

**Training Young People to be the
Footballers of Tomorrow:
*Challenges and Possibilities***

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DECLARATION FORM



Name of the Programme of Study: BA HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

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DECLARATION

I certify that the whole of this work is the result of my individual effort, and that all sources have been acknowledged.

Signed D. L. Thomas (Student)

Date 1st May 2020

DECLARATION

I am satisfied that this work is the result of the Student's effort.

Signed *Phillip Morgan* (Lecturer)

Date 1st May 2020

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ABSTRACT

A career as a professional footballer has long been considered the ultimate career goal through the lens of many young, talented, and inspiring footballers, not only within the United Kingdom, but globally. As a result, children have been given the opportunity to pursue their dreams through Football Academy systems. However, increasing concern has come to be placed on the way in which young players are identified and developed within professional clubs within the UK. With particular concern being raised over the limited number of players who, having made sacrifices in their young, personal lives in order to develop their careers within the clubs, fail to secure a professional contract. Unfortunately all too often their aspirations are unfulfilled and upon their release from their clubs there appears to be a lack of concern for their welfare, with clubs offering little or no emotional support, leaving these youngsters with a gaping hole in their future which was once filled with hopes and dreams.

ACRONYM

EFL - English Football League

EPPP - Elite Player Performance Plan

CoE – Centre of Excellence

FA - Football Association

PL – Premier League

UNCRC - United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

UK - United Kingdom

WHO - World Health Organisation

WSL - Women's Super League

YDP – Youth Development Phase

PDP- Professional Development Phase

1. INTRODUCTION

Whilst this dissertation will focus on football, the literature may also apply to various other sporting activities including but not limited to water sports such as rowing, indoor sports such as basketball and other outdoor sports such as rugby, all of which entail working as part of a team. The long term psychological effects that team players may experience during and after their time as sporting professionals cannot be underestimated, particularly in the world of professional football where an injury or being unable to meet the required standards may curtail the footballer's future career indefinitely.

In the absence of evidence of studies that have attempted to research the outcomes of mental health and wellbeing of players having been part of and completed a journey through the Football Academy system, this dissertation will attempt to critically examine by way of reviewing literature the responsibilities and potential welfare concerns that may be raised in the world of professional football. It will particularly focus on the introduction of the 'Charter for Quality' (Wilkinson, 1997) and the Elite Players Performance Plan (EPPP) (Premier League, 2019) into the world of English football. It will further critically analyse how the Football Association (Wilkinson, 1997) have incorporated these policies into their Charter. Furthermore, it will probe various policies and legislations introduced by Government such as the (Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, Department of Health and Social Care, Deputy Prime Minister's Office and The Rt Hon. Nick Clegg (2015)). It will also analyse the *United Nations Convention on the rights of the Child*, (United Nations, 1989) to which the United Kingdom has ratified (Department for Education, 2010) and whether such Academies contravene this Convention.

Magowan (2015) reports that there are approximately 12,500 youths attending an Academy at any one time. He further claims that by the age of sixteen, only two percent manage to secure a scholarship, progressing to the 'top five tiers of domestic game by the age of eighteen' resulting in a success rate of 0.012 percent who become Premier League Professionals. Whilst there is no doubt that these Academies are a source to spur children on, regardless of background, the small percentage of those who become professional players in the long-term implies that some sort of support should be available for children who are not able to achieve such status.

Notwithstanding these figures it is perhaps not surprising that not all players are able to achieve the required level to continue a career as a professional footballer (EFL, 2018). What these children will experience is a failure (Piaget, 1954) which can have a considerable impact on the young person's perception of themselves and their self-worth (Maslow, 1954; Jenkins, 2004; Erikson, 1971). This dissertation will therefore seek to examine the strengths and weaknesses of Academies in youth development football. With reference to existing literature it will investigate if and how those young players, chasing their dreams can do so in a healthy, positive way as opposed to one that appears to have little or no regard for their well-being, potentially shattering dreams of becoming the next football superstar and perceiving their life as over due to a failure to be chosen at Academy level.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This literature review will seek to investigate some of the topics surrounding the journey to success and failures of the national game of football, leading very few from pitch to podium during their time at football Academies. And for the many that fail to rise to the required level, leaving them with little to show for their hard work and dedication having gone through the system, given up their personal lives in order to maximise their chances of becoming a professional footballer.

Firstly, it will critically examine the reshaping of youth elite development at professional football clubs through the creation of the document ‘Charter for Quality’ produced by former technical director Howard Wilkinson (1997). Furthermore, it will seek to investigate the failings of the FA to create more ‘home grown’ players following the lack of success in the National teams during the World Cups of 1974 and 1978 along with further failures at the World cups and European championships of 1990 and 1996, (Green, 2009).

Secondly, it will investigate the effect of mental health and self-worth (Erikson, 1971: Jenkins, 2004) of players during their time spent at the Academies and following their release. Furthermore, it will address the Rights of the Child in Sport under *the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (United Nations, 1989) and investigate whether the Football Association (Wilkinson, 1997) along with the EPPP (Premier League, 2019) have incorporated the articles as set out by the convention (United Nations 1989) into their directives.

2.2 Growing their Own: Making Changes

Arguably Football is the most spectated sport in the United Kingdom (UK), being played and watched by millions of people world-wide (Dvorak, Junge, Graf-Baumann and Peterson, 2004). According to Forbes (2019) it is one of the highest paid individual sports, listing the top three sports earners on the Forbes list of ‘World’s highest paid athletes.’ Against this backdrop, it could be considered that a career as a professional footballer is a highly sought-after career for many, being paid for what some may consider a hobby (Platts, 2012). As a result of this emotional need (Maslow, 1954) to be part of this competitive sport at a professional level, along with the fact that the National team failed to reach the World Cups of 1974 and 1978, and their failures at the World cups and European Championships of 1990 and 1996 (Green, 2009), football Academies for children and youth were introduced into

domestic English Football in 1998 (Wilkinson, 1997). The Academies were formed with the intention of producing more ‘homegrown’ players to represent their country (EFL, 2018) with a view of placing ‘strict regulations and quality assurance procedures’ which would contribute to improving the experience of young potential footballers at professional clubs (Brackenridge, Pitchford, Russell and Nutt, 2007).

Attempting to perpetuate the idea that a career in football is a potential lucrative career, the Football Association (FA) produced a ‘Charter for Quality’ document written by former technical director Howard Wilkinson (1997). The Charter was written with a view to develop a structure that would ultimately produce more English and therefore National team players to choose from to compete in the major international tournaments (Nesti and Sulley, 2015). This was to be done by recruiting aspiring, talented young footballers, to develop their skills in line with each club’s ethos in producing highly skilled ‘home grown’ players (English Football League, 2018) with promotion of the concept of an ‘elitist academy system’ (Calvin, 2018). However, growing concern has been placed on the methods in which players are being identified and developed within professional clubs and how the system allows boys to be treated (Green, 2009).

Accomplished sports writer and author of ‘No Hunger in Paradise’ Calvin, (2018) explores the world of youth football in great depth and if what he writes so passionately about highlights one thing, it would be the need for some serious debate around how the English game treats the thousands of children along with their family members who are often drawn into the fantasy world of professional football with the hope of becoming the next best football star of the future in the world of football fame.

It is clear that the introduction of the Charter (Wilkinson, 1997) delivered significant shifts for Academies. Arguably, one of the most significant changes being the age in which boys could be recruited lowering to the age of nine instead of fourteen. However, whilst rulings permitted clubs to recruit children into Academies from the age of nine, not all clubs continued to adhere to the system set up by the EPPP (Premier League, 2019). In 2017, following their promotion from Championship to Premier League, Huddersfield Town took the decision to restructure their Academy system (Huddersfield Town, n.d) by firstly re-banding their age categories in an attempt to combat the relative age effect, with age groups amended to fit in with the European model using the calendar year as opposed to the academic year. Secondly, again mirroring the European model they placed the U19 and U17's to run alongside the Elite Development Team, with focus on their elite football squads at Under 18's and Under 23's level, 'creating a clear pathway to the first team' for players with the ability to progress (Huddersfield Town, n.d). As a result, they abolished the Under 8's to Under 16's at the Academy (Threlfall-Sykes, 2017) and by doing so lowered their category status from category 2 to category 4.

