“Hey, look at me” An (auto)ethnographic account of experiencing ADHD symptoms within sport.

Charles Ing\textsuperscript{1}, John P. Mills\textsuperscript{2}

\textsuperscript{1} Department of Sport and Exercise Sciences, Teesside University, Middlesbrough, UK

\textsuperscript{2} School of Sport, Rehabilitation, and Exercise Sciences, University of Essex Wivenhoe, UK. john.mills@essex.ac.uk
Using an autoethnographic approach, the first author, an individual diagnosed with ADHD in early childhood, explores his lived sporting experiences with the help of the second author. Although there is a tendency for research into ADHD to be confined largely to clinical evaluation and subjective interpretations, this fails to advance cultural understanding and ultimately maintains the status quo. Therefore, by sharing and exploring experiences, both as an athlete and a coach, we aim to address this in-balance within sport and give a voice to the voiceless (Holt 2003). By endeavouring to reveal the thoughts and feelings attached to key episodes within the first author’s experience as a player and a coach, the study functions to provide preliminary evidence to showcase how ADHD can impact upon those who participate in sport. Furthermore, the vignettes presented act as a vehicle to signpost the reader in accessing the available academic literature. As a result, it is hoped that this manuscript will (1) bring further meaning to this often misunderstood condition, (2) showcase how ADHD symptoms may present themselves within a sporting environment, and (3) enable coaches to better support those who experience similar episodes.

Keywords: Attention Deficit Hyper Activity Disorder (ADHD); Sport; Mental Health; Coaches; Anger.
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As a behavioural disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is usually characterized by abnormal behaviour, impulsiveness, inattention and forms of hyperactivity (Putukian 2011). As such, youth athletes with ADHD are often singled out by coaches as trouble makers (Beyer et al. 2009, Vargas et al. 2012, Braun and Braun 2015). Although scholars frequently describe the condition as an excuse for aberrant behaviour, ADHD has more recently become accepted as a unique disorder of brain connectivity (Timimi 2005, Kutcher 2011). According to White et al. (2013) prevalence rates of ADHD are currently as high as 10% of all children. Furthermore, scholars suggest that higher levels of ADHD are experienced in males with symptoms such as an inability to focus attention reported well into adulthood (Harpin 2005, Benkert et al. 2010, Karam et al. 2015).

According to Beyer et al. (2008) ADHD diagnosed athletes are often faced with an inability to follow directions and remember strategic information. Therefore, when supporting athletes experiencing ADHD symptomology, Connant-Norville (2012) suggests enjoyment focused activities and patience when working with young children. Connant-Norville (2012) also advocates the importance of support and understanding when working with athletes during adolescence. Although sage advice, Beyer et al. (2008) note that coaching education programmes often omit such information. With this in mind, Beyer et al. (2008) call for the adoption of a more varied approach to coach education that better supports coaches in assisting those with ADHD along with other hidden disabilities and disorders.

Although research examining the consequences of ADHD in sport has begun (see Beyer et al. 2009, Moya et al. 2012, Braun and Braun 2014), as with other mental health research, qualitative inquiry has lagged behind (Peters 2010). As such, interpretive approaches may play a central part in shaping, questioning, and enlightening populations
(Fuermaier et al. 2014, Defenbaugh 2008, Bochner and Ellis 2016). Moreover, although
diverse views are offered by practitioners as to what ADHD represents (Barkley 2002), first-
person accounts from subcultural “natives” are required to gain a deeper level of
understanding (Denzin 2000). As a result, this autoethnography adds to what is a growing
pool of research using narrative approaches in sport (e.g. Douglas 2009, Zehntner and

Diagnosed with ADHD at age 5, the first author has found himself battling many
invisible challenges of the condition. Although his symptomatology has gradually improved
as he has progressed into adulthood, sport was always an integral part of his development.
With this in mind, we will utilise an autoethnographic approach to draw upon his lived
experiences in an effort to contribute to the understanding of how ADHD symptoms may be
presented within sport (Sparkes 2000). Despite criticism (Buzard 2003, Anderson 2006, Wall
2008) autoethnographies have received support in their ability to highlight human
experiences at both an individual and group level (Ellis and Bochner 2000, Carles and
Douglas 2013, Mills 2015). Within the present manuscript, we seek to tackle deep-seated
stigma in society by addressing and exploring the first author’s experiences of “feeling
misunderstood” (Mueller et al. 2012, Michielsen et al. 2015).

