tasks willingly (Figure 3; B4), (b) Offering suggestions as appropriate, but without authority (Figure 3; B3, C1, D1), (c) Voicing difference of opinion (Figure 3; B3, C1, D1).

Benefits of Shared Leadership

When observing the collective benefits acquired through shared leadership expressed within the literature review in chapter two, similarities can be found between the review and the opinions of the coaches included in this research. The research by Kidman (2001) and Carson et al. (2007) had significant similarities of opinion. These authors found that with good shared leadership the level of players' understanding in relation to game tactics and decision making was significantly improved. This concept was echoed by two participating coaches in this research as seen in Figure 4 (A1, A2, D1, D2) conveying the parallels between the literature and contemporary thinking.

Thorpe & Bunker (1982) and Kidman (2001) share the notion by also concluding that increase in confidence, motivation, continued participation, deep rooted learning and

a feeling of accomplishment can be a result of effective shared leadership for team athletes. Jones (2006) concludes that by allowing athletes to make decisions improves teamwork resulting in greater performances on the pitch. This was also found to be the opinion of two coaches within this research (Figure 4; A2, C2, D2). Although some findings of this research reflect literature included in chapter 2, as seen above, there have been some findings that were unexpected. The participating coaches believed that good shared leadership increases the shared vision and goals of the environment (Figure 4; B2) and coaches specifically can improve by having to adapt their coaching style through the implementation of shared leadership (Figure 4; A3, D3).

The literature by Lyle (2002) supports Coach B's opinion within the research that athletes benefit from being a part of the vision and values of sports teams. Lyle states that by athletes having the same vision and values as one and other an increase in confidence, team cohesion and work ethic can occur within the environment. Hackman & Wageman (2005) support the opinion of Coach and Coach D by stating coaches would have to adapt in order to implement shared leadership in an effective manner. The approach which seems most beneficial is that of a supportive coach, engaging in encouragement, aiding teams when conflicts arise (e.g., over responsibilities), praising athletes in situations which team members demonstrate leadership, making themselves available for advice or input of knowledge and providing general encouragement to a team as a whole (Hackman & Wageman, 2005)

Difficulties surrounding shared leadership

Despite coaches expressing the benefits of shared leadership there were also possible difficulties expressed in the implementation. Three factors highlighted within the results although individual all had an effect on one and other. The three themes were confusion, experience of players and the number of leaders within a team environment. These themes affect one another directly. Confusion is observed when there are too many leaders within the environment leading to lack of effective communication and lack of definition in regards to specific roles, i.e. leader-follower

roles. Having too many leaders is seen as a negative aspect within the environment according to the findings of this study. By having too many leaders Coaches B, C and D believed that factors such as role confusion and conflict of opinions were the main catalysts for this negative outcome (Figure 5; B2, B4, B6, C1, D2). Coach B stated that by having too many leaders within the environment there is a possibility of mixed messages, resulting in unclear goal setting and lack of understanding in regards to instructions. Due to this conflict within the environment is likely and shared leadership inevitably breaks down.

However, these findings are in contrast to literature by Northouse (2004) who encourages more leaders within a team. Through this research Northouse (2004) believes that leadership should be open to everyone and not restricted to a formal leader or a group of leaders. This displays that the preference of the coach also has an effect on the effectiveness of shared leadership.

Another of the themes, experience level of players, caused difficulties when the level of experience was not to a high enough standard to support an effective shared leadership environment. Coach A and Coach B share a similar opinion that inexperienced players are reluctant to take the lead and prefer to be followers (Figure 5; A1, B6). Breife (1981), Chelladurai & Arnott (1985) and Chelladurai et al. (1989) provide literature which supports this opinion with their work conveying that players might react to shared leadership with either unwillingness of responsibility by viewing leadership as a job, chore or an additional task by the athletes.

CHAPTER SIX
CONCLUSION

Summary

In summary, the findings from this study delivered awareness of factors which influence the effectiveness of shared leadership in a sporting team environment. Additionally, the literature review highlighted that shared leadership has a positive influence on a team environment and provides benefits such as an increase in greater performance on the pitch by improving game knowledge and a shared vision towards team goals. These were supported within the results found in this work. It was discovered that coaches believed that shared leadership could be a key factor in improving the team environment. However, findings in this study also highlight two key factors which influence the attitude of coaches towards utilising sharing leadership within a team. These key factors are (a) players within the environment must be experienced and mature enough to handle the responsibilities; (b) players and coaches alike within team environments must understand the job role and importance of effective followers.

Strengths and Limitations

This study provided an insight on factors which influence shared leadership within a team environment. However, as with all studies, the current study produced strengths and also produced limitations. A major strength of the study was the method of using semi-structured interviews to collect the necessary data needed and by only choosing to use four coaches for questioning this work was able to be professional specific. Another strength of the study is the design of the semi-structured interview guide. The guide allowed for probing questions to encourage the interviewer to collect more detailed information on the coaches' experience within a team environment and also their understanding and opinions on shared leadership.

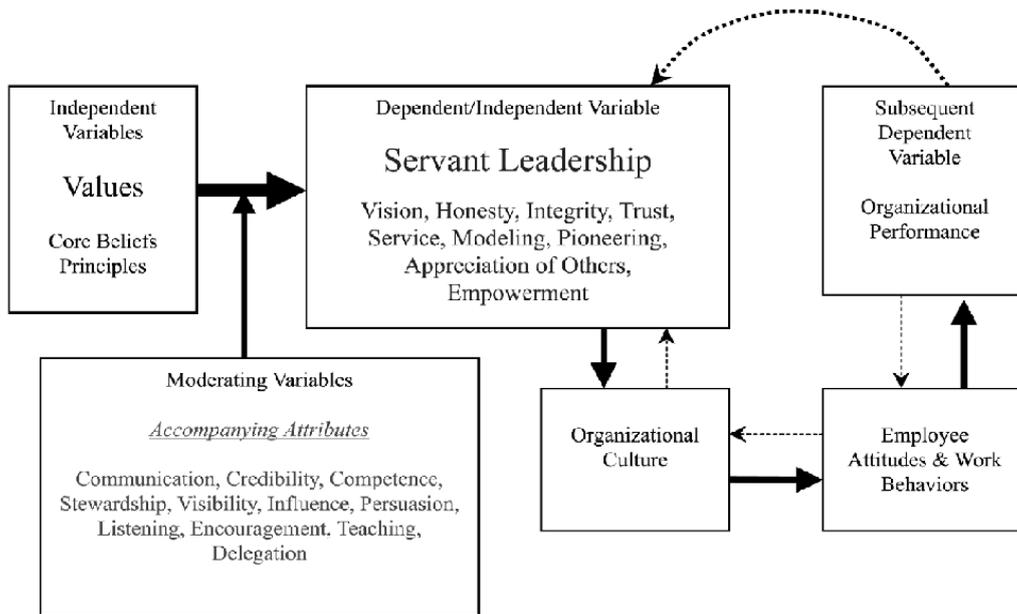
Despite mentioning the strengths of the study, the limitations must also be known. The decision to only interview coaches is seen as the main weakness. By involving players in this study this work could have collected more information on the overall view within the environment in regards to this subject. By including both the viewpoint of the coach and the player a more comprehensive collection of information would allow comparisons to be drawn between the two groups.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study has set the tone for future research to explore the factors in which effect shared leadership within a team environment. This study has also highlighted another aspect within team environments in which needs thoughtful attention. The views towards followers are mostly negative within a team environment with this type of role seen as passive, weak and unmotivated (Kelley, 1992). Followership, as a subject, appears in the literature surrounding leadership as something that is additional and rarely a subject of itself (Atik, 1994). As there is a debate over what model followership should be included in, it is clear followership skills need specific attention as its effectiveness has a significant influence on shared leadership capabilities within a team. Future research should look in more depth to the influence followership has on a team environment.

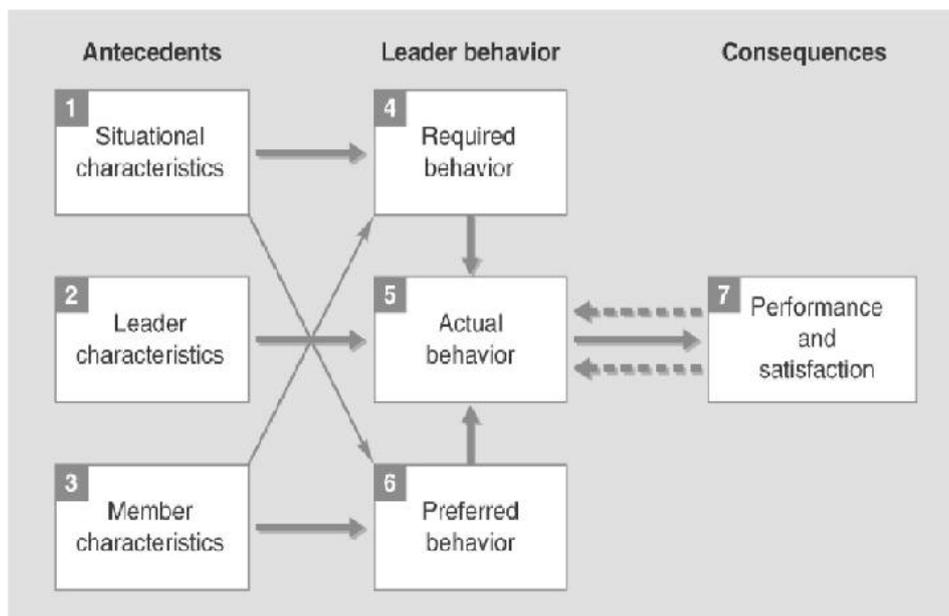
APPENDICIES

Appendix I; A diagram showing the 'Servant Leadership Model'



