

Secondary school first XV rugby players' perceptions of the coaching environment: A
qualitative descriptive study.

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Abstract

Sport provides a number of physical, social and psychological benefits for youth. These benefits do not come from sport participation on its own, as the effects are mediated by the actions and interactions of significant others in athletes' lives, such as teachers, parents, and coaches. This qualitative descriptive study explores the perceptions 1st XV players have of their coaching environment and how this affects their experience of playing sport. There has been increased media attention on secondary school rugby in New Zealand and the impact that it is having on the wider rugby system. While research acknowledges the influence of coaches, there has been no research exploring coaching in the New Zealand secondary school context.

The participants in this study were secondary school rugby players, between the ages of 16 and 18, competing in the 1A, 1st XV competition in Auckland. Data was gathered via three focus groups. Using thematic analysis, five dominant themes were identified that influenced the participants' experiences: 1st XV status, brotherhood, coach control, power relationship dynamics, and expectations and pressures. The 1st XV is held in high regard by those in the participants' school setting and it gave participants social status amongst their peers. Having a sense of relatedness through the player brotherhood was something participants loved about playing rugby. Coaches controlled what sports participants played and dictated how they were to play on-field, which prevented players from being able to express themselves during games. Participants sometimes resisted this control through covert and overt displays of power. Participants found the expectation on performance often led to a fear of failure, while the expectation of commitment was too much when taking into account their rugby and school workloads.

The findings suggest that while at times coaches used autonomy-supportive behaviours, for the most part controlling behaviours were used which led to examples of player dissatisfaction, lack of understanding and reduced enjoyment of their sporting experience. There are a number of wider factors that may influence these behaviours, but the results suggest coaches need to be cognisant of how their actions influence the experiences of their participants. With the increased advocacy of athlete-centred, humanistic coaching, results suggest coaching behaviours in the 1st XV secondary school rugby space do not always align with this approach.

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except when explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.



Signed _____

Samuel McKenzie

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Ethical Approval

Ethical approval was granted on 23rd of March 2019 by Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC): Reference: 18/113 (Appendix A)

Chapter 1: Introduction

This qualitative descriptive study explores New Zealand secondary school rugby players' perceptions of their coaching environment and how this affects their experience of playing sport. To the author's knowledge, there has been no research focussing specifically on secondary school rugby coaching in New Zealand. However, there has been increased media attention on secondary school rugby and the impact that is having on the wider rugby system. Focus groups were held with current rugby players who are competing in the 1A 1st XV competition in Auckland, the largest (in terms of playing numbers) rugby union in New Zealand. The focus groups were facilitated to allow participants to discuss their thoughts on their experiences of coaching and how that influences their sporting experiences. Using thematic analysis, dominant themes were identified which revealed how coaches influence the participants' experiences.

Background

It is widely acknowledged that sport provides a number of physical, social and psychological benefits for youth (Fraser-Thomas & Côté, 2009). These benefits do not just come from sport participation on its own, as the effects are mediated by the actions and interactions of significant others in athletes' lives, such as teachers, parents and coaches (Bailey, 2006).

Coaches, as 'sport teachers', play an integral role in shaping participants' sport experience. Coaching effectiveness is considered to be the ability to bring about change in not only athletes' performance but also their well-being (Jowett, 2017). Researchers have argued that the quality of the coach-athlete relationship lies at the heart of coaching effectiveness (Philippe, Sagar, Huguet, Paquet, & Jowett, 2011). Coach actions and behaviours, and how these are perceived by athletes, play a role in determining the quality of this coach-athlete relationship (Occhino, Mallett, Rynne, & Carlisle, 2014).

Research has shown that coaching behaviours and the coach-athlete relationship influence the motivation of athletes (Jowett et al., 2017). Motivation is a key determinant in the actions and behaviours exhibited by individuals, which influences their desire to persist and put effort into an activity (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Certain types of coaching behaviours have been identified that have the potential to enhance or diminish participant motivation, affecting their overall sport experience (Bartholomew, Ntoumanis, & Thøgersen-Ntoumani, 2009; Mageau & Vallerand, 2003). The impact of these coaching behaviours and the quality of relationships with coaches has been shown to influence a range of sport-related outcomes such as (but not limited to); positive and

negative developmental experiences (Fraser-Thomas & Côté, 2009), collective efficacy within team sports (Hampson & Jowett, 2014), athlete exhaustion (Davis, Appleby, Davis, Wetherell, & Gustafsson, 2018), athlete burnout (Isoard-Gautheur, Trouilloud, Gustafsson, & Guillet-Descas, 2016), perceptions of physical self (Jowett & Cramer, 2010), athlete needs' satisfaction (Jowett et al., 2017), and success at the elite level (Jowett & Cockerill, 2003). Based on this evidence, researchers have advocated for a humanistic and athlete-centred approach to coaching.

The athlete-centred approach is an overarching term defined as a pedagogical approach to coaching, which is based on empowering the athlete in their development and placing them at the forefront of the experience (Kidman, Hadfield, & Thorpe, 2005). If the participant is to be placed at the centre of the experience, it becomes imperative to provide opportunities for them to voice their opinions. However, the voices of young people are often unheard in sport discourse where adult voice dominates (Lindgren, Hildingh, & Linnér, 2017). Literature has shown that there is a difference in the perception of the motivational climate between coaches and participants; specifically that participants perceive a significantly more performance-orientated climate compared to what coaches perceive (Møllerlækken, Lorås, & Pedersen, 2017). As players' motivations are influenced by the motivational climate they perceive, it would seem logical that the participants' perceptions should be taken into account. There is a paucity of evidence utilising the voice of New Zealand secondary school sport participants on their perceptions of the environment created by their coaches. This research aims to address this gap in the literature and give secondary school rugby players in New Zealand the opportunity to express their thoughts about their coaching environment.

Context of the Research

Secondary school sport in New Zealand has been impacted by a number of factors, including historical legacies, education reforms, and the changes in the sport sector, which have combined to promote a high performance model of sport (Rogers & Cassidy, 2015). There has been an increasing number of schools creating Secondary School Sport Academies (Tristram & Batty, 2000) though there has been little in the way of critical research on them (Pope, 2002). It has also been noted that elite athlete programmes, traditionally held in an extra-curricular capacity, have begun to move into the space dedicated to the health and physical education curriculum (Brown, 2015). Some of these factors could cause the traditional New Zealand sports to be held in high regard at secondary school levels (Hill, 2007) at a time when schools have an increased need to promote and market themselves (Buttersworth & Buttersworth, 1998). It has been argued that the egalitarian and participatory ideals of sport have been, to some

extent, sidelined (Wensing, Bruce, & Pope, 2004). Although there has been little research conducted on New Zealand secondary school participants and their experiences of sport, one qualitative descriptive study suggested that the experience of New Zealand secondary school rowers was initially positive, but as they continued to participate their basic psychological needs were thwarted and they experienced dissatisfaction, ultimately leading to drop-out (Walters, Beattie, Oldham, & Millar, 2017).

Rugby is a sport of national and cultural significance in New Zealand (Pringle, 2001). The All Blacks, the New Zealand national men's team, has held a place in the national consciousness and played a role in New Zealand developing its national identity (Hope, 2002). It is a traditional secondary school sport and media coverage has suggested that the New Zealand Rugby 1st XV competition has become increasingly professionalised. Matches are televised on Sky TV (pay TV) with live games and a 1st XV revision TV highlights show presented weekly. Rob Nichol, CEO of the New Zealand Rugby Players Association has been quoted as saying:

The issue we have is when we see an environment [1st XV competition] that has lost sight of that [education underpinning school sport]; where it becomes about the 1st XV winning and being a brand for the school. Or where the school acquires players because they believe they won't be good enough to win the competition with what they already have (Cleaver, 2017).

This has most recently come to a head in the lead up to the 2019 season, where 10 teams within the 1st XV competition in the Auckland Provincial Union threatened to boycott games against another team due to what they determined as unethical practices in player recruitment (Cleaver & Paul, 2018). New Zealand Rugby, the governing body of the sport has just completed a review of the Secondary School rugby space to "better understand the various factors affecting the New Zealand secondary school rugby environment" ("New Zealand Rugby complete secondary schools review, make 31 recommendations," 2019). Previous research on coaching in younger children (6-12 years of age) has found rugby coaches in New Zealand use significantly more negative and instructional comments than coaches of other sports (Walters, Schluter, Oldham, Thomson, & Payne, 2012). The authors suggested this was due to the cultural context of rugby being a sport of national significance. There has been no other research, to this author's knowledge, of coaching practice or players' perceptions of coaching in the New Zealand secondary school rugby context which seems pertinent in light of the current discussions surrounding secondary school rugby.

Methodology Choice for the Research

This research sits within a post-positivist paradigm, and the methodological approach chosen for the study is qualitative descriptive. This form of qualitative research examines the social environment and those within it, aiming to gain a deeper understanding of the how and why of behaviour (Berg, 2009), and acknowledges participants' experiences of the world are socially constructed. As there have been no studies on coaching in New Zealand secondary school rugby, it was felt a qualitative study would provide the depth needed to explore participant experiences.

Qualitative descriptive studies aim to keep the description of the event or phenomena as close to the data as possible by offering a summary of events in the everyday language of said events (Sandelowski, 2000). Using this methodology will allow the research to stay true to the words of the participants, an approach that was felt would best give the participants their voice. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data, utilising an inductive approach.

Research Question and Purpose

The purpose of this study is to investigate how athletes playing in the Secondary School 1st XV competition in New Zealand perceive their coaching environment.

The two key questions for this research are:

1. What are the perceptions of New Zealand Secondary School 1st XV players of their coaching environment?
2. How does the perceived 1st XV coaching environment affect players' experiences of secondary school sport?

Aims of the Research

The aims of this research were to:

- Capture the perspectives of 1st XV players playing in the 1A competition of their coaching environment and how this influences their experiences of sport;
- Highlight what secondary school participants think is important for their coaches to take into account when coaching;
- Further understand how coach behaviours and actions can influence the experience of those playing sport in a New Zealand context;
- Use the findings to inform athlete-centred coach education programmes in the secondary school space;
- Use the findings to help rugby coaches, administrators, schools and clubs create positive rugby programmes tailored to their participants' needs.

Structure of the Report

Chapter two of the report provides a review of relevant coaching literature and its influence on participant experience. The review provides a background into the psychological needs underpinning motivation, in particular using the tenets of Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Ryan & Deci, 2000). It then moves onto research that has looked at how coaches can influence athlete motivation through the coach-athlete relationship and particular behaviours or actions of the coach. It follows that up with research that has looked at the coach-athlete power dynamic, concluding with a review of coaching research completed in New Zealand.

Chapter three presents the research methodology and methods adopted in this study. The chapter starts with an overview of the research philosophy underpinning the study, as well as the qualitative approach that will be used. The chapter presents elements of the research design, including; procedure, participants, data collection, and data analysis. Ethical considerations are presented, as well as the four criteria identified for rigour and trustworthiness in qualitative research.

Chapter four presents the results under each dominant theme identified through the analysis process. The five identified themes are; 1) 1st XV status, 2) brotherhood, 3) control of the coach, 4) power dynamic, and 5) expectations and pressures. Sub-themes are also presented. Staying true to a qualitative descriptive approach, the participants' own words are used throughout the results section.

Chapter five discusses the key findings in relation to previous literature, structured around the dominant themes.

Chapter six concludes the thesis, presenting and discussing limitations, implications and future recommendations.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This review will examine literature on a range of topics related to the influence of coaches' actions and behaviours on the experiences of participants. Adults, particularly parents and coaches, are key influencers of the youth sport experience. The interaction between adults and youth in the form of coach-athlete, and parent-athlete relationships are determinants of the motivation youth have to participate at any given time (Amorose, Anderson-Butcher, Newman, Fraina, & Iachini, 2016). As this study has a particular focus on the coaching environment, this literature review will focus on adults as coaches for children (noting that in some situations parents are the coaches). This review includes an overview of motivation through a self-determination theory perspective, coach autonomy-supportive behaviours and their influence on participants, the athlete-centred coaching model and how it is placed in current coaching literature, the quality of the coach-athlete relationship and its effect on self-determined motivation, how power relations affect the coach-athlete relationship, and current models of athlete development, as well as relevant research within the New Zealand secondary school context.

Motivation

Motivation in sport is a key determinant behind every action and effort exerted by individuals (Keegan, Spray, Harwood, & Lavalley, 2010). The motivation of youth athletes can vary considerably, affecting the way they engage with their environment. Motivational theories provide a framework with which to study human motivation and understand the antecedents involved in participation decisions (Ullrich-French & Smith, 2009). Self-determination theory (SDT) is one such theory. It suggests that whether humans are proactive and engaged or passive and alienated is largely influenced by the social conditions they develop and function within (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Three basic psychological needs underpin SDT; autonomy, competence and relatedness. When these needs are satisfied the environment is more likely to support optimal psychological health and well-being. Competence is how those in the environment perceive their behaviour as being effective and how their ability matches the tasks (Amorose & Anderson-Butcher, 2007). Autonomy is when people perceive they have some form of decision-making in their context and their actions are aligned with their sense of self (Gillet, Vallerand, Amoura, & Baldes, 2010). Relatedness is that people feel they are connected to others and have a sense of belonging (Isoard-Gauthier, Guillet-Descas, & Lemyre, 2012).

SDT argues that individuals participate and persist in an activity along a continuum (Figure 1) of self-determination (Amorose & Anderson-Butcher, 2007).

Figure 1. *The self-determination continuum showing types of motivation with their regulatory styles and loci of causality*

Behaviour	Non-self-determined	→				Self-determined
Motivation	Amotivation	Extrinsic motivation				Intrinsic motivation
Regulatory styles	Non-regulation	External regulation	Introjected regulation	Identified regulation	Integrated regulation	Intrinsic regulation
Perceived locus of causality	Impersonal	External	Somewhat external	Somewhat internal	Internal	Internal

Adapted from Ryan and Deci (2000, p. 72)

Intrinsic motivation is the inherent tendency in human nature to “seek out novelty and challenges, to extend and exercise one's capacities, to explore, and to learn” (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 70). It is the most self-determined form of motivation and occurs when an individual partakes in an activity for the pure enjoyment of it, without external regulation. A sub theory of SDT, Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET), proposes that different social and environmental conditions are conducive to facilitating or undermining intrinsic motivations, and argues that competence and autonomy are fundamental needs to be satisfied for intrinsic motivation to flourish. Autonomy, in particular, is necessary for individuals to experience self-determined behaviour and for intrinsic motivation to be evident (Ryan & Deci, 2000). On the opposite end of the continuum is amotivation, or a lack of motivation and intention (Amorose & Anderson-Butcher, 2007). When individuals are amotivated they may not act at all. If they do, they act without intent and can be observed going through the motions.

Extrinsic motivation implies that individuals engage in an activity not out of pleasure or any inherent enjoyment they get but because of the external outcomes that result from participating (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003). According to SDT, there are four types of extrinsic motivation, varying in their degree of self-determination (Figure 1) (Deci & Ryan, 1985). External regulation refers to where activity is performed and regulated by external forces such as rewards or pressures. Introjected regulation refers to individuals taking on regulations, but not accepting them as their own and can be seen when people are motivated to demonstrate ability (which could be avoiding failure) to maintain their self-esteem. Although internally driven, the motivation is still outside of the self. Identified regulation is a more self-determined (or autonomous) form of extrinsic

regulation and reflects an individual consciously valuing a behavioural goal to the point where it is accepted as personally important. The most self-determined form of extrinsic motivation is integrated regulation. Integrated regulation happens when the regulations have aligned with the individual's values and beliefs and are assimilated to the self. Although there are many qualities shared between integrated regulation and intrinsic motivation, integrated regulation is extrinsic as the goal outcomes are still extrinsic to the self and not done for the inherent enjoyment (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

SDT has been used as a framework to understand the effect coaches have on the motivations of participants, as well as the impact that has on developmental and performance outcomes for participants, across a number of contexts.