Although individuals with ADHD may be predisposed to organisational memory
difficulties when recalling personal experiences (Klein et al. 2011), formal discussions
between the first and second author helped to bring structure to the events and increase the
vividness of reflections (Ellis and Bochner 2000). Through the process of collaboratively
writing the manuscript, loose descriptions of lived events were developed with creativity into
thoughtful vignettes that effectively communicate and represent the first author’s experiences
(Smith et al. 2015, Emerald and Carpenter 2016). The stories told explain fragments of
individual experiences and the dramatisation of feelings; projecting silent stories of hopes,
fears and vulnerabilities (Purdy et al. 2008, McMahon and Dinan-Thompson 2011, Carless and Douglas 2013). It is hoped that the vignettes presented provide support to those experiencing ADHD and allow others to closely feel conditions as they are experienced (Bochner and Ellis 2016).

Adams (2006) suggests successful autoethnographies show rather than tell readers what the story is meant to theoretically convey. Building on the recent recommendations of Wall (2016, p. 8), the current manuscript aims to “combine the power of the personal perspective with the value of analysis and theory”. As such, it is hoped that the stories presented here will connect and guide the reader to relevant literature (Wall 2016). Further, as Minge and Zimmerman (2013, p.13) suggest, autoethnography is best “understood [by] sharing, discussing and reflecting with a trusted friend”. Although the primary author can be traced as “I” throughout the vignettes, to gain clarity on issues faced by individuals with ADHD and theoretically guide the reader, the vignettes are critically analysed and evocatively crafted with the support of a trusted other (Minge and Zimmerman 2013). In doing so, “we” marks the collaborative “reflexive and theoretical unpacking of the narrative journey”” (Minge and Zimmerman 2013). However, adopting the approach used by Mills (2015), we have employed Sparkes’ (2004) personal and academic voice framework. We do this with the aim of distinctively highlighting the differences between relived experiences (i.e., personal voice) and sections that provide explanation and signpost the reader to useful scholarly content (academic voice[s]).

The first vignette offered is called “losing it”, which documents the first author’s experiences of losing control while playing competitive youth football aged 10. The second vignette discussed, “it’s not just me”, is an account of the feelings attached entering adulthood, while starting a new coaching position within a football academy and working
with young athletes. Like Smith (2013), throughout the manuscript we utilise vernacular language in the interest of being easily understood by both academic and lay audiences.

Losing it: Personal voice

It is match day. I arrive to the game guilt ridden. Yet again I am the last to arrive. Today feels different though, we play the nemesis, the so called “cool kids” at school. They have mentioned this fixture all week, so a solid performance from me may go a long way in finally proving myself. They call me the “naughty kid”. The headmaster always tells me the same when my parents are summoned to the school. At least, that’s when I am allowed to attend. Last week they asked my parents to keep me home as they had the inspectors in. I hate it and I hate them. I shouldn’t be singled out for things I cannot control.

I appear onto the pitch to be greeted by my opponent’s leering grins. I look at the grass and petulantly shuffle my body towards my coach. To stay out of trouble, you have to keep your space. In position, I hear the coach calm and collectively state the following “if you believe you will win today, you will win”. For many kids my age this would be a pointless statement lost in the wind, but from a guy who understands me, who I trust and respect, it means a lot. I cling to the words, replaying them in my mind. I absorb his confidence in me. As my team-mates now welcome my arrival, I briefly smile as I feel acceptance from the group. There is no time for greetings though, as we are ordered to run in circles around dirty plastic cones in preparation for the fixture.