Subsequent rulings allowed clubs to operate development centres alongside the Academies, giving them the freedom to, what Green, (2009 p.8) describes as, 'groom' players as young as four years old in preparation for joining Academies at a later stage at the age of nine (F.A,1997).

Consequential amendments to the rulings allowed clubs to increase training times substantially from one hour a week to twelve hours per week for Under 12 to Under 16's and fourteen hours for under 17's to under 21's respectively (EFL, 2018: F.A, 1997). This was viewed as a substantial increase for category 1 Academies who the EFL, (2018) consider to be a prestigious, 'elite environment, where players are provided with additional access to coaching and the potential of full-time education from U12's.'

It is evident that participation in sport offers many benefits to children and adults alike, including physical fitness, increased self-confidence and self-esteem (Allender, Cowburn and Foster, 2006). This along with the Government initiatives put in place to drive policies in promoting good health, (Public Health England, 2019) supported by the fact that sport is now being prescribed for its mental health and social benefits (NHS, 2018), illustrates the many benefits of playing sport. However, it could be argued that the additional hours of training can lead to over-training, potentially leading to an increased risk of injury (Malina and Bouchard, 1991: Committee on Sports Medicine and Fitness, 2000). The National Health Service (NHS) (2019) physical activity guide recommends that children and young people aged between five and eighteen should be engaging in moderate physical activity for a minimum of one hour per day in order to strengthen their bones and muscles. Faigenbaum (2018) argues that children who ‘specialize in just one sport’ and over-train are at greater risk of injury, illness, and burnout, potentially impacting on the child’s ability and desire to continue participating in the sport. Further stress is placed on the fact that ‘over-training or sudden increase in frequency, intensity or volume’ of training for children can potentially cause ‘serious consequences later in life’ due to the ‘presence of growth cartilage at the growth plates, cartilage lining joint surfaces at the point at which major tendons attach to the bones’ (Faigenbaum, 2018: Malina and Bouchard, 1991).

In addition to the intense training at an Academy, depending on their age players may be required to take part in the hybrid programme (EFL, 2018). As part of their weekly timetable, players are released from their school and in place attend their Academy to undertake increased training sessions along with educational support as set out in section 192.2 of the Youth Development Charter (YDP) which states that;

‘Each Club which operates an Academy shall, in respect of each of its Academy Players being trained under the Hybrid Training Model [...] provide to the Academy Player such

additional educational support (to be detailed in the written agreement referred to in Rule 192.5) as shall be necessary to compensate for teaching he has missed, and to ensure that his education is not adversely affected, as a result of being released from school to undertake coaching during the Core Coaching Team' (EFL, 2018).

However, despite their claims that their 'education programme will help players to achieve a productive and fulfilling career, both on and off the field', (EFL, 2018) it could be argued that their time spent away from school has a negative impact on their chances of gaining good academic results at school. Whilst there is no evidence to support the outcome of Academy players academic achievements, a press release published by the Government (Department for Education and The Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP, 2016) entitled 'Just one day off can hamper children's life chances' claims that 'missing school for just a few days a year can damage pupils' chances of gaining good GCSE's,' potentially leading to damaging effect on their life chances.

As a result of their time spent at training Academies, players are left with little room to participate in any other sport or spend time with their peers and therefore miss out on time with their friends and family (Strudwick, 2016) and for many resulting in harsh rejection at a tender age at vital stages of development in their lives (Brackenridge, Pitchford, Russell and Nutt, 2007). Green (2009) argues that 'the document brought with it great responsibilities and a wide range of potential welfare concerns.' Moreover, he states that 'the publication of that document and what it has led to may yet prove to be one of English football's seismic moments.' This statement is reinforced by Kelly and Waddington, (2006) who suggest that such Academies could significantly compromise the welfare of players by the 'aggressive, tough, masculine, and at times violent, subculture that tends to surround the game.' Conn, (2009) sports reporter for *The Guardian* would also agree with this statement and suggest that not only do the Academies compromise the players welfare but take away youth club football. In his report entitled 'Clubs leave lost youth behind as Academies fail English talent' Conn (2009) claimed that such Academies 'overhauled youth development' by removing youth players

from schools and ‘youth club football’ therefore empowering professional clubs with control over the players.

2.3 Young People at Risk: Snakes and Ladders

According to Magowan (2015) there are around 12,500 children and youths attending an Academy environment or Centre of Excellence at any one time. Whilst for very few the harsh demands, blood, sweat and tears pay dividends (Calvin, 2018) the reality is that, of this large number of youngsters attending such Academies and CoE’s, unsurprisingly, not all players are able to achieve the required level to continue in a career as a professional footballer (EFL, 2018). This has resulted in increasing consideration being placed on the number of players having gone through Academy systems at professional clubs that have failed to gain a professional contract (Green, 2009). Whilst parents and players alike are led to believe that joining an Academy set up is a wonderful opportunity (EFL, 2018) the reality is that ‘less than one and a half percent of players who enter the Academy structure at the age of nine will make a first-team appearance’ for their club, or in fact any other club (Calvin, 2018. pp.13 -14; Green, 2009) and very few will succeed in gaining a professional contract (EFL, 2018).

With competition being so fierce, it could be argued that the further players progress through the system, the higher the odds are stacked against them in progressing to a higher level (Armour, Jones and Potrac, 2004). Over three quarters of thirteen to sixteen year olds no longer meet the clubs’ requirements, (Brown and Potrac, 2009) and are therefore unduly released from the Academy structure with their age dictating whether they return to play at local grassroots football, are released into a central pool where other clubs may offer them trials (National careers service, n.d: EFL, 2018) or for some, never play the sport again (Green, 2009). As a result of having gone through the system, for many having given up their personal lives in order to maximise their chances of becoming a

professional footballer, this may have somewhat of a considerable impact on a young person's perceptions on themselves and their self-worth (Maslow, 1954: Jenkins, 2004: Erikson, 1971).

Magowan, (2015) and Calvin's (2018. pp. 13-14) 'No Hunger in Paradise' claims that of the sixteen year olds who do manage to secure a scholarship, only two per cent of players make it to the 'top five tiers of the domestic game by the age of eighteen' resulting in a success rate of 0.012 per cent becoming Premier League professionals.

Despite the efforts made by Howard Wilkinson (1997) to address and improve youth football, his work has been heavily criticised. Sir Trevor Brooking who was appointed as the new director of the FA in 2007 argued that 'as a governing body the FA did not have sufficient control over the day-to-day operations of football Academies or CoE's' (Champ, 2018). Whitehouse (2013) supports this criticism and suggested that;

Too many of these new Academies (or Centre of Excellences) were created which diluted the talent and were for the most part left unmonitored. Therefore, the elite standards which were required were the most part missing throughout many of England's clubs (Whitehouse, 2013).

As a result, the ambitious standards that the FA set out to achieve were not met and the English Premier League became overshadowed by overseas players, signifying the country's failure to produce 'home grown,' top-level talent (Champ, 2018).

This is evident with clubs such as Manchester City fielding a high rate of international players (Armstrong, 2018: Besson, Raffaele and Ravenel, 2018). Reports by Armstrong, 2018 for Statista reveal that, seventeen out of twenty two (seventy seven per cent) professional footballers that play at Manchester City are international players, followed closely by Chelsea at seventy six per cent and Arsenal at sixty per cent. From these figures, it could be argued that such Academy systems are failing

potential future stars (Conn, 2017b). This is clear from the comments made by Howard Wilkinson (1997) creator of the Charter for Quality himself, who accuses the top clubs of ‘failing in their moral responsibility to give young players opportunities [...] and that very high release rate causes mental health difficulties to some, which can endure for years’ (Conn, 2017b). Sir Trevor Brooking, director of the FA, shared the same view and suggested that ‘English Football has been hugely negligent in the way it develops young talent’ (Slater, 2007).

This may arguably have been as a result of the Bosman ruling of 1995 which allowed players over the age of twenty three and out of contract to transfer to another club without their existing club having to pay transfer fees at the end of their existing contract (Brand, 2015). However, to maintain the games integrity, two rules were imposed resulting in how the clubs view their youth development programmes (Nest and Sulley, 2015). The first being that at the start of each season, all twenty Premier League clubs must produce a list of twenty five players in the squad, to include at least eight ‘home grown players’ but may have unlimited under 21’s. A home grown player is defined by the Premier League (2018) as someone who:

Irrespective of his nationality or age has been registered with any club affiliated to the Football Association or the Football Association of Wales for a period, continuous or not, of three entire seasons or 36 months prior to his 21st birthday or the end of the season during which he turns 21 (Premier League, 2018).