Autonomy-Supportive Behaviours

A sense of autonomy is critical for self-determined behaviour (Ryan & Deci, 2000). To achieve this in sport, the coach-athlete relationship is of particular importance. A coach's personal orientation towards coaching, the context they coach in, as well as their perceptions of athletes, influence how coaches behave (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003). An integral aspect of this relationship is how coaches are able to support the basic psychological needs of their participants. Mageau and Vallerand (2003) identified seven autonomy-supportive coach behaviours that nurture an athlete's intrinsic motivation, including: 1) providing choice within specific rules and limits, 2) providing rationale for tasks and limits, 3) acknowledging the other person's feelings and perspectives, 4) providing athletes with opportunities for initiative taking and independent work, 5) providing non-controlling competence feedback, 6) avoiding controlling behaviours, and 7) preventing ego-involvement in athletes. In contrast, controlling behaviour by coaches has been correlated with psychological needs thwarting and maladaptive outcomes from sport. Similar to autonomy-supportive behaviours, certain controlling coach behaviours have been identified: 1) tangible reward, 2) controlling feedback, 3) excessive personal control, 4) intimidating behaviours, 5) promoting ego-involvement, and 6) conditional regard (Bartholomew et al., 2009)

Previous literature has focused on how autonomy-supportive behaviours impact athlete motivations. For instance, Amorose and Anderson-Butcher (2007) found the degree to which high school and college athletes perceived their coaches to be autonomy-supportive significantly predicted their perception of competence, autonomy and relatedness, which in turn predicted self-determination. The study was conducted across athletes from both team and individual sports and the pattern of relationship between autonomy support, athletes' perceptions of their basic psychological needs and

athletes' level of self-determination was similar across groups. Balaguer et al. (2012) also found a positive relationship between coach autonomy support and psychological needs satisfaction. Specifically, male soccer players aged 11-14 years had enhanced psychological needs satisfaction when they felt they had opportunities for input and decision-making, were provided rationale for coaches' requests and recommendations and the coaches considered their perspective. Increases in autonomy support and need satisfaction also reduced levels of burnout, suggesting that an autonomy-supportive coach may lengthen participation for young athletes. On the other hand, Pelletier, Fortier, Vallerand, and Brière (2001) found perceptions of coach controlling behaviour were associated with athlete amotivation and non-self-determined motivation. Additionally, the perception of coach controlling behaviours negatively impacted on the feelings of autonomy for late adolescent aged basketball players (Blanchard, Amiot, Perreault, Vallerand, & Provencher, 2009).

Mediated through satisfaction of basic psychological needs, autonomy-supportive behaviour has; predicted youth self-perception, been associated with indices for psychological well-being and negatively influenced burnout (Coatsworth & Conroy, 2009; Li, Wang, Pyun, & Kee, 2013; Reinboth, Duda, & Ntoumanis, 2004). This finding suggests a correlation between coaches' autonomy supportive behaviours and positive developmental outcomes in sport.

Positive developmental outcomes have been associated with coaches' autonomy supportive behaviour, basic psychological needs satisfaction and motivational orientation. For example, Coatsworth and Conroy (2009) found coaches' autonomy supportive behaviours predicted the satisfaction of youth swimmers' basic psychological needs, while the satisfaction of basic psychological needs predicted youth self-perceptions which in turn predicted positive youth developmental outcomes. In contrast, controlling behaviours have been associated with negative developmental outcomes. Bartholomew, Ntoumanis, Ryan, Bosch, and Thøgersen-Ntoumani (2011) completed three studies on female athletes spread across multiple sports such as gymnastics, figure skating, rowing and long-distance running. They found athlete perceptions of control predicted needs thwarting. The studies also found a perception of thwarting of psychological needs predicted maladaptive outcomes such as burnout, drop out, depression, and disordered eating.

Performance has also been related to autonomy-supportive behaviour. Gillet et al. (2010) studied the influence of coaches' autonomy support on judokas' motivation and performance. Athletes, ranging in age from 14-43, were given questionnaires prior

to a national tournament that assessed perceived autonomy support, and their situational and contextual motivation. Performance was based on the objective placing within the tournament. The level that athletes perceived their coaches to be autonomy-supportive, was associated with how self-determined their motivation was for participating. There were also positive relationships between perceptions of autonomy-support and situational motivation. Further, both contextual and situational motivation were positively linked with performance. The greater the motivation, the better the performance, indicating that there may be an indirect relationship between autonomy supportive behaviours and performance. Other research has supported this across different contexts including in professional tennis under pressure (Englert & Bertrams, 2015), elite rugby (Hodge, Henry, & Smith, 2014) and Olympic sprinting (Mallett, 2005).

Coaching Pedagogy

Athlete-centred coaching places those participating in the sport or activity at the forefront and empowers them in their development and decision-making to enhance their performance (Kidman et al., 2005). In the literature, it is an overarching term that describes a pedagogical approach to coaching, using inquiry based approaches such as game sense, play practice and teaching games for understanding, while employing communication techniques that facilitate a discovery approach to learning (Light & Harvey, 2017). It is presented as an alternative methodology to the traditional style of coaching, which has been largely based on the set of values of the coach.

Autonomy-supportive coach behaviours align with those promoted through athlete-centred coaching. The increase in academic literature espousing the benefits of autonomy supportive environments (as reviewed above) has led to increased advocacy of a humanistic and athlete centred approach to coaching. Along with all the benefits of autonomy-supportive behaviours, other researchers have suggested that a holistic developmental approach may also make athletes less vulnerable to abuse, increase persistence in sport and mediate other positive sport developmental outcomes (Kidman & Lombardo, 2010; Stirling & Kerr, 2009).

Quality of the Coach-Athlete Relationship

It has also been argued that the quality of the coach-athlete relationship is the most important factor in successful and effective coaching (Jowett, 2017). The coach-athlete relationship is a dynamic interpersonal relationship where the coaches' and athletes' emotions, thoughts and behaviours are mutually and causally interconnected (Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004). As every relationship is interdependent, it has been argued that an athlete-coach-centred environment is more appropriate than an athlete-centred

one, as it takes this into account (Jowett, 2017). There are four key properties, based upon case studies and relative literature, of quality coach-athlete relationships (Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004). They are referred to as the 4C's and include closeness, commitment, complementarity and co-orientation. Closeness refers to emotions, the interpersonal feelings of coaches and athletes, mainly around trust, appreciation and liking of one another. Commitment reflects the interpersonal thoughts of coaches and athletes of maintaining a close relationship across time. Complementarity is the interpersonal leadership and co-operation behaviours of coaches and athletes, and co-orientation reflects the interdependence between the coaches and athletes in terms of the similarity and understanding of their views on the quality of their relationship (Jowett & Shanmugam, 2016).

Numerous studies, across a range of cultures, have examined the quality of the coach athlete relationship using the Coach-Athlete Relationship Questionnaire (CART-Q) (Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004), a popular self-measurement tool that predicts the nature of the coach-athlete relationship. The literature shows that coaching behaviours can mediate the quality of the coach-athlete relationship, while the quality of the relationship is associated with satisfying athletes' basic psychological needs and motivational orientations. Environments in which coaches' actions include punitive responses to mistakes, unequal recognition, and emphasis on rivalry between players have been associated with lower levels of perceived closeness, commitment and complementarity (Olympiou, Jowett, & Duda, 2008). On the other hand, higher levels of closeness, commitment and complementarity were associated with a coach-created environment emphasising role importance, co-operation and improvement (Olympiou et al., 2008). Choi, Cho, and Huh (2013) found a significant correlation between commitment and closeness with satisfaction of athlete competence and autonomy, while complementarity was significantly correlated with competence and relatedness. In line with previous research on self-determined motivation, basic psychological needs satisfaction and autonomy-supportive behaviour, a quality coach-athlete relationship has been shown to provide athletes with positive sport outcomes (Jowett, 2017; Jowett & Shanmugam, 2016).

Power Relations

All social life features power, which refers to the capacity with which individuals can transform their social world. Power is not one-way, or limited to one having absolute power over another, as subordinates have resources at their disposal with which to change the nature of the power relationship (Giddens, 1984). As the coach-athlete

relationship is a dynamic social interaction, within this relationship, there is an inherent social power dynamic (Purdy, Potrac, & Jones, 2008).

If effective coaching is to be achieved, coaches need to be aware of the various forms of power and resistance expressed within the coach-athlete relationship (Potrac, Jones, & Armour, 2002). In New Zealand, youth sport coaches were seen to use their power to support coaching practices and behaviour that reflected a win-at-all-costs attitude and were not conducive to a child-centred environment (Walters, Payne, Schluter, & Thomson, 2015). The coaches were predominantly coach-centred, with a focus on winning, thereby creating a performance climate. Participants also have opportunities to exert their power whilst playing sport. Walters et al. (2015) found children exerted their power by ignoring their coach's sideline instruction or moving out of earshot during a game. In professional youth football, players resisted coach control by skipping college classes when their coaches were not going to attend and conserving their effort at training (Cushion & Jones, 2006). More open resistance to coach directives were described in a rowing autoethnography by Purdy et al. (2008). The coach-athlete relationship was deteriorating due to perceptions of uncaring coaching practices and during a training session the athlete directly disobeyed a coach order, knowing it would frustrate her, to exert power. Awareness of these forms of athlete power and how they manifest provide coaches with important information, as power struggles may have negative impacts on emotions, cognition and performance (Mellalieu, Shearer, & Shearer, 2013).

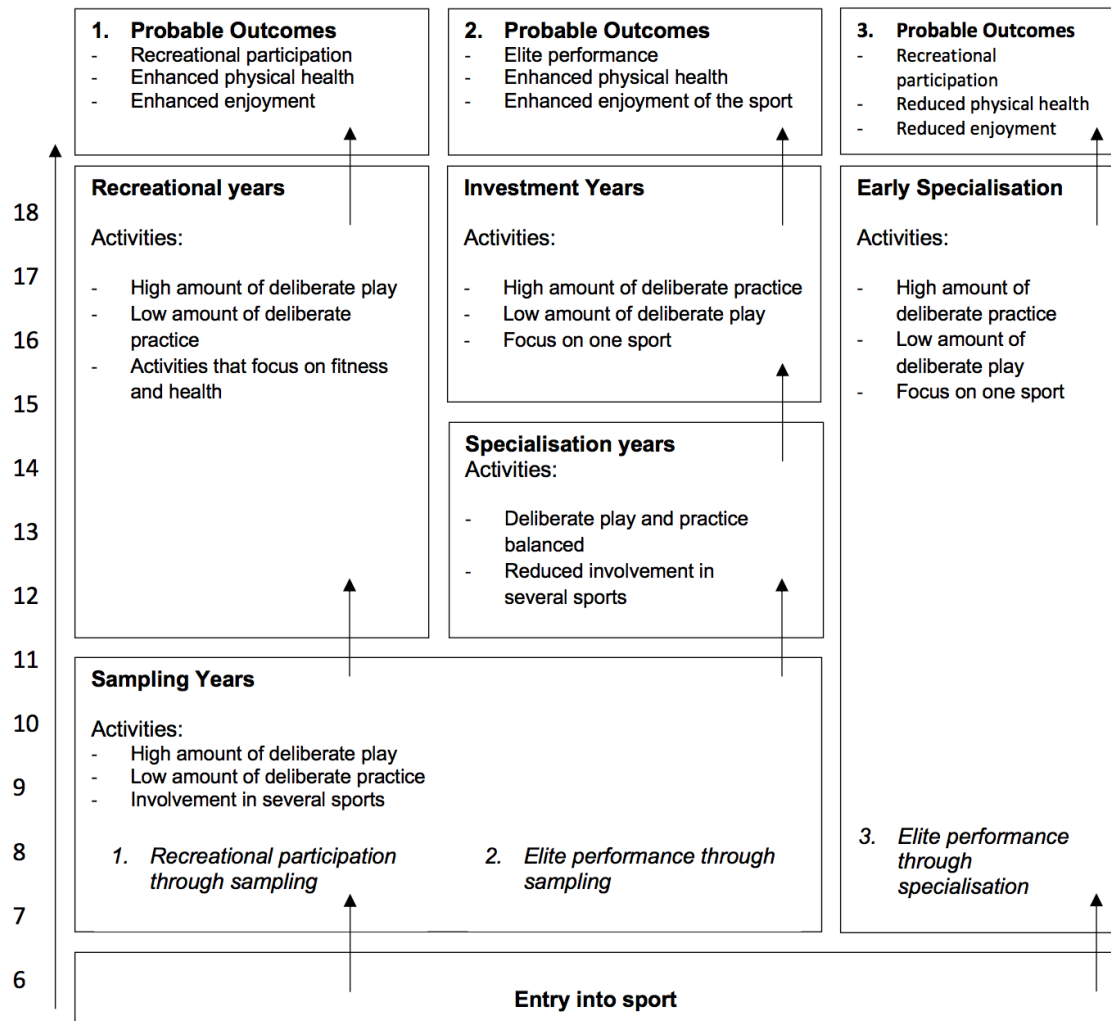
Athlete Development

Over the last three decades researchers have attempted to explain children's development in sport through a number of athlete development models (Bailey & Morley, 2006; Balyi & Hamilton, 2004; Côté & Vierimaa, 2014). There has been criticism that some models, such as the Long Term Development Model (LTAD), are preoccupied with talent development as opposed to understanding talent and participation development (Bailey et al., 2010). Researchers have argued that models need to take into account the balance of performance, participation and personal development (Côté & Hancock, 2016).

The Developmental Model of Sport Participation (DMSP), developed by Côté (1999) and Côté and Hay (2002) is another prominent model that has been thoroughly researched in academia (Côté & Vierimaa, 2014). The DMSP proposes three different trajectories that sport participants may take; recreational participation through sampling, elite performance through sampling and elite performance through early specialisation

(Côté & Fraser-Thomas, 2007). See Figure 2 for the characteristics of each trajectory, probable outcomes and the relevant ages assigned to the different stages.

Figure 2. *Developmental model of sport participation*



Adapted from Côté and Fraser-Thomas (2007).

A danger of the early specialisation trajectory are the negative effects research has associated with it, such as less enjoyment, overuse injury, burnout, and dropout (Côté & Vierimaa, 2014; Fabricant et al., 2016; Fraser-Thomas, Côté, & Deakin, 2008; Jayanthi, Pinkham, Dugas, Patrick, & LaBella, 2013; Myer et al., 2015; Wall & Côté, 2007). It is argued that sampling, or diversifying the sports played when younger is a viable option to reach elite performance whilst reducing the risk of negative developmental outcomes (Baker, 2003; Côté, Lidor, & Hackfort, 2009). Research also supports the positive benefits of the underlying mechanisms by which the sampling trajectories work, through sport diversification, deliberate play, child-centred coaches and being around peers (Côté & Vierimaa, 2014).

New Zealand Context

This study is being conducted with participants currently competing in a New Zealand secondary school rugby competition. However, to date, little research has been conducted on secondary school participants and their experiences of sport. Hodge, Lonsdale, and Ng (2008) used SDT as a framework to examine the antecedents of athlete burnout in New Zealand development academy players between 1-3 years removed from secondary school (average age of 19.7 years). Players' perceptions of autonomy and competence were strongly related to the players' levels of burnout, while relatedness was a low to moderate predictor. The high burnout group reported significantly lower autonomy and competence scores than the players with low burnout. Overall the relationship between needs satisfaction and burnout was found to be generally strong. This aligns with previous studies investigating autonomy-supportive behaviours (see previous section).