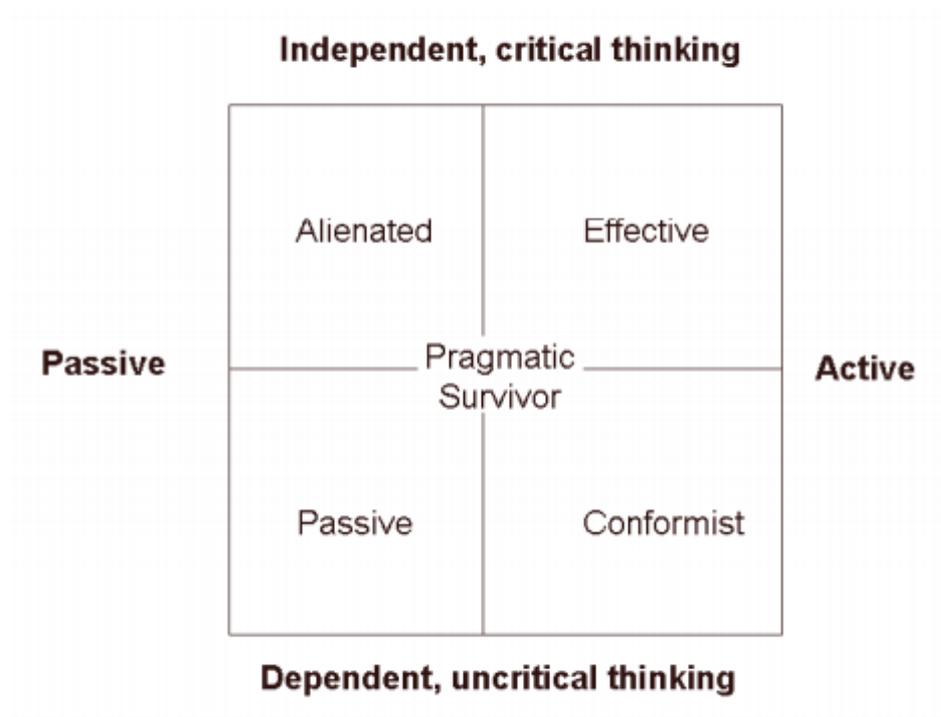
Above; 'Servant Leadership Model' (Rieke et al., 2008)

Appendix II; Diagram showing the 'Multidimensional Leadership Model'



Above; Multidimensional Leadership Model'. (Chelladurai, 1984)

Appendix III; Diagram shows Kelley's Model (1992) of the types of follower



Appendix IV; Interview guide that was used when conducting the interviews

Interview Questions

1. How do you see the 'Role of the coach'?

Probe Questions:-

- Is it complex or simple?
- What makes it complex?
- Why do you feel the coach needs to adopt different roles?

2. Much of the research suggests that the coach is 'a leader'. Do you see yourself as a leader in your environment?
3. In what ways do you lead?

Probe Questions:-

- Do you carry out an inter- and intrapersonal leadership approach?
- What benefits do you feel comes from this type of approach?

4. What roles do your players have in the environment?

Probe Question:-

- Other than playing roles do you see any other roles for players?

5. Do you see the players simply as followers?

Probe Questions:-

- How else do you see the players?

6. Do any of your players assume leadership roles?
7. Can you explain these roles?
8. How were these 'leaders' selected?
9. The concept of 'Shared Leadership' is now seen as being a positive in team environments. What do you understand by the term 'Shared Leadership'?
10. Can you give any examples of Shared Leadership in your environment?
11. 'How much power do coaches share with players?' is seen as an unanswered question. How much power do you share with your players within your environment?

- Examples: -

Captains; Team runs, impact on team selection

Leadership groups; Analysis sessions, Disciplinary issues, Impact on training sessions/goals,

Squad; Type of playing style of team, Set moves.

12. Do you share this power with only your 'Leaders' or is it open to all members of the environment?

13. Do you see a role for the coach within this 'Shared Leadership' approach?

14. Can you give any examples of the benefits from using Shared Leadership?

Probe Questions:-

- Are the benefits only for player's development?

15. Do you find it easy to share the leadership?

Probe questions:-

- What makes it difficult/easy?
- What would make the sharing of leadership easier for you?

16. Do you feel that it is important for players to be leaders?

Probe questions:-

- Why?
- What benefits to players development can happen from this?

17. What difficulties can occur when allowing Shared Leadership in a team environment?

Prompts:-

"Athletes unwillingness of responsibilities"

"coaches unwillingness to change the concept of the environment"

18. What can be done in order to eliminate these difficulties?

19. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix V; The information sheet that was used to introduce the interviews

INTRODUCTION

To begin, thank you in participating in this interview and study.

The aim of this study is to find out whether shared leadership is used within a team environment, and if so, how beneficial it is or can be. Even though there is little research covering this field, there has been an increase in question by researchers to obtain a better understanding regarding shared leadership. The answers, results or conclusions of this study could aid individuals within team environment such as coaches, captains or team members who wish to consider shared leadership within their team. It can also become a facilitator for further research.

There is always an option if at any point you do not feel comfortable with any questions, merely answer 'no comment'. Any questions that I ask that you do not understand then please do not be hesitate to say so. All information given to me by yourself will be strictly confidential with all your personal information being replaced and categorised with a customary 'Coach A/B'. If at any point you feel like asking a question to me, please feel at free to ask.

Appendix VI; Example of the data reduction process that was conducted

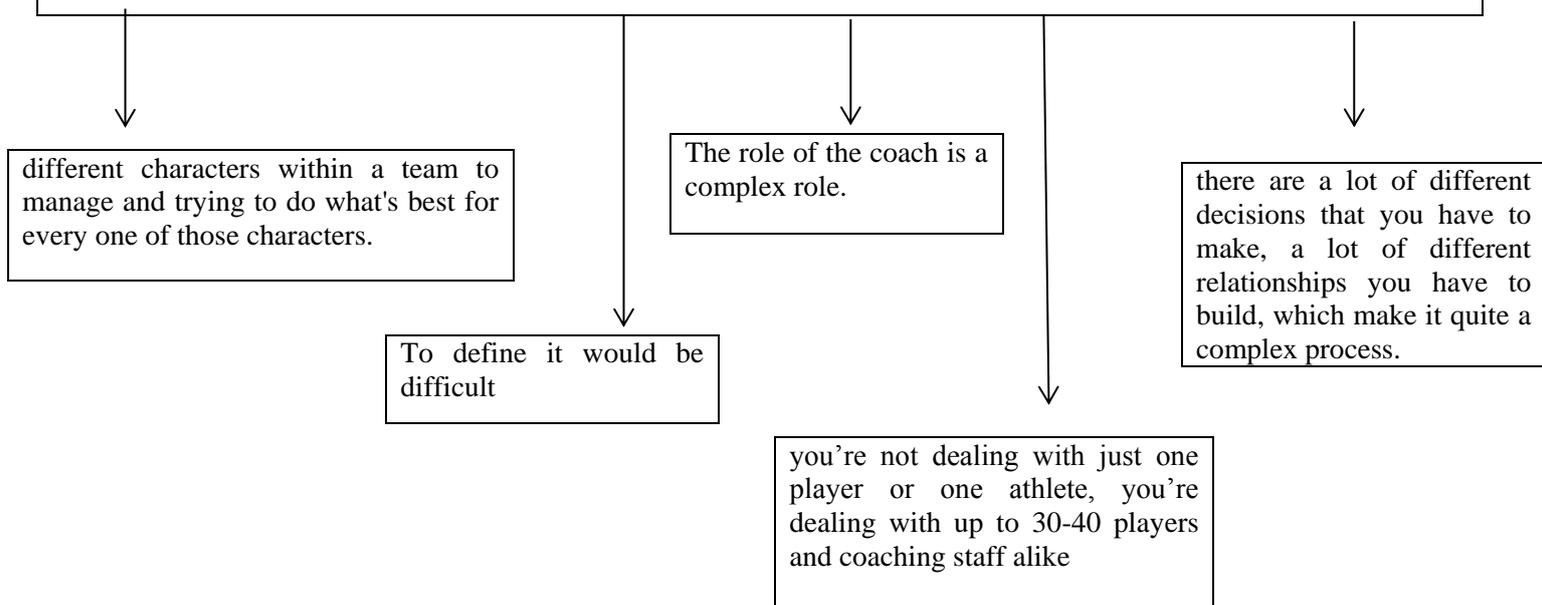
Coach D

Q:How do you see the role of the coach?

A:The role of the coach is a complex role, especially within a team environment. To define it would be difficult as well with so many different roles and responsibilities, different characters within a team to manage and trying to do what's best for every one of those characters. The role of the coach would be very different in all those different settings and also in the different types of environments like professional, amateur, grass roots. So it's difficult area to get a clear definition for. (2.12)

Q:What would you say makes it complex?

