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## Factors influencing continuation and withdrawal from coaching youth football in metropolitan Western Australia

James T. K. Milne  
*Edith Cowan University*

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**FACTORS INFLUENCING CONTINUATION AND WITHDRAWAL  
FROM COACHING YOUTH FOOTBALL IN METROPOLITAN  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

By

**James T. K. Milne**

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Award of

Bachelor of Science (Sport Science) Honours

Faculty of Science, Technology and Engineering

**Edith Cowan University - Joondalup**

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## ABSTRACT

It is inevitable that at some stage of his career, a coach will withdraw. This qualitative study explored the various reasons why coaches of youth football (between the ages of 13 and 17 years) choose to continue or withdraw their involvement with the sport. It was the first part of a two phase larger study into this topic involving: (a) in depth interviews with current and former youth football coaches; and (b) the use of themes from the interview data to develop a questionnaire for distribution to a larger sample of youth football coaches, at a later stage.

Perceptions and experiences of eight current and eight former youth football coaches from four of the six Western Australian Football Development Trust (WAFDT) metropolitan football regions formed the basis of this research through one-on-one, tape recorded interviews.

Findings from this study revealed that there is a number of principle factors that influence a coach's motivation to continue or withdraw. Youth football coach continuation will be assisted if the coach: (a) receives support from his wife and family; (b) values intrinsic rewards over extrinsic incentives; (c) embraces compulsory accreditation and its related benefits; and (d) does not allow his own son's involvement as a player influence his own coaching.

The youth football coach may be motivated to discontinue his involvement if: (a) he receives pressure from his family to spend more time with them; (b) he has lack of parent

and player support and commitment; (c) he has a change in work commitments that do not allow the investment of the necessary time and effort required for coaching; (d) he has lack of time or inclination to complete the requirements of a compulsory Level 1 accreditation course; and (e) his son ceases his involvement as a player at the youth level.

## DECLARATION

"I certify that this thesis does not incorporate, without acknowledgement, any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text".

Signature

Date ..... ✓ 8-2-99 .....

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## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

This qualitative study, conducted with the support of the Western Australian Football Development Trust, examines current and former youth football coaches' opinions and experiences about the factors influencing a coach's decision to either continue or withdraw his involvement from youth football (ages 13 –17 years) coaching in metropolitan Western Australia. It is the first part of a larger study into this topic involving: (a) in depth interviews with current and former youth football coaches, and (b) a questionnaire developed from the responses in the interviews to be distributed to a larger sample of youth football coaches. The present study only addresses the first phase, that is, in depth interviews with current and former youth football coaches.

This introductory chapter provides an overview of the study outlining its background, significance and purpose. Research questions, a conceptual framework, limitations of the study and a glossary of key terms will also be detailed.

### Background of the Study

As a youth footballer between the ages of 13 and 17 the researcher was coached by four different coaches at the same junior football club. The memory of so many coaches in a short time has persisted and was brought to the fore again when he undertook work experience at the Western Australian Football Development Trust (WAFDT).

The WAFDT is the development arm of the Western Australian Football Commission (WAFC) which oversees all Australian Rules Football in Western Australia, including the local elite Westar Rules competition (formerly known as the Western Australian Football League), the West Coast Eagles and the Fremantle Dockers Football Club. The WAFC's mission is "to enhance and promote the image of Australian Rules Football throughout the community, encouraging greater levels of participation by individuals, community groups – business and government, aimed at improving the quality of life and enjoyment of the game for all" (Unpublished WAFDT Business Plan, 1997).

The role of the WAFDT, according to this organisation's Director of Coaching, Steve Hargreaves, is to coordinate and promote junior football, while implementing policy and guidelines conducive to the sport as a whole within Western Australia (personal communication, November 2, 1998). Established in 1987, the WAFDT's mission is "to improve the quantity and quality of participation in football, including players, coaching, spectators, administration, sports trainers and umpires" (Unpublished WAFDT Business Plan, 1997).

Ross Luckman, General Manager of the WAFDT, explained that there is a dire need for research in the area of coach withdrawal in Western Australian football and the steps needed to address this problem (personal communication, March 25, 1998). Hargreaves (personal communication, March 25, 1998) has also highlighted the specific need for research in the area of coaches of youth football, that is, football for youngsters aged 13 to 17 years.

In an unpublished 1997 business plan, the WAFDT explained that one of its many goals for the next three years was to increase the number of coaches and improve



overall coaching standards. To accomplish this, the WAFDT aims to attract and maintain quality coaches at all levels of developmental football, including youth football.

A qualified and experienced coach is a valuable asset to the youth, the team, its club and the organisation as a whole. It is therefore very important that these coaches are retained in youth football in order to maintain a high standard for its participants.

Previous research (Smith, Smoll & Curtis, 1979; Wandzilak, Ansorge & Potter, 1981; Dal Santo, 1993) has indicated that the coach has a great impact on the participants they are coaching, with a number of 12 to 14 year olds choosing to cease their participation in sport due to the impact that their coach at the time had on them. It is therefore vital that the number of quality accredited coaches is increased so junior participants can receive optimal advantage from their involvement in sport.

To develop quality coaches, the WAFDT conducts coaching accreditation courses under the guidance of the Australian Coaching Council (ACC). The ACC is the national peak body responsible for coaching and officiating education and development in Australia. It administers the National Coaching Accreditation Scheme (NCAS) and incorporates the National Officiating Program and the Coaching Athletes with a disability scheme. (Australian Sports Commission, 1986). The NCAS aims to increase the proficiency of coaches through the implementation of uniform standards of instruction specific to the requirements of individual sports (Australian Sports Commission, 1986).

Australian Rules Football now leads all other sports in the number of accredited coaches. Football officials believe a major contributing factor is "compulsory" Level 1 accreditation that has been implemented in many football organisations around

Australia, including all junior football in metropolitan Western Australia.

Despite this stellar position, football officials are not resting on their laurels. They are vigorously pursuing policies at club level to ensure even more coaches become accredited. The Western Australian Regional Junior Football Board (WARJFB) is the body which oversees junior football in metropolitan Western Australia. This organisation has specific policies pertaining to coach accreditation in all junior and youth football in Western Australia. The WARJFB is formed from the presidents of each of the six metropolitan football regions: (a) North Suburban, (b) South Suburban, (c) Central Districts, (d) Swan Districts/Midlands, (e) East Fremantle, and (f) Peel/South Fremantle (S. Hargreaves, personal communication, March 25, 1998).

In their latest policy document, the WARJFB included the specific statement that all persons placed in charge of junior footballers must have successfully completed Level 1 accreditation or be working towards completing the course within the first ten weeks of the current season. If not, they are not permitted to coach (Western Australian Junior Football Policy, 1997).

To achieve Level 1 accreditation a prospective coach must attend a 14 hour course and complete at least one season of practical coaching or equivalent of at least 30 hours. Aspiring coaches also have the option to gain further knowledge and qualifications through Level 2 (60 hours) and Level 3 (100 hours) coach accreditation courses, with each level requiring greater amounts of practical involvement.

Football organisations, such as those governed by the WARJFB, rather than the WAFDT, are responsible for implementing and mandating compulsory Level 1 accreditation for all their coaches. In addition to the WARJFB policy, the majority of junior clubs have policies which advise prospective coaches that if they wish to coach

they must have, or be in the process of achieving Level 1 accreditation. The Sunday League currently imposes weekly fines upon non-accredited coaches (S. Hargreaves, personal communication, June 11, 1998).

There is, however, considerable concern that a policy of "compulsory" accreditation may in fact deter the very people football officials would like to become associated with youth football. The WAFDT was anxious for research to be undertaken to determine if compulsory accreditation encourages prospective coaches to continue or if it forces them to withdraw.

The majority of football coaches in Western Australia, and all subjects participating in the present study were male, hence throughout the thesis, where ever applicable, pronouns such as "his" and "him" were used when referring to coaches.

### Significance of the Study

Qualified and experienced coaches are invaluable to any sport and youth football is no exception. In order to maintain a high standard in youth football and encourage participation, quality coaches are vital.

While there is considerable literature and previous research investigating athlete or participant withdrawal from sport, there is a paucity of Australian studies examining why coaches leave their positions, especially in junior sports and specifically youth football in Western Australia.

The WAFDT have shown particular interest in this study as a means to improve the junior and youth football network. Steve Hargreaves (personal communication,

November 2, 1998) explained that any data that the WAFDT can source is highly beneficial to assist in evaluating and enhancing football programs to suit the continually changing demands of the junior and youth football public throughout Western Australia.

For these reasons the researcher, in conjunction with the WAFDT, has chosen to explore what motivates coaches at the youth level to decide to continue or withdraw their involvement in football.

### Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to investigate why coaches at the youth level of Australian Rules Football in metropolitan Western Australia choose to either continue their involvement or withdraw. The study will provide the WAFDT with research data that can be used to develop future policies for the accreditation of coaches of youth teams.

### Research Questions

The major research question for this study was:

- What are the principal factors influencing coaches' motivation to continue or withdraw from their involvement in Australian Rules Football at the youth level?

The major question was explored through the following set of subsidiary questions:

- What are the similarities and differences between coaches who continue and coaches who withdraw?
- What factors influence the coach's decision to become involved in youth football?
- What factors would encourage the coaches to continue their involvement?
- What are the most common reasons given by coaches for discontinuing their involvement?
- What is the influence of compulsory Level 1 accreditation?
- What is the influence of their own child(ren)'s involvement?
- Are coaches withdrawing from youth football to pursue careers at the more elite levels of football such as Westar Rules Colts?

### Conceptual Framework

The research questions gave rise to the following conceptual framework as seen in Figure 1. This framework guided the researcher toward relevant literature and assisted in the development of questions used in in-depth interviews as explained in Chapter 3.

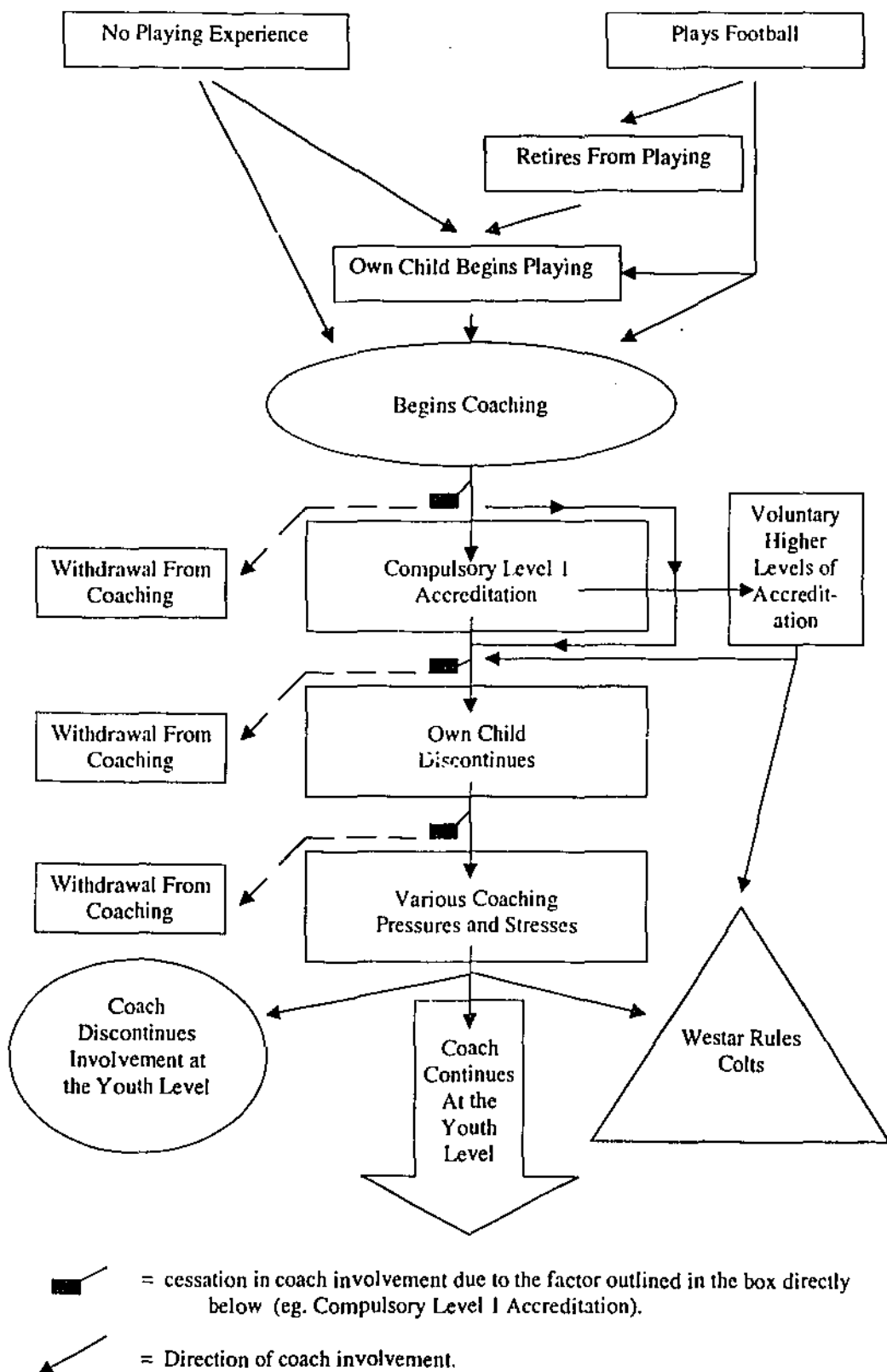


Figure 1. Conceptual summary based on the research questions as to the factors influencing a coaches decision to continue or withdraw from youth football.

For the purpose of this study it was assumed that there are a variety of ways in which the coach initially becomes involved. It is highly likely that for the majority, coaching is simply a continuation of their football participation. Some wait until they retire. Some have no prior experience but accept an invitation to coach or volunteer. Often the impetus for the player-turned-coach or volunteer is the decision of their own child(ren) to play football. Once committed, the coach is then confronted by 'compulsory' accreditation. It is possible that the coach may take one of three avenues at this point: (a) undertake Level 1 accreditation and perhaps continue to Levels 2 and 3; (b) ignore the requirement and continue to coach; and (c) withdraw. One area of speculation is that the coach's career is closely tied to that of his child(ren) and that while the children play, the father-coach will be involved. When the children progress to higher levels of competition or drop out the father must then contemplate his own involvement. For the coach who decides to continue there may be other pressures and stresses that influence his involvement or withdrawal. The more ambitious coach could even pursue competitions for older, more elite players, for example, in the Westar Rules.

The conceptual framework was essentially a planning tool prepared in order to guide the study but in full awareness that it would be revised when the data was collected and analysed.

### Limitations

There are some limitations that occur with the sample population for this study and must be heeded in any attempts to generalise findings to a broader community.

These include:

- Only 16 subjects were interviewed;
- The subjects were youth coaches chosen from junior football clubs affiliated with the WAFDT;
- The results cannot be generalised to coaches of any other age group or level of football - only youth football coaches;
- The study was conducted with coaches residing in the metropolitan area.

The purpose of the study is to work within these bounds, therefore the limitations listed above, should not detract from the credibility of the study.

## Glossary

### Definition of Key Terms

Key terms used in this study are detailed below:

#### Coach Burnout:

Refers to a state of emotional exhaustion caused by excessive psychological and emotional demands made on people working with other people. It occurs when the demands of the activity exceed individuals' abilities to cope, and they become overwhelmed by the stress of the activity (Vealey, Udry, Zimmerman & Soliday, 1992).



### Coaching Orientation:

Coaching orientations are the motives or reasons why a coach coaches and what they perceive as important in their coaching. Martens and Gould (1979) suggest coaches coach because they are either: (a) *self-oriented*; (b) *affiliation-oriented*; or (c) *Task-oriented*.

### Coach Withdrawal:

The process whereby a coach discontinues his or her involvement in the position of coach. Other terms with the same meaning, including *attrition*, *dropout*, and *discontinuation*, will be interchanged in both the literature and throughout this study.

### Youth Football:

Australian Rules Football played by participants aged 13 to 17 years of age. Standard rules apply with no modification from age 13 onwards.

### Definition of Acronyms

Acronyms used in this study are detailed below:

#### ACC:

The Australian Coaching Council is the national peak body responsible for coaching and officiating education and development in Australian.

MDOs:

There are six *Metropolitan-Regional Development Officers*, one assigned to each of the six WAFDT metropolitan football regions. Their role is to promote football and develop players and coaches at schools and community clubs in their region.

NCAS:

The National Coaching Accreditation Scheme aims to increase the proficiency of coaches through the implementation of uniform standards of instruction specific to the requirements of individual sports (Australian Sports Commission, 1986).

WAFC:

The Western Australian Football Commission over sees all Australian Rules Football in Western Australia, including the Westar Rules competition, West Coast Eagles and the Fremantle Football Club.

WAFDT:

The *Western Australian Football Development Trust* is the development arm of the Western Australian Football Commission. The WAFDT has six country and six metropolitan regions. The metropolitan regions are: (a) North Suburban, (b) South Suburban, (c) Central Districts, (d) Swan Districts/Midlands, (e) East Fremantle, and (f) Peel/South Fremantle.

### WARJFB:

The Western Australian Regional Junior Football Board is the body that over sees junior football in metropolitan Western Australia. It is comprised of six presidents which are representatives of each of the six metropolitan football regions. The WARJFB is responsible for introducing policies and the governing rules of junior football, including compulsory Level 1 accreditation.

## CHAPTER 2

### Review of Literature

#### Introduction

This chapter identifies and discusses the literature related to the study of coach involvement and withdrawal from sport. A number of studies have been conducted on the various reasons for withdrawal from coaching duties. The majority of this research has, however, been conducted in North America in the sports of basketball, gridiron and athletics (Hart, Schmidt & Stein, 1991; Hasbrook, & Mathes, 1986; Martens & Gould, 1979; Pastore, 1992; Weiss & Sisley, 1984; Youth Sports Institute, 1978) and as yet, very little has been done on major Australian sports such as Australian Rules Football, which is the focus of the current study. There is, however, considerable commentary literature grounded in experience and common sense of elite coaches. As a result, much of the literature and research findings provided guiding principles for the present study, however their details are not always relevant.

