Coffee and Golf: A Monday night ritual

By

Jonathan Anthony Wright

**A thesis submitted to the University of Birmingham for the degree of
MRes**

Abstract

This paper is concerned with the examination of the social elements of golf coaching: to study the relationship of coach and golfer(s) and the societies they form. Data was collected at a golf teaching facility during an 8-month-long ethnographical study. The group was made up of four beginning female golfers, one male golfer and a PGA Professional golf coach.

The social perspective of sports participation is an area that has been largely under-valued in coaching literature. There are a number of studies around participation, but there is little on the coaching 'experience'. Until recently, coaching theory and practice have largely been focused on the technical at the expense of the social: an emphasis on the *what* rather than the *how*.

This study identified that the social relationships of the group were more important to the group than the activity itself, with issues of social support and community being central. This paper suggests that there is a need for the coach to understand the social needs of the participants as much as their technical needs. It calls for a better understanding of the importance of how one should teach as well as what one should teach among coaches in golf.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Setting the scene

This research seeks to examine the social elements of golf coaching: to study the relationship of coach and golfer(s) and the societies they form within the golf context. It is hoped that this study of beginner golfers, their interaction with the coach and each other, will further the understanding of the social element of golf coaching. The sociology of sport and golf in particular, has not been studied to any great extent. It is the aim of this study to add to the existing body of research in this area.

Sports settings have come to be regarded as an important context in which people are socialised. Smoll et al (1988) describe sport as an essential part of modern society, a major social institution, and therefore a key socialising agent. Jones and Armour (2000) assert that sport is a social context just like economics, education and class, and therefore a valid area for investigation; and Kay (2003) describes how sport is a significant social institution that is well positioned to transmit values and ideologies. As Armour and Jones (2000) point out, we are inescapably human beings, social beings, and, as such, any context where social interaction takes place, golf lessons, for example, are valid situations to examine and explore. Schempp (1998; 1) agrees, stating "our social worlds offer no immunity to sport fields or gymnasia; actions, beliefs, traditions and perspectives that define how we live in the world also define how we live and learn in sport". Jones et al (2004; preface) summarise the developing attitude to social issues in sport: "coaching is essentially a social practice created in the interaction of coaches, athletes and the club environment… [and it should be seen as] a complex social encounter".

An appreciation and understanding of these social perspectives is useful in many instances. For example, coaches will benefit from a reflective understanding of the social element of their coaching and this understanding will thus shape and inform their own practice. Jones (2000; 8) asserts that this will "empower coaches to act intellectually and reflexively… and to take responsibility for decisions affecting their athletes". As well as this altruistic aim, coaches should appreciate that taking a sociological perspective, and being reflexive in their practice, may consequently lead to more effective coaching and greater success for athlete and coach alike. This understanding can also be used, according to Armour and Jones (2000), to further participation and the enjoyment of all those involved in golf. North (2007) agrees, arguing that there is a strong case for increasing and sustaining participation in sport through enlightened, socially aware, coaching practice. However, North (2007) also believes that this practice is largely under-utilised in coaching at present and that there is a need for research to investigate the participant-coach relationship with respect to sustaining participation. This paper seeks to address these issues from a golf perspective.

1.2 Research Questions

The study focused on a beginner group golf lesson that took place on most Monday nights between November 2007 and June 2008. The research took place at a golf driving range in England. The facility consisted of covered golf driving bays, a café area (with several large screen televisions all showing sport) and a golf shop. There were two PGA (Professional Golfers' Association) professional golf coaches based at the facility. The coach who took part in the study, Henry (a pseudonym), had been a professional coach for 10 years.

The issues and general areas to be examined by this research were to some degree identified before the research began. However, the research questions were allowed to evolve as the Literature Review was undertaken and the research itself progressed. These emerging questions then served to inform the methodology employed in the study.

Question 1: How is the group socially constructed?

- o   How do the individuals practice this social context?

- o   What are the expectations of particular individuals of one another, including the coach?

- o   What is the role of the coach during lesson time and during coffee time: how does it change and differ?

- o   Social positioning – what is it in this context and how does it evolve over time?

The social construction under examination here alludes to the interpretative, constructivist perspectives that were adopted in this study. This question is informed by the work of MacPhail and Kirk (MacPhail et al 2003, MacPhail and Kirk 2006), Zevenbergen et al (2002) and also Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (2005). This first question highlights the overarching question of the study.

Question 2: How is the role of the coach influential in this social construction?

- o   What coaching styles are used and how do these affect the group?

- o   What are the strategies of the coach to maintain participation?

- o   How does the coach perceive the relationship he has with the group?

The social role of the coach in sports settings has remained largely unexplored. Given the influential nature of the coaching role within the learning environment, this is quite surprising. The coach is in an unparalleled position to influence beginner golfers and hence affect participation levels in sport as described in the work of Robyn Jones (Jones 2000, Jones 2004, Jones 2004a, Jones and Armour 2000, Jones et al 2002, Jones et al 2003, Jones et al 2004).

Question 3: Why do members of the group participate?

- o What are the reasons individuals started to play golf?
- o What are the challenges to this participation?
- o How does their golf impact on family life?

Increased participation levels in golf and sport generally can help society tackle health and other issues as well as aid the identification, support and development of elite athletes. Insight into the sociology of coaching will help bodies such as the PGA whose task it is to train, develop and educate golf coaches and the EGP (England Golf Partnership) in their quest to increase participation at all levels of the game in England.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1The coaching process

Over the last 20 years, coaching development programmes have failed to highlight the human interaction of coach and pupil (Woodman 1993, Potrac and Jones 1999, Jones et al 2002, Purdy et al 2008). Historically, research into the coaching process has concentrated on bio-scientific lines and, as such, has failed to fully explore and understand the "essential humanistic, social nature of the process" Jones (2000; 34). This may be due to what Potrac et al (2002) describe as the 'product-orientated view' of coaching. This approach presents coaching as an almost independent body of information that should be passed on by a facilitator - the coach merely acting as a technician in the transfer of knowledge. Jones (2000) believes that coaching theory is often de-contextualised and produces two-dimensional coaches who are driven by mechanistic considerations and therefore have difficulty in adapting to human contexts. The comprehension of the interplay between the 'other', society and self is lost. Coaches need to be more than 'technicians' and should be educated as intellectuals with personal skills and values including reflection, collaboration and communication (MacDonald and Tinning 1995). Indeed, Potrac and Purdy (2004) believe that the interpersonal nature of coaching is the most essential feature of coaching practice which needs to be addressed if coaching is to be successful.

If coach education programmes reflected social realities and involved the social being, coaches could better understand their own socialisation and that of others. Their own coaching journey could be explored and deconstructed and a "base from which to critically evaluate social situations and the behaviour of others" (Jones 2000; 40) could be established. Lyle (2002) praises the work of Jones (2000) and agrees that coaches need

enlightenment and educating within the social matrix in which they operate, thus resulting in socially informed decision-making and improved social relations. Lyle (2002) suggests it is now widely acknowledged as being critical that the interpersonal element of coaching shapes coaching practice, and that the performer's growth and development is determined to a significant extent by the nature of this personal relationship. With this in mind, Jones (2000) suggests that successful and professional practice must encompass not only technical competence, but also flexibility, creativeness, intelligence and social responsibility. This could lead to what Lyle (2002) feels would be a better understanding of interpersonal relationships, development of reflexive practitioners, and enhanced personal development. Taking this one stage further, Armour and Jones (2000) suggest that 'putting the person before the body' is essential to fully realising an athlete's potential and is therefore of paramount importance. "It is only the individual [coach] who understands social settings in a thoroughly practical way who can possibly mediate tensions and overcome difficulties" (Armour and Jones 2000; 8).

2.2 Coaching: processes and practices

The coaching process, according to Lyle (1999a), involves the coach in a series of interpersonal relationships that vary in strength, empathy and extent. The coach's job is to manage participants towards improved performance based on the individual's aspirations and abilities. Jones (2004b; 135) says that interaction between coach and athlete is the very essence of coaching: "it is this interaction that generates athlete learning and relates how coach and athlete connect, correlate, bond and generally 'get on' with each other". In order to facilitate this relationship, Lyle (2002) believes that the interpersonal skills of the coach should be well developed and encompass coach expertise in areas such as communication, social relationships, intervention style, decision-making, leadership,

rewards and goal management. He goes on to state that coaches should be aware of the interpersonal dimension of the coaching process as this has the potential for a range of positive and negative effects on participants. North agrees (2007) suggesting that just as 'good' coaching can have positive effects on participation; 'bad' coaching can be detrimental and harm participation levels. Indeed, Jones and Armour (2000) suggest that empowered coaches can act intelligently and, as such, are able to critically evaluate information relevant to participants and make the coaching environment fit the participants' requirements.

Cassidy et al (2004) believe that, within the sporting domain, the coach is a powerful socializing agent, especially when the participants are children. The quality of the coach-participant relationship is therefore of great significance. Smith and Smoll (2002) found that during their research in coaching effectiveness (using CET – Coaching Effectiveness Training) trained coaches were more supportive and encouraging which resulted in participants reporting increased self-esteem and decreased anxiety compared to a control group. Smith and Smoll (2002; 211) conclude, "coaches influence the effects that sport participation has on children through the interpersonal behaviours they engage in, the values and attitudes they transmit both verbally and through example, and the goal priorities they establish". As such, Côté (2002) argues that the coach is in a unique position in regard to a child's social development. Areas such as co-operation, assertion, responsibility, empathy and self-control can be positively influenced. It is critical to appreciate the role of the coach and coaching practice within its social context. Lyle (2002; 191) believes that "just as with any other social phenomenon, sports coaching practice will have been shaped by the social structures, power relationships and social trends and will, in turn, have contributed to those emerging social patterns".

Coaches are social beings. Potrac et al (2002) assert that the coaching process is inextricably linked to human interaction. Lyle (2002; 192) believes that "coaching exists in a social world that imbues meaning and significance beyond that created by the individual". To gain a holistic understanding of the coaching process, as Potrac et al (2000) suggest, requires a focus on the social worlds of these individuals. From their study of an expert soccer coach, it was concluded that social role, power, and self-presentation are thoroughly interlinked in the role of a coach. The coach in this study set out to create a social bond between his players and himself that was not only based on respect for him as a competent professional, but also as an individual. Once again this demonstrates the importance of the social aspect of the coaching process. Furthermore, Jones et al (2003; 214) hypothesise that to understand this process we need to know about coaches' lives, their knowledge base, and the way the "workplace socialises coaches to fulfil expected roles, and how such influences can be both constraining and liberating". Unfortunately, there is currently very little informing research into the socialisation of coaches. Nevertheless, Callero (1994), cited in Jones et al (2003), suggests that coaches need to be aware of their own coaching socialisation. As such they can then become increasingly active in role-*making* as opposed to merely role-*playing*. Awareness of this critical influence on a pupil or child's life is essential because in such situations coaches often find themselves acting as substitute parents (Smith and Smoll 2002). It is in situations like this that the role of the coach becomes even more important and influential. Connell (1993) recognises that the job of the coach is difficult. The coach must have expert technical knowledge, but just as important is the understanding of the specific individuals and groups being coached. The role of the coach is vital because, as Cassidy et al (2004) found from recent surveys regarding athlete participation motivation, the coach, and coaching behaviour are major factors in determining whether participants choose to continue or drop out of sport.

