Øystein Røynesdal

The transition from academy to professional football

An examination of factors influencing players' progression when encountering and adapting to a first team context

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Øystein Røynesdal[1]

Norwegian School of Sport Sciences[2]

Abstract. Based on the transitional phases outlined in Jones et al. (2014), the main objective of this study was to examine factors influencing players' progression when encountering and adapting to a first team context in the transition to professional football. Using a hierarchical content analysis, transcribed semi-structured interviews with eight elite development coaches in two professional football clubs was inductively and deductively analyzed. The analysis generated six higher-order categories influencing the progression in the encounter and adaption phase of the transition. These were; adaptability, survival strength, practice behavior, social competence, nature of elite football and relationship between academy and first team. Collectively, these higher-order categories illustrate the multifaceted and complex nature of the academy-to-first-team transition when encountering and adapting to the context of a professional football club. Following this, practical implications and recommendations for future research are discussed.

Keywords; career transition, professional football, talent, junior-to-senior

Introduction

> *The final step of a player moving into the first team is the meeting of attitude, a talent and after, the character of the manager to make room for him to play. At some stage you have to stand up and say I stand up for this boy Saturday afternoon at 3 o'clock because I believe he deserves to be there. But of course, you never have the guarantee even if you have such long time in the game, you never know exactly how a boy will respond to his first mistake and the pressures of the game, but if you want to bring players up; you have to stand up for it!*

Arsène Wenger (Arsenal, 2015)

As Arsène Wenger illustrates, there are certain elements in young footballers' careers that have to come together when attempting to reach the professional stage of football. Not only is football considered one of the most complex and competitive sports in

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which to attain expertise (Haugaasen, Toering, & Jordet, 2014), but out of the 256 million people who regularly play football world-wide, only 113 000 of these are registered as professionals (FIFA, 2007). In many ways, this highlights the difficult pathway for young players when endeavoring to reach the promised land of elite football (Haugaasen & Jordet, 2012).

For young English footballers, breaking into the highest level of professional football in the Premier League may be even more challenging. Since the establishment of the English Premier League (EPL) in 1992, the Premier League clubs have been equipped with the capability of attracting some of the best players in the world due a global commercialization and rapidly rising revenue from television rights causing an ever-increasing financial prowess (Nesti, Littlewood, O'Halloran, Eubank, & Richardson, 2012). Consequently, a scenario has been formed where young English players not only have to be the best in terms of English standards, but in terms of a world-class standards, making the journey to the first team football of the Premier League even more difficult (Mills, Butt, Maynard, & Harwood, 2014b)

Furthermore, due to the quality of the professional players and the "win at all costs"-culture of the Premier League, young talented footballers struggle to get appearances in the first teams (Bullough & Mills, 2014). In 2013, the playing time of English under-21s in the Premier League had descended to 2.28% (the lowest since 2005) with only 35 English under-21-players making appearances in the league games (BBC, 2013a). Additionally, only 32.26% of the minutes played in the Premier League was accounted for by English players (39.63% accounted for by British players; English, Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish) (BBC, 2013b). In a broader perspective, this magnifies the contextual difficulties for a young English footballer, not only when attempting to convert himself into a Premier League player, but also when endeavoring to remain in the first team line-up as an established professional.

A wide range of studies have been conducted on the development of expertise and elite performances in sports (e.g. Durand-Bush & Salmela, 2002; Gould, Dieffenbach, & Moffatt, 2002; MacNamara, Button, & Collins, 2010a, 2010b; Tucker & Collins, 2012) contributing to the accruement of a comprehensive understanding of the requirements for developing and maintaining elite performances (Mills et al., 2014b). But recently,

researchers have accentuated towards elite development in football, and more specifically to the attainment of football expertise (e.g. Ford & Williams, 2012; Haugaasen & Jordet, 2012; Haugaasen et al., 2014), elite football performance (Jordet, In press), the elite development contexts of academies (Mills, Butt, Maynard, & Harwood, 2014a; Mills et al., 2014b; Morley, Morgan, McKenna, & Nicholls, 2014) and getting to the professional world of football (e.g. Holt & Dunn, 2004; Holt & Mitchell, 2006; Mills, Butt, Maynard, & Harwood, 2012; Morris, Tod, & Oliver, 2014; Van Yperen, 2009). But despite of these valuable contributions to our understanding of expertise development in football and the environments engendering these processes, there are still questions yet to be answered to provide more robust guidelines for nurturing players at various key stages of development (Williams & Reilly, 2000). One of these key stages of development is the junior-to-senior career transition from the academy to first team context of a professional football club.

Sport transition researchers have defined career transitions as periods of normative (i.e. predictable, anticipated, voluntary) and non-normative (i.e. unpredictable, unanticipated, involuntary) events in the life of developing and established athletes characterized by "a set of specific demands related to practice, competition, communication, and lifestyle that athletes have to cope with in order to continue successfully in sport" (Alfermann & Stambulova, 2007, p. 713). For example, for a young talented footballer transitioning to a first team context, a normative event may be the promotion from the under-21s to the training sessions of the first team due to sustained performances at a high level for the development squad. On the other hand, a non-normative event may be getting pulled from first team training despite of performing well, and getting reinstated with the under-21s.

Contemporary literature shows that both conceptual (Pummell, 2008; Stambulova, 1994; Stambulova, Alfermann, Stauer, & Côte, 2009; Wylleman & Lavellee, 2004) and empirical research (e.g. Jones, Mahoney, & Gucciardi, 2014) have been conducted on the transition from youth to elite sport. More specifically, researchers have investigated the junior-to-elite transition in ice-hockey (Bruner, Munroe-Chandler, & Spink, 2008), track-and-field (Bennie & O'Connor, 2004; Hollings, Mallett, & Hume, 2014), rugby, (Jones et al., 2014), event riding (Pummell, Harwood, & Lavallee, 2008) football (Mills et al., 2012) and male team sports (Finn & McKenna, 2010).

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The transition from youth to the elite level is a complex and dynamic developmental phase (Hollings et al., 2014; Jones et al., 2014), where training and competition in the pursuit of excellence are the main areas of focus in the life of young elite football players (Mills et al., 2014b). It is a development process which may endure between one and four years (Stambulova, 2009), a phase which, for most athletes, is characterized by non-linear performance trajectories (Gulbin, Weissensteiner, Oldenziel, & Gagné, 2013). The transition from junior to senior is often instigated in team sports when players train with a first team or slightly contribute in competitive situations (Stambulova, Francka, & Weibull, 2012). Abbott, Button, Pepping, and Collins (2005) suggest that the performances of young players' may be especially unstable when transitioning between different phases of development, and this may be particularly so in the transition to elite sport, which has been described as extremely demanding and stressful for players (Finn & McKenna, 2010; Stambulova, 1994; Stambulova et al., 2009).

Several researchers have highlighted athletes' application of coping strategies within periods of transition as beneficial for the progression of players' careers (Abbott et al., 2005; Finn & McKenna, 2010; Jones et al., 2014; Van Yperen, 2009). For example, Van Yperen (2009) showed that young elite footballers who made the step to the professional level engaged in problem-solving coping behaviors as one of three psychological factors that distinguished non-professional from professional players. Consequently, this indicates that young players are not only dependent on sport-specific ability (i.e. technical-tactical) to deal with the transition to elite football, but also other domains of development (e.g. psychological attributes and behaviors).

Empirical evidence shows that athletes encounter a range of challenges when transitioning from youth to senior professional sport. More precisely, these strains refer to the athletic (Bruner et al., 2008; Finn & McKenna, 2010), social (Finn & McKenna, 2010; Fletcher & Hanton, 2003; Mills et al., 2012) psychological (Cook, Crust, Littlewood, Nesti, & Allen-Collinson, 2014; Holt & Dunn, 2004; Miller, Cronin, & Baker, 2015; Mills et al., 2012), organizational (Morris et al., 2014), socio-cultural (Larsen, Alfermann, & Christensen, 2012; Larsen, Alfermann, Henriksen, & Christensen, 2013; Mills et al., 2014a; Nesti, 2010) and environmental (Mills et al., 2012, 2014a) aspects on-and-off the field.

Elite development academies exist primarily to produce individual players for the first team, which often induces an interpersonal competition between aspiring academy players to secure one of the few professional contracts offered by the club (Mills et al., 2012). More specifically, tension between the ambitious athletes may arise when individuals adhere to personal agendas incongruent with the team goals during competition (Fletcher & Hanton, 2003). On the contrary, elite development coaches have underlined the importance of understanding that being a team player enhances young footballers' chances of becoming professionals, as well as displaying interpersonal skills and being cognizant of the environment in which they function (Mills et al., 2012). But due to the competitiveness of these environments, aspiring players have reported difficulties socially integrating in first team milieus (Morris et al., 2014). Additionally, players have shown reluctance to seek support and confide in other team members about personal uncertainties and weaknesses due to a fearfulness of others players exploiting that to their advantage (Fletcher & Hanton, 2003). As the transition into elite sport represents a shift in social support from parents to new teammates (Bruner et al., 2008), and especially, in light of research stressing the significance of support mechanisms (e.g. Martindale, Collins, & Daubney, 2005; Mills et al., 2012; Richardson, Gilbourne, & Littlewood, 2004) and seeking social support (e.g. Holt & Dunn, 2004; Van Yperen, 2009) for young talented athletes, players' capability of handling these social dynamics represents attributes which may have an influential effect on individuals' further progression to elite football.

In addition to the exhibition of social competence to sustain an effective development, researchers have highlighted the importance of the psychological aspect (Miller et al., 2015; Van Yperen, 2009); especially in the transition to professional football (Mills et al., 2012). More specifically, mental toughness and resilience have been identified as key attributes to overcome and recuperate from adversity on the path to the elite level of football (Cook et al., 2014; Holt & Dunn, 2004; Mills et al., 2012). In interviews with experienced football coaches, they accentuated the significance of mental toughness, and more explicitly, displaying resilient behavior by moving quickly on from setbacks and putting aside disappointment when attempting to secure a professional contract in the Premier League (Cook et al., 2014). In support of this, young sub-elite players and elite development coaches described resilience as a necessity to overcome personal and contextual obstacles when striving to become a professional player (Holt & Dunn,

2004). On the contrary, researchers have shown that players on the verge of being released were lacking in delayed gratification, coping strategies and determination to succeed (Holt & Mitchell, 2006). Additionally, newly-published research suggests that young elite players prepare insufficiently for difficult situations which may influence their junior-to-senior promotion (Mills et al., 2014a). Through these lines of research, the evidence indicates that the psychological aspect of a young footballers' skillset may be especially crucial when endeavoring to reach professional football.

It may not only be the handling of setbacks and social relations which is of relevance for aspiring footballers coming through, but also adapting to and understanding the culture of an elite football context. The culture of professional football involves, not only the daily practices, operational mechanisms and explicit processes, but tradition, unwritten rules, precedents, values and patterns of belief (Nesti, 2010). As an example of this, elite development coaches have been shown to epitomize 'arbiters of taste' as they generate subjective talent-defining philosophies in which players are socially configured to legitimize (Christensen, 2009). Researchers have suggested that being unable to understand the club culture may induce a discrepancy between actual patterns of behavior and those expected in a professional context (Jones et al., 2014; Pummell, 2008). Similarly, other researchers have suggested that a lack of role models and a shortage of communication between staff at the professional and academy level may cause a culture-shock for players when reaching the elite standards of the first team due to a lack of knowledge of the tacit or implicit expectations from the club, other first team members and coaching staff (Larsen et al., 2012; Larsen et al., 2013). It seems logical that having built relationships with professional players, this may enable talented individuals to harvest the experience of older senior players pertaining to behaviors and the suitable handling of challenges at the professional level (Mills et al., 2014a). For example, by adopting a proactive approach to educate players on factors contributing in the transition to professional level, this may facilitate better academy-to-first-team conversion rates due to the staggered nature of the introduction to senior teams (Morris et al., 2014). This may also contribute to simplify the hard-won process of gaining acceptance and the respect from the senior players and first team coaches (Finn & McKenna, 2010). Consequently, forming measures assisting young players' integration into the squads and attaining an understanding of the culture of professional football may be of great magnitude for the transition to the elite level.

This extant evidence implies that the transition to elite football is as a complex, multifaceted and dynamic process where players encounter a wide range of challenges in which they need to overcome to effectively progress to the next level. But a recent study on a professional rugby context in Australia suggests that the transition to the elite level comprise different phases; an anticipation phase, an encounter phase and an adaption process (Jones et al., 2014). During the *anticipation* phase (i.e. knowing what to expect in National Rugby League-context), the flourishing transitioning players were generally concerned of being capable of reproducing the standards of the professional level. Further, they exhibited a love for the game precipitating a more extensive investment of personal resources in the transition experience, as opposed to the players failing at the transition, who overstated their resources. In the *encounter* phase (i.e. moving into NRL-squad), the players who made the step managed to identify the requirements and confidently adapted to them, compared to the non-transitioning players who had a negative take on this phase. During the *adaption* process, the transitioning players described the importance of understanding that failure helped you improve, both as a player and mentally. On the contrary, the unsuccessful players failing at the transition depicted an apparent discrepancy between demands and expectations which made adapting difficult (Jones et al., 2014).

In addition to career-transition literature depicting the transition as a complex and dynamic process (e.g. Finn & McKenna, 2010; Stambulova et al., 2009), these findings from Jones and colleagues indicate that the transition to professional sport may comprise different phases. Furthermore, each of these phases may involve distinctive complex and dynamic processes with unique demands in which players are required to comply or conform to in order to successfully transition onto the professional stage. In light of valuable contributions to our understanding of expertise development in football and the environments engendering these processes, there are clearly still questions in need of answering to provide more guidelines for effective developing players in the developmental phase from junior-to-senior (Mills et al., 2014a). Although Mills and colleagues (2012) provide specific and much-needed knowledge on the complex blend of factors influencing young players' progression at a *critical* stage in the transition to professional football, it is not possible to apply their findings to the different phases (e.g.. encounter phase and adapting phase) of the junior-to-elite transition as depicted by Jones and colleagues (2014).

Therefore, this study intends to build on the transitional phases outlined by Jones and colleagues (2014) and conduct a qualitative in-depth investigation of elite development coaches' perceptions of factors influencing young talented footballers when encountering and adapting to first team contexts at Premier League clubs. More specifically, the inquiry of this study revolves around the following research questions: a) what characterizes young footballers' progression when encountering the first team context of a professional football club, and after, b) what characterizes transitioning players' progression when adapting to these first team contexts?

By extending the knowledge of the phase-specific demands in the transition to professional football, this may contribute to a more complete understanding of its nature and the identification of key types of behavior and attributes associated with a successful progression. Following this, more robust guidelines pertaining to the distinct phases in the transition from the youth academy to the first team context may be provided which, consequently, may generate more home-grown and local players at the highest level of professional football.

Method

Using a hierarchical content analysis (see Sparkes & Smith, 2014), the aim of this study is to conduct semi-structured interviews to examine the views of elite development coaches pertaining to factors influencing young players' progression when encountering and adapting to a first team context.

Context

Many professional football clubs are in England structured into a professional and a youth department (Relvas, Littlewood, Nesti, Gilbourne, & Richardson, 2010). The academies of elite youth football are organized and fully-financed by professional clubs, whose primary objective is the development of young players to the professional level of football (Richardson et al., 2004). These academies are the highest ranking development structures in England (Mills et al., 2012), and responsible for registering players, organizing match programs and delivering a special training scheme pertaining to three stages of development; foundation (9-11 years), the youth development (12-16 years) and the professional development phase (17-21 years) (Premier League, 2014). At 16, when entering the professional development phase, the academies select young

promising players to undertake a two-year full-time training scheme, known as an academy scholarship. Upon completion at 18, the scholars are either released from their youth contracts or offered to sign their first professional contract enabling them to continue their pathway to professional football (Mills et al., 2012). If receiving their first professional contract from the club, the player becomes registered to under-21s or the reserves squad while continuing to strive in his endeavors to reach the first team.

