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'That is like a 24 hours-day tournament!': using social media to further an authentic sport experience within sport education

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1 **‘That is like a 24 hours-day tournament!’: using social media to**
2 **further an authentic sport experience within Sport Education**

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1 **‘That is like a 24 hours-day tournament!’: using social media to** 2 **further an authentic sport experience within Sport Education**

3 4 **Abstract**

5 Several studies demonstrate that Sport Education supports the development of an
6 authentic experience of sport. Social media has the potential to further the development
7 of an authentic sport experience since it is a key aspect of contemporary sport culture
8 and can be a space for individuals to interact during the Sport Education. Yet the
9 evidence-base on the use of social media within Sport Education is limited.

10 The purpose of this study was to explore how social media supports the
11 development of an authentic sport experience within Sport Education. The context of
12 this study was within a female recreational community sport futsal club. Players
13 engaged with Sport Education as a focus for their sessions for 13 weeks. The Sport
14 Education season embedded the six key features. During the Sport Education season,
15 players interacted with each other through Facebook. Data were generated from; (1)
16 researcher/player field journal, (2) Facebook posts and (3) post-season player
17 interviews. Data analysis involved inductive, constant comparison and member-
18 checking methods.

19 Results showed that players’ uses of Facebook supported the development of an
20 authentic sport experience. Players’ uses of Facebook strengthened the development of
21 three key Sport Education features; affiliation, festivity and season. Based on the
22 limited amount of research on the impact of social media within Sport Education and
23 community sport, future studies should continue to examine the effectiveness of social
24 media as an interactional tool to enhance the development of an authentic sport
25 experience.

26 **Keywords:** *Sport Education; Soccer; Social Media; Facebook; Learning; Technology;*
27 *Pedagogical Models; Innovation; Social Networking; Communities of Practice.*

28
29 Sport Education is a pedagogical model that has been researched extensively and
30 internationally in physical education and sport pedagogy literature (Harvey, Kirk, &
31 O’Donovan, 2014; Hastie, Ojeda, & Luquin, 2011; Wallhead & O’Sullivan, 2005).
32 Several studies, in a variety of settings (e.g., schools, universities and community sport)
33 demonstrate that the model is capable of providing an authentic and educationally rich
34 sport experience (Hastie et al., 2011; Parker & Curtner-Smith, 2012). Siedentop, Hastie,

1 & Van der Mars, 2011). Specifically, the model can be used to foster the development
2 of three learning outcomes; competent, literate and enthusiastic sportspersons
3 (Siedentop et al., 2011). A *competent* sportsperson is someone who develops skills and
4 strategies to participate successfully in a game; a *literate* sportsperson is someone who
5 understands rules, traditions, and values associated with sport, and also can distinguish
6 between good and bad sport practices; and an *enthusiastic* sportsperson is someone who
7 plays and behaves in ways that preserves, protects and enhances the sport culture
8 (Siedentop et al., 2011). Thus, Sport Education is “the most mature of the models-based
9 approach currently available to us” (Kirk, 2013, p.975) and is a model that encourages
10 learners to experience the culture of sport and the diverse roles in sport (that extend
11 beyond on a performer). In this sense, an authentic sport experience is defined by
12 standards of excellence, ‘goods’ that are derived from the pursuit of excellence, and
13 virtues such as honesty, justice and courage that are necessary to achieve these ‘goods’
14 (Kirk, 2013; Siedentop, 2002).

15 Digital technologies and social media sites have been recently positioned as
16 tools that can accelerate and extend learning within Sport Education (Calderón et al.,
17 2016; Casey, Hastie, & Rovegno, 2011; Casey & Hastie, 2011; Hastie & Sinelnikov,
18 2007; Sinelnikov, 2012). Hastie, Casey and Tarter (2010), for example, showed how
19 wikis can be used to help students create games. Hastie et al. (2010) described that
20 wikis created a community of practice (CoP) that could extend participation and
21 learning. Hastie and Sinelnikov (2007) also demonstrated how college students
22 developed web pages to represent their engagement with volleyball in Sport Education.
23 These authors suggested that web pages created a new way of learning and assessment.
24 Calderón et al. (2016) is one of the few authors to explore the use of social media.
25 Calderón et al. (2016) demonstrated that social media promotes an authentic student-
26 centered learning context for higher education students by offering additional
27 opportunities for students to discuss their participation and learning. Yet while the
28 potential for social media use within Sport Education was noted by Calderón et al.
29 (2016), engagement by all students, digital identity and digital competence were noted
30 to be barriers to social media integration. The authors, consequently, called for further
31 empirical evidence to determine if and how social media can be used effectively within
32 Sport Education.