2.3 Coaching practice

Coaching practice refers to a full range of behaviours, activities, interactions, processes, and individual and organisational functions (Lyle 2002). Lyle recommends that practice should be approached in a rational, logical and systematic way. This systematic process should include comprehensive coverage of the area of expertise, planned actions, management of the process, and decision-making based on established principles and good practice. These functions should be co-ordinated and integrated into the coaching process. This leads Jones et al (2004; 163) to describe coaching as a "diverse and demanding occupation that requires a high level of physical and mental vigour on the part of the practitioners". Despite this description, Lyle (1999a) believes that the coaching process has historically been treated as the non-problematic improvement of sports performance. He warns that the coaching process will be different in all cases as it will be determined by organisational setting, the performer's aspirations and commitment, the coach's contractual obligations, and perhaps most importantly, the unpredictable and dynamic nature of human interaction.

Armour (2004) believes that the word 'pedagogy' does not go far enough in conveying the complexities involved in coaching. Coaching philosophy, rationale, program design, teaching and learning are all part of this field, as well as the interaction that Lyle (1999a) details. Jones (2004a) writes that the roles played by coaches are open to interpretation, and will change depending on the situation; he reports that even elite level coaches sometimes needed to employ a directive style and 'be the teacher'. The role a coach employs will then dictate to the participants their expected behaviour. Jones (2004a) feels that this merely adds to the nuances of the coaching relationship and environment.

An additional issue that coaches need to be aware of is discussed by Lyle (1999a), who believes that a distinction exists between participation and performance coaching - a difference he feels present literature has not sufficiently recognised. Lyle (1999a) defines participation coaching as where the principle goal is concerned with the enjoyment of participation and immediate satisfaction rather than competition success. It follows then that the needs of participants are very different to the requirements of performance golfers. An area of particular concern here is a child's potential progression from 'participation' to 'performance'. This is a sensitive area that has implications for coaching practice.

2.4 The training of golf coaches by the PGA

In 1997 Mathers asserted that, historically, the training of Professional Golf Coaches by the PGA did not take account of, or understand, all the complexities of 'the coaching process'. Mathers predicted that the role of 'science' in golf coaching was set to increase. Mathers does not mention *social* science in this context but rather focuses on the quantitative, traditional 'science' approach and on 'performance' - sports science. Mathers goes on to say, "it seems clear that a well developed understanding of the sports coaching process is an essential feature of effective coaching and the planning of performance in sport" (Mathers 1997; 32). Cushion et al (2006) identify that, more generally speaking, despite an increasing recognition of the existence of a process of coaching, and a resulting increase in research activity, there remains a lack of a clear conceptual base for sports coaching. This situation has left coaching without a clear set of concepts and principles that reflect on to coaching practice. However, a recent Government White Paper (House of Commons, European Commission White Paper on Sport, 2008) states that since 1997 the PGA has radically improved and developed its training programmes and invested in a national academy. One result of these developments is the association with the University

of Birmingham and the subsequent awarding of University Foundation and Honours degrees. Also, a programme of continuous professional development has been established and developed.

2.5 Reflective practice in coaching

Cassidy et al (2004) believe that the modern coach should be a reflective practitioner. Cassidy et al feel that reflective teaching, and not simply the repetition of passed down knowledge, is essential in order to maintain good coaching practice. 'Mindless' teaching can be manifested in a lack of knowledge and understanding as to how and why athletes learn, and of the complex and dynamic environment over which they preside. Taking this theme on, Gilbert and Trudel (2006; 114) claim that "ten years of coaching without reflection is simply one year of coaching repeated ten times". Moreover, the coach should have the capacity for autonomous self-development through reflection of the self; the benefits being that the coach is able to be open-minded and active in improving their coaching quality and standards. Cassidy et al (2004; 18) believe that this will lead coaches to be more sensitive to the backgrounds, needs and interests of the participant and that this will "result in better and more inclusive coaching, leading to enhanced athlete learning and therefore performance". Jones (2004a; 133) states that "it is difficult to compartmentalise the role of the coach neatly, as such a complex job cannot realistically be broken down in a clinical way".

It must be recognised, however, that coaches are all individuals, and as such, Lyle (1999b) believes that they do not all operate in the same way. It is where the preferences of the performer and the actions of the coach do not match up that problems can occur. Lyle (1999b) feels that individual differences will be apparent in communication styles, decision-

making, feedback, goal setting, counselling, disciplinary behaviour and management. Although it would appear that the power in the coach-athlete relationship lies with the coach, Sugden and Tomlinson (2002; 4) believe that "all human beings possess some power in the form of their ability to transform, to some extent, the circumstances in which they find themselves". The participant can therefore be said to have an ability to shape the coaching experience and process as well as the coach. Indeed in golf coaching culture, the golfer in many situations could be said to hold significant power as he has the choice to terminate the relationship with the coach. Cassidy et al (2004; 3) note that "ultimately, coaching is a social endeavour, and while sport-specific, organisational, physiological and psychological tools are necessary, if the coaches lack the sensitivity to act appropriately within a dynamic social and educational environment, they can struggle to achieve their intentions of improving the quality of both performance and participation".

2.6 Communities of practice (CoP)

This research study uses the work of Etienne Wenger and Jean Lave (Lave and Wenger 1991, Wenger et al 2002, Wenger 2005, Wenger 2008) to help understand how situated learning exists within a CoP. Situated learning may be described as learning whilst undertaking an activity within a particular context and culture; learning and application within the same environment. These theories will be used in the context of a golf setting to help describe, depict and illustrate how the participants behave and learn. An exploration of the nature of CoP and the social construction in this golf context is valid based on their assertion that "human minds develop in social situations" (Lave and Wenger 1991; 11). Lave and Wenger emphasise the socially mediated character of learning; what they call 'legitimate peripheral participation'. They go on to identify that the mastery of knowledge and skills requires participants to move towards "full participation in the sociocultural

practices of a community" (Lave and Wenger 1991; 29) and that this social process includes, and sometimes subsumes, the learning of skills therein. Lave and Wenger (1991) believe that learning and social practice are integral and inseparable - as Wenger (2005; 4) says, "We are social beings. Far from being trivially true, this fact is a central aspect of learning". Wenger et al (2002) suggest that communities are not born in their final state and that they go through a natural cycle of birth, growth, and death. They continually evolve and generally go through five stages of development: potential, coalescing, maturing, stewardship and transformation. They note that a community's development is rarely smooth and frequently involves discoveries, transitions, and learning through experience. Leaders within groups are of key importance here and their role is pivotal in how the communities develop.

Galipeau and Trudel (2006) acknowledge that the examination of sports settings through the lens of CoP is legitimate and worthy of exploration. In summary, Wenger (2008; 1) suggests, "Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly". Wenger (2005) says that participating (with a wide ranging meaning) in the practices of a community, and developing identities in relation to these, shapes what we do, who we are and how we interpret what we do.

However, there are nuances that need to be examined regarding the coach-participant relationship in golf. Firstly, it has been suggested by Wenger (2005) that it is usual in this relationship for the coach to be a 'master' within coaching but not generally a master of the skill being coached. This is certainly not true in golf; PGA Professional golf coaches have to be able to perform to a high level before they are able to qualify as coaches (the handicap requirements are 4.4 for men and 6.4 for women). This requirement enables the

golf coach to demonstrate skills effectively as well as to gain recognition, power and therefore legitimacy from participants; a situation not mirrored in many other sports. The other issue to be acknowledged is that the participant is not an 'apprentice' of *coaching* but of *performing*. Galipeau and Trudel (2006) hypothesise that within sports teams groups should be split into two distinct CoP - the coaches and the participants – and the ways in which these two groups interact and transform should be the subject of interest and debate.

2.7 Developments in coaching in the UK

Recent developments in coaching in the UK aim to address and improve coaching standards. 'A Sporting Future for All' (Department for Culture Media and Sport, 2001) set out the Government's belief that coaching is central to the development of sport at all levels. North (2007) highlights that increased participation in sport is now a major priority of Government, with potential benefits such as enjoyment, personal development, citizenship, health, education and inclusivity being central. The introduction of the UKCC (UK Coaching Certificate) framework has led to new and updated coaching qualifications. This has enabled best practice and knowledge to be shared across the sports involved. Phillpots (2007; 167) recognises that, for golf, the development of the UKCC "represented a major change in both the range of coaches delivering golf, the nature of coach education, and the way golf coaching is developed as a profession". The higher echelons of these qualifications in golf are still under development, but there is every indication that the social aspect of coaching as well as reflective practice will be included. Stafford (2007; 1) claims, "Coaches coach people! If a real participant centred coaching system is to be developed…programmes [should] account for individual differences". It is clear that the

social element of coaching needs addressing wherever you believe coaching sits on the art versus science continuum.

2.8 Increasing participation in sport; the role of coaching

In his paper, North (2007) sets out an overview of this area. North believes that given existing research (Biddle and Mutrie 2001, Weinberg and Gould 2003), there is a strong case to link participation with coaching and goes on to say that, "there is an excellent match between what individuals want from participating in sport and what good coaches provide" (North 2007, 20). However, North believes that the use of coaching to this end is largely under-utilised. Among participation motivators, North details the importance of social interaction. The work of Foster et al (2005) details the importance of the social benefits of participation but also highlights the dangers of authoritarian and prescriptive methods of coaching, which may result in attrition rather than sustained participation. Although he reports a correlation between coaching and sustaining participation, North concludes that there is a great need for further research into how this phenomenon actually works in practice; a need for "participant-coach case studies in a participation context" (North 2007; 22). Certainly in golf there is little such research and this study seeks to begin the process of populating knowledge and facilitating understanding in this area.

2.9 Existing coaching research

What follows is a summary of research in four areas that the research questions cover. These same topic areas will be used in the discussion.

2.9.1 Socialisation in sport

Zevenbergen et al (2002) examined the socialisation of children aged between 8 and 14 years old at a golf club in Australia. The golf club set out to socialise the children (golf cadets) in a particular way. The children were exposed to practices that conveyed meanings and values that the club esteemed. Zevenbergen et al (2002) wanted to examine how the golf club legitimised the habitus of the dominant social and cultural groups. The authors used habitus to "provide a means through which it is possible to understand and theorise the embodiment of certain aspects of the social context which will predispose people to act, think and behave in certain ways" (Zevenbergen et al 2002; 3). Habitus was found to have many applications in the study and the authors used it in two main contexts. Firstly, the cadet's primary habitus was examined. It was found to be influenced by the family of the player and affected how easy or difficult it was for the player to assimilate into the golf club. Secondly the golf club habitus was observed. Zevenbergen et al (2002) refer to this as the club 'agenda' in which young golfers were expected to display certain behaviours and ways of thinking. To be considered 'good' club members, cadets needed to display those aspects of golf habitus 'valorised' within the context of the golf club. It was found that there were many rituals that enabled the cultural practices of the golf club to be performed and reinforced. These rituals were an integral part of the club culture and were seen to display dispositions valued by the club. Four keys rituals were identified: assemblies, the Cadet Achievement Scheme, playing golf, and golf lessons. The authors state that the way in which cadet golfers locate themselves within these rituals can help us understand how these individuals are constructed within the context of the golf club. Given the relative dearth of research focussing on social issues in coaching, the research of Zevenbergen et al (2002) is useful but does focus on a very traditional golf setting as well as being framed in the culture of Australian sport.

The research of Ann MacPhail and David Kirk (MacPhail et al 2003, MacPhail and Kirk 2006) has explored young people's socialisation in athletics, drawing on a longitudinal

ethnographic study at Forest Athletics Club (FAC). During the study, 47 children were interviewed as well as many of the coaches and officials of the club, and the parents of numerous children. These studies found strong evidence to support the model of participation developed by Côté and Hay (2002). This model suggests three stages of participation in sport: sampling, specialising, and investment/recreational stages. These stages cover the period from early childhood to late adolescence. The initial sampling stage (roughly 7-12 years old) is where the child experiences and tries out many different sports and activities. The emphasis here is on fun and enjoyment, but this is also where the child will develop their basic identities, motivations, values, and beliefs about sport. It is therefore a critical time in terms of future participation and attrition. From this initial sampling stage, there are three possible routes: dropout, recreational involvement and what Côté and Hay (2002) call the specialising stage. During this stage (roughly 13-16 years old), the child has now focused on one or two sports. Fun is still important, but sport specific skill development takes over. The child is more motivated and desires technical instruction. The decision to specialise in a sport may be due to positive experiences with the coach, encouragement from siblings, success or simply enjoyment.