This chapter is organised into sections and sub-sections that relate to the research questions and conceptual framework outlined in Chapter 1. In order, the sections are: (a) the importance of the role of the youth coach; (b) similarities and differences between current and former youth coaches; (c) reasons for coach involvement; (d) reasons for coach withdrawal; (e) the influence of the accreditation process; (f) the involvement of the coach's own child; and (g) factors associated with a transition from volunteer to professional coaching.

### The Importance of the Youth Coaching Role

According to Woodman (1994) it is generally accepted that the job of the coach is to help athletes achieve their best possible level of performance. Broadly, coaching can be defined as preparing an athlete for competition. This role encompasses a wide range of tasks including teaching the basic skills to beginners, planning and implementing long-term training programs, immediate match preparation and providing technical and tactical advice throughout a competition or performance. Other tasks may include implementing, evaluating and modifying training programs to promote athlete development and coping with immediate treatment and rehabilitation of injuries or over-training. Specifically, the coach of junior or youth sport must ensure that their athletes are provided with a practice and competition environment that promotes their development to an eventual mastery of the skills of the sport whilst maintaining the enjoyment factor. Unfortunately, coaches are often subject to a constant pressure to win, administrative and parental interference and influence, disciplinary problems, multiple roles to fulfil, extensive travel commitments, and intense personal involvement (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). For these, and many more reasons, coaching is not an easy task. It is one that requires considerable dedication and sacrifice.

Corbett (1994) explained that coaches of junior and youth sport should have a philosophy suited to the age group. That is, the coach must be able to relate to the players and vice versa, and must have the skill and ability to maintain a learning environment that is not boring or specific to only the better players in the team. For instance, Dal Santo (1993) discovered that a vast number of 12 to 14 year olds drop out of sport because of their coaches. Some of the responses by the children to Da! Santo's

(1993, p. 8) questionnaire included, "Shows favouritism", "Doesn't play me in a variety of positions", "Training is boring", and "Doesn't have enough skill to teach us". More specifically, according to research conducted by Smith, Smoll and Curtis (1979) and Wandzilak, Ansorge and Potter (1981), when studying attitudes of participants in the youth sport setting, those who have played for highly reinforcing and encouraging coaches have significantly higher levels of post-season self-esteem than the players who are exposed to coaches who do not use this positive approach.

Australian Football League (AFL) premiership coach, David Parkin (1990), expressed his opinion that the coach influences the quality of the football environment by having a direct impact on his players. Parkin considered it imperative that the coach be qualified and competent in dealing with his athletes to ensure that football, in particular youth football, maintained a high standard and the children involved gained access to the most up to date coaching ideas and methods. For Parkin, the future of Australian Rules Football relies on the ability of quality coaches to attract participants to the game.

#### Similarities and Differences Between Current and Former Coaches

Martens and Gould (1979) surveyed 400 North American volunteer coaches and found that the average coach was male, in his mid-30s, and had coached his own child(ren) in the program for an average of five and a half years. In addition, the average coach, preferred the socialisation outcomes from the sport to the fun and winning outcomes and felt that physical, psychological, and social outcomes were of equal importance to participants.

Findings from the study conducted by Martens and Gould (1979) motivated later research undertaken by Weiss and Sisley (1988) with the main purpose of investigating the reasons given by dropout youth sport coaches for deciding not to continue in coaching. A secondary purpose of this study was to compare former coaches to current coaches on demographic characteristics, coaching orientations, self-ratings of ability in various coaching areas, and ratings of the effectiveness of and relationships with youth sport personnel.

Results from the Weiss and Sisley (1988) study indicated many similarities between the current and former coaches. Similar to the findings of Martens and Gould (1979), the average current coach from this study was male, in his mid-30s, married, had coached his own child(ren) in the program for over five years. In addition, the average current coach had formerly competed in the same sport at both the youth and high school levels. Half of the current coaches had also competed at the adult recreational level, had attended a coaching clinic but most did not possess a physical education or recreation degree. The average former coach from this study possessed almost identical characteristics (Weiss & Sisley, 1988).

More recent research carried out by the Australian Coaching Council indicated that over 60% of coaches are aged 40 years and more, and only 8% are aged under 25 years. Over 64% of coaches are in full-time employment in non sport occupations and professions. A high proportion are school teachers, however only 8% of coaches are employed as a coach. Over 60% of coaches are volunteers and receive no monetary return for their services (NCAS Research, 1998).

### Reasons for Coach Involvement

Martens and Gould (1979) explained that there were many specific reasons why coaches coach, but research showed that individuals do have general orientations or motives for being involved. These included: (a) intrinsic motivation; (b) extrinsic motivations; and (c) different orientations to coaching based on various rewards.

Martens (1987, p.18) defined intrinsic motivation as an “inner striving to be competent and self-determining, to master the task, to be successful”. Further, Paull, Bycroft, Galich, Lamber, Rowe, Sadek and Van Maanen (1995) explained that intrinsic motivation refers to a sense of fulfilment and pleasure that is derived from involvement in coaching and has been identified as being the most common general motive for coach involvement.

A coach will receive extrinsic motivation to be involved from “other people through positive and negative reinforcements” (Martens, 1987, p. 18). These reinforcements may be materialistic such as trophies, remunerative including money or presents, or intangible in nature such as public acknowledgment.

Martens and Gould (1979) have identified three orientations to coaching based on different types of rewards. The *self-oriented* coach is extrinsically motivated, seeks personal praise and rewards and often places his desire to fulfil his needs over the well being of the athletes he coaches. The second type of coach may be *affiliation-oriented*. This type of coach is concerned with forming friendships, fostering strong interpersonal relationships, emphasising having fun and working cooperatively. They are easy to talk to, are always friendly and have a desire to work with children. Martens and Gould described the third type of coach as *Task Oriented*. This coach aspires to achieve the



team's goals. He strives to be effective in teaching the skills of the sport and to be knowledgeable in all aspects. He will focus on his athletes playing well and overcoming any barriers inhibiting success.

Research conducted by Robertson (1985), Leyden (1994), and Goddard and Pavy (1995) indicated that the main motivation for coaches was intrinsic in nature. Reasons for involvement in coaching as cited by these authors included: (a) the enjoyment of coaching; (b) to make a contribution to the sport; (c) a love of the sport; (d) a liking for coaching; (e) wanting to do something about the standards; and (f) for personal development.

Such research also noted that, although in a minority, extrinsic motivations for coaches included: (a) financial rewards; (b) social benefits; and (c) being forced into coaching by an association.

The various factors associated with a coaches decision to commence and continue his involvement in youth football form an important part of the present study and as a result, they have research questions pertaining to them.

### Reasons for Coach Withdrawal

Due to the lack of research specifically pertaining to coach withdrawal from youth football, the literature reviewed in this section refers to youth sport in general. Sub-sections within this section will also address the involvement of the coach's child, family pressure and involvement, and coach burnout as factors influencing coach withdrawal.

A study on coach withdrawal from youth sport, conducted by the Youth Sports

Institute (1978) at Michigan State University in the United States, asked coaches to identify the reasons they thought other coaches quit. Coaches were allowed to respond with more than one answer and it was found that the two most "important" reasons were "child no longer involved" and "too time consuming". This study only included current, not dropout coaches. This meant that there was no means of comparison between the two forms of coaches. In addition, these subjects gave their opinions by checking off items on a predetermined list, hence limiting subjects' ability to respond to various questions. Therefore, there was no way to determine whether or not the real reasons for coach dropout were found, and perhaps dropout coaches would have responded differently than those involved in the study.

Weiss and Sisley (1988) explained that while efforts are being made to improve the quality of youth coaching, there is little more than speculation about the actual reasons why coaches decide to discontinue their involvement. These authors therefore undertook a study of current and former coaches with the purpose to investigate the reasons that former youth sport coaches gave for deciding not to continue with their coaching.

Questionnaires were administered to, and completed by, current boys' and girls' basketball coaches attending a youth sport agency organisational meeting. Former coaches were contacted from a list indicating those who had ceased their involvement with the same agency since the previous year. These coaches were telephoned initially to procure their participation in the study. Those who obliged were mailed the research materials and asked to return the completed questionnaires by post.

The top five reasons given by coaches discontinuing their involvement were: (a) too time consuming; (b) want to spend more time with my family; (c) other leisure

activities interested me; (d) conflicts with my regular job (financial); and (e) my child discontinued in the program.

Weiss and Sisley's study contains many aspects relevant to the present study, including its general aim and the way in which they sought their data. It was, however, conducted a decade ago in the United States and was not conducted on coaches of Australian Rules Football. As a result, many of its findings may not be pertinent today in general or specifically for use in the present study. The theoretical underpinnings have provided a guide for the present study, particularly its methodology.

#### Influence of Own Child's involvement

A former coach of youth football, known to the researcher, discontinued his involvement in the sport when the son he was coaching finished playing. The question was raised in the researcher's mind as to whether there was a link between the son giving up football and the coach withdrawing.

There is limited literature on the importance of the involvement of the coach's own child in the program. The two studies conducted by the Youth Sports Institute (1978) and Weiss and Sisley (1988) both indicated that the withdrawal of the coach's son featured as one of the most common and important reasons associated with coach withdrawal. Weiss and Sisley (p. 341) explained that factors influencing this seemed "to be situational/conflictual reasons... and could be regarded as neutral reasons for dropping out". In other words, they are reasons that the program administration can do little about and attrition of coaches due to these factors probably cannot be recovered.

It did seem appropriate, however, in the present study to seek opinions from

current and former coaches about the influence of their own child's involvement.

### The Influence of Family Pressure and Involvement

The Youth Sports Institute (1978) indicated that an important reason for coach withdrawal was the fact that it was too time consuming. A later study conducted on both male and female coaches by Hasbrook, Hart, Mathes and True (1990) to investigate the sex bias and the validity of perceived differences between male and female coaches. These authors explained that an aspect associated with coach withdrawal was time constraints due to family responsibilities. In fact these authors suggested that male rather than female coaches more often experienced this as a factor.

Similarly, when investigating gender differences in coaching career selections, Pastore (1992, p. 185) supported the findings from the study undertaken by Hasbrook et al (1990). By comparing genders, Pastore was able to provide insight into how women differ to men in terms of reason they give for dropping out of coaching. Subjects in the Pastore (1992) study cited reasons for withdrawing such as, "decrease in time to spend with family and friends", "lack of financial incentive", "lack of support by the administration", and "lack of player dedication".

The present study, which is investigated the factors associated with coach continuation in and withdrawal from youth football examined the importance of family support for the coach in further detail. A lack of support from the family and pressure to spend more time with the family were areas addressed as possible factors influencing coach withdrawal.

## The Influence of Coach Burnout

There are two elements to this sub-section. The first includes a general discussion of burnout, the second relates to burnout as a factor in coaching.

Smith (1986, p. 37) highlights, the most notable feature of burnout as "psychological, emotional, and at times physical withdrawal from a formerly pursued and enjoyable activity". According to Vealey, Udry, Zimmerman and Soliday (1992) burnout refers to a state of emotional exhaustion caused by excessive psychological and emotional demands made on people working with other people. It occurs when the demands of the activity exceed individuals' abilities to cope, and they become overwhelmed by the stress of the activity. Kelley and Gill (1993, p. 94) state that burnout results from "prolonged exposure to experiences perceived as stressful and thus must be understood within the context of stress". These authors go further to define stress as the "discrepancy between the perceived demands of a situation and the perceived ability to cope with and adapt to those demands" (Kelley & Gill, 1993, p. 94). According to Kosa (1990), burnout correlates with symptoms of stress such as addiction to alcohol, cases of mental illness, marital problems, and in extreme cases, suicide.

Coach burnout is a potential contributor to coach withdrawal as Weinberg and Gould (1995) explained: coaches are prime candidates for burnout as they are subject to constant pressures from parents, athletes, their own family, and their governing bodies. The coach, particularly at the youth level where often they are the parent of one or more of the children participating, may be subjected to these pressures for quite a lengthy period, especially if they have several children involved in the program. In addition, burnout is not an ailment confined to coaches in highly visible sports, it affects

coaches of both sexes, at all levels and in most sports.

To deal with burnout, Humphrey (1987) suggests that self-awareness and realistic understanding of coaching seem to be the best approach. Successful coaches accept the rigours of their profession, while recognising their strengths and weaknesses. In other words, they can manage their own stress levels and can be a positive role model for their athletes. As Lee (1993) explains, it is most important that coaches clarify their values and motives and understand the part they play in the lives of the children they coach. Above all, coaches must determine for whom they are coaching: (a) themselves; (b) the club; (c) the sport itself; (d) the parents; or (e) the children. In addition, Drew (1985) and Milam (1995) suggest delegating more responsibility or turning down extra responsibilities that will only add to the coach's stress as one of the first steps to take. This will leave more time free to be creative and provide the coach with some essential leisure time or more time with his/her family and other commitments.

Martens (1987) and LeUnes and Nation (1991) suggest taking care of one's self physically as an important step for the coach. They add that it is important for the coach to be a model to their athletes, not just a "preacher of fitness". Being fit will not only benefit the coach physically, it will also serve as an inspiration to their athletes.

Drew (1985) proposes attending clinics on coaching or becoming accredited, if not already, as other measures of combating coach burnout. This author suggests that such courses are a way of refreshing the coach with new ideas and concepts to "rekindle" the enthusiasm that is needed in successful coaching. The clinics also provide a chance for different coaches to meet and discuss any problems, such as burnout, and recommend solutions as a group of colleagues. LeUnes and Nation (1991)

concur, mentioning that other coaches know only too well what the burned out coach is experiencing and can serve as a source of tension release.

By understanding the concept associated with burnout and how it can affect a coach's decision to continue or withdraw from sport, coaches can learn to overcome its negative effects and hopefully eliminate it as factor in their coaching lives.

### The Influence of Coach Accreditation

Drew (1985) explained the importance of coach accreditation courses as a means of discussing problems such as coach burnout amongst colleagues and determining solutions. In this section, the compulsory nature of coach accreditation will be discussed in relation to its influence on the coach's decision to either continue in, or drop out from his position.

The effect that compulsory accreditation may have on a coach's decision to continue or withdraw from their role in sport has not been studied in depth. As with any profession one needs to 'keep working at it' to remain competent in the job. Coaching an athlete is no different.

The Australian Coaching Council (ACC) is the national peak body responsible for coaching and officiating education and development in Australian. It administers the National Coaching Accreditation Scheme (NCAS) and incorporates the National Officiating Program and the Coaching Athletes with a disability scheme. (Australian Sports Commission, 1998).

The NCAS aims to increase the proficiency of coaches through the implementation of uniform standards of instruction specific to the requirements of

individual sports (Australian Sports Commission, 1986).

Under the guidance of the ACC and hence the NCAS, the Western Australian Football Development Trust (WAFDT) conducts accreditation courses that are specific to all levels of Australian Rules Football. As detailed in Chapter 1, junior football is coordinated and promoted by the WAFDT, the development arm of the Western Australian Football Commission. In addition to this role, the WAFDT is responsible for implementing policy and guidelines conducive to the sport as a whole within Western Australia (S. Hargreaves, personal Communication, November 2, 1998).

Pyke and Woodman (1986, p. 30) explained that "it is no longer entirely appropriate for our sports coaches and administrators to simply emerge from the ranks of playing without any formal training...". In a later, un-authored feature article in the ACC's quarterly journal, "Sports Coach", it was explained that even if the coach thinks they are doing a reasonable job, there is always room for improvement and it is important to stay up to date with the latest information and techniques (Coaching Notes, 1994).

According to McArthur-Allen (1995), as at May 1994, Australian Rules Football clearly lead all other sports with the largest total number of accredited coaches (see Table 1). Basketball was the next, with a total of over 6000 less accredited coaches than football. Possibly, a major reason for this fact, is that "compulsory" Level 1 accreditation has been implemented in many football organisations around Australia.



Table 1

Total Accreditations as at May 1994

| Sport        | Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 3 | Total |
|--------------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| Football     | 16116   | 1345    | 120     | 17581 |
| Basketball   | 10413   | 942     | 22      | 11377 |
| Rugby League | 7698    | 704     | 275     | 8677  |
| Gymnastics   | 7155    | 897     | 30      | 8082  |
| Cricket      | 6053    | 1030    | 376     | 7459  |

(McArthur-Allen, 1995, p. 14)

Compulsory accreditation is a complex issue open to a variety of interpretations. According to Douge (1990), the need for compulsory accreditation was raised at the 1984 National Football League Conference where frequent comments suggested that coaching methods were totally inadequate to meet the needs of football as a participant sport. In a commentary article for the journal "The Sports Educator", den Duyn (1997), a Coaching Consultant for the ACC, explained that there is currently no Australian legislation to mandate compulsory accreditation and at present this is an issue left up to the individual sporting organisations on which to make a decision.

The Western Australian Regional Junior Football Board (WARJFB) is one such football organisation. The WARJFB, the body which oversees junior football in metropolitan Western Australia, stated in their latest policy document that all persons placed in charge of junior footballers must have successfully completed Level 1 accreditation or are working towards completing the course within the first ten weeks of the current season. If not, they are not permitted to coach (Western Australian Junior

Football Policy, 1997).

Prior to this latest decision by the WARJFB, football officials had been attempting to enforce compulsory accreditation. In a commentary article, McNeill (1991), the former General Manager of the WAFDT, explained this was supported by all administrators of WA football, at all levels, reinforcing the notion that junior and youth football coaches should be competent. McNeill added that most children and adolescents indicated that the coach is the major reason why they chose to drop out of, or remain in football, thus emphasising the importance of quality accredited coaches in childrens' sport. This was consistent with Dal Santo's (1993) later findings pertaining to drop out rates of 12 to 14 year olds from sport.

In his book on coaching children in sport, Lee (1993) claimed that people who coach children have a responsibility to educate them. This responsibility can not be avoided and has effects which may extend beyond the playing field. In order for the coach to impart knowledge on to his athletes, he must have all the facts. If a coach is committed he will seek out required knowledge without being told, and possibly eliminating the need to enforce compulsory accreditation. The committed coach will talk to and watch other coaches, read texts, watch video tapes and attend workshops (Parkin, 1990).

According to an undated brochure produced by the ACC, Level 1 accreditation has two components. The first requires attendance at a theory course, such as that conducted by the WAFDT. The theory course begins with four hours focusing on general Coaching Principles, followed by Sport Specific and Theory and Practice components for a minimum of 10 hours. Topics covered in the Level 1 course include: (a) role of the coach; (b) teaching and coaching skills; (c) planning programs and

practice sessions; (d) problems in coaching; (e) sports specific skills and tactics; and (f) coaching practice. The second component requires completing at least one season of coaching experience (or equivalent for at least 30 hours). In addition, football coaches are required to submit a mid-season report to the WAFDT for an assessment of their progress (S. Hargreaves, personal communication, June 11, 1998).