33 Building on the work of Calderón et al. (2016), we believe that there are new

1 opportunities for learning within Sport Education through social media that could
2 extend participants experiences of sport; the culture, roles, and ethical values. Indeed,
3 social media has a level of relevance to the culture of sport and has been shown to be a
4 key space to attract fans (Özsoy, 2011) and increase fan–athlete interaction (Frederick,
5 Lim, Clavio, Pedersen, & Burch, 2012; Pegoraro, 2010). For example, to access updates
6 on sport events, view pictures and post event reports, 1.1 million people joined the
7 Facebook page of the London 2012 Olympic Games (Atali, Serbas, & Akkus, 2014) and
8 14.6 million for Rio 2016². As such, we argue that if social media is part of professional
9 sport it could be considered as an important tool for promoting an authentic sport
10 experience within Sport Education.

11 The potential for social media to further promote an authentic sport experience
12 within Sport Education can be grounded, theoretically, in situated learning within CoP
13 (see Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998; Wenger and Wenger-Trayner, 2015).
14 Situated learning within a CoP could be summarized as ‘groups of people who share a
15 concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact
16 regularly’ (Wenger and Wenger-Traynor 2015, p 1). Individuals within a group come
17 together to interact, and contribute to shared ‘public’ practices in particular spheres of
18 life (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger & Wenger-Traynor, 2015). The assumption for
19 learning within a CoP is that ‘learning is an integral and inseparable aspect of social
20 practice’ (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 31). Each individual person occupies a unique
21 identity, where their contributions are seen as important for other members and the
22 practices of the community (Wenger, 1998). Despite this, a person is not seen just as an
23 individual but also as part of a cultural and community context (Fleer 2003; Lave &
24 Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998). Participation in a CoP, therefore, involves genuine
25 participation by a diverse range of individuals who share and develop common socially
26 shared and public practices within an authentic context (Lave & Wenger, 1991;
27 Wenger, 1998; Wenger & Wenger-Traynor 2015).

28 In using situated learning as a theoretical framework to examine learning within
29 Sport Education, Kirk and Macdonald (1998) and Kirk and Kinchin (2003) argued that
30 Sport Education provides an authentic sport experience by reproducing contemporary
31 CoPs that are in-line with community based sport. The key features of Sport Education,

² <https://www.facebook.com/olympics>

1 that include, seasons, affiliation, competition, a culminating event, record keeping and
2 festivity (Siedentop et al, 2011) are central practices of community sport and, therefore,
3 provide learners with replicable experiences (Kirk & Kinchin, 2003; Kirk &
4 Macdonald, 1998). In addition, Sport Education promotes, through the feature of
5 affiliation, learners adopting different roles in sport, for example, a coach, journalist or
6 record keeper (Siedentop et al., 2011). These roles allow learners to authentically
7 participate in a CoP, through encouraging them to occupy a unique identity where their
8 contributions are seen as important for other members (Kirk & Kinchin, 2003; Kirk &
9 Macdonald, 1998).

10 The justification for social media to further the authentic experience within
11 Sport Education comes from social media's capabilities to strengthen and support
12 interactions and the practices within CoPs (Goodyear, Casey, & Kirk, 2014; Goodyear
13 & Casey, 2015; Wesely, 2013). Closely aligned with the theoretical underpinnings of
14 CoPs (see Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998), Goodyear et al. (2014), for example,
15 demonstrated that social media acted as a space external to the school site where
16 members of a school-based CoP could gain support, develop shared practices and
17 promote their individual and group identities. Wesely (2013), on the other hand, has
18 shown that social media can be a space for the formation of online CoPs. In Wesely's
19 (2013) exploration of Twitter-chats, social media was positioned as a socially and
20 culturally relevant space for a group of individuals to come together to contribute to and
21 develop shared public practices.

22 Through the discussions on situated learning within CoPs, we have shown that
23 Sport Education provides an authentic experience of sport through re-producing CoPs in
24 community based sport. Social media has the potential to further an authentic sport
25 experience since it is a key aspect of contemporary sport culture and it can be a space to
26 support the practices of CoPs and/or the formation of CoPs. The purpose of this paper,
27 therefore, is to explore how social media supports an authentic sport experience within a
28 Sport Education season.

29

30 **Methods**

31 The study design was a case study. A case study is a system; the examination of this
32 system seeks to identify the many elements that compose its structure, and how each
33 component affects one another (Stake, 2005). In this study, the system analyzed

1 included (i) the six features of Sport Education (season, competition, score keeping,
2 festivity, team affiliation and culminating event) and (ii) community sport players' uses
3 of Facebook during a Sport Education season. The study, therefore, sought to identify
4 how players' uses of Facebook influenced the key features of Sport Education.

