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**Andrew Thomas Manley**

**Surveillance, Disciplinary Power and Athletic Identity:  
A Sociological Investigation into the Culture of Elite  
Sports Academies**

**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy**

**School of Applied Social Sciences  
Durham University  
2012**

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**Andrew Thomas Manley**

**Surveillance, Disciplinary Power and Athletic Identity: A Sociological Investigation  
into the Culture of Elite Sports Academies**

**Abstract**

With the exception of work conducted by Parker (1996a) research concerning identity construction, surveillance practices and power relations within the context of a professional sports academy institution appears limited. Drawing on 30 semi-structured interviews with staff and athletes at two Premiership academies (one rugby, one football), a Foucauldian framework is utilised to provide a sociological analysis of disciplinary power and its impact upon the experiences and development of elite athletes. Foucault's (1979) concept of panopticism is employed to explore the impact of surveillance as a disciplinary tool within the academies. The concept of surveillance as a disciplinary mechanism is furthered with the application of Latour's (2005) 'oligopticon' and Deleuze and Guattari's (2003) 'rhizomatic' notion of surveillance networks. Foucault's (1979; 1994b) normalising judgment and the concept of self and 'lateral' surveillance are employed to understand how the athletes internalise the values, attitudes and behaviours witnessed within the academies. An analysis of the regulation of the social space and time is accompanied by an application of Weber's (1978) 'domination by authority' to explore the authoritative role of the coaches and their relationships with the players. The Foucauldian approach is accompanied by the work of Erving Goffman (1959; 1961a; 1961b) to understand how the role of 'elite athlete', bound by the notion of 'professionalism', is constructed and managed by the players on a daily basis. By adopting both a Foucauldian and interactionist perspective the thesis explores how the structure of the academies impacts upon the development and socialisation of those housed within them, whilst also maintaining focus upon the construction and management of identity and the presentation of 'self' in an institutional setting.

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## Contents

<b>Abstract</b> .....	ii
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	iii
<b>Introduction</b> .....	1
Typology of Academies .....	4
Football Academies .....	6
Rugby Academies.....	9
A Week in the Life of a Valley FC Scholar .....	12
A Week in the Life of a Derrington Town Player.....	17
Thesis Structure .....	20
<b>Chapter One: Elite Sports Academies</b> .....	24
1.1 Introduction .....	24
1.2 Rugby and the Academy .....	24
1.3 Previous Research in Elite Youth Rugby .....	26
1.4 Football and the Academy.....	28
1.5 Education and the Football Academy .....	29
1.6 Hegemonic Masculinity, Professionalism and the Football Academy.....	32
1.7 Authority, Identity and the Football Academy.....	34
1.8 Conclusion.....	40
<b>Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework, Foucault, Disciplinary Power and Goffman</b> .....	43
2.1 Introduction .....	43
2.2 Power and Discipline.....	46

2.3 Techniques of Surveillance .....	52
2.4 Normalising Judgment and the Examination .....	58
2.5 Institutions, Bio-power and Interaction .....	64
2.6 Foucault and Goffman .....	68
2.7 Conclusion .....	73
<b>Chapter Three: Methods .....</b>	<b>80</b>
3.1 Introduction .....	80
3.2 Academy Selection .....	83
3.3 Participants .....	83
3.4 Research Setting .....	86
3.5 Initial Access to the Academies .....	88
3.6 Issues of Access at Valley FC's Academy .....	92
3.7 Issues of Access at Derrington Town's Academy .....	96
3.8 Epistemological Position .....	99
3.9 Interviewing as a Methodological Tool .....	101
3.10 Interviewing and the Position of Power .....	107
3.11 Field Notes .....	110
3.12 Data Analysis, Validity and Reliability .....	113
3.13 Interpretation of Data .....	117
3.14 Disclosure and Confidentiality .....	120
3.15 Conclusion .....	124
<b>Chapter Four: Surveillance within Academies .....</b>	<b>126</b>
4.1 Introduction .....	126
4.2 Panopticism and Surveillance within the Academies .....	129
4.3 Data as a Mode of Surveillance .....	140

4.4 Documentation .....	147
4.5 The Oligopticon and Rhizomatic Surveillance .....	154
4.6 Socio-Technological Control .....	163
4.7 Conclusion.....	165
<b>Chapter Five: Self-Surveillance as a Disciplinary Function .....</b>	<b>168</b>
5.1 Introduction .....	168
5.2 Self-Surveillance within Academies .....	169
5.3 Self-Surveillance and Performance .....	179
5.4 Self-Surveillance and Care of the Self .....	184
5.5 Lateral Surveillance within Academies.....	192
5.6 Conclusion.....	200
<b>Chapter Six: Discipline and the Role of Authority .....</b>	<b>203</b>
6.1 Introduction .....	203
6.2 The Timetable and Control of Activity .....	204
6.3 Discipline and Domination by Authority .....	214
6.4 Authoritative Modes of Discipline .....	221
6.5 Discipline Amongst Athletes.....	229
6.6 Director of Performance .....	233
6.7 Conclusion.....	235
<b>Chapter Seven: Normalisation within the Academy Setting .....</b>	<b>239</b>
7.1 Introduction .....	239
7.2 Normalising Judgment and the Academy Setting .....	240
7.3 The Examination and the Academy Setting .....	253
7.4 Individualisation of the Athlete .....	260
7.5 The Internalisation of ‘Norms’ Over Time .....	262



7.6 Conclusion.....	265
<b>Chapter Eight: The Normalisation of Injury, Career, Stigma and Masculinity.....</b>	<b>271</b>
8.1 Introduction .....	271
8.2 The Normalisation of Injury .....	273
8.3 Injury and Career .....	287
8.4 Injury and the Rehabilitation Process.....	294
8.5 Stigma and ‘Banter’ .....	300
8.6 Pain, Injury and Masculinity .....	305
8.7 Conclusion.....	309
<b>Chapter Nine: Identity, Professionalism and the Academy Athlete.....</b>	<b>311</b>
9.1 Introduction .....	311
9.2 The Definitive Attitude.....	312
9.3 Professionalism and Self-Discipline.....	320
9.4 Performance, Role and Identity .....	324
9.5 Team Cohesion and Individual Performance .....	332
9.6 Conclusion.....	341
<b>Chapter Ten: Conclusion .....</b>	<b>345</b>
<b>Appendix.1: Participants.....</b>	<b>361</b>
<b>Appendix.2: Interview Guide.....</b>	<b>362</b>
<b>Appendix.3: Consent Form .....</b>	<b>368</b>
<b>Appendix.4: Summary of the Research Project .....</b>	<b>370</b>
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>372</b>
<b>List of Tables: <i>Table.1 Rugby Academy’s Structure</i> .....</b>	<b>11</b>

## Introduction

Sports academies are often considered to be the breeding ground for the future generation of elite-level athletes. Research regarding elite youth sport has focused much of its attention on issues of careers and education (Bourke, 2003; Christensen and Sørensen, 2009; McGillivray *et al*, 2005; Monk, 2000; Monk and Olsson, 2006; Platts and Smith, 2009), talent identification (Christensen, 2009; Hoare and Warr, 2000; Williams and Reilly 2000), comparative studies of development systems (Fisher and Dean, 1998; Holt, 2002), generalisations regarding the developmental pathways of athletes (Baker *et al*, 2003; Carlson, 1988; Carlson, 1993; Culver and Trudel, 2000; Fraser-Thomas *et al*, 2005; Fraser-Thomas and Côté, 2006) and labour migration (Darby, 2007; Darby *et al*, 2007). With the exception of work conducted by Parker (1996a) and Cushion and Jones (2006) limited research has investigated the social and structural composition of elite sports academies.

Further research surrounding youth sport highlights the work-like environment that is often associated with youth sport programmes. Donnelly and Petherick (2004) identify key issues at the “extreme” end of the sporting spectrum that affect high-performance youth athletes such as exposure to excessive physiological and psychological stress, the denial of important social contact and experiences, and the intense involvement with sport to the extent where athletes become detached from the larger social sphere (Donnelly and Petherick, 2004). These particular experiences highlight the pressures placed upon young athletes in

this environment, emphasising not only the physiological and psychological impositions placed upon them, but also the cultural restrictions that may affect the athlete's process of socialisation. Hong (2004) identifies similar values or methods of training that may impact negatively upon the experiences of young elite athletes. Hong (2004: 341) highlights the dominant values within specialised sports schools in China, where training methods focus specifically on the, "three non-afraids of hardship, difficulty and injury, and the five toughnesses of spirit, body, skill, training and competition". These values are adopted by the young athletes and are implemented within their training and performance. Hong (2004: 341) indicates that "they work long hours, train under physical, social and psychological strain and carry much responsibility". These particular characteristics reinforce the lifestyles that young elite athletes encounter when involved with institutions such as specialist sports schools or elite academies.

Upon describing the environmental factors that comprise the social surroundings of adolescents in top-level sport, Brettschneider (1999: 124) comments that several stresses appear within the lives of the young athletes such as "major sporting success and defeat, physical stress and injuries, the departure of a trainee or the break up of a training group". Brettschneider (1999) indicates that the level to which these factors impact upon athletes is determined by their personal ability to cope with such stresses and external supporting factors. Therefore, if social or personal resources are absent from the athlete's environment then they are more likely to succumb to the stresses placed upon them (Brettschneider, 1999). The

pressures experienced by the young athletes and the routine of their schedule may be a direct result of the pressures placed upon the managers or coaches to succeed.

Culver and Trudel (2000: 42) state that “coaches of elite teams put more weight on the importance of winning than coaches of non-elite teams”. It may be suggested that the greater the demands of the coach then the greater the demands of the player as Culver and Trudel (2000: 42) note, “coaches are often evaluated solely on the performance of their teams, which tends to have the unfortunate effect of tainting their interactions with their athletes”. Although it is quite likely that the research thesis will encounter similar behaviour demonstrated by the previous literature, the majority of the literature reviewed regarding elite youth sport rarely discusses the athlete in context to their social setting. It is believed that a focus on the institutional setting of the athlete may reveal a greater understanding of how they construct their identities and develop within such an environment.

It is the intention of the thesis to present an understanding of disciplinary power and how it impacts upon the experiences and development of athletes situated specifically within professional sports academies. By drawing upon two professional academies, one rugby and one football, a more comprehensive understanding of how disciplinary power influences academy athletes will be developed. The inclusion of two separate institutions provides insight to the extent to which disciplinary power is exercised differently. Moreover, an introduction to the structure and organisation of both academies may reveal different or similar techniques of development that impact upon the athletes’ performances and progress.

### *Typology of Academies*<sup>1</sup>

Within the United Kingdom (UK) sports academies may exist in varying institutions and may be attached to different organisations or governing bodies. Some sports academies are independent organisations that have been established to encourage young students to continue in education using sport as a medium to engage them. Academies may also be affiliated with universities providing an integrated programme of both sporting and academic excellence. Other academies may be directly linked with professional clubs or teams. These particular academies house the elite younger generation of sports men and women. The selection of athletes is based upon the individual's current level of sporting achievement. Many athletes aim to pursue a professional career in their chosen sport upon leaving the academy. However, sport academies also aim to ensure that each student receives adequate academic qualifications allowing them to continue on to higher education.

Within the UK specialist sports colleges and further education colleges may house academies in a variety of different sports. Specialist sports colleges are secondary schools with additional funds to raise standards of physical education within, and in addition to the sport curriculum. In order to attain the status of a specialist sports college the institute must raise £50,000 of private sector sponsorship. In addition, a four year plan detailing how the particular institute will raise the profile of physical education and sports performance must be submitted

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<sup>1</sup> Information regarding sports academies retrieved from the European Commission DG Education & Culture Education of Young Sportspersons (lot 1) Final Report PMP: In partnership with the Institute of Sport and Leisure Policy Loughborough University August 2004.

once the £50,000 has been raised and the plan approved. The Department of Education and Skills <sup>2</sup>(DfES) will then provide a capital grant of £100,000 and the college may be eligible to apply for lottery funding. Specialist sports colleges and further education colleges provide specialist sports provision for elite athletes, including specialised coaching and training facilities. The colleges also provide a wide range of sports related courses and flexible study arrangements for student-athletes.

Professional sport academies are attached to specific sports clubs or sports federations. Academies connected to professional sport aim to serve three main functions; academic development, sport development and personal development. The academies provide high quality coaching, development, education and medical care for athletes. Individuals are ‘scouted’ countrywide and abroad, the academies provide gifted athletes with an opportunity to fulfil their potential and reach professional status. This study focuses on two academies associated with professional sport, a rugby union academy (Derringstone Town) belonging to an Aviva Premiership rugby union club and a football academy (Valley FC) belonging to an English Premiership football club.<sup>3</sup> Both academies are associated with the professional clubs in the top divisions of their respective leagues.

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<sup>2</sup> The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) was a United Kingdom government department between 2001 and 2007 responsible for the education system and children’s services in England. Since the election of the coalition government in 2010 the Department for Education (DfE) has become responsible for issues associated with child protection and education in England.

<sup>3</sup> In order to preserve anonymity, pseudonyms for the academies (Derringstone Town and Valley FC) and all participants have been used throughout this thesis.

## *Football Academies*

In 1997 Howard Wilkinson, former professional footballer and manager, authored the document entitled *A Charter for Quality* published by the Football Association (FA). What was to follow was the birth of modern football academies. With the introduction of football academies a greater emphasis was placed upon the age at which specialisation in training should start, the commitment of time expected from children and the expectations of the children and their parents (Bent *et al*, 2000). In 2007 the Charter was reviewed by Richard Lewis, chair of Sport England, and a new document was published by the FA entitled *A Review of Young Player Development in Professional Football*. The *Lewis Report* (which this came to be known as) provided a comprehensive overview of the academies, offering over 64 separate recommendations to improve football youth development in England (Green, 2009). The opening statement of the *Lewis Report* (3.2: 5) states that “understanding the changing needs of the young player at each stage of his development is crucial towards helping produce a talented and successful player”. Although the report provided an in depth analysis of youth development it failed to consult either the players or parents involved with the academy programmes. Although considered a minor omission, the importance of consulting the young players regarding their changing needs may be seen to be crucial to understanding how best to proceed with development procedures in youth football.

Currently there are 40 FA registered academies in England. It is mandatory for all Premier League clubs to house an academy, with the FA funding 18 places per

academy; however, the number of funded places may vary depending on the size of the club. Potential academy athletes, as young as five years old, are scouted from within their particular region and are invited on a trial basis to join the club. If the player shows potential then they will be asked to attend the academy on a regular basis. Boys from the age of eight to 16 may be eligible to sign on an academy registration. These players will train and play for the academy, however, not on a full-time basis. Up until the age of 16 players will attend the club for evening and weekend training, competitive games for the under 16 and under 18 teams are played on a weekend.

Valley FC instigated a day release programme for the under 15's and under 16's academy squad. With permission from the respective schools, players at Valley FC academy are able to leave school one day per week to spend a full day's training with the academy. To ensure that their academic performance does not suffer, English and mathematics lessons are conducted during the day at the academy. This particular programme has only been implemented for academy athletes aged 12 to 16. It is not a standard model enforced by other FA academies as each academy approaches their educational programme differently. The day release programme also acts on the basis of a reward system. If the young academy athletes are underachieving or are seen to be misbehaving at school, then their day release privileges are revoked.

From the age of nine to 11 the academy players will sign a one year contract, from 12 to 16 the players may sign a contract for a minimum of two years and at



aged 16 players may be offered a two year scholarship. At 17, if they are believed to be good enough, players may sign a professional contract. Players aged 16 may also be offered a three year contract, two years as an academy scholar and a one year as a professional, rather than the standard two year scholarship. Players who receive a scholarship will train full-time at the academy. They will receive a wage from the club and continue in further education. At Valley FC's academy all college classes were conducted within the academy itself. The length of the contract for each individual player is determined by the academy manager and academy coaching staff. If players are unsuccessful in attaining or extending their contract then they are released and an exit strategy is put into place. The coaching staff and academy manager aids the player in finding another club or recommend other clubs to accept the player on a trial basis.

Within recent years football academies have focused much of their attention upon the 'holistic' approach to development. Stratton *et al* (2004: 200) state that "the more humanistic and holistic concepts of development emphasise a more caring and nurturing environment in order to encourage the development of the 'whole' individual". Valley FC advocated such an ethos and was committed to developing 'well-rounded' footballers through a holistic approach to their development.

### *Rugby Academies*<sup>4</sup>

Within England there are a total of 14 regional rugby union academies, 12 of the regional academies are connected to the 12 clubs within the Aviva Premiership and a further two are located in Bristol and Exeter. The academies are responsible for the development costs and are supported by the Rugby Football Union (RFU). The academies are funded by a partnership between the club itself and England Rugby, which is supported by Sport England lottery funding. Each academy serves a specific geographical area within England, and is only able to select talent from their allocated region. Potential academy players are selected from a variety of sources; existing club and school structures, direct referrals, county development squads and age group festivals and training camps.

Rugby academies aim to develop links with schools, colleges, universities and local and regional clubs with the intention of enhancing the development of young English players. The academies provide an integrated pathway for potential elite players from the grassroots level into the Aviva Premiership and on to the England national side. Academy players who have the potential to pursue a university degree may be encouraged to select one of the appropriate universities within the academy's region. However, it is not mandatory that academy players follow this protocol and they are free to pursue higher education at any institute throughout the United Kingdom. In addition, regional academies work in partnership

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<sup>4</sup> Information regarding RFU academies retrieved from the following web address:  
<http://www.rfu.com/TakingPart/CareersInRugby/Overview.aspx>

with further education colleges and schools to provide the academy athletes with flexible educational support, which allow the players to participate in rugby for two to three hours each day whilst still attending lessons and lectures. The majority of academy players receive a set programme of skills training, technical skills development and conditioning and tactical awareness training each week.

Derrington Town's academy is divided into two different levels with each level comprising three tiers. The first level is the junior academy, which runs from the age of 13 up to 18 years of age and the second level is the senior academy, which runs from the age of 18 to roughly around the age of 24. Each level is split into three tiers, the junior academy is divided into Associate, Elite Player Development Group (EPDG) and RFU, and the senior academy is divided into Associate, Club and RFU. The Associate level is perceived as the lowest tier; here the potential for players to progress to the first team is seen as minimal. The EPDG tier in the junior academy supports the best players aged 14-16 years of age who have the potential to enter an England rugby academy. RFU is considered the highest tier within the system, players that fall into this tier are considered to have first team potential and may already be training full-time with the first team squad. Each tier has its own particular benefits including contact time with coaches, training and fitness programmes, uniforms, physiotherapy treatment, medical cover and game analysis. The further a player progresses up the hierarchy the more benefits he gains from the academy programme. Players within Derrington Town's structure may move up or down the tiers depending on their performance in training or in matches; the decision

to move a player is left to the discretion of the academy manager and coaches.

Table.1 indicates the academy's tiered structure and benefits that were allocated to each player depending upon their position within the hierarchy:

*Table.1 Rugby Academy's Structure*

Player Categories and Benefits <sup>5</sup>					
<b>RFU 18 – 24</b>	<b>Club 18 – 24</b>	<b>Associate 18 – 24</b>	<b>RFU 13 – 18</b>	<b>EPDG 13 - 18</b>	<b>Associate 13 – 18</b>
Squad Contract	Bursary Contract	Train with development squad	Monthly Squad Training - Club	Monthly Squad Training - Club	Monthly Squad Training - Club
Train with 1 <sup>st</sup> Team	Train with 1 <sup>st</sup> Team	Game analysis – 2 per year	Individual Skill Dev Prog – weekly at school	Individual Skill Dev Prog – fortnightly at schools	Some kit
Individual Skill Dev Prog.	Individual Skill Dev Prog.	Some Kit	Coach Mentor Game Analysis – monthly	Ad hoc Game analysis – 2 per year	Group Fitness Programme – monthly contact
Coach Mentor	Personal Game Analysis - Monthly	Physio treatment whilst playing and training for Club	Full Kit	Some Kit	Physio cover whilst at club
Personal Game Analysis - weekly	Full Kit	Club RFU Insurance	Boots x 2	Physio cover	Club RFU Insurance
Full Kit	Full time Physio and Medical cover with RugbyCare	Group Fitness Programme – Weekly Contact	Gym Membership (£100)	Club RFU Insurance	End of season review/ goal setting
Full time Physio and Medical cover with RugbyCare	Individual Fitness Programme - Daily Contact	End of season review/ goal setting	Physio and Medical cover with RugbyCare	Individual Fitness Prog – Fortnightly contact	
Individual Fitness Programme - Daily Contact	Goal setting – 2 per year	End of season bursary dependent on involvement	Individual Fitness Prog – weekly contact	Goal setting – 2 per year	
Goal Setting – 3 per year	FAST Testing – 2 per year		Goal Setting – 3 per year	FAST Testing – 2 per year	
FAST Testing – 3 per year			FAST Testing – 3 per year		

An exploration into the differing organisational structures of the Derrington

Town and Valley FC academies allows for an understanding of the disciplinary

<sup>5</sup>Table.1 identifies the hierarchical nature of the rugby academy's structure, illustrating the different playing groups and the benefits afforded to each one. The table demonstrates each category for the 13-18 (junior academy) and 18-24 (senior academy) age groups. The data was retrieved from the rugby academy coach and outlined the exact structure of the junior and senior rugby academy system. It is clear that the top tier group (RFU) receive significantly more support in relation to contact time with coaches, medical cover, performance analysis and lifestyle support in relation to the lowest tier (Associate).

mechanisms and modes of power that are present in both institutions. By analysing both academies differences or similarities can be ascertained regarding the pathway to developing elite athletes in two separate institutions. The following section provides a daily schedule for each academy demonstrating a clearer contextual description of the everyday circumstances of the academy athletes and their respective institutions.

#### *A Week in the Life of a Valley FC Scholar*

The daily routine of a Valley FC scholar followed a somewhat monotonous schedule, as little or no variation appeared apparent throughout their day to day lives. All of the Valley FC scholars interviewed within the current study lived outside the confines of the academy. The majority of players lived with their parents; however, three of the interview sample (Hugh, Oliver and Roger) resided in ‘digs’<sup>6</sup>. Whilst at the academy players undertook routine tasks and responsibilities that they had to complete on a weekly basis. One first year scholar was partnered with a second year scholar and a rota was created to ensure that menial tasks were completed on a daily basis. Players were responsible for ensuring that the pro (professional) boot room, the players’ games room and the changing room were cleaned and that the bibs and balls were collected and stored appropriately after each use. Each week the rota changed to ensure that different partners were placed on different tasks. After the changing room and the boot room had been cleaned, the under 18 captain inspected

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<sup>6</sup> Valley FC academy athletes living away from home with a host family often referred to their accommodation as ‘digs’.

the jobs to ensure that the tasks had been completed to the correct standard. The weekly schedule rarely altered significantly for the Valley FC academy athletes; however, training days and rest days could be changed if a game was timetabled midweek as opposed to a weekend. The following schedule details the weekly training routine of a Valley FC under 18s player starting from a Monday morning and ending on a Sunday.

#### Monday:

The under 18 academy players arrived at the training ground to begin their recovery session at 8.30am on a Monday morning. Prior to the recovery session the sport scientist (Geoff) at the club took urine samples from the players to monitor their osmolality levels to ensure that the players had been hydrating properly over the weekend. Once the records of the urine sample had been documented the players began their recovery training session. The recovery session usually consisted of exercises conducted in the hydrotherapy pools, stretching and ice baths to ensure that their bodies had fully recovered from the weekend game. Geoff led the players through a range of recovery exercises that involved using the spinners<sup>7</sup> and a light upper body weights session, after which players had the option of requesting a massage if they still felt sore from the weekend game, although I was informed by Geoff that very few would. Once showered the players began their college work from 10.00am. All college work for the academy scholars was conducted 'in house'

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<sup>7</sup> Spinners refer to exercise bikes (often known as spinning bikes) where the resistance of the bike's fly wheel can be altered to make pedaling either easier or more difficult.

where tutors came to the academy to teach the students as opposed to the players receiving education in a college located away from the academy. The academy athletes interviewed within this study were enrolled on a BTEC National Certificate in Sport and Exercise Science. College work on a Monday morning began at 10am and lasted the full day finishing at 5pm in the afternoon. The day was broken up by lunch provided by the academy at 1pm where all the players ate together in the canteen. The choice of food was dictated by the academy and was representative of the culture of healthy eating that was encouraged by the academy coaching and training staff. At 5pm the academy athletes were free to leave the academy and spend the afternoon as they wished. Although the academy athletes were left to their own devices, many of them chose to continue training, either out on the pitches or in the gym, prior to returning home or back to their digs.

### Tuesday:

On a Tuesday morning the athletes arrived at the academy to begin training for 9.00am. The morning training was led by Geoff and consisted of a core stability session, where specific exercises were conducted to target and improve the core strength<sup>8</sup> of the athletes, and a leg weights session. At 10.30am the players headed to the pitches and begun training with the academy coach (Graham). The Tuesday morning training session with Graham focused upon possession work, placing

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<sup>8</sup> The core of the body is where the centre of gravity is located and may be defined as the lumbo-pelvic-hip complex (Prentice, 2004). Core training is used to strengthen this region to improve the efficiency of movement and gain strength, power and neuromuscular control (Prentice, 2004).

emphasis upon the ability of the players to retain the ball under high pressure situations, and lasted until 1.00pm. At 1.00pm the players returned to the academy to have lunch together and then at 2.00pm returned to the pitches with Graham to focus on tactical work. Once training with Graham had finished the players met with the sport scientist for a post training recovery session, which involved either a light jog or swim, accompanied by flexibility work. At 5pm the players were free to leave the academy, stay to use the training facilities or return home or to their digs.

### Wednesday:

Training for the academy players on a Wednesday started at 9.00am and was taken by Geoff. The training sessions lasted from 9.00am till 10.00am and consisted of a game of team handball to warm-up, followed by a leg weights session and a core weights session. At 10.00am the players returned to the pitches to train with Graham. The morning training session with Graham focused on forward play often incorporating crossing and finishing drills, as discussed in Chapter Six of the thesis, accompanied by simulation games and possession work. Players returned to the main academy building for lunch at 1.00pm. Once the players had finished lunch they were either called back to the training pitches for more game simulation and possession work with Graham or given the afternoon free, the decision to allow players free time or to train was left to the discretion of Graham. The majority of the players would often take advantage of a free afternoon by engaging in extra training.



#### Thursday:

The Thursday morning training started at 9.00am and included lighter strength and conditioning exercises due to the forthcoming game that was due to be played on the Saturday. Geoff led the players through a core strength training session incorporating proprioception<sup>9</sup> exercises, which trained and tested the players' balance and control of movement. At 10.00am the players trained with Graham focusing on team tactics, often with the opposing team in mind, finishing at 12.00pm for lunch. After lunch the academy athletes began their college work and finished at 5.00pm. Once again the players had the option of remaining at the academy to train on their own, return home or spend time socialising.

#### Friday:

Athletes arrived at the academy for a 9.00am warm-up session with Geoff, which was led on the training ground pitches. Due to the immediacy of the game, Graham focused on possession skills, which usually consisted of a 'box drill'<sup>10</sup>, exercise, and match simulation where two teams played against one another whilst Graham observed and interrupted to correct mistakes, comment on the positioning of players and dispense advice with regard to player decision making. The morning

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<sup>9</sup> Proprioception may refer to a conscious and unconscious appreciation of joint position (Prentice, 2004).

<sup>10</sup> The box drill involved the coach arranging the academy players around the edge of a square formation on the training pitch (roughly 5 square metres) instructing them to pass the ball between one another across the square formation. Initially one player was introduced into the centre of the square to intercept the passes, more players were introduced until one player had successfully intercepted and controlled the ball. The players were then removed from the centre square and the drill began again with the player who had made the mistake in the centre.

training session finished at 12 o'clock and the players had lunch together. After lunch the focus was placed upon tactical work off the pitch and players were offered the opportunity to rest before the Saturday game.

#### Saturday:

Both the under 18 and under 16 squads played their games on a Saturday. Prior to a home game (games that were played at Valley FC's academy) the players and coaching staff met an hour before 'kick-off' to go through a forty-five minute warm-up with Geoff. After a home game Geoff led the players through a recovery session in the hydrotherapy pool that involved flexibility exercises to loosen and relax the players' muscles. After the recovery session the players were free to return home, or for those lodging with a host family, back to their digs.

#### Sunday:

Sunday was scheduled as a rest day for the players; however, they could be called in to the academy for a recovery session at Graham's discretion.

#### *A Week in the Life of a Derrington Town Player*

The weekly schedule for the Derrington Town players was also unlikely to alter; however, the contact time between the coaching staff at the academy and the senior rugby academy athletes was significantly less in comparison to Valley FC. At the time of the interviews all the academy athletes lived outside the confines of the

academy, either in university or private accommodation, five of the interviewees (Christopher, Ethan, Evan, Josiah and Noah) were enrolled at a university and two (Jacob and Ryan) were not involved with higher education. The following schedule details the weekly training routine of the Derringtonstone Town senior academy players starting from a Monday morning and ending on a Friday.

#### Monday:

Training for the Derringtonstone Town senior academy athletes began at 7.30am. The players arrived at the academy and were joined by the academy coach (Phillip) and strength and conditioning coach (Tim) who led them through a warm-up on the exercise bikes. Once the players had warmed-up they began their own individual weights programme designed by Tim. Tim would monitor the athletes whilst they exercised; however, the majority of the players worked in pairs to support one another. The weights session lasted for an hour after which the players made their way to the training pitch behind the stadium to focus on a skills session. The skills session was led by the academy director; however, on some occasions a coach from outside the academy took the session. The skills session focused upon developing the players' spatial awareness, hand eye coordination and tactical knowledge with regard to defence work and attacking lines, finishing at 10am.

#### Tuesday-Wednesday:

For the Derringtonstone Town academy athletes there was no training within the academy on a Tuesday and Wednesday as players were left to train or play with their club sides or university teams away from the academy itself.

#### Thursday:

On a Thursday players arrived at the academy at 5.00pm to begin a weight session lasting 90 minutes. Once again, players followed their own individual strength and conditioning programme as advised by Tim.

#### Friday:

The Friday morning session also began at 7.30am in the morning and followed the exact same routine as the Monday morning training session. An early morning weights session was followed by skills training. It was mentioned by the academy players during interviews that on occasion skill sessions were conducted in the gym itself due to adverse weather conditions.

Training sessions at Derringtonstone Town were scheduled around the athletes' academic commitments and therefore morning sessions had to be arranged as early as possible. From comparing the weekly schedules of both academies it was quite clear that contact time between coaching staff and players at Derringtonstone Town was significantly less than that of Valley FC. Due to the lack of contact time between the coaching staff and players, Phillip (Academy Coach) was forced to rely on a

dispersed network of club coaches, university coaches, County coaches, teachers and parents, to report back upon the progress and well-being of the players. Derrington Town presented an organisation dependent on establishing and maintaining these contacts. Similar to Latour's (2005) notion of the oligopticon, as discussed in Chapter Four, the academy staff could only progress the players if the connections within this network held firm.

Valley FC presented a different portrait of an academy institution, similar to Parker's (1996a) study the overall structure of the academy athletes' lifestyle at Valley FC was used to great effect to ensure that the dominant norms associated with 'professionalism', as discussed in Chapter Nine, were adhered to. A combination of disciplinary mechanisms, a regulation of space and time and a dispersed but rigorous network of observation ensured that such norms were internalised by the Valley FC players. The frequency of interaction between the coaching staff, support staff and players ensured that athletes could be observed, measured, compared and categorised on a routine basis. In comparison to the organisational structure of Derrington Town, Valley FC presented an institution that monitored their athletes with greater intent to cultivate their 'ideal' character.

### *Thesis Structure*

**Chapter One** offers a review of the existing literature surrounding elite youth rugby and elite youth football. The aim of this chapter is to explore the key concepts arising from empirical work that has looked to examine elite sports

academies. **Chapter Two** provides the theoretical framework for the study introducing the Foucauldian concepts of discipline and power. Particular emphasis is placed upon Foucault's (1979) understanding of disciplinary mechanisms used to create 'docile-utility', and notions of governmentality focusing upon the concept of bio-power. A justification of the chosen methodology is provided in **Chapter Three** with an outline and rationale for the sample and methods used. Ethical considerations and notions of reflexivity, disclosure and access are discussed in relation to their impact upon the research process.

**Chapter Four** considers the impact of surveillance as a disciplinary tool within both academies. Foucault's (1979) interpretation of panopticism is introduced and applied to the academies settings. With the increasing use of modern surveillance technology further concepts relating to surveillance in society are being applied to the academies. Latour's (2005) 'oligopticon' and the concept of 'dataveillance' as systems of monitoring will be discussed in relation to the academies' approach towards discipline through methods of surveillance. **Chapter Five** discusses self-surveillance as a disciplinary function emphasising the academy athletes' attitudes towards disciplining the self in relation to performance and attitude. The concept of 'lateral' surveillance is also introduced in the context of peer-to-peer monitoring.

**Chapter Six** introduces discipline and the role of authority within the academies. A Foucauldian approach towards discipline is applied to the academies exploring the concept of disciplinary power and its functioning within both the

academy environments. Specific emphasis is placed upon the control of activity through the regulation of social space and time. Weber's (1978) concept of 'domination by authority' will be used to explore the authoritative role of the coaches and their interaction with the players. **Chapter Seven** provides an overview of the literature relating to 'normalisation' in a sporting context. The purpose of the chapter is to apply the Foucauldian notion of 'normalisation' to the academies in order to explore how specific 'norms' and behaviour become internalised by the athletes. A focus upon the mechanisms employed by the academies to establish a normalising standard will be explored in relation to the Foucauldian (1979) concepts of a 'normalising judgment' and the 'examination'.

In **Chapter Eight** an understanding of the academy athletes' experiences of pain and injury is analysed. The concept of pain and injury is discussed with references to a Foucauldian perspective drawing upon the concepts of normalisation and technologies of the self (Foucault, 1988a). An interactionist perspective is also employed to understand the interaction between academy athletes and the social construction of pain and injury in relation to career (Kotarba, 1983; Roderick, 2003), masculinity (Connell, 1990), stigma and 'banter' (Roderick, 2003, 2006b).

**Chapter Nine** focuses upon issues of identity and professionalism within the academies. Goffman's (1959, 1961a, 1961b, 1971) concepts relating to identity, including the presentation of the self and 'role theory', are adopted to explore the construction of identity amongst the academy athletes. By presenting the academy athletes' understanding of 'professionalism' an idea of how they construct their

desired identity and perform the ‘role’ of an elite athlete is demonstrated. **Chapter Ten** offers a summary of the main findings of the thesis, limitations of the study and concluding remarks.

The attention of the thesis will now turn to a review of existing literature surrounding elite sports academies. Emphasis of this particular chapter is placed upon key literature associated with elite youth rugby and elite youth football.



## Chapter One: Elite Sports Academies

### *1.1 Introduction*

The aim of this chapter is to provide a review of the existing literature on elite sports academies. Specific focus will be placed upon empirical work surrounding both elite youth football and elite youth rugby. This review of literature examining the social and structural features of rugby and football academies attempts to provide a context for the following chapters of the thesis.

### *1.2 Rugby and the Academy*

In 1995 English rugby union witnessed a formalised shift, initiated by the International Rugby Board (IRB), from amateurism to professionalism, a change in policy that would impact significantly upon the culture and structure of the game (O'Brien and Slack, 2003). With the RFU steeped in the tradition of amateurism, the transition to professional status was problematic and not easily negotiated by all clubs who wished to achieve the move from an amateur sports organisation to a small business operation (O'Brien and Slack, 2003). With the IRB repealing its laws on banning professionalism, rugby clubs aimed to move towards becoming corporate entities, professionally staffed and commercially orientated (Malcolm *et al*, 2000). Alterations to club ownership, finances, an increased dependence on media support and a shifting attitude towards players as assets contributed to the changing ethos of the game as Malcolm *et al* (2000: 67) note: "Many clubs, in order to cope with the

new demands of professional rugby, altered their ownership and structure organisation. The new owners and administrators in rugby union found it increasingly necessary to consider financial, rather than simply playing, goals”.

Despite the structural and cultural consequences arising from the introduction of professionalism within rugby union football, there is a distinct lack of research concerning the formation of academy institutions, which develop the young athletes involved within the game. Since 2001 academies have been responsible for producing players eligible to sign professional contracts with Aviva Premiership club sides and represent the England national squads from the under 16 to under 24 age ranges. The 14 regional rugby academies were established to provide a pathway for academy athletes to advance to professional status and the full England international sides.<sup>11</sup> The regional academies are integrated within the RFU’s performance pathway for developing full England international players, which functions at three levels.

The initial level, ‘School of Rugby Level’, works with the regional academies, clubs, schools and RFU development staff to establish a programme of talent search and player development. At this level the players who have been nominated by schools, clubs or personal recommendations are assessed as to whether they should be placed on the ‘Schools of Rugby’ programme. Once successfully

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<sup>11</sup> Information regarding the overview of RFU academies retrieved from the following web address: <http://www.rfu.com/TakingPart/CareersInRugby/Overview.aspx>. The introductory chapter of this thesis provides a more detailed discussion of RFU academies and the geographic areas they serve. Moreover, by providing insight into the structure of one specific regional academy (Derrington Town) a more detailed understanding of their development pathway is provided.

placed on the programme the athletes receive lifestyle management, game sense and skills training in accordance with the RFU Core Skills Development programme. Level two progresses to the Elite Player Development Groups (EPDGs), the best players aged 14-16, located within the regional academies or clubs, are provided with a personalised programme that provides fitness testing and screening, skills work, conditioning, physiotherapy and dietary and lifestyle advice. Level one is the final stage of the pathway and is concerned with the National Academy; here players will be placed in an England international side ranging from the under 16 to under 24 age groups.<sup>12</sup> The following section highlights the focus of previous research that has looked to examine elite youth rugby.

### *1.3 Previous Research in Elite Youth Rugby*

Research concerning talent identification and development in youth rugby has placed much of its attention on the individual athlete with less emphasis on the institutional settings that aim to develop their performance. A search for literature concerned with elite youth rugby academies proceeds to produce one main type of text; that which is concerned with the anthropometrical and physiological indicators that signify sporting excellence. Comparative studies of elite youth rugby have examined specific aspects of youth development, placing emphasis on

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<sup>12</sup> Information regarding the development pathway for England rugby academies retrieved from the following web address:  
<http://www.rfu.com/TakingPart/CareersInRugby/RegionalAcademyProcess.aspx>. The England international sides referred to in this section include the England Under 16, Under 18, Under 20, and England Saxons squads.

anthropometrical, physical and motor variables (Plotz and Spamer, 2006; Spamer, 2000; Spamer and Winsley, 2003). In addition, studies have examined scientific profiles of elite youth rugby players, again placing attention on anthropometric data and key physical and motor abilities required to become successful rugby players (Pienaar and Spamer, 1998; Spamer, 2009; Spamer and De La Port, 2006). Despite a focus on the individual athlete, Spamer's (2005) study concerning ethical behaviour in sport attempted to examine the principles of 'fair play' amongst elite youth rugby players. However, little attention was given to the cultural surroundings or social interactions between players and coaches that may facilitate or impede ethical behaviour in sport. Additional literature focusing upon elite youth sport has examined the social and cultural concepts associated with socialisation (Carlson, 1988), communication between the coach and elite youth athletes (Culver and Trudel, 2000), and a general overview of key aspects associated with talent development in youth sport (Baker *et al*, 2003; Carlson, 1993; Fraser-Thomas *et al*, 2005; Fraser-Thomas and Côté, 2006). However, the concept of elite sports academies, specifically within rugby union football, has been significantly overlooked. Due to an absence of literature surrounding the structural and cultural aspects associated with elite rugby academies, the review of such an environment becomes problematic. Subsequently the following discussion will focus on past work that has examined the socio-cultural elements that comprise elite football academies. Despite the lack of literature surrounding rugby academies, comparisons may be drawn and differences distinguished between both the institutional setting of a rugby

and football academy throughout this study. This research will aid in producing an insight into the cultural components of such institutions, providing an understanding as to how the athletes and coaching staff interpret the institutional setting in which they reside.

#### *1.4 Football and the Academy*

As Parker (1998) indicates ‘insider’ accounts of the professional game of association football are rarely achieved. This particular perception is no different from investigations concerning elite academies associated with professional clubs. Stratton *et al*’s (2004) review of the role of football academies provides a general discussion concerning the structural components of such institutions, their roles and responsibilities. The fundamental role of elite football academies is to “develop players for the first team or (at least) generate income through the sale of ‘marketable assets’” (Stratton *et al*, 2004: 201). Football academies are responsible for delivering a curriculum that includes the tactical, technical, and physiological components of development, whilst also providing education concerning diet and nutrition, psychological awareness and academic or vocational support (Stratton *et al*, 2004). Whilst this particular curriculum may demonstrate a humanistic approach to developing elite youth footballers, claims that the holistic model is effective have not been established as Stratton *et al* (2004: 200) note: “No real evidence exists as to how this added value is realised within individual club settings”. One particular area

that has received attention concerning football academies and the curriculum design is the provision of academic support.

### *1.5 Education and the Football Academy*

Traditionally education amongst football academy athletes, or youth trainees, has been perceived as relatively unimportant. Parker's (2000a) work concerning educational provision for youth trainees in professional football demonstrates the common attitude often adopted by young footballers. Parker (2000a: 62) states that "education was seen by trainees as just one of a host of relatively 'trivial' occupational obligations which, together with the day-to-day fulfilment of domestic duties, epitomised the symbolic inferiority of trainee status within the context of club life". Monk and Olsson (2006) indicate that the relevance of particular vocational courses, such as the BTEC National in Sport and Exercise Science, which are undertaken within academies, may hold little value for the trainees as their academic interests may not always align with such courses or potential career pathways. Moreover, the general education that is on offer to the academy athletes, who are of post-compulsory school age, varies between different clubs and throughout the football leagues, demonstrating inconsistencies in the delivery of the curriculum (Platts and Smith, 2009).

Despite the negative portrayal of educational provision, McGillivray and McIntosh (2006) highlight that there has been an increasing expansion of educational opportunities open to professional footballers, a development that intimates "a

gradual shift towards a more empowering culture in the game in relation to educational engagement” (McGillivray and McIntosh, 2006: 384). However, caution is still to be exercised when discussing the provision of education and the level of engagement experienced, as the function of football clubs and the affiliated academies have not altered dramatically since their conception, with the majority of clubs not catering to the needs of those who do not secure professional contracts, as Monk and Olsson (2006: 435) indicate: “Football clubs are training young people to do jobs that they will, for the most part, not do, after the training period is finished”. Indeed, previous research has indicated that despite the realisation by youth trainees that few players will make the transition to professional footballer, the majority fail to maximise educational opportunities afforded to them (Monk, 2000). The lack of emphasis on educational attainment is reflective of the interests of the clubs and aides in perpetuating the restricted view that most trainees adopt, focusing on forsaking education to attain the status of professional footballer (Monk and Russell, 2000). Perhaps a truer reflection of the success or failure of the educational provision, and the academic engagement and attainment amid trainees within academy institutions, will be most evident amongst those who are forced into entering a labour market other than that of professional football (Stewart and Sutherland, 1996).

The traditional perception of the modern academy apprentice is that of an individual who possesses a lack of academic potential. However, previous research (Bourke, 2003; McGillivray *et al*, 2005) indicates that aspiring professional

footballers both enjoyed academic engagement and possessed the capability and potential to achieve academically, and a dislike for education was not perceived as the key influencing factor that impeded the majority of the young footballers' to excel in the field of education.

Christensen and Sørensen's (2009: 127) study concerning education amongst elite youth Danish footballers indicates that:

The core of the professional football culture makes itself felt as the dominant logic and powerful underlying assumption in the everyday lives of young footballers and pushes to one side the struggle for symbolic capital in the field of education.

The ambitions to succeed as a professional, the threat of losing recognition within the team and the potential loss of a contract all assume precedence over the young players' lives, inevitably impacting upon their attainment of academic achievement (Christensen and Sørensen, 2009). Moreover, research (McGillivray, 2006; McGillivray *et al*, 2005; Parker, 2000a; Platts and Smith, 2009) has indicated that an interest in education, or demonstration of academic ability, for young academy athletes could potentially threaten their prospects of becoming professional footballers. Indeed, Parker's (2000a: 73) study revealed that trainees who demonstrated too much interest in their studies were, "'given stick' about being 'schoolboys and 'boffs' by coaches and players alike, on account of their ambitious educational interests". By engaging in academia trainees are seen by significant others to be forsaking their identity as committed athletes determined to attain professional status, subsequently education is devalued and perceived by academy



athletes or youth trainees as a hindrance towards achieving their overall goal of professionalism.

Christensen *et al* (2011: 176) indicate that “the organisation of training at football clubs and the sociocultural settings in which the players act have a structuring influence on the players’ social practice and learning trajectories”. Indeed, the subcultural environment that engulfs professional footballers and academy athletes influences their behaviour and the values that they adopt. A broader review of the social setting in which academy athletes are located provides an understanding as to why education becomes devalued amongst trainees, and further demonstrates the core values that are perpetuated and adopted by those who are immersed within the culture of the footballing world.

#### *1.6 Hegemonic Masculinity, Professionalism and the Football Academy*

Central to the subculture of youth football is the concept of hegemonic masculinity. Intertwined with the notion of a ‘professional attitude’, hegemonic masculinity plays an integral part in constructing an identity for youth footballers that is accepted by peers and significant others located within the institutional setting of professional football academies (Parker, 2000b). Parker’s (1996a, 2001, 2000b, 2006) work highlights the ‘official’ and ‘unofficial’ norms that influence gender identities amongst youth footballers. An acceptance of institutionally defined and hegemonic masculine values was considered a central component that comprised the occupational identities that youth trainees upheld and demonstrated (Parker, 1996a,

2000b). Here the youth trainees adhered to an identity that was bound by an acceptance of an institutional logic, surrounded by masculine working-class values that included “notions of personal integrity, conscientiousness, discipline and the development of a healthy ‘professional attitude’” (Parker, 1996a: 200).

The concept of a ‘professional attitude’ within the lives of trainees constituted both an acceptance of traditional, and often mundane, working practices (cleaning of boots, preparation of kit and servicing of equipment) and the physical rigours of playing and performing (Parker, 2000b). Further research (Roderick *et al*, 2000; Roderick, 2003, 2006a, 2006b) examining the management of injury in English professional football, casts light on additional values associated with the attitude of ‘professionalism’ espoused by players and clubs alike. A willingness to accept pain and injury is central to the concept of a ‘professional attitude’, and is a value that reinforces a strong adherence to the hegemonic masculine behaviour witnessed amongst professional and youth footballers. Players who openly admit to injury risk the social stigma of becoming labelled idle and face taunts from peers, in the form of ‘banter’, directed towards issues concerning their heterosexuality (Roderick *et al*, 2000). Furthermore, Parker (2006) reinforces the notion that the construction of a masculine identity amongst youth trainees is commonly witnessed and propagated through the use of institutional language and interaction. Parker’s (2006: 695-696) analysis of youth trainees indicates that “central to the enactment of sub-cultural life was the stylised adoption of a sexually explicit and often highly derogatory vocabulary which was typically characterised by razor-sharp wit”.

Further ‘unofficial’ social behavioural norms manifest in the form of a desire to embody “the hyper-masculine practices of personal extravagances and superstar status, to enjoy the delights of fast cars, designer clothes, financial affluence, social indulgence and sexual promiscuity” (Parker, 2000b: 61), values that are inevitably guided by the all-male subculture in which youth footballers inhabit. The acceptance of both ‘official’ and ‘unofficial’ behavioural norms demonstrates the contradictory nature of key values and the complex cultural environment in which youth trainees must negotiate on their route to professionalism (Parker, 2001). As Embrey (1986: 149) highlights in reference to youth football, “it is only possible to understand the game in terms of the context in which it is played and the participants’ interpretation of that game”. Therefore, one may suggest that a greater understanding of the social interactions that govern and take place within the youth development system, at the very least, will provide insight into the cultural practices that shape the structure of academy organisations and the players housed within such institutions.

### *1.7 Authority, Identity and the Football Academy*

An integral part of the culture is the nature of control, authority and relationships that exist between players, managers and coaches (Embrey, 1986). However, one must recognise that a single homogenous culture does not encapsulate all of youth football. Despite a more homogenised approach towards the organisational structure of youth development in football, differences in organisational practices are evident from club to club, most noticeably with regards

to the role and responsibilities of key practitioners, the pragmatics of the transition from a youth environment to a professional environment and the communication between such stages of development (Relvas *et al*, 2010). However, research that attempts to explore authority, control and the dominant relationships evident between athletes and coaching staff helps to reflect the institutional nature and core values that are frequently displayed in football academies.

As Parker (1995) notes, youth football has progressed from its informal beginnings to a more regulated, systematic and standardised practice. However, questions still exist as to whether the everyday practices of academy athletes have altered significantly since the introduction of increased regulation in youth football (Parker, 1995). Research focusing on the authoritarian environment surrounding both professional and youth football indicates that abusive language still forms a common part of the culture, despite the introduction of a more regulated and systematic approach towards youth development (Cushion and Jones, 2006; Kelly and Waddington, 2006; Parker, 1995, 1996a). Kelly and Waddington's (2006) work concerning managerial control in professional football indicates that abuse, intimidation and violence are utilised by managers to enforce authority over their players. Such findings are not restricted to the professional tier of elite football and can also be witnessed amongst youth trainees (Cushion and Jones, 2006; Parker, 1996a). Previous work (Cushion and Jones, 2006; Parker, 1996a, 1996b) demonstrates that abusive and intimidating language is an unquestioned and accepted

part of academy athletes' progression towards professionalism, and highlights the dominant mode of authoritarian leadership still evident in youth football.

Although the traditional authoritarian attitude towards management still appears prevalent within youth football, measures have been taken to alter the culture and ensure that abusive behaviour is eliminated. Brackenridge *et al's* (2004) study concerning child protection in football indicates that academies have attempted to alter the culture of youth football by implementing a range of innovations.

Brackenridge *et al* (2004: 43) indicate that such measures include:

The development and implementation of codes of conduct for players, coaches and parents; the use of reflective diaries as a way of tracking personal and professional development; the management of players' conduct on the pitch; and protection of young people from an over-emphasis on results.

In addition, the introduction of Education and Welfare Officers into academies, many of whom are former teachers, has demonstrated an attempt to adopt a more child-centred approach towards the development of young footballers (Brackenridge *et al*, 2004). Although codes of conduct have been instigated and personnel employed to ensure that the humanistic approach towards elite athlete development has been adopted by academies, research (Daniel, 2004; Pitchford *et al*, 2004; Thorpe, 2004) highlights the common power relations witnessed in youth football and the lack of agency that young footballers possess in relation to issues concerning their development. As Pitchford *et al* (2004: 55) indicate, despite the use of regulatory codes to determine modes of behaviour, such methods “are effectively

imposed by adults, and that children have few opportunities to influence such measures”, a power relation that contributes towards the authoritarian/subservient relationship perpetuated within academies (Cushion and Jones, 2006; Parker, 1996a). Consequently Pitchford *et al* (2004: 48) accurately describe youth football and the academy as “a social construct laden with values that not all children are able or willing to adhere to or want to share”. With football clubs adopting a more systematic approach to development, emphasis becomes placed upon producing disciplined and docile bodies (Foucault, 1979), with performances measured and collated for the purpose of ensuring progress is monitored. With an increase in control over the athletes’ development, it becomes difficult to decipher how traditional cultural norms will alter significantly to ensure that the holistic approach, espoused by most academy mandates, takes precedent over simply developing marketable assets for elite clubs. Daniel’s (2004: 222) discussion concerning youth football aptly indicates that the increasing responsibility that professional clubs maintain for developing players has effectively “put King Herod in charge of the nursery”. Furthermore, with an increased emphasis placed upon viewing youth academies in cost-benefit terms, the humanistic approach towards development becomes less significant and potentially leaves athletes housed within such institutions open to commercial exploitation (Thorpe, 2004).

Although structural changes have been implemented within elite football academies that aim to provide a more ‘well-rounded’ experience for youth footballers, those athletes involved within the system invest their efforts into

establishing an identity that is bound by the occupational culture of the clubs. As Parker (1996b: 127) notes, youth trainees in football are “occupationally tied by the highly rationalised pattern of daily work and socially bound by curfew and time-tabling arrangements”. The institutional life that surrounds youth footballers can be likened to that of Goffman’s (1961b) definition of a ‘total institution’, an aspect that is examined further in Chapter Two of this thesis. Previous research (Gearing, 1999; Parker, 1996b) has indicated that football clubs and the lives of youth trainees are shaped by ‘encompassing tendencies’, possess a ‘total character’ and demonstrate an enclosed and formally structured existence. Such an environment helps to cultivate a one-dimensional identity for those located within the academies, as the participants’ lives become centred upon footballing performances and lack any alternative roles or interests that may help to facilitate a differing sense of self (Brown and Potrac, 2009). Given that academy environments are dominated by values associated with developing an athletic identity, Brown and Potrac (2009: 155) state that “coaches and managers involved in this programme have an obligation to try and develop the whole person as opposed to the standardised mechanistic athlete”.

Despite the ‘closed’ nature of elite football academies, the culture of the game has been impacted upon by the introduction of foreign players to English football’s elite youth academy system. Since the early 1990s there has been acceleration in the rate of footballing talent leaving both Europe and Africa to enter into the English football academy system (Darby, 2007; Darby *et al*, 2007). Research (Elliott and Weedon, 2011) examining the transnational migration of elite youth

players demonstrates the effects that such a process has on the English football academy system. Elliott and Weedon's (2011) study revealed that the influx of foreign players to the Premier Academy League impacted positively upon the talent development of indigenous players. The introduction of foreign players into the youth system allows for an exchange of skills, enhancing the technical ability of the indigenous players, their work-ethic and desire to succeed (Elliot and Weedon, 2011). However, what is not clear is whether, and to what extent, the impact of foreign players has on the work-ethic and desire to succeed in relation to skills outside of football. If the desire to succeed as a professional footballer is heightened by the introduction of foreign players, one may suggest that the concept of an 'athletic identity' will be adopted by English players with increased severity, and at the risk of negating interests and roles outside of the playing and performing domain.

Parker (2001: 77) provides an apt summation of youth traineeships in professional football indicating that for these young athletes the process is, all about becoming a man; about graduating to professional status, about rising above the physical depression of injury, about casting aside the psychological pressures of team selection, about resisting verbal chastisement and personal humiliation, and safely negotiating one's own masculine prowess, whilst at the same time fulfilling the stringencies of club 'officialdom'.

Therefore, assimilating oneself into the world of both professional and elite youth football requires attention towards developing a particular identity or sense of self. Here the skill of impression management is integral to success in order to "maintain stable workplace identities" (Roderick, 2006c: 261). Although academy



athletes are not yet professionals, impression management and the adoption of key values is significant within the lives of youth footballers, as core values associated with their surrounding culture must be upheld, and a desired and recognised 'role' lived out on a daily basis if they are to achieve any sense of success.

### *1.8 Conclusion*

The concept of professionalism within rugby union football is relatively new and the structural changes imposed upon the game, including the introduction of a formalised academy system, remains unexplored. An absence of literature discussing the structural nature and social composition of elite academies within rugby union football is clearly evident. It is hoped that this thesis will provide some insight into the norms and values that shape the culture of such institutions, and how they impact upon the developmental aspect and lives of the academy athletes. Moreover, comments derived from the findings hope to stimulate new lines of inquiry that look to view elite athlete development within rugby union that is not simply formed from a performance orientated or physiological perspective.

The review of literature surrounding elite football academies provides some indication as to the cultural norms that are perpetuated within such institutions; however, one must note that such environments are not static and are subject to change. In January 2010 a review of youth development in football was conducted by the English Premier League (EPL). Upon consultations with EPL clubs, representatives of the Football League and the Football Association the EPL

produced the Elite Player Performance Plan (EPPP). The overriding vision of the plan seeks to “deliver an environment that promotes excellence, nurtures talent and systematically converts this talent into professional players capable of playing first team football at the clubs that develops them” (EPPP: 12).

The EPPP ushers in a new classification system that looks to modernise youth football. Academies will be segregated into four categories with the top tier (or category one academies) considered the elite, responsible for demonstrating a regular graduation of players into the EPL and wider professional game (EPPP: 31-32). Part of the new system aims to increase coaching time offered to academy athletes, help clubs forge links with local schools and improve the athlete performance management systems. In addition, the EPPP looks to introduce greater flexibility in relation to education within the academy system (EPPP: 50). Each academy will be responsible for developing an education programme that integrates with the coaching programme, effectively allowing for an increase in contact time with the players (EPPP: 56).

Despite the possible advantages that such changes may bring, it would appear that the athletes themselves have not played a part in the consultation process, once again demonstrating how players are unable to contribute towards measures that will inevitably impact upon their lives (Pitchford *et al*, 2004). Moreover, there appears to be an absence of consideration for the concerns raised in relation to issues of education, cultural values and power relations that have been discussed within this section. Such an issue reinforces Pitchford *et al's* (2004: 55) central concern that

“much of the delivery of football in England is based on a range of assumptions about the motives and development of the children concerned”. Whilst a more in-depth review of the new system is required once it is implemented, it is clear that the power relations that guide policy reforms in youth football continue to enforce measures without providing a voice for those who matter the most, namely the athletes themselves.

The following chapter will provide the theoretical framework for the study. A focus upon the Foucauldian (1979) concepts of discipline and power will be discussed; examining governmentality, bio-power and the disciplinary mechanisms utilised to create ‘docile-utility’.

## Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework, Foucault, Disciplinary Power and Goffman

“The classical age discovered the body as object and target of power. It is easy enough to find the signs of the attention then paid to the body – to the body that is manipulated, shaped, trained, which obeys, responds, becomes skilful and increases its forces” (Foucault, 1979: 136).

### *2.1 Introduction*

Through the appropriation of Foucault’s concepts concerning power and discipline it is possible to see how ‘docile’ bodies are produced. Foucault’s interest in the ‘how’ of power illustrates the functioning of certain mechanisms, which promote this notion of ‘docility’. By adopting a Foucauldian analysis of power, an understanding of how the body is subjected and manipulated to produce a system of useful and efficient bodies can be made. Foucault examines the body as an ‘object’ and ‘target’ of power (Foucault, 1990). A Foucauldian perspective indicates that power should not be reduced down to a concept that creates a difference between those who retain power and those who succumb to it. Foucault (1994a: 36) states that power must be analysed as something that:

Circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localised here or there, never in anybody’s hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth.

A Foucauldian perspective perceives power not in terms of domination but as something that is administered through a 'net-like' organisation. Described as 'capillary' and 'individualizing' this mode of power presents a stark contrast to the old monarchical form (Han, 2002), which focuses on the sovereign rule of power. Referring to the Foucauldian notion of power Hacking (1986a: 35) suggests that "the new technology of power does not originate with any identifiable person or group". Power should not be considered in terms of complete domination of one individual over others or of one group over another. Power may be seen as moving towards a form of subjection initiated through specific mechanisms that ensures its continuing perpetuation. Therefore, Foucault (1994a: 35) indicates that we must understand "how things work at the level of ongoing subjugation, at the level of those continuous and uninterrupted processes which subject our bodies, govern our gestures, dictate our behaviours".

This specific form of power is administered and exercised through mechanisms that allow for the control and subjection of the body. Foucault (1994a: 41-42) states that "it is a mechanism of power which permits time and labour, rather than wealth and commodities, to be extracted from bodies. It is a type of power which is constantly exercised by means of surveillance". Labelled as 'disciplinary power', it contains techniques of surveillance, normalisation and coercion which contribute toward the production of self-discipline and 'docility'. It is a power imposed through a hierarchical structure, mobilized to increase efficiency and the

usefulness of a population, as Foucault (1979: 26) indicates: “The body becomes a useful force only if it is both a productive body and a subjected body”.

Foucault’s notion of power not only shapes behaviour but seeks also to direct individuals toward the attainment of a specific goal or aim. This may be achieved through indirect legislation, the removal of the means necessary to commit a particular class of actions, or the implementation of specific sanctions used to direct behaviour toward a common goal (Foucault, 1979). For example, by applying Foucault’s concept of discipline within the context of the prison system we are able to identify how disciplinary power can mould and shape individuals rather than follow a path of juridical correction. Through disciplinary power, this particular technique of correction moves toward the creation of an obedient subject. Through a hierarchical structure of authority, the individual’s surrounding environment is shaped to create a body that functions automatically and in accordance with a pre-determined set of values, as Foucault (1979: 128-129) indicates:

Ultimately, what one is trying to restore in this technique of correction is not so much the juridical subject, who is caught up in the fundamental interests of the social pact, but the obedient subject, the individual subjected to habits, rules, orders an authority that is exercised continually around him and upon him, and which he must allow to function automatically in him.

This chapter aims to provide an understanding of Foucault’s (1979) concepts related to power and discipline. The investigation of further concepts concerning surveillance, the process of normalisation and governance will also help to provide the theoretical basis for the thesis. The concepts explored in this chapter provide a

framework to apply to the sporting academies under consideration and expand upon throughout the later chapters. It is argued that a Foucauldian framework helps to organise and interpret the data collected; allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the institutional nature of the academies and the disciplinary power that emerges within them.

## *2.2 Power and Discipline*

Foucault's exploration into the 'how' of power sought to produce an understanding of the mechanisms of power and how they function to reproduce this concept within the wider social sphere. Foucault (1988b) indicates that the 'strategies of power' must be examined in order to comprehensively understand how power is exercised. Foucault (1988b: 104) states that in order to comprehend the 'how' of power one must consider "the strategies, the networks, the mechanisms, all those techniques by which a decision is accepted and by which that decision could not be taken in the way it was".