Autonomy-supportive coaching was also highlighted in a case study on the New Zealand men's side (All Blacks) and their coaches from 2004 - 2011. Hodge et al. (2014) discussed how the All Blacks' coaching staff changed their environment by using more autonomy-supportive behaviours, such as; offering choice to players, which gave ownership and accountability for decision-making, encouraging players to take initiative through leadership groups and shared responsibility, and using empowering performance feedback as they focused on improving strengths not just reducing weaknesses. This change in coaching style helped the All Blacks to an 85% winning percentage (10% up on the All Blacks overall percentage) through the period of 2004-2011.

Although autonomy-supportive behaviours are associated with low levels of instruction at the elite level, studies have shown that youth coaching in four major New Zealand sports (including rugby union) is highly instructional with low positive to negative comment ratios (Walters et al., 2012). Controlling behaviours like this are aligned with a traditional coach-centred approach. Rugby union had the worst rate of negative comments across the sports, which the researchers suggested may have to do with the contextual influence of the culture within the sport, and the historical and cultural significance of the sport to the nation.

Walters et al. (2017) undertook a qualitative descriptive study on secondary school rowing attrition. Using semi-structured interviews, they captured the experiences of eight adolescents who were no longer participating in high school rowing programmes. Their results suggested New Zealand secondary school rowers' experiences were

initially positive, but as they continued to participate their basic psychological needs were thwarted and they experienced dissatisfaction. Participants enjoyed the sense of relatedness in participating, they felt they were part of a family and there was camaraderie in rowing. Participants also spoke of a lack of input in training (autonomy), as well as a perceived outcome and results focus from coaches which alienated some of the participants. These factors were all related to why the participants ended up withdrawing from the rowing programmes. Researchers, in their conclusion, spoke of how the study highlighted an urgent need for research in New Zealand to critically examine the role of schools in providing positive sporting experiences for their participants.

Summary

Sport provides the opportunity for a number of positive developmental outcomes for youth who take part (Fraser-Thomas & Côté, 2009). Adults, particularly coaches, are key influencers and mediate the motivational orientations of athletes (Curran, Hill, Hall, & Jowett, 2015). An abundance of research has associated different types of coach behaviours with athlete psychological needs satisfaction and thwarting (Bartholomew et al., 2011; Mageau & Vallerand, 2003; Occhino et al., 2014). These behaviours also affect the power dynamics and quality of the coach-athlete relationship which may affect the overall effectiveness of the coaching (Jowett, 2017).

DMSP suggests that the context related to this study, senior secondary school (late adolescence) may be an important transitional time for athletes as they decide whether to invest in a sport they wish to excel in (Côté & Hay, 2002). While research in the New Zealand secondary school rugby context is limited, a range of behaviours from coaches have been seen from youth to elite level, which have had both negative and positive developmental impacts (Walters et al., 2012). Other sports in New Zealand secondary schools have indicated coaches have a large influence on athlete motivations (Walters et al., 2017). Rugby is a traditional school sport of cultural and societal significance in New Zealand (Pringle, 2001) and exploring this context may provide researchers and practitioners with important insights on how coaches influence participants' experience of secondary school sport.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

This methodology section discusses the research methodology and the underpinning philosophical standpoint. This chapter also provides a description of the research methods, ethical considerations, participants, procedures, data collection and data analysis.

Qualitative Research

Research methodology is the “strategy of enquiry that guides a set of procedures” (Petty, Thomson, & Stew, 2012, p. 378). Methodology considers the social, theoretical, political and philosophical backgrounds to research and how this impacts its practical application (Petty et al., 2012).

Qualitative research examines the social environment and those within it, aiming to gain a deeper understanding of the how and why of behaviour (Berg, 2009). Qualitative approaches to research commonly have a similar goal of seeking to understand a phenomenon from the perspective of those experiencing it (Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013). In qualitative research the researcher is the instrument of research, with data often generated through questions in interviews or focus groups, taking down notes and observations, or even participating in events and reflecting on their own participation (Magilvy & Thomas, 2009). Even in descriptive studies, through the act of describing an event or experience, researchers must choose what to describe (or what not to) and through this process they begin to transform the event or experience (Sandelowski, 2000).

There are a number of qualitative methodologies available to researchers, but it is up to the researcher to decide which philosophical standpoint and methodology will best be able to answer the research questions (Grant & Giddings, 2002). The next sections detail the lens through which this research is conducted and how the methodology aligns with this.

Research Philosophy

The philosophy that underpins a research methodology allows those reading to understand the lens through which the researcher views the world, providing a framework to make order out of the chaos in social life (Grant & Giddings, 2002). It also provides consistency between the philosophy of the researcher, the aim(s) of the

research study, and the methods, which is essential for the underpinning and rationale of the project (Crossan, 2003).

This research sits within a post-positivist paradigm. Researchers working within this philosophy understand that reality is complex and unfixed while knowledge is socially constructed (Ryan, 2006). The principles of post-positivist research emphasise the meaning that comes from exploring and understanding social concerns, (Henderson, 2011). As reality is influenced by context, many constructions of reality exist and researchers operating within this paradigm are searching for evidence that provides sound support for a phenomena's existence (Crossan, 2003). The characteristics of post-positivism are broad, bringing together theory and practice, providing acknowledgment of researchers' motivations, and recognising that there are many techniques to collect and analyse data (Henderson, 2011).

Within post-positivism there are a number of methodologies that could be used to collect and analyse data, but this study uses qualitative description. Qualitative descriptive studies aim to keep the description of the event or phenomena as close to the data as possible, by offering a summary of events in the everyday language of participants, staying true to their words (Sandelowski, 2000). Researchers conducting qualitative descriptive studies aim to provide an accurate depiction of the events so that there would be agreement by other researchers on the description provided (Sandelowski, 2010).

It does need to be noted that although qualitative description provides an interpretation of data that has lower inference than other qualitative approaches (such as grounded theory, phenomenology, and ethnography studies) no description is free of interpretation as "all description entails interpretation" (Sandelowski, 2000, p. 335). Descriptions require the researcher to select what they highlight (as well as what they do not) and in doing so inevitably transform the event. Qualitative description research aims to stay as close as possible to what was presented by the participants. The aim of this research is to hear current 1st XV participants' perceptions of their coaching environment, thus qualitative description has been chosen as the research methodology to best meet this.

Research Design

This qualitative descriptive study used semi-structured focus-groups to generate data. An inductive thematic analysis was conducted to analyse the data, guided by a framework provided by Braun and Clarke (2006).

Research Setting

Current players in the Auckland secondary school 1A 1st XV competition were targeted as participants for the focus groups as; 1) Auckland is the biggest (by player numbers) provincial union in New Zealand, 2) the secondary school 1A competition is held in high regard around the country and commonly perceived as producing the best schoolboy rugby talent in the world (Hepburn, 2013), 3) there has been increased scrutiny on the competition and some of the moral and ethical decisions made by teams and schools (Cleaver, 2017), and 4) the primary researcher is based in Auckland.

There are 12 Secondary schools competing in the Auckland 1A competition. The competing schools can change year-to-year due to promotion/relegation matches between the bottom two teams in the 1A competition and the top two teams in the 1B competition. There are a wide range of secondary schools in the Auckland 1A 1st XV competition with private schools, state schools, state-integrated schools, co-educational and single sex schools all competing. These schools are spread across the Auckland Provincial Union in a range of different socio-economic areas.

Procedure

Initial contact was made via email and/or phone call to the principal (or principal's personal assistant/executive assistant) of the eleven 1A schools who had competed in both 2017 and 2018 (the season of the research and the previous one). The initial contact was made to explain the research and ask for permission to attend a 1st XV training to introduce myself, the research topic, hand out information sheets (Appendix B) and consent forms (Appendix B) to potential participants. If contact could not be made with the principal, other key leadership positions for sport/rugby within the school were contacted; including deputy principals, directors of sport and directors of rugby. Four schools agreed to take part in the research.

Once a school agreed to take part, the researcher attended a 1st XV training or team meeting to introduce himself and the research topic to the players. It was here that the information sheet and consent forms were provided to the potential participants. In this meeting the researcher used every-day, non-academic language in an attempt to ensure that players fully understood the purpose and scope of the research.

Upon discussion with the key staff in charge of rugby for each school it was made clear that for ease of access for the students, and to reduce both time commitment and travel barriers, the focus groups should be held at their school. The details of each focus

group were organised with the head of rugby, or sports co-ordinator for the school to ensure they had as little impact as possible on the participants' rugby or school commitments. The head of rugby or sports co-ordinator was used instead of the coach of the 1st XV to reduce potential harm to the participants through the coach intimately knowing who was involved in the focus groups. It was noted that the initial reaction from the majority of potential participants was that they were very willing to take part in the focus groups.

Three focus groups were completed. One school who had agreed to take part was unable to schedule a time for the focus group before it started to impact on potential participants' school examination period. Therefore, the fourth focus group was not conducted as planned. Please see the conclusion chapter for a more complete discussion relating to the number of focus groups conducted.

Participants

All participants in the focus groups were current secondary school 1st XV players at a school competing in the Auckland Secondary School 1A 1st XV competition. All participants fully consented to participate in the research. All participants were 16 years of age or over at the date of the focus group interviews which meant, as per ethical requirements, they could sign informed consent to participate and they did not require their parents to sign consent forms. Please see Table 1 to see the number of participants per focus group.

Table 1. *Number of participants per focus group*

Focus group number	Number of participants
Focus group 1	12 (1 st session) 11 (2 nd session)
Focus group 2	7
Focus group 3	7

During the 1st focus group there was a large turn-out with 12 players from the team (evidence of the interest from the players to have an opportunity to discuss their coaching experiences in the 1st XV). Upon reflection of the initial focus group it was decided that number was too high, therefore efforts were made to keep numbers in later focus groups between six and eight, in line with recommendations by Braun and Clarke (2006).

Data Collection

Qualitative description allows for a number of different data collection methods. This study used focus groups as they can collect a broad and rich range of perceptions,

thoughts, feelings and impressions on the researched topic (Stewart & Shamdasani, 2015). The researcher wanted to be able to explore the participants' experiences and knowledge of the coaching environment in a less inhibiting and formal format, therefore focus groups were considered to be the ideal approach to assist in generating discussion from younger participants (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005). A focus group would also potentially allow for any discussion between the participants themselves on the questions raised, generating a broad range of data.

It has been suggested that focus groups work best for topics that people could talk about in their day to day lives, but do not (Macnaghten & Myers, 2004). The coaching environment for players is something that potential participants live in their day to day lives, and again based on the researcher's collective knowledge of a sporting environment, would be something commonly talked about amongst the players. On top of this, focus groups provide opportunities for interactive discussion which allows for participants to provide and refine their views after hearing others' opinions (Hennink, 2014), providing richer data for the research. A focus group approach can also help to access the everyday vernacular used by participants (Bloor, Frankland, Thomas, & Robson, 2001), helping to provide space for the participants to provide opinions in their own words, which aligns with a qualitative descriptive research approach. From a post-positivist perspective, it also enables the researcher to see how participants make sense of their social world and construct perceptions of their rugby experiences.

The first focus group was held on the 12th June 2018 and the last one on Tuesday 14th August 2018. The scheduled length of time for the focus groups was between 60 and 90 minutes. One focus group had to be split into 2 separate sessions due to school time commitments and were held nine days apart, therefore four focus group sessions were run in total. The longest focus group ran for a total of 78 minutes, while the shortest ran for 52 minutes split over 2 sessions (27 minutes and 25 minutes each respectively).

Building a rapport with the participants and making them feel comfortable to speak openly and honestly was important. How the primary researcher dressed and spoke was taken into consideration to assist with this. Food and drink were provided to all participants, which proved to be a popular move. The initial questions were broad, asking them to describe their typical weeks, encouraging them to share experiences which are very familiar and unlikely to be sensitive to them (Peterson-Sweeney, 2005). Researchers have also found that assurances of confidentiality are paramount for teenagers to share openly and this was discussed at the start, with the primary researcher ensuring the participants knew confidentiality extended right through the

research process (Daley, 2013). Teenagers are particularly susceptible to 'collective voice' emerging, due to the influence of outspoken teenagers in the group (Krueger & Casey, 2015). To help mitigate this the researcher ensured that there were opportunities for everyone to speak and express contrasting opinions by asking the group what they thought, or if there was anyone who disagreed (Daley, 2013). What was clear during, and immediately post the focus groups, was that the participants liked being given the opportunity to share their opinions, thoughts and feelings on the coaching environment they experience.

In line with a semi-structured interviewing approach, initial questions were used to guide the focus groups. Using an inductive emergent approach to analysis, I was able to use my familiarisation with earlier focus groups to guide my questioning in later focus groups. Examples of questions that were used can be found in Appendix B.

All focus groups were recorded with a digital recorder and they were transcribed verbatim either by the researcher or outsourced to an external transcriber. The outsourced transcriber signed a confidentiality agreement (Appendix C). All transcripts were then re-read whilst listening to the audio, to ensure that the transcripts were as accurate as possible.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data generated from the focus groups. Thematic analysis is a "method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). Thematic analysis and content analysis are two commonly used methods for data analysis. Although they have been used interchangeably in the past they are different methods of analysis, so researchers need to be clear which one is used, based on the research questions (Vaismoradi et al., 2013).

A theme is a patterned response or meaning found in the data that captures something important related to the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This study wants the voice of the participant to be retained as much as possible through the data analysis. It is therefore critical that the themes, and importance placed on them, were generated based on whether they captured something important relative to the research questions, as opposed to deciding importance based on quantifiable measures such as in a content analysis (Vaismoradi et al., 2013).

Data was approached primarily inductively and semantically. Data was the starting point for coding and theme development, and the codes attempted to capture

the explicit meaning of the data, which is an inductive approach (Terry, Hayfield, Clarke, & Braun, 2017). It is understood that the researchers bring their own subjectivity and bias to the data, but by using an inductive approach they are attempting to let the data lead the analysis, as opposed to bringing in existing theoretical concepts and applying them to the data.

Braun and Clarke's (2006) phase guide provided direction for each phase in the analytical process. Table 2 provides the phases of thematic analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) and describes how this was applied in this specific research setting.

Table 2. *Phases of thematic analysis*

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarising yourself with your data:	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas. Upon receiving transcription of each focus group, the primary researcher edited the transcriptions to ensure accuracy, by re-listening to and re-reading each focus group. The primary researcher also attempted to immerse himself in the data through constant re-reads and note taking.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code. The primary researcher utilised the software tool NVivo to assist with coding the data. Data was transcribed into word documents and loaded up onto NVivo. Data was initially coded descriptively based on the content of the transcription.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme. Codes were then collated into relevant categories based on their description. For example, all the codes relating to players having to give up or stop playing other sports were collated into a larger code of 'control of other sports.' Upon generating the larger codes they were referenced with each other to see if there were common threads. For example, 'control of other sports' had a similar thread of coach control with 'control of game plan' and 'control of training.'
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis. During the theme creation process there was contact between the primary researcher and the two supervisors to discuss the different codes and how they related to each other.
5. Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme. Once the primary researcher felt he had identified the dominant themes for the research a meeting was organised with both supervisors to present the themes. The primary supervisor presented the dominant themes with their corresponding codes and quotes. Each theme was

6. Producing the report	<p>discussed, and consensus was reached that these were the dominant themes in the research.</p> <p>The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis. The primary researcher worked on the report sending sections upon completion to the two supervisors. From there amendments and edits were suggested to be implemented as necessary by the primary researcher. This allowed movement between codes as well once written up. For example, participants' dislike of other players playing 1st XV rugby for popularity was moved from the theme of brotherhood to 1st XV status based on communication with supervisors while drafting up the results section.</p>
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Adapted from (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87).

Note these phases can be non-linear, that is you do not need to finish one phase to then move onto the next. The movement between phases is more fluid with some overlapping each other and researchers may move back and forward between phases as necessary (Terry et al., 2017).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was granted for this study on the 23rd of March 2018 by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (Appendix A).

