



**An elite hockey player's experiences of video-based coaching: A poststructuralist reading**

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Abstract:	<p>In this article, we present a poststructuralist reading of Claire's (a pseudonym) experiences of receiving video-based coaching in elite level field hockey. Data were gathered through a series of in-depth interviews that formed part of a recursive and iterative data collection and analysis process. Interpreting Claire's stories through a neo-Foucauldian application of Mathiesen's synopticon revealed how the presence of a video camera mediated Claire's practice and imposed a critical gaze, one that became collectively and institutionally consumed. We argue that the thoughts presented in this paper have significant implications for coach practice and education and that, as a result, there is need for further critical inquiry into coaches' uses of video-based technology.</p>

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**Abstract**

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3 experiences of receiving video-based coaching in elite level field hockey. Data were  
4 gathered through a series of in-depth interviews that formed part of a recursive and  
5 iterative data collection and analysis process. Interpreting Claire's stories through a  
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7 a video camera mediated Claire's practice and imposed a critical gaze, one that  
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11 video-based technology.

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14 synopticon.

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### Introduction

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The utilization of various video and computer technologies to monitor and evaluate the performances of individuals in various organizations and workplaces has become an increasingly salient feature of modern life (Ball, 2001, 2010; Mason, Button, Lankshear and Sharrock, 2002). For example, Ball (2010) noted that its normality in the workplace, as well as the prevalence of associated discussions of how to 'do it better', means that such monitoring and scrutiny is largely seen as 'good' and 'effective' management practice. Similarly, it has been reported that employees increasingly expect such technology to be deployed when reviewing their performances, gaining data on their activities, and having performance objectives set (Ball, 2010). Interestingly, the existing literature has suggested that using technology in this way is not an entirely productive or, indeed, an unproblematic affair. For example, while some suggested that employee monitoring and surveillance can be beneficial when undertaken in a caring and supportive manner, others have argued that it also has the potential to negatively impact upon employees' lives inside, as well as outside, of the workplace. It has been suggested that the latter is especially so when the use of monitoring or surveillance technology negatively effects existing levels of trust, control and autonomy (Ball, 2010; Mason et al., 2002).

While the mainstream literature in sociology has paid increasing attention to the application and consequences of using technology to monitor and assess individual performance, the critical consideration of its application in the context of elite level sport is sparse by comparison (Butryn, 2013; Carling et al. 2014; Groom and Nelson, 2013; Williams and Manley, 2014). To date, much of the existing

1 sporting literature that has explored the use of video-based technology (i.e. the use of  
2 modeling and the provision of feedback) is grounded in (post)positivist research  
3 paradigms and has sought to generate recommendations *for* practice, through  
4 experimental research designs, rather than engage in the study *of* practice (Groom and  
5 Nelson, 2013; Jones and Wallace, 2005). While such inquiry has undoubtedly  
6 advanced our understanding of this topic, it has arguably ignored the complex, power-  
7 dominated nature of athlete learning and coach(ing) practice. A key issue to consider  
8 here is that reductionist work not only fails to acknowledge the individuality of  
9 learners and the cultural contexts within which coaches and athletes operate, but has  
10 also served to ‘sanitize’ our representations of coaching by stripping away its inherent  
11 and dynamic cultural and political features (Jones, Potrac, Cushion and Ronglan,  
12 2011). In an attempt to redress this situation, scholars have started to develop more  
13 ‘reality grounded’ accounts of the uses of video-based technology in coaching  
14 contexts. For example, such studies have highlighted the importance of considering  
15 the contextual factors, delivery approach, and target outcomes of such sessions  
16 (Groom, Cushion and Nelson, 2011), the impact trust and respect has in athlete  
17 learning (Nelson, Potrac and Groom, 2014), and the consequence of utilising  
18 authoritarian interactional practices on athlete talk (Groom, Cushion and Nelson,  
19 2012).