MacPhail et al (2003) found strong evidence of the 'sampler' in their research. The children questioned took part in a wide variety of sports and activities, they were primarily motivated by fun and enjoyment, and there was evidence of deliberate play. In terms of fun and enjoyment (intrinsic motivators), MacPhail et al (2003) suggest that, for younger children, the social element and play may be the main sources of pleasure, although as the child gets older these feelings can change. There is no doubt that the work of Ann MacPhail and David Kirk furthers our understanding of the process of socialisation into sport for children, although these findings do relate specifically to an athletics club.

2.9.2 Social interaction and the coaching context

Perhaps the most interesting of the rituals examined in the work of Zevenbergen et al (2002) for this study, is that of the golf lesson. All cadets were required to take part in a one-hour group golf lesson each week that took place after the assembly. Ken, a professional golfer, delivered the golf lessons. As such Ken was seen as a figure of authority whose knowledge was sovereign. The lessons were delivered in the technical, non-thinking way described earlier. Knowledge was 'handed down' from Ken and as such, "Cadets came to construct golf as a form of skilled knowledge that was transmitted from one who knew to those who didn't know" (Zevenbergen 2002; 11). Ken's 'coaching' was simply the passing on of an independent body of knowledge that Potrac et al (2002) describe and Jones (2000) warns against. There was also a striking lack of cadet interaction within the context of the lesson. Dialogue, constructive or not, was not a part of learning golf at Paradise Golf Club. There was only deemed to be one right way to play golf. "The focus on correct technique fostered a meritocratic ethos within the lesson where cadets came to construct their sense of self-worth in terms of the number of good shots they played" (Zevenbergen et al 2002; 11).

In my own previous research (Wright 2005), I also used the model developed by Côté and Hay to examine children's socialisation in golf in the context of a group golf lesson. Data was drawn from a six-month ethnographical study at Woodbridge Driving Range (WDR), a golf facility in England where children aged between 7 and 14 years took part in group golf lessons. It was found that children exhibited the characteristics of Côté and Hay's 'samplers'. This study found that there were four distinct ways in which the children experienced the fun and enjoyment characterised by the sampling phase. These groups were classified as Learners, Ball-hitters, Fun-seeking Socialisers and Socialisers. It was found that the coaches involved did not identify these distinct groups and as such failed to

maximise the fun and enjoyment of all participants, marginalising some individuals and groups. The coaching practices in this study were non-reflective, disorganised and did not provide an optimal environment for the children who participated. Cassidy et al (2004) call for reflective practices in coaching, and it is clear that if the coaches in this study were more reflective then it might have been recognised that the environment they helped create was not conducive to maximising the fun and enjoyment of all participants.

Another interesting study in this area was conducted by Purdy et al (2008) who investigated the relationship of the principal author (a rowing coxswain) with her coach in the run up to a National Championship. Purdy et al (2008) state that after an investigation of the literature, they found little informing research to help us to understand the social power dynamic that exists between coach and athlete. Purdy et al (2008) communicate their findings using three separate illustrative stories that serve to highlight the complex and dynamic relationship that existed. They found that there were "varying levels of compliance, co-operation and resistance" within this relationship (Purdy et al 2008; 332). Potrac et al (2002) stated that if effective coaching were to happen, then coaches should be aware and sensitive to the varying forms of power they exercised over the athlete. Purdy et al (2008) back up this message stating that in this case, insensitivity to social and power issues by the coach resulted in a irretrievable breakdown in relations with the rowers. Purdy et al (2008) do point out that this account of events is taken from a single perspective and that the coach may well have a different view.

2.9.3 Rules, etiquette and golf culture

Zevenbergen et al (2002; 1) state that "Golf clubs and golf are structured in ways that legitimate the habitus of the dominant, social and cultural groups" and that this process is effected by the rules and culture of the club. In their study of Paradise Golf Club,

Zevenbergen et al summarise that the Paradise Golf Club acted as a socialising agent that added to the cadets' existing cultural capital. The process of social reinforcement that the club undertook was carried out in a conscious way. Cadets had to strictly adhere to practices and behaviours set down by the club, otherwise they were at risk of being marginalized and excluded. One boy was expelled from the club for 'gross misconduct' which involved laughing when another child 'duffed' a shot. Those children who conformed to club rules, values and habitus were likely to gain power, legitimacy and control within the society of the golf club. The club's socialisation of young cadet golfers allowed them to preserve and reproduce the existing relationships of power and legitimacy in the club context.

In their ethnographic study of gender influences at a private golf club, Shotton et al (2004) found that there were distinct social groups within the club context and that the members recognised these groups. It was found that women "showed greater respect for rules and regulations, paid greater attention to etiquette, were distinctly more organised during committee meetings and formal events than men, and appeared to value the social benefits of golf more than skill acquisition or victory" (Shotton et al 2004; 5). The men within the club, who made up the vast majority of members (400 out of a total of 550), were more overtly competitive and placed greater value on winning and improving skill levels than the women. It was found that men were often reluctant to observe club rules and regulations and had to be reminded by members of staff as to what the rules were. Shotton et al (2004) sum up by saying that there is a weight of discrimination against women in sport in general and in golf particularly, and that although this was not overt at the club it was never the less an ever present phenomenon. Both of these studies are valuable in describing, illuminating and communicating a picture of golf club culture.

However, it must be remembered that these studies can only be illustrative of the particular context of the study.

2.9.4 Behind the coaching mask

In his paper entitled "Dilemmas, Maintaining 'Face' and Paranoia, An Average Coaching Life", Jones (2006) describes his own experiences as a football coach. This paper clearly differentiates itself from the previous research discussed due to the way in which it is written. Jones seeks to tell a 'truer' story of his experiences by presenting the paper in an autoethnographical style - a more thorough discussion of this methodological style follows in the next chapter. Jones tells the story whilst giving the reader the power to 'generate' attitudes and findings from their own interaction with his piece. An illustrative exert is set out below, in which Jones describes a pre-game team talk:

"The players begin to shuffle. They want and need more. A low murmur rises then falls as I take centre stage. The silence is respectful. All eyes turn on me. I remind myself of the need to keep control; to talk slowly yet naturally, with meaning; and not to ramble yet to be informative. I need to give the impression that I've really thought this game out, that I can predict its certainty, that I can 'call' it. That way, I'm the expert they expect, someone they're right to believe in.

Suddenly, I become aware of the silent backdrop. It's a rapidly growing void waiting for me to fill. Doubts flood in. My stomach and throat muscles immediately tighten. *I can't do this. I can't talk. I really can't do this.* I try to fight back: *Of course I can do it, I've done it a hundred times before, no problem. But I can't do it now, not right now…* My respect and power are dissipating, leaking away. Their faces tell me, *this isn't supposed to happen. He can't be a real coach".*

Jones (2006; 1017) says that he took this approach in order to illuminate issues that normally lie undiscovered, "Principal among these is a portrayal of coaching not as content knowledge but as a performance aimed at managing the impression of others". This statement clearly alludes to the complex nature of human relations and social interaction: the social aspect of coaching. In the statement Jones also alludes to the role, associated power, legitimacy and social positioning of the coach. Potrac and Purdy (2004) in their analysis of elite coaching practices use the example of Graham Taylor the former England football coach who believes that the coach has to be a 'good actor' and as such tries to persuade and cajole players into buying into his way of doing things. Echoing the viewpoint of Jones (2004), Taylor (in Potrac and Purdy 2004) says that coaches are under constant scrutiny by the athletes and that verbal and body language, tone of voice and eye contact are all tools and elements of this scrutiny. Taylor believes that hiding one's true emotions and feelings and focussing on a confident and enthusiastic 'front' is all important. Jones (2004) makes the case that coaching relies less on the mechanics of how or what to coach and more on "who is coaching, their perceptions of how coaches ought to act, and the relationships they have with those being coached" (Jones 2006; 1017). To this end, Jones (2004) suggests that coaching is an interaction of "social relationships comprising a constant and dynamic two way street between engaged parties, and the strategies that individuals use to 'get their way' within it" (Jones 2004a; 134). In this way it could be said that the 'coaching mask' concept is in some way a "theatrical one, with the principles derived being dramaturgical in nature" (Jones 2004b 136); one in which a coaching 'performance' or 'front' is instituted in order to reach the goals of all those involved.

2.10 Summary

Having examined the literature there is plenty of available evidence examining the technical content, the 'what' to coach, within a golfing context. This seems to be a historic factor in golf where technical expertise and knowledge have been regarded as the most important factor for coaches. Within sports coaching more generally there has been a move towards researching and understanding how coaches and players interact and how important this can be. However the clear lack of such move in golf, where there is almost no research at all regarding coach/player interaction, means that I believe that the research questions detailed here are important and need exploring in more detail.

Question 1: How is the group socially constructed?

- o How do the individuals practice this social context?
- o What are the expectations of particular individuals of one another, including the coach?
- o What is the role of the coach during lesson time and during coffee time: how does it change and differ?
- o Social positioning – what is it in this context and how does it evolve over time?

Question 2: How is the role of the coach influential in this social construction?

- o What coaching styles are used and how do these affect the group?
- o What are the strategies of the coach to maintain participation?
- o How does the coach perceive the relationship he has with the group?

Question 3: Why do members of the group participate?

- o What are the reasons individuals started to play golf?
- o What are the challenges to this participation?
- o How does their golf impact on family life?

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Methodological paradigm

The paradigm adopted by a researcher directs how the research proceeds. It will determine what questions we ask, what instruments we use and how we generate findings and knowledge. This research was carried out within an interpretative framework in order to best understand the issues and motivations of the beginner golfers and their socialisation in golf. Donnelly (2003; 77) believes that "interpretation is the basis of all sociology". In order to gain a deep understanding of the social phenomenon in evidence, a six month long ethnographic study was undertaken which included data collection by various methods including observation and interview to produce a rich description (Geertz 1993, Rock 2007). This methodology mirrors many of the studies previously discussed. For example, the research of MacPhail et al (2003) into young children's socialisation at an athletics club chose a very similar design in order to capture the routine and everyday activities of the individuals at the club and to understand the meanings of the activities from the participants' points of view.

I felt it was important to use the informal governance of previous research while being open to paradigmatic and methodological development. It is hoped this allows a number of pieces to be viewed as a bank of research with all the benefits of comparison and that this will outweigh the potential paradigmatic polarisation that Hammersley and Atkinson (2002) warn against. It is also hoped that this approach will lend some degree of reliability to the study. However, with qualitative research absolute reliability is difficult as each research setting and social situation therein, is different. In an attempt to address this problem,

Lincoln and Guba (2000) suggest that trustworthiness and authenticity should be the criteria against which reliability is measured.

3.2 Interpretative sociology, reflexivity and constructivist approaches

Donnelly (2003) believes that interpretative sociology in the form of ethnography, thick description and reflexivity, has come to be regarded as the predominant approach in the sociology of sport. This is due in part to the view it permits of participants as competent interpreters of the social world (James 2002). It allows what Sands (2002; 63) describes as participating and observing with "a wide-angle view of cultural behaviour". Sparkes (1992; 26) agrees, stating, "The interpretative paradigm seeks explanation within the realm of individual consciousness and subjectivity, within the frame of reference of the participant as opposed to the observer of action".   For this research this framework enabled the beginner golfers to be studied in a natural environment and as such it is hoped that this will result in realistic findings. This approach has, at its heart, the belief that the social world can best be understood from the standpoint of the actors who are being studied (Cohen et al 2005). In adopting an interpretative, ethnographic approach, Denzin and Lincoln (2000a; 4) believe that the researcher becomes a maker of quilts or montages, interpretative *bricoleurs* who "produce a … pieced together set of representations that are fitted to the specifics of a complex situation".