Participants

Eight expert development coaches, all male, ranging from 28-59 years of age participated in the study, and were all recruited from professional Premier League clubs. To ensure the depth and information-rich cases, a purposeful sampling was employed to recruit the participants in the study (Patton, 2002), as well as a 'gate-keeper strategy' allowing the researcher to apply the gatekeepers (i.e. academy-employee) knowledge of personnel to identify suitable members of the community (Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2011). To certify their status as experts, a number of pre-conditions were set; a) working full-time as an academy coach and having obtained a UEFA A/Pro-license, b) minimum of five years of coaching experience and c) having worked with or been responsible for facilitating players' successful progression to the professional level in the first team (i.e. Premier League). Six of the coaches had between 6-28 years of coaching experience. Two of the interviewed coaches had only three years of experience working full-time with the under-16s and under-21s, but had previously worked part-time at the club. Also, these participants had a background as professional players in the Championship and Premier League. Due to the stage-specific inquiry of this study, the participants were recruited on the basis of their day-to-day responsibility of players in professional development phase (i.e. 17-21 years).

Procedure

Following the approval from the Norwegian Data Protection Authorities, the process of identifying suitable clubs was undertaken. On the basis of an assumption that clubs' academy-to-first team conversion rates may imply a well-driven praxis for bringing players through to the first team, suitable clubs were identified on the account of home-grown players registered to the first team squad. This information was derived from player history statistics on the clubs' official websites.

Some participants are only accessible by approaching the institution in which they reside or work, thus gaining access to them requires approval from a manager of operations at the site, known as formal gatekeepers (Seidman, 2013). After initial contact was established with informal gatekeepers (i.e. a respected employee at the club academy), an information letter was e-mailed to the formal gatekeeper (i.e. academy manager/head of coaching) detailing the nature of the study. Following this, the researcher was granted access to the environments allowing data collection to be carried out in two field-work trips visiting the different training grounds of two professional football clubs.

Interviews

To obtain an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of elite development coaches pertaining to the conversion of young promising footballers into first-team-professionals, individual interviews were utilized as the method of data collection (Seidman, 2013). A provisional interview-guide was pilot-tested on four elite football coaches with work-experience in the Norwegian Premier League (Tippeligaen). This allowed the student researcher to make alterations to ensure the narratives of the guide and the stability of data collection over time (Sparkes & Smith, 2014)

Before the interviews begun, the researcher detailed the information letter to each participant before the informants consented to contribute to the study. All the interviews ranged in duration from 35-87 minutes, with most lasting approximately 45-55 minutes. A semi-structured interview guide was carefully structured to elicit open-ended responses pertaining to four main areas; a) *before the transition* (e.g. when players are selected to train with the first team), b) *encountering the first team contex*t (e.g. what would you as a coach look for in players coming into the first team training sessions?), c) *adapting to the first team context* (e.g. expectations and demands from first team coaches and players) and d) *maintaining a successful transition* (e.g. what's important to maintain performances with the first team?). All the interviews were transcribed verbatim, allowing the student researcher to better immerse with the data and gain a sense of the whole (Seidman, 2013). After, the transcribed interviews were sent back to different coaches for verification to ensure no statements were misinterpreted or transcribed incorrectly (Patton, 2002). All the coaches received an ID-code (e.g. Coach

6 = C6) to ensure their anonymity, and only this code was referred to in the transcribed interviews used in the study.

Analysis

A hierarchical content analysis (see Sparkes & Smith, 2014) was adopted for analyzing data. This approach entails 'identifying patterns in the data collected and explore the ways these patterns interplay hierarchically' which enables researchers to 'contrast and compare what is in the data, divide the data into larger or smaller categories, and identify, coherently describe and order the material collected' (p. 116). All qualitative analysis is typically inductive in its initial stages, as themes emerges from data, but evolves into a deductive process as the researcher assesses and affirms the authenticity of his inductive analysis (Patton, 2002)

Following the procedures for adopting a hierarchical content analysis of data (Sparkes & Smith, 2014); the first step of the primary investigator is immersion into the transcribed data to familiarize the content. Specifically, this involved reading the interview texts repeatedly and identifying segments of data containing meaningful information to the inquiry of the study, whilst making personal notes of initial thoughts. After, these meaning units were labelled with codes derived from the exact text or reflective of its content, known as an initial coding scheme (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). These codes, or raw-data themes, were coalesced into clusters of topical commonality which emerged as higher-order and lower-order categories. As an example of this, raw-data codes such as '*presenting yourself confidently'* and '*exuding confidence when meeting first team'* were grouped to create the higher-order theme; '*presenting yourself right when with the first team'*. After, the primary investigator thoroughly reexamined the raw data themes and clusters, also known as cross-checking (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Finally, this categorization of data into higher- and lower-order clusters of generality was reviewed by two experienced qualitative researchers. The emerging higher-order categories contributed to obtaining general knowledge on a macro level describing the different phases of the transition to elite football.

Trustworthiness

In qualitative research, the terms *credibility* (i.e. the coherence of data and intended focus of study*)*, *dependability (*i.e. a detailed description the methodology, procedures

and interview guide ensuring consistency of data collection), *confirmability* (i.e. ensuring the rootedness of data in the context and persons from the research) and *transferability* (i.e. the extent of transferring findings to other groups) have been applied to describe aspects of trustworthiness (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004; Sparkes & Smith, 2014).

To ensure the credibility of this study, a number of measures were initiated; a) the primary investigator had broad knowledge of the different teams, coaches and players in the Premier League which assisted in the sampling of suitable coaches and clubs, b) to ensure the appropriate method for data collection, the student researcher obtained extensive guidance from highly-qualified supervisors to compensate for a lack of experience in using qualitative methods, c) the student researcher received advice from other researchers with pertinent knowledge of the culture of English football to better understand its nature and build rapport with coaches, d) the transcribed interviews were sent back to coaches allowing for 'member-checking' to avoid misunderstandings or misinterpretations of their narratives, and lastly, e) cross-checking of the labelled raw-data themes, the higher- and lower-order categories was conducted by the student researcher and two highly-experienced researchers.

By providing a rich description of the selection and characteristics of the participants and environment of study (i.e. professional academy), this allows the readers of this study to apply the current findings to other sufficiently congruent contexts. To ensure dependability, a description of analysis, procedures and interview guide was detailed allowing others to inspect and evaluate the transparency of this research (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). As a measure of dependability, a reflexive stance outlining the social background and positioning of the researcher was adopted to ensure a 'thoughtful and self-aware analysis of the intersubjective dynamics between the researcher and researched' (Finlay & Gough, 2003; in Sparkes & Smith, 2014, p. 20)

In this case, the researcher is a male 25 year old masters' degree student at the Norwegian School of Sport Sciences. He has a background from football, having played semi-professionally in Norway, and is currently employed as Head of Coaching and Head Coach of the under-15s at Røa IL, as well as a Sport Psychology Consultant for the under-16s at SK Brann.

Results

A total of 169 raw-themes emerged from the initial inductive analysis of data. From these raw-data themes, 20 lower-order categories and six higher-order categories arose that collectively represented factors perceived by elite development coaches to influence players' progression to professional football when encountering and adapting to a first team context. These six higher-order categories were; adaptability, survival strength, practice behavior, social competence, nature of elite football and relationship between academy and first team. A framework of the different factors influencing the transition to professional football is shown in Figure 1. Each of the categories will be accounted for in the paragraphs below detailing its relevance pertaining to the encounter phase and adaption process of the transition. As players' promotion to the first team context are primarily determined by the first team manager and staff, the anticipation phase of the transition will not be accentuated in this section.

Adaptability

This higher-order category refers to the various aspects in which young players have to adapt to when transitioning to the first team context. Specifically, this category consisted of four lower-order categories: *adapting to the managers' philosophy* (e.g. understanding the requirements of the manager), *adapting to the style of play in the first team* (e.g. capacity to adapt tactically to the style of play), *adapting to the speed of play* (e.g. understanding and processing football information quickly) and *adapting to any type of circumstance* (e.g. adapting to different coaching).

Adapt to the managers' philosophy. All of the elite development coaches emphasized the importance of adapting to the managers' key principles, ideas and requirements. When encountering the first team context, Coach 5 stated that "it's a crime if you go and train today and you get undone on one of the manager's key principles". Additionally, when players come up to train with the first team, which often happens around pre-season, the manager may assess their qualities differently requiring players' to enthusiastically embrace any new ideas:

> He might be a center-forward, but the manager might have something in his mind; 'Actually, I think I might play him off the right hand side as a midfield player' and want to see him in a training session. So you've got to be able to adapt in that perspective (C2).

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At a later stage, when adapting to the first team context, all the coaches highlighted players' ability to understand and fulfill the requirements of the first team manager to get selected in the starting line-up. More precisely, this entailed exhibiting qualities to ascertain your position as an asset to the group, as these quotations from Coach 4 and Coach 5 exemplifies:

> So they can go up there with a certain set of qualities, and they earn the credibility and the trust of the players and the staff. I think it's then being adaptable to what the manager wants because that is what's going to get you selected in the team (C4)

> Whenever you ask first team managers what they want from players, they always talk about trust; 'I got to be able to trust that he can do the job and I got to be able to trust that he won't switch off when it matters' (C5)

But as Coach 8 highlighted, gaining the trust of the manager by identifying and conforming to his key principles has to transpire quickly, especially during transitions of different managers:

> I've worked with seven or eight managers here, and a lot of them are looking for different things. Where some managers might be looking for arrogance, others might be looking for humility. And again, there are some players who have failed here because they've not read the change in manager and not read what he's looking for (C8).

Adapt to the style of play. Seven of the coaches highlighted the importance of adapting to the style of play when encountering the first team context, because "as soon as the manager says this is how I want to play, they [players] have to grasp it quickly" (C8). More precisely, this involved players exhibiting an specific understanding of the footballing principles of balance, width and depth, as well as different roles, positions and formations to make the right decisions, innovatively solve problems and figure out how to affect a game by exploiting the strengths and weaknesses of teams. Coach 4 detailed that "you've got to go up there and whatever practices or sessions you're going into, you've got to understand very quickly what the rules and conditions are and what the manager wants from the session". Adding to this, Coach 6 explained that "if you don't have a good game understanding and you're not football intelligent, at first team
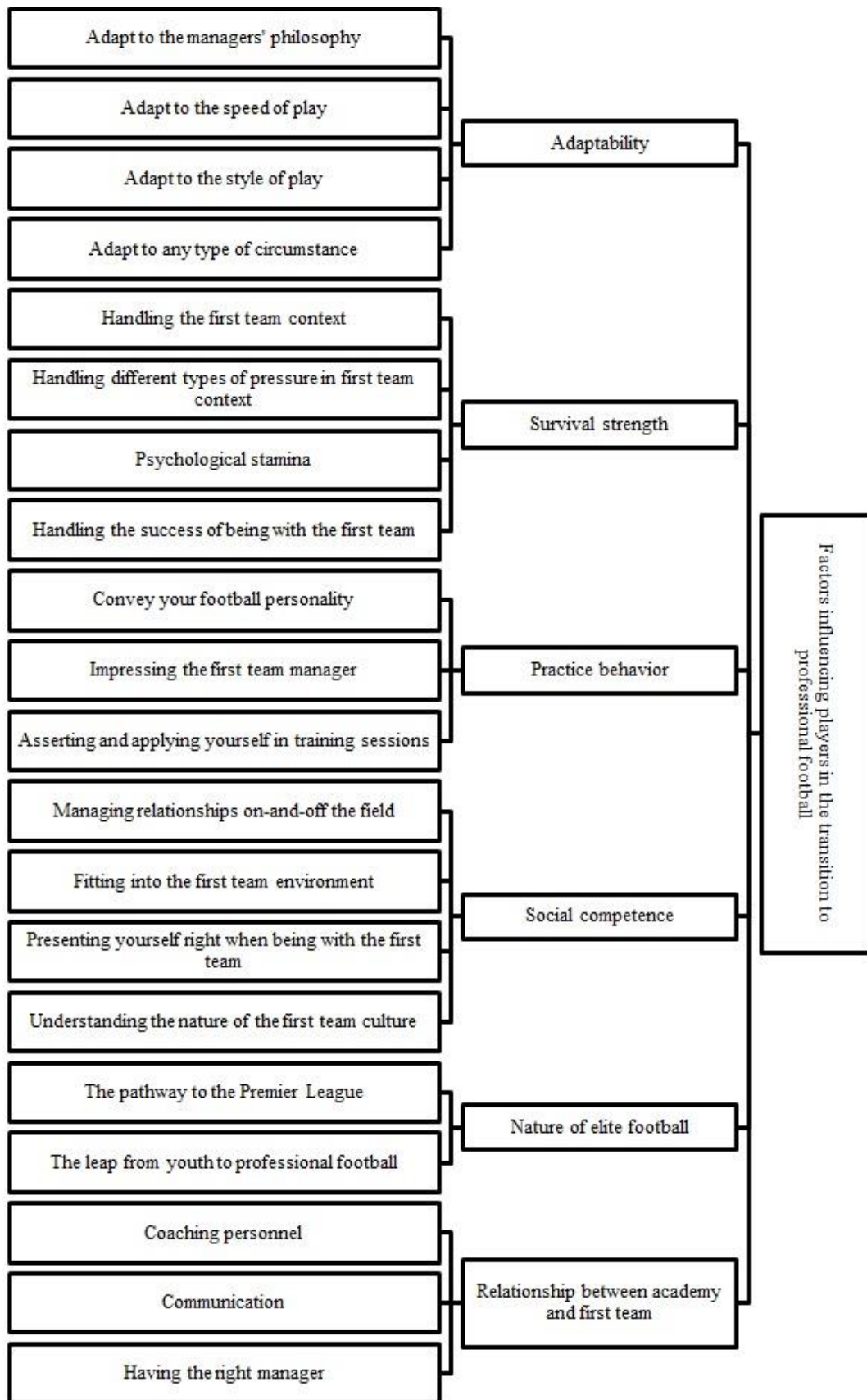
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Figure 1: Six higher-order categories and 20 lower-order categories influencing players' progression in the transition to professional football

level, you'd get found out". Accordingly, Coach 5 illuminated how players had to earn the senior first team players trust by letting them know that "if they give you the ball, you'll keep it for the team", and as Coach 8 described, to "do it on a sustained basis over a 90 minute training session, over a week and over two weeks".

Table 1: Example of the process of analysis from meaning units and initial coding, to lower- and higher-order categories

Meaning unit	Code	Lower-order category	Higher-order category
Can you cope in an estranged environment outside this bubble where all of a sudden winning and little bits of detail are so important? Because it is players' careers, it is mortgages getting paid; so there's a real significance to losing the game	The significance of professional football	Handle the demands and significance of professional football	Handling the nature of the first team context
Again, as in the animal kingdom, the lion survives probably a little bit different to the meerkat, both capabilities of surviving. I think as long as you have outstanding survival strength, whether it is physical or mental, or it might be wit or humor, surviving in that changing room and surviving on that pitch in terms of body language or humor or whatever, they've got to learn to develop that as a mechanism to survive	Having outstanding survival strength	Surviving in first team environment	

Adapt to the speed of play. Six of the coaches emphasized players' ability to adapt to the speed of play. This entailed understanding, processing and applying football information (e.g. think quickly with the ball) and having the technical attributes to adjust to the speed of play (e.g. being technically capable in the sessions). More specifically, when encountering the first team environment, Coach 4 explained that "in terms of players, there's credibility you've got to gain first [through your] footballing ability, the ability to deal with the technical levels up there" to avoid becoming a session-wrecker. But more importantly, "you can't rely on good technique alone, because it's so quick that you need to have a very high level of perception and reading of the game" (C4) because "now that they've gone over there, they've integrated and the balls are flying, are they able to adapt? Are their eyes and brains able to adapt to the speed of things?" (C8). Coach 1 described how "taking on football information and applying it is very important in this age" which enables the players "to read and interpret the other players [in the first team], and play on their wavelength" (C4).