Parkin (1990), an elite Australian Football League (AFL) coach, and a keen advocate of the accreditation process, suggested in a "Coaching Update" commentary article that a coach receives many benefits from attending the accreditation course including: (a) an increase in confidence and competence; (b) considerable improvement in knowledge and expertise as the coach moves up through the levels; (c) an increase in awareness of the many resources available; (d) improvement in communication skills; and (e) an increase in the enjoyment of participation for both themselves and their players. Lee (1993) concurs, adding that with skills gained through accreditation, coaches can improve children's feelings of satisfaction by recognising the differences in their views, including activities to satisfy different goals, encouraging to set their own goals, giving them plenty of opportunity to play, and showing them that winning is not the only important aspect in sport.

Austin (1992), however, makes the relevant point that a number of potential coaches, at all levels, may be lost due to the compulsory nature of accreditation. Den Duyn (1997) observed that finding sufficient volunteer coaches is hard enough without eliminating the non-accredited. McAthur-Allen (1995) suggests that some coaches are not willing to make the personal sacrifice of their time to complete the necessary 14 hours of a Level 1 course, and many are reluctant participants who question their need to attend.

Following a survey of 72 coaches, Lee, Williams and Capel (1989, p. 31) found that only approximately half had taken courses to enable them to become better coaches. These authors commented that “clearly many coaches feel qualified to coach children without the need to demonstrate coaching, as opposed to playing competence”. In other words, these coaches may feel that their previous playing experiences are all the qualifications required in order to be a coach and they have an aversion to the thought of having to receive formal qualifications such as coach accreditation. Forcing coaches with this type of egocentric outlook and opposition to formal qualifications, may result in them dropping out of coaching. It is possible therefore, that compulsory accreditation may be a contributing factor influencing a coach's decision to continue or withdraw from youth football.

#### Transition from Volunteer to Professional Coaching

One of the research questions for the present study proposed to enquire whether or not there is a pathway for aspiring coaches to progress from the youth level to the more professional or elite levels such as Westar Rules Colts.

If this pathway exists, what does it involve and is it drawing coaches away from youth football? Research into this specific area is extremely scarce. In a commentary article in the journal “Sports Coach”, Shakespeare (1994), the Director of the Queensland Academy of Sport and a Level 3 Accredited netball coach, addressed the issues a coach must consider when planning to move into professional coaching.

Shakespeare urged coaches to recognise and develop their skills. While technical merit is usually the basis for the hiring and firing of salaried coaches, being an effective

professional coach, however, is not merely limited to technical expertise. In fact, to address only this restricts one's effectiveness.

In addition, Shakespear emphasised that the astute professional coach is involved with identifying future athletes. He or she must network with sports science and sports medicine experts and know when to harness their strengths. The professional coach should have good management skills, including computer literacy and be willing to have a public presence.

In summary, based on her personal experience, Shakespear suggested that coaches who constantly seek to upgrade and improve their skills will find the professional life a challenging and rewarding experience.

### Summary

The coach, particularly at the youth level, plays a vital role in the lives of many of the athletes under his direction. It is therefore imperative that these coaches are qualified and competent. This will ensure that the youths being coached are taught with the correct techniques and gain every possible benefit. While it appears that there are minimal differences between current and former coaches, the decision to continue or withdraw from sport is dependent on many factors. Whether or not he is intrinsically or extrinsically motivated will most certainly be a factor.

It is inevitable that eventually the youth football coach will discontinue his involvement in coaching. Maybe this will be due one of a number of factors including the involvement of the coach's own child in the program, family pressures or lack of family involvement, or coach burnout. Perhaps compulsory accreditation will play a

role in the decision or the coach may decide to leave volunteer coaching to pursue a professional role in the sport.

As Pastore (1992) explained the more understanding we have of the reasons coaches enter and leave various sports, the greater the chance of creating programs to reverse the declining number of coaches. The purpose of the current study is to determine what factors contribute to coaches of youth football in metropolitan Western Australia continuing or withdrawing from their involvement in this sport.

## CHAPTER 3

### Methodology

This chapter outlines the: (a) research design; (b) sample; (c) data collection, including procedures, interviews and pilot study; (d) data analysis; and (e) ethical considerations related to this study.

#### Research Design

Much of the previous research in the area of coach withdrawal from sport including that by the Youth Sports Institute (1978), Martens and Gould (1979), and Weiss & Sisley (1984), has been based on quantitative methods using questionnaire data. There is a need for a qualitative approach in order to more fully explore coaches' views. As Scanlan, Stein and Ravizza (1989) explained qualitative methods of investigation provide depth, detail, and allow subjects to be understood in their own terms.

Qualitative research based on open ended interview questions allow the subject to respond in their own terminology, and they are given the opportunity to express their own opinions. Patton (1990, p.357) suggested that the in-depth interview allows the researcher to "walk a mile" in the head of the subject.

The total research project into the factors influencing continuation and withdrawal from coaching youth football in metropolitan Western Australia involves two phases, of which the first one is the focus of the present study. Phase 1 involves a qualitative research approach. Phase 2 will utilise the data from Phase 1 to construct a

questionnaire for distribution to several hundred current and former coaches by the Western Australian Football Development Trust (WAFDT).

The aim of this research was to explore the views, opinions and personal experiences of current and former youth football coaches to determine why coach continuation or withdrawal occurs at the youth level.

### Subjects and Sample

Sixteen subjects participated the present study, eight current and eight former coaches. Criteria for selection in the study as a current coach depended upon the following: (a) currently coaching youth football (ages 13 – 17 years) at the community club level; (b) currently coaching in one of the four WAFDT regions listed below; and (c) known to the Metropolitan-Regional Development Officers (MDO) in their region.

Former coaches were selected on the following criteria: (a) formerly coached at the youth level in community club football; (b) withdrew from coaching within the last two football seasons; (c) formerly coached a club situated in one of the four WAFDT regions listed below; and (d) appeared as a cancellation on the regional list of coaches possessed by the MDO in that region.

The subjects were recruited from four of the six Western Australian Football Development Trust (WAFDT) metropolitan football regions: (a) North Suburban, (b) South Suburban, (c) Midlands/Swan Districts, and (d) Peel. By including a northern, southern and eastern metropolitan sample and an outer metropolitan sample from Peel, a fairly broad spectrum of the youth football coaching community was addressed, hence reducing any bias that might occur by sampling from only one metropolitan region.



With the aid of the WAFDT MDOs, current and former youth football coaches were contacted to find two willing participants in each category in each of the four regions.

This type of sampling could be termed *stratified sampling* (a form of probability sampling) as described by Henry (1990), due to the six football regions or strata. However, the subjective nature of the MDOs' involvement meant that the sampling process used was nonprobability sampling. As Henry (1990) adds, nonprobability samples are often selected when relatively extreme limitations on time and resources prohibit probability samples. This approach has the distinguishing characteristic that subjective judgements play a role in the selection of the sample. The form of nonprobability sampling that best reflects that used in the current study is *critical case* sampling. That is, the researcher selects a limited number of cases that logic or prior experience (MDOs' involvement) indicate will allow generalisation to the population.

The sampling technique used in the present study was also based on that of *purposeful* sampling as advocated by Patton (1990). As this author explains, the relevance of this type of sampling relates to the selection of information rich cases. These "are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research, thus the term *purposeful* sampling" (Patton, 1990, p. 169). The MDOs recommended information-rich cases whom they believed would be beneficial for the study.

To ensure anonymity of the subjects, they were given pseudonyms which are listed in Table 2 along with the WAFDT region from which they were chosen. For consistency and convenience, current coaches were given pseudonyms beginning with C and the former coaches' identities were disguised with names starting with F.

Table 2

Subjects' pseudonyms and coaching regions

| WAFDT Region                 | Current Coaches  | Former Coaches    |
|------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| North Suburban               | Charles<br>Clive | Frank<br>Francis  |
| South Suburban               | Chris<br>Colin   | Fred<br>Ferdinand |
| Midlands / Swan<br>Districts | Cameron<br>Cliff | Fraser<br>Fergus  |
| Peel                         | Craig<br>Coby    | Floyd<br>Fritz    |

Data Collection

Procedure

Upon receiving the names and contact details of the 16 subjects from the MDOs, the researcher telephoned each to invite them to participate in the study. During these phone calls, individual interview meetings were arranged at a place convenient to each. As Appendix A displays, the majority of interviews were conducted at the subject's residence, however where necessary their workplace or a neutral venue was used.

At the meeting, each subject was supplied with a covering letter explaining the research in further detail and asked to sign an informed consent form (See Appendix B).

Any questions were answered to the satisfaction of the subjects and permission was gained to tape record the proceedings. Two to three minutes into the interview, the tape was checked to ensure that the recorder was working properly and the recording was audible. The interview then proceeded.

Following the interviews, the tape recordings were transcribed in full with the permission of the interviewees. Each page of the transcript was formatted with line numbers on the left margin to facilitate each location of data during analysis (See Appendix C).

### Interviews

With the consent of the participants, all of the interviews were tape recorded, which as Scanlan et al (1989) explained improved the accuracy of information gathered, and allowed the researcher to observe the reactions of the subject in response to the questions.

Data was collected through open-ended semi-structured interviews. As advocated by Patton (1987), interview guides were used to gain similar information from each subject. Interview guides for both current and former coach subjects are displayed in Appendices D and E. Probing questions were asked in order to gain specific aspects of information.

Initially questions were designed to relax the subject and to obtain essential demographic details including playing experiences. Questions then moved on to areas relating to their coaching experiences, accreditation and future coaching ambitions.

Interview duration ranged from 27.1 minutes to 45.2 minutes with an average of 36.4 minutes (See Appendix A).

### Pilot Study

Prior to the interviews with the 16 current and former coaches, a pilot study was conducted with one former coach and one former coach to determine the suitability of the schedule of interview questions. Two coaches were chosen, one with whom the researcher was acquainted and was known to be a former coach of youth football; the other was a current coach, chosen with the aid of the MDO in the researcher's WAFDT region for convenience.

Following phone calls to establish their initial interest in the study, meetings were arranged at each subject's home. Consent forms were signed and any questions were answered to the participant's satisfaction prior to the commencement of the interviews. Using interview schedules similar to those used in the major study (see Appendices D & E), open ended questions were posed in order to stimulate discussion particularly from the subject. In addition, the interviewees were invited to comment on the focus of the questions, the style of the interviewer and any other pertinent information for the conduct of the interviews. The interviews lasted between 30 to 35 minutes.

Following these pilot interviews, transcriptions were made from the tape recordings and analysed using procedures outlined in a later section. Data gathered and analysed in the pilot study did not form part of that in the present study. Since the purpose of the pilot study was to practice interview, transcribing and data analysing

techniques prior to embarking on the larger scale study, a number of areas for consideration and improvement were discovered and implemented into the present study. Areas that were modified included: (a) creating a more flowing interview environment by asking more leading questions instead of jumping erratically from one topic to another; (b) asking more questions pertaining to coach burnout and stress as this is an important factor that was glossed over in the pilot study; (c) the addition of an external microphone to enhance the quality of the interview recordings; and (d) addition of line numbers to interview transcripts to allow easier reference to relevant quotations.

### Data Analysis

The analysis of the data in this study was as Scanlan et al (1989) describes, of an inductive nature whereby relationships were allowed to emerge from the data rather than being imposed upon them. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985, p.333) "inductive analysis begins not with theories or hypothesis but with the data themselves, from which theoretical categories and relational propositions may be arrived at by inductive reasoning process".

Analysis began with the transcribing of the tape recorded interviews. This allowed the researcher to become familiar with the data. Upon completion, each transcript was checked against the audio tape for accuracy and then a copy was mailed to the subjects to peruse in order to make any necessary modifications prior to further analysis. Four of the 16 subjects requested slight modifications or had information to add to their interview transcripts. The remainder either did not respond, or notified the researcher of their approval for analysis to continue.

The researcher read each transcript several times making notes in the margin of important aspects, and abbreviated responses and highlighting relevant and important quotations, as Appendix E displays. From this point, tables were constructed which enabled a comparison, question by question, of all the subjects' responses. These tables also enabled quick reference to relevant quotes (See Appendix F). From these tables common themes emerged and these are summarised in tables in Chapter 4. As will become obvious in Chapter 4, the current and former coaches were more alike than different. Therefore, it was possible to amalgamate their responses. A ranking system was then utilised to list the top 10 responses to most questions. The most common response was ranked number one, followed in order by the next most common responses. Where an equal number of responses were recorded, these were bracketed and their position in the ranking shown as an average. These tables displayed an amalgamation of both current and former coaches' opinions and suggestions into a ranking system of most common responses to various related interview questions.

#### Ethical considerations

All steps were taken to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of all subjects. All interviews were conducted in private, except in two cases where a member of the subject's family was present. All transcripts of interviews were completed either in person or by a professional typist who at no stage knew the real identities of the subjects, and no identifying names were included in the transcripts. All interviews were conducted on a first name basis only, and the details of identity are only be available to the researcher. All subjects have been represented by pseudonyms, details of which are

stored separately from the transcripts.

The subjects at all times retained the right to withdraw all data provided by them from the research at any stage prior to submission if they wished to do so. All subjects were provided with full transcripts of interviews for their perusal and the opportunity to amend, prior to data analysis.

All data, from this research has been stored separately for a period of five years, where upon it will be destroyed by incineration. All identifying information is restricted to use by the researcher only and stored securely.

## CHAPTER 4

### Results

#### Introduction

This chapter presents the data collected from one-on-one tape recorded interviews with eight current and eight former youth football coaches. The sections in this chapter relate to the major research question: What are the principal factors influencing coaches' motivation to continue or withdraw from their involvement in Australian Rules Football at the youth level? Section headings and sub-sections are based on the subsidiary research questions as outlined in Chapter 1. From the analysis of the data it became apparent that the most appropriate way to present the data was to address the subsidiary questions and then pool them to answer the major question.

Throughout this chapter, relevant quotes from the interview transcripts have been used. These quotes are in the subjects' own words and include a number of grammatical inconsistencies.

#### Similarities and Differences Between Current and Former Youth Football Coaches

Weiss and Sisley's (1984) compared various characteristics youth basketball coaches to determine the similarities and differences between the current and former coaches. This process helped frame the subsidiary question: What are the similarities and differences



between coaches who continue and coaches who withdraw from youth football. The comparison considered demographic characteristics, playing experiences, and the extent of family support and involvement have been addressed.

### Demographic Characteristics

The demographic similarities and differences between the two categories of coaches are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3  
Comparing Current Coach and Former Coach Demographics

|                                 | Current Coaches | Former Coaches |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Mean Age (years)                | 39.8            | 44.7           |
| Percentage married              | 87.5            | 87.5           |
| Mean number of Children         | 2.6             | 2.6            |
| Mean age of children (years)    | 12.2            | 15.6           |
| Percentage employed             | 87.5            | 100            |
| Mean time in Employment (years) | 14.6            | 16.8           |

Despite a variation in average age between the current ( $M = 39.8$  yrs.) and former ( $M = 44.7$  yrs.) coach categories, the demographic characteristics of the 16 subjects are quite similar in many respects. For instance, as Table 3 displays, there is

an obvious similarity in their marital status. All the coaches were married except current coach Charles and former coach Fraser who are both divorced. Both categories of coaches had 2.6 children. The average age of the subject's, however, differed slightly with children of the current category being 12.2 years and the former category 15.6 years. This is not surprising since the former coaches were older and thus would have older children.

With the exception of Chris who is currently studying teaching at university, all the current coaches are involved in full time employment and have been for an average of 14.6 years. Similarly, all of the former coaches are employed full time and have been for an average of 16.8 years. Again the difference was probably attributable to the age difference.

When asked whether or not they liked their jobs, coaches answered mostly positively with responses ranging from "it's alright" (Fergus) through to "excellent, really enjoy it" (Francis).

### Coaches' Playing Experiences

There were a number of similarities between the playing experiences of the two groups. For instance, almost all the current coaches played Australian Rules Football all the way through from juniors to seniors except for Clive who only played football at the junior level and went on to mostly play hockey and cricket. Similarly, in the case of the former coaches, the majority had played at both junior and senior level except for Fred who only played at the junior level.

While senior football playing experience for the current coaches varied from Sunday League to Amateurs to Country League football, two of the coaches, Cameron and Charles, also played Veterans into their 40s. In addition, Cliff, at the age of 44 is still playing Amateur League football. Senior experience for the former coaches included Sunday League, Amateurs and Country League football and also Westar Rules Reserves and League experience and a brief period in the VFL colts. Francis, like Cameron and Charles also played Veterans League football.

When asked to comment on the happiest memory of their playing days, half of the current coaches responses indicated that *success* in terms of either premierships or personal achievements such as trophies, or being selected to play at a higher level, rated quite highly. The other current coaches indicated that *participation* was their happiest memory. This incorporated the fitness they gained, playing with now 'Big' names such as Ross Glendinning (a former AFL player, now Channel 7 sports commentator), and simply the enjoyment of playing the game. Success and participation are reflected respectively in the following two responses:

Obviously I played in Grand Finals and they were pretty happy memories, and my achievements...trophies and the skills I have now, the skills I learnt along the way.

(Chris)

I reckon getting to a fitness level at the age of about 28 that I just never got to when I was younger, that was pretty good, I felt like I could do anything. That was the best part of it.

(Colin)

Similar responses were heard from the former coaches. For instance, six of the eight suggested that *success* was one of their happiest memories including winning premierships, fairest and best trophies, and adulation from team mates due this success. Additional responses from those coaches and the remaining other two coaches indicated that the social aspect, team work and participation were amongst their happiest memories.

More than anything that I remember was the honesty of my team mates when I got cheered off the ground and brought into the change rooms, everybody clapped for about 5 minutes because of the amount of effort I put in from start to finish. I recognise that as being a total overwhelming motivational thing for anybody who has been in football. (Fraser)

Five of the subjects interviewed highlighted the importance of success during their playing days explaining also that competitiveness encourages longevity in the game and it was especially important towards the end of one's career.