A:It could be at low level or at high level, it can be within a school environment or a rugby club environment. Being involved in a team-based sport, where you're not dealing with just one player or one athlete, you're dealing with up to 30-40 players and coaching staff alike. So by the very nature of it, there are a lot of different decisions that you have to make, a lot of different relationships you have to build, which make it quite a complex process. (2.57)



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EVIDENCE
TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEWS

DAVID ROBERTS

INTERVIEW 1

COACH A

Interviewer: First may I thank you for taking part in this interview and study which is part of my final year dissertation at Cardiff Metropolitan University. The aim of the study is to find out whether shared leadership is used within a team environment and, if so, how beneficial it is, or can be. Even though there is little research covering this field, there has been an increase in questions by researchers wishing to obtain a better understanding regarding shared leadership. The answers, results, or conclusions of this study could aid individuals within a team environment, such as coaches, captains or team members who wish to consider shared leadership within their team. It can also become a facilitator for further research.

There is an option if, at any point you do not feel comfortable with any question, merely to answer "No comment." Also, if there are any questions that I ask which you do not understand, please do not hesitate to say so and I will endeavour to clarify the point. All the information you give me will be strictly confidential with your personal information being replaced and categorised with the customary anonymous "Coach A/B." If at any point you wish to ask me a question, please feel free to do so. Are you ready and do you feel comfortable?

A: I certainly am. Very comfortable, thank you. (1.20)

Q: How do you see the role of the coach?

A: The role of the coach is an interesting one, because I suppose it depends on which field you're working, what level you're looking at, you could give it a huge range of definitions, depending on whether it's an U7s coach in little mini-rugby, to the professional coach, who might be part of a coaching team at the top end of the game, so I suppose the role of the coach would be very different in all those different settings. So it's a very complex and quite difficult area to get a clear definition for. (2.08)

Q: What would you say makes it complex?

A: I think some of the factors I just mentioned, in terms of that there is such a huge range. It could be a teacher, it could be coach, could be at low level or at high level, but even within each one of those scenarios, rugby being a team-based sport, has an environment where you're not dealing with just one player or one athlete. You might have upwards of 15 – 30, or in our environment, a hundred-odd players, to coach, try to have individual contact time with and try to make everyone improve and be successful. And by dealing with 15 – 30 players, every single one of those players have different characters, different things that make them tick. So by the very nature of it, there are a lot of different decisions that you have to make, a lot of different relationships you have to build, which make it quite a complex process. (2.57)

Q: Much of the research suggests that the coach is a "leader". Do you see yourself as a leader in your environment?

A: I think you have to be and I think that as a coach you are a leader. As Director of Rugby, yes, I'm in charge of certain areas of the game, so

I would lead those areas of the game and have a game plan around them; but you're also leader in other ways, aren't you, as a role model possibly, to players in terms that they will follow your actions and how you speak to them and how they speak to you, you'll be developing relationships. So, I suppose a coach at any level is not just leading in the way that they coach but also leading as a role model and other aspects that fit into it. (3.48)

Q: You said there that you are a role-model type of figure. In what other ways would you say that you lead? Would you say you have an Interpersonal or an Intrapersonal leadership? Intrapersonal would be about yourself and interpersonal leadership would be between other people.

A: I think in terms of your leadership roles, you have on-field duties and you have off-field duties; so when I talk about on-field I mean your training session, which could be things like how you organise your training sessions, how well-planned you are, your level of technical knowledge as a coach. It could be your ability to influence decisions that players are making in training, in games, the ability you have to give players on-field feedback, all those on-field situations. But then as a coach you also have to manage the off-field things, which may include giving people feedback away from training, disciplinary matters, organisational skills. Again using our environment as a practical one, it's not a professional environment, there aren't six or seven coaches with full-time responsibilities and team managers, it's pretty much the coaching staff who run everything. So they run pre-match organisation and post-match organisation, buses, and all those sorts of things which fit into it, as well as, like I said and you alluded to, being role models as

an example to players of how you want them to act, which is very much determined by the way you act yourself.

And in terms of leadership approach, I feel there is a need for both inter and intrapersonal leadership. Being a coach, having many players and coaching staff to deal with interpersonal is key. However, it is also important to concentrate on yourself on how you come across to the players, getting the key messages across to the environment as a whole. (5.25)

Q: What roles do your players have within your environment?

A: We have used a variety of different roles and different types of maybe leadership share set-ups in the last five or six years, to try to find one that best suits our club, the dynamics of our club. We have things like, again if I split them into on-field and off-field, we have on-field leaders, which could be your Captain or Vice-Captain, or your Line-out Captain, your Defence Captain, those sort of roles in terms that they lead the on-field stuff. Away from the field we have roles like Team Support, we have people who help with the analysis, we have a leadership group who meet up, maybe from first-year, second-year and third-year players and try to get a fair representation. We have monthly meetings to discuss how the players feel the environment's going, what needs to be changed, what they're happy with; those sort of leadership roles as well. (6.32)

Q: Do you see the players simply as followers within your environment? You said about the leadership group and the captaincy, but what were the roles of the other players outside those?

A: I would like to think that we try not to have just followers. However, we're in quite a difficult environment again, where the majority of our players are straight from school and in that 18-21 years of age, where they're in that transitional phase, from coming from school and becoming men and adults and living their life as they want to. While if they're in an ideal world, we would want the players to lead more effectively at times, be more comfortable in those roles, by the very nature of their being young, it doesn't happen as often as we'd like. So, more often than not, they probably fall into that role of following the coaching group, rather than taking the opportunities that we think we provide, to really pop up and get yourselves up in those leadership roles. However, followers within a team environment are key for successful leadership. Effective followers that is. Effective followers will have some sort of influence within the environment, but if the captain will over rule them then they will buy into the captains' view and support his decision. (7.52)

Q: Do any of your players assume leadership roles on their own, outside the leadership group?

A: I think there are naturally people – we've got a first-team group of 45 and there'll be people who will, over the course of the season, naturally take on more senior roles within the group. I think that certainly happens. I can think of examples of players, Tom Hall and other guys this year, who aren't Captain, haven't been given a specific role, but are very much a visual presence in the squad. They have a presence out on the field in training. They are quite involved in the social side of things. He is an example of an effective follower. So, a follower would be

naturally assumed roles that occur and I think those sorts of things happen quite regularly within our environment. (8.40)

Q: You mentioned the leadership group, the captaincy, and so on. How are these leaders selected?

A: It's interesting. Again over the last 4/5 years we've tried various different techniques of picking our leaders, from selecting them ourselves; to picking a pool of five or six players that people go to vote on; to actually giving a free vote to all the players so that they get what they want. So that would be an example of trying to empower the players, by giving them the responsibility to pick their own captain; which we've done. And they've all had varying degrees of success. If I were to reflect back on how we've done it, it needs to be on a horses-for-courses, on a yearly basis. I think some years there is naturally someone who might pop up and players and coaches would be naturally happy with and coaches would feel quite comfortable just to appoint that player. In other years it hasn't been as easy, whether it's due to injuries or availability, or maybe no natural leader appearing, we've tried other methods which, again, have had varying success. (10.00)

Q: The concept of Shared Leadership is now seen as being a positive in team environments. What do you understand by the term "Shared Leadership"?

A: My understanding of shared leadership would be to take the pressure away from one person making all the decisions and giving opportunities in a rugby environment to more than one person taking on those roles and responsibilities, for two reasons. Firstly, to take the

pressure away from one person, but also to empower other players, other coaches in the group, to try to have a positive impact on leading the club forward. (10.44)

Q: So, within your environment, can you give examples of shared leadership?

A: Shared leadership could be something as simple as Chris giving me responsibility for the attacking side of our game, whereas Chris would be more set-piece and defence orientated in terms of the roles that have been established. That's just on a coaching footing. Another example would be the Leadership Group who meet independently of us, and with us, to move the team forward. On the field it could be the fact that we maybe have four or five players who have different responsibilities for how our game runs. So it's not just lumped on the Captain, who has to make all the decisions. I'd be expecting my 10 to run our attacking starts and call our moves from line-outs. I would expect our 12 to be running the defensive side of the game. One of our second rows usually takes charge of our line-outs and our Captain also looks after the contact area. So we try to share those roles out. (11.55)

Q: "How much power do coaches share with players?" is seen as an unanswered question. How much power do you share within your environment?

A: Again, it's something that we want to do, it's something we've tried to do, I'm not sure how effective we always are at it. I sometimes think we want it to be a player-driven environment and we want players to

step up and be comfortable in those leadership roles, but I'll come back to the age of the players here and their level of maturity and development; it's not something they easily fit into, which sometimes means we become too coach-dominated and too power-dominated, in terms of that relationship, which I sometimes think impinges on the field and doesn't allow the players to express themselves fully as much as they would like, and we want them to. But players don't really want the power from the coaches, players enjoy to be lead and being given set rules to follow. (13.45)

Q: You said there that, as an example, Captains and your No. 10 perform aspects of your leadership or power within the environment. Do other members of the squad have any impact on how they run the environment?

A: One thing we have tried to do in terms of our leadership group this year, is invite a couple of different people each time, as I know there was criticism in the past that first-years felt a little bit isolated from the leadership group, so what we've tried to do is share that round and as players develop over the year we've had different people come into those meetings to share those responsibilities. We've tried this year to get our analysts more involved so that players can go and see analysts and try and prepare footage for sessions. So again, that might not be your Line-out Captain, it might be really on a basis of who wants to go and try that out; go and get some information on the opposition team we're playing; put some clips together, put it up on-line for us to discuss. We have a new website that we use as of this year, where all the players' clips and all their team performances go up on line for them to be able to view. But also they can upload stuff as well, so if they put

footage they can access through the analysts, they can maybe get clips of their starters play, some clips of their own performance or of the opposition's performance, and put them up on-line for everybody to see and probably discuss before games. Basically trying to build a strong follower base below our captain to take the pressure of captaincy off him. (15.34)

Q: As a coach, what do you see the role of the coach as being within the shared leadership approach?

