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The implementation of the elite player performance plan: A sociological study of the experiences of education and welfare officers and coaches

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Submitted for the degree of Master of Science.

Nick Ashley

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Declaration

I confirm that this work has not been submitted for any other degree of examination. I have read and understood the University's regulations on plagiarism and I declare this as my own original work.

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Introduction

The recent poor performances of the English national side during the 2010 World Cup in South Africa and the European Championships in 2012, have caused journalists, fans and footballing figures to create a supposed moral panic for the state of the national game. A large part of the blame has fallen on our youth development systems accounting for the lack of young home-grown talent breaking into the first team squads of some of the country's most successful clubs (Gibson, 2013; Independent, 2013; Sky Sports, 2013; Telegraph, 2013b). There have been various attempts to explain the lack of home-grown talent progressing through into the professional game in this country. The two of the most recognised arguments revolve around the influx of foreign players into the domestic leagues (Independent, 2013; Sky Sports, 2013; Telegraph, 2013b) and the quality of coaching (Football Association, 2008; McGowan, 2010; Premier League, 2011).

In an attempt to tackle the supposed barriers to the success of young players, the Premier League (PL) in conjunction with the Football Association (FA) and Football League (FL) have sought to cultivate a new youth development system – the Elite Player Performance Plan (EPPP). Previously, under the Charter for Quality, youth professional football had been allowed to wane due to a lack of monitoring and evaluation of current practices (Brooking, 2007). As a result, the standards of football clubs varied greatly throughout the PL and FL (Brooking, 2007; Lewis, 2007). Moreover, due to the lack of direction from the governing bodies, football clubs have developed young players in ways which suited the club - which has accounted for the sporadic numbers of players progressing through over recent years (Lewis, 2007; McGowan, 2010).

In response, the introduction of the EPPP is an attempt to address these apparent shortcomings by standardising and modernising coaching practices, recruitment practices and facility provision in order for clubs to create greater access to younger players (PL, 2011).

Most recently in a speech by Greg Dyke, the new FA chairman, youth football, and the EPPP has been hailed as playing a pivotal role in the development of the national game (Bond, 2013; Telegraph, 2013b; Winter, 2013). As a result of Dyke's speech, the England senior squad are being handed new key performance indicators: a semi-final appearance in the 2020 European Championships and a World Cup trophy in the 2022 games, in which the £320 million EPPP is supposed to be the catalyst for attaining such ambitious goals (Winter, 2013). With such a high level of expectation on the EPPP to improve the standard of youth professional football, it is important for us to understand how the EPPP has been implemented within clubs. However, given how recent its inception is within youth professional football there is currently no existing published sociological work surrounding the initiative. Therefore, in an attempt to broaden youth professional football research, the objective of this study is to examine the experiences of key stakeholders within youth professional football, namely education and welfare officers (EWOs) and coaches, to assess how they have implemented the EPPP within their respective clubs. The success of the EPPP is reliant on the compliance of such stakeholders to implement the initiative at club level. As such, the central objectives of this study are to: i) examine how EWOs and coaches have experienced implementing the EPPP within their respective clubs; ii) explore the ways in which the EPPP has affected the existing roles of EWOs and

coaches; and iii) reflect upon how the implementation of the EPPP has differed throughout the PL and FL.

In order to examine the central objectives of the study, the thesis will be broken down into five chapters. The first chapter reviews the existing literature that surrounds youth professional football highlighting the three major themes of research in the area: the culture of professional football, educational provisions and players' perceptions of education and player welfare and safeguarding. The chapter also reveals, given how recently the EPPP has been introduced, there is currently no existing literature surrounding it, creating a rationale to undertake this study.

The second chapter of the thesis focuses on the EPPP itself, and what changes have been made to youth professional football compared to the previous youth system the Charter for Quality. Additionally, given the thesis aims to measure the implementation of the EPPP, the later part of the chapter outlines the policy process in order to give the reader some perspective when making reference to compliance levels and the ways in which the EPPP has been implemented by the EWOs and coaches within their respective clubs.

Chapter three explains the theoretical framework, namely figurational sociology, that will be used to help explain the experiences of EWOs and coaches implementing the EPPP at their respective clubs. The chapter will highlight Elias' core concepts of figurational sociology which the researcher believes will help make sense of the attitudes of EWOs and coaches towards the initiative and the reasons why its compliance has varied between clubs.

Chapter four justifies the chosen use of research methods for the study offering the reasoning behind selecting semi-structured interviews as the main source of data collection. The chapter also describes the participants in the study, the methodological procedure and how the interviewees' responses were analysed using thematic analysis.

The final chapter of the study explores the major themes that came to light after subjecting the data to thematic analysis. The main themes were: (i) the changes in the roles of EWOs and coaches; ii) coaching hours; (iii) it is becoming football, football, football and; (iv) attitudes of managers towards opportunities for home-grown players. The chapter outlines the significant changes to the roles of coaches and how the varied conformity to the directives can potentially question the effectiveness of the EPPP in achieving its goals.

Chapter One: Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a critical review of the literature on professional youth football, focusing on: i) the culture of professional football; (ii) education provision and players' perceptions of education and; iii) player welfare and safeguarding.

The Culture of Professional Football

Professional football is an 'aggressive, tough, masculine, and at times violent "industry" and these values are reflected in workplace behaviours and in the socialization and social control of young players' (Kelly & Waddington, 2006, p. 146). This is supported by Parker (1996) who argues professional football revolves primarily around a strict diet of authoritarianism, ruthlessness and hyper-masculine work-place practice. This culture pervades professional football in this country because managers perceive the need to create a hostile environment in an attempt to enforce their authority and control over players (Cushion & Jones, 2006; 2012; Kelly & Waddington, 2006; Platts & Smith, 2009; Platts, 2012; Roderick, 2006). Kelly & Waddington (2006) and Parker (1996) liken such behaviour to a working-class shop floor culture whereby discipline is instilled in workers to ensure obedience and workplace subservience, taking away the opportunity for individuality and autonomy by stressing the need to be a part of the collective.

Professional football is a socially closed off world that is suspicious of outsiders, a strictly regimented profession with footballers' daily tasks

controlled by their superiors (Parker, 1996). As a result, it produces optimum conditions for socialisation to the groups' accepted norms given the limited opportunities to socialise outside of the game (Cushion & Jones 2012; Platts, 2012; Roderick, 2006). Central to the task of club officials (manager, coaches and physiotherapists) in professional football, is the promotion of attitudes of acceptance, obedience and collective loyalty among apprentices (Cushion & Jones, 2012; Parker, 1996). Young players have impressed upon them from an early stage the importance of displaying a 'good attitude' which is an all-encompassing ideal that constructs a particular identity that people within the professional game encourage their players to aspire to (Roderick, 2006; Platts, 2012). In short players, in order to indicate their progress and development within the game, must display conformity to the values and perspectives of club, and, in general, professional football (Cushion & Jones, 2012; Platts & Smith, 2009; Platts, 2012; Parker, 1996; Roderick, 2006). Conversely, if players were seen not to be displaying conformity to the values of the club they would fall victim to stigmatisation by coaching staff and players (Roderick, 2006; Parker 1996; Platts, 2012). If players were seen as being too far removed from the clubs ideals they would face being released, and this has proven to be an effective method of social control by constraining players to develop a footballing habitus in fear of rejection or castigation (Cushion & Jones, 2012; Platts, 2012).

What is expected from players can vary from club to club. However, there seem to be recurrent themes throughout the literature that indicate players must develop a habitus, a second nature, that normalizes pain and injury,

possess a strong work ethic and a willingness to make sacrifices for the greater good of the team (Parker, 1996; Platts & Smith, 2009; Roderick, 2006; Roderick, Waddington & Parker 2000). It is argued that amateurs conform to many of the expectations coaches make of professionals and youth players (Platts, 2012). However, amateurs are not expected to underperform in their educational studies but youth professional players are (Parker, 1996; Platts & Smith, 2009; Platts, 2012). Managers and coaches view education as something of a distraction to the main aim of the football club which is to produce footballers for the first team (Parker, 1996; Platts, 2012). Therefore, players seen to be prioritising their education over their footballing development are chastised by coaches and fellow players, such is the influence of the culture of the game on young players (Platts, 2012). Outside of the professional game it would seem nonsensical to expect such behaviour as the labour market has simply evolved away from the ideals of verbally, and at times, physically abusing workers for poor job performance or fining them if they are late (Parker, 1996; Platts, 2012). However, football still operates in this way and constrains players to accept poor treatment as part of being a footballer and to complain about it would have severe consequences for their careers in the sport (Parker, 1996; Platts, 2012).

Players' perceptions of education and educational Provision

Professional football clubs develop youth academies with the main goal of producing players for the first team. However, only a select few will accomplish such a feat (McGillivray et al., 2005; McGillivray & McIntosh, 2006; Monk, 2000; Monk & Russell, 2000; Monk & Olsson, 2006; Platts, 2012). With such an awareness of the high attrition rates that exist, national governing bodies

and the government offer education within the syllabus of a youth development programme, in an attempt to provide opportunities for unsuccessful scholars to secure alternative occupations post-football (FA, 1997; FA, 2012; LFE, 2009; PL, 2010).

Education in youth professional football has transformed since it was first made compulsory in youth training (Monk & Russell, 2000; Platts & Smith, 2009; Platts, 2012; Stewart & Sutherland, 1996). At first, education was treated as somewhat of an afterthought with players made to undertake a 'one size fits all' Leisure and Tourism vocational qualification (Monk & Russell, 2000; Platts & Smith, 2009; Stewart & Sutherland, 1996). The initial qualification was met with disdain by players as it bore little relevance to them and their interests with the poor pass rates reflecting this (Monk, 2000; Monk & Russell, 2000; Monk & Olsson, 2006). In 1997, the implementation of the Charter for Quality under Howard Wilkinson, education was prioritised with qualifications being tailored around the players' intelligence levels in the hope that their educational attainment would improve (FA, 1997; Monk & Russell, 2000; Platts & Smith, 2009). Players were offered courses that ranged from GCSES and GNVQs through to the more academically respected A-Levels, yet players still displayed a poor attitude towards educational commitment and attainment (Monk & Russell, 2000; Platts & Smith, 2009). Although a diversity of qualifications were offered, young players still only undertook the vocational qualifications despite numerous players having obtained sufficient GCSE grades to opt for the more academically respected A-Levels, as they were coerced to do so by their significant others (Monk & Russell, 2000; Monk & Olsson, 2006). With footballing authorities aware of this and, given the

impending regression of government funding for youth training, in 2004 professional football opted for the apprenticeship in sporting excellence (ASE) programme – a BTEC diploma in sport with a supposed equivalent of two A-levels (Monk & Olsson, 2006). The shift in provision was aimed again to try and entice the players to actively engage in their education. Yet, the footballing authorities ignorantly selected a qualification in sport, due to the fact that they believed sportsmen should study about sport, without taking into account other academic interests (Monk & Olsson, 2006; Platts, 2012).

Notwithstanding the change in the educational programme, it was still met with disdain and players continued to devalue education in pursuit of a professional contract (Monk & Olsson, 2006; Platts, 2012; Platts & Smith, 2009). Parker (1996) and, more recently, Cushion and Jones (2012) argue that the players' own oppression and disempowerment is a conscious thought. However, it has been so ingrained upon them and their habitus that it was almost a subconscious decision as players are so heavily socialised by significant others (such as coaches, managers, education and welfare officers and physiotherapists) to marginalise their educational attainment in pursuit of footballing success (Christenson & Sorenson, 2009; McGillivray et al., 2005; Platts, 2012). The vast majority of youth team players have originally been contracted to the schoolboy development programmes of clubs whereby they are recruited at a vulnerable age, sometimes as young as 9, and subjected to a culture which is claimed to reinforce the worth of physical capital (football development) and devalue cultural capital (education attainment) resulting in a restriction to the development of their identity (Brown & Potrac, 2009; Christenson & Sorenson, 2009; McGillivray et al., 2005; McGillivray &

McIntosh, 2006). As a result, Platts (2012) argues that many players will have disassociated themselves from education prior to leaving compulsory education. Consequently, the adoption to the culture had significant effects on the players' educational attainment which detrimentally impacted upon occupational success post-football in addition to the development of a post-football identity Brown & Potrac, 2009; Christenson & Sorenson, 2009; McGillivray et al., 2005; McGillivray & McIntosh, 2006). Upon leaving education and being contracted as a youth team player (ages 16-18), the culture further compounds the anti-academic perception towards education to the extent that players being seen to actively engage in their studies, or even planning alternative career paths after football, are perceived to concede that their chances of becoming a professional footballer are over (Parker, 1996; Platts 2012). With the players adopting this attitude towards education, the provision made available to them has been effectively set up to fail as, although clubs may be succeeding with their pass rate statistics, the vast majority only obtain the lower level pass marks than merits or distinctions (Platts, 2012). Consequently, players may find securing employment outside of sport or securing a university place because of the lack of academic currency that the BTEC holds outside of the particular subject area (Monk & Olsson, 2006).