Oh definitely, Grand Finals you played in. There's no doubt that winning is a pretty high thing in anyone's participation in sport. It's not all of it but it is probably pretty important that you taste some success. I probably played in four or five premiership teams and it was certainly the highlight. (Charles)

All the teams I played in were competitive. Just to play in a Grand Final is great, that certainly is a factor with senior football. (Frank)

Oh yeah, that was I suppose, when you're in your twilight years its what keeps ou going once you've achieved what you wanted to achieve. (Fritz)

### Extent of Family Support and Involvement

A comparison can be made between the extent of support and involvement from the coaches' families. In the case of the current coaches, the majority had their wives help at the club in roles varying from team manager to club registrar to being keen spectators. These coaches emphasised the importance of this support in terms of the pressure it relieved them of, especially in terms of making phone calls and following up with players and in terms of maintaining family unity.

Yes, very heavily, she's always been there doing all the important things that I don't get time to do, running around chasing up kids, making phone calls, canteens and what have you. (Cliff)

When you've both got interests you can both go on a Sunday with the same thing in mind. Whereas if I say I'm going to the football and she saying I'm going to my mum's because we're supposed to be going to a family dinner today. At least with my wife being team manager we both know we have to go to the footy then after that we can do the other things. Plus being team manager I can come home and I can sit down and say who hasn't paid their fees instead of going and seeing or ringing somebody else all the time. (Coby)

In contrast the spouses of the former coaches seemed to have more limited hands-on involvement. Only half of their wives had helped out as team managers, or similar administrative roles, while their husbands were coaching. The others had a mainly spectator role. The extreme was Fraser's wife who actually "hates football".

In summary, the two categories of coaches had similar demographics and playing experiences. The interviews suggested that the former coaches received less support and help, on the whole, from their family. Therefore in the remaining discussion, the responses of the coaches are considered together unless specifically indicated otherwise.

### Factors Associated with Coaching Involvement and Withdrawal

This section reports the various factors associated with the coach's decision to initially become involved in youth football through to his eventual withdrawal from the sport and the main reasons associated with this decision. When investigating factors associated with coaching involvement, the following sub-sections have been used: (a) reasons for initiating involvement; (b) important issues in youth football; (c) factors associated with continuing coaching; and (d) the effect of own child's involvement in youth football. The investigation into coach withdrawal involved: (e) factors associated with withdrawal; and (f) transition to a higher grade of coaching. The relevance of remuneration at the youth level has also been discussed as a separate sub-section.

#### Coach Involvement

##### Reasons for initiating involvement.

The following table displays a combination of the 10 most common reasons provided by the subjects from both categories for initiating their involvement in coaching. From

the tables constructed during the data analysis (see Appendix F), all the subjects' responses to questions relating to initiating coach involvement were grouped together producing the list below.

Table 4  
Most Common Reasons for Initiating Coaching Involvement

| Rank  | Reason  | Total Responses |
|-------|---|-----------------|
| 1     | Influence of personal participation in the game   | 9               |
| 2     | Demand for coach at son's club  | 7               |
| 3     | Ongoing interest or passion   | 5               |
| = 4.5 | <div> <div>Son's interest &amp; involvement</div> <div>Belief in ability to do better than existing coach</div> </div>      | 4               |
| = 7   | <div> <div>Asked to coach</div> <div>Had something to offer</div> <div>Already involved at club in other roles</div> </div> | 3               |
| 9     | Related to physical education career  | 2               |
| 10    | Good peer and club support  | 1               |

Over half of all the subjects believed that to some extent, experiences encountered whilst playing the game influenced their decision to take up coaching. Responses ranged from a desire to repay the game for benefits received whilst playing, through to an aspiration to make amends for their own misfortunes as players.

The reason I continued playing football was because I wanted to make something of myself before I finished. I enjoy putting some time back into football after I had got so much enjoyment out of it when I was playing. So

yeah, if I hadn't have played, there is no way in the world I would have coached. (Charles)

I always had the aspirations of becoming a coach. I think probably because of my strong views on why I didn't make it to the AFL or VFL as it was then.  
(Fraser)

Other coaches embraced a number of the most common reasons for beginning their involvement in their responses. These include: (a) his son's interest and involvement; (b) Belief in ability to do better than existing coach; (c) had something to offer; and (d) already involved at club in other roles. This was portrayed in Cliff's comments:

I was always down there and I was always umpiring their games, I had coached 13s, 14s and 15s probably three or four years before that. I was going down with [my son] and I was a little bit put off with the skill level with some of the kids that were coming through, I thought that I could improve it. That's what turned me to coaching.  
(Cliff)

The other top two ranking reasons for initiating involvement in coaching were: (a) demand for coach at son's club; and (b) ongoing interest or passion. When asked why they decided to begin coaching, the following subjects' responses were heard:

Firstly it was because there was nobody else and at the time you didn't need any qualifications.  
(Charles)



I started coaching because my son needed a coach. (Chris)

It comes back to following the boys when they first started and I've always loved football anyway... I love footy and that's the reason why I followed it through and then started coaching. (Fred)

I love footy, I've been in it for the best part of my life. (Fraser)

### Important issues in youth football

Coaches' opinions about the most important issues in youth football are revealed in Table 5 below.

Table 5

#### Major Issues in Youth Football from Coaches' Perspective

| Rank | Important Elements   | Total Responses |
|------|--|-----------------|
| 1    | Player development   | 9               |
| 2    | Personal/social development of players   | 5               |
| 3    | Providing opportunity for participation and talent pathways  | 3               |
| = 7  | <div> Variety and quality of coaches<br/> Winning – particularly in older age groups<br/> Maintaining participation<br/> Player self esteem<br/> Attitude<br/> Skills<br/> Discipline </div> | 2               |

The majority of coaches agreed that a critical element at the youth level was player development in terms of on-field attributes, such as skill improvement. This often meant that the subjects would modify their training sessions to ensure that their players were developed as much as possible.

I've had a lot of kids that I spent a lot of time on non-preferred, I always believed that at a [training] session we'd have a 20 minute session of non-preferred [side of the body kicking and hand-balling]. (Fred)

Another commonly highlighted issue of concern in youth football was the off-field, personal and social development of the coaches' athletes, as opposed to their on-field playing development. This was conveyed in following statements:

I don't only look for better footballers but definitely for better people in the community. I think that community football has a huge role in changing the face of our nation and if we give kids a great image about what life's supposed to be and what good citizens are supposed to be then that's reflected by our kids in the community. (Fraser)

Well, I certainly think as a junior player this [social aspect] is an important factor, [it's] the reason why they are down there. Some of them are not as interested in the football as they might be, but the social side is an important one, and them developing friendships, learning to co-operate with one another and just the socializing is an important factor of it.

(Frank)

The third most common issue raised by the subjects was providing opportunity for participation and talent pathways. Player development was often contrasted with winning in a number of responses. Coby explained that this was often a means of maintaining player participation and encouraging them to continue with their football to higher levels.

At the end of the day if you just play to win maybe only two or three kids will go on, but if you develop them all well then 22 might get the chance to go on. You've got to give everyone equal amount of time and skills and if they choose at the age of 16 to not ever play again, which is their choice, if they all choose to go to development squad level well what a bonus. We're here to develop them and at the end of the day winning is only a bonus. (Coby)

#### Factors associated with continuing coaching at the youth level.

Table 6 displays the top 10 reasons why a coach may continue his involvement in youth football. The data is a combination of suggestions and opinions from current and former coaches in response to two different questions. Current coaches were asked why they had continued to this point and the former coaches were asked to provide their opinion on why a coach may stay involved in youth football.

Table 6

Top 10 Reasons Why Coaches Continue Involvement

| Rank  | Reason  | Total Responses  |
|-------|---|------------------|
| 1     | Working with children and helping develop players (I)   | 9                |
| = 2.5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>{ Ongoing interest / passion for the game (I)</li> <li>{ Club, parent and player support (E)</li> </ul>  | 6                |
| 4     | Enjoyment and happy memories (I)  | 4                |
| = 5.5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>{ Long term success of players (E)</li> <li>{ Acknowledgment / ego (E)</li> </ul>  | 3                |
| = 8.5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>{ Ambition to coach at higher level (I)</li> <li>{ Satisfaction of doing a good job (I)</li> <li>{ Success – not just winning (E)</li> <li>{ Something to offer / repayment (I)</li> </ul> | 2<br>2<br>2<br>2 |

(I) = intrinsic motivator

(E) = extrinsic motivator

As governed by Martens' (1987) descriptions of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators (Ch. 2, p. 18), subjects' reasons for continuing involvement were followed with an "(I)" if the response was an intrinsic motivator and an "(E)" if extrinsic. The intrinsic rewards of working with children and helping the players develop and the enjoyment and happy memories gained from coaching are influencing factors as to why a coach chooses to continue his involvement in youth football. The following typical responses indicate this.

Develop my kids, truly and simply just the development of seeing kids go from just thirsty babies through to young men and how they develop. My aim has always been to let them achieve the greatest level they wanted to achieve.

(Cliff)

They're [coaches] generally the retired footballers that have taken up coaching and they're putting something back into the game and they've got a lot more from being around youth players than what they would be getting around seniors where a can of beer is the most important thing. So they tend to stay there for quite a long time and put a lot of effort back into it.

(Fraser)

That it is the happiest part, that I've been able to take them from a side that basically lacked a lot of confidence - their skill level was pretty average - to a side that is now playing pretty good football.

(Colin)

Extrinsic rewards such as acknowledgment seem to be less important as there are only four featuring in the top ten reasons for coach continuation. However they do play a role in maintaining some coaches involvement. For instance, as Fraser explains:

... kids come in and call your name out and say there's our coach. It shows an enormous amount of respect for the person and you get a good feeling about it as well, particularly if you're talked about in the community.

(Fraser)

#### Effect of own child's involvement in youth football.

Two issues are addressed in this section. Firstly the influence on the subjects from coaching their own child(ren), and secondly, the impact upon the subjects' coaching due to their own child's involvement under the direction of another coach.

Firstly, twelve of the subjects had coached their own child or children at some point throughout their youth football coaching career. Three of the current coaches' children were not old enough to be involved and therefore had never coached them.

For those subjects interviewed who had at some point coached their own child, the question was asked as to whether or not they believed that doing this impacted on the father / son relationship at home. Responses indicated that it did have an impact and the impact was not always positive.

I don't know really, we have disagreements over some things that I do at football. We talk a lot about football, I suppose it's a far greater bonding than most fathers and sons I'd say. We've got something to talk about every night of the week, it's usually football.

(Craig)

With coaching my son, I felt like he used to blackmail me, to the point where if he wanted to hold something against me he might use football, so that's why I stopped coaching him...

(Chris)

In fact, as Charles explains, not having your own child in the team has its advantages over those who coach their son. For instance:

Yeah, it does because it doesn't give us an attitude of favouritism. We're looking at the over all picture. We've obviously got favourites which we can see are doing the things that we've asked to do but we don't have parents complaining that we're favouring our own kid so it works out pretty well. It's

definitely a problem with some parents that's for sure, we've come across that already this year. (Charles)

Secondly, when all the subjects were asked to what extent they were influenced by other coaches' methods, particularly their own children's coaches, varying responses were given. Only six of the subjects suggested that the methods used by their own children's coaches influenced their's, and only three felt their children's opinions of their coaches impacted on the coaching methods of the subjects. However, 75% of all subjects suggested that it was very important to observe other coaches in action and were very willing to do so where ever possible.

I think a little bit of feedback from my boys has probably helped though I suppose some of the coach's lack of experience has made me put more effort into my coaching. (Cameron)

Take a weekend off and go and listen to a few coaches of anything from junior teams all the way through to 17s, go and have a look at a few different coaches and different clubs and you'd soon get a better perspective on the way you should be thinking about your coaching. (Ferdinand)

To a certain extent, but I think what influenced me in my coaching was probably coaches that I had when I was playing. More so that watching other junior coaches coach. (Francis)

Coach Withdrawal

Factors associated with withdrawal from coaching at the youth level.

Table 7 below displays the top 10 reasons why a coach may choose to withdraw from youth football. The data is a combination of suggestions and opinions from current and former coaches in response to a variety of interview questions. Firstly, just the former coaches were asked to provide their reasons for discontinuing and then their comments were coupled with responses from questions asked of both categories as to why they felt other coaches might withdraw from coaching. Lastly, these amalgamated responses were integrated with comments heard from both categories in response to prompting questions relating specifically to possible withdrawal factors including coach burnout, parental pressure, participation numbers and own child discontinuing.

Table 7

Top 10 Opinions as to Why Coaches Withdraw From Coaching Youth Football

| Rank | Reason  | Total Responses |
|------|---|-----------------|
| 1    | Pressure from parents and lack of parent support  | 14              |
| 2    | Lack of player commitment and participation numbers   | 12              |
| 3    | Other commitments (including work, time and travel)   | 11              |
| 4    | Own child's discontinuation   | 9               |
| 5    | Becoming jaded or burnt out   | 7               |
| 6    | Compulsory accreditation  | 5               |
| 7    | Pressure from and lack of club support  | 4               |
| = 9  | { Transition to higher grade of coaching<br>Pressure from family or lack of family involvement and support<br>Lack of success and self belief | 3               |



Almost all of the coaches agreed that parental pressure or lack of parental support was the biggest factor causing a coach to withdraw from youth football. This was reflected in Fred's response to the question: Do you feel that parents who don't support a coach and constantly nag him contribute to coach withdrawal?

I suppose a coach would look at that. I think if you had that sort of parent in your side and it continually happened, I think coaches would obviously say, that I've had enough of this, it's not worth it. (Fred)

Comments from other coaches often encompassed a number of reasons for coach withdrawal as seen in Table 7. In his comments below, Fraser encapsulated four of listed reasons for coach withdrawal, including the second ranked opinion, lack of player commitment. He also highlighted a lack of success, parent support and club support and the time constraints related to work commitments.

The most outstanding point would be that most coaches have a son in the team and once they find that it has become outside their capability, they will leave, because most of them are just dads, who may not have played a game of football in their life and they've been sucked into being coaches. They are generally the first ones to go, they can't hack the harassment that is placed on them from the parents, the club and the players. Other reasons, a coach may have been with a team for 2 or 3 years and haven't tasted success, they don't know how to take them to the next level, they haven't gone to the next coaches course or tried to better their knowledge of coaching to succeed. Work reasons would be another, perhaps they've changed jobs and are unavailable to coach any more at club level, because the teams have to be coached by around 4.00pm after school so it places them in a great bit of difficulty because they might not finish work until 6.00pm. (Fraser)

Colin identified three of listed reasons for withdrawal, including: (a) other commitments; (b) becoming jaded or burnt out; and (c) pressure from the coach's family and/or a lack of their involvement and support for the coach.

Basically the burnt out feeling of being weighed under, some coaches stop because they realise that they are a bit out of their depth, some coaches stop because they realise they can not give as much time as it's needed. They realise that getting down to training twice a week and on the weekend is a fair time commitment and they might have other family commitments they have to get to. They are the main factors that I have found why coaches drop out.

(Colin).

The fourth ranked opinion as to why coaches may withdraw, that of the coach's own son discontinuing, was identified by Craig below:

Yes, it's a lot to do with coaching their sons or members of the family, then once they [the coach's children] finish they go...

(Craig)

Cliff explained that compulsory accreditation is a further burden for many coaches who may not have the time to attend a course, and are as a result forced to withdraw from coaching.

By forcing people in, trying to get them accredited before they coach or when they really don't have the time, they're not getting the full value out of it. They also won't take the accreditation, so they won't coach, you're getting second or third best people coming into coach. They don't want to coach, but they just happen to have the time, but not the inclination, they'll do it because no one else is there. That's why you find in most regions in WA you have such a great turnover in coaches, they'll coach for 1 or 2 years and then just fall out of it.

(Cliff)

Transition to a higher grade of coaching as a factor for withdrawing from youth football.

As highlighted in Chapter 1, page 7, the subsidiary question was raised as to whether or not coaches were withdrawing from youth football in order to pursue careers at the more elite levels. Table 7 showed that choosing to coach at a higher level was in the top 10 reasons cited for coach withdrawal from the youth level. For instance, Coby explained his intentions to reduce or even eliminate his involvement at the youth level to concentrate on coaching higher levels of football. His aim was a continued involvement only with the Westar Rules combined developmental squad which is comprised of the best youth footballers in his region.

I'm cutting back next year because it is too much with the family and that. I'm not coaching at club level...I'll just stay with the development squad.

(Coby)

Seven of the eight current coaches believed that youth football is a stepping stone or pathway for aspiring coaches wanting to move up the grades to the Westar Rules colts level. However, a common theme was the perception that elite coaches should have experience playing at league level.

Those that suggested that one did not require league experience to coach at Westar colts level explained that it is important to initially prove oneself at the youth level. Once this has been achieved, the coach may take the step to the Westar development squad level and become involved with a particular Westar club. The coach will then meet the various staff, and learn how an elite club is run.

Experience of coaching at senior amateur level would also be beneficial and Level 2 accreditation is a vital element for coaches wanting to progress. These suggestions are reflected in the following comments from Cliff:

Without a doubt they [youth coaches] have to continue through their junior coaching and coach to the 17s level... next step would have to be to an amateur club and then, of course, on to the Westar. If they were going to Westar an important step for them would be a level 2 accreditation. If they want to go to Westar they have to go that one step further to have all the facts and not just go in with half the facts...[youth coaches] just have to have an understanding of the game, a philosophy for the game and an impression of the game. If you have those three things with the coaching experience behind you, you don't have to be a league player. (Cliff)

Belief in the existence of a pathway from the youth level to Westar level from the former coach's point of view was more limited. League playing experience as a requirement was a more common response from this category. Those that thought a pathway existed suggested the accreditation process as being an important factor, and a coach needs to become known by the Westar club he is trying to move into.

Yes, I think there is a pathway there. You get involved in combined sides, inter districts sides, there is opportunity there to take on elite squads and make contact with Westar clubs and you will be noticed there if you've got the abilities...I've seen people move through along that pathway – junior teams, combined sides, up to colts assisting in some way. (Frank)

### The Relevance of Remuneration for Coaches at the Youth Level

Subjects from both categories were asked if there was a need for coaches at the youth level to receive remuneration for their services. The vast majority of subjects adamantly opposed this suggestion as exemplified in the comments of Cliff and Francis.

