NAME: CLAIR HUISH

UNIVERSITY NUMBER: ST05002915

DEPARTMENT: SCHOOL OF SPORT

UNIVERSITY OF WALES INSTITUTE CARDIFF
A CRITICAL INVESTIGATION INTO THE RELEVANCE OF SPORTS DEVELOPMENT MODELS IN RELATION TO THE ENGLISH LACROSSE ASSOCIATION.
# Contents Page

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acknowledgements</th>
<th>i</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CHAPTER I

**Page Number**

**INTRODUCTION** 1

## CHAPTER II

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

- Sports Development Defined 3
- Sports Development Background 5
- Models of Sport Development 7
- National Governing Bodies and Development Continuums 13
- Relationship between player pathway models and sport development in the community 14
- ELA Lacrosse Development 18

## CHAPTER III

**METHOD**

- Advantages of qualitative method 22
- Disadvantages of qualitative methods 23
- Interview Procedure 23
- Participants of the interview 23
- Interview schedule 24
CHAPTER IV

**DISCUSSION**

Discussion 28
The meaning of Sport Development 28
Strategies and Pathways 30
Development Continuum 34
Increasing Participation 38
Issues and Barriers of Participation 40
Funding 41
Discussion of summary 42

CHAPTER V

**CONCLUSION** 45
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List of Figures</th>
<th>Page Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1. Traditional Sports Development Continuum</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2. The modified model of the sport development continuum</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3. The modified model of the sports development continuum</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4. The House of Sport Geoff Cooke</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5. Welsh Netball Association player pathway</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6. English Hockey Association player pathway</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 7. The Sport Development Pyramid</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 8. Sports Council Effective Domestic Structure</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 9. Lacrosse SWOT Analysis</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 10. The ELA Whole Sports Plan business plan</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 11. The ELA model of participation</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 12. The Model for local development</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 13. Women’s under 21 development continuum</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 14. Women’s development continuum for over 21 years of age</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 15. Men’s Lacrosse under 21</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 16. Men’s Lacrosse over 21</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 17. Interview 4 Traditional Pyramid continuum</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 18. The Lacrosse version of the House Model</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 19. Map of lacrosse deprivation</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 20. The author’s lacrosse development continuum</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A          ELA Key Target
Appendix B          Letter of consent
Appendix C          Interview Questions
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DCMS - Department of Media Culture and Sport
ELA - English Lacrosse Association
LDO - Local Development Officer
NEMLA - North England Men's Lacrosse Association
PE – Physical Education
PESSCEL - Physical Education School Sport and Club Link Strategy
RDO - Regional Development Officers
SCNWR - Sports Council North West Region
SCW - Sports Council Wales
SDO - Sports Development Officer
SEMLA - South England Men's Lacrosse Association
SWOT – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my dissertation supervisor Nicola Bolton for her help throughout my investigation, John Rawlins for his continuous support throughout my studies, my family, friends and boyfriend for their encouragement throughout my time at UWIC. Thank you to the ELA and their employees for their time and contribution to this investigation.
Abstract

Sport development continuums are used across many different National Governing Bodies (NGBs) in order to display player pathways and highlight the different standards of participation at which the participant could potentially perform. The chosen development continuum differs depending on the sport and on the player’s amateur or professional status.

There has been little or no research into lacrosse development pathways. This investigation aimed to fill this gap by highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the English Lacrosse Association (ELA), by comparing the development continuums developed by Cooke, cited in Hylton (2001) and Houlihan and White (2002) to the ones that the ELA have developed and use in order to develop lacrosse in England. This investigation aimed to highlight the issues that are related to sports development, in particular what sports development means to the ELA and its employees, what strategies and pathways are put in place to facilitate players’ development, the work carried out by the ELA in order to increase participation and the barriers and issues that hinder participation.

This was a qualitative study which used semi structured interviews with representatives of the ELA at various levels within the organisation in England.