Focus groups were initially planned to be held at a local rugby club. Upon talking to the schools, it was made clear that the best place to hold the focus groups would be on the school grounds. 1st XV rugby players have a large number of commitments with their training and school workloads. Schools were concerned that having them held away from the school would increase the time commitment in participating, and impact unnecessarily on their schoolwork. The decision was made that they would be held on school grounds to reduce any potential harm to the participants. To ensure that confidentiality was ensured for the participants; the time and place of the focus group was organised with someone from the school who was not the head coach of the 1st XV and organised on a day/time that was not a regular time for the team to be together on school grounds. This significantly reduced the likelihood of the coach (on balance of probabilities) knowing who took part in the focus group. No participants objected to the focus group being held on school grounds.

Informed and Voluntary Consent

At the initial meeting it was verbally presented that participants must be 16 years or older at the time of the focus group. This was also clearly stated in the information

sheet (Appendix B) given to potential participants. As all participants were 16 years or older, they were able to give informed consent themselves and did not need to have their parents give consent. All participants filled out a consent form prior to the commencement of the focus groups (Appendix B). It was made clear in the initial meetings, on the information sheet, and at the focus groups that they had the right to withdraw at any time if they so wished.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

No schools or individuals are named in the research to protect the school and participants' identities. At the start of the focus groups the researcher reiterated that the information that was disclosed in the interviews would not be discussed outside of the focus groups and nobody in the school would know what they said (apart from fellow participants). Members were also encouraged not to speak outside of the focus group about the discussions.

Consent forms were collected by the researcher at the time of the focus groups. Focus group times and locations were organised through someone within the school who was not the 1st XV coach, to again protect participants' anonymity.

Potential Conflict of Interest

The primary researcher is employed by Auckland Rugby, the Regional Sporting Organisation (RSO) for rugby in Auckland, in a coach development role. The current role is in the junior rugby coaching space (that is under 13 age group and lower) while the environment being researched is the secondary school space (13-18 years old), so currently there is no connection between coaches and the primary researcher in his role with Auckland Rugby. The perception of the coaching environment and how it affects participants' experience of secondary school rugby is the focus for this research not individual coach characteristics. While behaviour from individual coaches makes up part of the coaching environment, it is not the primary focus of this research as negative perceptions of the coaching environment may come from multiple factors, not just individual characteristics.

One of the potential benefits of this research is that the participants' voice will be able to guide development programmes for coaches to better meet the needs of their participants in the secondary school space. There is no evidence of any previous research drawing upon the perspectives of this demographic and the aim of this research is to address this significant gap in the literature, not to target the behaviour of individual coaches.

Treaty of Waitangi

As this research is being completed in New Zealand, the researchers must be cognisant of the Treaty of Waitangi. The three principles that were taken into consideration into the design of the research are; protection, participation and partnership (Hudson & Russell, 2009).

Protection. The focus groups were held at the participants' school to reduce interference with their school and extra-curricular commitments and provided them with a familiar environment to try and remove any discomfort. Participants were free to withdraw from the study at any time, which was clearly stated in the information sheet and verbally by the researcher. In the consent form and verbally at the onset of each focus group meeting it was made clear that all information in the focus group is confidential for all parties (i.e. it must not be discussed outside of the focus groups). This provided protection for participants to be honest with no fear of repercussion.

The data generated from the focus groups is confidential to protect the participants from their identity being recognised by those who may have power over them and have a vested interest in their views, thoughts and feelings on their coaching environment (i.e. their coach or team selectors). As the lead of the focus groups, the researcher steered the two-way conversation. The primary researcher ensured that participants understood all information shared is confidential and was vigilant to any sensitive information that may be shared which could be harmful to participants.

Participation. The research provided participants the chance to voice their opinions and perceptions of the coaching environment in which they play. The research was not possible without their participation and this is the first time, to the researcher's knowledge, that these participants (secondary school rugby players) have had an opportunity to participate in coaching related research.

Partnership. The researcher and the participants worked together as the researcher provided the participants with the opportunity to have their voice, opinions and feelings on the coaching environment heard. The participants worked with the researcher by providing their thoughts and generating the data of the study. Focus groups are a two-way conversation so the researcher asked the participants questions to uncover the feelings, opinions and thoughts on the subject matter. The analysis of the data also reflects the principle of partnership as qualitative description attempts to leave the participants' voice as it was heard.

All participants were fully informed of the study design and protocols as well as what their rights were prior to data collection. Before any data collection commenced, consent forms were signed by the participants. Participants who wished to, were free to withdraw from the study at any point. Participant selection was based solely on their meeting the inclusion criteria regardless of ethnicity, culture, sexuality or member of specific collectives. Data collected has not been split by ethnicity thus eliminating any possibility of examining any differences associated with being Māori, Pacifica, Asian or any other specific ethnic group.

Rigour and trustworthiness

In order for qualitative research to provide meaningful and useful results, it must be conducted in a rigorous, methodical and trustworthy manner (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017). Guba (1981) provided four aspects or criteria that qualitative research should strive to meet in order to achieve rigour and trustworthiness. Although there has been debate about notions of rigour and trustworthiness in qualitative research (for discussion on this see Rolfe (2006)) from this researcher's perspective these criteria are important for those designing, reading and evaluating the research (Guba & Lincoln, 1982). The four criteria as described by Guba (1981) are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. This research has used the framework for meeting this criteria as laid out by Lincoln and Guba (1985).

Credibility. Credibility is concerned with the internal validity of the project (Guba & Lincoln, 1982) and if the views of the participants fit with the researchers' analysis of them (Nowell et al., 2017). Guba (1981) suggests peer debriefing, that is seeking out other professionals to perform a debriefing function, as a way in which to ensure credibility. In this study, while working through the phases of thematic analysis the primary researcher was in regular contact with his supervisors to discuss themes that were being drawn out of the data.

Transferability. Qualitative research is not generalisable, but transferability is concerned with the opportunity for case-to-case transfer (Nowell et al., 2017). The researcher needs to provide a full description of all contextual factors impacting on the research so that other researchers can then make informed judgements on the transferability to their own contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

There are a wide range of types of secondary schools in the Auckland 1A 1st XV competition, with private, state, state-integrated, co-educational, and single sex schools

all competing. These schools are spread across the Auckland Provincial Union in a range of different socio-economic areas. By holding focus groups across multiple teams, they cover a range of these school differences, thus any common threads or themes identified are common across different school types, location in Auckland and socio-economic areas. It is noted that by only focusing on the 1A competition it does not incorporate participants across multiple abilities or skill levels, but the focus of this research is on a serious secondary school age competition that is arguably the most prominent in New Zealand. The researchers believe that the results may be interesting and relevant for other researchers examining this type of 'high performing' environment for secondary school age participants.

This study was only conducted in one sport, in one New Zealand region, but the feeling is that the findings will benefit other regions, as well as other sports that have secondary school competitions.

Dependability. Guba (1981) points out that researchers need to be concerned with the stability of data, even though qualitative research lends itself to instabilities. A clear documented research process that is easy to follow is needed in order to demonstrate dependability (Tobin & Begley, 2004). This research project has attempted to provide a clear description of the process that was undertaken. All decisions on the research process have been linked to the research questions as well as explain why they were chosen. Attempts have been made to clearly illustrate the alignment through all phases of a qualitative descriptive study theoretically underpinned by a post positivist approach.

Confirmability. Confirmability is the objectivity of the data and the clarity of how the interpretations and findings have been reached (Tobin & Begley, 2004). If credibility, transferability and dependability are all achieved then confirmability is established (Nowell et al., 2017). To assist in confirmability, Guba (1981) suggests the researcher reveals their underlying philosophical assumptions, which affects how they have formulated their research and how they present these findings. The assumptions and potential biases of the researcher, as well how (where possible) these have been mitigated have been clearly laid out within the introduction and methodology sections of this research.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

Qualitative descriptive studies aim to keep the description of the event or phenomena as close to the data as possible, by offering a summary of events in the everyday language of participants, staying true to their words (Sandelowski, 2000). This chapter's focus is to present the findings from the thematic analysis in relation to the two research questions of the study.

The research questions for this study were: 1) what are the perceptions of New Zealand Secondary School 1st XV players of their coaching environment? And 2) how does the perceived 1st XV coaching environment affect players' experiences of secondary school sport?

Thematic analysis of the focus group transcripts identified five dominant themes. These were: 1) 1st XV status, 2) brotherhood, 3) coach control, 4) power relationship dynamics and 5) expectations and pressures. Sub-themes were identified within these themes and will be expanded on in this chapter. The findings will be presented one dominant theme at a time, keeping as much of the participants' voice as possible.

An inductive approach to data analysis allows the data to lead the researcher in the process of identifying dominant themes. As such, themes may arise that may not initially be associated with the research questions, but upon analysis present themselves as dominant themes. During this thematic analysis, one such identified theme was, 1st XV status.

1st XV Status

Although not necessarily related to the original research questions a dominant theme of 1st XV status was identified through the thematic analysis process. Within the dominant theme there were two subthemes identified: 1) the status of the 1A competition and 2) personal status from being a 1st XV player.

The status of the 1A competition within secondary schools. The secondary school 1A 1st XV competition was regarded by participants to be the highest level of rugby within Secondary School in New Zealand. Rugby's perceived place within New Zealand and the secondary school setting was identified as giving the 1st XV 1A competition in Auckland prestige.

Playing 1st XV rugby in the 1A competition was described as “the pinnacle of schoolboy rugby.” When asked to expand on what was meant by “the pinnacle” they replied, “it’s the highest like thing you can do for rugby, probably for sport overall in New Zealand.” This was supported by other participants who described playing in the 1st XV as the best experience because “you play the best players, and I believe [the Auckland Secondary School 1A competition] is the hardest comp [competition] in the world.”

The perceived prestige referred to by participants clearly related to not only being the top competition in the country, but also internationally. The theme is relevant given the perceived status of the competition was a reason the participants loved playing 1st XV rugby. The status of the competition afforded the players an opportunity to represent their school, to play with the support of the people they love (their family and friends), and to play other schools. All of this contributed to the competition being held in such esteem.

One way the participants had their perception of the status of 1st XV rugby confirmed was how they saw themselves treated relative to other sports within the school, and how the other sports teams perceived them. Participants spoke of receiving greater resourcing from the school regardless of results and this sometimes annoyed or frustrated other teams:

I think like our schools, they prioritise 1st XV over all other sports... They don't really look at other sports as important as 1st XV. I know, I guess it pisses off all the other sport teams. Especially when they're winning; like the other sports teams, the soccer team. They're winning every game, but they have no sponsorship in the school, just transport. They're not treated equally as our 1st XV.

Participants in focus group 3 described a similar situation with the 1st XV being the only team within the school given special kit such as bag, shirt, socks and jacket. This meant other sports felt the 1st XV were spoilt. “I guess because the other top sports complain again. I guess that’s just like reality of how the school holds the First XV.”

Personal status of being a 1st XV player. Participants perceived that being a member in a secondary school 1st XV team provided status to them within their New Zealand secondary school environment. Once you are in the first XV you are known for being a 1st XV player, regardless of playing ability. For participants in the focus groups, being a 1st XV player means something in their social setting:

Yeah, like people will know you, once you play 1st XV; you'll have more eyes on you.... You could be the shittiest First XV player but to people who see you; they're like, 'Oh you're a First XV player'.

This increase in status within the school setting led to concerns some players were only in it for the prestige associated with being a 1st XV player, "Yeah, I think some of them are just in it for popularity in school; they just want to be known as someone who's playing in the First XV. A first XV player." Players said it was frustrating when they are not on the same page as to why they are playing. There was concern that some players are not in it for the right reasons.

However, having an elevated place in their school setting meant that there were some drawbacks. With the increased status, comes an increased interest in the results of the team. If the team is losing, it can make interactions with others more difficult:

"It's kind of hard when the people who ask and judge us weren't at the game. They've just seen the score line and they're like, "Oh you guys were shit." Little things in the game actually change it a lot and it's hard to explain to everyone."

Some participants felt that more people knowing who they were meant they were not able to get away with as much at school, relative to other students. "We [the 1st XV] get watched more than any other team [in the school]." Some participants felt uneasy about this close attention their initial reaction being, "I think it's dumb; like, they should watch not just us, but the other teams as well."

Participants were happy with some of the positive outcomes from the elevated social status, including getting more kit and having more support, though it was unclear whether they thought it was unfair to the participants of other sports. Participants had accepted 1st XV receiving preferential treatment as a natural part of their secondary school setting. However, when this meant they had their actions scrutinised more while at school, they questioned the fairness of the increased attention relative to others.

When probed, participants recognised the increased attention had benefits for them. They could see how playing in the 1st XV actually helped them with their off-field behaviours as well as assisting in them "growing up" and becoming men. They felt that playing in the 1st XV teaches them important skills, such as discipline and time management.

You know where, as well as First XV; you're taught to discipline yourself in many ways, and just be serious about a lot of things. So, I guess, a learning curve.... Yeah, something that we needed, something that I needed.

One participant expressed how the opportunities that were provided to them through playing 1st XV gave them experiences that others did not get and described how these helped the players become better people, “I guess it’s made all the past boys, better men. Yeah. There are some guys that start off school, like really out of it and stuff, but now they’re going good.” The two quotes both reference how 1st XV rugby helped players to grow up, become more serious and “better men”. This is often purported to be a social benefit of sport for youth.

Importantly, participants overwhelmingly spoke about how they loved the experience of playing 1st XV rugby and one participant summed up his experience of being in the 1st XV, “it’s once in a lifetime.”

Brotherhood

The experience of playing 1st XV in the 1A competition was special to the participants, with one dominant theme identified across all three focus groups; the feeling of “brotherhood.” Participants described that the relationship formed between players, the brotherhood, was something they loved about playing rugby. It was clear how strongly players felt a sense of connection to each other which was bigger than themselves and provided them enjoyment. Players realised the strength of their relationship with one another was special. They were playing amongst friends and people who they see every day, which shaped the bond between them.

When asked to describe their team environment, participants used the terms “down for the pack” and “a brotherhood.” Both of these descriptions show a sense of unity and connection between all the players that is more than just a team or group of individuals.

Participants described where the notion of brotherhood comes from and what it means for them. “That brotherhood comes from each other, we rely on each other to help us through the game to play for each other.” The connection players have with each other is something they can rely on and supports them while they are on the field. Participants recognised this was different to future settings they may play rugby in, such as club rugby. In those situations players may only see each other at trainings and games, rather than be in close contact every day.

One focus group explained the difference in the player connection between junior grades and secondary school, “like when you’re in the junior grades you just play with

guys you train with like twice a week. But with schoolboy you play with everyone you see at school so it's like a better connection on the field." The connection that the players have off the field contributes to this sense of brotherhood and helps them when they are playing. Rugby is played in secondary schools for a five-year period in New Zealand, where there is no club rugby. Participants recognise that before (in junior club) and after (in senior club) are quite different experiences in terms of relationships with teammates.

Another focus group shared similar sentiments, with their close relationship formed through going to school together and the shared experience of playing 1st XV rugby:

I feel it's, kind of like, it's kind of hard to describe to me because there's lots of sports that you play for where there's not much of a connection between and the team; not much of a brotherhood. I feel because we're with each other so much during the week that it's kind of natural and you are just kind of like working for each other out there. Some teams that you play for you don't really want to work for each other but sometimes you have to get the internal desire but with this team the motivation is there already for each other.

There is a recognition from participants that the feeling of brotherhood does not always exist in sports teams, and an understanding and appreciation that within the 1st XV team the connection is special and something to value. This idea of brotherhood also plays an important role in assisting their motivation when playing.

Coaches influence on the sense of brotherhood. Although the feeling of brotherhood forms through the players' connections with each other in and out of rugby, coaches were able to foster this relationship through their actions and behaviours.