Adapt to any type of circumstance. Seven of the coaches highlighted players' capability of adapting to any type of opponent, environment or circumstance. More specifically, when encountering the first team context, the nature of the sessions changes as "a lot of it is preparing for the game, recovery and maintenance" (C10) and "you're almost peer-coached by others players" (C10). Furthermore, four of the coaches emphasized players' ability to adapt to any environment, scenario or situation, as Coach 5 described, "we want those players who have attributes of adapting; adapt or die. This is what's happening, it's unorthodox, but I'm going to do this". As an example of this, Coach 5 said:

> A center-half marking in the box, we always talk about Leslie, who's a top player and Jimmy. We've had them both in and showed them both a situation [and they solved it in] two totally different ways. Leslie says 'I'll do this'. Jimmy says 'I wouldn't do that; I would do it like this'. Two huge different things, Leslie's marking on this shoulder and Jimmy would say 'nah, I'd mark on that shoulder. I'm a bit slower then you, so if he's quicker than me…'

In the adaption phase, four of the coaches notified players' ability to adapt to any opponent. Coach 7 stated that "if you play in the Premier League you might be playing against a South American striker as a defender, next week you might be playing a Scandinavian or a 6'4 striker like Benteke". More specifically, Coach 5 explained that "if you mark Sergio Aguero the same way you'd mark a center-forward in League Two, you're doing something wrong because Aguero's going to murder you" (C5). Likewise, Coach 8 described how players have to be able to adapt to players who are bigger, quicker and more agile by "finding a way of beating [that player] 1v1, and then in our unit work and our teamwork".

Survival strength

This higher-order category refers to the various factors young footballers have to withstand and overcome in their progression to professional football. More precisely, this category comprised four lower-order categories; *handling the nature of the first team context* (e.g. displaying survival strength in first team environment), *psychological stamina* (e.g. handling being dropped from the first team), *handling the pressures of the first team context* (e.g. doing your job regularly on the big stage,) *and handling the success of being with the first team* (e.g. having the mental make-up to deal with success)

Handle the nature of the first team context. Six of the coaches highlighted the importance of handling the nature of the first team context. More specifically, this entailed developing mechanisms to survive and handling the significance and demands of first team football. In the encounter phase, Coach 8 discussed the difference in individuals' approach as either surviving or attacking as examples of survival mechanisms players employ to deal with the environment of first team football, as these quote illustrates:

> Some boys who are currently in the first team, when they first went up there they survived. And for them, if they could survive two or three weeks or 2 or 3 times […] some of them weren't as brave as maybe Dave, so Dave goes up there and he attacks it from day one. Simon would go up and he wants to make sure that he would just survive up there and become credible. Joel goes up there and attacks; Jamie goes up there and will attack it (C8).

> I think as long as you have outstanding survival strength, whether it is physical or mental, or it might be wit or humor, surviving in that changing room and surviving on that pitch in terms of body language or humor or whatever, they've got to learn to develop that as a mechanism to survive (C8).

At a later stage, when adapting to the first team context, three of the coaches emphasized the need to handle the significance and demands of first team football "where winning and every little detail becomes so important because it is players' careers, it is mortgages getting paid, so there's a real significance to losing the game" (C6). More precisely, this involved exhibiting a certain confidence and presence, accompanied with mental strength, and an understanding of the responsibility, the competitiveness and the extreme result-oriented nature of "an all-male environment [where] showing any kind of weakness isn't perceived very well' (C1). Coach 8 exemplified:

> It's going out into an unfamiliar environment, dealing with the pressures of playing in men's football where it's competitive and it's playing for three points. People's livelihoods and careers are on the line, there's a passionate support base and it's a much more challenging environment then youth level football.

Psychological stamina. All the coaches emphasized the importance of psychological stamina, a term defined as the ability to keep going; "to stay long enough on the train for the scenery to change" (C8). More specifically, this entailed dealing with disappointment, criticism and setbacks, handling being dropped, maintaining a positive

attitude and withstanding hardship over a prolonged period of time. This leap from the under-18s or under-21s to the first team required young footballers to exhibit mental strength, because "for players in England between 18 and 21, their biggest asset today is psychological stamina" (C8). In the encounter phase, five of the coaches emphasized the need for players to "not beat yourself up if you make a mistake" (C7) because "experienced football managers realize that in football things go wrong" (C3). In this respect, avoiding a negative label from the manager was imperative, because players may "not make the journey [if] you get assessed by a manager who thinks you haven't got it" (C6).

In the adaption phase, Coach 2 explained that "it's not a smooth journey, certainly if you get to first team level, it won't be a bed of roses every day. There are a lot more downs then ups". Additionally, Coach 1 highlighted how players in this phase "have a rollercoaster ride, and they'll experience disappointment, failure and frustration". One of these adverse situations illustrated, is the relegation from the first team back to the under-21s as Coach 2 described:

> I think of a player who spent the whole pre-season with the first team, played all the games and scored a couple of goals and doing really well. He might be thinking 'I've got a chance here and I might be on the bench for the first game [of the season]'. And then left out totally and sent back to the under-21s […] he's not handling that particularly well; it's a challenge for him as well. And I'm sure that won't go unnoticed by the manager.

Five of the coaches associated players' awareness of situation with their capability of dealing with and respond to the array of setbacks in the transition. Especially when handling the relegation from the first team squad, players' level of awareness enabled them to understand their situation and identify the requirements to get reinstated at the top.

Handle the success of being with the first team. Seven of the coaches highlighted the importance of handling the success of being with the first team. More specifically, this comprised players' mindset and ability to deal with and to maintain their success at youth level with the first team. When players come up to train with the first team, two of the coaches emphasized how "you got to show work-ethic and be ready to work hard" (C7) because "one of the problems mentally is that sometimes they go up with the

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first team and all of a sudden they think; 'that's it I've made it now'" (C2). Despite of the progression to the first team level, Coach 8 explained that "they [the players] have to excel, maybe the first couple of times up there you survive, but you must excel and be better than the first team players up there".

In the adaption process, two of the participants described how players have to "not forget that they're still developing and they're not there yet" (C2). Coach 3 explained how "everyone outside the first team is potential, [they] haven't done anything yet … there's loads of players who've got one or two caps for England, [but that] don't make them world class". Furthermore, three of the coaches highlighted that players have to avoid becoming complacent by letting the admiration from social media, newspapers and personal support networks impact their attitudes to training, development and social relations due to a lack of maturity. In an example of this, Coach 7 illustrated how young players suddenly are worshipped if playing for the first team in a big game:

> Can you imagine? You're from the local area and you go and play for [the club] in the Europa League, and everyone; your family tells you how great you are, your friends say that you're brilliant, the newspapers [say] you're brilliant. On Twitter, you had 300 followers and now you have 3000. And this is everyone telling you how great you are!"

Handle the pressures of the first team context. Seven of the coaches considered players' ability to handle different types of pressure in the first team context as vital. More specifically, this referred to the pressure in the training sessions, and the hostile crowds and performance-related pressures of the first team matches. In the encounter phase, the transitioning players have to handle the pressure from manager and first team staff, whilst adapting to the speed of play and maintaining their technical level in the training session. Additionally, for the younger transitioning players, there is also peer-pressure from family, friends and parents in this phase. If players are performing poorly, the player-pressure within the training sessions can be harsh and difficult to handle, as Coach 5 illustrates:

> Every time you're getting on the ball, an established first team player is getting at it. For the effect of the environment, because this is what they'll say: 'fucking hell, any chance of him keeping the ball!?' And if you're getting that, it's a huge pressure to deal with.

In the adaption process, the types of pressures in the first team environment may vicissitude because "when you get there it becomes harder; are you good enough to stay there?" (C5). Coach 4 explained that "once you're up there and have earned the trust and credibility with the players, the pressures of training becomes okay and it's then about getting yourself in the team" (C4). In order to get selected in the first team line-up, players have to consistently perform at a very high-level under intense pressure and succeed in doing so, as this quote illustrates:

> I can think of a player up there who nearly scores and he nearly gets the final pass. And that's every day and every time he's up there. And I can think of Joseph who just scores, he just does it (C8).

Additionally, the players' capability of handling intense and hostile crowd is fundamental at the professional level. Coach 6 explained that "it could be 40-50 000 people giving you stick and as a result you're letting a pass go under your foot". Accordingly, three of the coaches emphasized players' ability of developing survival mechanisms to appropriately manage the hostility and pressure of big crowds, as this quote from Coach 5 exemplifies:

> We've had a couple of games, home games now, where we've played poorly and the crowd's been very hostile. So people start to moan, or start to boo every time someone give the ball away, and fans are standing up angry, 35 000 people. Lloyd's response is to go above and beyond, so the next level, he'll run and demand the ball. He'll say: 'Hey! Give me the ball!' to create a new sense of energy so he doesn't get sucked into the energy of the stadium

Practice behavior

This higher-order category involved the various aspects of training influencing the young players' progression to the first team. More specifically, this category comprised three lower-order categories: *convey your football personality* (e.g. expressing yourself as a footballer), *impressing the first team manager* (e.g. showing the right qualities) and *asserting and applying yourself in the training sessions* (e.g. applying yourself in training).

Convey your football personality. Four of the coaches emphasized the importance of showcasing your talents and personality as a footballer. More precisely, this was highlighted when players' encountered the first team sessions as "players are given that

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chance [and] the manager doesn't really know who you are and he hasn't got a lot of reference really" (C3). Adding to this, two of the coaches said "this is the Premier League; you need to be excellent at something" (C7) because "they can't just be okay, can't be ordinary, they can't be not bad, they've got to be WOW!" (C8). When expanding on the essence of football personality, Coach 4 said "it's more of a confidence, a way of carrying yourself and a way of dealing with situations […] it will be sort of an undefined quality for different people".

Impressing the first team manager. Six of the coaches underlined the significance of finding a way to impress the manager. More specifically, this entailed showcasing outstanding attributes pertaining to the managers' liking and players' capability of generating an auspicious first impression in the encounter phase. As an example of this, Coach 2 said that "if you're going to play in the Premiership you've got to have one outstanding quality […] something that catches the managers' eye where he thinks I like him". In the first training sessions, Coach 3 explained how "you don't get many chances to impress the first team manager, and often, those first impressions stick". Adding to this, Coach 11 said players "have to impress the manager with the way they apply themselves and the level of performance" because "attitude, being prepared to work hard and applying themselves properly in the session would be key things for any coach to look at". In an example of this, Coach 8 recalled how "Andy went up there and didn't care. He was going to be selfish and was prepared to make ridiculous mistakes to make an impression".

Asserting and applying yourself in the training sessions. Six of the coaches stressed the importance of players asserting and applying themselves in the training sessions. More precisely, applying yourself was referred to as "giving everything in training" (C2) and ascertaining that "your concentration in spot-on and the work-ethic unquestionable" (C5). When encountering the first team context, Coach 7 said "in the first training sessions you've got to show work-ethic and that you're ready to work hard. Some players want to go up there and be cool and look good. And I say no, go there and work hard". Adding to this, Coach 5 explained how "you've got to go up there amongst men in a different peer group and assert yourself on the session. You've got to demand, whether it comes from your voice or your tempo" because "an elite player you would

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notice him in training … there's a presence and vibrancy to them in training generally in terms of how they train. That separates them from the others" (C4).

Social competence

This higher-order category refers the various social aspects influencing players' progression to the first team comprising four lower-order categories; *presenting yourself right when with the first team* (e.g. exuding confidence when meeting first team players), *managing relationships on-and-off the field* (e.g. manage the dressing-room chat), *fitting into the first team environment* (e.g. socially integrating with the first team) and *understanding the first team culture* (e.g. sending off right messages in first team context).

Presenting yourself right when with the first team. Seven of the coaches emphasized players' ability to present themselves right when with the first team. More specifically, this entailed managing social impression and displaying a confident body language. Three of the coaches explained the importance social and emotional skills when encountering the first team context by exhibiting a "confidence and assuredness that you belong and deserve to be there" (C2) to "engender a trust from the players around them" (C8). Also, Coach 2 emphasized how the players need to "make sure you're in plenty on time [and that] you're out and ready to train, looking the part and present yourself well in terms of your training kit and your boots". A deficient cognizance of such social habits and skills might have a detrimental effect on your progression, as Coach 4 said that "if they don't have them, then they're off on the wrong foot straight away". In an example of this, Coach 6 explained:

> Players would shake hands and they wouldn't look them [first team staff] in the eye. Little things like that, you've got to be bang on it just to almost not rule yourself out. And that before you've shown them what you can do with a football.

Managing relationships on-and-off the field. Five of the coaches emphasized managing relationships on-and-off the field. More specifically, this involved managing relationships with players, coaches and stakeholders outside of football, managing the banter and team conversations and respectfulness. When encountering the first team context, "they've [players] got to learn how to manage themselves around the place. It's

a place built on respect for yourself and respect for other people, allowing people to work and train" (C3). Adding to this Coach 7 said that "you've got to respect the older players, but show them no respect on the field. You're there to take their place". Furthermore, Coach 6 emphasized the importance of "having the personality to deal with the dressing room chat". Coach 5 said when "the first ones give you a bit of stick, are you going to think in your head 'I'd better slow it down, the lads are bantering me', or are you willing to laugh at it and keep doing it?" In addition, Coach 3 highlighted players' ability to manage themselves in conversations "if the manager asks you a direct question, are you willing to say: 'Well, actually I think this' … it's learning when and where to keep quiet and when to put your point in".

In the adaption process, three of the coaches emphasized managing relationships by influencing other senior players, staff and the manager, as well as handling agents off the field. More specifically, "you've got to learn to work with other people and influence other people, because that's how you get picked" (C3). Of particular difficulty for players' in the adaption phase might be to understand how to handle managers "who don't tell you why you're not in the team" (C1), as Coach 5 exemplified:

> I'd say the bigger test, because anyone … I could go up there now, train once
> and run around like a mad man. But it's more about what they do on day 21 of
> training with the first team, when they've still not made their debut and they're
> still not sure. The manager's not really talking to them because he's a young lad
> and he's got other things to worry about. So you're still not sure that they're
> having you, or that you're closer

Fitting into the first team environment. Six of the coaches noted the significance of fitting into the first team environment. More precisely, this entailed integrating socially in the first team squad and behaving appropriately to fit into a challenging environment. When addressing the players' capability of fitting in, Coach 3 explained that "fitting in doesn't mean you're not allowed to express yourself on the field, fitting in means certain types of characters make it and some don't" because "we want the ones who express themselves on the pitch, you still got to be humble, you still got to respect yourself and others, and you still got to be willing to learn" (C3). In the encounter phase, two of the coaches described how "you look at how they socially integrate when they go over there, do they just stand on their own or are they prepared to go in and integrate with the senior players?" (C8) because "it's being able to go into a new group

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and be accepted [...] your talent will get you over the line, but the way you conduct yourself when you're in that group will count as well" (C1).

When adapting to the first team environment, Coach 1 highlighted how "you then [need] to become part of the team and you feel like you're working toward a common aim" because "if you're going to be successful you need a good team spirit and togetherness, so despite the cultures you have to find a way of being together" (C7).

Understanding the nature of the first team culture. Four of the coaches emphasized the importance of understanding the nature of the first team culture when transitioning to the professional level. More precisely, this entailed understanding the competitiveness of an elite performance culture and conveying the right messages in the first team environment. In the encounter phase, two of the coaches described the interchangeable dyad of hostility and friendliness in the environment when transforming from a training body into a reliable training body:

> When players go up there, they don't welcome you with open arms. They think this is one who can potentially take my job … but they're more likely to be willing to help if they don't perceive you as danger *(C3)*.

> So all of a sudden you're challenging one of the big boys for their shirt which will impact on their career, the money they're taking home and how many games they play that year, then sometimes, the sort of friendliness can be a bit icy for some time (C8).