Results indicated that the factors which hinder players’ pathways within the development continuum and which impact on the number of people
participating in lacrosse in England were: accessibility to lacrosse clubs, stereotyping of the sport in relation to white middle class participants, funding to promote the sport, lack of an infrastructure within the ELA. It was concluded that there was a need for a sports development continuum to be applied consistently across England by the ELA. Secondly, it was concluded that a better understanding of the concept of sports development was needed to include education and skill as well as growth.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION
Introduction

Sport has become increasingly more important due to rising obesity and other health related issues, both the government and the sports councils have acknowledged the importance of adults and children taking part in regular physical activity. The Government and Sports Councils have also highlighted the importance of establishing a range of different sporting opportunities in order to encourage more people to take up a more active lifestyle.

Currently lacrosse in the UK has been labelled by the sport councils as a ‘developing sport’ (ELA, 2004) due to the low participation rates, image and the low number of lacrosse clubs in England and the rest of the UK.

The sports councils have highlighted that a sports such as lacrosse should be made accessible to everybody throughout the nation. At present the ELA is trying to develop and raise the profile of lacrosse throughout the country in order to develop player’s pathway’s and improve participation rates.

Lacrosse is seen as a white middle class sport (ELA, 2004) this is a stereotype the ELA are keen to change in order to increase participation rates. As participation rates are low it is clear that there are factors cause these low participation rates. The ELA is an amateur organisation which has little experience in sports development. Furthermore, it also has a small number of employees compared to National Governing Bodies (NGB’s) such as football and rugby.

The ELA has established participation programmes in order to increase participation at grass root levels; this programme has developed links with schools with clubs. It is clear the way in which an athlete within lacrosse progresses up the development continuum differs depending on the area in which they live, the experience of coaches, age and gender. Unfortunately, it appears that the ELA have not established a sports development continuum that is uses across England. It is rare that a lacrosse player that lives in an
area of deprivation will become a world class international player as lacrosse is sparsely spread throughout England and the UK.

Reasons have been acknowledged for the lack of lacrosse players in the England and the rest of the UK by the ELA, these include; the lack of access to clubs, the lack of role models which hinders the growth of the sport as there is little publicity, a point with which the Department of Media Culture and Sport (DCMS) (2008) agrees,

There is a common perception that sports people are viewed as role models and that they have a correspondingly positive impact upon individuals and the broader community in general. This perception has resulted in a number of programmes being instituted where prominent and successful sports people have been promoted to the community as role models in order to influence sports participation rates.

The cost of playing is also an issue that hinders the growth of lacrosse which has been highlighted by the ELA, the high costs occur due to the amount of travel required and the amount of equipment needed.

The author has a particular interest in the development of lacrosse as they have competed at an international level and have a dedicated interest in sports development. This investigation intends to highlight the positive and negative characteristics of an athlete’s progression across the different stages of the development continuum. From carrying out this investigation it is hoped that suggestions can be developed in order to improve the player pathways and improve the levels of participation within lacrosse in England.

The aim of this study is to investigate the relevance of sports development models in relation to the ELA.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY
Method

The method of research involved collecting qualitative data. In general, the qualitative approach tends to collect a great deal of ‘rich’ information about relatively few people rather than more limited information about a large number of people (Veal, 1997, p.129). The qualitative method of research is based on the individual understanding and knowledge of the particular area of work, in this case the development continuums of the ELA. In order for this investigation to be undertaken semi-structured interviews were conducted. According to Gratton and Jones (2004) this approach uses a standard set of questions, or schedule, however, the researcher can adopt a flexible approach to data collection, and can alter the sequence of questions or probe from more information with subsidiary questions (Gratton and Jones, 2004).

The Advantages of Qualitative Methods

The method used to obtain information included interviews and questionnaires which correspond with the nature of the study which is an in-depth investigation of the current trend of the development continuums of the ELA. An advantage of qualitative research is the ability to make the research personal with participants and create a clearer understanding of the questions undertaken. As the questions being undertaken were question and answer based, it allowed the opinion and perceptions of the interviewees to emerge. The method of research will also give the opportunity to reflect on the past as well as the present, both successful and unsuccessful trends, in terms of the development of lacrosse.
Disadvantages of qualitative methods

The disadvantages of the interview method should be also taken into consideration before conducting the interviews. According to Gratton and Jones (2004), when carrying out the interview it is possible that personal expression may have an impact on the result given. For example, the nodding of the head may encourage the interviewee to answer the question in the way that the interviewer would like the question to be answered. Therefore the results would not record the participant’s own view on that particular topic. There is also a possibility that the interviewee may stray from the question being asked, therefore when interviewing it is vital that the interviewee is guided back to the interview question.