Sheridan (1980: 152) notes that the Foucauldian perception of power is not to be considered "triumphant, excessive, omnipotent, but moderate, suspicious, calculating". Foucault's position suggests that power distributes individuals in a continuous field; no end of power or privileged position may be seen situated outside that specific field of power (McGowen, 1994). It is not a form of power that functions through domination, but employs mechanisms of discipline to create productivity amongst individuals. Foucault (1994b: 327) states that "while the

human subject is placed in relations of production and signification, he is equally placed in power relations that are very complex". The power relations that surround the human subject categorise, individualise and shape the individual so as to produce an efficiency and utility with regards to the economy of their actions. Foucault (1994b: 331) identifies that:

This form of power that applies itself to the immediate everyday life categorises the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him that he must recognise and others recognise in him.

This particular notion of power makes subjects of and subjugates the individual. It is a form of power that exposes traits in order to impose correction and discipline upon individuals for the purpose of utility. Foucault's notion of power partly functions through the interrelation between goal-directed activities and systems of communication. The information that passes from individual to individual may be modified thus presenting a complex power relation. This particular form of power is nearly always directed towards an aim or desired end. Foucault (1994b: 338) indicates that:

Power relations are exercised, to an exceedingly important extent, through the production and exchange of signs; and they are scarcely separable from goal directed activities that permit the exercise of a power (such as training techniques, processes of domination, the means by which obedience is obtained).



Foucault (1994b: 339) uses education to illustrate how power relations are exercised; the acquisition of behaviour and specific social values may be regulated by a number of circumstances, which may be achieved by “means of a whole series of power processes (enclosure, surveillance, reward and punishment and the pyramidal hierarchy)”. The technical capacities, networks of communication and relations of power culminate to form disciplinary mechanisms. However, they are not to be understood in the traditional sense of the word discipline. Foucault (1994b: 339) notes that the disciplining of societies “is not, of course, that the individuals who are part of them become more and more obedient, nor that all societies become like barracks, schools, or prisons”. By adopting this particular perspective discipline can be viewed as a productive force. It may be implemented to enhance efficiency amongst individuals, situating them within a network of power relations that interact to promote normative behaviour. Merquior (1991: 114) notes that “not only is modern power ubiquitous; it is also anonymous and comprehensive. It makes cogs in its machinery of us all, high and low, ruling and ruled”.

Far removed from the spectacle of discipline under the guise of sovereign power, this particular form of disciplinary power utilises techniques that act upon our actions almost silently and with specificity and productivity in mind, as Merquior (1991: 113) notes, it is a mode of power that “concentrated on ‘human bodies and their operations’”.

O’Farrell’s (2005: 100) analysis of the Foucauldian form of power highlights its productive nature suggesting that power “is not about simply saying no and

oppressing individuals, social classes or natural instincts. Instead, argues Foucault, power is productive. By this he means that it generates particular types of knowledge and cultural order". Foucault's notion of power is a concept that is not 'fixed' or dominated by one particular person. Philp (1983: 34) indicates that the Foucauldian notion of power relates to "the field of force. It does not constitute that field but is, rather, the effect of the patterns within that field". For Foucault there is no focal point but rather an endless network of power (Walzer, 1986). As Hargreaves (1991: 4) indicates, the Foucauldian idea of power may not be located in one specific site as it is considered to be "diffused and circulates throughout the social body".

Disciplinary power requires conditions and procedures for it to be implemented to great effect. Foucault (1979) outlines the four disciplinary procedures, which when combined, help to produce a 'disciplined' society that individualises, exposes and categorises reproducing docility amongst the individual: First discipline is said to be cellular, the space in which individuals are subjected to discipline is subdivided into self-contained units, displaying a sense of heterogeneity enclosed to those who belong to it; second, discipline established a control of the activity and introduced the notion of regularity initiated by certain mechanisms such as timetabling, this allowed for the separation of activity into a series of minute acts; the third procedure incorporates the imposition of discipline upon the body in a sequential manner, whereby processes of training may be broken down into stages for developmental purposes; finally discipline incorporates tactics involving the positioning of the body in relation to the tasks required and in combination with

others. Sheridan (1980: 152) states that “these four disciplinary procedures combined to produce the dream, and something of the reality, of a totally rational, totally efficient, totally controlled society”.

Surrounded by the four processes of discipline and through the implementation of systems of surveillance and a normalising judgment the individual is continually exposed ensuring an automatic functioning of power. Sheridan (1980: 152) indicates that Foucault’s notion of discipline acts as a technique of power operating through “hierarchical observation, normalising judgment, and their combination in the examination”. At the centre of this function of power lies the notion of docility. Foucault indicates that the body itself is subject to the functioning of disciplinary mechanisms thus creating a docility amongst the individual. Foucault (1979: 137) states that such power relations work by treating the body individually “exercising upon it a subtle coercion, of obtaining holds upon it at the level of mechanism itself — movements, gestures, attitudes, rapidity: an infinitesimal power over the active body”. To gain an understanding of how this form of power is implemented a further understanding of the disciplinary mechanisms must be provided. An illustration of Foucault’s concepts relating to systems of surveillance and a normalising judgment will be made in this thesis. By outlining these concepts we are able to understand how power may function within specific institutions and the mechanisms imposed upon the body to ensure that a ‘docile-utility’ is created. For Foucault, discipline is a concept concerned with knowledge and power. By utilizing means of surveillance and coercion, power

regimes are created to establish discipline under the guidance of an anonymous method. Foucault (1979: 170-171) states that:

The exercise of discipline presupposes a mechanism that coerces by means of observation; an apparatus in which the techniques that make it possible to see induce effects of power, and in which, conversely, the means of coercion make those on whom they are applied clearly visible.

Foucault introduces the notion of coercive means through a system of surveillance that induce certain power relations thus enabling sanction, judgments and ultimately discipline to be placed upon those who are subject to them. It is a form of surveillance that moves away from direct methods of discipline and promotes a notion of self-discipline amongst those who are subject to it. The Foucauldian notion of surveillance will be applied to the organisational structure of the football and rugby academies featured here, exploring the way in which athletes are disciplined throughout a network of surveillance and disciplinary mechanisms. Foucault's (1979) notion of surveillance will be developed with the introduction of further concepts relating to modern forms of surveillance and data capture. The application of 'the examination' (Foucault, 1979) will highlight how the athletes are disciplined, and come to discipline themselves, through the collation of data allowing for the comparison and categorisation of the athletes' performances.

### *2.3 Techniques of Surveillance*

Foucault's (1979) understanding of surveillance within society is integral to the functioning of a disciplinary power. Foucault's (1979) emphasis upon an all encompassing gaze exposes the individual to a visibility that can easily categorise and incite a notion of docility amongst its population. It is a mode of surveillance that accumulates and centralises knowledge, situating the individual within a power relation that fixes them as both the object and the subject of power, as Foucault (1979: 202-203) indicates:

He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection.

This particular mode of surveillance moves away from the heavy handed treatment of enforcement as power relations are internalised and the subject is seen to discipline themselves. It allows for the creation of a docile yet efficient body, a body that encapsulates such a relationship is maintained through disciplinary mechanisms executed by a system of surveillance.

Panopticism is a concept created from Bentham's (1995) architectural composition, a central building located in a penitentiary with the ability to maintain a constant gaze over the incarcerated. The Panopticon was designed to reduce the negative effects of mass incarceration and expose maximum visibility. Bentham's Panopticon situates an observation tower overlooking the penitentiary. Prison cells

are located on the periphery of the building allowing those situated in the observation tower complete surveillance over the inmates. Windows situated within the penitentiary ensure that natural light may illuminate each cell from one end to the other. Foucault (1979: 200) describes the architectural system as containing “so many cages, so many small theatres, in which each actor is alone, perfectly individualized and constantly visible”. The architectural design of the penitentiary enabled complete visibility of the inmates; it ensured that individuals were no longer lost in the mass of a crowd but were isolated in their individuality. Foucault (1979: 201) identifies the major effect of the Panopticon:

To induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. So to arrange things that the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action; that the perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary.

Therefore, the application of the Panopticon suggests a control over those under observation to the extent that individuals begin to discipline themselves. The Panopticon casts a constant surveillance over the inmates, unaware as to whether anyone is observing, inmates will begin to discipline themselves to ensure that actions and tasks are carried out accurately and behaviour is regulated, as Ransom (1997: 47) indicates:

Never sure when they are being watched by someone in the tower — or even if there is anyone in the tower at all — prisoners come by degrees to watch themselves, to make sure on their own that exercises and tasks are performed in the correct manner.

In addition Ransom (1997: 32-33) notes that the nature of this particular penal system observes and classifies for the purpose of categorisation and comparison: “Behind walls the prisoner could be observed, knowledge accumulated, and a file created that could be compared with others”. Due to the implementation of an ever present ‘gaze’, Foucault (1979: 201) suggests that the need for an external force applying disciplinary measures becomes redundant as individuals are situated within “a power relationship independent of the person who exercises it”. The Panopticon maintains several functions, accompanied by disciplinary mechanisms. The Panopticon’s power of observation can shape, categorise and classify the individual. It’s architectural design and structural composition was intended to create power relations and functions to expose differences, increase efficiency and shape docile bodies. When discussing the possibilities of the Panopticon in relation to education and among schoolchildren, Foucault (1979: 203) notes that it allows individuals to “observe performances (without there being any imitation or copying) map aptitudes, assess characters, to draw up rigorous classifications and, in relation to normal development, to distinguish ‘laziness and stubbornness’ from ‘incurable imbecility’”. The particular power relation that is created through panopticism locates power away from one specific individual, thus rendering the individual the master of his own subjection. This particular power relation rests upon the ability to convey a notion of undetected surveillance, as Foucault (1979: 202) indicates:

The Panopticon is a machine for dissociating the see/being seen dyad: in the periphery ring, one is totally seen, without ever seeing; in the central tower,

one sees everything without ever being seen. It is an important mechanism, for it automatises and disindividualises power.

Foucault (1979: 208) suggests that the Panopticon attempts to arrange power so that its main aim is able to, “strengthen the social forces – to increase production, to develop economy, spread education, raise the level of public morality; to increase and multiply”. It is a mechanism in itself that aims to assist progress rather than impede it. The Panopticon increases the effectiveness of power shaping and disciplining the body so it may be put to economic use (Andrews, 1993). It is a method of surveillance that is able to create a power relation promoting productivity rather than repression and progression rather than regression. Lemert and Gillan (1982: 59) note that Foucault’s examination into the history of the penal system has led to the reformulation of the effects of power as power is to be considered as “not merely negative, repressive, and prohibiting, but positive and productive, and explicitly bound to knowledge”. To ensure that an increase in the effect of power leads to an increase in efficiency and productivity, Foucault (1979: 208) states that this particular mode of power may only be secured if:

On the one hand, it can be exercised continuously in the very foundations of society, in the subtlest possible way, and if, on the other hand, it functions outside these sudden, violent, discontinuous forms that are bound with the exercise of sovereignty.

Therefore, in order to function effectively, the display of power should no longer become a visual display of enforcement and reprimand. A Foucauldian



approach suggests that the face of power adopts a more passive form, whereby subtle mechanisms may be employed to ensure that the practice of discipline or productivity is continuously perpetuated. Foucault (1980: 156) states that “power is no longer substantially identified with an individual who possesses or exercises it by right of birth; it becomes a machinery that no one owns”. Disciplinary mechanisms encompassed within this mode of surveillance exposes individuals to a visibility that classifies, categorises and thus modifies irregularities for the purpose of correct training. Foucault (1980: 153) indicates that this particular form of surveillance combined with a normalising judgment functions not to punish but “to prevent even the possibility of wrong-doing, by immersing people in a field of visibility where the opinion, observation and discourse of others would restrain them from harmful acts”. It is a mode of surveillance that functions to promote a compliant, docile individual subject to self-surveillance. Foucault (1980; 155) states that it is “just a gaze. An inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorizing to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against, himself”.

Due to the implementation of an all encompassing gaze, discipline as a function for the observers becomes less significant. Although those situated higher up within the hierarchy are still perceived as authoritative figures, techniques of surveillance and documentation are implemented to create bodies that employ a notion of self-surveillance, which ultimately leads to the disciplining of the self. Foucault’s construct of power presents an in depth analysis of social control and the

development of a disciplinary society. The examination of panopticism highlights how disciplinary mechanisms function to reproduce power relations within a given institution. Through modernist techniques of surveillance the gaze of power turns people into subjects of discipline (Fox, 1998). However, it is the combination of surveillance techniques and a normalising judgment that ensures the subjection of individuals and the replication of normative behaviour. An exploration into the Foucauldian concepts of normalising judgment and the ‘examination’ will provide an understanding of the disciplinary mechanisms that exposes the individual by effectively utilizing a formation of knowledge for the exercise of power.

Foucault’s (1979) representation of panopticism will be applied to the structural organisation of the two academies under consideration. An understanding of how this mode of surveillance functions to discipline the academy athletes will be obtained. The Panopticon provides a central gaze that oversees all that it encompasses (Foucault, 1979). Within Chapter Four this particular mode of surveillance will be developed with an introduction and application of Latour’s (2005) oligopticon and a ‘rhizomatic’ (Deleuze and Guttari, 2003) mode of surveillance. Contemporary modes of surveillance are relying less upon a ‘central gaze’, utilising a more dispersed network of techniques of observation. Although the centrality of the Panopticon is perhaps less significant, these particular networks still induce a similar effect to that of Foucault’s (1979) surveillance. An examination of how these networks function within academy settings will be explored throughout the thesis. The following section outlines Foucault’s (1979) concepts of normalising

judgment and the ‘examination’, incorporating an explanation of its mechanism and impact upon the discipline of the individual.

#### *2.4 Normalising Judgment and the Examination*

Macherey (1992: 176) states that “what probably most concerned Foucault was to understand how the action of norms in the lives of men determines the type of society to which they belong as subjects”. Foucault’s thesis is concerned not with law but with his concept of normalisation (Taylor, 1984). For Foucault (1975: 50) the ‘norm’ is a concept that is “not at all defined as a natural law but rather by the exacting and coercive role it can perform in the domains in which it is applied”. The norm may be considered the product of a power/knowledge regime, an instrument of social control that establishes the individual as both the subject and object of power. Garland (1986: 859) defines Foucault’s method of normalisation as:

A means of knowing how the individual performs, watching his movements, assessing his behaviour, and measuring it against the rule. Surveillance arrangements and examination procedures provide this knowledge, allowing incidents of nonconformity or departures from set standards to be recognized and dealt with.

Foucault’s (1975: 21) position regarding the norm places emphasis upon the production and processes of normalisation, analysing the concept of normalisation as a mechanism of power focusing upon:

The emergence of the power of normalisation, the way in which it has been formed, the way in which it has established itself without ever resting on a

single institution by establishing interactions between different institutions, and the way in which it has extended its sovereignty in our society.

Normalisation may be viewed as a technique of power designed to mould or shape individuals to comply with specific social demands or criteria. Foucault (1975: 49) indicates that the function of normalisation is a “general technique of the government of men”. It claims not to be a repressive form of disciplinary power that inhibits action and consciously segregates individuals; rather it aims to alter individuals in a positive and progressive manner, adapting the individual to suit a specific ‘norm’ or criteria. Through the application of training and normalisation subjects are individualised and differentiated to ensure control and optimise performance (Smart, 2010). Foucault (1975: 50) suggests that “the norm’s function is not to exclude and reject. Rather, it is always linked to a positive technique of intervention and transformation”. The modern age has brought with it an emphasis upon surveillance techniques that aim to observe and classify. The execution of a normalising judgment and methods of observation produce a mode of power that does not establish possession over the body but aims to objectify it. Smart (1991: 86) indicates that this mode of power “has the character of a machine or apparatus through which power is produced and individuals are distributed in a permanent and continuous field”.

Although the process of normalisation promotes homogeneity amongst individuals it simultaneously identifies individuality and thus classifies or categorises a given population. Foucault’s (1979: 135) example provides an

illustration of the normalising behaviour expected of those subjected to the processes of a normalising judgment and hierarchical gaze:

The soldier has become something that can be made; out of formless clay, an inapt body, the machine required can be constructed; posture is gradually corrected; a calculated constraint runs slowly through each part of the body, mastering it, making it pliable, ready at all times, turning silently into the automatism of habit.

Foucault's example of docility demonstrates how individuals may be manipulated and moulded to produce a desired mode of behaviour that becomes habit forming. Foucault's concept of a normalising judgment is an effective construct impacting upon the promotion of self-surveillance amongst individuals.

Foucault indicates that the 'norm' is established through the implication of disciplinary techniques. The process of normalisation adopts these techniques to reproduce a behaviour or function that fulfils the representation of a specific 'norm'. As Foucault (1979: 184) indicates, this disciplinary mechanism "establishes over individuals a visibility through which one differentiates them and judges them". 'The examination' utilises the techniques of surveillance and the disciplinary practices of a normalising judgment to exercise control and power. Garland (1986: 859) indicates that "the examination is, for this system, a central method of control, allowing close observation, differentiation, assessment of standards, and the identification of failure to conform". The examination acts as a disciplinary mechanism, a mode of correct training that produces a documented account of progression and regression and separates the 'abnormal' from the 'normal'.

The examination is a technique that does not demonstrate power by force or repression but through the acquisition of knowledge. These hierarchical observations and techniques of surveillance objectify the individual and thus exact a form of control over the body. Foucault (1979: 187) states that “the examination is the technique by which power, instead of emitting the signs of its potency, instead of imposing its marks on its subjects, holds them in a mechanism of objectification”. The examination serves a particular purpose, to document, measure and categorise individuals allowing for the collation of knowledge and the implementation of procedures for correction. Foucault (1979: 191) states that the examination “makes each individual a ‘case’; a case which at one and the same time constitutes an object for a branch of knowledge, and a hold for a branch of power”. Through measurements, comparisons and categorisation knowledge is acquired that may shape and discipline the individual to reproduce specific values or behaviour that complies with a given ‘norm’. Purpose is added to the collation of information, and knowledge of individuals allows an analysis and comparison with reference toward a specific norm. Such a process creates a record of traits that may be evaluated and modified accordingly. Foucault (1979: 193) suggests that it is a technique that is employed through “surveillance rather than ceremonies, by observation rather than commemorative accounts, by comparative measures that have the ‘norm’ as reference rather than genealogies giving ancestors as points of reference; by ‘gaps’ rather than by deeds”.

The combination of hierarchical observations and a normalizing judgment situates the individual as both the subject and object of knowledge. Through these disciplinary techniques individuals are quantified and classified. Thus, knowledge is accumulated so behaviour may be altered to comply with a given norm. It is a disciplinary mechanism that aims to produce a docile yet effective body, one that is both malleable and able to discipline the self so as not to stray from the specific norm established. It is through this process that the correction procedure can begin, which moulds the individual to fit a given norm.

This process of correction revolves around a system of gratification and punishment (Foucault, 1979). It is through this system that individuals within institutions are corrected to comply with a given norm or standard. Foucault (1988a) introduces four specific ‘technologies’ that relate to the understanding of linguistics, sciences, domination and the self. Foucault (1988a: 18) states that “every technique of production requires modification of individual conduct — not only skills but also attitude”. Technologies of the self are adopted by individuals with the aim of transforming the individual in order to attain a state of perfection, wisdom or purity (Foucault, 1988a). Foucault (1993: 203) states that techniques of the self concern “those forms of understanding which the subject creates about himself”. It may be considered a self-reflexive approach toward the body, constituting knowledge of the self that is imputed for the purpose of transformation. In this sense, correction is not only limited to the physical actions of the individual but also works to mould both attitudes and behavioural norms. It is this ‘technology’ that can be applied to the

institutional setting of the academies as Markula (2003: 104) indicates that critical self-awareness “constitutes the most important aspect of the technology of the self in a sporting context”.

Although the technology of the self is demonstrated throughout this thesis within the context of the academy athletes’ willingness to transform their physiques in compliance to a desired norm, this particular concept is most evident in their desire to adopt or display the correct ‘attitude’. The academy athletes’ approach to a critical evaluation of their behaviour demonstrates an awareness of the dominant norms that are to be adopted whilst in the academy environments. This particular mode of self-correction and compliance to standardised behaviour demonstrates how Foucault’s (1988a) technology of the self impacts upon the construction of the ‘self’ in relation to the physical and behavioural representation of the academy athletes. Thornborrow and Brown (2009: 370) indicate that technologies of the self are “conducted under conditions of intense surveillance including cultural practices of moral endorsement, enablement and persuasion”. Methods of surveillance and observation ensure that individuals become critically self-aware in relation to a normalising standard. The adoption of normalising behaviour in relation to the academy athletes’ experience of injury, pain and professionalism demonstrate how technologies of the self are manifested within the academies cultural environments.

The following section examines the Foucauldian concepts of bio-power and governmentality. By providing an understanding of the processes that shape specific power relations within the academy settings, a framework for understanding how



such power relations are imposed can be made. An emphasis upon the Foucauldian concepts associated with governance may be applied to the academy settings to demonstrate how such institutions act to increase the productive forces of the academy athletes situated within them.

### *2.5 Institutions, Bio-power and Interaction.*

Foucault's analysis of political institutions provides insight into governmentality and power, initiating an understanding of how such themes explore the structural characteristics of society within a much broader sense. Bevir (1999: 352) indicates that Foucault's understanding of social arrangements, and therefore society in general, is based upon a hierarchical set of power relations: "Any set of social arrangements rests on a particular, arbitrary conceptual structure, that is, an episteme or a regime of power". By identifying the correct processes or policies that dictate the power relations established within institutions a clearer understanding of the regimes and concepts relating to the control and regulation of the academies will be gained. Concerning notions of governance, Bevir (1999: 352) states that "the focus is on the devices or policies that give effect to a regime of power and the ways in which these devices and policies define, control, and regulate the individuals who are subject to that regime of power". By adopting a Foucauldian perspective, Bevir (1999: 354) further indicates that "we do not truly make ourselves through our own creative activity, but rather construct ourselves in a way that is prescribed by the technologies of the self sanctioned by the modern regime of power".

This particular form of governing relates to Foucault's notion of governmentality and bio-power. Disciplinary power leads to the use of governance for the purpose of highlighting and constructing the desired qualities that are required of an individual, as Taylor (1986: 75) indicates:

Foucault wants to explain the modern notion of individuality as one of its producers. This new technology brings about the modern individual as an object of control. The being who is thus examined, measured, categorized, made the target of policies of normalization, is the one whom we have come to define as the modern individual.

Here we may consider governance through the implementation of bio-power, a form of governmentality effective in the governance of social life. Osborne (1996: 100) describes governmentality as a "science of the population". Governmentality is composed of four elements; what we seek to act upon, how we govern, who we are when we are governed and why we govern or are governed (Dean, 1999). Foucault (1994b: 149) indicates that governmentality may be considered a process that "brings about the emergence of population as a datum". The notion of 'governmentality' introduces a new interpretation of the power/knowledge relation. Governmentality, or more specifically the introduction of bio-power, is concerned with the government and regulation of populations. Central to this form of governance is the analysis of the population based on categorisation and thus an individualisation of the wider society. Osborne (1996: 100) suggests that "invocations of bio-politics or such like can seem to have rather a sinister ring to them; we conjure up visions of eugenics or the Nazi politics of life". It is a

mechanism of power that is concerned with promoting and intervening in life, arising from a dispersed source never originating from a central core (May, 2006).

As Taylor (1984: 152) indicates, Foucault presents a modern system of power “which is both more all-penetrating and more insidious than previous forms”. By adopting a Foucauldian perspective Rose (1999: 23) indicates that life may be:

Taken in charge by the interplay between the technologies of discipline focused on the individual body and the technologies of bio-politics, which acted on those bodies *en masse*, intervening in the making of life, the manner of living, in how to live.

Rose (1999) indicates that this particular perspective of governance concerns an expansive network encompassing an array of techniques situated within a hierarchical structure. Rose (1999: 22) states that it is a power that is used to induce a productive force by optimizing the life forces of the population:

Disciplinary techniques may be embodied in an external regime of structural times, spaces, gazes and hierarchies. But discipline seeks to reshape the ways in which each individual, at some future point, will conduct him or herself in a space of regulated freedom.

A Foucauldian approach situates the modern individual as an ‘object of control’ within society. Rabinow and Rose (2006: 196-197) note that, at its most basic form, bio-power “serves to bring into view a field comprised of more or less rationalised attempts to intervene upon the vital characteristics of human existence”. The concept of bio-power is a form of power that portrays an increasing effort to

utilise subtle forms of disciplinary techniques to shape individuals' conformity to required norms. Nadesan (2008: 94) states that this form of governance:

Shifted the focus of discipline/government from the outside (e.g., from law and the forceful disciplining of the body) to the inside (e.g., the disciplining and cultivation of the mind), as older disciplinary regimes were either replaced by a bio-politics of population and by technologies of the self.

Bio-power may be considered a pervasive form of power, one that employs technologies to categorise, fix and manage the population. Its relevance to the study of specific institutions and subcultures provides an understanding of how individuals are governed. The concept of bio-power is coalesced around two poles, one concerned with the human species and the other with the control of the body (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1983). The main concern of the thesis is to understand how the body, in its most fundamental form, is controlled and governed for the purpose of increased force and productivity within the context of the academy settings. Dreyfus and Rabinow (1983: 134) indicate that "bio-power centered on the body not so much as the means for human reproduction, but as an object to be manipulated". An understanding of how athletes are 'manipulated' or 'shaped' within the academies will help to demonstrate the methods of objectification and the impact of the academies structures on the development of the athletes. In addition, the application of Foucault's bio-power will provide a greater understanding of how power relations are made and work at a local level (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1983).

Although a Foucauldian perspective may provide an understanding of how specific characters are derived and the mechanisms by which they are internalised,

how individuals define their characters through the interaction of micro-practices on a daily basis needs further exploration. Therefore, an application of Erving Goffman's (1959) work regarding 'the presentation of self' and 'role theory' will be applied to comprehend how these micro-practices shape specific identities and behavioural norms.

## *2.6 Foucault and Goffman*

Foucault's later works (1988a; 1989a; 1990) refer specifically to the notion of a reflexive constitution of the body, represented by a self-awareness that is often associated with an institutional form of social interaction. The current study will emphasise the Foucauldian concept of power and its influence on the construction of the body. Although it is important to examine 'how' the constructs of power are manifested within the academies in question, it is also necessary to understand the impact of this particular power relation upon the body and the promotion of self-governance. As Hargreaves (1987) notes, within sport the body constitutes the most prominent expression of sporting activity. The importance of self-awareness amongst the academy athletes will be described in reference to their self-imposed discipline and attention to performance. It is suggested that transformation and modification of the body are key principles that relate to the daily lives of elite athletes. As Giddens (1991a) notes, in late modernity the body has become increasingly open to human intervention and the subject of constant revision. Foucault's (1979) notion of power describes the use of disciplinary mechanisms that act upon the body to transform an

individual into an effective and compliant working being. Within the realm of sport these disciplinary mechanisms may take the guise of training exercises or dietary regimes (Featherstone, 1999). Foucault's notion of disciplinary mechanisms and methods of surveillance will help to understand how these transformations are pursued and internalised by academy athletes.

A Foucauldian perspective indicates that characters may be derived from the context in which they occur or the surroundings that shape them and by the actions in which these concepts are created. As Bevir (1999: 352) indicates "institutions and the concepts on which they are based arise out of the more or less random interaction of numerous micro-practices". The root of Foucault's concept concerning power is embedded in the notion of capacity (Patton, 1998). The type of action of which a body is capable may depend upon its physical, social and institutional constitution, social and institutional relations and the moral interpretation which define acts or behaviour (Patton, 1998). Therefore, in the current study, it is important to consider the levels of interaction and social and institutional relations within the academies when discussing their construction of certain power relations. This requires an examination of the key concepts that contribute toward the construction of patterns of behaviour, social norms or values that provide the characters within an institution. As Featherstone and Turner (1995: 8) indicate, "we need to develop an embodied notion of the human being as a social agent and of the functions of the body in social space".

When analysing the body in an institutional setting it is important to consider not only the social space that individuals occupy but also the interactions that take place within that space. Within the current study an interactionist perspective will be adopted to supplement Foucault's (1979) analysis of power relations in institutional settings. The work of Erving Goffman (1959, 1961a, 1961b) will be utilised to explore how social interaction within the academies helps to define the individuals that are situated within them.

Central to Goffman's (1959) understanding of the presentation of the self is the concept of performance. Embedded within this concept is the notion of 'front' and 'backstage' behaviour (Goffman, 1959). This dramaturgical perspective of interaction highlights further concepts of impression management and the importance of social interaction on the construction of identities. Within any given subculture it is not enough simply to possess key attributes associated with a specific identity, the required 'role' must be lived out as accurately as possible presenting multiple 'fronts' (Goffman, 1959). Therefore, the code of conduct corresponding to the behavioural attributes and normative values associated with a particular identity must be consistently 'displayed', as Goffman (1959: 77) notes, "while persons usually are what they appear to be, such appearances could still have been managed". By utilising Goffman's (1961a) 'role theory' we are able to understand the implications of an agent-of-play and their relation regarding the role of principal. In addition, it provides an understanding of how identities or roles are perpetuated amongst a particular subculture or within a specific institution. These attributes must

be lived out by the individual through the socialisation, interaction and presentation of the self amongst 'role others'. Acceptance into the subculture or specific institution may be dependent upon how well the individual executes the desired role. Therefore, individuals must present a specific role, projecting this to an audience ensuring that the pre-established values are adopted and demonstrated with sincerity and accuracy (Goffman, 1961a).

The inclusion of both Foucault and Goffman's theoretical perspectives concerning social institutions will be utilised in a complimentary manner to explore how the social structure of the academies influence and shape the interaction demonstrated amongst the players and staff. Burns' (1992) work concerning Erving Goffman highlights the similarities between Foucault and Goffman's exploration of normalising power witnessed in institutional settings. Burns (1992: 160) notes that:

It is almost as if Foucault had taken up Goffman's interpretation of the process by which organisations impose an appropriate identity on their members and expanded it into a much wider thesis about how political power is exerted in modern society.

Indeed, within Goffman's (1961b) *Asylums* (The Underlife of a Public Institution) the concept of normalisation is discussed with reference to identity construction and organisational settings. To establish one's identity within an organisation requires the individual to adopt the appropriate attitude and confer a particular conception of self, one that embodies the central values associated with the establishment as Goffman (1961b: 170) indicates, "to engage in a particular activity



in the prescribed spirit is to accept being a particular kind of person who dwells in a particular kind of world". For Burns (1992), both Goffman and Foucault explore the notion of normalisation as the product of a process that seeks to instil within the individual a specific set of values that impose and perpetuate an appropriate identity. A framework for understanding the establishment of social identity as constituting an ideal character, or the adoption of moral expectations associated with a given institution, is offered as Goffman (1961b: 164) indicates:

Built right into the social arrangements of an organisation, then, is a thoroughly embracing conception of the member – and not merely a conception of him *qua* member, but behind this a conception of him *qua* human being.

Further similarities may be witnessed between the work of Goffman and Foucault. Upon examining social interaction and the establishment of identity within an institutional setting Goffman (1961b: 171) considers the "discipline of being". Similar to Foucault's (1979) concepts of normalisation and the discipline of the self, Goffman (1961b: 171) identifies that the deviation from a desired character may be viewed as "defaulting not from prescribed activity but from prescribed being". The abnormal individual may be identified through their lack of conformity to a desired norm or set of values associated with a particular identity; highlighting how the institutional setting may help to construct and define a specific notion of self.

For Burns (1992: 165), Goffman's analysis "amounts to a small-scale model of how Foucault's normalisation process works out in "complex organisations" – a

major social sector that Foucault barely mentions”. However, the focus of Goffman’s (1961b) work concerning organisations places great attention on social action as opposed to the elements of structure (Burns, 1992). It is crucial when studying institutions or specific subcultures to gain an understanding of both the individual at the level of interaction and the structural organisation of the institution that surrounds the individual. Goffman’s (1959) interpretation of interaction and representation of self compliment the Foucauldian concept of disciplinary power and governance. Hacking (2004: 277) suggests that, “both are essential for understanding how classifications of people interact with the people classified”. Within this study an application of Goffman’s (1959, 1961a, 1961b) analysis regarding interaction and the construction of roles will provide further support to the Foucauldian presentation of disciplinary power at the interpersonal level of interaction.

## *2.7 Conclusion*

The concepts developed by Foucault that are relevant to this study of sports academies may be summarised as follows. Much of Foucault’s application of disciplinary power was directed toward institutions, such as schools, hospitals, prisons and the military. Sports academies by their very nature may be defined as institutions, ‘closed’ environments that circulate very specific norms and values within an enclosed subculture. Foucault’s concern regarding how institutions are constructed presents a firm understanding of the organisation of the individuals within them. This is also similar to Goffman’s (1961b: 10) notion of ‘total

institutions’; mirroring the ‘encompassing tendencies’ of an institution and the desire to “develop a sociological version of the structure of the self”. Foucault’s (1979) concepts relating to disciplinary mechanisms will be applied to examine how the function of power may shape or form specific practices or behaviour within the academies. Ultimately, this may identify how these techniques of discipline influence the athlete to reproduce and internalise specific values and norms. By adopting a Foucauldian approach the analysis of how these institutions are able to promote and manage positive youth development can be made. The identification of the specific disciplines within the academies can allow for the exposure of the strengths and weaknesses of the strategies and actions of these institutions. Although Foucault’s (1979) concept of power appears to provide a relevant framework for the exploration of certain discourses within the academies organisations, this particular notion of power is not without critique. Garland (1986: 877) states that:

Power is not a thing in itself, despite Foucault’s tendency to use the term “power” as if it were a proper noun. Power is instead a relational concept. It is the name we give to the capacity to realize a desired goal in a particular situation, and in human cultures the goals that may be valued and sought after are many and varied.

It may be true that power is a relational concept and that individual goals are varied in nature; however, it is believed that within an institution such as an academy their actions may be defined by the acceptance of common goals. Ultimately all athletes within the academies aim to pursue a professional career within sport; therefore, despite the relational nature of power and goals, within such an institution

specific goals are clearly defined and followed by those who inhabit such environments.

Although Foucault's concepts regarding surveillance provide a useful basis for analytical application, a progressive movement toward a technological age has seen a shift in systems of surveillance. Monitoring sites have become less reliant on centralised locations and have begun to deploy a more dispersed method of surveillance. In the modern age disciplinary power has become ever more extensive and pervasive (Armstrong, 1994). Concepts such as Latour's (2005) 'oligopticon' expand upon and disperse the notion of centrality associated with the Panopticon. Latour (2005) introduces a system of surveillance that has become more reliant upon electronic forms of communication and a variety of surveillance sites, moving away from the central 'gaze' imposed by Bentham's Panopticon. With the progressive development of technology, methods of documentation have evolved to create digital personas and electronic databases. The collation of digital data, for quantitative analysis, provides an example of the evolution of techniques of surveillance employed to document and thus correct actions and behaviour. Within the modern age of surveillance this technological embodiment emphasises the materiality of bodies (Balsamo, 1995). A modern approach toward surveillance techniques has altered the way in which we view the individual. With the increasing effect of technology more dispersed methods of surveillance are infiltrating our everyday lives, with an increased amount of emphasis placed upon data capture. Lyon (1994: 191) suggests that through the introduction of databases emphasis is placed upon

other aspects of the power/knowledge relationship noting that “people are not only sorted into categories of creditworthiness, for example in a technical sense; the category also signifies their position in society and attach meaning to their existence as consumers, workers or citizens”.

The creation of a digital persona and the collation of data allows for the surveillance of a population in a range of respects. This particular form of electronic data describes and ‘fixes’ an individual by monitoring and tracking their actions and communications (Clarke, 1994). The notion of ‘dataveillance’ provides an extension to the Foucauldian concept of the examination. With the introduction of computerized technology ‘digital’ personas are created for the purpose of categorising personalities and quantitatively analysing individuals (Clarke, 1994). This implication of data and its use regarding techniques of surveillance and modification will be explored further in later chapters. Such an application will provide a useful example of how techniques demonstrated in Foucault’s ‘examination’ may still be sustained and translated to modern forms of disciplinary mechanisms.

The execution of modern surveillance networks ,within society at large (Castells, 2004), not only promotes a sense of self-surveillance, similar to Foucault’s (1979) panopticism, but also the notion that an individual must observe others and their behaviour more stringently. With an increase in the modernisation of surveillance techniques and the surrounding bio-politics of society, the function of

the gaze begins to extend towards a mode of lateral-surveillance or peer monitoring as Andrejevic (2005: 486) notes:

Internalizing the gaze — in an era of governance in terms of risk — comes to mean not just turning it upon oneself (in anticipation of the possibility of being watched), but also directing it outwards towards others.

Therefore, a further exploration into the modern use of surveillance systems in the wider social sphere must also be applied. An examination of lateral-surveillance and its impact upon discipline within the academies will provide further examples of how surveillance sites are able to induce disciplinary power within these institutions.

Foucault's (1979) application of disciplinary power will provide an understanding of the formative structure of the academies and how they impact upon the development of an athlete. It is an approach that will be used to explore the concepts of power, discipline and the formation of an identity within the sports academies. However, as Hacking (2004) indicates there is something absent from Foucault's approach. Hacking (2004: 300) states that:

Foucault gave us ways in which to understand what is said, can be said, what is possible, what is meaningful — as well as how it lies apart from the unthinkable and indecipherable. He gave us no idea of how, in everyday life, one comes to incorporate those possibilities and impossibilities as part of oneself.

Therefore, in order to gain an understanding of how individuals define themselves and are defined by others the discourse of interaction must be explored.

Gubrium and Holstein (2003: 227) indicate that Foucault “elaborates the broad birth of new technologies, such as the emergence of new regimes of surveillance in medicine and modern criminal justice, but he does not provide us with a view of how these operate in social interaction”. An application of Erving Goffman’s (1959; 1961a; 1961b) work will thus help provide a comprehensive understanding of how individuals within specific locations establish identities and roles that define a presentation and construction of the ‘self’. Goffman’s (1959) concepts relating to performance and role theory will provide an understanding of how and why certain identities are upheld and sustained. The use of Goffman’s (1959, 1961a, 1961b) work will provide a useful framework to explore how the norms and values are perpetuated through everyday interaction and the acceptance and adoption of certain roles that are ‘performed’ on a daily basis. The Foucauldian approach towards power and discipline provides little insight to the agency of the individual. For Foucault the notion of agency is introduced through the concept of technologies of the self and the transformation of the self brought about via a self-imposed discipline as individuals become the subject of their own thoughts and actions (Atkins, 2005). However, with the individual situated in a continuous field of power, less attention is placed upon any sense of self-determination (Freundlieb, 1994). Weber’s (1978) concept of ‘domination by authority’ accompanied by an interactionist approach will help to provide insight into the academy athletes’ construction of power and experience of authoritative discipline within these social settings. In addition, both a Foucauldian (1988a) and interactionist perspective are utilised to explore the concepts of pain,

injury (Kotarba, 1983; Nixon, 1992, 1993; Roderick, 2003) and hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1990) to gain a further understanding of how such concepts contribute towards identity formation and the socio-cultural characteristics of the academies.

Despite the prevalence of alternative theory in relation to the construction and embodiment of social and cultural norms, both Goffman and Foucault focus their attention towards institutions, and their perspectives will be utilised to provide an analysis that examines both the discourses and interaction that occurs within the academies. The following chapter considers the rationale for the sample and methods utilised within the current study. Notions of reflexivity, access to the sample, the position of the researcher as an ‘outsider’ and ethical considerations will also be discussed in relation to their impact upon the research process.



## Chapter Three: Methods

### *3.1 Introduction*

From a methodological perspective Foucault acknowledged that practices should be considered the focal point of analysis (Foucault, 1987). Foucault (1987: 103) defined ‘practices’ as “places where what is said and what is done, rules imposed and versions given”. By approaching the academy settings from a Foucauldian perspective I was able to examine how the concept of power formed or shaped the practices that occurred within the academies. By applying this to a wider context I was able to comment more on the development and nature of contemporary elite youth sport.

Gubrium and Holstein (2003: 225) indicate that “Foucault is particularly concerned with social locations or institutional sites — the asylum, the hospital, and the prison, for example”. Foucault’s attention toward institutions and the discourses that connect the lived experiences of the individuals that inhabit them provides insight into the power relations that comprise their social structure. Gubrium and Holstein (2003: 227) indicate that a Foucauldian project aims to “answer how it is that the individual experience comes to be understood in particular terms”. Therefore, Foucault’s work can provide an understanding of the social norms and values that comprise the experiences of academy athletes.

The rationality of this approach exists within the context of that which is being researched. When applying Foucault’s (1979) framework to the institute of an

academy one must analyse the practices in terms of the context in which they occur.

Foucault (1987: 107) indicates that “one isn’t assessing things in terms of an absolute against which they could be evaluated as constituting more or less perfect forms of rationality”. Therefore, one must analyse the academies according to two axes, that of codification/prescription and truth production. A Foucauldian (1987: 107) approach toward the study of academies examines “how forms of rationality inscribe themselves in practices or systems of practices, and what role they play”.

The two axes of analysis allowed me to examine the interplay between a “code” that dictates how individuals are examined, classified or trained and the construction of discourses that provide a justification for the way of doing things (Foucault, 1987). Although Foucault’s work provides an understanding of the disciplinary power and its process within these institutions, it is not able to determine how this functions at the level of interaction. Therefore, an interactionist approach aided in supplementing an understanding of how such systems affect the individual at the level of social interaction. This allowed me to gain knowledge of the roles and identities that were sustained within the academies.

Blumer (1969: 8) indicates that social interaction is “an interaction between actors and not between factors imputed to them”. Therefore, in order to gain an understanding of the social interaction that occurred within the academies it was necessary to gain an understanding of the ‘roles’ attached to the identities that emerge within these particular institutions. In addition, Banton (1965: 2) notes that “every member of a social unit, be it a ship, a football team, or a nation, has one or

more parts to play”. An interactionist perspective allowed me to explore these parts in a more detailed manner. As will be discussed further in Chapter Nine, the athletes maintained a ‘role’, as did the various staff members of the academy, each functioning interdependently through social interaction. The academies were analysed in relation to the social organisation of the institutions themselves and the personal identities that were ascribed to the athletes within these social contexts. An interactionist perspective provided an understanding of the impact of the academies social structure upon the athletes’ negotiation of behaviour. As Goffman (1961a: 7) indicates, “the study of every unit of social organisation must eventually lead to an analysis of the interaction of its elements”. As such, an interactionist approach provided an understanding of the athletes’ behavioural norms and values that were formed and perpetuated within the social network of the academies, exploring the construction of the athletes’ identities and how their particular ‘roles’ were ‘lived-out’ on a daily basis.

By adopting a Foucauldian and interactionist perspective I was able to see in what capacity athletes were surveilled by coaches and managers and the interactions between them. I was able to identify how academy members were compared, monitored and measured, and whether they are coerced into reproducing specific norms set by those in authoritative positions. The impact of such discourses upon the athletes provided insight into the structure and developmental pathways of the academies. Furthermore, it highlighted the athletes’ positions as ‘docile’ bodies and the effect this had upon their identity within the academies.

### *3.2 Academy Selection*

The selection of each academy was based upon certain requirements that suited my research needs. Academies that were devoted to promoting players through to professional status were highlighted as suitable for the study; the justification for such selection criteria is outlined within the ‘participants’ section of the study. The choice of academy was relatively arbitrary; initially three academies attached to professional sports clubs (one cricket, one football and one rugby academy) situated in different locations around the UK were contacted. All three academies granted an interview with their respective academy manager; however, access was eventually only approved by two of the academies. The two academies featured in this research were attached to a Barclay Premiership Association football club (Valley FC) and an Aviva Premiership rugby football union club (Derringstone Town)<sup>13</sup>. The reason for rejection from the third academy approached was unknown as the academy manager would not respond to e-mails or phone calls despite my persistence to keep in contact. Therefore, the two academies who agreed to cooperate in the study were selected to be part of my research project.

### *3.3 Participants*

The study involved a total number of 30 participants, nine of whom belonged to the Derringstone Town academy and 21 to the Valley FC academy.<sup>14</sup> The age of

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<sup>13</sup> Pseudonyms were given to protect the identity of both the football and rugby club.

<sup>14</sup> A full list of participants can be found in Appendix.1. Pseudonyms were given to all academy athletes and staff interviewed to protect their identity.

Derringtonstone Town's academy athletes interviewed varied from 17-21 years of age and the age of Valley FC's academy athletes varied from 17-18 years of age. The youngest players recruited at Valley FC's academy were seven years of age and the eldest 18. In contrast to Valley FC's academy, the youngest players recruited at Derringtonstone Town's academy were 13 years of age and the eldest 24<sup>15</sup>. A justification for the age range of the sample is based on Côté's (1999) understanding of elite athlete progression. Côté (1999) indicates that individuals who fall into the sample's age range (17-21) have already entered the 'investment years', which begin after the athlete has reached the age of 15. Côté (1999: 408) states that athletes who have reached the investment years are said to be "committed to achieving an elite level of performance in a single activity". It was believed that the selection of elite athletes pursuing professional careers provided key examples relating to Foucault's concept of disciplinary power as Johns and Johns (2000: 221) note: "The strong commitment of athletes to sport is a clear manifestation of disciplinary power of which Foucault spoke". It was necessary to incorporate athletes who demonstrated a strong commitment towards their sport and not simply view their participation as a past-time or leisure activity. Moreover, it was felt that an elite athlete sample would allow for a more comprehensive analysis of disciplinary power and a clearer understanding of its manifestation within a sports specific context.

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<sup>15</sup> Derringtonstone Town's academy did not recruit players under the age of 13 as they believed that the male body had not matured to an extent where it may endure the physical demands of either the rugby training or matches.

The athletes at both academies were at various stages of their academy career or contract. The majority of Valley FC's academy athletes interviewed were second year academy scholars looking to sign a professional contract with the club for the following year. Nine of the footballers interviewed had been at the academy from a young age; however two had only just joined the under 18's squad from other clubs or academy youth programmes. At Derringstone Town's academy five of those interviewed had also been involved with their junior academy programme. Only two of Derringstone Town's academy athletes interviewed had no experience of the junior academy and had been recruited into the senior academy from other clubs. At the time of interviewing three of Derringstone Town's academy athletes had signed a professional contract with the club. Throughout the interviews some of the academy athletes were able to explain how their lives had changed by comparison to their prior experiences with former clubs both in England and abroad or with previous management at their current academy. Using a sample consisting of a broad range of experiences within an academy setting provided comprehensive data and a varied outlook on their current academy experience.

The justifications for using all male participants within the study were dictated by a number of research concerns, not least of which was access to a large enough sample of female participants. Within the United Kingdom there are 40 male Football Association (FA) academies and only 25 female academies, five of which are not FA licensed. The Rugby Football Union (RFU) only funds 12 premieriership England rugby academies and two England regional rugby academies. Within the

UK a greater percentage of those participating within rugby union and association football are male, moreover there are more academies and elite facilities available to male athletes. As there are fewer female academies and athletes participating within these specific sports it becomes increasingly difficult to gain access to this particular population.

Although both academies were connected to Premiership clubs within their respective sports, the structure and organisation of the academies were markedly different. A review of the research setting at both academies provides an understanding and context for the differing research environments.

### *3.4 Research Setting*

Prior to interviewing any of the participants I was given a tour of Valley FC's academy. This helped me to familiarise myself with the location and also gave me an opportunity to view the full range of facilities that were available to the academy athletes.

The Valley FC academy was composed of a central building containing six outdoor full-size training pitches that were maintained on a daily basis by permanent grounds staff. The academy building contained a range of modern facilities including a parent's lounge, a player's lounge, player's games room, two educational suites, two IT suites, three media suites including interviewing facilities, a gymnasium, small 3G (artificial grass) pitch, a weights room fully equipped with a range of weights, treadmills and boxing paraphernalia, hydrotherapy facilities, physiotherapy

facilities and an administrative area. The administrative area was an open-plan office; the staff members' desks were situated in one large room with the academy manager's office placed at the far end overseeing his colleagues.

Derringtonstone Town's academy presented a stark contrast in comparison to the facilities located at Valley FC's academy. A tour was not needed as the facilities at Derringtonstone Town were minimal. Derringtonstone Town's academy was based at the rugby club's ground. The club contained two dining halls, kitchen, large meeting room (situated above the largest dining hall), a bar, small offices, the club ground, a weights room (containing old resistance machines and weights) and one training pitch situated behind the west stand of the ground. Although training for the rugby players also took place at a second location all observations at the academy were made at this training ground.

The length of fieldwork spanned over a period of 11 months, with observations of training and interviews conducted at both academies within this time frame. Prior to arriving at the academies, observations and interviews had to be pre-arranged through e-mail contact or telephone conversations with both academy coaches at Valley FC and Derringtonstone Town. Initial interviews began in October 2008 with the final interview conducted in May 2009; however, observations within both academies began earlier in September 2008 and ended in August 2009. Over the course of the data collection period access was controlled by both academies, which proved to be problematic and placed limitations on what I was able to observe once inside the academies. As Denscombe (2010a) notes, ethnographic research can



present difficulties in relation to gaining access to a specific social world that avoids disrupting the ‘naturalness’ of the environment. An analysis of the key issues associated with access to the academies and participants provided a comprehensive review of such difficulties, and further highlighted the ‘closed’ nature of academies and the environment in which I had to negotiate my presence.

### *3.5 Initial Access to the Academies*

Blumer (1969: 51) suggests that in order to comprehend the world in which those under study exist one must acquire the ability to “place oneself in the position of the individual or collectivity”. While this methodological practice provides an in-depth portrayal of the subcultural environment or a specific group’s social milieu, issues of access may limit the researcher’s capability to place oneself in the position of the individual or subculture under investigation. Regarding the issue of access, Burgess (1991: 31) indicates that “much will depend upon the researcher, those who are researched and the setting in which the researcher works”. For the current study the entire research experience was affected by my ‘outsider’ status, the individual athletes being interviewed and the research setting.

As Roderick (2006a: 9) indicates “football clubs are ‘closed’ to people who are perceived as ‘outsiders’ with very few exceptions”. This was no different to my research experience, both the Valley FC and Derrington Town academies were ‘closed’ environments and both were cautious of outsiders, in particular those conducting research. To gain ‘insider’ status amongst the staff and players was very

difficult. To achieve such a status required a vast amount of time being invested in building a suitable relationship with the clubs and players. It could be argued that such a relationship has been forged by only a few researchers (Parker, 1996a; Davies, 2001). Access to notoriously closed environments, such as professional football and rugby clubs, automatically determines some form of social exclusion and detachment to that which is being studied. Therefore, my position as researcher was established prior to entering into the academies.

Those who provide initial access to the research setting may be defined as 'gatekeepers'. A gatekeeper tends to be an individual who is either in charge of the institution or located at the top of the hierarchy of the social setting (Burgess, 1991). Although this is generally the case within most research settings it does not always apply to every researcher. Within this particular research project access to the academies was granted via the academy coaches. Initially there were few issues in gaining access to the academies. The academy managers and coaches were supportive of the research project; however complications arose once access was obtained.

Prior to interviewing any of the participants at both academies an Enhanced Criminal Record Certificate was obtained. A month before the research began initial meetings with both academy coaches were established to explain the premise of the research and to ask for their involvement. The initial introductions to the academy athletes differed for each academy. In both instances I was introduced by the academy coaches; however both introductions were radically different. At

Derrington Town the academy coach informed the players of who I was, where I was from and what I was doing. In addition the academy athletes were to meet me at a specific location where the interviews were conducted and I was introduced as a university researcher. The introduction to the Valley FC players was conducted by the academy coach but on a much more informal scale as noted by the field notes:

At the initial training session for the under 18's academy squad I tried to observe without intruding upon the session. After about five minutes it was clear to see that the players were distracted by my presence. At this point Graham [Academy Coach] stopped the training session and introduced me by ordering the players to wave in my general direction. The academy coach yelled, "That's Andrew, everyone say hello Andrew", at which point the majority of the players waved and yelled, "Hello Andrew", I waved back and continued to watch the rest of the session (Field notes, 21<sup>st</sup> November 2008).

Not only did I feel isolated by this introduction but also felt that it strongly reinforced my identity as an outsider and would perhaps limit my ability to establish any sense of 'rapport' with the players. In addition, this jovial introduction by Graham ensured that the players were completely unaware as to who I was and the purpose of the research project. This unfamiliarity with me as the researcher and the research project manifested itself upon my initial meeting with each of the Valley FC academy players interviewed. Upon entering the academy players would often ask questions relating to the purpose of the study such as, "What's this all about?" and "Is this a project for college (sixth form)?" or "Is this for some coursework?" At the beginning of each interview I had to re-introduce myself and define the research project, my aims, objectives and role. Due to informal introductions and the lack of

knowledge regarding research and the research process at Valley FC's academy, I introduced myself as a university student rather than a researcher to the academy athletes. Although the academy managers and coaches were aware of the research and my line of questioning, it would appear that they had not informed the academy athletes of my intentions. This was relatively frustrating as this was time consuming, considering I had limited time to spare, and could have been avoided with a group introduction that outlined, at the very least, who I was and what I was aiming to do. Hammersley (1995: 108) notes that "we are all on the margins of *some* of the activities in which we participate. We cannot be, nor in my view should we try to be, central to all of them". Indeed, it was impossible to be considered central to the subculture of the athletes or gain access that would allow this within the academies.

Burgess (1991: 45) indicates that, "the points of contact which the researcher has with an institution, organization or group will influence the collection of data and the subsequent perspective that can be portrayed". The initial points of contact for this study were the academy coaches and the initial interviews conducted with the players were relaxed and open. The following field note describes the research environment upon conducting the first interviews at Valley FC's academy:

Interviews with the players are relatively informal and quite relaxed. Some of the scholars are less willing to talk as it is generally interrupting their free time; others show quite an interest and are willing to talk at length about their experiences. Graham [Academy Coach] is always present to introduce me to the players, often with a remark or joke such as, "Make sure you don't tell any lies" or "Be careful what you say" etc. Although I know he is joking a part of me feels that he is seriously warning the players not to speak their mind. Graham initially requested to be present at each interview; however he has not sat in on any of the interviews thus far. A time restriction always seems to be placed upon

the length of the interview by Graham. Graham will always enquire as to how long I will be by often asking, “How long’s it gonna take, about 20 minutes?” I try to reassure Graham that I’ll only be half an hour, however most interviews last 40 to 45 minutes, which has caused no problems thus far (Field notes, 20<sup>th</sup> March 2009).

Hornsby-Smith (1993: 55) states that “broadly speaking, elites and powerful people and institutions are frequently able to deny access because they do not wish themselves or their decision-making processes to be studied and wish to assert their rights to privacy”. As the research progressed both the clubs became suspicious of the motives of the research and were wary of what might be uncovered or how the data, or themselves, may be represented. Therefore, access to the academies became precarious and had to be negotiated and managed partly through the explanation of disclosure and confidentiality within research. The following sections detail the issues of access that occurred once the research had begun at both academies.

### *3.6 Issues of Access at Valley FC’s Academy*

Burgess (1991: 31) indicates that “accounts of researchers have revealed that social research is not just a question of neat procedures but a social process whereby interaction between researcher and researched will directly influence the course which a research programme takes”. Indeed, the physical context in which conversations occur must be considered as this reveals a greater understanding of the social composition of a particular institution (Shipman, 1981). The place of interaction at Valley FC’s academy greatly affected the research process. Therefore,

the data could not be explained without illustrating the environments in which it was collected.

Prior to negotiating access to the athletes with the administrative staff at the football club, interviews were conducted far from the coach and manager's office and were located in a private room (the players' library/computer room) at the opposite end of Valley FC's academy. Here no interruptions were experienced and no strict time limits were placed upon the interviews. However, the environment in which interviews were conducted altered as it was made clear that Valley FC had not been told of my presence. Once my presence became known to the Human Resources (HR) department at the football club the environment altered dramatically.

Although I had every intention of ensuring that Valley FC was aware of my presence, the academy coach had not informed the administrative staff at the club. Therefore, complications arose regarding my intentions and position as a researcher within the academy once the club became aware of my research. Immediately after interviewing the third footballer at the academy one of my PhD supervisors received a phone call from the HR department at the club. As they had not been informed of the research, my supervisor had to explain the nature of the project, my intentions as a researcher and the concept of sociological research. Had it not been for this careful negotiation between my supervisor and the football club then I would have been denied access to the academy, staff and players. Although this instance was resolved,

the research setting altered dramatically and I had to approach the following regulations imposed with an increased sensitivity.

Upon entering the academy grounds I had to check in at the security office located at the gates of the academy. A member of the security staff would then inform an academy staff member that I had arrived. Once the staff had been notified I was escorted to the main security door of the academy and greeted by either the academy coach or one of the players. Once inside the academy I was then led to the main office area where the interviews took place.

The interviews were conducted within a specific office with strict instructions to leave the door open when conducting interviews with the footballers. In some instances time restrictions were imposed, limiting the contact time with each individual player. In certain circumstances the length of the interviews were dictated by the academy coach, if present within the office, as academy players were physically removed from the interviews if they were perceived to be taking too long. Once the interviews had finished I was escorted by a player to the main entrance of the academy and let out through the security door.

I reassured coaches and managers that I would comply completely with the new regulations and would try to be less of a burden. To ensure my credibility as a researcher a transcription of the interview schedule and a short summary<sup>16</sup> of the research project, outlining the main intentions of the thesis, were submitted to the club as requested by the HR department. The following field notes highlight the

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<sup>16</sup> See Appendix.4 for the short summary of the research project sent to the HR Department at Valley FC's academy.

increasing difficulties that presented themselves once the HR department became aware of my presence:

Interviews and access to players have been relatively problematic due to a previous incident with another researcher and the revelation of my presence within the academy to administrative staff at the club; unfortunately this has impacted upon the data collection quite significantly. Interviews now take place in the open-plan office where the administrative staff, academy coach and manager work. The door must be left open during each interview and strict time restrictions have been placed upon each interview to the extent whereby Graham [Academy Coach] has come into the room and physically removed an academy athlete towards the end of our interview. Since this particular change, two of the three interviews have been interrupted, once to end an interview and on the second occasion to check if we were OK. Interviews were conducted in earshot of Graham's desk. It has been noted that some of the players would often look around the door prior to answering certain questions and on some occasions the interviewees appeared to be careful with their responses. It is quite noticeable that the atmosphere is more relaxed when Graham or any other academy coaching staff are not present in the office. Interviews were conducted in a busy environment and both administrative staff and coaching staff were often walking past the doorway, which was distracting at times for both me and the player. I must check-in with the security and am now escorted into and out of the academy after each interview has finished (Field notes, 17<sup>th</sup> of April 2009).

Palmer (2000: 371) notes that "ethnographic research demands an often painstaking sensitivity in explaining who you are and what you are doing in order to gain the trust and confidence of the people you are interested in". It was clear from the newly imposed restrictions that Valley FC's academy had lost significant trust in the sincerity of my presence and the research I was hoping to conduct. The new restrictions created a great deal of frustration; however, I was not in a position to negotiate the terms of my new environment and therefore had to be even more sensitive towards the demands of the football club with regards to my presence.



### *3.7 Issues of Access at Derringstone Town's Academy*

The environmental constraints of the research process were markedly less at Derringstone Town's academy. Derringstone Town offered an open environment and provided a place for interviews to be conducted which was quiet and situated away from any other academy athletes and staff. However, as with Valley FC's academy, access to the athletes was limited. This was due to the decentralised structure of the academy, as many of the rugby players were not located within the area. I was only given access to a small number of academy athletes as they were the only rugby players, at the time of data collection, who were located in the local area and available for the study. Despite this, access to Derringstone Town's academy also became problematic once the research had begun. After I had interviewed the academy athletes and senior members of staff belonging to the academy, I was to proceed with an interview with the academy's physiotherapist. However, shortly after the Tom Williams 'Bloodgate'<sup>17</sup> scandal occurred, the ensuing media coverage it received meant that the physiotherapist and Derringstone Town academy were reluctant to allow me access to any more interviews. Although I was persistent in pursuing an interview with the physiotherapist he politely refused my advances suggesting that he was unable to meet due to "complicated circumstances" within the club. It was at this point that I lost communication with the academy and felt I could

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<sup>17</sup> <http://www.guardian.co.uk/sport/2010/aug/23/bloodgate-dr-wendy-chapman>. The 'bloodgate' scandal refers to a nationally reported news story that highlighted the controversial actions of Tom Williams, a rugby player of Harlequins rugby club, and the rugby club's doctor. During a match Tom Williams had bit into a blood capsule to engineer a blood replacement allowing a specialist kicker to come back into play. Later it was revealed that the club doctor had cut the lip of Tom Williams to demonstrate that he had indeed sustained a "real" injury.

no longer request my final interview. Although this may be perceived as largely coincidental, both academies were wary of what might be published during the research process regardless of my open intentions as Wallis (1977: 149) indicates, “the publication of the results of research almost always contains a potential threat to the public rhetoric or the private self-image of those who have been studied”.

Although an outsider status may present many difficulties when conducting research it may not always present disadvantages. Kusow (2003: 592) states that “objective knowledge relies on the degree to which researchers can detach themselves from the prejudices of the social group they study”. By maintaining the role of outsider one was able to view the researched from a position of detachment that allowed for a relatively non-biased view of the academies, athletes and staff.

An understanding of the social situation of the subject’s environment is critical when considering the position of the researcher in relation to their subjects (Kusow, 2003). Entering a sports academy, where individuals are routinely governed by figures of authority, may produce guarded responses from the subjects. Due to the hierarchical nature of the academies and the social structure they promoted, athletes may have been less likely to communicate certain values or ideals to an outsider and therefore limit the possibilities of obtaining insider status.

Although my status as an outsider was not adopted by choice, this level of detachment allowed me to remain objective when discussing certain values or concepts with the interviewees as individual concerns did not assume priority.