20 While such work has provided some initial insights into some of the realities  
21 of video-based coaching practice, little is known about if, and how, an athlete may  
22 come to understand a coach’s use of video-based technology as a form of discipline  
23 and control, as well, as how he or she subsequently thinks, feels and acts in response  
24 to its usage. Indeed, recent poststructuralist research in sports coaching has suggested  
25 that dominant coaching practices (e.g. controlling times, spaces, and activities that

1  
2  
3 1 athletes engage in, continuously recording and monitoring athlete progress, and  
4  
5 2 punishing non-conformity) have the capacity to render athletes' docile and compliant  
6  
7 3 (Barker-Ruchti, 2010; Denison, 2007; Denison, Mills and Jones 2013; Gearity and  
8  
9 4 Mills, 2012; Manley, Palmer, and Roderick, 2012; Mills and Denison, 2013; Shogan,  
10  
11 5 1999). Following the earlier work of Groom, Taylor, Nelson and Potrac (2011) and  
12  
13 6 the suggestions of Groom and Nelson (2013) in taking a poststructuralist inspired  
14  
15 7 position, the aim of this paper is to examine Claire's (an elite female field hockey  
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17 8 player) experiences of being filmed during practice and match situations, and to  
18  
19 9 explore the complex relationships which ensue through the act of one's practices  
20  
21 10 being recorded, viewed, analysed, replayed and archived ('the video-based  
22  
23 11 performance analysis paradigm'). In doing so, we aim to highlight such relationships  
24  
25 12 in action between Claire, the camera, the recording, the coach and her team-mates,  
26  
27 13 thus challenging orthodox coaching practices evident in the use of video-based  
28  
29 14 practices in elite level sport. In particular, we seek to argue that the use of such  
30  
31 15 technology in coaching is not entirely innocent and has the potential to be  
32  
33 16 considerably powerful in the control and normalizing of athlete conduct (Fusco, 2012;  
34  
35 17 Manley, Palmer, and Roderick, 2012). Therefore, this paper seeks to challenge the  
36  
37 18 largely reductionist and sterile representations of technology usage in coaching as  
38  
39 19 being both unproblematically productive and benign in nature. The significance of  
40  
41 20 this paper, then, lies in presenting a neo Foucauldian (1979) notion of surveillance by  
42  
43 21 introducing Mathiesen's (1997, 2004) discussion of the synopticon, to develop a  
44  
45 22 rich(er) understanding of Claire's experiences.

### 23 **Surveillance, Panopticon and synopticon**

24 In order to critically interrogate Claire's experiences, we suggest that a Foucauldian  
25 approach on the establishment of disciplinary thinking regarding the Panopticon

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2  
3 1 might be advanced by Mathiesen's (1997, 2004) contemporary writings on  
4  
5 2 surveillance in the form of the synopticon. We believe that this blending of  
6  
7 3 sociological thought allowed us to establish new ground in terms of how we think  
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10 4 about performance analysis technology, surveillance, and pedagogical practices  
11  
12 5 within the context of high performance sport. We contend that it provides a fruitful  
13  
14 6 means for further developing our sociological understanding of everyday coaching  
15  
16 7 practices and the technologies of discipline.

18  
19 8 Foucault's (1979) historical treatment of the manner in which power is  
20  
21 9 exercised saw him focus on disciplinary analysis and the production of 'docile bodies',  
22  
23 10 the 'means of correct training' and 'Panopticism'. He described how the arrangement  
24  
25 11 of time, space and activity, which he branded the arts of distribution, the control of  
26  
27 12 activity, the organisation of geneses and the composition of forces, led to the  
28  
29 13 imposition of docility upon an individual body. Foucault also noted that while  
30  
31 14 disciplinary power renders bodies docile through the arrangements described above,  
32  
33 15 in a parallel disciplinary process, these bodies are 'correctly trained' to achieve a  
34  
35 16 desired output and acquire related skills. A process of thought that in reality  
36  
37 17 constructs a visible body, a body of actions, a body of knowledge, an athletes' body,  
38  
39 18 is a knowable body, one that can subsequently become subject to the workings of  
40  
41 19 power (Foucault, 1982; Rabinow, 1984).