One focus group explained that a pre-season camp organised by the coaches helped to strengthen the brotherhood. "We went on a week camp together in the first term holidays. Yeah we kind of all bonded through there which is cool." By taking the players away as a group and giving them a chance to spend time with each other the coaches helped to bring the team together. Participants described how during that camp the coaches facilitated discussion of values the team could have, but the values were ultimately decided by the players:

We split off; we have unit groups kind of thing. We split off into those and then we all kind of came up with a list in our little groups and then came together at the end and kind of picked the most important ones [values].

The players felt that the process of value creation was mainly driven by them, although the coaches had some input. Throughout the season coaches expected the players to hold each other accountable for their actions, especially adhering to the team values. The players, having created the values themselves, felt comfortable to challenge

other players if they were not living up to the team values and could do this one on one with each other. They appreciated that this allowed for an open team environment.

Participants mentioned how coaches were able to facilitate the unity in the group when behaviour from some students did not meet the standards agreed to within the team. A team meeting was held for everyone, “coz some of the boys been getting in trouble and we [players] wanted to have a team meeting and just decide, just see what’s going on with everyone.” The coaches facilitated the meeting and allowed the players an open forum to say anything they wanted to say. “The coaches kind of just let us, like they’ll say if there’s something that we need to get off our chest.” The players felt that this gave everyone a chance to have their say on the team culture and environment.

The participants see the brotherhood they have created within their secondary school team environment as special and recognise they need to make the most of it and enjoy it for as long as they can, as it will not be the same after they leave school. They say it is important for them to “just enjoy each other’s presence; while it lasts. Because, after school, everyone separates and makes their own way they’re not bonded like us... We’re just to make the best of it while you can, before school finishes.”

Coach Control

Coaches were able to foster the players’ sense of brotherhood by allowing the players to lead the creation of the team values as well as give them the opportunity to have input in the discussion of their team environment. However, this was one of the only areas where players felt they had input. In a number of other areas coaches exerted a significant amount of control over the participants. Coach control was identified as a dominant theme and three subthemes were identified, relating to the ways in which coaches exerted their control. These are: 1) control of what sports players can play, 2) control of the game plan, and 3) control of players expressing themselves on the field.

Control of other sports. Participants were asked if they currently play sports other than rugby and the response was that they could play some summer sports but were not allowed to play sports that run through the winter, due to the perceived clash with the rugby season. A number of the players had played other winter sports previously, for example basketball, but had to give it up because it coincided with the rugby season. Participants were asked if they would like to play other sports and typical responses were, “I would but I can’t” and “we have to prioritise 1st XV or else we wouldn’t play. It’s always 1st XV training over our other sports.” One participant described how they felt after they had to prioritise rugby over basketball. “At the beginning I don’t really

like it, because I like basketball, then I was always told to be at First XV training. Yeah, I wanted to train in basketball as well”.

When asked who made them choose between sports, participants answered with “I was told by the Principal. I was not allowed to play league; no other sports” and “more like the school, rather than the coaches.” It was not always the coach who the participants perceived to be forcing the decision on the players, but also the school and the headmaster (who is the ultimate authority for students within the secondary school setting). This suggests that the participants perceived the school and headmaster to also have a control over them.

Coaches, though, were described as being complicit in taking away players’ choice. One team had players who were playing social basketball during the rugby season, but a coach saw them. They described the situation that unfolded as:

We got snitched on by one of the coaches. He saw us and then he kind of like dropped a hint to us.”

(SM): How do you mean he dropped a hint?

I don’t remember what he said but he said something that kind of made us think about should we be playing? Then the next day I think it was game day and they brought it up in the pre-game talk. Then yeah, we just stopped playing after that; after we got told.

The use of the term “snitch” is interesting, as it has connotations that the coach informed on them to a higher authority. It also suggests that the players may have known that playing basketball was something the coaches would have frowned upon. Some participants clearly desired to play other sports and the enjoyment gained out of it was great enough for them to play behind their coaches’ backs. Ultimately, the coaches were able to get them to stop and control the sports they could play.

When asked if they would like to play other sports in winter a number of the participants said they would like the choice. One player summed it up for their group, “give us the chance to at least; so, playing more sports than the one. Instead of prioritising our rugby.”

Control of training and games. Throughout the analysis of the data it became increasingly clear that coaches exerted a large amount of control over what the players do on-field. One way of doing this was through the control of what happens at training and how they should play on the field during games.

Across all three focus groups participants spoke about the coaches controlling the game plan and having the final decision on what moves could be run. Players had

little to no input in the overall game plan for the team. When coaches did provide them with a say, it was often to come up with a move (e.g. a backline move) but it would have to be discussed with the coaches, who would need to approve it before it could be used.

In one focus group the participants were in agreement that the coaches do not give opportunities for player input on how they should play. When asked how much say they have into what they do at training participants replied, “not much, not at all” and “I don’t think we have much. Like usually the coaches just watch our previous game and just whatever we need to work on.” The players were unanimous that they did not have much input into the content of their training sessions. It seems the coaches decided on what the players need to work on, told them and then the players’ job was to just train on those aspects.

The participants also explained that whilst they sometimes can make up their own moves, it was ultimately controlled by the coaches, “we can come up with moves, but it still has to go through the coaching staff, before it can actually come onto the field.” The coaches always have final control over the moves called and participants felt that the coach only has to show some disapproval of the move for the players to know they cannot use it during a game.

Participants said that a lack of input in training left them feeling “a bit lost” and “we [players] get told the move, and then we’ll go out and practice it, without even understanding why we’re doing it.” A greater understanding of what they were doing was something the players wanted. One focus group spoke of a team meeting the players had without the coaches where they decided that they needed to get more clarity from the coaches:

We sat down as a team after morning training. We have our own Facebook group; just the team without the coaches... Then we met as a team in the changing rooms and just talked about what we think we should change if we really wanted to make the semis and stuff. We kind of identified stuff and I think the leadership group brought it up to coaches. Then they sat down with us that training on the same day and just asked the group what they wanted. Some of the boys told the coaches and I think one of them was clarity... Clarity around game plan.

When asked if they would like some input, participants thought it would be a good idea. One participant said:

But maybe like if we do have a say like it might be actually beneficial. Like, if they hear what our opinions on what they should do, then they make the final decision maybe that would probably be better. Because maybe the move would work or something if they take everything into consideration. But I don’t really think they do that.

Players feel they have a lack of input into how they play and what they are doing. They expressed a lack of understanding and clarity around what they are supposed to be doing during both training and games. There is a suggestion from participants that these are linked, and more player input would increase the clarity and understanding. Players say when everyone is on the same page and “in sync” they find it enjoyable.

Participants described how coaches were able to exert their control during games through their behaviour whilst on the sideline. Coaches did this through yelling out moves, lineout calls and other instruction. They also used other members of the coaching staff during the game. When asked who makes decisions during game, the players were pretty clear, “yeah it’s the coaches... they’re always telling us what to do.”

Players also described how the coaches were set up on game days so they can provide instruction during the game:

They have a couple on the side; so, our manager and our assistant. Our backs coaches are usually on the side communicating to the boys, and they have the mics. the walkie talkies and stuff. Like, everything they see during the game, if they see something, they’ll communicate it, then the guys on the side, will just shout to the boys, and tells us what’s going on, and what we need to do.

Players can hear the coaches whilst playing, though to what extent depends on their playing position. The players know coaches are calling out instructions on what to do in the game, and for the most part try to do what they hear. There were occasions when they did not follow coach instructions, and this is covered in the power relationship dynamic theme.

Sometimes the participants felt that the coaches went beyond just yelling and instructing during the game, making sure their decision was executed out on the field regardless of what the players wanted. Participants from focus group 3 provided this example:

I remembered in our semi-final last year. There was like 5 minutes to go, maybe 10 and we chose to take a kick. The whole team I think at least the forwards really wanted to kick for touch. They sort of just ran on the [kicking] tee; the coaches and we didn’t have a decision. Even the captain was like, wanting to kick for touch. We had just scored from the lineout maul. Then we wanted to kick for touch. Our kicker hadn’t been kicking well. Then we had chosen to kick for touch but then the tee got brought on and we weren’t allowed to change the decision because the tee was on the field.

When asked what the reaction from the players was, they said, “well even the kicker didn’t... I remember hearing the kicker just yell ‘Oh F###k’.”

Participants felt that they did not have any choice around what they actually wanted to do based on how they are feeling or what they are seeing during the game. Because of this coach control, the participants said that some players abscond responsibility for their actions if something did not work because the decision was made by the coach not them, as shown by this quote, “no, if it goes wrong, that’s not on you though; that’s on the coaches.”

With coaches controlling training and how the team should play, the players find that they have a lack of clarity or understanding of why they do things. When things go wrong, they take less ownership of it, as the coaches are the ones who ‘made the call’.

Control of players expressing themselves. The third subtheme identified expanded on the control that coaches have over how the players play the game. Participants across all three focus groups alluded to not being able to express themselves on the field due to the coaches controlling the way in which the participants can play. Participants described how when they were younger, they were able to express themselves when they played, which they enjoyed. One participant said “the only fun I’ve had was in the under-14’s. That’s it.” Other participants agreed and added “yeah, that’s where everyone got to express themselves.”

The players felt that the control of the game plan stifled their ability to play naturally. Participants in one focus group used “robotic” to describe the way in which they played. This term alludes to the fact the players felt they were not able to be creative or do what they felt based on how they wanted to play, rather, they just had to do what the coaches said. Participants said, “we just are doing the game plan.” and “everyone is just doing what they are told.” When asked what they would say to the coaches if they could, without any fear of punishment, they said, “probably just let us play, give us more freedom.”

The ability to play with freedom was controlled by the coaches, in that the coaches would choose who could or could not play with freedom. “Sometimes he puts it on specific players, instead of everyone; like, he can give some of us the license to express ourselves, but other boys don’t get that chance.” Participants felt that it was not fair that some players were given the chance to play with freedom while others were not.

They also understood that the coaches could revoke the right to play with freedom if there were mistakes. One focus group described it as, “they give us freedom to a certain extent. But then... Yeah, see they give us freedom, and once that freedom,

like everyone played wrong, then they take that freedom from us.” When asked to expand on how they would prefer coaches to react, they said: “Encourage us to keep going until it sort of, like it works.”

Players want the coaches to help them to best play with freedom in a way that works, and not to stop them once they make a mistake. When asked what they would like the coaches to change about the way they coach:

On a game day I think coaches need to stop screaming from the side line and telling us what to do; just let us play. Yeah that would one of the big ones.

(SM): “Do you guys agree with that?”

Yeah. They’re not actually sometimes out there feeling what we’re feeling.

Coach control over how the players play clearly stifles the enjoyment players get out of the game. They would like the coaches to understand that sometimes they want to play what they see, not necessarily what the coaches see. The players said they would like encouragement to help them to get it to work, rather than having the freedom revoked when mistakes are made.

Power Dynamic

Although the coaches had control over the way the participants played and the sports they took part in, it was identified that there was a power dynamic between the participants and coaches. Often this was displayed where participants had their greatest influence over what was happening, on-field during a game.

Participants sometimes would deliberately ignore the coaches’ calls during a game, instead making decisions they thought would work best. Following on from the example described in the previous section where the coaches took control of the decision-making on field by sending a tee out onto the field, there were examples where the players made the decision they thought was best, regardless of what the coaches wanted:

We’ve overcalled them a couple of times though, just when we felt confident in some stuff.... The biggest moment call out that I remember was our [school removed] game. We got a penalty right in front of the sticks and they were to bring the tee on. I don’t know what it was but someone told them to f### off and we took a scrum. Then they were pissed about that; that we took it. But with us we made the decision that’s what we wanted to do.

The participants understood that they did have the opportunity to push back against the coaches wishes even though they knew it would frustrate the coaches. The use of strong language to get rid of the person bringing the tee on, showed that the players felt they needed to be forceful to ensure they got their way and their depth of feeling in this regard.

Another group of participants described how they have moves created by the coaches that they do not think will work yet continue to practice at training. This created a rather interesting cycle due to the dynamic between the coaches and players:

I know that there's some players don't agree with like some of the moves that we run, not like the ones we created, like the ones that sir uses. There's some boys that think it'll never work and stuff"

(SM): Yup, so if you've got moves you don't think are going to work do you end up using them?

Mmmmm, no.

(SM): "No?

No!

(SM): So, are they just sort of moves you just have?

Run at trainings, Not on game day.

Players have moves that they do not think will work and because they do not believe in them, they will not run them in games. Participants do not tell the coaches this as they are "scared of the reaction" which they imagine will likely be a form of physical punishment. Interestingly they also gave another reason they do not tell the coach, "probably also a sign of respect to not like overthrow them or something." Participants recognise the coach is in a position of authority and they do not want to be seen as overtly challenging that authority, yet by not running the coach-created moves in games, they in effect are.

The participants did admit that if they ran those moves in games and they did not work, then the coaches would likely change it:

Yeah, coz, like, say if we ran that move that wasn't working and it didn't work. Then, coz we analyse the moves we did run, like how it worked. So, I reckon if we ran it and it didn't work and then they'd probably change it after that.

Because the participants do not believe the move will work and are not willing to run the move in a game, they remove the chance to review and change it. Thus, the coaches do not realise they spend time training moves which will never be used in games.

Participants also felt that coaches manipulated coach-athlete conversations, so the coaches' point of view would prevail. Participants described different ways they reacted to this. Some felt that it meant there was no point asking again as "we [players] kind of didn't know how to react because it was like one thing to tell them [coaches] and then they steered away from it; it came like we didn't really want to ask again." While others felt they needed to have the conversation anyway:

We still do it so they know. But in the end the coaches end up winning. We've just wasted a couple of minutes, explaining why we shouldn't, or what moves work, or like challenging you, but in the end, it's an obvious loss.

This is an example of the power dynamic being tested by the players. Even though the players go into the conversation knowing that they are likely to lose, they still see it important to have the conversation, so the coaches know their position.

Expectations and Pressure

We have seen that there are increased expectations and pressures on players once they are in the 1st XV. Coaches play a major role in what these expectations and pressures are, which impacts how players feel about sport in the secondary school setting. Within this theme, three subthemes were identified: 1) expectations of performance, 2) pressure to play through injury, and 3) expectations of commitment.

Expectations of performance. When participants were asked about the expectations they feel the coaches place on them, they answered, “sometimes they have too high expectations on us, and as players, like they think we can do more than what we’re asked to do” and “yep, I think that why the boys are scared, because they have a lot of expectation. They think they have a lot of expectation on them.” Other participants agreed:

The um, what’s it called, the expectation on you. I think it’s pretty overboard for this level.

(SM): “So what do you mean about that?”

Like you’re expected to do everything professionally, at schoolboys. Like execution wise and everything. Getting your job done properly. And so you think there is that expectation but you... Just want to have fun, play with the boys.

It seems that the expectations placed on players’ performance affected their experience of playing. The worry generated from these expectations takes away from the fun they have playing.

When asked if the players agreed with the expectations placed upon them, they followed up with:

Not really, because I think that’s what makes us not play as team, because we’re worried about the little things, instead of playing our game. So, we’re worried making all our tackles, and making mistakes, when it’s supposed to be enjoyable. Yeah, it’s like, boys play too safe; they just grab the ball, then just...

The players found the expectations placed on them impacted their ability to play to their full potential and express themselves, both as individuals and as a team. It was also seen to diminish the enjoyment they get from playing.

There is a sense that players have a fear of failure which makes them worry about mistakes, as opposed to playing with freedom:

I guess it's just, once the mistakes made; self-doubt. Yeah, they don't brush it off. Yeah, then they hold onto their mistake, because once they're nervous, they do another mistake, and you do another mistake, and then it all adds up. It's frustrating and then they crumble.