This type of constructivist inquiry seeks to understand the contextualised meaning of the actor's actions and interactions in particular situations or contexts (Denzin 1997; Greene 2000). Gubrium and Holstein (2000) describe this process as engaging both the 'hows' and 'whats' of social reality. This means that, in terms of ontology and epistemology, the existence of the phenomena encountered in the field will be viewed as specific constructed

realities, their understanding a matter of subjective interpretation, open to the researcher's own reflexive values and judgements (Ferguson 2006). Denzin and Lincoln (2000b) note, "there seems to be an emerging consensus that all inquiry reflects the standpoint of the inquirer" (Denzin and Lincoln 2000b; 872).

In terms of the methods to be employed in this study, the question I needed to ask was: which is the best way to uncover the truth and convey the findings? Cohen et al (2005; 5) believe that the search for truth involves a combination of personal experience, reasoning and research and that this process must be regarded as "the most successful approach to the discovery of truth". Emphasis should be directed towards the quality of the interpretation of data rather than the objective purity of the method (Hodkinson 2004). This point is reinforced by O'Sullivan (2007; 247) who stated, "I am driven in my research by problems in the field: problems of practice more so than problems of theory".

3.3 Ethnography

An ethnographic approach was most suitable for this study. This is a design that is increasingly accepted within social research into sport (Gratton and Jones 2004). The advantage of this approach, according to Tedlock (2002), is the better understanding of beliefs, motivations, and behaviours that can be gained *at first hand*. The naturalistic setting described by Gratton and Jones (2004) of this research allowed me to place specific encounters, events, and understandings into a fuller, more meaningful context. Heyl (2002) believes that ethnographic methods can be interpreted in different ways, but that there are areas that can be agreed upon: listening well and respectfully; acquiring a self awareness of the role in the co-construction of meaning during the process; and being cognizant of ways in which both the ongoing relationship and the broader social context affect the participants. Atkinson (1997) is at pains to point out the parallels between

sociology and literature that ethnography encompasses and that this relationship in no way weakens the 'scientific' and scholarly nature of this type of research. Atkinson (1997) continues, "if the scope of sociology includes the understanding of inter-subjective communication and social actors' methods of reality-construction, then surely the methods of textual persuasion fall within that scope" (Atkinson 1997; 2-3).

However, an ethnographic approach does present difficulties. Sands (2002; 15) points out that "the ethnographer must attempt a difficult feat – becoming an insider while simultaneously maintaining an analytical distance to process cultural information". With difficulty, the ethnographer must maintain an attitude of detachment towards the society or culture studied. The oxymoron 'participant observation' implies emotional involvement at the same time as objective detachment. He must not 'go native' or himself become the phenomenon according to Jorgensen (1989). Detachment and self-interrogation, according to Lincoln and Guba (2000), will permit the researcher to observe the conduct of himself and others, to understand the social processes and to comprehend and explain why both actors and processes are the way they are. In this way the researcher acts as a 'human instrument'.

An acknowledgement of the social construction that occurs as a result means that, as Hodkinson (2004) says, the researcher is always implicated in their work because of their social position and identity. The researcher plays his part as one of the actors involved in the study. In consideration of this, Greenback (2003) feels the important issue is that the values of the researcher are clearly articulated in their writing. Reflexivity is one of the emerging innovations in methodology that Gergen and Gergen (2000) believe will replace the traditional effort to discover and recode truth. Indeed, ethnography has been seen to nourish and elaborate methodological self-consciousness (Pollner and Emerson 2002),

attempting to "turn the anthropological lens back upon the self" (Karp and Kendall 1982; 260). This principle is certainly embraced during the writing of autoethnography.

Charmaz and Mitchell (2002; 162) tell us "researchers alone are obligated to be reflexive about what they see and how they see it". As such, the text of ethnography should be fashioned from one's engagement with, and participation in, the world studied (Schwandt 2000). Sands (2002; 22) describes how this process may be aided by the attempt to become "culturally invisible by becoming culturally similar". In this respect I believe that my personal values and resources are a positive advantage and should be assets on which to draw and make use of, as Denzin and Lincoln (2000a) describe. For instance, to be accepted in the 'golf culture' that the research will be set in I need to be able to speak the golf 'language', and being a PGA qualified professional golfer aids this process. I wear the golf 'uniform' and am socialised into golfing culture. In my own previous research (Wright 2005), this was a particular advantage when negotiating and interacting with the group's coach. However, during the research process I had to be careful not to 'go native' (Jorgensen 1989), but rather, remain detached and self-interrogative (Lincoln and Guba 2000). In theory this would permit me to observe the conduct of myself and others, to understand the social processes and to comprehend and explain why both actors and processes are the way they are. However, this is easier said than done. Despite these challenges I feel that the advantage of this approach is being able to gain a better understanding of beliefs, motivations, and behaviours at first hand. Indeed Ellis and Bochner believe that we should celebrate narrative in social analysis: "Narrative can be argued to offer more in the way of enlightenment than putative theory" (2000, 778). The legitimacy of this approach is at the heart of Gadamer's hermeneutics. Gadamer (1975; 466) says that in the studies of human sciences "the only scientific thing is to *recognise*

what is". That is my aim. To recognise *what is* in the context of the golf lesson and to reflect it as accurately and effectively as possible.

At the start of this process, I thought that this style of narrative creative writing would be relatively easy to produce compared with the, on the face of it, 'labour intensive' method of Grounded Theory. However, when faced with a blank page and the task of 'evoking' the reader this becomes more difficult; the mental demands on the researcher are palpable. I made every effort to recognise and explore the role of reflexivity and follow the advice of Vidich and Lyman (2000; 38) who believe that the researcher should be "committed to an understanding of the self" in the writing-up process and throughout the research.

3.4 Biography of the researcher

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000a) the researcher's own biography in terms of gender, social class, race, ethnicity, education, should be fully acknowledged in any research. Gergen and Gergen (2000; 1027) take this further by suggesting that to be truly reflexive, researchers should "seek ways of demonstrating to their audience their historical and geographic situatedness, their personal investment in the research, [and] various biases they bring to the work". It is with this in mind that a biography is included here.

"I was educated at comprehensive school and Sixth Form College in the late 1980s, where I undertook 'O' and 'A' levels with moderate success. I was then employed by a high-street bank in 1987, eventually leaving in 2002. During this time I fulfilled differing roles in many branches including a role as a personal account adviser. This job entailed interviewing up to 30 customers per week, questioning them on financial issues and selling them financial services. I undertook this role for two years.

Immediately prior to leaving the bank I was a Branch Manager with responsibility for five London branches. This involved overall responsibility for their sales and service performance, including management of a large sales team, service quality, staff development, adherence to budgets, operational issues and managing high value customers.

In 2002 I moved to Birmingham to take up a place on the Applied Golf Management degree course at the University of Birmingham that offered PGA membership for successful candidates. During the degree course I gave up my amateur status and became a 'Trainee Professional' golfer. In 2005 I graduated from the degree with First Class Honours and was elected to full PGA membership. At this point I joined the Scott Cranfield Golf Academy and became a full time golf coach. I was based at a busy, modern golf facility in Essex and found the role to be both rewarding and enjoyable.

However, in the autumn of 2007 I left this post to fulfil a life-long ambition of working for the PGA based at the Belfry in Sutton Coldfield. My role there is that of Coach Education Manager for England. This involves running and managing the program of coaching courses, arranging venues and managing tutor issues, as well as being involved in the continuing development of these programs. I also have responsibility for organising and managing the 2009 PGAs of Europe Teaching and Coaching Conference that is due to take place at the International Convention Centre in Birmingham in October 2009.

In terms of golf, I have played since a young age, mainly due to the influence of my family members - my maternal grandparents were regular participants, as are my mother and

father. I first joined a golf club at the age of 14 and played there for a few years before temporarily giving the game up, mainly due to transport and logistical issues. I began playing again in my mid-twenties and gradually reduced my handicap to 3. As part of my PGA training I undertook tournament rounds but since this time I have not played regularly. I am interested in and have participated in many sports, including football, cricket and squash. My other interests including, travelling, reading American fiction, music, cinema and the arts.

Stop!

I've just proof read this bit and I have to say, it's not me, it's a list of things I've done. All this talk about 'real' writing and ethnography, how on earth does my 'biography' fit in with this ethos? The simple answer is, it doesn't. The biography above is factual but at the same time is stale, boring and sterile. Ok, so here are some of the bits I missed out…

The truth is that during the writing of this thesis I have been diagnosed with a condition called bipolar disorder. It used to be known as manic depression, which is much more descriptive. This did have an effect on my research, just as it affects every other part of my life. What it means is that I experience extremes of mood, high and low, for long periods sometimes, but also periods of rapid cycling. This does mean that I don't really know what kind of mood I'm going to be in when I wake up in the morning.

Low mood – my most common state is typified by discomfort around people, anxiety, suicidal feelings and avoidance of all human interaction.

Normal mood – I can be normal too! I'm not a 'mentalist' all the time!

High mood – this doesn't happen too often for me, but when it does everything is so easy, writing research, playing golf, I'm the life and soul of the party! I can be a bit overbearing in this state and am definitely hyperactive and, well…manic!

As you can imagine this has consequences for everything I do, including research. In an ideal world I would be quiet and invisible during the research and just observe and in writing I would be manic and full of ideas and write with ease, style and meaning. Unfortunately, it doesn't always work out so conveniently…

At times during the writing-up process I have felt very low and morose, wondering why the hell I am doing this…what a waste of time… and whether I <u>will</u> ever finish it or that perhaps I don't even <u>want</u> to finish it."

3.5 Ethical Considerations

This research was conducted within the ethical guidelines suggested by BERA. The actors' express consent was sought at the beginning of the process. Each actor signed a consent form (see Appendix 1). It was made clear to the actors throughout the process that they were free to withdraw at any time. During the writing up of this research the names of the actors have been changed to protect their identity. As Rees (2002) suggests, the pseudonyms of the actors has been allocated in light of their ethnic origin, age and background so as to reflect their actual identity. The whereabouts of the research venue has been deliberately concealed so as to further protect the identity of the actors. Given these precautions, the actors' ages and keywords - listed later in the piece - were included as I felt they were vital in order to convey an accurate picture of the research.

Chapter 4

Coffee and Golf: A Monday night ritual

4.1 Introduction

What follows here are some excerpts of the events which occurred during the research. They have been chosen in order to attempt to enlighten the research questions and to illustrate and describe my experiences following this group of beginning golfers and their coach.

4.2 The story

Coffee and golf is a Monday night ritual for Delia, Leanne, Henry, Christopher, Samantha and Juliet. The group gather, hit some golf balls, chat, drink coffee and generally spend time together. Every Monday, come hell or high water, the group gather for coffee and golf.

How did it all start? Well, Delia and Leanne decided it would be a nice thing to do together. Their children 'alpha boys' had been to the centre a couple of times before (they are quite child-friendly at the golf range) and they thought they would give it a go. Being the two more assertive members of the group, Delia and Leanne managed to rope in Samantha and Juliet…

They start to arrive. I watch from a distance. Leanne, as usual, first. She always seems to look quite nervous when she arrives, even though she's been here so many times before with her family, as well as on Mondays. Even though the centre is very family, women, and child-friendly, she still seems like a fish out of water.