The game eventually starts and we immediately find ourselves on the back foot. After a few minutes of sustained pressure, we promptly concede the first goal. It feels inevitable. They have everything and we have nothing. I stoop my head and trudge towards the centre circle. On my way, however, I am halted by a member of the opposition. He knows me from school. He is smiling and excessively celebrating directly in my face. “Dick”. How dare he! It’s not fair, why must life... My eyes dart from side to side as my mind tries to keep up with
the waves of emotion. Wherever I hide, I am always found. I stop myself, I know he yearns
for a reaction. I tell myself to not award him the pleasure. But, there is nothing I can do. My
teammate puts the ball down in the centre circle and the game resumes. I, however, am not
ready. Again, I remind myself of the need to ignore what has happened, but I cannot. I am the
innocent victim, plagued by the past and unsure of the future. I can feel my frustration
developing as my brain decides retaliation is the only available option. I need to defend
myself. I now feel my mood turning as the red mist gushes like a waterfall. It’s involuntary.
Like a bull charging at a matador, I slide along the cool wet grass and smash into my
opponent. The thunderous thud of bone on bone soothes me and as I stand a wave of intense
relief washes over my body. I believe my behaviour was vindicated as I now feel a little
better. However, as I return to my senses I am greeted with a wall of noise and anger.
Disorientated, I struggle to focus on the words uttered and can only see the venom spewing
from my opponent’s mouths. They are shouting at me and at the ref. I don’t understand why
they are so furious. I just need the opportunity to explain my actions. It may just be a game to
you, but to me it is everything in my uncertain world. Please, I’ll do anything. The referee
marches over and in no uncertain terms tells me to leave the field of play.
As I solemnly shuffle from the pitch the opposition manager shakes his head and calls
me a disgrace. The ever-present self-doubts flood into my mind. This isn’t fair. He’s not my
coach and has no right to criticise me. He should tell his player off for provoking me. Just
remove the hecklers from the game and the shackles from my feet; I need to be free. Free like
everyone else. Can’t you see each tear that slides across my face represents a day of pain?
These thoughts now stop and I begin to detach myself from the life that surrounds me.
Everything is black and caving in rapidly. I feel trapped inside my own head. Feeling a
mixture of emotions – too many to contemplate - I turn and run to escape. A few hundred
yards later and I am in the woods. I feel safe, but my mind jolts back into life like an electric
shock. Help me! Leave me alone! Kicking through the still brush and screaming hysterically, I try to resist but the anger boils and overflows inside me. I am drowning head first within my own mind. Like a boat without a mast, I scream out for a light house, but all I receive is the open ocean. Save me. Save me from myself! After a few moments the whirring cogs inside my mind begin to slow and the fog starts to clear. I lift my face to feel the rain and abruptly, I stop. The voice of reason, missing for the past few minutes starts to protrude through the mist of anger. I am being stupid, very stupid.

I hear the leaves rustle at the edge of the woods. I turn to see my pale faced coach panting and frantically looking for me. I expect anger, but all I see is concern. Tentatively we move towards one another. “I’m sorry”, I mumble. The coach stretches out an arm, places it on my shoulder and tells me it’s ok. I am now calm and just want to re-join the action. I had been looking forward to this all week. My coach pleads the case for my return but the referee, without looking, gestures him away. Is life always this cruel? I see the game progress without me as I am ushered towards an open car door. Bewildered and mid-movement I turn towards my team. The field looks so joyous. Safely imprisoned in my dad’s three door saloon, I look longingly towards the referee one last time. I feel my chance to belong shattering into thousands of pieces. With puffy red eyes that are watery from the previous events, I look over one last time, but I’m ignored. The referee has already made his choice; my game is over before it ever really began.