A: I think it depends where you are on the "food-chain". I think you have to have direction given to you from the Director of Rugby, so, for instance Chris would use me, he would be in charge of how he distributes that shared leadership; so, for example, as he's distributed the back line to me, those players I'd try to empower as much as possible to get feedback from them, so, from my perspective in the players I'm responsible for, I would look maybe to give certain roles in the back line for those players, as we've already discussed. I think he's there maybe as a facilitator to give the players opportunities to develop, more than necessarily that autocratic traditional coaching style. (16.40)

Q: Can you give any examples of the benefits from using Shared Leadership?

A: I think in rugby circles you're more likely to get better game understanding. If I'm "tell, tell, tell!" and being very autocratic in my approach, and telling the players everything, it makes it very difficult for them to think for themselves. It makes it very difficult for them to move off that sort of straight line of instructions they've been given. If you are

confident enough as a coach and confident in your knowledge and your relationship with the players, that you can allow them to take responsibility for on-field and off-field roles, I think the players have as good, sometimes, if not better ideas that they can bring to the table. They'll be more comfortable on the field, in making decisions and being more effective, because they've had the opportunity to maybe look at things in a different way, look at things in a bit more detail. As a coach, what you have to be careful of is that shared leadership doesn't mean "Off you go!" to the players. You've got to be there to guide and help them and direct them and be there as a source of knowledge and give them technical information. It's all very well saying "Empower the players." But if you don't give them the skills to be able to empower effectively, that would be where I'd see it would break down. (18.12)

Q: So, would you say that the benefit is only for the players' development?

A: No, I think it's something that a coach can use to develop their coaching style, but it's something again, I think sometimes we get this idea that empowering players is "Right! Off you go, there you go and play!" And you're there to make the decisions. That's fine, but as a coach you have your game plan, you have your technical knowledge and it's about being a support and developing those players, giving them feedback, helping them in those leadership roles for them to develop, which in turn will help you develop your coaching style, which will be more effective. (18.55)

Q: In your experience of Shared Leadership, do you find it easy to share the leadership?

A: No, I think as a coach you almost want to – not show off your knowledge but – you want buy-in from your players and you get buy-in from your players by showing them that you have a good level of technical knowledge; that you can motivate and inspire people, so as soon as you share the leadership and share those roles you almost feel as if you're de-powering yourself, something that as a coach you can feel uncomfortable with. Also, I think it depends on each group you're coaching. Some groups will be better suited to it than others. Some groups will need more direction, some groups will need less direction and it's about you adapting your coaching philosophy and coaching style to fit the group you've got. (19.50)

Q: So, what would make the sharing of leadership easier for you?

A: Players who want to take responsibility. Players who have an active interest in the game. The coaching group singing from the same hymn-sheet, being comfortable in everybody's role and making sure that there's clarity in those roles. Again, I think what would make it easy is how effective you are as a coach or coaching group at assessing not just the technical ability, but also the game understanding, and maybe the make-up of the players, to know how effective using Shared Leadership would be. (20.35)

Q: Do you feel that it's important for players to be leaders?

A: Again, we're in a very unusual set-up in that we're also an educational establishment, so I have two hats, and while you're a rugby coach you're also an educator or something like that, so for me having a

team of 18-21-year olds and being able to give them roles of responsibility and opportunities to lead, is a really important part of their development; not just for them as players while they're here, but whatever they're going to go and do in the future. If you were coaching at a premiership club where results maybe are all-important, you might have a different outlook on that. I'm quite happy to offer those roles and give those opportunities each year, because ultimately my job isn't on the line whether we win or lose. So I think again, it's that question we started with, that level you're coaching at is probably a big determining factor in how easy these are to implement. (21.50)

Q: You said there about the players' development. How beneficial is it for the players' development for them to have leadership?

A: I think it's hugely important for them to experience leadership so that it will help them determine the type of player they are, how comfortable they are in leadership roles. It might take people out of their comfort zone; it might be something that people feel naturally suited to and it's something they want to do. So there are a number of benefits for player development, I think it'll give them better game understanding; it'll give them an insight into the game. I think it's a huge development tool for players. (22.30)

Q: What difficulties can occur when allowing Shared Leadership in a team environment?

A: I think some of the things we've talked about, in terms of the nature of the group; how much the group want to take responsibility. I think some players like being told what to do; I think some players like

being directed. Some players don't want those leadership responsibilities, they want to be told, "I want you to go from A to B." and that's what they'll do. So I think knowing your coaching group, knowing the players there, is of huge importance, because if you pitch it wrong and you try to empower the players and give a sense of shared responsibility sometimes that can come back and possibly lead you to not being as successful as you could be, because you don't have the players there who are able to take on those roles. If those players do try to take on those roles but aren't very successful it could lead to a fairly negative environment, where you have shabby standards; the level of buy-in from players isn't as good, so for example, attendance at training drops, performances on the field aren't as good; standards off the field aren't as good, and I think that as soon as you allow more people in to that circle of leadership, the more that's going to happen, unless you're very comfortable with the people you're inviting in and that environment's really tight. I think if you haven't got a tight environment, having something like Shared Leadership could be quite negative. (24.14)

Q: What can be done in order to eliminate these difficulties?

A: Again, I think it's quite difficult, because if an athlete doesn't want the responsibility of a role of leadership or to buy in to the team's values, or to really take responsibility for themselves, how as a coach can you manage that situation? Do you call a player in, do you call a players' meeting, there are lots of different techniques that you can use but how effective they are I'm not sure. I think that certainly an area that I feel I would need to develop would be those personal relationship skills to know what would be the best thing to do when you hit those situations.

When you have a group that are difficult to manage and you don't have the level of buy-in you want, how do you turn that around? Do you have to become more autocratic and start to tell more and direct more yourself? I'm not sure, is the answer. (25.25)

Q: Is there anything else you'd like to add before we finish?

A: No, other than I suppose I come back to where we first started and say that the role of the coach is very complex for a number of different reasons, but I think also where you are as a coach, a coach teaching a U7s group is very different from a coach teaching a youth group, from a teacher in a school, or a professional team or a club team. I think that's what makes this hard, that you could investigate and do a lot of theoretical research around the role of a coach at a premiership club and publish those findings but how relevant would that be to an U7s coach delivering on a Sunday morning, about effective leadership. So it's the context that you are in which is very important to the research. (26.28)

Q: Thank you very much.

Interview ends at 26 minutes 31 seconds

DAVID ROBERTS

INTERVIEW 2

COACH B

Interviewer: First may I thank you for taking part in this interview and study which is part of my final year dissertation at Cardiff Metropolitan University. The aim of the study is to find out whether shared leadership is used within a team environment and, if so, how beneficial it is, or can be. Even though there is little research covering this field, there has been an increase in questions by researchers wishing to obtain a better understanding regarding shared leadership. The answers, results, or conclusions of this study could aid individuals within a team environment, such as coaches, captains or team members who wish to consider shared leadership within their team. It can also become a facilitator for further research.

There is an option if, at any point you do not feel comfortable with any question, merely to answer “No comment.” Also, if there are any questions that I ask which you do not understand, please do not hesitate to say so and I will endeavour to clarify the point. All the information you give me will be strictly confidential with your personal information being replaced and categorised with the customary anonymous “Coach A/B.” If at any point you wish to ask me a question, please feel free to do so.

Q1: How do you see the role of the coach?

A: A difficult one to answer in terms of the role. I suppose the coach would perform many different roles and different coaches would have different roles, perhaps, within an environment as well. Personally, my role is multi-faceted, in terms that I oversee the rugby environment here

at the university, so I have a role as an overseer, manager, in terms of managing the environment, in terms of team arrangements, fixtures and so on. I have a managerial role in terms of managing Assistant Coaches within the environment. Obviously there is a leadership role in that sense as well, in terms that as the head of that set-up you have to take a lead in a lot of different areas, in terms of decision-making. Other roles which would be there would include selector, coach, mentor in some cases; there are lots of different roles you have to perform within the heading of "Coach". (3.00)

Q: So would you say it's complex?

A: Yes, a very complex role. (3.05)

Q: What would you say makes it complex?

A: I think really the fact that you're dealing with people and immediately you're dealing with people, people are different and we have an environment where there are over 100 players there and clearly each of those players is different in some way, and trying to manage all those different personalities and egos and ambitions and disappointments, can sometimes be difficult. It can be very complex running the number of teams that we do. Sometimes we're putting eight teams a week out now, and that again is complex in itself, trying to keep track of fixtures and selections and so on, who's available, who's not available; so I think the fact that dealing with people, people are strange animals, they all have their individual personalities. I think that interaction with people is probably what makes the job most complex. (4.05)

Q: You gave me a long list of examples of the role of the coach. Why do you think the coach needs to adopt these different roles?

A: I think that's what the job entails. I suppose different environments would have different job descriptions for the coaches, but coaching is about more than simply putting your boots on and getting on the field and delivering coaching sessions. I suppose that's the easiest part of the job, actually delivering the practical coaching sessions. Everything that goes behind that, I think, is the difficult, the complex part of it and where you adopt these other roles, then, in terms of leader/manager/disciplinarian/mentor/whatever. (4.55)

Q: You touched on it slightly there - much of the research suggests that the coach is a "leader". Do you see yourself as a leader in your environment?