Merriam *et al* (2001: 415) note that “what an insider ‘sees’ and ‘understands’ will be

different from, but as valid as what an ‘outsider’ understands”. Outsider status was perhaps advantageous as it allowed me to gain fuller explanations of certain concepts from subjects rather than assuming I had prior knowledge. In this instance I was not aligned with the academies in anyway and unfamiliar with their practices. This allowed me to probe further out of curiosity and unfamiliarity without questioning from those in positions of authority. As an outsider I was approaching the academies without any pre-conceived notions regarding their organisation, structure or culture that surrounded them. Merriam *et al* (2001: 214) note that outsiders are able to “see things not evident to insiders, and render a more objective portrayal of the reality under study”. It was this position as researcher that perhaps enabled a greater level of objectivity, thus allowing me to ‘see’ that which was apparent had I otherwise been totally immersed within the academies cultures.

The experience of entering an environment that is traditionally viewed as ‘closed’ to outsiders presented many challenges that were not easily negotiable. However, it did provide me with a heightened understanding of the cultural environment in which these athletes exist, especially in relation to Valley FC’s academy as greater time was spent there. As Hammersley and Atkinson (1983: 15) indicate, “how people respond to the presence of the researcher may be as informative as how they react to other situations”. The behaviour of the senior coaching staff towards the players and myself at Valley FC reflected the regimented and heavily regulated culture that existed within the academy. The heightened modes of surveillance were not only enforced upon the players but also upon me as it was

clear that I was not to be trusted. Although I was not able to immerse myself within either of the academies' cultures, my position and experience once entering the academies' cultures allowed for a more objective stance. This revealed relevant information regarding the nature of the academies and how they may impact upon the lives of the athletes.

Prior to discussing the methods used to gather data, the epistemological position of the study must be addressed. Denscombe (2002: 18) indicates that an epistemological position highlights the “competing visions about the ways that humans create their knowledge about the social world in which they live”. Central to this study was an understanding of the academy institutions and the social reality that was constructed and interpreted by the individuals housed within them. Therefore, it was deemed relevant to assume an interpretivist epistemology to inform the theoretical perspective embedded within the methodology.

### *3.8 Epistemological Position*

Linked to Weber's concept of 'Verstehen', an interpretivist epistemological stance suggests that the social world is “constructed in the minds of people and reinforced through interactions with each other. It is a reality that only exists through the way people believe in it, relate to it and interpret it” (Denscombe, 2010b: 121-122). The Verstehen approach looked to view sociology as a practice that understood social conduct in relation to the individual and their actions and interpretations upon the construction of meaning, as Weber (1969: 54) notes, “real behaviour proceeds at

the subconscious or inarticulate conscious level of its subjective meaning”. The premise of this study sought to understand how the concept of disciplinary power impacted upon the lives, experiences and development of elite athletes within professional academy institutions. Moreover, an examination of how the athletes and academy staff negotiated their identity within such a social setting revealed greater insight into identity construction in an elite sport environment. Such an approach demanded an understanding of the participants’ cultural milieu as subjective, a socially constructed concept engineered through interaction with significant others and the social environment in which they were situated.

Adopting this epistemological stance one must note that claims of absolute truth are to be considered redundant, an interpretivist epistemology seeks to look for “culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world” (Crotty, 1998: 67). Moreover, as Bryman (2008) indicates, interpretivism is engaged with a double interpretation, that of the subjects experiences of their own social world and a further interpretation in relation to the conceptual and theoretical framework of the discipline under study. By interpreting the participants own social experiences through the lens of an interactionist and Foucauldian framework, insight into the subjective experiences of the academy athletes, staff and the social world that encompassed them could be attained. By adopting such a position the focus of the research placed emphasis upon the shared meanings and social interaction apparent within the academy institutions.

In order to gather such data it was imperative that the correct methodological tools were utilised; therefore, a justification for the chosen methods used for understanding the social realities and lived experiences of the academy members will be discussed.

### *3.9 Interviewing as a Methodological Tool*

Due to the nature and scale of the research project semi-structured interviews<sup>18</sup> and observations were conducted during the data collection stage. All interviews were conducted within the confines of the academy except for one<sup>19</sup>. Staff members and athletes, prior to the commencement of interviews, signed a consent form<sup>20</sup> that highlighted the purpose of the study and an acknowledgement of their role and rights regarding their participation, confidentiality and anonymity. Each interview varied in length with the shortest interview lasting 25 minutes and the longest lasting 70 minutes.

Fontana and Frey (1994: 366) identify that semi-structured interviews are a useful methodological tool as they are “used in an attempt to understand the complex behaviour of members of society without imposing any prior categorization that may limit the field of inquiry”. It is considered a methodology whereby specific focus is maintained, as the direction of the interview can be associated with specific research questions (Bryman, 2001). In order to discover the social reality that is relevant to

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<sup>18</sup> See Appendix.2 for an example of the initial interview guides used.

<sup>19</sup> One of the Derrington Town athletes was interviewed in university accommodation away from the academy.

<sup>20</sup> See Appendix.3 for an example of the consent form used.

the subjects setting researchers may conduct interviews, following a line of situational questioning, to reveal the values, experiences, understandings, relationships and interactions present within the given sample (Mason, 2002). Semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to take cues from ongoing dialogue. Mason (2002: 64) notes that this allows the researcher to “follow up the specific responses along lines which are peculiarly relevant to them and their context, and which you could not have anticipated in advance, in a highly organic way”.

In the case of this research, theory guided interviews were adopted with questions aimed toward specific concepts. Interview questions were directed toward issues of structure, performance, injury, success and failure with the aim of identifying themes relating to disciplinary power occurring within the academies. The initial interviews acted as pilot interviews providing insight for altering specific questions, omitting questions, expanding upon themes, the order of questions and altering the question wording. Arber (1993: 40) indicates that,

Such preliminary qualitative research helps to clarify the researcher’s conceptual framework, identifies issues which are important to the respondent but which the researcher might not have considered, and indicates the vocabulary respondents use to talk about their situation.

Although no two interviews were identical, as it was important to let the participants express their own opinions and values, the line of questioning revolved around the concepts of disciplinary mechanisms and power within the academies. It was essential to ensure that a framework was employed for the interviewing process

as it was important not to let the athletes deviate too far from the central concepts of the research project.

Cooperation is also essential when conducting any kind of research, and in certain circumstances interviewees may be unwilling or uncomfortable to explore specific topics (Marshall and Rossman, 1995). Although the interviewees in my research were willing to participate they were directed to do so by the academy coaches and managers, which was reflective of the control and coercive nature that the coaches and managers displayed. In some instances it seemed as though the athletes would rather not have participated but felt obliged to do so as the coach had demanded it. For some of the athletes the interview was perhaps perceived as a formality. The interviews took place during the athletes' spare time, and, therefore, I was effectively intruding upon the only time of day in which they had time off from academy training, educational work or physiotherapy treatment. Moreover, all the Valley FC academy athletes interviewed had received media training on how to conduct themselves during an interview. This was noted amongst some of the interviewees as they began to respond in a 'closed' manner to questions asked. Palmer's (2000) study concerning the methodological and ethical issues surrounding ethnographic research highlights the initial problems associated with this type of data collection. Palmer's (2000) investigation into La Société du Tour de France presented similar issues regarding the response of those interviewed. Having to pose as a journalist to gain access to the relevant sample presented difficulties as the responses of those interviewed were overly managed, Palmer (2000: 372) states that:



When constructed as a journalist, I was often given the official history of events. As a journalist, I was provided with a very particular social history of the Tour de France in which certain characters and events were emphasized, while others were downplayed or outright ignored to achieve a certain strategic effect.

In order to resolve such issues Palmer (2000) suggests that more ‘peripheral players’, those perhaps situated on the fringe of the organisation or institution, can provide greater insight into the functioning of the organisation itself. This may allow for a more comprehensive understanding of a particular sporting institution; however, I was not able to choose who I could or could not speak to. Therefore, in order to ensure that the academy athletes were not simply relaying managed responses I probed for further information on specific topics or concepts that were theoretically relevant ensuring that I maintained control of the interview. This allowed for a new line of questioning, which was relevant to the study, to be pursued and helped to establish a more informal conversation. Fielding (1993: 140) notes that “probing is a key interview skill. It is all about encouraging the respondent to give an answer and as full a response as the format allows”. This was an important technique to adopt when interviewing the academy athletes. Oakley (2004: 262) states that within the interview process the most crucial exercise is “the interviewer’s use of non-directive comments and probes to encourage a free association of ideas which reveals whatever truth the research has been set up to uncover”. Therefore, probing was necessary in order to stimulate the interviewees to provide further discussion of certain topics and to retrieve the sufficient quality and richness of data.

Regarding concerns as to whether the athletes responses were overly managed, Dean and Whyte (1979: 188) indicate that,

The interviewer is not looking for *the true attitude* or *sentiment*. He should recognise that informants can and do hold conflicting sentiments at one time and they hold varying sentiments at one time and they hold varying sentiments according to the situations in which they find themselves.

Therefore, interviewing may be considered a situational process. It is imperative that one must examine the interview process not solely in terms of whether the respondents are telling the truth, but more in terms of what they state and within what context they state it (Dean and Whyte, 1979). Particular attention should be placed upon the environment or context in which opinions or statements are formed as cultural values and ideals are products of the social situations in which they arise (Denzin, 1970). Approaching the academy players and staff as an outsider, it can be assumed that the interviewees would have constructed specific expectations, feelings and reflections of me prior to and during each encounter. Therefore, to gain an understanding of the subject's behavioural norms, values and ideals it was important to employ a reflexive outlook with regards to the interviewing process. Finlay and Gough (2003: 138) identify that the interview is not just a means to collect verbal data: "The interview itself is a reflexive process and one in which a relationship is established. This relationship becomes almost a third *actor* in the research scenario". The process of interviewing may be viewed as an intrusive variable. Factors contributing to the interview process such as the entry of 'outsiders' or shifts in the levels of mutual involvement, indicate that it is a

situational process that requires both interaction and negotiation by the researcher (Denzin, 1969).

Age, gender, and class were likely to have an impact upon the participants' perspective of myself and vice versa. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983: 88) indicate that "in the course of fieldwork, then, people who meet, or hear about, the researcher will cast him or her into certain identities on the basis of 'ascribed characteristics', as well as aspects of appearance and manner". Therefore, I had to present a role that would enable me to establish a sense of rapport with the interviewees that would impact less upon the research and still provide useful data. When considering the relationship of observer to observed Cassell (1988: 96-97) notes that:

One must fit in, if that seems to be called for; not fit in, if it seems inappropriate. One must dress acceptably, speak acceptably...The fieldworker...Should adopt a role or identity that meshes with the values and behaviour of the group being studied, without seriously compromising the researchers' own values and behaviours.

In any social research the researcher will inevitably have to portray a role that is dictated not only by the social setting but those who also comprise it. Burgess (1991: 88) indicates that "the researcher may be simultaneously perceived in different terms by different members of the same institution". It was impossible to 'fit in' within this specific environment and deemed not appropriate. Therefore, the identity of university researcher or university student was maintained throughout the data collection stage as it was not possible to deviate from this particular role, and afforded me the ability to establish an identity that the academy athletes would feel

comfortable with and could relate to in order to promote an informal and relaxed discussion.

When considering qualitative research, one is interested in the account of the subjects own behaviour as they are assumed to reveal the rules that the subjects follow, thus identifying the meaning of the action in question (Alasuutari, 1998). Producing such data is most important, as the credibility of the majority of semi-structured qualitative interviews is partially based on the richness and depth of the data that may be retrieved and analysed from the interview transcripts, an issue within qualitative research that can be impacted upon by the positions of power between both the researcher and the researched.

### *3.10 Interviewing and the Position of Power*

When considering the position of the researcher one must note that conversation takes place in both a physical context and a social context (Burgess, 1988). May (2001: 52) indicates that “social power is not evenly distributed between groups. The definition that there exists a problem will often depend on the relative power that the people who define the social problem have over those who are defined”. Power is not located in one specific position or by one specific source, but is dispersed through a network of interdependence. Power relations within the interview scenarios were quite clearly defined. Mason (2002: 80) states that “it is usually assumed that the interviewer exercises power over the interviewee in and after the interview, for example in setting the agenda and in controlling the data”.

This was the case whilst the interviews were being conducted; however, as a researcher within the academies, I was situated in a complex network of power relations. Throughout the interviews I was able to dictate the content and direction to a great extent, and it was very unlikely that the interviewees would end the interview or decline to answer certain questions as they had been instructed to attend by their respective coach or academy manager. However, it was made clear by the academy coaches that I was in a privileged position, and it was very apparent that senior authority figures within the academies could end the research project or deny access at any point. It was not until I was halfway through the interview process at Valley FC's academy that I began to experience direct resentment towards my presence. The following field note highlights the precarious relationship I held with the Valley FC academy staff:

After the last interview of the day I walked out of the office unescorted as the player had to go to the treatment room for physiotherapy. As I passed Graham's [Academy Coach] desk he was chatting to one of the administrative staff. He stopped me as I passed and I thanked him for the continued access to the athletes in light of recent events that could have prevented my access to the academy and the athletes. He mentioned that it was no problem but then enquired as to how many more interviews I would like to do, the conversation continued as follows: "How many more do you wanna do then?" I Replied: "Oh I dunno' maybe another six more if that's OK?" Graham: "Bloody hell Andrew, oooh I dunno'." I replied: "I know I can be a bit of a pain in the arse." Graham laughed and then responded with: "Yeah, you can, no problem six is fine, I'll set it up for you." I knew that throughout this conversation Graham was only joking but it did reinforce my status as an unwelcome distraction for Graham and the other coaching staff. Initially it felt good to engage in a bit of 'banter' with Graham and the other members of staff but I began to feel as though I was becoming an increasing annoyance to both Graham and the office staff and that he was very keen to have the interviews completed (Field notes, 24<sup>th</sup> April 2009).

Hammersley (1995: 108) states that “the people studied are unempowered if not disempowered — to a large extent they are treated merely as objects of the research process”. The content and course of my interviews were largely dictated and controlled by myself and, therefore, I was able to maintain some sense of power within these specific interactions. This particular power relation was not only limited to interviews with the academy athletes but also included the academy staff. In this instance the athletes and academy staff may have been perceived as objects of the research process; however, it was important to ensure that this power relation did not affect the responses of athletes or staff as I was careful not to direct the interviewees toward a desired or specific answer.

Hammersley (1995: 109) further suggests that “researchers do not normally form part of the permanent power structures in the settings in which they do research”. As a researcher entering into the academy environment I was considered a temporary fixture in the academy staff and athletes’ lives. Although I was able to assume some sense of power within the interview situations the research process and procedures were directed by the academy coaches and managers. Within both the Valley FC and Derrington Town academies the location of interviews was dictated by the academy coach or director, which, at times, impacted greatly upon the research. In this instance I was limited to the breadth of knowledge that I could gain and was controlled by the willingness of engagement and level of involvement with the research project.

To overcome such issues observational field notes were combined with the interviews conducted. Robson (2011: 315) states that “data from direct observations contrasts with, and can often usefully complement, information obtained by virtually any other technique”. The importance of reflecting on field notes helped to provide a comprehensive representation of the culture witnessed at both the academies, and thus provided an enhanced understanding of the structure of these institutions and how they construct and mould the behaviour of the athletes who inhabit them.

### *3.11 Field Notes*

Field notes documenting observations whilst attending interviews, training sessions and matches were recorded during the research process and were written up upon leaving the academies. The purpose of taking notes was to ensure that I adopted a reflexive approach toward the research, support the interviews and provide an additional data source. The notes included issues surrounding processes, procedures, access to the sample population, how the participants reacted toward the intrusion of me as an outsider and the impressions of the academy environment. Burgess (1984: 139) indicates the advantage of note taking by stating that “researchers can consider their methods and speculate on ways in which these methods can be adopted, adapted and developed”.

Within the field of social research body language and gestural cues may be noted as they can reveal meaning to the words of those interviewed (Angrosino and Mays de Pérez, 2003). In addition, social scientists may be perceived as observers of

both “human activities and of the physical settings in which such activities take place” (Angrosino and Mays de Pérez, 2003: 673). Therefore, it was imperative that observations were made if I was to gain an understanding of the athletes’ behaviours and the nature of the institution that housed them.

Marshall and Rossman (1995: 80) state that “observation is a fundamental and critical method in all qualitative inquiry. It is used to discover complex interactions in natural social settings”. Observations for this particular study were, to a certain extent, controlled by the academy staff. Although access to training sessions at Valley FC and Derrington Town were permitted, when and what I could observe was relatively controlled by the senior academy staff. I was instructed to attend on specific days and to specific training sessions, this was to be expected and I complied as I did not want to interrupt or distract the players whilst present at their training sessions. This presented certain limitations with regards to observations and data collection. As my presence within the academies was regulated I was unable to gain a full picture of an academy athlete’s training week and would only gain access to a small segment of their daily routine both on and off the pitch. On two separate occasions scheduled meetings to watch the Valley FC academy athletes train was forgotten by the academy coach. The following field note demonstrated the lack of control I had over when and what I could observe within the academy:

I arrived at Valley FC’s training ground and was met by the security staff as usual. I informed the security that I had been allowed to watch a training session that was scheduled in by Graham [Academy Coach]. The security allowed me into the academy and directed me to the correct training pitch. As I arrived onto the high banks that overlooked the training pitch I noticed, to



my surprise, that the senior academy were nowhere to be seen. I waited for around half an hour and watched the younger age groups train. Eventually I was greeted by Valley FC's academy goal keeping coach who questioned my presence. I explained the premise of my study and why I had come to the academy on this particular day. It was then revealed to me that Graham and the team had gone for a walk and a bacon sandwich as a team bonding exercise and to discuss issues with the players. It was clear that Graham had forgotten about my presence and turned up about thirty minutes later. In order to make up for this I was offered a tour of the facilities, which I accepted. Although I still managed to chat with Graham for a short while and viewed the facilities I felt that my presence was an annoyance to those who had agreed to the research project and that the research was of little significance. During the tour of the facilities Graham explained that he would often change the training schedule at the last minute so I was to expect similar situations to occur in the future. Although I was frustrated by the inconvenience of the situation I felt that I couldn't complain as this would have jeopardised access to the athletes and the entire research project, it was clear from this moment onward that my visits to the academy would be heavily affected by Graham's attitude towards the study (Field notes, 2<sup>nd</sup> of October 2008).

In some instances situations within the field revealed more about the academies' culture and environment than did the interviews conducted. For example, the heavy monitoring, regulation and control of certain interviews within Valley FC's academy was reflective of the academy's culture and indicated a great deal about the relationship between the coach and athletes and the processes of surveillance witnessed within the club. Robson (2011: 216) indicates that observations are an "appropriate technique for getting at 'real life' in the real world". By supplementing the semi-structured interviews with observational field notes it was believed that an increased reliability and validity of results would be obtained (Robson, 2011). The acquisition of observational field notes allowed me to gain a

greater understanding of the social context of the interviews and the brief interactions I shared with the players and senior staff.

Once the data had been collected the process of coding began. Coding allows the researcher to make analytical interpretations of the data developing and deriving key concepts (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). The following sections provide a detailed analysis of the coding processes and interpretation of data undertaken.

### *3.12 Data Analysis, Validity and Reliability*

Open-coding began as soon as the interview data were collected and transcribed verbatim, this specific process of coding built upon the grounded theory approach as identified by Charmaz (2006: 42-72). Open coding allowed for the data to be closely examined, dissected into discrete parts, and compared for any similarities and differences (Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Strauss and Corbin, 1990), with an attempt to “remain open to other analytic possibilities and create codes that best fit the data” (Charmaz, 2006: 48). Text relating to themes such as discipline, monitoring and professionalism were highlighted and grouped into specific segments. A ‘de-contextualisation’ and ‘re-contextualisation’ approach toward analysing and organising data was adopted. Tesch (1990: 116) identifies that “each sentence or paragraph within a document, is embedded in the context of that document”. Relevant text within the interviews were isolated into meaningful segments, this is identified as the de-contextualisation process, and ‘tagged’ to identify specific features or patterns emerging within the data (Seidel, 1988).

The data were then organised by a system of focused coding, here a more selective process of coding was utilised that looked to “synthesize and explain larger segments of data” (Charmaz, 2006: 57). By identifying the most frequent earlier codes, a more complete and precise categorisation of the data could be achieved (Charmaz, 2002). By tagging segments of text with mnemonic codes, (codes used to remember names of specific categories or topics), an organising system was developed. Tesch (1990: 122) indicates that “after data are coded, they still are not ready for interpretations. Everything that belongs in one category must be assembled in one place, so the researcher can read in a continuous fashion”. This constitutes the re-contextualisation process. Segments were settled within the context of their specific topic or theme, transferring the next segment that is relevant to the particular category context (Tesch, 1990). This process continued until all relevant data had been grouped into the specific categories, from this process categories emerged with subcategories for the identification of further topics and themes.

The software package NVivo was used to manage and analyse the data once it had been gathered. NVivo was employed to import and code documents as well as sort information, to edit comments, group codes and automatically assign pre-selected codes to matching text passages. Lynch (1999: 4) states that NVivo “offers many ways of connecting the parts of a project, integrating reflection and recorded data”. Initially, specific concepts concerning surveillance, discipline and attitude were segregated into ‘free nodes’. Bazeley (2007: 32) indicates that “free nodes allow you to capture ideas without imposing any structure on those ideas”. This was

particularly useful at the beginning of the data analysis as it allowed for the identification of key concepts that could be expanded upon to develop a network of sub-concepts referred to as 'tree nodes'. Bazeley (2007: 103) states that "trees help to create order out of randomness or chaos", by separating the data into 'tree nodes' it was possible to expand key themes. For example issues relating to surveillance could be split into further sub-concepts such as self-surveillance, lateral surveillance and dataveillance. Moreover, the sorting and coding of data into 'tree nodes' identified themes or concepts that overlapped or could be connected. As Corbin and Strauss (2008: 198) identify, "as analysts work with data, their minds automatically make connections because, after all, the connections come from the data". This process of axial coding allowed for the re-contextualisation of the data by making connections between a category and its subcategory (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Although 'tree nodes' are useful for sorting data overlapping themes may be coded into a second level of coding that can identify the connections between concepts or themes explored within the 'tree nodes'. This process helps to build a greater understanding of the data and its relationship to the theoretical framework utilised within the research, as Bazeley (2007: 116) indicates:

The hierarchical ordering of concepts in a tree-structured coding system – as categories with sub-categories, or concepts with their unique dimensions – does not directly show the associations you find between different kinds of things. Nor is it easy, in a hierarchical classification system, to capture information like who communicates with whom about what. These kinds of connections – the kinds which build theories rather than concepts – need a different solution, and one that is offered here is to capture them in relationship nodes.

As previously highlighted the research environment, specifically within Valley FC's academy, presented a challenge to gaining access to the sample and obtaining adequate or relevant data. Issues of validity and reliability were raised when considering the nature of the interview and the environment in which they occurred. Peräkylä (2004: 283) states that "the aim of social science is to produce descriptions of a social world – not just descriptions, but descriptions that in some controllable way correspond to the social world that is being described". Therefore, the issue of establishing validity and reliability within the research is an important process as it verifies the credibility and objectivity of that which is being researched (Peräkylä, 2004).

Hammersley (1992: 69) indicates that "an account is valid or true if it represents accurately those features of the phenomena it is intended to describe, explain or theorise". In order to increase the validity of the study and capture an accurate representation of the academies' cultures it was important to record field notes documenting the experiences, observations and atmosphere upon arriving at the academies after each visit. The use of multiple methods or triangulation allows the researcher to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the researched (Miller and Fox, 2004). Although, one can never remain neutral in the research process (Denscombe, 2010a), the use of field notes prompted a reflexive approach towards analysing and interpreting the data and attempted to provide a more valid and reliable understanding of the culture under study.

### *3.13 Interpretation of Data*

Schwandt (1994: 119) suggests that the aim of an interpretivist approach is concerned with “the grasping or understanding (*Verstehen*) of the “meaning” of social phenomena”. In the case of this I was interested in the personal perceptions of both the athletes and the academy staff and how they constructed a social identity within such an environment. As Mason (2002: 56) indicates an interpretivist approach allows the researcher to “see people, and their interpretations, perceptions, meanings and understandings, as the primary data source”. Total immersion within the setting was therefore not required as an understanding of the social norms, collective understandings and reasoning processes of the individuals within the study could be obtained through a methodology that contains semi-structured interviews (Mason, 2002).

In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the environment under study it was important to approach the research with a reflexive outlook, as Blumer (1969: 49) indicates: “Human action is constructed by the actor on the basis of what he notes, interprets and assesses; and the interlinking of such ongoing action constitutes organization, institutions and vast complexes of interdependent relations”. As with any social institution sports academies contain a number of individuals each with a different role and each promoting a variety of interactions that relate to one another through ‘networks of interdependence’ (Elias, 1978). Interpreting the interview data from this particular perspective, Mason (2002: 78) notes that “you would be wanting to ‘read’ the interviews for what you think they

mean, or possibly for what you think you can infer about something outside the interview interaction itself”. This is telling of the research and the interview process itself. I was interviewing with the purpose of understanding a perception of the institutions and the lives of the academy athletes as young professional athletes. Through interaction with the players an understanding of their identity and social status within the academies was obtained (see Chapter Nine). However, the academy athletes and academy staff were also able to reveal a greater understanding of the social structure and mechanisms of the academies (see Chapter Five). Schwandt (2000: 193) states that:

In order to understand the part (the specific sentence, utterance, or act), the inquirer must grasp the whole (the complex of intentions, beliefs, and desires or the text, institutional context, practice, form of life, language game, and so on), and vice versa.

Therefore, it was necessary to consider the whole and the individual parts that comprised the social structure of the academies. In order to understand or interpret what the subjects were trying to convey an understanding of the developmental nature of the individual and the influential factors that surrounded them had to be known. Such a view is represented by Gadamer’s perception of ‘understanding’. Gadamer (2004: 258) states that, “we must understand the whole in terms of the detail and the detail in terms of the whole”. That is, researchers must relate what is being stated to the context that it is situated in. Gadamer (2004) states that:

When we try to understand a text, we do not try to recapture the author's attitude of mind but, if this is the terminology we are to use, we try to recapture the perspective with which he has formed his views.

Thus, a knowledge of 'self' in relation to what is being researched and an understanding of the context in which the subjects existed was paramount to interpreting that which was being said. Consequently, this approach revealed the nature of the individual itself and provided a greater understanding of interaction within the academies.

Schwandt (2000: 194) indicates that "in interpretive traditions, the interpreter objectifies (i.e., stands over and against) that which is to be interpreted. And, in that sense, the interpreter remains unaffected by and external to the interpretive process". This is critical not only from an epistemological point of view but also highlights the level of detachment the interpreter is able to achieve when considering the research. Although a sense of detachment is beneficial to the interpretation of data and the research environment it remained difficult to be unaffected by and external to the subjects researched, the research setting and thus the interpretive process. Interpretation of the social structure and the individuals immersed within the academies had to arise from the documentary evidence, situating the interpreter 'over and against' that which was studied. Furthermore, Gubrium and Holstein (2003: 230) note that:

The aim of an analytics of interpretive practice is to document the interplay between the practical reasoning and the conversational machinery entailed in constructing a sense of everyday reality on the one hand and the institutional



conditions, resources, and related discourses that substantively nourish and interpretively mediate interaction on the other.

The two aspects of this specific approach are concerned with the conversational machinery and the institutional conditions of the academies themselves. By analysing the academies from this particular perspective I was able to provide an understanding of the interaction between the social agents of the academies and the institutional conditions. This also allowed me to provide an understanding of how the academies' social structures directed or mediated this form of interaction.

Although such an approach to interpretation revealed significant insights with regards to the social context and cultural environment of the academies, access to the research sample was perhaps the most problematic issue, raising ethical considerations that had to be negotiated by an adherence to protocols associated with disclosure and confidentiality.

### *3.14 Disclosure and Confidentiality*

Punch (1994: 87) states that “the actual conduct of research and success in the field can be affected by myriad factors, including age, gender, status, ethnic background, overidentification, rejection, factionalism, bureaucratic obstacles, accidents and good fortune”. It may be suggested that there is a comprehensive list of factors that inhibit or facilitate the progress of research, some of which may not be accounted for until the fieldwork has begun. It is clear that the interpreter or observer

of a research setting should not be considered a neutral spectator (Denzin, 1997), and that researchers have responsibilities to those whom they research. Christians (2003: 138-139) states that “proper respect for human freedom generally includes two necessary conditions. Subjects must agree voluntarily to participate — that is, without physical or psychological coercion. In addition, their agreement must be based on full and open information”. Although all participants within the study signed a consent form outlining their voluntary participation, not all of the athletes had a free choice to decline participation as this was arranged by their coach or academy manager. However, in accordance with the British Sociological Association’s statement of ethical practice (BSA, 2002: 3), it was made clear within the consent form that all participants may decline to answer any questions or end the interviews at any given moment without notice. Moreover, it was made clear to the academy athletes and staff that interview transcripts and a copy of the completed thesis may be submitted to any subject who requested either document ensuring that all participants remained anonymous (BSA, 2002: 2-3).<sup>21</sup>

Researcher’s responsibilities towards ethical practice include issues concerning confidentiality, anonymity and the representation of the researcher’s aims and objectives (Denscombe, 2002). By not divulging all the necessary information,

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<sup>21</sup> The statement of ethical practice for the BSA states that “interviewers should clarify whether, and if so, the extent to which research participants are allowed to see transcripts of interviews and filed notes and to alter the content, withdraw statements, to provide additional information or to add glosses on interpretations” (BSA, 2002: 3). In accordance with good ethical practice in relation to the research process, it was necessary to ensure that the participants of the study were aware of their rights concerning the research process, details of which can be found in the consent form in Appendix. 3.

including the purpose and aim of the study, it may be suggested that researchers are misrepresenting themselves and therefore betraying the trust of the researched (Denscombe, 2002). This may affect the relationship between the researcher and the researched and thus jeopardise issues concerned with access. Punch (1994: 90) indicates that informed consent “by which the subjects of research have the right to be informed that they are being researched and also about the nature of the research”, may help to facilitate a relationship between the researcher and the researched, ensuring a credible representation of the researcher and his or her aims. However, revealing all information concerning the research project may not be entirely possible as Burgess (1991: 199) indicates, “all research is to some extent secret, as researchers do not know everything they wish to investigate at the beginning of a study, a situation which makes consent difficult”. Upon my initial meeting with the senior staff at both academies, the research topic and the intentions of the research were introduced. However, it was thought wise to refrain from openly revealing all aspects of the research at the preliminary stages, as this may have affected the relationship between myself and those at the academies. In certain circumstances it was profitable to conceal certain facts relating to knowledge claims, as Burgess (1991: 202) indicates, “a white lie told in order to gather more field data generates further material”.

Opposing views have suggested that institutions or individuals are more likely to respond to a trustworthy individual as Bulmer (1980: 63-64) states: “Many accounts of observational research stress that the success of the research depends more on the

acceptance of the individual by those he is studying as someone they can trust, than on elaborate fronts and role pretence”. That said, it was not the intention to deceive the athletes and staff at the academies by adopting covert methods. In relation to covert research the BSA guidelines indicate that covert methods may be justified in circumstances whereby, “access to spheres of social life is closed to social scientists by powerful or secretive interests” (BSA, 2002: 4). When such methods are required, it is imperative that the anonymity of research participants are safeguarded (BSA, 2002: 4-5).

Issues concerning confidentiality and anonymity had to be considered in accordance with the BSA (2002: 5-6) guidelines. Athletes were informed that all digital recordings and interview transcripts would only be available to me and my PhD supervisors and their identity would remain anonymous with the use of pseudonyms. It was also made clear to all participants that any information disclosed to me would remain confidential. No information discussed within the interview would be relayed to staff members or other academy athletes with the exception that any disclosures of illegal behaviour had to be reported to the necessary authorities. It is the responsibility of the researcher to report any illegalities that may be disclosed by any of the subjects to ensure that such issues are dealt with correctly (BSA, 2002: 5)<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> The statement of ethical practice for the BSA clearly indicates that “research data do not enjoy legal privilege” (BSA, 2002: 5). Therefore, it is the researcher’s duty to disclose any illegalities to the necessary authorities if they occur during the research process.

Janesick (2003:56) states that “from the beginning moments of informed consent decisions in the field, to other ethical decisions in the field, to the completion of the study, qualitative researchers need to allow for the possibility of recurring ethical dilemmas”. Ethical concerns arising from the study were considered inevitable, a strict adherence to a clear guideline of ethical practice <sup>23</sup>sought to address such concerns with the desired level of sensitivity and professional conduct that the study required.

### *3.15 Conclusion*

This chapter provided a justification for the chosen research methods used. Details of the participants, research setting and issues associated with access have been discussed to form a contextual basis and reflexive outlook upon the study. Moreover, a consideration of the philosophical grounding that informs the research methodology (Crotty, 1998) has been presented through an exploration of the epistemological stance adopted. In addition, this section has demonstrated concerns that governed processes associated with data collection, analysis and ethical considerations embedded within the study.

The following chapters are concerned with an analytical review of the data collected and themes that emerge throughout the process of the study. Attention will be given to the theoretical framework utilised to support the research and a clearer

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<sup>23</sup> The guideline referred to here is the statement of ethical practice for the BSA.

exploration of issues associated with surveillance, power and identity that emerge within the academies' cultures.

## Chapter Four: Surveillance within Academies

### *4.1 Introduction*

This chapter aims to adopt the Foucauldian (1979) concept of panopticism to explore how surveillance may increase the functioning of discipline within the institutional setting of the academies. An extension of Foucault's (1979) panopticism will be explored with the use of Latour's (2005) 'oligopticon' and Deleuze and Guattari's (2003) 'rhizomatic' notion of surveillance networks. These concepts allow for the exploration of a dispersed method of surveillance that benefits the structural networks of the academies and places less emphasis on a central observation point such as that displayed by Bentham's Panopticon.

In post-modern society surveillance and the introduction of modern technologies have come to express changing forms of disciplinary approaches towards the individual. The use of electronic surveillance technology has enabled an empirical observation and classification of the individual with greater efficiency. The introduction of radio telemetry, electronic tagging (Lyon, 1993), and Radio-Frequency Identification tags (RFID tags), have accelerated the use of electronic systems of surveillance. Lyon (1993: 655) indicates that such techniques have allowed for a "highly unobtrusive monitoring of data subjects in a variety of social contexts". In its most simplistic form Lyon (2003a: 15) notes that it is appropriate to view surveillance in "terms of paying very close attention to personal details — often in the form of digital data — for the purpose of influencing, managing, or controlling those under scrutiny". Giddens (1984: 127) notes

that the function of surveillance “connects two related phenomena – the collation of information used to co-ordinate social activities of subordinates, and the direct supervision of the conduct of those subordinates”. In this instance surveillance operates through a dual system of data collection for the purpose of control or management of a given population. Giddens (1984: 127) continues to state that “surveillance by its very nature, involves disclosure, making visible. The garnering of information discloses the patterns of activity under observation in order to control it”. Inevitably surveillance will produce an adherence to conformity amongst those who are observed and indeed induce a possible resistance to it. However, the greater that the individual is ‘exposed’ then the more readily they will conform to the desired norms or practices of the institution. Although these definitions encompass the basics of surveillance, the collation of details and the management of individuals may vary between social institutions or contexts. Surveillance may be situated upon a spectrum that ranges from soft, dispersed methods of observation to more centralised forms of control (Lyon, 2003a).

Through the introduction of advanced technology concerning surveillance of society, both en masse and individually, techniques and methods of observation have altered dramatically over time as Zuboff (1989: 322) indicates: “Information systems that translate, record and display human behaviour can provide the computer age version of universal transparency”. The alteration in surveillance methods provides a different perspective of the observed as Haggerty and Ericson (2000: 611) note: “The monitored body is increasingly a cyborg; a flesh-technology information amalgam”. The introduction of computer technology and database systems reproduces a virtual representation that is constructed from the incorporation of codes and data allowing for



the advanced multiplication of visibility, as Staples (2000:59) indicates, “a state of permanent visibility looms over us as cameras and their tapes encroach everyday life”. Staples (2000: 11) further notes that post-modern surveillance practices “target and treat the body as an object that can be watched, assessed, and manipulated”. It is the body that is increasingly becoming the target of surveillance and the object of knowledge as Lyon (2001: 81) notes, “the body has become not only a site of surveillance but a source of surveillance data”. Through an enhancement in visual, audio and bio-medical forms of surveillance techniques the body is being subjected to a more rigorous and exposing mode of observation. The body may no longer be considered an object to be observed but also a source of information for control.

Although surveillance techniques have evolved throughout the ages, the significance of perspectives that developed prior to the introduction of advanced technologies, such as the Foucauldian notion of panopticism, must not be ignored. Foucault’s (1979) notion of panopticism has provided a comprehensive understanding of surveillance and the mechanisms used to impose an unseen observation over the individual. In this chapter, Foucault’s application of the Panopticon will be discussed in the context of an academy setting, introducing the impact of disciplinary mechanisms and their role in the monitoring and examining of the academy athletes. Although this central concept will be used to explore the notion of disciplinary surveillance within the academies, an extension of the concept of panopticism will also be developed. Due to the structural organisation of the academies, the central locality of observation, demonstrated via Foucault’s (1979) panopticism, is perhaps less relevant. Instead, a

more dispersed form of monitoring can provide an accurate analysis of the systems of surveillance functioning within the academies as discussed in this chapter.

#### *4.2 Panopticism and Surveillance within the Academies*

Within the academy systems under investigation, the movements of athletes were observed and supervised, records of weight, technical ability, fitness and dietary intake were documented and progress was routinely monitored. Individual body movements were broken down to the smallest detail and analysed by coaches and managerial staff. This was reflected not only within the social space of the academies but also, to a certain extent, in their architectural structure. This was noted more so upon entering Valley FC's academy as closed circuit television cameras (CCTV) were positioned external to, and throughout, the academy allowing staff to observe any point of the building from a central control room at any given time. Although the notion of a central vantage point still exists within this particular example, the use of CCTV was not specifically used to monitor the athletes but implemented for the purpose of safety. That said, the relevance of previous literature (Bale, 1992; 1993; 1994; 2000) that connects Foucault's concept of spatial segmentation, power and control to the architectural and geographical composition of the stadium must not be ignored. The concept of panopticism may, in part, exist within an academy structure. However, it is not as centralised as Foucault's initial representation, or as imposing as Bentham's original architectural composition discussed in Chapter Two. There are many networks within academy systems, perhaps focusing upon different aspects of an athlete, but all

monitoring with the intent to expose the academy athletes to an overt sense of transparency.

As indicated in Chapter Two, the Panopticon was an architectural composition designed to promote the notion of self-discipline amongst inmates within a prison. It was to be an all encompassing observation point, a central eye of unseen surveillance as Foucault (1979: 201) notes: “The inmate must never know whether he is being looked at at any one moment; but he must be sure that he may always be so”. Although the Panopticon’s disciplinary function was to remove the need for the sovereign display of power, its employment to social settings may provide for a further array of applications as noted by Foucault (1979: 205):

It is a type of location of bodies in space, of distribution of individuals in relation to one another, of hierarchical organisations, of disposition of centres and channels of power, of definition of the instruments and modes of intervention of power, which can be implemented in hospitals, workshops, schools, prisons.

The multivalent nature of Foucault’s panopticism suggests that it is a concept not simply applicable to prisons, but utilised to explore power relations and issues of surveillance in a variety of institutions, as Simon (2005: 2) indicates: “In its most concrete form, the Panopticon is a socio-material template for institutional orders of all kinds ranging from prisons, to schools, to factories, to hospitals”. Sports academies can also be included within this particular category. However, the mode of surveillance witnessed within the academies presents an altered or enhanced notion of panopticism.

Within Valley FC’s academy the network of surveillance extended beyond the central locality of the coaches and managers. Even so, the see/being seen dyad illustrated by Foucault was still present within both the academies structure, although it

was seen to vary in intensity between the two. This mechanism of undetected surveillance functioned in the same way as that of Bentham's Panopticon. The Valley FC athletes, at times, were unaware they were under observation or how information about them may have reached those that were higher up in the club hierarchy. Ultimately this functioned to ensure docility and compliance amongst the academy athletes so as to avoid any further retribution. The 'all encompassing eye' was perceived by players to be upheld by the central academy coaching staff and manager. In reality it was a dispersed network of surveillance sites as illustrated by the Valley FC academy coach:

**Graham:** If something's happened you 'ave to understand, physios, sport scientists, coaches are all the eyes and ears of the manager. The physio came to me today and told me something that I hadn't noticed, but what I do though, I'll speak to that particular player, and he'll think how the hell does he know that? Now I won't tell him who's told me.

**AM:** So they're not aware then?

**Graham:** Ohhhh no, all I'll do is I'll go to that player and I'll say, "Uhhhhh, don't think I didn't see you turn in late the other day, I knew you walked in behind me". Did I bollocks know he was behind me, one of the physios told me after he was late he crept in but I was talkin' to somebody else with my back turned to him so I didn't see him. So now what that tells to this lot [the players] is I better be careful 'ere. Now he doesn't know the physio has told me, so he's thinking "how does he know that"? [one of the players]. They need to know their parameters, so we're all monitoring them all the time.

Managers and other academy staff are often used as a network of surveillance to monitor the athletes on a day-to-day basis. This anatomical form of surveillance, as depicted by the Valley FC academy coach, not only incorporates the coaches, but also managers, physiotherapist and conditioning coaches. Although the central locality of a Panopticon

was not present within the academies system of surveillance, the concept of an ‘all-seeing’ gaze that stems from Foucault’s (1979) notion of panopticism was still present. Lyon (2003a: 30) indicates that panopticism is “partly a centralised scheme, though there is scope for its localisation into the “capillary” levels in the minutiae of everyday life”.

This undetected form of surveillance allowed those situated higher up within the hierarchy the opportunity to gain access to information that helped the coaches and managers form a profile of a player. This constant form of surveillance exposed the athletes allowing a number of attributes relating to performance and attitude to be explored by the academy managers and coaches. It allowed those higher up within the hierarchy to view the athlete in a multitude of ways providing a range of data that helped to analyse performance and also provide a comprehensive view of the athletes’ personalities. Data may be obtained from speed, agility and strength tests; however, the constant presence of the coaches allowed for the observation of behaviour away from the pitch and in the confines of the changing rooms. The Derrington Town academy coach Phillip explained how such techniques of monitoring helped to provide a profile of a rugby player both in and away from the academy:

So, someone might be doing a training session and they might think you’ve got your back turned to them and you’re not watching but you’re actually listening to what they’re saying. So, you’re always monitoring them, not even just from the rugby side of things, when they’re in the changing rooms the way they interact with other players, if they’re sort of there with their towel whipping people or if they’re reserved and keep themselves to themselves, if they’re always in with the physio getting treatment, uhhh you can look at their pain thresholds, you can look at them in a multitude of ways (**Phillip**).

These systems of monitoring still remained similar to that of panopticism as the object was to exact an undetected surveillance over the individual athlete. The attitude and behaviour of the athletes became apparent to the academy managers, coaches and staff through the combination of an undetected mode of surveillance and an extensive human web-based network. Through this mode of surveillance the transparency of the academy athletes' behaviour became intensified to the extent that power relations ensured a process of self discipline.

However, the institutions themselves are not immune from the monitoring process. The Valley FC academy was also subjected to constant surveillance mechanisms to ensure that protocols were followed correctly. From a consideration of the day-to-day duties of the Education and Welfare Officer within Valley FC's academy it became clear that the actions of the academy were also under scrutiny. The Education and Welfare Officer described his weekend duties, highlighting the external monitoring that was implemented by outside sources:

Saturday and Sunday are our busiest days in terms of the football programme. So you've got the eighteens [U18s] and sixteens [U16s] playing, often at home on a Saturday, I'm involved in the match day coordination of that, paying referees, seeing to the opposition when they come here making sure they've got all the stuff they need and so on and so forth, making sure the pitches have got the required things out there because they'll send a Premier league monitor who'll, if they're not there, will write in their report that we didn't do this and we didn't do that; so it's all monitored, monitored, monitored, monitored (**Colin**).

Internal review processes of the academy athletes that were undertaken by the Valley FC academy coaches were also monitored by external sources. The review process, explored further in Chapter Six, details the progression of each individual athlete and was video recorded and kept on DVD file for future analysis. It is this process that was

externally reviewed by Premier League monitors, to ensure that the academy received the required funding, was performing the reviews accurately, to modify athletes' behaviour, was keeping a record for internal and external verifiers and was ensuring that players' performances were progressing. When asked who Valley FC's academy was monitored by, the Education and Welfare Officer replied:

By Premier League monitors, that's part of the LSC<sup>24</sup> [Learning and Skills Councils] requirements for drawing down funding, so they have to complete those reviews with external people. All of our reviews are videoed, all of our group discussions are videoed now. Uhhh there's a reason, there's two, three reasons for doing it. One because they are prospective sports people who'll be asked to do interviews, asked to appear in front of cameras, Dictaphones, uhm... What's the modern word for that? We've got them.... Voice, voice tracers that's it. So the more technology we use with the lads, at this stage, for them to get used to, I mean lads now sit in front of a camera and do a review with two members of staff, the coach and the NVQ supervisor and they don't even realize the camera's there. And we can play it back and say, "Look, you know this is what you were doing while you were talking, did you realise you were doing that?" So it can be used for all sorts of things, but it's a good record and now the IV's [Internal Verifiers] and the EV's [External Verifiers] that come in from outside to monitor the work often ask to dip into those as well, so they're there for a lot of reasons, a lot of people to use them **(Colin)**.

It was unclear whether such a system of monitoring was present within Derringsotne Town's academy as the position of Education and Welfare Officer did not exist. Even in interviews, it was not made clear by Derrington Town's academy staff as to whether external monitoring of the academy took place. As Lyon (2003a) indicates, the intensity of surveillance can be placed along a continuum. It would appear that Valley FC's

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<sup>24</sup><http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/nat-about-the-lsc161007.pdf>. The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) was a non-departmental public body responsible for funding all learning for young people aged 16-19 in colleges, schools and training providers. The LSC subsidised apprentice places in the Football League and Premier League so the clubs concerned did not have to tolerate full costs of running youth development (Monk and Olsson, 2006). In 2008 the LSC was abolished and replaced by the Young Peoples Learning Agency and the Skills Funding Agency.

academy lay toward the more intensive side of surveillance activity; whereas Derringstone Town's academy adopted a more decentralised form of surveillance. However, it was clear that within both academies the central purpose of this particular mode of monitoring was to improve and enhance athlete performances. Therefore, I argue that surveillance was utilised as a productive mode of transformation. Professionalism was the end goal viewed by the coaching staff, training staff and players alike. To deviate from such a goal was perceived by players and coaching staff as non-productive and therefore unacceptable. Bogard (1996: 43) notes that surveillance technology:

Works on the time of movement, it records flows of events (motions, sounds, rhythms, performances), translates activities (of bodies, persons, groups, nations, populations, whatever) into information to more conveniently control them – to enhance them, speed them up, slow them down, repeat them, knock them off course, cancel them.

Within both of the academies competitive games were video recorded and stored on DVD files for future analysis of team and individual performance. Bogard (1996: 43) states that “all surveillance, in any case, operates on this principle: break a flow by recording it – surveillance is, at this first level of operation, the *recording machine*”. In this instance the video camera recorded and relayed an all-encompassing view of an individual or team performance. Lyon (1993: 674) notes that “electronic surveillance does exhibit panoptic qualities in certain settings. Above all it still contributes to social control via invisible inspection and categorization”. Freeman's (1993: 175) examination of corporate discipline draws upon the concept of the Panopticon through the use of video display terminals in the workplace:



The video display terminal (VDT) is undoubtedly a manager's dream come true: every employee can be electronically observed without pause or error; her productivity can be measured for specific increments or longitudinally; and she need never be engaged in face-to-face contact. The computer thus becomes a tool that not only speeds specific job tasks, but that evaluates the worker as well.

In its most basic form video analysis within Valley FC's academy was used as a tool for identifying the mistakes or commenting on the successful performances of athletes. Within the Valley FC academy players reviewed matches together in the media suite or classrooms and were obliged to write notes and submit feedback to the team and training staff whilst receiving criticism from coaches. Joshua, a Valley FC player, described this process of analysis, where emphasis was placed upon identifying mistakes, improving future performances and goal setting:

**AM:** How often do you do the video analysis?

**Joshua:** We've done more last year than this year, it was probably... last year we done nearly every other game, we've only done a few games this season. We just get together in a classroom and we put the DVD on and just watch it and just make notes, what was good, what wasn't, how to improve, where we're gonna go next and stuff like that.

Video analysis also occurred within Derrington Town's academy; however, it was not always done collectively by all team members. Instead academy players would view the recorded footage one-on-one or in small groups. When discussing the purpose of video analysis with Ethan, a Derrington Town player, it became clear that, by its very nature, it acted as a disciplinary mechanism. By highlighting individual errors athletes were able to adjust their performances accordingly thereby improving in the future. By adopting this form of technology it was possible for the academy coach and staff to

capture the actions of the athletes not just in one single gaze but from a myriad of angles and views:

**AM:** What's the feedback for?

**Ethan:** I think, especially the younger guys, it's really important that the feedback happens just to sort of, I dunno... Personally I think it speeds up the learning process, if you're there and you're, if the video feedback wasn't an option, in your head it felt like this was the right thing to do. Whereas from cameras, technology these days you can get five, six different angles, and you can see, ohh yeah that's a good space there or yeah the pass was there. And then I think the next time you feel yourself in that environment you can make the right decision, so the video feedback is definitely vital.

Video analysis, as a tool for surveillance, was able to capture the actions of the athletes subjecting them to maximum 'exposure'. Although it was seen to be an integral part of the player feedback process it also acted as an effective mode of discipline ensuring that mistakes were rectified and the players performances conformed to a desired 'norm' or standard. It allowed for clear comparisons to be made between athletes and the easy identification of mistakes made by specific athletes, thus exerting a sense of self-discipline and control as highlighted by Lucas, a Valley FC academy athlete:

**AM:** What sort of things are you looking for when you watch the DVD?

**Lucas:** You're lookin' for mistakes really but if it's not really a mistake then it's positioning, or what you could've done to prevent something, then if you see that it might re-occur in a game and you can correct that.

**AM:** Do you watch it as a team or do you watch it individually?

**Lucas:** Yeah as a team, well you can watch individually if you go over to the, uhhmm...the cameraman, he's got copies of every game, so you could say, "Can I borrow the so and so game?" And he'll say, "Yeah" [cameraman] and give you a copy but uhhhh...usually we'd watch it and sit down as a team and discuss it and pause it and say what the problems were, normally conceding goals, and see what we could've done to prevent that.

**AM:** What if someone was to point out a mistake you made?

**Lucas:** Well you've gotta hold your hands up and then say, "I was...I was at fault there, and I'll try not to do it again".

Through these particular measures power no longer becomes a visual display of enforcement and reprimand. The face of power adopts a more passive form, whereby subtle mechanisms are employed to ensure that the practice of discipline or productivity is continuously perpetuated within a given institution or social organisation.

Disciplinary mechanisms encompassed within this mode of surveillance allows for the exposure of individuals to a visibility that classifies, categorises and thus modifies irregularities for the purpose of correct, and corrective, training.

As indicated in Chapter Two techniques of documentation are implemented to distinguish individuality amongst the masses. It is a process that classifies the individual through analysis and establishes differences between peers based on a comparison with a specific 'norm'. It is this particular concept, present within Foucault's representation of surveillance, which can be applied to the social structure of the academies. The process of documentation enables academy staff and other athletes to distinguish difference and recognize those that deviate from a desired 'norm'. Foucault (1979: 189) states that "the examination that places individuals in a field of surveillance also situates them in a network of writing". The documentation of the athlete's progression was perceived as a good example or representation of their continuing or declining performance and could be witnessed in Valley FC's academy athletes' recorded reviews and Derrington Town's academy athletes' sporadic fitness testing. Documentation complements the human network of surveillance within the academies to increase the

visibility of performance. Lyon (2003a: 23) indicates that “surveillance is practiced with a view to enhancing efficiency, productivity, participation, welfare, health or safety”. As indicated by Foucault (1979), surveillance and the process of documentation exposes difference and promotes productivity. By utilising education as an example Foucault (1979: 176) identifies that “a relation of surveillance, defined and regulated, is inscribed at the heart of the practice of teaching, not as an additional or adjacent part, but as a mechanism that is inherent to it and which increases its efficiency”. Within the case of the academies, surveillance can be understood as a productive force implemented to optimize an athlete’s efficiency and overall performance.

As previously indicated, surveillance within the academies does not comply fully with Foucault’s notion of panopticism. Although the concept of an undetected mode of surveillance did exist, the notion of a central locality, or even a central figure, of monitoring was absent. That said, the method or mode in which it was exacted was more dispersed and less reliant on the restrictions of a central observation point as it was achieved through a variety of surveillance techniques. An extension of Foucault’s (1979) panopticism will be introduced within this chapter to explore the emerging theme of disciplinary power, and how a more dispersed network of surveillance sites within the academies may be appropriated to induce similar effects to those witnessed by the Panopticon. In addition, the prevalence of data capture and analysis for the purpose of surveillance and a disciplinary mechanism will be explored in relation to the concept of ‘dataveillance’.

#### 4.3 Data as a Mode of Surveillance

Since the introduction of Bentham's architectural penitentiary and the birth of panopticism, further concepts have been introduced regarding the notion of surveillance within post-modern society. Due to advancing technological developments it has become easier to locate and trace individuals with the use of Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and Radio-frequency Identification tags. This has affected the way in which we view the see/being seen relationship. Mathiesen (1997) introduces the concept of synopticism, a post-panoptical model that parallels the development of Foucault's panopticism and the implication of control mechanisms. Through the introduction and evolution of the mass media, Mathiesen (1997: 219) explains how the concept of 'synopticism' may have come to alter the central tenet attached to panopticism:

It may be used to represent the situation where a large number focuses on something in common which is condensed. In other words, it may stand for the *opposite* of the situation where the few see the many. In a two-way double sense of the world we thus live in a viewer *society*.

With the introduction of the mass media and the modern technological advancements that accompany it, the Foucauldian perception of surveillance may adopt a new shape whereby the many more are able to observe the few. However, within the confines of an institutional space such as a sports academy, synopticism may not be a concept that is fully applicable. It is possible to argue that we do live in a viewer society, and with the emergence of the mass media, television in particular, Mathiesen (1997) highlights that individuals can be exposed to the masses through this medium. Mathiesen's (1997: 230) application of synopticism to the wider sphere of society explains how self-control is induced through the creation of a false consciousness:

“Synopticism through the modern mass media in general and television in particular, first of all directs and controls or disciplines our *consciousness*”.

The few within the academies are exposed to the many through the documentation of their performance. The transparency of monitoring creates a visibility which ensures that everybody is aware of each others’ progress. In this particular context ‘the many’ within the academies are clearly able to observe the progression or decline of the few. Yet, within a sports academy setting, media intervention is limited and impacts less upon the social life of the athlete. Due to the hierarchical nature of the structure of the academies particular information, such as performance reviews and medical records were confidential and restricted. Despite this, some of the academy athletes would share information regarding their performance reviews or progress of injury reports with teammates. In this instance information that was supposed to remain confidential was shared amongst the academy athletes allowing for greater modes of comparison to be made. This exposed the lateral mode of surveillance that will be explored further within Chapter Five. Although synopticism may not equate fully to the social context of the academy, Mathiesen’s (1997) conception of control functions does apply. Mathiesen (1997: 228) presents the term ‘control functions’ in its purest possible sense defining the concept as:

Change in behaviour or attitude in a wide sense, following from the influence of others. ‘Control’, then is something more than ‘surveillance’; it implies the regulation of behaviour or attitude which may follow for example from surveillance.

Within the context of a sports academy control functions are bi-products of surveillance. Control functions take the form of documentation, data or information that

is retrieved from a process of surveillance. These data may then be used to collate knowledge that is presentable to those further up the academy's hierarchy. Similar to Mathiesen's (1997) understanding of control functions, fitness tests, physiological tests and review sessions within Valley FC's academy aided the shaping and regulating in the behaviour of the athlete so that they may improve their performance. These 'control functions' provided data that enabled club personnel to identify that which was incorrect in order to modify accordingly. They were used to split the body into categories of technical, social and physical ability and thus act accordingly upon specific traits that affected performance.

When discussing the development of Valley FC academy athletes, the academy manager highlighted the importance of viewing an athlete's progress in relation to the separate categories of social, technical and physical:

As they get older we test them, from about the ages of 14 they'll do some physical tests with the sport scientist to identify, uhhmm, you know, from a physical point of view is he gonna progress, is there a problem from a physical point of view. So, when we sit down and we're looking at a player, equally whether to sign or to release, everything's put on the table from every aspect. So, you know, it isn't just from...He could be struggling yeah, but why is he struggling is it the technical, is it the physical is it the social, so again everything's put on the table and then a collective decision's made. Uhhmm, and if everything from the social side, the physical side, if it becomes a tactical thing we may say well we may need to work with him harder on that (**Henry**).

The athletes' performances were reduced to a numerical language based upon the data collected by coaches, physiotherapists or conditioning coaches. It was a method of control that stemmed from the disciplinary technique of documentation. Such documentation provided knowledge that was interpreted by coaches and sport scientists

so as to act upon altering or enhancing specific qualities attached to individual athletes as Deleuze (1992: 5) notes:

The numerical language of control is made up of codes that mark access to information, or reject it. We no longer find ourselves dealing with the mass/individual pair. Individuals have become “*dividuals*”, and masses, samples, data, markets, or “*banks*”.

In the case of a sports academy the athlete’s persona is shaped and directed by others as a particular ‘front’ is pre-determined and expected (Goffman, 1959). However, athletes were encouraged to take responsibility when adopting the certain expectations that were required of them, therefore the creation of a persona can be considered a dual process. Clarke (1994: 78) notes that, “the ability to create a persona may be vested in the individuals, or in other people or organizations, or in both”. However, it is the creation of a ‘digital persona’ and the collation of data that enables coaches and managers to survey their athletes across a range of aspects. Lyon (2003b: 13) identifies that classifications resulting from the coding process are designed to “influence and to manage populations and persons thus directly and indirectly affecting the choices and chances of data subjects”.

Within the case of Valley FC and Derrington Town the codes or data were used to manage the academy athletes to ensure that an optimal performance was attained. It was a form of surveillance that was ultimately used as either a tool for enhancement or a preventative measure. Clarke (1994: 83) defines this particular mode of surveillance as ‘dataveillance’ “the systematic use of personal data systems in the investigation or monitoring of the actions or communications of one or more persons”. Dataveillance can be broken down into further sub-categories including ‘personal



dataveillance', which entails the monitoring of a specific individual for a particular purpose. Within Valley FC and Derrington Town each academy athlete had their own individual programme with regards to strength and fitness conditioning. The data collected on athletes was very specific and identified the areas that were needed to be improved. Within Valley FC's academy data regarding injuries was also collected. These data were very comprehensive and provided a useful analysis of player injuries. A Physiotherapist may use these data to treat the ailment and thus decrease the time of recovery. Edward, the physiotherapist at Valley FC's academy, described the types of data and methods of data capture that occur once a player has sustained an injury:

Every injury we pick up goes into the computer, date it occurred, how it occurred what was the mechanism of injury, did they trip, were they kicked, were they sprinting, how they did it. Uhhhh, what side of the body was it on, was it there dominant side, was it a contact injury, was it a non-contact injury, what exactly is it, what was its cause, what treatment did they have, how long were they out for, what date did they return. So at the end of the season we can correlate all that and we get quite useful information from it (**Edward**).

Again, within Valley FC, academy athletes wore heart rate monitors during training sessions every Tuesday. When enquiring as to why heart rate monitors were used the academy coach simply stated that, "heart rate monitors are used to see what areas are working, so you know they are working physically hard" [Graham]. Data retrieved after a training session from the heart rate monitors clearly identified which individuals were working to their maximum effort and those who were not.

Clarke (1994: 84) states that "the data which is monitored is implicitly assumed by the monitoring organization to provide a model of the individual which is accurate in all material respects". If the academies, or more specifically the coaching staff and sport

scientists, are to be considered the monitoring organisation, then they must assume that the data they retrieve from testing and reviews provides an accurate model of the individual and their behaviour both inside and outside of the academy. An increase in weight suggested that athletes were not following their nutritional plan; a drop in fitness assumes they were either not working hard enough, adopting the right ‘attitude’, or they were partaking in ‘unhealthy’ activities such as drinking alcohol, eating ‘junk food’ and staying out late. Consequently, Clarke (1994: 84) notes that these methods of surveillance give rise to “a digital persona which is far from complete, but generally adequate for the purposes implied by the relationship”. The inclusion of data analysis leads to the use of modern technology for the purpose of highlighting and constructing the desired qualities that are required of an individual.

Foucault (1979) suggests that through the implementation of an observing hierarchy and normalizing judgment the individual becomes classified as a ‘case’. Foucault (1979: 191) defines the ‘case’ as, “the individual as he may be described, judged, measured, compared with others, in his very individuality; and it is also the individual who has to be trained or corrected, classified, normalised, excluded”. This particular definition of a ‘case’ equates to the identity of an academy athlete. The large network of testing ensures that a greater amount of data are generated, which, in turn generates, more knowledge regarding the athletes’ performance in a number of given areas.