44  
45 20 While the utility and potency of Foucault's thinking here should not be  
46  
47 21 underestimated, authors such as Koskela (2003), Simon (2005) and Andrejevic (2005)  
48  
49 22 have suggested that in postmodern societies, perhaps alternative and more nuanced  
50  
51 23 theorising is necessary to develop surveillance concepts such as Foucault's (1979)  
52  
53 24 celebrated 'Panopticon'. Koskela (2003), Boyne (2010) and Lyon (1992) are among  
54  
55 25 a number of writers who suggest that the concept of the Panopticon can no longer  
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1 fully account for the development of modern tools of surveillance nor the manner in  
2 which they are exercised. While some, Simon (2005) being among these, are reluctant  
3 to abandon the legacy of Foucault's central tenet, there is acknowledgment that  
4 modernity provides an ever more complex and interconnected nexus between  
5 technology, the cultural potency of the moving image, patterns of media consumption,  
6 and the apparent democratisation of its usage (Heir, 2003, Lyon 2003). As we live in  
7 the digital age, as Simon suggested (2005:1), advances in technology 'fundamentally  
8 alter the organisation, practice and effects of surveillance relationships'. Not only  
9 have these developments led to the growth of more complex networks of surveillance  
10 and our relationship to them, but also it has altered the way we think about  
11 surveillance and its role in modernity (Yar, 2003).

12         These concerns may have motivated Mathiesen (1997; 2004) to review and  
13 elaborate upon Foucault's 'Panoptic' analysis and devise his notion of the synopticon.  
14 Mathiesen (1997, 2004) argues that modernity provides mechanisms and instruments,  
15 advanced by technological developments, which now enable the many to gaze upon  
16 the few (e.g. Facebook, streaming broadcasts). In doing so, Mathiesen maintains that  
17 our relationship with modern media and technology may be best described as synoptic  
18 and not panoptic in nature. The synopticon, where the many now observe the few, can  
19 be seen *writ large* in a number of modern media platforms (Allmer, 2011). The result  
20 of this, according to Mathiesen, is that knowledge and culture become more or less  
21 homogenous across time and space. Due to increasing instrumentalisation and the  
22 sophistication of surveillance technology, how and where individuals can and will be  
23 observed, as well as the location of the observer, is no longer constrained by physical  
24 structures such as the Panopticon (Lyon, 1992; Simon, 2005). Technology now allows  
25 instruments of surveillance to be mobile, de-institutionalised, hidden, personalised

1 (e.g. GPS attached to an athlete) and located where needed by those whom it best  
2 serves. Those who watch the action of others now take on different roles to those  
3 described in Foucault's *Discipline and Punishment: the Birth of the Prison* (1977);  
4 Mathiesen argues that the observing of others, via modern technologies of recording,  
5 is no longer constrained to a single person as in the sole prison officer described  
6 pictured in Foucault's model of the Panopticon. This collective consumption of the  
7 action and behaviors of others opens up possibilities of communal witnessing of  
8 others' conduct, and, in doing so, the normalising effect of judging others' actions  
9 instils self-discipline through compliance and acquiescence on those who watch.  
10 Others, according to Rose (2000: 227), are now co-opted to be 'partners in prudence'  
11 where the acts of compliance in watching and being watched blur into a collective  
12 responsibility for each other's' behaviour. Andrejevic (2005) refers to those who now  
13 watch the action of their peers being engaged in 'lateral surveillance'. The act of  
14 viewing peers distorts panopticon notions of hierarchical relationships where the  
15 intuitional powerful watched over inmates. This viewing of others will be mediated,  
16 for their own instrumental ends, by authoritative figures, such as coaches and  
17 performance analysts, so that what is being seen is tightly controlled (Manley, Palmer,  
18 and Roderick, 2012). Here, the concept of the synopticon is presented as accounting  
19 for the development of modern technology which allows 'evidence of behavioural  
20 compliance' to be stored, broadcast, reviewed, revisited and modified. The potency of  
21 modern forms of technology advances the possibilities *of* and *for* acts of surveillance  
22 and, thus, is in need of additional research and consideration. Research in sports  
23 coaching has recently called for an elaboration of the theorising of surveillance and,  
24 for alternative readings, a post-panoptic analysis of surveillance (Manley, Palmer and  
25 Roderick, 2012). We agree that drawing upon new theoretical ideas of surveillance



1 can help critique dominant coaching practices. Therefore, we draw upon Mathiesen's  
2 (1997, 2004) concept of the 'synopticon' to analyse our data and establish our  
3 findings.