Other participants shared similar sentiments:

Oh yeah at the start of the season for me, literally the trainings, I was just focusing on not doing anything wrong because I was too scared. That's me personally. No. I was too scared; I didn't want to get told off for doing something wrong. I wasn't really thinking of what I can do to get better. It's just don't do anything wrong so you don't get told off. That was my first bit.

The pressure felt by the participants to perform at the coaches' standards, and fear of the response if a mistake was made was so great, that the player was not concerned with improving himself, just with not making errors.

The change in expectation for players once they made 1st XV affected how they experienced their rugby. Players described the 1st XV environment as quite serious and different compared to rugby when they were younger:

Yeah, the only fun I've had was in the under-14. That's it.

Yeah same.

(SM): How does everyone else feel about that?

Yeah, that's where everyone got to express themselves; like, everyone was equal and stuff. As you're young, you sort of enjoy sports. But as you come older, it's commitment it's all about commitment.

As the participants moved up in their sports, their experience was that fun and enjoyment was superseded by commitment and the need to meet expectations. All of which impacted on players feeling they can express themselves on the field.

Across all focus groups participants described how not meeting the expectations of coaches would lead to perceived negative outcomes, such as physical punishments and coaches yelling at them. When asked what would happen if they do not meet the coaches' expectations, participants replied, "you're going to get an earful. You're going to get yelled at." During a game this can be worse for players. They described it as below:

They [coaches] just seem to be angry all the time, even if we are winning or not. At halftime they have pretty high expectations. They'll still find a mistake to still give us a go. And if we're losing it's just worse.

Coach expectations place pressure on the players and the resulting "earful" players get can negatively affect their desire to play. Participants in one focus group described how the coach interactions affected some players experience of rugby, "yeah it ruins it for heaps, some boys like last year [player name removed], I know the boys didn't want to play anymore because of how they were being treated." A number of the

participants agreed that they had at times thought about not playing. When asked why they felt that way, the reply was, “just like how the coaches were treating me sometimes.”

Part of the struggle was the way in which coaches were quick to point out mistakes and slow to give praise, which meant players were unsure where they stood with them. When asked what made them feel that they could give up rugby they said, “I think because the coaches are the first ones to give you an earful if something goes wrong. But sometimes they’re the last ones to give you a compliment. So, you’re pretty unsure where you’re standing from their perspective.”

Pressure to play through injury. Another aspect of the expectations and pressure on 1st XV players was the pressure players felt from coaches to play through injury. This was not seen across all focus groups, but when it was, there were some strong responses around the pressure participants felt and how this affected their experience.

Injured participants felt pressured by coaches to play, especially if the players felt the coaches did not think the injury was serious:

It just depends on your injury. Like there are some injuries where like the coaches will like accept it. But some where the coaches just don’t want to listen to it. So kinda [sic] have to like suck it up and do it.

(SM): “What sort of injuries?”

So like like, got a little niggle and the physio tells you don’t train for a week. And then you approach a coach and he gives you the evils. So personally, you’re like I’m gonna [sic] have to train coz he’s given me the evils. And I might not play.

Even if the medical team (who are part of the extended management staff of the team) tell the player not to train, the players feel the coach is disappointed, and that it may impact their opportunity to play come game time.

Participants described how injuries could have quite an impact on their mental health, one player described that it “sort of takes your passion of the game away, sort of. When you’re injured like it can put you down like which can lead you to like a depression.”

The feeling of letting the team down can lead to some negative effects on player mental health. The way a coach reacts to the injury has the same effect and can impact a player’s desire to play. An example was provided by a participant:

Last year I like got injured like pretty bad. And like I tore a ligament in my foot and then like [Coach] like saying that I was scared to play. Coz we were versing (School) the next week and I already beat them last year, I already versed them

last year and we won. And I was like, just annoyed like why he would think that, and he was trying to say I wasn't injured But I went for an MRI and I tore a ligament in my foot. And then they were trying to get me to play but I couldn't run. And then yeah.

(SM): So that made you...

Yeah not want to play, well not want to play here.

This coach-player interaction around injury, which is already tough mentally for a player, led to the player feeling that he did not want to play for that team or coach. It was interesting to note that the player clarified that the interaction made him not want to play in the current environment he was playing in, not that he wanted to stop playing completely.

Whilst participants described injury as having a negative impact on their mental health, it was also recognised that overcoming an injury can have positive benefits mentally as "when you overcome it aye, it's just like a mental barrier that you've overcome, and you feel stronger to be honest."

Participants identified some of the biggest issues with an injury are mental, not physical. Coach pressure on a player suffering an injury may negatively affect their emotional and mental state.

Expectation of commitment. 1st XV rugby players are expected to commit fully to their season, which includes a high number of training hours on top of their normal school commitments. The very first question of the first focus group was to ask the players to describe the typical week as a 1st XV player. The response was "tough" and:

Exhausting, like you've got school, and trainings in the morning and after school, and then have like homework. And then you don't feel like doing it and then get to school and get in trouble and I sort of look back at rugby.

All participants felt the amount of training they had to do was too much. It took its toll as players struggled to handle the volume and felt tired:

Yeah, it's pretty hard, because we train every day, we train every day of the week except Friday. So yeah, just trying to get to every training it's pretty hard, especially in the mornings. Some of us find it hard to wake up.

Some participants focused on the fact that the morning sessions impacted on their schooling. They said "well, morning training is kind of negative. It causes us to kind of be tired during classes and fall asleep at times. When the training is too intense in the morning."

It is not surprising that the morning sessions cause players to be tired during school, as the players spoke of their early wake up times to get to the session, “when you’ve got sometimes on Wednesday morning we have a six or seven am lift. Sometimes if it’s at six you have to get up at 4.30 or four.”

A double training day, with a morning and afternoon session (with school in the middle) impacted on participants’ school work. Players had to manage ways to mentally get through the day:

Yes definitely it’s just the start of training; knowing you’ve got training after school. It’s pretty hard to get through school when you’re already tired and then you know you’ve got to do like hours of training after school.... “You have to mentally tell yourself to turn up. It’s that last period on a Wednesday is the hardest for me.

Participants themselves have been conditioned to believe that their current commitment level is normal for players in a 1st XV environment, therefore do not question what is required of them, even though they find it hard. The coaches help to reinforce this idea:

I remember one time it was my first training on a Wednesday. They [coaches] said, “this is what a normal person would do.” Well, that’s what I heard. What a normal 1st XV training would be like. That’s what I heard at my first training.

Participants know there are expectations for them to attend every training session, but feel that coaches can sometimes be over the top when they question their commitment to the team if they miss one session:

Yeah, and not like, just because we don’t turn up to one training... doesn’t mean our commitment’s not there, and stuff; while we’re actually training our asses off when we’re at training, but when we’re not there for one training, they make it like we’ve missed the whole week.

Participants think coaches need to take into account how hard they are training and that missing one training session is not the worst thing. When asked what they would like to change in their training participants responded with:

“Shorten the training hours” and “Just limit the training days” and “I feel like I’d probably sacrifice my Tuesday to have a lift in the morning instead of having the whole day off and then not having Wednesday two sessions”.

Players would like to reduce the amount they train, or at least remove the double training days where they struggle the most. They would even be willing to give up their full day off, if it meant that they did not have to have two sessions within one day.

Conclusion

The thematic analysis of the transcripts identified 5 dominant themes with their associated sub-themes. These themes are: 1) 1st XV, status, 2) brotherhood, 3) coach control, 4) power dynamics, and 5) expectations and pressures.

The 1st XV gave players status within their secondary school setting, whilst the 1A competition itself was held in high regard by participants. The extra attention had both negative and positive impacts on players.

The feeling of brotherhood was formed by the closeness of players, which participants recognised as special and something they may not find in sport once they leave school. Coaches were able to foster this through their actions, while players could also weaken the bond if others perceived them to be in the 1st XV for the wrong reasons.

Coaches held control over the participants by dictating what sports they could play, how they played the game and what they did at training, as well as controlling the ability of players to express themselves. Participants felt frustrated if they believed coaches were controlling them and not taking on board their suggestions or providing opportunities for their input. They also wanted more understanding of why they were doing things. The control coaches have may cause a lack of clarity for players, which can diminish the enjoyment they get out of playing.

Power dynamics played out mainly on-field, with participants challenging the decisions of coaches in a setting where they had an opportunity to. This was manifested by ignoring coach decisions or deciding not to run certain moves that the coaches had come up with. Participants also felt that coaches would manipulate conversations to get the best possible result for the coach. Participants reacted to this differently, with some finding it uncomfortable to challenge multiple times, whereas some felt it was necessary for them to speak up, even if they knew the coach would manipulate the discussion to their way of thinking.

Expectations and pressures were identified as participants faced expectations of performance, pressure to play through injury, and expectations of commitment. The players felt the expectations of performance were perhaps too high for secondary school students. These expectations led to participants worrying about making mistakes, rather than playing freely, in turn affecting their enjoyment of playing. Participants also felt pressure from their coaches to play through injury. Injury was felt mentally as well as physically, so the added pressure to play from coaches may have an impact on players' mental health. The commitment required to play 1st XV whilst at secondary school was

significant, with all participants saying that they train too much and in particular the double days of training are tiring and can impact on their school work.

The next chapter will discuss these themes in more detail in relation to relevant literature.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to hear 1A, 1st XV players' perceptions of their coaching environment and how that affected their experience of secondary school sport. In this discussion section each of the dominant themes identified in the previous chapter will be discussed in more detail relative to previous research. These findings are not necessarily intended to be generalisable to larger populations but may assist researchers by providing an insight into secondary school students' experiences of sport.

1st XV Status

The participants perceive that of all sports in the secondary school context, rugby is the pinnacle. Players spoke of how playing 1st XV rugby in the 1A competition was "the highest like thing you can do for rugby, probably for sport overall in New Zealand." This aligns with other research depicting the cultural and national significance of rugby in New Zealand and the importance of rugby historically within the New Zealand school system (Pringle, 2001; Pringle & Markula, 2005; Thompson, 1988). Rugby union as a, or perhaps more aptly put, *the* dominant sport in New Zealand society has had a history of being given patronage and promoted over other sports, helping to maintain its relation to national identity and prominence (Falcous, 2007). Indeed, players spoke of how the 1st XV received preferential treatment relative to other sports in their school, suggesting schools preserve this perception through their actions.

Making the 1st XV provided status to players in their social setting. For instance, they mentioned how "you could be the shittiest first XV player but to people who see you; they're like, 'Oh you're a first XV player'." This is not unique to rugby, as Shakib, Veliz, Dunbar, and Sabo (2011) found sport to be particularly important for male popularity during middle and high school. Previous research has found that social recognition of competence provides an element of enjoyment for children in sport, as they like to be able to show the ability to perform their skills or sport at a high level (McCarthy & Jones, 2007). This social recognition of competence takes on more importance for children once they are older than 10 (McCarthy & Jones, 2007) and although younger than the current participants of this study, it may be an interesting element for further research. Playing in the 1st XV may provide a sense of competence (a basic psychological need) by validating their rugby abilities both to themselves and

to external parties (i.e. their schoolmates). This then, in turn, provides popularity and social status to them.

It was a source of frustration for participants, however, if they thought players were in the team just to increase their social status at school. A perception of players playing 1st XV rugby just for the status, may end up diminishing the feeling of brotherhood and relatedness of other players (which is discussed in the next section), affecting their enjoyment and intrinsic motivation.

The sporting environment can facilitate positive development for youth (Fraser-Thomas & Côté, 2009). In this study, the participants described how the increased attention they received from school provided them with opportunity to experience positive life skills development. Participants specifically said they were taught discipline and time management skills which made them become better men which are two skills Jones and Lavalley (2009) identified as critical life skills adolescent athletes needed to learn. Players perceive they receive these benefits from 1st XV participation, though more research is warranted to explore in what capacity and how these benefits are transferred.

Brotherhood

Brotherhood was a term the participants used to describe their real sense of connection with each other. Built out of the closeness of their relationships, it was a reason they loved playing rugby. From a motivational perspective, and specifically in relation to the three basic psychological needs underpinning Self Determination Theory (SDT), the theme of brotherhood relates to relatedness. There are also elements of the psychological need for autonomy being supported, as coaches used autonomy-supportive behaviours to assist in the fostering of the sense of belonging.

During the focus groups it was made clear that this notion of brotherhood was something that the players enjoyed and loved about their rugby playing experience. This supports previous research that highlighted the importance of a sense of belonging in shaping a positive sport experience for young people. Walters et al. (2017) emphasised the importance of relatedness for secondary school aged rowers who valued a 'sense of family', influencing their motivations to continue to participate in their sport. Other studies have highlighted the positive experiences youth athletes receive through a sense of community, meaningful relationships with peers, being with friends and having a sense of connection (Cope, Bailey, & Pearce, 2013; Fraser-Thomas & Côté, 2009; Fraser-Thomas et al., 2008)

The participants in this study described how their sense of relatedness being supported positively affected their motivation to play. They said, “sometimes you have to get the internal desire but with this team the motivation is already there for each other.” This quote indicates that although participants describe their “desire” and “motivation” to be internal, there is a sense that the motivation is extrinsic, albeit self-determined. This is because although internally driven, the motivation comes from outside the self, it comes from playing for each other. This would place the participants on the continuum of self-determined motivation where identified and integrated regulation sit. This is where individuals have started to assimilate actions with their self and accepted them as personally important. Although not fully intrinsically motivated, where players are playing for the pure satisfaction and joy that it brings, the sense of team is important to them and becomes a key motivator for them as players. The impact of brotherhood on participants’ self-determined motivation aligns with previous research which has correlated satisfaction of relatedness with increased self-determined motivation amongst participants (Jöesaar, Hein, & Hagger, 2011; Sarrazin, Vallerand, Guillet, Pelletier, & Cury, 2002).

The sense of brotherhood was built through the relationship participants have with each other, though there were actions coaches took which helped to foster this. Participants described a number of the autonomy-supportive behaviours that align with those identified by Mageau and Vallerand (2003), including; providing choice within specific rules and limits, acknowledging the other person’s feelings and perspectives, and providing athletes with opportunities for initiative taking and independent work. Players had opportunities for initiative taking and independent work as well as providing choice when they created their team values at their team camp as, “we [players] all kind of came up with a list in our little groups and then came together at the end and kind of picked the most important ones [values].”

Coaches also acknowledged the participants’ feelings and perspectives by organising a team meeting after their players wanted to discuss some team behavioural issues. Participants said, “we wanted to have a meeting and just decide, just see what’s going on with everyone.” The coaches then provided an open forum where players could say anything they wanted. The use of the word “we” highlighted that the players felt they had a say in having the meeting and coaches facilitated that opportunity. Participants acknowledged it made the team environment more comfortable for them and strengthened their bond with each other. This aligns with previous research on autonomy-supportive behaviour from coaches satisfying relatedness in athletes

(Amorose & Anderson-Butcher, 2007; Coatsworth & Conroy, 2009; Reinboth et al., 2004). A coach can have a strong influence on supporting the need for relatedness, with the quality of the coach-athlete relationship capable of predicting team cohesion, or in other words, the sense of belonging in a team (Jowett, Shanmugam, & Caccoulis, 2012).

Although coaches can facilitate the sense of team relatedness in this context, the participants did say “the brotherhood comes from each other [players].” This may indicate that relatedness was created within the playing group rather than it being created by the coaches. Research has linked peer influence with satisfaction of relatedness and intrinsic motivation (Jõesaar et al., 2011; Murcia, Román, Galindo, Alonso, & González-Cutre, 2008). When taken in conjunction with these findings, it may be worth further research on whether peer relationships are more important to satisfying a sense of relatedness than the coach-athlete relationship.