Absolutely not, I think that it is up to the clubs to ensure that the coaches are satisfied in coaching for the right reasons, if they need to be there for the money, they shouldn't be there. (Cliff)

No, I feel pretty strongly about that, I don't believe so and mainly because we need to be careful as to how much pressure and influence we put on teams to compete and win. I think if money becomes involved with coaching, it brings with it that sort of attitude to a certain extent from the coach's perspective. He probably feels he has expectations that he should perform. I wouldn't be for that at all. (Francis)

However there were four subjects who did consider remuneration a possibility. These subjects explained that under certain circumstances, such as the 16 and 17 age groups, remuneration may be necessary to attract and maintain quality coaches and also to cover the higher personal costs to the coach.

In that case, we would like the 17s to have the best coach available and so advertising remuneration might be the way to go...the payment could be to send them to do a level 2 or sending them to the AFCA Camp or something like that, instead of paying them money, paying for those sort of things (Colin)

In the most difficult circumstances, say under 17s or 16s teams, a coach will spend the majority of his time running around the streets in his own vehicle and also on the telephone chasing up players to ensure that they're all there. Without realising it, it probably adds an enormous amount of money to their costs for the year on top of their own telephone bills etc. I think this might be a little bit unfair and the coaches should be looked after or you can have some sort of expense amount sort of applied to them so they can actually have \$300 or \$400 in a booty that they have the availability to utilise for whatever reason.

(Fraser)

In summary, over half of all the subjects believed that to some extent, experiences encountered whilst playing the game was the influence on their decision to take up coaching. In the subjects' opinions, the most critical issue in youth football was player development. Similarly, the most common reason for continuing at the youth level was working with children and helping the players develop. For those subjects that had coached their own child, the impact on the father / son relationship which resulted varied from positive to negative. The majority of subjects highlighted the importance of watching other coaches, however, few of them suggested that their own children's opinions of their coaches or those coaches methods influenced their own. Almost all of the coaches agreed that parental pressure or lack of parental support was the biggest factor causing a coach to withdraw from youth football. In addition, choosing to coach at a higher level was amongst the top 10 reason cited for coach withdrawal from the youth level. Lastly, the vast majority of subjects opposed this suggestion of remuneration.

## The Influence of Coach Accreditation

This section deals with the subsidiary research question focusing on the influence of compulsory accreditation. Firstly, a summary of the subjects' levels of accreditation will be provided, followed by sub-sections relating to: (a) accreditation as a factor for coach continuation; (b) accreditation as a factor for withdrawal from coaching; and (c) the subjects' suggestions for accreditation course modification.

Table 8

### Subjects' Level of Accreditation

| Subject's<br>Name      | Level 1 | Level 2    |
|------------------------|---------|------------|
| <u>Current Coaches</u> |         |            |
| Chris                  | √       | Completing |
| Coby                   | √       |            |
| Cameron                | √       |            |
| Cliff                  | √       |            |
| Clive                  | √       | √          |
| Colin                  | √       | √          |
| Craig                  | √       |            |
| Charles                | √       |            |
| <u>Former Coaches</u>  |         |            |
| Fraser                 | √       | √          |
| Francis                | √       |            |
| Fred                   | √       |            |
| Frank                  | √       |            |
| Fritz                  | √       |            |
| Floyd                  | √       |            |
| Ferdinand              | √       | √          |
| Fergus                 | √       |            |

√ = level of accreditation attained

As Table 8 highlights, all of the subjects interviewed had at least Level 1 coach accreditation, citing its compulsory nature and club policy as reasons for having attended a course. Colin, Clive, Ferdinand and Fraser had also attained Level 2 accreditation, while Coby was in the process of completing the course. Other than accreditation being compulsory, Colin added that his decision to gain formal qualification was also career based, for personal gain in the form of knowledge and expertise for his employment as a physical education teacher. Frank explained that he was able to display a recognition of prior learning and was granted Level 1 due to his long term career as a physical education teacher and coach. Floyd also cited insurance purposes as a major factor for becoming accredited. When the subjects were asked to comment on their willingness to become accredited the vast majority responded very positively with only Francis mentioning that the process “didn’t worry me”.

#### Accreditation as a Factor Contributing to Continuation in Coaching

The subjects from the current coach category were asked whether or not the accreditation process had resulted in them staying in coaching for longer. Five of the eight coaches agreed that indeed it had. They cited that the greater access to resources, materials and a desire to become more educated about coaching was closely linked with the accreditation course.

Yes, without a doubt, I’ve found out a lot more about it, a lot more interested, you also get to know people who can give you better information and we get magazines and those sort of things, it has enabled me to know a lot more about the game and be more interested.

(Colin)



The impact that accreditation had on the various subjects approaches to coaching following their attendance at a course was also discussed. The most common response from both categories of subjects was the implementing of new drills and skills learnt at the course, particularly warm-up and cool-down techniques according to Floyd. Other responses ranged from a minimal impact through to a complete change in approach as Colin and Fraser explained:

Yes, without a doubt, I can still remember how I was coaching my school teams seven or eight years ago and how I'm coaching now especially with an older group. The old hormone level was racing away. I have changed my coaching and I would imagine that I would continue to change it. (Colin)

Since then I'd been through level 1 and level 2 coaching courses. A totally new perspective on youth football and Aussie football which was really important...without doing the accreditation courses there would be no way I would have been as effective. (Fraser)

Cameron suggested that the accreditation process helps coaches accept the modified versions of the game and build a coach's confidence, particularly the psychology aspects for dealing with children. He added that accreditation doesn't help some coaches however, which was later supported in an interview with Coby.

I go to games and I see coaches screaming from the boundary line and I think that if you're an accredited coach it should be taken off you. (Coby)

Asked whether or not the former coaches thought the accreditation process encouraged them to seek further education, half agreed that it had, especially in terms of reading more literature on the topic of coaching and a greater exposure to numerous resources. The remaining subjects felt that accreditation did not encourage them to seek further education.

The subjects from the former coach category were asked to provide their opinion on the accreditation process. A common answer was that it is particularly beneficial for coaches with no playing experience, while Fraser suggested that accreditation is very important for insurance purposes. Other responses ranged from “it’s a great idea” (Fred) to “possibly a little unnecessary” (Francis). Overall there was a notion of support, by the subjects, for the accreditation process.

#### Compulsory Accreditation as a Factor Contributing to Coach Withdrawal

Subjects from both categories were asked their opinion on the possibility that compulsory accreditation may place coaches under too much pressure and therefore affect their decision to continue in or withdraw from coaching. As highlighted in Table 5, compulsory accreditation was ranked sixth in the top 10 reasons cited for withdrawing from coaching. Five of the subjects suggested it as a possible withdrawal factor, particularly for those coaches that feel they are already qualified enough as Cameron explained:

I know a few blokes that have said “look I’ve been involved in football for 20 years and if I have to go through that sort of thing then I’m not going to be

bothered” because they feel as though they are being forced into something they don’t really think is necessary. (Cameron)

Other subjects suggested compulsory accreditation does put some coaches under pressure but also added that this was probably due to a lack of commitment on the coaches’ behalf as reflected in Fraser’s comments below:

I’ve actually seen that happen where coaches have pulled out because they’ve been required to enter a course and weren’t capable of getting there or weren’t interested in getting there, a number of circumstances but, yes, I have seen them pull out. However, I will say that they weren’t committed enough to be there in the first place so therefore they’re not going to conduct the correct coaching procedures for kids under the proper circumstances so no, don’t require them.

(Fraser)

#### Recommendations for Possible Modification to the Accreditation Course

Subjects from both categories were asked to highlight any areas in the accreditation process they thought could be modified. Subjects offered suggestions for improvement to make the courses more appealing for all coaches to attend and hence reduce the chances of compulsory accreditation contributing to coach withdrawal. These suggestions are displayed in Table 9 below:

Table 9  
Most Common Suggestions for Course Modification

| Rank  | Suggestion   | Total Responses |
|-------|--|-----------------|
| = 1.5 | { Make course more accessible<br>Intermediary stage between<br>Level 1 and Level 2 | 4               |
| 3     | Greater emphasis on psychology   | 3               |
| = 4.5 | { Create a more stringent written<br>exam process<br>Shorten time requirements     | 2               |
| = 6.5 | { Remove sports science aspects<br>Greater emphasis on drills                      | 1               |

A common response was to make the courses more accessible to coaches with time constraints. Whether it be creating regional AFCA divisions, running the course all year round as Cliff suggested, having a mobile accreditation system whereby an 'accreditor' moves around to different coaches and conducts the courses during training sessions as Craig suggested, or as Cameron adds, conducting the courses on Sundays or evenings. It was also emphasised that the accreditation process should become a four tiered structure with an intermediary step between Level 1 and 2 for coaches that have played the game, have the skills of the game already, but want to learn more about coaching. In other words, there is a need for some form of refresher course for retired players wanting to move into the realm of coaching:

Level 1, I think if someone has been coaching for 20 years, Level 1 should be scrapped and they just go to Level 2...I think that the Level 2 should be a Level

3 and there should be one between Level 1 and 2...make the Level 1 a basic one for someone that has never played football and wants to learn the skills and wants to learn how to coach and then something a little bit more advanced for those that know the game but want a little bit extra. (Clive)

Three of the subjects explained that there needs to be a greater emphasis on psychology aspects including ideas on how to deal with parents and adolescents. Cliff and Francis believed that the written exam process should not be an open book scenario and hence become more stringent. Ferdinand also highlighted the unnecessary nature of sports science aspects at the Level 1 course:

The medical side of things, probably that's a little bit too much for coaches to really need and to get involved with... the coach isn't allowed to run on the ground when a player goes down any how so why are we trying probably to stimulate a coach to know a great deal about injury. Basic treatment I don't have a problem with like RICE type scenario but anything further you're really filling your mind with things they really don't need to do. (Ferdinand)

In summary, it has been suggested that accreditation has resulted in a number of coaches wishing to continue their involvement due to an increase in knowledge and a modification of their general approach to coaching. However, compulsory accreditation was regarded by the subjects as the sixth most common reason why a coach may withdraw from youth football. In addition, a number of course modifications have been suggested in an attempt create a more appealing accreditation process for all those wanting to coach youth football.

Principal Factors Influencing Youth Football Coaches' Motivation to  
Continue or Withdraw

In order to ascertain the principal factors influencing coach continuation and withdrawal at the youth football level, hence answering the major research question, a number of related areas were researched. Subsidiary research questions formed the basis of the exploration into these related areas, and the findings are summarised below.

Demographic characteristics, coaches' playing experience, and extent of coaches' family support and involvement were discussed in order to identify the similarities and differences between coaches who continue and coaches who withdraw. Minimal variation between the two categories of subjects was observed for the first two areas on concern. However, current coaches on the whole had greater family support with their coaching than did the subjects in the former coach category.

The second subsidiary research question dealt with the factors that influence a coach's decision to become involved in youth football. The most common reason cited by subjects in both categories for this initial involvement was the influence of personal participation in the game. This usually involved a desire to repay the game for benefits received whilst playing or an aspiration to make amends for their own playing misfortunes.

In response to the third subsidiary research question – what factors would encourage the coaches to continue their involvement? – the majority of subjects identified the intrinsic, rather than extrinsic rewards gained from coaching. The intrinsic reward of working with children and helping develop the players was highlighted as the highest ranked reason why a coach would continue his involvement.

Fourthly, the subsidiary question was posed: what are the most common reasons given by coaches for discontinuing their involvement? The most common reason cited by the subjects from both categories was pressure from parents or a lack of parent support for the coach. A lack of player commitment and participation numbers, and other commitments, including work, time and travel, were also identified in the top three factors affecting coach withdrawal.

The research question pertaining to the influence of compulsory accreditation was addressed from the point of view of it as a factor of coach continuation, and as a factor of withdrawal. Five of the eight current coaches suggested that accreditation had resulted in them continuing due to a greater access to resources and materials and a desire to become more educated about coaching. Other subjects explained that the accreditation process had resulted in various changes in their coaching ranging from the addition of new drills and skills to a complete modification of the coaches attitude. It was also suggested that compulsory accreditation may place some coaches under too much pressure, and with their other commitments may force a coach to withdraw. It was explained that some coaches refuse to become accredited and are therefore forced to discontinue their involvement.

When addressing the research question related to the influence of the coach's own child's involvement two areas were dealt with. Firstly the influence on the subjects from coaching their own child(ren), and secondly, the impact upon the subjects' coaching due to their own child's involvement under the direction of another coach. For those coaches that had coached their own child, this usually impacted on the father / son relationship, however not always positively. In fact, it was suggested that not coaching one's own child was beneficial for the coach. Secondly, the majority of

subjects explained the importance of watching other coaches to gather ideas. However few suggested that their son's opinions of their coaches, or the methods employed by those coaches, impacted on the subjects' approach to coaching.

The final subsidiary question related to coach withdrawal from youth football to pursue coaching careers at higher grades of football. The minority of coaches explained that they intended to drop out of youth football in an attempt to progress to the more elite levels of coaching. A number of subjects did explain the possibility youth football as a stepping stone to more elite levels such as Westar Rules colts, however, factors such as league playing experience, the accreditation process, and experience coaching senior Amateur football, and involvement in Westar development squads all play important roles in this pathway.

Therefore, through the opinions and experiences of the subjects interviewed in this research, principal factors have been identified as contributors to coach continuation and withdrawal. A coach may be motivated to continue if he receives support from his wife and family. The continuing coach will most often seek intrinsic rewards in his role such as the enjoyment of working with children and helping his players develop, both on and off the field. Compulsory accreditation may serve as a means of maintaining a coach's interest and hence prolong continuation. By not coaching his own child a coach is more likely to continue. By doing this, he will avoid a number of related withdrawal factors such as pressure from other children's parents and drop out due to own child's discontinuation.

However, a youth football coach's decision to withdraw his involvement may be motivated by pressure from his family to spend more time with them. A lack of parent and player support and commitment frequently eventuates in coach withdrawal. Other



pressures and stresses, such as coach burnout, are factors at the youth level and if not controlled, drop out can occur. A change in work commitments often results in an inability for the youth coach to invest the necessary time and effort into his coaching and withdrawal ensues. A lack of time to complete the requirements of a compulsory Level 1 accreditation course may see a youth coach being forced to withdraw. Coaches unwilling to attend such courses for a number of reasons, including an egocentric outlook on their coaching, are not permitted to continue coaching at the youth level. Withdrawal will often occur when a coach's son ceases his involvement as a player at the youth level.

A discussion of the results displayed in this chapter will form the basis of the next chapter. The subsidiary questions will be addressed in greater detail and then related to the available literature in order to elaborate upon the answer to the major research question of what are the principle factors influencing coaches' motivation to continue or withdraw from their involvement in Australian Rules Football at the youth level?

## CHAPTER 5

### Discussion

#### Introduction

The major focus of this research was to investigate the factors influencing coaches' motivation to continue or withdraw their involvement in Australian Rules Football at the youth level. A number of subsidiary questions served to provide the necessary details. Questions were: (a) what are the similarities and differences between coaches who continue and coaches who withdraw? (b) what factors influence the coach's decision to become involved in youth football? (c) What factors would encourage the coaches to continue their involvement? (d) what are the most common reasons given by coaches for discontinuing their involvement? (e) are coaches withdrawing from youth football in order to pursue a career at the more elite level such as Westar Rules Colts? (f) what is the influence of their own children's involvement? and (g) what is the influence of compulsory Level 1 coach accreditation?

The subsidiary questions form the basis of this chapter and will be discussed in light of the results from Chapter 4 and integrated with the available literature to answer the major research question.

## Comparing Similarities and Differences Between Current and Former Youth Football Coaches

In addressing the similarities and differences between coaches who continue and coaches who withdraw, demographic characteristics and playing experience of the subjects in each category resembled each other. The extent of involvement and support for the coach by his family did, however, differ.

### Demographic Characteristics

Recent research conducted by the Australian Coaching Council found that over 60% of coaches are aged 40 years and more and over 64% of coaches are in full-time employment in non sport occupations and professions. (NCAS Research, 1998). Comparative demographic characteristics of the average current and former coaches in the present study resembled these the figures. In addition, there were only minor variations in almost all aspects, between the two categories of participating subjects.

A difference between the two categories of subjects was their mean ages, with the former coaches being an average of 4.9 years older than their current counterparts. Another disparity between the two categories of subjects was the average age of their children. As would be expected, the older former coaches had children that were on average 3.4 years older than the offspring of the current coaches. From Table 1 in Chapter 4, the average current coach involved in the present study was in his late 30s ( $M = 39.8$  yrs), was married (87.5%), had 2.6 children that were an average 12.2 years old, and were involved in long term (14.6 yrs), full time employment (87.5%).

Similarly, the same percentage of former coaches were married with an equal average number of children as the current coaches. The average former coach, however, was in his early 40s (44.7yrs), and his children were an average of 15.6 years of age. All former coaches were involved in long term (16.8 yrs) full time employment .

A comparative study conducted on 159 current and 97 former North American youth coaches by Weiss and Sisley (1988) determined that the average current and former coaches in their study were also similar to each other in many demographic respects including mean age and marital status. Weiss and Sisley's (1988) average current coach was in his mid 30s ( $M = 32.5$ ) and was married (70.2%). Similarly the former coaches in this study were in their mid 30s ( $M = 35.9$ ) and also married (76.6%).

Whilst the subjects in the present study had a mean age older than those from Weiss and Sisley's (1988) study, one aspect similar in both studies, was that the average former coaches were older than the current coaches. This information indicates that coaches tend to withdraw their involvement when they get older. An influencing factor in this decision may be the coach's own child's participation in the game. While it was demonstrated in Chapter 4 that interest and involvement in football shown by the coach's son was the fourth highest ranked reason for initiating coach involvement, it was also shown that the coach's own child discontinuing in the program was the fourth highest ranked suggested reason for coach withdrawal. It seems a link exists between the age of the coach and the age of his own children. If so, the older former coaches' children, at the time of coach withdrawal (a point within the last two years), were within an age bracket of 12 to 14 years as specified by Dal Santo (1993) as being a period of high attrition from sport for youngsters. Therefore, when the coach reaches an age where his child is within this period of high attrition and hence withdraws from the

game, then the coaches are more likely to withdraw coaching involvement.

Former coach, Fritz, raised another point that warrants discussion in relation to the age of the subjects and their children. He suggested that as children age, the less appealing they are to coach.