#### 4 **The Research Process**

5 This study was conducted from a poststructuralist perspective, as this paradigm is  
6 particularly well suited to understanding and problematizing dominant discourses in  
7 sports coaching (Avner, Jones and Denison, 2014). It is an approach that aspires  
8 towards bringing about social change by recognizing that research is a political and a  
9 reflexive act (Markula and Silk, 2011). In this respect, poststructuralist inquiry is  
10 'particularly interested in the formation of current power relations and often critiques  
11 how discourses are used for dominance' in an attempt to bring about change (Markula  
12 and Silk, 2011, p. 52). Indeed, the poststructuralist position rejects and directly  
13 contests positivistic understandings of sport and those sporting practices that serve to  
14 promote docility (Avner, Jones and Denison, 2014). We suggest it can be used as a  
15 disruptive and deconstructive lens to offer, in this case, a reading of Claire's  
16 experiences of video-based coaching and opens up a critical space to think about this  
17 area of practice in critical and more ethical ways (Ball, 1995; Gulson and Parkes,  
18 2010).

19 Two of the authors of this paper first met Claire through her participating in a  
20 university degree program. At that time, Claire was a recently retired international  
21 field hockey goalkeeper. Claire's athletic commitment involved the attendance of  
22 residential training camps, numerous weekday coaching sessions and most weekends  
23 engaged in playing matches or further training. After gaining clearance from the  
24 appropriate University Ethics Committee, Claire was approached and asked if she  
25 would be willing to talk about her experiences of being subject to video-based

1 coaching. Subsequently, with Claire's informed consent, we formally documented her  
2 experiences of having received video-based coaching at the international level. Claire  
3 was, therefore, selected as she was considered to be knowledgeable about the 'cultural  
4 arena or experience' to be studied (Rubin and Rubin, 1995, p. 66). In doing so, we  
5 argue a case for the research making substantive and novel contribution to the area  
6 and suggest that for both coaches and those athletes who have had experience of  
7 being videoed; this account may have considerable resonance (Smith, Sparkes and  
8 Caddick, 2014)

9 Claire's experiences were explored in five in-depth reflexive interviews  
10 (Gubrium and Holstein, 2003). These inter-related interviews considered how Claire  
11 interpreted and understood being video-recorded in training sessions and matches, as  
12 well as the subsequent use of video playback when providing feedback in a collective  
13 setting. During these interviews Claire was encouraged to set the agenda and lead the  
14 interaction into areas that she found held most resonance and impact for her. Each  
15 interview lasted approximately one hour in duration. All interviews were audio  
16 recorded, transcribed verbatim, and subject to a process of analysis.

17 Unlike the reporting of most research accounts, we were committed to  
18 reject the notion that the analysis of data was something that occurred 'after the  
19 fieldwork and before the write up' (Markula and Silk, 2011; Sparkes, 2002; Wolcott,  
20 1994, 2001). Rather, the collection, analysis, and writing up of our data formed part of  
21 a recursive and iterative process that entailed 'working back and forth between data  
22 and theory, the understanding and questioning of data' (Taylor, 2014, p. 182). Here,  
23 using the discussed theoretical frameworks, Claire's interview data were read from a  
24 particular standpoint. That is, theory aided the identification of meaningful data that  
25 were considered illustrative of a broader structural critique (Smith, Sparkes and

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3 1 Caddick, 2014; Taylor, 2014). We are mindful of the limits of case study research,  
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5 2 but suggest that the account presented will provide points for reflexive thought and  
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7 3 encourage us to evaluate critically others' and our own practices. The use of these  
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9 4 data and our reading of the case study is not an attempt to generalize the experience of  
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11 5 this single case study, nor to encourage any collective message being foregrounded;  
12  
13 6 we have, instead, followed a less familiar route in seeking to deploy data evocatively  
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15 7 and illustratively rather than simply as evidence. Here, what we offer is *one* reading, a  
16  
17 8 critical reading that we consider to be informative and hope may serve to sensitize  
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19 9 academics, coaches and coach educators to the possibilities that the 'taken for granted  
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21 10 accounts' of the use of video may be open to new constructions.  
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### 11 **Claire's Experiences of Video-Based Coaching Technology**

#### 12 The camera and I

13 In sharing her experiences of the use of video-based coaching technology in elite field  
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15 14 hockey, Claire initially outlined how, unlike her outfield colleagues, the goalkeeper's  
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17 15 training sessions were always video-recorded. In this respect, she described how a  
18  
19 16 camera with tripod and sound recorder were purposefully set-up in such a way that  
20  
21 17 they were capable of recording all the actions of the goalkeepers. She noted:

18 The coaches, they would often set the camera up, check we knew what was  
19  
20 19 expected of us, and then walk away to focus on the outfield players at the  
21  
22 20 other side of the training pitch... . Some of that stuff [the outfield players]-  
23  
24 21 don't get me wrong- it was filmed but they didn't have it as much... . It was  
25  
26 22 definitely used on us the most, and, the outfield players the least.