Player Welfare

Although there is a plethora of literature surrounding young people's engagement in sport, both at the elite level and sub-elite level, little is actually written regarding the safeguarding and child protection provision available to them (Brackenridge, 2007; Platts, 2012). Such a dearth of literature is further

exacerbated when attempting to delve into youth professional football (with only a few notable exceptions) (Brackenridge, Pitchford, Russell & Nutt, 2007; Parker, 1996 & Platts, 2012). Pitchford (2007) argues that exposing children to the professional sporting domain is fraught with challenges as the very nature of sport makes it unlikely that clubs would prioritize the needs of the children above the requirements of their particular organisation. Moreover, Brackenridge (2007) further asserts that when a talented young player progresses through the professional game they are exposed to the scrutiny and control of the business of football, which sees them more as investments than human beings, and views safeguarding through the lens of protecting the value of an investment rather than as a responsibility to ensure the welfare of a human being.

Up to the late 1990s, the position of children in professional clubs had been largely unexamined (Pitchford, 2007). What sources there were on the experiences of young professionals during those years, mainly originated from anecdotal evidence in the form of ex-professionals' autobiographies (Pitchford, 2007). The problem with relying on such evidence for explaining the welfare of young players was that 'any suggestions that these experiences were negative or problematic in some way would be swept aside by a nostalgic, uncritical apology for the "school of hard knocks"' (Pitchford, 2007 P.111). Again we see here the influence that the culture of the game has had on the socialisation of young players whereby they are expected to be treated badly in order to 'toughen up' and 'prepare' for a life in the professional game (Parker, 1996). The welfare and protection of young players during this time was seen as merely a token gesture due to the fact that the only full time member of staff in

youth development was that of the youth team manager (Pitchford, 2007). Without a full time position for a member of staff in charge of the welfare of the players, this militaristic culture was ever present, constantly being reproduced with every intake of new players (Parker, 1996; Pitchford, 2007).

The major advancement in youth football was the implementation of the Charter for Quality in 1997/1998, which radically changed youth development. Clubs were required to increase levels of funding, staffing and facilities to improve the state of youth provision in this country (Anderson & Miller, 2012; FA, 1997; Pitchford, 2007; Platts, 2012; Platts & Smith, 2009). The most notable change with regards to the welfare of the young players was the introduction of the full time EWOs throughout all of the 46 academies (Pitchford, 2007). Pitchford's (2007, p.116) work argues that EWOs 'created a cultural shift towards a more child centred practice' which is highlighted by one of the participants in the study:

'This all started six years ago with the influx of 38 head teachers into professional football, into the clubs ... that's where it all began, when the academies were created. Qualified teachers coming into football and saying "OK what are we doing about child protection?" We owe all the advances to that process really.'

Although it is evident that there has been change within the academy clubs interviewed, Pitchford (2007) points to a limitation of his study, in that it was only possible to gain access to clubs willing to be a part of the study. In so doing, clubs who proactively participated in child protection provision and exhibited good practice were interviewed, however, those who arguably were

not did not wish to take part in the study (Pitchford, 2007). No research was undertaken with clubs who operated centres of excellence as it was not a necessary requirement to have a full time EWO, only a member of staff within the club needed to be formally designated as being in charge of the players' welfare (The Football League Trust, 2010). However, for the majority of the time such people tended to be coaches, which was fraught with conflicting interests (Platts, 2012). By having a coach in charge of welfare, Platts (2012) found that the willingness of players to confide in them was restricted due to the fear of what was said 'getting back' to the youth team manager, which in their eyes could have potentially hindered their selection for future matches and also the opportunity of securing a professional contract (Platts, 2012). As a result, players did not wish to divulge their welfare issues to the clubs, which is severely problematic as it puts the well-being of the players at risk (Platts, 2012). Furthermore, Platts (2012) found that despite clubs operating sophisticated child protection models the treatment of youth team players was still, on the whole, poor with young players being referred to as the bottom of the pile in which bad language and verbal intimidation were daily occurrences (Platts, 2012).

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to review the literature on youth professional football. Three main areas of research into youth football have been examined. The first theme, the culture of professional football, highlights that the players' footballing success dominates all other concerns, which constrains players into developing habituses that conform to the cultural processes of the profession (Cushion & Jones, 2012; Roderick, 2006; Platts,

2012). The conformity to the culture of football can vary from marginalising education through to playing injured in order to achieve footballing success with the eventual goal of securing a professional contract (Roderick, 2006; Platts & Smith, 2009; Platts, 2012).

The second theme focused on the education of young players and demonstrates that, despite the change in educational provision over recent years, their attainment levels remain low as they marginalise education in favour of footballing success (Monk & Olsson, 2006; Platts, 2012). This can be linked back to the significant impact of the culture of football. Such an attitude has proven to be detrimental to the young players when the vast majority of them are not offered professional contracts and consequently restricting their opportunities post-football in the labour market (McGillivray et al., 2005).

The third theme, player welfare in youth football, draws upon the significant changes made to youth professional football with the implementation of welfare and safeguarding practices. However, the actions and attitudes of staff are still resistant to operating a child centred approach with youth professional football (Platts, 2012). This is due to the influence of the culture of professional football, as young players are subjected to an intensely masculine world, full time, at the age 16 and they are encouraged to accept maltreatment as the norm (Parker, 1996; Pitchford, 2007; Platts, 2012).

Having reviewed the literature it is evident that no current research that has attempted to review or measure the effectiveness of the EPPP in youth professional football. Additionally, apart from notable exceptions (Pitchford, 2007 and Cushion & Jones, 2006; 2012), EWOs and coaches have been

largely neglected when trying to make sense of youth professional football. Such neglect is a major oversight as EWOs and coaches are key stakeholders within youth professional football. Obtaining the EWOs' and coaches' thoughts and experiences of youth professional football would offer the researcher the opportunity to compare and contrast the thoughts and experiences of the players. Therefore, the following chapters of this study are to examine the experiences of EWOs and coaches in youth football and their experiences of implementing the EPPP in youth professional football.

Chapter Two: The EPPP and the Policy Process

Introduction

The previous chapter provided an overview of the literature surrounding youth professional football. The aim of this chapter is to synthesise the major concepts of the EPPP in order to further develop understanding about the changes that are required throughout the youth professional football. Additionally, the chapter conceptualises the policy process as the aim of this study is to examine the implementation of the EPPP. Therefore, it is important to have an appreciation for the whole of the policy process and how compliance towards policy and its effectiveness is reliant on the implementers – the EWOs and coaches.

The EPPP

The major driving force of the EPPP has been to modernise the approach of youth development throughout all levels of professional football. Many sports, particularly Olympic sports, have, over the last 10 years, been through significant advances in terms of athlete development with the growing expertise and acceptance of sports science. It has been recognised that to be able to play in first team squads in the PL a player must not only be one of the best players in England but now the world (PL, 2011; Taylor, 2007).

A fundamental directive of the EPPP is to gain greater access to young players. Additionally, coaching standards have been targeted for improvement in an attempt to produce home-grown players that can be successful in the top echelons of the game (PL, 2011). Another key element to the EPPP is the

monitoring and evaluation of youth systems throughout the country to ensure that the required standards are consistently met by clubs (PL, 2011). Previously, under the old Charter for Quality, clubs were not monitored systematically and independently which allowed for the decline in coaching standards, facility provision alongside overall bad practise going unchallenged (Brooking, 2007; Lewis, 2007). Clubs were simply required to produce an annual report to prove that they have met the facility requirements, provided minimum contact hours for coaching, committed to a games programme, demonstrated support for the prescribed staffing structure and provided an education programme for youth team players (PL, 2011). As a result of the new system, the development of an independent standards commission has been developed with the remit to audit clubs with the intention to uphold standards and hold clubs more accountable (PL, 2011). Once all clubs have been assessed for the first time, the minimum frequency of the audits will be extended to once every three years.

The overall structure of the academy system proposed by the EPPP is to allow for a supposed transitional progression between systems. Unlike the previous model, in which youth football was split into two different systems either an academy or centre of excellence, the EPPP has altered the structure to reduce the disparity between them (PL, 2011). Under the previous system, to operate an academy, a club required one pitch per 30 players registered in addition to an artificial surface such as a 3G or AstroTurf both indoors and outdoors (FA, 1997). Moreover, an academy required medical facilities, study facilities, a parents' lounge and a fulltime EWO (The FA, 1997). In contrast, to operate a CoE, clubs only required an outdoor grass pitch, changing rooms, separate

medical room, floodlit synthetic outdoor area or indoor sports hall (FA, 1997). Much like the previous system, what separates the categories is the level of funding, staffing and facilities. However, the new category system is much more stringent and does not allow for the autonomy that clubs had been afforded in the past (PL, 2011). The new classification can be conceptualised by figure 1 (PI, 2011, p.31):

With an attempt for youth development to become more standardised, there are three major concepts the governing bodies are trying to implement and they are: coaching contact time, training models and staffing quotas (PL, 2011).

A fundamental concept of the EPPP is increasing the contact time clubs have with their players. Under the Charter for Quality, the number of hours which would have been completed by a player as they progressed through the academy was 3,760 hours. The EPPP has drawn upon various sports development systems such as cycling (who undertake 10,000 hours) and swimming (8,360 hours) and gifted and talented systems such as the Royal Ballet School (10,000 hours) and the Yehudi Menuhin Music School (10,836 hours) (PL, 2011) arguing increased practice time is a prerequisite for success. Therefore, category one and two clubs must significantly increase their coaching hours to 8,500 and 6,600 hours respectively from the ages of five to 21.

To achieve the expected coaching hours proposed by the EPPP, each category system has to run particular training models that can facilitate the increased demand (PL, 2011). Category one clubs at the foundation phase, under fives to 11s, must adopt a part time programme that will achieve four hours rising to eight hours incrementally as the player ages. As the players progress in the foundation phase they begin a hybrid programme - a training regime that incorporates elements of the part time model and the full time model, in which players have sessions during the evenings and weekends but also take part in the day release programme where the player leaves school for either a half a day or a full day (PL, 2011). At ages under 12-16, the youth

development stage, players are required to complete 12 hours rising to 16 hours in a full time programme with players undertaking one or two days in the day release programme. Education sessions must be offered to players who take part in the day release programme in both the full time and hybrid model (PL, 2011). The under 17s to 21s operate a full time model in order to achieve up to 16 hours per week in which they are at the club full time and they must complete 12 hours of directed education a week (PL, 2011).

Category two clubs at the foundation phase clubs must offer the players three hours rising to five hours a week and must operate either a part time or hybrid programme. For the youth development phase, clubs must provide six hours rising to 12 hours a week and must run a hybrid programme and the professional development stage utilises a full time programme to achieve up to 16 hours a week (PL, 2011).

Category three clubs are only required to operate a part time programme for foundation and youth development phase achieving three and six hours of contact time respectively. The professional development stage runs a full time model in order to achieve the expected 12 hours of training per week (PL, 2011). Category four teams only operate a full time programme for their professional development stage to reach 16 hours of training a week as they cannot operate an under five to 16 programme (PL, 2011).

The final significant change brought about by the EPPP is the need to increase staffing quotas in order to achieve the desired goals of the initiative. With the growing emphasis of a modernized youth system, sports science has been firmly advocated to maximise players' performances. Clubs are now required

to have strength and conditioning coaches, match analysts and sports psychologists (PL, 2011). Furthermore, to facilitate the increase in players undertaking day release programmes additional educational staff have been recruited in order to supervise study sessions (PL, 2011). An example staffing model for category one clubs has six senior management positions, 15 full time positions and at least 11 part time staff (PL, 2011). For category two clubs, there are six senior management positions, 13 full time staff and at least 11 part time staff (PL, 2011). For category three clubs, there are four senior management positions, six full time positions and at least 14 part time staff (PL, 2011). For category four clubs, there are four senior management positions, five full time staff and at least five part time staff (PL, 2011).

Overall, the EPPP has made significant change to youth football. It sought to implement systems from other sports in an attempt to improve the productivity of the youth football to combat the increasing competition for places to further the prospects of home-grown players to play in the top echelons of the professional game. Three major changes have been brought about by the EPPP: coaching, hours, training models and staffing quotas wherein the following chapters of this thesis will try to gather the thoughts and experiences of EWOs and coaches towards the changes deemed necessary by the EPPP and how they have found implementing the directives within their club.

The Policy Process

In its simplest term, policy is made in response to a problem that requires attention by a given group ranging from the government through to private organisations (Bramham, 2008). In order to address the supposed problem

policy makers have to go through four main stages when producing policy and they are: initiation - the setting of this supposed problem - formulation – the development of policy to address the problem - implementation – putting the devised policy in place – and evaluation – how successful the policy has been at achieving its desired goals (Bramham, 2008).

For the initiation phase of developing the EPPP, the justification for change has been based around the supposed inability for youth systems to create home-grown players at the required level to represent starting XIs in the top echelons of the game (BBC, 2013; Telegraph, 2013b; PL, 2011). Many leading football figures such as Graham Taylor (Taylor, 2007) and most recently Tony Pleat (BBC, 2013), Gary Neville and Jamie Carragher (Telegraph, 2013a) have been critical of the standard of English international football compared to their continental counterparts. Neville and Carragher (Telegraph, 2013a) and Rio Ferdinand (Sky Sports, 2013) further the argument by creating a link to the young players' lack of opportunity to progress in to professional players due to the foreign players' presence in the domestic leagues. However, such assumptions seem to have been based around an ideological viewpoint as opposed to being able to prove a causal link between them through the use of empirical evidence as there has been a lack of systematic reviews that have taken place within youth football.