There is probably four different types of junior coach. There is the toddlers and then there is the nine/ten year olds then the young teenagers and then the 15/16 year olds. I think that it is like primary school teaching. I think you'll find that a lot of teachers like teaching the younger kids whereas once you start getting up to the grade sixes and sevens the lack of discipline in the kids themselves can take its toll on people. I know my wife is a school teacher and it can be quite draining when you put in the effort and the kids around you aren't responding and all they want to do is muck around. But I feel that coaching 10 / 12 year olds is a lot easier than coaching the under 14s/16s. They need a lot more discipline in them and there is not much of that around any more. (Fritz)

Considering Fritz's view, in light of the fact that seven of the eight former coaches in this study coached their own child in the program at some point, and the former coaches on average had children older than their current counterparts, being older, having older children and coaching an older age group could be a cause for coaches withdrawing.

Weiss and Sisley's (1988) comparison of current and former coaches also dealt with the qualifications of the average coach in their study. They found that the majority of both current and former coaches did not possess a physical education or recreation degree, and that approximately half of subjects from both categories had attended a coaching clinic. In terms of possessing university qualifications relevant to coaching,

similar results were observed in the present study, with only former coach Frank and current coach Colin employed as physical education teachers. All subjects in the present study, however, had completed at least a Level 1 coaching accreditation course. This figure was due mainly to the compulsory nature of Level 1 accreditation in youth football as insisted by Regional Junior Football Board and Junior Football Clubs' policies.

### Comparing Playing Experiences

When comparing current and former coaches in terms of their playing experiences, again, there was little variation between the two categories. All of the subjects had at least participated in junior football and the majority ( $n = 14$ ) had gone on to play senior football in some capacity. Senior involvement for the current coaches included time in the Amateur, Sunday, Country and Veteran's Leagues, while former coach experience included these four competitions plus Westar Rules and VFL careers. Once again results pertaining to the playing experiences of subjects' in Weiss and Sisley's (1988) study bore similarities to those in the present study. For instance, Weiss and Sisley' (1988) average current and former coach had formerly competed in sports at the youth level and had or were competing at the adult recreational level.

The fact that all the subjects in this study had played Australian Rules Football lends support to the suggestion that the *influence of personal participation in the game* was the most common reason for initiating coaching involvement in youth football (See Table 2, Ch. 4).

### The Importance of Family Support and Involvement

The majority of current and former coaches involved in this study were married, with Fraser and Charles each being divorced. The extent to which the married coaches' wives actually helped out in the youth football program varied, however, between the two categories. The majority of the current coaches' wives were involved at the club in roles such as team manager, club registrar, helping the canteen and being keen spectators. The former coaches' spouses involvement in a hands-on roles, however, was more limited with only half of these women helping out as team managers or in similar administrative roles.

This difference is an important factor when considering reasons for coach withdrawal. In his book, "The Coach", Sabock (1985) explained that the impact of coaching on the family is an area that demands a great deal of understanding, however it is often overlooked by many prospective coaches. Sabock adds that it makes little difference whether the married coach wants his spouse to be involved in the coaching or not, as there is no way to avoid it completely. The extent to which the coach's wife and family accommodate the requirements his role and support the coach may determine the longevity of involvement.

In a study conducted by Hasbrook, Hart, Mathes and True (1990) when comparing male and female interscholastic athletics coaches, it was found that male rather than female coaches more often experienced time constraints due to family responsibilities. Family pressure or lack of family support was ranked in the top ten reasons for coach withdrawal as seen in Table 5, Chapter 4, it was actually stated by Fraser as being the major factor in his decision to quit coaching. When asked why he

had stopped coaching, Fraser responded:

Basically because of family reasons. I used to get nagged about being at football and not being at home enough. (Fraser)

A greater family support network was linked with the current coaches in the present study and these coaches emphasised the importance of this support in terms of the pressure it relieved from them, especially in terms of making phone calls and following up with players and in terms of maintaining family unity as described in Chapter 4 by Coby (p. 46).

Yes, very heavily, she's always been there doing all the important things that I don't get time to do, running around chasing up kids, making phone call, canteens and what have you. (Cliff)

When describing current coaches, Sabock (1985) explained that it was apparent that most of the wives were willing to adjust themselves and their families to the unique demands inherent in the responsibilities their husbands faced. In the present study, a higher proportion of former, rather than current coaches, lacked such support. Therefore, it is more likely that a coach will continue his involvement if his wife and family offer support throughout the football season.



### Reasons for Initiating Coaching Involvement in Youth Football

This section deals with the subsidiary research question relating to the factors influencing the coach's decision to become involved in youth football.

As research indicates (Martens & Gould, 1979; Martens, 1987; Paull et al, 1995), individuals have general orientations for being involved in coaching. Coaching orientations are the motives or reasons why a coach coaches and what they perceive as important in their coaching. The literature suggests that the most common reason for coaching is intrinsic motivation, however some coaches may be involved for extrinsic motivations. In addition, three different orientations to coaching have been identified that are based on the types of rewards a coach may seek. These coaches are either: (a) self-oriented; (b) affiliation-oriented; or (c) task-oriented.

The most commonly suggested reason in this study for a coach initiating his involvement in youth football was due to the *influence of personal participation in the game*. A number coaches wanted to repay the game for the benefits they received whilst playing as noted by Charles in Chapter 4, or had a desire to prevent their own playing misfortunes recurring in the youths they coached as Fraser has explained, also in Chapter 4. These coaches could respectively be described as self-orientated and task-oriented. Charles' comments are supported by Francis who explained the influence that playing football had on his decision to take up coaching:

I just felt it was a way that I could give something back and having played for that length of time and the knowledge that I'd got out of the game and the fun I had playing the game. I just thought it was a good thing for me to do, to give something back to the game.

(Francis)

Charles and Francis' ambitions to repay the game fits with the description of intrinsic motivation provided by Paull et al (1995). These authors explained that intrinsic motivation referred to a sense of fulfilment and pleasure that was derived from involvement in coaching. For Charles and Francis, there was no greater reward for their coaching than simply being involved.

Chris expressed reasons for initiating involvement in coaching that were very similar to Fraser's comments:

My failures as a player, was the reason I wanted to coach, because of what I did wrong as a player, how I was coached as a player and the chances that I had that I never took up. That is what I want to impart to the guys that I coach now. You have to give it your best and you only get one chance and in my case I blew my one chance.

(Chris)

Comments from Chris and Fraser corresponded to Martens and Gould's (1979) profile of a *task-oriented* coach in terms of him striving to be effective in teaching the skills of the sport, to be knowledgeable in all aspects and to focus on his athletes playing well and overcoming any barriers inhibiting success. This was further supported by the fact that Fraser also had a great ambition to go on to achieve Level 3 coach accreditation. While Fraser is presently not coaching, and hence classified as a former coach...

... my commitment [is] to football and [I] will come back to coaching and at this stage I have got my name down to be a level 3 accredited coach, hopefully that is going to happen within the next 12 months. (Fraser)

Research has indicated that general motives for coach involvement are more often intrinsic than extrinsic (Robertson, 1985; Leyden, 1994; Goddard & Pavy, 1995). On the whole this was reflected in the findings of the present study where the majority of subjects cited intrinsic motivations for coaching. Maybe this is due to the nature of youth football being a volunteer sport where extrinsic rewards such as monetary remuneration is minimal, if not non-existent for the majority of coaches. The topic of remuneration will be dealt with in the next section.

#### Factors That Encourage Coaches to Continue at the Youth Level

Following the discussion as to why coaches initially become involved in coaching, it would be prudent to investigate the reasons associated with continuing coaching at the youth level. This section responds to the subsidiary research question relating to factors that would encourage a coach to continue his involvement in youth football. When addressing this topic, coaches' opinions on the issues of importance in youth football and their relevance to coach continuation will be discussed. Findings presented in Chapter 4 suggest that remuneration may play a relevant role in attracting and maintaining coach involvement and hence will also be included under this section.

Previous research has indicated that the enjoyment of coaching, making a contribution to the sport, a love of the sport, a liking for coaching, wanting to do

something about the standards, and for personal development were all important factors pertaining to reasons for coach involvement (Robertson, 1985; Leyden, 1994; Goddard & Pavy, 1995). Results in Chapter 4 support these findings. Subjects identified *helping players develop, an ongoing interest and passion for the game, and the enjoyment and happy memories gained from coaching* among the top four possible reasons for continuation of coaching at the youth level. This lends further support to the notion that the majority of coaches are intrinsically, rather than extrinsically motivated.

### Important issues in Youth Football

In their research, Martens and Gould (1979) defined three outcomes that coaches would likely seek or term as important to them during their involvement. These were: (a) winning, (b) having fun, and (c) socialisation, an encompassing term used to include any reference to the physical, psychological, and social development of the participants being coached. The same research also indicated that the majority of coaches placed more emphasis on having fun than winning, and the socialisation outcomes were most important of all.

While helping players develop was the highest ranked reason for continuing coaching in the present study (see Table 6), it was also considered by the subjects in this study to be the most important aspect at youth level. The importance of player development was emphasised in contrast to winning as suggested by Coby (see Chapter 4), when he discussed the idea of development as a tool of coaching being an effective means of maintaining long term player interest. Ferdinand added that it is important for coaches at the youth level to consider the intrinsic benefits of coaching, such as the

enjoyment factor and player development as priorities, and if the coach is extrinsically motivated, *self-oriented*, as described by Martens and Gould (1979), and perceives winning as important, they will not be involved long. For instance, Ferdiand explained:

That is something I've tended to find is that if a coach is purely intent on winning he generally doesn't go too far, he generally tends to struggle. Whereas a coach that is confident on the skills side tends to get the players to carry through.

(Ferdinand)

Findings from Martens and Gould (1979) support information revealed in the present study in terms of the importance of *personal / social development of players*. Fraser and Frank's comments expressed in Chapter 4 (p. 51) highlighted the social importance of youth football. Fraser and Frank's suggestions were supported by Fred when he discussed the development of his players, not just in terms of on-field attributes:

Yes, once again it's a very good social side to football I think, any sport really, because it keeps kids off the streets and I think if you can give them involvement in a club, it's only better for the kid himself to go further and find somewhere happy and keep going.

(Fred)

Youth football is obviously more than just a sport for many of its participants. It provides a social outlet for a number of the youngsters involved as the subjects in this study have explained. The youth coach must therefore be aware of this and modify his

approach to coaching to incorporate social as well as athletic components and hence accommodate all of his players. This may also serve as a means of addressing waning participation numbers, which was seen in Table 7 (Ch. 4) as a major contributor to coach withdrawal.

### The Relevance of Remuneration for Coaches at the Youth Level

In a quantitative questionnaire study conducted by Pastore (1992) on reasons given by male and female high school coaches for leaving a coaching career, it was discovered that the male's second highest ranked reason was a lack of financial incentive. While a lack of remuneration did not feature in the top 10 reasons for coach withdrawal in the present study, it was mentioned by 25% of the subjects as a means for possibly attracting and maintaining coaches, particularly in the older age groups.

Colin explained that for some clubs there is a need to attract quality coaches to coach their senior sides. Advertising remuneration could serve as a means of persuading a greater number and variety of coaches to apply for the senior positions hence creating a system whereby the best coach can be chosen from a group of candidates.

Another factor related to coaches at the 16 and 17 year old age groups was highlighted by Fraser in Chapter 4 in terms of recuperating the personal costs incurred, particularly when coaching these youths. As Ferdinand and Craig added:

There could be some sort of gratuitous payment just for the time they put in for petrol or something like that. (Ferdinand)

Then again, in 16s and 17s maybe a couple of honorariums wouldn't go astray. It takes a fair bit of running around and organizing and that for the coach... the travelling and the arranging of training and running a few guys around and all that sort of stuff, phone calls and stuff. 17 year olds get a little bit irresponsible and you have to ring them and injuries. To find out who's playing and who's not, organize your team a little bit more... \$200.00 per year or something like that to cover his phone calls and running around, wear and tear on his vehicle...

(Craig)

Although a minority of cases, these four coaches have considered the relevance of the extrinsic motivator of remuneration as a factor related to coach continuation. This is an area that perhaps warrants further investigation in order to determine the necessity of remuneration and what form it should take at the youth level.

#### Factors Contributing to Withdrawal from Coaching Youth Football

The majority of subjects ( $n = 14$ ) held the opinion that a combination of pressure from parents and/or a lack of parent support was the most common reason why a coach may choose to discontinue his involvement in youth football. In addition, over half of the coaches suggested a lack of player commitment and participation numbers, other commitments, including work, time and travel, and own child's discontinuation were all very strong influences in a coach's decision to withdraw his involvement.

Weiss and Sisley (1988) cited three major reasons for coaches dropping out. These were: (a) time involvement; (b) conflicts with job; and (c) child no longer participating in the program. These authors went on to explain that while the majority

of coaches attributed withdrawal to these reasons, they are factors that the program administration could do little to influence. In other words, it is doubtful that attrition of coaches due to these reasons could be reversed.

Indeed, there is a possibility that *other commitments* and *own child's discontinuation* are factors affecting withdrawal that can not be eliminated, however, factors such as *parental pressure* and *lack of participation numbers* are areas that youth football as a whole can intervene in. For instance as Table 7 in Chapter 4 displayed, *a greater emphasis on psychology*, including how to deal with parents, was the third highest ranked suggestion by the subjects for accreditation course modification. This means there is a desire amongst youth football for ways to handle parents as indicated previously in comments from Fred in Chapter 4 and Frank below:

[A lack of parent support] certainly could be a factor, especially if you are left on your own doing all the work. The coach is left to shoulder a large amount of the responsibility. If you are left on your own to do that, that can be tough. And I'm sure the coach would feel a bit isolated and would feel he was baby sitting to a large extent. (Frank)

Parents may indirectly place further pressure on the coach by pressuring their own children. As Kidman and Hanrahan (1997) explained, parental ambition sometimes exceeds that of the child, to a point where children participate in a particular sport as a duty rather than a pleasure. This type of parent will often perceive winning as all important and will insist that this is achieved often by trying to tell the coach how to do his job.



Martin and Lumsden (1987) highlighted the fact that a coach can save himself from a number of related problems if he respects the rights of the parents of the athletes to be involved in their child's sport. These authors go further to add that a coach should provide parents with a clear understanding of the program and ensure that parents understand the coach's expectations for their involvement. In addition, parents and coaches should have a clear line of communication, and parents should receive positive feedback when they do help the coach.

Martens (1990) concurred, explaining that developing good working relationships with his athlete's parents is just as important for the coach as the relationship with the athletes themselves. By keeping parents informed and listening to their concerns, the coach can improve the parent /coach relationship and hence help to alleviate pressure on himself.

Absenteeism of players and a lack of player commitment was another area that could be modified to reduce its severity as a factor for coach withdrawal. A number of the subjects suggested that by altering training methods and the way in which he approaches his players, the coach can have an influence on participation numbers and hence reduce the risk of the team disbanding and the loss of the coaching position. Some of the subjects' suggestion follow:

I say to them "if you don't turn up to training what do you think is a fair outcome?" I'll give them a few options and they choose the rules . I type out the rules and give them out to the kids. If they know the rules at the start then they know they have to stick to them or pay the price. (Coby)

I think by the way he acts and the way he talks and I think he has to do it straight away. If there is a couple of kids in there that he can see are going to give him a hard time yeah you jump on it straight away. You lay the ground rule down straight away. If the club has selected you to do the job then you have to set the ground rules for the kids. I think that's the main thing. You've got to stamp your own method and your own expectations to them straight away. As early as you can. (Floyd)

Come up with a few ideas that really attract the players to come down and be involved with him. Different coaches come up with different ways of doing things. Easier nights now and again to just break the ice to take them out somewhere else. (Ferdinand)

The fifth most commonly suggested possible influence on a coaches' decision to continue or withdraw from youth football was *becoming jaded or burnt out*. Vealey, Udry, Zimmerman and Soliday (1992) suggested that burnout refers to a state of emotional exhaustion caused by excessive psychological and emotional demands made on people working with other people. It occurs when the demands of the activity exceed individuals' abilities to cope, and they become overwhelmed by the stress of the activity.

As Colin commented, "the burnt out feeling of being weighed under" was certainly a large factor for coaches at the youth level. Francis agreed, adding:

I felt that after the 3 years I'd had enough... it was like you had to get yourself up every week as well, even though you aren't playing, but you are still very heavily involved in the game. To a certain extent, it was probably a bit of burnout there.

(Francis)

A number of the other subjects suggested that coach burnout at the youth level was contributed to by other factors such as other work commitments, pressure and lack of support from parents and the importance to some coaches of winning. As Fritz explained:

When you're coaching a side, whether it be a the junior or senior level really it's on your mind all the time and I suppose that can be a bit of a drain. Especially at work you're trying to do your work and you get these football flushes coming to you quite a few times in the day. I would imagine that people would give it away just to have a rest from that... Yeah there's a whole lot of things that go with coaching that can be quite stressful at times. (Fritz)

Chris, currently a student without the added pressures of work commitments, explained that to a certain extent he had suffered from burn out and feels that the related stresses of coaching are contributed to by parents.

Oh yes, I'm pretty fragile now. In this district, we have what they call the twilight competition so we have been training since the 17 February so it's a long time for junior footy... I would imagine if you had a job when you finished at 4.00 or 4.30 and rush straight down the oval and trying to think of what you have to do. It would have a lot of stress, especially where it seems a lot of parents just drop their kids down and race off. (Chris)

When Charles was asked, if in his opinion, coach burnout was a factor at the youth level, he responded:

Oh hell, yeah. Oh, there's no doubt and especially again because a lot of other people are driven by performance and if you're driven by performance and it doesn't come your way you're going to be totally wrecked and that would be the reason why you'd throw it in. (Charles)

Weinberg and Gould (1995) suggested that coaches are prime candidates for burnout as they are subject to constant pressures, and the results from the present study support these authors' suggestion.

#### Coach Withdrawal From Youth Football Due to a Transition to a Higher Grade of Coaching

It was shown in Table 7 (Ch. 4) that choosing to coach at a higher level was amongst the top 10 reasons for coach withdrawal from youth football. In fact, Coby was considering reducing or eliminating his community level youth football involvement the following season to pursue coaching at a higher grade. Frank suggested that for some coaches, youth football is just the beginning of their coaching careers.

Some of them really do enjoy it, and they get considerable satisfaction out of it, some of them see a pathway and would like to move up through the coaching ranks and take on senior. It does become a major leisure interest for a small proportion of people anyway. They enjoy it, they have been successful and the challenges are there. The coaching accreditation system, they are motivated to go on to level two. A number of them do that. I haven't come across too many of them, but I have seen a number of them go on to do their level two and think seriously about further coaching with seniors. (Frank)

On the whole, results indicated that a more optimistic view of the existence of a pathway to the Westar Level was heard from the current coaches as opposed to the former coaches in this study. A common theme amongst the former coaches was that to coach at Westar Level, even colts, one must have previously played elite League level football. Current coaches suggested coaching a Westar Development squad was the beginning of the pathway, while the majority of subjects believed that progressing through the accreditation process was a vital component in the formation of a pathway.