A: Yes. I certainly have to lead the environment, my responsibility is to oversee all the rugby so undoubtedly I have a leadership role in that sense, in terms of leading my Assistant Coaches and planning and programming what we're going to be doing there and obviously heading up the environment puts you into that leadership position anyway. (5.30)

Q: What kind of leadership approach do you use? Would you say it's inter-personal leadership or intra-personal leadership? Intrapersonal leadership would be about yourself and interpersonal leadership would be between other people.

A: I think you probably need to do both. There's a need obviously to look at yourself and how you deal with your own issues, but we're in the people business and interpersonal leadership is obviously going to be key. You've got to get the players on board and hopefully have everybody pulling in the same direction and having a tight team in that sense, both players and management, really trying to develop those bonds. So interpersonal is certainly important, but I think with anybody there's going to be some intrapersonal leadership that you need to consider as well. (6.40)

Q: What benefits do you feel come from this type of approach? You said that you use both. What kind of benefits do you see coming from them?

A: I don't know if it's benefits, I think it's a necessity, I think the nature of the job means that you have to do both of those things. I think you have to deal with people and inevitably when you're dealing with people, certainly if you have a position of authority, a position of power in the environment, there is going to be a leadership element to that; so I think it's more of a necessity and I think if you can do it successfully, the benefits come from having a good tight environment, a successful environment, if you can get a good leadership structure going within it. (7.23)

Q: What roles do your players have within the environment?

A: Obviously they're there as players, but in terms of their roles, different players might have different roles within the team. We do have a senior players' group where those particular players would be seen as

leaders within the environment. They would be part of our decision making process in terms of squad selections, training times, monthly calendars, socials, all those types of things. So there is a group of players there who would act as leaders to a certain extent.

It's an interesting one in terms of whether we want all our players to be leaders. A lot of the research would suggest that you want to try to develop leaders. I'm not fully behind that, I'm more of the view where I think effective followers are often better than having a team of leaders, because if you understand what an effective follower is, really they can bring much more to an environment than having too many chiefs and not enough Indians in it. So I think seeing the players in that way, and I'm trying to get them to understand that being an effective follower isn't a negative thing, it's not a sort of nod-your-head, be like a sheep and do as you're told position. Effective followers do challenge the environment, do question the environment, but are trying to drive the environment forward in doing that; trying to be a real positive influence in the environment. So those are the types of roles I like to see players adopting; really positive followership roles, rather than leadership roles.
(9.20)

Q: You said you had a senior club group. What kind of roles specifically do you give, in your environment?

A: Again, we haven't designated roles there. The leadership group is there to do as much as they want to do, really. It's for them to come to us as a management group, with any issues, any ideas, anything they want changing or whatever. So they pretty much have a free rein to operate in any way they want. There are formal roles that they have to perform; on a monthly basis we sit down and review our conditioning

squad, our playing squads etc so the leadership group would be a part of that selection process. If we feel we have any issues to deal with, with individual players who we feel are not buying in to the environment or are causing problems there, again we would bring that up with the leadership group and discuss a way forward with that; whether it's something the leadership group do and take on and carry out any course of action they decide on, or whether they want us as a management group to deal with that would be discussed between the two groups. And, again, I mentioned the social side of things. What we tried to do this year was to plan any socially events carefully in with our playing calendar, so we don't have conflicts in terms of trying to play well when perhaps we aren't in the best condition to be playing well! So, again, they would oversee that and have had responsibility for cancelling a couple of socials and moving them to other dates this year, because they didn't fit into our playing schedule. That's really where that comes in. (11.12)

Q: How were these leaders selected?

A: They were selected by the Captain. So the management group selected the Captain and then felt that, in order to get a supportive group around the Captain, the best way of selecting a leadership group would be to allow the Captain to get people around him who he felt would help him drive the environment, would have the same sort of values and attitudes that he has and would hopefully carry some of the burden with him in terms of leading the team, the squad and the club, through the year. So they were selected purely by the Captain. (11.55)

Q: Do you have any titles for these specific roles?

A: No, I think they have designated a Social Sec in there, but I don't think it's anything formal. I think that just as a group they meet up informally, chat, filter things back to the players, bring information from the players, but nothing on a formal basis. (12.20)

Q: The concept of "Shared Leadership" is now seen as being a positive in team environments. What do you understand by the term "Shared Leadership"?

A: I suppose it does what it says on the tin really. Shared leadership is trying to distribute leadership roles and responsibilities throughout the environment rather than having a sort of figurehead who is the leader, makes all the decisions and leads from the front, trying to disseminate that responsibility through the team, through the squad, through the club, so it's seen as a shared responsibility and hopefully, through that shared leadership, we get a better buy-in from everybody in the club. It's a great concept but it's not an easy thing to achieve, I don't feel. (13.13)

Q: Specifically within your environment, can you give examples of shared leadership?

A: Yes, I think within the team you would have people who would be given leadership roles. Obviously you have the Captain, so there's a responsibility there; a Vice-Captain. We'd have our Line-out Captain who would also have a responsibility within the team; so those types of positions. I think even things like the Social Secretary in the club has a responsibility. Our leadership group is a way of disseminating that

leadership role out amongst the players as well. So, those would be the main examples we have. (13.53)

Q: “How much power do coaches share with players?” is seen as an unanswered question. How much power do you share with your players within your environment?

A: It’s an interesting one. As much as they want, but in my experience players don’t really want much power. Players enjoy being in an environment where they know what’s acceptable, what isn’t acceptable, what they should be doing in any given time, place, game, whatever. I feel that what a lot of the players feel, (certainly in our environment, we’re a young environment) a lot of the players are reluctant to accept leadership roles, that they would much prefer to be led than to take leadership roles. (14.58)

Q: So, within your environment specifically, you don’t give, for example the Captain would take a team run. That would impact on team selection. Would you give that kind of empowerment to him?

A: Yes, those feedbacks from the Captain, the Captain would always take our team run, the last run out before the game would always be led by the Captain. But I think there’s a lot more you could try to develop there, but players like the nice bits of leadership, but don’t really like the less glamorous bits. Perhaps they tend to be a bit selective in terms of the leadership roles they like to slip into, but less prepared perhaps to accept the other responsibilities that come with that. Something like inputs to selection, it’s great to have an input to selection, but with that comes the responsibility then of dealing with the players who are not

selected and being able to go to those and say “Look, I didn’t think you should be playing today because ...” I think that’s a difficult one for fellow-players to be put in that position. One week you want that guy alongside you, backing you up, giving you everything and the next week you’ve said “Oh well, I think this player’s better than you.” And I think really that’s more of a job for the coach, to take that responsibility away from the players. So I think there are lots of ways. For me, players can have as much of a leadership role as they want, but they’ve got to understand that responsibility that comes with that role, as well. (16.40)

Q: Do you share this power with only leaders? You mentioned your Captain there; would you only share leadership with him or is it open to all the members of the team?

A: No, it’s open to anybody and I think when I talk about effective followers, effective followers should really drop into that leadership-type role in terms of ... for me it would be great for players to come to training with ideas, things they’ve seen other teams doing, which they feel would benefit our environment, things like moves, line-out systems, structures that we could be using; but rarely, if ever, do we get that. They turn up and we coach and say what we feel we could be doing. I feel there could be a lot more coming from the players, but as I say, they are reluctant to have that type of input and I think that’s a really positive way in which players can have a leadership role in the environment, to actually develop and grow the game they want to play themselves. (17.45)

Q: Where do you see the role that the coach has to take within the Shared Leadership approach?

A: In an ideal world I suppose you'd see everybody as equals, but the world isn't like that. Somebody has to be ultimately responsible and ultimately somebody's neck has to be on the block for any decisions made in the environment and any outcomes of those decisions. So whilst there's shared leadership, we do give out roles and responsibilities within the environment, ultimately I'm at the head of that and therefore I'm the "Leader" and would ultimately have the final say on anything that was going to happen there. So, yes we want our players to make a contribution; to show that they can contribute to the leadership within the environment, but the idea of everybody being equal I think is a false impression. I don't think you could ever have that; even within the team you'd have some players who were more equal than others, because of the way in which they conduct themselves and bring themselves to the fore. Some players are naturally more leadership-orientated than others. (19.05)

Q: What you're saying there seems quite negative towards the Shared Leadership concept, but can you see any benefits from using this approach?

A: Yes. I'm not saying it's negative. I think it's a great thing, I think the more shared leadership you can get in the environment – great! But what you can't have – imagine you have a team full of leaders, who are they leading? There's nobody to lead. Everybody's there. Everybody wants to make a decision, what if three players come along and say "Look, we think we ought to be trying to do this." And three players over there say "We think we ought to be doing this." And these three ... ultimately somebody's got to say "Yes, great, all good ideas, but OK,

we've had a think about it and this is the way we're going to go." So ultimately somebody is going to have to take in all the information that comes, but make a decision based on that and say "What do we think is best for the team? This is the way we're going to go." So I think you have to be careful with shared leadership, you can't allow it to become so loose, so fluffy, that everybody feels they've got to have an input as a leader all the time, there's nobody there. I like the concept of what I call "pop-up leadership" where anybody in the environment feels that they can contribute, can become a leader – got a good idea – pop-up – but then drops back into that follower's role and is prepared to get behind and back other people when they're coming in and popping up and bringing leadership into the environment as well. (20.39)

Q: Do you see any benefits of shared leadership?