But more importantly, the transitioning players have to "play with enthusiasm and look like they want to be there and not be inhibited or intimated by the environment" (C1). Likewise, Coach 3 said that "they got to know that how they behave [with the first team] is really significant, what sort of messages they give off by what they do and how they're behaving".

In the adaption phase, Coach 5 highlighted that "the biggest mistake players do when they train with the first team is to slip into the first team culture … it's about being strong enough to confront the mood". He gave an example:

> So if the first team players, if it's a bit cold and they want to put the hats on, jacket up to here (pointing at the chin), hands in the sleeves and they want to go at 50% through the session, then it's very difficult for a young player to not

follow suit or be bold enough amongst established first team players and be at a noticeable higher intensity. So technically, you're embarrassing the first team and you're showing them up.

In addition, Coach 8 said that "ideally you want the players to be combative and go after the first team". By continuingly conveying the right signals to the first team manager, the players' may ascertain their position as a superior player to one of the senior professionals in the first team line-up, because if "they give of good messages by how they behave, they're basically saying 'pick me, I can do this job!'" (C3). This quote from Coach 5 exemplifies:

On day 22, if you still got that mental strength if you want to call it that, to continue to do the things we spoke about; to assert yourself of the training session, to have the bravery and courage to constantly get on the ball, the courage to be at a noticeably higher level than anybody else, because you do that and you're making a statement.

Nature of elite football

This higher-order category engenders the various contextual and environmental factors influencing players' progression to the first team and consists of two lower-order categories: *the pathway to the Premier League* (e.g. the wealth of Premier League limits opportunity for young players*)* and *the leap from youth to professional football* (e.g. going over to the first team).

The pathway to the Premier League. Three of the coaches emphasized how the status of the Premier League and its wealth limits opportunity for young players' because "it's one of the hardest leagues to come through" (C7). Coach 3 explained:

The Premier League is very rich and they can go over the world and get their players. It's a world league, not an English league, so why wait for a young one when you can go somewhere and pluck someone off somebody else?

The leap from youth to professional football. Five of the coaches highlighted the leap from youth to professional football. More specifically, this entailed readiness to train with first team (i.e. physical and mental preparation), opportunity and nature of promotion from academy to the professional level. For this event to arise in the life of a young footballer, Coach 8 said that "everything has to come together in terms of timing, talent and opportunity". In the encounter phase, the elevation of players from academy

to the first team transpired for either one or two reasons. Coach 2 explained how "the manager [might] need a body and you can be going up there almost as canon-fodder, or actually the manager can have something in his mind like I need a body and he's seen something in that player". Adding to this, Coach 8 described how players have to "earn the right by playing well, behaving well and being mentally strong down the with the youth team". Moreover, if gaining a much-sought-after promotion to the first team, the players' awareness of this opportunity was highlighted as crucial:

> If you go and train with the first team, you've got to be aware of the opportunity […] because of the nature of it and the nature of those involved, there's a chance that if you mess it up, it may never happen again (C3).

But more importantly, "once you get over there, it's about staying there. You've got to plan your feet and say I'm not moving" (C7). Coach 8 explained how each player has individual ways of dealing with this transitional journey from academy to professional football:

> From my experience, there isn't one way of doing it, there isn't a blueprint to say; 'Here you go, read this, copy this and you'll be able to mentally deal with the transition, mentally be able to deal with the changing room and mentally able to deal with the crowd'. I think they have to find their own way with help, but they have to work out what recipe is right for them.

Relationship between academy and first team

This higher-order category involves the various organizational factors influencing players' progression to the first team comprising three lower-order categories: *having the right manager* (e.g. giving players time to adjust to first team sessions), *communication* (e.g. frame the session for players), *coaching personnel* (e.g. senior players as youth coaches).

Having the right manager. Two of the coaches emphasized the importance of having a manager who understands, observes and immerses young players into the first team. As an example of this, Coach 3 said "when John was moved up to be manager, he understood all the kids and quite a lot of them got opportunities … and to be fair to the manager here now, he has carried it on". In the encounter phase, allowing players patience and time to adjust to the senior group was highlighted, because "unless they

have a real poor first session, the manager or the coaches' have brought them up for a reason" (C1).

In the adaption phase, the importance of the managers' endearment of transforming younger players into senior professionals increased. Coach 3 described how "one of the most talented youth players I have ever seen just happened to have the wrong manager at the wrong time, [and was] sent out on loan to the wrong club and is now playing in League One". Adding to this, Coach 8 described how clubs and first team managers' often ignored and disapproved younger players in the Premier League:

> There's a culture I believe that has developed in a lot of Premier League clubs and with a lot of managers that are just passing through. Why should they play the young players? At the end, the young players think they're good enough but often the opportunity doesn't arise irrespective of ability.

Communication. Seven of the coaches highlighted communication between the academy and professional level. More specifically, this entailed framing the session for players, as well as guiding and educating players on the managers' principles and their appearance in the first team. In the encounter phase, Coach 5 said "I always try to educate the boys … build them or give the players an idea of exactly what the manager is looking for". Especially for young players who are struggling to adapt to the environment, Coach 6 emphasized "framing a positive way of going over there, but with realism as well, because if he has a technical breakdown it could be quite embarrassing and he may not be asked again". In addition, two of the coaches explained how the development coaches interchangeably "watch them [players] all the time and we'll gauge what the managers' opinion is of them and feedback to them" (C4).

Coaching personnel. One of the coaches highlighted how senior professional players assisting the academy in the coaching of younger players contributed to making the transition easier for these players when encountering the first team context. Coach 8 said that "I think it's quite good now because some of our players would have worked with them [the younger players], so they will have seen them as players down there, so some might come up with more trust and credibility then others".

Discussion

Building on the transitional phases established by Jones et al. (2014), the aim of this study was to examine factors perceived by elite development coaches at Premier League clubs to influence players' progression when encountering and adapting to a first team context. To this researchers' knowledge, although the embodiment of research investigating talent development in football is extensive (e.g. Van Yperen, 2009), no empirical study has examined how factors assigned to different phases in the academy-to-first-team transition of professional football influence players' progression. The aim of this section is to situate the identified key factors in light of assumptions derived from current research on career transition and talent development in football. Following this, implications and recommendations on the basis of the findings in this study are discussed.

As the results of this study illustrate, the junior-to-senior transition is a multifaceted and dynamic process, which requires a complex blend of attributes to overcome the many internal and external factors influencing the transition, both when encountering and adapting to a first team environment in professional football. These findings underpin multiple assumptions derived from contemporary research on the development of young elite footballers (e.g. Cook et al., 2014; Holt & Dunn, 2004; Morris et al., 2014) and career-transitions (e.g. Finn & McKenna, 2010; Jones et al., 2014), and also support the majority of factors presented in Mills et al. (2012). In line with Jones et al. (2014), the coaches in this study also emphasized the necessity for players to identify the demands and expectations of the first team manager and players' in the encounter phase, as well as learning from failure and understanding how to handle the adversity and setbacks when adapting to the first team environment.

A main finding emerging from this study was the notion of adaptability. More specifically, this entailed adapting to the managers' philosophy, the style and speed of play in the first team and different types of circumstance in an elite football environment. As highlighted by all the coaches, the players' ability to conform to the managers' key principles, ideas and requirements was imperative. In support of Holt and Dunn (2004), 'obeying orders' to avoid being negatively assessed by a manager when encountering the first team context is an aspect which may strongly influence players' progression. Such an assessment is often obtained by players' failing to

perform or conform to the managers' key principles, as elite coaches are well-known 'arbiters of taste' (Christensen, 2009). In this sense, forming sustainable measures to certify the players' knowledge of the first team managers' philosophy and expectations would be logical. This may be particularly important due to the staggered nature of which players are rushed into first team sessions (e.g. injuries of senior players), where viable information on the transitioning players' qualities may be scarce, giving the manager and first team staff little reference in regard to the players' attributes. In line with Mills et al. (2012), the coaches in this study encouraged players to showcase their talents as footballers to impress the first team manager and staff. This is somewhat surprising as elite football coaches have been shown to be renowned 'arbiters of taste' which 'players are socially configured to legitimize' (Christensen, 2009, p. 377). In this respect, providing such advice may be misguiding as the players' conveying of talents to sway the first team manager may precipitate an exclusion from upcoming training sessions if failing to adapt to the managers' principles and standards in the current session. In this way, much emphasis should be put on ensuring that players comprehend the intricate balance of conforming to the managers' philosophy and conveying football talents in the first training sessions.

Another major finding emerging from this study refers to survival strength. More specifically, this entailed handling the adversity and different types of pressure, maintaining the success, and managing the nature of the first team context. Recent studies on talent development in English football have highlighted the importance of mental toughness and resilience in players (e.g. Cook et al., 2014; Mills et al., 2012). A unique finding of this study identified the relegation from the first team to the under-21s as a distinct scenario where mental strength may be accentuated, as this represent a situation that players struggle to handle effectively when adapting to the first team context. Underpinned awareness of self and the situation, the coaches emphasized how a players' subsequent response to deselection may strongly influence future opportunities with the first team. In light of existing research, players' have reported emotional and psychological disturbances due to deselection (Brown & Potrac, 2009). Additionally, newly-published research suggested that players prepare insufficiently for adverse circumstances (Mills et al., 2014a). In this respect, the relegation from the first team to under-21s may represent a scenario which players are ineffectively handling due to a lack of preparation and knowledge pertaining to appropriate self-management following

deselection. In line with Morris et al. (2014), by adopting a proactive approach comprising an education of coaches, players and parents on contributing factors and appropriate behaviors in the transition to professional football, the clubs may improve their players' capability of handling these situations. In this way, by providing clear guidelines on self-management prior to difficult stage-specific scenarios in the academy-to-first-team transition, this may facilitate an increased transformation rate of young players from academy to the professional level.

An interesting finding of this study refers to the social competence highlighted by the elite development coaches. More specifically, aspects of this entailed presenting yourself right, managing relationships on-and-off the field and conveying the right messages in the first team to fit into an environment and influence the managers' and first team players' view of themselves as players. In many ways, this resembles *impression management*, also known as self-presentation, defined as 'the process of which people try to control others impression of them' (Leary & Kowalski, 1990, p. 34). According to Leary and Kowalski, there exist two sub-processes to impression management; impression motivation (i.e. monitoring and gauging others impressions) and impression construction (i.e. the management strategies applied to create a certain impression). In accordance with Pummell (2008), employing these strategies may be highly relevant for players' to avoid a discrepancy between actual behaviors and those expected in a professional context, and generate a certain impression which may influence whether or not players' progress in the transitional phases investigated. These patterns of behavior do not only entail conforming to managers' principles, but involves a much broader perspective as accentuated by the elite development coaches. For example, one aspect referred to the appearance (e.g. looking presentable) and interpersonal behaviors (e.g. exude confidence) exhibited by players as they encounter the first team context, while another aspect referred to the adoption of professional sporting behaviors (e.g. going after first team players) by displaying competitiveness in a hostile and highly competitive environment during the adaption process. In this respect, young players' application of impression management strategies to portray the right messages in the contexts of professional football seems to be highly relevant for players' successful transition to the elite level.

Practical implications

This study identified several findings with implications for transforming academy players into first team players. In line with Martindale et al. (2005), a well-functioning relationship between the academy and the first team department comprising a consistent, open and reciprocal flow of communication between manager, first team staff and academy coaches is emphasized. In addition, allowing rapport-building between senior and younger academy players to transpire before instigating the transition to professional football and the appointment of a manager attracted to the conversion of young talent into elite footballers is discussed.

First, as the results of this study emphasized, by ensuring lines of communication between the staff at the professional and academy departments within the club, the coaches were able to inform transitioning players of the demands and expectations in the first team level. More specifically, this dialogue allowed coaches to frame the training sessions, guide players on their appearance and persona in the first team, and lastly, gauge and feedback the managers' opinions to each player. In this way, this ensured the players' knowledge of the managers' philosophy and views, and if applied appropriately, assisted the transitioning players' in avoiding a "culture-shock" by effectively preparing and constructing favorable impressions when encountering and adapting to the first team context. On the other hand, this also enabled the academy coaches to proactively give reminders, advice and guidance on how the players' came across in the first team context. For example, if a player attained an "already-made-it"-attitude or displayed frustration due to a lack of opportunity, the coaches might attempt to guide him into an understanding of the negative aspects of sustaining analogous behaviors over a prolonged time-period. In this way, this relationship between the academy coaches and the transitioning players may be viewed as an efficient and specific support mechanism in the transition to professional football.

Secondly, as one of the coaches emphasized in this study, by appointing senior players as coaching personnel in younger academy groups, this enabled players to build relationships with older senior players. This may have assisted the transitioning players when encountering the first team context due to the familiarity of faces in the new environment. Not only may this contribute to a more effortless encounter with the competitive and hostile nature of the first team environment, but due to the recognized

trust and credibility from the senior professionals, this specific relationship might assist players in getting the respect of other senior players and model professional sporting behaviors minimizing the discrepancy between actual behaviors and those expected by stakeholders in the first team environment. In this respect, this can be viewed as an apprenticeship where the senior players operate as role-models and are responsible for the fostering of younger players into the culture of the professional sporting group.

Thirdly, as this study highlighted, if the first team manager is attracted by the prospect of transforming young talents into professional footballers, this may enable the transitioning players' more opportunities to train and play with the first team. As well, when encountering the first team context, a talent-friendly manager may exhibit more patience and allow players time to be immersed in the environment, as opposed to other managers who prefer to invest in and acquire more experienced, fully-developed senior players. In this respect, if club policy entails bringing home-grown talents through to the first team, a systematic and in-depth assessment of a managers' philosophy pertaining to the conversion and immersion of young players into a first team, is highly recommended prior to employment.

Strengths and limitations

The strengths of this study refer to its methodological rigor, the admission to the research milieu and the suitability of participants. More specifically, by ensuring a transparent methodological 'audit trail' and measures of credibility, this reinforces the trustworthiness of this study. In addition, the researchers' admission to a restricted and unique sporting environment provided valuable insight and knowledge of the day-to-day practices of talent development in an elite football context representing the highest level of professional football. A small-sized sample of eight coaches was interviewed, which may represent a potential limitation of this study. But due to the participants' wealth of experience of day-to-day workings in elite football development with transitioning players, they provided a rich description of the array of factors influencing players when encountering and adapting to a first team environment.

A methodological limitation of this study refer to how the researcher 'trades breadth for depth, resolution for scope and thick description for thin description' when adopting a hierarchical content analysis (Sparkes & Smith, 2014, p. 118). More precisely, as the

whats is the major foci of this methodological approach, the nuances of description embedded within the *hows* of data disperses precipitating a) an alienation of the person behind the statement, and b) the lifting of segments of text from its context of production (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). However, as the intention of this study was to produce general knowledge pertaining to the distinctive phases of the transition from academy to professional football, this did not affect the trustworthiness of the study.

Another potential limitation of this study regards to the transferability of extant findings to other contextual landscapes (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). More specifically, the development praxis of professional football clubs may vary in relation to club policy and philosophy, financial proficiency (e.g. available resources in the academy) and governing bodies (e.g. rules and regulations regarding home-grown players in the Premier League) which may influence areas of focus and the conversion rate of academy players into the first team squad. Additionally, the socio-cultural context of the club, in which this developmental process resides, may influence the beliefs of coaches. This may induce coaches of a different nationality, cultural origin and social background to emphasize different attributes or factors influencing players' progression when encountering and adapting to a first team context. In this respect, as the primary investigator, it is important to acknowledge that the enlisted factors of this study do not represent a "golden recipe" for converting young players into elite footballers, but merely presents a theoretical idea for understanding factors influencing the academy-to-first-team transition in the contextual landscape of English professional football.

As the readers of this study may be aware of, young players may successfully transition to the professional level despite the presence or absence of the various intrapersonal, interpersonal, contextual and environmental factors presented in this study. However, as the primary researcher, I contend that the attainment of behaviors derived from the array of factors identified in this study, is likely to increase the possibility of players' successfully progressing when encountering and adapting to the first team context of a professional football club.