The fact that the former coaches are no longer involved in youth football possibly indicates a lack of insight and ambition on their behalf to continue with coaching and move up through the grades. Therefore, if a coaching career pathway was more clearly stipulated by football officials, perhaps a larger percentage of coaches would be encouraged to prolong their involvement.

#### The Influence of Coaching One's Own Child in Determining Coaching Continuation or Withdrawal

A possible connection between coaching one's own son and the age of the coach and his children has previously been raised in this chapter. In this section will expand the discussion of the influence of the coach's own child's involvement in the program will be investigated.

In a study conducted by the Youth Sports Institute (1978) in an attempt to uncover the primary reasons for coaching attrition in youth sports, it was revealed that a discontinuation of the coach's child was amongst the most important reasons cited. Weiss and Sisley's (1988) study produced similar results with the same reason among

the top five factors influencing coach dropout. Similarly, the present study revealed that *own child's discontinuation* was ranked fourth in the top 10 reasons for coach withdrawal with over half of the subjects citing it as a reason.

Yes, it's a lot to do with coaching their sons or members of the family, then once they finish they go...the first guy I asked for 10s, I said, "Will you be back next year to coach?" and he said, "If Scott plays." That's his son. So he's only coming back if his son plays. I think that 90% of why guys stay in because of their own kids. We wouldn't have a coach over there that's not coaching his own son, not one out of 10 teams...90% continue with the coaching because their sons are involved or their family are involved, the other 10% for the love of the game and the development of the kids, there not many of us around, I'm the only one that wants to go on in our club out of 10, if their kids aren't involved, they don't want to be involved.

(Craig)

Frank, who had his own son in the side he was coaching, when asked if his son finishing was among the major reasons for him ceasing his youth football coaching, he responded affirmatively. Floyd suggested however, that even though he was not coaching his own son at the time of coaching withdrawal, the fact that his son was no longer involved in youth football was a main contributor to the decision to drop out.

Yeah but I wouldn't go back now. I just don't think you feel comfortable in a situation where once your son's left the club you don't feel part of it any more. All the other people are there because they have a kid playing in the side.

(Floyd)

Floyd's comment may also be linked to the social aspects of coaching discussed previously. Frank and Fred have explained the importance of promoting the social side of youth football for the players. Floyd has suggested, however, that the cessation of the social network, created by his son's discontinued involvement with a club, influenced his decision to withdraw from coaching.

This coach-related social aspect was identified by Martens and Gould (1979) when they explained that a coach may be *affiliation-oriented*. These authors described this type of coach as being concerned with forming friendships and fostering strong interpersonal relationships.

It is evident that socialisation has a role to play in a coach's decision to continue or withdraw from coaching. Ferdinand stated that he began his involvement in coaching because "I enjoy the club, they're great people". Floyd supported the notion that coach withdrawal may result from a lack of social integration, particularly if the coach's motivation is affiliation-oriented.

The involvement of the coach's child was also discussed in terms of whether or not it impacted on each of the subjects' relationship with their child at home. Subject responses indicated that in some cases, as highlighted by Craig's comments in Chapter 4, the sporting interaction between father and child improved the family bond. Chris, however explained that coaching his own son had a negative impact both on and off the field and as a result, he ceased coaching his own son. It is therefore feasible that in an extreme case, coaching one's own child could create such a hostile atmosphere, that withdrawal from coaching may be necessary to preserve family harmony.

Charles highlighted a very pertinent point when he explained that not having a son to coach put him in an advantageous position. Not coaching a son enabled Charles

to avoid any negativity from parents and other players who may otherwise suggest that a coach is favouring his own child.

Kidman and Hanrahan (1997) believe that the parents should not coach their own children for two important reasons. Firstly, as highlighted by Charles, coaches could be seen to favour their own children in managing behaviours, picking teams, and other important factors in sport. Secondly, similar to comments by Chris, coaches may think that other people feel that they are favouring their child and therefore compensate for this (to the detriment of the child) providing less support for their child than for others in the team.

It would be beneficial for a youth football coach, wishing to continue his involvement in the game, to not coach his own child. While it is possible the parent coaching his child may improve the father / son relationship, in many cases too many negatives arise, resulting in either the son or the father discontinuing.

### The Influence of Compulsory Level 1 Coach Accreditation

As explained previously, compulsory Level 1 accreditation has been imposed on all coaches at the youth level and as a result there are varying opinions as to the effect this may have on the populations of youth football coaches. Within this section, sub-sections will attend to the idea that compulsory accreditation may influence a coach to continue or withdraw from coaching. In addition, subjects' suggestions for course modification as a means of improving coach involvement will be discussed.



### Compulsory Accreditation as a Factor Contributing to Continuation in Coaching

As displayed in Table 1 (Ch. 2), McArthur-Allen (1995) explained that as at May 1994, Australian Rules Football leads all other sports with the greatest number of accredited coaches. Therefore, it is not surprising that all subjects involved in the present study had at least achieved Level 1 accreditation.

Parkin (1990) suggested that by attending an accreditation course a coach should have: (a) an increase in confidence and competence; (b) considerable improvement in knowledge and expertise as the coach moves up through the levels; (c) an increase in awareness of the many resources available; (d) improvement in communication skills, and (e) an increase in the enjoyment of participation for both themselves and their players. Subjects participating in the present study indicated that since becoming accredited, such benefits had been received, plus accreditation had possibly contributed to them continuing their involvement.

Current coaches were asked whether or not they felt that accreditation had resulted in them staying in coaching longer. Over half of these coaches agreed that it had and explained that accreditation enabled access to greater amount of resources, materials and further education that made coaching easier and more enjoyable.

As Sabock (1985) explained, knowledge of the sport is critical for a coach. It is mandatory that the coach have a thorough knowledge of all phases of the sport to be able to organise and supervise the whole program properly and efficiently. As Martens (1990) added, good intentions are not enough to be a successful coach. The successful coach needs all the knowledge he can get. In the present study, both the current and former coaches suggested that accreditation resulted in a greater all round knowledge of

coaching and the game of football and was potentially very beneficial for providing incentive for coaches to continue their involvement. These findings further support Parkin's (1990) suggestions of the benefits of accreditation.

Due to the fact that accreditation featured in the top 10 possible reasons for coach withdrawal, the subjects were asked to suggest any ways in which the accreditation process itself could be modified to make it more appealing to all coaches. The two most common responses indicated a need to improve the accessibility of the courses for the coaches and also to modify the present three tier structure.

It was suggested by four of the subjects that some coaches can not attend the courses the way they are structured now. Due to other commitments such as work, some prospective coaches are unable to find time complete the requirements of an accreditation course and are, as a result being forced to drop out of coaching. If courses were made more accessible by running them all year round, creating regional AFCA divisions, creating a mobile accreditation system or running them on Sundays or evenings, more coaches will have the chance to attend and hence continue in coaching at the youth level.

Four of the subjects also indicated that an intermediary stage between Level 1 and Level 2 should be created. The aim of this is to accommodate those who have a playing back ground and have a knowledge of rules and skills of football, but are just looking for a refresher type course to improve their ability to coach. It was suggested by the subjects that a number of coaches dropped out of coaching when they were forced to become accredited, because they perceive that, due to their experience both as a player and coach, the accreditation process would not be beneficial. These findings lend support to areas of concern raised in the literature relating to compulsory

accreditation forcing some coaches to withdraw their involvement (Lee et al. 1989; Austin, 1992; McArthur-AlLEN, 1995; and den Deyn 1997).

A strong case can be mounted for an intermediary level between Level 1 and Level 2 thereby offering coaches an opportunity to become accredited and hence continue in the role of coaching.

#### Compulsory Accreditation as Factor Influencing Withdrawal From Coaching

As highlighted in Table 5, Chapter 4, compulsory accreditation was ranked sixth in the top 10 reasons cited by the subjects for coach withdrawal. Subjects suggested that it was particularly evident as a reason for withdrawal in those coaches that felt their experience far outweighed any benefits that could be received from attending a course.

As Sabock (1985) explained, competing in a particular sport only provides the basic knowledge upon which additional knowledge gained through study and experience is built. Subjects in the present study on the whole concurred with Sabock, describing that the youth football coach should always be looking to improve his abilities and that any coach not willing to become accredited, probably should not be coaching youth football.

Despite these opinions, by enforcing compulsory accreditation, some prospective coaches with an egocentric outlook and who frowned upon the need for formal qualifications, may be lost from the youth football scene.

### Application of the Results to the Conceptual Framework

Through the course of this research various principle factors influencing coach continuation and withdrawal have come to the fore. Results have indicated that a coach will be encouraged to continue his career in youth football if the following conducive factors, in order of presentation in this chapter, exist. The continuing coach should receive support from his wife and family as this will relieve some pressure from the coach and also help maintain family harmony which is very important.

He should seek intrinsic rewards in his role such as the enjoyment of working with children and helping his players develop. On field skill development should be a priority for the coach, as well as implementing a social element into the team. Extrinsic rewards such as the accolades associated with winning, and financial incentive should not be a priority for the coach wishing to continue. Neither of these elements are guaranteed at the youth level and hence a coach relying on them is likely not to prosper.

Another continuation factor is compulsory Level 1 coach accreditation. For the continuing coach, this should serve as a means of gaining access to further resources and materials and learning better coaching methods to help maintain his interest and hence prolong continuation.

The results suggest that not coaching one's own child a coach aids continuation. Family harmony can be disrupted and pressure on the coach from other children's parents can be increased by the coach having his son in the team.

Any one, or a combination of a number of principle factors may motivate a coach to withdraw his involvement. A coach may feel pressure from his family to spend more time with them. The role of coach demands a large portion of time, and if a coach has family responsibilities to which he must attend, the coaching may suffer to the point where drop out occurs.

A lack of parent and player support and commitment are very important issues affecting withdrawal in youth football. Excess pressure from parents relating to the on field success and playing time of their child can accumulate and burden a coach who does not manage his role responsibly. A lack of numbers, attending training and to form a team on match days can result in the disbandment of a team, leaving the coach without a position.

A change in work commitments often results in the youth coach unable to invest the necessary time and effort into his coaching and withdrawal ensues. Similarly, the requirements of a compulsory Level 1 accreditation course may pose difficulty for a coach with other commitments. Without formal qualifications, withdrawal must ensue for the youth football coach.

The coach who has a son in his team or a member of the same club may only maintain his involvement as coach while the son is playing. For some coaches, particularly those who are affiliation-oriented, the son provides an essential link to club and if this tie is broken, coach withdrawal eventuates.

Prior to the commencement, of data collection for the present study, a basic conceptual framework, based on the research questions, was devised to depict the possible outcomes of a youth football coach's career from beginning to end (see Figure 1, Ch. 1). This framework was adequate to structure the interviews from which the data

was collected.

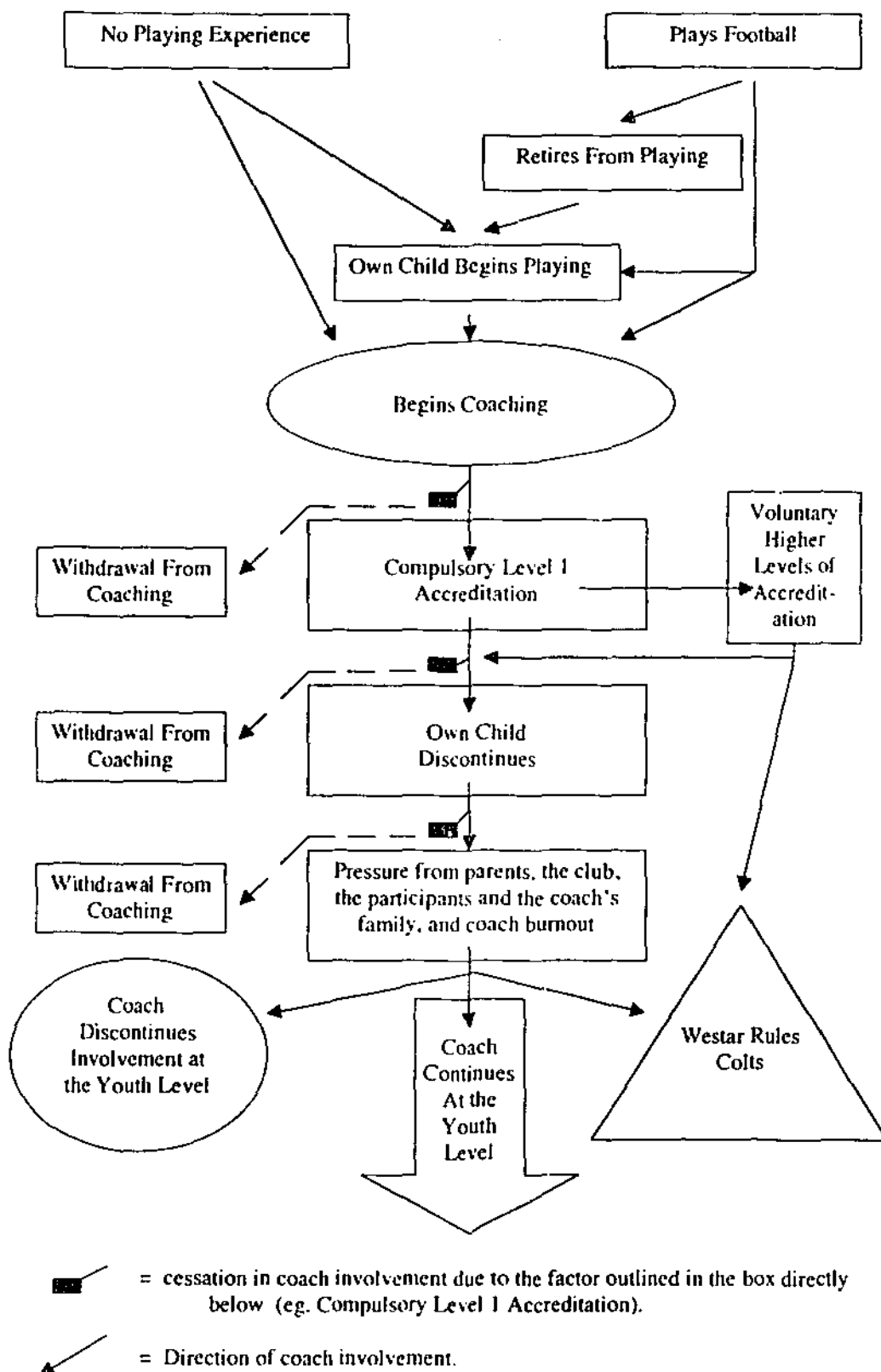
Since the data analysis, results have revealed that the concept presented in Figure 1 required only minimal modifications to compulsory Level 1 accreditation and the various coaching pressures and stresses.

Firstly, due to the latest policy guidelines of the WARJFB, no coach is able to continue in his role without possessing at least Level 1 accreditation. It is not possible for coaches to by-pass the accreditation process and continue their involvement without accreditation. It would be feasible, therefore to eliminate this 'by-passing segment' of the original conceptual framework. This would leave only two options for the youth football coach. Either they become accredited and continue to coach or be forced to withdraw due to a lack of formal qualifications.

Secondly, the various coaching pressures and stresses outlined in Figure 1 were not stipulated. Results indicate, however, that the various pressures to which a youth football coach is subject include: (a) parental pressure; (b) club pressure; (c) participant pressure; (d) coach burnout; and (e) the coach's family pressure.

Parental pressure was highlighted as the most influential reason for coach withdrawal in the present study. A lack of support for the coach by his own family, was also closely linked with his decision to withdraw from coaching. This indicated the importance of family support for the coach in order for him to continue.

Resulting from the above modifications, the linearity of the framework has basically remained unchanged. The various coaching pressures and stresses, have however been stipulated and added. A revised conceptual framework is presented in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Revised conceptual framework of the factors influencing a coaches decision to continue or withdraw from youth football.

## CHAPTER 6

### Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this research was to explore, in-depth, the motives associated with coaches' decision to continue or withdraw their involvement in youth football in metropolitan Western Australia.

Subjects interviewed for the study were eight current and eight former youth football coaches. Subjects' opinions and experiences were gathered through the interview process and formed the basis for the data in this study. The research was guided by a number of subsidiary questions: (a) what are the similarities and differences between coaches who continue and coaches who withdraw?; (b) what factors influence the coach's decision to become involved in youth football?; (c) what factors would encourage the coaches to continue their involvement?; (d) what are the most common reasons given by coaches for discontinuing their involvement?; (e) what is the influence of their own children's involvement?; (f) What is the influence of compulsory Level 1 coach accreditation?; and (g) are coaches withdrawing from youth football in order to pursue a career at the more elite level such as Westar Rules Colts?

### Major Findings and Conclusions

In order to answer the main research question, each of the subsidiary research questions listed above were addressed. These are summarised below.



In terms of the similarities and differences between current and former coaches, there was very little disparity between the two. Notable difference included the fact that on average former coaches, and their children were older than current coaches and their children. This indicated a link between dropping out of coaching and the age of the coach and his children. In addition, former coaches averaged less involvement and support from their family, indicating the importance of good family support for maintaining coach involvement.

The most commonly suggested reason for coaches initiating their involvement in coaching was the influence of their own participation in the game. Coaches indicated that they either wanted to make amends for the mistakes they made as players or simply felt a need to repay the game for the benefits they received when playing.

The most common opinion as to why a coach may stay involved in youth football was related to the subjects' opinion of the most important aspect in youth football. That is, player development. Coaches cited a desire to improve their players in all facets of the game was the main reason for staying in coaching.

Parental pressure and a lack of parental support was cited by the majority of subjects as the reason why a coach will discontinue his involvement. The influence of the coach's own child withdrawing from playing also rated as a very common reason for coach withdrawal.

Compulsory Level 1 accreditation seems to have its advantages and disadvantages in attracting coaches to continue or not. On the whole, for those coaches who advocate the accreditation process, compulsory Level 1 was beneficial in encouraging them to seek further education and knowledge about football and accreditation and often resulted in them staying involved longer. In contrast, there are

some coaches that feel accreditation is unnecessary and feel they should not have to do become accredited. If these coaches are adamant about not attending a course, they will be forced out of youth football coaching due to the compulsory nature of Level 1 accreditation.