The formulation of policy is a highly contested space and the power relations within policy networks can influence the direction of policy (Bramham, 2008). As previously mentioned, the setting of the EPPP has been largely ideologically based. In developing policy in such a way it indicates the power of ideology and the ways in which the PL have influence over other clubs.

There has been much debate surrounding the formulation of the EPPP in which it has been argued to disproportionately favour the 'bigger' clubs by creating conditions and provision that only the wealthiest of clubs can afford (White, 2011; Fletcher, 2011). However, given the power that the PL possess it was possible to persuade the FL to accept the changes required or face having much needed funding for their youth development slashed (Fletcher, 2011).

A fundamental stage in the policy process is the implementation phase as the effectiveness of the policy is directly influenced by how policy is put in place at the ground level (Bramham, 2008; Oosterwaal, 2011). Throughout much of social policy literature surrounding the policy process there is a widely reported divergence between the formulation phase and the implementation of policy (Bramham, 2008; Hanstad, Skille & Loland, 2010; Oosterwaal, 2011). This disparity can have detrimental impacts on the effectiveness of policy if policy at the national level is too far removed from the ground or local level (Hanstad et al., 2010) – in this case football clubs. Oosterwaal (2011) explains how this is linked to compliance levels and how the implementers of a policy react to the changes deemed necessary. If the implementers strongly disagree with the directives of the policy the levels of compliance are low which limits the levels of success. Additionally, Oosterwaal (2011) suggests the complexity of change required by stakeholders to implement the policy can also have an influence on how policy is put in place as the levels.

The final stage of the policy process is the evaluation phase. Previously, much of sports policy has largely neglected the evaluation of existing policy which has fundamentally flawed the development of new policies (Coalter, 2007).

The previous system, the Charter for Quality, was not systematically evaluated to assess whether or not its objectives have been achieved. The only review the Charter for Quality was privy to was the Lewis Report (2007). However, it lacked detail and its findings and subsequent recommendations did not change current provision (Anderson & Miller, 2012). It seemed the football authorities merely paid lip service to the evaluation stage of policy and did not properly engage with it. The audit team will play an important part of the effectiveness of the EPPP by evaluating the clubs provisions such as facilities, staffing quotas, coaching hours and game programmes. Yet, with such an ill-defined and ambitious objective, measuring the EPPPs effectiveness is going to be very difficult.

Conclusion

When explaining the policy process in relation to developing the EPPP, it can be argued that the interventions in place to improve youth football have been largely based around ideology due to the lack of empirical evidence that has been undertaken to prove the lack of playing opportunities for young players. As a result, this potentially may have impacts on the success and evaluation of the policy given that the EPPP is attempting to address a very ambitious goal with difficult-to-measure outcomes. Overall, the purpose of this study is to focus on two stakeholders experiences of implementing the EPPP within their club. Therefore, the implementation phase of the EPPP will be examined in the discussion chapter. The main aim is to draw insights into the compliance levels of the EWO and coaches, as well as the club as a whole, towards the initiative to judge how successful the EPPP will be in achieving its goals and if not what the major barriers may have be.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Perspective

Introduction

The previous chapter offered a broader explanation of the changes that are being made by the EPPP. It also conceptualised the policy process in order to place the measurement of the implementation of the EPPP into a wider context. The current chapter will now explain the sociological theory, namely figurational sociology, that will underpin the thesis. It will introduce the theory and will examine the major concepts that the researcher believes will help make sense of the experiences of EWOs and coaches implementing of the EPPP and they are: figurations, power, habitus and involvement and detachment.

Figurational theory, also known as process sociology, originates from the work of Norbert Elias (Roberts, 2009). Central to figurational sociology are figurations, or networks, and how the people that form such groups account for both small scale and large scale social processes (Murphy, Sheard & Waddington, 2000). Elias described a figuration as a structure of mutually oriented and dependant people who can be studied through face-to-face and non-face-to-face interactions (Murphy, et al., 2000). Elias's sociology stresses that to study real people we must do so in the plural, in ever changing webs of social interdependencies whereby people are bonded to each other not only economically or politically but also emotionally (Kiliminster & Mennell, 2003). Therefore, people should be studied 'in the round', simultaneously in all ways in which they are tied to each other in their social existence as this will enhance our understanding of their cognitions and behaviours (Quilley &

Loyal, 2004). Elias developed the concept of figurations to counter what he argued was a false dichotomy between the individual and society, which led sociologists to marginalise the conception that people always come in groups and that society is no more than an organised set of individuals (Hughes, 2008; Quilley & Loyal, 2004; Roderick, 2003). It is through the study of figurations and power relations within them that account for emerging and contingent processes (Murphy et al., 2000). Elias used the civilising process to explain this notion and suggested that society had evolved from the Middle Ages to modern day society (van Krieken, 1998). He indicated a clear preference for understanding social transformation in terms of changes in social conditions, or in the structuring of social relationships, rather than solely attributing significance to the decisions and actions of particular and supposedly more powerful individuals or groups (van Krieken, 1998). Elias also recognised, however, that it is also the case that some individuals are more powerful than others and therefore have a greater ability to affect social change (van Krieken, 1998). Thus, leading to the argument that figurations should be seen to be always in a dynamic state of flux rather than having a fixed identity (Kilminster & Mennell, 2003; van Krieken, 1998).

Figurations

For this study, the concept of figurations can draw insight into the varying dependencies that exist within the (youth football) figuration because people (EWOs and coaches) are dependent on others (players, physios, academy managers, sport science staff as they rely on each other to function and be a successful youth system) inevitably becoming interdependent upon each other (van Krieken, 1998). Studying these interdependencies through exploring the

EWOs' and coaches' attitudes of, and relationships with, significant others such as players and managers can help explain how, according to Elias, social processes such as socialisation, learning and education has taken place and exists within the figuration (van Krieken, 1998). In delving into such social processes it must be noted that people within the football figuration are not entirely influenced to adopt certain predispositions through solely face-to-face interactions, stakeholders, particularly that of EWOs and coaches, are heavily influenced by non-face-to-face interactions from policy makers within organisations such as the PL and FL through education provision and coaching provision. Additionally, they are also exposed to influences by the club chairman and the board of directors to ensure the targets for youth development are being met even though they may never meet them.

Another aspect of studying the figurations within football is the differing complexities that are formed depending on the category system the club has applied for and been awarded. With varying staff requirements in various category systems through exploring the complexities between them it can help shed light on the power relations that exist.

Power

The concept of power is a fundamental notion of the networks of interdependence in which people find themselves (Hughes, 2008). For Elias, power is an aspect of all human relationships that can be best conceptualised through balances of power that are continually in flux (Hughes, 2008; Murphy et al., 2000). Therefore, the people who comprise a figuration are never entirely powerless or totally powerful (Murphy et al., 2000). People can be

thought of as being in a powerful position rather than possessing power, because power is not an object but rather a structural characteristic of human relations, or figurations (Murphy et al., 2000; Hughes, 2008). Power can vary in form and its significance depends on the importance placed on it by the figuration being studied (van Krieken, 1998) for example, within academia, cultural capital is held in high esteem whereas within football bodily capital is held in higher regard. To fully understand a figuration, it is important to have an appreciation for the power relations within it as people who possess more power (for example football managers) have a greater influence on change within the figuration which ultimately affects the acceptance of norms within the groups by the less powerful people in the figuration (Hughes, 2008; Kilminster and Mennell, 2003).

Studying power relations within this thesis can be a potentially beneficial way of examining the extent to which the EPPP is received within youth professional football and how its compliance depends on the attitudes of the implementers – the academy manager, coaches and EWOs. Within youth professional football the academy manager possesses the most amount of power and will work closely with the first team manager (Platts, 2012). Given the intense contestation regarding the implementation of the EPPP (Fletcher, 2011; White, 2012), studying the power relations small scale, within the club, and large scale, between different clubs, varying from the PL to League One, has the potential to shed light on how willing or unwilling clubs are to implement all of the directives expected under the EPPP.

Habitus

For Elias, habitus is 'an automatic blindly functioning apparatus of self-control' (van Krieken, 1998, p. 59), 'it is formed during socialisation and comprise of durable perceptions, understandings and predispositions to action' (Roberts, 2009, p.21). A person's habitus is most impressionably developed during childhood with parents being the dominant influencers of personality structure (van Krieken, 1998). Over time, as a person grows older, their figuration widens through interactions with different people and sharing social experiences such as learning. As a result, their habitus advances and fluctuates and eventually grows with their own personal characteristics beginning to differ from other members of society (van Krieken, 1998). Although a person has an individual and unique habitus, a person's habitus can be shared with similar people who have been exposed to similar social experiences (van Krieken, 1998) for example gender and social class groups. The development of a habitus continues throughout a person's life course and it never ceases to be affected by the changing relations with others (van Krieken, 1998). To summarise, Platts (2012 p.73) offers a concise explanation of habitus:

'the social learning that all human beings are constrained to undertake in the course of their interdependence with others plays a significant role in the development of habitus, and the views we develop, and experiences we have, of the world.'

Exploring the habituses of EWOs and coaches in the study, has the potential tease out what their perceptions are regarding the required changes and if

their personal habituses have impacted upon the ways in which the EPPP has been implemented within their clubs. Moreover, it is possible to create a comparison between the implementation of the EPPP within different clubs in different leagues. In so doing, it may offer an explanation of alternate views towards the EPPP within different leagues and categories as there has been well known disagreement by FL clubs regarding the implementation of the EPPP within youth professional football (Fletcher, 2011).

Involvement and Detachment

The final concept to be examined is that of involvement and detachment, Elias used this to explain ‘the relationship between human understanding and values ... which have usually been discussed in ... dichotomic terms ... for ‘objectivity or subjectivity’” (Murphy et al., 2000). Rather, Elias conceptualises the problem of knowledge through moving ‘constantly between these two poles of ‘involvement’ and ‘detachment’, between an expression of the sociologist’s *subjective* experience of the world, and the attempt to transcend that experience in gaining an *objective, scientific* perspective (van Krieken, 1998, p. 70, emphasis in the original). When conducting research, Elias argued sociologists must find a balance between their involvement and detachment from the aspect of society that they are studying (Hughes, 2008). It should be understood that sociologists cannot cease to take part in, or be affected by, social affairs of their time and issues for which they are studying (Murphy et al., 2000; van Krieken, 1998). Their own involvement is one of the conditions that must be considered when they are trying to solve problems as a social scientist (Hughes, 2008).

The concept of involvement and detachment plays an important part of the research methodology and for the data collection of this study. It has been well publicised that youth professional football suffers from extreme wastage rates (Monk & Russell, 2000; Green, 2008; Williams, 2009) and given that the researcher has been through the process, it is vital that their own involvement and feelings towards youth football, does not cloud the formulation and style of questioning during the data collection. In order to achieve this, according to Elias, the research process should progress through a detour via detachment in which any personal concerns are placed aside to achieve more reality congruent data by not being rushed into evaluative judgements through preordained expectations of results (van Krieken, 1998). It is vital that the researcher is reflexive and constantly assesses the ways in which the data is collected, analysing how the questions are asked to ensure levels of involvement are kept to a minimum (van Krieken, 1998). The following chapter will now provide a justification for the research methodology chosen to enable a detour via detachment.

Chapter 4: Research Methods

Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the theoretical framework that underpins the study and highlighted the major concepts of figurational theory that will help us to understand the experiences of EWOs and coaches implementing the EPPP within their respective clubs. The objectives of this chapter are to: i) justify the use of semi-structured interviews as the main source of data collection; ii) conceptualise the participants of the study; iii) outline how the data collection was carried out and the sampling procedures of the study; and iv) describe thematic analysis and how it was applied to the research data to establish the key themes for discussion.

Semi-Structured Interviews

For this study, a cross-sectional, qualitative, single method research design was employed to generate data from a range of EWOs and coaches in youth professional football in order to address the research questions of the thesis. A qualitative approach was selected given the exploratory nature of the thesis with the focus on gathering insights into the experiences of EWOs and coaches (Bryman, 2012). It was decided that interviews were the most effective method for gathering data from a range of EWOs and coaches throughout youth professional football. Focus groups were ruled out due to clubs only having one EWO per club and an ethnographic study was inappropriate since the research was aiming to gather a breadth of EWOs and coaches throughout the PL and FL.

Semi-structured interviews were chosen over alternative interviewing methods because of the flexibility afforded to the researcher (Bryman, 2012).

