Is there life after playing football?  
Investigating the perspectives of football coaches at a club in the North West of England.

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Abstract

This paper discusses some-interview based research conducted at a well established football club in the North West of England. The club’s pseudonym in this paper is North West United and individual’s names have been changed to protect their identity. The investigation focused on the attitudes, beliefs and opinions of a small number of football coaches about becoming a coach and coaching champions within professional football. The interviewees were all professional players, now coaching at different levels at the club; “Andy” (A) the youth team coach (coaching 3 years), “Barry” (B) the reserve team coach (coaching 1 year), and “Charlie” (C), the first team coach (coaching 28 years). These football coaches are at different stages in their careers and they provide an interesting insight to the different characters and attitudes involved with coaching football at this club. The structure and presentation of this paper is intended to reveal these insights in the context that they were discovered by bringing to the fore some of the responses from the interviewees. The authors have restricted their focus to “becoming a coach and coaching champions”; however, there are a great deal more topics that could be discussed from the data. Some of these are identified as areas for further research in the conclusion. If the data tells a wider story we leave the reader to make those inferences and judgements. The paper concludes that the personalities and contacts in sport count as much, if not more, towards accessing coaching at the higher levels in UK football.

Becoming a coach in football — the road of chance.

This study reveals that developing a career path of coaching in sport, and in football in particular, does not appear to be a straightforward exercise of progression as many Governing Body plans for coach development would have people believe. The simplified view of progression provided for the aspirant coach is a line of badges from one level to another, rather like leaping over stepping stones towards the highest level of coaching qualification which supposedly, all coaches have equal access to (Figure 1).
Figure 1. **THE FOUR STEPS TO BECOMING A TOP COACH**

(Football Association, 2007)

However, the level of human interaction within the whole coaching process seems incredibly complex to gain any degree of success in sport. This belies the simplistic, diagrammatic picture of progression given in the diagram above. Martens, (2004) outlines what he comprehends the demands on the coach to be, which seems to go way beyond that of being simply qualified to direct training activities at a particular level.

Coaching is the face to face leadership that pulls together people with diverse backgrounds, talents, experiences and interests, encourages them to step up to responsibility and continued achievement, and treats them as full-scale partners and contributors.

(Martens, 2004: 36)

The type of coach behaviour alluded to here seems to be that of a stakeholder to help players realise their potential and promote ownership of success in their sporting context. Martens’s (2004) notion of coaching here implies there is a complex interplay of numerous factors which may influence success and failure in coaching. For example, the interplay of relationships at a personal, social and professional level, the interplay of opportunities; being in the right place at the right time, and the interplay of money and ego in sport. Major changes in governing body rules and changes in qualification structures may also affect progression of certain individuals, placing further challenges to the coach for gaining recognition and status for what they do. Andy, in the following example from the data highlights some of the complexities of relationships and coach aspiration in football.

*Andy*, **Youth Team Coach**

Q: What are the opportunities for you to move on to bigger [career] projects or are you at the peak in the club?

It’s who you know, especially for coach and manager.
I've no ambitions at the moment to be a manager. Err… we've done so well together me and “Dave”, he's at the sharp end and I'm at the blunt end. We're a good partnership. I know the proof is in the pudding from the games we've played and all the clubs we've worked at and the success we've had. We work really well and I have no ambitions to take Dave's job in football … that sometimes happens. Dave knows that he knows me inside out and I know Dave inside out so I'm happy with that at the moment. Hopefully we'll get North West United to where they belong.

A career in coaching at the club – what some coaches said.

The three interviewees all had very successful football playing careers. Andy played for a lower league team for a number of years and eventually captained the team. Barry had experience of competing at World Cup level and played for Premiership teams in the UK. Charlie played for various non-premier league clubs around the UK. Unfortunately it is a fact that a footballer's career can be very short lived. Morris (1981: 26) states that, “…after he has passed his thirtieth birthday, he will soon be discarded by the club and left to fend for himself”. Mason (1993: 28) agrees with this and points out that, “…the football player has a problem of what to do when the cheering stops at 30, 35 or perhaps 40”. It is interesting to consider what happens to football players after they have retired because the majority of footballers are picked up as apprentices when they are very young and perhaps have little experience of other jobs or trades outside of playing football that they might turn to when they stop playing. As Mason (1993: 20) points out, “…if the boys are considered good enough, the next stage could be to sign as an apprentice footballer at 16, the school leaving-age”. This apparent closet existence as a player may also exclude coaching football as a career option although it may seem the obvious thing to do as they may know little else – and many are seen to follow that route. The following example from the data highlights how someone may come to live out their professional life within the world of football.