This would arguably defeat the objective set out by the Premier League (2018) and what the Charter (Wilkinson, 1997) set out to achieve in creating home grown players. Whilst the clubs must include eight home grown players in their squad, arguably, if three of those players were to register with the FA or the FAW on or after their eighteenth birthday and providing they played for three entire seasons prior to their twenty first birthday, they would be classed as ‘homegrown players, resulting in only one fifth of players representing home grown players. This would highlight the fact that clubs are

therefore failing in providing opportunities for the players having gone through the system from a young age.

It could be considered that the significant decline in players through the stages, may perhaps be contributed to the disparities in junior sport, one of which is referred to as ‘relative age effect.’ (Salinero, Pérez, Burillo and Lesma, 2013). Lovell, Towlson, Parkin, Portas, Vaeyens and Cobley (2015) suggest that ‘players born in the later part of the season are at a considerable disadvantage compared to those born in the earlier part of the season.’ In the United Kingdom, age groups for academia and sport are categorised by the month in which a person is born. The later dates in the UK fall between January 1st and August 31st and for the earlier part, between September 1st and December 31st (Muschin and Grondin, 2001). BBC Sport (2012) reported that in the 2009 season, players aged between sixteen and twenty at professional English youth Academies were ‘grossly over-represented’ by players born between September to December at fifty seven percent, in comparison players born between June and August represented only fourteen percent. Malina (2011) *cited in* Viswanath, Unnithan and Iga *in* Strudwick (2016 p. 57) would reinforce this statement and suggest that in biological terms, ‘from 13-15 years of age, more early maturing and fewer late-maturing boys tend to predominate in any group of young soccer player’s.’

This could also be considered relative for various other sports. A study carried out by Barnsley, Thompson and Barnsley (1985) revealed similar results for Canadian Hockey players. The study revealed that the rates of those that represented major hockey Leagues were born in the earlier part of their academic year, between January and March, (the oldest being born in January) illustrating once again that players born within the first trimester are most likely to be at the ‘top of their game.’

Viswanath, Unnithan and Iga, (2016) in Strudwick (2016) acknowledge the fact that not all players reach biological maturation at the same point in their lives, and whilst some may be biologically

advanced in relation to their chronological age, others may be delayed. Despite previous failings in English football, an attempt to display fair play and to offer players equal opportunities to demonstrate their ability and potential, a system known as ‘bio banding’ was implemented into English football (Khamis and Roche, 1994; Lansley, 2016). The system allows players at the same stage chronically but at varying levels of biological development to be grouped according to their biological development and not their chronological age (Lansley, 2016). However, James Bruce *cited in* Lansley (2016) argues that grouping players by height and weight only creates a fake environment, and inevitably there will always be taller and shorter players in all age groups.

2.4 Football: A Political Perspective

Football has received much political attention in recent years, with public policy being driven by the Government who seek to achieve a wide range of social outcomes in respect of improved community cohesion, youth development, enhanced social inclusion and the much-debated topic of well-being (Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport and Tracey Crouch MP, 2015). The introduction of a new Government funding strategy introduced in 2015 aimed to strengthen sports from grassroots to elite levels. As a result, the investment in sport was not only available to children aged fourteen and over, but became available for children age five years and above, allowing clubs to take advantage and spot talent from a young age, with the hope of snapping up some talent before any other clubs (Calvin, 2018).

It can be contended that the rights of children and young people have taken centre stage in the agenda for politics in the United Kingdom in recent years, underpinned by various international statutes and directives (United Nations, 1989; Welsh Government, 2015). For the first time in British history, young people under eighteen years of age were given a full set of human rights set out by the *United*

Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified in the United Kingdom in 1991 (United Nations, 1989). This inevitably signified a crucial shift in child welfare and could be contended that such legislation has undoubtably forced organisations and institutes to accept responsibility for child welfare.

However, despite the Government's intention to protect the rights of children through various legislations (United Nations, 1989) there seems to be a disconnect between what the Government are trying to achieve and what the Charter (Wilkinson, 1997) sets out for its players. David (2001) *cited in* Brackenridge, Pitchford, Russell and Nutt, (2007 p.31) argues that 'the promotion and protection of children's right in sports has been a contentious blind spot for various organisations for far too long.' He further argues that the mental and physical integrity of children under such demands set out by the charter (Wilkinson, 1997) potentially violates various articles of the convention (United Nations, 1989) and challenges the fact that various articles of the convention are flouted within football Academies. Firstly, he considers that intense training at a young age violates article 19 of the convention (United Nations, 1989) which states that 'children should be protected from child abuse, neglect and bad treatment from their parents or anyone else who looks after them.'

Secondly, he considers drug abuse which some youth, adolescent players may consider performance enhancers necessary, not only to enhance their performance but also in aiding towards their appearance when being exposed to the media (La Botz and Griesemer, 2016). This would therefore violate article 33 which states that 'Children should be protected from using, producing or distributing illegal drugs.'

Thirdly, he considers that the buying and selling of players and compensation of transfer of players violates article 32 of the convention which states that 'Children must be Protected from economic

exploitation’ and article 35 ‘Protection from sale and trafficking.’ Lastly, he considers article 28 of the convention which states that children have the ‘right to an education.’ Although Academies provide a hybrid system, which provides an education programme for the players, it could be argued that the time children spend at Academies and away from school does not grant them the education they would receive if they were attending school on a full time basis and can therefore hamper their life chances. This would support the claim made by the Government (Department for Education and The Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP, 2016) who claims that ‘missing school for just a few days a year can damage pupils’ chances of gaining good GCSE’ results.

It could be further argued that article 3 ‘Best interest of the child’ stands alone in outlining the care of duty to children in stating that ‘The best interest of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect the child.’ However, the convention fails to recognise sport as a ‘right to play’ and subsequently lists ‘play’ as ‘taking part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities’ under article 31 of the convention (United Nations, 1989).

The five key points outlined in the document; *Every Child Matters* (2003) could also be taken into consideration and argued that such clubs have little or no regard for their players in this respect.

- Being Healthy
- Staying Safe
- Enjoying and Achieving
- Making a Positive Contribution
- Economic Wellbeing

2.5 Mental Health in a Career of a Professional Footballer

The term ‘Mental Health’ has become a familiar household phrase, with many Organisations and institutions creating and developing new ways of measuring and assessing people’s Mental Health and Well-being (Manclossi and Randall, 2018). The term has received many and varied definitions (Mental Health Foundation, 2020). The World Health Organization (WHO) (2014) offers a definition of the term as

A state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community (World Health Organization, 2014).

However, it could be argued that such a perspective of mental health, influenced by hedonic and eudemonic traditions that idealise such positive emotions and perfection in functioning, potentially risks the exclusion of children and youths in an Academy environment (Galderisi, Heinz, Kastrup, Beezhold and Sartorius, 2015). It could be considered that such interpretation could potentially lead to the wrong conclusion being drawn and that an individual of a certain age or with a physical condition prevents them from ‘working productively’ and is therefore by definition not in ‘good mental health.’

Despite achieving sporting success, for many, the pressure is considered to be causing psychological distress (Donachie, 2020). To demonstrate this point, a report carried out by Gouttebargue (2014) in Fifpro (2016) reveals that ‘over one quarter of professional footballers suffer from anxiety and depression at some point in their career.’ The figures are somewhat surprising, as the perception of the fans is that they are sporting heroes and psychologically superior to the everyday person on the street (Donachie, 2020).

Inevitably, very few players achieve their desire of becoming a professional footballer (EFL, 2018). Whilst some players accept their involuntary termination from their clubs, many other players are left with little control over their future in sport (Blakeman, Chen and Prescott, 2016). Research has found that involuntary termination as opposed to voluntary termination has led to psychological distress for many athletes (Mannes, Waxenberg, Cottler, Perlstein *et al*, 2018). In a study undertaken for his research towards a Doctorate in Clinical Psychology on released players, ex-professional footballer David Blakeman's research revealed that of the players released, thirty six percent displayed clinical levels of distress following their release. However, further research revealed that after twenty one days, the figures increased to fifty five percent (Blakeman, Chen and Prescott, 2016) highlighting the fact that young players are finding it increasingly difficult to cope and for many their sense of identity (Piaget, 1954; Jenkins, 2004) and self-worth (Maslow, 1954) becoming fragmented when their time at the Academies come to an end.