5 *Setting and participants*

6 The setting was a female community futsal club within Santos, Brazil. At the time of
7 this study, the players had rented a futsal³ court for more than three years to play pick-
8 up indoor soccer twice a week. There were 21 female players in total (20 were aged 22-
9 34 years, and 1 player was aged 14). Carla (lead author researcher) was a player within
10 the futsal club and had been part of the futsal group for more than two years. Carla is
11 considered an insider in this study (Collins, 2000). At the time of the study, she was 32
12 years old and identified as a PhD student, middle class and physically active as a
13 recreational soccer player.

14 Carla introduced the idea of engaging with a Sport Education season to the
15 players. While Sport Education is a curriculum and instructional model designed for
16 delivery in physical education settings, the goals and outcomes of Sport Education can
17 be extended to adults (Bennet & Hastie, 1997; Sinelnikov & Hastie, 2012). For
18 example, studies have proposed the use of the Sport Education model in higher
19 education as an appropriate intervention to teach sport values and skills to adults
20 (Bennet & Hastie, 1997; Sinelnikov & Hastie, 2012). The ability to further develop their
21 understanding of the values of sport in a different format to their normal futsal club
22 setting was attractive to the players. Further, the outcomes of competent, literate, and
23 enthusiastic sportspersons were something that the players expressed an interest in
24 further developing. Sport Education was therefore contextually relevant to the players in
25 the futsal club and all players agreed to participate in a season. Subsequently, Carla led
26 the Sport Education season and also participated as a player. It should be noted that
27 none of the players had any experience with Sport Education and this was the first time
28 Carla had led a Sport Education season.

29

³ Futsal is a variant of soccer that is played on a smaller field (minimum 25x16m and maximum 42x25m) between two teams of five players each, one of whom is the goalkeeper.

1 *Sport Education*

2 The implementation of Sport Education was based on six key features; seasons,
3 affiliation, formal competition, a culminating event, record keeping and festivity
4 (Siedentop et al, 2011). Table 1 describes these features and how they were
5 implemented.

6 [Insert tables 1]

7 To support the lead author's delivery of Sport Education, the third author
8 'Mauro' acted to guide the implementation of the model. Mauro has implemented Sport
9 Education in variety of settings for more than six years. Carla and Mauro planned the
10 seasons together and spoke on a weekly basis about the sessions to ensure a level of
11 model fidelity i.e. that the implementation of Sport Education closely adhered to the key
12 features (Hastie & Casey, 2014).

13 The Sport Education season lasted for 13 weeks and each week had two one-
14 hour sessions. There were 4 teams (Spain, South Africa, Egypt and Italy) and 4
15 organizational roles (coach/manager, referee, scorekeepers and journalist). The
16 coaches/managers were responsible for planning the training sessions and took care of
17 team administrative duties, such as organizing the equipment for team practices and
18 informing all team members of when and where matches would take place. The referees
19 were responsible for defining rules prior to the start of the season, teaching the rules to
20 teammates, and upholding rules during gameplay. The scorekeepers (two per team)
21 recorded team and individual statistical performances and provided the journalists with
22 the scores. The journalists were responsible for collecting information about their
23 team's performance and updating their team's portfolio (see Kinchin, 2001 for an
24 overview of Sport Education portfolios). A key place where the portfolio could exist
25 was on a dedicated webpage. The webpage was created specifically for the study and it
26 was an idea proposed by the journalists prior to the start of the Sport Education season.
27 Despite the option to use the webpage to keep the team's portfolio, during the Sport
28 Education season Facebook emerged as an additional space for discussing the Sport
29 Education season.

30

31 *Facebook as a medium for interaction*

32 Interactions and discussions on Facebook that occurred during the season were not in
33 the study's original design nor were they planned for aspect of the implementation of

1 Sport Education. While the role of Facebook interactions within Sport Education will be
2 detailed in the results section, it is important to provide some methodological and
3 contextual information as to how Facebook was used by the players and Carla. In
4 particular, the types of interactions and the functions of Facebook can be understood in
5 Table 2.

6 [Insert table 2]

7 Prior to this study Carla was friends with the players on Facebook. This
8 Facebook friendship was mostly likely a result of Carla's participation in the
9 community sport club as a player for the past two years or more. Alongside being
10 friends with one another, the players were also members of the community sport club's
11 closed Facebook page. This Facebook page was mainly used for announcements (e.g.
12 payment notices). At the start of the season, the players began to use the Facebook page
13 as a space to talk about rules, fixtures and match play.