“Charlie”, First Team Coach

Q. Did you specifically want to be a youth coach at North West United? Or do you have to start at youth coaching because you’re not as experienced?

Yeh… so I’d done the school of excellence at North West United for 3 years and I’d enjoyed it. Lucky enough I finished at [another club] and a job come up here as a youth coach…

Q. Oh, so because you had done the school of excellence…

Yeh… and also I’d played for North West United as a youngster so my background is
North West United. I’ve spent 14 years working for North West United, 11 as a player and a apprentice and 3 as a coach. So that was me background and it sort of worked out like that.

Consequently, if no training or qualifications are undertaken, there are not many career options that football players can pursue after they have retired from playing. This is a reason why many of them are becoming football coaches, although, as some of the data will indicate, having a career as a player may not equate to being successful as a coach. The following text-bite from the data indicates Andy’s perspectives on career progression and access to coaching at higher levels in football. This seems to depend, for Andy, on personal relationships rather than attaining the highest Governing Body coaching qualifications:

“Andy”, Youth Team Coach

Q. Is it an easy journey to become a top level coach?

It’s very hard to get in the Premiership unless you know somebody and you’ve come through that way. Especially with the foreign lads coming in. I mean… I’m [not] knocking… That, I mean… [pause]… There is not many English managers in the Premiership. There are not many coaching jobs when you think about it. So you know… it’s very hard to get in there unless you know someone. Like I’m with Dave until the day more or less… we’re a partnership we work well together we’re friends off the park. Now if Dave got a Premier League job then I’d be coaching in the Premier League. It’s basically the same job, better quality players to groom but the job in itself is the same. You know there’s more staff so you don’t have as many jobs to do I imagine. I’ve coached at every level apart from Premier - doesn’t faze me doesn’t frighten me. I would love to have a go.

It is interesting to note that the assumption being made by Andy (above) is that the stock of coaching knowledge and skills he possesses would be automatically transferable to, and acceptable to a Premier League club on the basis that his colleague, “Dave”, got a manager’s position at that club.

All three coaches are extremely passionate about football and all stated that becoming a coach was a means of remaining in the game. This was the main reason why they became coaches but it also became too late for them to consider another career.

“Charlie”, First Team Coach

Q. Why did you become a coach?

It was an opportunity to stay in the game and also I’d be a liar if I didn’t say it’s what
I’m good at.
To come out of football I’d have to start something else.
Whether it was going back to college and doing something else I couldn’t really af-
ford that… I needed something that was going to bring in revenue.
Plus I really enjoy it.

“Barry”, Reserve Team Coach

Q. How did you get to the position you are now?

There comes a point when your [playing] career is starting to come to an end and
you need to have a bit of realism in this because there’s going to be others that will
take your place.
I always wanted to stay in the game and so I needed to put things in place for me to
start coaching.

Mason (1993) makes the basic point that it would be sensible to advise players every-
where to make sure of their educational qualifications before embarking on a career
in professional sport. Whilst this may be simple careers advice it seems particularly
relevant to football players who should recognise that gaining a coaching qualifica-
tion within football may help to open doors for them if they wish to remain within
the sport when their playing career ceases. Their experience as a player alone can
quickly be deemed out of date may not be enough to provide a living as a [unqualified]
‘coach’. In order for the interviewees to become coaches they had to gain governing
body qualifications. James (2003: 54) states that, “coaching involves the instruction
or training of an athlete by a qualified and experienced person”. In football aspirant
coaches follow the Football Association (F.A) coaching programme (Figure 1). There
are four steps in the coaching programme but level 3 is acceptable for Premiership
clubs and below. However if a person wanted to become an international coach they
would have to have coaching qualifications up to the pro-licence coaching badge. It
is also important to note that these qualifications take a long time to achieve and in
addition, can cost a good deal of money. It was reported by Andy that the pro-licence
takes at least ten years to gain and costs around £6000:

“Andy”, Youth Team Coach

Q. What qualifications have you got in coaching?

I got me full badge, UEFA badge err used to be just the full badge.