27  
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29 23 Interestingly, Claire described how she found the video camera to be a poor substitute  
30  
31 24 for receiving instantaneous feedback from the coach. She was jealous of the treatment  
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33 25 the outfield players received in this regard. In her own words:

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3 1 Why did they leave us and not really watch us properly? Why can't we have  
4  
5 2 your undivided time? We're just as crucial in the team as an outfield player.  
6  
7 3 So why weren't we given that time? In the feedback sessions, we'd (the  
8  
9 4 goalkeepers) be the ones that would be annihilated for letting goals in... . At  
10  
11 5 that time, as a player, you'd rather have the coach there watching you and  
12  
13 6 giving you feedback there and then, and being able to watch you directly...  
14  
15 7 Sometimes you just want that personal feedback there and then... sometimes  
16  
17 8 you want that feedback to iron out any errors as quickly as possible.  
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19 9 She became acutely aware, however, that the recordings would be subject to the  
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21 10 scrutiny of the coaches as well as her teammates.  
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25 11 Claire shared with us the variety of ways in which she understood the  
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27 12 continual monitoring of the camera to influence her emotions and behaviours in  
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29 13 training sessions. On a positive note, she believed that the cameras presence certainly  
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31 14 helped focus her concentration and the intensity of her physical efforts in training  
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33 15 sessions, however, its use was not without tensions and issues for Claire. In her own  
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35 16 words:

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38 17 It probably made you try to perform to your optimal all the time, which is  
39  
40 18 obviously a good thing... The camera was there to try to help... But at the  
41  
42 19 time it was like "Oh for god's sake! Turn that camera off... It's watching me.  
43  
44 20 It's getting everything: the good, the bad, and the ugly!"... Telling them [the  
45  
46 21 coaches] that I didn't like the camera wasn't going to help because they  
47  
48 22 probably would have just turned around and said that it's only a camera and its  
49  
50 23 not impeding how you perform. Maybe emotionally deep down it was, but it  
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52 24 was just one of those things that I just didn't discuss...I just wanted to comply  
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1 with, you know, the normality of it all, I suppose, and do as I should do not as  
2 I wanted to. You are always taught that the coach is right.

3 She also noted that such observations made her become risk adverse in training  
4 sessions. That is, she felt less able to experiment with new techniques, as she feared  
5 that any 'failure' that would likely accompany such efforts would be captured on film  
6 for others to see (i.e., the Head Coach). She appeared to lament the fact that the  
7 camera denied her the opportunity to "try and fail" without sanction in coaching  
8 sessions. She noted:

9 It's weird...when that red light goes on [reference to red LED on top of the  
10 camera] you're on [laughs and smiles]. If you were quiet you could hear the  
11 video machine running...and there is always that light, the red light...  
12 Obviously, the word being training, you've got to try new things. Sometimes it  
13 didn't quite go right... The video is there to help put it right, but at the same  
14 time you don't want to have to look back at something that you're trying to do  
15 which isn't working. It would stress me out even more. You just want  
16 everyone to let you go off and try it- you know- try it in your own time...I  
17 think sometimes we could have done with camera being removed or taken  
18 away...It's training at the end of the day and you're not 100% going to save  
19 everything. And you are human and what the camera picks up on, due to its  
20 positioning, isn't perhaps what actually happened... I did try and forget the  
21 camera was there and running, but it is difficult you know. I mean once it is in  
22 your line of vision it is there, even when my back was turned, you know,  
23 recording.