14

15 *Ethics*

16 Ethical approval was provided by the university ethics committee prior to data
17 gathering. All players provided informed consent for their participation in the study,
18 interviews and for data to be gathered and used from the webpage. However, given that
19 Facebook emerged as a form of interaction and data, informed consent was not sought
20 initially for posts made to Facebook. Similar to the approaches adopted by Goodyear
21 (2016) and ethical procedures recommended by McKee and Porter (2009), Carla sought
22 additional consent from the players to access and use their posts made to Facebook.
23 Facebook's terms of service were consulted and relevant procedures were followed.
24 Yet, and again due to the emergent nature of Facebook as a data source, Facebook's
25 terms to post a statement to a group that users' posts may be used for analysis was
26 difficult to navigate. The subsequent informed consent processes, however, sought to
27 address this limitation. In the reporting of the findings names have been represented by
28 pseudonyms and data is reported on verbatim. These anonymity strategies were selected
29 because of the private nature of the Facebook groups used in this study; while posts
30 could still be traced, privacy settings limited the traceability of players' posts by
31 individuals external to this study (Goodyear, 2016; McKee & Porter, 2009).

32

33 *Data gathering*

1 Over the course of the Sport Education season, 130 status updates, 398 likes, and 965
2 comments on the Facebook page were made. This data from Facebook were exported to
3 Microsoft excel using the Facebook export application. In Table 3 the frequency of
4 status update, likes and comments are provided.

5 [Insert table 3]

6 In addition to data gathered from Facebook, Carla wrote weekly field journals
7 about her experiences of leading and participating in the Sport Education season
8 (totaling 25 pages). Semi-structured interviews were also conducted at the end of the
9 season (December 2013). Mauro interviewed 13 participants; at least 3 players from
10 each team were interviewed. These interviews ranged in length from 22 to 41 minutes
11 and were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. The interviews aimed to gather data
12 about the players' perceptions of their experiences of Sport Education and the
13 usefulness of Facebook during the intervention.

14

15 *Data analysis*

16 Data analysis involved four steps and was approached through an inductive lens
17 (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Firstly, Carla and Mauro read all data sets separately
18 (interviews transcripts, field notes and Facebook posts) and engaged in the process of
19 coding. Through this inductive approach, statements, and ideas were developed as these
20 authors read and re-read the data. After the data were coded, Carla and Mauro discussed
21 the codes they had identified in relation to the research question: how does social media
22 support the development of an authentic sport experience within Sport Education?
23 Examples of codes by each author were offered, and then questioned and critiqued by
24 the other author. This enabled the authors to share commonalities and differences. By
25 engaging in this step Carla and Mauro attempted to act as external analysts of each
26 other's reflections, seeking clarity by asking questions and probing for deeper meaning
27 where appropriate. The third process of analysis involved constant comparison. Data
28 were grouped and placed into categories and moved backwards and forwards until an
29 agreement was reached. The fourth and final process of analysis involved the second
30 author 'Victoria'. Victoria engaged in a process of member checking Carla and Mauro's
31 interpretations. Victoria added credibility to analysis because she challenged the

1 interpretations of the coded data and the construction of themes. In this phase, data was
2 moved between different themes until a level of agreement was reached.

3

4 **Findings**

5 The data demonstrated that Facebook extended the opportunities for players to
6 participate in an authentic sport experience. Table 4 shows how interactions on
7 Facebook supported the practices of the key features of Sport Education: seasons,
8 competition, score keeping, festivity, team affiliation and a culminating event. Team
9 affiliation, festivity and seasons, however, were the key features most impacted by
10 interactions on Facebook. As a result, in this section these key features will be
11 discussed.

12 [Insert Table 4]

13 Before the key features are discussed it is important to acknowledge players'
14 different levels of engagement with Facebook. Variability in how the players' used
15 Facebook is discussed first to demonstrate the differing levels of impact Facebook had
16 on individual players' experiences of Sport Education.