Fifpro (2016) would support Blakeman, Chen and Prescott's (2016) findings and suggests that 'One of the most challenging periods in the life of a professional player coincides with the moment he or she stops playing football.' According to Carmody, Jones, Malhotra, Gouttebarger and Ahmad (2019, p.788) 'retired professional footballers are at a significantly increased risk of several health problems' one of which being a hot topic of discussion in society today: 'mental health.' They propose that 'mental health is highly prominent amongst ex-professional footballers', claiming that thirty-nine per cent of ex-professionals report of symptoms relating to depression and anxiety with a trend occurring soon after retirement from the sport. It could be considered that this may be due to the players facing the loss of social support they once received from their teammates, coaches, and advisors, inevitably resulting in losing their sense of belonging (Maslow, 1954) and identity (Jenkins, 2004; Erikson, 1971) and therefore causing strain leading to depression (Weigand, Cohen and Merenstein, 2013). Ex professional player Carlisle (2013) reporter for BBC Sport suggests that when a player retires,

sustains an injury, transfers club or is unsettled from the upheaval of separation from family and friends, the chances of suffering from clinical depression is increased by forty percent.

It is evident that the demands of an elite athlete are intense, with influences such as physical activity, performance, travelling, environmental and personal issues being contributing factors to poor mental health (Stillman, Glick, McDuff, Reardon, Hitchcock, Fitch, and Hainline, 2019). A research article carried out by Gouttebauge, *et al* (2014) in Stillman *et al* (2019) outlines a correlation between self-reported symptoms of sleep disorder, alcohol misuse and anxiety linked with musculoskeletal injuries and surgeries during an athlete's career amongst male European professional footballers. This would indeed highlight the necessity of psychological support within professional clubs.

Although psychologists have been working in the professional sport for over twenty years, (Champ, 2017) according to Nesti (2010) they have not always been well received within the elite level. Speaking from his own experience as a sport psychologist, Nesti (2010) suggests that sports psychologists are often viewed as weak and feminine. It could be considered that this still remains the case. Despite the Elite Players Performance Plan (EPPP) (Premier League, 2019) asserting that category 1 and 2 clubs should provide psychological support and employ support staff within their clubs, it could be argued that such demands are not being met. Lovett, (2019) reporter for the Independent newspaper reports on a survey undertaken by Brunel University London in association with the Premier Football Association (PFA). Their findings revealed that of the seventy-five clubs surveyed across the Premier League, English Football League and Women's Super League, most only offered limited access to psychologists and alternatively, although unqualified to do so, relied on physiotherapists to provide psychological support for injured players. Champ (2017) would argue that apart from Nesti (2010) few practitioners have reported on what their role as a psychologist entails within the Academy environment. Nesti and Sulley (2015, p6) believe that 'sport psychology

in youth development is one of the least understood and most poorly applied aspects of practice in professional football in general' especially in young players. They further express that 'it continues to be the most under-used part of sport science support in football.'

Despite the Mental Health Charter for Sports and Recreation (Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, Department of Health and Social Care, Deputy Prime Minister's Office and The Rt Hon Nick Clegg, 2015) suggestion that 'exercise is proven to be as effective as antidepressants for those with mild clinical depression' and Curtis, Rosenbaum, Sherrington, Tiedemann and Ward's (2014 p.e150) conclusion of their systematic review and meta-analysis for people with mental illness that 'Physical activity was effective in reducing depressive symptoms amongst people with a mental illness' along with the fact that the NHS (2018) now prescribe exercise as a 'treatment' for depression, it could be considered as to whether failings within a sports environment can in fact be the cause or at least contributing factor of increased pressure, rather than being of beneficial gain to some participants in some cases of mental health (Fsem, n.d). Bobby Barnes, President of Fifpro Europe and Deputy Chief of the FA would support this accusation, In an interview with Rumsby and Percy, (2017) he quoted;

I've always had a theory that footballers aren't so much driven by the attempt for success but psychological studies have shown that a lot of motivation for footballers is actually a fear of failure. Sometimes, success is a relief more than a source of joy. (Rumsby and Percy, 2017).

Mind (nd) have identified what they consider 'three main particular mental health pressure points' in the career of a professional sports person which 'coincide with key transitions in their professional career.' The first being the 'pressure of being released from their position,' whether due to bad performances, injury, or funding. Talk Sport, (2018) highlight the various reasons for potential releases, placing consideration on the players height, pace and physique being common factors in the

release of players. Secondly, retirement from the sport, BBC Sport (2018) suggest that the average retirement age for sportsmen and women is around thirty years of age, they further suggest that more than half of retired sports people have reported concerns over mental and emotional wellbeing either during or after participation. The final 'pressure point' Mind have identified is 'struggling in silence.' An article produced by Mind, (nd) reveals that the 'stigma' sports persons feel are still attached to seeking support. Despite efforts being made by political and legal debate to raise awareness of the causation and treatment of mental health issues, the stigma remains both socially and that within the sports culture (Bauman, 2016).

2.6 Not Meeting the Mark

For the one percent that are lucky enough to progress through the stages, their experience at the Academies along with the potential of a lucrative career in football is undoubtedly an amazing experience (Roderick, 2006). However, increasing consideration has been placed on the number of players having been talent spotted, signed and having gone through Academy systems at professional clubs that have failed to gain a professional contract (EFL, 2018). It can be considered that during their time at Academies, players develop a high athletic identity (Sabato, Walsh and Caine, 2017), however, following their release, many players are subject to losing this primary source of identity, (Piaget, 1954) with the clubs having little to no regard for their well-being, identity (Erikson, 1971) and self-worth (Jenkins, 2004). Despite the EFL's (2018 p.7) claims that they 'put well-being and personal development at the heart of everything they do,' various sports journalist and authors would argue that such Academies are failing youth players (Conn, 2017a; Green, 2009; Coleman, 2020).

An article entitled '*Football's biggest issue: the struggle facing boys rejected by academies*' written by Conn (2017a) reports on the issues that many youth players face on being released from Academies. The coverage of his article, a 16-year-old who upon release from a Premier League

football club suffered with poor mental health and subsequently committed suicide highlights this struggle. A further article written by Coleman (2020) for *Wales Online* also focuses on the struggles faced by youth players. His interview with Welsh ex professional Rhodri Jones highlights the result of having long term injuries. He discusses his ongoing injury problems during his time at the well renowned football club Manchester United's Academy who he signed for at the age of fourteen in the hopes of following in the footsteps of superstars of their time, David Beckham and Ryan Giggs. His time inevitably ended due to his inability to play and therefore became a financial burden on the club as opposed to a financial asset. He also speaks about his inability to cope with living away from home, injury, pressure and identity. His statement that 'there aren't many jobs where you become surplus to requirements so easily' illustrates the fact that once the club no longer has any financial interest in the players, they are thrown onto the scrap heap with little to no regard for their well-being following their release.

Conn (2017a) labels these clubs as 'Relentlessly ambitious and commercialised professional clubs' with 'focus on who might have a faint chance of making a career in professional football and becoming a valuable financial asset.' This raises the question as to whether the wellbeing of envisaged 'home grown' player is being taken into consideration, whether it be during their time at the Academies or thereafter. Many professionals will admit that the support available to players following their release from their academy set ups is poor with many youngsters being discharged with little or no support following their release (Calvin, 2018). Nesti and Sulley (2015 p.22) suggest that the problem is not with the players, but with the system, he cites that 'if the Science, coaching, talent identification or welfare support does not improve the football, the solution is to change these support systems, not football.' Having researched Academy environments, Green (2009, p10) author of 'Every Boys Dream' claims that:

Despite the time, effort, and huge investment that has gone into England's youth development schemes, one thing the clubs, their leagues, and the FA have not been very good at is finding out what the people who have been through the system felt about it. (Green, 2009 p.10).