Semi-structured interviews generally start with a defined interview guide, however, pursue a more conversational style that could see questions answered in an order more 'natural' to the flow of the conversation (Bell, 2010). This is an advantage of semi-structured interviews because it helps build rapport with the interviewee, which in turn allows for a more informal experience (Bell, 2010). Furthermore, through the flexible experience of the interview, there is a greater opportunity for the interviewee to speak in detail about what is seen to be important which may enable further insight into their personal thoughts and experiences (Bryman, 2012) of implementing the EPPP in youth professional football. Another advantage of semi-structured interviews for this study was the opportunity to probe interviewee responses with subsidiary questions which may open up insightful lines of enquiry and provide new unintended, emergent themes for discussion (Bryman, 2012; Gray, 2004).

From a figurational perspective interviewing is seen as an effective source of data collection as it is possible to explore to the 'I' (individual EWOs and coaches) and 'we' (football officials as a group) perspectives to understand the networks of interdependencies and the complexity of figurations that exist within professional football (Roderick, 2003). Semi-structured interviews gain insight into the 'I' perspective of an individual by designing questions to tease out personal beliefs and attitudes and how they have personally experienced phenomena (Roderick, 2003) (e.g. implementing the EPPP in youth football). Additionally, semi-structured interviews provide the opportunity to study a person's 'they' and 'we' perspectives, that is, the group identity of the figuration

in which they are a part (Roderick, 2003), through designing questions that allow the opportunity to comment about implementing the EPPP as a club. To understand both perspectives, we must use the concept of power and power relations within the figuration in order to understand the collective habitus of that particular group (Roderick, 2003). In so doing, it is possible to gain insights into how we may see people's individual habitus differing to that of the group habitus. For example, the role of the academy is to produce professional players and academy managers, coaches and sports science staff work towards that goal whereas EWOs are focused on the young players' educational attainment. Therefore, with different orientations for the young players, it is beneficial to extrapolate the differences between the two habituses as it could affect the ways in which the EPPP is received by the two roles.

Although there are numerous advantages towards the use of semi-structured interviews we must appreciate that there are some limitations to the approach. When interviewing it is possible for the researcher to influence what is said and the direction the interview follows. Elias suggests throughout the research process there must be a balance between involvement and detachment given that the researcher is a part of the research process (Murphy et al., 2000). Therefore, the researcher must try and limit their influence on the answers provided and ensure that the questions being asked are specifically related to helping answering the research question of the thesis (Bryman, 2012) not just because the researchers interest. In order to tackle interview bias and the involvement of the researcher, reflexivity is vital to achieve this (Roberts, 2012). It is encouraged to constantly review transcripts ensuring what is being

asked is relevant, and most importantly, to ensure the way the question is being asked is not leading (Bryman, 2012). In so doing, the researcher increases the chances of obtaining more valid and reality congruent data (Gray, 2004; Payne & Payne, 2004).

Participants

Due to the socially closed off world of professional football (Kelly & Waddington, 2006) obtaining access to an equal number of EWOs and coaches proved very difficult. As a result, there has been a skew in the data with the disproportionate number of EWOs (12) to coaches (4) with an additional PL official (1). Originally, the research intended to gather equal number of coaches and EWOs spread across the four category systems. However, due to category three and four clubs not being audited until the 2013/14 and 2014/15 season respectively only category one and two clubs were interviewed.

The participants in this study were spread over 12 football clubs, eight category one clubs and four category two clubs. At the time of interviewing, the league that the clubs' first team were in consisted of seven PL clubs, five Championship clubs and two League One clubs. The duration of the participants' current role significantly varied from one year to 15 years allowing for the opportunity to gather transformation over time. To provide an overview of the participants a table below outlines a biography of the participants' interview number, occupation, the category system their club holds, the league the first team was in at the time of being interviewed and the duration of their current role. Such information has been included so the reader is able to

identify the participants and their comments in the discussion whilst, at the same time, protecting the participants' true identity. Additionally, including this information provides an outline of their experience in youth professional football and the various leagues in which category one and two clubs reside.

Name	Occupation	Category System	League of first team	Duration in Current Role (Years)
Interview 1	Academy Manager	1	Premier League	9
Interview 2	Head of Education and Welfare	1	Premier League	14
Interview 3	Head of Education and Welfare	1	Championship	1
Interview 4	Head of Education and Welfare	2	League One	1
Interview 5	Youth Development Phase Coach	2	League One	15
Interview 6	Head of Education and Welfare	1	Premier League	14
Interview 7	Head of Education and Welfare	1	Premier League	6
Interview 8	Head of Education and Welfare	1	Premier League	15
Interview 9	Head of Education and Welfare			6
Interview 10	Head of Education and Welfare	1	Premier League	19
Interview 11	Youth Development Phase Coach	1	Championship	1
Interview 12	Head of Education and Welfare	1	Championship	10
Interview 13	Head of Education and Welfare	1	Premier League	15
Interview 14	Youth Development Phase and Coach Developer	1	Premier League	10
Interview 15	Head of Education and Welfare	2	Championship	1
Interview 16	Head of Education and Welfare	2	Championship	10
Interview 17	Head of Education and Welfare	2	Championship	1

Table 1. Participant biography

Procedure

Prior to the study being undertaken, the Faculty of Applied and Health Sciences Research Committee granted ethical approval on the 13th of December 2012. Interviews were subsequently conducted over a period of eight months from December 2012 to July 2013. In order to obtain the required participants, the use of a 'gatekeeper' was seen as essential for gaining access as the researcher was likely to be seen as an 'outsider', that is, someone who has not been a part of the football figuration and not having played professionally (Roderick, 2006). Therefore, the researcher used an ex-Premier League chairman to help accrue a convenience sample by gaining participants who were readily available but also help to gain the trust of the EWOs and coaches, so they could feel they could be open and truthful in their answers. As a result, the first three interviewees were gained via the ex-chairman directly contacting the participants, with the researcher was copied into the correspondence via email. To accrue more participants to the study a snowball sampling approach was utilised in which previous participants were asked to recommend potential future participants that meet the requirements of the study (an EWO or coach) (Bryman, 2012).

All interviews were arranged at the convenience of the participants and were conducted at the training grounds of the clubs throughout the country (interviews one, two, three, four, six, seven, eight, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 17), the Premier Leagues headquarters (Interview 9) and five interviews on the telephone (interviews 5, 8, 14, 15 and 16). Although the researcher first anticipated conducting all interviews face-to-face due to the logistical difficulties of travelling to the training grounds and the time constraints and cost implications associated with this, some interviews were conducted via telephone. It is important to note that there are some disadvantages to

this method of interviewing (Bryman, 2012). The most striking difference between telephone and face-to-face interviewing was the inability to judge non-verbal communication such as body language (Bryman, 2012). As a result, it was difficult to evaluate how questions were interpreted by the interviewees particularly when attempting to probe with subsidiary questions or questions they were sensitive about.

Interviews, when face-to-face, were conducted in a quiet room ranging from classrooms to personal offices in which only the researcher and the participant were present with only the occasional interruption. During the telephone interviews participants were either contacted on personal mobiles or office phones in which participants either took the phone call in private offices (EWOs) or shared offices (coaches). Participants were then asked to read the participant information sheet (see appendix) which outlined the procedures of the interview in which anonymity was guaranteed. Upon expressing their willingness to proceed, the participants were then asked to sign the participant consent form.

The duration of each interview ranged from 19 minutes to 83 minutes and were all audio-recorded via the use of two digital Dictaphones. All participants were instructed that during the interview, if they so wish, they could stop the recording at any time and were free to withdraw from the study and did not have to answer any questions they did not want to. The interviews were designed to build rapport and a degree of trust by introducing numerous questions that were easier to answer and were focused around their roles within youth professional football. Upon building a degree of rapport the questions then attempted to analyse the effects that the EPPP had on their role before opening up to broader questions about how the clubs as a whole dealt with implementing the EPPP. The questions were intentionally broad in order to tease out what was seen to be important to the participant which helped to

build up personal and collective experiences of implementing the EPPP throughout youth professional football. All interview data was saved onto the researcher's personal password protected computer and backed up on the researcher's own password protected hard drive in order to keep the identity of the participants secure. All consent forms and interview data were kept away from the final dissertation so that the participants' identities could not be compromised.

Data Analysis

All of the interviews were transcribed verbatim, and each of the participants were offered the opportunity to have a copy upon completion of the transcript in which only four participants exercised that right. The transcripts were subsequently subject to thematic analysis which is one of the most common methods of data analysis of qualitative research (Bryman, 2012; Roulston, 2010). Thematic analysis is a process of data reduction that is designed to create emergent themes within and across the interview transcripts (Roulston, 2010). Firstly, the researcher must use a process of coding the data, whereby the researcher considers what has been said by participants and how this relates to the major concepts of the chosen theory and the research questions posed of the thesis and how what is said relates to the previous literature (Roulston, 2010). Examples of these codes are '10,000 hours', 'increased hours', 'burnout', 'report system' 'Ofsted process', 'demand and commitment' and 'lack of feedback'. Once the preliminary codes were produced they were subsequently used to analyse the rest of the interviews. Upon completing the coding process the data was then 'adjusted, collapsed and revised' in order to create categories of data (Roulston, 2010, p. 153). For example, 'coaching hours', 'monitoring and evaluation', 'expectation of players' and 'the audit process'. By categorising the data it was possible to reduce the opportunity to create pre-

formulated coding schemes, which can be particularly prevalent if the research is theory driven (Bryman, 2012). Additionally, it also ensures that the final thematic representations of the perceptions of EWOs' and coaches' experiences of implementing the EPPP were as accurate as possible. When reviewing the categories, it was evident that there were a number of interrelated and similar methods of talk (Roulston, 2010). Therefore, the final process of thematic analysis was to compartmentalise them into themes of enquiry for the discussion in the next section of the thesis. The themes that were formed and will subsequently be discussed in the following chapter are: i) the changes in the roles of EWOs and coaches; ii) coaching hours; iii) it is becoming football, football, football and; iv) attitudes of managers and opportunities for home-grown players.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

The previous chapter has outlined the justification for the chosen method of data collection in order to generate the findings for this study. The purpose of this chapter, the discussion, is to examine the major themes that were obtained from the responses of the interviewees (EWOs and coaches). These views and experiences are to be explained using a figurational perspective to develop an understanding of how EWOs and coaches have experienced implementing the EPPP within their respective clubs. This chapter will achieve this through expanding upon the four major themes that were produced as a result of subjecting the interview data to thematic analysis. The following themes that will be explored are: i) the changes in the roles of EWOs and coaches; ii) coaching hours; iii) it's becoming football, football, football and; iv) attitudes of managers towards opportunities for home-grown players.

Theme one: changes in the roles of EWOs and coaches

Having provided an overview of the changes deemed necessary by the EPPP (chapter three), it is evident that every department throughout youth professional football is required to make changes. It is important to have an appreciation of the how the implementers (EWOs and coaches), have found adapting to the changes because the effectiveness of policy is reliant on their compliance (Bramham, 2008; Oosterwaal, 2011). In this study, the changes in the roles of EWOs and coaches were vastly different with the scale of change demanded of the EWOs being smaller than their coaching counterparts:

“The biggest additionality to what we have to do, to what we had previously, was the requirement to do some educational work with the youth development phase. And also the fact the review process has changed to every 6 weeks which is obviously a lot, a big work load with regards to that ... [but] I think that impacted across the board really [in all departments]” (Interview three, EWO & YDP coach, Cat two, League 1).

“Not at all, because again I and the staff within the educational section were ahead of the game anyway in most ways in fact we have used reports constantly for example” (Interview two, EWO, Cat 1, PL).

“I would say so not at this moment in time no cos’ as I say we were already doing that [the report system]” (Interview seven, EWO, Cat 1, PL).

In contrast the role and workload of the coaches have notably changed:

“the coaching syllabus has had to change drastically, erm, everything has had to, the biggest upshot of it is everything has to be recorded, everything has to be evaluated and everything has to be measured effectively so we’ve had to invest in a number of pieces of software, erm, in order to track player minutes on the pitch, player minutes in the gym, player progression ... so there’s been a lot, basically, erm, I would say pretty much everything has”(Interview three, EWO & YDP coach, Cat 2, League 1).

“it’s long hours, mate, it’s really long hours so Mondays we will be in the office all day ... admin day, reviewing the weekend’s games looking at your week ahead and then we will train our 12s outside in the evening ... Tuesday obviously they get out of school at two o’clock ... and they train two till 9 on a

Tuesday and Thursday. So it's a lot of sort of session planning and looking towards the sessions because of the time we try and look at quite a few different topics and guide them technically and tactically to try and be as comprehensive as we can. Wednesday is a kind of dead day due to our job now, we kind of do admin but every day is manic regarding documentation and trying to put in place everything that is there. Friday the kids either my phase or the youth teams, we have staff meetings and then Saturday and Sunday are both match days" (Interview five, coach, Cat 2, League 1).