24 In a similar vein, Claire also believed that the camera's presence constrained  
25 her ability to "let off steam" during the training sessions. In particular, she believed

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2  
3 1 that her comments and behaviours would be recorded on camera, which may then be  
4  
5 2 interpreted in a variety of problematic ways. Importantly, then, Claire believed that  
6  
7 3 the camera's presence meant that she had to control the external projection of her  
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9  
10 4 thoughts and emotions. For example, she noted how she felt unable to engage in some  
11  
12 5 "much needed" cathartic behaviour to help relieve the stresses and tensions of the  
13  
14 6 intense training undertaken at this level of sport. In her own words:

15  
16 7 Sometimes you're having a stressful moment or just need to let off steam and  
17  
18 8 not feel guilty for moaning about a player... Or say a few swear words under  
19  
20 9 your breath...and you don't mean any harm by it. Sometimes I would be  
21  
22  
23 10 scared if a player had heard it on the video...but nobody says anything they  
24  
25 11 just sit there and watch.  
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32 13 Equally, she did not want the camera to record any evidence of her making negative  
33  
34 14 comments about the coaching staff. In her own words:

35  
36 15 Sometimes you just wanted to just have a little moan about the coach, but the  
37  
38 16 video camera is behind you... especially short corner training, you and your  
39  
40 17 defenders would always be moaning. And players have been caught out  
41  
42 18 bitching about the coach...and it's caught on the camera. Like, do you not  
43  
44 19 want to do that! [Laughs]

45  
46 20 Interestingly, she also highlighted how she felt the need to demonstrate the character  
47  
48 21 traits and resilience that she believed was expected of her in this performance context.

49  
50 22 For Claire, this meant avoiding displays of weakness in front of the camera. She  
51  
52 23 described how:

53  
54 24 I tried not to show my emotions... If I get really cross with myself and they  
55  
56 25 see this on camera do they think that I'm a really angry person all of the time  
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1 and I can't deal with the pressure, the training, and the intensity...? If I was  
2 welling up or having tears, I would never done have that in front of the  
3 camera... I would just have turned my back and walked away... You're  
4 scared of that red light being on and someone watching you all of the time.  
5 That camera was always there watching every move and I wanted to prove  
6 that I could deal with the pressure, deal with what was happening around me,  
7 and play like a superstar...!You do everything in your power to keep your  
8 place.

9 The coach(es), the camera and I

10 Following the training sessions, Claire was sometimes required to engage in  
11 individual debriefs with the coaching staff. Normally, these took place after what she  
12 considered to be a less than expected personal performance. On several occasions, she  
13 did not agree with images of her performances that were presented on the video or,  
14 relatedly, the Head Coach's diagnosis and assessment of her decision-making and  
15 technical performance. She suggested:

16 Even if the feedback was one-to-one with the coaches, I would often watch  
17 myself and not recognize the movement, the...picture...or what I did... It was,  
18 at times, like watching someone else not me. They say, don't they, the camera  
19 never lies, well it bloody well does... It is not the same as being there but  
20 they believe it is. They point to the screen like it is the truth. Well sometimes,  
21 it makes you look like an idiot, like you're crap, and cannot play for toffee. I  
22 can play a bit [Laughs].

23 While Claire felt less awkward discussing these issues with the goalkeeping coach,  
24 she chose not to verbalise such thoughts to the Head Coach, as she felt that such  
25 actions might endanger her position within the squad. Claire emphasized the

1 vulnerability and angst that accompanied her engagement with the Head Coach in  
2 these meetings. She noted:

3       If you'd had a bad training session and they called you in for a one-to-one,  
4       I'd always be really scared because that would be the time when they'd  
5       say "Sorry, you've got to go" and you just don't know when that time is  
6       coming... I would always feel terrified going in there. I don't like going into,  
7       you know, the Headmaster's office. I was terrified; it was something that I'd  
8       worked hard for so long. How long was it going to last for?

9 The coaches, the camera, teammates, and I

10 The video recordings were also utilized in larger group meetings with the coaches and  
11 the rest of the playing squad. Similar to her sentiments outlined in the previous  
12 section, Claire was reluctant to voice her disagreement with coaches' comments, even  
13 when she believed that it was the mistakes and errors of other teammates that were the  
14 cause of the opposition's success on the field. She was reluctant to challenge other  
15 players, as well as the coaches:

16       In the group sessions, I was quite quiet. I kind of took it on the chin... I  
17       would be very quiet because I was very intimidated by all these other players  
18       and everyone knowing more than me or being in the set-up longer than me and  
19       having that experience. So, I kind of thought "Yes, OK, take knowledge, take  
20       note, walk away and try again tomorrow".