Fox (2001: 265) indicates that “data citizens are not only required to ensure compliance with relevant laws, eligibility criteria and performance standards, but also as a means of informing government of its own needs and strategies”. Applied to the

setting of the academies, such data provided suitable information, which allowed coaches and managers to employ specific strategies to enhance or improve individual and team performance. Fox (2001: 268) notes that “social control is thus being achieved by conditioning to conformity as well as by the deterrent effect of potential exposure”. Similar to Foucault, conformity to a desired ‘norm’ is achieved through the threat or actual exposure of ‘abnormal’ behaviour or a lack of conformity shown by the individual. In its design and application it must be considered a progressive force, one that is intended to promote efficiency and production. Upon discussing the concept of monitoring, academy coaches referred to the physical attributes that could be documented. For example, the Valley FC academy coach made the point that:

We take their body weights, fats, various tests that he [the Sport Scientist] does with ‘em periodically. They get weighed once a month; we can then see what their fat content is, their weight, their height all these attributes come up. We do speed tests, agility tests, they do weights, they do upper body weights, they do leg weights, which he [the Sport Scientist] keeps a record of so you can see the players progressing as in, uhhhhm, the weight they’re lifting, the strength they’re doing so you can see that progress over the years (**Graham**).

The documentation of physical attributes was also viewed as important within Derringtonstone Town’s academy. It was essential for the academy staff to capture and document a rugby player’s physical performance in order to monitor their development. Tim, Derringtonstone Town’s academy conditioning coach, made the following point:

I’ll monitor their weight and heart rate through the eight weeks, heart rate’s a good monitor of over training, just the resting heart rate. Their weight is more a kind of fact of how much actual weight they’re putting on muscle wise. Then we also record what weights they’re lifting each week. So again we’re wanting to

progress them on strength wise even though they're doing their hypertrophy<sup>25</sup>, but also to make sure that they're not over training (**Tim**).

The importance of generating data for surveillance was reiterated by Derrington Town's academy coach as he highlighted the specific tests used to identify the physical condition of an academy athlete:

We do a bit more than we used to in terms the physical testing or monitoring of players. So, at certain times of the year the players will do FAST tests, which are Fitness Anthropometric Scoring Tests, which is again an RFU [Rugby Football Union] initiative, which all the England squads do, and it's their way of identifying who is physically in good condition, so there's baseline tests that they do (**Phillip**).

Quantifiable attributes such as body weight, hydration levels, heart rate, speed, fitness and physical strength were documented by standardised tests. By recording these attributes the introduction of individualisation becomes more evident. Managerial staff and the athletes themselves were able to identify strengths and weakness within their performance, thus fixing the athletes in their own individuality. It was possible to then describe, analyse and thus correct the performance of the athlete through a process of documentation.

#### *4.4 Documentation*

Ball's (2002) conceptualisation of the elements of surveillance provides a clearer understanding of its significance and application to the academies. Ball (2002) indicates that surveillance is comprised of four elements; re-presentation, meaning, manipulation and intermediation. Within the academies meaning and manipulation are the two

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<sup>25</sup> Zatsiorsky (1995: 61) states that "the size of a muscle increases when it is subjected to a strength training regime. This increase is called muscle hypertrophy"

elements that appear to be most significant. Ball (2002: 581) states that “the most apparent meaning is that surveillance is *knowledge*”. This is inherently true within the context of a sports academy, surveillance was the primary method of attaining knowledge and informing upon an athlete’s progress. Moreover, Ball (2002: 582) notes that “surveillance-enabled information also means that watching actors can make stable categorisations of the characteristics of watched spaces or people”. Surveillance within academies helped to categorise athletes within a number of criteria relating to fitness levels, technical proficiency and health. The purpose of monitoring was to ensure that athletes were functioning at optimal levels; surveillance provided the necessary information to inform coaches and managers that performance levels were sustained. Manipulation refers to the power relations formed under surveillance (Ball, 2002). Ball (2002: 583) states that power relations are evident “by the way in which watching institutions and their agents were able, at certain moments, to regulate the flows of information and knowledge between various interested parties”.

The Valley FC academy athletes were monitored for hydration levels through the use of urine samples. At weekends each athlete should have been properly re-hydrated, therefore urine samples were administered on Monday mornings to monitor fluid balances. Staples (2000:97) notes that this particular mode of monitoring “provides instant knowledge of an individual’s behaviour, and codes a complex set of activities into simple “yes” and “no” categories”. Although Staples (2000) was discussing the effects of drug testing, the principle is similar to that used by Valley FC’s academy. Urine samples indicate more than just hydration levels. It was made clear to all academy athletes that if their levels of hydration did not comply with a given norm then financial

penalties were to be administered. The sport scientist at Valley FC described the process of monitoring players for hydration levels and the baseline standard that all the footballers had to comply with:

So, what we do is, we get them in Monday morning, prior to college eight thirty, so they'll come in, hydration testing, so we take urine samples and we test that with the osmolality, get a score, if it's anything below... Above six hundred then the players are dehydrated and bearing in mind that's forty eight hours post game, I'd be very disappointed if I see that too much too often (**Geoff**).

This particular technique of documentation served as a function for the collation of knowledge that may shape behaviour, as Foucault (1979: 191) notes, "It is no longer a monument for future memory, but a document for possible use". Within the academies' systems, all documentation was acquired for a purpose or function. Primarily it was used to identify weaknesses or strengths of the academy athletes and map their performances. Within the academies this technique of documentation was seen as a necessity as it provided the coaches and managers the opportunity to monitor the progression of the athlete in a variety of different fields.

Through the implementation of documentation and the acquisition of knowledge the individual is disciplined via the use of codes. Foucault (1979: 190) indicates that codes, such as the code of performance or the code of conduct "marked the first stage in the 'formalization' of the individual within power relations". Within the context of the academies documentation can be compared to a particular 'code' of performance or code of 'conduct' that enables not only the coaches and managers, but also the athlete to identify their weaknesses and adjust their performance. The individual athlete becomes the disciplinary force that drives their motivation to correct their training and thus

improve upon their performance. Deleuze (1992: 5) indicates that “disciplinary societies have two poles: the signature that designates the *individual*, and the number or administrative numeration that indicates his or her position within a *mass*”. The technique of documentation within the academies clearly demonstrated the Foucauldian concept of power and its effect upon the body. The two poles of the disciplinary society work simultaneously to locate the *individual* amongst the *masses*. By distinguishing differences through documentation, athletes were able to situate themselves with reference to the data collected and thus apply self-disciplinary mechanisms to adjust their behaviour in accordance with a successful performance. It is a technique that is able to instil a power relation that functions to ensure a self-regulatory discipline.

At Valley FC’s academy athletes had a video recorded review that took place every three months. Each academy member filled in a sheet and scored his own personal performance on a scale of one to ten, one being poor and ten being outstanding. The review sessions were recorded on DVD film to ensure that coaches, managers and other academy staff may refer back to previous reviews. Staples (2000: 51) notes that, “the camera does not discriminate; its gaze is both controlling and productive”. The overarching gaze of the central Panopticon may have been replaced with the camera, a surveillance that monitors with similar intent. As the academy coach suggested, this is quite a subjective process, the procedure is to ensure that athletes were aware, realistically, of where their performance lies within this particular scale:

For me, it’s me assessing where they see themselves more than anything else. I say to ‘em, right if I say to you ok you say you’re a four but I think you’re really only a three. Now the bloke next to him might be a four, who really is a four, I might leave you at a four ‘cos you see yourself at four but then I might say to you, well ok you see yourself at four, why? You know, and I’ll say well I can’t

see that but I'll leave you there, but next time we speak I want you to definitely be there, maybe five or six (**Graham**).

The coaching staff at the academy were aware that such a process may have unintended consequences. Athletes became de-motivated if their personal ratings did not match that of the senior staff's expectations. Therefore, Valley FC's academy coach tried to avoid de-motivating the players by setting realistic goals that they may reach by the time of the next review. Emphasis was once again placed upon documenting performances, setting targets and ensuring that the footballer progressed towards his established goals:

I need to give 'em a bit of carrot as well, I can't say well no you're not a four you're a three, 'cos he'll go "uhh fucking hell". You know I can't, I find it a bit de-motivating, I think it can become a bit of a de-motivating factor if I turn around and say, well actually I don't think you're a four. I've got one player who's got a high opinion of himself, massively high opinion of himself, and I ask him why? And then I started analysing him and saying, or giving him feedback, saying "Well, what about that then 'ave you thought about when this happens or what about that, that and that". But what I didn't want to do is de-motivate him, so what I said was, "Harry [pseudonym] I can see what you're trying to say to me, you see yourself as that in the standard of football you've come from, but you're not in this standard at this moment in time", but I said, "what I *will* say to you is that's where I want you to be at the next review" (**Graham**).

This particular technique of documentation and target setting not only reinforced the process of individualisation but ensured that the athletes adjusted their training performance in accordance with the data collected. This particular process exposed the specific weaknesses of the individual athlete highlighting progression or decline in key areas.

Although these techniques were regularly administered within Valley FC's academy, the extent to which data were collected and analysed within Derrington



Town's academy was less frequent and relatively minimal. Reviews occurred within Derringstone Town; however they were only conducted on a yearly basis and in a more informal format focusing on general feedback. That said, Derringstone Town's academy coach revealed that the academy's tiered structure was reviewed on a more regular basis to assess who should move up or down within the hierarchy:

Now we're at some sort of compromise where we've got that list [player hierarchies], and it does change quite regularly, uhhhm because people sort of go through bad patches and form. So formally me and the other staff will sit down and review it maybe three or four times a year, and sort of put people back into places where we see them. That won't affect their long term programme over the year but it will affect maybe the future for the year after. Uhhhm, and that's there, so if someone wants to come and see where they are then we say, "Look, if you come and ask us and you wanna know where you are in the system, which level of the hierarchy you're at, then come and see us and we'll tell you" (Phillip).

Regarding the introduction of technology and the mass of information, Bogard (1996: 16) notes that "computers have made coding, viewing, storing, and recalling information on persons, events, and everything in general, faster and more efficient". The introduction of databases within the academies provided access to specific information with greater ease. As Staples (2000: 73) suggests when analysing surveillance within modern schools "with increased measuring and testing, we make finer and finer gradients that distinguish one student from another". Not only did this method of documentation allow the coaches and managers to map performance and fitness more readily, but it also exposed the visibility of the athletes on a greater scale thus categorising each individual according to performance based tests.

Foucault (1979: 208) indicates that in order to analyse the social body one must implement "mechanisms that analyse distributions, gaps, series, combinations, and

which use instruments that render visible, record, differentiate and compare: a physics of a relational and multiple power”. These particular mechanisms were instigated by Valley FC’s academy and were used for the purposes of exposing the strengths and weaknesses of the athletes, differentiating individuals based on quantifiable criteria and documenting knowledge for future comparison. The extent to which these mechanisms or techniques of documentation were used varied between the Valley FC and Derrington Town academy. Moreover, the academies would also analyse, document and monitor educational performance as well as the physical development of the athlete.

Zuboff (1989: 319) notes that “techniques of control in the workplace became increasingly important as the body became the central problem of production”. Within the academies it was clear that the body was indeed the central mode of production and it was this aspect of the athlete that received the majority of surveillance. Furthermore, Zuboff (1989: 322) states that, “such systems can become information panopticons that, freed from the constraints of space and time, do not depend on the physical arrangement of the buildings”. This particular concept illustrates the mode of surveillance present within both of the academies. Although parts of Valley FC’s academy provided useful sites for monitoring, the interconnected networks of surveillance present within Derrington Town and Valley FC were able to capture and report information from several different loci. The following section will analyse the networks of surveillance established at the academies, providing a greater understanding of the specific modes of surveillance and how they functioned.

#### 4.5 *The Oligopticon and Rhizomatic Surveillance*

It is quite clear that social institutions are no longer immune from the encroaching use and application of advanced technology. The academies within this study were no different as computerised systems and basic databases allowed for the collation and analysis of data related to performances. The introduction of new modes and mechanisms of surveillance have altered the approach to viewing and monitoring that which is observed. Lyon (2003b: 19) notes that “social relationships have become more fluid, more liquid and surveillance data, correspondingly, are more networked, and must be seen in terms of flows”. The displacement of the central gaze of the Panopticon alludes towards a more dispersed form of surveillance supported by multiple sites that monitor through a system of networks.

Latour’s (2005) oligopticon provides an example of such surveillance, illustrating a system of monitoring that relies on multiple sites of surveillance. Boyne (2000: 302) states that the premise of the oligopticon “combines the idea of restricted groups with a focus on relatively small segments of society”. Boyne’s reference to a small segment of society supports the suitability of this particular concept to the study. The academies were enclosed subcultures constituting a small population monitored from a variety of surveillance sites. Latour (2005: 181) notes that the oligopticon does maintain a notion of centrality as it is a site whereby “literal and not simply metaphorical *calculations* are made possible by the mathematical or at least arithmetic format of the documents being brought back and forth”. The oligopticon is seen to command or control situations so long as it is able to establish and maintain a connection to that which is physically traced or monitored. Latour (2005: 181) indicates

that the oligopticon represents the complete opposite to that of the Panopticon as the sites of surveillance “see much *too little* to feed the megalomania of the inspector or the paranoia of the inspected, but what they see, they *see it well*”. Its function is not to adopt an absolute form of surveillance or an all encompassing power, but to both localise and connect through the *connectique* (Latour, 2005). These sites of surveillance, or oligoptica, connect through a network of information that is able to provide a broader perspective of the ‘whole’. Latour (2005: 181) states that “from oligoptica, sturdy but extremely narrow views of the (connected) whole are made possible—as long as connections hold”.

Within the context of a sports academy we see how this particular form of surveillance can function. Within the academies separate sites of surveillance exist ranging from the managers, coaches, physiotherapist, conditioning coaches, teachers and tutors. Each site functions to observe the athlete and to provide in-depth knowledge that may relate to the facilitation of their overall performance. As Latour (2005: 182) suggests it is a mode of surveillance that can be described as “flattening the landscape”. This non-centralised form of surveillance emphasised the importance of the various networks that existed within the academy structures. However, it is a form of surveillance that may only provide an overview of the ‘whole’ if the supply of information or knowledge claims is correct and if the connections that maintain them are sustained. The reliance on a human network of surveillance and feedback was illustrated by Valley FC’s academy coach. Parents and teachers were utilised as a useful source of information that could provide the academy staff with knowledge that was used to

resolve personal issues relating to the player or their performance, as the Valley FC academy coach revealed:

Everyday I deal with 'em [the players] on a one to one basis. Now sometime during everyday we'll 'ave a conversation with 'em; whether it's a, "Hello how are you, how's things, what's happening", I will have a conversation with them everyday. If they're in digs we'll have house parents that are basically like surrogate parents to 'em. They give us feedback; we encourage the parents, if there's a problem, to give us feedback...Uhhh, we have an Educational Welfare Officer who governs them and watches them over their school work. We have college teachers who keep an eye on 'em, I go and speak to them to see what their behaviours' like, are they behaving themselves in college and if not then either Colin [Education and Welfare Officer] deals with it or I'll deal with it **(Graham)**.

Boyne (2000: 299) provides an overview of a post-Panoptical system highlighting the "emergent practice of pre-visualisation, the practice not of observing what is going on, but of foresight and prevention". This post-Panoptical paradigm introduces the concept of simulation. Simulation may be perceived as a concept that parallels that of the Panopticon and may even eradicate its existence as surveillance adopts this new particular form (Bogard, 1996). Bogard (1996: 76) states that "now one can simulate a space of control, project an indefinite number of courses of action, train for each possibility, and react immediately with preprogrammed responses to the "actual" course of events". In this instance surveillance no longer acts as undetected or disconnected from its subjects, it encapsulates the present existence and projects beyond that which is being observed as Bogard (1996: 15) indicates: "Simulation, that is, is a way of satisfying a wish to see everything, and to see it in advance". It is this particular concept that allows coaches and managers to establish control or command over situations. The technique of simulations is defined by Bogard (1996: 61) as, "preparing environments

for training or organizing perception”. The method of simulation could be witnessed in the academy training practices. The simulation of certain situations aimed to ensure that errors or miscalculations were avoided. It was employed to ensure that specific ‘real time’ situations progressed efficiently and aided in the improvement of performances. Coaches and managers were able to exact control and command over players’ positioning, performance, skill acquisition and fitness as Bogard (1996: 43) suggests, “the observer “interferes” in the observation, modifies the observed conditions”.

This particular notion of post-panopticism provides further insight into the methods of surveillance imposed within the academies. Coaches, managerial staff, physiotherapists and conditioning coaches inevitably plan, train and modify for future courses of action. Through observations of training sessions I noted that coaching staff chose to replicate a variety of ‘in-game’ scenarios that aided preparation for future matches. The game simulation drills were observed on one of the many occasions I was unable to watch the under 18’s Valley FC academy squad train. The following field note is a result of observing an under 14’s training session and highlights the type of drills that were common throughout the age groups and that represented this notion of simulation.

Having been told by the academy coach to arrive on a Saturday to observe training I was unable to see the senior academy athletes train as they had a game scheduled for this particular day. Instead I stood on the high banks that surrounded the training ground and watched an under 14’s training session. Training drills were set up like military stations and reflected in-game scenarios. One of the larger drills taking place related to what would later be described in the interviews as ‘crossing and finishing’. Those players who primarily play in attacking positions would practice crossing the ball to a central player who would try and score whilst under pressure from defenders. The drill was fast paced and instructions yelled from the sideline by coaches to ensure that certain players’ positioning were correct. If major mistakes were made then individuals

were singled out and the coach would stop the drill and physically demonstrate where the player should be positioned or how they should carry out the specific task. The drill appeared to last a long time with each attacking player receiving several attempts to complete the drill successfully, if mistakes were made minor punishments such as pushups were administered to either the attacking team or group of defenders depending on who was at fault (Author's field notes, 13<sup>th</sup> September 2008).

Game simulation is a method for providing the athletes with the ability to pre-judge specific scenarios before they occur. Within Valley FC's academy the physiotherapist would monitor athletes with the intent to anticipate the reoccurrence or prevention of injury. Through monitoring and conditioning athletes, physiotherapists and the sport scientist were able to implement specific techniques to ensure that injury was prevented and performance continued to progress. In this instance, simulation existed partially within the academy structures. Edward, the physiotherapist at Valley FC's academy, explained how he monitored the athletes to ensure that the occurrence of injury was limited and injuries were prevented from re-occurring:

**AM:** You mentioned earlier about prevention work, what do you do to prevent injuries happening again?

**Edward:** I suppose if somebody is injured we do specific work with them to get them back fit like I've just said. I think one of the big things we do do, and we should keep doing, is like preventative work. So even if somebody is not injured getting them to do that work to prevent the potential for injury, and sort of things we do, one of the big things we do is core work, core stability work. Uh, and that's been proven for quite a long time to certainly reduce injury risks, certainly in this age group, more than any.

Deleuze and Guattari (2003: 6) demonstrate that, "the multiple *must be made*, not by always adding a higher dimension, but rather in the simplest of ways". To provide a more encompassing form of surveillance, this particular technique has been adopted by

the academies. In order to ‘multiply’ the sites of surveillance, a broader network has been employed to great effect. To laterally expand one’s vision is to achieve a greater expanse of monitoring in its simplest form. Deleuze and Guattari (2003) note that multiplicity is best achieved through a rhizomatic structure. A Rhizome is described as plant life that grows from surface extension via a vertical root system. Deleuze and Guattari (2003: 7) indicate that the characteristics of such plant life suggest that “any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be”. Indeed this interconnectedness is essential for surveillance to function effectively within the academies. Similar to Latour’s (2005) oligopticon, any point of contact established with the Valley FC athletes, either within or away from the academy, allowed for a point of surveillance and the production of information or feedback. Valley FC’s academy manager highlighted that this inevitably allowed for the surveillance of the athletes’ behaviour not only within the confines of the academy but also situated elsewhere:

**AM:** How do you identify whether a player is struggling within the academy?

**Henry:** We have systems, we have systems that are in place and obviously we look at them on a week to week basis, we look at how they’re doing in training, how they’re doing in games. But also with the younger age groups he could be struggling because it’s a physical aspect, could be going through a growth spurt, uhhm, it could be a social aspect there could be problems at home. So again, you know, it’s, it’s, everybody plays a part, the coaches play a part, the Education and Welfare Officer plays a part. If there’s information that comes back from the school that there’s a problem or there’s a problem at home, a split family he’s having problems with that, coming to cope with that, that can all have an effect on how well a kid’s doing and how well a kid’s not doing.

Expansion of surveillance was clearly required for the academy staff in order to gain sufficient information or to monitor their athletes. As Deleuze and Guattari (2003: 21) note, “the rhizome operates by variation, expansion, conquest, capture, offshoots”. This



rhizomatic form of surveillance can be considered more useful within Derringstone Town's academy due to its structural organisation. Derringstone Town academy contained no central location, the academy players had minimal contact and the resources such as training facilities and staff was limited. The need to establish various points of contact was integral to obtaining a sufficient amount of information. This was noted by Derringstone Town's academy coach when discussing forms of feedback within the academy's systems of networks:

**AM:** Where does this feedback come from?

**Philip:** From their teachers, their club coaches, their County coaches, parents, themselves. Uhhhm, so there's loads of people out there and it's just a case of building a network over time. Uhhhm, so there's lots of people we know personally, who sort of, who buy into what we try to do, and I think there's always gonna be one or two people who are against it and sort of put a negative aspect on things, but we think the majority of people are on side with what we're doing and those people buy into our process, and they tend to give us quite good feedback, so we sort of rely and trust on what they're saying.

Although academies require technological methods of observation, and data is collected and analysed, a large majority of their disciplinary surveillance was based upon human observation. When discussing forms of feedback Derringstone Town's academy coach commented that, "a lot of it is about building the relationships, so getting good relationships with the people and the networks around them so everyone can buy into the whole process" [Phillip]. Within Valley FC's academy this was referred to as 'informal' monitoring by coaches and managers and was a source to which they relied on heavily as an indicator of performance and a procedure for discipline. The reliance on a human network of surveillance further reinforced the importance of human surveillance within such an institution. Haggerty and Ericson's (2000) conceptual analysis of the

surveillant assemblage suggests a diverse exposure of information ranging from auditory, chemical and visual informational stimuli. The academies are generally not technologically advanced as to capture such information. Systems of surveillance are aimed toward specific criteria and therefore do not adopt the all-encompassing nature of the surveillant assemblage. However, Haggerty and Ericson (2000: 611) state that “in situations where it is not yet practical to technologically link surveillance systems, human contact can serve to align and coalesce discrete systems”. Players within both the academies were aware, at times, that they were being observed from multiple sites of observation. When asked who monitored their progress, the majority of those interviewed responded by indicating that everyone they came into contact was assessing their potential, as the following quotes from Valley FC academy athletes show:

**AM:** Who monitors your progress?

**Harry:** Uhh, everyone, uhh...Graham [Academy Coach] especially uhhmm...all the coaching staff, Geoff our Sport Scientist, physios, the whole club really even the gaffer [first team coach] and things like that, he wants to know how you're going.

Further examples from Valley FC academy athletes demonstrated the multiple sites of observation that function through this form of rhizomatic surveillance:

**AM:** Who monitors your progress?

**Roger:** Geoff the Sport Scientist, Graham [Academy Coach], Haydn [Goalkeeping Coach], uhhh...the psychologists, even our tutors are teachers for school work, everyone.

Interviews with Derringstone Town academy players highlighted the connections that were sustained with local rugby clubs and universities. The academy players explained

how these networks allowed for the academy coach to monitor a player's performance when they were playing away from the confines of the academy itself:

**AM:** Are you often watched by your coaches?

**Noah:** Uhhmm, yeah I think.

**Ryan:** Uhh, and even if they don't, like, when I play at my local club they film the games, so you just give them the DVD and then they can sit and look over them with you. So they tell you what, what things you need to improve on and what you did well and stuff like that.

**Noah:** The Uni coach [University Coach] is linked with the academy so they quite often ask the coach, like, how are the academy players playin' and stuff like that and just pretty much gettin' feedback from other coaches.

In certain situations the implication of technological systems of surveillance may not be required. As previously indicated in Chapter Three academies are 'closed' environments and contain a very specific population. Therefore, it is relatively easy and useful to use human contact as a primary source of surveillance. This includes those who are situated away from the academies themselves; for example, schools, universities or colleagues. In the case of Derrington Town academy this form of surveillance was relied upon more heavily than that of technological mechanisms, as databases used to track players' performances were restricted to specific information, weight gain/loss and fitness, and represented basic data for analysis. This particular mode of surveillance allowed the Derrington Town academy coach access to an athlete's whereabouts or actions on a more regular basis. He explained how links with outside institutions informed the academy staff of a player's behaviour:

It is pretty much twenty four hour surveillance, we know what goes on; we can hear you guys [the players] talking to each other. Uhh, obviously we're talking

to people, so say someone who misses school to come and see the physio, or misses some university stuff to come and see the physio and then lies to somebody about it, and we're in constant communication with these people so people find out. Uhhhm, now that's not to say we go up to them and say, "What're you doing"? We just say, "Look we know what goes on", and it's up to them to sort of do anything about it. Now, again, because of the whole attitude drive that we're pushing, it's not really an issue because the majority of the time the guys are really well behaved. Some people may go off the rails a bit, but no I don't think it's a major concern of ours (**Phillip**).

Despite the prevalence of a human based network of surveillance within the academy settings, socio-technological control was instigated through the use of monitoring athletes via social networking sites. The 'electronic revolution' allows the capacity for new surveillance technologies to be utilized that "transcend both spatial and temporal barriers" (McCahill, 1998: 41) and it is to this issue that we now turn.

#### *4.6 Socio-Technological Control*

Haggerty and Ericson (2000: 613) indicate that surveillance "is not so much immediately concerned with the direct physical relocation of the human body (although this may be an ultimate consequence), but with the transforming of the body into pure information, such that it can be rendered more mobile and comparable". The purpose of comparison is central to the academies as it details progression as the body is a source of information detailing the athletes' development, regression and performance. Due to the introduction of advanced technology and web based resources, social networking sites have been able to render the power of surveillance more mobile. A recent article in the publication *NewScientist* highlights the prevalence of digital data in monitoring social activity. Buchanan (2010: 31) notes that:

If you use a social networking site, a cellphone or the internet regularly, you are leaving behind a clear digital trail that describes your behaviour, travel patterns, likes and dislikes, divulges who your friends are and reveals your moods and opinions.

The social networking tool 'Facebook' was used by Derrington Town's rugby academy coach to monitor the athletes' behaviour outside of the academy. Facebook is a social networking website that allows individuals access to personal information, video and photographic footage and insights into the day to day occurrences of individual lives. By accessing this particular information, managers and coaches were able to monitor the athletes when they were outside the confines of the academy or away from the watchful eye of the sideline. This allowed those within the hierarchy a different vantage point to gain new information or knowledge and provided a further method of surveillance to monitor athlete behaviour, as Derrington Town's academy coach highlighted:

Some guys will turn up on time and some guys will sleep in and make up excuses, things like, uhhhh it sounds silly, but things like Facebook; all the players are on Facebook and they might tell us, "Ohhh I was in bed I've been ill", but one of their mates has put pictures of them on a night out. We're not sort of spying on them, we'd never go out there and try lookin' for information but you find out because people talk, people say things and you'll over hear conversations **(Phillip)**.

Socio-technological perspectives of control mechanisms, used for the purpose of disciplinary measures, have begun to re-shape the methods used to implement the see/being seen dyad established by the Panopticon. With the advancement and implementation of technology the range of surveillance may be increased. Deleuze (1992: 7) indicates that "it may be that older methods, borrowed from the former

societies of sovereignty, will return to the fore, but with the necessary modifications”. Within this particular example, ‘Facebook’, as a mode of surveillance, maintains the same function as that employed by the Panopticon, but has been modified in the mechanism of its execution. Perhaps the use of social networking sites to monitor player behaviour is an example of how virtual mobility has led to the increasing use and ease of technology within the area of surveillance as Lyon (2003b: 25) notes, “mobility both physical and virtual, is a mark of the information and communication age”.

#### *4.7 Conclusion*

Foucault (1979: 173) states that “the perfect disciplinary apparatus would make it possible for a single gaze to see everything constantly”. Within the context of a sports academy this particular gaze aids in the discipline and progression of athletes’ performances; however, it is not possible to view everything constantly. Accompanied by specific disciplinary mechanisms, coaches and training staff are able to shape and form the athletes’ behaviour, identifying weaknesses and mapping their performance. It was the post-Panoptical concepts that provided a relevant application to the academies’ social structures.

With the introduction of modern technology and a rhizomatic understanding of surveillance it is possible to identify the methods used to monitor athletes within the academies structure. The networks of surveillance and disciplinary techniques that accompany them provided insight into how the athlete’s behaviour was regulated and controlled. This was illustrated by the quantitative data that were extracted from the athletes through specific fitness tests, measuring speed, weight, fluid intake, strength

and medical records. Even so, these particular data were able to produce more information about the athlete's character rather than simply charting injury facts or providing a 'data-double' to monitor performance and progression. Capturing the athlete in a fixed form of data was also viewed as necessary as it allowed the coaches, managers and sport scientists to map progression or decline in performance. Through such mechanisms an understanding of how specific modes of behaviour were adopted and rationalised by the athlete was made. Marx (2006: 103) states that, "visibility refers not to what we literally see, but to what we know (or can discover) as participants in the culture". Therefore, information retrieved should be analysed within the context that it occurred.

Within the academies minimal data could portray more than that which was observed on the surface. Results from tests provided a clear indication of an athlete's performance or behaviour; however, the interaction with the human network of surveillance and the interpretation of the athletes' data provided a greater source of information. Similar to other institutions, sports academies are constantly aiming to 'speed up' or 'standardise' certain actions so as to develop the athlete and produce optimum performances. Bratich *et al* (2003: 144) identify that the disciplinary mechanism "depends upon surveillance as its primary coercive tool". Within an institution such as an academy athletes are constantly under surveillance. Surveillance techniques were used as a form of monitoring performance to develop athletes in terms of the academy managers' own specific criteria. It was evident that surveillance was a large part of the athlete's development within an academy setting. Athletes within the

current study were scrutinised and analysed during and post performance with emphasis placed upon the result of each practice.

The architectural dominance of surveillance, as presented by Bentham's Panopticon, contained less significance within the institutional space of the academies. Although surveillance was less centralised its function still held significant importance within the academies structure. More emphasis was placed upon the network of human contact and an increase in disciplinary mechanisms to provide effective forms of observation. Central to this notion of dispersed surveillance was the use of data for the acquisition of knowledge and progression. It was a disciplinary mechanism that promoted a method of self-discipline amongst the athletes, designed to produce optimum output or achieve a certain performance demanded by the coaches or managers. As Foucault (1989b: 140) indicates, "by saying what one sees, one integrates it spontaneously into knowledge". Knowledge was used to identify and expose strengths, weaknesses and behavioural aspects of the academy athletes thus providing information for modification. The following chapter looks at how such methods of observation led to the promotion of 'docile bodies' within the academies. It also discusses how these particular methods of surveillance influenced or shaped the athletes' behaviour reducing the need for overt forms of disciplinary procedures.



## Chapter Five: Self-Surveillance as a Disciplinary Function

### *5.1 Introduction*

As indicated in the previous chapter, surveillance within the academies was distributed through a network of agencies where panopticism was seen the least significant feature of the academies methods of observation. Within both academies coaches, academy managers and tutors encompassed this network of surveillance allowing for the observation of the academy athletes in a range of different situations. However, a Foucauldian framework can provide a further understanding of the disciplinary practices that occur within the academies settings.

The concept of surveillance present within the academies was not tied to one specific location but relied on various sites of human observation and interaction. Coupled with the introduction of quantitative observational data interpreted by coaches, sport scientists and physiotherapists it was possible to present the complex and comprehensive nature of surveillance systems within the academies. Although this was a dispersed system of surveillance it was well connected and provided a frequent and useful source of information through hierarchical webs of communication. Similar to Foucault's (1979) panopticism, this network of surveillance functioned to promote a 'docility' and self-surveillance amongst the academy athletes. The hierarchical surveillance of the coaches and managers promoted the internalisation of the gaze as players became fixated by the progression of their own performance and inevitably their careers. The emphasis on career progression and the competitive environment presented within the academies also promoted the act of 'lateral' surveillance or 'peer-to-peer'

monitoring. This chapter aims to explore the notion of self-surveillance, identifying how the external ‘gaze’ of others may be internalised and thus promote a sense of docility amongst the academy athletes. The concept of lateral surveillance will also be explored to illustrate the use of peer monitoring amongst the Derrington Town and Valley FC academy athletes.

### *5.2 Self-Surveillance within Academies*

Foucault (1980: 56) notes that “mastery and awareness of one’s own body can be acquired only through the effect of an investment of power in the body: gymnastics, exercises, muscle-building, nudism, glorification of the body beautiful. All of this belongs to the desire of one’s own body”. The attention to the body is integral for the mastery of one’s own self. However, within the realm of sport, as demonstrated by Rinehart (1998: 40), attention to the body can come from both external and internal forces: “The swimming body has discipline imposed from both outside and inside; it is inscribed by others, including coaches and parents, and it is inscribed by itself”. The method of self-surveillance practiced by the athletes is necessary ultimately for the functioning of their successful performance.

Indeed, subjection was present amongst the Derrington Town and Valley FC academy athletes; there was a willingness to subject themselves to a routine form of self-surveillance that created an environment that was less reliant on external modes of discipline. Foucault (1979: 207) states that “the arrangement of this machine is such that its enclosed nature does not preclude a permanent presence from the outside: we have seen that anyone may come and exercise in the central tower the functions of

surveillance”. Similar to this notion of monitoring, it was clear that anyone who came into contact with the academy athletes acted as a site or reference for surveillance. It would appear that the notion of panopticism was extended laterally, and rather than rely on one point of observation a multitude of surveillance sites were created. This particular process of surveillance induced a power relation that relied less upon the dominant enforcement of authority and tried to promote a mode of self-surveillance and self-discipline. Foucault (1979: 203) notes that “by this very fact, the external power may throw off its physical weight; it tends to the non-corporal; and, the more it approaches this limit, the more constant, profound and permanent are its effects”. That said, self or lateral surveillance did not call for an end to authoritarianism within the academies and will be discussed further in relation to Weber’s (1978) ‘domination by authority’ within Chapter Six.

Although authoritarianism was witnessed within the academies, this form of disciplinary power also manifested itself in the form of a compliant docility. This was demonstrated by the academy athletes’ willingness to conform to a strict set of norms that highlighted the desired ‘attitude’ or behaviour required to succeed. Evan, a Derringtonstone Town academy athlete, demonstrated this mode of docility through his commitment to physical development through ‘conditioning’ the body and an attention to lifestyle. His attitude towards training the body and adhering to the correct lifestyle emphasised the self-discipline required to succeed within the culture of the rugby academy. When questioned on the qualities required to attain professionalism within his chosen sport Evan replied:

Obviously on a physical side a healthy lifestyle, uhhh, diet, uhhmm and then obviously, you know, with rugby bein' the contact sport that it is, obviously being in condition and being conditioned position-wise as well. I mean I play back row, so it's puttin' on weight as well, and getting like good night sleeps, eatin' right not goin' out on the piss too much [we both laugh], now and again, so, yeah, that's about it (**Evan**).

Surveillance is a tool that is integrated into the productive functioning of the academies. With the body as both object and subject of surveillance, the external gaze of managers, coaches and sport scientists is internalised and a system of self-surveillance is utilised by the academy athletes as a mechanism for improvement and conformity. Through the productive mode of surveillance Foucault (1979: 175) indicates that such a concept becomes, "a decisive economic operator both as an internal part of the production machinery and as a specific mechanism in the disciplinary power". It is a progressive mode of discipline that is adopted for the purpose of productivity. Foucault (1979: 220) states that discipline stemming from the panoptical mode of surveillance must "increase the particular utility of each element of the multiplicity, but by means that are the most rapid and the least costly, that is to say, by using the multiplicity itself as an instrument of its growth". Within an academy setting the athletes themselves were used as a mode of discipline. Self-discipline was integrated into the attitude and lifestyles of the athletes and became an intrinsic part of their regular process of self and lateral surveillance. Foucault (1979: 176-177) also notes that:

Although surveillance rests on individuals, its functioning is that of a network of relations from top to bottom, but also to a certain extent from bottom to top and laterally; this network 'holds' the whole together and traverses it in its entirety with effects of power that derive from one another.

As indicated in the previous chapter, this network of surveillance functioned both laterally and vertically throughout the academies. It was a network that maintained a clear hierarchy but allowed for the dispersion of power through the ranks promoting both lateral and self-surveillance amongst academy members.

The practice of self and lateral surveillance by academy athletes ensured that coaches and managers assumed less responsibility regarding issues of discipline. It may be considered a technique that improved the efficiency of both discipline and player management. This power relation enabled the athletes' bodies to be objectified and to induce a consciousness or self-awareness amongst themselves leading to the production of a self-disciplined and docile body. This shift in disciplinary power was demonstrated by Derringtonstone Town's academy coach. When discussing the notion of feedback it became apparent that the Derringtonstone Town academy athletes were to take responsibility for their own progression. The notion of self-discipline was presented by Derringtonstone Town's academy coach as self-motivation. However, it was clear that athletes must assume a strong sense of self-discipline if they were to progress to the top level:

**AM:** What's the purpose of this particular process or system of feedback?

**Phillip:** We're trying to push things back onto them, such as; if they want information then they come and ask us. That then gives them that self drive to keep on top of it all. Uhhhm and you do need to be self-motivated to push on to the highest level, 'cos if you're not then you're relying on someone to tell you to do something all the time, then its not gonna work because the reality at the top level is that they're not gonna tell you what to do, you've got do it off your own back and you've got to work hard in your own time to catch up on things that you're maybe not so good at; and you've got to realise what are your strengths and what are your weaknesses. And again that's something that, as the lads get older through the academy system, we try to introduce it gradually but ultimately push it on to them so that they can take responsibility for their actions.

One may suggest that disciplinary procedures are central to attaining the status of elite athlete. It was clear that a disciplined approach toward training, but more importantly lifestyle behaviour outside of the academy, was regularly adopted by both the Derrington Town and Valley FC academy athletes. When discussing the difference in training from first joining Valley FC's academy Lucas highlighted the change in his lifestyle, demonstrating the importance of a self-disciplined approach toward life away from the academy that became an intrinsic part of his overall daily routine:

**AM:** What's the biggest difference for you from when you joined 'til now?

**Lucas:** Biggest difference, uhhh...me lifestyle really, 'cos now really I've gotta, outside football, I've gotta think about I've got training in the morning I go out like, me mates say are you coming out and I've gotta say no, I've got a job to do. But when I was at school it was like, you'd go play football, come in after training and then probably go out after with your mates, so you're like, ah I've only got school in the morning, so that's the type of attitude you've gotta take but you've gotta change it really if you wanna do well.

**AM:** How do you feel about changing your lifestyle?

**Lucas:** I'd do anything to make it so...I found it...it was hard at the start like, having to totally change your lifestyle outside of the academy, so it's like anything it's changing but now it's just second nature really.

Norris and Armstrong (1998: 6) state that "the power of surveillance is not merely that it is exercised *over* someone but *through* them and it is this subjective element of the operation of power which Foucault also wants to stress". By adopting a Foucauldian perspective toward surveillance, we can see how the athletes begin to become subject to their own forms of self-discipline through the process of self-monitoring. Self-surveillance amongst the athletes was manifested through the constant monitoring of

their lifestyles outside of the academies and the progression of their physical and technical performances within the academies. Upon discussing the need for extra training Eli, a Valley FC athlete, highlighted the reliance on a self-disciplined approach toward training:

If you make sure that you're disciplined enough to do extra on your own or do the right things outside of the academy then you can make sure that you're always givin' it a hundred percent and hopefully improve your chances of playing (**Eli**).

A further response from one of the Valley FC players regarding their schedule in the break prior to pre-season training demonstrated the self-disciplined attitude of the academy athletes. This particular footballer highlighted the commitment devoted to conditioning his body in his free time in order to maintain physical fitness and peak performance:

**AM:** In between the break when you are not playing are you doing anything yourself?

**Eric:** Yeah I go to the gym by myself and go joggin' and stuff like that myself, so then when you come back it's not as hard to get back into, you're already fit enough to get on with pre-season.

**AM:** Do you think other lads do that as well?

**Eric:** I think most of them do, if you had any brains I'd think you'd do it like, otherwise you're gonna be blown when you back, yeah I think most of them will, probably all of them.

Chase's (2008) study on distance running and "large" or "fat" runners highlights the Foucauldian concepts of surveillance and discipline that can be witnessed in both the Valley FC and Derrington Town academies. Chase (2008: 134) states that:

In many cases, the highly disciplined athletic body very often is a docile body. Disciplinary techniques function as a central component of sport even at recreational level. Off-season training programs, fitness and body fat testing, and rigorous practice and competition schedules contribute to the construction of athletic docile bodies.

Similar to the distance runners both the Valley FC and Derrington Town academy athletes were constantly reminded of their weaknesses through fitness tests and reviews. As indicated in the previous chapter, the frequency to which these occurred at the Derrington Town academy was less than that of Valley FC. It was made clear that Derrington Town's academy held yearly reviews as opposed to Valley FC's academy that practiced reviews every quarter. The Rugby Football Union conducted and collated the data obtained from fitness tests rather than Derrington Town itself, although results were readily available for academy managers, coaches and players to view as explained by one rugby academy player:

**AM:** Is your progress recorded?

**Josiah:** We have fitness testing three times a year and they take....But that's not them, that's for the RFU [Rugby Football Union], they have to do that for the RFU, and they take down our weights and we have to do all these different types of tests to see how we improve through the year and stuff.

**AM:** And do you get to see the results of these tests?

**Josiah:** Yeah, we do, I haven't seen the results of my last test, uhhh, but we usually get to see them.

**AM:** Do you find them helpful?

**Josiah:** yeah 'cos it like compares you to, like, every academy player in the country, and uhhh they're quite good.



It was made clear that the number of fitness tests conducted at Derrington Town's academy was based upon the player's position within the hierarchy of the academy itself. Fewer tests were conducted with those who had less potential to pursue a professional career as indicated by Jacob, a former Derrington Town academy athlete, who had gained first team experience and a professional contract:

**AM:** I was talking to other academy players about their progress. One said that they needed to improve his weight so he was weighed at certain stages throughout the season. Do you have anything like that?

**Jacob:** Well you do a weigh-in every Tuesday. So you'll go into the gym before you have a session and you weigh yourself, and that'll just, you can obviously keep track of that throughout the weeks. Then, uhhmm, like for different people it's different how many fitness tests they're meant to do a year, but you'll do one in pre-season, we did one in pre-season just sort of, all the sort of tests you do for...Like sprint tests, weight tests, the endurance tests and things like that, and then we did them about two weeks ago just to sort of see how you progress throughout the season, and I think we'll probably do another one. I think we'll do about four fitness testings throughout the whole year.

The academy athletes were under constant supervision and were observed throughout the majority of their time in the academy. The academy athletes became conscious of their physical progression through test results, reviews and scores and thus adjusted behaviour, movements and gestures to ensure that their performance on the field and in training conformed to a certain set of criteria or expectations as Heikkala (1993: 410) indicates: "Discipline in sport is manifested most of all in the form of a productive self-discipline and regimentation of the athletic self and body". At Valley FC's academy the athletes were encouraged to keep diaries that they would update regularly. Although they were not widely used by the majority of the academy athletes they did serve to provide a useful tool for self-evaluation that could ultimately lead to the critical

evaluation and discipline of teammates. As Mischel (1977: 33) notes, “a critical aspect of self-regulation thus stems from the fact that people assess and monitor themselves”. In order to succeed within Valley FC’s academy self-assessment became a regular part of an athlete’s daily routine. Although only a minority of the footballers referred to the diaries or log books as a useful training aid, they did provide an example of the level of self-surveillance and self-discipline that was required of each individual on a daily basis as described by one of the second year scholars:

**AM:** How do you make sure your performance is on track?

**Joshua:** It’s just, it’s just...sometimes we keep diaries, we did it in the first year but not so much this year, we just keep a diary and we write at the end of each day or the end of each week and just sort of make note of the session. Like, how long the session lasted, like ‘etc’, ‘etc’ what your performance was like, strengths, weaknesses what you can improve on. So it’s basically just keepin’ a diary really and goin’ back to it and seein’ whether you’re improving, see what went wrong there, see what went right there and just having a look at previous sessions.

**AM:** Who looks at the diary?

**Joshua:** It’s just personal so it’s just us. I mean other people can look at it if they want but, like, mainly it’s just ourselves that look at it and tend to keep, like, ourselves to ourselves, like, on that side of things. I mean because it hasn’t really got anything to do with the others and it’s just all down to, like, your personal evaluation.

**AM:** Would team members ever discuss the diary between each other?

**Joshua:** Yeah they would, yeah, uhhh...I mean after the session, while we’re writing our diaries, we might get together and say, yeah I understand you done this right but you’ve done this wrong and next time do this, next time don’t do that, and just like evaluate each other’s training sessions.

Both Valley FC and Derringstone academy players maintained a regimented approach toward their training and match preparation. Players ensured that their bodies were well

rested, hydrated and in peak physical condition. It is this sense of self-discipline, manifested through the constant mode of self-surveillance that ensured their progression as professional athletes continued. Once again an emphasis was placed upon an attention to discipline away from the academy and was integrated into the athletes' own personal lives; as the following exchange with Christian, a footballer, illustrated:

**AM:** Tell me about your preparation before each match?

**Christian:** Just bed early, get the right fluids in onboard so you're hydrated for the next day and then get the carbohydrates in as well. I mean on a Friday before the game the fitness coach gives us protein drinks so that we're ready for the next day.

**AM:** What's the most important part of the preparation?

**Christian:** Fluid, taking on the right fluid, diet wise as well so each week we get the right diet in and the right food and just keep hydrated for the game.

Other footballers highlighted the importance of a disciplined and regimented lifestyle away from the academy to ensure that their performance was progressing:

**AM:** How do you make sure that your performance is on track?

**Owen:** I try to do the same thing most weeks, uhhmm...I stay in digs so I have an early night *all the time*, uhh, I eat the right things and uhhmm...and just keep myself like that. I mean I go home *every* night, if I have a game the next day I'll *always* stay home, I try to do the same thing really keep a sort of consistent routine, just make sure I'm doin' the same thing each week.

Self-surveillance within Valley FC and Derrington Town manifested itself through the players' constant adherence to a regimented lifestyle. A greater awareness of the self in relation to the institutional setting of the academies was also witnessed by the academy athletes' attention towards personal performance and the constant pursuit of attaining perfection.

### *5.3 Self-Surveillance and Performance*

The concept of self-surveillance is integral to the management or enhancement of the body. When discussing the contemporary discourse of women's body reduction Spitzack (1987: 364) identifies that,

To overcome the negative cultural stigmatisation of the obese body as object (of ridicule, of pity, of exclusion), the dieter makes an object/objective of her own body. In the process of self-objectification, monitoring, and confession, she announces that there is always more to be done, an object of greater perfection on the horizon.

This particular concept regarding body awareness was witnessed within the academies. Under the guise of self-surveillance the body was perceived as an object of manipulation, one that must be moulded into physical perfection through the rigours of physical training. Although managers and coaches within the academies ensured that training sessions were run efficiently and effectively, the academy athletes were aware that a large proportion of their success originated from adopting a self-disciplined and self-motivated attitude toward training.

When discussing the politics and practices of women's body images within the print media, Duncan (1994: 50) notes that the gaze women project onto their own bodies "seems to be an expression of their own personal quest for perfection, and they learn to see their bodily shortcomings as private failures". Similar to the athletes the internal gaze revealed either a progression or regression with regards to performance. The academy athletes were constantly pursuing the ideal of perfection, failure of the body or a poor performance was viewed as something that must be rectified immediately. This behaviour witnessed amongst the academy athletes was similar to that of Spencer's

(2009) investigation into body techniques in mixed martial arts. Spencer (2009: 127) notes that “the fighter’s body is continually in a state of flux or metamorphosis. Irrespective of the stage of the fighter’s advancement, there is a continued vigilance to remedy weaknesses”. The ideal of striving for perfection through a disciplined approach to training the body, objectifying performances and attaining goals was clearly evident amongst both the Valley FC and Derrington Town academy players. Once again an acceptance of responsibility for one’s own progression was evident amongst the academy athletes, self-motivation and willingness to subject the body to perfect performances were integral; as the following interview with Eric, a footballer, illustrates:

**AM:** How do you make sure that you’re on the track to becoming a professional?

**Eric:** Well same again, work hard every game. Uhhhh, just keep pushing yourself. Once you’ve achieved something, what you wanted to achieve, then keep aiming your goals higher and higher.

**AM:** Does working on your own help?

**Eric:** Yeah it can do if you’ve got things you need to work on. You shouldn’t need people to tell you, you should just do it yourself, go off and do it yourself.

Similar to Green’s (1999) study concerning somatic practices in dance technique classes, discipline was executed through self-regulation. When discussing the expectations of dancers to perform Green (1999: 90) states that “with the teacher’s eye constantly on the students, the teacher does not have to impose an outside force to motivate students to perform according to specific standards; the students learn to discipline themselves through self-regulation and unconscious habits”. Disciplinary

power within the academies ensured that the athletes were constantly self-evaluating their performances. Athletes imposed a process of self-discipline and adjusted their behaviour so as to conform to the norms established by the individual club. Once again, this mode of disciplinary power ensured that a less authoritarian method of discipline was required. Therefore, athletes were more intrinsically motivated to adopt the norms established by the academy and inhabit the correct 'attitude' that was desired by coaches and managers. A further comment made by Dylan, a Valley FC academy athlete, highlighted the importance of self-motivation and the desire to achieve perfection. When discussing how his levels of effort had changed over the years spent in the academy, Dylan noted that high levels of self-motivation and self-regulation were integral to producing optimum performances. Extra training in his own time was viewed as necessary to improve the finer aspects of his playing ability:

**AM:** Could you comment on how your training has changed in terms of level of effort?

**Dylan:** Well, uh-hmm, it's more like intense now than it was, like, when you were 16 you only trained like three times a week with people, like in your area [surrounding geographical area] so it wasn't that intense really. But when you come in as a scholar, it's *everyday* training, it's like you have to be up for it everyday in training, motivate yourself everyday to put the best effort in you can really to get the better results.

**AM:** How do you make sure you give the best?

**Dylan:** Just stayin' out after trainin' and things like that, little things that you can do...uh-hmm, in the gym as well, if you're not the biggest type of person you can go into the gym and improve your weaknesses all the time and your speed and that. There's like staff 'ere, like sport scientists who can like...they'll help you and there's stuff to do with your diet and if you just ask and you wanna do things you can.

Ethan, one of the Derringtonstone Town academy athletes, expressed the difficulty in maintaining a perfect performance consistently. However, the importance of striving for perfection was integral to displaying the correct attitude and filtered through into the player's lifestyle away from the academy. The norms associated with perfect athletic performances were adopted by Ethan in his leisure time and ultimately became a habitual part of his lifestyle:

**AM:** But surely it's quite tough to be consistently good all the time.

**Ethan:** Yeah, definitely, yeah, but I think that's one thing you sort of strive for through training, just having, having sort of personal standards and not settlin' for just having an OK session and not sayin', "Oh it's a bit cold this morning I think I'll just cruise this session and get back inside". Every session has got to be taken with the mindset of, right I'm trainin' for an hour and a half I'm gonna be, like I said, as good as I can be. And then, if you get into it, once you do that that sort of becomes habitual and then you take that through everyday life as well. So go out on a night when the times right, not the night before training and stuff like that, uhhmm...And then through life, them good habits sort of keep comin' and then that comes into your game as well I think.

Shogan's (1999) analysis of panopticism in elite level sport provides a further portrayal of self-surveillance and the awareness of the 'self' regarding the performance and discourse of athletes. Shogan (1999: 38) states that, "when athletes perform skills incorrectly or without intensity, the movement feels 'wrong' or 'unnatural'". This was evident amongst both the Derringtonstone Town and Valley FC academy athletes. When questioned as to how an athlete realised when he had made a mistake the majority responded by stating that they instantly 'knew':

**AM:** How do you know if you've made a mistake?

**Ethan:** I think...Sometimes you sort of know before you've done it, in terms of, like a kick out of hand for example, if you get to there [demonstrates dropping

the ball to the floor] and you know, ohhh I haven't dropped that right, that's not a good drop and it's off tilt, and you think I've just gotta go through with it... Then you kind've have that mad panic of, ohhh no this is gonna go anywhere and then it's... You know in your head it hasn't gone well and stuff.

The Foucauldian notion of surveillance allows for a detailed inspection and monitoring of the body and behaviour in such a way so as to limit the need for enforcement and remove the reliance of external modes of discipline. Savage (1998: 68) notes that,

It marked a new stage in the elaboration of disciplinary power in which surveillance no longer depended on direct visual observation between people. This allowed surveillance to be extended much more deeply into social relationships. Power rested less on direct control of the body and more on techniques designed to elicit 'self-regulation' and people began to act as if they were being observed.

Although the academies relied on a network of human observation, academy athletes were given the responsibility, to a certain extent, of monitoring their bodies and performances through self-regulation and an adherence to strict self-discipline. Vaz and Bruno note (2003: 273) that the concept of self-surveillance does not simply imply the analysis of one's own behaviour in the presence of observers of a similar or senior position but should include the individuals' "attention to their actions and thoughts when constituting themselves as subjects of their conduct". Therefore, self-surveillance is a concept that is not fixed and may relate to many positions of social interaction each pertaining to a possible different set of norms or behaviour. Athletes in both academies referred to the constant need to be 'self-motivated' individuals with an emphasis upon continuously producing optimal performances. The athletes monitored their bodies and performance with the desire to fine tune and enhance their fitness and technical abilities,



and it is this particular mode of self discipline that may be readily associated with Foucault's concept of the 'care of the self'.

#### *5.4 Self-Surveillance and Care of the Self*

Foucault (1989a: 41) indicates that the care of the self takes the form of "an intensification of the relation to oneself by which one is constituted oneself as the subjects of one's acts". It is an emphasis on the attention towards an increased propensity to place oneself as object and subject of surveillance. Foucault (1989a: 45) notes that the 'cultivation of the self' is bound by the premise that one must take care of oneself, as defined as:

An attitude, a mode of behaviour; it became instilled in ways of living; it evolved into procedures, practices, and formulas that people reflected on, developed, perfected and taught. It thus came to constitute a social practice, giving rise to relationships between individuals, to exchanges and communications, and at times even to institutions.

Bound by the social, the care of the self provides more than just a reflection or inward gaze upon one's own actions. It is to be considered a way of life or a particular behaviour that is common to social groups or institutions. This is seen amongst the academy athletes as they adopted a lifestyle that was routinely associated with elite level sport. Foucault (1989a: 61) states that the care of the self involves a process of self-examination that "calls to mind a kind of administrative review where it is a matter of evaluating a performed activity in order to reactivate its principles and ensure their correct application in the future".

Self-surveillance was imposed to ensure that mistakes were corrected and actions were performed correctly for future performances. The academy athletes were constantly being evaluated and therefore must constantly monitor their own performance in relation to a standard set of norms that they are expected to conform to. Foucault (1989a: 62) states that:

The fault is not reactivated by the examination in order to determine a culpability or simulate a feeling of remorse, but in order to strengthen, on the basis of the recapitulated and reconsidered verification of failure, the rational equipment that ensures a wise behaviour.

This notion of self-evaluation was present within the academies, although athletes would inevitably be singled out for making mistakes; the function of this evaluation was implemented for productive reasons. By analysing their own performances and that of others the athletes were able to identify areas of their performance that were weak and required further concentration or training. Foucault (1989a: 63) notes that this form of examination “should have the form of a steady screening of representations: examining them, monitoring them, sorting them out. More than an exercise done at regular intervals, it is a constant attitude that one must take toward oneself”. This notion of self-evaluation or self-surveillance was a practice that was required of the athletes if they were to improve their performances. A constant surveillance of the body by the academy athletes was perceived as central to maintaining and improving their performances. An emphasis upon training the body and mind correctly was adopted by the Valley FC academy athletes indicating that care of the self was integral to ensuring the progression of their performance:

**AM:** How do you make sure your performance is on track?

**Hugh:** Uhh, well I think mental preparation has a big part to play, make sure you're mentally prepared and you're giving yourself every chance to play well.

**AM:** Are there any extra things you might do to make sure you're performing well?

**Hugh:** Uhh, yeah, just things like out of football, things, like, make sure you go to bed at a good hour, drink plenty of fluid, and then you're giving yourself every chance to play well. Whereas if you didn't, and you had sweets or went out drinking and that, and you didn't look after yourself, then you'd be on a slippery slope.

Another of the footballers noted that care of the self was important to producing an optimal performance. Such attention was placed upon the footballers' bodies so that they were able to identify the specific lifestyle habits that may impair their performance and modify them accordingly:

**AM:** What sort of things do you do to make sure you're performing well?

**Charles:** Well you need to perform well in training really, you need to prepare for training right...everything about it, you need to drink right, you need to sleep right, you need to eat right. Just, if one of them's not right then basically you can probably pinpoint where you're goin' wrong and then that's where you need to put it right really.

Vaz and Bruno (2003: 273) indicate that self-surveillance "implies associating it with practices of the care of the self". As previously indicated 'care of the self' was a high priority amongst athletes as their bodies were their investment that must be protected to ensure that they were successful. Vaz and Bruno (2003: 273) indicate that such practices are "based on the cultural postulations that certain thoughts and actions are dangerous or unwholesome to the constitution of the individual as a subject". This notion of self-

reflexivity may refer to the athletes' process of the care of the self, as Johns and Johns (2000: 229) indicate:

Being fully prepared for competition involves more than the physicality of fitness. It entails a sense of self-discipline and an awareness of what it takes to be an athlete. Athletes, in the process of learning the discourse, establish mutual support based on self-reflexivity of what is acceptable and not acceptable.

Similar to Johns and Johns (2000) study of elite gymnasts, the academy athletes' self-evaluation not only functioned as a disciplinary practice but also as a practice of transformation. Johns and Johns (2000: 228) state that in Foucauldian terms this act "is a technology concerned with the care of the self and is commonly found in sport and other closely related fitness activities that are believed to lead to better health". Self-surveillance and the care of the self does not therefore just constitute a conformity to that which is allowed but also stresses the importance of acknowledging and conducting oneself in accordance with that which is *not* allowed. Care of the self and this particular mode of self-discipline within the academies constituted more than just an evaluation of performances but incorporated a transformation of the self. The consumption of drugs and alcohol were perceived as unhealthy by the athletes within both academies. It was important for the academy athletes so as to ensure that their lifestyle was as wholesome as possible to guarantee peak performances and not harm their potential career as a professional, as highlighted by Max, a Valley FC academy athlete:

**AM:** And how do you keep your place within the academy?

**Max:** Work hard and keep a professional attitude, don't do silly stuff like drinking and that, just keep a good attitude...uhmm...attitudes *really* important, just get enough rest eat the right diet, stuff like that.

The rejection of ‘unhealthy’ activities was readily expressed by one of the footballers when discussing the right ‘attitude’ to adopt in order to succeed in an academy environment:

**AM:** What qualities do you think you need to have in order to become professional?

**Ethan:** I think one thing is just sort of having good habits and just, like, everyday just doing good things. Like you say, eatin’ the right stuff, livin’ the right lifestyle, gettin’ into training early, doin’ extra stuff, just sort of put yourself there for them to offer it to you.

Further comments made by one of the football academy athletes when defining a ‘good attitude’ demonstrated the importance of self-discipline and a desire to do well, ensuring that they regulated both the social aspect and training aspect of their lifestyles:

**AM:** What is a good attitude to have?

**Oliver:** Like, uhhhmm, just approaching everything correctly. Like training every single day, wanting to get better, wanting to work hard, wanting to do the right things. Like everything behind that as well not goin’ out on the piss on a regular basis, like eatin’ and drinkin’ right, lookin’ after yourself and just keepin’ focused basically. Uhhhh, like, doin’ the right things, if you think you’re feeling tired a good attitude would be to go into the pools and stretch and stuff like that. Just try and be as good as you can and make sure you always perform well.

A good attitude to an academy lifestyle emphasised the need to protect and ensure that the athletes’ bodies were well rested and in peak physical condition. Many of the athletes realised that an investment in their bodies provided a better chance for success. In this regard Foucault’s (1989a) care of the self was integral to the athletes’ career

progression. This was reiterated by one of the footballers when discussing the required qualities needed to turn professional:

You need to just be professional about your profession. Just eating right, not going out all the time partying, we're human beings as well, we can still go and have a good time, we can go and party but our bodies are basically our work, we have to take care of them and I think that's the most important thing. You know if you go out drinking or whatever you've gotta watch out, make sure that you are performing a hundred percent, 'cos if you're not someone's gonna be there to take your spot, so it's really important to be self-disciplined about what you do. You know sometimes you're gonna have a bad week, sometimes players have bad seasons but as long as you are taking care of your body, you're still, I think, you still have a chance (**Roger**).

Johns (1998: 42) notes that "the careful control of body weight among competitive athletes in many forms of contemporary sport is part of the increasing importance given to either weight gain, weight loss, or weight maintenance". Gaining weight was a concern for the academy athletes and was made a priority for the rugby players if they were to break through into the first team. Within both academies the conditioning coaches supplied individual weight training programmes and diet plans. It was revealed that some of the academy athletes would partake in extra weight training to be physically ahead of their teammates when it came to lifting weights and strength tests. The emphasis on weight gain amongst the rugby players was noted when discussing their particular fitness and training programmes, as outlined by two of those interviewed:

**AM:** And what's the purpose of the programme?

**Noah:** To improve yourself probably to try and get...

**Ryan:** Like at our age we need to get bigger, so it's more like puttin' muscle mass on, rather than, that's why we, like, do three gym sessions a week, like,

rather than like running about or like fitness 'cos we don't wanna lose weight 'cos we're playin as well. So we wanna try and bulk up and we do exercises, like power cleans<sup>26</sup> and stuff for like power and strength, so it's not just like one specific thing.

**Noah:** It's about trying to adapt your body to try and be the best that your body can be at that time, do you know what I mean?