17

18 *The differing levels of engagement*

19 The players used Facebook in different ways and interacted with each other on this
20 platform to different intensities (see Table 3). For example, the number of status updates
21 made by individual players ranged from 32 - 1 (Table 3). Although it is not possible to
22 argue that players' engagement was related to their roles (journalists, coaches, referees
23 and scorekeepers), there is some evidence to suggest that players' engagement with the
24 Facebook page varied by role. Indeed, journalists (Carla, Maria and Gabriela) made the
25 greatest number of status updates. The journalists posted all information onto the
26 Facebook page that they had already uploaded to the website. For example,

27 Girls, I just uploaded fresh news in relation to the games yesterday! See photos and
28 news in our website (website link) :- (Journalist Gabriela Facebook post 11-22).
29

30 Given that status updates are a message shared with the whole group and that all
31 users can see (see Table 2), the frequency of status updates made by the journalists (see
32 Table 3) is somewhat reflective of their role to disseminate and share information about
33 team performances. Although coaches and referees were also required to disseminate

1 information, their role predominantly focused on sharing information during face-to-
2 face session time. The number of posts made by the coaches and referees ranged from
3 2-8 status updates. Further evidence for engagement with Facebook being associated
4 with role comes from the scorekeepers. Scorekeepers were required to collect scores
5 and share these with the journalists. The interactive component of their role was,
6 subsequently, minimal and this was further evidenced through the scorekeepers posting
7 the least amount of status updates. Although role was associated with the number of
8 status updates all players, regardless of role, engaged with the Facebook page by liking
9 and commenting on other's status updates (Table 3). Given that journalists posted the
10 most status updates, this finding suggests that the journalists were the key drivers of
11 player engagement with the Facebook page.

12

13 *Increasing opportunities for interaction: enhancing team affiliation*

14 The data revealed that Facebook extended the opportunities for players to participate in
15 an authentic sport experience through the increased opportunities for interaction that
16 were provided. Although Sport Education happened on Mondays and Thursdays, the
17 players reported that Facebook was responsible for a "24 hours-day tournament" (Maria
18 - interview). As Maria's comment below shows, Facebook allowed the players to
19 interact with each other before and after the sessions.

20 I found the use of Internet very positive in our tournament. I think that nowadays, the
21 use of technology is essential, Internet these days is essential. I think that the
22 participation in Facebook and the webpage was a really cool idea. The tournament had a
23 limited time [i.e. Monday and Thursday]. However, the Facebook comments did not
24 have a time to finish. We stayed all week commenting on the tournament on
25 Facebook... That is like a 24 hours-day tournament! We sleep together, wake up
26 together and everything. And everything was totally informal, we pretty much spent the
27 whole day together on the Internet (Maria - interview).

28

29 Besides the interactions that took place in this closed Facebook page, each of the
30 four teams also created a private message group where they exchanged messages. While
31 data could not be gathered from these private spaces of Facebook the field notes and
32 interviews showed that private messages contributed to deepening the friendship among
33 the players.

34 Yesterday I realized that the girls were writing a lot on Facebook. I have noticed that I
35 have greatly increased the time that we stay online. We made a private message of my
36 team and we discussed the shirt color, our bios on the web page. We also organized a
37 day to go running on the beach. I realize that our contact in the webpage and Facebook
38 has been very intense (Carla's Fieldnote).

39

1 Although demonstrations of friendship and affection occurred in the private
2 spaces, these were also noted to occur in the overall futsal club Facebook page. The
3 following Facebook conversation illustrates this matter.

4 Tabata: Regardless of who won or lost yesterday, I want to say thank you for
5 everything. Both games were sensational. I feel a great happiness
6 because we are brought together and playing. Everyone who was playing
7 yesterday deserves congratulations. It was very pleasurable.

8 Denise: I'm thrilled. Congratulations to you, Tabata. You are a good goalkeeper.

9 Gabriela: How nice Tabata!!! Even more so because you support São Paulo
10 (Brazilian soccer team)! hahaha Egypt !!!

11 Laura: My goalkeeper is Perfect (11-01 Facebook post)

12
13 In summary, the Facebook page created an enjoyable space for informal and
14 frequent conversations between players. Indeed, Facebook acted as a platform for
15 players to talk about the Sport Education season beyond the formal sessions on
16 Mondays and Thursdays and it was a space where players could demonstrate an
17 affiliation toward their team mates. For example, players congratulated each other and
18 demonstrated a sense of belonging to their team and team mates. It can be suggested,
19 therefore, that because Facebook was a space that allowed players to interact more
20 frequently, Facebook contributed to strengthening the key feature of affiliation.

21 22 *Increasing festivity*

23 Festivity relates to players celebrating their participation in sport through the
24 development of a festive atmosphere (see Table 1). A festive atmosphere was supported
25 by Facebook through the ways in which the players created and expressed their team
26 identities on the webpage and on Facebook, and through the subsequent opportunities
27 these spaces provided for players to engage in humorous discussions. For example, on
28 the webpage each team created their online space with their names, colors, descriptions
29 of their teams, and individual players' profiles. In some cases, imaginary ages,
30 alternative nationalities and comic pictures were used to identify particular players
31 and/or their teams. Indeed, most of the players chose funny and fictional player profiles.