Q. Is that the pro licence?

Nooo… haven’t got the pro, that’s the big one that.
They’ve bought that one in since I started but I’ve got me full badge which is what we
used to call it but it equates to the UEFA A badge now days.
I’m not doing the pro because it takes round 10 years to complete and by then I’ll be
pensioned off plus it costs £6000.
No, but I’m fully qualified.
However these qualifications are necessary steps to take in order to become a coach. When discussing this with my interviewees they gave me an insight into how they went about attaining their badges. Barry made an interesting comment about coaching badges. He strongly considered that if you have been in professional football a long time then you should be automatically given the lower coaching badges:

“Barry”, Reserve Team Coach

Q. You told me your qualifications are you going to go any higher?

Yes it goes C which is your first [badge],... then B which I am now...and then A and pro licence. You need your pro licence to coach in the premiership which is a few years away yet.

But err… I’m quite… err…

I really believe that footballer’s, especially international footballer’s who have had over 25 caps… I think should be given their C and B badge because it’s very basic. It’s errrm…

…it’s more use for someone who has not been involved in a football environment from day to day.

… Errrm I feel terrible saying it but Joe Bloggs, they would benefit more from doing the C and B badge - teaches you how to do heading and passing.

I mean… I’m doing the course now but if I come in here and coached the lads what I’m doing on the B badge they’d be like what???

It’s like really basic I think for someone who has played football - use me as an example, for 15 years, you know, played international football at the highest level. I think they should be given it.

This example from the data may be attempting to value and equate playing experience as coaching experience; an assumption which could create failure in the coaching system at the most basic and perhaps, critical level – the introductory level for novices. That is to say, that coaching basic skills in football such as “heading and passing” demands a totally different set of skills to that of performing them. This may confirm the notion that a good performer may not make a good coach if they skip the badges on how to teach the basics. Andy and Barry are in the early stages of becoming coaches. They have both started in a “low-pressure” situation, for example, starting to coach at youth level and reserves. The low-pressure situation for a football player is when they are making the transition to becoming a coach and the consequences of any mistakes they might make are not too severe. This is ideal because it gives the coach time to develop his coaching style and technique; it is a period of experimentation. He will make mistakes but will be given time to refine his technique and hopefully learn from the mistakes. Barry will occasionally play himself in reserve team matches to enable him to assess how the team performs in the match situation and to address any tactical problem the team may have during a match. This high level of involvement seems to indicate that he is keen to learn more about how to influence others in a coaching capacity whilst he is playing on the pitch with them. Similarly, Jones (2003: 218-219)
writing about a professional football coach states that, “...he has been keen throughout his career to learn from others and he would argue that he is continuing to learn; even learning how not to do things has been useful.” However, it may also reveal that Barry, in this instance, is somewhat reluctant to come off the pitch and is having some difficulty with that fact that his playing career is coming to an end.

It is important that players coming out of football develop their personal technique as a coach and make sure that they have the necessary skills and knowledge to be a coach. Marten’s (2004: 11) states that, “Successful coaches not only are well versed in the technical and tactical skills of their sports, but they also know how to teach these skills to young people”. Some former players in the Premiership like Gareth Southgate and Chris Coleman have retired from playing at a top level and have entered management with very little experience in coaching at this high-pressured level. It is likely however that because of their high profiles as players they have been granted these coaching positions with unproven coaching ability. The following comments from Andy seem to bear this out:

“Andy”, Youth Team Coach

Q. What are your opinions on players finishing their playing career and going straight in to premiership coaching/ managing?

So what you’re saying is the likes of Alan Shearer who's got the name. Who's got the experience of mixing in with the lads in the dressing room and being at that level all his life?
Err… from a coaching point of view a lot of them would struggle because they don’t get the grass roots … they don’t get the grounding.
A lot of them get the job because of their name and a lot of them fail because they don’t get the grounding and experience you need.
Like Barry [another coach at North West United] you know… he played at international level, what a fantastic player.
Now he's got to prove it as a coach/ manager.
The problem with a lot of them is they don’t get the grounding and learning in from managers like Dave or the management team … at what ever club they’re at.
Coaching is completely different because you’ve got to learn to listen to your own voice.
I think the next thing what players find hard is having one foot in the dressing room and one foot in the office and to step out and say right now I am a coach.
That's what they find hard.
I mean I worked through the levels just like I did when I was a player.
But from speaking with the likes of Barry, that's what they find hard.

Q. Basically, it was the transition they found hard?

Transition! Good word!

Yes, transition.
I think that at professional level you need the grounding and knowledge to be able to coach.
If you don’t know what you’re doing at professional level the players will let you know.