Once again issues regarding the gaining of weight were seen as important obstacles to overcome in order to progress into Derrington Town's first team and sign a professional contract:

**AM:** So what kind of feedback do you get?

**Josiah:** Uhhhhmm, well I've only really had it once and that was after a match a few weeks ago. Uhhm, saying that I played well, things to work on, like he told me that I need to put on weight if I was gonna push for the first team this year. Uhhmm, that's it really, I mean we don't get that much feedback, I think it would be better if we got more.

**AM:** How do you go about putting on more weight to get to the first team?

**Josiah:** Well with the gym sessions, tryin' to eat loads, I've started to take protein and creatine; our fitness instructor got us that.

**AM:** Are there any specific instructions given to you?

**Josiah:** yeah we've been given loads of diet advice; a nutritionist comes in, like, sometimes. We've had talks with them once or twice since I've been at the academy. It's just people that come in from the outside and give talks, advice us what to eat and what not to eat.

**AM:** Do you stick to your diet plan?

**Josiah:** Uhhhhh, yeah...I just try to eat as much as I can, really.

Chapman's (1997) analysis of lightweight rowers highlights the presence of self-surveillance and lateral surveillance that ensures that rowers maintain their weight

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<sup>26</sup> This exercise consists of quickly and forcefully pulling a barbell from the floor to the front of the shoulders all in one movement (Earle and Baechle, 2000)

standards. The discourse of dieting was considered to be a disciplinary practice that led to the monitoring of the self. Chapman (1997: 206) suggests that, as a practice within elite level sport, dieting was seen to promote amongst the athletes an “ongoing self-surveillance where they continually evaluate and judge their own bodies from the standpoint of an internalized panoptical male viewer”. Similar to the Foucauldian notion of self-discipline, Chapman (1997: 212) notes that “the strongest indicator of the disciplinary nature of the practices of making weight, was the rowers’ continual monitoring and surveillance of their food consumption and bodies”. The Valley FC academy athletes also discussed the importance of gaining or maintaining weight as diet plans were provided for each individual player. It was identified that conditioning coaches and academy managers were fully aware of the players’ progress regarding dietary intake through the routine use of body fat tests:

**AM:** Do you think everybody does keep to it [diet plan]?

**Charles:** Nah, I wouldn’t say so. I’d say they do to a certain extent like, but they...If say if you’re eating too much bad food, we get like body fat tests so it’ll show on that if you’re eating rubbish like. Yeah, I mean obviously you’re gonna put weight on and that’ll show up on the test, if you put too much on.

Self-surveillance and care of the self is a practice that is not directly imposed upon the individual by other human agents. Vaz and Bruno (2003: 276) indicate that it may be perceived as “surveillance of an internalized, but identified, other upon us”. One may suggest that this ‘other’ does not constitute a human agent but an internal desire bound by the normative behaviour that is expected of the individual. As Vaz and Bruno (2003: 277) state “the connection between internalisation and identification hinges on the function of the normalising judgment”. Foucault’s normalising judgment impacts greatly



upon the internalisation of specific behavioural norms that are produced by the athletes within the academies. This notion of self-reflexivity and the limits of what were perceived as acceptable or unacceptable may be determined by coaches and managers leading to a self-imposed discipline adopted by the academy athletes. Johns and Johns (2000: 229) state that self-care from a Foucauldian perspective is referred to as “‘governmentality’ and is seen to coexist with the normalising gaze of coaches and officials. It is a discipline of the self that reflects on being a particular type of person who engages in a specific discursive practice”. The care of the self introduced a discipline that had become less reliant on external force, turning the gaze of coaches and managers inwardly so as to produce a notion of self-reflexivity and docility as Hacking (1986b: 236) notes “it is seldom force that keeps us on the straight and narrow; it is conscience”. However, this mode of surveillance also extended laterally, whereby players began to monitor one another’s actions with great intent. This peer-to-peer monitoring within the academy systems flattened the hierarchical mode of surveillance demonstrated by Bentham’s Panopticon and provided an extension to Foucault’s (1979) concept of panopticism.

### *5.5 Lateral Surveillance within Academies*

The prominence of self-surveillance amongst the academy athletes not only promoted a sense of self-discipline but also led to the practice of lateral surveillance or ‘peer monitoring’ amongst team members. Andrejevic (2005: 481) defines lateral surveillance as constituting “not the top-down monitoring of employees by employers, citizens by the state, but rather the peer-to-peer surveillance of spouses, friends, and

relatives”. Lateral surveillance represents an extension of Foucault’s (1979) panopticism, the central gaze of the coach, managers and sport scientists within the academies were reinforced by a system of peer monitoring. Andrejevic (2005: 485) identifies that lateral surveillance constitutes the “redoubling of the panoptic model whereby the subjects of the panoptic gaze come to take on some responsibilities not just of monitoring themselves, but keeping tracks of one another”. The notion of the Panopticon becomes multiplied and employed not just in one site but many sites of observation, as Wood (2003: 236) indicates “the Panopticon is also *displaced*, becoming less central and more one *dispositif* amongst many”. This particular concept manifested itself within the academies through the monitoring of peer performances during training, games and review sessions. Spitzack’s (1987: 366) research conducted on women’s weight loss identified that “women become suspect to other women as well as to themselves, their bodies trivialised and marked by one another”. Athletes made their opinions clear when discussing the importance of monitoring other teammates. Similar to Spitzack’s (1987) research, the academy athletes’ gaze was turned inward towards oneself but also projected out to view the progression or performance of teammates. The Valley FC academy athletes would use this mode of lateral surveillance for the purposes of measuring or quantifying their own performance and progression to ensure first team selection on a regular basis:

**AM:** How do you feel when someone in the same position as you has higher marks?

**Lucas:** Well I’m watchin’ ‘em all the time, so obviously I’d have an idea of what he can do and what I can’t do, and if I would agree and say he...you are probably better than me at that then I would probably go out and improve that.

Say it was like long passing, you'd make sure that you go out and improve that long passing

Competition for places within Valley FC's academy not only highlighted the need for self-discipline but also the prevalence of lateral surveillance that occurred on a routine basis:

**AM:** How much competition is there at the academy?

**Joshua:** I mean it's...obviously we're all great mates, we all get on dead well and it's not like...I mean we want each other to do well obviously uhhh...but then again another side is you have to think that he wants my position, he wants my place. There is competitiveness but it's not like competitiveness where we hate each other, it's just, like, everyone wants to do well, but you've gotta watch out for others and keep an eye on how they're doin', you're competitive 'cos you wanna play, you know it's important that you're seen to be playin' well.

Chapman's (1997: 212) research concerning the discourse of weight amongst elite rowers indicated that "rowers also monitored each other's weight, sometimes organizing their own weigh-ins to ensure that everyone was on track". This notion of self monitoring extends into the realms of peer-to-peer monitoring or lateral surveillance. Seen as perhaps an advancement on Foucault's (1979) notion of self-surveillance, the rowers began to discipline or monitor one another to ensure that progress was advancing. Chapman (1997: 213) indicates that this mode of self and lateral surveillance was promoted by the panoptical gaze of the coach and the threat of failure:

The possibility of being weighed by the coach at any time, and the chance of being cut from the team if the weight was too high, ensured that the rowers monitored themselves and each other and followed the making weight regiment.

Similarly, the threat of losing one's place within the academy or squad promoted the notion of self and lateral surveillance amongst the athletes. With a myriad of

surveillance networks and the introduction of recording technology the academy athletes were constantly on display. The self-discipline, a product of self-surveillance, provided coaches and managers with a visual display of commitment from the academy players. In addition, this encouraged a lateral surveillance amongst the academy athletes to ensure that everyone was complying with the institutional norms and expectations of the academies, as indicated by one of the Valley FC academy athletes:

**AM:** How much do you know about the player's scores for the tests you do?

**Kieron:** Oh yeah, well if we do body fat tests for example, yeah we'll tell each other but I'm not really that bothered and uhhmm stuff like that. Uhhmm...and every Monday, we 'ave a game on Saturday, so on Monday morning we do a urine sample to see whether we've been hydrating well over the weekend, to see whether we've been drinking enough water and stuff. And we get told if you're over a certain point then you get fined but we're good at it, we do well, but we tell each other to, you know, pay attention and that and everyone watches everyone else and that so it's ok.

Competition within Valley FC's academy fuelled the athletes' desires to monitor one another as the opportunity to gain first team status or achieve professionalism was notoriously competitive. Within Valley FC's academy players would look to see review scores as an indication of how they were progressing. These athletes would monitor each other's performances in order to assess individual playing performances during both training and matches. This enabled the athletes to judge where their performance lay in comparison to their peers and provided possible information regarding team selection, their position within the squad or their career progression:

**AM:** Would you ever look at other player's scores for reviews, or fitness tests, or how they're doing weights wise?

**Hugh:** I would, yeah, I would look at the reviews and that, ‘cos...I think that’s personal like but I’d like to know their scores ‘cos it tells you how they’re improving. I would look at their weights and that to see people around me, that are all my build, to see what they’re lifting to make sure I’m at a similar level or over it like. You don’t wanna be falling beneath.

The evaluation of peers within the academies came in the form of verbal feedback after training and matches. Criticism of performances was delivered to one another in a ‘light-hearted’ manner as demonstrated by one of the Derrington Town academy athletes:

**AM:** How much of your other team member’s progress are you aware of?

**Josiah:** Uhhh, *they* don’t tell us but, like, the teammates might say something, I mean you’ll just know.

**AM:** Do you get any feedback from teammates?

**Josiah:** Uhh, yeah but jokingly but semi-serious. Yeah that’s probably the most feedback we get, from each other.

**AM:** What kind of things would they say?

**Josiah:** Uhhh, just if you do something wrong they’ll take the piss out of you and stuff like that, but they also encourage you.

Zimmer (1997: 10) notes that “trying to describe surveillance as “peer-to-peer” suggests a flattening of the power relationship that is counter to its very definition”. Moreover, Zimmer (1997: 10) indicates that “the participation by the subjects in their own surveillance does not make them equal with the watchers in the panoptic model”. This notion of peer-to-peer or lateral surveillance appears to contradict the notion of panopticism as the role of overseer is subverted. However, as previously indicated the panoptic model of surveillance was less significant within the academies. Lateral surveillance was adopted by both the Valley FC and Derrington Town academy

athletes, to the extent that players began to discipline one another. It was a method of monitoring that was employed to promote independence amongst the young players without disrupting the academies hierarchy:

**AM:** Do you ever comment on others performances?

**Hugh:** Yeah definitely, if someone's not up to it I'll tell him he's not up to it.

**AM:** Could you describe a typical comment you might make?

**Hugh:** "Buck your ideas up", if he's not...if he's underperforming, "Sort your head out", if he's not...if you think he's not mentally prepared, then you tell 'em to sort himself out like.

The importance of highlighting players' mistakes, placing disciplinary power with the players rather than the coaches, was integral to an athlete's responsibilities as indicated by Dylan, a Valley FC academy athlete:

**AM:** Do you ever comment on others performances?

**Dylan:** Yeah, yeah to other players as well just like sometimes , like, I'd say when they're in the room and things like that, I'd say when they were in the room, you did well or you could've done better at this and that, let 'em know 'cos they wanna hear it 'cos like... 'cos some players don't like, just think they sometimes see the one side and think ohhh I've done well all the time sort of thing. Sometimes they just need to know that they didn't really and they've gotta get on with it and improve, 'cos some people are in denial sometimes.

Using education as a further example of self-surveillance, Gore (2001: 170) states that "teachers monitor students, and students monitor each other. Surveillance singles out individuals, regulates behaviour, and enables comparisons to be made". Peer-to-peer monitoring was used primarily by the academy athletes to draw comparisons to track or monitor teammates performances to ensure that they were not advancing ahead of them

or were improving. The concept of lateral surveillance was a tool used by all the academy athletes. This particular mode of surveillance acted as an important day-to-day ritual amongst the academy athletes and was seen as an integral part to monitoring their own progress:

**AM:** How much of the other team members' progress are you aware of?

**Julian:** Uhhmm, how well they're doin'?

**AM:** Yeah.

**Julian:** Uhh, you see them everyday week in week out, you're training with 'em so you know if they're doing well or not like. Roy [pseudonym], like, he's, like, one of my good friends 'ere, like, he's progressing every single day and I think he's getting better all the time and, like, he says the same to me so... Like, I still monitor all the lads here to see how they're all doing, like, it's a good thing.

**AM:** You personally do?

**Julian:** Yeah, I just see how they're doing, like, every single time I'm training, like, I think oh he's done well today in training, oh he's not done so well and just see how well they've done every single week, and then that, like, gives you an idea of how good they are.

**AM:** Do you think the other players are doing this to each other as well?

**Julian:** Yeah, I think everyone does it, 'cos everyone knows how good each one is, and like... I could bet that all of them could say who's the best, who's the second, who's the third best, who, like, they think is the best in the team and who's the worst in the team, 'cos they all know how good each other are.

Lateral surveillance has been used to describe the growing number of surveillance systems and techniques implemented post 9/11. In relation to the counter-terrorist movement Chan (2008: 237) identifies that "the new lateral policing has all the hallmarks of a down-market, low-tech version of 'high-policing'". This particular mode of surveillance has increased controversy over its implication. Within the wider sphere of society, and more specifically in relation to counter-terrorism, Chan (2008) notes that

this particular mode of surveillance is designed to create awareness and vigilance providing information on activities that deviate from the norm. However, as Chan (2008) indicates this particular technique of peer monitoring can create a culture of suspicion amongst the populace leading to a notion of distrust. Chan (2008: 235) notes that “if the lack of horizontal trust is the mark of a culture of suspicion, then it is not surprising that this is more than made up for by an increased reliance on vertical trust”. It was clear that lateral surveillance existed within the academies; however, its presence was used to obtain knowledge for personal gain rather than reporting instances of abnormal activity due to suspicion.

Chan (2008: 237) notes that “the new lateral surveillance, as part of the logic of preparedness, is not interested in sustaining trust and building healthy communities”. It was unclear as to whether academy athletes sustained a sense of trust amongst one another. However, it was clear that a competitive environment ensured that lateral surveillance was used to gain significant advantages over teammates. This issue of trust and lateral surveillance was only discussed by Ethan and Christopher, two of the Derrington Town academy athletes:

I mean you’ll speak to some people and they’ll be ohh you were great, you were great and you’ll be like ohh thanks, thanks but you know they’re sayin’ that just to sort of keep face and stuff like that (**Ethan**).

Players do comment on other players behind their backs and I know that, I try not to, I don’t really do that but other players will do. Not always in a bad way sometimes they’re like, yeah they’re playing amazing they’re doing really really well, uhhmm...and then sometimes it might be negative (**Christopher**).



Chan (2008: 237) concludes by indicating that,

Like high policing, the new lateral surveillance is ‘absorbent’ and ‘quiet’: it is *absorbent* in its ambition to accumulate intelligence from the general public everywhere, it is *quiet* in its low emphasis on prosecution success, but it manages to instil dread in the whole population through the stealthy character of its operation.

Unlike Chan’s (2008) depiction of lateral surveillance it must be noted that peer monitoring amongst the academy athletes was not implemented to prosecute but to acquire knowledge. The presence of lateral surveillance within the academies highlights the competitive nature of the academy environment. Lateral surveillance provided a useful indication of player performance for each individual athlete. It was an effective mode of surveillance that induced a notion of self-discipline amongst the academy athletes. It was perceived as an unconscious act that was carried out almost habitually by athletes providing a useful tool for the progression of their careers. Although Chan (2008) described this mode of surveillance as *quiet*, within the academies the players talked openly to each other about their respective performances. In such instances players become acutely aware of each others’ position within the academy allowing for comparisons to take place and judgments concerning the development of teammates to be made.

### 5.6 Conclusion

Savage (1998: 67) notes that “the originality of Foucault’s analysis lies in his concentration on two rather different techniques by which modern ‘capillary’ power operates, firstly, through the elaboration of techniques of bodily control, and secondly, through the construction of new forms of ‘self monitoring’ subjectivity”. It is clear that

within the academies a system of self-monitoring existed. Self-surveillance induced a method of self-discipline that was embodied by a conscious effort to maintain peak physical fitness. Eskes *et al* (1998: 319) state that “modern society has social control mechanisms that are dispersed and difficult to locate. The result is the production of docile bodies that monitor, guard and discipline themselves”. The academies maintained a network of dispersed surveillance sites whereby the athletes were monitored in a variety of aspects. Through such monitoring techniques the academy athletes disciplined themselves and one another through self and lateral modes of surveillance. Self-surveillance and lateral surveillance promoted a more subtle method of discipline as they removed the need for an enforced mode of discipline by coaches and academy managers. Such an approach attempted to re-enforce the ideal of ‘attitude’ or what it was to ‘be’ a professional footballer or rugby player. This technique of surveillance promoted the internalisation of key values associated with the identity of becoming a professional athlete.

The Foucauldian notion of surveillance suggests that such a process is more than just a mere exercise. If one is to exact a care of the self then this process must be adopted and integrated into the individual’s attitude. It no longer becomes a separate routine but an integral part of the individual’s way of life. Rail and Harvey (1995: 166) note that “modern societies utilise a disciplinary power based on a system of surveillance that is internalised to such an extent that each person now becomes his or her own overseer”. The academy athletes not only became their own overseer but also utilised lateral surveillance as an effective mode of knowledge acquisition. It was more than just an exercise that was practiced on regular occasions; it was a mode of behaviour

that had been adopted by the athletes to form part of their attitude toward professionalism. It was viewed as a progressive form of self-discipline; without the routine process of self-evaluation reaching the status of a professional footballer or rugby player appeared to be problematic.

Savage (1998: 67) notes that “surveillance operates on the ‘body’ and on the ‘soul’”, as with the academy athletes, self-surveillance or lateral surveillance was intended to shape not only the body of the athlete but also their attitude. For the academy athletes ‘professionalism’ and a disciplined ‘attitude’ required both the transformation of body and soul. The purpose of remaining within the academy system for all the academy athletes was to pursue the career of a professional athlete. The direction of their careers within the academies systems depended greatly upon inspection, examination and control. To adopt the role of professional athlete or pursue the correct attitude at an early stage demonstrated a greater willingness to conform to the desired norms and thus aid the progression of their career.

Despite the use of surveillance within the academies, the notion of an authoritarian approach towards discipline was not completely redundant as coaches inevitably displayed authoritative behaviour whilst coaching (Kelly and Waddington, 2006; Parker, 2006). The regulation of the academy athletes and the concept of authoritarianism and its impact upon discipline will be explored further within the subsequent chapter. A specific emphasis will be placed upon Weber’s (1978) concept of ‘domination by authority’ to explore the authoritative role of the coaches and their interaction with the players.

## Chapter Six: Discipline and the role of Authority

### *6.1 Introduction*

This chapter aims to explore the concept of discipline and the role of authority within the two academies. By adopting a Foucauldian approach a further analysis of how the structure of the institutions impact on the athletes' approach towards disciplining the self can be carried out. A focus upon the regulation of time and space within the academies will be made in relation to the academy athletes' daily schedule. As Chapter Four and Five indicate surveillance techniques and the promotion of self-surveillance amongst the academy athletes induced a mode of subjectivity that led to the disciplining of the self. However, the role of coach as a disciplinarian was still an integral feature of the academies cultural environments. Although previous chapters have highlighted the subtle modes of control witnessed within the academies, the authority of coaches and the level of disciplinary control they command should not be overlooked. The concept of domination by authority (Weber, 1978) will be used to explore the authoritarian role of coaches within the academies. Specific emphasis will be placed upon exploring the authoritative nature of discipline and the authoritarian/subservient power relation between coaches and players that has been witnessed in previous research (Cushion and Jones, 2006; Parker, 1996a).

## *6.2 The Timetable and Control of Activity*

As previously indicated research regarding elite youth sport (Donnelly and Petherick, 2004; Hong, 2004) highlights the regimented lifestyle of young athletes. Athletes who are training as young professionals are often subject to a lifestyle that is dictated by fixed training schedules. The purpose of the training schedule is to train the body as efficiently as possible and to maximise the use of contact time between the coach and athlete. Crossley's (1996) analysis of the Foucauldian notion of power suggests that bodies are partly controlled via the organisation and regulation of space. Crossley (1996: 107) states that "it is the use of space, as an ongoing, situated activity, that constitutes body-power. And this demands that the body is both active and acted upon". Within the context of the sports academies the timetable itself was utilised as an effective mode of discipline controlling both the athletes' time and social space. Driver (1994: 119) notes that "new techniques of moral regulation depend on a more calculative attitude towards human behaviour". These techniques of moral regulation are manifested in the execution of classifications, timetables and routines used to organise time and space (Driver, 1994). Lefebvre (2002: 231) defines social space as "the environment of the group and of the individual within the group; it is the horizon at the centre of which they place themselves and in which they live". Within the academies the timetable, as a disciplinary mechanism, imposed a regulation of social space ensuring that the athletes adhered to an environment that was carefully controlled by a segmentation of both time and space.

The introduction of a regimented timetable to early nineteenth century institutions, such as schools, hospitals and workshops, highlights the effectiveness of

such a disciplinary measure. Goldstein (1984:175) indicates that Foucault's disciplines were achieved through "the placement of persons in enclosed, partitioned spaces where their time was given structure by means of detailed daily schedules". The central locality of Valley FC's academy enhanced the disciplinary effect of the timetable as opposed to the dispersed organisation witnessed at the rugby academy. Although both utilised a dispersed surveillance network to monitor athletes, Valley FC had the luxury of partitioning and enclosing the athletes in a central location around a more rigid schedule. Foucault (1979) suggests that the timetable itself is able to impose three distinct methods; it may be described as a disciplinary tool able to establish rhythms, impose specific occupations and regulate cycles of repetition. Although perhaps not as extreme as the nineteenth century corrective schools, the timetable within high performance sport may also be used to great effect.

Within the academies the timetable became a tool for instilling a routine in the athletes' lives that remained unchanged only allowing for minor deviation. The unquestioned acceptance of this particular routine for the academy athletes ensured that behaviour was shaped around the activity that was dictated by the regimentation of their daily or weekly schedule. Foucault (1979: 151) indicates that "precision and application are, with regularity, the fundamental virtues of disciplinary time". The timetable allowed coaches to focus their time on necessary activities and avoid the athletes from distracting themselves with unnecessary tasks. Shogan (1999: 25) notes that "in order to ensure efficient use of time, coaches must be masters of the timetable". Within both the Valley FC and Derrington Town academy a weekly timetable, was established for the athletes. The Derrington Town academy training sessions were based on a Monday,

Thursday and Friday. Josiah a first year Derringtonstone Town academy player described the academy's weekly timetable. Due to the educational commitments of the academy athletes all training sessions were scheduled around their university or school hours. The contact time between the coaches and academy athletes was significantly less than that of Valley FC's academy. For the majority of rugby players their main source of coaching and, thus, playing time would be for the local clubs who they played for during the week and on the weekend:

**AM:** Can you describe a typical day here at the academy?

**Josiah:** Uhhh, I only 'ave training on a Monday, Thursday and a Friday. Monday it's half seven in the morning, so that's pretty nasty. So we go in the gym then for an hour and then we do like an hours training outside. Then Thursday we've just got the gym so we do the gym at five o'clock, then Friday we're back in at half seven in the morning, then you've got that, then there's the training session outside. But we go away and train at different clubs, most of us, like who we play on a Saturday, the teams who we play matches for when there's like no matches for the academy.

The schedule for Derringtonstone Town academy players throughout the week consisted of a weights session each morning followed by a skills session and was unlikely to change. Due to the nature of the early start punctuality was a prominent issue for the academy coaches and players. When discussing the implication of a schedule within high performance training Shogan (1999: 24) notes that the use of a timetable "may not be as prevalent in schools in the latter part of the twentieth century, but is still prevalent in high performance sport. For one thing, coaches are intolerant of those who arrive late for practice". This was evident within Derringtonstone Town's academy, lateness was not acceptable and punctuality was to be viewed as an indication of character. Derringtonstone

Town's academy coach indicated that if the players were to succeed at becoming professional athletes then punctuality should be held in high regard:

We had some of the senior academy guys, two of their gym sessions are on a Monday and Friday morning at 7.30am. The first couple of weeks of the season they'd just started at university so its freshers week and they'd been out a lot, and drinking and getting used to meeting new people and stuff. Uhhh, and we just got them altogether and said, "Look if you've got an ambition of playing at the highest level we would expect you to turn up on time, we turn up on time so you turn up on time; once we're here we can enjoy what we're doing and stuff but you've gotta be here on time" (Phillip).

Rugby players who turned up late or missed training sessions, without legitimate reason, were administered extra training as punishment. Josiah highlighted a situation where he missed one of his initial early morning training sessions. Due to his absence at the session he was subjected to extra training without rest. Although he admits that he was able to feel the physical benefits from such a punishment it was an experience that ensured he would always be on time for future training sessions:

**AM:** What happens if you miss a session?

**Josiah:** Uhm I missed one, I slept through my alarm, it was about a month ago and I had to come in later that day and I got beasted by the fitness and conditioning coach.

**AM:** What did he make you do?

**Josiah:** Uhhhh, just did like what we usually do in the gym but without any rests and then extra on top, and then it was just me and him so I couldn't hide really.

**AM:** How did you feel after that?

**Josiah:** Uhhhh, it felt good actually, although I didn't wanna miss another session.



In comparison to Derringstone Town's academy the young footballers experienced a greater amount of contact time with the coaches, managers and conditioning coaches. By dividing the practice sessions of the footballers, with each session starting and ending at a specific time, an organised environment was created that exerted control and discipline amongst the academy athletes. Giddens' (1991b: 157) examination of Foucault's concept of timing and space in the workplace indicates that:

Managers have to coax a certain level of performance from workers. They are concerned not only with the time-space differentiation and positioning of the bodies but also with the co-ordination of the conduct of agents, whose behaviour has to be channelled in definite ways to produce collaborative outcomes.

The formation of a standardised and routine schedule allowed for the regulation of the academy athletes' behaviour. The timetable acts as a disciplinary tool allowing for the creation of a productive and effective individual who acts in accordance with the desired norms established by the academy staff.

Foucault's (1979) analysis of the late eighteenth century military organisation provides further understanding of how discipline was created through the division of training into parallel segments, the construction of an analytical plan, a decision on the duration of each segment of training that should conclude with an examination and introduce specificity of exercises according to rank (Foucault, 1979). Eric, a footballer who had been at Valley FC since the age of seven described the weekly routine for the senior academy players. Although perhaps not as regimented as Foucault's (1979) depiction of the military organisation, through his description we are able to see the parallel between the military institutions of the eighteenth century and the schedule of high performance athletes:

**AM:** Could you describe a typical week at the academy?

**Eric:** What, like, going through day to day?

**AM:** Yeah.

**Eric:** Monday we come in at like half eight, 'cos we've normally had a game on the Saturday, so we come in at half eight and do recovery, do weights, uhhhh, we normally have a urine test to test our hydration.

**AM:** What do you mean by recovery session?

**Eric:** Well we go in the pools do a bit of stretching, ice baths and stuff like that. Then we come in, obviously go and get a shower after that, then we do college from ten till three, uhh, four or five in the afternoon. Then Tuesday in for nine, nine o'clock till ten we do weights or core or leg weights or stuff like that, with the fitness coach and then we train from half ten till half twelve, one o'clock, then have dinner, then depends how hard the week is following we go out training in the afternoon for a couple of hours. Wednesday...Nine 'til ten we do something like core weights, we mix it up, uh...Normally leg weights on a Wednesday, then we train from half ten 'til half twelve, one o'clock again, sometimes we have the afternoon off, sometimes go back out after dinner. And then uh...Thursday from nine 'til ten we normally do something lighter 'cos it's closer to the game, so we do core probably, proprioception something like that. And then train from half ten 'til half twelve and have our dinner, then college from after we've had our dinner till four or five o'clock again. And then Friday it's, we're normally in for nine or ten, we don't do any core or anything 'cos obviously we've got the game on Saturday, and we just do like a light session in the morning, like some box, like possession work stuff like that, get ready for the match prep really, ready for Saturday. Then obviously Saturday play our game, Sunday either off or in for recovery.

Foucault (1979) indicates that a rigid structure to the working day increased the efficiency of time used. In the working house and school of the nineteenth century activities were restricted to specific times. By partitioning the working day and governing minute actions in detail the quality of time and the imposition of discipline was used more effectively (Foucault, 1979).

As Eric's description suggests, Valley FC academy athletes were able to give a detailed description of their working week. The rigidity of this structure would only alter if games were to be played during the week and not on weekends. As contact time with the football players was a concern for the coaches the time spent must be used efficiently. Foucault (1979: 151) states that "time measured and paid must also be a time without impurities or defects; a time of good quality, throughout which the body is applied to its exercise". Within Derrington Town's academy the coach emphasised the importance of efficiency within training. Individuals who were not working to their maximum or were not as effective on the pitch were described as 'social loafers':

**AM:** So basically everyone needs to have an impact or be effective within their position?

**Phillip:** Yeah, yeah 'cos if you're not then there's no point in you being there 'cos you're a bit of a social drag on the rest of the team. 'Cos if you're not pulling your weight then someone else has gotta do the work for you, if everyone is working to their highest level and working as hard as they can then you can't really ask any more of anybody. But there are social loafers within teams, who sort of hang back and don't give their all, and that just makes other people have to work harder.

Similar to Light and Kirk's (2000) analysis of high school rugby players, training sessions within the rugby academy were engineered towards developing the players' skill level and maximising efficiency. Light and Kirk (2000: 171) witnessed that the majority of training sessions observed focused upon "developing the correct technique, to using the body in the most efficient manner possible". The morning training sessions at Derrington Town's academy focused primarily upon skill acquisition, body positioning and technique. These skills session were designed specifically to focus upon technique and improving efficiency once on the pitch. Training sessions within Valley

FC's academy were also used to great effect. During the week the training sessions were divided into specific activities focusing on physical fitness and tactical awareness. These sessions were further subdivided into activities that were designed for players relating to their specific position. Christian, the second year academy scholar described a typical week of training and how each session was broken down into separate activities:

**AM:** Could you describe a typical week for you at the academy?

**Christian:** Monday's we do, we come in for half eight for recovery after the game on a Saturday, then we do college work all Monday. Tuesday mornin' we do, like, possession work, like keepin' the ball, and then Tuesday afternoon we go out and do tactical work. Then Wednesday you do like games and possession work as well, then Thursday mornin' sometimes crossing and finishing<sup>27</sup>, finishing for the strikers and defenders, like, heading and Thursday afternoon is college work. Then today Friday we do, we just do like possession and then matches 'cos it's the day before the game so we don't tire ourselves out.

**AM:** You mentioned that your week was broken down and within these sessions you do tactical work, possession work...

**Christian:** Yeah crossing and finishing and defenders do work so every day there's like, for each position really, you do technical work most of the week but Tuesday afternoons you sometimes go out and do crossing and finishing or tactical work. Like the back four will go in against our two strikers and the midfielders play it in and the back four try and win headers against them.

The training schedule for Valley FC academy players was unlikely to alter and repetition of the activities was a key principal of their training. As Giulianotti (2005: 104) indicates "modern coaches *qua* accredited experts reduce player actions to routinized tasks, to be practiced until the body repeats these manoeuvres intuitively". Having observed training sessions at Valley FC's academy it was clear to see that drills were regularly repeated until performed successfully. Shogan (1999: 25) states that

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<sup>27</sup> Crossing and finishing refers to a drill involving the wingers or wide players and the attacking forwards. Wingers and wide players practice crossing the ball whilst the attacking plays attempt to try and score a goal.

“without timetables, coaches would be unable to establish training cycles or the rhythms of specific activities. Nor would they be able to regulate cycles of repetition. *Repetition* of skills under competition conditions is central to disciplined performance”.

The regimentation of the academy athletes’ schedules highlighted the mundanity of their lifestyles and the lack of agency they possessed. When discussing the notion of excellence in sport Chambliss (1989: 85) notes that “there is no secret: there is only the doing of all those little things, each one done correctly, time and again, until excellence in every detail becomes a firmly ingrained habit, an ordinary part of one’s everyday life”. The repetition of various skills and techniques and the regimented schedule that the academy athletes followed was considered to be a necessary part of their path to achieving excellence. Within both the Valley FC and Derringstone Town academies repetition of drills within a competitive environment was integral to the athlete training sessions. Jacob, a former Derringstone Town academy athlete, commented on the repetition of drills exercised within the first team training sessions. It was clear that drills were repeated on a regular basis to ensure that the required actions or tasks were performed successfully and to identify those tasks that require further repetition or practice:

**AM:** How often do you do the same drill?

**Jacob:** Until you get it right. If you’re doin’ it right, like continuously, you’re gonna stop and do something else ‘cos if you’re doin’ it right, well... You’re doin’ it right so you don’t need to carry it on, you need to go and practice something else that you’re not doin’ as well.

The rigid schedule of high performance athletes presented by Shogan (1999) was also found to be prominent within both the academies. However, the lifestyle of the Valley

FC academy athletes, on balance, was considered to be more controlled. The contact time between the coaches and footballers was much greater as both their training and education was located within the confines of the academy. Most of the footballers' time was structured around the training of the body, which involved regular weight training, skills sessions and physical conditioning. By confining the athletes to a central location the timetable was used with greater effect. Technical coaches, conditioning coaches and managers were able to monitor the activities of the athletes with greater efficiency as they trained, ate and learnt together. Orlikowski and Yates (2002: 686) note that temporal organisations, by their very nature, constrain and enable action, by following schedules we restrict our activity to allocated times, which then become routine or taken for granted:

Temporal structures can be used to powerfully shape people's ongoing activities. Structuring becomes particularly influential when certain temporal structures become so closely associated with particular social practices (e.g., teaching occurs in semester-long blocks) that actors have little awareness of them as socially constituted.

The time that was available to the academy athlete's had to be used economically and in accordance with the responsibilities imposed upon them by the coaches or managers. Brettschneider's (1999: 126) examination into top-level adolescent athletes indicates that "the way leisure time is structured and used is determined mainly by the routine of their everyday lives". Whether an academy athlete's leisure time was greatly affected by their daily routine and commitment to achieving professional status was not confirmed. That said the importance of sacrificing leisure time for the sake of pursuing excellence appeared integral to an academy

athlete's life. By implementing a set schedule into the daily lives of the academy athletes, coaches were able to identify where the athletes should be at specific times and the exact tasks or training that they should be performing, thus providing a useful mode of surveillance. Deviation from the schedule established by both academies, without a legitimate reason, required explanation and was punishable.

The combination of repetitive training and a structured routine created an environment that promoted a disciplined approach towards their lifestyle as young professional athletes. In addition, Weber's (1978) notion of domination by authority may be utilised to explore the modes of discipline, and how they were enforced, within both academy settings.

### *6.3 Discipline and Domination by Authority*

As previously indicated in Chapter Two a Foucauldian approach to discipline and power introduces the notion of a 'docile' individual, one who is compliant and effective. By adopting a Foucauldian perspective to discipline, docility is achieved through the introduction of the moral pressure of comparison (Merquior, 1991). This technique of normalisation removes the need for forceful domination and overt displays of power; through a relentless focus on performance a discipline is induced amongst team members (Katzenbach and Smith, 2005). Although this mode of discipline was achieved within the academies the occurrence of authoritarian behaviour and forceful domination, as demonstrated by coaching staff, was still noticeably present.

The creation of a disciplined environment within the academies emerged through the use of dispersed methods of surveillance, hierarchical observation, the

documentation of player progress reports and an adherence to a normalising standard. As Foucault (1979: 141) indicates a disciplined body is shaped through “a whole set of techniques, a whole corpus of methods and knowledge, descriptions, plans and data”. It is a mode of discipline that should be considered a productive force concerned with creating rather than repressing (Armstrong, 1994). Within the academies such methods helped to promote a notion of self and lateral surveillance, and thus discipline, amongst the players. Similar to Kohn’s (2008) study on martial arts training, the disciplining of an individual requires a control that works both from within the self and is assisted by external forces such as teachers or trainers. Although the academy coaches played an important role in the disciplining of the athletes, self-discipline towards training and lifestyle was an imperative part of their development towards becoming a professional. The Derrington Town academy coach likened his role, at times, to that of a parent rather than a coach. It was important for Derrington Town’s academy coach to instil a sense of independence and self-discipline into the rugby players. The ability of a player to take responsibility for his own actions and decisions was viewed as necessary in order to ‘develop them as people’:

A lot of the time it can be a bit like being an extra parent, you’re sort of looking after kids rather than actually teaching them rugby. Uhhhm, and if we’re looking after them all the time then maybe they’re not developing as people as they should, and being able to stand on their own two feet and ask questions for themselves and stuff. So we’ve got the information there, but we’re sort of going down the line now of, the information is there if you wanna come and get it you come and get it, uhhhm were not just gonna give hand outs to everybody, and that’s a good thing to do **(Phillip)**.

While one may suggest that the production of disciplined skill does not necessarily require the display of authoritative power, coaches and managers exercised a significant



amount of authority over the athletes. Research by Parker (1996a, 2001, 2006) indicates that particular norms are reinforced by the notion of authoritarianism that exists within professional sport. Parker (2006: 693) states that such authoritarianism had “emerged as something to which players must be seen to respond positively and a way in which managers might identify potential strengths and weaknesses amongst team members”. Within Parker’s (2006) study the authority of the coach was demonstrated through verbal chastisement and physical punishments when the trainees were performing poorly. Due to the implementation of such training methods Parker (2006: 694) notes that “notions of personal and occupational threat, fear and aggression were clearly evident in trainee accounts of institutional relations”. Some of the trainees would use these verbal criticisms and physical punishments as a source of motivation, Parker identified that (2006: 695) “though disapproving of their everyday treatment, some trainees were of the opinion that rather than be regarded as a matter of personal attack, these strategies could also be viewed as a method of managerial motivation”. In addition, Parker (2006) indicates that further effects of this particular style of coaching presented ulterior motives and more subtle forms of discipline. In order to rectify poor performances or mould a trainee’s ‘attitude’ further exercises were implemented in the form of physical punishment. This ensured that trainees adopted the appropriate attitude, conditioned them to a higher level of fitness but also prepare them for the arduous severity of professional football. Commenting upon the physical punishments administered by the team coach, Parker (2006: 694) states that:

As well as serving to accommodate overall fitness objectives, these practices appeared to constitute an additional element of trainee ‘mortification’ whereby

the rigours and authoritative demands of the professional game could be firmly implanted within the minds of the recruits.

Similar research in youth football academies has further highlighted the behavioural discourse that is witnessed between academy coaches and players. Cushion and Jones (2006: 148) reinforce the authoritarian aspect of youth football and the academy setting indicating that “such beliefs are deeply rooted in the culture of professional soccer, with harsh, authoritarian, and often belligerent coaching behaviour viewed as a necessary aspect of preparing young players for the rigors of the game”. Within Valley FC’s academy players would describe this form of authoritative discipline when discussing errors made whilst training or during matches. Similar to the research by Cushion and Jones (2006) and Parker (2001, 2006), an authoritarian/subservient relationship was evident within the football academy in this study. Whilst describing the change in coaching style that he had witnessed since joining the Valley FC academy from a young age, Eric outlined how the approach toward discipline had altered suggesting that a harsh authoritarian approach towards discipline was beneficial:

**Eric:** Obviously as a kid you weren’t like...If you weren’t doin’ as well as you could then you...Well you might’ve been shouted at a bit but you wouldn’t of been like bollocked really but now...Now with Graham [Academy Coach], which is the right way to go about it I think, you’re bollocked really and you’re told where you stand and that really, but he tells you in a diplomatic way sometimes, so...

**AM:** How do you feel when you are bollocked?

**Eric:** Well you feel like an arse, but you feel like he’s an arse an’ all but he’s helping you really so you’ve just gotta get on with it and don’t sulk and stuff like that, just get on with it and improve.

Max Weber's examination of 'domination by authority' provides an understanding of the functioning of authoritative discipline that can be witnessed within the academics environment. Weber (1978: 941) states that "in most varieties of social action domination plays a considerable role, even where it is not obvious at first sight". Weber (1978) demonstrates the link between domination and the authoritarian power of command. Foucault's (1979) analysis parallels that of Weber (1978), as emphasis is placed upon the creation of an obedient subject. Commands are dispensed by those in positions of authority, which are thus interpreted as the 'norm' by individuals who receive them. Weber (1978: 946) notes that "we cannot overlook the meaning of the fact that the command is accepted as a 'valid' norm". The command as a 'norm' is similar to Foucault's (1979) approach regarding the disciplinary mechanism and the process of normalisation, which will be discussed in Chapter Seven. Weber (1978) suggests that the effectiveness of the command may be achieved through methods of persuasion, empathy, inspiration or an amalgamation of the three. Weber (1978: 946-947) illustrates that:

In a concrete case the performance of the command may have been motivated by the ruled's own conviction of its propriety, or by the sense of duty, or by fear, or by 'dull' custom, or by desire to obtain some benefit for himself.

Weber (1978) indicates that the 'ruled' may perform certain commands based on a sense of duty or by 'dull' custom, a concept that corresponds with Foucault's (1979) process of normalisation. Even so, Weber (1978) is discussing power relations in terms of domination by authority, a contrast to Foucault's (1979) representation of power. Weber (1978: 947) states that "in some limited respect the will of the one has influenced that of the other even against the other's reluctance and that, consequently, to the extent

one has dominated over the other”. Therefore, when discussing the concept of power, Weber (1978) indicates that direct control may be exacted over another. Authoritative behaviour that is readily associated with the ‘traditional’ forms of football coaching was witnessed within Valley FC’s academy. When discussing the procedures of discipline for players who were underperforming coaches were seen to use an authoritarian approach. Commands directed by coaches during training sessions may be seen as valid norms and players act on these commands either through custom or a sense of obedience, fundamentally they do as they are told. The lengthy field note entry below illustrated the typical coaching behaviour that was witnessed in one of the initial observations conducted at the football academy. It was quite clear from the profanities used during the session (and the way in which the coach interacted and commanded the academy players) that an authoritarian approach was being adopted. Players appeared to obey commands without question and responded positively to authoritarian behaviour:

During the drill Graham [Academy Coach] would ‘yell’ instructions to individual players. Players were scolded for poor passes and bad technique with the use of some quite ‘abusive’ language [quite a few profanities used when the same mistake was made twice]. Every time a mistake was made the individual responsible was identified and the mistake rectified. Prior to any corrections Graham would always ask the group their opinion regarding the error just committed. Questions such as, “Why was that a bad mistake?”, “Why was that a bad pass?”, “What went wrong?”, “Where should he have been?”, “What was wrong with that?”, “What should he have done?” and “What do you lot constantly do that’s wrong?” were often directed towards the players. After they were questioned players would normally remain silent and not speak up. Little time was given for the players to respond with an answer and Graham would then tell them what went wrong, why it went wrong and then immediately tell them what to do.

One noticeable moment occurred when quite a torrent of abuse was directed toward one player who was not displaying the correct ‘character’. The player’s lacklustre efforts were quickly noticed by Graham. The training was halted and Graham directed his attention towards this particular player. Rather forcefully

Graham began to question the effort of the athlete, finishing his discussion with the player he turned to him and said: “There is a big fucking question mark over you right now”. After disciplining this particular player he then turned his concern to the rest of the team stating that if they all adopt this particular character then they will get, “Fucking beaten on Saturday”. Coincidentally, this seemed to inject more life into the practice and everyone, most noticeably the player in question, picked up their energy levels (Author’s filed notes, 21<sup>st</sup> of November, 2008).

Despite the language used and the authoritarian attitude adopted praise was also given to players who had performed well, in the form of Graham (Academy Coach) yelling “beautiful”, “superb pass” or “top draw” from the sideline. However, Weber’s (1978) notion of domination by authority was further demonstrated by the footballers’ lack of choice or autonomy during training sessions. The Valley FC academy coach was able to describe the mode of discipline that was commonly used within the academy. Within this description the coach highlighted the players’ lack of autonomy and the authoritative behaviour traditionally associated with professional football:

**AM:** What happens to players who are not performing well in training?

**Graham:** Do you mean do I beat ‘em up? [We both laugh]. If we’re out training I will verbally tell ‘em in an assertive manner.

**AM:** How do the players respond to that once you have to discipline them?

**Graham:** Fine, well they ain’t got no choice, they ain’t got no choice, there will be a stage where I’ll say, “Listen get off my pitch, you don’t wanna play, off my pitch”, and I’ll say, “Get up the tunnel”. I’ve told the players, I’m not gonna lie now, try and sit ‘ere and lie and say to you I find a nice way of doin’ it. There’s times where players come down and I just say, “No sorry you’re not working, you’re not training, you’re not at it”. You know, don’t get me wrong I’ll ask “Is everything ok”? You know I’ll say “Are you alright, you’re not at it today”. If it’s like, what I class as one of them days where it’s just not happening for ‘em, but if it’s a petulant one where they can’t be arsed and they’re moaning with their teammates, and havin’ a go at their teammates, I’ll just say to ‘em, “Stop, do you wanna train, yes or no? Ok ‘ave a go, if it carries on again I’ll stop it a second time, that’s your last warning, do you wanna carry on or get off and go

in”? Players need to know where they stand, other players need to know that the coach is prepared to step in and say, “You’re not doin’ it right, not a problem come out of my session”. ‘Cos otherwise the session ends up dying on its backside because of one particular player isn’t in the mood, and it kills it for everybody, and they need to know that and they need to know that when they go out we’re working.

The imposition of a regimented daily schedule and Weber’s (1978) concept of domination by authority provided an insight into the control and discipline of activity witnessed within the academy settings. Despite such considerations, the traditional values associated with discipline in elite youth sport (Parker, 2001, 2006) were still prominent within the cultural milieu of Valley FC and Derringstone Town and could be identified by the authoritative behaviour displayed by the senior coaching staff.

#### *6.4 Authoritative Modes of Discipline*

Discipline within Valley FC’s academy was seen to establish parameters for the correct mode of training. Without such parameters the players would seem to have a lack of structure. Although this would have given the players a greater amount of autonomy, it would impede upon their development as professional footballers. Therefore, an authoritative mode of discipline was perceived as necessary as it contributed towards the overall development of the players:

Now we go back to that thing, ohh an academy is meant to be enjoyable, football is enjoyable by doin’ it right. If they go out and train and they work hard, do it right then they enjoy it. If I as a coach let ‘em go out with sloppy standards do what they want, when they want, they’ll enjoy it to start with because they think oh this is great we don’t ‘ave to do anything, but when they’re not getting anywhere all of a sudden they’ll be thinking, I don’t know if this is really good, I don’t think I’m particularly enjoying this. It’s too late then, the parameters are gone (**Graham**).

A similar relationship between academy players and coaches was also witnessed within Derrington Town's academy. However, it was noted that during the training sessions less of an authoritarian approach was adopted. All rugby players within the academy received the majority of their coaching at local club sides; therefore, the coaching sessions within the academy focused primarily on the acquisition of key skills. It was clear that a less authoritarian approach was adopted by coaches within these skill sessions in comparison to Valley FC's academy. The following field note describes the atmosphere of the training sessions witnessed within the Derrington Town academy:

The skills session started at 8.30am and had a very relaxed atmosphere, the drills focused on specific skills and advice and instructions were administered after each particular exercise. Players were not singled out for mistakes during or after each drill and advice and instructions were given to all the players by the coach after each drill had finished. Players were rarely questioned with regards to errors made and communication between the coach and players seemed rather one-way. The players performed a drill, the drill was halted and feedback and corrections were given by the coach. Rather than yell instructions from the side-line the coach would watch a drill and then deliver feedback to the group explaining the success or failures in a huddle amongst the players. This was normally accompanied by a demonstration of how to perform the skill correctly or where certain players should have been in relation to their positioning. Although I was standing quite a distance away and chatting with a member of the academy coaching staff, relatively few if any profanities [both from the coach and players] were used throughout the duration of the session. Upon reflection this represented a stark contrast in relation to the coaching environment within the football academy (Author's field notes, 26<sup>th</sup> September, 2008).

Although these field notes demonstrated a less authoritarian approach, Derrington Town's academy coach indicated that certain coaching habits, such as singling individuals out for mistakes made or the use of abusive language to motivate individuals, were still evident. However, the academy coach emphasised that coaches should view the players as individuals, suggesting that certain behaviour should be

adopted for different players regarding issues of discipline. Similar to research by Shogan (1999) the issue of trust was important for Derrington Town's academy coach as it allowed the coaches to deliver critical feedback more effectively:

If someone's struggling in training then obviously you give them advice and help and sort of through the coaching awards you do there's certain things that you're told not to do. And obviously you're not supposed to do things like single people out for criticism but at times it's appropriate depending on the person. Some people thrive on being told, you're crap you need to get better, and it drives them, a sort of military style. Some people need a bit more of a shoulder to cry on when they're not doing good things, some people know they're doing a bad thing, you can tell just by the way they act afterwards. Uhhmm, just sort of take it as you see it (**Phillip**).

Although a direct form of authoritative discipline was upheld by Valley FC's academy coach, it was clear that the enforcement of rules and regulations, the correction of mistakes and overall discipline was not to be the sole responsibility of the coaches, as Frank (1996: 59) notes "externally imposed bodily disciplines and inscriptions have a real effect, but they also are not destiny". It is true that disciplinary mechanisms had a significant impact upon the regulation of an academy athlete's life; however, the athletes maintained a certain level of autonomy that allowed them to make certain decisions regarding their lifestyle or career. This was demonstrated by Valley FC's academy manager when discussing one of the young footballer's recent decisions to pursue a career in athletics:

From an academy point of view we sometimes forget that boys are doing other sports as well, which they might be equally as good at. I mean as recently as this week one boy's decided to come out of the academy because he's a very good, uh, distance runner and he needs to do more training on that. And you know he's in the top twenty nationally so his decision is to say, look I think I want to become a runner and not a footballer (**Henry**).



Players within Valley FC's academy were encouraged to make decisions both on and off the football pitch, taking responsibility for their own actions and the actions of teammates around them. This highlighted the 'docile' nature of the academy athletes as they were able to discipline themselves and one another increasing the utility and productivity of their actions (Foucault, 1979). This was demonstrated by Valley FC's academy coach when discussing issues of discipline and monitoring behaviour within and outside of the academy:

I think the players should know the rules, regulations, parameters and then it's up to them. 'Cos if I'm forever 'aving to do it for 'em monitor 'em, do this, do that, do the other, why 'aven't you done that, why 'aren't you doin' this, fucking hell, hold up when are they gonna start making the decisions. When are they gonna start making their own decisions, when are they gonna start being able to turn around and be on the pitch making their own decisions. I encourage 'em to make their own decisions (**Graham**).

Domination by authority presents a power relation that is not diffused through a network of forces but administered through the power of command. Weber (1978: 948) notes that "we shall ascribe domination, wherever they claim, and to a socially relevant degree find obedience to, commands given and received as such". Domination by virtue of authority guides a power to command and a duty to obey. Within both the academies, however more so within Valley FC, the power to command and duty to obey was clearly evident. During training and matches coaches would administer specific commands which the athletes must follow as correctly and efficiently as possible.

Within the academies the interest of the athletes to conform to commands may be based upon their desire to succeed as professional athletes or renew scholarship contracts. Having observed training sessions at both the academies it was quite clear that

players seldom challenged or questioned the authority or decisions of coaching staff and an authoritarian/subservient relationship was clearly evident. This particular relationship demonstrated the direct mode of discipline that was enforced by academy coaches and highlights the notion of “domination by authority”. However, a small minority of the Valley FC athletes at times confessed to challenging authority. One example of this was witnessed during a pre-season training session at Valley FC’s academy as the following field notes indicate:

An interesting incident occurred during an observation of today’s pre-season training. It was noticed that one of the players was questioned on a mistake that he had made. The training drill was stopped and everyone was silent, the coach asked, “Why did you do that?” The player suggested that his decision was made due to the incorrect positioning of other players and suggested where they should have been, not only that but he questioned the coaches point of view regarding why the mistake was made. The coach responded, “Hold-up, are you the fucking coach now?” The player was made to run extra lengths of the pitch as his answer was deemed incorrect and his ideas on positioning wrong. Once the player had finished his punishment the coach explained to him in front of the other players why he was wrong. (Author’s field notes, 28<sup>th</sup> of July, 2009).

In this instance the player was deemed to be not only questioning the authority of the coach but also adopting the role as coach as he offered suggestions regarding the correction of mistakes made. This particular challenge to the authority of the coach was seldom seen at either academy. However, during the training sessions at Valley FC players were constantly questioned regarding their actions. The incident detailed above provides an example of the players’ ability to resist authority all be it momentarily and with predictable consequences.

Similar to previous research (Cushion and Jones, 2006; Parker, 2001, 2006) domination by the coaches of the players was consistent and omnipresent throughout the

training sessions of the academies. Domination was also expressed through the verbal chastisement of players within the academies. This was most notable amongst the Valley FC athletes and was mentioned when discussing several aspects of the footballers' training. Charles, a second year scholar, discussed how his training had altered during his time at the academy from a very young age. Much like Eric, (cited earlier), he highlighted the 'traditional' authoritative discipline that was often witnessed in professional football:

Once you come in from like under 15's if you're doin' well there you've still gotta put effort in and under 18's you...If you don't put the effort in you get a good bollocking like [we both laugh], so you know you've gotta put the effort in like every day (**Charles**).

This particular mode of discipline was reinforced by other footballers who had also experienced similar behaviour. When discussing how levels of concentration had altered during his career through the academy, Owen highlighted the verbal chastisement players received when losing concentration during training and matches:

**Owen:** You 'ave to be fully concentrated with Graham [Academy Coach], 'cos one slip up and then you just get a kick up the backside [we both laugh], so uhh...you 'ave to concentrate throughout the whole training session.

**AM:** How do you feel when you get a kick up the backside?

**Owen:** Ahhh it's horrible, it is horrible when, uhh...'cos he stands you up in front of everyone and just picks you out and then just shouts at you in front of everyone, which is a bit embarrassing, but it's good for us 'cos it makes us not do it again really, it'll not happen again and we'd improve upon it.

The effects of authoritative behaviour, such as reprimands 'bollockings' and humiliation, was experienced by a large majority of the Valley FC players. However, in

almost every incident the athletes justified this as either necessary or acceptable behaviour in order to aide them in their progression towards professionalism. As Parker (2001, 2006) indicates authoritarian behaviour was perceived as something that all players responded positively towards and provided the coaches with an example of their character. Ethan, a regular first team Derrington Town player, justified the verbal chastisements and authoritarianism by associating it with the nature of the game and the corporate atmosphere that surrounded the sport. Therefore, players should be responsible for their mistakes and accept such behaviour from coaches or club owners:

If you have a run of ten losses you're lookin' down the barrel really. Uhhm, and it's up to them, it's such a cut-throat level it's now ran as sort of a multi-million business and that's how it is. You've gotta learn to accept that and if that means getting' an ear full off the coach or off the boss then that's just sort of what it takes, and you gotta be able to step up and take that really (**Ethan**).

Domination, as a form of power, would appear to present an opposing position to that of Foucault as his main premise regarding power avoids any notion of domination.

However, the aim of introducing the Weberian concept of domination by authority is not to discredit Foucault but to supplement the understanding of power, enhancing certain concepts that remain unexplained or less well defined in the context of the academies.

Although Foucault provides an explanation of the mechanisms of power, the concepts of authority and domination remain relatively unexplored in his work. Moreover, McNay (1996: 101) highlights Foucault's rather one-sided analysis of institutional power suggesting that "power relations are only examined from the perspective of how they are installed in institutions and not considered from the point of view of those subject to power".

The Foucauldian examination of power places much of its attention on the mechanisms of discipline rather than the experiences of those who are subjected to it. Dyck (2008: 3) notes that Foucault's study of power "remained firmly focused on technological features and mechanisms, the "it" of discipline, rather than upon relationships and dealings between those who would apply discipline and those to whom it would be applied". Weber's (1978) analysis of domination allows the disciplinary relationship of coach and athlete to be examined at the level of interaction. Rather than examining the structure of the academies and how this impacts upon the academy athletes, Weber's (1978) concept of domination provided an understanding of the face-to-face interaction between the coaches and athletes. In addition, it exposed the core values that were upheld and perpetuated throughout the academies and amongst the athletes, as the traditional authoritarian/subservient relationship between coaches and players (Parker, 1996a, 2001, 2006) was clearly evident. Although the athletes within this study were encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and actions of others, a need for an authoritative mode of discipline was viewed as necessary both for establishing parameters and controlling activity. Moreover, the authoritative discipline was used more regularly and perhaps with greater effect within Valley FC's academy compared to Derringtonstone Town.

Despite the domination of coaches over players, and the power to command and duty to obey witnessed within the academies, both the athletes at Valley FC and Derringtonstone Town were encouraged to maintain a level of independence. This manifested itself within the academies through the adoption of an authoritative role and the discipline amongst athletes.

### *6.5 Discipline Amongst Athletes*

Although the traditional display of authority commonly associated with coaches in professional sport, was witnessed within the academies, athletes were also able to adopt the role of disciplinarian. Shogan (1999: 38) identifies that “high-performance athletes police their own behaviour because they have incorporated both the technologies and values of docility and correct training”. Within Valley FC’s academy responsibility for accepting and correcting mistakes made during matches and training was integral to the players’ identity. An adherence to such behaviour demonstrated the correct role a player should adopt. Goffman (1963: 82) notes that norms associated with social identity “pertain to the kinds of role repertoires or profiles we feel it permissible for any given individual to sustain”. Within Valley FC’s academy the players were expected to discipline one another; therefore to adopt this particular behaviour reflects the expectations of the coaches and demonstrates that the desired role has been assumed by the players. Eric revealed that the senior Valley FC academy athletes should not have to be told when they had made mistakes or how to correct them as this was a process that they should have already learned. In this instance the need for the manager or coach as a disciplinarian becomes less significant as players should be able to discipline themselves and adjust accordingly:

**AM:** How do you know if you made a mistake? I mean you mentioned that you get bollocked...

**Eric:** No, he doesn’t always bollock us, I mean we know if we’ve made a mistake ourselves and you just say get on with it. Every mistake he doesn’t shout at you, it’s just if you keep making the same mistake then he’ll pull you up and just say, you know what’re you doin’. As we’re all 17, 18 year old now so we know we’ve made a mistake so we just get on with it ourselves and just put it right and that. You know when you’ve made a mistake, if you give the ball away

you know you've given the ball away so you know how to deal with it yourself. We're 17, 18 year old now so it's a bad job if you need the manager to tell you every time you've made a mistake.

By adopting a Foucauldian approach toward operations of modern power in a sporting context, Cole *et al* (2004: 214) state that “individuals who recognize the necessity of their own discipline freely submit to governing techniques”. It is this notion of ‘docility’ that ensures the governing norms of the institution become one’s own (Cole *et al*, 2004).

This particular power relationship was also evident within the academies.

Coaches noted the importance of players adopting a disciplinary role within the academies in this study. An example of this particular shift in power from coach to athlete was the fine system present within Valley FC’s academy. The footballers were fined a certain amount of money if they did not comply with the academy rules such as lateness, absenteeism or behaviour. It was emphasised by the academy coach that the fines system was initiated by the Valley FC footballers themselves. The fines system provided the players with power over one another but also acted as a disciplinary tool for shaping the ‘correct’ behaviour established by the academy coaches and managers. This particular fines system further reinforced the notion of lateral surveillance discussed in Chapter Five as the following quote from Graham, the Valley FC academy coach, suggests:

I don’t wanna fine ‘em, I’ve told ‘em “I’m not interested in fining you, I will if I ‘ave to but I don’t wanna fine you, I want you to be on time, I want you not to be late for training” but kids need to know if they’re gonna be late there needs to be a repercussion. So they set there own fines, I said, “Come up with a fine list”. I said “I’ll check, we’ll always leave it open at the bottom for the coaches discretion and then I want you all, if you agree to it, write on the back we the undersigned agree to the fine and sign it”. So everyone who’s late or is on their phone in the academy, I can go back to him, he can’t turn around to me and say

“Well you’re not fining me”, ‘cos I’ll say, “Well why not you agreed to it”  
(**Graham**).

This was also noticeable when discussing how players were informed of mistakes made during matches and training. The majority of footballers indicated that they recognized mistakes when they were made; however, teammates were likely to discipline or encourage one another. When discussing mistakes made during training Charles noted that teammates were likely to criticise or discipline each other on a routine basis:

**AM:** How do you know if you’ve made a mistake?

**Charles:** Uhhmm...If you’ve made a mistake I’d say like...Obviously you know if you give the ball away or something like that but...Teammates again.

**AM:** Oh, will they tell you?

**Charles:** Oh aye, they’ll sometimes get on your case if you’re playin’ rubbish, sometimes they’ll, like, G you up [motivate], try to get you playin’ well again but sometimes they’ll give you a good rollickin’ like tellin’ you to get your finger out, it just depends.

**AM:** How do you feel when your teammates are giving you a good rollicking?

**Charles:** Like I need to get me finger out [we both laugh], you need to accept it if you’re playin’ badly you can’t...You can’t do anything about it you know in yourself that you should be playin’ better so if they give you an earful you feel like tellin’ ‘em to shut up ‘cos you already know when you’re playin’ badly but...Uhh you just need to accept it and try even harder really.

Similar to the authoritative behaviour displayed by the coaches and managers in the academies, the footballers would also feel they had to respond positively to the criticisms from fellow teammates regardless of how they felt. Within the academies, techniques of surveillance and a fiercely competitive environment created docility amongst the athletes who relied not solely upon authoritarian control but began to



discipline themselves. Within Derringstone Town's academy players were likely to comment on their peers' performances; however, the traditional mode of authoritative discipline, as demonstrated by the footballers, was perhaps less significant. Christopher described a typical situation where other rugby players might comment on mistakes during training and matches. Normally this was done in team meetings during video analysis of training or games and was relatively reserved in comparison to the footballers:

**AM:** Do your teammates ever comment on performances?

**Christopher:** Yeah, yeah but not like...not harshly really, everyone's a pretty good player, but yeah they do they do comment on performances. And like we'll go, we won't go through the video as a team but we'll go through parts of the video as a team, and people comment on it and say, you know what people could do better at and stuff, so yeah they do make comments.