The last subsidiary question related to the presence of a coaching future pathway from youth to the elite Westar Rules Colts football, and whether or not this is drawing coaches away from youth football. For the vast majority of cases, this was not the case. A number of the subjects either had no desire to aspire to the higher grade or didn't believe in the existence of such a pathway. Those that were keen to move on suggested that League playing experience was not a necessity, however, making a name at youth level, the accreditation process, Westar developmental football squads, and coaching experience at the Amateur level were vital steps along this pathway.

Therefore, in conclusion, results from this study have identified a number of principal factors that influence a coach's motivation to continue or withdraw. Youth football coach continuation will be assisted if the coach: (a) receives support from his wife and family; (b) values intrinsic rewards over extrinsic incentives; (c) embraces compulsory accreditation and its related benefits; and (d) does not allow his own son's involvement as a player influence his own coaching.

The youth football coach may be motivated to discontinue his involvement if: (a) he receives pressure from his family to spend more time with them; (b) he has lack of parent and player support and commitment; (c) he has a change in work commitments that do not allow the investment of the necessary time and effort required for coaching; (d) he has lack of time to or inclination to complete the requirements of a

compulsory Level 1 accreditation course; and (e) his son ceases his involvement as a player at the youth level.

### Recommendations

Subjects interviewed in this study made a number of recommendations which they believed may assist youth football officials in implementing and encouraging coaches to become formally qualified. These recommendations were addressed in Table 9, Chapter 4. Further recommendations for future research into the area of coach continuation and withdrawal will be based on the outcomes of the present study .

Limitations existed in the interpretation of the findings from the present study because of the small sample size. This study provided the opportunity for only a small percentage of youth football coaches to voice their opinions and suggestions.

It is therefore recommended that further research be conducted on areas covered in this study with a larger population of current and former youth football coaches, potentially from the whole of Western Australia.

Themes and findings from the present study, specifically 'top 10' items outlined in Chapter 4, should form the basis of a questionnaire that has a combination of closed questions that are answerable on a Likert scale (see Figure 3), and open ended questions that allow coaches to expand on their comments. The following is a preliminary draft outlining a segment of a proposed questionnaire for Phase 2, quantitative research. It is emphasised that this has not yet been discussed with the WAFDT.

A five point Likert scale is proposed for all items excluding the demographics and playing experiences which will be otherwise addressed.

Please circle the number that best represents your feelings:

- 1 = Strongly Agree
- 2 = Agree
- 3 = Neutral
- 4 = Disagree
- 5 = Strongly Disagree

Section 1.

*The most common reasons coaches become involved in youth football:*

|  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| Previous experience as a footballer                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Son's team needed a coach                              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Passion for "footy"                                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| "I can do better than my son's current coach"          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Asked by club to help out                              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| "I felt I had something to offer"                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| "I was already involved with the club in another role" | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Figure 3. Preliminary draft segment of proposed Phase 2 questionnaire.

With the aid of the WAFDT this survey could be conducted on an much broader population and hence enable the larger perspective to be accounted for. Complex statistical analysis could be under taken giving rise to a comprehensive set of data as to why coaches' decide to continue or withdraw their involvement in youth football.

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## APPENDIX A

### Schedule of Interviews

| Subject   | Date | Duration<br>(minutes) | Venue* |
|-----------|------|-----------------------|--------|
| Frank     | 10/8 | 40.8                  | SR     |
| Francis   | 11/8 | 34.5                  | SR     |
| Chris     | 11/8 | 41.4                  | SR     |
| Fred      | 11/8 | 28.5                  | SW     |
| Craig     | 12/8 | 35.5                  | SR     |
| Colin     | 12/8 | 45.1                  | SR     |
| Cameron   | 18/8 | 36.5                  | NV     |
| Cliff     | 18/8 | 42.3                  | SW     |
| Charles   | 19/8 | 29.9                  | SR     |
| Fraser    | 19/8 | 45.2                  | SW     |
| Clive     | 20/8 | 27.1                  | SR     |
| Floyd     | 23/8 | 33.5                  | SR     |
| Fritz     | 23/8 | 33.5                  | SR     |
| Ferdinand | 24/8 | 31.5                  | SR     |
| Fergus    | 24/8 | 31.4                  | SR     |
| Coby      | 27/8 | 45.0                  | SR     |
| Total     |      | 581.8                 |        |
| Mean      |      | 36.4                  |        |

- \*    SR    – Subject's Residence  
       SW    - Subject's Workplace  
       NV    - Neutral Venue

## APPENDIX B

### Introduction Letter and Informed Consent

James Milne  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Dear <Subject>.

As previously discussed with you, I am seeking your assistance in researching the "Factors influencing continuation and withdrawal from, coaching youth football in metropolitan Western Australia" as part of my Honours Degree in Sports Science at Edith Cowan University. The study is endorsed by the WAFDT. The major research question for the proposed study is: "What are the major factors influencing coaches' motivation to continue or withdraw their involvement in Australian Rules Football at the youth (13-17 years) level?".

To obtain information from you, I would like to conduct a one-on-one interview with you which with your permission, will be tape recorded and fully transcribed. The interview should take approximately 30 minutes and can be done in your home, or if you desire, at another suitable location.

The information gained for this research will be reported in a thesis and there is a possibility that a WAFDT survey will be based on its findings for distribution to a larger population of current and former youth football coaches. Confidentiality and anonymity will be assured at all times. Your identity within the study will be protected by a pseudonym or code and no identifying information will be included.

Tapes of interviews with you and any identifying information, such as this form, will only be accessible to myself, and will not be released to any third party.

At any stage of the research process, you will be free to withdraw with no further obligation. Transcripts of interviews conducted with you will be sent to you for your perusal, upon request, for amendments. A reply paid envelope will be included for its return.

If you are agreeable to participate in this study, please sign the attached form of disclosure and informed consent and return it, ASAP, in the envelope provided. I will

contact you in the near future and make further arrangements regarding the interview process.

If you have any questions or require further clarification regarding any of the above details, please do not hesitate to contact me, or my supervisor for this research project, Dr. Lynn Embrey during working hours at the School of Biomedical and Sports Sciences, Edith Cowan University, Joondalup Campus, on 9400 5655.

Thank you for your consideration of assisting this research.

Yours sincerely

James Milne.

**Factors Influencing Continuation and Withdrawal from, Coaching Youth Football  
in Metropolitan Western Australia.**

**By:**

**Jame. T. K. Milne**

**Bachelor of Science (Sport Science) Honours**

**Edith Cowan University - Joondalup**

**FORM OF DISCLOSURE AND INFORMED CONSENT**

I \_\_\_\_\_ (participants name) have read the information provided and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

I agree to participate in this research, realising that I may withdraw at any time.

I agree that the research data gathered may form the basis of a WAFDT survey provided I am not identifiable.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Participant)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Researcher)

## APPENDIX C

### Sample of Interview Transcript with Notes

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FORMER YOUTH FOOTBALL COACH - "FRITZ"

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

R  
Alright, just to begin with I'd like to ask you some demographic questions because I'm  
going to compare current to former coaches so just firstly, what is your occupation?  
E  
Estimator  
R  
Right and how long have you been doing that?  
E  
Nine months  
R  
So its just a recent thing?  
E  
Oh yeah, I'm a boiler maker by trade  
R  
Ok and what's involved in estimating?  
E  
Steel, estimation of materials only. People send in drawings and I'm quoting on  
quantities of steel to do a project. Material take offs, find the quantities they need, the  
tonnage and then convert it into dollars and just quote them on that?  
R  
Pretty good job?  
E  
Yeah, its different to what I've been doing. Out of the workshop and into an office  
environment with a computer and phone.  
R  
That's good and are you married?  
E  
Yes  
R  
And what about any children?  
E  
Three children  
R  
And how old are they?  
E  
Son A is 14, Son B is 12 and Daughter A is six.  
R  
And have you managed to fit time in you family and work commitments to play footy  
yourself?

Estimator  
9 months  
"Different"  
Married  
3 kids  
B14, B12, L6



45 E  
 46 No I don't, I retired about three or four years ago. I found that I had probably had  
 47 enough. And I thought well, I did coach while I was playing so I've just sort of taken an  
 48 interest in junior football I suppose and maybe make sure the boys are well look after in  
 49 that department.  
 50 R  
 51 What level were you playing at?  
 52 E  
 53 I did play with Swan Districts in Perth a few years ago and then basically country  
 54 football. I played in the South West and the Goldfields and finished my career in the  
 55 North Pilbara.  
 56 R  
 57 How old were you when you finished then?  
 58 E  
 59 32  
 60 R  
 61 So how old are you now?  
 62 E  
 63 37, so probably I've been retired for five years.  
 64 R  
 65 So what is your happiest memory of your playing days then?  
 66 E  
 67 Probably coaching a League Premiership in the North Pilbara  
 68 R  
 69 And playing at the same time?  
 70 E  
 71 Yeah.  
 72 R  
 73 So success was pretty important to you at the time?  
 74 E  
 75 Oh yeah that was I suppose, when you're in your twilight years it's what keeps you going  
 76 once you've achieved what you wanted to achieve. As you get older, if you don't  
 77 absolutely 110% then I suppose you did what I did say well ok I'm happy enough with  
 78 what I've achieved it's time to give it away.  
 79 R  
 80 So you hadn't necessarily lost your passion for the game but you just sort of thought you had  
 81 achieved what you wanted to.  
 82 E  
 83 Yeah and I saw a lot of people around me with bad injuries and I suppose that had  
 84 something to do with it. I'd hate to have to retire because I needed a knee reconstruction  
 85 or something like that. It was nice to retire unscathed I suppose.  
 86 R  
 87 So do you feel as though your playing influenced your decision to take up coaching at the  
 88 youth level?

Retired  
age 32

playing  
Sparked  
interest

age 37

Success

Success  
imp.

Retired  
injury  
free

89 *E*  
 90 Yeah I suppose when you playing football... I suppose coaching was always in the back  
 91 of my mind whether it be at junior level, amateur level what ever level I thought I had  
 92 something to offer the game as far as a coach went and I found Juniors quite rewarding  
 93 actually. *playing sport  
interest*  
 94 *R*  
 95 Did you coach your own children when you were coaching?  
 96 *E*  
 97 Yeah I'm a great believer in kicking the football in the back yard. I think I did it as a kid  
 98 and I think it is great to go outside and kick the footy. Not that I used to go outside and  
 99 kick with my dad he wasn't really interested. But yeah while I was coaching and playing  
 100 I was spending time with my own kids teaching them how to kick. *Something to  
offer game*  
 101 *R*  
 102 Have you formerly coached them at the youth level?  
 103 *E*  
 104 Yeah  
 105 *R*  
 106 That was at the Mandurah Club was it?  
 107 *E*  
 108 Yeah  
 109 *R*  
 110 When did you begin coaching your own child then?  
 111 *E*  
 112 About three years ago  
 113 *R*  
 114 Did you begin coaching at the youth level when you started coaching your own son?  
 115 *E*  
 116 Yeah I did. As a senior coach in the North Pilbara I did try and have a little bit to do with  
 117 juniors, taking a few training runs for different coaches. But full time that wasn't until I  
 118 came to Mandurah  
 119 *R*  
 120 What were the circumstances surrounding your decision to take up coaching down there  
 121 at Mandurah?  
 122 *E*  
 123 Well it just so happened that they were looking for a coach and I suppose I was in the  
 124 right place at the right time and a couple of parents asked if I knew anything about  
 125 football and so one thing led to another and the boys hadn't got a coach by then so I said  
 126 yeah I'll do it. *became a  
youth  
coach with son*  
 127 *R*  
 128 So your coaching your oldest son at the moment?  
 129 *E*  
 130 Yeah, my youngest son plays soccer.  
 131 *R*  
 132 So you don't mind that he plays soccer?  
*oldest son -  
Soccer*

## APPENDIX D

### Interview Guide for the Current Coach Subjects

Interview guide for the current coach subjects.

Tapes marked and coded prior to leaving researcher's residence.

Preferred location found. Covering letter and consent form read and signed by subject.

Permission to record requested. Confidentiality assured.

Set up of equipment.

Interview begins:

- What is your occupation?
- How long have you been doing that for?
- Is it a pretty good place to work?
- What about any children?
- Do you have any?
- How many do you have?
- Are they boys or girls?
- How old are they?
- And are you married?
- So did you ever find time to play footy yourself in amongst all these other commitments?
- At what level did you play?

- For how long, when did you retire?
- What is your happiest memory of your playing days?
- Do you feel as though your playing of the game influenced your decision to take up coaching?
- When did you begin coaching?
- Do you or have you ever coached your own child?
- When did you start doing that?
- What were the circumstances surrounding you beginning coaching?
- What about your other children, who coaches them?
- Do your other children's opinions of their coaches, including your daughters, affect your approach to coaching?
- Are you concerned about who coaches your children?
- What about your other children's coach's methods, do they influence you?
- Do you watch other coaches for ideas?
- How has coaching your own child impacted on your relationship with him at home?
- Is your wife involved in the football side of things?
- So is it a bit of a family affair then?
- Is this important for the coach at the youth level, to have his wife and family involved?
- What is your happiest memory or most memorable moment in your coaching so far?
- What reasons would you give for staying in coaching this far?
- How much longer do you think that you will stay coaching at the youth level?

- Can you suggest factors that might influence a coach to withdraw from youth football?
- How about coach burnout and stress, is this a factor for youth coaches?
- What about parental support or pressure from parents, is this a factor?
- And participation numbers?
- Do you think that remuneration is required for coaches at the youth level?
- Moving on to coach accreditation now, are you an accredited coach?
- What were the circumstances surrounding that?
- Were you pretty willing to become accredited?
- What is your club's policy on accreditation?
- Do you feel that now Level 1 accreditation is compulsory in this competition it puts coaches under too much pressure, and might be a factor of withdrawal?
- Has accreditation resulted in an a change in your approach to coaching?
- Do you think accreditation has resulted in you staying in coaching for longer?
- Has the course encouraged you to seek further education on coaching, football in general and / or the accreditation process itself?
- Just lastly, what is your opinion on the existence of a pathway or stepping stone effect from the youth level up to the more elite Westar Rules colts level for aspiring coaches?
- How can aspiring coach make it to this level?
- What important steps should he take?

## APPENDIX E

### Interview Guide for the Former Coach Subjects

Interview guide for the current coach subjects.

Tapes marked and coded prior to leaving researcher's residence.

Preferred location found. Covering letter and consent form read and signed by subject.

Permission to record requested. Confidentiality assured.

Set up of equipment.

Interview begins:

- What is your occupation?
- How long have you been doing that for?
- Is it a pretty good place to work?
- What about any children?
- Do you have any?
- How many do you have?
- Are they boys or girls?
- How old are they?
- And are you married?
- So did you ever find time to play footy yourself in amongst all these other commitments?
- At what level did you play?
- For how long, when did you retire?
- What is your happiest memory of your playing days?

- Do you feel as though your playing of the game influenced your decision to take up coaching?
- When did you begin coaching?
- Did you ever coach your own child?
- When did you start doing that?
- What were the circumstances surrounding you beginning coaching?
- What about your other children, who coaches them?
- Did your other children's opinions of their coaches, including your daughters, affect your approach to coaching when you were still coaching?
- Are you concerned about who coaches your children?
- What about your other children's coach's methods, did they ever influence you?
- Did you ever watch other coaches for ideas?
- How did coaching your own child impact on your relationship with him at home?
- Was your wife involved in the football side of things?
- So was it a bit of a family affair then?
- Do you think it is this important for the coach at the youth level, to have his wife and family involved?
- What was your happiest memory or most memorable moment of your coaching?
- What reasons would you give for ending your involvement in coaching youth football?
- Can you suggest factors that might influence other coaches to withdraw from youth football?
- How about coach burnout and stress, is this a factor for youth coaches?

- What about parental support or pressure from parents, is this a factor?
- And participation numbers?
- Were these factors ever a problem for you?
- Do you think that remuneration is required for coaches at the youth level?
- Moving on to coach accreditation now, are you an accredited coach?
- What were the circumstances surrounding that?
- Were you pretty willing to become accredited?
- What is your club's policy on accreditation?
- Do you feel that now Level 1 accreditation is compulsory in the competition you used to coach in, it puts coaches under too much pressure, and might be a factor of withdrawal?

- Was it for you?

- Did accreditation result in an a change in your approach to coaching?
- Do you think that accreditation could result in coach staying in coaching for longer?
- Did the course encourage you to seek further education on coaching, football in general and / or the accreditation process itself?
- Just lastly, what is your opinion on the existence of a pathway or stepping stone effect from the youth level up to the more elite Westar Rules colts level for aspiring coaches?
- How can aspiring coach make it to this level?
- What important steps should he make?



# APPENDIX F

## Sample of Second Stage Data Analysis

| INTERVIEW QUESTIONS  | FRITZ  | FLOYD   | FERDINAND  | FERGUS  | GOOD QUOTES                            |
|--|--|---|--|---|--|
| Coached own children   | Yes  | No;<br>Didn't want to;<br>Too critical.   | Yes;<br>Not whole time though;   | Yes   |  |
| Began coaching youth football  | When son started   | 1984 (1 year);<br>6 years ago   | Initially during playing days;<br>Then eight years ago.                  | When son started 9s   |  |
| Reasons for beginning coaching   | Demand for coach at son's club;<br>Had something to offer. | "Ego"<br>Understood the game;<br>Had something to offer;<br>Son playing at club;<br>Asked to coach. | Enjoyed son's club;<br>Peer support.                                     | Got asked to – demand for coach;<br>Take over existing coach.                           | Floyd – 170                            |
| Happiest coaching memory   |  | Being involved  | A close win that put them into the finals                                | Player progression over year.   | Floyd – 185<br>Ferdinand – 236-238     |
| Aspects of importance in youth football                                      |  | Enjoyment;<br>Skills;<br>Attitude;<br>Spirit;<br>Discipline;  | Player self discipline;<br>Self-set standards;<br>Skill / fitness level; | Maintain player interest;<br>Player protection;<br>Participation;<br>Player development | Floyd – 279-280<br>Ferdinand – 133-137 |
| Influence of their children's coaches' methods on their own coaching methods | Minimal  | No influence.   | Not a factor   | Not just own children's coaches.  | Fergus – 100-102                       |