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‘Becoming’ an elite coach: a longitudinal
study examining elite players’ transitions
into elite coaching

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Phenomena under investigation



Martin Johnson – Rugby Union



Ryan Giggs - Football



Context - literature

Meilke (2007) **60%** -
EPL, MLB, NBA, NFL

Schempp et al. (2010) -
MLB, NBA, NFL =
*no statistical relationship
between head coaches
with playing experiences
and professional
coaching success*

Elite coach pathways

(Gilbert *et al.*, 2006, 2009; Irwin *et al.*, 2004; Nash & Sproule, 2009; Saiz *et al.*, 2009; Schinke *et al.*, 1995, Werthner & Trudel, 2009)

‘Fast-tracked’ (Rynne, 2014)

Apprenticeship (Cushion, Armour & Jones, 2003)

Socialisation into club culture (Blackett, Evans & Piggott, *in review*)

‘Carrying (our) values through’: Club directors as arbiters of taste

“I often look up at senior players who for me ***extol the values*** of what it’s like to be (local area name). I ***offer*** them jobs within the community team that if they delivered in there then they can one day move into the [senior] coaching team.”

(Kirk, Championship Director of Rugby)

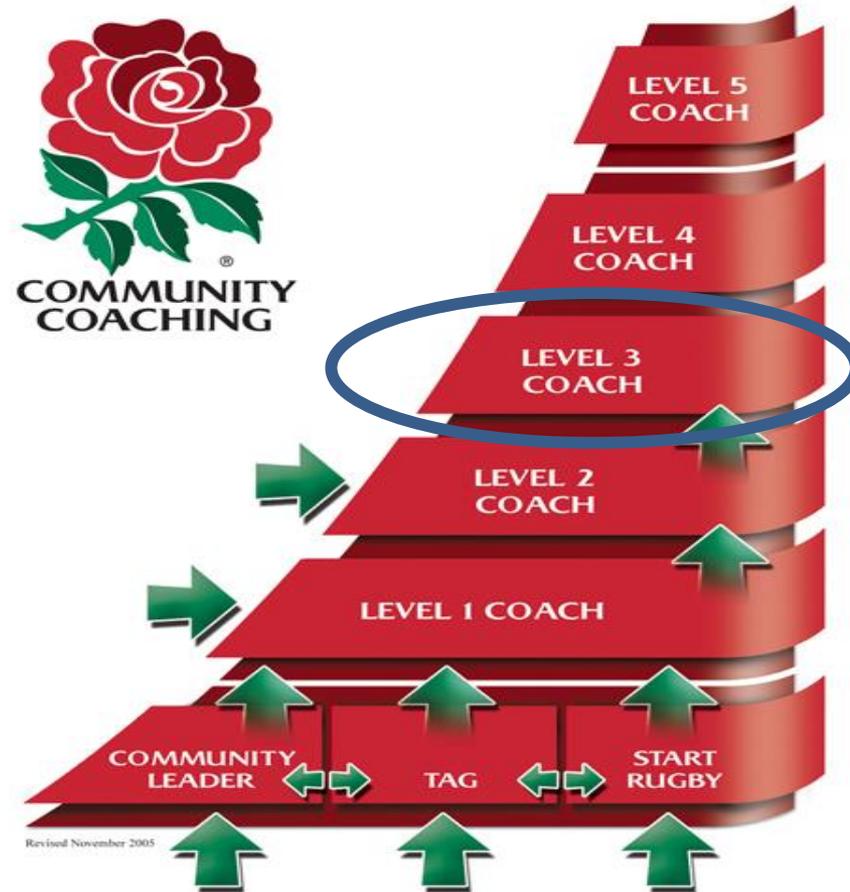
Theoretical Discussion (Bourdieu, 1977)

- Coaches = *arbiters of taste* when identifying playing talent (Christensen, 2009)
 - Arbiters of taste = the club hierarchy
 - Board members act as '*cultural custodians*' of club values when making head coaching appointments with the candidate being required to *embody* the club values = *Hexis*
 - Head coach appointments largely remain within the field and *in-house* which perpetuates a *fast-tracking* culture of appointing elite athletes to elite coaching positions
- = *Doxa* → *Symbolic Violence*
(*the cultural norm*) → (discriminates - *BME & women?*)