Coach Control

While coaches facilitated a sense of brotherhood amongst players, when it came to playing other sports, they exerted control. Indeed, our results suggest that players are forced to invest in rugby at the expense of other sports, or risk not being able to play. “We have to prioritise 1st XV or else we wouldn’t play. It’s always 1st XV training over our other sports.” Focusing on a single sport from the age of approximately 16 years aligns to literature examining models of sports participation. Specifically, the Developmental Model of Sport Participation (DMSP) proposes a stage of ‘investment’ (Côté & Fraser-Thomas, 2007), characterised by pursuing elite level of performance in one or two sports and including giving away other sports that interfere with the ability to commit fully (Côté & Hay, 2002). According to the DMSP model, the alternative to investment at this level of development is ‘recreation.’ The recreation years are characterised by participation in multiple sports without the aspiration for elite performance (Côté & Hay, 2002). While a clear division exists in the literature, it is rarely that simple in practice. For instance, the present study showed that participants attempted to operate in both the performance and recreational pathway, choosing to play social basketball for as long as their coaches allowed it during the rugby season. For this reason, it may be that sports specialisation within secondary school 1st XV environments should be questioned.

Typical behaviours that can be categorised as controlling include; 1) influencing the number of sports participants play, 2) excessive personal control by imposing values and opinions, 3) surveillance, and 4) over-intrusiveness (Bartholomew et al., 2009). Such behaviours were evident by coaches when they realised players were participating in other sports. For instance, this is how participants described being caught, “we got

snitched on by one of the coaches. He saw us and then he kind of like dropped a hint to us... Then yeah we just stopped playing after that; after we got told.” Use of the word “snitch” implies a violation of trust between the coach responsible and their players. This may have impacted the closeness of the relationships, something identified by Jowett (2017) as an important aspect of the coach-athlete relationship and, in turn, the athletes’ self-determination, identified as important by Olympiou et al. (2008).

The results of the present study also show elements of surveillance. Specifically, the way coaches excessively monitored the participants’ session to ensure it was carried out the way they believed it should (Bartholomew et al., 2009). Furthermore, participants described how coaches used surveillance to closely monitor them on game day and provide autocratic feedback. These behaviours were particularly frustrating for the players as they felt it made them “robotic”, having no freedom to just play or express themselves. In addition, it was associated with feelings of frustration and monotony, “The only fun I’ve had was in the Under-14’s. That’s it.... Yeah that’s where everyone got to express themselves.” Previous research shows that controlling behaviour in such ways thwarts autonomy and reduces player enjoyment (Alvarez, Balaguer, Castillo, & Duda, 2009; Bartholomew et al., 2011). The autocratic coach behaviours in the present study are not unique. In the autoethnography by Purdy et al. (2008), the participant described feeling like a robot when the coach reduced their autonomy, diminishing their sporting experience as a result.

Controlling behaviour by coaches led to a lack of player ownership of their decisions. One participant summed it up as, “no, if it [decision on-field] goes wrong, that’s not on you though; that’s on the coaches.” In their case study of the All Blacks, Hodge et al. (2014) found that previous controlling and instructional coaching behaviours had reduced individual player responsibility for performance. However, the national team coaches were able to increase player ownership by using autonomy-supportive behaviours, such as inviting players to contribute to coaching strategy during the week and increasing player input as game time became closer. Mallett (2005) also showed the benefits of autonomy supportive behaviours on personal ownership in Australian sprint relay athletes.

The participants in the present study also advocated for more autonomy-supportive behaviours from their coaches, including; more choice in the sports they could play, acknowledging their perspectives and providing more opportunities for initiative taking during trainings and games:

But maybe like if we do have a say [in how the team plays] like it might be actually beneficial. Like if they hear what our opinions on what they should do, then they make the final decision maybe that would probably be better.

The players spoke of how their clarity and understanding would increase as a result of more autonomy, which in turn would reduce some of their frustrations. These thoughts are supported by previous research (Alvarez et al., 2009; Amorose & Anderson-Butcher, 2007; Coatsworth & Conroy, 2009; Gillet et al., 2010).

Power Dynamic

Power dynamics are an inherent feature of social interaction (Giddens, 1984). Individuals are embroiled in the web of power operating in the exchanges between individuals, groups and institutions (Foucault, 1980), which was evident in this study between coaches and athletes. In any social network or relationship there is the potential for resistance (Foucault, 1988), and even though the coaches exerted controlling behaviours over the participants, they themselves were not powerless.

Participants in this study demonstrated some covert resistance to coach power. In one instance, while they practiced coach-created moves at training, they had no intention of running them during a game as they did not believe they would work. The participants would also skip compulsory recovery sessions that they knew the coaches did not attend. Previous research has highlighted similar examples of athletes covertly resisting coach power. Professional youth footballers would exert some resistance against their controlling coaches by skipping college classes (where their coaches were not present) or subtly conserving their efforts at training (Cushion & Jones, 2006). In another study, Purdy et al. (2008) revealed how rowers resisted coach orders during a training session as a way to fight back against autocratic leadership. Walters et al. (2015) also found younger children (6-12 years of age) exerted power whilst playing sport by ignoring their coach's sideline instruction and moving outside of earshot during a game.

Some participants were worried that if they challenged the coach more overtly it would be taken as disrespect, or that they were trying to "overthrow them or something." However, there were other participants who were happy to challenge the coaches despite knowing that coaches are likely to disregard their input:

We still do it [challenge the coaches] so they know. But in the end the coaches end up winning. We've just wasted a couple of minutes, explaining why we shouldn't, or what moves work, or like challenging you, but in the end it's an obvious loss

Participants also described moments in games when despite coaches instructing them to do one thing, they made the decision to do another:

The biggest moment call out that I remember was our [school removed] game. We got a penalty right in front of the sticks and they were to bring the tee on. I don't know what it was but someone told them to f### off and we took a scrum. Then they were pissed about that; that we took it. But with us we made the decision that's what we wanted to do.

It was noted the powerful language the players used, suggesting that they felt they needed to be quite forceful in order to resist the coaches. Due to coach control over how they play (see previous section on coach control), participants may feel that any attempt to disregard coach decisions needs to be assertively made, or the coaches will overrule them and take back control. Giddens (1984) identified that challenges to power may manifest itself in different ways due to individual dispositions, and use of strong language may be one such disposition.

The perception of status within a team may affect the willingness of an individual to challenge a coach or express a form of power (Purdy & Jones, 2011). In this study it was noted by the researcher that the participants who led the discussion about overtly challenging their rugby coaches were players who had been in the team for longer than one season. In a secondary school setting where players are only at school for a maximum of five years, players who have been in the 1st XV for over a year are likely to be considered (and consider themselves) 'senior players.' Their perceived seniority status may have made them more willing to challenge the coach overtly.

Previous research has generally focused on the power a coach exerts over his or her athletes. However, power operates within a dynamic web, and this research highlights that athletes are not necessarily fully submissive. Rather, they have opportunity for and engage in behaviours, both indirect and direct, that show resistance. Moreover, athletes may exert their power in settings they feel most comfortable doing so, which in this context was mainly on-field. The results of this study suggest that in secondary school rugby, coaches are intrusive with their behaviour to intervene. Accordingly, athletes may need to be more forceful with their resistance. However, further research on how youth athletes exert power or resistance to coach power is warranted.

Expectations and pressures

Research has identified sport as providing opportunities for individuals to reach a state of 'flow' or optimal experience (Jackson, Ford, Kimiecik, & Marsh, 1998). Flow is characterised as a deeply rewarding and optimal experience where individuals are totally absorbed in an activity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1992). These experiences are highly valued and positive, having been associated with an increase in intrinsic motivation and a

number of other positive outcomes such as enhanced well-being, subjective and objective performance (Swann, Keegan, Piggott, & Crust, 2012). However, this can only be achieved when the balance between the challenge set and the skill level of the player is matched. When the challenge or expectations set are too hard for the players' skill levels, then this can result in anxiety and decreased performance (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008). A number of the participants considered the expectations of performance from coaches were too high and that led to players worrying about making mistakes rather than just playing and enjoying themselves.

Sometimes they [coaches] have too high expectations on us, and as players, like they think we can do more than what we're asked to do.... Yep I think that's why the boys are scared, because they have a lot of expectation. They think they have a lot of expectation on them.

One of the nine dimensions for reaching a state of 'flow' is to have appropriate challenge-skills balance (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008). The participants in this study suggested that the challenge or expectation set for them by the coaches was too high for their ability and this may hinder athletes actually being able to reach a state of optimal experience.

This was supported further as the participants discussed that they were preoccupied with a fear of failing, rather than improving their ability at training:

I was just focused on not doing anything wrong because I was too scared... I didn't want to get told off for doing something wrong. I wasn't really thinking of what I could do to get better. It's just don't do anything wrong so you don't get told off.

Fear of failure is a multidimensional construct, conceptualised as a tendency to see failure of performance as a threat to the achievement of personally important goals (Conroy, Willow, & Metzler, 2002). If an individual perceives failure to have aversive consequences, then they see failure as threatening and therefore experience fear and apprehension when they are in evaluative situations (Sagar, Busch, & Jowett, 2010). In this study coaches' reactions to mistakes were yelling at the players, or as the participants put it after making an error, "*you're going to get an earful*". Participants also noted that at half-time, no matter how they were playing the coaches were angry and going to find a mistake in how they were playing. There were negative consequences for mistakes, and this could be the reason players had a fear of failing.

Feedback is an important way that athletes are given information on how their actions correspond to the expectations (Carpentier & Mageau, 2016). The results suggest that the quality and nature of the feedback provided by coaches may be a reason why participants feel the expectations on them are too high. Change-orientated feedback is given when performance is inadequate, and behaviours need to be modified.

Research has shown that when change-orientated feedback is given in an autonomy-supportive way, athletes are more motivated, have higher senses of well-being and self-esteem, and have greater satisfaction of their psychological motivational needs for relatedness, competence and autonomy (Carpentier & Mageau, 2013, 2016). Providing more autonomy-supportive change-orientated feedback may reduce the fear of failure, as there is less of a threat associated with failing, thereby increasing opportunities for the players to have optimal experience or flow. Research on elite Canadian athletes supported the link between satisfying basic psychological needs and flow, with competence and autonomy both predicting flow (Hodge, Lonsdale, & Jackson, 2009). This also aligns with previous studies that have found athlete perceptions of competence were predictors of flow in competitive athletes (Jackson et al., 1998; Jackson, Thomas, Marsh, & Smethurst, 2001; Kowal & Fortier, 1999).

If participants made mistakes, they found these could compound detrimental effects on performance as players' self-doubt increases:

I guess it's just once the mistakes made; self-doubt. Yeah, they don't brush it off. Yeah then they hold onto their mistake, because once they're nervous they do another mistake, and you do another mistake and then it all adds up. It's frustrating and then they crumble.

This finding supports previous research on anxiety and pressure affecting performance due to the extra attentional demands the anxiety creates for players (Nieuwenhuys & Oudejans, 2017). Confidence has also been shown to have a mediating effect on athlete performance and optimal experience (Swann et al., 2012).

Coaches have an important role to play in the environment they create for players. Previous research has shown that if coaches promote an environment where mistakes are part of the players' learning process, rather than something to be avoided, players are less likely to feel a sense of the fear of failure (Gómez-López, Ruiz-Sánchez, & Granero-Gallegos, 2019). Csikszentmihalyi (2008) described how a fear of failure was detrimental to individuals being able to reach optimal experience. The manner in which the coaches gave their feedback meant participants lost motivation to play; "Yeah it [getting an earful] ruins it for heaps, some boys like last year [player name removed]. I know the boys didn't want to play anymore of how they were being treated." Players were unsure where they stood with the coaches and this uncertainty negatively affected them. This research supports previous research on the coach-athlete relationship and how poor quality of interactions can diminish motivation to play (Jowett et al., 2017)

On top of the expectations of performance, participants also have expectations on their level of commitment. The overall commitment required to play in a 1st XV is high.

When asked to describe the typical week of a 1st XV player, the first answer given was “tough”. This referred to the sheer amount of time they have to commit for their rugby, which translated to sessions almost every day, sometimes twice a day on top of their schooling and other commitments. This level of commitment and the impact on their experience of sport contrasts with their earlier experiences of sport. “Yeah the only fun I’ve had was in the under-14. That’s it.” They followed up with, “yeah [Under-14 rugby] that’s where everyone got to express themselves; like everyone was equal and stuff. As you’re young, you sort of enjoy sports. But as you come older, it’s commitment, it’s all about commitment.”

From this statement we get a clear sense that rugby has moved from something the participants do for the love of sport, to something akin to work. If we look at this through the lens of the Developmental Model of Sport Participation proposed by Côté and Hay (2002), it suggests (as previously discussed in the control section of this chapter and in the literature review) the participants are being encouraged by external agencies (their school and coaches) to commit to investing in the sport. This again brings to the surface the question of whether secondary school 1st XV rugby is the right place to start making participants move into the investment years of their sport participation.

Participants across all teams noted that days were hardest when they had early morning gym sessions or two sessions in one day, with both before-school and after-school sessions, “just trying to get to every training, it’s pretty hard, especially in the mornings. Some of us find it hard to wake up.” They also pointed out that it made them less attentive in class as they sometimes fell asleep from being tired. Some participants had to wake up at 4.30am to get to a 6am gym session.

Participants’ finding the early start hard and the resulting negative impact on their motivation and attention in school, is not surprising in light of recent literature on adolescent sleep cycles. Research suggests that for adolescents, optimal sleep is eight to ten hours, while the normal developmental shift in their circadian cycle favours late morning to late day activities, and later bedtimes (Minges & Redeker, 2016). The American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM) released a position statement that advocated for educational institutions of middle and high school students to delay their start times to 8.30am or later to ensure that students get enough sleep to be healthy, alert, awake and ready to learn (Watson et al., 2017). Lack of sleep is associated with poor school performance, increased depressive symptoms, risk-taking behaviours, athletic injuries and increased motor vehicle accident risk (Minges & Redeker, 2016; Watson et al., 2017). These results showed that often the participants’ rugby

commitments were stopping them from being able to get enough sleep, which may be the reason that participants felt their rugby commitments negatively impacted upon their schoolwork.

The amount of time commitment required of players begs the question as to whether at secondary school a player's primary focus should be on their schooling, or on their rugby. If rugby is affecting their schooling, the amount of commitment required may need to be adjusted. In asking the participants what they would like to change in their training, the response was fairly simple across the board, "shorten the training hours." An athlete-centred approach to coaching, would place the athlete in the centre, asking for their perspectives and take into account how the expectations of commitment impact on aspects of participants' life, such as their life-school-stage and sleep needs. The results suggest that these aspects are not being taken into account for these players.

Participants also had pressure from coaches to play and train whilst injured. Rugby is a physical game, with a relatively high risk and incidence of injury (Chalmers, Samaranayaka, Gulliver, & McNoe, 2011; Junge, Cheung, Edwards, & Dvorak, 2004). Previous research has found reckless behaviours towards injuries and pain amongst players (Fenton & Pitter, 2010). The majority of participants in this study have had an injury at some point in their rugby experiences. Some participants though felt pressure from their coaches to play or train through injuries. Participants spoke of how even when medical staff tell them not to train, they could pick up cues from the coach that they should train anyway:

The physio tells you don't train for a week. And then you approach a coach and he gives you the evils. So personally, you're like I'm gonna [sic] have to train coz he's given me the evils. And I might not play so.

Whatman, Walters, and Schluter (2018) in a study on New Zealand secondary school coach and athletes' attitudes to injury, found over half of the surveyed participants had seen coaches exert pressure on athletes to play whilst injured. They noted that this was reported more by players older than 15, which they speculated was due to the increasingly competitive nature of sport as youth get older. With the highly competitive nature of 1A 1st XV rugby, this research lends support for that theory. Whatman et al. (2018) also found that a lack of knowledge of injury, the desire to win, and not letting the team down were key reasons athletes played on through injury. This study adds to that body of knowledge, suggesting that players were worried about losing a place in the team, and they felt that if they did not train they would not get selected to play when they were ready to play again.