Concluding remarks

The inquiry of this study was to examine factors perceived by elite development coaches at Premier League clubs to influence players' progression when encountering

and adapting to a first team context. In respect of this, the study added to the career transition literature (e.g. Finn & McKenna, 2010), and more specifically, to the football-specific literature pertaining to the transition from youth to professional football (e.g. Mills et al., 2012) by providing supplementary guidelines for nurturing players in the key transition from academy-to-first-team of professional football in England.

In light of the limitations of this study, the emphasis of future research investigating the transition to professional football may adopt different methodological approaches to gain supplementary and extensive knowledge of the phenomenon. For example, by conducting a field-work study observing the activities and behaviors of players in situ in this transition (Sparkes & Smith, 2014); this may allow researchers to expand on the *actual* processes transpiring in the first team context of a professional football club. Although investigated in other professional sports (e.g. rugby – Jones et.al. 2014), the player-perspective of the leap from academy to professional football may provide a more nuanced insight into the transitional processes engendering these environments and allow researchers to develop a more complete understanding of the challenges players' encounter in this stage-specific transition. Additionally, sport psychology researchers may examine the academy-to-first-team transition in other socio-cultural contexts. By doing so, this may provide more robust and universal guidelines of the key transition and allow practitioners to compare their day-to-day workings with other professional football clubs. In a longitudinal perspective, this may induce improved and increased conversion rates of home-grown players in professional football clubs worldwide.

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Sammendrag

Overgangen til profesjonell idrett er en komplisert og dynamisk utviklingsprosess. Med utgangspunkt i de ulike overgangsfasene fra junior til senior skissert i studiet til Jones et al. (2014), var hensikten til dette kvalitative studiet å undersøke faktorer som påvirker spilleres progresjon når man *møter* en seniorlagskontekst, og *tilpasser* seg denne, i overgangen fra ungdomsnivå til profesjonell fotball i England. I den anledning ble det utført åtte semi-strukturerte intervjuer av mannlige eliteutviklingstrenere i to ulike profesjonelle fotballklubber. For å analysere data brukte studiet en hierarkisk innholdsanalyse, og studerte det transkriberte tekstmaterialet både induktivt og deduktivt. Resultatene fra denne studien indikerer at tilpasningsevne, overlevelsesevne, treningsatferd, sosial kompetanse, toppfotballens karakter og forholdet mellom klubbens akademi og seniorlag er viktige faktorer som kan påvirke unge spilleres progresjon i overgangen til profesjonell fotball. På bakgrunn av funn i dette studiet, diskuteres praktiske implikasjoner og anbefalinger for fremtidig forskning.

Nøkkelord; karriereovergang, profesjonell fotball, talent, junior-til-senior

Forord

I arbeidet med denne oppgaven har jeg fått en meget omfattende innsikt i overgangen fra ungdom til profesjonell fotball i England. Det har vært en særdeles lærerik og interessant forskningsprosess, og jeg er meget takknemlig for å kunne få arbeide med aspekter innen fotball som står hjertet nært.

I den anledning må jeg takke de respektive trenerne hos de utvalgte klubbene for deres velvillighet, imøtekommelse og deltagelse i studiet. Uten deres vilje til å avsette tid i sin travle hverdag, og deres velbegrunnede og kyndige meninger om overgangen til profesjonell fotball, ville ikke dette prosjektet sett dagens lys.

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Oslo, 27.05.15

Øystein Røynesdal

Innhold

1. Teoretisk rammeverk for vitenskapelig artikkel

I det følgende vil ulike teoretiske begreper redegjøres for ved å spesifisere hvordan disse forstås i oppgaven. Deretter vil tidligere forskning innen talentidentifisering, talentutvikling og karriereoverganger i idrett bli presentert. Hensikten med denne delen er å skape et bredere teoretisk rammeverk for den vitenskapelige artikkelen.

1.1 Begrepsavklaring

I denne delen gjøres det rede for hvordan overgangsbegrepet defineres i forskning på karriereoverganger, før ulike typer overganger for utøvere innad i en karriere vil bli diskutert.

1.1.1 Overganger i idrett

I sin «Human Adaption to Transition Model» foreslo Schlossberg (1981) en definisjon av overgangsbegrepet som "an event or non-event [which] results in a change in assumptions about oneself and the world and require(s) a corresponding change in one's behavior and relationships" (s. 5). Denne studiens primære hensikt var derimot å forklare forskjeller knyttet til individers erfaringer av hverdagslige overganger, og ikke overganger i idrettskontekster (Pummell, 2008). Idrettsforskere har i nyere tid kritisert Schlossbergs' definisjon av overgangsbegrepet fordi den ser på fenomenet som en singulær hendelse (Stambulova, Alfermann, Stauer, & Côte, 2009), og har lansert overganger i idrett som komplekse og dynamiske prosesser (Finn & McKenna, 2010; Jones, Mahoney, & Gucciardi, 2014). Eksempler på slike overganger i idrettskarrierer kan være overgangen fra spesialiseringsfase til investeringsfase (Côté, Abernethy, & Baker, 2007) eller junior til seniornivå (Stambulova et al., 2009). Ut ifra dette har Alfermann og Stamulova (2007) foreslått at overganger innad i idrettskarrierer defineres av "a set of specific demands related to practice, competition, communication, and lifestyle that athletes have to cope with in order to continue successfully in sport" (s. 713). For eksempel, når unge fotballspillere trener med seniorlaget i en profesjonell fotballklubb i overgangen fra junior til seniornivå, møter man ulike krav og forventninger enn i ungdomsgruppene, som man er avhengig av å mestre og tilpasse seg til for å opprettholde sin progresjon.

I en idrettskarriere har man hovedsakelig to typer overganger; normative og non-normative overganger. Normative overganger er generelt sett forutsigbare og forventet (Schlossberg, Waters, & Goodman, 1995). I idrettssammenheng kan normative overganger tilsi overgangen fra ungdoms- til seniornivå, eller fra amatør- til profesjonelt nivå (Wylleman & Lavellee, 2004). Nonnormative overganger kan være konsekvenser av signifikante hendelser i utøverens karriere, og karakteriseres som uforutsigbare og uventet (Pummell, 2008). Slike overganger kan eksempelvis tilsvare sesongødeleggende skader, trenerskifter eller utelatelse fra en konkurransetropp til et mesterskap (Wylleman & Lavellee, 2004). Ettersom normative overganger regnes som forutsigbare, mener enkelte forskere at man kan forberede seg på slike hendelser og dermed mestre disse situasjonene bedre. På den andre siden vil en liten grad av forutsigbarhet gjøre det vanskeligere for utøvere å takle non-normative overganger (Alfermann & Stambulova, 2007).

Med utgangspunkt i gitte beskrivelser av overganger i idrettskarrierer, støttes perspektivet på overgangen til profesjonell idrett som en kompleks og dynamisk prosess (Hollings, Mallett, & Hume, 2014; Jones et al., 2014). Dette kan begrunnes i at det er en særdeles utfordrende og stressende prosess i utviklingsløpet, hvor unge utøvere møter flere utfordringer på både og utenfor idrettsarenaen (Finn & McKenna, 2010).

1.2   Eksisterende forskning

I denne delen diskuteres kort tidligere forskning på talentidentifisering og -utvikling i idrett generelt, og mer spesifikt i fotball. Deretter vil ulike teoretiske rammeverk og empirisk evidens for karriereoverganger i idrett legges frem for å skape et bredere teoretisk grunnlag for den vitenskapelige artikkelen.

1.2.1   Tidligere forskning på talentidentifisering og -utvikling

Det finnes betydelig mengder forskning som har undersøkt talentidentifisering og utvikling i idrett (f.eks. Abbott, Button, Pepping, & Collins, 2005; Durand-Bush & Salmela, 2002; Vaeyens, Lenoir, Williams, & Philippaerts, 2008; Williams & Reilly, 2000). Selve begrepet talentidentifisering kan defineres som evne til å gjenkjenne utøvere med potensial for å oppnå et elitenivå innen en idrett (Williams & Reilly, 2000). Talentutvikling handler derimot om de rette personlige egenskaper og formålstjenlige omstendigheter for å realisere et potensial hos utøvere i et langsiktig perspektiv (Reilly,

Bangsbo, & Franks, 2000). Identifisering av talentfulle utøvere har vært forstått som en forløper til det langsiktige talentutviklingsløpet hos utøvere (Miller, Cronin, & Baker, 2015). I det følgende vil derfor ulike perspektiver i forskning på talentidentifisering legges frem og diskuteres i lys av empirisk evidens for talentutvikling i idrett og fotball.

Både nasjonale idrettsforbund og profesjonelle klubber har investert betydelige ressurser i utviklingen av ulike talentidentifiseringsprogram for å rekruttere unge eksepsjonelle utøvere så tidlig som mulig (Vaeyens et al., 2008). Etter at tidlig forskning viste hvordan fysiske egenskaper kan legge til rette for eliteprestasjoner i spesifikke OL-øvelser, har også forskere innen ulike vitenskapsdisipliner forsøkt å profilere antropometriske, fysiologiske og motoriske faktorer hos unge utøvere for å predikere og identifisere eliteutøvere innen en idrett (Phillips, Davids, Renshaw, & Portus, 2010). Eksempler på slik profilering kan være VO^2-max, hurtighet og «agility» i fotball (Unnithan, White, Georgiou, Iga, & Drust, 2012), høyde for basketballspillere, og i mer ekstreme eliteprestasjonsmiljøer, testing for genet α-actinin-3 hos sprintere og utholdenhetsløpere (Abbott & Collins, 2002). En slik tilnærming til identifisering av talent bygger på en antagelse om at spillere må tilpasse seg ulike faktorer som tilrettelegger for eliteprestasjoner på seniornivå, og at disse bør identifiseres hos unge utøvere på et tidlig tidspunkt i deres utvikling (Reilly et al., 2000). Ut i fra disse verdiene vil man da kunne forutsi hvilke utøvere man bør rekruttere ettersom disse utøverne vil ha større mulighet for å oppnå ekspertisenivå i sin idrett (Vaeyens et al., 2008).

En rekke studier har tatt utgangspunkt i fysiologiske og antropometriske krav for eliteprestasjoner på toppnivå, og anvendt disse inn mot unge utøvere for å identifisere og skille elite og sub-elitespillere i fotball (f.eks. Gil, Ruiz, Irazusta, Gil, & Irazusta, 2007; le Gall, Carling, Williams, & Reilly, 2010; Rebelo et al., 2013; Reilly et al., 2000). I en studie på 194 unge fotballspillere i alderen 14-17 år fant man at spillere med bedre verdier på en rekke variabler knyttet til fysisk modenhet under pubertet, i større grad ble selektert av sin respektive klubb (Gil et al., 2007). I en annen studie på 95 elite og 85 sub-elitespillere på U19-nivå fant man at elitespillerne skilte seg ut med bedre verdier på antropometriske, fysiologiske og tekniske tester uavhengig av hvilken posisjon de spilte (Rebelo et al., 2013). Også ved rekruttering til profesjonelt nivå kan disse verdiene spille inn, hvor le Gall et al. (2010) fant at unge spilleres antropometriske

og fysiologiske egenskaper indikerte i hvilken grad spillere tok steget til aller høyeste nivå i fotball. Med andre ord kan det tyde på at gode verdier på slike prestasjons-variabler kan være hensiktsmessig for å selekteres i tidlig alder, og for nå toppen i profesjonell fotball.

På den andre siden mener forskere at bruken av slike testbatteri bestående av fysiske og antropometriske prestasjonsvariabler har manglet evne til å predikere hvem som faktisk når ekspertisenivå (Abbott & Collins, 2004). Flere akademikere har vist til en rekke utfordringer ved å identifisere og eliminere potensielt talentfulle utøvere med tverrsnittmålinger av slike variabler i ung alder (Abbott et al., 2005; Vaeyens et al., 2008). Grunnet at utviklingsløp i stor grad er ikke-lineære prosesser, vil det å forutsi verdien av fullt utvokste genetisk betingede variabler hos unge utøvere være meget vanskelig, om ikke umulig (Abbott & Collins, 2002; Phillips et al., 2010). I tillegg har man vist at prestasjoner begrenses av en rekke faktorer hvor ikke alle er genetisk betinget (Simonton, 1999). For eksempel, så har empirisk forskning vist at ulik grad av modenhet hos utøvere kan påvirke prestasjoner i fotball (Meylan, Cronin, Oliver, & Hughes, 2010). Derimot kan disse spillernes evne til å opprettholde slike overlegne prestasjoner i ung alder utjevnes over lengre tid i utviklingsløpet (Vaeyens et al., 2008). Altså kan en identifisering av talent på bakgrunn av fysiske og antropometriske prestasjonsvariabler i større grad beskrive deres nåværende prestasjonspotensial, i motsetning til utøveres fremtidige utviklingspotensial (Morris, 2000; Unnithan et al., 2012).

Det foreligger en bred enighet mellom ulike forskere om at rekruttering av unge utøvere på bakgrunn av antropometriske og fysiologiske egenskaper er problematisk, grunnet at man risikerer å overse potensielle eliteutøvere i ulike idretter (Abbott et al., 2005; Abbott & Collins, 2004). Ut i fra dette, har enkelte forskere foreslått at identifiserings-prosedyrer bør fokusere på et fremtidig prestasjonspotensial, hvor psykologiske faktorer som underbygger en vedvarende utvikling vektlegges i større grad enn antropometriske og fysiske prestasjonsvariabler (Abbott et al., 2005; Martindale, Collins, & Daubney, 2005). Dette kan begrunnes i hvordan empirisk forskning har fremhevet viktigheten av mentale egenskaper for å oppnå ekspertisenivå og ta steget til profesjonell idrett (f.eks. Collins & MacNamara, 2012; Gould, Dieffenbach, & Moffatt, 2002; Kreiner-Phillips & Orlick, 1993; MacNamara, Button, & Collins, 2010a), og hvordan utøvere beveger seg

ulikt gjennom individuelle, dynamiske og non-lineære utviklingsbaner i en idrettskarriere (MacNamara, Button, & Collins, 2010b; Phillips et al., 2010). Blant annet, i en studie på 7 eliteutøvere i individuelle og lagidretter understrekte intervjupersonene viktigheten av mentale attributter, og oppfordret samtidig trenere til å se forbi de fysiske egenskapene hos utøvere. Dette ble begrunnet disse utøverne med at andre, som de oppfattet som bedre teknisk/fysisk, ikke klarte å utmerke seg og oppnå ekspertisenivå i sin idrett (MacNamara et al., 2010a). I andre empiriske studier har en rekke mentale egenskaper også blitt fremhevet av utøvere som avgjørende for å oppnå ekspertisenivå (f.eks. Durand-Bush & Salmela, 2002), og da spesielt i investeringsårene og når man nådde elitenivå i en idrett (MacNamara et al., 2010b).

Det finnes også en rekke studier som har understrekt viktigheten av mentale egenskaper for å utvikle ekspertise i profesjonell fotball (f.eks. Holt & Dunn, 2004; Holt & Mitchell, 2006; Mills, Butt, Maynard, & Harwood, 2012; Morris, 2000; Van Yperen, 2009). I en longitudinell studie på unge nederlandske fotballspillere fant man tre psykologiske faktorer som predikerte karrieresuksess, hvor spillere som ble profesjonelle skilte seg ut fra de spillerne som ikke klarte å ta steget (Van Yperen, 2009). I intervjuer med engelske utviklingstrenere hos profesjonelle fotballklubber mente trenerne at det mentale aspektet i overgangen til profesjonell fotball var avgjørende for om spillere lyktes eller ikke (Mills et al., 2012). I en annen studie hvor man undersøkte kjennetegn ved fotballspillere som ble frigitt av profesjonelle klubber, fant man at disse manglet mentale egenskaper som vilje til å lykkes, egenrådig atferd og evne til å jobbe vedvarende over lengre tid for å oppnå sine mål (Holt & Mitchell, 2006). Dette kan tyde på at mentale attributter kan være viktig for at utøvere faktisk evner å ta steget hele veien til toppen, og indikerer at disse egenskapene bør vektlegges når man identifiserer og rekrutterer talentfulle utøvere i fotball. Så hva vet man egentlig om hvordan man faktisk driver talentidentifisering i verdens største idrett?