2.7 Conclusion

With the world of football being recognised as a global, lucrative attraction, sporting some of the highest paid individual sporting professionals, (Forbes, 2019) it is hardly surprising that many youngsters hope to follow in the footsteps of their idols. Also, again unsurprisingly, the fact that the FA and EPPP have endeavoured to seek the best players for their home and International teams through the introduction of their 'Quality of Charter' created by Wilkinson, (1997) speaks volumes about just how large and competitive the sport has developed into. However, changes introduced by the introduction of the 'Quality of Charter' (Wilkinson, 1997) have raised many concerns over the number of children and youths entering the Academies and failing to gain a professional contract. Notwithstanding this, for some, having gained athletic identity (Sabato, Walsh and Caine, 2017) and being released, for some after many years, there appears to be little evidence which suggests any follow on care for players following their release. This has raised concerns over their self-worth and well-being (Maslow, 1954: Jenkins, 2004 and Erikson, 1971) with a large numbers of Academy and non-Academy youths in the UK reporting poorer wellbeing and life satisfaction (Department for Education, 2019).

Drawing from the above, it can be determined that key themes have emerged. First and foremost, the number of children and youths having gone through the Academy system that have failed to achieve a professional contract, with little to show for their time and effort at the Academy. For many experiencing little to no support following their release, often resulted in fragmentation of their sense of self identity and self -worth, (Maslow, 1954: Jenkins, 2004 and Erikson, 1971).

The growth of English football has unescapably attracted global attraction to the sport, leading to many children and youths having the emotional desire to be part of this competitive sport at a professional level (Roderick, 2006). Despite the Charter's (Wilkinson, 1997) claim of being created with the intention of laying clear foundations for Academies and Centre of Excellence's (CoE) in preventing the game of football becoming monopolized, (Player Scout, 2019c) along with the need and desire to produce 'better, homegrown players,' it could be argued that the game has become no less than a global monopoly (Jennings *in* Green, 2009. P.8) which has seen increasing numbers of International players in the Premier League (Premier League, 2018). These topics will be discussed further in the next section.

3. Results and Discussions

3.1.Introduction

Issues related to the above will now be considered. Whilst it is evident that taking part in sport offers many benefits both physically and mentally (Rush, 2018: NHS, 2018a) it could also be considered as to whether the pressure players are placed under at football Academies also has the adverse effect on their well-being (Donachie, 2020). This section will take into consideration the large number of players that fail to gain a professional contract, and the little support offered to them following their release, resulting in many players questioning their self-worth (Maslow, 1954: Jenkins, 2004: Erikson, 1971). Whilst there is evidence of research carried out which seeks to investigate the well-being of children in the UK, (The Children's Society, 2019: Randall, Cochrane, Jones and Manclossi, 2019: Department for Education, 2019) there is little evidence of research undertaken which seeks to gain an insight into the outcomes of well-being for the ninety nine percent of players who have failed to gain a professional contract from their clubs (Green, 2009 p.6). In addition to investigating the players who have been released from the Academies, this section will also seek to investigate the

well-being of players who remain at the Academies and also players who have secured a professional career and will explore if and how their mental well-being is being cared for.

Football has attracted global attention in recent years (Roderick, 2006) leading to many children and youths having the emotional desire to be part of this competitive sport at a professional level (Maslow, 1954; Roderick, 2006). However, concerns have been raised over the way in which young players are identified and developed within professional clubs within the UK (Green, 2009). Despite the Charter's (Wilkinson, 1997) claim of being created with the intention of laying clear foundations for Academies and Centre of Excellence's (CoE) in preventing the game of football becoming monopolized, (Player Scout, 2019c) along with the need and desire to produce 'better, homegrown players,' it could be argued that the game has become no less than a global monopoly (Jennings *in* Green, 2009. P.8) with players being failed and denied a future at their clubs, which this section will seek to investigate further.

3.2 Football as a concept of wellbeing

It is well established that taking part in sport has major benefits on several aspects of the developing human (NHS, 2018a). Rush (2018) suggests that 'taking part in sport has many physical health benefits and can be considered beneficial towards muscle development, coordination, cardiovascular health and numerous other benefits.' Newport Academy, (2018) would further this assertion and suggest that as well as physical activity, taking part in sports provides athletes with the opportunity to accomplish further benefits such as development of their psychological health in improving self-esteem, (Jenkins, 2004) teamwork skills as well as providing a sense of belonging (Maslow, 1954). Craft and Perna (2004) also consider exercise to have a 'positive effect on depression due to an increased release of endorphins' which are related to 'positive mood and an overall enhanced sense of well-being.' Conversely, they also express that the pressure to 'overachieve' in sport is often

overwhelming and can therefore place the players under undue pressure in the sport, causing detrimental concerns over their well-being.

Whilst there is evidence of research carried out which seeks to investigate the well-being of children in the UK, (The Children's Society, 2019; Randall, Cochrane, Jones and Manclossi, 2019; Department for Education, 2019) there is little evidence of research undertaken which seeks to gain an insight into the outcomes of well-being for the children attending Academy systems or indeed the ninety nine percent of players who have failed to gain a professional contract from their clubs. Green's (2009 p.6) comment highlights this issue;

Despite the time, effort, and huge investment that has gone into England's youth development schemes, one thing the clubs, their leagues, and the FA have not been very good at is finding out what the people who have been through the system felt about it (Green, 2009. P.6).

However, whilst clubs may be failing to identify the impact of being in an Academy environment or being released may have on a child or young person, a report entitled The Good Childhood Report (2019 p.10) commissioned by The Children's Society (2019) revealed that children in the UK between the ages of ten and seventeen displayed a 'significant decrease in happiness with life as a whole,' with figures decreasing year on year since the survey began. The most clear change in wellbeing was by age, with children between thirteen and fifteen years of age reporting poorer wellbeing and life satisfaction (Department for Education, 2019) than any other age group. Although it is acknowledged that the survey undertaken may cover a wide cohort of children from various backgrounds and may not include any children involved in football Academies, it does however highlight the pressures young children and youths are facing in the current climate and brings into question whether the Academies are loading pressure onto the shoulders of young players who should be enjoying the sport and not having to worry if they are good enough to be offered a professional contract.

It is evident that clubs appear to take care of the physical well-being of their players through screening at the start of every season, (EFL, 2018) however, there is little evidence that enough is being done to ensure that their mental well-being is being taken into consideration. Although Each Club which operates an Academy ‘should ensure that each of its Academy players undergoes various tests to measure physical and physiological fitness,’ (EFL, 2018) sections 212.6; psychological profiling and 212.7; monitoring of physical exertion is limited to Category 1 Academies only, illustrating that the assessment of mental well-being of players falls short for a large number of players.

An article produced by Rumsby and Percy (2017) of *The Telegraph* entitled ‘Clubs are letting players down when it comes to emotional well-being’ highlights the mental health issues players are facing, not only for children and youths, but for the players who have secured a professional career in the sport. The article illustrates the need for clubs to provide a ‘duty of care’ towards their players following the detention of Aaron Lennon under Section 136 of *The Mental Health Act (2005)* in 2017 when he was spotted in Greater Manchester close to a busy main road near the M602.

Following his own suffering of mental health related issues, former professional footballer turned campaigner Clarke Carlisle set about raising awareness of mental health related issues within Professional football clubs in 2016. His statement that they (The leading bodies)

are the employers and it seems really bizarre to me that they don’t have a duty of care to their employees [...] That doesn’t happen in any other industry. If you’re an employee of a company, they have a duty of care towards your physical and mental wellbeing. I don’t understand why football clubs don’t follow suit (*in University of Exeter, 2016*)

highlights the issues surrounding the well-being of players, both during and after their time at their clubs.

Despite the many concerns surrounding the mental health of sporting professionals in recent years, there appears to be little evidence of clubs that have any procedure in place to identify these players. Notwithstanding this English Premiership Rugby Club ‘Wasps’ have recently uncovered how they came to the assistance of Academy player Will Wilson, who has exposed how his mental health battle led him to a suicide attempt (Bridge, 2020). According to club doctor Ralph Mitchell, ‘Wasps are one of the few, if not only clubs that now incorporate mental health screening for our athletes as part of their pre-season physical screening’ whereby at-risk players are identified through standardised screening and offered mental health interventions to support them. This would once again highlight the need for psychologists at all sporting activities.

3.3.Young Players as a Global Commodity

‘The Premier League has established a strong global reputation for high-quality and entertaining football since its creation in 1992/93,’ attracting some 520,000 season ticket holders, along with 686,000 international supporters (Premier League, 2019a: Premier League, 2019b). They boast that the club stadiums are ‘consistently being occupied by more than 96 per cent’ of supporters ‘the highest of any major European League,’ attracting a further 43 million people viewers watching League games on TV, creating 1.6 billion in broadcasting revenue. With such a large number of followers, there is no surprise that the economic gains generated by the sport are so high.