Another of the rugby academy players re-affirmed the reserved approach towards discipline amongst the squad. Within Derringstone Town's academy teammates were perceived as encouraging and less scolding of mistakes made when training and playing in matches:

**AM:** How do you know if you've made a mistake?

**Jacob:** Uhhmmm...How do I know if I've made a mistake, uhh...Well I'd say your teammates let you know but they don't really let you know they just, sort of, give you encouragement and sort of try and make you a bit more confident in what you're doing.

A greater understanding of the coaches positions within the social setting of the academies may be highlighted through the use of Goffman's (1959) concept 'the director of performance'. Once again, this specific concept helps to demonstrate the position of

the coaches in relation to the athletes and the social context that surrounds them. Despite the authoritative importance of the coaches present within the academies, power relations were not fixed and fluctuated throughout the social composition of the academy settings.

### *6.6 Director of Performance*

As previously indicated, Weber (1978) identified that the legitimate authority to command is based upon the acceptance of the established order. Within the social context of the academies, to comprehend how ‘the order’ is administered and upheld provides insight into the particular power relations that existed. The authoritative importance of the coaching and managerial staff must not be overlooked when considering themes of discipline and authority. The role of coach or academy manager can be likened to that of Goffman’s (1959) ‘director of performance’ as athletes are clearly dependent upon a central figure to manage and direct performances. The director of performance maintains two functions, the first is to instil discipline within the team, and the second to allocate specific roles according to the performance and personal front that is employed for each part (Goffman, 1959). It was clear that within an academy setting these functions were necessary in order to produce effective performance.

Goffman (1959: 101) states that, “when one examines a team-performance one often finds that someone is given the right to direct and control the progress of dramatic action”. Within a sports academy it is necessary for one or more senior individual to adopt a controlling role and direct the team, this may include the sport scientist, coach or manager. In addition Goffman (1959: 101) notes that, “the director views the

performance in terms of whether it went ‘smoothly’, ‘effectively’ and ‘without a hitch’”. Coaches and managers will conduct a post analysis of the team member’s performances relating both to training and games. The grading of a player’s performance was demonstrated by Valley FC’s academy coach when discussing forms of feedback:

I would’ve said there’s every form of feedback within our academy they need, as in uhhmm written feedback, I keep marks, uhh notes from training. You see I mark ‘em each game to what I think they performed like six is average, seven is good, eight is very good, nine is excellent, ten is like fucking proverbial over the moon, five is poor, four is very poor (**Graham**).

The director of performance is a concept that was present within the cultural composition of the sports academies. Any institution that establishes a pre-determined set of norms or values must have authoritative figures to implement these particular norms and disciplinary regulations. Therefore, such a concept was an inevitable construct of the social hierarchy of the academy. Ingham (1976: 359) identifies that, “throughout the formal socialisation of the athlete the moral virtues of discipline are stressed and provide legitimation for the coaches’ authority”. However, as indicated the power relations that were present within the academies were not solely restricted to their hierarchical structure. Athletes within the academies were expected to assume the role of disciplinarian, not only towards the self but also towards peers, and demonstrated authoritative behaviour that was traditionally reserved for the coaches and managers.

Although coaches were perceived as the central agent for the propagation of moral virtues and discipline amongst the academy athletes, the academies utilised a variety of methods to ensure that athletes were exposed to a system of self-surveillance. Coaches then became removed, although not entirely, from the central role as instigator

and enforcer of discipline. Academy coaches expected and encouraged athletes to take up positions of authority and not only discipline themselves but other team members around them. The lateral-discipline demonstrated by the Valley FC academy players was encouraged by the academy staff. The athletes were encouraged to discipline their peers if they appeared to be ineffective or not performing to the required standard as Geoff, the football academy sport scientist suggested:

It's their team not the coach's team. So for instance if my teammate wasn't, wasn't at it and it's effecting my team, we're happy as coaches for him to say, hey come on, and try and get a grip of that player rather than us have to do it **(Geoff)**.

Due to the implementation of disciplinary techniques such as methods of analysis and documentation, discipline as a function for the director of performance becomes less significant. Although managers and coaches were still perceived by the athletes as authority figures, these disciplinary techniques are implemented to create 'docile' bodies that employ a notion of self-surveillance, which ultimately led the athletes to discipline themselves and those around them.

### *6.7 Conclusion*

The authoritative nature of professional sport outlined by previous research (Cushion and Jones, 2006; Johns and Johns, 2000; Parker 2001, 2006;) was witnessed within the cultural milieu of the academies. Weber's (1978) domination by authority highlights the disciplinary nature of interaction between coaches and players. However, as previously stated power relations within the academies were dispersed and authority was entrusted to the players as well as the coaches and managers. Discipline within the

academies was not only dispensed by the coaches and managers but also directed toward the self and among the players. Similar to the notion of lateral surveillance, the idea of self and lateral discipline was a dominant theme within the academies.

The regimented lifestyles of the academy athletes presented a rather stoic and somewhat monotonous portrait of their lives, which was especially noticeable amongst the footballers. Despite this, both the Derrington Town and Valley FC academy athletes maintained an active social life outside of the confines of the academy.

Research conducted by Roy (1959) surrounding the themes of job satisfaction and informal interaction in a factory setting elude to patterns of behaviour that break the monotony of the working day where instances of verbal interplay, time interruptions and jovial ‘horseplay’ helped to break up the monotony and repetition of the long factory hours (Roy, 1959). In addition Roy (1959: 167) notes that “from these interactions may also be abstracted a social structure of statuses and roles”.

It was unclear as to whether such behaviour occurred within the Valley FC and Derrington Town academies. Access to players was restricted and therefore I did not have the opportunity to observe the same type of social interaction that was explored by Roy (1959). The players’ behaviour during training and matches was consistent with the themes of professionalism and the values associated with a ‘good attitude’. That said, the academies may be viewed as institutions that promote disciplinary mechanisms rather than enforcing disciplinary blockades (Scott, 2010). Similar to Scott’s (2010) analysis of swimmers, the academy athletes were not physically confined to the academies but voluntarily chose to attend. However, the constant level of surveillance witnessed within the academies, most notably at Valley FC’s academy, highlighted the

lack of agency that the athletes experienced. Discipline and respect for authority appeared to be adopted ‘voluntarily’ amongst the academy athletes and was utilised as a positive motivating force. However, the academy athletes appeared to have very little choice, resisting such authoritative behaviour and rejecting the dominant norms associated with a disciplined lifestyle demonstrated a lack of commitment toward upholding the role of academy athlete.

When considering the development of young professional footballers Stratton *et al* (2004: 210) indicate that “today’s elite young player is exposed to a range of support mechanisms that can enhance both his soccer and his personal development”. Within modern academies facilities, techniques and staff provide support that aims to promote a holistic approach toward developing the athlete. Stratton *et al* (2004: 210) state that “the introduction of academies and the development of ‘other’ (e.g. European) youth programmes suggest that clubs are (increasingly) taking their responsibility for the development of young players more seriously than ever before”. Therefore, if academies are aiming to develop a ‘well-rounded’ individual, one may suggest that greater support or control mechanisms are put into place to ensure that both personal and player development progress. However, the role of the academies has not changed since they were originally established. Although new methods may have been introduced their primary role is still to produce professional athletes. Therefore, if this goal is being adopted with ‘increasing’ responsibility, the central values associated with the elite youth subculture are being perpetuated ‘more seriously than ever before’. If the values of the academies are being imposed with more severity then this may contribute to increasing pressures placed upon the development of elite young athletes and an

increased loss of agency. The following chapter will continue to examine the dominant norms and values established within the academies. Utilising the Foucauldian (1979) concepts of a 'normalising judgment' and the 'examination' an understanding of how such norms become internalised by the academy athletes will be made. Specific focus will be placed upon the mechanisms that were used to ensure the academy athletes adopted the desired norms espoused by both academies.

## Chapter Seven: Normalisation within the Academy Setting

### *7.1 Introduction*

Within a sporting context, normalisation can be defined as the acceptance of certain values or behaviour that has come to embody, what Hughes and Coakley (1991) refer to as, the ‘sport ethic’. Hughes and Coakley (1991: 308) state that “the sport ethic refers to what many participants have come to use as the criteria for defining what it means to be a real athlete”. This particular criterion may include risk taking, challenging limits of both the mind and body, striving for distinction and playing through pain and injury (Hughes and Coakley, 1991). It is a set of behaviours that have become the norm within the world of elite sport and have come to define the identity of a ‘true’ athlete. Hughes and Coakley (1991: 311) state that elite sports men and women view this particular behaviour as “confirming and reconfirming their identity as athletes and as members of select sport groups”. To adopt these specific values is to assume the role of an elite athlete and constitutes what is ‘normal’ behaviour for modern athletes if they wish to succeed. To succeed as an elite athlete one must adhere to a level of professionalism that involves committing the mind and body to the rigours of elite competition, negotiating certain risks and playing through pain and injury.

The intention of this chapter is to analyse how particular norms and values become internalised and sustained amongst the academy athletes. The Foucauldian (1979) concept of normalisation will be applied to the academy settings with emphasis placed upon two concepts in particular; ‘normalising judgment’ and ‘the examination’. The application of these concepts will aid in the explanation of how the academy



athletes come to internalise the values, attitudes and behaviours associated with the ‘norms’ of modern day elite sport.

### *7.2 Normalising Judgment and the Academy Setting*

Foucault (1979: 184) states that, “like surveillance and with it, normalisation becomes one of the great instruments of power at the end of the classical age”. Foucault (1994b) suggests that we have moved away from a society of inquiry and toward a society of supervision. This notion of supervision consisted of a knowledge that “was no longer about determining whether or not something had occurred; rather it was about whether an individual was behaving as he should, in accordance with the rule or not, and whether he was progressing or not” (Foucault, 1994b: 59). In this instance the ‘norm’ may constitute a desired set of rules or characteristics that should be upheld by individuals located within a society of supervision. Therefore, the purpose of normalisation is not to exclude but is implemented for the use of “production, training [*formation*], or correction of the producers. It’s a matter of guaranteeing production, or the producers, in terms of a particular norm” (Foucault, 1994b: 78). In this instance, normalisation may be viewed as a process of production rather than exclusion. Sheridan (1980: 154) states that “by comparing one individual with another, by a continuous assessment of each individual, discipline exercises a normalising judgment. A coercive, centralised Normality is imposed”. An analysis of how these concepts function within the sports academies allows for an understanding of how the norms of sport become internalised and perpetuated amongst professional athletes.

It was clear that the structural and cultural organisation of the academies impacted upon the athletes as their bodies were subjected to conform to particular norms and behaviours. Racevskis (1983: 105) notes that, “bodies are valorised according to an economics of usefulness and of truth, and, in a culture where the effects of power are aimed at life the fact and existence become the objects of a politics of normalisation”. Usefulness and truth were key concepts in establishing a normalising power amongst the academy athletes. Truth constituted knowledge and was gained through the collation of measurements implemented by coaches, managers and sport scientists. This particular knowledge provided one with the ability to examine, categorise, individualise and, thus, coerce to a normalising standard. Usefulness with the academies constituted a very simple aspect of an athlete’s existence. Within the context of a sports academy, usefulness was determined by an ability to fulfil the role of ‘professional athlete’ and thus conform to a desired norm. Racevskis (1983: 107) notes that, “the individualised subject of modern society is constantly held accountable to the system of the norm — but they must first be made aware of this particular situation”. Both the Derrington Town and Valley FC academy athletes were aware of their situation with regards to the ‘standard’ or ‘norm’ to which they must conform. Although both sets of athletes were aware of their status within the academy the approach adopted to expose their individuality was markedly different.

Derrington Town’s academy was structured with a hierarchical system and provided a very clear indication as to the ‘usefulness’ of a particular athlete.<sup>28</sup> The academy was divided into two different age groups with each age group containing three

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<sup>28</sup> A detailed exploration of Derrington Town’s academy hierarchy, and the exact benefits associated with each tier, is presented in Table.1 of the thesis within the section entitled *Rugby Academies*.

tiers. The first age group (13-18) was the junior academy and the second age group was the senior academy (18-24). As previously identified, the senior academy was split into three tiers; Associate, Club and RFU. The Associate level was perceived as the lowest tier; here it was unlikely that players would progress to the first team. At the Club level players were viewed as having potential to move up to the RFU tier with a possibility of securing a first team place. RFU was considered the highest tier within the system; and players within this category may have already secured a squad contract or had been training full-time with the first team squad. The Derringtonstone Town academy coach made it clear to the players that they could move up or down the tiers depending on their current performance. The structural hierarchy of Derringtonstone Town's academy provided a clear indication as to an athlete's position within the academy, and a clear indication of their 'usefulness' and thus likelihood of progressing into the first team. An upward movement within the academy's programme indicated an upward movement in academy status for an athlete as more coaching, medical treatment, skills analysis and programme reviews were at their disposal.

Derringtonstone Town's hierarchical structure parallels the findings of Cushion and Jones (2006). Cushion and Jones' (2006) investigation into the coaching habits at a Premiership football academy noted that the year groups within the academy were arranged hierarchically. Those who adhered to the coaches' values increased their potential to gain recognition as team members. Within this particular hierarchical structure further subgroups amongst the academy footballers existed. Cushion and Jones (2006: 152) state that "these groups were themselves hierarchically organised and could be termed as the "favourites", the "peripherals", and the "rejects"". Academy players

were able to move between both the “favourites” group and the “periphery” group; however, those within the “rejects” group remained relatively static (Cushion and Jones, 2006). Cushion and Jones (2006: 153) note that “membership in each group meant a different relationship with the coach and a different experience in the practical coaching context”. “Rejects” were perceived as less likely to acquire a professional contract whereas the “favourites” and “peripherals” had a greater chance.

At Derringtonstone Town it was made clear to each individual player who was ranked in front and who was ranked behind him as the academy athletes were each given a list as to where they were situated within the hierarchy. The purpose of this particular system was to clearly differentiate between each rugby player and categorise them according to their ability or potential to reach first team status. Therefore, if a rugby academy athlete wished to maintain his status at the top of the hierarchy he had to continue to conform to the desired institutional norms. In this instance, the experience of the academy institution for each academy player may have differed greatly regarding their status within the subcultural hierarchy. Derringtonstone Town’s academy coach highlighted the self-discipline that was required to succeed within the academy’s current system:

So we’d give all the academy members a list of where they were in the pecking order and then say, “So that’s where you are and this guy is actually ahead of you in our perception, you’ve got to work hard to push in front of him”, and the flip side, if you’re currently at the top of the tree there’s nothing to say that you might fall down the branches if this guy is working really hard and you’re sort of not pushing yourself as well (**Phillip**).

It was a system that established a desired ‘norm’ and imposed a sense of self-awareness amongst the individual rugby players. The coaches and managers within the club

defined this voluntary conformity as ‘self-drive’ or ‘self-motivation’. Within the academies athletes were able to view their own progression or regression and others around them and ensure that they conformed to the desired ‘norms’.

Valley FC’s academy adopted a different approach towards identifying and classifying difference amongst its athletes. Although the academy contained a rigid hierarchy it was not used specifically to denote a difference in abilities amongst the players. Daily and monthly reviews, fitness tests, weight and strength measurements, hydration measurements and body fat tests were all administered and documented to provide a clear indication of a player’s physical progression. Although fitness and strength tests were used within Derrington Town’s academy, these particular techniques were used more often and accentuated at Valley FC. The normative values related to performance, within Valley FC’s academy, were reinforced by a constant normalising judgment, which was defined as recognition of a player’s own status in relation to a comparison with peers and a clearly established norm. Due to the documentation of attributes related to physical performance an academy athlete became aware of their progress and was able to adjust certain aspects of their performance such as technical ability, tactical awareness, physical fitness and weight in accordance with their personal scores as indicated in Chapter Five.

Within Valley FC’s academy a number of standards were set related to the footballers’ fitness. The monitoring of each player’s body fat percentage provided a useful indicator of their physical fitness. The sport scientist at Valley FC’s academy described how specific standards were set for outfield players and goalkeepers. A deviation from the desired ‘norm’ indicated a drop in an athlete’s physical performance

or commitment to training and a disciplined lifestyle, and was therefore rectified accordingly:

The sort of standard that we set, for an outfield player, must be below ten percent, for a goalkeeper, uhhmm, we give them a little bit of leeway because obviously they're not as involved in as many... Goalkeepers are predominantly anaerobic they're not really aerobic in terms of any sort of conditioning work, it's predominantly anaerobic, we give them anything below sort of twelve percent. Most of the lads have been spot on. We do get problems in the past where they've gone over that percentage. Uhhmm, so I'll speak to them from a nutritional point of view, is it a nutritional problem? I'll try and identify that first, is it a nutritional problem? Or is it a training problem? Or is there other things going on, we'll try and identify that and address that (**Geoff**).

The imposition of a normalising judgment functioned as a disciplinary mechanism. Foucault (1979: 179) states that “the whole indefinite domain of the non-conforming is punishable: the soldier commits an ‘offence’ whenever he does not reach the level required; a pupil’s ‘offence’ is not only a minor infraction, but also an inability to carry out his tasks”. The normalising judgment acted as a mode of discipline for the Valley FC academy athletes. By viewing their scores, ratings and match selection players were able to identify their progress and performance in relation to the normalised standard that was expected of them. Foucault (1979: 146) notes that “discipline is an art of rank, a technique for the transformation of arrangements. It individualises bodies by location that does not give them a fixed position but distributes them in a network of relations”. This particular system of supervision allowed the sport scientists and coaches within Valley FC to document, survey and analyse performance, noting any deviation from the desired norms that were established by the club.

Within Valley FC’s academy player reviews occurred once every three months. Each player was asked to rate themselves from a score of one to ten, one being poor and

ten being excellent, on a variety of different categories related to their skill acquisition. Once the footballers had rated themselves they then met with the academy coach who reviewed the players' score sheets and adjusted their ratings according to what they judged to be appropriate levels. All review sessions were conducted with the academy manager present and were recorded and kept on both a paper file and DVD recording. The review processes at Valley FC's academy and the hierarchical nature of Derrington Town exposed an athlete's individuality by documenting their weaknesses and strengths and classifying them accordingly. It was a process that accentuated a normalising judgment that functioned to correct and coerce the academy athletes in to adopting the desired 'norm'. Within Valley FC's academy reports on the players' educational progress were also conducted once every term. It was imperative for the academy athletes to be aware of their individual progression both in their football performance and educational work. The purpose of such reviews enabled the coaches, managers and educators to quickly expose weaknesses and act accordingly, which proved to be most effective when disciplining the academy athletes as demonstrated by the Education and Welfare Officer:

Uhh, we do do termly reports where the tutors write a report. That report goes home to parents and we sit down and discuss it as well. So, it would never become a problem. The problem would be identified very early on, that, sorry you're not doing the business here so we need to talk about this, we need to put it right, so that's how we would do it, and we have to do that. I can't remember the last time we did it, I honestly can't remember the last time where I would sit here and someone would sit there and I'd say this isn't on, can't remember the last time, educationally. And the same happens on the football side as you'll have gathered talking to Graham [Academy Coach]. Somebody has a poor game, somebody hasn't been doing the business in training, they'll be the first ones to be sat down, just to say, "This isn't on, this isn't good enough, you're not firing your full potential, you're not giving it your best shot", and in order to achieve a

pro contract you need to give it your best shot, in order to achieve a merit or a distinction you need to give it your best shot (**Colin**).

Heikkala (1993) indicates that athletic bodies are normalised through disciplinary mechanisms, becoming both the object of knowledge and subject to individual transformation and external control. Elite athletes will conform to the norms of sport through the desire to reproduce successful performances and a strong will to win (Heikkala, 1993). Through methods of documentation the Valley FC academy athletes were able to see their success through quantitative data. When discussing the monitoring of progress within Valley FC Dylan, a football academy athlete, noted the methods of documentation present and the regularity of assessment that occurred within the academy. The documentation of performance was perceived as positive amongst the players as it demonstrated a clear indication of progression:

You do all sorts, when I was a first year scholar you 'ave like them booklets, where you do, like, you assess yourself you do, like, uhhmmm writing your targets down and seein' where you're improving and things like that. You always know how you are improving each year and each month really, you usually get better 'cos you're trainin' everyday and that all the time so...you just get more used to it 'cos, like, you're in 'ere twenty-four-seven so you get assessed all the time and you can see yourself improve so it's good like (**Dylan**).

Within Derringtonstone Town's academy reviews or assessments were carried out with less regularity. The players' position within the hierarchical structure seemed to be the most prominent indicator of performance or progression. However, the Derringtonstone Town athletes' weight and strength and conditioning were documented with regularity as this was perceived as the most important feature of development amongst the players. Evan, one of the rugby players, discussed the use of the weights programme administered for



each individual player. Although the weights programme provided an indicator of performance or an individual 'norm' to adhere to, it was stressed by Evan that a progression in strength did not necessarily equate to a progression in overall performance:

**AM:** Can they tell from your programme how well you are performing?

**Evan:** Well what we've done, we've got like a four to six week kind've like plan, and uhh, so we look back at how much we progress in that way. Uhhhhhmm, but obviously you can't really put that on a performance, like you can't maybe review that as a performance or anything, just as like a performance in the gym maybe, but obviously not on the pitch.

**AM:** So it's just like a guideline to go by?

**Evan:** Yeah, yeah.

In terms of normalisation Smart (1985: 86) identifies that "what is being punished is non-conformity which the exercise of disciplinary power seeks to correct". The academy athletes' status as an elite athlete was clearly defined for them in the reproduction of their performances which were recorded and documented. This particular form of discipline created a strong desire to internalise the norms and values that contributed toward a successful performance. Thus, it was a technique that led to the discipline of the self and the reproduction of an identity that was comparable to that of an elite rugby or football player. Heikkala (1993: 401) states that:

Sport is not forced labour; it must and does include a strong voluntary flavour. Significantly, the will to do better must also carry a strong internalised feeling of a 'need' of discipline and conformity to the practices necessary for achieving the desired goal. The eye of an external authority is accompanied with an internalised 'bad conscience', which sounds an alarm whenever tasks are not properly executed or the columns of training diaries are not adequately

filled..... This bad conscience is a consequence of normalising techniques and is the instrument of control, internal or external.

The eyes of the external authorities and the documentation of performances promoted an inward gaze and a strong sense of self-discipline amongst academy athletes. The presence of a 'bad conscience' manifested itself amongst the academy athletes in a desire to conform to the normative behaviour that was required to reproduce a successful performance. Although Heikkala (1993) illustrates the voluntary aspect of sports performance it was the implementation of disciplinary techniques that created this voluntary desire to conform. The willingness of the Derrington Town and Valley FC academy athletes to conform to the desired norms may be witnessed commonly when mistakes were highlighted by coaching staff, when they were not selected to play in matches, or when they missed specific targets. A poor performance or a drop in review rating, a match or training session indicated to the individual player that an error had occurred either within their performance or training programme. It was important for Valley FC academy athletes to display the correct attitude and rectify mistakes quickly. Once mistakes were identified an increase in effort was displayed and corrections were made by the footballers to ensure that the same mistake did not occur again:

**AM:** What happens if you don't make the targets that you write down?

**Dylan:** You'd be disappointed really 'cos you wouldn't have written them targets down if you didn't think you could make 'em at the time so...you must've been doin' something wrong if you didn't reach your goals. You've just gotta make sure you work hard to get back up to the standard they want.

A similar reaction to mistakes was evident amongst Derrington Town academy players. A desire to correct mistakes and be 'brilliant' at the task in hand was an

important part of their career progression. Failure to show a desire to correct mistakes or improve performance was an indication that both the rugby and football players had an inappropriate attitude. The academy athlete attitudes towards correcting mistakes and improving performances based upon fitness tests and review sessions highlighted the productive nature of the normalising process, as the following comments from Ethan, a rugby player, suggests:

You know in your head it hasn't gone well and stuff, maybe there's a reaction from the crowd or something's gone on, you might've missed a tackle or dropped a pass. And it's sort of getting' into the mindset of, right that's happened, there's nothing I can do to change that, so I've got to just switch onto, you know, just say in your head that buzz word 'next job', just get on with it, just get onto the next thing. You know, and when that next time, when that chance comes around be brilliant at doin' it (**Ethan**).

The review process within Valley FC's academy was not confined solely to a player's athletic and physical performance. The review sessions also extended into other developmental aspects of the players' lives such as education. Educational norms and standards were to be met and reviews were implemented to ensure that the players conformed to a desired standard. The recorded review sessions and informal observations promoted a sense of self-discipline amongst the footballers that ensured they were productive within their educational work. When discussing the concept of monitoring and disciplining, the Education and Welfare Officer indicated that discipline was to be considered 'normal' and part of the footballers' weekly routine. It was not only implemented by a system of recorded reviews but also through a system of surveillance that involved a constant interaction between the Education and Welfare Officer and the lecturers:

As far as the system here is concerned discipline is not a separate thing, discipline is part of your week to week normal activity and we would address things through conversations, through reviews. Uhhh, we would never say that things become a discipline problem because they don't, they're not allowed to get to that point. How are they monitored? There's an informal system, obviously the lecturers are in every week, we talk every week, uhhmm, "So and so's a bit down today, hasn't performed quite as well" [lecturer], "Ahhh really"?[Colin] And with the numbers we've got we can address that on a *very* quick basis (**Colin**).

Previous research reinforces the notion of an internal and external discipline based upon an overarching normalisation. Rinehart's (1998) research into competitive swimming identifies how modern technology can be adopted for the purpose of disciplinary control. Rinehart (1998: 41) states that "through the introduction of electronic timing devices and pace clocks every change in stroke, start and turn can be dissected into minute parts for the purpose of improving efficiency". Recordings, documentation and rank within elite sport provides an indication of performance measurable against a well defined norm as Markula and Pringle (2006: 42) indicate, "within the 100 metre sprint, for instance, the performance of different competitors is measured via time and place, accolades are given to the champions, records are kept, and differentiated subjectivities are constituted". The normalising judgment works effectively as a disciplinary tool. It enables one to create an inward sense of self-discipline whilst simultaneously differentiating and exposing individuality outwardly.

Ransom (1997: 37) states that: "Discipline shapes individuals — neither with nor without their consent. It does not use violence. Instead individuals are trained". By applying this concept to both academies this particular operation of power was regularly displayed amongst academy athletes. Individuals were trained in the most scientific and

regimented of ways. Although athletes were aware of certain modes of ‘discipline’, they did not perceive normalisation as constituting one particular form of discipline.

Therefore, the academy athletes were unaware of the nature of such ‘disciplines’ that shape them as they were guided through the construction of what Foucault (1979) terms as the ‘normalising gaze’.

To impose a normalising judgment is to categorise individuals in their individuality, to distinguish difference and thus identify those who deviate from the norm. Foucault (1979: 181) states that “the distribution according to ranks or grade has a double role: it marks gaps, hierarchizes qualities, skills and aptitudes; but it also punishes and rewards”. Due to the very structure of Derrington Town’s academy the athletes were clearly aware of their position within the hierarchy. The gaps were clearly defined and specified the rugby players’ professional standing within the team. Within Valley FC’s academy a variety of methods were introduced to differentiate and mark out gaps between the players’ skills and aptitudes. Monthly reviews, heart rate monitors, regular fitness and strength test, urine samples and daily observations were used to constantly rate or assess individual players. Foucault (1979: 184) states that “the power of normalisation imposes homogeneity; but it individualises by making it possible to measure gaps, to determine levels, to fix specialities and to render the differences useful by fitting them one to another”. The power of normalisation within the academies was encompassed by the disciplinary techniques that were utilised to ensure that players were aware of their individuality. This awareness created a notion of self-discipline within individual athletes and ensured that they adopted and internalised the values and

behaviours associated with the traditional norms of professional rugby and football.

Foucault (1979: 179) notes that the disciplinary punishment is:

Of a mixed nature: it is an ‘artificial’ order, explicitly laid down by a law, a programme, a set of regulations. But it is also an order defined by natural and observable processes: the duration of an apprenticeship, the time taken to perform an exercise, the level of aptitude refer to a regularity that is also a rule.

The quantifiable results attained from the testing and documentation may be viewed as the ‘artificial’ order or programme. The results obtained explicitly identified where a football or rugby player could be situated with regards to the set of normalised standards or regulations established by the academies. However, there was also an observable process that aided in the internalisation of the norms or standards required to produce an optimal performance. This ‘observable process’ combines with a normalising judgment to produce what Foucault (1979) termed ‘the examination’. Through the combination of hierarchical observation and a normalising judgment a disciplinary power was exercised to expose, categorise, objectify and increase a utility or productiveness within the individual. Therefore, by implementing these techniques the traditional norms associated with elite sport became internalised and accepted by the academy athletes.

### *7.3 The Examination and the Academy Setting*

Foucault (1979: 184) indicates that the examination is concerned with combining “the techniques of an observing hierarchy and those of a normalising judgment. It is a normalising gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, to classify and to punish”. It is a concept that includes an observation of the body for the purpose of

corrective productivity. These techniques are pursued for the purpose of creating a docile and malleable body that is exposed in its individuality (Armstrong, 1994). Within the context of elite sport, Howe (2004: 62) notes that “the body can be disciplined through the creation of habit by the repetitive rudimentary drills that are set down by coaches to enhance players’ performance”. Although this may be considered one particular method, to create docility and malleability amongst individual athletes requires much more. Systems of surveillance, data analysis, data for the purpose of comparison, a rigid daily routine all contributed toward creating the necessary environment to promote a docile-utility amongst the individual athletes in both academies within this study. Therefore, the examination was a mechanism that contained techniques to expose the visibility of the individual so as to instil docility and, ultimately, a sense of discipline amongst the young academy athletes.

Smart (1985: 85) indicates that “discipline is a technique of power which provides procedures for training or for coercing bodies (individual and collective). The instruments through which disciplinary power achieves its holds are hierarchical observations, normalising judgment, and the examination”. Hierarchical observations were clearly implemented in both academies as coaches ensured that the academy athletes’ performances were monitored routinely through the system of formal reviews and informal observations during training. Smart (1985: 87) identifies that “through the mechanism of the examination individuals are located in a field of visibility, subjected to a mechanism of objectification, and thereby to the exercise of power”. Footballers within the academy system were under observation from the moment they joined. The intensity and range of techniques to observe the players progression and performance

increased as they became older and began to sign academy scholarships. Valley FC's academy coach noted that observations and match ratings of individual players were conducted on a daily basis. This information provided a vast amount of knowledge for coaches and managers, allowing them to map the individual progress of each player and identify and categorise them. The Valley FC academy coach stated that this knowledge indicated those who were 'pushing on' or progressing and those whose performance was seen to be declining:

I keep a record of all the training we do, all the playing times they've got, every day whether who trains and who doesn't, who's injured who's not, so we can see whether a pattern emerges when people suffer with a lot of injuries or who are not training. You get a pattern emerge from who's with the reserves a lot, which could be good 'cos it means they're kickin' on [progressing] or it can mean either they're not kickin' on 'cos they're not playing with me and they need somewhere to train depending on what day it is they're with the reserves. There's loads of different ways of doin' it, and I keep a record of that every month so I've got the last four months it tells me who's gone with the first team to train, who's gone with the reserves to train, who went with the reserves to Jersey, who's playing in the reserves, who's playing for me; and I can see that at any given time. I can look in there and say, right he's turned around and trained every day this month (**Graham**).

In addition to the coach's formal and informal observations, the sport scientist at the club monitored the players' progress with regard to fitness, strength, speed, agility and nutritional intake. Smart (1985: 87) indicates that "these techniques and methods of documentation facilitate the description and analysis of individuals and groups, as well as the identification and classification of commonly occurring attributes and differences between people". Each particular attribute relating to a footballer's performance was observed, measured and then analysed exposing their individuality and providing knowledge for correction.



Foucault suggests that the analysis of an institution must include an understanding of its *rationality* or its *aim*. Foucault (1994b: 385) defines rationality or the aim of an institution as “the end it has in view and the means it has in view and the means it possesses for attaining those ends”. Foucault’s (1994b) fourth level of analysis concerning an institution considers ‘strategic configurations’. Strategic configurations were defined as “results that are adapted to different uses and these uses are rationalised, in any case — in terms of new ends” (Foucault, 1994b: 386).

Foucault’s (1994b) analysis of institutions provides a useful template to explore the process of normalisation within the sports academies. Within these institutions there was a well-defined aim, initially to produce professional first team rugby or football players or an asset that could be traded for profitable gain. Throughout the career of the young academy professional, results are documented to gain an indication of their progression. The acquisition of these results allowed for the modification of the rugby and football players’ performance so as to implement more utility amongst the athletes. The results also identified the area or aspect of training that needed to be altered so as to improve a specific function of a player.

Canguilhem (1978: 72) notes that “all human technique, including that of life, is set within life, that is, within an activity of information and assimilation of material”. Within the context of a sports academy the athletes’ lives were fixed by the acquisition and assimilation of knowledge for the purpose of productivity and efficiency. It was imperative for academies to establish or be able to view progress, as a team and amongst players, by analysing results. Although the development of the player was not purely based on the results they achieved they gave a clear indication to the players’ overall

performance. If the academy athlete was failing in a specific category this could be identified easily through quantitative data and thus corrected accordingly. This particular technique was witnessed in one account of a football scholar who had gained a significant amount of weight during the summer rest period and was failing to maintain the desired or 'normal' weight for his position. Such an example highlighted the extent to which documentation and a clear visibility of performance was needed to promote an adherence to the norm of the academy's work ethic. As previously indicated norms were established for the footballers' body fat percentages; specific targets had to be met according to the particular positions in which they played. Results were regularly documented and faults identified by the sport scientist so corrective procedures could be put in place. The football academy coach highlighted one specific example whereby a player returned from the summer break with a body fat measurement significantly higher than the required norm. This discrepancy was quickly identified and measures were taken to rectify the problem so as to ensure that the player reached the required standard and thus improved his physical fitness:

**Graham:** Now we've got one player at the moment, that we've watched, and he's put on an unbelievable amount of weight over the summer and he's now finding it hard to shift. So we're saying, "Well you put on weight when you weren't training, so that suggests to us that your diet was poor, you've come back and your training so you've stopped putting any weight on, it's just fluctuating around there, bearing in mind we've told you to cut down stuff to bring you're weight back down and it's not". So he's either not working hard enough, which we use polar heart rates on a Tuesday, we don't do it all the time.

**AM:** What's a polar heart rate?

**Graham:** Heart rate monitors to see what areas are working, so you know they are working physically hard. We know the training they do at the academy is hard enough that he shouldn't be carrying weight. So obviously it's a dietary problem with him.

Shogan (1999: 10) states that “the discipline of high-performance sport produces a set of knowledges about ‘the athlete’, who is then controlled and shaped by these knowledges in a constant pressure to conform to a standard of high performance”. Once again these knowledges are captured by the physiological testing and review processes that the football and rugby academy athletes undergo. The review sessions that occurred routinely at Valley FC’s academy functioned effectively as a technique for promoting self-discipline amongst players. The footballers were aware of their progress through the review process. It enabled them to view their progress and focus on aspects of their game that were perceived as weaknesses. Although some of the footballers were disappointed to see that their performance had declined in some areas the process was perceived as positive overall:

**AM:** How has the review process been for you?

**Hugh:** Yeah they’ve been good, every time I think there’s been steady progress throughout the year. Each time I started me and Graham [Academy Coach] recognised things I could practice and improve, and go to the gym everyday and kick extra balls and try and improve it, and each time I think I’ve steadily progressed.

This particular disciplinary technique exemplified the modes of surveillance that occurred within Valley FC’s academy and the effectiveness of their function. Through a constant form of surveillance the football players were coerced into a system of self-surveillance and ultimately self-discipline. The overarching gaze of the coach and the review process was described by Lucas, one of the footballers, who emphasised the Panoptic gaze of the coach: “He [the Academy Coach] can see *everything* about your

game, so sometimes you miss things that he can see and he'll mark you up on it."

**(Lucas).** This particular technique of monitoring the footballers allowed for a system of surveillance that not only exposed individuality and differentiation amongst the athletes, but also enabled those higher up within the organisation to classify, categorise and act accordingly with methods of accurate correction. Chase (2008: 34) indicates that "a trained, efficient, and obedient body is one of the primary goals of modern sport training. As such, sport can be properly disciplined and reshaped". The Education and Welfare Officer at the football academy highlighted the effectiveness of the disciplinary measures that were implemented within the academy. An emphasis on performance ensured that all aspects of an academy athlete's training and development was monitored, thus eliminating any margin for error as the following exchange indicates:

**AM:** Are there any measures to make sure they [footballers] stay on track?

**Colin:** Oh I think we got everything...that's *well* enough, there's no escape. I'm mean there's nobody that can under-perform either educationally, fitness wise...I mean there's so much monitoring of performance 'cos that's what we're talking about *everything's* performance. Your body weight, your body fat, I mean now they take your body fats before they go away in the middle of May, the first thing you do when they go back is take your body fat, and you know *exactly* what they've been doing or haven't been doing, there's no escape. So it's all performance related, and yes as you go through the season individual adjustments may be have to be made, but you're under the spot light whatever.

**AM:** And this translates to education as well?

**Colin:** Yeah, yeah the whole piece, I wouldn't think and I wouldn't say that we pay more attention to any particular...every aspect of the boys development is under a pretty rigorous, pleasant, rigorous system of review, and there's no escape.

Further instances of documentation were highlighted by the football academy manager.

The monitoring that was put into place within the football academy allowed coaches and

managers to oversee all aspects of an individual player's performance. Frequent match reports, where individual players were marked on their performances, were kept by the coaches and academy manager to determine whether any differences or irregularities occurred throughout their playing season:

The coaches they uhh... They do match reports on a regular basis where they'll mark the boy out of ten, if there's a concern they'll mark that as a concern then I would monitor that. You know if it's coming on to my desk and I see the same boy being marked with a concern then, then I would approach the coach or the full time staff whose in charge of those age groups to say, you know, "Well what's going on 'ere"? "We need to bring the boy in a find out if everything's alright" (**Henry**).

Foucault's (1979) concept of the 'examination' worked to expose the performances of the academy athletes to allow for categorisation and comparison. It is a concept that ensures individuality of those located within an institutional setting, and allowed for an easy classification of the academy athletes under observation. Techniques of the examination were utilised within the academies for the purpose of imposing corrective procedures and creating docile bodies that were compliant to dominant norms established by the clubs. Therefore, it was imperative for the academy coaches and managers to view each athlete in their own individuality if a docile yet effective body was to be cultivated.

#### *7.4 Individualisation of the Athlete*

As previously demonstrated in Chapter Two, Foucault (1979) indicates that the examination, supported by its methods of documentary techniques, identifies each individual as a 'case'. Coaches, managerial staff, physiotherapists and players were

aware of individual personalities and skill levels of the different players within the academies. The rugby and football players were marked out in their individuality by criticisms of their performance in training and matches, physiological and fitness tests and monthly performance reviews. It was seen as essential by coaching staff to identify each player in their individuality if they were to progress their performances and eventually reach professional status. Managers and coaches expressed this notion of individuality when discussing player development or how to interact with different players on a day to day basis. Regardless of a rugby player's position within the academy's hierarchy, the academy manager noted that all athletes must be viewed as individuals with distinctive career paths. This was expressed by the academy coach when discussing the developmental pathways of the Derrington Town players:

Uhh, the main bit is the development of the players, so wherever they are view them as individuals and make sure they've got an appropriate programme to help them progress **(Phillip)**.

The rugby academy coach further illustrated the importance of implementing a programme that was designed to specifically suit the needs of individual players that have greater potential to succeed as a first team professional:

If we think someone should have a shot at playing National League rugby, we get them down to training see how they go and we've got no issues with monitoring their playing programmes and changing their playing programmes to suit them. Uhhhm...so we try and view them all as individuals **(Phillip)**.

The emphasis of the 'individual' was also apparent within Valley FC's academy as there was a clear focus on the individual development of players ensuring that all weaknesses and strengths were identified, thus providing a basis for improvement. The Valley FC

academy coach highlighted the importance of analysing the individual weaknesses and strengths of certain players, moulding them to ensure that in time a ‘complete’ player was created:

Individually at times you analyse players within training and watch where they are improving, you obviously put exercises on that’s gonna benefit ‘em. You encourage ‘em, say for example work with their weaker foot, you encourage ‘em if they need it then, and we do this stuff with them and over a period of time you can see an improvement (**Graham**).

The athletes’ lifestyle within the academies was shaped by a clear set of regulations. They adhered to a programme of events that structured their daily routine hour by hour and week by week and were very unlikely to alter. Throughout this programme observational methods were directly and indirectly imposed to review performances. Thus, the identity of an individual academy athlete was cultivated and sustained through the process of documentation and observation. However, such norms are not adopted once the academy athletes reach a specific level. Therefore, a greater understanding of how the dominant norms associated with elite sport are internalised and cultivated over time within the academy settings is required.

### *7.5 The Internalisation of ‘Norms’ Over Time*

Due to the strict regimentation of their lifestyles the academy athletes had to structure their leisure time around the constraints of training and performance. Once the Derrington Town academy athletes reached the senior RFU tier and the Valley FC academy athletes secured a scholarship the intensity of training and emphasis on performance was enhanced. At this stage the significance of their performances had a

vast impact upon their potential career prospects as a full time professional athlete. However, as previously indicated, Roderick (1998) notes norms and values associated with elite sport are not simply appropriated once an individual athlete has reached the level of professional status. The normative behaviour associated with elite sport is internalised over a period of time. The mechanisms of surveillance and documentation 'fix' an athlete within a normalising judgment. The hierarchical observations employed within the academies created a sense of self-awareness regarding their own progress and of those around them. This method of exposure promoted a docility and self-discipline amongst academy athletes and a stricter adherence to the standardised norms and values propagated by the academies. These particular methods were employed almost instantly when young individuals join the football academy. The intensity of the mechanisms was increased as footballers and rugby players progressed within the academies' systems. Similar to the findings of Parker (1995), many of the Valley FC academy athletes emphasised the loss of fun and an increase in seriousness with regards to training when commenting upon their progression within the academy system. Training was seen as more intense; players had to be more motivated toward their training sessions ensuring that their performance was consistently good on a daily basis. The footballers within this study had to display a disciplined approach toward their training with an emphasis on ensuring the correct attitude was pursued both on and off the field. When discussing how their training had altered in terms of concentration one of the players emphasised the importance of self-discipline away from the academy setting. It was important for the footballers to monitor their daily and social habits, especially at the age of the professional scholar, if they were to succeed at becoming professional footballers:



Uhhmm, it's important like now, Graham [Academy Coach] he's always saying like you're a twenty-four-seven footballer<sup>29</sup> so you 'ave to constantly concentrate on what you eat, what you drink and things like that. And now, 'cos you do play every single day, you 'ave to make sure you're focused and concentrated 'cos it does...obviously it does get harder every single day and things like that so it's just important to try and stay as focused as you can and that **(Oliver)**.

These particular norms were instilled within the academy athletes from an early age; however, the mechanisms that aid in the internalisation process were intensified once they began to reach the age of a football scholar or senior academy member.

Christopher, a Derringtonstone Town academy athlete, described the increase in pressure having secured a professional contract with the club. Once again emphasis was placed upon reproducing a successful performance consistently:

Uhhmm, like, you always have to...I dunno, it's still really fun but it's, you know, it's not like I fear making a mistake but I wanna always do the right thing. You know there's a little bit more pressure involved, especially in like the rugby training side of it uhhmm...so I want to, you know, get that pass right and if I don't quite get it right people say great effort that's the right decision and you went for it and that's the right thing to do and now I've just gotta get the execution right **(Christopher)**.

Derringtonstone Town's academy coach explained how emphasis and attention was placed upon those athletes that were more likely to pursue a professional career. The methods of observation, documentation and classification were heightened for those who were situated higher up within the academy's tiered system regardless of their age, as the following quote from Derringtonstone Town's academy coach suggests:

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<sup>29</sup> The term "twenty-four-seven" footballer indicated that the football academy athletes had to uphold the correct attitude and level of professionalism, established by the academy staff, twenty four hours a day and seven days a week.

So we've got a junior academy, which is run whilst players are still at school; so from sort of 13 to 18 years of age, and a senior academy, which is post school. So 19 to whenever we perceive them to sort of have their opportunity, so those are sort of the university ages. Then within those two systems there's three tiers. So there's sort of a low level, who realistically, probably aren't gonna make it as professional rugby players, which is obviously the ultimate goal of the whole programme. So the idea is that they come in and do some work with us and it helps them develop as players and gives them ideas and things they can go back to their clubs and schools and help that sort of arena develop as well... There's another tier above that who we think have got an outside chance. Uhhm, we work a little bit more closely with them, we do some more one on one skills type stuff. Maybe do a little bit more conditioning that type of thing, and then there's the group at the top who we perceive to have the most potential and have a very good chance of becoming professional rugby players, if that's the route they wanna go down. We see them every week, so we go and see them; we spend quite a bit of time with them. Uhhh, for the guys in the junior academy, so the 13 to 18 year olds, we go and see them at their schools, 'cos obviously they can't travel up to us. For the older guys that tend to come to university in and around the local area anyway, they come into the club. Uhhm, so it depends, based on sort of their individual circumstances (**Phillip**).

Although the current study focuses on the older age groups within the academies, processes of documentation and observation did occur at a younger age. However, the intensity to which these techniques were implemented was increased once the potential to become a professional athlete was realised. The internalisation of the norms and values associated with elite sport occurred throughout the development of the academy athletes lives; however, the attention to discipline, surveillance techniques and methods of documentation became more aware to the athlete towards the later stages of their development.

## *7.6 Conclusion*

The combination of a hierarchical structure and the application of certain methods of surveillance enable one to exercise control and power within an institution.

As this chapter has suggested, Foucault's (1979) concept of control and discipline, administered through surveillance techniques and hierarchical structures is mirrored by the social structuring of the academies.

Within the context of an academy, productivity and efficiency are determined as key concepts in producing elite athletes. Vaz and Bruno (2003: 277) note that, "the classification of each individual along the polarity ranging from normal to abnormal achieves its goal if it is active in the interior of individuals, if it makes them judge and conceive themselves according to this polarity". Therefore, this process of normalising power may only be successful if the athletes are aware of their position in relation to other teammates and required norms. As previously indicated academy athletes were very aware of each others' performances and progression as 'lateral' surveillance was a common occurrence within such an environment. Foucault's (1979) concept of the examination is an effective construct impacting upon the promotion of self-surveillance amongst individuals. Foucault (1979: 183) indicates that the "perpetual penalty that traverses all points and supervises every instant in the disciplinary institutions compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes, excludes. In short, it *normalizes*". To separate athletes in their individuality allowed teammates to view each other and their performances with greater clarity.

Vaz and Bruno (2003: 278) indicate that citizens may "fear potential abnormality not only in others but also within themselves, and thus refrain from doing what would characterize them, in their own eyes, as abnormal". Athletes may conform to the required 'norm' through fear of being identified as different. Within the academies abnormal behaviour was easily identified through the review sessions, informal

observations by coaches and managers and physical examinations, and was quick to be corrected. However, it was perhaps not the fear of being different that ensured normative behaviour amongst the athletes but the consequences this may lead to. The academy athletes' fear of potentially losing their careers, and thus loss of identity, encouraged normative behaviour.

The Foucauldian (1979) concepts of a 'normalising judgment' and 'the examination' provide an understanding of how norms are internalised and perpetuated within institutions. Although the disciplinary techniques may exist within each academy, the extent and intensity to which they are imposed varied from institution to institution. Valley FC's academy used a system of verbal and written reviews and physiological and fitness tests to analyse an athlete on a frequent basis gauging their performance and establishing change. Reviews were present within Derrington Town's academy however not to the same extent as Valley FC. Moreover, Derrington Town relied upon an informal use of sporadic observations and data retrieved from infrequent strength and fitness tests. Therefore, Valley FC's academy was encountering strategic configurations (Foucault, 1994b) on a more routine basis and thus promoted a greater sense of utility amongst the players' performances. The corrective changes, therefore, could be seen as more frequent within Valley FC's academy and implemented with a greater sense of purpose toward achieving the desired 'end' goal.

Nixon's (1993) work regarding sportsnets and the perpetuation of behaviour related to the sport ethic draws comparisons to the current study. The academies were supported by a hierarchical structure that was relatively 'closed'. The lack of agency amongst the academy athletes was clearly evident as an adherence to the norms of the

academies had to be undertaken by the athletes if they wished to succeed. As McGillivray *et al* (2005: 107) note football clubs present a panoptical (Foucault, 1979) role for their young recruits by “institutionalising sacrifice and self-denial for the good of the club. The relatively autonomous footballing field, then, represents a self-contained territory with its own inner logic, rules and way of being in the field”. This particular ‘way of being’ incorporated the norms and values in which the Derrington Town and Valley FC academy athletes had to adopt and adhere to if they were to succeed in attaining a professional contract with their respective clubs.

Methods of documentation and observation occurred once the rugby and football players entered the academy system; however, they appeared to be heightened once the academy athletes progressed further towards securing a professional contract at the club. This ensured that the academy athletes adopted a more disciplined approach towards their performance and lifestyle outside of the academies. Normalising behaviour was demonstrated through the athletes’ willingness to adopt a disciplined and professional lifestyle, display a good attitude and demonstrate a strong commitment towards their performance. Thornborrow and Brown (2009: 358) indicate that “disciplinary mechanisms lead individuals to regulate their own conduct, turning them into self-disciplining subjects”. Disciplinary mechanisms witnessed within the academies ensured that all athletes regulated their behaviour in accordance with the normalising standard. Such behaviour led to the production of a docile yet productive body, one that was willing to comply with the norms of the academies in order to increase the productiveness of their forces and increase the likelihood of success within the academies.

This chapter has sought to explore the functioning of normalisation within the academies utilising a Foucauldian (1979) framework. By marking out each athlete's individual ability comparisons to a desired 'norm', in terms of performance and behaviour, were made. The academy athletes were aware of their own ability in relation to a desired standard, which was set by the academy managers and coaches and ensured that a drop in performance was quickly rectified. The constant surveillance of the academy athletes, by school teachers, college tutors, sport scientists, coaches, and academy managers ensured that the academy athletes' performances were routinely reviewed. As indicated in Chapter Four, this dispersed method of surveillance moved away from the more centrally located form of observation demonstrated by Foucault's (1979) panopticism. However, the concept of a 'normalising judgment' (Foucault, 1979) was still prevalent through the methods of documentation that worked to distinguish differences and ensure conformity. The internalisation of behavioural norms was also witnessed as the academy athletes would routinely refer to the 'correct' behaviour that had to be adopted at all times. Through the mode of a 'normalising judgment' (Foucault, 1979) the footballers and rugby players conformed to the desired norms espoused by the clubs in an attempt to ensure that their position within the academies was secured.

A further display of normalising behaviour was illustrated by the academy athletes' willingness to play through pain and injury. This particular aspect of behaviour was common amongst all academy athletes and contributed towards the establishment of their athletic identity. Chapter Eight will highlight the Foucauldian (1979) concept of 'normalisation' in relation to the academy athletes' perceptions of pain and injury, their

career progression and athletic identity. In addition, the acceptance of pain and injury amongst the academy athletes will be explored in association with the concept of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1990) and the athletes' conception of self.

## Chapter Eight: The Normalisation of Injury, Career, Stigma and Masculinity

### *8.1 Introduction*

The culture of modern professional sport requires athletes to sacrifice their bodies to routine forms of rigorous training exceeding the boundaries of human limits, both physiologically and psychologically (Hughes and Coakely, 1991). Brohm's (1978) portrayal of elite level sport highlights the commitment of athletes to these norms and the subjection of the human body that appear at the forefront of professional sport. Brohm (1978: 23 *italics in original*) states that "*the sporting legend is above all else a story of pain barrier, of going to the limits of endurance, of being drunk with 'animal' fatigue and of getting a kick out of bruises, knocks and injuries*".

As indicated in the previous chapter, the sport ethic defines the criteria required to achieve the status of a 'real' athlete. This criterion is broken down into four sub-sections. Each section describes what it means to be a 'real' athlete and the requirements needed in order to excel as an elite athlete. In order to adhere to the sport ethic, athletes are expected to make sacrifices for their sport, strive for distinction, accept risk and play through pain and injury (Hughes and Coakley 1991).

The level of success achieved by an individual athlete may be based upon the level to which they conform to such values often resulting in detrimental side effects as Messner (1990: 159) indicates:

It seems reasonable to begin with the assumption that in many of our most popular sports, the achievement of goals (scoring and winning) is predicated on the successful utilisation of violence—that is, these are activities in which the



human body is routinely turned into a weapon to be used against other bodies resulting in pain, serious injury, even death.

A willingness to fully adhere to these values may be understood as over-conforming to the sport ethic. Ewald and Jiobu (1985) note that athletes who over-conform to these norms are said to be engaging in behaviour that is deviant. This particular notion of deviance may be described as positive deviance: “Behaviour which is pronormative but becomes deviant when pursued with an intensity and extensity going beyond the conventional bounds” (Ewald and Jiobu, 1985: 144). However, Howe (2004: 75) indicates that “reactions to pain are not simply involuntary and instinctual, but are determined in part by the social context in which pain occurs”. A contextualist approach towards pain and injury within elite sport offers similar considerations as pain is viewed as a construct of one’s social and cultural surroundings. Loland *et al* (2006: 54) state that:

Typically, certain kinds of pain without injury, such as pain of hard training and competition, are taken as signs of development and athletic growth. The well known slogan, ‘no pain no gain’, illustrates the point. The acceptance and endurance of pain are necessary to succeed.

Pain and injury may be viewed as integral to the cultural composition of the elite athlete. Previous research (Albert, 1999; Curry and Jiobu, 1984; Curry and Strauss, 1994) has demonstrated that injuries are routine or uneventful and inherent to the culture of elite sport. The acceptance or normalisation of pain reinforces a commitment to the cultural identity that defines what it is to *be* a professional athlete. Therefore, one must look at the social context in which these values are perpetuated. For the academy athletes in this study the experience of pain and injury may be defined by their

interaction with other group members situated in their particular cultural milieu. However, methods of observation, categorisation and comparison ensured that such values were internalised by the academy athletes so as to accept playing with pain and injury as normative behaviour.

The aim of this chapter is to provide an understanding of academy athletes' experience of pain and injury in relation to the Foucauldian (1979) concepts of 'normalisation' and 'technologies of the self' (Foucault, 1988a). By applying a Foucauldian approach an understanding of how these particular norms become internalised amongst the academy athletes can be explored. Drawing from semi-structured interviews, an exploration of injury in relation to career progression, stigmatisation and masculinity will also be discussed.

## *8.2 The Normalisation of Injury*

Young and White (1995: 53) note that to disregard pain and injury in professional sports is to show "courage and character; to consolidate membership and kudos in the group; to avoid being benched; and, to help make sense of compromised health in a lifestyle that demands and reveres fitness". The concept of over-conformity has created a large contradiction within the world of competitive sport. A tolerance of injury, an acceptance of pain and a will to sacrifice the body for sporting achievement is seen as evidence of a strong character; however it also illustrates a major paradox of professional sports. Messner (1990: 211) states that, "top athletes, who are often portrayed as the epitome of good physical conditioning and health, are likely to suffer from a very high incidence of permanent injury". Moreover, Safai (2003) highlights this

contradiction through the examination of the culture of risk, sport medicine and the injured athlete. Safai (2003: 129) states that “paradoxically, as the body is built up to move through the competitive hierarchies of modern sport, the body is increasingly worn down”. Over-conforming behaviour, although celebrated by many, may, in effect, be viewed as behaviour that is ultimately leading toward the deterioration of the athlete’s body.

As previously indicated in Chapter Seven the academy athletes come to internalise the core values associated with the academy cultures through a process of observation, documentation and comparison. Integral to the values of the culture that surrounded both academies was the willingness to play through pain and injury. Moreover, it appeared that to discuss minor injuries, often referred to as ‘niggles’ or ‘knocks’ was perceived as detrimental to the progression of academy athletes. The physiotherapist at Valley FC’s academy highlighted how playing with an injury became normalised amongst the players as they were expected to simply ‘get on with it’ once injured:

I always say in terms of, sort of the younger age groups who are coming through, say from when they’ve got a bit more sense from 15 [years of age] onwards if you like they’ve got sort of, they’re in a no win situation because if they’ve got little niggles and knocks, if they mention them all the time it’s sort of looked upon like, you’ve got a little niggle or knock just get on with it like. **(Edward)**.

Chapter Seven also indicates that Foucault’s (1979) normalisation was perpetuated via a hierarchical mode of observation and a normalising judgment. Foucault (1979) notes that this mode of observation functioned through the all encompassing gaze of the Panopticon. The Panopticon functioned as “a laboratory; it could be used as a machine

to carry out experiments, to alter behaviour, to train or correct individuals” (Foucault, 1979: 203). Therefore, a normalising judgment not only worked on the body but also managed to shape the behaviour of those who were subjected to it (Foucault, 1979). This method of normalisation ensured that the academy athletes displayed the desired characteristics that conform to the ‘norms’ of the academies’ cultures. One such norm that was prevalent amongst academy staff and players was the willingness to rationalise and justify playing with pain and injury. Josiah, a first year Derrington Town academy athlete, described his experience of playing with an injury and its long term lasting effects. Although the nature of the injury appeared to be quite severe the rugby player made sure not to inform the club’s physiotherapist so he could continue to play the rest of the season. For Josiah this particular type of behaviour appeared normal and therefore justified his decision to continue to play on with injury:

**AM:** You said you’ve played with concussion as well?

**Josiah:** Yeah, well...I went through a phase ‘cos I got concussed in one match, and then you’re meant to be out for one month afterwards, and it was like the first match of the season. Uhh, so I just kept, I played for the rest of that year and like every match I’d go light headed and feel a bit funny. I get concussion quite easily now.

**AM:** So it’s fairly normal to be concussed?

**Josiah:** Yeah, but not badly, my vision goes, not completely but just a little bit.

**AM:** Does this happen often to other players?

**Josiah:** Yeah, quite a lot, one every match I reckon.

**AM:** And for you?

**Josiah:** Uhhhhhmm, there’s always a little niggle but I think everybody gets that so...Yeah, once the adrenaline gets going you can’t really feel it.

Loss of vision and regular concussions were perceived as normal for this particular rugby player. To play with injury was an accepted norm for all the athletes interviewed, and playing at less than full fitness was perceived as a routine occurrence. Jacob, a senior men's first team rugby player and ex-academy player, described his experience of playing at the top level of his profession and the paradoxical notion of healthy bodies and professional sport:

**AM:** How often do you play with an injury?

**Jacob:** Uhhmm, ha, week in week out really. You 'ave, well it's not that often when you've got absolutely nothing wrong with you. It's like you 'ave a niggly hamstring or a tight calf or something like that, usually I reckon it's very rare for a player not to have anything wrong with them if you know what I mean.

Oliver, a second year Valley FC academy athlete, described his experience of having to play whilst injured despite being in pain and having limited movement. Although he allowed the physiotherapist to analyse the injury, he had already decided to continue to play regardless of the diagnosis. During the interview Oliver noted how, although quite badly injured, he *had* to carry on playing. This suggests that there was no other alternative and thus reinforced the normative attitude towards pain and injury that was present within Valley FC's academy. Always under surveillance from managers and coaches the academy athletes felt they had to continue to play in order to display the normative behaviour or attitude required to succeed:

**AM:** Have you ever played with an injury?

**Oliver:** Yep, I played...I done it last week, I got a bad knock against FC United [pseudonym] the whole outside of my foot was black and it was really quite sore and I just had to carry on. They put a strapping on it and some hard sort of plastic gel on top of it just to, uhhh, just to make it better but I couldn't kick with

the outside of my foot properly or anything like that but I just played through it 'cos I didn't wanna sit on the sidelines or anything. So I play with an injury quite often.

**AM:** Why do you do that?

**Oliver:** Just 'cos you don't wanna...like you do see 'em [Physiotherapists] and go like, "'Ave a look at it". And they'll [Physiotherapist] go, "How do you feel"? And you're like, "Yeah I'm just gonna play on it anyway", just 'cos you don't wanna sit in and be injured and you just don't wanna do it, you wanna stay and play football as much as you can.

The majority of the academy athletes interviewed were able to manage their own injuries and recognised what they could and could not play with. Minor injuries that were not observable to coaches and peers, such as 'dead-legs', groin strains, or twisted ankles, would not restrict the athletes from playing. Kotarba (1983: 133) indicates that "Without any observable physiological evidence that indicates a person may be in pain, we can only know of another's suffering through the communication of the *idea* of pain". Both the Derrington Town and Valley FC academy athletes were more likely to conceal injuries that were not visible, such as muscle strains or 'dead' legs, than those that required immediate medical attention due to the visible severity of the injury. Although all the academy athletes interviewed admitted to playing with certain injuries, some would manage their injuries differently to others. Whilst a number of the academy athletes were very reluctant to report injuries, others, once the injury became too unbearable, would report to the physiotherapist for treatment.

From a Foucauldian perspective this mode of personal responsibility manifested itself amongst the academy athletes in the form of self-diagnosis when managing their injuries. Eric, a first year scholar at Valley FC's academy, discussed his experience of playing with and managing injuries. Small 'knocks' and 'niggles' sustained throughout a

match were perceived as very minor injuries that were either completely dismissed or could be run off requiring no treatment. However, Eric suggested that the reporting of a major injury constituted a professional attitude toward managing pain and injury:

**AM:** Have you ever played with an injury?

**Eric:** Nah not really, I've had like little knocks on my leg, like, at the start of the game if I've had a knock I'm not the one to go off, I'd rather just get through the injury really, just run it off.