Interview procedure

The first step in this particular study was to gain consent from the interviewees to conduct the interviews. It is important that the interviewees are fully aware of both the reason for conducting the interview and also what the interview is about. A consent form was composed prior to the interview containing information about the reason for conducting the study (see appendix B). This document also highlighted to the interviewee the opportunity to remain anonymous. It is vital that an interview date and time is established that best suits both the interviewee and interviewer.

Participants of the interview

The interviews were carried out with several members of the ELA all of whom work within the development of lacrosse in England. The following potential officers/officials were contacted in order to carry out this study. These included:

- **Head of development and coaching from the ELA**
  
  An ELA funded position, this position consists of 60 to 70 hours of work a week. This is managerial role, work includes the development of jobs
undergoing national committee meeting resolving issues that arise and coaching

- **Two Regional Development Officers (RDO’s)**
  An ELA funded position, hours of work is varies from 20 to 24 hours per week however it is a full time position. Position/role is to develop lacrosse within their area through coaching and establishing links with schools and clubs, ensure that the LDO’s are meeting targets and provide support.

- **Two lacrosse Local Development Officers (LDO)**
  The above participants work for the ELA on a paid full time basis working between 20 and 70 hours a week. The roles are to coach lacrosse and pop lacrosse in schools and to teach the basic lacrosse skills to children in their lessons in a fun and safe environment.

**Interview schedule**

The purpose of the questions within the first section of the interview was to allow the researcher to gain understanding of these officials’ roles and responsibilities within the ELA. The rationale behind section two of the questions was to allow the researcher to gain knowledge of the participants’ understanding of what exactly sport development is. It was also to gain information on the strengths and weaknesses of the ELA infrastructure. The third section allowed the participant to comment on the availability and accessibility of lacrosse within England at a junior age.

The fourth and fifth sections of the interview contained questions regarding the different types of development continuums, the reasoning behind their chosen continuum and what the participants carried out at each stage of the continuum. The fifth section entailed questions regarding elite performance.
Question construction

Before constructing questions it is important to identify the main themes and issues. This will ensure that the most appropriate questions will be asked and therefore fully answer the overall aim of the investigation. The language used when interviewing (Veal, 1997) should avoid jargon and simplify, wherever possible, avoiding leading questions and only ask one question at a time, thus avoiding multi-purpose questions. Patton (2002) states ‘good questions should, at a minimum, be open-ended, neutral, singular, and clear’. A copy of the question asked can be found in the appendix (see appendix C)

To ensure the information received was clear two different methods of probing were used in order to clarify the answer and gain a greater understanding of responses to the question. According to Gratton and Jones:

- Clarification probes allow to clarify any point that was not clear. Or open to misunderstanding by the interviewee, or to clarify your understanding of a point made by the interviewee.
- Elaboration probes. These are used to elicit a more in-depth response about a particular point related to the interview. For example using phrases such as why is that? (Gratton and Jones, 2004)

Pilot study

Prior to the interview it is imperative that a pilot study of the interview is carried out. The pilot study will allow the interviewer to highlight potential flaws within the question being undertaken, therefore creating robust data. According to Thomas and Nelson (2001) more than 75% of these research effects are unpublished and make no contribution to theory or practice because of major methodological flaws that could have been easily corrected with pilot work. The pilot study taken prior to the interview highlights the flaws within the questions being asked, therefore solutions and rewording can take
place in order to achieve a successful interview. The pilot study was undertaken with a Scottish Development Officer for lacrosse.