Therefore it appears very important that if a football player decides to go into coaching they should learn their trade as coaches gradually and make sure they are capable to deal with the social pressures associated with coaching. These pressures typically include for example, judging how to talk to players and managers alike, to give (and take) orders, to make requests, to give feedback in the form of praising or disciplining. The phrase from Andy highlighted in the data above “…coaching is completely different because you’ve got to learn to listen to your own voice” is very insightful and reveals an honest perception of what coaching means for Andy. The comment seems to indicate that a significant personal adjustment in one’s attitude to others is required from that of being a player to that of being a coach.

Barry is coming to the end of his football playing career and is in a “transition period”, taking on the role of coach but also playing along side and being ‘one of the lads’ in the changing room. This seems to be a phase in his football career which he is finding very challenging to handle and may be reluctant to face the new responsibilities associated with coaching:

“Barry”, Reserve Team Coach

Q. Was it hard to make that initial transition as a player?

I’m still not fully there because I’m still a player.
I’ve still got one foot in the dressing room and I’ve got one foot in the office.
I’m in a lot of meetings with the gaffer…and with the coaching staff and stuff.
So there’s a lot of confidential stuff that gets spoken about that can’t be discussed in the dressing room …sometimes that’s difficult for me because they don’t go in the dressing room were I’m still in the dressing room mixing with the lads, … as one of the lads.
They still see me as one of the lads but, there’s a good side to it because they come to me if hey have a problem and I’ll go to the gaffer.
Sometimes that gap is too big for the players and to knock on his door…
Knocking on the manager’s door is daunting…
…it’s like you get in and you’re like … I can’t do this.
You’re going over it in your head what you’re going [to say]…pause… what you going to say and sometimes having me there…
[Infers that his presence makes it easier for the player to communicate with the manager.]

When the researcher was discussing this situation with Barry he expressed what a difficult position this is for him, as he will be having to give up something that he loves and embark on something that he may not succeed in:
“Barry”, Reserve Team Coach

Q. So why you are not a full coach yet are you not ready to give up the game?

Errrm… it’s because I’ve still got something to offer.

It’s because I’m still great.

Errrm… I’m only 35,

… I think at this level I’ve still got something to offer.

I’m still fit, …I done pre season this year and I was middle of the pack.

Sooo… I’m not the un-fittest player here.

Like I said, I’ve still got something to offer [on the pitch].

I think as well, you know, …last year when I changed over into coaching and stuff …and I was doing the reserves, I still play in the Reserves from time to time because it helps me to understand how some of them are thinking.

Sometimes when you’re on the side of the pitch your just watching the ball and the play, …but when you’re on the pitch you’re seeing different things. …you’re talking to all the players organising and sometimes being on the pitch helps.

I don’t even think next year if I’m still here…

Errrm…

I won’t give up playing,

Errr… [pause]

I’ll probably give up playing in the first team but I won’t give up playing for the Reserves.

Errrm…

because the Reserves are a different level again.

Errrm…

But I can still offer something and recover quickly so that’s why I’m still playing.

The apparent trauma that this cross-roads in Barry’s career is causing, is worth highlighting here as it is probably a common phenomena shared by many football players at this stage of their careers. Mason (1993: 28) states that, “…old pros say nothing beats playing and they never adjust to life without it”. Person B is learning lots of new skills as a coach and has had to learn to distance himself from his fellow players. Martens (1997: 9) states that, “Being a successful coach is an enormous challenge. And good intentions are not good enough to be successful; you need all the knowledge you can get”. Therefore Barry needs to continue developing as a coach and eventually make the transition from being “one of the lads” – stepping out of his comfort zone as a player. Andy and Charlie also reported that they struggled to make that transition as players and it seems to be a major step which a footballer must undergo to become a coach.

In the Premiership for example, there are many external factors that will put pressure upon a coach. The main pressures are from the fans and the club that you manage. Morris (1981: 26) states that, “Soccer is an industry, not a sport” and at a high level the coaches are expected to get the players up to an elite standard so they perform and get results such as winning the league and winning competitions. The fans and
club can put immense pressure on the coach and if the players don’t perform and get results coaches and managers can get sacked by the management and forced out the club. This kind of failure is both publicly and socially stigmatised as a coach’s track record is there for all to judge, especially when that coach is looking for a new position at another club. Morris (1981: 27) points out that, “…the directors and managers, and the fans, demand winning as the top priority”. It is very important that at Premiership level, a coach should get their players performing to the usually high expectations of the fans and the club. If this does not happen the coach will be clearly made aware that he is not doing his job, not only by the fans and club, but by the players. The following example from the data indicates how the pressures at top level football may be viewed from a player’s perspective:

“Barry”, Reserve Team Coach

Q. You know before you said about playing in the World Cup was that the highlight of your career is it a lot of pressure?