It is estimated that the League generated an estimated £3.3 billion in total contributions to the Exchequer in the season of 2016/2017 Premier League, (2019b). Of this figure, they claim that the ‘players themselves accounted for a sizeable portion of the League’s contribution,’ to the estimated sum of £1.1 billion, illustrating just how lucrative a career in professional football can be if players are successful in gaining a professional contract.

Despite the Charter (Wilkinson, 1997) being created with the intention of laying clear foundations for Academies and Centre of Excellence's (CoE) in preventing the game of football becoming monopolized (Player Scout, 2019c) along with the need and desire to produce 'better, homegrown players,' it could be argued that the game has become no less than a global monopoly, with increasing numbers of International players in the Premier League (Premier League, 2018).

There is no denying that the game offers some lucrative career opportunities, with the top three highest listed paid sportspersons being players of the sport (Forbes, 2019). It could be considered reasonable how desirable the idea of becoming a professional footballer can be. However, growing concern has been placed on the methods in which players are being identified and developed within professional clubs and how the system allows boys to be treated (Green, 2009).

Through interviews with various Premier League clubs Calvin (2018) learns from a senior coach of one club that the parents of a nine year old child received a figure to the tune of £24,000 a year in order to secure a contract with the player when he reached the U16's. He also learnt of 'entire families' being supported through what he describes as the 'black economy' with the lure of 'illicit incentives, including houses cars and cash,' demonstrating the greed of clubs to ensure that they have first call on any prospective player that may make them money. This would support David (2001) accusation that, clubs are violating both articles 32 and article 35 of the convention (United Nations, 1989) which states that 'Children must be protected from economic exploitation' and 'Protection from sale and trafficking.'

It would also reinforce Green's (2009 pp. 3-4) accusation that 'the real reason for the creation of the Charter was to get the best, most valuable players snapped up as soon as possible and therefore, make

more money.’ This statement is supported by Romeo (2017) of ‘Business Insider’ who suggests that ‘The problem is that the ills of senior football-greed, opportunism, the stockpiling of talent unnecessarily for commercial gain-are seeping down into junior football.’ The fact that section 1.4 of the document (Wilkinson, 1997) is entitled ‘the top 1% : the most gifted players’ would reinforce both Romeo (2017) and Green’s (2009) allegations.

Speaking in an interview for Radio 5 live in 2004, former Academy director for Manchester United, Les Kershaw *in* Green (2009. p.8) argued that “the clubs’ intentions is not to develop players for England’s representative teams - they are working exclusively for themselves.” Jennings former head of youth development at the Premier League *in* (Green, 2009 p.8) likens the process to a factory and suggests that ‘the players - the raw material as many football people call them are seen as little more than commodities - they are made, they are bought, and they are sold,’ arguably, often at the detriment of their education, social life and welfare. It could be considered that Brackenridge’s (2007) statement; ‘To what extent does football’s response to child protection reflect general attitudes to human rights and welfare in the game’ signifies the ignorance of clubs towards the children and youths in the sport who see them as no more than a commodity that they can gain financial benefit from, lining their own pockets with little concern for their self-worth and future well-being.

3.4.Conclusion

This research has identified numerous pits and troughs that have arisen following the introduction of Charter for Quality (Wilkinson, 1997) into English football. It has unequivocally raised many issues around the way in which English football Academies seek to develop players, most significantly, the number of children and youths having gone through the Academy systems that have failed to gain a professional contract (Green, 2009). Whilst various authors speculate over the reasons for this, the real reason for their failings is undocumented. However, Whitehouse (2013) argues that the reason

behind the failings has been the outcome of ‘a lack of focus, detail and care which has seen us drop behind other nations when it comes to developing young footballers.’ He also claims that in order to develop players ‘more structure and increased discipline is the key to get rid of the cowboys and amateurs and professionalise the system.’ Furthermore, he claims that if standards are to improve then clubs will need to invest in youth development and ‘pay coaches more deserving wages.’ Nesti and Sulley (2015. p.22) suggestion that ‘if the Science, coaching, talent identification or welfare support does not improve the football, the solution is to change these support systems, not football’ also suggests that the problems with developing future ‘home grown’ players lays with the development of the players and their coaching and not the players themselves.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is evident that there is limited research into the effects of the introduction of the EPPP (Premier League, 2019) and Charter for Quality (1997) into the domestic game of football. Champ (2017) cites that her thesis ‘was the first of its kind to explore the impact of the EPPP as a youth development framework.’ However, she could be criticised for the cohort interviewed. Whilst she included interviews, focus groups, and evaluation sheets in her methods of research, the cohort consisted of only one club ranging from the youth development phase (U13-16’s) to the Professional development phase (U18-23’s) providing an ambiguous overview of the effects of the introduction of the EPPP (Premier League, 2019) and the Charter for Quality (Wilkinson, 1997) into Academies overall.

The introduction of the Charter for Quality (Wilkinson, 1997) and the EPPP (Premier League, 2019) may well have been the start of providing a solution to improving standards and developing home grown players in the domestic sport of English football. However, it could be argued that too many Academies were created and as a result diluted talent, leaving a large number of children and youths failing to secure a professional contract (Whitehouse, 2013: Green, 2009). In turn this has resulted in a high rate of players left with a fragmented sense of self-identity and self-worth (Piaget, 1954,

Jenkins, 2004: Maslow, 1954) and a larger number of players suffering from mental health at some point in their career as explored by Blakeman, Chen and Prescott (2016).

In order to gain a greater understanding that the impact of both the EPPP (Premier League, 2019) and Charter for Quality (Wilkinson, 1997) has had on players having gone through the system, and to safeguard our future generations well-being, further research would be needed.

Recommendations

It could be argued that if professional clubs adopted the systems which both Huddersfield Town (Threlfall-Sykes, 2017) and English Premiership Rugby Club 'Wasps' (Bridge, 2020) have implemented, this would have an impact on younger players. Academies who appear to be 'working exclusively for themselves' (Les Kershaw *in* Green, 2009. p.8) would be unable to take advantage of these vulnerable children who are viewed as no more than an accessory of financial gain. Additionally, by increasing the age limit this would reduce the number of intense hours of training endured by these children, thereby reducing their risk of injury (Malina and Bouchard, 1991) and therefore their future prospects and careers.

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6. APPENDICES

6.1. Appendices 1 Ethical Approval

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

In order for research to result in benefit and minimise risk of harm, it must be conducted ethically. A researcher may not be covered by the University's insurance if ethical approval has not been obtained prior to commencement.

The University follows the OECD Frascati manual definition of **research activity**: "creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications". As such this covers activities undertaken by members of staff, postgraduate research students, and both taught postgraduate and undergraduate students working on dissertations/projects.

The individual undertaking the research activity is known as the "principal researcher".

Ethical approval is not required for routine audits, performance reviews, quality assurance studies, testing within normal educational requirements, and literary or artistic criticism.

Please read the notes for guidance before completing ALL sections of the form.

This form must be completed and approved prior to undertaking any research activity. Please see Checklist for details of process for different categories of application.

Delete the Guidance Notes at the end of the form BEFORE submitting your application

SECTION A: About You (Principal Researcher)

Full Name:	Donna Louise Thomas				
Tick all boxes which apply:	Member of staff:	☐	Honorary research fellow:	☐	
Undergraduate Student	☒	Taught Postgraduate Student	☐	Postgraduate Research Student	
Faculty/School/Centre:	Yr Athrofa (SPYC)				
Campus:	Carmarthen				
E-mail address:	14703478@student.uwtsd.ac.uk				
Contact Telephone Number:	07583 695993				
For students:					
Student Number:	1703478				

Programme of Study:	BA Sociology
Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Phillip Morgan

SECTION B: Approval for Research Activity

Has the research activity received approval in principle? (please check the Guidance Notes as to the appropriate approval process for different levels of research by different categories of individual)	YES	☒	NO	☐
			Date	
If Yes, please indicate source of approval (and date where known): Approval in principle must be obtained from the relevant source prior to seeking ethical approval	Research Degrees Committee	☐		
	Faculty Research Committee	☐		
	Supervisor P Morgan	☒	09/10/19	