The interview

Prior to the interview the recording equipment was tested in order to ensure that both the interviewer and the participant’s voices were clear and sufficiently loud to be transcribed at a later date. According to Gratton and Jones (2004) it is important that the interviewer projects professionalism, enthusiasm and confidence to the participants. When under going the interview it is crucial that the interviewer should avoid agreeing or disagreeing with the participant or suggesting an answer (Veal ,1997) as this may have an impact on the answer and reliability of the data being collected.

The questions asked during the interview were tested prior to the interview, in the pilot study. This ensured that the questions asked were clear and extracted the right information for this investigation. The interview was conducted after the participant had read and signed the voluntary consent form. Each question was asked in a predetermined, logical, progressive order. The participant was given time to ask questions before answering the question, allowing the information given to be more specific to the study. The interviewer moved on to the next question only once the participant had finished answering the question. Probes were used within the questioning in order to gain the information relevant to the study.

After the interview

After the interview had taken place the information was transcribed to enable the researcher to highlight key topics. The recorded interviews were copied onto a compact disk (CD), ensuring that no data was lost throughout this investigation. A copy of the voluntary consent form was kept alongside the transcribed interview and the copy of the interview on CD.
Reliability and Validity

Gratton and Jones (2004) maintain that, ‘reliability can be enhanced through a standardised interview schedule, maintaining a consistent interviewing environment, and recording with the interviewees’ permission, which should then be transcribed within as short a time as possible by the researcher.’ To ensure that the interviews conducted followed the guidelines stated by Gratton and Jones (2004) the order of questions and the style of the interviews were consistent throughout the investigation. Due to the participants’ knowledge regarding sports development and lacrosse, different probes were used in order to gain information relevant to this investigation. Interpretation by the researcher of the responses of the participants may not be in line with their intended meanings.

According to Hammersley (cited in Silverman, 2002), ‘by validity, I mean truth: interpreted as the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers’. There are factors that could have affected the results in this investigation. These are knowledge of the question and the level of understanding of the topic. Experts should be aware of some of the more subtle issues and nuances of the concept, and be able to critically assess (Gratton and Jones, 2004). Therefore, to ensure data was not affected by participants’ knowledge of the questions, probes were used to overcome this factor. The personal feelings of the participants may have had an impact on the results. For example, if they are happy with the way in which the ELA operates then they will have a positive approach to the questions asked.
CHAPTER IV
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION
Conclusion

In conclusion, it is evident that the ELA is in great need of establishing a lacrosse continuum in order to highlight the issues and barriers that occur at each stage of the continuum and factors that affect a player’s pathway and progression up the continuum.

From carrying out qualitative research in the form of interviews it is clear that the ELA at present has not established a lacrosse development continuum that is used generically throughout lacrosse in England, which means there is a lack of structure within players’ pathways. It has been made clear from the interviews that both the ELA and its employees are working towards developing lacrosse in England by linking schools to lacrosse clubs in order to increase participation.

Lacrosse is still predominantly perceived as a white middle class sport, predominantly played in areas with no deprivation. There is a need to increase clubs available to all areas in England, especially in areas that are perceived to be areas of high deprivation in order to address this stereotype. This will have a great effect on the participation rates for lacrosse. Funding is also a factor which hinders the development of the sport.

Another key factor that needs to be addressed by the ELA and the coaches is the understanding of the term ‘sports development’. The commonly held view was that sports development meant growth, with no awareness of education and skill being part of sports development. This issue was highlighted in the discussion and is essential if sports development is to be carried out effectively. The coaches also need to understand the different levels of the continuum in order to push their athletes to the next level of the continuum.
Figure 20 is the author's interpretation of an effective lacrosse development continuum as it illustrates both the players’ pathways and also issues that will affect a player’s progression. This figure provides a model that could improve understanding of the players’ pathways for lacrosse in England and therefore be used by the ELA and its employees in order to improve participation rates.

**Recommendation**

A recommendation for a future investigation would be to study the methods of development in Scotland or other European countries and compare these with England.