Gosh you’re opening a whole can of worms now.
Playing at international level is a lot of pressure.
To be a professional footballer at the highest level is very difficult.
Once you’ve left the pitch your dealing with a lot of media pressure…
Your life is looked in to and scrutinised…
[Coping with] the pressure is hard work.
But also playing is hard because you have to play at the highest level every time you go out on the football pitch and there’s 40,000 people watching you perform week in and week out.
I mean, you don’t get a plumber fixing a pipe with 40,000 people watching you.
On the other hand you have to deal with people… a minority of people… giving you stick in the crowd.
So you have to deal with that mentally as well.
You’re mentally testing yourself all the time.
You have to be a really strong person to play at the highest level.
We have players at this level who leave because they can’t handle the pressure never mind if they get to the top and make it.
Errrm… international football… yes it’s great, it’s were you want to be, you know…
We’re in this job to get to the top.
So you know…
If you can’t handle the pressure then get out.
If you can, then the highest level is where you want to be.
Playing in the World Cup is ridiculous… everything that’s provided is the best.
…like the pitches are the best,
…the accommodation is the best,
…the foods the best,
…the coach is the best.
…It’s like for 6 weeks and its brilliant - it’s where you want to be.
The comments in the data above seem to encapsulate a good deal of personal role definition for Barry by combining self-perceptions of strength, value and selfless contribution as performance traits required *all players* to perform well in the game at international level. This building of self-worth/self-esteem may appear to be extremely egotistical, but this may be an indication of the competitive character that is required by some players to survive and succeed at the top level of the sport.

During the interviews the coaches discussed their experiences in working with premiership and international players. They all made me aware of the difference in player’s standards and abilities from lower division football to premiership and international standard and the pressures that can be encountered. One of the main issues that emerged during the interviews was the media and the intense pressure the media can impose upon a coach. Andrews and Jackson (2001: 138) state that, football teams “…hit the headlines for negative reasons, they are castigated for their failure”. The media invade not just the player’s private lives but the managers and coaches which can be very hard for them to deal with. Their popularity (or notoriety) through the press; being built up or knocked down, is difficult to manage, as Lines (2001: 286) has pointed out, “…as their celebrity status grows, for some, the audience knows as much, if not more, about their personal lives as their sporting endeavours”. Therefore, there may sometimes be a great deal of extra pressure for the coaches which is distracting to handle whilst endeavouring to produce good results and to win trophies to satisfy the fans.

An aspect that the coach has to consider when working with famous champions, such as, Jermaine Pennant or Christiano Ronaldo, is how to manage their egos. This is an aspect which the data from this research is already beginning to reveal. Unfortunately, because of the glamorisation of football, players can develop a massive ego that could prove difficult to deal with as a coach, if the coach hasn’t experienced that situation. Morris (1981: 36) states that, “…the professional is only in it for himself and what he can make out of it”. Therefore, the coach needs to know how to deal with these ego’s and be able to motivate the player for work in his team, on the pitch. Barry’s comments in the following section of data indicates how the combination of “ego” and “money” in football alter or shift the bargaining points to motivate players:

**“Barry”, Reserve Team Coach**

**Q. Are you going to stay the level you are now or are you going to go in to the first team or premiership?**

I mean when you look at the likes of Gareth Southgate and Chris Coalman they went straight from playing in to coaching managing premiership league teams. It’s very rare that that happens and I think sometimes you need a little bit of schooling. I think at this level, that’s were you get your schooling and although you’re not as scrutinised by the media at this level, that’s a good thing, they’re not watching you, like… When you’re at a premiership you can’t fart with out them knowing.
I think at this level you’re working with a different animal.
Errrm…
What I mean is that …
I mean the players in the premier league have big ego's.
You’re also dealing with bigger wages, different lifestyles and stuff.
The job for these lads at premier league, you have to motivate them in a different way…
You really have to motivate them at a real footballing level.
Although it’s not nice to say money is a great way to motivate the lads they need to work and sometimes it can work to your advantage as they’ll try a bit harder for you.
It's good though,
But you are dealing with a different animal.