**AM:** Why wouldn't you go off, what would stop you from doing that?

**Eric:** Because I'd rather just play and run it off. Obviously, if I got an injury and I felt I couldn't play on with it I'd go off obviously, 'cos that's professionalism and you'd just go off. But if I had got a knock and I knew I could run it off then I wouldn't like...I'd rather just run it off by myself rather than go off with a slight knock, just play on rather than miss out.

**AM:** So, you are willing to play on if you can run it off?

**Eric:** Yeah, but obviously if it's too painful and you can't, like if you've pulled your hamstring and you can feel it then you'd obviously put your hand up and say my hamstrings gone; It's just using your brain and not being stupid really.

As players were constantly under surveillance from managers, coaches, sport scientists and conditioning coaches motivation to perform, with or without injury, was rarely required. The majority of the academy athletes were unwilling to discuss injuries with senior members of the academy staff due to a fear of replacement or loss of place within the team. Injuries were perceived by the academy athletes as a normative part of their sport and a method of self-surveillance was adopted to diagnose the state of their health based on past experiences. Aiden, a second year Valley FC academy athlete, explained how he continued to play with an injury due to his own misdiagnosis of the injury that ultimately led to a longer period of rehabilitation:

**AM:** Why were you playing three or four weeks with the injury?

**Aiden:** Because I thought it was just the hard ground that made it swell a little bit and then it went back down but...I was playing on it and it was just gradually getting bigger, the swelling, so I just went right deal with it to the physios, please.

**AM:** Were you worried that if you had told someone you might've missed out on training or matches?

**Aiden:** Well yeah because...Like the physios they have to be protective but, like...Say if I've got, like, a dead leg or something like that I wouldn't tell 'em about that, I'd just play with that 'cos I know that's just gonna go away. But I thought this was gonna go away so I just kept on playing until it got too bad for us to play with.

Similar attitudes towards pain and injury can be witnessed in institutions away from the realm of sport. Ballet schools also present a similar cultural milieu to the sports academies. Within ballet schools body image and the occurrence of injury are primary concerns for most of the dancer (Turner and Wainwright, 2003). These concepts are of equal concern to an athlete within the sports academies and may aid in explaining how certain values are established amongst the athletes and within their culture. Turner and Wainwright (2003: 272) state that:

While a ballet injury is potentially fatal to a ballet career, it is accepted as an inevitable feature of ballet life, but discomfort, pain and injury are masked by a ballet culture that is committed to the notion that "the show must go on".

The academy athletes' perception and management of pain and injury illustrated how the athletes' became aware of their bodies in relation to the cultural environment in which they existed. Foucault (1988a) highlights the 'concern of the self' in relation to his concept the 'technologies of the self'. Foucault (1988a: 18) indicates that



technologies of the self imply “certain modes of training and modification of individuals, not only in the obvious sense of acquiring certain skills but also in the sense of acquiring certain attitudes”. It is clear that the academy athletes were modified to adopt specific skills; however, the acquisition of a certain attitude was also fundamental to their existence. The willingness to play with pain and injury was a clear indication of the required attitude that is associated with elite sport. Mediated messages were perpetuated within the cultures of the academies and specific norms were established to which all players conformed to ensuring that they displayed the required attitude. Speaking with Valley FC’s academy coach it was clear that these mediated messages regarding pain and injury were prevalent within the culture of the institution themselves:

But you know I don’t expect ‘em to be soft and I have said to ‘em [Academy Players], “You have to understand this, you *will not* play a game of football throughout a career of like I did, six hundred games where I could probably count on one hand the games where I could say to myself Christ I was absolutely bang on, I had nothing wrong with me”. You’re always carrying a little niggle ‘ere and a little niggle there because of the nature of the game we’re in, we’re in a physical game where your bodies are being battered everyday (**Graham**).

As the academy athletes were also under routine observation the propensity to deviate from the normative behaviour associated with pain and injury appeared unlikely. Therefore, the athletes often hid certain injuries in order to continue playing; reasserting their identity as an athlete who had adopted the correct attitude to succeed. Owen, a second year Valley FC academy athlete, openly admitted that teammates would routinely hide injuries in order to continue playing:

**AM:** Do you think players will often hide injuries?

**Owen:** Uhhh, yes, you see it quite often really, they'll say oh it's just a niggle, it's just a knock, 'cos they just love playing and they don't wanna...they don't wanna stop that. Sometimes it just goes and you can get on with it, sometimes it gets worse and you can just tell that they've played with that for a while and they haven't reported it.

Further research by Young and White (1995: 53) regarding pain, injury and elite female athletes indicates that “because it is normative in sport for public declaration or display of injury to be poorly received, the athlete is often forced to cope with her condition privately”. Similar to Theberge's (2008) work concerning injury amongst male and female elite athletes, both the Valley FC and Derringtonstone players took it upon themselves to manage threats to their health and well-being and cope with their injury in private avoiding public disclosure for as long as possible.

Goffman (1963: 82) notes that “norms regarding *personal* identity...pertain not to ranges of permissible combinations of social attributes but rather to the kind of information control the individual can appropriately exert”. The control of information regarding injuries was a useful mechanism utilised by Valley FC academy athletes to sustain a *personal* identity within the academy. The concealment of injuries helped to sustain the footballer's identity of a professional athlete and ensure their place within the squad. At Valley FC it was acknowledged by both Edward, the physiotherapist, and the academy coach that players were likely to train and play matches whilst injured:

**AM:** So how often do they [Footballers] play with injuries?

**Edward:** I think if you spoke to any, if you spoke to one hundred percent of footballers then they'd say they played with injuries. I think, they always say they are never one hundred percent fit when they play, and it's difficult if you are in full time sport never to have any aches or pains.

The normality of playing with pain and injury for Derringstone Town academy athletes was further reiterated by Tim, the academy's conditioning coach, indicating that training without an injury was perceived as very rare. If the rugby athletes sustained long term injuries then exercises could be modified so that they were still able to work on conditioning their bodies whilst injured. Maintenance of the athlete's body strength and physical fitness and a quick recovery was paramount for both the player and club. This particular approach to training the body whilst injured was indicative of Foucault's (1979) portrayal of the 'docile body'. Although the rugby players were injured the body could still be conditioned and trained to ensure that performance levels did not decrease and strength was maintained. The focus of training was still placed upon the manipulation of the body to ensure that it continued to be a productive body that increased or maximised its forces (Foucault, 1979):

**AM:** How often do players train with injuries?

**Tim:** That happens, especially in rugby, that happens quite a lot. It's very rare that one of our academies will go throughout a training block without some form of injury. So it's just a matter of finding the different exercise that he can still do to maintain his strength even if it's until he gets injury free again. But it's also quite important from a rehabilitation point of view that if he has got quite a bad injury, he gets on with the weights he can do and then for the injury kind of site he's doing rehabilitation work to get him back up to speed quite fast as well.

Although the willingness to over-conform to these values is seen as integral within many sport subcultures, Murphy and Waddington (2007: 250) believe that the messages conveyed by coaches and managers, although not always delivered with intent, help to perpetuate a culture of risk encouraging athletes to play with injury:

It would seem that the outcome of the interaction between those in the sportsnet is, in effect, to transfer risk to the athletes, even if this is not part of a deliberate conspiracy to do so. It is important to note that one does not have to assume deliberate intent in this regard.

This particular notion was evident within the culture of Valley FC's academy.

The academy coach was aware that players were not always honest with their responses regarding injuries. The coach was clear on his position of what injuries players should and should not play with. Malcolm and Sheard (2002) indicate that coaches and managers within professional rugby were reluctant to encourage or coerce athletes to play with pain or injury, thus contrasting with Nixon's (1992) work regarding the 'sportsnets'. This was also evident within the academies in this study as the athletes were seen to be educated by coaches and managers on the matter of diagnosing injuries. Even so, academy athletes, especially rugby players, tolerated playing with both pain and injury on a regular basis. Malcolm and Sheard (2002: 155) note that "in the context of English professional rugby, the responsibility for playing hurt lies more with the players than it does with the sports authorities". This was true of the academy athletes, and demonstrated that these individuals were not completely dominated by coaching and managerial staff. The majority of the academy athletes in this study took responsibility for their own choices and actions regarding the management of injury. Once again this particular responsibility demonstrated a heightened sense of self-surveillance and an awareness of the self in relation to the cultural surroundings.

Although the majority of the academy athletes suggested that injuries should remain hidden or could be managed independently, it was seen as important for Valley

FC academy coaches to educate players on recognising the difference between minor and major injuries and how to cope with them:

**AM:** How honest are the players with their responses?

**Graham:** Uhhhmm, no not always, 'cos there's times I think there's probably players that train with injuries, I think there's players say they're injured when they probably could train. I think that's down to the mental make up of the person. We've got lads down that've been playing with injuries, I'm not sure they were telling me how severe they were but I think the injuries they were playing with were self inflicted through over training, from our point of view not from their point of view. So I've said to them, "Right that's it you're not playing again until you're pain free", but I've always said to 'em "If it's a muscular injury you got to report it to the physio straight away". We can 'ave obviously muscle soreness, delayed onset muscle soreness, you can 'ave like a pull and I said there is a difference and we've got to educate them on the difference. I said, "If it's a kick then really it's down to whether you can handle it". I said, "If it's a kick you can play with then great get on with it, if it isn't then don't play, don't train".

Hughes and Coakley (1991) suggest that not all athletes are likely to engage in over-conformity to the sport ethic to the same degree. Rather that those who are susceptible to complying with group demands and who view sport as a form of social mobility are more likely to partake in over-conforming behaviour: "Athletes whose identity or future chances for material success are exclusively tied to sport are most likely to engage in overconforming behaviour" (Hughes and Coakley, 1991: 312). However, as demonstrated by a Valley FC academy athlete, the importance of the occasion was also considered a variable for playing with pain and injury:

**AM:** Have you ever played with an injury?

**Hugh:** Yeah, yeah a few times, calf injuries and that there, you just try and pull through it, dead legs and that, nothing too serious like.

**AM:** Why do you play on through injuries?

**Hugh:** Well it was back home and I think I thought I was still capable of playing even though I was injured like. And maybe if you get injured during a game, and it's an important game, you don't wanna come off so it's like, you just battle through it.

In addition, some of the athletes would have considered masking the pain with strong pain killing injections in order to continue to play in important matches. Christopher, a senior Derrington Town academy athlete revealed his intentions if seriously injured:

**AM:** Would you ever consider playing with an injury?

**Christopher:** Uhhmm...if the team needed me to and I was *able* to get through it without too much pain, if I was able to have a cortisone injection or something, and it was a big game in which they needed me then yeah I'd definitely, definitely do that.

Research by Roderick *et al* (2000) indicates that athletes are likely to vary in their attitude to pain and injury. Their study concerning English professional footballers and the management of injury, suggested that the degree to which players would play with pain or injury altered from player to player and even club to club. Roderick *et al* (2000:177) state that:

The extent to which players are constrained to play hurt...may vary from some degree from one player to another, and from one club to another and may be associated with a variety of considerations.

Within Valley FC's academy the players' attitudes towards pain and injury was variable. Although the players did not admit this within the interviews their approach to managing and reporting injuries indicated that each had a different perception of playing hurt. The physiotherapist at Valley FC noted that individual players had different pain

thresholds, which became evident through knowledge of the players and their previous injury record:

Probably from both a coach's point of view and a physio's point of view you do get to know your players, and there are certain players that'll walk in the door with what you think is this certain injury, or two players could walk in the door say with this one injury. One you'll know will be fit in, to look at them with very similar injuries, but one you know's gonna be fit to play at the weekend and the other one you think they'll be out for probably a couple of weeks. Uhh, because different footballers have different attitudes to injury, they have different pain thresholds, they have all sorts...and there're certain lads who'll just get on with it, uhhh, and there's certain lads that won't (**Edward**).

The extent to which athletes would push their physical boundaries became a predisposition to their commitment to their sport and a testament of their 'character'.

Research by Klein (1995) regarding men's health and bodybuilding provides a first-hand account of the cultural significance of sacrificing one's body for the sake of establishing an identity. This was noted in Klein's (1995: 105) observations of weight lifting sessions:

The first time I witnessed a bodybuilder suffer a nosebleed while lifting weights it was triumphantly explained to me that the man in question was a true bodybuilder, paying dues, training in earnest and wiling both to risk and to endure injury for his calling.

Sinden's (2010) Foucauldian approach to the normalisation of emotion and disregard of health in elite sport provides an understanding of how athletes internalise values regarding pain and injury in sport. Sinden (2010: 252) notes that, "in the area of hierarchical observation, surveillance worked as the athletes watched each other and compared themselves with other athletes in the areas of training, health and emotions".

As previously indicated in Chapter Five this method of surveillance manifested itself

within both the academies in the form of lateral surveillance, leading to a mode of lateral discipline. Through such techniques norms regarding pain and injury were sustained and perpetuated throughout the academies. Through lateral surveillance and constant comparison the academy athletes were able to view and adopt the normative values associated with pain and injury.

Similar to the culture of modern sport Turner and Wainwright (2003: 281) note that the majority of dancers invest their identity within their profession; therefore “an injury that terminates their career abruptly and irrevocably is a major threat to their identity”. The career of the academy athletes was representative of their overall identity. To suffer an injury not only disrupted their career but also discredited their identity as professional athletes. As previously indicated academy athletes were more likely to continue to play with a certain injury until the pain became too unbearable as disclosure may cost them both in terms of career progression and social status. An exploration into the concept of career and injury helps to understand how athletes internalise the values associated with pain and injury and it is to this that we now turn to.

### *8.3 Injury and Career*

All of the academy athletes interviewed had, at some point in their academy career, experienced some form of injury. When discussing the concept of injury with the academy athletes the focus was upon the inconvenience of the injury rather than the pain or discomfort that the athlete may have felt. The stigma of being labelled ‘soft’ or to be seen as ‘bottling it’<sup>30</sup>, and the experience of rehabilitation were seen as key factors that

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<sup>30</sup> ‘Bottling it’ was a common phrase used amongst the academy athletes and referred to the athlete using injury as an excuse to forgo training or playing in matches.



would encourage the academy athletes to continue to play with certain injuries.

However, a loss of place within the team and the potentially damaging effects that injuries may have on a player's career were seen as an essential feature of the athletes' experience of injury. Kotarba (1983: 137) states that:

Put simply, *play with pain* refers to the decision to prevent a physical problem interfering either with one's athletic identity or with one's play. *Talk injury* refers to the decision to disclose a physical problem to potentially helpful (or discrediting) audiences such as coaches, trainers, management, the press, or the public. The variables that influence these decisions include visibility and severity of the injury, age, and the location of the problem in the athletic career continuum.

The position of the athlete within their career was a common variable that influenced players not to talk about certain injuries and to continue to play with pain. Ethan, a former Derrington Town rugby academy athlete who had just signed a professional contract for the first team squad described the frustrations of being injured. The potential loss of his career to injury was perceived as an important aspect of his injury experience. The danger of having his position threatened by other rugby players was also a prominent consideration when deciding whether to play through pain. For this particular rugby player having a secondary option, other than professional rugby, was seen as essential:

**AM:** Why is it so frustrating to be injured?

**Ethan:** I think it's just if you took it as lookin' at your job. If you worked as, I dunno a builder, and something happened and you weren't able to build you're just there sort of, not twiddling your thumbs 'cos you've gotta come in and do your rehab and stuff, you're sort of being restricted from something that you wanna do. You also worry about things happening, "What if, what if he takes my place and he goes on really well, or what if this happens, what if that happens"? As a young player you just want to play and bein' injured and standing and

watching is not a nice thing. I mean it's never good when you're younger as well and you couldn't play and all your mates were flyin' around, it's just a bit sort of frustrating but you've just gotta come up with things to combat that. I think long term it's good to have something else to sort of drop back to in case sort of, touch wood, if something does go wrong then obviously you've got something there in place ready to move into or some plans to move into something.

Kotarba (1983: 137) notes that the main concern influencing athletes' disclosure of pain and injury relates directly to "the athlete's perception of his or her own job security".

Kotarba suggests that athletes with 'insecure athletic identities' or IAI are more likely or have greater reason to conceal injuries or to continue playing whilst injured. Kotarba (1983: 137) indicates that IAI players are defined as athletes who "perceive their job status as being in constant jeopardy due to the high level of competition for positions in professional sports". The competitive nature of the academies reflected the need to conceal information regarding pain and injuries as both Derrington Town and Valley FC academy athletes were selective on which injuries they would and would not report. As Roderick (2003) notes replacement due to injury creates 'fear' and 'uncertainty' amongst professional athletes.

To lose one's place within the squad or one's position in the starting line up was a major concern for the majority of both the academy athletes interviewed. Injury was seen as a huge disruption to players' careers. Both Derrington Town and Valley FC academy athletes perceived that a disruption in playing time due to injury could dictate whether they would be resigned for a further year or to a professional contract, or even released from the club. The desire to continue to play through injury was expressed by a second year scholar at Valley FC's academy. Due to a current run of good form, and difficulty in returning to the first team after injury, he was willing to play with pain to

ensure that his reputation and position in the squad was maintained. It was not until he was physically unable to play, due to the nature of the injury that he had suffered, that he reported the injury to the physiotherapist:

**AM:** Have you ever played with an injury?

**Eli:** Yeah I have, I think I started playing with me back injury and I just wanted to kick on through it 'cos I just didn't wanna be out injured, so I just tried to push through it. But then it just got the point where I couldn't anymore, it was hurting too much and I found it difficult to train so I had to report it.

**AM:** And what stopped you from saying, I'm injured I've got to go to the physio?

**Eli:** Ahhh, I just think it was because I was playing well and playing every week so...I just wanted to keep that. You know, obviously when you come out of injury you're not automatically gonna get back in the team, so it's obviously a lot harder.

A further senior Derrington Town academy player, who had also recently signed a first team contract, reinforced the notion that playing whilst injured was necessary to earn a position within the senior squad. While discussing his own experience the player commented on the difficulty of coping with an injury as a player without an established reputation:

I think it was just difficult because it was my first season as, you know, a really full pre-season and I wanted to make an impact and...so that made it more difficult. If I'd been like a season pro, you know, been three years into my contract or had 50, 60 starts in the Premiership, in a way it would be easier to be injured because even if someone comes up and plays really well you've still got your reputation, so, yeah, it's not very nice (**Christopher**).

Kotarba (1983: 140) notes that IAI players may be defined as: "Unproven rookies, aging veterans trying to "hang on", minority group players who feel their ethnicity places them at an inherent disadvantage in job competition, or simply average players on year-to-

year performance contracts”. Whilst reflecting on his injuries the rugby player continued to comment on the difficulty in establishing himself in the first team due to the veterans’ propensity to play with injury. Similar to Kotarba’s (1983) concept of IAI athletes, the veteran players may perceive up and coming players as a threat or would continue to play with injuries for financial gain. It was perceived that more established players were looked upon favourably by managers and coaches, as they were seen to be more experienced and could be trusted to perform well:

**Christopher:** I’ve got what ten years if that<sup>31</sup>, you know, and I want to reach my potential and if that means, you know, playing in games where I’m not a hundred percent, I know lots of other guys have done that this year, like Jim [pseudonym] has done that this year, he’s played through injury uhhmm...and Bill [pseudonym] as well sort of thing. They’ve just picked up little niggles which aren’t terrible but if you keep on working on them you find you need to have a couple of games off sort of thing.

**AM:** Why do you think they did that?

**Christopher:** Honestly? It’s because they didn’t want someone like me coming into the team and securing a spot sort of thing but, you know, yeah I mean it was quite frustrating in a way because uhhmm...they had like little niggles and I think the manager wanted them to be in there. I don’t know whether at the point when they were getting these niggles they trusted me enough as a player ‘cos they hadn’t seen me play for, you know, quite a while ‘cos there was no second team rugby. I was just bursting for an opportunity to just get in there and play.

Academy athletes who had experienced injuries that forced them to rest for long periods of time expressed frustration at not being able to display their potential or ‘show’ their talents on the field. Dylan, a second year scholar at Valley FC’s academy, who had frequently played with minor injuries reflected on the importance of being ‘seen’ to be playing rather than resting at the sideline for the progression of his career:

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<sup>31</sup> At the time of the interview Christopher was 21 years of age.

**AM:** Have you ever played with an injury at all?

**Dylan:** Yeah I play a lot with injuries really ‘cos like I’m still growin’ and, like, I get niggles and things but, like, I just have to put up with ‘em I just try to play through ‘em really.

**AM:** Why do you do that?

**Dylan:** Just...I wanna play football really. I hate, I *hate* stayin’ inside and things, you can’t show anything if you are in the gym and you can show what you’re about when you’re on the field. So, even if I feel like, even if I like...some people say if you’re not gonna play at your best, if you’re half injured, then there’s no point in playin’ but I think you might as well give something ‘cos if you’re not gonna play at all you can’t be seen. It’s pointless really you’re gonna be stuck at the side so you might as well just give it your best shot ‘cos you never know what might happen.

As the academy athletes were under constant observation it was important to ensure that they displayed their abilities. Central to the willingness to conform was the academy athletes’ desire to constantly be ‘seen’ to be performing at an optimal level. If injured the academy athletes were unable to demonstrate their performance or ‘show’ their ability. The effect of a constant mode of surveillance induced conformity to the dominant norms of the academies and that of elite sport. Performance was an integral feature of the academy athletes’. It was vital to be seen to be productive; an injury hindered the notion of utility and usefulness thus rendering them unable to display their full potential.

For both the Derrington Town and Valley FC academy athletes it was important to play as much as possible so that they may progress their talent and achieve either second year contracts or move up into the reserves or senior men’s first teams. Research conducted by Young *et al* (1994: 190) surrounding injury, male athletes and the masculine identity indicates that “by relegating himself to the sideline, the male

athlete becomes less functional”. This was clearly evident amongst academy athletes interviewed in this study. A second year scholar at Valley FC’s academy who had recently experienced a number of injuries expressed a feeling of detachment from the other players. Frustration was experienced by this particular player as he felt he was unable to contribute to the team’s success in the previous season and therefore no longer felt part of the squad:

**AM:** What’s it like to be injured?

**Kieron:** Uhhmm...aahhh...not very good, I mean obviously you have to work hard when you’re injured and stuff, to get yourself back fit, but it’s just...you feel as if you’re not part of the team and stuff and when they win you feel like you haven’t contributed...It’s just something that you wouldn’t want.

**AM:** What’s the worst part about being injured?

**Kieron:** Just like I said, like not feeling part of the team, when they’re winning games and you’re not...you’re not really involved you feel like you haven’t done anything to be there. You watch from, like, the side and you see them gettin’ better and better and you think that you’ve had...like you’ve had nothing to do with that, so that’s probably the worst part about it.

The academy athletes viewed their bodies as an investment; an injury could cause a disruption in their productivity, performance and progression and thus force them to re-evaluate their potential careers. Much like Wacquant’s (1995) study on body capital in boxing, an academy athlete’s body may be considered the epicentre of their life as it is considered the medium of their occupational exertion and their asset for accomplishment. Howe’s (2001: 295) ethnographic analysis of pain and injury in professional rugby union identifies that alongside professionalisation came a greater pressure to over-conform in order to retain position within the squad:

With the arrival of commercialisation, which ultimately led to professionalisation of the team, the player's body became a commodity to be employed. As a result the way pain and injury was managed was also transformed, but the manner of this change related to the individual's role at the club. Players appeared to be placed under more pressure to deal with pain when their position within the squad was under threat.

However, as previously indicated, detachment from the squad or a potential loss of career was not the only variable that encouraged athletes to continue to play with pain and injury. The rehabilitation process was also central to the academy athletes' experience of injury and may be considered a prominent feature of their desire to continue to play with pain and injury. The academy athletes' experiences of rehabilitation ensured that they continued to conform to the normalising behaviour associated with playing through injury demonstrating conformity to the dominant norms of the academies social environments.

#### *8.4 Injury and the Rehabilitation Process*

The rehabilitation process was an integral part of the athlete experiences of injury and provides a further understanding as to why the athletes within this study adopted the decision to play through pain and injury. Injured players who require lengthy rehabilitation treatment will experience a different schedule to that of the healthy or fit players. Roderick (2003: 137) notes that "part of the different routine of injured players is related to the fact that they cannot take part in normal training sessions as they require physiotherapy or other treatment". This was indeed evident both for the Derrington Town and Valley FC academy athletes. A different training schedule was provided for injured players. At Valley FC's academy the injured would even undergo

separate reviews as they were unable to be monitored and graded on the usual criteria due to the physical restrictions placed upon them by their injuries. These athletes would partake in an injury review that would carefully document their rehabilitation progress step-by-step, and would be analysed by the physiotherapist, sport scientists and Valley FC academy coach. However, Roderick (2003: 137) notes that:

The different routine for injured players cannot be explained simply in terms of their need for specialist treatment for, in many clubs, the routine is deliberately designed to ‘inconvenience’ injured players and thus to act as a disincentive to them to remain on the injured list for one day longer than is absolutely necessary.

Within the present study I was unaware as to whether the academies purposefully inconvenienced injured players. However, the experience of rehabilitation for the majority of the academy athletes was perceived as unpleasant. The intensity of the rehabilitation was a common complaint amongst the majority of the players. A second year scholar at Valley FC suggested that whilst an injury could initially present a welcome break from the rigors of regular training sessions, it was noted that the rehabilitation programme was more intense than the regular training sessions and presented an overall experience that was looked upon negatively by the players:

**AM:** What’s it like to be injured?

**Roger:** In the beginning you kinda think, ohhhh it’s a nice break for about *two* days, and then after two days you’re like, *this sucks*, and you wanna get out of there. And it sucks even more because you do *more* weights than everyone else, you do *more* running, you do... Ahhh it’s just horrible. I remember when I was injured for the two weeks, I’m a keeper so I don’t do the, like, outdoor running, and they put me out there outdoor running and I was sore for about the next *week*, all my legs I couldn’t... I went in the ice baths and nothing helped, I was ohhhhhh, it was horrible, and I made sure that I was never getting injured again. So, you know, it happens to every player and physios and coaches always tell



you, report anything, but the players...sometimes you get something that hurts but we don't...we don't like reporting.

**AM:** Why not?

**Roger:** Why not?

**AM:** yeah, why wouldn't you report it?

**Roger:** *You wanna play*, you don't...It's not fun being injured, you wanna be part of the squad and if you're out then you're not really part of the squad, you're being treated and someone's taking your place, it's no fun.

The experience of rehabilitation was considered enough to ensure that minor injuries or 'knocks' and 'niggles' were not reported to the physiotherapist. This particular academy athlete further reinforced the notion of detachment that stemmed from injury. By being physically removed from the training ground the player no longer felt part of the team experiencing a loss of identity and the threat of replacement. Another first year scholar at Valley FC commented on the physical intensity and work rate that was negatively associated with rehabilitation:

**AM:** What's it like to be injured?

**Julian:** Well it's not nice, well I dunno, some people might like it but I *hate* bein' injured. 'Cos to be fair it's just as hard as trainin', they take you in the swimming pools they make you do sixty plus lengths, in the gym with Ted [pseudonym], he's one of our fitness coaches, and, like, it's just so hard with him he doesn't give you a breather he just makes you work so hard.

The intensity of rehabilitation was not the only variable considered unpleasant by the academy athletes. The process of going through rehabilitation was especially mundane for the majority of the football academy athletes. Oliver, a second year Valley FC scholar, who had experienced a number of injuries, each resulting in long term

rehabilitation, expressed his dislike in participating in the mundane but necessary exercises required to rehabilitate:

**AM:** What's it like to be injured?

**Oliver:** Ahh it's horrible, it's so boring. When you see everyone gettin' ready for trainin' and that and you're 'aving to be stuck in the treatment room, and all you 'ave to do is go in the gym and do weights, or a bike or...It's just no fun at all, like you wanna play football and that and when you 'ave to...when you 'ave to like go on a push bike or go on a treadmill or something like that it's just really horrible like.

Oliver continued to discuss the inconveniences of being injured. The monotony of non-football related exercises, the harsh rehabilitation training schedule and the lack of company were all perceived as negative aspects of rehabilitation:

**AM:** What's the worst part about it?

**Oliver:** Just like having to be in nine o'clock every morning, when you're fit you get the odd lie-in here and there and day offs and things like that. But when you're injured you're in nine o'clock every day and then you'll do work, like boring stuff like weights and that. And then sometimes you might 'ave to be in in the afternoon while everyone's off, and you 'ave to come in on a Sunday when it's like a ghost town when *no-one's* about on a Sunday and *you're* in gettin' treatment and doin' weights and that, so I'd say that's the worst thing about it.

In addition, the uncomfortable environment of the treatment room was also described by one of the Valley FC academy athletes, highlighting how such an atmosphere impacted upon maintaining a healthy mental state whilst injured:

**AM:** So what's it like to be injured?

**Joshua:** It's horrible really, you're sat on the treatment room I mean...it's designed, the treatment room's designed to make you not wanna be there if you know what I mean.

**AM:** What do you mean by that?

**Joshua:** There's no windows in it, and there's all bright lights, and you're in there and it's giving you a bit of a bad head, it's like you're like locked in if you know what I mean.

The architectural construction of the treatment room depicts a 'cell-like' environment utilising artificial lighting to allow maximum observation of the athlete's injury. This Panoptical mode of surveillance allowed for a greater transparency of an academy athlete's physical status and thus highlighted their ineffectiveness, as Foucault (1979: 200) indicates "full lighting and the eye of the supervisor capture better than darkness". Like Foucault's (1979) representation of the 'leper', injured athletes are segregated from the healthy athletes and confined to the treatment room, here a clear distinction between the 'normal and 'abnormal' can be made.

Although all of the athletes interviewed felt frustrated by injury most of them perceived rehabilitation as a necessary inconvenience, a small minority of the academy athletes focused on the positives of being injured. Josiah, an Associate level Derrington Town academy player, although frustrated with injury, suggested that it allowed him time to rest and focus on physical conditioning and thus improve himself as a player once he returned to full fitness:

**AM:** What's it like to be injured?

**Josiah:** Uhhhhh, it depends... Really annoying, it's like the worst part of rugby, but it can come at like, it can come at a good time if you're gettin' like sick of rugby 'cos you've played loads and loads and you just wanna work on your physical conditioning. Like you get an injury and you can just go and concentrate on that for a bit, it can work out for the best but at the time you're annoyed.

These sentiments were further reinforced by Harry, a first year Valley FC scholar. The short break he had spent while recovering from injury improved his motivation to succeed. The rest from playing was seen as a positive step as it allowed him time to reflect upon his team's success and increased his desire to play and be part of the team once more:

Because having, like, a six week break from football, uhhmm, which was about mid season for me, personally I thought it was a good thing, 'cos when I came back I was hungry, I was hungry to play because I'd been out, and I watched the others play and win matches and that and I wanted to be a part of it, so when I came back I was hungry to really get involved (**Harry**).

For the majority of the academy athletes interviewed the rehabilitation process was perceived as an unwelcomed inconvenience that created a sense of distance between those who were viewed as injured and those who were viewed as 'healthy'. To be injured and receiving treatment was a clear display of incapacity, the injured body demonstrated to coaches and significant others the inability to be an effective individual. Within the academies injury also carried a social stigma that labeled injured players as malingerers or 'soft', questioning their desire to conform to the norms of 'professionalism' in elite sport and their heterosexuality. Such interaction was displayed through the form of 'banter' and jovial conversation between players. However, it carried a serious undertone that stigmatised injured players as unwilling to conform to the dominant norms associated with pain and injury that were perpetuated within the academies, an issue to which the discussion of the thesis now seeks to address.

### *8.5 Stigma and 'Banter'*

Roderick's (2003) study concerning the careers of professional footballers highlights the social stigma that is attached to athletes when they are injured. When discussing the notion of disclosing information regarding injuries Roderick (2003: 129) notes that,

Players want their injuries and reports of discomfort to be believed. They do not want to be considered as complainers, as 'soft' or as though they are not 'up for it', and nearly all players, but particularly younger, less experienced players, are constrained to 'manage the information' they offer about themselves in order to avoid becoming discredited.

Roderick (2003) notes that 'banter' amongst the footballers in his study was an integral part of the football culture in which they worked and could dictate what players felt they should or should not reveal regarding pain or injury. Roderick (2003: 133) states that this notion of 'banter' was understood to be "a source of team spirit which fostered camaraderie. Yet sociologically it is clear that it is also a source of fear for players because it raises the threat of them becoming viewed as injury-prone, and as malingerers".

Within the academies the stigma of being labelled 'soft' ensured that athletes reacted positively to the banter and continued to play with pain and injury. Similar to Collinson's (1988) research surrounding the joking culture of shop-floor work, humorous comments carried a serious undertone reminding the footballers and rugby players of what was expected of them regarding the norms and values associated with playing with pain and injury. This form of joking raises unintended consequences as Roderick (2006b:89) notes, "banter directed at injured players reminds those who are

‘fit’ of the dangers of being viewed as injury-prone”. Speaking with Ethan, he explained how you should be willing to sacrifice your body for the sake of success. It was important to be seen to uphold the correct attitude towards playing with an injury and avoid the stigma of being labeled as a malingerer or permanently injured:

**Ethan:** You don’t wanna be seen as that person, why are you always injured, why are you always in rehab, you’ve only got a knock. If you’ve just got, like, I dunno, a dead leg or something, you might do as much as you can in training just to sort of show the coaches that, yeah, you know you’re willing to sort of put your body on the line.

**AM:** Why might it be a good thing to carry on with a little niggle or a knock?

**Ethan:** Yeah, I dunno, I think if the coaches are aware of that and they see it then they’ll be like, especially as a young guy, he’s got a bit of dog in him and he wants to play and he’s not just sort of here to have it as, ohhh I’m a professional rugby player and I don’t need to do anything else.

Lucas, a further second year scholar at Valley FC, also supported such claims suggesting that the ‘right’ attitude was not to report every injury that they incurred:

I’ve played with, like...you play through dead legs and sometimes you might roll your ankle a little bit, it might be a bit swollen but you’ll still play through it. Really you should tell the physio, ohh well I’ve got a bit of a twinge, but you don’t wanna be, like, every time you graze your elbow you don’t wanna be goin’, ohhhh I’ve hurt myself, so sometimes you just grit your teeth and get through it (**Lucas**).

Similar to Goffman’s (1963) portrayal of stigma and social identity the academy athletes who were perceived as constantly injured displayed an attitude that deviated from the desired norm. Goffman (1963: 13) states that “an attribute that stigmatizes one type of possessor can confirm the usualness of another”. The stigma of being injury-prone amongst the footballers highlighted the abnormal athlete from the normal and

emphaised their ineffectiveness. This particular attitude to injury and the notion of banter was not exclusive to Valley FC's academy; Derrington Town academy athletes also encountered similar experiences. Evan, an Associate level rugby player, commented on the banter encountered when injured for a lengthy period of time:

**AM:** What's it like to be injured?

**Evan:** Uhhhhh, I dunno, it's...It feels bad in a way because obviously you...You kinda feel like you should be out there, especially when you're watching a game. And the worst feelin' is to be injured and go and see the team you play for win a massive game without you, 'cos you're not needed kinda thing, and then you get the banter afterwards, like, ohhh you're not needed, like joking you know, so yeah it does feel bad.

Goffman (1963: 19) states that "the central feature of the stigmatized individual's situation in life is often, if vaguely, called 'acceptance'". For the academy athletes an identity associated with playing with pain and injury was perceived as normal and constituted an acceptance amongst the group. Pike's (2004, 2005) research regarding female rowers and the experience of injury suggests that injury is seen as a symbolic display of the rowers commitment to training. This was evident within the academies; however, it was also seen as a commitment to upholding the identity of a professional athlete and the norms and values that were associated with such a 'role' (Goffman, 1959). To deviate away from such a norm, or to question the values associated with such an identity, would result in stigmatisation. The occurrence of an injury creates the loss of a celebrated status and a devaluation of character (Brock and Kleiber, 1994). This acquisition of ordinariness severs an athlete's identity leading to the forced creation of an alternate identity or sense of self (Sparkes, 1996). Moreover, injury for the academy athletes created frustration as the body became 'incapacitated'. They

experience a sense of liminality, an ambiguous condition where the athlete is trapped between a previous state and a state that is yet to be defined (Collinson, 2005). This feeling of frustration manifested itself in the lack of effectiveness in team success when injured. When discussing the worst aspect of injury Aiden, a Valley FC academy player, suggested that the feeling of incapacitation, ineffectiveness and a distance that was created through injury all contributed towards the negative aspects of being injured:

**AM:** What was the worst part about it [being injured]?

**Aiden:** Not bein' able to train, not bein' able to play games, 'cos we went to the games just watching 'em play and you want to be a part of it, don't you?

To avoid receiving such a stigma and discrediting their identities, the athletes involved in this study managed their identity by restricting the information they disclosed and to whom they disclosed this information (Goffman, 1963). The management of identities was noted by the physiotherapist at Valley FC's academy as it was evident that players would divulge different sets of information regarding their physical fitness to coaches and managers:

There's been many a time that, uhh, a player'll say be telling you one thing saying, "It's no good, it's sore I can't walk let alone run" [player]. The coach will walk in the room, "What are you like"? [coach] "Oh I'm fine". [player] "Can you train"? [coach] "Oh yeah it's fine" [player]. And that's obviously when your job is to go and say to the coach he's not really fine, he's just stood there and told me he can't walk let alone run (**Edward**).

As Goffman (1959: 40) suggests, "If the individual's activity is to become significant to others, he must mobilize his activity so that it will express *during the interaction* what he wishes to convey". In this instance the academy athletes ensured that they displayed



the normative behaviour associated with pain and injury when interacting with the coaches so as to re-affirm their identity as committed athletes. The stigma of appearing 'soft' or not to be seen as 'bottling it' were significant influences on the athletes' decision to play with injuries. The 'labeling' (Becker, 1973) of an athlete as 'soft' imposed an identity that deviated from the dominant norms associated with the perceptions of pain and injury in elite male sport.

Kotarba (1983: 138) indicates that "the player's perception of his athletic identity largely determines to what degree he will allow the injury to limit his playing time and whether or not he will disclose the injury to others". Athletes can lose their sense of identity or self worth if they do not conform to the dominant norms of elite sport. Pike and Maguire's (2003) study of female rowers further highlights the social construction of pain and injury and the importance of establishing a sense of 'self' over the general well-being of an athlete. Pike and Maguire (2003: 245) conclude their study by stating that:

There is a trend of athletes tolerating injury in order to maintain influence over their athletic self. This suggests that performance efficiency, as part of a process of identity reaffirmation through conformity to the sport-based norms, is taking precedence over well-being.

For the academy athletes playing with pain and injury, even if they were unfit to do so, was seen as part of establishing their identity as a professional football or rugby player. Those players who were not willing to accept the dominant values of sport lost their identity within the social network of the subculture. Josiah, a Derrington Town academy athlete, had sustained torn ligaments in his ankle but continued to play the remainder of an important tournament. When questioned as to why he continued to play

despite being in pain he responded: ‘Cos I didn’t wanna look like I was bottling it’ [Josiah]. The appearance of being able to struggle through an injury was viewed as significantly more important than his physical fitness. This was a common behavioural trait expressed by the majority of athletes interviewed and helped to reinforce their athletic identity and the dominant norms associated with professionalism and hegemonic masculinity present within the academy cultures.

### *8.6 Pain, Injury and Masculinity*

Integral to the athlete’s construction of identity was the concept of masculinity. For the academy athletes a display of masculinity was demonstrated through their attitude towards pain and injury. Connell (1990: 83) defines hegemonic masculinity as “the culturally idealised form of masculine character”. Within the academies masculine character manifested itself in the form of an acceptance of pain and injury whilst training and participating in games. Messner (1992: 74) notes that “there is a powerful motivating force working in conjunction with external factors, that makes it likely that the athlete will ‘choose’ to play hurt: the internal structure of masculinity”. Playing with pain and injury for the academy athletes was very much a voluntary course of action. Although the loss of position within the team or the threat of being replaced was considered the main factor for continuing to play whilst injured, the notion of upholding the traditional mode of masculinity was also evident.

Connell and Messerschmidt (2005: 851) state that “bodies participate in social action by delineating courses of social conduct — the body is a participant in generating social practice”. How the academy athletes treated their bodies was a clear delineation

of the cultural environment in which they were immersed. Swain's (2003) study investigating schoolboys and the construction of masculinity highlights the key attributes towards sustaining a masculine identity. Swain (2003: 305) noted that "it was important for a boy to refrain from showing weakness by admitting the feeling of pain, and, particularly, by crying". A large part of the academy athletes' identities involved the devaluing of pain. Jacob, a first team Derrington Town player, explained how minor injuries should be ignored if they did not prevent him from playing:

**AM:** Why did you feel like you should carry on if you've got an injury?

**Jacob:** I dunno, it might be different for other people but I just think that...If you can still play then you should play. If it's not that serious then ok, but obviously if it's serious, obviously stop and get some treatment but if it's not that serious I don't see the point in stoppin' you might as well just play on, 'cos it's not stoppin' you from playing at all, it just hurts a bit that's all [we both laugh].

Research by Liston *et al* (2006) highlights the importance of traditional forms of masculinity amongst non-elite rugby players and its impact upon athletes to play with pain and injury. Liston *et al* (2006: 393) identified that themes of masculinity were expressed by the players through the acceptance or rationalisation of pain and the willingness to sacrifice their bodies in order to achieve success: "Aspects of traditional forms of aggressive masculinity – of being able to hit people and take it', as another rugby player put it – were expressed in several ways perhaps most notably in terms of 'putting one's body on the line'". It was important for the academy athletes to avoid the notion of appearing to be 'soft' and the stigma that it carried, and be willing to 'put their bodies on the line' for the sake of success. Young *et al* (1994: 190) suggest that by acknowledging injury "the athlete is also perceived as giving way to parts of himself

that are threateningly perceived as “soft” or feminine”. Harry, a first year Valley FC scholar, who had been playing with a minor shoulder injury continued to do so to ensure that he did not get labelled with this particular stigma. When I asked him why he continued to play he responded by stating: “Well a bit of its probably self pride ‘cos you don’t wanna be looked at by your peers as sort of soft” [Harry]. These traditional values associated with images of masculinity were supported by the majority of the academy athletes. Admitting that such behaviour existed the physiotherapist at Valley FC suggested that players who incurred a lot of injuries received the stigma of being ‘soft’ and injury prone:

**Edward:** If they’re injured there’s the, there’s kind of a, they’re probably termed as soft and certain things like that and it’s amongst the teammates and I think they wanna be seen that they’re givin’ it their all for the team.

**AM:** Have you ever experienced this kind of banter amongst the players?

**Edward:** Uhhh, I think you do experience it but maybe...uh there is that certain, depending on different types of players, some players are injured a lot some players aren’t injured at all. I certainly think the ones who are injured a lot certainly get banded as, as being injury prone and this and that and I think it’s really gonna be difficult to change that, that’s just football banter as such.

White *et al* (1995: 162) state that, “in conforming to the naturalised, idealised, and legitimised ways in which “real” men are expected to play sport, participants routinely become injured”. Ingrained within the culture of sport is the acceptance of pain and injury. To ignore minor injuries supported the traditional ideals of masculinity that are perpetuated throughout elite sport. That said the paradoxical relationship of pain and injury within elite sport places the athlete’s body at risk creating a culture of acceptance towards potentially debilitating behaviour (Robidoux, 2001). Murphy and

Waddington's (2007: 242) study examining elite athlete exploitation in terms of health risks in English professional football highlights that: "Those who are not prepared to play through pain and injury are likely to be stigmatised as not having the 'right attitude', as malingerers or, more bluntly, as 'poofers'". Murphy and Waddington (2007) identify that through verbal abuse, players are ostracised from the groups' social milieu. This particular environment created contradictions within the academies cultures. Playing with pain and injury and an adherence to the masculine ideals associated with the academies cultural environment ensured that the athletes avoided the stigma of being associated as 'soft'. However, to conceal certain information regarding pain and injury from coaching staff created further complications as academy athletes would inevitably suffer the consequences of training and playing matches whilst in pain or injured. Edward, Valley FC's physiotherapist, highlighted the contradictory nature of the academy's culture surrounding the dominant ideologies associated with masculinity:

Sometimes they're fighting a bit of a losing battle in the fact that if they report every little aches and pains that they've got they become soft, for want of a better word, and if they don't report these things they're in trouble 'cos they should have mentioned it earlier and they haven't (**Edward**).

Donaldson (1993: 646) states that "the public face of hegemonic masculinity, the argument goes, is not necessarily even what powerful men are, but is what sustains their power, and is what large numbers of men are motivated to support because it benefits them". The adherence to values associated with pain, injury and masculinity was considered beneficial to the academy athletes as it demonstrated their commitment to the dominant norms associated with the role of a professional rugby or football player. To

deviate away from such values demonstrated a lack of commitment from the academy athletes and potentially jeopardized their position within the team or academy.

### *8.7 Conclusion*

The academy players interviewed within the current study were seen to conform to the dominant values associated with elite sport. Playing with pain and injury was accepted by all academy athletes interviewed and was seen as integral to establishing their identities as professional football and rugby players. This particular culture was perceived as normal by coaches, conditioning coaches and physiotherapists. Roderick (1998: 76) notes that “the capacity for coaches, trainers, and significant others to affect athletes is not a one-way process. It is not the case that one party does the affecting while remaining unaffected by the actions of others”. The contributing factors and social relationships that encouraged the athletes to play with injury may not be viewed as unidirectional. Although the coaches and trainers impacted upon their actions, the academy athletes were also affected by the interactions between their peers and other group members within their cultural environment.

For the majority of the athletes playing whilst injured, and conforming to the dominant norms of the academies, was perceived as necessary as it enabled them to continue to be on ‘show’ and reduce the threat of displacement. The competitive nature of the academies ensured that the athletes were constantly aware of their position in relation to team selection. Injury for the athletes was seen as a disruption in their career progression. The loss of team participation and role of performer in the team’s success was also considered a significant feature contributing towards the players’ attitude to

injury. Due to such variables the majority of academy athletes interviewed were experienced at managing their own injuries; players were aware of what they could and could not play with regarding pain and injury. By conforming to these attitudes the academy athletes were able to sustain their identities as ‘professional’ athletes or individuals who were willing to ‘battle it out’ on the playing field. Markula (2004: 304) states that “the individual self is always a subject to power that shapes the individual’s understanding of his or her identity”. In the instance of injury the academy athletes’ identity was shaped by a willingness to conform to the normative behaviour associated with playing through pain and injury under the guise of a hierarchical mode of observation imposed by academy staff and reinforced by their surrounding peers.

The following chapter will discuss the social construction of identity within the academy settings, focusing upon Goffman’s (1959) presentation of the self, and the contradictions that occur upon demonstrating the desired characteristics that embody the notion of a ‘professional’ athlete.

## Chapter Nine: Identity, Professionalism and the Academy Athlete

### *9.1 Introduction*

Goffman's (1961b:15) analysis of total institutions suggests that "every institution captures something of the time and interest of its members and provides something of a world for them; in brief every institution has encompassing tendencies". Due to the closed nature of both Valley FC and Derringstone Town, key values were sustained and perpetuated amongst their members. As mentioned in the previous chapter an ideal character or attitude was adopted and sustained by academy athletes in relation to the normative behaviour associated with playing with pain and injury. The encompassing tendencies that these institutions presented was reflected in the production of an ideal 'character' that was promoted by coaches, managers and further academy staff.

Goffman (1959: 28) states that when an individual performs a required role they are,

Asked to believe that the character they see possesses the attributes he appears to possess, that the task he performs will have the consequences that are implicitly claimed for it, and that, in general, matters are what they appear to be.

Therefore, how an individual manages their identity and the role they display is integral to the demonstration of a performance that is believable. When considering the dramaturgical notion of 'role' enactment Goffman (1959) indicates that specific roles will be allocated by the director of performance in order to perpetuate the key values attached to an individual's personal 'front' via the process of socialisation. Agents ensure that the particular attitudes and attributes required to perform a desired 'role' are



upheld and effectively reproduced amongst a groups' social milieu. Within the context of sport, Ingham (1976: 358) suggests that "formal socialisation agents such as the coach facilitate the internalisation of the performance principle necessary for the organisational efficiency". Gearing (1999) indicates that football clubs encompass similar characteristics to that of Goffman's (1961b) notion of total institutions promoting 'encompassing tendencies' and 'total character'. Gearing (1999: 47) describes the football club as an institution where:

Anything up to forty similarly situated adult individuals, together lead a semi-enclosed, formally managed, way of life which, though not physically separated from the wider society (as in the prison or army barracks), constitutes its own paramount reality—one which is superimposed on that of the outside world. Activities are carried out in the immediate company of a batch of others, who are treated more or less alike, and subject to formal rules and sanctions from above.

In this chapter an understanding of these institutions in relation to Goffman's (1959) concepts concerning an individual's 'front', 'role' and performance will be developed. This chapter aims to explore how the academy athletes construct and negotiate their identity within the context of their own cultural milieu. By presenting the academy athletes' understanding of what it is to 'be' a professional athlete it is possible to see how they are able to construct the desired identity and perform the 'role' of an elite athlete.

## *9.2 The Definitive Attitude*

For elite athletes, striving for achievement and a quest for excellence embodies the ultimate performance within modern sport (Maguire, 2004). Maguire (2004: 302) notes that the performance of modern athletes "rests on what might be termed the myth

of the superman a performance so great that it eclipses the efforts of mere mortals”. Within the athletic community a ‘win at all costs’ mentality is regularly upheld and celebrated by its members. A significant component of the professional athlete’s identity is composed of a number of traits that form a specific ‘attitude’.

The ‘correct’ attitude within professional sport, a pattern of behaviour that is perceived desirable by coaches and managers, may also be identified as an athlete’s ‘character’. Roderick (2003: 78) notes that “what it means to possess a *good attitude* (or for that matter a *bad attitude*) can vary considerably”. This may be true throughout the world of sport as attitudes towards performance can differ from club to club and country to country. Moreover, attitudes towards training and performance may alter through a professional athlete’s career. However, as previous research indicates (Cushion and Jones, 2006; Parker, 2001, 2006; Roderick, 2003, 2006a; Shogan, 1999), dominant values that encompass the notion of a ‘good’ or ‘correct’ attitude consist of a number of specific traits. The fundamental values that are upheld within high-performance sport are outlined by Shogan (1999: 18): “Success in high-performance sport requires and produces athletes who can persevere, who do not give in to competing desires, and who are strong-willed”. Although this depiction of high-performance sport provides an accurate representation, the elite athlete’s ‘character’ can be dissected further.

For an elite athlete the following criteria define what is meant to uphold a ‘good’ attitude or ‘correct’ character. Athletes must display a passion for their particular sport, an unrivalled dedication towards training, the acceptance of an institutionalised set of values, a competitive demeanour and the willingness to conform to the rules and regulations established by the club or institution. This ‘attitude’ encompasses the traits

required for the academy athletes to succeed in pursuing a professional career. Parker's (2001: 61) analysis of Youth Traineeship in English professional football outlines the core values that encompassed a 'professional attitude' amongst youth footballers, indicating the underlining code of conduct that the trainees should adopt:

Crucial in this sense was that all trainees demonstrated a keen and 'hardy' enthusiasm for the game itself, a forceful 'will-to-win', an acceptance of work-place relations based on authoritarianism/subservience, an ability to conform to institutional ('official') rules regulations and disciplinary codes.

Within Parker's (2001) study these values were seen to be reinforced by the coach and managerial staff at the club. They were norms that the trainees were expected to adopt and served as a guideline for attaining success with the first team and asserting their identity as a professional footballer, providing their ability had also reached the desired level. Of all behavioural traits a 'professional attitude' was perceived as the most important and should have been displayed by the trainees regardless of the activity. However, Parker (2001) notes that although the majority of the youth trainees adhered to such norms and values, as established by the club, motivation to do so varied. Within both the Valley FC and Derrington Town academies; a good attitude was seen to be established as a benchmark early on in both the footballers and rugby players' careers. In the context of professional football Roderick (2003) highlights how this particular identity is forged amongst young professional footballers. Roderick (2003: 79) indicates that:

When a young player signs a full-time contract with a football club, he is exposed as part of a process of informal learning to what in professional football are considered appropriate attitudes and values. It is in this context that the young players learn what it *means* to pose a good attitude, and of central importance to them, what behaviour elicits the reaction from others that *they*

(that is the young player) have a good attitude. In short, players, particularly young players, learn that it is meaningful for them to ‘display’ and to be praised by significant others for ‘showing’ a good professional attitude.

Similarly, professionalism within an occupational domain focuses upon the formation of a specific attitude or code of conduct rather than acquisition of specific skills. When discussing professionalism in a work-related environment Fournier (1999: 294) states that “the image of professionalism was not used to refer to certain groups of employees possessing specific skills and knowledge (such as say accountants or engineers) but to index a certain form of conduct or work ethics”. A good attitude is defined by coaches and athletes as possessing a strong work ethic with an emphasis on self improvement. Roderick (2006a: 36) states that “this can be interpreted to mean someone who always tries hard to win in matches *and* in training, who is competitive and who is constantly looking to improve their level of performance”. This particular definition of the desired attitude or character was present within the sports academies in this study. Within the academies a good attitude was emphasised as a key criteria to securing a professional contract or advancing to the first team. Within the context of his research Roderick (2006a) indicates that a ‘good’ attitude or possessing the correct character is more prevalent amongst younger professionals than that of the more established and experienced players. Within the current study it was viewed by coaching and managerial staff that this particular attitude should be instilled amongst the academy athletes at an early stage so they may maintain this character through to professional status. Valley FC’s academy manager described how the required attitude could be shaped from an early age to ensure that the correct character was instilled amongst the younger players:

Our opinion is you get them in early, you get them into good habits, not just from a football aspect but, you know, how to live, what you eat, how to act. It's a, it's a holistic approach, once the boys come in to sort of develop all aspects of their character and basically how they do things (**Henry**).

The Valley FC manager continued to suggest that to solely possess talent and good technical ability was insufficient to gain a professional contract at the club. It was imperative that the young footballers understood that a good attitude, combined with technical ability, was necessary for them to succeed. Emphasis was placed upon encouraging habitual behaviour both in and away from the academy, as the following quote suggests:

What I'm sayin' is that with boys that may be a bit shaky with the attitude, and the enthusiasm, and the work rate side of it we've got to expose them to that. You're a very talented player technically and you understand football, but you *need* to get these things put right, because that will only take you so far, the rest of it, if you put the whole thing together, then it'll take you all the way (**Henry**).

At both academies within this study the notion of a good attitude proliferated into the social aspect of athletes' lives. It was inherently important that all athletes displayed the correct level of professionalism outside the confines of the academy. Punctuality, politeness and a friendly and approachable demeanour both within and outside the academies were established as important characteristics when considering the selection of players. When discussing the correct attitude for players to adopt at Derrington Town, the Derrington Town academy coach emphasised the importance of displaying the above characteristics both on and off the pitch:

So there are certain things we're looking for in players, the primary one is their attitude and sometimes you can't really see that when they're playing a game of

rugby. It's how they act off the pitch, are they gonna turn up on time, are they gonna work really hard when they're training, uh-hm, are they courteous to other people and all that sort of stuff; how mature they are as people (**Phillip**).

The Valley FC academy manager further emphasised the social training that the young players received to ensure that the correct attitude was adopted when interacting with adult members of staff and visitors. Importance was placed upon how the young players conducted themselves, their appearance and mannerisms when interacting with other athletes, coaches and managers:

On the other side we work hard on the social aspects, you know, when the boys are in the academy, how they conduct themselves, how they dress, uhh, what they wear, how they interact with other adults. Uh-hm, one of the little things that was introduced within the academy was that if somebody came to the academy coaching most of the boys would come out and shake hands, and we just think that's a social aspect and breaking down barriers. Uh-hm, basically, you know, encouraging the boys to interact, but more importantly knowing how to interact with adults and other members of staff. So it's important that there's a social aspect, an educational aspect and that there's the, the football aspect (**Henry**).

Ingham and Loy (1973: 18) indicate that "the sport role leaves little room for redefinition by the here-and-now actor; the obligations of the role are predetermined. Indeed the here-and-now actor, if he is to reap the rewards of sport, is constrained by these obligations". This was witnessed amongst the academy athletes and highlighted the lack of agency that these individuals possess. When discussing the selection process for the scholarships within Valley FC the concept of a good attitude was re-introduced by the academy coach. The coach's perception of the desired attitude highlighted the pre-established attributes that define the role of professionalism:

**AM:** How do you know whether they deserve it [scholarship]?

**Graham:** Uhhhhm because their attitude's right, which is the biggest thing for me, their attitude to do things is right, whether it be on the pitch or off the pitch, their attitude to do things is right; and if that's the case you know they're ready. They're willin' in training, they're doin' their stuff off the pitch, they're workin' hard in training, their quality's good in training; the only other thing you've got against 'em though when it comes to adapting all of that into the playing, can they handle that.

The academy athletes may be considered permanently on display and therefore must become adept at managing their image, as Ingham and Loy (1973: 5) indicate: "The athlete's performance on and off the field becomes typically stereotyped as the athlete's role performance must meet the expectations of the wise and unwise". Due to the networks of surveillance inside the academies systems, (as illustrated in Chapter Four), the identity of a professional also had to be managed in non-sport related activities. The pre-scholar footballers who still attended lessons at schools outside of Valley FC's academy were expected to uphold the values associated with professionalism whilst at school. For example, Valley FC's academy manager revealed that former footballers had been suspended from attending the academy due to inappropriate behaviour and poor educational progress. Such behaviour was deemed unacceptable and ultimately displayed a lack of attitude or desired level of professionalism that was required by the academy staff:

A couple of years ago we actually expelled two boys from the academy for a period of six weeks until they got their act together in school. So you know... We want footballers but they've got to tow the line, you know you can be the best footballer in the academy but, at the end of the day, if he's being a bit of a Charlie or he's messing about then we'll, we'll act on that, and if it means he can't come training for a period of time then that's, that's the case (**Henry**).

This was emphasised further by the Education and Welfare Officer at Valley FC. The footballers had to adhere to the same level of professionalism not only on the training

ground but also in their educational classes. The role of professional athlete had to be maintained on the pitch and taken into the classroom:

**AM:** What is expected of these players from you?

**Colin:** *Personally* from where I sit right across the piece<sup>32</sup>, so it's not just education, I expect the boys to come in, to work hard, to be honest, to be open and to be respectful of each other and of the people who are trying to work with them, full stop.

This particular attitude towards education and the lifestyle of the footballers away from the academy opposes certain themes demonstrated by Parker (2000a). Parker's (2000a) investigation into football traineeship and educational provision highlighted youth trainees' attitudes towards education. Parker's (2000a: 69) study identified that the trainees concerned "regularly attempted to establish their own educational agenda within lessons, psychologically drifting in and out of classroom activity, interested only in finding excuses to disrupt work routines". The football academy within the current study demonstrated an opposing view regarding the behaviour and educational lifestyle of the athletes. An adherence to professionalism was expected at all times and due to the close monitoring of the academy athletes and the extensive surveillance networks it made it increasingly difficult to deviate away from the desired level of professionalism requested by the club.

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<sup>32</sup> Here the Education and Welfare Officer is referring to both the education programme and the football programme undertaken within the academy.



### *9.3 Professionalism and Self-Discipline*

Cushion and Jones' (2006: 152) study concerning power, discourse and symbolic violence in English professional youth soccer indicates that:

Players displaying professional ideals were most favourably looked upon by the coaches' desire in relation to the fulfilment of "professional values". The significance attributed to such behaviour by the coaches was considerable and more often outweighed any innate talent possessed by the players.

This was true of all the academy athletes within the current study. To 'display' a good attitude throughout their academy career was of utmost importance. By establishing their identity through the affirmation of a good attitude they are asserting themselves as professional athletes. By shaping the footballers' attitude at an early age academy staff aimed to produce athletes that were able to sustain the desired level of professionalism through to the first team or professional level. The construction of a professional identity and the use of 'professionalism' exerted a form of control over the academy athletes that could be executed from a distance. Paralleling Foucault's notion of governmentality, Fournier (1999: 285) states that professional knowledge "articulates professional subject positions, or the ways in which the professional should conduct themselves.

Professionals are the target of professional rationality, they are both the governor and the governed". The creation of a professional identity ensured that the academy athletes regulated their conduct and became subjects of their own discipline. This self-discipline required of the footballers and the self-imposed restrictions on social activities were desirable qualities. Valley FC's academy manager highlighted that those who did not adhere to these institutional values were likely to be looked upon less favourably and may ultimately fail to secure a professional contract:

They *need to know that* there's a social aspect, you know, we talk to the boys about how footballers are in the lime light, any little thing where you step out of line you'll end up in the paper, 'cos you're a footballer. So, you know, we encourage them to live right, not to be silly... Understand that there's certain places you can go on a night time but equally there's gonna be places that you can't. Uhhmm, so it's the whole educational package, at the end of the day if he doesn't wanna do that it's the exit door (**Henry**).

The central values associated with the notion of professionalism within the academies were critical to producing the required attitude amongst their athletes. In this instance elite sports academies presented a cultural institution similar to that of military academies. Dornbusch (1955) indicates that the main function of a military academy is to create officers from civilians achieved by a dual process. Dornbusch (1955: 316) states that "the objective is accomplished by a twofold process of transmitting technical knowledge and of instilling in the candidates an outlook considered appropriate for members of the profession". Similar to such military institutions, the footballers and rugby players who did not adhere to this particular 'character' were sought out from those who appeared more dedicated, and to oppose this particular character would show a lack of desire. Furthermore, Dornbusch (1955: 320) notes that "harsh practices are defended as methods by which the insincere, incompetent, or undisciplined cadets are weeded out. Cadets who rebel and resign are merely showing lack of character". Once again this reinforced the opinions sustained within both the academies in this study.