Losing it - academic voice.

Although scholars have begun researching the role of sport in the treatment of ADHD symptomology (e.g. Conant-Norville 2012, Lee et al. 2014), to date, the focus has been primarily quantitative. In response, the previous vignette aimed to showcase the condition from an individual’s perspective. Whereby, the vignette first presents the author’s identity uncertainties developed through difficulties in school – and extended to extra-curricular
activity. In doing so, the first author earmarked his potential susceptibility to antagonism, due to his dynamic identification with ADHD. Despite naturally acknowledging the opportunity to integrate with his peers as a ‘football person’, the author soon realised that he would fail to change his identity attachment to ADHD placed on him by his opposition (Jones 2006). As a result, the vignette demonstrates how the condition can affect relationships with others, in this instance the first author was shy, lonely, and confused in the social situation (Gentile and Atiq 2006, Nazeer et al. 2014). However, putting evident identity discrepancies aside from the social norm (Gajaria et al. 2011), two key themes ran true through this reflective account. The first theme captures the reasoning as to why ADHD is misunderstood as a disorder of both anger and aggression (Singh 2011). Perroud et al. (2016) offer an explanation for this aggression, stating that individuals with ADHD anticipate fewer negative consequences, which through a lack of self-directedness, may lead to a greater likelihood of unrecognised risky behaviour.

Within the vignette, the first author’s behaviour was perceived to be the result of the opposition’s targeted provocation. In this case, emotional regulation was achieved through an excessive outburst of anger, which in this instance resulted in the ill-timed tackle (Harty et al. 2008, White et al. 2013). Subsequently, the first author felt in a paradoxical position whereby he understands cultural norms around appropriate behaviour in sport, yet achieves emotional regulation through the transgressive act. This dissonance is thought to lead children with ADHD to develop heightened levels of stress (Webb 2004, Whalen et al. 2009). The vignette also highlights that, through the forceful removal of the first author from the football pitch, it can be argued that the referee legitimises and reinforces the need to warehouse the disordered individual (Whalen et al. 2009). Although the whole event only lasts minutes, the situation subjectively demonstrates how a hostile team sport environment, combined with the form of low frustration tolerance associated with ADHD can result in a
child’s exclusion from a desired activity. As Beyer et al. (2008) and Rizzo et al. (1997) suggest, when dealing with athletes experiencing ADHD symptomology, those in positions of authority (i.e., coaches, referees, and parents) should attempt to provide adequate support and involvement opportunities. Although a positive step, as expressed within the vignette, this message does not seem to have trickled down to all aspects of competition. In reflection, individuals in authority should seek successful and acceptable methods to allow their athletes to release anger to stop similar episodes. For example, leagues could instruct referees to permit a short time out period, which would allow the athlete to regain their thoughts in a bid to return to action – although care and subtlety would be required in implementing such an initiative.

The second theme of the vignette surrounds the role of the coach in meeting the needs of individuals with ADHD. Within the vignette, the first author initially felt competent within the team. This may be directly attributed to the success of the coach in dealing with the first author’s disruptive behaviour to positively influence his team mate’s social perceptions (Sherman et al. 2008). However, as the story continued and the first author came in to contact with his opponents, he became confused as self-doubt influenced his perceptions of others. As Wiener and Daniels (2015) suggest, destructive ADHD behaviours may be lessened when the individual feels socially accepted and supported by peers within group settings. With this in mind, the vignette highlights the need for coaches to: (i) show patience and understand their athlete’s needs, (ii) gain extra training and experience in supporting those with mental health disorders, and (iii) attempt to develop an inclusive culture within their clubs, which aims to challenge the stigma associated with having ADHD (Bell et al. 2010).