I profesjonell fotball bygger på talentidentifisering på en allestedsnærværende bekymring om å rekruttere talentfulle spillere for å prestere på fotballbanen, og å lykkes med dette på bekostning av sine rivaler (Miller et al., 2015). Følgelig har tidlig rekruttering av de rette spillerne til profesjonelle klubbers ungdomsakademi blitt forstått som viktig for en langsiktig utvikling av ekspertise hos utøverne (Meylan et al., 2010).

Grunnet fotballens kompleksitet, hvor ferdigheter må utføres under utmattende forhold i et miljø med stadig skiftende forutsetninger, har man foreslått at forskere bør utvikle identifiseringsprosedyrer med økt fotballspesifikk relevans og økologisk validitet (Unnithan et al., 2012). Derimot viser en flere studier at disse rekrutteringsprosedyrene i fotball preges av at man måler verdier av fysiologiske, tekniske og antropometriske variabler i isolerte situasjoner for å identifisere talent (Gil et al., 2014; Meylan et al., 2010; Unnithan et al., 2012). Følgelig kan dette ha gitt grobunn for ugunstige effekter av relativ aldersforskjell, hvor man rekrutterer tidlig utviklede spillere som presterer bedre på et foreliggende tidspunkt, både til profesjonelle klubber og landslag (Helsen, van Winckel, & Williams, 2005; Unnithan et al., 2012). Enkelte forskere hevder at rekrutteringspraksis i fotball er særdeles utfordrende grunnet at talentspeidere og trenere i stor grad identifiserer spillere intuitivt på bakgrunn av deres subjektive forståelse av hva som er talent (Christensen, 2009; Morris, 2000).

I senere tid har fotballtrenere i større grad erkjent behovet for forskningsbaserte metoder og objektivitet i identifiseringsprosedyrer (Miller et al., 2015; Unnithan et al., 2012). Likevel finner man til stadighet ulike synspunkt og praksis for hvordan man best kan predikere karrieresuksess hos spillere, både i forskning og i profesjonelle fotballklubber. Blant annet har en rekke forskere vektlagt relevansen av å bruke tekniske (Figueiredo, Goncalves, Coelho, & Malina, 2009), psykologiske (Williams, 2000), fysiologiske (le Gall et al., 2010), sosiale (Meylan et al., 2010) og antropometriske (Gil et al., 2007) variabler, enten isolert eller kombinert, for å forutsi ekspertise i fotball. I lignende grad finner man også ulike identifiseringsprosedyrer hos profesjonelle fotballklubber. I den velkjente fotballklubben Ajax Amsterdam operasjonaliserer man talent ut i fra akronymet TIPS (technique, intelligence, personality, speed), hvor hver faktor har sine respektive underkategorier (Stratton, 2004). Andre funn viser at engelske trenere i Premier League klubber brukt akronymene TABS (technique, attitude, balance, speed) og SUPS (speed, understanding, personality, skill) for å skille talentfulle spillere fra mindre talentfulle spillere (Stratton, 2004; Unnithan et al., 2012). Med andre ord beskriver dette variasjonen i forsknings- og praksis for hvordan man bør identifisere talent i fotball, hvor man anvender et noe vilkårlig, men bredt spekter av ulike variabler for å skille elite- fra sub-elitespillere.

Alt i alt viser empirisk forskning og praksis i klubber at det hersker uenigheter knyttet til hvordan man bør bedrive talentidentifisering, både i idrett generelt, og mer spesifikt i fotball. Ut i fra dette mener Miller og kolleger (2015) at forskning, i stedet for å diktere hvordan talentidentifisering *burde* gjøres i praksis, i større grad bør opparbeide og ta utgangspunkt i ulike treneres forståelse av identifiseringsprosedyrer i sitt daglige arbeid. Ved å gjøre dette kan man skape en *gjensidig* forståelse hos praktikere og akademikere for hvordan man kan drive velfungerende talentidentifisering. På bakgrunn av empirisk evidens og forskning foreslås det dermed at forskere i større grad bør vektlegge kvalitative forskningsmetoder for å kartlegge hvordan trenere identifiserer talentfulle spillere i sitt daglige arbeid i ulike idretter.

1.2.2 Tidligere forskning på karriereoverganger i idrett

Forskning på karriereutvikling i idrett har økt betydelig i løpet av de siste tiårene, og reflekterer en voksende anerkjennelse rundt viktigheten av utviklingsprosesser i idrett (Pummell, 2008). Spesielt kan overganger fra junior til senioridrett introdusere særdeles utfordrende omstendigheter for utøvere, hvor utøvere mobiliserer personlige ressurser, og anvender ulike mestringsstrategier og støttefunksjoner for å takle overgangen best mulig (Stambulova et al., 2009). Ettersom problemstillingens primære hensikt er å beskrive denne overgangen, vil da hovedsakelig empirisk forskning og teoretiske modeller som beskriver overgangsprosessen fra junior til senior legges frem i denne delen.

Teoretiske modeller

Det finnes ulike teoretiske modeller for å beskrive overgangsfaser i idrett (Bloom, 1985; Côté, 1999; Stambulova, 1994, 2003; Wylleman & Lavellee, 2004).

I sine utviklingsmodeller beskriver både Bloom (1985) og Côté (1999) hvordan utøvere beveger seg gjennom ulike faser i en idrettskarriere; en introduksjons- og begynnelses-fase (introduksjon til idrett), utviklings- og spesialiseringsfase (spesialisering inn mot en til to idretter), og en perfeksjons- og investeringsfase (eliteidrett). Begge disse modellene er viet stor oppmerksomhet i forskning på karriereutvikling, men er i stor grad overlappende og mangelfulle i beskrivelser av overganger *mellom* fasene. Videre er disse av deskriptiv natur, og forklarer dermed ikke hvordan man som utøver kan *takle* slike overganger på en hensiktsmessig måte (Alfermann & Stambulova, 2007)

I sitt bidrag til forskning på overganger i idrett, utviklet Wylleman og Lavellee (2004) en teoretisk modell for karriereoverganger hos utøvere i et livslangt utviklings-perspektiv. Denne modellen beskriver karriereutvikling og -overganger på fire ulike nivå: atletisk, psykologisk, sosialt og akademisk. Det atletiske nivået tar utgangspunkt i Bloom (1985), og omhandler a) introduksjon til organisert idrett i 6-7 års alder, b) intensiv trening og konkurranse i en alder av 12-13 år (spesialiseringsfase), c) overgangen til elitenivå i 18-19 års alder (investeringsfase) og d) veien ut av profesjonell idrett fra 28-30 år. Det psykologiske perspektivet vektlegger individers modenhet, og beskriver psykologiske faser fra barndom (opp til 12 år), ungdom (13-18 år) og voksenliv (fra 19 år). Det sosiale aspektet tar for seg relasjoner, både personlige og mellompersonlige relasjoner (familie, kjæreste, venner og trenere), og beskriver hvordan disse endrer seg. Det akademiske nivået omfatter en utøveres skolegang og utdanning.

Ifølge Wylleman og Lavallee (2004) kan utøvere oppleve at man utvikler seg ulikt på de forskjellige nivåene. Et eksempel på en slik prosess, er hvordan Martin Ødegaard utviklet seg til et sportslig elitenivå i fotball ved å debutere for Strømsgodset og Norges A-landslag (atletisk), mens han enda gikk på ungdomsskolen (akademisk). Selv om Wyllemann og Lavallee (2004) gir et helhetlig perspektiv på karriereutvikling hos unge utøvere, så er den i likhet med Bloom (1985) og Côté (1999) av deskriptiv natur (Hollings et al., 2014). Med andre ord er den noe mangelfull i tilknytning til latente beskrivelser av potensielle utfordringer *mellom* utviklingsfasene, samt hvordan man *takler* slike overganger på en hensiktsmessig måte.

Ifølge Stambulova (1994) og hennes arbeid på karriereoverganger kan oppstå kriser som konsekvenser av, og i relasjon til, ulike overganger i et utviklingsløp. I sin studie fra 1994 viser hun til at slike kriser kan føre til, og forårsake, at utøvere føler seg inkapable til å mestre en gitt situasjon, og skisserer seks potensielt kritiske overgangsfaser; a) introduksjon til idretten, b) overgang til intensiv og idrettsspesifikk trening, c) overgang fra populæridrett til prestasjonsidrett, d) overgang fra ungdoms- til voksenidrett, e) overgang fra amatør til profesjonell sport og f) kulminering av idrettskarriere.

Ifølge hennes modell for overgangen fra junior til seniornivå, må utøvere takle en rekke spesifikke krav for å utvikle karrieren videre (Stambulova, 2003). Disse kravene mener

Stambulova vil skape et sprik mellom hva utøveren er på et nåværende tidspunkt, og hva utøveren ønsker å være i et fremtidig perspektiv. Ut i fra dette mener hun at en utøver vil mobilisere personlige ressurser for å takle overgangen, hvor da utøveren er avhengig av en dynamisk balanse mellom overgangsrelaterte ressurser og barrierer for å lykkes. Overgangsrelaterte ressurser omfavner i dette tilfellet alle interne og eksterne faktorer som *tilrettelegger* for en mestringsprosess, som for eksempel tilgjengelighet på idrettsspesifikk rådgiving. På den andre siden viser barrierer i overgangen til ulike faktorer som *forstyrrer* denne prosessen, som for eksempel relasjonelle konflikter med andre aktører i treningsmiljøet. Altså for å lykkes i overgangen fra junior til senior, mener Stambulova at utøvere må mestre dette balanseforholdet, hvis ikke vil man oppleve personlige og idrettsspesifikke kriser i forbindelse med denne utviklings-prosessen.

Ifølge Stambulova (2003) vil utøvere som oppleve overgangsrelaterte kriser ha behov for psykologiske intervensjoner for å endre utfallet av overgangsprosessen. Om denne er vellykket, vil utøvere oppleve en noe forsinket, men suksessrik overgang til seniornivå. Derimot, om denne intervensjonen ikke lykkes, beskriver Stambulova (2003) at dette kan få omfattende negative konsekvenser for utøveres karrierer, som for eksempel frafall fra idretten, psykosomatiske sykdommer eller alkoholavhengighet (Stambulova, 1994).

Empiriske studier
Det finnes en rekke empiriske studier som har undersøkt overgangen fra junior til seniornivå i blant annet friidrett (Bennie & O'Connor, 2004; Debois, Ledon, Argiolas, & Rosnet, 2012; Hollings et al., 2014), ishockey (Bruner, Munroe-Chandler, & Spink, 2008), ridning (Pummell, Harwood, & Lavallee, 2008) rugby (Jones et al., 2014), fotball (Mills et al., 2012) og individuell- og lagidrett (Finn & McKenna, 2010; Stambulova, Francka, & Weibull, 2012). Dette empiriske grunnlaget har identifisert overgangen til profesjonell idrett som et potensielt kritisk, og meget viktig, tidsrom i utøveres karrierer, hvor utøvere må håndtere og mestre en rekke interne og eksterne utfordringer knyttet til prestasjon, relasjoner til andre personer og utenomsportslige faktorer (Finn & McKenna, 2010; Jones et al., 2014).

En vellykket overgang fra junior til senior kan avhenge av utøveres evne å prestere jevnt i denne utviklingsfasen. I en studie på åtte unge ishockeyspilleres erfaringer av overgangen til den profesjonelle arena fant man at en rekke prestasjonsrelaterte utfordringer for spillerne (Bruner et al., 2008). Spesielt la Bruner og kolleger vekt på hvordan flere av utøverne opplevde å få svekket selvtillit grunnet redusert spilletid i overgangsfasen. I en studie på overgangen fra akademi til profesjonelle lagidretter viste forskere at den fysiske belastningen i et seniorlag økte betraktelig, hvor kravet om å trene og arbeide hardt for å bevise egen verdi for laget, gjorde det meget utfordrende å prestere jevnt over lengre tid (Finn & McKenna, 2010). Ifølge Abbott et al. (2005) vil prestasjonsnivået til unge utøvere variere når de gjennomgår slike ustabile faser i utviklingsløpet, hvor enkeltpersoners evne til kontinuerlig å prestere på et høyt nivå, kan være av betydning for videre progresjon. I studiet til Hollings et al. (2014) fant man også at utøverne som oftest lykkes med overgangen til profesjonell idrett var kjennetegnet av at de tidlig oppnådde suksess på seniornivå. Dette kan tyde på at spilleres evne til å prestere tidlig i denne overgangsfasen har mye å si for om man lykkes eller ikke. Siden prestasjonsnivået hos spillere også kan variere i denne perioden, kan tålmodighet og årvåkenhet hos trenere når man observerer og evaluerer prestasjoner hos utøvere, være særdeles viktig for å unngå å avfeie spillere for tidlig.

Empirisk evidens viser at utøvere må håndtere ulike relasjonelle utfordringer både på og utenfor idrettsarenaen i overgangen til profesjonell idrett. I en studie på engelske lagidretter fant man at det relasjonelle perspektivet ofte var relatert til hvor dyktige spillere var til å bygge gode forhold til nye trenere, og håndtere kjærester, foreldre og agenter (Finn & McKenna, 2010). Ifølge Finn og McKenna mente disse trenerne at spillernes evne til å mestre slike relasjoner var vesentlig for om man lykkes med overgangen til den profesjonelle arena. I studiet til Jones et al. (2014) understreket både trenere og spillere betydningen av å bli sosialt integrert i idrettsmiljøet ved å være «a good character, being personable, having a good attitude and being respectful» (s. 35). På samme måte ble spilleres sosiale ferdigheter fremhevet av eliteutviklingstrenere i Premier League-klubber som viktige faktorer for å lykkes med overgangen (Mills et al., 2012). På den andre siden var manglende håndtering av ulike sosiale relasjoner, da spesielt innad i treningsmiljøet og trener-utøver forholdet, kjennetegn på utøvere som feilet i forsøket på å nå profesjonell status i friidrett (Hollings et al., 2014). Dette kan tyde på at spillere må være bevisst og innforståtte med at de må mestre ulike sosiale

relasjoner både innad i laget og utenfor banen, og at dette i ulik grad kan påvirke hvordan overgangsfasen til profesjonell idrett forløper seg.

For enkelte utøvere kan det også være vanskelig å takle hvordan utenomsportslige faktorer kan påvirke overgangsprosessen til profesjonelt nivå. I studiet til Hollings og kolleger (2014) fant man at utøvere som ikke mestret kombinasjonen mellom eliteidrett og skole/karriere betegnet individer som aldri evnet å ta steget til den profesjonelle arena. Lignende funn ble også gjort av Pummell et al. (2008), hvor utøvere fortalte om store vanskeligheter knyttet til å balansere skole og hesteridning på elitenivå. I studiet på overgangen til profesjonell ishockey fant man at spillernes forhold til sine respektive vertsfamilier kunne påvirke deres opplevelser av overgangsprosessen (Bruner et al., 2008). I en annen studie mente trenerne at normer for upassende atferd (f.eks. en alkoholisert drikkekultur) ved ulike universiteter skadet utøveres profesjonelle karrierer, ettersom dette ikke var forenlig med en prestasjonsutvikling i idretten (Finn & McKenna, 2010). Også i studiet til Jones og kolleger (2014) ble spillernes evne til å unngå problematisk utenomsportslig atferd (f.eks. alkohol og dop) understreket av trenerne som kritisk for en vellykket overgang til profesjonell idrett. Disse empiriske funnene kan tyde på at spillere må håndtere en rekke utenomsportslige faktorer for å lykkes i denne overgangsfasen, hvor individers mangel på mestring av disse kan få uønskede konsekvenser for deres videre progresjon.