Although injury is physical, the participants spoke of the negative psychological effects an injury had on them. "When you're injured it can put you down, like which can lead you to like a depression." Injury has been associated with depression in athletes, though there is only limited research on depressive symptoms and injury in young athletes (Palisch & Merritt, 2018). This research provides some evidence of injury having negative psychological effects on athletes. This is supported by Appaneal, Levine, Perna, and Roh (2009) who found injury was a contributing factor to depressive symptoms for players with injury, and the length of injury (increased restriction on participation) was significantly related to more depression symptoms. This research also supports the assertion by Palisch and Merritt (2018) that further research is needed to examine depressive symptoms in young athletes after they have an injury that stops them being able to play.

One participant spoke of a serious foot ligament injury, yet he felt the coach was pressuring him to play, and implying he was scared to play due to the opposition. It is worrying that coaches are putting pressure on the participants to play through serious injuries, which could compound the anxiety a participant already feels for not being able to play. This behaviour is particularly coach-centred, in that the coach has not taken the participants' thoughts, feelings or perspectives into account and conflicts with the autonomy-supportive behaviours as proposed by Mageau and Vallerand (2003) as well as the athlete-centred coaching approach advocated by Kidman et al. (2005). It is therefore not surprising that the impact on this participant was diminished motivation for playing, saying that the way they were treated made them not want to play for the school.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The aim of this study was to explore the perceptions New Zealand secondary school 1st XV players have of their coaching environment and how that affects their experience of secondary school sport. It was clear that the 1A secondary school rugby competition is held in high regard by the players and they enjoy participating in the 1st XV, although their experience is affected by high expectations of performance and commitment as well as coaching behaviours.

Results showed that coaches used both autonomy-supportive and controlling behaviours, affecting different aspects of participants' rugby experiences. Coaches helped to facilitate a sense of relatedness amongst the playing group by using autonomy-supportive behaviours, including giving players a say in the creation of team values and providing opportunities for players to give their perspectives on how they (the participants) felt when teammates were not living up to the team values. A sense of brotherhood was what participants enjoyed the most about playing rugby, indicating the importance of relatedness in their rugby experience.

At the same time, coaches used a number of controlling behaviours that reduced the players' feelings of autonomy. For instance, they dictated what players could do at training or on the playing field, such as running the kicking tee onto the field during a game to ensure players took the shot at goal as opposed to another player-led option. Coaches also took away the option to play other sports. This reduced players' feelings of autonomy and competence while they were playing, diminishing the enjoyment from the playing experience. If coaches are aware of how different actions affect different aspects of participants' experiences, they may be able to adjust their behaviour to meet basic psychological needs across the whole playing experience. However, participants exerted power themselves by challenging coach made decisions either overtly or covertly. Further research into how power dynamics are demonstrated between secondary school rugby players and their coaches is warranted.

Importantly, coaching does not occur in a vacuum. In New Zealand, a high performance model is promoted within secondary schools (Rogers & Cassidy, 2015). With the national significance of rugby, increased attention on, and status of, the 1A 1st XV competition it is likely there is pressure on coaches to have their teams perform and get results. Coaches may have pressure on them from external sources to get results, which causes them to behave in a more controlling manner (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003).

The structure of the rugby talent development system in New Zealand may also impact on coaching behaviours. Selection of regional (New Zealand Super Rugby franchise) and national representative programmes starts at age 17, and the 1st XV competition is a key environment for talent identification. The start of these elite performance talent identification programmes may influence coaches and schools to encourage 'investment' in rugby through increased training hours and reduction of other sports played, as per Côté and Hay's (2002) Developmental Model of Sport Participation (DMSP). Future research that explores the pressures on 1st XV coaches from external parties (i.e., school management, the rugby talent identification system) and how that affects their coaching behaviours is warranted.

A limiting factor of the study is the number of focus groups held. As this was a master's thesis, it was considered that three focus groups were sufficient to provide some meaningful insight into the experiences of secondary school rugby players (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Originally four to five focus groups were planned. However, there was difficulty in getting school permission to conduct the research with their students. Schools in today's climate of media attention are understandably wary of who they give access to their students, as they do not want to overload them with commitments. This may, in part, explain why there is so little previous research in this context.

Another limiting factor is the narrow group of participants. This study only looked at those participants playing in the 1A 1st XV competition in Auckland. This is a small and specific group to select from (only 12 schools compete in the 1A competition each year). Within Auckland alone there are three 1st XV grades (1A, 1B, 1C). However, this competition is generally perceived as the top secondary school competition in the country. With a qualitative study the intent is not to generate findings that are generalisable to a wider population, rather to provide a depth of understanding to a particular context (Sandelowski, 2000). This study was able to provide an insight into 1st XV rugby players' experiences of their coaching, in an area that had not been explored before. It would be interesting for future research to compare and contrast the perceptions of coaching across all of the 1st XV grades, as well as across different provincial unions within New Zealand.

The purpose of this study was to investigate how players in the Secondary School 1st XV competition in New Zealand perceive their coaching environment and how this affected their experience of secondary school sport. The findings suggest that while at times coaches used autonomy-supportive behaviours, for the most part controlling behaviours were used which led to examples of player dissatisfaction, lack of

understanding and reduced enjoyment of their sporting experience. There are a number of wider factors that may influence these behaviours, but the results suggest coaches need to be cognisant of how their actions influence the experiences of their participants. With the increased advocacy of athlete-centred, humanistic coaching, results suggest coaching behaviours in the 1st XV secondary school rugby space do not always align with this approach.

At the end of each focus group participants spoke of how much they enjoyed having the opportunity to speak about their experiences. In this study the participants identified two things straight away that they would like; less time training and more input in how they play on field. Giving the players an opportunity to have input into the structure and activities that make up their secondary school rugby programme could be an initial move that would place them at the centre of the experience. The findings of this study will hopefully help coaches, schools, and rugby administrators to develop programmes that place the participants at the centre, but also encourage more researchers to focus on the secondary school rugby coaching space.

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ptsp.2018.01.011>

Appendices

Appendix A: AUTECH approval for study

AUTEC Secretariat

Auckland University of Technology
D-88, WU406 Level 4 WU Building City Campus
T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316
E: ethics@aut.ac.nz
www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics

23 March 2018

Craig Harrison

Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences

Dear Craig

Re Ethics Application: **18/113 Secondary school first XV rugby players' perceptions of the coaching environment: A qualitative descriptive study**

Thank you for providing evidence as requested, which satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Subcommittee.

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 23 March 2021.

Standard Conditions of Approval

1. A progress report is due annually on the anniversary of the approval date, using form EA2, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>.
2. A final report is due at the expiration of the approval period, or, upon completion of project, using form EA3, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>.
3. Any amendments to the project must be approved by AUTEC prior to being implemented. Amendments can be requested using the EA2 form: <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>.
4. Any serious or unexpected adverse events must be reported to AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.
5. Any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should also be reported to the AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.

Please quote the application number and title on all future correspondence related to this project.

AUTEC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval for access for your research from another institution or organisation then you are responsible for obtaining it. You are reminded that it is your responsibility to ensure that the spelling and grammar of documents being provided to participants or external organisations is of a high standard.

For any enquiries, please contact ethics@aut.ac.nz

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K O'Connor', written in a cursive style.

Kate O'Connor

Executive Manager

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: swjmckenzie@gmail.com

Appendix B: Documentation related to focus groups

Participant Information Sheet

Date Information Sheet Produced:

27/02/18

Project Title

Secondary school first XV rugby players' perceptions of the coaching environment: A qualitative descriptive study.

Kia Ora, I am Samuel McKenzie and I'm trying to understand what 1st XV players in the current 1A competition in Auckland think and feel about their coaching environment as part of completing my master's qualification at AUT University. Would you be interested in helping me? This research will be conducted through the use of focus groups of 6-8 1st XV players from Secondary Schools currently competing in the Auckland 1A competition and will contribute to my master's qualification at AUT University.

I am currently employed by Auckland Rugby as Junior Coach Development Manager and your participation will neither advantage nor disadvantage you in your rugby participation, whether in your own school programme or Auckland Rugby Union's rugby programmes.

What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of the research is to provide an outlet for 1st XV players in the 1A competition to discuss their thoughts, feelings and opinions on their current coaching environment as participants of youth (5-17 years old) sport are often left out in sport discussions. This research is being used to assist me, the lead researcher, with a master's degree via thesis. There is also the opportunity to present the findings at sport and coaching conferences as well as in academic publications.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

You were identified as your school, a current school competing in the 1A rugby competition in Auckland, has granted permission for me to ask members of the 1st XV to participate in this research. As you are a current member of the 1st XV, I am inviting you to participate. You must be 16 years or older to participate, if you are younger than 16 please disregard this information sheet.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

You can contact me via email or phone (details at the bottom of this information sheet) to indicate you wish to participate. Options will be provided for the Focus Groups times and dates which you will confirm. You will need to complete a consent form which is also here and bring along to the focus group session.

Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You are free to discuss your participation with your family prior to giving consent. You are able to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible.

What will happen in this research?

This project will involve a focus group for 6 to 8 participants. In this focus groups I will ask you to discuss your current coaching environment.

The focus groups will be approximately 90 minutes long and will be recorded for data collection purposes.

What are the discomforts and risks?

You may experience some discomfort when discussing your feelings about your coach whilst in a focus group with your teammates. You will be exposed to a small amount of risk as you will be giving your feelings about your coach.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

The potential risks and discomfort to you will be mitigated by assuring that no data will be passed on to any third party and all data will be confidential (so no-one will be identifiable in the research). To assist with confidentiality and reduce the chances of you being identified as a participant by coaches, the focus groups will be held at a local rugby club and not at your school.

What are the benefits?

The potential benefits are below:

For you: This research provides an outlet for you to voice your opinions on your current coaching environment. Often the participants of youth sport are left out and any discussion is generally dominated by adults. This research's focus is on you as a participant and 1st XV rugby player.

For me: This research is being used to assist me with a master's degree. I am also actively working within the Youth Sport environment and it will provide knowledge on the current environment being created by coaches for youth athletes. This will allow me to develop coach education programmes based off the findings to assist with best practice for coaches in the secondary school and youth sport space.

The wider community: Sport is generally considered to be beneficial for youth to play (for social, physical and emotional development reasons). The perceptions of the coaching environment from youth athletes will provide the wider community with more information about what is actually happening and if best practice guidelines are being followed.

How will my privacy be protected?

All information in the results of the study shall be confidential. Focus Groups will be held off school grounds to assist with confidentiality.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

It is expected that the focus groups will take between 60 and 90 minutes. There is no monetary cost to participate.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

You have 2 weeks to consider this invitation. If you require more information please contact me (my personal contact details are below)

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

Yes, all participants will receive a summary of results from the research. Should you wish to opt out of receiving the summary of results there will be an opt out option on the consent form you will need to fill out.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Craig Harrison

+6427 226 5181

craig.harrison@aut.ac.nz

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTECH, Kate O'Connor, ethics@aut.ac.nz, 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details:

Samuel McKenzie

027 5479793

swjmckenzie@gmail.com

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Craig Harrison

+6427 226 5181

craig.harrison@aut.ac.nz

AUT Millennium 17 Antares Place Mairangi Bay Auckland, NZ

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on **23/03/2018** AUTEK Reference number **18/113**

Consent Form

Project title: *Secondary school first XV rugby players' perceptions of the coaching environment: A qualitative descriptive study.*

Project Supervisor: *Craig Harrison and Simon Walters*

Researcher: *Samuel McKenzie*

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 27/02/2018
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I understand that identity of my fellow participants and our discussions in the focus group are confidential to the group and I agree to keep this information confidential.
- ☐ I understand that notes will be taken during the focus group and that it will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- ☐ I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ I understand that if I withdraw from the study then, while it may not be possible to destroy all records of the focus group discussion of which I was part, I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.
- ☐ I wish to opt out of receiving a summary of the research findings ☐ (please tick here)

Participant's signature:

.....

Participant's name:

.....

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 23/03/2018
AUTEC Reference number 81/113

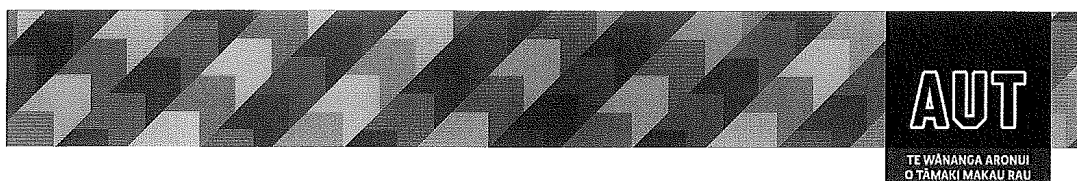
Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.

Indicative questions for focus groups

Introductory Statement: The purpose of this focus group is gain an understanding of your experiences and perceptions of the coaching environment whilst playing 1 st XV rugby in the Auckland 1A competition	
1.	Can you please describe your typical week as a 1 st XV rugby player? (get them talking and get an understanding of how much they are doing/what they are doing) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Do any of you play other sports? b. Why/why not? (would you like to) c. How do you think your coach would/what would your coach say if you were to play another sport?
2.	What do you love about playing? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. What do you struggle with?
3.	Describe to me a typical training session (what type of activities you do)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. What do you enjoy about training? b. How does your coach explain what you are doing and why?
4.	What do you enjoy about training? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. What is hard about it? b. What's frustrating? c. What would you change if you had the opportunity?
5.	How much say do you have in what happens at training and on game days? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. How does that make you feel? b. Would you like that to change at all? c. If you could change it, how would you change it?
6.	How does your coach react when you do something well at training or in a game? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. How does that make you feel?
7.	How does your coach react when you make a mistake at training or in a game? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. How does this make you feel?
8.	How much time does the coach give you one on one? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. How do they do that? b. Do you feel the coach knows and understands you? c. How would you like the coach to connect with you?
9.	How would you describe your team environment? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. What impact does the coach have on that? b. How? c. Does everyone get opportunities? d. Why/Why not and how?
10.	How does your coach act on game day? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Does this change at all? b. When? c. How does this impact on how you play?

d. How you feel about playing?
11. What sort of language does your coach use to communicate with you and your team? Does this change at all? a. When does it change? b. If it changes how do you feel about it?
12. How would you describe the overall behaviour and demeanour of your coach? a. Does this affect how you feel about playing rugby? b. If so, how?
13. What would you say your coach's main focus is on for the team? a. What makes you say that? b. Would you say that is your main focus as well? c. If different, how is it different?
14. From your experience playing in 1 st XV rugby, what are your plans for playing rugby going forward? a. Has this changed at all from before playing 1 st XV to now?
15. How would you describe your relationship with your coach? a. How do you feel about this relationship?
16. If you could change anything your coaching and the way your coach interacts with you, what would that be?
17. Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

Appendix C: Transcriber confidentiality agreement



Confidentiality Agreement

For someone transcribing data, e.g. audio-tapes of interviews.

Project title: *Secondary school 1st XV rugby players' perceptions of the coaching environment: A qualitative descriptive study*

Project Supervisor: *Craig Harrison and Simon Walters*

Researcher: *Samuel McKenzie*

- ☐ I understand that all the material I will be asked to transcribe is confidential.
- ☐ I understand that the contents of the tapes or recordings can only be discussed with the researchers.
- ☐ I will not keep any copies of the transcripts nor allow third parties access to them.

Transcriber's signature:

Transcriber's name:

Bonita Ward

Transcriber's Contact Details (if appropriate):

021 1515457

Date: 6/8/2018

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 23/03/2018 AUTEK Reference number 18/113

Note: The Transcriber should retain a copy of this form