32 Referee Denise

33 *Team:* Africa

34 *Age:* 17 – the youngest player

35 *Nationality:* Ilha Robben

36 *Strong points:* Perform plays that combine futsal, Artistic Gymnastics and Judo.

37 The opposing athletes usually stop playing to watch.

38 *Weak points:* when she is excited in the execution of acrobatics she forgot the ball.

39
40 Journalist Maria

1 It is considered the nicest athlete. She found space in your busy schedule to
 2 compete in this tournament
 3 *Positive points:* Teamwork, communication, and very helpful.
 4 *Negative points:* She does not kick on goal. She said she is afraid because lack
 5 confidence
 6 *Expectation for the tournament:* win all games
 7

8 Although there was space on the webpage for comments about these profiles, the
 9 players used Facebook as a space to discuss these player and team identities. Instead of
 10 creating t-shirts, team chants, banners or the decoration of festive spaces, the
 11 participants created a virtual space where humor was always present that represented
 12 notions of festivity.

13 Maria: #LetsSpain
 14 Carolina: Let's go? Where?
 15 Denise: Ha Ha Ha
 16 Maria: Let's win the game against your team... hahahahaha
 17 Carolina: ha ha ha (11-21 Facebook post)
 18

19 I accessed the webpage every day. I even saved the webpage as my mobile's home page.
 20 We commented on Facebook what the journalists posted on the site. Generally, we would
 21 write funny comments about our webpage... I always laughed a lot. I posted funny
 22 comments and comic pictures (Audrey - interview).
 23

24 Alongside festivity existing within player and team profiles, Facebook supported
 25 the development of a festive atmosphere within the culminating event. For example,
 26 players used awards to recognize outstanding performances and team-related efforts
 27 during the culminating event. Players rewarded each other based on game-play
 28 performance (top scorer, best defender, most improved player), excellence in fulfilling
 29 duty-team responsibilities (best coach/manager, best referee, best journalist and best
 30 scorekeeper), and fair play behaviors (best fair play player). Although the awards for
 31 game-play performances were based on statistics collected during the season, awards
 32 for excellence in duty-team responsibilities and fair play behavior was voted for by
 33 using the Facebook page. All pictures of the festive day were posted by the journalists
 34 and players were encouraged to and comment on the Facebook page and vote.

35 Hello all!!! During our BBQ we also will award the best journalist, best statistics, best
 36 coach and best referee, as well as the fair play player! It will be fun! We selected 10
 37 categories to be voted on by you. I talked to the coaches and they will collect your votes
 38 by private messages groups! Remember you cannot vote for yourself! ha ha ha (Carla
 39 Facebook post 12-18)
 40

1 Facebook supported the development of a festive atmosphere by re-enforcing a
2 team identity and by creating a sense of festivity within the culminating event. The
3 ability to engage in humorous interactions about identity and the culminating event on
4 Facebook furthered the development of a festive atmosphere.

5
6 *Creating a democratic space*

7 Facebook created a democratic space that supported decision-making during the season
8 that allowed players to resolve challenges related to the organizational aspects of teams
9 and gameplay. Indeed, Facebook provided an additional space for the players to discuss
10 the organization of games and practices. This was important as during the season,
11 unexpected eventualities occurred (e.g. injuries, dropout, discussions and absences) in
12 which the players had to decide how to solve problems within a short period of time. It
13 became evident that Facebook provided a democratic space for decision making where
14 players could express their feelings in a safe environment, supporting players to resolve
15 and avoid conflicts during the sessions.

16
17 Andressa/Marta: Good morning girls! I really want to apologize to you and
18 especially, I want to apologize to Denise for not having controlled my
19 emotions yesterday. I should not behave in that way... I apologize. We
20 are in the tournament for fun and not to fight. Signed Marta

21 Melissa: No worries Marta. Sometimes we got nervous in the game. But I think
22 all of us know how things are different on the field and offside the field.
23 Outside the field our friendship will stay the same (12-04 Facebook
24 post).

25
26
27 Nowadays everything is virtual; Internet has made everything more practical in
28 our live. In our tournament, we had several schedule changes and the Internet has
29 facilitated our communication. It was very practical and convenient to suit the
30 order of some games to help someone, for example (Karina - interview).

31
32 By creating a democratic environment, Facebook also increased players'
33 understandings of how to perform in their individual roles to support the organization of
34 the seasons. For example, some of the Facebook posts showed how players could give
35 an opinion on their team's performance and how to improve. As the interaction on
36 Facebook shows below, collectively the players realized that scorekeepers should have
37 fewer criteria to observe, should share the criteria between the two scorekeepers and
38 also should meet to discuss the criteria. Similarly, the referees could share difficulties of
39 performing their role. Players discussed ideas on how to make better judgments
40 (referees) during game play. Referees agreed to talk about mistakes and successes after

1 games and not speak to spectators during the games. In addition, they pointed out that
2 athletes needed to respect their decisions.