With the thrust of the EPPP to specifically improve the standard of football in this country, it is unsurprising that the changes within the role have heavily impacted the workload and job description of the coaches than the EWOs. Interestingly, however, when exploring both EWOs and coaches' thoughts towards the changes, there are stark differences. EWOs have originated from educational backgrounds - within schools - in which change is expected as throughout their teaching career there have been constant alterations in the national curriculum (Johnson, 2007). As a result, teachers have needed to adapt their teaching practices accordingly (Johnson, 2007). Moreover, within youth professional football itself there has been significant changes made to educational provision (Monk, 2000; Monk & Russell, 2007; Platts, 2012; Platts & Smith, 2009; Stewart & Sutherland, 1996) in which EWOs have had to grow accustomed to altering the qualifications being taught to young players. Consequently, EWOs have been socialised through their teaching figurations to develop a habitus - their durable perceptions, understandings and predispositions to action (Roberts, 2009) - that is used to change and is able to cope with the changes required as interviewees seven and nine explain:

“[the audit process] was very intense and very in depth it was like you wasn't sure what it was going to be and how it was going to be. Having experienced about eight Ofsted inspections it didn't daunt me professionally but a lot of people were quite anxious about it [other departments in youth football], in fact we have been Ofsted here twice since I have been here and we've done really well out of it.”(Interview seven, EWO, Cat 1, PL).

“we have taken them in to a world that is different, you know, if you are teacher over the last few years you have got used to Ofsted and it has become a part of what you do and we put an Ofsted type process into football and people that have never been challenged.” (Interview nine, PL official)

Notwithstanding the EWOs ability to cope with change, coaches, it seems, are not used to such transformation within their roles. Under previous youth development initiatives such as the Charter for Quality and the Youth Training scheme, their remit largely focused primarily on facilities, staffing and educational provision (Anderson & Miller, 2012; FA 1997; Platts, 2012). Although, the Charter for Quality did address coaching standards and expectations to some extent by introducing minimum operating standards – in which certain coaching qualifications were required to coach certain age groups – and recommended levels of coaching time with players (FA, 1997). There was not, however, an evaluation process on the role of coaches to ensure standards were being carried out and maintained. As such, coaches had been left to develop their own coaching curriculum which has accounted for the various styles of play within academies and CoE over recent years (McGowan, 2010). The EPPP has now introduced a process whereby coaches have been made more accountable and have been forced to implement modern day pedagogical practices into their sessions and it has not been well received:

“the EPPP is very much document based ... now football is not all about criteria, it's about good people with good experience recognising what kids need at the right times on any given day ... but they are not bothered about that. They want to see a long term development programme and see the differentiation between it, and, more importantly, see that it is documented ... it will change the way that people think and it will make it more professional. But you are dealing with people that haven't been and done 3-5 years at university, you are dealing with people in the football industry and me included and that's so we are not necessarily cut out to do fantastic documents and recognise what this needs and what this does but we are quite good at getting the job done” (Interview five, coach, Cat 2, League 1).

“so nowadays with the new youth development system coaching is not just what you do on the pitch you are [now] always responsible for their all-round development. And I think a lot of coaches are understanding that and I think those who have been in the game a long time don't want to change ... and the sad fact is that some coaches are no longer with clubs because they can't deal with this sort of new way of working” (Interview nine, PL official).

“we have got to make sure we do not change too much, you know, coaches have still got to go and coach and they have got to be out on the grass coaching more in a day. The EPPP has produced more written work which is important but at the same time, you know, you are not going to produce players on the computer, you are gonna' produce players on the grass. So I think you have got to be careful that you don't give coaches too much work as administrators because otherwise coaches aren't going to be doing what

they wanna' do - which is coach and the only way you produce players for me is on the grass, you know, and a lot of old school coaches will tell you the same and will agree fully with me on that" (Interview 11, coach, Cat 1, League 1).

The professional football figuration is a socially closed off domain (Cushion & Jones, 2006; 2012; Kelly & Waddington, 2006; Parker 1996; Platts 2012) which accounts for the lack of external monitoring of coaching provision within youth professional football over recent years. As a result, some coaches have developed a habitus that is unaccustomed to change due to the fact their coaching practices have previously been unchallenged. As such, coaches have questioned the need to make such adjustments on the grounds of previous successes in developing players under their earlier systems. Consequently, some coaches have not implemented the changes at their clubs and, as some of the respondents indicate, some clubs have misled the auditors by altering their behaviour during the audit process and reverting to previous practices on a day-to-day basis, which seriously questions the efficacy of the EPPP and the evaluation process in particular:

"I am not sure if you get checked for four days in two years, Nick, are you going to get better every day and do it right or are you going to do the job when the auditor comes? And then when they have gone, and given you your status, what are you going to go and go back to then? Do you know what I mean and that is what a lot of clubs will do." (Interview five, coach, Cat 2, League 1).

"it's a little bit like as a teacher I went through an Ofsted now when they first come into Ofsted its totally and utterly forced, you put on a show for the

Ofsted people that are in there that week. You know teachers will be preparing lessons three months in advance, the week before Ofsted come in you taught the lesson you know you were going to be watched at. Well that's totally false" (Interview eight, EWO, Cat 1, PL).

Oosterwaal (2011) draws upon two key aspects that can affect compliance levels towards the implementation of policy: the level of change compared to existing policy and the levels of acceptance by the implementers. It is evident within this study that the change to existing policy and the acceptance of policy are mutually interdependent because, in order to make significant change to existing policy, it is vital that the implementers agree with the changes deemed necessary (Oosterwaal, 2011). It appears that some coaches within youth professional football have developed a habitus that is resistant to change due to the lack of previous monitoring and evaluation of coaching practices. Consequently, within that group of coaches, compliance levels with the required changes of the EPPP remain low. Coaches were willing to alter their day-to-day practice upon notice of an upcoming audit in the same way teachers have been found to be changing their methods of teaching and delivering one off lessons during Ofsted inspections (Patton, 2013a; Patton, 2013b; Rojas, 2013). As a result of the falsification of evidence to the auditors, the eventual success of the EPPP may be significantly restricted as not all clubs are conforming to the directives. Moreover, the auditors will not be aware that compliance levels are indeed low and may even believe them to be high, giving a misleading picture to the football's governing bodies who may then be unaware of the need to direct further resources to ensure adequate compliance.

Theme two: Coaching hours

A major driving force for implementing the EPPP was the supposed need for greater access to players and with the notion that more hours spent coaching would increase the chance of producing elite football players (PL, 2011). In theory, this is a reasonable assumption. However, in reality, it has proven to be a misguided and ambiguous concept which has been misunderstood at the local and national level. The EPPP has aimed to increase coaching hours up to 8,500 hours in category one clubs, 6,600 hours in category two clubs, 3,600 in category three clubs and 3,200 in category four clubs (PL, 2011). Despite clubs being given direct instructions with regards to coaching hours there has still been a misunderstanding surrounding the exact quantity of coaching hours young players are expected to undertake. The concept of increased practice resulting in greater performance has stemmed from psychologists Herbert Simon and William Chase on the study of expertise, estimating around 10,000 to 50,000 hours of practise is required to become a master chess player (Simon & Chase, 1973). The 10,000 hour concept has been used in various gifted and talented disciplines such as music and ballet and more recently in sport by table tennis player Matthew Syed and the British Cycling team (PL, 2011). However, making reference to the 10,000 hour concept within the EPPP publication has caused confusion as to whether clubs should be delivering 10,000 hours or the hours stipulated by the category system. Notwithstanding the confusion, clubs have found the increase in coaching hours (which have more than doubled in some cases) too much and are having impacts upon their players:

“I have found the most difficult thing is for the kids that the level of the work load for younger kids in particular has been far too much. You know, this, this tenant of the EPPP is you do 10,000 hours on the grass over a period of 9-21

over a 12 year is a heck of an asking because it stipulates on the grass [bangs fist on table to emphasise] you've got to provide and that's not right for a collision sport, that's not right for growing bodies (Interview seven, EWO, Cat 1, PL)".

"some of their major requirements of what they wanted us to do and one of them was like I keep saying was this 14 hours that they had to be on the green grass and I don't think any club is doing it you can't do it you kill the kids, you kill the kids if you are training 14 hours a week outside" (Interview eight, EWO, Cat 1, PL).

The majority of respondents in this study did not see the added benefit of the increase in coaching hours. When asked how they managed implementing the increase in hours there was a varying response which highlights the power relations that exist within professional football:

"I think what it is, I think some clubs, this is only a personal opinion, have been bullied into something that they don't 100% agree with i.e. I'm talking about the schooling, increasing the hours I think there are clubs out there lying to achieve their category one status they are saying they are doing these hours and aren't because they know they are wrong. We are being quoted as to what players should be doing [yet] they have got no data there whatsoever having footballers doing these number of hours ... whereas we think we have got sufficient data to know what's right here." (Interview eight, EWO, Cat 1, PL).

"10,000 hours is a ridiculous thing! How many hours do Barcelona do a week? Do you know? How many hours do Barcelona do? But we are told to do

this many hours and that many hours if we didn't do that many hours a week we wouldn't be this we wouldn't be that. We don't do the hours people are saying! Barcelona do less hours than us. They do less hours than clubs in this country to start off with." (Interview 10, EWO, Cat 1, PL).

"in terms of the coaches I think it's, they're not quite sure in terms of the hours, erm, we seem to be fulfilling all of the hours that we are obliged to by the EPPP. However, we have heard through the grapevine that other clubs aren't following the hours that have been asked to follow so there's a little bit of concern there in terms of you know if clubs aren't following the hours and we are then what's the impact?" (Interview three, EWO, Cat 1, Championship).

Here is another example where some clubs are not complying with the directives of the EPPP. What is noteworthy is that the club in the Championship, who has secured a category one license, is currently achieving the required coaching hours set out by the EPPP as it is as a major requirement of the initiative. Whereas, the other two clubs – one of which has enjoyed success in domestic and European competitions and the other who secures European qualification on a regular basis - have completely disregarded the EPPP directives quoting data from Lilleshall the national CoE and the hours completed by Barcelona (revered for having one of the most successful academies in the world) as reasons for their lack of compliance. Such volition demonstrates the uneven power balances that exist within professional football. Due to the success of the two larger clubs, it seems they have afforded themselves more influence over the governing bodies as their financial power, as a result of their success, has weakened the interdependency chain between the governing bodies and themselves as they are less reliant on them than other clubs.

As a result, they have gone unpunished for a lack of compliance as they have exploited the notion that without both teams being awarded a category one status, the legitimacy of the EPPP may be questioned as other category one clubs could not play their world renowned representative teams. Consequently, such behaviour can have detrimental impacts on the success of the EPPP in achieving the required coaching hours throughout the country. If other clubs were to discover that the conformity to the hours significantly varied throughout youth professional football, and given the extra staffing, facilities and provision required to accommodate such hours, other clubs may also begin to decrease their coaching hours which would significantly hinder the prospects of the initiative.

Theme four: it's becoming football, football, football

With the increased coaching hours, even though conformity to the directives has varied between clubs, there is now greater access to players at an earlier age than ever before in youth professional football. As a result, there has been an increased expectation placed on players from a younger age but also a much higher level of commitment required on their behalf. Young people's leisure lifestyles are more varied and have become more complex than previous generations (Green, Roberts, Smith, 2005). As such, their free time outside of school is spent pursuing such interests (Green et al., 2005). However, for young footballers their commitment to their respective clubs is now having an impact on their socialisation outside of football because of the increased demands placed on young players brought about by the EPPP. Interview three, 12 and 13 explain the expectations that the club now has on their players:

“the under 12s and under 13 when your talking about 11 and 12 year old kids they’re down on a Tuesday and a Thursday might be get to school at 8 o’clock and 13 hours later finish here. So there’s a massively, there’s a massively big ask for those guys really” (Interview three, EWO, Cat 1, PL).

“I think lots of 9, 10, 11, 12 year olds haven’t got the choice they have got to go when [the club] tell them a training session is on because the manic commitment they have bought into. Their parents, their grandparents have bought in to their aunties have bought in to and they have to do it and I think some of those hours of coaching aren’t constructive, aren’t progressively making them a better player, aren’t developing them. In fact, I think arguably some of them making them worse and making them think I don’t really want this and counterproductive hours spent at coaching sessions and I think taking them for coaching sessions and taking them out of schools is ludicrous I think to take all of the under 12s, 13s under 14, 15 and 16s out of school for 20 per cent of their time is wrong” (Interview 12, EWO, Cat 1, League 1).

“it’s rather arrogant I think, in that it’s kind of putting football up there almost as if it’s the most important thing in the world which even if you have to wait until a quieter moment I think everyone thinks it isn’t the most important thing” (Interview, 13, EWO, Cat 1, PL).

Such expectations and levels of commitment placed on young players is in fact in breach of European Legislation with regards to working hours completed during term time for young people (European Council, 1994). Young players are obliged by law to attend school up to the age of 17 rising to 18 in 2014 and are contracted to their

respective clubs through signing a registration form for two years (PL, 2011). If a player was to display poor attendance the club might question their commitment to the club and towards being a footballer and could decide to release the player or reduce their playing time (Platts, 2012). Such expectation to undertake school as well as being at the football club late into the evening, two or three times a week, is a lot to demand from a 12 year old boy, five years before they can even be considered for a professional contract. One academy manager reflects upon how busy young players' lives are now and stresses the need to be cautious about the expectations and demands of the football club on their time:

“the big thing for is that it allows us greater access to players. But again you have got to be careful with that because they are kids, and it's alright people sitting and saying you need to coach them this amount of hours and, you know, you need to do this, you need to do that, but sometimes people forget that they are kids, you know, they have got brothers and sisters there is other commitments. They have got the school ... the boys who come to the Academy are sportspeople they play tennis, or they play table tennis or they swim, or they do cross country or they play rugby and you have got to take all of that into consideration that you know in some cases they could be doing something every evening or every afternoon.” (Interview two, Academy Manager, Cat 1, PL).