The academy athletes indicated that particular standards, such as a good work ethic, self-discipline and desire were sustained not only on the field of play in training and matches but also away from the academy itself. These attributes were introduced into the athletes' lifestyle outside the confines of the training grounds and away from the academy setting. Ethan highlighted how the role of 'professional athlete' infiltrated into

the social aspect of the Derrington Town players' lives; demonstrating the self-disciplined nature of the academy athletes. Commitment to a professional lifestyle as well as a dedicated athlete was deemed a necessary part of living the role of an elite athlete:

Sometimes you've gotta pull out of a social event 'cos, ohhh I've got trainin' in the morning so I can't come to this, I can't come to that. It's sort of quite tough to take sometimes, or you go round to your friends and they'll all go into town and you'll be like, ohh I'm just off home, so there'll be like a ten minute realisation of, ahhh this pretty boring, but then you'll wake up in the morning fine and they're still be lyin' in bed till three o'clock in the afternoon, it's, it's not really a problem anymore (**Ethan**).

The notion of professionalism within the academies acted as a mode of disciplinary control. The construction of a 'professional' identity ensured that the academy athletes would adhere to a specific 'moral character' determined by the coaching and managerial staff. Upon discussing the use of professionalism as a disciplinary mechanism Fournier (1999: 281) states that "the mobilisation of the discursive resources of professionalism potentially allows for control at a distance through the construction of 'appropriate' work identities and conducts". When discussing the required traits to succeed as a professional, Derrington Town's academy coach insisted that a good attitude was of primary concern. Those who did not conform to the norms of a correct attitude or did not display the right traits to succeed would not only suffer in the world of rugby but also within a wider social context:

Obviously the attitude of the players is probably the most important one as far as we're concerned, 'cos if they haven't got a good attitude then they'll struggle in anything in life and not just rugby. I think traditionally, if someone's got a good attitude and drive and ambition, and they're nice people and they've got quite good skills, then they're more likely to be involved in our academy system. So if

you've great skills but you're attitude stinks, and they don't turn up, and they don't wanna be there and they moan all the time then that's not great (**Phillip**).

Soeters and Recht (1998) identify the prominent characteristics that are present within military culture. "Communal" character is a concept that is said to relate to "the degree to which the control of military organisation extends to many phases and aspects of personal life" (Soeters and Recht, 1998: 171). The intrusion of the core values of the sports academies significantly impacted upon the personal lives of the academy athletes. This would be expressed through the resentment of training hours and the sacrifices made in order to 'make it' as a professional athlete; however, the majority of athletes rationalised these annoyances or sacrifices as a small compromise in order to realise their end goal. Whilst discussing the negative aspects of Derrington Town's academy, two players highlighted the sacrifices that were needed to be made in order to succeed:

**AM:** And what's the worst part about being an academy athlete?

**Ryan:** I don't think there is a bad part, really.

**Noah:** I'm tryin' to think...Uhhmm, you have to make sacrifices.

**Ryan:** Gettin' in the gym at seven thirty, especially in the pissing snow and rain, having to roll around outside, but it's all enjoyable.

**Noah:** Yeah, you enjoy it, and if you wanna get to the top then the sacrifices are not gonna be that much bigger deal.

**Ryan:** You'll be annoyed in the morning when you get up, but then when you get 'ere its good craic [good fun] so you're not really pissed at all.

Soeters and Recht (1998: 171) state indicate that "communal" character, "operates as a direct control mechanism which provides indirect cues concerning what is acceptable and important in the organisation". As Soeters and Recht (1998) indicate it functions not

only to establish particular values that are permitted within the academies but also as a control mechanism to ensure that athletes did not deviate from the desired norm. While military academies and sports academies may be identified as two separate kinds of institution the culture of discipline and identity construction, may be relatively similar. The mechanisms used to promote a particular character or attitude is employed by both institutions in order to discipline the individual and reaffirm particular norms and values.

The academies created an enclosed world that managed to shape and mould the athletes into a specific character. The qualities that comprised a 'good' attitude and a desired mode of professionalism were made explicit to the academy athletes. Therefore, it was critical that the footballers and rugby players managed their identity so as to demonstrate the desired norms that were required of them. Deviation from the dominant norms associated with a good attitude resulted in a loss of self as the identity of an elite athlete was no longer sustained. A further exploration into Goffman's (1959) concepts surrounding 'front', performance and identity management will be discussed with application to the academy athletes' understanding of the 'correct' attitude or notion of professionalism.

#### *9.4 Performance, Role and Identity*

Goffman (1959: 32) defines the term performance as "the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some influence on the observers". Within the realm of sport athletes are constantly on display. Coaches, managers, sport scientists,

physiotherapists and the viewing spectator are all observers, each with their own vantage point and interpretation of an individual's performance. Within the setting of a sports academy performances inevitably impact upon the observers to the extent that future decisions are made regarding the athletes' potential career status. Goffman (1959: 32) further dissects the concept of performances, suggesting that an individual's performance may consist of a 'front': "The part of the individual's performance which regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the situation for those who observe the performance". Although this particular concept is identified as 'fixed', performances may alter depending upon the situation or context in which they occur and who is present to observe.

An individual's front is deployed during the performance itself and contains both the setting and 'personal' front. Goffman (1959) indicates that a personal front may contain characteristics such as 'race', rank, age, size posture, speech patterns, facial expressions and bodily gestures. Personal front is constitutive of both 'appearance' and 'manner'; appearance refers to the stimuli that indicate the performer's social status, representing the mode of behaviour either he or she is partaking in; whereas manner refers to stimuli that alert us to the interaction role the performer will play (Goffman, 1959). In the context of a sports setting, Ingham and Loy (1973: 18) indicate that appearance may relate to the display of certain subcultural values or behavioural traits: "In the male chauvinist world of football, sex identifies who will play and who will cheer". These particular attributes represent the normative values evident within the hegemonic culture of male orientated sports. Thus, the role a performer will play and the social status they attain may be pre-determined by the norms of that particular cultural

milieu. Goffman (1959: 37) states that a front may become “a collective representation and a fact in its own right”. One must conform to these established attributes in order to produce a convincing and successful performance of the ‘role’, as Goffman (1959: 37) indicates: “when an actor takes on an established role, usually he finds a particular front has already been established for it”.

Within both the Derrington Town and Valley FC academies the role of professional athlete may be viewed as predetermined. As previously indicated specific attributes defined the role of academy athlete and were regarded as paramount to producing a successful performance and attaining professional status. A second year Valley FC scholar noted that, although physical attributes were perceived necessary for success, dedication, a good work ethic and desire were identified as the key attributes to upholding the ‘role’ of professional athlete and maintaining a successful career:

**AM:** What sort of qualities do you need to turn pro?

**Kieron:** Uhm...obviously you need, well I think you need the attitude, you need the attitude and the professionalism but you also need ability as well so. Mostly attitude though, if you’ve got a good attitude then you’ve got a good chance of making it.

**AM:** What does it mean when you say have a good attitude?

**Kieron:** Uhm, *everyday* be up for it and ready, even if you’re not having the best of days technically you still give a hundred percent, work hard and stuff like that, just...just a good attitude towards training and stuff.

Constant reference to professionalism and the notion of a “twenty-four-seven” footballer highlighted the obligations of the ‘role’ of a professional athlete and the necessary duties required of the academy athletes. A rejection of such attributes resulted in a perception of poor performances or even dismissal from the team or academy. Goffman (1959: 81)

states that “to *be* a given kind of person, then, is not merely to possess required attributes, but also to sustain the standards and conduct of appearance that one’s social grouping attaches thereto”. Academy athletes had to constantly ‘show’ that they were willing and committed to conform to the prescribed norms that were representative of the academies’ culture and the identity of a professional athlete.

Ingham and Loy (1973: 20) indicate that “becoming involved in sport might be one way in which we lose our Renaissance consciousness; we fail to see ourselves as anything but a sport role exhibiting varying degrees of competence”. Academy athletes adopted the role of professional athlete; they were routinely analyzed in accordance with a variety of different competencies such as technical ability, tactical awareness and mental and physical strength. The observers and the athletes viewed themselves and their peers in relation to the performances which they provided regarding these competencies. Goffman (1961a: 99) suggests that “the performer will attempt to make the expressions that occur consistent with the identity imputed to him; he will feel compelled to control and police the expression that occur”. A failure to uphold the ideal values associated with professionalism spoiled the identity of the academy athletes and thus severed a sense of ‘self’ creating a loss of identity. Performances for the athletes were integral to sustaining their identities and attaining success within their careers.

When discussing the notion of failed performances in sport, Ball (1976: 731-732) indicates that:

The failure is forced to abandon that position—a role with a high degree of salience for definitions of self and assignments of identity. For the failure, a major anchorage of self is severed; for his others, that by which they knew him best is gone—his status as a performing member of the team.



A failure to sustain the identity of a professional athlete within the academies demonstrated a lack of commitment to pursuing a professional career, as McKay and Roderick (2010: 305) note “there exists an acute comprehension not only of what athletes do *to* themselves — the technical practices and punishing regimes — but also the kinds of selves they seek *to* be”. Joshua, a Valley FC scholar in his second year, highlighted the dedication that was required to achieve a professional contract. The role, and thus identity, of a professional footballer had to be demonstrated by the academy athletes at all times. Joshua indicated that the footballers’ entire lifestyles were constructed around performances and thus sustaining the ‘role’ of professional athlete:

**AM:** What qualities do you need in order to be a professional footballer?

**Joshua:** You need to be a hundred percent dedicated, I mean you must *want* to be a footballer, if you’re thinking to yourself, ohh do I wanna be a footballer, don’t I wanna be a footballer, then you’re not gonna get very far. Football’s like twenty-four-seven, you can’t afford to not want to be a footballer one little bit, you just have to...you must want to be a footballer, just twenty-four-seven, everything, *everything* about your lifestyle is based around performances really.

Criteria must be met in order for athletes to be considered for scholarships or selection into the first team squad. Players must reach or exceed that of which is required of them to ensure that they play on a regular basis, remain as young professionals or attain first team status with the senior squad. Athletes within the academies had to ensure that they performed the role of elite athlete appropriating the norms and values that accompanied this specific role. Their identities had to be projected towards their peers, coaches and managers ensuring that the pre-determined values were displayed with sincerity, efficiency and accuracy as Goffman (1961a: 87) notes. “In performing a role the individual must see to it that the impressions of him are conveyed in the situation are

compatible with role-appropriate personal qualities effectively imputed to him”. When discussing the change of attitude, Harry, the first year Valley FC scholar, remarked on how his attitude had altered once entering the academy. The institutional values that are associated with professionalism in elite sport had to be adopted by the footballer thus creating the correct identity in order to perform his ‘role’ successfully:

**AM:** Would you say that your attitude changed when you came over here?

**Harry:** Yeah, massively, massively uhhmm...I’m happy that I’m still here with my family, but uhhmm...yeah I think just the effort levels, the getting up in the morning and just the general discipline of being an academy footballer has really changed me a lot. Basically having to live my life differently, you know, you’re a twenty-four-seven footballer, so you have to do all the right things, like, train hard, eat right, basically be disciplined outside the academy.

When considering the notion of ‘role concepts’ Goffman (1961a: 87-88) states that “a self, then, virtually awaits the individual entering a position; he need only conform to the pressures on him and he will find a *me* ready-made for him”. The central values associated with professionalism were predetermined for the academy athletes.

Therefore, to conform to these normative values was to ‘step-in’ to the role of professional athlete, as Goffman (1961a: 88) indicates, “doing is being”. Footballers who had not been in the academy system since early childhood did not display the ‘correct’ attitude automatically and therefore had to adopt the role of elite performer.

Gearing (1999: 47) indicates that:

Clubs are keen to produce a disciplined and collective approach in players and to this end they may also be regimented in ways which go beyond the actual playing of the game. For example, players may be subject to explicit club rules and sanctions—through fines or more serious measures—in respect of punctuality, match day dress, leisure pursuits and general off the field behaviour.

Julian, similar to Harry, was also a new scholar within Valley FC's academy system. Having come from a lower league club he was not used to the disciplinary lifestyle or the level of professionalism that was required at more advanced clubs. Julian's transformation portrays a refashioning of the self; similar to Shakespeare's Hamlet the academy athletes must relocate their identity or 'self' in a new "Mould of Form" (Shakespeare, 1993: 3. 1. 157). This process is akin to Foucault's (1988a) technologies of the self, as discussed in Chapter Eight, and demonstrated the academy athletes' capacity to acquire and display the 'correct' attitude. Julian described how his poor attitude, appropriated whilst at his previous club, was quickly rectified and thus enhanced him as a player and a professional:

Before, like, off the pitch I could've been quite bad, I was late a few times when I came here and I had quite a few, like, times I had to 'ave meetings 'cos I was poor but... That's probably coming from my previous club, the place, like, I've come from. So, like, I was... I came 'ere quite arrogant at first but now Graham's [Academy Coach] been speaking to me he's made me such a better professional, like, me attitude's so good now and it's worked wonders for me; just through listening to him (**Julian**).

The actions and roles established for the athletes, including individual positions, are pre-determined prior to entering into the academies. As previously demonstrated a selected front contains pre-determined attributes that define an elite athlete. These attributes must be presented by the athlete through the socialisation and interaction amongst 'role others'. Moreover, Goffman (1961a: 87) states that "recruitment for positions is restrictively regulated in some way, assuring that the incumbents will possess certain minimal qualifications, official and unofficial, technically relevant and irrelevant". It is clear that athletes must assume a particular role in order to be successful within their

career; however, athletes do not simply acquire an identity for success. The role of academy athlete and the values and norms that accompany this particular front are not acquired just by association to a particular institution. Socialisation amongst other role members can aid in perpetuating the norms and values associated with the academies; however, disciplinary mechanisms were required to ensure that these values were internalised over a period of time by the athletes.

The importance of ability and performance in establishing an identity within the academies should also be addressed. Within the realm of elite sport a finely tuned physique is an outward representation of an athlete's identity. In the surroundings of the academies the body became a focus of interaction and thus a central component of the 'me', that experience of the self in which the vision of 'others' is vitally present (Mead, 1934). Glassner (1989: 183) notes that within post-modernity "the body has become a cardinal sign of the self". In addition, Schyfter (2008) suggests that body failure, skill and technological incompetence places an athlete 'outside' their community. Acceptance to the group is partly determined by the technical skill and physical performances of an academy athlete. The body can be viewed as a tool of affirmation and re-affirmation, of attaining status and belonging to a particular group (Schyfter, 2008).

The academies presented an institution that was designed to influence the athletes in the decisions they took. The role of academy athlete, and the values and characteristics that encompassed such a role, had to be managed and presented in such a manner that established their identity as a committed athlete. Despite the adherence to the core values associated with such a performance, contradictions did occur within both

the academies. Such contradictions were most noticeable amongst the academy athletes' prioritisation of individual performance and progression over that of team performance, a value that appeared to contradict the fundamental character associated with the identity of a professional elite athlete espoused by both clubs.

### *9.5 Team Cohesion and Individual Performance*

Goffman's (1959) social exploration into the construction of teams and their purpose highlights the relevance of its application to a sports setting. Goffman (1959: 108) defines a team as "a set of individuals whose intimate cooperation is required if a given projected definition of the situation is to be maintained". This definition may be applied to a sporting context. In theory, individual team-members are bonded together through a sense of unity that stems from a desire to maintain a certain situation or achieve a certain goal. Intimate cooperation amongst the individual team-members is required if they are to be successful. Goffman (1959: 92) further states that "team-mates are related to one another by bonds of reciprocal dependence and reciprocal familiarity". Reciprocal dependence may be considered necessary for the team to function well. Academy athletes also required motivational and mental dependence, and this was expressed by some of the athletes when discussing the difficulties of injuries. Within Valley FC's academy athletes who experienced similar injuries, or encountered injuries at the same time, relied upon each other for support when recovering through the rehabilitation process:

**AM:** How did you feel when you were out [injured] for that length of time?

**Aiden:** Well it was hard but I had someone else who snapped his cruciate last season so he was out for the same amount of time, we did it at the same time so we helped each other through it really.

Goffman (1959: 93) indicates that “in staging a definition of the situation, it may be necessary for the several members of the team to be unanimous in the positions they take and secretive about the fact that these positions were not independently arrived”. Athletes within the academy teams were fully competent in arriving at the same conclusion through independent thought. Moreover, the athletes were encouraged by the coaches and managers to take a certain amount of personal responsibility. However, teams must be unanimous in their overall direction they take and the goals that they want to achieve.

Although athletes were encouraged to think independently and take responsibility for certain decisions, ultimately the decision making process and the positions that the athletes held within the academies were assigned and regulated by the coaches and managers. The academy athletes were all designated a specific position within the team with specific roles and objectives attached to their position. These pre-determined objectives were created by figures of authority and were overtly clear within the team and the cultural network of the academy. Systems of surveillance, documentation and ‘self’ and ‘lateral’ surveillance were utilised to ensure that the athletes maintained and adhered to these objectives. The academy athletes’ actions and performance were constantly on display; therefore, there was little margin for secrecy regarding the positions that the athletes adopted concerning the staging of situations. However, as Goffman indicates (1959: 92), “unanimity is often not the sole requirement of the teams project”. Although unanimity was a feature within the teams overall aims

and objectives, individual goals, aims and further objectives may be set by the academy athletes. Personal performances contradicted the overall objectives established by the team and the notion of unanimity. This contradiction was witnessed through the athlete's desire to do well regardless of the overall outcome of the team's performance. Eli, a Valley FC footballer, acknowledged the importance of team success; however suggested that self-improvement was a fundamental aspect of becoming a professional:

**AM:** What about when you've played well but the team's lost, how do you feel?

**Eli:** I think at this age you're gonna think...It's all about improving yourself to, as I say, to becoming a professional but altogether it's a team game so you want the team to do well.

Ingham (1976: 358) suggests that:

Professional attitudes are inculcated in the gifted athlete which emphasize performance and the importance of victory. Indeed, the commitment of the athlete to improving his performance and to winning is often a major factor in the gifted athlete's upward mobility.

Although it was disappointing to see the team lose and the importance of victory was highly regarded, the majority of both the Derrington Town and Valley FC academy athletes focused on a successful personal performance rather than that of the team's success. Robidoux's (2001) analysis of competition within a sporting context highlights the reproduction of capitalist relations of self-interest whereby performance and production are seen to be an alienating process. A competitive environment was prominent within the academies and competition was perceived as healthy and an integral part of the academy athletes' careers. However, competition for positions within the squad could lead to behaviour deemed detrimental toward team cohesion or players'

careers as outlined by a Derringtonstone Town academy athlete when discussing team selection:

**AM:** How do you feel when you're not selected?

**Josiah:** Pissed off, I get quite bitter. If the person selected, if I'm training against him I'll try and...I'll go out of my way to try and hurt them, even if I like really you know do some damage, yeah it gets on my nerves that, quite a bit. I don't feel bitter towards anyone in particular, we're good friends but there's rivalry.

Further comments made by the Derringtonstone Town athletes regarding team selection reinforced this notion of competition. In addition, their reaction towards the competitive nature of the academies and its impact on team cohesion or interaction between other academy athletes, coaches and managers became clear:

**AM:** How do you feel when you're not selected to play?

**Noah:** Angry sometimes, uhhmm, quite often anger.

**Ryan:** yeah, it's not like disappointment it's more like you're just pissed off.

**AM:** Who are you pissed off with the most?

**Noah:** It depends, it depends...

**Ryan:** I dunno, there's not like one person you're pissed off with, it's more yourself.

**Noah:** You can be pissed off, I've been pissed off with myself, with the person who took my place and the coach. It depends, it just depends on the situation to be honest, like what reason...

**Ryan:** Sometimes you get pissed off with the coach 'cos you don't agree with him, but it's like, at the end of the day it sort of comes down to personal opinion, like, even if you think you're a better player than them it's not your decision to decide whether you start or not.

**Noah:** If you get dropped for a reason that's your own, that's when you get pissed off with yourself. If it's someone who's not as good as you and you know they're not but then they might be in, that's when you get pissed off with them.



**Ryan:** If you've had a bad game and get dropped then fair enough, but if you think you're playin' well and then someone, who's not as good as you in your position gets picked then that's when you get pissed off.

**Noah:** And if there's bias with the coach then that's when you get pissed off as well.

**Ryan:** But then that just brings out the competitive juices again, like, for training, you just battle with them.

It was clear that competition was also a prominent feature of everyday life for Valley FC academy athletes. Although competition did not seem to affect team cohesion it was viewed as an integral part of the academy's subculture and promoted an overt sense of self-discipline amongst the academy members. Due to the competitive nature of the academy's environment, athletes were constantly under pressure to 'prove' themselves worthy adversaries or ensure that they were always performing the 'right' tasks, as demonstrated by Oliver, a Valley FC academy athlete:

**AM:** Is there much competition between the players?

**Oliver:** Yeah there is, there is 'cos there's about 19, 20 [players] of us and obviously some are injured so there's probably about 16 [players] that are fit a game. But it is, like especially for me, like, there's a couple of wingers, I'm a winger, and there's uhuh two possibly three that can play in my position. So it's important to just keep tryin' to do the right things. Like, I've been playin' the last couple of games recently, which is good, but there's always someone, you know if you 'ave a bad couple of weeks there's always someone that *will* come in and replace you, or he might change the formation or something. So you just gotta keep making sure that you keep playin' well and that and then you should get picked.

**AM:** How do you feel knowing there's someone right there to replace you?

**Oliver:** I think it makes you kick on to be honest you can't...if you just sit there and think, ohhh it doesn't matter I'll get in and I'll get in the team every week. It doesn't like keep encouraging you, like, you need things to keep you going and keep you sort of motivated and your focus on things. And if you think to

yourself, ohhh I gotta play, I gotta do well or he'll be there, I think it pushes you on and sort of, it gives you like, it gives yourself a little bit of pressure to keep doin' well and then...and, like, you just know that if you don't do well, you won't be there, so you just keep tryin' to do well and I think it improves you as a player and that.

Harris and Eitzen (1978: 180) note that “before an athlete may be labelled a success or failure, one should take into account the personal motivations, aspirations and the intentions of the individual himself”. The importance of personal performance was seen as most significant regarding the progression of their career. Lucas, who had been at Valley FC's academy from early childhood, emphasised the importance of personal performance when faced with a defeat:

**AM:** How do you feel when you've played well but the team's lost?

**Lucas:** As much as I feel for the team I've got a bit of self satisfaction to say, well I've done well, that's my positive I can take out of it although the team got beat I can always say to myself well I'm pleased with the way I played. You know, although you want the team to do well, everyone's watchin' you so you've gotta make sure that you're performing well.

Myers (1969: 376) indicates that within a competitive environment “the general tendency to have more favourable interpersonal perceptions seemed to justify the conclusion that the competitive condition generated better adjustment of individuals in their teams”. However, for some academy athletes, the importance of the individual's performance superseded the importance of victory. Harris and Eitzen (1978: 180) state that “to understand a failure and a failure reaction adequately both group and personal factors must be examined, along with the social-organisational milieu in which the failure occurs”. Although the loss of a game signals team failure, such failures should

be considered in relation to the academies' competitive environments and an academy athlete's own personal goals.

Due to the presence of monitoring techniques in elite level sport performances are under constant scrutiny. Individual performances are becoming more prevalent as it becomes significantly more difficult to escape the 'gaze' of coaching and managerial staff. Due to the implication of surveillance techniques individual performances become a priority. The athlete's performance becomes a reflection of their identity, to under-perform becomes quickly apparent to the coaching staff and thus hinders the athletes' representation as a committed athlete and potentially disrupts their career:

**AM:** What if this situation is changed around and the team has won but you've played poorly how would you feel?

**Christopher:** Obviously I'm happy for the team but I'm disappointed. I think it's just natural, like, especially when you get to high level sport, because it's *so*...you know, video analysis is everywhere, you know everything you do on the pitch can be monitored, uhhmm...then if you don't play well then it will be seen and that's gonna effect your chances next time. I had that scenario earlier in the season, like, I played in Spain and played Elsalvador and got a half there and I didn't play very well. I dunno why I didn't play very well, I just didn't, and that's when I felt like everyone [First Team Coaching Staff] was questioning me in a way and like just saying, "Uhhmm is he really up for this"?

Although all teammates within the academies expressed that there were no issues regarding team cohesion and interpersonal relations, the competitive environments created an attitude that focused primarily upon individual success. Parker's (1996a) analysis of football apprenticeships reveals similar observations regarding team cohesion. Parker (1996a: 128) states that "team spirit and 'togetherness' was central to the routines of trainee behaviour, in practice such ideological values were not stringently upheld". Amongst the academy athletes interviewed within the current study, successful

individual performances and a competent display of commitment were perceived as more important to upward mobility than that of team victory. Plath and Hill's (1987) study of the rivalry between Japanese shellfish divers also reflects the competitive environment that was demonstrated within the academies. Similar to the academy athletes Plath and Hill (1987:154) note how the daily performances of the "ama" (Japanese divers) are common knowledge amongst both fellow and competing divers. "Each diver's catch is weighed and recorded daily. Her daily score and seasonal average are public knowledge not only among her rivals but also among ama-watchers elsewhere in the village". Plath and Hill (1987) note that the Japanese shellfish divers work in a conflicting environment where teammates not only work side-by-side but also as rivals competing against one another. The divers are constantly observing one another's actions to ensure they get the best catch whilst diving in the "iso" (the tidal zone where they fish): "In the iso, the tidal zone, ama operate as rivals working separately but in parallel. Colleagues are present visually and observe one another's actions, but in the water there is little opportunity to speak or to communicate at all except by gesture" (Plath and Hill, 1987: 159).

Goffman (1959: 208) identifies that individuals must be "willing to accept minor parts with good grace and perform enthusiastically". This reflects the stereotypical image of the good natured and humble athlete, qualities that are promoted and celebrated within the world of sport. Although the academy athletes may have to display this particular attitude towards managers, coaches and their peers, a desire to be individually successful altered these feelings toward team cohesion. Academy athletes displayed a keen sense of comradery but ultimately focused on their own performance

and success. Within Valley FC's academy Dylan suggested that it was important not to display any sense of self satisfaction if he had played particularly well but the team had performed poorly:

**AM:** What if you've played well and the team has lost how do you feel?

**Dylan:** You think of yourself. Inside you feel good but you don't show it to other people, especially if they've played bad as well, and the team hasn't done well you just like keep it to yourself, and you know you've done well so you just keep on going along. But in short you just, like, keep it low and don't really show it to other players sort of thing.

Roderick (2003: 89) notes that:

The clearest and most common example of personal conflict occur when players are dropped or unfit for selection, and are forced to watch their team play without them. In these respects, the attitude and behaviour of players reflect the importance attached to *playing* as a central value in football culture.

It was vitally important for the academy athletes to 'show' that they were physically able to conform to and display the core values associated with professionalism and a good attitude. The importance of *playing* was central to the academy athletes' career progression and highlighted the contradictory behaviour that was discussed by the academy athletes. Team cohesion may be a value that was promoted throughout the academies; however, individual performance was considered more important. In this sense the academy athletes identity must be managed so as to adopt the correct 'role' and avoid potential conflict.

## 9.6 Conclusion

Donnelly and Young (1988: 225) state that “acceptance in subcultures is directly related to demonstrations of job and/or skill requirements, appropriate roles and identities under specific circumstances, successful socialisation procedures, and general homophily between the actor and the larger group”. Within the academies the adoption of the successful ‘role’ of a professional athlete was directly related to the display of attributes associated with a good or correct attitude. Goffman (1961a: 85) states that “*role* consists of the activity the incumbent would engage in were he to act solely in terms of normative demands upon someone in his position”. The academy athletes may be perceived as acting out or performing the normative requirements for the ‘role’ of an elite athlete. Alvesson and Willmott’s (2004:450) discussion concerning identity regulation as organisational control indicates that “established ideas and norms about the “natural” way of doing things in a particular context can have major implications for identity constructions. The naturalisation of rules and standards for doing things calls for the adaptation of a particular self-understanding”. The pre-determined values associated with professionalism and a good attitude within the academies impacted significantly upon the construction of athletic identity.

Parker (2006) supports the notion that professionalism and ‘correct’ attitude were held in high regard by coaching and managerial staff in the youth trainee football environment. Parker (2006: 691) indicates that,

‘professional attitude’ held particular importance in terms of how well trainees were seen to accept traditional working practices and sub-cultural norms, in that its assessment was based around the extent to which individuals accommodated both the routines of occupational duty and the physical and psychological rigours of footballing life.

Indeed the embodiment of a good attitude, and thus of a professional athlete, is reflected through the performance and interaction of the athletes with their peers, coaches and significant others. The core values associated with professionalism proliferated into the personal lives of both the Valley FC and Derrington Town academy athletes and should have been demonstrated at all times. This was potentially the difference between failing and succeeding as a professional athlete. Roderick (2003: 79) notes that:

Failure to display an appropriate attitude in the context of the football club may generate unwanted reactions from significant others and may lead to a diminished sense of 'self' for the player. Consequently, players come to perceive, form judgements, and control themselves from the standpoint shared by all the other players – what might be termed an occupational ideology – and thus deliberately, intuitively or, maybe unconsciously, 'perform' for the particular people whose judgement of their abilities is deemed important.

The adherence to professionalism and a keen work ethic were conscious decisions made by the academy athletes in order to enhance their career progression. Goffman (1961a: 102) notes that "whatever an individual does and however he appears, he knowingly and unknowingly makes information available concerning the attributes that might be imputed to him and hence the categories in which he might be placed". To conform to the desired norms of the academies provided the athletes with a greater opportunity for success and an established identity amongst their peers. As Birrell (1978) indicates, it is difficult for sports men and women to escape the gaze of an audience as coaches, managers and training staff are constantly monitoring performances. As the scholarship footballers and senior Derrington Town academy players were nearing the end of their academy experience, performances and the display of a good attitude were considered

especially important in terms of securing a long term future as a professional athlete.

Due to the constant presence of an audience, performances and the identity of the academy athletes were routinely scrutinised. Players who devoted less time to sustaining their identity were perceived as contributing insufficiently toward displaying the required level of effort or desire to succeed as a professional.

Roderick (2003: 88) indicates that,

A good attitude is not a characteristic that players are born with, unlike potential levels of aerobic fitness, agility or peripheral vision. Rather it is a quality which is socially constructed and reinforced, and the praise received from a significant other by players who display a good attitude serves directly to underscore their sense of self-esteem and heighten their self-confidence.

A good attitude and high levels of professionalism were qualities that were instilled within the academy athletes through processes of internalisation and socialisation. It was clear that those athletes who had not been within the academy system for a great length of time had to shape their attitude so as to secure their position within the team and academy. Through the implication of disciplinary mechanisms and monitoring techniques these qualities became internalised amongst the academy athletes and were performed habitually. Taylor (1989: 27) states that identity may be defined by “the commitments and identifications which provide the frame or horizon within which I can try to determine from case to case what is good, or valuable, or what ought to be done, or what I endorse or oppose”. Identities may be adopted by individuals once they have determined the correct behaviour to assume for a particular ‘role’. One may step into an already existing identity; however, it must be noted that identity may change over time and can be shaped and re-shaped through the course of interaction.



As indicated in Chapter Six surveillance techniques employed by academies aimed to promote the internalisation and normalisation of cultural and behavioural norms that were established by the managers and coaches who perpetuated the pre-determined view of a 'professional' athlete. These norms and values could then be adopted by the athletes through a process of socialisation that occurred amongst their peers. The identity of the academy athletes were shaped by the role that they performed, the production of a good performance enabled the athletes to secure their place within the teams and ultimately the academies themselves. Therefore, the notion of identity not only affected the athletes' sense of 'self' and their establishment within their immediate social surroundings but also impacted upon the development of their careers. The role of elite athlete presented certain contradictions that had to be managed to ensure that the academy athletes presented an identity that conformed to the required norms of professionalism avoiding any form of conflict. For the academy athlete a good attitude, and thus their identity, was a socially constructed concept that required careful management to ensure acceptance and reinforcement from significant others.

The final section of the thesis will offer a summation of the main findings and a brief statement on the limitations of the study. The key conceptual elements utilised to demonstrate an understanding of surveillance, disciplinary power, athletic identity and their impact upon the academy athletes and within the academy settings will also be revisited.

## Chapter Ten: Conclusion

Little is known of the specific mechanisms that are utilised to develop and nurture talented individuals within modern professional sports academies. Moreover, there is a considerable lack of research concerning the experience and impact of academy structures on the development of young players. The aim of this thesis has been to present an understanding of disciplinary power and how it impacted upon the experiences and development of elite athletes situated within two professional academy environments, rugby and football. The work of Michel Foucault has been used to understand and explore the mode and mechanisms of disciplinary power that were employed within the academies for the purpose of developing elite athletes. Foucault's (1979) concept of panopticism has provided a useful basis to explore the power relations present within the academies; however, from this particular perspective it was possible to see that the concept of panopticism was less applicable to the academies systems of surveillance.

Advances in technological and, more specifically, electronic modes of observation bring us evermore into a post-Panoptic age of surveillance. The examination of technology, a 'networked' society (Ball, 2002; Castells, 2004; Fox, 2001; Lyon, 2001, 2002) and its infiltration into the world of surveillance, illustrate the notion of more dispersed methods of observation. As indicated in Chapter Four, the most prominent mode of surveillance within the academies was related to a displaced method of surveillance routed in a network of human sites that included academy managers, coaches, physiotherapists, teachers and tutors. The

interconnectedness of these sites allowed for a system of surveillance to exist within the academy structures that was similar to Latour's (2005) post-Panoptic concept of the 'oligopticon', or Deleuze and Guattari's (2003) 'rhizomatic' concept of lateral expansion. Although the academies relied on a network of human surveillance, rather than electronic sites, the lateral expansion of these observation points relayed sufficient information or data concerning behavior and performance of the athletes, back to the central vantage point of the clubs' coaches and managers.

Within the academies it was clear that other modes of surveillance were also deployed to ensure that athletes were unable to escape the gaze of senior staff. The social networking site 'Facebook' was employed by Derrington Town's academy coach to observe the behaviour of athletes outside the confines of the academy to ensure that they were adhering to the behavioural norms established by the club. Such a mode of surveillance highlights the digital age of data collection and the prevailing use or misuse of social networking sites for the purpose of gaining access to personal information. This particular use of surveillance provided a useful tool for disciplining the players, as Fox (2001: 251) notes, "technology now allows the compilation, storage, matching, analysis and dissemination of personal data at high speed and low cost". The relative ease of accessing personal data or exposing the social habits or behaviours of the rugby players, through the use of online social networking sites such as 'Facebook', highlighted the increasing effectiveness of computerised surveillance. Although such online sites are not intentionally established for the use of implementing surveillance mechanisms, they provide a

data-trail that exposes an individual's behaviour to a network of surveillance sites as Lampe *et al* (2006: 167) indicate:

Facebook may foster relationship building by allowing users to track other members of their community. This “surveillance” function allows an individual to track actions, beliefs and interests of the larger group to which they belong. In some cases this may act as a warning mechanism against unsuitable behaviour from a fellow participant, while in other cases this may help the watcher search for social cues that indicate group norms.

Foucault's (1979) panopticism suggests an ‘axial visibility’ but also implies a ‘lateral invisibility’. The architectural composition of Bentham's Panopticon that formed the basis of Foucault's (1979) concept of surveillance segregated inmates from any form of lateral communication or observation. It is this aspect of the Panopticon, and Foucault's (1979) representation of panopticism, that does not translate adequately to the social structure of the academy athletes' environments. As indicated in Chapter Five, ‘lateral surveillance’ was a prominent feature within the daily routines of academy athletes and was used frequently as an indication of performance and progression as well as detecting potential threats. The threat of failure and the rivalry that existed among players highlighted how the academy athletes not only subjected themselves to a mode of disciplinary surveillance but also extended their gaze laterally. This redoubling of the panoptic model (Andrejevic, 2005) ensured that the academy athletes were constantly aware of their own position in relation to peers for the purpose of maintaining team selection and career progression.

In the wake of terrorist activity post 9/11, peer-to-peer monitoring has become an integral part of our society as members of the general public are increasingly being encouraged to become the “ears and eyes” of security (Lyon, 2003). Applied to the

wider social sphere, lateral surveillance is considered a ‘low-tech’ method of surveillance imposed for the purpose of detecting and reporting abnormal behaviour (Chan, 2008). This silent mode of surveillance (Chan, 2008) creates a culture of suspicion leading to issues of distrust amongst the population at large. Although the issue of distrust was only raised by a small number of the academy athletes lateral surveillance was employed on a routine basis and became an integral part of the athletes’ daily lives. However, lateral surveillance was also used by the academy athletes to gain knowledge rather than report it. Close observation of their peers’ performances and progression became an integral part of their own development ensuring they were aware of where they lay in the institutional hierarchy. Lateral surveillance was an inherent part of the athletes’ culture and, in this respect, conflicted with Foucault’s (1979) representation of surveillance as it appeared to flatten the apparent hierarchical mode of observation.

Despite the level of disciplinary surveillance witnessed within the academies, the traditional notion of disciplinary authoritarianism that is regularly associated with professional sport was clearly witnessed within the academies. Moreover, this particular type of behaviour perpetuated by coaches and managers was unquestionably accepted by the academy athletes themselves. As indicated in Chapter Six this particular mode of authoritarianism manifested itself in the form of ‘domination by authority’ (Weber, 1978) and was witnessed within the academy training sessions. A need for this mode of authoritative discipline was deemed necessary by coaching staff as it was able to enhance pre-established parameters that exist between both the players and coaching staff and exert a necessary form of control.

Upon observing training and conducting interviews with the academy athletes, it was noted that this mode of authoritative behaviour was used more frequently and to a greater effect within Valley FC's academy than that of Derrington Town. As Chapter Six illustrates discipline amongst the academy athletes also extended laterally. The role of disciplinarian for coaches and managers became less significant as the athletes were encouraged to discipline one another. Similar to the concept of lateral surveillance; the academy athletes were made aware of one another's performance and took it upon themselves to enforce a mode of discipline to encourage team members or to correct mistakes. This particular behaviour was encouraged by coaches and managers and was seen as a necessary part of the academy athletes' 'role' (Goffman, 1959).

A post-Panoptical examination of surveillance by Boyne (2000: 285) concludes by suggesting that "the Panoptical impulse is not fading away, and that developments in screening and surveillance require the retention of the Panopticon as an analytical ideal". Although certain aspects of Foucault's (1979) concept of surveillance were not evident within the academies, the notion of a hierarchical mode of observation and the imposition of a normalising judgment were prominent features of the academies cultural milieu. The Foucauldian (1979) concept of 'the examination', the combination of an observing hierarchy and 'normalising judgment', was clearly displayed within both the football and rugby academies. As Chapter Seven highlights disciplinary mechanisms were instilled to ensure that 'docility' was achieved and adherence to a 'normalising' standard was witnessed amongst the academy athletes. The processes of achieving and sustaining a normalising standard were clearly marked within the academies cultural environments and were demonstrated within Derrington Town's academy by a clear

hierarchy detailing where each player was situated and the benefits ascribed to them. Constant comparisons were made between teammates in both academies as their individuality was exposed through a range of fitness tests, anthropometric tests and performance reviews.

Chapter Seven further illustrated how Foucault's (1979) 'examination' was also integral to the managing of the athlete performances. Within both academies the notion of performance was central to the academy athletes' existence. As characterised by the coaching staff, all reviews and documented measurements were performance related. The documentation and examination of the academy athlete performances highlighted the detailed methods of surveillance that were imposed to establish a normalising judgment and encourage docility amongst the academy athletes. Due to the exposure of performance through constant reviews and testing, self-surveillance was a prevalent feature within the lives of the academy athletes promoting a notion of subjectivity amongst the academy athletes.

The ability to play through pain and injury and the adherence to a masculine identity were integral to the perpetuation of the role of 'professional' and upheld the dominant norms that were espoused by coaching and managerial staff within the academies. Similar to previous research (Hughes and Coakley, 1991; Nixon, 1992, 1996 and Roderick, 2003) the concept of pain and injury was normalised by the academy athletes. Pain and injury were accepted as a part of their athletic identity and were managed on an individual basis. Although athletes received 'education' concerning the severity of injuries; the majority of athletes would continue to play until they felt unable to do so regardless of how severe or debilitating the injury was. A key factor relating to the

athletes' willingness to disclose of pain and injury was significantly influenced by their career status. The academy athletes interviewed were all looking to either sign professional contracts at their current club or move on to a senior men's team in the same league. Pressure to 'perform' consistently was a prominent theme amongst the young athletes. Situated at the early stages of their career, and in such competitive environments, the desire to reproduce successful performances on a routine basis was essential for each individual athlete. As Kotarba (1983) notes, athletes at this particular stage in their careers may be defined as possessing 'insecure athletic identities'. Injury amongst team members also signified a loss of place or function within the team; to be injured created social detachment from the injury free players. Injury was perceived by the players and coaches alike as part of their daily routine. Indeed if athletes were injured at Derrington Town's academy then it was a question of isolating the injury and continuing to train or lift weights so they could continue to progress physically, rather than halting training altogether.

Similar to work by Roderick (2006b) the notion of 'banter' and the stigmatised individual was apparent within the academy cultures. To reject the dominant norms associated with playing through pain and injury stigmatised the individual to the point where they may be labelled as 'soft' or lacking in commitment. However, as Roderick's (1998) earlier research indicates these particular attitudes concerning pain and injury are not suddenly adopted by professional athletes; they are infiltrated into their way of life through a process of learning and socialisation. A competitive environment that emphasises such norms within the academies is established from an early age. This can be demonstrated by the increasing reliance on a variety of 'disciplinary mechanisms'



(Foucault, 1979) that are used to compare or categorise the individual athletes as they progress through their academy career.

Chapter Nine indicates that the terms ‘professionalism’ and ‘attitude’ encompassed a range of qualities, characteristics and attributes. However, a willingness to succeed, regardless of ability or fitness, an unrivalled commitment to training and the capability to impose self-discipline, including the strict monitoring of eating, drinking and lifestyle habits, were perceived as the key values associated with the term ‘attitude’. As Goffman (1961a) indicates, performance must be consistent with the identity ascribed to the individual. Performance was also integral to the academy athletes’ existence. As such, it was important for the academy athletes to manage their identity so as to provide a believable ‘performance’ as a ‘professional’ athlete who upheld the correct ‘attitude’. A self-disciplined lifestyle and an adherence to a ‘professional attitude’ were adopted by the academy athletes in an attempt to establish an identity that could secure their status as a committed athlete. The academy athletes were actively aware of the required ‘front’ to display, or norms and behaviours that would lead to a successful ‘performance’ (Goffman, 1959). The perpetuation of these core values by coaches and managers inadvertently operated as direct methods of control to ensure that athletes were constantly pursuing the ‘correct’ attitude or upholding the core tenants of ‘professionalism’. To deviate from the desired norms associated with professionalism created a loss of identity and thus hindered any chance of success.

As Gearing (1999) suggests, clubs are keen to instil a productive level of discipline that infiltrates into the daily lives of the athletes through means far removed from the training pitch. Although financial penalties were put in place at Valley FC’s academy

and a lack of punctuality was punishable at Derringtonstone Town's academy through extra training, an emphasis on more subtle modes of disciplinary mechanisms based around performance were introduced to ensure that the academy athletes adopted the desired 'attitude' promoted by the clubs. The values attached to a 'good attitude' were upheld by the majority of the academy athletes; however contradictions existed within their cultural environment. The perception of individual performance over team success was highlighted as one such contradiction. Similar to work of Roderick (2003) and Parker (1996a), the importance of individual performance was integral for the academy athletes when considering their career progression. Such a performance had to be carefully managed by the academy athletes so as not to impact negatively upon their identity construction.

As Lyon (2003a) indicates the intensity to which surveillance is demonstrated may be placed along a continuum. This thesis has demonstrated that surveillance within Valley FC's academy may be considered more intensive in comparison to that of Derringtonstone Town's academy. Derringtonstone Town's structure appeared more sporadic and less centralised, whereas Valley FC displayed a more organised and established structure. Due to Valley FC's ability to monitor their athletes with greater intent a more rigid, centralised and organised approach to imposing disciplinary mechanisms, documenting performance results and categorising the individual players was undertaken. Derringtonstone Town's academy relied on a hierarchical system, providing minimal feedback and informal and irregular performance reviews. Within the Derringtonstone Town academy there was more reliance on the interaction between a human network of surveillance sites than that of the disciplinary mechanisms of

categorisation and documentation that were apparent in Valley FC's academy. The decentralised organisation of Derrington Town may explain why the academy coach stressed the importance of building reliable networks and utilising online networking sites for the purpose of obtaining information.

The appropriation of a Foucauldian framework has demonstrated the manner in which aspiring professional athletes are cultivated. Through an analysis of the systems of surveillance, documentation and categorisation, an understanding of how athletes are disciplined to conform to desired norms has been demonstrated. For the academy athletes the institution that housed them provided a 'perpetual characterisation' (Foucault, 1979). Facilitated through interaction and the documentation of performance, identities were adopted and sustained that could be compared with their peers and the institutional norms of elite sport. By expanding the gaze of those watching, performances were observed, qualified and enhanced. The athletes became agents of their own subjectivity as they adhered to the norms and values of the clubs, adopting the role of 'docile' yet efficient bodies. The academies provided an environment that allowed for the analysis and manipulation of the athletic body, as Foucault (1979:138) indicates it is this mode of disciplinary power that defines how "one may have hold over others' bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines".

Initial success for Valley FC's academy was based upon the number of wins amassed and the number of academy athletes that would continue their career as first team professionals. The academy managers and coaches also suggested that success for the Valley FC academy could be based upon the number of individuals who had moved

on to lower league clubs or who had become a professional elsewhere, either on loan or sold to another club for a fee. Derringtonstone Town's academy appeared to define their success predominantly upon the number of players that were eligible to move into the first team squad. This particular aspect of the academy was seen as a priority as the overall success of the academy's team appeared to be less significant. However, Derringtonstone Town's academy coach also commented on their success at a local level developing community rugby to improve the developmental pathway of the academy athletes. Throughout the length of the research project Valley FC's academy encountered two successful seasons in their respective league; moreover a number of the footballers interviewed continued to play for the reserve team squad and represent their countries within their age groups. A small minority of the football players who did not receive professional contracts continued to play football at collegiate level in the United States. Within Derringtonstone Town's academy five of the seven athletes' interviewed signed professional contracts either with the Premiership club affiliated to the academy or with another elite level club. Although both academies enjoyed differing success it was clear that only a small minority of the young players who passed through these systems continued on to professional status.

The environment at both academies was 'performance orientated' and athletes would reflect this in their constant references to being 'on show'. This level of surveillance and the disciplinary mechanisms imposed reduced the notion of agency amongst players. A greater lack of agency was evident within Valley FC's academy as players were confined to the boundaries of the academy for both their education and training. By controlling the social space through the imposition of a rigid schedule, greater

restrictions could be imposed upon the footballers as the ease with which the football club could gain access to, control and monitor the athletes was increased. Derrington Town's academy athletes managed to maintain a certain amount of autonomy as their education was based outside of the confines of the academy as all the rugby players, except for two, were enrolled at university. The rugby players also maintained less contact time with the academy and would often train with a local club side for the majority of their training programme. Although the lack of player agency was clearly demonstrated at both academies it was emphasised within Valley FC's academy. This lack of agency infiltrated all aspects of the players' lives both inside and outside of the academy.

The lack of agency witnessed amongst the academy athletes, especially the footballers, seemed to contradict the notion of a 'holistic' approach to development that was constantly referred to by academy coaches and managers. This was most noticeable within Valley FC's academy as the players experienced a clear lack of decision making capabilities especially with regards to their educational pathways. Although Valley FC's academy boasted exceptional facilities and educational provision, the choice of education was relatively restricted. The vast majority of footballers were channelled into a sports specific course (BTEC National Certificate in Sport and Exercise Science) and were given little choice to pursue courses outside of this particular subject area. On rare occasions exceptions were made for those players who did not perceive themselves to have a future in football at the highest level.

Previous research (McGillivray, 2006; Parker, 2000a; Platts and Smith, 2009) has noted the lack of importance placed upon education in football due to the mediated

messages perpetuated by the surrounding culture. This particular attitude appeared less evident within Derringtonstone Town's academy. Here the majority of players had either graduated from university or were enrolled at university during the course of the research project. Platts and Smith (2009: 336) state that "for many young footballers, at least those currently plying their trade in England, there exists a widespread belief that a desire to do well academically is to accept they may have no future in football". However, the in-house education and level of surveillance witnessed at Valley FC's academy ensured that the footballers demonstrated the same level of 'professionalism' both on the training pitch and within the classroom. As demonstrated in Chapter Nine sanctions were put into place for those academy athletes who were not engaging with their academic work, this had also been extended to the players who were not receiving in-house education and still attending school.

As Platts and Smith (2009: 336) indicate policy regarding educational prospects for football academy athletes should consider "bringing about greater cooperation between clubs, managers and players". Although it may be naive to suggest that the academy footballers were altering their perspective on education, the in-house tutoring and educational day-release programme established by Valley FC's academy allowed for a more intensive monitoring of the footballers' educational development. The implementation of surveillance techniques and disciplinary mechanisms ensured 'docility', in the Foucauldian sense, which impacted upon the educational aspect of their lives. Rather than display a greater sense of cooperation between clubs, managers and players the traditional culture surrounding the value of education was altered through increased surveillance techniques and disciplinary mechanisms. One may suggest that

this encouraged the internalisation of the desired norms and values associated with the correct attitude towards education.

As with all research conducted limitations within the study were apparent, with access proving to be the most significant. As Parker (1998, 2002) highlights access to professional football clubs are notoriously difficult to negotiate, remaining highly restrictive and closed organisations, an observation that was no different to my own research experience. The controlled access to the academies ensured that limitations were placed upon the study that inevitably impacted upon observations made and data collected. My ‘outsider’ status as a researcher impeded upon the ability to forge a certain level of openness, trust and legitimacy with the participants involved, thus impacting upon the depth of data gathered (Adler and Adler, 1987). As Dwyer and Buckle (2009: 58) note “the benefit to being a member of the group one is studying is acceptance. One’s membership automatically provides a level of trust and openness in your participants”. Indeed, total immersion and an ‘insiders’ account of the culture would have allowed me to gain access to information, or certain ‘truths’, that otherwise remained hidden when observing and interacting with participants within this study (Denscombe, 2010a).

Although this position as a researcher presented limitations to gathering and analysing data, it also provided certain advantages during the research process. Total immersion within the cultures of the academies could have been viewed as detrimental, as the role of an insider raises questions concerning personal experience and its impact upon interpreting data, a difficulty in recognising patterns due to a familiarity with the researched, and the possibility that participants fail to explain their experiences fully due

to assumptions of similarity with the researcher (Chavez, 2008; Dwyer and Buckle, 2009). Although an insider status provides the opportunity for the researcher to establish an equalised relationship with the researched (Chavez, 2008), the context of the research setting helped to form my understanding of the participants and the institutions that housed them.

Tedlock (2003) indicates that during data collection the researcher is embedded within their field experiences and they become both a process and product of the research itself. In addition, Angrosino and Rosenberg (2011: 470) state that “the ways in which we as researchers negotiate the shifting sands of interaction, if we are careful to observe and analyse them, are important clues to the ways in which societies and culture, form, maintain themselves, and eventually dissolve”. The context of the research setting, and the interactive negotiations that take place within it, are reflective of the culture that they embody (Angrosino and Rosenberg, 2011). The increased measures of surveillance placed upon me throughout the research process impacted upon my role as researcher, as the observer became the observed. However, this systematic and regimented approach towards my presence within the academies reflected the overall culture of the organisations and their approach taken towards developing their athletes. Despite the level of detachment this created, the context of the research setting, in which I had to negotiate my presence, revealed significant, and equally as valid, insights into the structural and cultural compositions of the academies.

It was clear that surveillance techniques and disciplinary mechanisms provided useful resources for the internalisation of norms within the academies. If academies are to be successful simply from the perspective of on-field performances then it could be



suggested that such techniques and mechanisms should be imposed with greater regularity and severity than those evident in the academies featured in this study. Observations, categorisation and comparisons are effective in highlighting the progression of the athlete and help to produce an individual who is more ‘docile’ and compliant. The implementation of such techniques and mechanisms at a younger age may also provide useful as the desired level of ‘professionalism’ and the ‘correct character’ of the academy athlete could be constructed and internalised at an earlier age.

If ‘attitude’ is seen to be the most integral aspect of an academy athletes’ pathway to professional status, then a greater understanding of how to shape and mould the individual should be adopted. As one of the Valley FC footballers suggested, “*to be professional about your profession*” requires a greater understanding of the self in terms of the norms and values of the role or identity to adopt. An ever increasing network of documentation and surveillance may aide in the internalisation of such norms leading to the production of ‘professionals’. However, this will come at a cost, as players continue to adopt the desired ‘role’ they will experience a greater loss of agency, a sacrifice that is seen by all as a necessary part of the game.

## **Appendix.1: Participants**

### **Valley FC Academy Staff:**

Henry: Academy Manager.

Graham: Academy Coach.

Colin: Education and Welfare Officer.

Edward: Academy Physiotherapist.

Geoff: Sport Scientist.

### **Valley FC First Year Academy Scholars:**

Eric                      Harry

Hugh                     Julian

Max

### **Valley FC Second Year Academy Scholars:**

Aiden                    Charles

Christian                Eli

Joshua                   Kieron

Lucas                    Oliver

Owen                    Roger                    Dylan

### **Derringtonstone Town Academy Staff:**

Academy Coach: Phillip.

Academy Strength and Conditioning Coach: Tim.

### **Derringtonstone Town Academy Athletes:**

Christopher: (former RFU level athlete/current professional).

Ethan: (former RFU level athlete/current professional).

Evan: (former Associate level athlete/current professional).

Jacob: (former RFU level athlete/current professional).

Josiah: (Associate level athlete).

Noah: (former RFU level athlete/current professional)

Ryan: (Associate level athlete).

## **Appendix.2: Interview Guide**

**(Original note format; additional questions may have been included/  
altered/omitted during the process of interviewing)**

### Questions directed towards academy players:

- How did you first become involved with football/rugby?
- Why did you decide to stick with football/rugby?
- When did you first join the academy?
- How did you manage to get into the academy?
- As an academy athlete do you have any roles/responsibilities?
- Can you describe a typical DAY/WEEK here at the academy?
- Can you describe a typical training session?
- How do you prepare before training?
- What's been your hardest training session? Why?
- What happens if training isn't going so well?
- How different is it (training) from the ages of 13 to 16?
- Can you comment on how your training may have changed over the years, in terms of level of effort/concentration/goal/setting/general quality? Major differences?
- Can you take me through a match day, home and away?
- Can you tell me about your preparation before each match?
- How do you feel before a match?

- How do you feel playing in a good/bad match? Why?
- How do you know if you've made a mistake? (follow up this, any other indicator?)
- How do you make sure your performance is on track? What sort of things do you do to make sure you're performing well?
- Tell me about a time when you were successful/unsuccessful?
- How do you feel when you are not selected for a match?
- Scenario: You've played well, however, the team has lost, how do you feel?
- Scenario: The team have won, however, you've played poorly, how do you feel?
- Have you ever been injured?
- What's it like to be injured?
- Have you ever played with an injury?
- How are you informed of your progress?
- Who monitors your progress?
- Can you take me through the review process? How have they been for you?
- How do you know if you are playing well/poorly?
- How do you keep your place within the squad/academy?
- How much of the other team member's progress are you aware of?
- Do you ever talk about games/training with other players? What do you discuss?
- Do you ever comment on other's performances? Can you describe a typical comment that someone might make?
- Have you ever given advice to a player?
- What's the best/worst part about being an academy athlete?

- What qualities do you need to have in order to become professional/sign a pro contract?
- What can you gain/learn from being an academy player?

#### Questions Directed Specifically Toward the Managerial/Coaching Staff

- Can you tell me about the structure of the academy?
- Can you tell me about your role within the academy?
- Tell me about the success of the academy so far.
- Can you tell me about how academy members are initially selected?
- From where are the majority of your athletes selected? And why are they selected from this particular area?
- Could you tell me how players are selected for games?
- Tell me about the selection process for professional contracts.
- Tell me about the process for refusing professional contracts?
- How do you identify whether an athlete is struggling?
- What happens to players who are not performing well in training/matches?
- How are players informed about their progress at the academy?
- How are players monitored at the academy?
- What attributes are needed to turn professional?
- What happens to the majority of players who leave the academy?
- What happens to the players that don't sign a professional contract?
- How have academies changed over time?
- Why have they changed in this way? What's the purpose?

- How involved are the parents?
- Do you draw inspiration from other academy systems?
- How does the behaviour of the academy member impact upon any decisions made by the manager?
- What can you do to develop young players toward professional status?

#### Questions Directed to the Education and Welfare Officer

- What is your role at the academy?
- Can you describe a typical day/week?
- What is like to interact between both the club and colleges?
- What is the role of education for these players?
- The purpose of achieving these qualifications?
- What will they get at the end of their time at the academy?
- How will this help their future educational pathway?
- What are the general attitudes of the players towards education?
- How important is education to the players?
- How do players cope with school work and the pursuit of a professional career?
- What is expected of the players?
- Scenario: What happens to a player who is not performing well educationally but is excelling on the pitch?
- How are the players monitored? (concerning discipline)
- How is a player's progress monitored?
- Are there any measures to ensure a player stays on track with their school work?

- Can you tell me about the academic success of the academy players?
- Do many players drop out of certain courses?

#### Questions Directed to the Physiotherapist

- What is your role at the academy?
- Can you describe a typical day/week?
- How are the players monitored/progress rehabilitation?
- Who has access to the data you collect?
- Do the coaches ever request to see medical notes or information?
- How do players cope with minor/major injuries?
- Can you tell me about the players' general attitude towards pain and injury?
- How do players manage their recovery?
- Are players aware they are being monitored?
- Do players ever play with pain or injury?
- Will players hide injuries so they may continue to play? (If so, why?)
- Have players ever used injury as an excuse to rest? (If so, why?)
- Has a player ever requested to come back early from an injury?
- Scenario: A player is not 100% fit but needs to play in an important match, what advice would you give?
- Are there any measures put into place to keep them on track?
- How involved are the players in decision making processes?
- Are you aware of each player's progress (physical/skill)?
- What are the attributes needed to turn professional?

### Questions Directed to the Conditioning Coaches

- Could you tell me about your role at the academy?
- Can you describe a typical day/week?
- Do you create the programmes?
- How varied are the sessions?
- How specific are the programs with regards to the players' positions?
- How do you monitor the progress of the player?
- How aware are they that they are being monitored?
- Are the players aware of their progress?
- What sort of feedback do you give to the players? Generally, how do they take this feedback?
- What's the purpose of the feedback?
- What measures are implemented to ensure they're progressing?
- What happens to players who aren't progressing?
- What happens to players whose progress is getting worse?
- What are the attributes needed to turn professional?



### Appendix.3: Consent Form



School of Applied Social Science,  
32 Old Elvet,  
Durham,  
DH1 3HN  
Tel: +44(0)191 334 6820  
Fax: +44(0)191 334 6821

#### ***CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN AN INTERVIEW***

I, the undersigned, \_\_\_\_\_ (being the age of 16 or over) hereby consent to my participation in an interview for the research project on the culture of sports academies.

The interview will be conducted by Andrew Manley.

I acknowledge that the following has been clearly explained:

- the nature, purpose and possible uses of the study as far as it affects me
- details of my involvement and the length of time I will be involved in the study
- that I should retain a copy of the consent form for future reference

I understand that:

- I have the right to review, comment on, and/or withdraw information prior to the submission of the research project
- no information which identifies me will be made public

- I can withdraw from the study at any time and am free to decline to answer particular questions
- If, for any reason, at any time, I wish to stop the interview, I may do so without having to give an explanation
- I may request a copy of the transcribed interview and research thesis upon completion
- The data collected will be available to the academic supervisors who are overseeing the research project
- My involvement within the research is voluntary and no payment will be made for my participation in the interview

If I have any questions regarding this study, I am free to contact the student researcher (a.t.manley@dur.ac.uk) or those responsible for supervising the project; Dr Catherine Palmer ([REDACTED]) and Dr Martin Roderick ([REDACTED]).

I hereby consent/do not consent\* to my participation in an interview for the research project on the culture of sports academies. *\*delete as appropriate*

\_\_\_\_\_ : Signature      \_\_\_\_\_ : Date

## **Appendix.4: Summary of the Research Project**



**Durham**  
University

School of Applied Social Sciences,  
32 Old Elvet,

Durham,

DH1 3HN

2<sup>nd</sup> of April 2009

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing with regards to your request for information concerning my research project. I am a second year PhD research student with the School of Applied Social Sciences at Durham University. The premise of the project aims to look at three different sports academies within three different disciplines (football, rugby and cricket) within the [REDACTED] of England. The primary objective is to gain an understanding of the structure and organisation of the academies with emphasis placed upon the athlete's experience of belonging to an elite academy.

Due to the nature of the study semi-structured interviews with staff and players must take place. For this particular study only academy athletes from the under eighteen squad have been selected for interviews. All subjects interviewed within the study sign a consent form acknowledging their rights with regards to their participation within the study. All clubs, academies and subjects who take part in the study will remain anonymous and will be referred to under a pseudonym. Therefore, any information that identifies players, staff, the academy or the club will not be made public.

If you wish to request any further information or would like to meet to discuss the project then please contact me on my e-mail address ([a.t.manley@dur.ac.uk](mailto:a.t.manley@dur.ac.uk)) or mobile phone number (07767088038). I have supplied a copy of the interview consent form and Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check with this letter. Dr Catherine Palmer ([REDACTED]) and Dr Martin Roderick ([REDACTED]) are the academic supervisors for the project and you may wish to contact them at any time for further information. Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Sincerely,

Andrew Manley

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