For å mestre de forskjellige utfordringene i overgangen fra junior til seniornivå, viser empirisk evidens til viktigheten av å anvende ulike mestringsstrategier. I sin studie på overgangen til profesjonell rugby fant Jones et al. (2014) at både trenere og spillere understrekte betydningen av mestringsstrategier for å takle de ulike kravene man møtte i denne overgangsfasen. Dette handlet spesifikt om spillernes evne til å utvikle strategier eller overlevelsesmekanismer for å tilpasse seg ulike sportslige og utenomsportslige stressfaktorer som prestasjonspress, media, berømmelse og familie. I studiet på overgangen fra junior til seniornivå i engelske lagidretter vektla også disse trenerne viktigheten av å benytte seg mestringsstrategier for å håndtere ulike krav (Finn & McKenna, 2010). Ifølge Finn og McKenna fremhevet trenerne løsningsorienterte mestringsstrategier for å takle kravene i overgangen til eliteidretten. På den andre siden frarådet trenerne ansvarsfraskrivelse og distansering fra overgangsrelaterte utfordringer. Altså kan dette tyde på at den måten utøvere takler ulike stressfaktorer og utfordringer

man møter i overgangsfasen, kan være avgjørende for å skape en langsiktig idrettskarriere på profesjonelt nivå.

Andre studier har demonstrert at spilleres evne til å anvende ulike støttefunksjoner kan være behjelpelig når man strever for å lykkes i denne overgangsfasen. I studiet til Pummell et al. (2008) fant man at utøvere fremhevet ulike former for emosjonell støtte og idrettsspesifikk veiledning i overgangen til profesjonell idrett. Mer konkret så fortalte utøverne om hvordan familie og venner bidro med råd for å løse eventuelle problemer, hvor da trenere var spesielt sterke støttespillere grunnet deres kompetanse om idretten. I studiet på overgangen til profesjonell ishockey rapporterte spillerne at lagkameratene var gode medhjelpere i denne utviklingsperioden (Bruner et al., 2008). Ettersom man opplevde en endring i type støttespillere i denne overgangsprosessen, hvor familie fikk en betydelig mindre rolle og man i større grad henvendte seg til medspillere for hjelp og råd, var et godt forhold til eldre lagkamerater spesielt viktig. I en case-studie på to profesjonelle fotballklubber viste man at det også kan være nyttig for klubber å orientere foreldre om hvordan de best kan bistå, støtte og veilede spillere hjemmefra i overgangen til profesjonell idrett (Morris, Tod, & Oliver, 2014). Ved å gjøre dette kan man kanskje unngå at spillere får råd og veiledning hos bekjente og familiemedlemmer som ikke er forenlig med hva trenerne forventer av spillerne, og hva denne overgangsfasen krever av dem (Finn & McKenna, 2010). På bakgrunn av dette bør klubber i stor grad etablere og vektlegge ulike støttefunksjoner i overgangen fra junior til senior nivå, ettersom spilleres muligheter til å søke råd, støtte og veiledning kan være gunstig for å lykkes i denne overgangen.

Alt i alt viser empirisk forskning at overgangen til profesjonell idrett er en kompleks og dynamisk prosess, hvor utøvere kan møte både prestasjonsrelaterte, relasjonelle og utenomsportslige utfordringer både på og utenfor idrettsarenaen. Med andre ord kan dette tyde på at enkeltes kapasitet til å mestre overgangen til profesjonell idrett, avhenger av flere faktorer enn det idrettsspesifikke ferdighetsnivået til utøveren. På bakgrunn av dette kan en helhetlig tilnærming til talentutvikling være hensiktsmessig, ved at man jobber proaktivt for å forberede og utvikle utøveres egenskaper til å takle fysiske, teknisk-taktisk, sosiale og psykologiske vanskeligheter i overgangen fra junior til seniornivå (Morris et al., 2014).

2.   Supplerende metode til vitenskapelig artikkel

Denne delen vil være et supplement til metodekapittelet i den vitenskapelige artikkelen. Hensikten med dette vedlegget er å utdype metodiske valg og forankring som i mindre grad beskrives i artikkelen.

I det følgende vil det derfor gjøres det kort rede for artikkelens vitenskapsteoretiske forankring og fremgangsmåter ved litteratursøk. Deretter legges det videre vekt på refleksjoner knyttet til forskerrollen, studiets troverdighet og etiske hensyn og utfordringer ved dette kvalitative forskningsprosjektet.

2.1   Vitenskapsteoretisk forankring

Formålet med studiet er å beskrive engelske eliteutviklingstreneres synspunkt knyttet til hvilke faktorer som påvirker spillere i ulike faser i overgangen til profesjonell fotball. Det metodiske perspektivet anvendt tar dermed utgangspunkt i fenomenologisk tradisjon, hvor forskerens hovedanliggende å studere og beskrive hvordan enkelt-personer opplever, erfarer og tillegger mening til et gitt fenomen i sin livsverden (Sparkes & Smith, 2014; Thagaard, 2013). Ifølge Sparkes og Smith (2014) er fenomenologi først og fremst en filosofisk retning, en forståelse av hvordan man ser på menneskelig eksistens og kunnskap, mer enn en spesifikk metode, teknikk eller prosedyre i kvalitativ forskning. Med utgangspunkt i dette mener de at det er vanskelig å beskrive hvordan dette perspektivet bør anvendes rent metodisk. Derimot mener Patton (2002), at man som kvalitativ forsker i et fenomenologisk perspektiv, må foreta dybdeintervjuer av personer som har førstehåndserfaring med fenomenet man ønsker å studere for å oppnå en generell forståelse av det man studerer.

Som kvalitativ forsker ønsker man å forstå andres livsverden (Thagaard, 2013). For å forstå andre individers erfaringsverden, krever dette at forskeren fortolker deres opplevelser, for å skape mening og utvikle en livsverden (Patton, 2002). Slikt sett vil beskrivelser av fenomen og tolkning av fenomen være sammenvevde gjerninger, hvor forskerens forforståelse, bakgrunn og erfaring har innflytelse på selve forsknings-prosessen (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). For eksempel, i intervjusituasjoner vil forskeren formidle sin forståelse av den mening intervjupersonen legger i et fenomen gjennom å stille oppfølgingsspørsmål til intervjuobjektet (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2011). Med andre

ord vil min forkunnskap om et fenomen påvirke hva jeg som forsker vektlegger og fokuserer på i intervjusituasjonen. I analyseprosessen må jeg som forsker videre fortolke disse intervjupersonenes beskrivelser av det gitte fenomenet for å skape en dypere forståelse av deres livsverden. Slik sett forankres også det metodiske perspektivet i en hermeneutisk tradisjon, hvor mening skapes og forstås i lys av den sammenheng det man studerer en er del av (Thagaard, 2013)

På bakgrunn av dette vil mitt epistemologiske utgangspunkt være forankret i hermeneutisk-fenomenologisk tradisjon, hvor forskeren hovedanliggende er å forstå andres menneskers erfaringer knyttet til et spesifikt fenomen, altså treneres erfaringer rundt overgangen til profesjonell fotball, ved å fortolke deres beskrivelser av sin livsverden.

2.2   Artikkelsøk

Artikkelsøk ble utført i databasene Google Scholar og SPORTDiscus med hele eller deler av søkeordene «career transition», «within-career transitions in sport», «career transitions in sport», «transition to professional sport», «transition from junior to senior», «transition to elite sport», «transition from academy to first team» og «transition from academy to professional sport». Disse søkeordene gav i alt flere hundre treff, hvor da artiklene ble sortert ut og inkludert i artikkelen på bakgrunn av deres relevans for prosjektets problemstilling ved at de inneholdt en eller flere av følgende temabeskrivelser; a) overgangen til profesjonell sport, b) lagidrett, og c) fotball.

I et eksempel på en slik søkeprosess ble artikkelsøket med nøkkelordene «transition to professional sport» utført i SportDiscus. Dette gav i alt 237 treff. For å minimere antall treff, ble et avansert søk på «transition to professional», «sports» og «soccer» gjort. Dette ga i alt 20 treff. Etter en nøye gjennomgang av søketreff, ble fire av studiene inkludert i artikkelen.

2.3   Forskerrollen

Som kvalitativ forsker ønsker man å forstå hvordan enkeltindivider erfarer og skaper mening i forhold til et gitt fenomen (Thagaard, 2013). I en forskningsprosess vil derimot forståelse av et fenomen farges av forskerens forforståelse og innsikt i hva man studerer, også kalt forskersubjektivitet (Sparkes & Smith, 2014; Patton, 2002). I det følgende vil

det derfor reflekteres rundt hvordan forskerens subjektivitet påvirket selve forskningsprosessen, før det diskuteres hvordan jeg som forsker anvendte min forkunnskap for å forberede meg og bygge tillitsforhold til de ulike aktørene i forskningsmiljøet.

2.3.1 Forskerens subjektivitet

I kvalitativ forskning er det ikke bare de subjektive erfaringene hos deltagere som er av viktighet, men også hos forskeren. Dette bygger på det unike forholdet mellom selve forskningen og forskerens forståelse av et fenomen (Sparkes & Smith, 2014).

Tradisjonelt har kvalitativ forskning oppfordret til objektivitet og distanse hos forskere, men en slik adskillelse kan begrense forskerens åpenhet til, og forståelsesevne av, essensen i hva man faktisk studerer (Patton, 2002). Med andre ord vil aspekter ved forskerens bakgrunn (f.eks. sosial bakgrunn, grunnleggende antagelser, erfaring og atferd) bidra til å forme hvordan selve forskningsprosessen foregår (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Ut i fra dette bør det gjøres rede for hvordan forskerens subjektivitet kan påvirke forskningsprosessen gjennom «a thoughtful, self-aware analysis of the intersubjective dynamics between researcher and researched» (Finlay & Gough, 2003, i Sparkes & Smith, 2014, s. 20)

Forskeren som redskap

Som masterstudent ved Norges Idrettshøgskole, har forskeren bakgrunn fra vitenskapsteoretiske- og kvalitative metodekurs på master- og bachelornivå. I tillegg har studenten erfaring fra å gjennomføre av kvalitative dybdeintervju i sin bacheloroppgave. Med andre ord har studenten begrenset erfaring fra intervjusituasjoner og anvendelse av ulike kvalitative metoder i forskning, og slikt sett kan dette ha påvirket selve forskningsprosessen. For eksempel, kan slik mangel på erfaring gjøre at forskeren ikke gjenkjenner intervjupersonens reaksjoner og øyeblikk underveis i intervjuet, som kunne vært brukt for å skaffe mer dybde og bredde rundt tema (Thagaard, 2013).

For å kompensere for manglende erfaring gjorde studenten ulike tiltak; a) utførte 4 ulike pilotintervju med elitetrenere av norsk, engelsk og spansk nasjonalitet for å bygge erfaring med intervjusituasjoner, og for å nyansere egen forskerolle ut i fra menneskers av kulturelle opprinnelse, b) filmet seg selv for å bevisstgjøre kroppsspråk og mimikk

under intervjusituasjoner, og c) oppsøkte jevnlig erfarne kvalitative forskere innen idrettspsykologi for kyndig veiledning gjennom hele forskningsprosessen.

Forskerens forkunnskap om tema

Som fotballtrener i Røa IL og idrettspsykologisk rådgiver for et guttelag i SK Brann, har forskeren praksiserfaring og kompetanse innen fotball og psykologi. Ettersom kvalitativ forskning handler om å fordype seg i deltageres erfaringer og livsverden for å skape en forståelse av fenomenet (Patton, 2002), har forskerens forkunnskap bidratt i forskningsprosessen ved å «promote rich insight through examining personal responses and interpersonal dynamics» (Sparkes & Smith, 2014, s. 20). Mer spesifikt ble forskerens forkunnskap anvendt for; a) å forstå konteksten som intervjupersonene befinner seg i, b) å forstå den kulturelle egenarten ved profesjonell fotball, og d) å forstå essensen i den livsverden til de ulike intervjupersonene.

2.3.2   Forskerens rolle i møtet med miljøet

I etnografisk forskningstradisjon vektlegges det hvordan man som forsker «gains entry to the field site, establishes rapport with the people living there, and comes to be a participating member of the group" (Angrosino, 2007, s. 14, i Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Ettersom profesjonelle fotballklubber representerer særdeles adskilte og unike forskningsmiljø, hvor man er avhengig av å skape tillit og relasjoner til aktører i klubben for å få tilgang til feltet, vil dette være relevant for dette studiet. I denne delen beskrives derfor forskerens fremgangsmåte for å skaffe seg adgang til de ulike prestasjonsmiljøene.

For å få adgang til restriktive forskningsmiljø må man ofte etablere kontakt med formelle (f.eks. akademidirektør) og uformelle (f.eks. respektert trener) «portvakter», hvor disse godkjenner forskerens tilgang til intervjupersoner i felten (Thagaard, 2013). I denne prosessen anvendte forskeren ulike tilnærminger for å få tillatelse til å drive forskningsarbeid i de profesjonelle fotballklubbene; a) en fremtoning bygget på ydmykhet og respekt ut i fra egen forståelse av engelsk kultur (for å unngå å bli oppfattet som upassende), b) egen bakgrunn som fotballtrener, og c) «known sponsor-approach» (Patton, 2002).

Når man har fått adgang til feltet vektlegges betydningen av at man som forsker må skape fortrolighet til deltagere i studiet, både gjennom hvordan man presenterer seg selv og forskningsprosjektet (Thagaard, 2013). I denne sammenhengen kan forskerens egenskaper, væremåte, atferd og utseende påvirke evnen til å bygge tillit og få kontakt med andre individer i miljøet. Spesielt kan språk og kulturelle ulikheter innvirke på hvordan spillere og trenere i miljøet oppfatter deg som forsker (Patton, 2002). For å skaffe seg en forståelse av kulturelle egenarten i engelsk profesjonell fotball, og hvordan man bør fremstå som forsker, oppsøkte studenten andre akademikere av lik kulturell opprinnelse med erfaring fra forskningsarbeid i slike prestasjonsmiljø i England. Videre hadde forskeren meget god engelskspråklig kompetanse, noe som bidro til at studenten forsto humoristiske undertoner og sarkasme, og skapte fortrolighet til ulike individer i miljøet. I tillegg brukte forskeren sin bakgrunn som fotballtrener og kunnskap om fotball, noe som kulminerte i en invitasjon av klubbens delegasjon for å overvære en U18-kamp i FA Youth Cup. Men andre ord, inntok forskeren hva Sparkes og Smith (2014) beskriver som en dynamisk forskerrolle, hvor studenten varierte mellom de ulike rollene som praktiker og akademiker ut i fra hvilke omstendighetene han befant seg i.

2.4 Troverdighet i kvalitativ forskning

I kvalitativ forskning anvender man begrepene «credibility», «transferability» «confirmability» «dependability» når man evaluerer ulike studiers troverdighet (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). I det følgende vil det redegjøres kort for hvordan jeg som forsker har gått frem for å skape et troverdig forskningsresultat, og hvilke valg jeg har gjort for å styrke oppgavens troverdighet.

«Credibility», omtalt som validitet i kvantitativ forskningsdisiplin, inneholder grad av koherens mellom data, analyseprosess og studiets formål (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004; Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Ettersom forskeren er selve verktøyet i kvalitative studier, vil praksiserfaring og trening i bruk av ulike kvalitative metoder påvirke studiets troverdighet. Videre vil intervjupersonenes habilitet og skikkethet, og de rette metodologiske verktøy for å besvare problemstillingen være essensielt for å sikre forskningsprosjektets validitet (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004; Patton, 2002). For å forsterke studiets validitet ble en rekke ulike tiltak foretatt; a) forskerens kunnskap om talentutvikling og engelsk fotball ble brukt for å identifisere habile intervjupersoner og

profesjonelle klubber, b) for å kompensere for manglende erfaring i bruk av kvalitative forskningsmetoder fikk studenten vedvarende og kyndig veiledning av to erfarne kvalitative forskere, c) for å skape en bedre kulturell forståelse av prestasjonsmiljøene i engelske profesjonelle fotballklubber, oppsøkte studenten to forskere med praksis-erfaring fra forskningsarbeid i slike miljø for råd og veiledning, d) de transkriberte intervjuene ble sendt tilbake til intervjupersonene for å forsikre at ingen uttalelser var misforstått eller transkribert feil, også kjent som «member-checking» (Patton, 2002), og e) en inspeksjon av koding, kategorier og analyseprosess ble utført av både studenten og to erfarne forskere, også kjent som «cross-checking» (Sparkes & Smith, 2014).