With football increasingly demanding more of the young players' spare time outside of school, there are reduced opportunities to participate in various other sports and leisure activities. As a result, a young players' development of a habitus, their own personal identity, will be heavily influenced by the football figuration. Brown and Potrac's (2009) study of young football players in academies found that, due to their

immersion into youth football, they adopted an athletic identity which took precedence over alternate identities. However, being released had detrimental impacts on their identity and psychological well-being as football was all they knew and their conformity to cultural norms reduced the development of various identities outside of football (Brown & Potrac, 2009). Given their increased interaction at their respective clubs we may see the young players embrace the cultural norms of the football figuration, such as playing through pain and the marginalisation of education in order to display a 'good attitude' (Roderick, 2006; Parker, 1996; Platts, 2012) from a much younger age. With the average young player only registered to their club for three years (FL, 2013) and only 15-20 per cent of young players playing professionally by the age of 21 (Monk & Russell, 2000) demanding such commitment by all the players from ages as young as 9 is extremely misguided. For the players who do get released, there is a high possibility that the increased commitment to the football club limits their participation in other leisure pursuits which will have detrimental impact on the development of a habitus outside of football due to the lack of socialisation outside the sport.

Theme four: Managers' attitudes to youth players and their opportunities

The EPPP aims to reform the existing academy system through modernising recruitment processes, coaching practices and facility provision in order to systematically produce more home-grown professional players (PL, 2011). However, one of the major obstacles that may limit the success of the EPPP is first team managers' perceptions of young players and their willingness to select them. Professional football is characterised by a culture of expectation with a reduced tolerance for failure (Reilly et al., 2008). This can be emphasised by the tenure of first team managers, during the last season 63 managers out of a possible 92 in the

PL and FL were either sacked or resigned (League Managers Association, 2013). With such pressure placed on managers to perform, EWOs and coaches express their concern for the playing opportunities young players have in their first team squads:

“for a club like us who are always just above relegation or dragged into the relegation so do you go with a young player? And let him learn his mistakes or do you go with a seasoned [laughs] international footballer who, you know, what you are going to get week-in-week-out. We had a previous manager here who, who’d made it very clear, I’ve not got time to sit around and wait for a player to develop I need to know someone who can go and do the job now! Because if we lose a game three points, six points we are relegated if I can get those points then we are in the top 10 and we are fine” (Interview seven, EWO, Cat 1, PL).

“over the last 10 years the opportunities players are getting, to get into the first team, is getting harder and harder because teams now have got a lot of money, you know, the likes of Man City have got millions and millions of pounds to go and buy players etc. which, you know, it must be difficult being an academy player at the likes of Man City to get into their first team because, you know, they could just go out and buy players with better, more experience than you” (Interview 11, coach, Cat 1, League 1).

“I do feel sorry for English born players who can be like pushed aside because someone’s got 5 million to go and spend on a foreign player, who’s probably a little bit more developed. I see it, if you’re going to have a system that creates English born players, who are going to develop, then you have

got to give them ... the opportunities to play, and I think if you're in the PL it's very difficult to recruit a 14 year old and look at them and say this boy is PL material. By the time they get through the youth team and the under 21's, then he's gotta' be ready to go into the first team. But the more successful the first team is, the harder the job is for that boy" (Interview two, EWO, Cat 1, PL).

Financial inequalities within professional football are at an all-time high (Platts, 2010) with the latest television broadcasting rights demonstrating the gulf between the PL and FL. The PL have recently confirmed a three year deal worth approximately £5.5 billion for their global television rights (Gibson, 2013b) compared to the FL's confirmed £195 million deal during the same period (BBC, 2013). With managers constrained by the expectation of results, particularly within the PL where teams possess high disposable income and transfer budgets, their predisposition to play young players is low as it is seen as a risk. Managers in the PL have the opportunity and funds to sign a player of a better quality or experience who will increase the chances of success. The lack of playing opportunities is demonstrated by the most recent statistics by the football observatory in which English under 21 players only made up only 2.28% of the total minutes played in the PL last season (Besson, Poli & Ravenel, 2013). However, the EPPP does not attempt to address the attitudes of managers in way that might encourage them to take a supposed risk on young players over experienced professionals. No matter how successful the EPPP is in developing the skills of young players, first team experience is still essential to become an established footballer and unless something is done to change managers' perceptions of the risk of playing young players the success EPPP will be restricted.

Where managers lack the finances to sign experience professionals, however, the opportunities for young players to establish themselves within their first teams increase:

“we’ve got two regular starts that have graduated from the academy that have played every single game so far this season ... the majority of the first year professionals have been in and around the first team. A lot of them have appeared and are on the bench every week and it’s one of those where whilst its dreadful for the club to be in League 1, it’s fantastic for the academy of the club to be in league 1 because there is massive amount of opportunities for the boys progressing through” (Interview four, EWO, Cat 2, League 1).

“I think they will have to rely on the youth a bit more this year as well, erm, because they won’t be going out and getting loads of players so they will have to look at what we have got in our youth team so it might be a good thing for us, in a way, that they have gone in to league1 because more players will be given an opportunity” (Interview 11, coach, Cat 1, League 1).

Given the financial restraints placed on clubs lower down in the FL, managers have been constrained to develop a habitus that will allow opportunities for young players within their club. Therefore, unless managers in the top echelons of the game alter their attitudes towards playing young players, the effectiveness of the EPPP may be restricted to that of the lower tiers of the football pyramid.

Conclusion

The objective of this study has been to examine the experiences of EWOs and coaches implementing the EPPP within their respective clubs. When reviewing the first theme it is evident that the changes in the current roles of the EWOs and coaches were markedly different. It was found that the EWOs in this study, given the constant evaluation and monitoring by external markers such as Ofsted, had developed a habitus that is comfortable with change and has coped with the required provision alterations. In comparison, coaches previously have not been exposed to a process of monitoring and evaluation under prior youth development systems and, as a consequence, their propensity to alter their practice was low. As a result, coaches' compliance levels with recent changes is also very low, with some coaches falsifying their practice and only changing their behaviour during the audit inspections. Such volition has the potential to seriously undermine the EPPP as without coaches implementing changing their practices to implement the changes it calls for, youth development cannot progress as intended.

Within theme two, it was found that one of the major directives of the EPPP – the coaching hours – was met with disdain by the vast majority of both EWOs and coaches. Conformity to the directives varied between clubs which demonstrated the power differentials that exist within professional football (Platts, 2010). It was found that although all clubs disagreed with the increase in coaching hours, some clubs still conformed to the required provision in fear of being reprimanded and having their category licence withdrawn. However, the more successful clubs within the PL with their increased financial power, simply refused to alter their coaching programmes to implement the new required coaching hours. Exploiting their privileged positions as

highly successful clubs, they threatened that removing their category one statuses would question the legitimacy of the EPPP.

Theme three drew upon the EWOs and coaches concern for the increase in commitment and demand on the young players' lives from an earlier age. With the vast majority of young players never going to secure a professional contract and a career in the professional game there is a significant investment in time demanded by clubs in order to benefit only a few. Drawing upon the work of Brown and Potrac (2009) and the detrimental effects on identity upon being released from professional football, it is plausible to suggest that such an increase in socialisation through greater time being spent at the football club, may exacerbate the impact of identity loss post-football as the development of the footballing habitus will be at a much younger age.

The final theme of the thesis argues that managers are constrained by the need to produce results in order to ensure occupational security (Reilly et al., 2008; Roderick, 2006). Consequently young players, especially in the upper echelons of the game, are infrequently given sufficient opportunity to represent their first team. Even if, through interventions like increased coaching hours, the EPPP is able to produce more skilful players they will still require regular first team experience to become established footballers. However, it was found that due to the disposable income available at certain clubs and the intense pressure attached to it, managers are unable to tolerate failure and are inclined to prefer proven, experienced professionals over young players. When financial constraints meant that buying in experience was no longer an option, as with teams lower down the FL, there was more opportunity for young players to represent their first team. Therefore, short term, the EPPP is likely to be more effective in producing players in the lower tiers of

English football as opposed to the higher tiers. If the EPPP is to be a success in the top echelons of the game, more needs to be done to alter the propensity for managers to select younger players for their first team squads.

On the whole, the objective of the EPPP is to produce more home-grown professional players. However, in light of the findings from this study the effectiveness of the EPPP is being significantly restricted by the lack of conformity of coaches to change coaching practices, the lack of compliance by the more powerful clubs and the attitudes of first team managers to afford playing opportunities for younger players. Unless the lack of compliance is improved, the targets set by Greg Dyke for the senior national team, which the EPPP is seen to be a pivotal part in its success (Winter, 2013), will remain an ambition.

Although there have been some insightful findings as a result of this study there are, however, a number of limitations that must be acknowledged. Firstly, the initial research proposal intended upon sampling participants from category one through to four. Unfortunately, due to category three and four clubs not being audited until the 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 seasons respectively, it was not possible to gather their experiences of implementing the EPPP within youth professional football. As a result, the researcher was not fully able to draw full comparisons of implementing the EPPP throughout the PL and FL. Without including the category three and four testaments to implementing the EPPP and given the low numbers interviewed compared to the broader population of professional football clubs, it is difficult to generalise the findings across the youth professional football population.

An additional limitation to the study was the skewed data in that there were more PL clubs and category one clubs than other categories and leagues. Given the

difficulties in obtaining contacts within professional football (Platts, 2012; Roderick, 2006) for this study snowball sampling was heavily relied upon. As a result, when the researcher asked current participants to recommend other people in similar roles at different clubs, they were invariably from the same league or category system as their only contact with such people.

Another limitation was the difficulty in obtaining more coaches given the disproportionate number of EWOs to coaches. After each interview with the EWO, the researcher enquired about interviewing one of the coaches at the clubs. Unfortunately, some EWOs refused as they argued the coaches would simply decline, whilst other EWOs passed on the coaches' details to the researcher but the vast majority of coaches did not reply to the researcher's attempts to establish contact. Such attitudes towards academic research can be argued to be indicative of the socially closed off world of professional football in which gaining access is so difficult given the scepticism, at times, displayed towards 'outsiders' (Kelly & Waddington, 2006; Parker, 1996; Platts, 2012).

With the EPPP proposing drastic changes to youth development there are a number of potential areas for future research to be undertaken to broaden the research area of youth professional football. With the increased time demanded by professional clubs of young players, some players are now spending up to 40% of their educational timetable at the football club (PL, 2011). Yet, there is no systematic evidence that measures the effects of being at the football club for such a length of time on the educational attainment of players. Additionally, within the clubs who have implemented the required coaching hours, little is actually known about what effects this has had on the young players physically as the training loads have had to change in order to accommodate the increase in hours.

Within theme four, the evidence has suggested that some first team managers in the top tiers of English football are reluctant to play young players within their first team squads and have chosen to sign more experienced professionals instead. Therefore, a noteworthy study that would shed more light on this issue would be an exploration of managers' attitudes towards young players, in an attempt to ascertain why it seems managers are reluctant to afford more opportunities for young players. Finally, given the lack of representation of category three and four clubs in this study, gathering data on such clubs could benefit current knowledge as the experiences of category three and four clubs of implementing the EPPP is still unknown.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Interview Transcript

NA: Ok [education and welfare officer], thanks very much for taking part in the study, erm, could briefly provide with a background of yourself and how you got into the role and your professional background?

Interview 13: mhmm, I was a school teacher and taught at one school, the same school for 26 years in Bootle, erm, taught P.E trained in err P.E and physical sciences, taught P.E, Science, R.E initially, erm, became second in the department after three years and then after 8 eight years, became head of P.E just for three years and then became head of year and did that for 15 years and that's your 26 years. Erm, taught the end, or the last five years of that time I started to coach at [club] in the evenings so therefore when they, the role when academies were just about to, to be put in place and the various jobs and roles within that were being decided upon, one of them was called, originally, education and welfare officer, erm, number of people didn't like that title because in schools, for years, the person who would come in to discuss the attendance of pupils was called the education, erm, or the education officer I think it was called and people just remembered that and didn't think that it, erms, they didn't was to be thought of in that way. Now from our clubs from the word go I was known as the head of education and welfare it was just something that our academy manager did, he gave everyone head of, in front of their, their role if you like as part of their title so, they all said 'ahh yeah, head of education and welfare' so that was it, erm, and that was 15 years ago in this May.