A: Yes. I think shared leadership can help if it's done effectively. If the players understand what leadership is. Leadership isn't just telling people what to do, or ranting and raving in team talks or warm-ups or whatever. Leadership is about a bit more than that and really it's for me in an environment, in a team environment, a lot of that leadership comes just through the way players conduct themselves in the environment. And I think that's where a lot of the shared leadership can come into it, but players adopting professional attitudes and showing, not ranting and raving about it, but just showing through their actions what the expectations are in the environment, so they're leading through doing rather than telling. I think that's probably the way forward in a team environment. (21.45)

Q: Would you say that the benefits are only to a player's development?

A: No, I think they benefit the players, but I think they benefit the whole environment as well. No, I think there are huge benefits to be gained in the environment if you have a good solid environment, where you have this shared vision and shared leadership towards that goal then – fantastic! (22.06)

Q: Can you give any examples of development other than the players' development, which could benefit from this?

A: I think the players themselves, individually. I think the team as a whole will benefit from that, as I said, as long as we haven't got everybody in the team trying to make decisions all the time, because if you have leaders you have to have followers. You have to have people who'll get behind those decisions and carry them out. So effective followers are important as well. But I think the team will benefit, the environment will benefit and the individuals in that environment will benefit. (22.38)

Q: Do you see the coaches being developed by shared leadership?

A: I think as long as the coaches are open to new ideas and are prepared to take them on board; if you're coaching at a good level, you'd be naïve to think that your players can't bring something to the environment. Some of the players will have experienced other coaches and picked up things from here and there, so I think one of the main things for a coach to be is open to those new ideas, to listen to them and then make the decision "Is it for me? Do I think there's value in that or

not?” because certainly it can help to grow the coach in that way. But I don’t think the coach can see it was a way of abdicating that overall responsibility that someone has to drive that environment forward. (23.27)

Q: Do you find it easy to share leadership? Does it come naturally to you as a coach?

A: Easy in terms of “Am I willing to do it?” I’m very open to it but the difficulties I find are in players wanting to accept that leadership you want to give them. I feel that the majority of players are reluctant to do that. They are reluctant leaders. They would rather be led. I think if you can get some good leaders in the environment, then fantastic. But my in experience, and it’s probably because I’m working at the moment in an environment where there are lots of young, fairly inexperienced players and they are perhaps reluctant to take on those roles, it’s an easy thing to say “Yes, I’m open to it and I’m prepared to give leadership roles out” but it’s difficult because often I think doing that makes the environment softer, in the sense of players not really knowing what the expectations of the group are. You get lots of mixed messages in the group, I think, where the more leaders you have in there chirping away and bring contributions, the more confused the environment becomes. So I think a group of players who sit down and meet with the management and we say “OK, this is where we’re going for the next month. These are the messages we send out to the group.” We’re all singing from the same hymn sheet, even though we might have had a debate and some people may not quite have wanted to go down that road and some people have wanted to – once the decision’s made of where we’re going, then we drive it through the environment. (25.25)

Q: Do you feel it is important for players to be leaders?

A: Not all players, no. Again, it depends on what you mean by a “leader” I suppose. Has everybody got to be making the decisions all the time on the field? No. Again, for me, it’s more important for players to be effective followers, to understand what we’re trying to achieve as a team and being prepared to listen to the instructions, the calls of the people who perhaps are in leadership roles in the team and being able to carry those out effectively. I don’t think a team full of leaders would be an effective team at all. (26.13)

Q: You touched on followership, that there should be one leader and some effective followers. What benefits to the development of the players and the environment can accrue from this?

A: I think an understanding of what an effective follower is – as I said earlier, an effective follower is not somebody who just listens to what they’re told and gets on and does it. Effective followers are people who are good critical thinkers, who look at what’s going on in the environment and are able to question what’s going on there, bring their own opinions and their own ideas to that environment, which in a way is a leadership-type contribution, they’re making suggestions as to how the environment might be improved, but only through their role as a follower. So I think the benefits of having clear lines of communication, clear roles and responsibilities within the team and a group of really effective followers buying into a common goal, is much more important than worrying about having a team full of leaders. I don’t think a team of leaders would be very effective at all. (27.30)

Q: During this interview you touched on the difficulties surrounding shared leadership within the team. What specific difficulties would you say can hinder a shared leadership environment?

A: I suppose confusion would be the big thing. If you have too many leaders, who is the leader? And if those leaders are giving out mixed messages, which can very easily happen in a big environment, people might misread things and their interpretation of what's actually happening might be slightly different from someone else's and they're taking information back to the group and you can get mixed messages in the group, which I think is not helpful to the environment, so I think that's a problem. Also you may get to a point where everybody thinks they've got to be a leader. If you have too many and I think that's a danger as well. That if you're not in this extended or leadership "Yes, they're leaders and they're leaders and they're leaders: what am I?" I think the idea, if players feel comfortable that they can make a contribution to the environment, they can have an input into the environment, then they should see that as a positive way of leading the environment, rather than having to be someone who's constantly chirping up, thinking they're leading by shouting out and telling them "Come on! Harder! Faster!" whatever. That isn't really what leadership is about in a team environment. For me I think it's doing rather than telling. (29.12)

Q: I think you're in the frame of mind of players; could you give any examples of difficulties in coaching terms of having shared leadership?

A: Yes, again, I think of the point I made about mixed messages. It's difficult if you have too many leaders and again I think then there's a

possibility with too many leaders that you can get conflict between leaders, groups within the group, if you like, of “Well this one’s got an idea.” “A group there likes that idea but this one’s got a different idea.” You end up with divisions in your environment. I think there’s a danger you could do that. For me the biggest thing would be to have clearly defined roles and responsibilities in terms of: People on the leadership group – what do they actually do? What is their contribution? They’re no more important than anybody else in the environment, it’s just that they are the link between the players and the management and they are seen to bring messages one way and the other, information one way and the other, and trying to ensure that flow of information goes right through the environment. And I think if somebody doesn’t want to take on a leadership role, I don’t think they should be looked on any differently from somebody who’s very keen to take a leadership role and thinks they’re a great leader because they’re the loudest person in the group. People can be really effective in an environment purely through the way in which they conduct themselves. (31.00)

Q: Finally, is there anything else you’d like to add before we finish?

A: No, I don’t think so. We’ve hit most areas there. I just think leadership was a big thing in coaching a few years back, when people were trying to define effective coaching and the coach as a leader etc. I think things have started to change there now and people are starting to understand the need for followers; the role that followers have to play in any environment, from industry (that’s where it’s come from, really) through into coaching. We’re dealing with people and we hear that any coach is only as good as his players and you hear things like “Oh, the coach has lost the dressing-room, he’s done this ...” or whatever. It’s

that interaction there which is crucial and therefore, for me, ensuring we have effective followership in the environment is more of a concern than whether we have enough leaders, because I think through effective followership we develop leadership roles, for players anyway. (32.10)

Q: Thank you very much.

Interview ends at 32 minutes 12 seconds

DAVID ROBERTS

INTERVIEW 3

COACH C

Interviewer: First may I thank you for taking part in this interview and study which is part of my final year dissertation at Cardiff Metropolitan University. The aim of the study is to find out whether shared leadership is used within a team environment and, if so, how beneficial it is, or can be. Even though there is little research covering this field, there has been an increase in questions by researchers wishing to obtain a better understanding regarding shared leadership. The answers, results, or conclusions of this study could aid individuals within a team environment, such as coaches, captains or team members who wish to consider shared leadership within their team. It can also become a facilitator for further research.

There is an option if, at any point you do not feel comfortable with any question, merely to answer "No comment." Also, if there are any questions that I ask which you do not understand, please do not hesitate to say so and I will endeavour to clarify the point. All the information you give me will be strictly confidential with your personal information being replaced and categorised with the customary anonymous "Coach A/B." If at any point you wish to ask me a question, please feel free to do so.

My first question is: How do you see the role of the coach?

A: It varies really from person to person. For myself, in the job I'm in, I see it very much as teaching people life skills in order to facilitate that through rugby. I see myself as having good technical information but most of all I aim to teach people how to get on with one another and how

to bond with each other, and how to make sure that they behave in the proper manner to each other. (1 minute 49 secs)

Q: Would you describe it as a simple or a complex role?

A: It's complex, without a shadow of doubt. (1.55)

Q: What makes it complex?

A: Interpersonal skills, finding out what makes each different person tick, because it's not as simple as just going into the changing room and shouting "Come on!" before the game, a couple of times. You have to see what makes some people tick, what makes some people learn appropriately, what makes some people play appropriately, what motivates different people in different ways. (2.24)

Q: Why do you feel that the coach needs to adopt these different roles?

A: To get the best out of his players and to challenge himself. (2.30)

Q: Much of the research suggests that the coach is a "leader". Do you see yourself as a leader in your environment?

A: In all aspects. I have to behave in a manner which other people have to follow. If I can't lead by example, I can't expect other people to follow. (2.50)

Q: Would you say your leadership approach is inter- or intra-personal?

A: I'd like to see myself as an interpersonal leader, but very often I have to pull myself back and be intrapersonal, because I tend to take over and demand that things are done in certain ways; very often through advice from other people, such as my wife, for example, it's a skill I've had to learn really, and I hope I have learned it to a certain extent, where I have other people to adopt leadership qualities as well. (3.30)

Q: Regarding the environment, what roles do your players have in it?

A: To a certain extent they're followers, simply because of their age. With regards the type of coaching I'm doing now, it's a step from Junior Rugby to Adult Rugby, so very often I have to lead quite strongly and give out leadership skills, because they're not mature enough, very often, to be able to adopt leadership roles themselves. So, very often, I have to be almost dictatorial in what I'm doing, whereas whenever I've coached adult teams, I'd like to think I'm a bit more democratic than that and offer people leadership. (4.15)

Q: So you say you're trying to develop them through Junior to Senior. Do you see other roles for the players, other than playing, in the environment?