21 Given her junior status within this environment, Claire often felt anxious in the lead  
22 up to, as well as during, these meetings. While the sharing of her good performances  
23 in this setting were certainly rewarding, she often felt acutely embarrassed when any  
24 of her mistakes were openly displayed to the watching audience. She described how:



1  
2  
3 1 It's a bit like waiting for an audition. Oh god! Here comes me [Laughs]. You  
4  
5 2 tend to remember which bits come first, the good or the bad. And you  
6  
7 3 remember the drills and you're thinking, oh, this is where I absolutely flunked  
8  
9 4 it or this is where I did a really good save and you take a sigh of relief... I  
10  
11 5 think that watching the video-back with the other keepers is better than  
12  
13 6 watching it with the other outfield players... Everyone thinks, "I could do  
14  
15 7 that", "It's easy". But outfield players, if you put them in goal could they  
16  
17 8 really do it? They probably scrutinize you a bit more... It does make you get  
18  
19 9 a bit paranoid thinking is every one going "What the hell does she think she's  
20  
21 10 doing?" I always wonder what everyone else thinks about what I'm doing or  
22  
23 11 what I'm saying. Sometimes, I do let that bother me a bit...  
24  
25  
26

### 12 **A Poststructuralist Reading of Claire's Stories**

13 For Claire, her relationship(s) with the camera, the recorded image and the  
14 experiences of it being played back, in an individual and collective setting, gave rise  
15 to feelings of fear, heighten self-awareness and a sense of responsibility. The video  
16 image of her embodied behavior both subjectifies and objectifies at the same time.  
17 This act of subjectification allows Claire and the coaches to personalise her actions.  
18 Claire became accountable and responsible, not just for her past, and now recorded,  
19 behavior, but also for her future conduct, now designed to amend and comply (Rose,  
20 2000). For Claire and the coaches 'the image as reality' subjectifies the captured  
21 behavior because they are hers and, thus, any judgement of them is personalised and  
22 ultimately owned. They also, are revealed as an objective representation of  
23 performance and behavior, which in turn, lends itself to be measured and referenced  
24 as truthful, meaningful and detached. Objectification of action, in the form of a  
25 reduction to measurable elements, adds to 'dataveillance' (Simon, 2005) which, in

1  
2  
3 1 turn, can be seen as contributing to the bio monitoring of athletes and their bodies by  
4  
5 2 presenting action as data (Latour, 1990). This allows the coaches, and other watchers,  
6  
7 3 to distance them from the responsibilities of judgement and comment, for while  
8  
9 4 'objective' in nature this 'image as reality', and what it represents, remains Claire's  
10  
11 5 responsibility (Mathiesen, 2004). In turn, the collective consumption of her actions, in  
12  
13 6 a synopticon sense, allows 'others' to contribute to the normalization of her actions  
14  
15 7 and to engage in lateral surveillance and thus to become fellow actors in scrutiny of  
16  
17 8 others (Andrejevic, 2005; Miller and Rose, 2008).

19  
20 9 As Miller and Rose (2008) suggest the appropriation of 'others' to contribute  
21  
22 10 to government of the 'conduct of one's conduct' at the same time divides and unites.  
23  
24 11 By the silent and collective witnessing of Claire's performance, as it is played back to  
25  
26 12 her, team members become supportive allies of the coach fearing that they too will be  
27  
28 13 exposed and ultimately judged. The development of the synopticon elevates all  
29  
30 14 watchers into actors of social surveillance (Mathiesen, 2004). In their silence, they  
31  
32 15 become active agents of the normalization of action and expectation. United in  
33  
34 16 judgment they become *silently silenced*, with passivity being construed as an  
35  
36 17 acceptance of the regime of truth by those subject to their social gaze (Mathiesen,  
37  
38 18 2004). The process of normalization manifests itself not just in the actions and  
39  
40 19 behaviors of an athlete such as Claire but molds both the beliefs and acceptance of  
41  
42 20 certain regimes of truth (Foucault, 1997). Mathiesen goes on to suggest that such is  
43  
44 21 the intensification of the mechanisms of surveillance into every aspect of life, that  
45  
46 22 there is a cumulative effect. Being watched mediates one's actions, according to  
47  
48 23 Mathiesen, and being watched most of time mediates most behaviors. This self-  
49  
50 24 control limits opportunities to express agency and has the effect of silencing, in deed  
51  
52 25 and in voice, those subject to almost continuous scrutiny. When Claire and her  
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1 performance are videoed it is a continuation of being part of the 'era of the great  
2 global optic' (Virilo, 2002:110) the silencing effect of yet another episode of being  
3 watched adds to the act of the silently silenced being made invisible to us (Mathiesen,  
4 2004).