When I ask her about this later, she replies, "I don't really know what to do; I'm not a golfer".

Samantha arrives and immediately Leanne is fine. They chat and laugh. That's the really interesting thing about this group; they chat and laugh a lot, including the coach, Henry. They laugh in the middle of the lesson, after the lesson, all the time. After the lesson, as it's usually Henry's last for the night, they all sit down and have several coffees until the centre manager throws them out.

Henry says he doesn't usually get this involved with pupils but that this group is 'special'.

"Special how?"

"Well, to start with I couldn't get away", he said, "they asked me to join them for a coffee and I couldn't really say no…now it's just a habit...I guess we are friends as well".

Henry's now arrived from his previous lesson and Delia and Christopher arrive too, I join the melee. Lots of greetings are exchanged and we slowly start to make our way out onto the range. Henry carries a whole load of clubs for the 'girls' – not sure what counts as a girl these days- these women are in their mid 40's! It's strange, I've done this kind of fieldwork before, but with this group I really do feel part of it. They are very inclusive."

"[Deep breath]…"I'm going to have to ask you to leave now; we need to close up" says the clearly hassled and centre manager. I talk to her later and she says, "What are they doing here? Why do they stay so late? Why does Henry stay and talk to them?"

She really cannot understand why four middle-aged, middle-class women are at the centre at 11pm on a Monday night holding her up. Actually come to think of it, neither can

I! It's just not the usual golfing scene. Golf is played by 'Tim's' (competitive urban males) and 'Phillip's' (comfortable mid-life men) as well as 'Roger and Joys' (retired couples), not middle-aged women on Monday nights. So why a Monday night?

"It's just the night we could all do", says Delia, "You know, we have to juggle swimming, judo and all the other things the kids do…"

"So who looks after the kids when you play?"

"Jeff, my husband. I need my time. He often gets in late in the week so Mondays is when I see the girls."

"So is it a social or did you decide that golf was something you wanted to learn?"

"Good question… I guess it started out as something that we could just do together, but I love it now"

"So if you stopped playing what might the reason be?"

"Well I have been spending quite a lot of money on lessons. Henry and I go and have a lesson on the course about once a week at the moment, as well as the Monday lesson… Jeff just can't understand what I'm up to!"

"And how about your boys, do you go and play with them?"

"Not really. I do go to the pitch and putt course with them but they are so lively I really couldn't try and play at the same time, maybe in a few years when they are a bit calmer! "

4.3 Henry

Keywords: Mid thirties, engaged, PGA Golf Professional.

I've known Henry for a few years now. He is a laid back character who has talent dripping out of his every pore. He is a PGA Professional golfer, a great photographer and musician.

I told Henry I was interested in a group lesson dynamic and he suggested I get involved with his 'Monday night girls' group. He said they were 'interesting' and he was right! At that point the group had had a couple of sessions with Henry. Henry telephoned Delia and Leanne to tell them about my project and to ask if they were happy to be involved, but why did he select them to call and not Samantha and Juliet? Samantha and Juliet later did give their permission but seemed to be left with little choice as the two 'leaders' in the group had already decided it was OK.

"Right ladies, we are going to have a look at your golf posture tonight"

[Some giggling]

"I will come around and I will take a picture of your posture then we will all have a little look at them on the laptop and see what we can see!"

The photos are taken and we all gather around the laptop to assess golf postures.

"Sam, you need to stick your arse out a bit more" says Delia

This is typical Delia, life and soul of the party and leader of the pack.

"Is it normal for pupils to interact this much with you?"

"Not quite as much as this" grins Henry "I guess it does happen a bit more with groups because they all tend to know each other, although I do teach a few people who just come along for a chat rather than lessons".

"These guys are different now though…"

"How do you mean?"

"Well it's more like a social club! We keep in touch between lessons and Delia and Leanne bring their kids to the group lessons during the week. We get talking then too, even when I'm supposed to be teaching!"

"So are you a teacher, coach or friend?"

"Wow, erm..I'm a teacher and coach for sure…Samantha and Leanne want to be taught, whereas Delia, and I suppose Christopher too, want to be coached"

"What's the difference?"

"Teaching is instructing and telling to a large degree I think…Coaching is helping someone learn…"

"And a friend?"

"Absolutely"

4.4 Delia

Keywords: Married, twin boys aged 8, full time student, mid forties.

Delia is the leader of the pack; the social glue. She makes the calls and sorts the arrangements. Although Leanne would like to think she is in control, and sometimes is clearly frustrated she isn't, it's Delia who is Queen Bee. A matriarch. Caring, very talkative: a real people person. Delia fulfils this role both on the golf range (among the pupils) and at the coffee table. The mother. The leader.

Delia was the most improved golfer and would often initiate a discussion during the lesson – everything would stop and interaction would happen. She asks leading questions and prompts others. It is with Henry and Delia that the power really lies – Henry, by the token of his knowledge and experience, holds the power in the lessons and Delia when we get to the coffee.

"My God, I'm not going to be able to do this" she says. Henry and Christopher reassure her.

Henry and Christopher have taken Delia to a proper golf course for the first time; she must have graduated I guess. We stand on the first tee. It must be an intimidating experience. I don't know if it helps that she has a PGA Professional playing with her; it might put lots of others off. Having said that Henry is so relaxed I can only imagine that he is a calming influence...

First tee shot time... Straight down the middle. Not long but good enough...

The whole group are jubilant. It's like Delia has joined 'the club'- playing on the course and doing really well for her first time.

"I was so scared" she tells me afterwards "but the boys are so nice and supportive that I knew it would be OK even if I made a prat of myself"

I ask myself, if everyone could feel this supported when they start out their golfing journey, maybe more would stay and participate for life instead of trying but dropping out: a big problem for the sport.

4.5 Leanne

Keywords: Married, son aged 9, daughter aged 4, part time teacher, early forties.

Leanne is struggling tonight, in fact, she struggles most Monday nights. The ball isn't going anywhere. Her face is contorted and she is desperate to 'maintain face' among her peers who appear to be getting better, give or take, most weeks. Leanne is getting worse; and the effort is killing her. Henry has already spent more than a fair of the time with Leanne tonight but it makes no difference.

"What am I doing wrong?" she asks me...

How to respond?

"Just try and relax," I tell her. "Take a break for a minute". I am a Golf Coach, but this is Henry's patch, I really don't want to interfere.

Her poor performance is getting to her in more ways than one.

"The others are doing better than me," she says.

"That's OK" I say, "We all learn at different rates and at different times".

I talk to Delia and she has noticed Leanne's struggle.

"I just don't know how to help her", she says.

Although Delia feels powerless to help I know she would if she could. She takes Henry aside later and talks to him about it. Henry is feeling under pressure too. Why is it that one

of the group just doesn't get it? Henry feels this calls into question his professional competence.

During coffee, Leanne is a changed person, happy, engaging, one of the leaders of the group. It's like chalk and cheese. Christopher on the other hand is a fairly good player, in the golfing field he is King, whereas in the coffee domain, Christopher is quiet, listening and agreeable.

4.6 Christopher

Keywords: Early twenties, single, blue collar.

Christopher is an interesting member of the group. Strangely enough Henry introduced him to the girls when the group were having coffee. He just sat down and joined in. Being the mother and leader of the group Delia was the one who made Christopher feel welcome and engaged him in conversation. He and Delia are now quite close. They often go to the pitch and putt course together in the evenings and sometimes on Mondays when Henry cannot do the lesson. The two of them make an odd, but rather endearing, pair.

"Delia is like a really good friend now…I dunno, she looks after me". Christopher has been through some issues in his personal life and Delia was there to support him and help him through, as was Henry.

"We are close, she's kind of like a really cool mum…I had a few things goin on and she was the one that I phoned and talked to about them…she helped me through...we both met up with Henry a couple of times as well and that really helped. To be honest all the

45

girls in the group are great and we all keep in contact on the phone and by text in between lessons".

4.7 Samantha

Keywords: Married, 3 children, full time mum, and former nurse, mid forties.

Samantha is a 100%er, that's for sure. She listens intently to Henry, her forehead creasing in concentration.

"But am I doing it right?"

"Yes, that's really good, maybe you could…."

Samantha really does expect an information-based approach from Henry. He on the other hand, generally, coaches in a much more questioning, problem-solving way.

Henry's style is relaxed, not too much technical detail, but in many ways this is what Samantha craves; she needs to be told what to do and then she feels she could follow these instructions. Is there a parallel here with how the group functions in the coffee context? Samantha is directed (consciously or subconsciously) by Delia in coffee and by Henry in golf.

4.8 Juliet

Keywords: Second marriage, stepson, and full time fun-seeker.

Juliet was there in the early days and gradually faded away. I don't think she liked the social interaction of the group. Interestingly she didn't take part in many of the children-related conversations. Anyone would have guessed she was childless, which in one way, she is. Juliet's main aim is to pack in as much fun into as short a space of time as she can.

Her husband plays golf, although he won't play with her, "He says I'm crap and play too slowly. He's probably right," she says.

Juliet, having played some golf before lessons with Henry, was initially on a different level to the others. The problem with this was that the set-piece type lessons (grip, stance and posture, and swing) that Henry taught at the start were not really relevant to Juliet, or so she thought. This meant she was bored by the content of the lesson and often went back to her bay when Henry was talking to the group in another bay. Henry just ignored her and carried on with the others.

Juliet was far more interested in the play on the course; she turned up for many of the games that Henry organised, but stopped coming to Monday night lessons. Having said that even on the course Juliet was clearly frustrated by the slow play and chatting of the others. Juliet was also very quiet in the coffee settings after golf. She didn't really share the same lifestyle as the others and stayed on the periphery. I guess the fact that she was 'better' and that she didn't enjoy the social interaction of the group was why she dropped out. It's a shame that I didn't get to ask her more about this.

4.9 A morning at the golf course

It turns out to be a lovely day for our first visit to the golf course, which is really a pitch and putt course. Henry had advised everyone about dress code and what is expected of them here, although looking at the place this doesn't seem like it was necessary - a sign by the first hole details rules one of which is 'no play allowed without a shirt' – hardly St Andrews!

On our trip are Henry, Delia, Leanne, Samantha and Juliet. Everyone has got their new golf shoes on, and very smart they look too; apart from Juliet of course whose muddy shoes clearly indicate she is a 'practicing' golfer. They have all 'made an effort' too. Full make-up and matching outfits - coach and researcher excepted!

Henry attempts to explain how it's decided who will play their tee shot first. Eventually it's a bit of a free-for-all. First shots are all taken with moderate success. What an easy game this is! We make our way to their golf balls and immediately a problem becomes apparent.

'Isn't it a lovely day?'

'What are you doing at the weekend?'

'I <u>love</u> your trousers'…

I think Henry can see the issue here. The social interaction is going to be difficult to manage into the right places.

Henry explains that the person whose ball is furthest away will now play next. No problem.

"It's you"

"Is it?"

"…Yes I think so"

The only exception here was Juliet who just wanted to 'get on with it'.

On the third hole, play actually stops for what feels like a long time…we are discussing something. Even Henry gets drawn in. Suddenly he takes command again and directs play like a conductor. It's quite endearing to see the gentle Henry trying to cajole and guide these novice golfers through the minefield of etiquette. Interestingly, Juliet doesn't try to help this process, but stands with hand on hip, huffing and puffing until it's her turn to play.

On the way back to the clubhouse I ask Henry about this 'part' he plays as the coach.

"So in general, do you try to manage how pupils see you?"

"Oh for sure…I have to put on my coaching mask. It's like putting on a performance really"

"How do you 'act' then?"