A: Definitely. Some people are happy to follow, others are happy to lead, some people I basically have to teach life skills to, because they need to realise the impact that they have on their team-mates. So, for

example, if somebody's messing about in the changing-room they might find it funny and one or two other people might find it funny, but to others it might completely ruin their psyche before games or totally ruin the training session: which can be immensely frustrating. So it's all about teaching people how to behave in a proper manner towards each other and make the best of the skills these young men possess. (5.00)

Q: Do any of your players assume leadership roles?

A: Yes. I try to indoctrinate people in leadership roles. Some people adapt to it far more easily than others. The more successful a team is, generally, the more leaders you have in the team and the more people chip in and offer advice at different points during the game. As I said, the more successful teams I've had, I've found strong leaders throughout the team. (5.35)

Q: Can you explain these roles more specifically?

A: There are the obvious ones, like different units, the Scrum Captain, the Line-out Captain or the Backs Captain, or the Defence Captain, so you spread the burden of the captaincy round the whole team. There are also leaders who lead just by example. I could give names, but I don't think it would be appropriate in this situation. There are people who lead by deeds, people who lead by actions, people who lead by vocal talents – all three of them are very necessary to the game. (6.20)

Q: You gave examples of the Scrum Captain, the Line-out Captain, the Backs Captain or the Defence Captains – how are these leaders selected?

A: They are emergent really, they're very much emergent leaders rather than prescribed leaders. Through watching people doing things, you find some who relish certain aspects of the game and you try to make them take charge of it, because they enjoy that captaincy and that leadership role in it, but also certain positions lend themselves to it. For example hookers are generally Captain of the Scrum because it's their "c—k on the block" You have to have a certain person in the Line-out who can see the whole line-out as well, so it can be positional. But obviously they also need the right personality for it. (7.05)

Q: The concept of shared leadership is now seen as a positive in a team environment. What do you understand by the term "shared leadership"?

A: Everybody having an input into what's going on, on the field. So people are sensible and intelligent enough, emotionally and intellectually, the more people have an input into the team, the stronger it makes the team. Because, very much out of the mouths of babes, come some really enlightening aspects. One example is my wife watching the South Africa vs England final in the World Cup a few years back, John Smit was captaining South Africa, she came in and just started watching and she knows nothing about rugby and when they were hitting ruck, she said "They're using their bodies like punches" and I thought "My God, she's got a real gem there!" because what was happening was that they were battering away at each other and the toll they were taking off each other physically in the first 60 minutes, would eventually bear fruit in the last 20, so they were legally punching each other. So, very often you can't dismiss any person, regardless of how

rugby intelligent they are or how sports intelligent they are; you can't dismiss anything they say. Everybody should be listened to and everyone needs to feel they have an avenue to be listened to, as well.
(8.35)

Q: So you wouldn't see this term just used on a rugby field?

A: No. Another example was one of the major toothpaste manufacturers wanted how to increase their sales. They went through all these different things about advertising then they went to the shop floor and one of the blue collar workers on the shop floor said "Why don't we just increase the diameter of the toothpaste as it comes out by 5%? People always put the same amount of toothpaste on their brush, so it'll just increase the amount they'll put on the brush by 5% so they'll buy more toothpaste." Alarmingly simple, but nobody had thought of it.
(9.10)

Q: Can you give examples of shared leadership within your environment?

A: Most of my boys have an avenue to express their feelings. I open things up to questions. Again, with the most successful teams I've had, you can listen to them a little bit more because there are no agendas with them. They just want to be successful, whereas with some other people, gradually over time you will realise that they're there for their own agenda. That's a skill which has to be learned by coaches. I do have problems with delegation amongst my coaches; my communication skills need to be improved and I need to spread things out a little bit more, but very often it's a double-edged sword. If you want things done

properly, sometimes you have to do them yourself, but it's not going to be done properly by the other people unless you give them a chance to do it. So it's a very difficult scenario, really. (10.08)

Q: "How much power coaches share with players?" is seen as an unanswered question. How much power do you share with your players, within your environment?

A: It's limited, mainly because of the age. So, very often I'm trying to impart my knowledge to them and impose my will upon them technically and tactically, so less in that situation. But very often coaching men's sides, if you have to impart things to them, you put a small group together and they'll be in charge of the rest of the group. So you'll have somebody in charge of attitude and others in charge of the things I mentioned earlier, and these people report back to you. (11.00)

Q: Saying that now, do you see yourself as only sharing power with the leaders or is it open to all members within the squad?

A: Open to all members of the squad, if I'm coaching a men's side. Coaching 16-19 year-olds you tend to look towards certain people, although, again, the more successful the side, the greater your perception of their rugby intelligence, their sporting intelligence, the more you'll be prepared to listen to them. Which can be a bad thing, actually, because if you're in a rush to get your point over, sometimes you overlook somebody who's come out with a real gem, and dismiss things without real thought. (11.50)

Q: What do you see the role of the coach being in the Shared Leadership approach?

A: That's part of the life skills you're trying to impart, you see certain talents in certain people and you try to bring those talents out, leadership being one of them. As far as I'm concerned, really, what gives me the greatest pleasure is imparting life skills to people through the medium of sport and that way they can then – it sounds conceited really to say that it makes them a better person, but it makes them a better citizen, not a better person necessarily because they're the same person, but it's given them the tools which bring out their proper qualities. Of the qualities they possess it gives them a better medium to bring out those qualities. (12.550)

Q: Can you give me any examples of benefits from using Shared Leadership?

A: I think rugby is all about shared leadership, because as soon as they cross the whitewash, if you start shouting things from the side it just confuses players. They have to have complete control over their own performance once they are on the field. You get one chance to speak to them, and that's at half time and very often that's just to re-affirm certain things. If you're shouting at people it just confuses them; it makes people nervous. So, when they cross the whitewash they just need to be able to control their own destiny really. So leadership is essential. (13.33)

Q: How do you get these players to be able to feel comfortable with this leadership? You said that when they pass the whitewash they're on their own.

A: By not being judgemental; by making sure that a lot of the comments that come out of your mouth are positive, praising them for things they've done and making sure that everyone isn't dismissed or ridiculed if they come up with any ideas. (14.02)

Q: Would you see the benefits of Shared Leadership as being only for the players' development, as opposed to the coaches' or coaching staff?

A: Yes, without a shadow of doubt. I'm terrible at it and really bad at taking over training sessions, so while the other coaches are doing things I'll step in and start to dominate proceedings and that's something I've had to learn. But it's essential, you have to have trust in them and if you're the Head Coach one of your responsibilities is to develop coaches who come in beneath you, and they don't get that unless you're confident they can take on certain aspects of leadership. (14.50)

Q: So you're saying that you find it hard to share leadership?

A: Yes. Amongst the players it's easy; amongst the coaching staff I do quite like to have that autonomy. (15.08)

Q: What makes it difficult for you to do that?

A: I like to be in control; I like looking at myself and thinking "Yes, you're in control." It's an ego thing, I suppose. (15.18)

Q: What would make it easier for you to share the leadership?

A: That's a really tough question! It doesn't depend on other people's skill and knowledge, because sometimes, if I'm brutally honest, that can be quite threatening. So, very often you pay lip service to the fact that you're sharing leadership with the rest of the coaching team, when really I want it all! And you can have leadership as long as they let you have leadership and it's known that I'm letting you have a little bit of leadership. (16.00)

Q: Do you feel it's important for players to be leaders?

A: Yes. I think I spoke about that earlier, in that as soon as they cross the whitewash, players need to be in charge of their own destiny, really. (16.18)

Q: What benefits to players' development can accrue from this?

A: As far as on the field goes, I think they become more confident as people and if they make mistakes, they can shrug those mistakes off because they know they've been given the chance to develop themselves. The fact that they're leaders on the field, also helps them with leadership factors off the field. It makes them more confident people. (16.52)

Q: So what difficulties can occur when allowing Shared Leadership within a team environment?

A: It becomes a “talking shop”. Sometimes when you go out there and you want to keep the tempo it becomes “I think this” - “No, I think this!” - They need to shut up and just get on with it. So the old adage of too many chiefs and not enough Indians – sometimes a person (generally me) has to say “Right! STOP! Shut up. You’re doing it my way, and that’s it!” (17.20)

Q: So would you define that as athletes’ unwillingness to accept responsibilities?

A: Athletes’ awareness of responsibilities? Yes, and because it’s a learning process, they also have to be aware of the fact that part of leadership isn’t always about talking. Leadership is very often about deeds and actions. (17.45)

Q: What can be done to eliminate these difficulties?

A: My difficulties with Shared Leadership? I don’t know, I’m so long in the tooth now I think it would be really difficult for me to change. It will either come with the students or the younger players, it just comes with experience really and it’s all about teaching people how to deal with leadership and what that responsibility entails. (18.30)

Q: Before we finish, is there anything else you’d like to add?

A: Nothing I can think of, it was quite intense, quite probing. (18.44)

Q: Thank you very much.

Interview ends at 18 minutes 44 seconds

DAVID ROBERTS

INTERVIEW 4

COACH D

Interviewer:First may I thank you for taking part in this interview and study which is part of my final year dissertation at Cardiff Metropolitan University. The aim of the study is to find out whether shared leadership is used within a team environment and, if so, how beneficial it is, or can be. Even though there is little research covering this field, there has been an increase in questions by researchers wishing to obtain a better understanding regarding shared leadership. The answers, results, or conclusions of this study could aid individuals within a team environment, such as coaches, captains or team members who wish to consider shared leadership within their team. It can also become a facilitator for further research.