**It’s not just me: Personal voice**
As I step out of the car my ears are filled by the sound of police sirens ringing vividly in the distance. Razor wire tops the graffiti covered walls of the club house and shattered glass covers the floor next to an old phone booth. A bench covered by three walls of cracked Plexiglas and what seems to be an infestation of spider’s webs sits by the side of pitch. Every so often, I can feel the sun’s warmth, but its rays are marred by a block of flats, which cast a shadow over the pitch. As I hide my belongings under the bench, flecks of white paint fall to the floor. Confident in the knowledge that my personal belongings are safe, I take a moment to sit quietly and consider where my coaching journey has taken me. I hear the air leave my body in one almighty exasperated breath; this place looks like hell on earth.

I check the time by prising out my phone from the not so hidden compartment of my tracksuit bottoms. It’s 10:06am. Six minutes later than planned, but I am still here before the players. As the Head Coach appears from the changing room and begins to approach me, I wonder whether arriving earlier would have made a better impression, but accept it doesn’t matter now. I’m late. I track his movements in the corner of my eye, while trying to keep calm. However, beads of sweat belie my obvious insecurities. Communication is key for any aspiring coach; I have to look confident and introduce myself. I place my hand on the side of my face, but the words are fixed between my teeth and impossible to force out. The Head Coach doesn’t notice and I regain my composure and complete the introduction. Reaching into the depths of my pocket I retrieve a note with my plans for the session scribbled on it. As the coach unfolds the outer edges of the paper, he seems happy as I try to explain my ideas. Within a minute he sends me on my way to scatter torn cones and lay out dirty bibs. I have passed the first obstacle in getting this far, but my mind begins to wander. It is one thing to get my ideas across to a coach, but doing the same with a new group of kids may not be so easy. Hopefully today works out.
As the players arrive I make final adjustments to the cones I had just laid out. A smirk appears across my face as I look back at the meandering line I had just created. I’d better fix that. As I finish the line, an invisible force attracts me to the slightly deflated ball beside me. More players are trickling in so I concentrate on the ball. I enjoy the feel of the leather on my boot as I attempt to keep the ball in the air. As the ball hits the floor I turn around to see that all eyes are now on me now. I am the object of curiosity, the new coach. I attempt to stimulate an upbeat mood to hide my insecurities. I remind myself that they are just 10-year olds. As I introduce myself I see faces switch off and shoulders shrink. I can feel the respect and authority draining out of my body. My lungs expand with every short breath I take, I need to stay composed. I force myself to demonstrate the drill and swiftly the session gets under way. Everyone seems happy to get playing.

After twenty minutes or so the skills component of the session ends and we finish with a game. You can tell this is what the kids have been waiting for as a course of nervous energy runs through the field. The players eventually take their sides and the game begins. Like a murmuration of starlings, the players dart right, then left, swarming around the ball. Like an addict looking for a fix, each of them is obsessed with the ball and desperate for a touch. After a while, squabbling ensues between two players. Suddenly, anger burns in the eyes of a player while liquid streams from his eyes. It’s not physical pain or tears, but rather anguish and frustration that boils over. In a fit of rage, he grabs the other boy, wrapping his arm around the child’s neck and squeezing. As the victims face begins to turn red I shout to let go, but he won’t. As I move towards them the victim breaks free and rushes into the arms of his distraught father. Both boys are clearly upset and while caring for his son, the father of the boy recently released from a headlock scowls in my direction with a look that demands I act.
I tap the perpetrator on the shoulder and ask the boy what had happened? He looks at me in a way that I am familiar with, but can’t put my finger on. I continue, but he’s in his own world looking straight ahead and ignoring my questions. I crouch in front of his face, I ask him again. The light returns to his eyes and awakens from his daze, but the only answer I can tease from his downturned lips is “I don’t know”. I press him a third time, but this time he resists eye contact and shuffles petulantly trying to free himself from the interrogation. I don’t know what to do. The head coach then appears by my side and tells the child to continue playing. No questions, no apology, no explanation for his action, simply “off you go”. I’m confused: The Head Coach now proceeds to tell me that he has known the boy for “donkey’s years” and that it is only recent that his behavioural issues have come to light. Captivated, I lean in as the Head Coach quietly mouths “he does this a lot, but what can we do?”