"Confident for sure, even if you're not sure what the problem is or how to solve it. What I try and do is mirror the personality of who I'm teaching and try and make them at ease and relax"

"Does that still happen with the girls?"

"I think we are way past that now! No, they know me very well now".

"Is that more difficult for you to handle?"

"I think it probably is…they know me so well that the mask has slipped I guess."

4.10 Coffee and Wagon Wheels: an after-golf ritual

We retire to the clubhouse, a small concrete building that comprises the shop, café and centre of operations. Coffee and Wagon Wheels all around. We have a lengthy discussion on the merits of Wagon Wheels and how we thought they had disappeared in the 1970's. Everything is making a comeback these days including biscuits it seems, although we all agree that they are smaller – maybe it's just that we are bigger!?. The usual pattern emerges, chat, coffee, chat.

"Shall we have another one?"

"…Yes, why not…"

Delia ends up being late to pick her kids up from school... and I'm left trying to work out if they're all here to catch up and chat, or play golf.

Seems to me it's a bit of both.

Chapter 5

Discussion

5.1 Introduction

Once established in the research setting, it was very easy for me to interact with the group. I think that this was more to do with their attitude as people rather than any great strategy I had. As time went on I began building relationships with the actors myself, but the question emerged, was I in fact an observer, participant, or, participant-observer? I believe that the answer to this is that my position evolved during the course of the study; I started as an observer and then moved towards being a member of the group.

The issue of *my* social 'position' within the group is just a part of the wider issue of the social positioning of the group as a whole. Toms and Kirk (2006; 101) say that the social positioning "helps us to understand not only how individuals and groups practice and interact around (and within) their positions, but also how the practices of these positions can help to construct a sports club itself".

What follows is a discussion around the four key areas previously identified during the literature review which seek to deepen and further understanding around the research questions of this study in this particular context.

5.2 Socialisation into golf; the sample

The group was certainly a social one. Interaction was their raison d'être. Golf was the vehicle for this but it could just have easily been tennis or bowls. Golf was a by-product but the group found new places to meet, the driving range, the pitch and putt course and also a full sized golf course. The female members of the group all knew each other at the start

of the process, mainly because their children went to the same school. The motivation to play came from Delia and Leanne's children as their participation sparked the interest of their mothers but also as golf was an activity they could all do together. However, in the process the group did transform and draw new members in. Henry and Christopher were added to the group and more and complex social relationships and ties were formed. New settings for social interaction were also discovered: the pitch and putt course and the golf course among them. The social gathering and 'catching up' was all important. Although the female members of the group often met at the school gates, there really was not enough time then to chat 'properly' and catch up. The golf context was free from children and their arrangements for football, cricket and golf practice.

These settings contrast greatly to the setting described by Zevenbergen et al (2002). In their study, the golf 'cadets' were aiming to become members of the golf club and as such had to conform and adhere to the social values that were set out for them. They were not there to socialise but to get into the golf club. The culture identified in the study was actually one which saw interaction, especially during the lesson, as distracting and inappropriate. Conversely, the group studied here formed their own rules and society, rules which the coach followed, not vice versa. The social interaction was the reason for the golf, and often interrupted it.

In part this was possible because of the initial setting in which their golf lessons occurred. The driving range was not a stereotypical golf environment; there was no dress code, no membership rules, and no social hierarchy; none of the barriers that the women in the Shotton et al (2004) study had to deal with. The driving range was child-friendly and notable for the large number of women who attended. This was certainly in contrast to the setting described by Zevenbergen et al (2002) where rules and regulations were apparent in all aspects of the club. This is potentially an area where golf clubs could improve

recruitment and membership levels. Golf clubs are usually not the most welcoming places and stereotypically tend to be male and white dominated and have strict dress codes. These factors may well have put off the members of this group from starting golf in a golf club environment; one which Shotton et al (2004) reports is imbued with sex discrimination.

Henry reported that the group was 'worth a lot' to him initially in terms of pounds and pence, but latterly in terms of their friendship. This was apparent to the extent that Henry didn't like charging Delia for lessons at the golf course; it was more like friends just having a game together (although Henry didn't ask for payment, Delia did still pay). At least part of the reason for this may have been the matching of teaching and learning styles that Henry and Delia preferred and enjoyed. This may seem unusual practice but as Lyle (2002) points out, sports coaching practice is shaped by social structures, relationships and social trends. This pattern of coaching practice that Henry was part of was indeed shaped and formed by the group members as by the coach.

Henry got to know the participants as individuals and friends, not just clients and, as such, followed the advice of Potrac and Purdy (2004) who suggest that interpersonal element of coaching is critical if the coaching is to be successful. Perhaps this would be a sensible way for golf coaches to go about teaching the everyday golfer; to build a 'true' relationship thus encouraging prolonged participation. However, not all coaches could necessarily duplicate the time and effort Henry put into this group with everyone they teach because of time constraints as well as potentially not having pupils they connected with in such a good way.

5.3 Social interaction and the coaching context

There is a huge contrast between the coaching styles adopted within this study by Henry and that detailed in previous research. Although at the start of the study, Henry was quite formal in the lesson format, he always acted more like a facilitator rather than a prescriptive teacher. This is in stark contrast to the style of the coach described in Zevenbergen et al (2002) where the cadets (pupils) were required to take part in the lesson that consisted of Ken, the coach and authority figure, 'passing down' his knowledge of the 'one right way to play'. Cadets were forbidden to interact. In contrast, Henry was happy for the group to interact (which they clearly wanted to) and positively encouraged it, following the advice of Stafford (2007) and Lyle (2002) who encourage coaches to deliver a participant-centred approach founded on communication and social relationships.

Henry was attempting to let the group problem-solve and come up with their own answers and solutions. Jones and Wallace (2005) suggest that coaches should expect to exercise some 'control' over athletes, but that this level of control will always be variable and limited by the often complex and problematic social context. Certainly Henry got the group back 'on track' if they were going in the wrong direction and in this way did exert an element of control. However, as the study progressed the agenda was set more and more by the participants. As each player started to exhibit different strengths and weaknesses the lesson became more like four or five individual lessons in one hour rather than a 'group' lesson. Delia also wielded power in the lesson scenario. Often the lessons would break down to look at a technical issue or have a discussion (led by Delia usually), but the discussion would soon result in a joke that would lead to laughter. The approach of Henry to 'let this happen' shows him to be the flexible, creative and socially aware coach that Jones (2000) suggests will be the most successful.

In Wright (2005) I found that the social interaction was an important motivator for the children involved – I classified different groups identified as fun seeking socialisers and socialisers. For some the social interaction was the primary reason to be at the lesson, much like the girls in this study. However, I also found that the coaches in my earlier study (Wright 2005) were disorganised and, as such, failed to identify the distinct groups within the golf lesson. They failed to meet the needs of the majority of the participants. Henry used social interaction as a tool of his guided-discovery style of coaching and, in doing so, strengthened the relationship and trust he built up with members of the group.

The complex thing about this group of golfers (and for that matter virtually any group of athletes) is that each member of the group had different learning styles or ways in which they preferred to be coached. In this case Samantha wanted detailed technical instruction, Leanne just desperately wanted to get better and Delia, a thinker and reflector, was most in line with the guided discovery-style that Henry adopted. How can the coach possibly cater for all these different requirements within a single session? In the case of Purdy et al (2008) and Zevenbergen et al (2002) the coaches simply delivered and the participants either liked it or not. Purdy et al (2008) reported varying levels of compliance and co-operation between the coach and athletes and perhaps this was because of this approach. It should be noted that the participants in this study were at National Championship level and this too may well have had an effect on the approach to coaching compared to that of the golf participant coach in this study. However, Purdy et al (2008) did report that the insensitivity to social and power issues resulted in an irretrievable breakdown of coach athlete relations.

Perhaps the 'social care' that Henry adopted and was keen to encourage was important in keeping most of the participants happy. Armour (2004) says that elite rugby coach Bob

Dwyer identified social care as a key function of the coach in creating an environment where athletes are able to relax and feel supported by the coach, both on and off the pitch. Dwyer asserted his belief that the coaching role was a giving one, "I think it's important to know that the role of the coach is to give, give, give to the players" (Armour 2004; 96). In this study, Henry did 'give' to the situation by allowing himself to be fully immersed both in the context of the lesson as well as outside of the lesson. Indeed, the whole group contributed to the care of Christopher when he was going through serious 'personal issues'. Telephone and text messages of support and advice were sent by the group to Christopher even though he was away from the group for a while. Delia and Henry both met with Christopher in a non-golf setting to offer support and friendship. When Leanne was struggling to hit the ball Henry spent more time with her and Delia approached Henry to say that she had noticed that Leanne was not happy and was keen to find out what could be done to help her. These incidents, and the group's reaction to them, resulted in strengthened bonds and relationships within the group.

The social care that Henry showed is perhaps a means by which coaches can deepen their relationship with players and build up mutual trust and connection. Despite the fact that all the members of the group studied here wanted different things from the coaching, only one dropped out and the remaining members of the group actually became closer as a result. In Wright (2005) I had identified that the needs of participants were not being met adequately, and because of this, attrition rates were high. However, it is important to note that Henry did not carry out a conscious 'audit' of what the participants wanted and how they preferred to be taught. Perhaps he picked up on this unconsciously and adapted his style to suit the situation. In the work of Zevenbergen et al (2002) and Purdy et al (2008) there is no suggestion that their coaches did this either. However, this is extremely important issue and both North (2007) and Cassidy et al (2004) suggest, good coaching

practice and participation are strongly linked. In Henry's case perhaps he achieved and maintained participation of most of the group simply by the personal relationship and group bond that emerged. Henry was not formally educated to take this approach, but he acted intelligently to meet the needs of his participants.

5.4 Rules, etiquette and golf culture

The Royal and Ancient (2008) quote the Rules of Golf as follows: "Play the ball as it lies. Play the course as you find it, and if you can't do either, do what is fair." If only it were this simple, they continue: "But to do what is fair, you need to know the Rules of Golf". The Rules of Golf consists of 203 pages and covers issues as obscure as what to do when your opponent attends the flagstick without your permission! Golf is certainly a game that has lots of rules, written and unwritten. During the first few weeks of their lessons, Henry did hand out copies of the Rules of Golf to the group, but I cannot imagine they read them and who can blame them for that?

Henry, by accident or design, managed to produce a culture very different to the 'norm' in the context of golf. Zevenbergen et al (2002) and Shotton et al (2004) state that golf is structured in a way so as to legitimate the dominant social and cultural groups. The group of beginner golfers in this study was certainly not the normal golf 'crowd'. The habitus they experienced in the three settings I observed them in, varied. Firstly, as previously mentioned, at the driving range there are none of the normal golf rules and etiquette, you could wear jeans and trainers without fearing being thrown out of the club. Women and children were great in number at the centre, definitely not a norm in a golf setting. Secondly, at the pitch and putt course there were some rules – wearing a shirt for instance – but not much etiquette. There were 'proper' practicing golfers to be found here, but also others for whom the pitch and putt was the extent of their golf. However, in the third

setting, when Delia graduated to a 'proper' golf course, she was subject to all the rules and etiquette issues that Zevenbergen et al (2002) would describe as normal golf culture and that Shotton et al (2004) found that women were much more likely to adhere to.

Fortunately, Delia was largely unaware of these issues and was therefore not put off golf or adversely affected by them; the only concern she had was focussed on her actual performance on the course. Delia was not concerned with stepping in the wrong place or making a noise at the wrong time. – my own first experience on the course was at a busy time, I was told that the Captain of the Club was playing in the group behind and was watching me as I prepared to take my very first tee shot. Lots of pressure to do the right thing, play in the right order, and not cough at the wrong time. Result? I hit the ball with a big slice out-of-bounds. Re-load…out of bounds again…humiliation…how did I manage to get over this? Given this initial experience, maybe others would have given up the game. Henry went about managing this potentially tricky situation by largely ignoring it. Rather than explain all the rules beforehand, Henry's approach was to try and explain things as the group went along. Shotton et al (2004) describe the women they encountered as being much more influenced and governed by the rules they encountered, Delia was simply not exposed to these rules and therefore was not affected by them.