Woods (1998: 7-9) explains that extrinsic motivation is when motivation comes from some outside source, such as trophies and money and other social reinforcement such as praise. Lower league club coaches tend to motivate their players extrinsically by offering them cash rewards. However, Premiership players already earn high salaries and therefore extrinsic motivation in the form of cash rewards may not prove to be a suitable incentive. Therefore, Premiership and international coaches have to find alternative methods to motivate their players, as Person B states in the text bite above “…you have to motivate them in a different way … you really have to motivate them at a real footballing level. (Whatever that actually means requires deeper exploration than was conducted in this research).

Conclusion

To summarise and conclude, professional football coaches are faced with challenges both in becoming a coach and when coaching champions. Without the reputation and contacts, and perhaps the qualifications, it can be difficult to be appointed as a coach in a Premiership club and almost impossible to attain an International coaching position. During the interviews with the coaches they explained that coaching job opportunities tend to arise through people they knew and having “strong social networks” (Giulianotti, 1999: 103). All the interviewees had previous football league experience as players. It may be an advantage for the coach to have experienced life as a professional footballer because they are able to appreciate what it takes to be successful and they may be better equipped to identify the qualities of good players. The coach may also be accustomed to, and better prepared in dealing with the media which has been reported in this research as a significant factor for some players in the modern game. It is assumed that the coach will have gained so much tactical playing experience that it is logical for them to pursue a coaching position when they retire from playing football. However, it appears essential that they gain the basic grounding and experience of coaching at lower levels (league-wise and qualification-wise) in order to succeed.
For the authors, there were numerous comments arising in the data from this research which could become fruitful leads to extend this investigation. A selection of these was for example:

A comment from Andy:
“Coaching is completely different because you’ve got to learn to listen to your own voice.”

A potential follow-up to this comment might be to investigate what it actually feels like to be coaching. That is, is there an altered sense of personality or altered perception of self during the act of coaching others? In what ways is the persona projected as a coach different to that of the [same] person outside of coaching? What might be the perceptions of the players towards the “coach persona”?

A comment from Barry:
Errrm… it’s because I’ve still got something to offer. It’s because I’m still great.
Errrm… I’m only 35, … I think at this level I’ve still got something to offer. I’m still fit.

A potential follow-up to this comment might be to investigate the notions of “letting go” and the insecurity associated with moving on in one’s career. It suggests also exploring the notion of egos in football; being egotistical about being a good player and/or being egotistical about being a good coach. This might shed further light upon the sense of self-worth at the end of a playing career and seek to explore a justification for why good players might think they make good coaches.

A comment from Charlie:
[After your playing career] Why did you become a coach?
It was an opportunity to stay in the game and also I’d be a liar if I didn’t say it’s what I’m good at. To come out of football I’d have to start something else. Whether it was going back to college and doing something else I couldn’t really afford that… I needed something that was going to bring in revenue. Plus I really enjoy it.

A potential follow-up to this comment might be to investigate to idea of being trapped into a football way of life – for life. The notion of becoming indoctrinated by football or feeling ‘imprisoned’ professionally to the extent that there are no other career options outside of football. The conflicts between having passion for football and earning a living from football might be explored – can expectation and pressure for results reduce a person’s passion for coaching football in the professional setting?

Since their retirement from playing football, Andy and Charlie reported having reasonable success in their coaching careers. Barry is about to make the final transition from player to coach. He is very ambitious and is likely to be fortunate enough to commence his career at a good football league club were he intends to further
develop his coaching skills. It is my opinion that he has the character and self motivation to succeed and I shall monitor his progress with great interest.

References


JQRSS: Acknowledgement Footnote

1. Authors Reflective Comment: The mentoring and reviewing process of my article has been useful and interesting and I thank the reviewers for their comments. Following their recommendations I think I have produced a well-written article. I consider that the whole experience of writing for this journal has improved my vocabulary and confidence as a researcher to present my ideas in a mature fashion.

2. Author Profile: Rachael is currently in the third year of her degree. She will be graduating in 2009 with a BA Honours in Sport Studies with QTS and Subject Leader Award in Physical Education. Rachael's field of interest is pedagogy, which links to her teaching. On completion of her degree Rachael will hopefully get a job in a Primary School as a P.E coordinator and perhaps return to do a Masters degree in a related subject.

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