NA: And what made you want to get a job in youth professional football? And move out of teaching and into full time-

Interview 13: I didn't. I didn't want to, I wasn't looking to. It wasn't something that I had given any thought to it came round out of the blue one Friday evening I turned up to coach and err the now head of coaching, erm, collared me in the car park and said err been at this meeting in Leicester today and erm about academies and he said erm there is this job education and welfare he just said erm you need to think about it, it could be you and all that and I said 'yeah, ok, thanks' had a cup of coffee, polished my boots and went and coached and then on the Monday, erm, the academy manager or CoE director as they were called then collared me and said '[EWO], I was at this meeting on Friday or Thursday and I never cracked on he said there is this job education and welfare and can we chat about it? So we did. And erm it sound quite interesting, nothing extra special at the time, erm, I am a manager in school, erm, the following day and on the way out of school at half six, 7 o'clock head teachers door is open, I just knocked on the door. Hello come in and all that, you know, [headmaster] can I just have a word the [headmaster] could I just have a little chat and he said yeah, sure [EWO] so we sat down and I said I'm not sure but I think I was offered a job over the weekend, erm, he said oh yes go on, explain so I

did and he said to me very generous I thought, I mean, it seem to have your name on it, erm, and I said I'm only saying this to you because, well, I 'm just being dead up front and I will listen and follow developments but I said I haven't said anything by way of yes or no or whatever and he gave me time off, a couple of day, to go to meetings and stuff [sighs] and erm, because they, Ideally wanted someone in post in May the beginning of May erm thinking it through over Christmas and all of that, erm, I made the decision that I would go for it and that was early February, mid-February, in order to resign in time, you know, give notice. So, that's what I did and when I took the job I continued to go into teach GCSE and A-level classes that I had, erm, which was nice because I didn't just walk out of the door and sort of never to be seen again at school because it meant so much to me. It was more than half my life at the time, 26 years so it was, it was a massive decision but erm, I got some great support from school. I don't know whether they were trying to tell me that they wanted me to leave so they were supported me as I went or, you know, some message there but I have not been in for a few months but I still go back into to school and see people from school and, erm, maintain the links and the connections and that over the years.

NA: Ok, great. What is the central part of your role now? Erm, given that maybe the EPPP has come in. Has it changed at all since it's been implemented?

Interview 13: I think like any other job over a period of time it's probably developed and grown, erm, and its, its evolved. I would think its evolved at different clubs in slightly different ways because it's probably down to the individual [coughs], the individual personality, erm, which way they would take a job, you know, which direction [coughs] erm, we are currently, erm, involved like most clubs in developing further and further and further their relationships with the schools in order to achieve greater access to the youngsters but when we are working with these youngsters we have a massive responsibility with them and what we are trying to do with them all the way through is safeguard their, erm, their academic and sort of, second career ambitions if you like, erm, so everything that we do, whereby we try to spend more time with them, you know, we have do it in a very sensitive way, so I'm quite involved in developing these things in other ways at the moment, erm, whereas prior to [assistant welfare officer] coming in everything that happened I kind of, well I will still have a handle of it but he'll have a tight hold of it and [assistant welfare officer] is involved with the post 16 education now so the scholars provision and he will, link and work very closely with the provider and the boys and where necessary, the parents and other staff and but obviously I am still around and still dipping in and out of it and I am trying to devote a lot of my time to developing further our schools release programme which I think is quite extensive anyway, erm, but we are just trying to refine it I suppose in some respects but grow it in one or two others but just in subtle ways we are not trying to go bizerk and try to take on something that, that is doomed to fail even before we start because that would do nobody any good, erm, but also, you know, conscious as I said of the responsibility and the, the need to just

keep all of these individuals in focus rather than, you know, this idea of lets have them for more time.

NA: And could you just outline the day release programme that you currently run what model do you use? So you operate as a hybrid or a full time model how do you do it at Everton?

Interview 13: Well its, [coughs] its hybrid in all age groups except the 15s and 16s they have a full time model for the 15s and 16s it was just the 15s, and now we have a new intake ready to go into this single school for next year so then will have 15s and 16s they are the only age groups that we operate a full time model with. All the others are involved with the hybrid model which varies from under 9s one Friday afternoon in four, they come to us for extra technical work, the 10s and 11s come in two Friday afternoons in four and we are looking to develop that whereby there is a school work element to that and they'll also have an evening coaching session that follows on with that. Currently, the under 12s come out for half a day a week and that as we speak is a Thursday, they are picked up at school, they are brought here as close to quarter to two as we can coach from two till four, shower, change, hot meal into class with a qualified teacher for an hour and half, they bring work from school the teacher supports them with their work if necessary and ensures the atmosphere is conducive then write in the boys planes what work he brought, sign it with a comment and then a coach comes to take them on the grass so it's like having a full day with us but only coming out of school for the afternoon and as you may know many schools only have one lesson in the afternoon now, some have two but compared to the morning, you know, they are far more prepared to forgo that time with the boys err, hopefully because they believe in what we are doing and they trust us under 13 and 14s come our two afternoons a week along the same lines as I have just described will the school work element and the evening session and now the under 15s and 16s have a full time model and that's a school nearby called [highschool] which is an academy just recently become an academy brand new £26.5 million pounds building, 1500 pupils voted the best secondary school in the country by the Times educational supplement, erm, and we are very lucky they have a great deal. I have just come from there now.

NA: Ok you bring the 15s and 16s into a little bit like what Man united do with Ashton Moss is that what you do?

Interview 13: Well Ashton upon Mersey well Man united do it slightly different, erm, we offer to all of the boys in the, in that age group man united just cherry pick for reasons I understand and that's the way they do it but they only offer it to certain ones and they offer it to them lower down as well, erm whereas currently we are just years 10 and 11.

NA: And if they are release from the clubs 10 and 11.

Interview 13: Well they wouldn't be released before [coughs] until march and April in year 11 because it's a two year registration and if they are everything that is in place remains in place, erm, but at the same time we would support them trying to get a scholarship at another club and in the last four years that we have not offered a scholarship to has gained a scholarship elsewhere, so hopefully what happens here helps them in here or elsewhere.

NA: Ok, just in relation to your sort of schools how many schools would you approx. do you liaise with about?

Interview 13: Before the boys came into if you like a large number of them into one school, erm, I think it was 117. 18 months ago 117 school for about 130 odd boys, yeah 128 or summit boys and that is without the scholars.

NA: Yeah and how did you find liaising with those schools? How did you find negotiating the time for them to club into the club and do the day release programme.

Interview 13: Erm, it took time and err obviously a fair amount of effort but generally speaking schools, you know, if they are proper schools and guided by the right principles and values, then they want whatever is best for each individual and if they regard our programme as being anywhere decent then they will want the youngsters at their school to have those opportunities, erm, and then over a period of time I suppose it's about trust, developing those relationships and developing trust, erm, and it was pointed out recently to me that, that's probably on a personal level is start on a personal level because obviously if I am going in to the school or speaking to them on the phone or I am writing to them then until they know a fair bit about the club it's me that they are taking on trust, erm, or in, in time to come [assistant welfare officer] or whoever that's just the nature of it and you are almost like the man on the front desk as it were, but erm, after that its more about the programme they trust and believe in the programme that we provide and they are invited in and they come and watch them play and they come to meetings here, I go into schools so, you know, it kind of, the relationship grows and blossoms to the point where unless I come out with something completely outrageous which hopefully I'm not going to then they generally speaking very supportive.

NA: How is your job evaluated in terms of being deemed a success?

Interview 13: erm, in, in crude terms by my peers if you like and in particular the coaches it would probably be judged on how much time I am able to negotiate with the schools for them to have with the boys during school time so they, the more time I can organise for the boys to be in here the more they will think oh yeah he does alright. Erm, I would like to think that we as a department are judged against some, some far more, erm, basic principles or a more basic checklist than that because I'd like us to be judged as caring for the youngsters, erm, looking to develop them individually and also in groups because we work with them in groups, erm, and to be

genuinely interested in them, you know, to have a knowledge of them as people their families, the dynamics within their family, erm, the performance of the youngster in school and kind gathering intelligence isn't it? And over time pulling in as much information as you can and basing decisions that you make for their benefit or for their good, upon what you know as a parent more I think and I think that's the baseline isn't it you'd want you want to treat them the same way you would like to be treated.

NA: Ok, and how about education in terms of the scholars, obviously a few welfare officers that they are judged on their success by their pass rates and err the qualifications obtained by the scholars what is it like here for the pass rates for them?

Interview 13: The pass rates are high, very high. Erm, it's a petty really that people have that, that black and white view of, of success I'm not even sure that I like, erm, success cause, cause it is so difficult to define I think it's' almost when you know when you are sent surveys sometimes by different organisations and its more about satisfaction, erm, rather than success and I think what's very satisfying for us at the club and certainly me as an individual is when, you see boys elsewhere either and it isn't just playing football either on the pitch and very often on the television or in the new papers or just by word of mouth just enjoying a successful life because hopefully at the club we have given them a lot more than just qualifications, and just technical, erm, coaching and, and understanding tactical understanding and so we hope it's a lot more than that and personally I'm confident that it is because when you meet boys or when you speak to them on the phone you text them after you have seen in the paper that they have scored or whatever and you are sending texts messages backwards and forwards it feels pretty good. So, from a satisfaction point of view its very, very rewarding just, just, being, just like it was at school just seeing people that you taught and being contact with them or, or through somebody else so and so asked about you the chap who was in yesterday says 'ah the lad that works for me used to go to your school you used to teach him' and then he mentioned his name and of course I taught there was about six brother and I taught 5 of them or there was 7 and I taught six of them so those kind of things are great so it's not just about exam results like at schools it isn't although, sadly, schools are judged pretty much first and foremost on that aren't they? League tables! You don't have league tables that involve any kind of pastoral or welfare input they just, it's not just quantifiable is it? It's like trying to grab hold of a load of air and stick it in your pocket, not possible and yet no question in my mind the most important thing of all.

NA: Sure, just moving on to the EPPP I did some research last night you have been awarded category one status how did you find the actual application process and having to compile all of the reports?

Interview 13: The application process, erm, [clears throat] I would liken it to the very first Ofsted inspections and obviously I was teaching when they were first introduced

and many schools will have been doing many things really, really, well but won't have had documentation, you know, to back that up, won't have been able to produce evidence at the click of their fingers to, erm, to reinforce something. So, we found ourselves having to do that like the very first Ofsted. Whereas, from now on, erm, having put all of the paper work together and the policies and various documents on a computer and in many cases in a paper copy now that we have done that we just need to tweak it and top it up and modify it as we go along because things will change, erm, but it was a, it was a bit daunting a huge team effort required because if you let the side down and I've worked my socks off then I am not happy with you and if I have let the side down and you have worked your socks off then I'm the weak link in the team because you don't just get category one in one department it's based on the performance of the academy and, and beyond the academy because we needed the support and backing of the, erm, the senior executive team within the club and the first team manager and so on, erm, so yeah it was hard work. Fantastically rewarding all along the way and sometimes, erm, bit like a helter skelter ride, got a bit scary and then erm someone said oh what about and you think that's right I need to that or I need to link it to this. It was just, erm, a major operation that, erm, because most people not everyone but because most people applied themselves in the right way because it mattered to them we got the provisional offer, of, of category one status, erm, and then as with every club we have a got a little checklist of things that the auditors felt we needed to improve, add to or tidy up or whatever and then we had a re-assessment visit and its after that, that they then come back and ratify it so finally that's it rubber stamp, official, category one, whereas, prior to that it was provisionally which felt nice, you know, you see it up in lights and is it for real?

NA: And what are your thoughts on the actual initiative itself?

Interview 13: I think it great. I think it's been needed, I think Academies and the academy system has been allowed to drift and Howard Wilkinson in 1998 put together the Charter for Quality, well he started to put it together in '97 but it was implemented in '98, erm, it, there was tons of great things in it but he left the FA and although there were at the PL who tried to take hold of it, he was working for the FA and then people at the PL tried to take hold of it and that but it was rudderless really for quite some time and was allowed to drift and then clubs started to, erm, follow their own agenda, which is understandable but not necessarily for football as a whole because we all need each other and, therefore, there needs to be some commonality within it and the EPPP has addressed those things and aims to take it to another level. Now, I can't say that I am 100% behind everything that is in it but in principle but A) it was necessary and B) I think it good, erm, its, its rather arrogant I think, in that it's kind of putting football up there almost as if it's the most important thing in the world which even if you have to wait until a quieter moment I think everyone thinks isn't the most important thing in the world but the way in which it was presented and this has been to some people who would be a case of football again,

hey, they think they are this, they think they are that, premier league with all of this money trying to rule the world and that's where I think we have to take a—that's where we have got to get it right because if we don't footballs reputation and in particular the clubs reputation and then you take it down further, strip it down further, you know, our academy individuals within the academy and so on all at risk of, of damaging all of that so we have to take our time I think and be very considered in our approach to applying it.

NA: Erm and when you said you are not 100% agree with it what aspects of it that don't agree with?