The first visit to the pitch and putt course was a good illustration of this. On this trip, three out of the four had brand new golf shoes on, as well as some interesting new 'golfing' outfits. Despite the social interaction threatening to take over, Henry tried to teach the group about how it is decided who takes the next shot. Juliet was clearly frustrated by this as she already was a 'golfer' and knew these rules, although interestingly was unwilling to

offer the others any advice or help. Indeed Juliet appeared to be quite cross with Henry for not making the rules clear before the start of play and thus allowing her more time to play. Juliet did not fit into the group; she wanted to attend for the instruction, but the social interaction afterwards did not appeal to her and she left the group. I met Julia by chance some time later (at a 'proper' golf course) and she told me that since leaving the girls group she had begun to play some golf with her husband, a 'socialised' golfer and that this was far better as he 'knew the rules'.

The golfing 'cadets' in the Zevenbergen et al (2002) study had the rules clearly written down for all to see, as well as having an overseer to ensure they were strictly adhered too. Failure to comply with these rules resulted in the offender being marginalised and possibly excluded. The actors in *this* study suffered no such scrutiny and baggage of rules, etiquette, golf culture and habitus and although that did clearly not suit Juliet, for the other participants this was a positive.

5.5 Behind the coaching mask

Jones (2006) believes the interaction between coach and participant is the essence of coaching, rather than the mechanics of what, and how, to perform a skill. Within the context of this interaction the coach needs to present a coaching face or 'mask'. Jones (2006) is certainly concerned and aware of this coaching persona and the management of it. Initially Henry did wear a mask and keep the relationship with the participants fairly formal. He described his coaching persona as confident and relaxed even if he was struggling to diagnose a swing fault; in the syntax of Graham Taylor, quoted in Potrac and Purdy (2004), he was a 'good actor'. However, to some degree the mask slipped over time with this group of novice golfers. The length of time and quality of social interaction

they enjoyed meant that the group knew a lot about Henry and his outlook on life and his personal circumstances. He learned a lot more about them too and as such their relationships were deeper and more firmly cemented than with an average pupil. Taylor's view (described in Potrac and Purdy 2004) was that the coach has to maintain the 'mask' and always remain positive, but it should be noted that Taylor in his coaching career was dealing with professional footballers and a team situation whereas Henry, in this case, was coaching beginning participant-type players, a distinction which Lyle (1999a) believes is necessary and needs making due to their diverse nature.

Perhaps Henry should have maintained a more 'professional' distance with the group. Clearly, once the coach has entered the field of more social understanding and interaction with pupils, one has to work out where to draw the line, and with this group in particular, *how* to draw the line. The group was so interactive that Henry had little choice but to join in. Perhaps initially, Henry felt he needed to join in to keep their 'business'. However, once fully socialised, he became especially close to two of the golfers who became good friends. This approach is backed up by the findings of Armour (2004) who suggests that coaches are aware of the social norms that are appropriate given their position, but that they are also influenced by role models and that it is the synthesis of these issues that allows the coach to transcend both and "become their own coaches" (Armour 2004; 134).

Henry was certainly his own man, having coached for 10 years. He was relaxed about his interaction with the group despite his own admission that the coaching mask had slipped somewhat. However, Jones (2004b) warns that deviance away from the coaching 'performance' or 'front' may put the credibility of the coach at risk; although this was in the context of a study of elite level coaches. Conversely, in this coaching situation the slipping of the mask possibly strengthened Henry's relationship with the group; the 'real' person

60

eventually shining through and forming relationships deeper than simply that of golf coach and pupil. However, it is questionable as to whether Henry could really use this tactic with all his other pupils. There would certainly be an issue with the amount of time he would need to dedicate to this but also there may be many pupils who would prefer to keep the relationship that of coach and player rather than anything more informal.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

This paper sought to examine the social elements of golf coaching: the relationship of coach and golfer(s) and the societies they form. The social perspective of sports is an area that has been largely under-valued in coaching literature. Whilst there are a number of studies investigating participation issues, there is little written about the coaching 'experience'. Until recently, coaching theory and practice have largely been focused on the technical at the expense of the social; an emphasis on the *'what'* rather than the *'how'*.

This study identified that the social relationships of the group were actually more important to the group than the activity itself, with issues of social support and community being central. The group met for social reasons rather than sporting ones. Ignorance of social issues can lead to coaching practice becoming de-skilled and to the "development of mechanistic coaches all primed with the knowledge, but finding it difficult to adapt that knowledge to the ever-changing complexities of the human environment" (Armour and Jones 2006; 8). Henry was certainly not a mechanistic coach. In fact it could be argued that he took the social aspects of teaching these individuals too far. Henry became their friend. The social interaction took place after the golf lesson, but also during the lesson. The lesson would stop and social interaction would ensue. Amongst other reasons, this may have been due in part to the lack of usual rules and culture of the golfing context. The actors were not aware of the usual golfing culture and were therefore were focussed purely on performance and not on anything else.

Reliability will always be a contentious issue when undertaking ethnography and writing in a narrative style. The truth that I discovered during the study is the only truth I can be

concerned with. It is critical though that my presence was acknowledged and accounted for. However, this is a subjective view and I will never really know to what extent I discovered the 'truth'. I did discover a 'truth' of what actually happened, but several questions will always remain unanswered with this type of research. How did my presence affect the truth that I experienced? What would the truth have looked like if I had <u>not</u> been there? It should also be acknowledged that this study is illustrative of this experience only. It cannot be used to generalise and is indicative of the experience of the participants only. As Purdy et al (2008) say, this type of research is a complementary way of understand the coaching context but will always be framed from the researcher's point of view.

Armour and Jones (2006; 8) believe that "sport sociology knowledge is knowledge which empowers coaches to act intellectually and reflexively, to critically evaluate information from a range on interested parties, and to take responsibility for decisions affecting their athletes". An appreciation of these social perspectives is invaluable in improving and understanding coaching practice. Jones et al (2004) believe that coaching relies less on the mechanics of how or what to coach and more on who is coaching, their perceptions of how coaches ought to act, and the relationships they have with those being coached. With this in mind, this paper suggests that there is a need for the coach to understand the social needs of the participants as much as their technical needs. Ultimately it calls for a better understanding of the importance of *how* one should teach, as well as *what* one should teach among coaches in golf.

References

Armour, K. (2004) "Coaching Pedagogy" <u>In</u> Jones, R; Armour, K; and Potrac, P. (eds) **Sports Coaching Cultures: From Practice to Theory**. London: Routledge. pp. 94-115.

Armour, K; and Jones, R. L. (2000) "The Practical Heart Within: The Value of a Sociology of Sport" <u>In</u> Jones, R. L; and Armour, K. (eds) **Sociology of Sport, Theory and Practice**. London: Pearson. pp. 1-12

Atkinson, P. (1997) **The Ethnographic Imagination**. London: Routledge.

Biddle, J; and Mutrie, N. (2001) **Psychology of Physical Activity**. London: Routledge.

Cassidy, T; Jones, R; and Potrac, P. (2004) **Understanding Sports Coaching**. London: Routledge.

Chang, H. (2008) **Autoethnography as Method**. California: Left Coast Press.

Charmaz, K; and Mitchell, R. G. (2002) "Grounded Theory in Ethnography" <u>In</u> Atkinson, P; Coffey, A; Delamont, S; and Lofland, J. (eds) **Handbook of Ethnography**. London: Sage. pp. 160-174

Cohen, L; Manion, L; and Morrison, K. (2005) **Research Methods in Education**. London: Routledge.

Connell, R. (1993) "Understanding the learner: guidelines for the coach" <u>In</u> Lee, M. (ed) **Coaching Children in Sport**, London: E. and F. N. Spon. pp. 78-90

Côté, J. (2002) "Coach and Peer Influence on Children's Development through Sport" <u>In</u> Silva, J. M; and Stevens, D. (eds) **Psychological Foundations of Sport**. Boston: Allyn & Bacon. Pp. 520-540

Côté, J; and Hay, J. (2002) "Children's Involvement in Sport: A Developmental Perspective" In Silva, J. M; and Stevens, D. (eds) **Psychological Foundations of Sport**. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. pp 484-502

Cross, N; and Brewer, B. (1999) "Coaching Children" <u>In</u> Cross, N; and Lyle, J. (eds) **The Coaching Process: Principles and Practice for Sport**. Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann. pp. 155-173

Cushion, C; Armour, K; and Jones, R. (2006) Locating the coaching process in practice: models 'for' and 'of' coaching. **Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy**, Vol 11, No 1: 83-99

Denzin, N. (1997) **Interpretative Ethnography – Ethnographic Practices for the 21st Century**. Thousand Island: Sage.

Denzin, N. K; and Lincoln, Y. S. (2000a) "Introduction: The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research" In Denzin, N. K; and Lincoln, Y. S. (eds) **Handbook of Qualitative Research**. London: Sage. pp. 1-30

Denzin, N. K. (2000b) "The Practices and Politics of Interpretation" In Denzin, N. K; and Lincoln, Y. S. (eds) **Handbook of Qualitative Research**. London: Sage. pp. 897-922

Department for Culture, Media and Sport (2001) **A Sporting Future for All**. London: Department for Culture Media and Sport.

Donnelly, P. (2003) "Sport and Social Theory" <u>In</u> Houlihan, B. (ed) **Sport and Society: A Student Introduction**. London: Sage. pp. 11-27

Ellis, C; and Bochner, A. (2000) "Autoethnography, Personal Narrative, Reflexivity: Researcher as Subject" <u>In</u> Denzin, N. K; and Lincoln, Y. S. (eds) **Handbook of Qualitative Research**. London: Sage. pp. 733-768

Ferguson, H. (2006) **Phenomenological Sociology and Insight in Modern Society**. London: Thousand Island.

Foster, C; Hillsdon, M; Cavill, N; Allender, S; and Cowburn, G. (2005) **Understanding Participation in Sport**. London: Sport England.

Gadamer, H-G. (1975) **Truth and Method**. London: Sheed and Ward.

Galipeau, J; and Trudel, P. (2006) "Athlete learning in a community of practice – Is there a role for the coach?" <u>In</u> Jones, R. (ed) **The Sports Coach as Educator**. London: Routledge. pp. 77-94

Geertz, C. (1993) **The Interpretation of Culture**. London: Fontana.

Gergen, M. M; and Gergen, K. J. (2000) "Qualitative Inquiry: Tensions and Transformations" <u>In</u> Denzin, N. K; and Lincoln, Y. S. (eds) **Handbook of Qualitative Research**. London: Sage. pp. 1025-1046

Gilbert and Trudel (2006) "The Coach as a Reflective Practitioner" <u>In</u> Jones, R. (ed) **The Sports Coach as Educator**. London: Routledge. pp. 113-127

Gratton, C; and Jones, I. (2004) **Research Methods for Sports Studies**. London: Routledge.

Greenback, P. (2003) The Role of Values in Educational Research: the case for reflexivity. **British Educational Research Journal**, Vol 29, No 6: 791-801

Greene, J. C. (2000) "Understanding Social Programs Through Evaluation" <u>In</u> Denzin, N. K; and Lincoln, Y. S. (eds) **Handbook of Qualitative Research**. London: Sage. pp. 981-1000

Gubrium, J F; and Holstein, J. A. (2000) "Analysing Interpretive Practice" <u>In</u> Denzin, N. K; and Lincoln, Y. S. (eds) **Handbook of Qualitative Research**. London: Sage. pp. 487-508

Hammersley, M; and Atkinson, P. (2002) **Ethnography: Principles and Practice**. London: Tavistock.