SECTION C: Internal and External Ethical Guidance Materials

Please list the core ethical guidance documents that have been referred to during the completion of this form (including any discipline-specific codes of research ethics, and also any specific ethical guidance relating to the proposed methodology). Please tick to confirm that your research proposal adheres to these codes and guidelines.	
<u>UWTSD Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice</u>	☒
UWTSD Research Data Management Policy	☒
British Educational Research Association (BERA)	☒
British Sociological Association (BSA)	☒

SECTION D: External Collaborative Research Activity

Does the research activity involve collaborators outside of the University?	YES	☐	NO	☒	
If Yes, please provide the name of the external organisation and name and contact details for the main contact person and confirmation this person has consented to their personal data being shared as part of this collaboration.					
Institution	N/A				
Contact person name	N/A				
Contact person e-mail address	N/A				
Has this individual consented to sharing their details on this form?	YES	☐	NO	☒	
Are you in receipt of a KESS scholarship?	YES	☐	NO	☒	
Is your research externally funded	YES	☐	NO	☒	
	Voluntary	YES	☐	NO	☒

Are you specifically employed to undertake this research in either a paid or voluntary capacity?	Employed	YES	☐	NO	☒
Is the research being undertaken within an existing UWTSD Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership (APLP)	If YES then the permission question below does not need to be answered.	YES	☐	NO	☒
Permission to undertake the research has been provided by the partner organisation	(If YES attach copy) If NO the application cannot continue	YES	☐	NO	☒

Where research activity is carried out in collaboration with an external organisation

Does this organisation have its own ethics approval system?	YES	☐	NO	☒
If Yes, please attach a copy of any final approval (or interim approval) from the organisation N/A				

SECTION E: Details of Research Activity

Indicative title:	Physical Failure: Youth Sport		
Proposed start date:	16/10/19	Proposed end date:	01/05/20
Introduction to the Research (maximum 300 words) Ensure that you write for a <u>Non-Specialist Audience</u> when outlining your response to the three points below: • <i>Purpose of Research Activity</i> • <i>Proposed Research Question</i> • <i>Aims of Research Activity</i> • <i>Objectives of Research Activity</i> Demonstrate, briefly, how <u>Existing Research</u> has informed the proposed activity and explain • <i>What the research activity will add to the body of knowledge</i> • <i>How it addresses an area of importance.</i>			
Purpose of Research Activity The purpose of this literature review is to critically explore the government policy on 'Mental Health and Elite Sport Action Plan' (2018) and the 'Mental Health charter for Sport and Recreation to help remove stigma and prejudice around mental health' produced by the Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition government (2015). With the charter suggesting that 'exercise is proven to be as effective as antidepressants for those with mild clinical depression', it can also be considered			

whether failings within a sports environment can in fact be a contributing factor in some cases of mental health. Mind (nd) have identified what they class as ‘three main particular mental health pressure points’ in the career of a professional sports person which coincide with key transitions in their career. Firstly, the pressure of being released from their position, whether due to bad performances, injury or funding. Secondly, ‘retiring’ from the sport, BBC sport, (2018) suggest that the average retirement age for sportsmen and women is around thirty years old, further reporting that more than half of retired sports people have concerns over mental and emotional wellbeing. Lastly, ‘struggling in silence’ Mind, (nd) article reveals the stigma sports persons feel are still attached to seeking support.

Whilst the arena for sport in the United Kingdom is vast, from water sports (canoeing), indoor sport (basketball),

To outdoor sports (rugby), for the purpose of this literature review, it will focus on football, in particular, the longer-term psychological effects of injury in youth football at academy level in Wales.

References

BBC sport, (2018) *State of Sport 2018*. Half of retired sportspeople have concerns over mental and emotional wellbeing. [online]. Available at: www.bbc.co.uk/sport/42871491. (Accessed: 09.10.19).

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Mind, (no date) *Performance matters*. Mental health in elite sport [pdf]. Available at: www.mind.org.uk/media/1085139/Mental-Health-and-Elite-Sport.pdf. (Accessed: 09.10.19).

Research Question

- Critically explore means of emotional support available to aspiring young athletes

- Negative effects of underachievement
- Emotional and family support
- To identify how sports personalities effected by mental health are perceived and treated in society
- Identify what improvements could be made

Aims of Research Activity

This literature review aims to establish the current levels of support available to young aspiring athletes. In doing so it will seek to identify areas of good practice alongside failings or gaps in support which may benefit young athletes and their families in the future. It will also seek to identify if and how policies already in place are being met.

Objectives of Research Activity

The objective of this research activity is to present a comprehensive literature review on the research of the effects of injury causing potential mental health problems in young sports persons.

Proposed methods (maximum 600 words)

Provide a brief summary of all the methods that **may** be used in the research activity, making it clear what specific techniques may be used. If methods other than those listed in this section are deemed appropriate later, additional ethical approval for those methods will be needed.

An extensive literature review related to the chosen topic will be undertaken using desk based research. This will include accessing the University online library, web searches, journals, newspaper archives and books. Identifying key words in the chosen area of research will aid in keeping within the scope of the research (Bryman, 2008).

For the purpose of the research, only academic sources and reliable web based pages will be used, taking into consideration their authenticity. This will evaluate the author, their interest in publishing their work and where their site is located within the

URL, for example, an academic site (.ac), government (.gov), non-commercial organisation (.org) or commercial (.com) (Bryman 2008)

According to Oliver, (2011, p.39) collecting data from the internet can be 'a rich source of material for the researcher' and whilst the information is readily available, can therefore be considered as 'potential research data' omitting approval of use. In order to protect and preserve anonymity and confidentiality, as suggested by Crow and Wiles, (2008) pseudonyms will be used.

References

Bryman, A. (2008). *Social research methods*. 3rd ed. Oxford. University Press.

Crow, G and Wiles, R. (2008). *Managing anonymity and confidentiality in social research: the case of visual data in Community research*. [pdf] Available at: eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/459/1/0808_managing%2520anonymity%2520and%2520confidentiality.pdf (Accessed: 11.10.19).

Oliver, P. (2011). *The students guide to research ethics*. 2nd ed. Maidenhead. University Press.

Location of research activity Identify all locations where research activity will take place.		
Desk and computer based. University, library and home.		
Research activity outside of the UK If research activity will take place overseas, you are responsible for ensuring that local ethical considerations are complied with and that the relevant permissions are sought. Specify any local guidelines (e.g. from local professional associations/learned societies/universities) that exist and whether these involve any ethical stipulations beyond those usual in the UK (provide details of any licenses or permissions required). Also specify whether there are any specific ethical issues raised by the local context in which the research activity is taking place, for example, particular cultural and/or legal sensitivities or vulnerabilities of participants.		
N/A <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
Use of documentation not in the public domain: Are any documents NOT publicly available?	NO	☒
	YES	☐
If Yes, please provide details here of how you will gain access to specific documentation that is not in the public domain and that this is in accordance with prevailing data protection law of the country in question and England and Wales. N/A <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		

SECTION F: Scope of Research Activity

Will the research activity include:	YES	NO
Use of a questionnaire or similar research instrument?	☐	☒
Use of interviews?	☐	☒
Use of diaries?	☐	☒
Participant observation with their knowledge?	☐	☒
Participant observation without their knowledge?	☐	☒
Use of video or audio recording?	☐	☒
Access to personal or confidential information without the participants' specific consent?	☐	☒
Administration of any questions, test stimuli, presentation that may be experienced as physically, mentally or emotionally harmful / offensive?	☐	☒
Performance of any acts which may cause embarrassment or affect self-esteem?	☐	☒
Investigation of participants involved in illegal activities?	☐	☒
Use of procedures that involve deception?	☐	☒
Administration of any substance, agent or placebo?	☐	☒
Working with live vertebrate animals?	☐	☒
Other primary data collection methods, please explain in this box For example, 'focus groups.' Please indicate the type of data collection method(s) in this box and tick the accompany box.	☐	☒
Details of any other primary data collection method: (this box should expand as you type)		

If NO to every question, then the research activity is (ethically) low risk and **may** be exempt from **some** of the following sections (please refer to Guidance Notes).

If YES to any question, then no research activity should be undertaken until full ethical approval has been obtained.