Interview 13: Erm, it's not a case of agreeing or disagreeing, erm, I'm not terribly comfortable with the hours that, erm, we are expected to spend with some of the younger age groups. I think we are in danger of taking over their lives and I just, what helps to put it into perspective to me is that fact I have a grandson who is 9 and although he spent a little bit of time up here he's not in the system but if he was I just know the impact it would have on him and his family and I find it a little bit worrying, although in most cases the families are 100% chuffed and committed and all that because obviously they feel great about it because obviously their son this and their son that and I can see all of that but I also have a slightly different perspective obviously I can sort of see it from both sides not completely but, but to a degree anyway and, erm, we just have to be careful sometimes because the impact it has on family life and on the youngster, individually turn their heads sometimes they get a bit pleased with themselves they feel that there is nothing else in the world other than football only worry about that and I don't think that is healthy.

NA: That's a resounded theme most of the welfare officer I have actually spoken to have been very concerned the required coaching hours. Erm, is there anything as a club that you are trying to maybe assess or look at that? The effect that is actually having on the players?

Interview 13: Erm, no I don't think we have specific strategy in place but I know that every time we look at the programme I've pretty much got the programme ready for next year but even up to a couple of days ago when I came back to the coaches with a slight variation on the schools release theme for the primary youngsters, erm, and we then if we agreed with it we were then going to have to alter some areas of the programme, erm, one thing we had to do was take one night of coaching out in order to accommodate this particular schools release arrangement and it's probably the best thing we have done in recent times because when you add the time that the schools release session will give to them but you take out a session the night before because they have been in here four nights on the run and they are tired and 11 years of age erm its probably good that we have done that and also the schools release afternoons are great because we have longer with them so I think the approach of the coaches is slightly more relaxed and they are not rushing to get all sorts of work done in one session in the evening and just hang on we are almost

finished just let's do this and let's do that and I think the coaches sometime try to cram so, it makes for a more conducive coaching atmosphere I think really.

NA: Have you spoken to other education and welfare officer and how they have found implementing the EPPP? And what have they said to you.

Interview 13: Yeah, erm, one club just simply told the Premier League we are not doing those hours and then came up with research and backed up their position if you like, erm, and I respect them for that. Right now, we are not, we don't want to necessarily approach it in that way I think we have got to look at the hours, try to achieve the recommendations and then judge it as we go along ourselves and you see if we are ever going to be allowed to formally and officially reduce the hours then it has to be as a result of a few years of experience and, erm, feedback from clubs and you know someone with the, erm, from a really from a base of like understanding to then collate this information and gather and speak to people more and more, engage other groups and other sports and so on before we then say. Ok, we are actually ok with this or what we will do is change our approach slightly and we will have fewer hours at this time of the year and may increase it at that time of the year and so on. I don't know where we are going to end up but I think it will be reviewed but you can't review something until it has had an opportunity to run for a while and of course not all clubs have been audited yet category threes I think they may have finished the category 2s at the moment and just starting category 3 and then there is 4s so it will take a while but it will also in taking the while to complete the audits it gives us time to run it and try and come to our conclusions.

NA: Yeah, of course. Erm, do you have much contact with Martyn Heather and his support staff from the premier league?

Interview 13: Yeah, yeah.

NA: and what is your relationship like with them?

Interview 13: Very good I think.

NA: How often would they come into you and talk to you?

Interview 13: I was a part of a working group that met up once a month in London so I would see Martyn once a month that hasn't obviously, that, that kind of shut down for the summer and I'm sure that we will kick back in and we have regional meetings, we have national meetings and one or two other initiatives come up in one or two of the meetings so I will see people then but they are just on the other end of the phone Martyn was up here about three or four weeks ago with a delegation of Chinese head teachers he came into school where we have our full time model and he, erm, and he came, erm, and then he came here in the afternoon.

NA: Just talking about the players now then. How is the time, the players time divided between coaching and education for the scholars the under 18s? How often do you do education with them?

Interview 13: Their education sessions, scholars, Monday an hour a half, Tuesday are an hour a half and six hours on a Wednesday. Interspersed with, erm, NVQ session on a Tuesday and Thursday lunchtime.

NA: So it's almost every day?

Interview 13: Yeah the boys who are doing A-levels will, erm, will go across to college on a Friday afternoon.

NA: and how many boys are doing that?

Interview 13: Erm, well one boy has just completed two A-levels, so he has just finished his second year and in the, the boys going into the second year we have two and the boys coming in as first year scholars we currently have two and that might change because we are just half ways through the initial assessment process.

NA: and what are your thoughts on the educational programme offered? Erm, obviously the NVQ, the BTEC but also trying to implement A-levels, some clubs do and some clubs don't what are your thoughts on the educational qualifications on offer?

Interview 13: Well they are a bit prescriptive, erm, from the top certain individuals within the Premier League, erm, philosophically flawed, I think their approach to it. You see because it is government funded and the, erm, PL act as the fund manager they attract the funding from the government and then obviously sort of spread it around and pay for things in order to maximise the funding they use the modern apprenticeship as the vehicle and whilst I think there is lots of pluses there, and that's attracts serious funding the other options and variations if you like are less well funded and I think I say to the boys it is about courses for horses not horses for courses so we need to provide what is best for you which might not be what is best for him which might be different again to him and so on but there is a little bit of dangers that I'm convinced shoe horn the boys into doing BTEC and nothing else or resist seriously other studies for example, A-Levels and I, I just don't think if everything else about what we do is, or everything else we do is about providing for the individual then that's where I think it's philosophically flawed because in many respects we are not. Now we are not the only people and I am not claiming we do it fantastically well but we try really, really, hard to present the full picture to the boys rather than make their choices and within that I have no problem saying to the boys the BTEC sport or BTEC courses fit really well with your lifestyle as a footballer you have a hard, physical job and very demanding plus of course it's what you want more than anything in the world to do and the BTEC fits that because you can pick it up and put it down, take it with you and bring it back all that kind of stuff, erm, but

many of the boys that are with us if they weren't with us would do A-levels and some still want to and that's great as long as they can show us that they are the right type of person to do that they will approach it in the right way because there is no point in doing A-levels and making a mess of them or getting grades that are hardly worth having you may as well do BTEC sport which is a very different learning style but achieve very well in it and get really good grades and points etc. so I worry that, that they try to prescribe based on the, the funding issue which is an issue for them which is a concern for them I know but, but I think that informs what they want doing more than they actually should for me anyway.

NA: Ok, and what are your thoughts on the educational qualification for helping them find alternative job careers or paths if they are released from-

Interview 13: It depends what qualification they come away with because when you say *qualification* [emphasises the singular] they do not all do the BTEC sport here. Ok most of them do but they don't all do that and when we talk to them in the initial assessment meetings and when we go into their school to discuss this specifically we factor in second career options and of course at that age not many of them have a real idea with what they want to do because their head is full of football and understandably. But we try to remind them that if they do well here and they chose wisely and then they are successful what it gives them is, is choices when football ends, whenever that is. So, that's, that's always the way we try to present it to the boys, erm, and it's not an add on its not just something that is stuck on the side of football it goes with the football so a boy came in yesterday with his mum and he was signing his professional contract and obviously the media department in the club were making a bit of a fuss in our media room downstairs with the sponsors names on the backdrop all that kind of thing signing a two year professional contract after signing a two year scholarship and in August he will get results of his two A-levels which will be A's and his twin sister who is at the same college as him will get A's as well and she'd have done four plus critical thinking, plus general studies so she'll have six A-levels or something like that and he wants to do medicine and so does he but his is that's his second career so he is in, he has achieved really well on both fronts and he has got himself a professional contract so its, erm, it's a great situations to be in but it was never just stuck on the side it was always a part of his programme it mattered that much to him and it is up to us to make sure that it matters to all of them and we do all we can to influence them.

NA: Ok, erm, given that obviously it's not seen as an add on here what is the attitudes of the erm actual coaches towards their education?

Interview 13: Erm, it's improving and generally good but they have their moments and I have my moments with them.

NA: And what do you mean by that?

Interview 13: [laughs] I mean that we disagree sometimes and I mean that I say to them that they perhaps don't fully respect the rest of the programme they get a little bit blinkered and a little bit locked in to their football and they are employed as football coaches but they all have sons and daughters and I always challenge them, you know, along the lines of 'is this what you would like, what would you do if this was your son? Is this what you want for your son?' 'no, erm,' they stutter a bit in response, erm, but we get there and things have improved over years, erm, certainly from the start which was more than interesting in the first few years trying to change attitudes and trying to affect people, erm, but if it's important to the youngsters that will show and hopefully the rest of the staff can't help but respect that will have an impact on them.

NA: Ok, what is your relationship like with the academy manager and how often do you speak with him regarding education and also with the coaches?

Interview 13: I think it's really good and, erm, and I would say, erm, I speak to him three or four times a day, fantastic support absolutely fantastic support! So, erm, so I couldn't ask for more I'm very, very happy with the situation.

NA: Ok, and do players parents speak to you about their child's development?

Interview 13: All the time.

NA: Ok and how do you find that?

Interview 13: Great. Great because let's face it the, the stakeholders if you want to call them that with regards to the young boys progress and his whole existence are his parents and brothers and sisters his, erm, his school and right now the club and I think, I mean, talking to, to erm a parent on the way back from school this morning about their family holiday in Florida and how his invitation to an England development squad session has cut a big hole in their holiday in Florida 'what should we do, how would, what's your advice' and things like that and you think about it and what a privilege it is to be in a position where people ask you questions like that, that they think you have their sons best interests at heart to the point where they are almost asking me for advice or at least a view on it and, erm you know, also a lot of responsibility goes with this so it's great dealing with parents is a massive part of the job and a very rewarding part of it because it's, absolutely essential, you know, because, because we are after the same as them the best for their son.

NA: Ok, erm, what happens when the clubs releases a player here? 16-18 and also under 16s what process do you have in the system?

Interview 13: well obviously there would have been reports produced, erm, regarding the boys performance and progress parents will be invited in and its almost we don't term it in this way but it's almost like traffic lights the system isn't it everything is fine smashing, you know, great keep up the fantastic work. Erm, there are a few concerns, you know, you need a lot of work on this you need to do that maybe you

maybe need to pay attention a bit more or the red light could simply be look we are really sorry but he doesn't seem to be performing at the required level and we don't see scope for improvement to that degree so we are going to, you know, we are not going to offer him a registration for next year. So then if it's the red light and if its good night then we have to support him in all sorts of ways so I will contact the school his age group coach will take on the responsibility of supporting him to find another club if that's what he wants, erm, if necessary I will speak to the local schools association to sort of try and introduce him to those people because he will be good enough but he may just not have been available so they might not be aware of him so, erm, sometimes the parents need a lot of support as well because their dream is shattered in the way that or sometimes more so than the youngsters.

NA: Ok, just to conclude now then if you could change anything in youth professional what would it be?

Interview 13: I think I would try to reduce the number of youngsters that clubs sign up. I think there is too many in the system I think it's an elite programme it's title, is you know the EPPP! And the performance plan so if they are elite players really can't be that many of them and I believe there is too many and I think, that's, that's the major one trying to reduce the number of youngsters in the system, erm, and make it genuinely elite.

NA: Erm, are you confident are well versed in child protection and safeguarding procedures?

Interview 13: mhhhmm

NA: and why is that?

Interview 13: because we have an on-going programme, erm, so everybody as part of their FA qualifications will do a safeguarding workshop and would have been formally CRB checked and more recently they will go through the DBS process, erm, obviously they are renewed as and when although the DBS process its slightly different now the renewal, its more the updating of rather than renewal of, erm, and we have in house training for the various groups so we will have a safeguarding workshop for coaches and it will involve issues and scenarios around their role we will have one for drivers we will have one for medics we will have one for whoever else. So, we, we try to tailor it and we try to put this programme and we are trying to keep the awareness levels up all the time so codes of conduct, codes of practice, recommendations and we are just discussing at the moment ways of monitoring how the different groups perform or behave or, or how they work.

NA: and has there been any instances of abuse at all, that you have had to deal with over time your time – any instances?

Interview 13: Erm, there have been situations I think because safeguarding isn't just about abuse so there have been a number of things that we have had to look into,

erm, some of them needed no further action and some needed further action and we have a head of safeguarding or a children's services officer based at [football ground] and a safeguarding and children officer based at the academy but this person oversees it all so we link very closely with him in those situations the, you know, we have followed the appropriate path and, erm, and taken the appropriate action.

NA: and not breaching confidentiality here but what are the sorts of issues have there been?

Interview 13: what sort or how many?

NA: Both really.

Interview 13: erm, not many and often to do with relationships.

NA: In what way?

Interview 13: Erm, staff player relationships, erm, and perceptions different perceptions of, erm, of the family they take particular view, erm, because they feel constantly under pressure in some cases with regards to their son's performance and if he is not performing well or he's released then in some cases obviously not in all, they will look for a reason possibly, possibly someone to blame, erm, so something's along those lines I'm not sure it's absolutely appropriate to, to say much more than that really because I am not trying to give you the impression that nothing has ever happened here but likewise what has happened here and at I'm sure what may have happened at other clubs as well is, erm, is not something that is appropriate to discuss.

NA: Ok. Erm, is there anything else that you would like to add to what was said today?

Interview 13: Not really I don't think, its occasions like this are interesting because you very rarely stop and consider things in this way in the whole but, erm, but if there is anything that you want to come back to me about once you transcribe it and listen to it first and then write it up then feel free to do so.

NA: Ok, that's great.