3 Carla: Girls, I would like to hear your opinion. What do we need to improve so
4 that we do not have statistical [score keeping] mistakes during the
5 season?

6 Denise: I'm not a scorekeeper, but I noted that the data is inaccurate. For
7 example, it does not have goalkeepers' good and bad passes

8 Carla: Thanks Denise! We need to consider goalkeepers' passes. Audrey also
9 made excellent suggestions in her inbox: a) we should divide the criteria
10 to observe between the two scorekeepers; b) we plan a meeting to
11 organize/better train the criteria.
12

13 In summary, Facebook was a democratic space where players were able to voice
14 their opinions, feelings and resolve many unexpected eventualities (injuries, dropout,
15 discussions/ disagreements and absences) that are common in sport competitions. In
16 addition, interactions that occurred on Facebook increased players' understandings of
17 how to perform in their individual roles to support the organization of the seasons.
18 Instead of having someone in a position of power (teacher or coach) to solve conflicts,
19 Facebook acted as a medium for democratic decision making in a relatively short period
20 of time.
21

22 **Discussion and conclusion**

23 Data from this study has demonstrated that Facebook acted as an additional space for
24 interaction between futsal players participating in a Sport Education season. In turn,
25 Facebook was a medium for players to share information and discuss roles, rules,
26 fixtures and results before and after their face-to-face weekly sessions. Facebook,
27 therefore, supported and extended the opportunities players had to interact with each
28 other and engage with the practices inherent within Sport Education (see for example,
29 Hastie et al., 2011).

30 There was evidence to suggest that the inclusion of Facebook as an interactional
31 tool strengthened the existence of the key features of Sport Education (see Siedentop et
32 al., 2011) and, consequently, supported the development of an authentic sport
33 experience. While it should be noted that all six features were impacted by players uses
34 of Facebook, affiliation, festivity and seasons were the features impacted the most and
35 were evidenced explicitly. Affiliation was evident since Facebook provided a medium
36 for players to express their sense of belonging to their team and team mates; festivity
37 was developed through interactions on Facebook that represented humor; seasons were
38 supported through the opportunities for players to voice opinions and resolve challenges

1 related to the organizational nature of tournaments. Given that the features of affiliation,
2 festivity and seasons are representative of community-based sport (Kirk & Kinchin,
3 2003; Kirk & Macdonald, 1998), we argue that there is evidence to suggest that social
4 media acted as a tool to support the development of an authentic sport experience.

5 Drawing on the theoretical underpinnings of situated learning within CoPs (see
6 Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998; Wenger & Wenger-Traynor, 2015), players' uses
7 of Facebook supported the development of an authentic sport experience Facebook was
8 a platform that provided more opportunities for interaction. Indeed, Wenger and
9 Wenger-Traynor (2015) and Wenger (1998) emphasised that a CoP represents a group
10 of individuals who share concerns and come together to interact regularly to contribute
11 to shared public practices. The point around interacting regularly is significant to this
12 study. A key finding was how players felt that Facebook enabled them to interact more
13 frequently, before and after face-to-face sessions. Facebook was also used by the
14 players because it was a socially and culturally relevant form of communication to
15 them; as seen through the players prior uses of Facebook, the players established
16 Facebook profiles, the players' preferences to interact through Facebook instead of the
17 webpage, and the players uses of the community club's Facebook page prior to the
18 beginning of the Sport Education season. It can be suggested, therefore, that more
19 opportunities to interact in a space that was socially and culturally relevant to the
20 players supported the development of an authentic sport context in this study.

21 Facebook's role in supporting an authentic sport experience can also be related
22 to the identity as aspect of CoPs (see Wenger, 1998), since opportunities existed for the
23 players to perform a particular identify on Facebook. In particular, Facebook acted as a
24 medium for the journalists to share information with their teams and perform in their
25 role in a more efficient and effective manner. The positive responses from other
26 members, in the form of comments and likes, suggest that other team members were
27 aware of, and supportive of, the journalists' identity and their unique contribution to the
28 team. Yet while the journalists could perform their identity on Facebook, this was not
29 evident for all players or roles. Notably, the scorekeepers rarely interacted with their
30 team through Facebook and there were differences amongst the players in their
31 willingness to comment or like in their Facebook group. The differences in how the
32 players used Facebook provide two key implications for the uses of social media within
33 Sport Education. First, social media can strengthen particular players' ability to perform
34 in their roles and contribute to the development of an authentic sport experience for