As the session ends, the perpetrator’s father heads in my direction. A seemingly passionate and supportive man, the dad speaks of how his “little shit” struggles to socialise and is often bullied. Looking at the ground, he then proceeds to tell me that this is why the boy experiences these explosions of rage – all the while assuring me that he is a “good kid”. For a split second all I see is white as the neurons fire in my brain. I lean my chest back slightly and take a moment to reflect. The boy’s father reaches out his hand to shake mine and I am brought back to reality. As the boy trails behind his father kicking clouds of dry dirt into the air, I smile. The Head Coach now congratulates me on my first session, before quietly whispering in my ear not to worry about the incident, before explaining that it is because the boy has ADHD.

It’s not just me. Academic voice.

Now in the role of football coach, the first author was keen on instilling confidence to adjust to the behaviour required to be a successful coach (e.g. Mills 2015). He was, however,
also ignorant of the need to gain trust and develop a coach-athlete relationship (Glutting et al. 2002, Gilbourne and Richardson, 2006). Instead, he was distracted by his own inattention and hyperactivity. The vignette then highlights the difficulty in identifying important aspects of ADHD symptomology within an unfamiliar group environment. Given the first author’s intimate knowledge of the disorder, this may, in part, explain why ADHD is such a poorly understood condition in sport. Despite the lack of recognisable cues when originally placed with the group, towards the latter sections of the vignette, he began to recognise and understand the player’s displayed impaired interpersonal skills (Beyer et al. 2008, Tarver et al. 2014). Whereby, without having information to determine the cause of the incident, he was still able to acknowledge the athlete’s displays of anger were ‘typical’ of ADHD behaviour (Braaten and Rosén, 2000). That said, without previously gaining the athlete’s trust, by approaching and interrogating the player in public, the athlete’s unresponsiveness was likely the outcome of the expected ‘singling out’ of his actions (Nazeer et al. 2014, Conant-Norville 2012). Nonetheless, despite a long and difficult process in working with the athlete, the Head Coach’s response to the quarrel represents visible disparity from the situational norm. The discrepancy expressed by not openly condemning the actions of the athlete, perhaps offered an expressed way of removing the Head Coach from responsibility.

Research suggests that individuals with ADHD are more sensitive to immediate punishment (Poon and Ho 2016) and acquire increased guilt and reduced empathy (Braaten and Rosén 2000). Therefore, by re-directing communication towards the athlete’s parent, the Head Coach was able to effectively take the athlete away from the centre of negative scrutiny to search for solutions to the ADHD outburst (e.g. Vargas-Tonsing, 2007). With such details acknowledged, the vignette promotes the importance of (i) coach awareness of ADHD diagnosis, (ii) coaches gaining ADHD individuals trust, and (iii) coach resourcefulness in liaising with significant others to resolving ADHD related behaviours.
Discussion

To date, scholars have investigated elements of ADHD symptomology using traditional quantitative approaches (e.g. Beyer et al. 2008, Conant-Norville 2012, Lee et al. 2014). However, in doing so, researchers have neglected using alternative qualitative approaches. To fill this methodological void, this study aimed to bring further meaning to the condition by showcasing the realities of ADHD in a sporting context. While the study also offers direct recommendations in a bid to assist coaches in their support. To achieve such aims, the study sought to address telling deficits in the field by providing both creative vignettes as the athlete with ADHD and as a coach in contact with ADHD, to “represent” the condition to a wide audience (Nöth 2003).