5 For Claire, this passive acceptance of the need for the use of video, the remote  
6 recording of practice in the coaches absence and the public exposing of her  
7 performance itself adds to the illusion that the camera and its usage is ultimately  
8 benevolent. The interdependent relationships here are not one of simply the coaches  
9 using the video camera as an agent of control, but all parties collectively acquiesce to  
10 its usage and presence. If Claire does challenge the existence of the camera acting as a  
11 surrogate coach, or the realities of what is shown on the screen, any resistance is  
12 temporary in as much as it fails to usurp the fundamental embodied nature of the  
13 coach-athlete relationship. It remains a relationship where notions of athlete  
14 centeredness are outwardly displayed, while the conditions and means of the  
15 governing of athlete conduct continues to manifest themselves in new and subtle ways  
16 (Bush et al, 2013; Groom et al., 2012). The notion of the collective gaze and the  
17 emergence of the synopticon and its relation with new technology adds to our  
18 understanding of the art of government of behavior and in the case of sports coaching,  
19 how it has been applied in the service of those whom it serves.

### 20 **Conclusion**

21 Within this paper we sought to challenge sterile and reductionist representations of  
22 using video-based coaching technology. In doing so, we suggest that, coaches have  
23 appropriated video as an extension of their technologies of discipline and its usage  
24 adds to the government of individual action and collective consumption. Through our  
25 poststructuralist reading of Claire's experiences, we suggested that her coaches' use

1  
2  
3 1 of video contributed towards her believing that she was under constant surveillance  
4  
5 2 within the training environment. The application of video-based coaching, then, as a  
6  
7 3 surveillance arrangement, contributed to the imposition of disciplinary and  
8  
9  
10 4 subjectifying power. This paper, we contend, contributes to a growing body of  
11  
12 5 poststructuralist literature, which demonstrates how coaches render their athletes  
13  
14 6 docile through diverse practices and mechanisms and how modern technology  
15  
16 7 provides ever more diverse and nuanced applications (Barker-Ruchti, 2010; Denison,  
17  
18 8 2007; Gearity and Mills, 2012; Johns and Johns, 2000; Lang, 2010; Mills and  
19  
20 9 Denison, 2013; Shogan, 1999; Williams and Manley, 2014). It also adds further  
21  
22 10 weight to the claim that ‘the application of video-based performance analysis  
23  
24 11 feedback to enhance athletic learning is far from a straightforward and unproblematic  
25  
26 12 process’ (Nelson et al., 2014, p. 32). This paper serves to illustrate the need to think  
27  
28 13 critically about the application of video-based technology and the manner in which it  
29  
30 14 is employed as a surveillance mechanism that is, in part, responsible for the  
31  
32 15 disciplining of athletes.  
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36 16 It is our belief that Claire’s narrative, and our poststructuralist reading of it,  
37  
38 17 has significant implications for coach education. If there is a genuine desire to  
39  
40 18 develop critical thinking and ethically minded coaching and related practitioners, we  
41  
42 19 would strongly encourage coach educators to devote some curriculum time to the  
43  
44 20 social analysis of the role and use of such technologies. Being introduced to social  
45  
46 21 theorising, like that utilised in this study, would help practitioners be more reflexive  
47  
48 22 towards how their intended or current integration of video-based technologies impacts  
49  
50 23 the pedagogical experiences of athletes and the coach athlete relationship it helps  
51  
52 24 builds (Denison, 2007; Jones, 2013).  
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1 In responding to the call for more contemporary understandings of  
2 surveillance (e.g. Koskela, 2003; Manley, Palmer and Roderick, 2012), our reading of  
3 Claire's experiences through the work of a neo Foucauldian application of Mathiesen  
4 synopticon demonstrated that video-based coaching can be seen as a novel  
5 application of surveillance instruments. In doing so, we contend that by theorising  
6 Mathiesen's notion of the synopticon, we become more alert to the subtle and detailed  
7 manner in which athletes are subject to monitoring and control.

8  
9 Note: We would like to note the useful contributions of the reviewers in the early  
10 submissions of this paper.

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