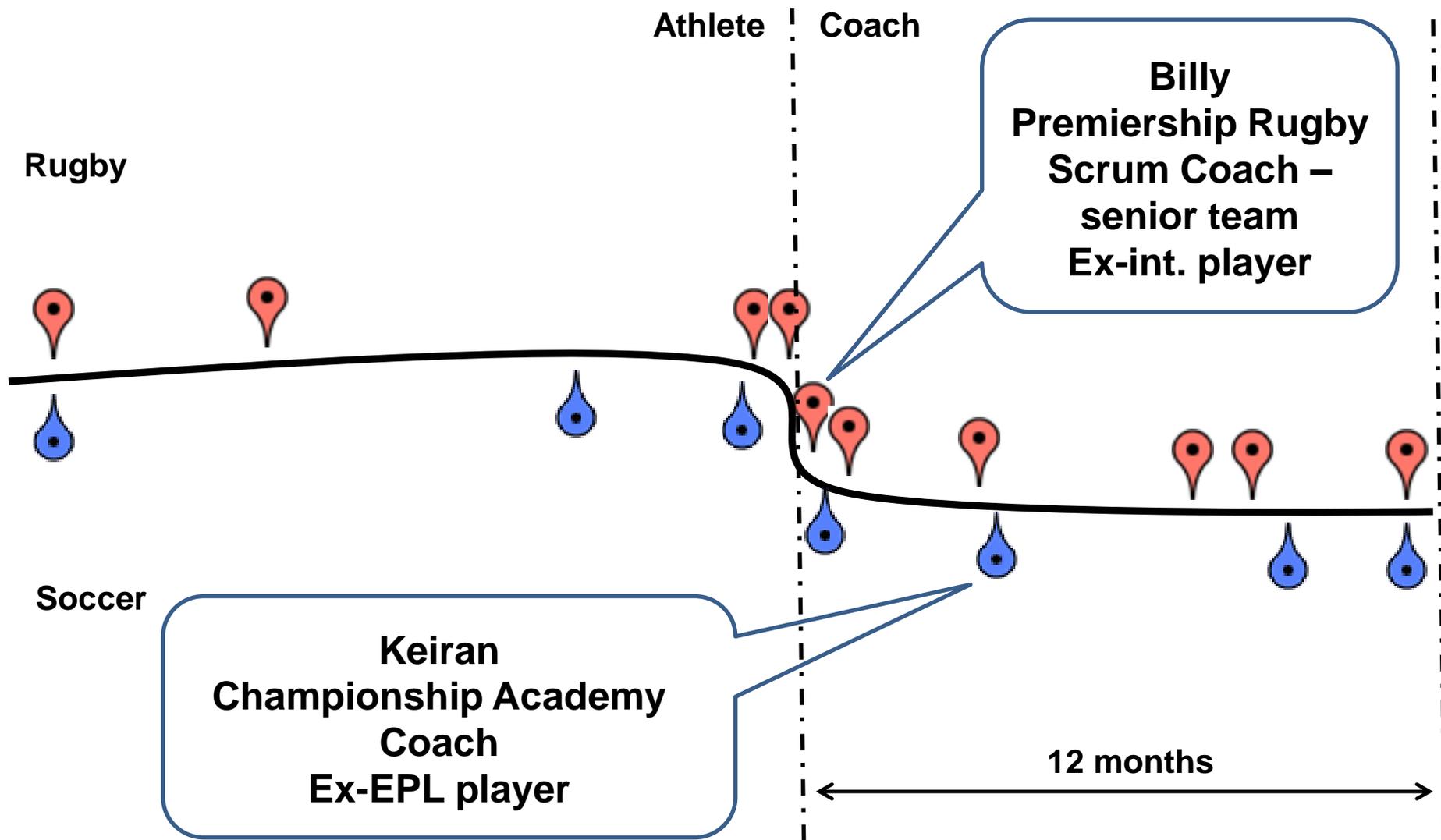
Study design

1. Longitudinal cohort design (Johnson, Plumridge & Holland, 2003)
 - Level 3 ‘senior professionals’ formal coach education qualification
 - 2x Semi-structured interviews
2. Data Analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998)
 - Open Coding
 - Axial Coding
 - Theoretical Coding

COACHING STRUCTURE



Sample characteristics



Results

ACCULTURATION PROCESS

Transition Commencement

Output

Coaching Pathway
Access Routes

'Aspirational'
or
'Reluctant'

Club values - drawing
athletes through

Refinement of a
Coaching and Playing
Philosophy

Direct or Indirect
Coaching Experiences

Significant Others

Coach Identity

Personal
Values/Character

Output/Practice

Discussion – Clubs drawing athletes through

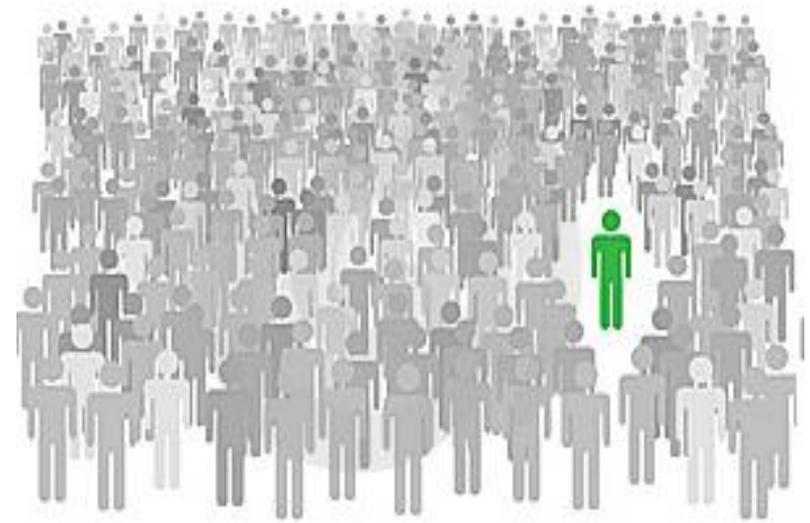
13 / 15 participants attained their first coaching role with either their first or last club they represented as athletes

“Well I retired in the summer through injury, so May time, and (current Championship Football Club 1) have *offered*, well they *offered* me a coaching role, because my contract was expired with them...”

(Kieran, interview one)

Discussion – Philosophical development.

- Conflict between ‘club coaching habitus’ and ‘individual coaching habitus’



I'm trying to still stay true to the way I want to play the game and the way I think is the best way, obviously you now at certain times you are compromised by pressures of people... but also you've got pressures from your squad. (Billy, interview 2)

Discussion – Coach identity

“Players are smart, players will *see through you* if you aren’t honest with them...” (Conrad, interview 1)

Knowledge of self the most important feature

Necessity of gaining player respect
(Potrac, Jones & Armour, 2002)

Honesty – contrasts to Goffman’s presentation of self, impression management & front/façade (cf. Jones, 2006)



Future considerations...

- How much impact do structural mechanisms (e.g. ideological, cultural and political) have on individual coach development?
- How are coaching philosophies 'negotiated' over an extended period of time?
- When does a coaching philosophy become a coaching ideology?



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Thank you.

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