1 others in their team and players within the wider Sport Education season. For example,
2 a direct association can be made between social media and the media orientated role of
3 the journalist. Second, the use of social media within Sport Education does not mean
4 that all players will be subjected to the same authentic sport experience and that all
5 players' experiences will be supported by social media. While variability in uses of
6 social media between individuals has been reported in investigations of teachers and
7 students within physical education contexts (Calderón et al., 2016; Goodyear et al.,
8 2014; Wesely, 2013), differences in how players used Facebook highlight the variability
9 of impact that interactions on Facebook could have. Overall, these two implications
10 suggest that coaches should not rely on social media as the sole form of communication
11 or the only space in which particular players, such as journalists, can perform in their
12 roles. Indeed, we emphasize that social media should be positioned as a supportive
13 interactive tool for Sport Education.

14 Although this study has demonstrated that social media can support the
15 development of an authentic sport experience, there were key limitations that should be
16 acknowledged. Firstly, Carla was an insider to the community sport club. Carla gathered
17 and analyzed data throughout the study and then re-analyzed her initial interpretations
18 of the data. Moreover, she had prior relations with the participants. Despite this,
19 attempts to meet Lincoln and Guba's (1985) notions of trustworthiness were made.
20 Carla contextual knowledge meets to some extent the notion of *credibility* (Lincoln &
21 Guba, 1985) since her understandings of the recreational community club and
22 participants adds significant depth to the data. Indeed, as Dwyer and Buckle (2009)
23 argue, insider role status can allow a greater depth of data to be gathered because a
24 researcher often shares an identity, language, and experiential evidence base with
25 participants that provides a level of openness and trust in the data gathering process. To
26 reduce the impact of this limitation, the second and third authors have added
27 *dependability* (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to the results through their on-going challenges
28 to the interpretation of the data, during the analysis, and in the reporting of the findings.
29 The results section also showed credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) through the
30 triangulation of data from the multiple data gathering sources. It should be
31 acknowledged, however, that the insider role status of Carla was both a strength and
32 weakness of this research.

33 The second limitation of this study relates to transferability. While the use of a
34 case study approach into a singular community sport club provided detailed insights

1 into the role of social media within Sport Education, a larger sample size of a diverse
2 range of community sport clubs and players would strengthen and legitimize the
3 transferability of the findings. Future investigations, therefore, should aim to explore
4 how players and coaches, from a diverse range of sport clubs, use and engage with
5 social media.

6 The last limitation is regarding ethics. In this study, and similar to Goodyear
7 (2016), due to the emergent nature of Facebook as a data source traditional procedures
8 for informed consent were difficult to navigate. As a result, when players posted to the
9 Facebook page they were not aware that their posts could be used for research purposes.
10 Although this can strengthen the authenticity of the data (see McKee & Porter, 2009),
11 key questions might be raised as to whether participants were deceived in any way. The
12 subsequent gathering of consent, as has been recommended by others, (see Goodyear,
13 2016; McKee & Porter, 2009), sought to address this concern. It is clear, however, that
14 future research should begin to address the ethical issues of social media research.
15 Indeed, while there is a growing body of literature dealing with the ethical issues of
16 conducting digital and Internet-based research (see McKee & Porter, 2009), relatively
17 little has been written about social media (Barnes et al. 2015). As such, there is no clear
18 ethical framework for researchers entering this field of research (Beninger et al., 2014;
19 Evans et al., 2015), where traditional procedures of informed consent and anonymity
20 have been reported as being complex and difficult to navigate (Goodyear, 2016).

21 In conclusion, the discussions in this paper have shown that social media plays a
22 key role in sport, and more specifically community sport. In using Sport Education and
23 in an effort to develop an authentic sport experience, social media should be considered
24 as a platform for communication. Players' interactions on social media can provide
25 increased opportunities for dialogue, before and after face-to-face sessions, and these
26 social media interactions can support the development of particular players' identities
27 within their team. Given the pace at which social media is being used by individuals in
28 wider society (Selwyn & Stirling, 2016) and the difficulties in separating online and
29 offline worlds (Bundon, 2016), this study has provided further empirical evidence to
30 suggest that we cannot separate social media from sport. Indeed, an authentic sport
31 experience, we suggest, encompasses social media interactions and if CoPs within Sport
32 Education are said to be in-line with community sport (see Kirk & Kinchin, 2003; Kirk
33 & Macdonald, 1998), social media should serve as a basis for communication between
34 players.

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