However, in centrally portraying the lived experiences of ADHD in sport, both vignettes highlight the potential triggering factors related to the formation of public outbursts of aggression. The vignettes highlight how behaviours deemed to be “abnormal” are often facilitated by a series of events caused by others misunderstanding (Rizzo et al. 1997, Beyer et al. 2008, Putukian 2011). In addition, while both vignettes showcase how outbursts can create allied identity discrepancies which can negatively impact social interactions, they are often caused by athletes accepting the label “disordered individual” (Whalen et al. 2009, Nazeer et al. 2014). That said, in addition to justifying the importance of increased social competency for youth athletes with ADHD, the present study highlights many key factors which potentially advocate why children with the condition are associated with a shorter length of involvement in team sports (Kang et al. 2011, Johnson and Rosén 2000). As the aforementioned scholars report, increased aggression and emotional inhibition were the prime reason for ADHD athlete dropout in sport (Johnson and Rosén 2000). However, despite such factors contributing to the formation of the outburst, the whole process may be mediated by complex rule structures, inter and intragroup dynamics, and trust in the coach.
Next, the vignettes both highlight the confusion that can occur when identifying disordered behaviours. By taking the position of coach, the first author showcases how difficult it is to detect ADHD symptomology within dynamic context of sporting environments. Therefore, while sensitivity and understanding are required, both vignettes exemplify the importance of strong coach-athlete communication, and understanding. The first vignettes also gives meaningful evidence to the idea that those in youth sport (i.e. referees/coaches) are usually not trained to work with the disorder (see Murphy et al. 2010). Therefore, it would be advisable for coaches to remain patient and develop the trust and respect required to make athletes feel competent and supported (Sherman et al. 2008, Lee et al. 2014). Further, it would then be advantageous to promote an inclusive club culture irrespective of ADHD outbursts, as this can challenge the negative outcomes surrounding ADHD stigmatisation (Bell et al. 2010). Subsequently, coaches may then wish to liaise with referees to offer cool-down periods in competition to promote such an inclusive culture, cooperate with parents for solutions to ADHD outbursts or experiment with self-regulatory techniques (i.e. goal setting or positive self-talk), which may help to motivate athletes and improve on task behaviour (Braun and Braun 2014).

Finally, by adopting a narrative approach, we attempted to create a dialogue representing an individual with ADHD (Denison and Markula 2003). We did so with the aim of advancing understanding of the disorder within the sporting community. As a result, we hope the current manuscript encourages those involved in sport to re-consider the personal support and environment they create, when working with athletes who suffer from behavioural disorders. Further, we hope to have encouraged others to use comparable methods and support the construction of “collective stories” around athlete’s experiences of similar conditions (Denzin 2000). The first author’s story will continue and so will many others with the same condition. Rather than providing an ending, it is our hope that the
vignettes described here encourage others with behavioural disorders to embrace their opportunity to speak up (Smith 1999, Mills 2015).

**Conclusion**

In sum, the reflective accounts presented here aimed to illustrate a range of outcomes associated with experiencing ADHD in sport (Short et al. 2013). To achieve this, the current study looked to redirect ADHD enquiry away from what is centred on the ‘other’ (e.g. Beyer et al. 2009), towards utilising a method that originates from the ‘self’ (Ellis 2004). As this process has led many to announce the efficacy of narrative approaches when navigating misconceived phenomena (e.g. Lang and Pinder 2017), it is hoped by creating ADHD associated vignettes the study may provide a deeper understanding of this often misunderstood condition in sport. By also offering episodes from both an athlete and coach perspective, the study aspires to illustrate how ADHD symptomology may present itself in sport. Through the use of theoretical signposting and the use of creative non-fiction, it is hoped that the current manuscript assists coaches in supporting athletes with ADHD in a way that is accessible and engaging. Therefore, we hope that the stories presented here encourage others who experience ADHD or coach those who do, to reflect upon their experiences in sport, shine a light on this often ‘invisible’ disorder (Beyer et al. 2008, Tarver et al. 2014), and consider the approach they take to meet and their athletes’ needs.
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