SECTION G: Intended Participants

Who are the intended participants: N/A	YES	NO
Students or staff at the University?	☐	☒
Adults (over the age of 18 and competent to give consent)?	☐	☒
Vulnerable adults?	☐	☒
Children and Young People under the age of 18? (Consent from Parent, Carer or Guardian will be required)	☐	☒
Prisoners?	☐	☒
Young offenders?	☐	☒
Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the investigator or a gatekeeper?	☐	☒
People engaged in illegal activities?	☐	☒
Others (please identify specifically any group who may be unable to give consent) please indicate here and tick the appropriate box.	☐	☒
Other – please indicate here: (this box should expand as you type)		

Participant numbers and source	
Provide an estimate of the expected number of participants. How will you identify participants and how will they be recruited?	
How many participants are expected?	N/A (this box should expand as you type)
Who will the participants be?	N/A (this box should expand as you type)
How will you identify the participants?	N/A (this box should expand as you type)

Information for participants:	YES	NO	N/A
Will you describe the main research procedures to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	☐	☐	☒
Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary?	☐	☐	☒
Will you obtain written consent for participation?	☐	☐	☒
Will you explain to participants that refusal to participate in the research will not affect their treatment or education (if relevant)?	☐	☐	☒
If the research is observational, will you ask participants for their consent to being observed?	☐	☐	☒
Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason?	☐	☐	☒
With questionnaires, will you give participants the option of omitting questions they do not want to answer?	☐	☐	☒
Will you tell participants that their data will be treated with full confidentiality and that, if published, it will not be identifiable as theirs?	☐	☐	☒
Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation, in a way appropriate to the type of research undertaken?	☐	☐	☒
If NO to any of above questions, please give an explanation			
N/A			
<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			

Information for participants:	YES	NO	N/A
Will participants be paid?	☐	☐	☒
Is specialist electrical or other equipment to be used with participants?	☐	☐	☒
Are there any financial or other interests to the investigator or University arising from this study?	☐	☐	☒
Will the research activity involve deliberately misleading participants in any way, or the partial or full concealment of the specific study aims?	☐	☐	☒
If YES to any question, please provide full details			
<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			

SECTION H: Anticipated Risks

Outline any anticipated risks that may adversely affect any of the participants, the researchers and/or the University, and the steps that will be taken to address them.			
If you have completed a full risk assessment (for example as required by a laboratory, or external research collaborator) you may append that to this form.			
Full risk assessment completed and appended? N/A			Yes ☐ No ☒
Risks to participants For example: emotional distress, financial disclosure, physical harm, transfer of personal data, sensitive organisational information			
Risk to Participant: N/A (this box should expand as you type)		How will you mitigate the Risk to Participant N/A (this box should expand as you type)	
If research activity may include sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting topics (e.g. sexual activity, drug use) or issues likely to disclose information requiring further action (e.g. criminal activity), give details of the procedures to deal with these issues, including any support/advice (e.g. helpline numbers) to be offered to participants. Note that where applicable, consent procedures should make it clear that if something potentially or actually illegal is discovered in the course of a project, it may need to be disclosed to the proper authorities			
(this box should expand as you type)			
Risks to investigator For example: personal safety, physical harm, emotional distress, risk of accusation of harm/impropriety, conflict of interest			
Risk to Investigator: May be exposed to sensitive information which may cause emotional distress. (this box should expand as you type)		How will you mitigate the Risk to Investigator: Be prepared to reading sensitive materials. Self-refer to Student Services	
University/institutional risks For example: adverse publicity, financial loss, data protection			
Risk to University: Publication of inappropriate content (this box should expand as you type)		How will you mitigate the Risk to University: Attend Regular supervision (this box should expand as you type)	
Disclosure and Barring Service			
If the research activity involves children or vulnerable adults, a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate must be obtained before any contact with such participants.	YES	NO	N/A
Does your research require you to hold a current DBS Certificate?	☒	☐	☐

SECTION I: Feedback, Consent and Confidentiality

Feedback What de-briefing and feedback will be provided to participants, how will this be done and when?
N/A (this box should expand as you type)
Informed consent Describe the arrangements to inform potential participants, before providing consent, of what is involved in participating. Describe the arrangements for participants to provide full consent before data collection begins. If gaining consent in this way is inappropriate, explain how consent will be obtained and recorded in accordance with prevailing data protection legislation.
N/A (this box should expand as you type)
Confidentiality / Anonymity Set out how anonymity of participants and confidentiality will be ensured in any outputs. If anonymity is not being offered, explain why this is the case.
N/A (this box should expand as you type)

SECTION J: Data Protection and Storage

In completing this section refer to the University's Research Data Management Policy and the extensive resources on the University's Research Data Management web pages (<http://uwtsd.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/>).

Does the research activity involve personal data (as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 “GDPR” and the Data Protection Act 2018 “DPA”)?	YES	NO
“Personal data” means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person (‘data subject’). An identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person.	☐	☐
If YES, provide a description of the data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
N/A (this box should expand as you type)		
Does it involve special category data (as defined by the GDPR)?	YES	NO
“ Special category data ” means sensitive personal data consisting of information as to the data subjects’ – (a) racial or ethnic origin, (b) political opinions, (c) religious beliefs or other beliefs of a similar nature, (d) membership of a trade union (within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992), (e) physical or mental health or condition, (f) sexual life, (g) genetics, (h) biometric data (as used for ID purposes),	☐	☐
If YES, provide a description of the special category data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
N/A (this box should expand as you type)		
Will the research activity involve storing personal data and/or special category data on one of the following:	YES	NO
Manual files (i.e. in paper form)?	☐	☒
University computers?	☐	☒
Private company computers?	☐	☒
Home or other personal computers?	☐	☒

Laptop computers/ CDs/ Portable disk-drives/ memory sticks?	☐	☒
“Cloud” storage or websites?	☐	☒
Other – specify:	☐	☒
For all stored data, explain the measures in place to ensure the security of the data collected, data confidentiality, including details of password protection, encryption, anonymisation and pseudonymisation:		
N/A (this box should expand as you type)		
All Data Storage N/A		
Will the research activity involve any of the following activities:	YES	NO
Electronic transfer of data in any form?	☐	☒
Sharing of data with others at the University?	☐	☒
Sharing of data with other organisations?	☐	☒
Export of data outside the European Union or importing of data from outside the UK?	☐	☒
Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, emails or telephone numbers?	☐	☒
Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals?	☐	☒
Use of data management system?	☐	☒
Data archiving?	☐	☒
If YES to any question, please provide full details, explaining how this will be conducted in accordance with the GDPR and DPA (and/or any international equivalent):		
N/A (this box should expand as you type)		
List all who will have access to the data generated by the research activity:		
N/A (this box should expand as you type)		
List who will have control of, and act as custodian(s) for, data generated by the research activity:		
N/A (this box should expand as you type)		
Give details of data storage arrangements, including security measures in place to protect the data, where data will be stored, how long for, and in what form. Will data be archived – if so how and if not why not.		
N/A		

(this box should expand as you type)		
Please indicate if your data will be stored in the UWTSD Research Data Repository (see https://researchdata.uwtsd.ac.uk/). If so please explain. (Most relevant to academic staff)		
N/A		
(this box should expand as you type)		
Confirm that you have read the UWTSD guidance on data management (see https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/)	YES	☒
	NO	☐
Confirm that you are aware that you need to keep all data until after your research has completed or the end of your funding NA	YES	☐
	NO	☐

SECTION K: Declaration

The information which I have provided is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I have attempted to identify any risks and issues related to the research activity and acknowledge my obligations and the rights of the participants.

In submitting this application I hereby confirm that I undertake to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice

Signature of applicant:	D. L. Thomas	Date: 09/10/19
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For STUDENT Submissions:

Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Phillip Morgan	Date: 16.10.2019
Signature:		

For STAFF Submissions:

Head of School/Assistant Dean:		Date:
Signature:		

Checklist: Please complete the checklist below to ensure that you have completed the form according to the guidelines and attached any required documentation:

☒	I have read the guidance notes supplied before completing the form.
☒	I have completed ALL RELEVANT sections of the form in full.
☒	I confirm that the research activity has received approval in principle
☐	I have attached a copy of final/interim approval from external organisation (where appropriate)
☐	I have attached a full risk assessment (and have NOT completed Section H of this form) (where appropriate) ONLY TICK IF YOU HAVE ATTACHED A FULL RISK ASSESSMENT
☒	I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice.
☒	I understand that before commencing data collection all documents aimed at respondents (including information sheets, consent forms, questionnaires, interview schedules etc.) must be confirmed by the DoS/Supervisor, module tutor or Head of School.
☐	I have deleted the guidance notes before submitting the PG2 for consideration