There is an option if, at any point you do not feel comfortable with any question, merely to answer "No comment." Also, if there are any questions that I ask which you do not understand, please do not hesitate to say so and I will endeavour to clarify the point. All the information you give me will be strictly confidential with your personal information being replaced and categorised with the customary anonymous "Coach A/B." If at any point you wish to ask me a question, please feel free to do so.

Q:How do you see the role of the coach?

A:The role of the coach is a complex role, especially within a team environment. To define it would be difficult as well with so many different roles and responsibilities, different characters within a team to manage

and trying to do what's best for every one of those characters. The role of the coach would be very different in all those different settings and also in the different types of environments like professional, amateur, grass roots. So it's difficult area to get a clear definition for. (2.12)

Q:What would you say makes it complex?

A:Some of the factors I just said, It could be at low level or at high level, it can be within a school environment or a rugby club environment. Being involved in a team-based sport, where you're not dealing with just one player or one athlete, you're dealing with up to 30-40 players and coaching staff alike. So by the very nature of it, there are a lot of different decisions that you have to make, a lot of different relationships you have to build, which make it quite a complex process. (2.57)

Q:Much of the research suggests that the coach is a "leader". Do you see yourself as a leader in your environment?

A:Yes, I feel I do lead in some sort of way. As a head coach you need to be a leader and have control of your players and coaching staff. You need to have a position of authority, a position of power in the environment. You need the players and coaches respect in order for them to trust you, and trust the calls you make which could affect a lot of players/coaches morale/views towards you if you don't earn their respect. That comes through leadership. (4.04)

Q: What kind of leadership approach do you use? Would you say it's inter-personal leadership or intra-personal leadership? Intrapersonal

leadership would be about yourself and interpersonal leadership would be between other people.

A:A bit of both. The environment needs to look at your (the coach) vision on how you want the game to be played and hopefully the players and coaches will jump on board and follow suit. Without the players and coaches on board singing on the same hymn sheet then you're in a losing battle from the start. But there will always be a part for interpersonal leadership to become involved. (4.46)

Q:What roles do your players have within your environment?

A:They have a huge role. Being involved in an environment filled with players and coaches of experience of premiership and regional level, they have a lot of power. They drive the environment, we have a lot of strong, driven characters who all have the same goals and that is to be successful. As a coaching staff we obviously plan the training sessions (time, venue, drills), then the players drive the standards and intensity of those sessions. (5.38)

Q:Have the players have any formal roles?

A:Like any other team environment we have a captain, and a vice-captain. We also have a pack leader and a lineout captain. In terms of coaching staff I am the head coach, where I make the final decisions on

everything. We have a forwards coach who is in full control in all aspects of their plays. We also have a backs/skills coach who assists me with the backs and is in full control of the teams skills drills. (7.05)

Q:Do any of your players assume leadership roles on their own, outside the formal leadership roles?

A:Definitely. This environment is mainly a player run environment in terms of leaders. We have a lot of experience players who are natural leaders, who strive for success and also enjoyment within the sport. Our captain is very much a lead by example leader with the players around him chipping in vocally when needed. I think they define that as followers. If they (the players) have point of views in which they want to express, whether it be moves off set piece, the way we defend, players not pulling their weight. Then they know they can do so to me, my forwards coach, backs/skills coach or even the captain. (7.52)

Q:You mentioned the captain, vice-captain etc. How are these leaders selected?

A:We have been very lucky in having a tight knit team and have had the same captain and vice-captain for around 4/5 years now. But they were chosen through us as a coaching staff. Some players just have natural leadership mentality, whether it through example and one or two words or a leadership type where he enjoys making speeches pre/post game. (8.39)

Q:The concept of Shared Leadership is now seen as being a positive in team environments. What do you understand by the term “Shared Leadership”?

A:Taking pressure away from one person making all the decisions and giving opportunities to more than one person taking on those roles and responsibilities. Sharing the leadership and empowering the environment as a whole. (10.44)

Q:So, within your environment, can you give examples of shared leadership?

A:Regarding the coaching team, I have no input in the forwards side of the environment except for their fitness. Skills session are taken by the skills coach along with some backs drills he would like to try to experiment on.

Regarding the players, they have responsibilities of driving the environment and bringing ideas in terms of set piece moves. The Captain and vice-captain has input in selection but not full power regarding the final team selection. The captain is in total control of Thursday night ‘captains run’ before a game where he goes through set piece moves or game related activity looking ahead to the game Saturday. We have a ‘social sec’ who organises team outings just to get together for a few drinks, which I think is very important to build team rapport and morale. (11.55)

Q:“How much power do coaches share with players?” is seen as an unanswered question. How much power do you share within your environment?

A:As much as they want really. Like I said we are very lucky to have an experienced team, who have played together for many seasons now and have really created a tight knit environment where we all have the same goals and mentality in terms of how we want this environment run. However, there is always a place for coaches within any team environment, whether it being player driven not. Players enjoy being lead. To feel confident in their coaches. It’s one thing less for them to think about and an opportunity for them to concentrate more on the playing side of the game. (12.45)

Q: Do other members of the squad outside of the selected leaders have any impact on the environment?

A:Of course. Many of the players in the team have been around for a while, they’ve had other coaches/team environment experiences and they pick out the best from those experiences and brought them to our environment. Some we have taken on board and some we haven’t.

In terms of leadership impact, then yes. Our environment is a tight knitted one where we all know what is best for the team. Anyone who has an opinion or an idea if it be an 18year-old player or a 37year-old player can express them. But like I have said we have players who are effective followers, where they give their points of view and if they get taken on board or not they will still be behind myself, my coaching staff

and the captain for the best of the team. As I say that I realise how lucky I have it really. (14.11)

Q:You have brought up 'followers' within this interview already. How effective are followers within a team environment?

A: . Effective followers are people who look at what's going on in the environment and question what's going on in a positive manner, bring their own opinions and their own ideas to the environment, in a leadership-type contribution. They aim to improve the environment without being involved in a formal leadership role. (15.21)

Q:As a coach, what do you see the role of the coach as being within the shared leadership approach?

A:Firstly giving your opinion on how you want everything to be done within the environment. Becoming that main authority in the environment, letting the players know that as a coach you are there if needed from the players. . You've got to be there to guide and help them and direct them and be there as a source of knowledge and give them technical information. Then in an ideal world you would let the players take control of the environment putting their stamp on things in how they would like to play, which suits them, what days is best for everyone to train etc.

More specifically surrounding our environment us coaches will have power of the big decisions, for instance the team selection, days of training, session outline and so on. Then the players would have power in how the sessions are run and power in set piece moves. (17.35)

Q:Can you give any examples of the benefits from using Shared Leadership?

A:Better game understanding. Like I've said I am lucky. I have confidence in my knowledge and my relationship with the players, resulting in me being able to allow the players to take responsibility for on-field and off-field roles. Improving game related decision making. Improving the players confidence in each other. Knowing they have team mates who are putting as much effort into the game as they are. Knowing that everyone within the environment is driven for success or striving for the same goals as each other.

There are a lot more examples of benefits through shared leadership I can give. However it all comes down to a tight knit environment, all fighting for the same thing. All fighting for each other. Without that then shared leadership can become a negative. (18.36)

Q:So, would you say that the benefit is only for the players' development?

A:No, I think it's something that the coaching staff can use to develop their coaching style. Coaches can learn from players as well as players learning from coaches. Coaches who think they have all the knowledge and all the answers are naïve. (19.15)

Q:In your experience of Shared Leadership, do you find it easy to share the leadership?

A:In my environment I am in now, I find it easier than my other experiences. I have more experienced players than I have in my previous teams and players with good game understanding which makes it easier for me. But if you ask any coach I think they will all say that it is hard to share leadership. There is always that doubt in players that they don't see your (coaches) vision. That if you share the leadership then the players might find out that they don't enjoy the way, in which you as a coach play the game. I think it all comes down to the players own knowledge and experience of the game. Young players who are involved in university rugby or youth rugby downwards then I don't feel it can be done. It's a very tough thing to do but if done correctly can be so beneficial to the environment in all aspects. (21.02)

Q:Do you feel that it's important for players to be leaders?

A:I think it's important for some players to taste leadership in order for them to develop and find out what type of character they are. But I don't believe in everyone being a leader. If there are too many leaders within a team it becomes more of a negative than a positive. Too many cowboys not enough Indians some will say. If everyone is a leader then who do they lead? It is important for an environment to have a formal authority figure, whether it being the head coach or captain. Players want to be lead at the end of the day. They enjoy having a role model figure to follow and take orders from. (22.11)

Q:You said there about the players' development. How beneficial is it for the players' development for them to have leadership?

A:Hugely important. To find out whether or not they can lead a side, they need to experience it.

Leadership takes people out of their comfort zone and find out a lot about themselves and only natural leaders will come out of the experience positively (22.59)

Q:What difficulties can occur when allowing Shared Leadership in a team environment?

A: Coaches and players alike not have the same goals. Confusion surrounding who is the main leader within the environment, who has the last say, making the important decisions. There are a lot of negatives that can come from sharing leadership if not done right. I feel players experience and knowledge of the game is vital. Without them then it cannot be done. (23.47)

Q:Is there anything else you'd like to add before we finish?

A:No I think its been a good interview where you can get good information from. Very probing.

Q:Thank you very much.

Interview ends at 23 minutes 47 seconds