**Limitations**

The findings of this study were restricted due to the limited amount of time available to the author for conducting the study and the limited number of interviews which could be conducted. However, this study has highlighted the major issues which affect participation and the development of lacrosse in England.
REFERENCES
References

English Lacrosse Association.(2004) Participation Plan, Manchester
English Lacrosse Association (2006) issues and barriers, Manchester
English Lacrosse Association (2005-2006) Whole Sport Plan, Manchester
English Tennis Association. Accessed : 21-02-08
http://www.englandhockey.co.uk/text.asp?section=000100010056
www.educationleeds.co.uk/documents/download.aspx?fid=18877


http://welshnetball.co.uk/Welsh-NetballAssociation/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=51&Itemid=99

APPENDICES
Appendix A
Key Targets

- Double the number of participants involved in the ELA’s Development Programme to 65,000 in 700 schools (from 32,500 in 360 schools in 2003).
- Increase the overall number of school based participants from 100,000 to 200,000.
- Increase the registered club based membership of the ELA from 8,800 to 17,500.
- Increase the number of active volunteers working as coaches, officials and administrators in clubs by 1000.
- Complete the collection of comprehensive baseline data on age, gender, ethnicity and disability. By 2005 produce robust equity targets and achieve the Preliminary Standard for equity by 2006.

Objectives

To increase opportunities for all to participate in lacrosse, particularly young people and women.
- To address inequality at all levels of the game.
- To expand the ELA Development Programme to assist in increasing the opportunities to participate in lacrosse.
- To increase the quality, quantity and diversity of the workforce available to assist in the game of lacrosse.
- To raise the standards of lacrosse clubs by promoting the ELA Club Accreditation programme.
- To produce and implement a Long Term Athlete Development Plan for the game of lacrosse.
- To increase the number of members of the ELA.
- To produce marketing and promotion materials to assist and support an increase in opportunities to participate in lacrosse.
- To achieve success by winning medals in the two future women’s world championships in 2005 and 2009 and maintain the men’s World ranking.
- To work in partnership with other organisations to achieve our objectives.
• To monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Whole Sport Plan including its quality and value for money.
Dear Subject

I am a Level 3 undergraduate student in the School of Sport, PE, & Recreation, at the University of Wales Institute Cardiff. I am doing a dissertation on An investigation into the relevance of sports development models in relation to the English Lacrosse association and wonder if you would be kind enough to help with my research.

The research aims to discover the sport development pathways used in order to develop lacrosse throughout England. As a subject, you will be asked a series of questions regarding the different methods used to promote lacrosse in England.

The research might prove beneficial since increases participation of lacrosse though England is of great importance. There are no risks involved in participation.

Participation is entirely voluntary. You are free to withdraw at any stage of the research process.

The information from the interview will be kept strictly confidential in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act (1998). Only the principle investigator and supervisors will have access to the information for the interview. Your name or any such identifiable data will not appear in any academic papers resulting from the research.

If you are willing to participate, then please sign. If you have any queries, do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Clair Jane Huish
APPENDIX C
**Question**

The following questions were asked in order to gain an in depth and clear understanding of the development pathways of the ELA.

**ELA**

1. Could you explain to me your current position/interest in lacrosse development?
   a. Paid position
   b. Voluntary
   c. Different roles
   d. How many hours do you work a week?
   e. Background

2. How would you best describe the ELA and its activities?
   a. National, regional and locally
   b. Men’s, women’s, children’s
   c. Elite participation
   d. Its strengths and weaknesses in terms of communication and planning?

3. The Sports council has highlighted the need to develop sporting opportunities for children and young people. In what ways can the ELA address this?

4. What resources are put into place in order to push and progress athletes to county or country standard?
**Sport Development**

5. Can you tell me what sport development means to you?
   a. General explanation
   b. In relevance to the ELA

6. There are many different forms of the sport development continuum. Could you look at the following diagrams and identify which best fits the ELA?
   a. Pyramid continuum
   b. House of Sport continuum
   c. Performance decisions continuum
   What are the reasons for your choice?

7. What happened at each stage of the continuum in regard to the ELA?

8. Could you identify the key skills needed for an effective sport development officer?
   a. Coaching
   b. Technical
   c. Safety/ people skills
   d. Participation and performance