Heyl, B. S. (2002) "Ethnographic Interviewing" <u>In</u> Atkinson, P; Coffey, A; Delamont, S; and Lofland, J. (eds) **Handbook of Ethnography**. London: Sage. pp. 369-383

Hodkinson, P. (2004) Research as a form of work: expertise, community and methodological objectivity. **British Educational Research Journal**, Vol 30, No 1: 9-26

House of Commons (2008) **European Commission White Paper on Sport**, House of Commons, 14th May 2008

James, A. (2002) "Ethnography in the Study of Children and Childhood" <u>In</u> Atkinson, P; Coffey, A; Delamont, S; and Lofland, J. (eds) **Handbook of Ethnography**. London: Sage. pp. 246-257

Jones, R. (2006) Dilemmas, Maintaining "Face," and Paranoia. **Qualitative Inquiry**, 12 (5): 1012-1021

Jones, R. (2000) "Towards a Sociology of Coaching" <u>In</u> Jones, R; and Armour, K. (eds) **Sociology of Sport: Theory and Practice**. Essex: Longman. pp. 33-43

Jones, R. (2004a) "Coaches Roles" In Jones, R; Armour, K; and Potrac, P. (eds) **Sports Coaching Cultures: From Practice to Theory**. London: Routledge. pp. 116-134

Jones, R. (2004b) "Coaches' Interactions" <u>In</u> Jones, R; Armour, K; and Potrac, P. (eds) **Sports Coaching Cultures: From Practice to Theory**. London: Routledge. pp. 135-149

Jones, R; Armour, K and Potrac, P. (2002) "Understanding the Coaching Process: A Framework for Social Analysis", **Quest**, Vol 54, No 1: 34-48

Jones, R; Armour, K; and Potrac, P. (2003) Constructing Expert Knowledge: A Case Study of a Top-Level Professional Soccer Coach. **Sport, Education and Society**, Vol 8, No 2: 213-229

Jones, R and Wallace, M. (2005) "Another bad day at the training ground: coping with ambiguity in the coaching context", **Sport, Education and Society**, Vol 10, No 1: 119-134

Jorgensen, D. (1989) **Participant Observation**. London: Sage.

Karp, I; and Kendall, M. B. (1982) "Reflexivity in Fieldwork" <u>In</u> Secord, P. F. (ed) **Explaining Social Behaviour: Consciousness, Human Action and Social Structure**. Beverley Hills: Sage. pp. 249-273

Kay, T. (2003) **The Family Factor in Sport – A review of factors affecting sports participation**. Report Commissioned by Sport England. Loughborough University: Loughborough.

Lave, J; and Wenger, E. (1991) **Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation**. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Lincoln, Y. S; and Guba, E. G. (2000) "Paradigmatic Controversies, Contradictions, and Emerging Confluences" <u>In</u> Denzin, N. K; and Lincoln, Y. S. (eds) **Handbook of Qualitative Research**. London: Sage. pp. 163-188

Lyle, J. (1999a) "The Coaching Process: An Overview" <u>In</u> Cross, N. and Lyle, J. (eds) **The Coaching Process: Principles and Practice for Sport**. Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann. pp. 3-24.

Lyle, J. (1999b) "Coaching Philosophy and Coaching Behaviour" In Cross, N; and Lyle, J. (eds) **The Coaching Process: Principles and Practice for Sport**. Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann. pp. 25-66

Lyle, J. (2002) **Sports Coaching Concepts – A Framework For Coaches Behaviour**, London, Routledge.

MacDonald, D; and Tinning, R. (1995) Physical education teacher education and the trend to proletarianization: A case study. **Journal of Teaching in Physical Education**, Vol 15: 98-118

MacPhail, A; Gorley, T; and Kirk, D. (2003) Young People's Socialisation into Sport: A Case Study of an Athletics Club. **Sport Education and Society**, Vol 8, No 2: 251-267

MacPhail, A; and Kirk, D. (2006) Young People's Socialisation into Sport: Experiencing the Specialising Phase. **Leisure Studies**, Vol 25, No 1: 57-74

Mathers, J. (1997) Professional coaching in golf: Is there an appreciation of the coaching process? **Scottish Journal of Physical Education**, Vol 25, No1: 23-25

North, J. (2007) **Increasing Participation in Sport: The Role of the Coach**. Sportscoach UK December 2007

O'Sullivan, M. (2007) Research quality in physical education and sport pedagogy. **Sport, Education and Society**, Vol 12, No 3: 245-260

Phillpots, K. (2007) "The development of the UK Coaching Framework for Golf" In Jenkins, S. (ed) **The Annual Review of Golf Coaching**. Brentwood: Multi-Science Publishing. pp. 167-184

Pollner, M; and Emerson, R. M. (2002) "Ethnomethodology and Ethnography" In Atkinson, P; Coffey, A; Delamont, S; and Lofland, J. (eds) **Handbook of Ethnography**. London: Sage. pp. 118-135

Potrac, P; and Jones, R. (1999) "The Invisible Ingredient in Coaching Knowledge; A Case for Recognising and Researching the Social Component", **Sociology of Sport Online**, Vol 2, No 1. www.brunel.ac.uk/depts/sps/sosol/sosol.htm, (Accessed June 2007)

Potrac, P; Jones, R; and Armour, K. (2002) Its All About Getting Respect: The Coaching Behaviours of an Expert English Soccer Coach, **Sport, Education and Society**, Vol 7, No 2: 183-202

Potrac, P; Brewer, C; Jones, R; Armour, K; and Hoff, J. (2000) Towards an Holistic Understanding of the Coaching Process. **Quest**, Vol 52, No 2: 186-199

Potrac, P. and Purdy, L. (2004) "Graham Taylor" In Jones, R; Armour, K; and Potrac, P. (eds) **Sports Coaching Cultures: From Practice to Theory**. London: Routledge. pp. 21-31

Purdy, L; Potrac, P; and Jones, R. (2008) Power, consent and resistance: an autoethnography of competitive rowing. **Sport, Education and Society**, Vol 13, No 3: 319-336

Rees, T. (2002) "Ethical Issues" In Allan, G. and Skinner, S. (eds) **Handbook for Research Students in the Social Sciences**. London: Falmer Press. pp. 140-151

Rock, P. (2007) "Symbolic Interactionism and Ethnography" In Atkinson, P; Coffey, A; Delamont, S; Lofland, J and Lofland, L. (eds) **Handbook of Ethnography**. Los Angeles: Sage. pp. 26-38

Royal and Ancient (2008) **Rules of Golf 2008-2011**. St Andrews: R&A Rules Ltd.

Sands, R. (2002) **Sport Ethnography**. Leeds: Human Kinetics.

Schempp, P. (1998) The dynamics of human diversity in sport pedagogy scholarship. **Sociology of Sport Online**, Vol 1, No 1 www.brunel.ac.uk/depts/sps/sosol/sosol.htm, (Accessed June 2007)

Schwandt, T. A. (2000) "Three Epistemological Stances for Qualitative Inquiry: Interpretivism, Hermeneutics, and Social Constructionism" In Denzin, N. K; and Lincoln, Y. S. (eds) **Handbook of Qualitative Research**. London. Sage: pp 189-214

Shotton, P; Armour, K. M; and Potrac, P. (2004) An ethnographic study of gender influences on social behaviour of members at a private golf club. **Sociology of Sport Online**, Vol 1, No 2. www.brunel.ac.uk/depts/sps/sosol/sosol.htm, (Accessed June 2007)

Smith, R.E. and Smoll, F. L (2002) "Coaching Behaviour Research and Intervention in Youth Sports" In Smoll, F. L; and Smith, R. E. (eds) **Children and Youth in Sport: A Bio-psychosocial Perspective**. Iowa: Kendall Hunt Publishing. pp. 211-234

Smoll, F. L; Magill, R. A; and Ash, M. J. (1988) **Children in Sport**. Champaign: Human Kinetics.

Sparkes, A. (1992) **Research in physical education and sport; exploring alternative visions**. London, Falmer Press.

Stafford, I. (2007) **Coaching for Long Term Athlete Development: To Improve Participation and Performance in Sport**. Leeds: Coachwise.

Sugden, J; and Tomlinson, A. (2002) "Theory and method for a critical sociology of sport" In Sugden, J; and Tomlinson, A. (eds) **Power Games – A Critical Sociology of Sport**. London: Routledge. pp. 3-22

Tedlock, B. (2000) "Ethnography and Ethnographic Representations" In Denzin, N. K; and Lincoln, Y. S. (eds) **Handbook of Qualitative Research**. London. Sage: pp 455-486

Toms, M; and Kirk, D. (2006) "The Researcher and Positionality in Youth Sports" In Fleming, S; and Jordan, F. (eds) **Ethical Issues in Leisure Research**. Brighton: Leisure Studies Association: pp 99-112

Vidich, A. J; and Lyman, S. M. (2000) "Qualitative Methods: Their History in Sociology and Anthropology" In Denzin, N. K; and Lincoln, Y. S. (eds) **Handbook of Qualitative Research**. London: Sage. pp. 37-84

Weinberg, R. S; and Gould, D. (2003) **Foundations of Sport and Exercise Psychology**. Champaign: Human Kinetics.

Wenger, E. (2008) **Communities of Practice, A Brief introduction** [online] http://www.ewenger.com/theory/index.htm [Accessed 1st June 2008]

Wenger, E. (2005) **Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity**. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Wenger, E; McDermott, R; and Snyder, W. (2002) **Cultivating Communities of Practice, A Guide to Mnagaing Knowledge**. Boston: Harvard Business Press.

Woodman, L. (1993) Coaching: A science, an art, an emerging profession. **Sports Science Review**, Vol 2, No 2: 1-13

Wright, J. (2005) **Children's Socialisation in Golf: A Case Study of a Golf Driving Range**. AGMS BA Dissertation, University of Birmingham.

Zevenbergen, R; Edwards, A; and Skinner, J. (2002) Junior Golf Club Culture: A Bourdieuian Analysis. **Sociology of Sport Online**, Vol 5, No 1. www.brunel.ac.uk/depts/sps/sosol/sosol.htm, (Accessed June 2007)

Appendix 1

Consent Form

Jonathan Wright
Apartment xx
xxxxxxx
Birmingham
xxx
Telephone 07894 xxxxxx
E-mail jonathanawright@xxxxxx

Dear

My name is Jonathan Wright and I am a Masters Degree student from the School of Education at the University of Birmingham. As part of my studies I am undertaking a short piece of field research. My area of interest is the social interaction of coach and pupil within the context of the golf lesson. As discussed I have the agreement of xxxx xxxx to carry out this research and am writing to you to ask permission for you to be involved.

The purpose of the study is to trying to understand issues around participation and the social aspect involved in golf coaching. It is hoped that these findings will inform golf governing bodies in creating strategies to increase fun, enjoyment and participation.

The research will require that I am present at your group golf lesson on Monday nights. I will be observing and may take some notes. At some point during the research it may be possible that I will ask to conduct an interview with you. If you agree to be involved I guarantee that your identity will remain confidential at all times.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you have the right to leave the study at any point.

Please do contact me if you have any questions regarding this matter,

Jonathan Wright

I hereby give permission to be included in the above research project. I am aware that this process may involve observation and interview. I understand that I have the right to withdraw at any point during this study.

Signed………………………………………
Name………………………………………
Date………………………………………..

UNIVERSITYOF
BIRMINGHAM

University of Birmingham Research Archive

e-theses repository