«Dependability», eller hva kvantitativ forskning kaller reliabilitet, bygger på et stabilitets- og nøyaktighetsprinsipp i studieforløpet. Med andre ord vil en kvalitativ studie være beregnelig om forskningsprosessen bygger på en etablert, gjenkjennelig og dokumentert metode, og at dataene faktisk er reelle. Ved å gi en detaljert beskrivelse av forskningsprosessen hvor jeg begrunner valg og prosedyrer jeg som forsker har anvendt gjennom studieløpet, gir dette studiet en gjennomsiktighet slik at andre forskere kan inspisere hvordan jeg har kommet frem til mine funn (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004; Sparkes & Smith, 2014).

«Confirmability», eller hva man kaller objektivitet i kvantitativ forskningsdisiplin, omhandler i hvilken grad dataene, analyseprosessen og resultatene tar utgangspunkt i intervjupersonenes beskrivelser, og ikke forskerens «tøylesløse» subjektivitet eller fantasi (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Som kvalitativ forsker har jeg beskrevet hvordan min bakgrunn har hatt innflytelse på analyse-, tolknings- og skriveprosessen. For eksempel, ved å bruke egen kunnskap om profesjonelle klubber og deres trenere, har jeg evnet å rekruttere et strategisk utvalg til å besvare studiets problemstilling og få tilgang til forskningsmiljøene. I tillegg har jeg valgt å vise analyse- og tankeprosessen i en tabell, slik at «both the raw products and the processes used to compress them are available to be inspected and confirmed by outside reviewers of the study» (Guba & Lincoln, 1989 s. 243; i Sparkes & Smith, 2014).

«Transferability», eller generaliserbarhet i kvantitativ forskning, bygger på at man som forsker gir en rik beskrivelse av deltagere og kontekst man har forsket på (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). For å sikre forskningens overførbarhet, har jeg valgt å gi en grundig og

detaljert beskrivelse av hvilke kriterier som ligger til grunn for å inkludere de ulike informantene i forskningsprosjektet. Videre har jeg skissert den unike konteksten hvor jeg utførte forskningen, for å gi lesere mulighet til å sammenligne i hvilken grad kontekst A (forsker) og B (leser) samsvarer, og for å avgjøre overførbarhet av funn i dette studiet.

2.5 Etiske hensyn og utfordringer

Kvalitative studier som forutsetter behandling av personopplysninger medfører meldepliktighet til Norsk Samfunnsvitenskapelig Datatjeneste (NSD) (jf. Personopplysningsloven av 1.januar 2001) (Thagaard, 2013). Forskningsprosjektet fikk godkjennelse til å initiere datainnsamling i desember 2014. I det følgende vil det legges frem hvordan forskningsetiske prinsipper som krav om informert samtykke, konfidensialitet og anonymitet ble fulgt i dette prosjektet.

2.5.1 Informert samtykke

Informert samtykke bygger på at prinsippet om at all forskningsdeltagelse skal være frivillig, hvor personene har fått fullstendig informasjon om studiets formål, konsekvenser og karakter. Ut i fra dette gir forskningspersonene sitt frie samtykke for å delta, og har til enhver tid rett til å avbryte sin deltagelse (Thagaard, 2013).

Ettersom kvalitative studier er fleksible, og undersøkelsesopplegg kan endres underveis i en forskningsprosess, kan man ikke forutsette at det opprinnelige samtykke fra informanter er bygget på en fullstendig informasjon om studiets endelige formål (Silverman, 2006). I tillegg vet man ikke som forsker hvilke innsikter ulike data kan gi, og dermed kan ikke personen som samtykker vite hvordan forskeren vil tolke og analysere data (Mason 2002, i Thagaard, 2013). Med andre ord bør informert samtykke fra deltakere i kvalitative studier ansees som en pågående prosess gjennom hele forskningsprosjektet (Sparkes & Smith, 2014).

For å forsikre at alle deltagere i studiet var informert om studiets formål gjennom hele forskningsprosessen, ble en rekke tiltak utført: a) et detaljert informasjonsskriv ble sendt ut til «portvakter» i begge klubber, b) før hvert intervju ble en kopi av det gitte informasjonsskrivet gitt til enhver deltager, og gjennomgått muntlig, før et skriftlig samtykke ble gitt av trenerne, og c) etter transkribering av forskningsintervjuene var

ferdig ble intervjutekstene sendt tilbake til de ulike trenerne, hvor de ga sitt samtykke for å benytte dataene som analysegrunnlag i studiet, og d) før en fremleggelse av studiet for publisering i et vitenskapelig tidsskrift vil artikkelen sendes tilbake til de ulike intervjupersonene slik at de kan gi deres samtykke til dette.

2.5.2 Konfidensialitet og anonymitet

For å sikre en etisk forsvarlig forskningspraksis er kravet om konfidensialitet og anonymitet grunnprinsipper for enhver forsker (Silverman, 2006). Disse prinsippene innebærer at all deltagelse i forskningsprosjekter skal være anonymt, og den informasjon som gis av deltagere behandles konfidensielt ved at man forhindrer bruk og formidling som kan skade enkeltpersoner som forskes på. Videre skal oppbevaring navne- og opplysningsregistre foregå i henhold til sikkerhetsregler ved institusjonen for å hindre identifisering av deltagere (Silverman, 2006; Thagaard, 2013).

Når man forsker på kjente personligheter i eliteidrett, eller mindre organisasjoner som profesjonelle klubber og lag, kan det være særdeles utfordrende for en forsker å hindre at deltagere kan identifiseres av andre gjennom spesifikke utsagn, livshistorier og opplevelser (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Enkelte forskere har foreslått å moderere deler av data for å sikre konfidensialitet ved slike tilfeller, hvor det er forskerens ansvar å «rense» data uten at man endrer, eller ødelegger materialets egenart (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Derimot, har en slik forskningspraksis vært betydelig kritisert, hvor blant annet Kaiser (2009, s. 1635) skriver: «changing additional details to render data unidentifiable can alter or destroy the original meaning of the data».

For å sikre konfidensialitet i databehandling og anonymisering av studiets deltagere, ble a) ulike intervjupersoners navn ble byttet ut med et kodenummer (f.eks. Coach 8 = C8) under transkribering av intervju, hvor det kun ble referert til denne koden i selve artikkelen, b) enkeltspilleres navn, som nevnes i ulike utsagn for å statuere et eksempel, ble erstattet av ulike pseudonymer for å skjule og beskytte både klubbens, spillerens og trenerens identitet, og c) spesifikke enkeltutsagn som kunne identifisere klubb, og/eller trenere, ble ikke inkludert i analysen. Videre ble all datalagring for forskningsprosjektet gjort i henhold til retningslinjer utarbeidet av Norges Idrettshøgskole. Alle person-identifiserbare opplysninger ble lagret i en låst skuffe hvor bare studenten hadde tilgang i hans leilighet. Videre ble transkribert datamateriale oppbevart i separerte mapper

beskyttet av ulike passord på studentens personlige datamaskin, og lagret på NIHs interne IT-system for å sikre back-up.

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Vedlegg

VEDLEGG I

Interview guide

Master's thesis 2014-15
"The transition from academy to professional football: an examination of factors influencing players' progression when encountering and adapting to a first team context"

Elite development coaches at Premier League clubs

By Øystein Røynesdal

Introduction *(student researcher)*

a) Background and purpose for study
   Why your knowledge is important
      a. Experiental knowledge
      b. Successfull at bringing players through
      c. Personal views as a development coach
b) Reinforce the principle of confidentiality, voluntary participation and anonymity

Preliminary questions:

a) Background and experience in football
b) Which mental qualities do you appreciate in a player

The transition to professional sport has been suggested to have certain phases; the anticipation phase, the encounter phase, the adaption phase (Jones et.al. 2014). Also, research has shown the importance of continuing consistent performances (Kreiner-Phillips & Orlick, 1993; MacNamara et. al. 2010b; Durand-Bush & Salmela, 2002)

   a. What is psychologically important in the transition from youth to professional football?

Before the transition begins (Jones et.al. 2014)

a) When players are selected to train with the first team – what's important?
b) The importance of mental qualities in such a selection and evaluation process
   a. Which qualities are/are not emphasized to players
c) Behaviors facilitating players' development (Jordet, in press)
d) Experiences managing players in such a period of time
   a. Differences between players who make it and don't
   b. Important characteristics – have him explain in depth on these characteristics
   c. Practice behavior, what do they do different?
   d. Appreciations as a coach from players in this phase
   e. How players work to prepare themselves for what's next

e) Anything else of importance

VEDLEGG I

The encounter phase (Jones et.al. 2014)

a) Encountering first team training sessions
   a. Social/mentally
   b. Players' ability to cope
b) What would you as a coach look for in players coming into the first team sessions?
c) Expectations and demands from coaches and other players in training sessions
d) The importance of mental qualities in such a situation
   a. Which qualities are emphasized/communicated to players – and from who?
e) Behaviors facilitating players' progress (Jordet, in press)
f) Experiences dealing with players in such a period of time
   a. Differences between players who make it and don't
   b. Important characteristics – have him explain in depth on these characteristics
   c. Practice behavior
   d. Appreciations as a coach from players in this phase
   e. Working with players to prepare them for what's next
   f. Preparing players for the upcoming challenges

g) Anything else of importance - present 11-model

The adaption phase (Jones et.al. 2014)

a) The adaption process to the first team training situations
   a. What's important
   b. Why
   c. How they adapt
b) What do you as a coach look for in players in this phase of their transition?
c) Expectations and demands from coaches and other players
d) The importance of mental qualities in this situation
   a. Which qualities do you emphasize the most?
e) Behaviors that are beneficial to players' in this phase (Jordet, in press)
f) Experiences dealing with players in this part of the transition
   a. Differences between players who make it and don't
   b. Important characteristics – have him explain in depth on these characteristics
   c. Practice behavior
   d. Appreciations as a coach from players in this phase
   e. Working with players to prepare them for what's next
   f. Preparing players for the upcoming challenges
g) Anything else of importance

The maintenance phase (Kreiner-Phillips & Orlick, 1993; MacNamara et. al. 2010b; Durand-Bush & Salmela, 2002)

a) What's important for players to maintain their performances in first team training situations?
b) What would you as a coach look for in players in this phase of their transition?
   a. Demands
   b. Expectations?
c) What do your first team coaches look for in these players?
d) The importance of mental qualities in this situation
   a. Which qualities do you emphasize the most?

e) Which behaviors do you believe will benefit players in this maintenance phase?
   a. The 11-model (Jordet, in press)
f) Experiences with players in this part of the transition
   a. Differences between players who make it and don't
   b. Important characteristics – have him explain in depth on these characteristics
   c. Practice behavior
   d. Appreciations as a coach from players in this phase
   e. Working with players to prepare them for what's next
   f. Preparing players for the upcoming challenges

<u>Information letter on research project</u>

"On the career transition to professional football: the perceptions of elite development coaches"

The research project is a master's thesis at the Norwegian School of Sport Sciences at the Department of Coaching and Psychology. The project is scheduled for completion in March 2016.

Purpose of study
The purpose of the study is to examine coaches' perceptions of which behaviors facilitate young elite players' development from youth to professional football, examining how coaches believe mental qualities influence their selection of players to train with the first team, and help players' progress, succeed and maintain their performances in the transition to the first-team squad.

What does participation in the project imply?
The study will conduct a 60 min interview with you (academy coach at U18 or U21). You can expect questions examining your personal experience in helping players get through to the first team, such as: "How much does players' ability to overcome adversity influence your selection of a player to get a chance at training with the first team?" and "Which mental attributes do you emphasize to your players in the transition to the first team?"

All the interviews will be recorded using a portable audio device, and will subsequently be transcribed verbatim before it is sent back to coaches for verification to ensure no statements are misinterpreted or transcribed incorrectly. The club will be granted access to the study before the research paper is submitted for publication in a scientific journal.

What will happen to the information about you?
All participants in the study are guaranteed full anonymity. All personal information will be stored confidentially in accordance with internal regulations at the Norwegian School of Sport Sciences. The participating coaches will receive an ID-code to ensure their anonymity, and only this code will be referred to in the transcribed interviews used in the study. It is voluntary to participate in the project, and you can at any time choose to withdraw your consent without stating any reason. No reference at all will be made to the club or academy coaches throughout the research project.

The study has been notified to the Norwegian Data Protection Authorities, the institution that warrants correct handling of research data in terms of ethics and privacy, and is expected to be finalized in March 2016.

If you have any questions or further information on the research project is warranted, please contact the student researcher using the contact information below.

Øystein Røynesdal (master student at Norwegian School of Sport Sciences)
Phone: +47 97981240
E-mail: oysteinr88@gmail.com

(In collaboration with supervisor Dr. Tynke Toering, Associate Professor at the Norwegian School of Sport Sciences)

Consent for participation in the study

I have received written information about the project *"On the career transition to professional football: the perceptions of elite development coaches"*. By signing this form, I am giving my consent to participate in the study. I am aware that I can choose to withdraw my consent at any time, without stating any reason.

Name:

Date:

Place:

Signature:

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS
NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES

Tynke Toering
Seksjon for coaching og psykologi Norges idrettshøgskole
Postboks 4014 Ullevål stadion
0806 OSLO

Vår dato: 02.09.2014   Vår ref: 39583 / 3 / LT   Deres dato: Deres ref:

TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 27.08.2014. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

39583	*A case study examining behaviors facilitating young elite players' development of expertise in the transition to professional soccer*
Behandlingsansvarlig	*Norges idrettshøgskole, ved institusjonens øverste leder*
Daglig ansvarlig	*Tynke Toering*
Student	*Øystein Røynesdal*

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger er meldepliktig i henhold til personopplysningsloven § 31. Behandlingen tilfredsstiller kravene i personopplysningsloven.

Personvernombudets vurdering forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, ombudets kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/meldeplikt/skjema.html. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, http://pvo.nsd.no/prosjekt.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 30.05.2025, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Katrine Utaaker Segadal

Lis Tenold

Kontaktperson: Lis Tenold tlf: 55 58 33 77
Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering

Dokumentet er elektronisk produsert og godkjent ved NSDs rutiner for elektronisk godkjenning.

Personvernombudet for forskning

Prosjektvurdering - Kommentar

Utvalget informeres skriftlig og muntlig om prosjektet og samtykker til deltakelse. Informasjonsskrivet er i utgangspunktet godt utformet, men siden prosjektleder ønsker å oppbevare innsamlede opplysninger ytterligerer 10 år etter angitt prosjektslutt, her 30.05.2015 i påvente av mulig videre PhD-studier må dette tydeliggjøres i informasjonsskrivet. Det må gå frem at innsamlede opplysninger vil bli oppbevart i en perioden på 10 år etter prosjektslutt da det er mulig det vil bli foretatt en oppfølgningsundersøkelse. Dersom det ikke er tatt kontakt innen 30.05.2025 vil innsamlede opplysninger bli anonymisert.

Revidert informasjonsskriv skal sendes til personvernombudet@nsd.uib.no før utvalget kontaktes.

Personvernombudet legger til grunn at forsker etterfølger Norges idrettshøgskole sine interne rutiner for datasikkerhet. Dersom personopplysninger skal lagres på privat pc/mobile enheter, bør opplysningene krypteres tilstrekkelig.

Forventet prosjektslutt er 30.05.2015, men datamaterialet vil bli oppbevart foreløpig frem til 30.05.2025 i påvente en eventuell oppfølgningsundersøkelse.