

Appendix A. Interview Guide

Introduction: We are interested in knowing more about your experiences in having/coaching athletes with an upper limb injury. The aim of this study is to gather information about the current experiences, perceptions and beliefs of athletes, coaches and support staff around how upper limb injuries and training load are managed. Please be aware that there are no right or wrong answers – we are just very keen to hear your thoughts on the topic. Please stop me at any time if you need to take a break or want to end the interview for any reason. Also, remember that you don't have to answer every question – just let me know if you want to move on from something. Before we start, can I please confirm that have your permission to audio-record this interview?

The interviews will contain the following prompting questions:

Questions for athletes

1. (Opening question) So as I mentioned earlier, we are interested in your upper limb injury experience. Can you start by giving me an overview of your upper limb injury experience?

Prompting Questions:

- *What did you feel when you first got the injury?*
- *How long have you had/had it for?*
- *How frequently do you have it?*
- *Do you experience fluctuations of symptoms or it is always the same?*
- *What factors outside of waterpolo training/playing do you feel is important for your upper limb injury? Are there any strategies you use to manage your upper limb injury?*

2. What were your experiences of return to playing and rehabilitation?

Prompting questions:

- *Can you give some examples of things that facilitated/helped you in the rehab process?*
- *Can you describe what the treatment feels like?*
- *Can you think of any examples of things which were not so helpful?*
- *Can you please elaborate on what makes you think that (adjust to participant's response) was not so helpful?*
- *What was most important aspect your rehab experience to you?*

3. Overall, how do you perceive upper limb injuries are currently managed in waterpolo?

- *Prompting Questions:*
- *What do you believe to be the facilitators for the management of upper limb injuries in athletes, if any?*
- *What barriers do you believe may hinder the management of athletes with upper limb injuries, if any?*
- *Can you think of anything that could potentially assist the management of upper limb injuries in the future at all?*

4. How do you perceive training load monitoring is currently managed in waterpolo? For instance, frequency of training, duration of training, use of training load units.

Clarifying question:

- Is it fair to say you feel the way training load is monitored is _____ (e.g. potentially problematic, adequate – adjust this according to their response)?

Follow up question:

- Can you tell me more about that?

5. If money or time etc were not a barrier, what tools or resources would you like to see developed to facilitate the management of upper limb injuries?

Follow up questions:

- We are considering developing an upper limb training load monitoring reporting tool. What information do you believe it should contain?
- What information would be useful for you?

6. Let's now consider the opposite scenario – if there were very few resources available but yet, an opportunity to improve how upper limb injuries are managed, what simple changes you would like to see, if any?

7. (Final questions to wrap up) Is there anything else you would like to mention or discuss that we have not covered today?

Follow up question:

- Could you please summarise to me what we have discussed today?

Further probing questions will occur if the participant provides innovative and novel information which may better inform the key themes for the participant group.

Questions for Waterpolo coaches and Strength and conditioning coaches:

1. So as I mentioned earlier, we are interested in your experience coaching athletes who sustained an upper limb injury. Can you start by giving me an overview of your experience coaching these athletes?

Prompting Questions:

- How did you feel coaching these athletes?
 - What factors outside of waterpolo training do think are important for their upper limb injury?

2. What were your experiences of coaching athletes returning to play and undergoing rehab after an upper limb injury?

Prompting questions:

- Can you give some examples of things that you believe to facilitate the rehab process, if any?
- In your opinion, what was most important aspect the rehab process?

3. Overall, how do you perceive upper limb injuries are currently managed in waterpolo?

- *Prompting Questions:*
- *What do you believe to be the facilitators for the management of upper limb injuries in athletes, if any?*
- *What barriers do you believe may hinder the management of athletes with upper limb injuries, if any?*
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Clarifying question:

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Follow up question:

- Can you tell me more about that?

5. If money or time etc were not a barrier, what tools or resources would you like to see developed to assist you to coach athletes recovering from an upper limb injury?

Follow up questions:

- We are considering developing an upper limb training load monitoring reporting tool. What information do you believe it should contain?
- What information would be useful for you?

6. Let's now consider the opposite scenario – if there were very few resources available but yet, an opportunity to improve how upper limb injuries are managed, what simple changes you would like to see, if any?**7. (Final questions to wrap up) Is there anything else you would like to mention or discuss that we have not covered today?**

Follow up question:

- **Could you please summarise to me what we have discussed today?**

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Questions for Other Support Staff (High Performance Managers, Physiotherapy, Medicine, Physiology)

1. **So as I mentioned earlier, we are interested in your experience supporting athletes who sustained an upper limb injury. Can you start by giving me an overview of your experience supporting these athletes?**

Prompting Questions:

- How did you feel supporting these athletes?
- What factors outside of waterpolo training do think are important for their upper limb injury?

2. **What were your experiences of supporting athletes returning to play and undergoing rehab after an upper limb injury?**

Prompting questions:

- Can you give some examples of things that you believe to facilitate the rehab process, if any?
- In your opinion, what was most important aspect the rehab process?

3. **Overall, how do you perceive upper limb injuries are currently managed in waterpolo?**

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