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So the first question is, do you feel rating of the Academy are currently working within influences your understanding and application of bio-banding?

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Interviewee

Yeah, it probably does just with the kind of the level it's at gives them more access to what you've got, and they can kind of set expectations and standards set for the level, and certainly that's kind of influence then what we can do.

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INTERVIEWER

And can you just confirm which category the club is currently at which you are working with please?

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Interviewee

Category 2

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INTERVIEWER

Ok great, and so do you feel like your role or your colleagues role influences your motivation to employ bio banding at the Academy?

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Interviewee

Yeah, I would say we certainly bought into it so certainly people are pushing for it with their understanding of it, and so I would say the club interested in it and the staff within the club are interested by bio banding so we certainly do try to push it.

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INTERVIEWER

And on the flip side to that, is there any you know, say, coaches who are maybe kind of reluctant to take bio banding on board? Or maybe just have a lack of understanding and a bit wary of say taking this approach on board?

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Interviewee

I mean, yeah, I don't think there's any reluctance to it, and I would just say that maybe has some misunderstanding with bio banding and you know the kind of mixing between the terms between, like relative age, bio banding, maturation. So I'd say there's maybe some misunderstanding of bio banding but I wouldn't say there is any reluctance to think that they're interested in it.

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INTERVIEWER

Yeah, and so based on this. Do you feel like there should be more around the introduction to bio banding for coaches? Say for instance you get an FA level 1 in coaching, should there be something similar for bio banding so its not an entirely new concept to understand?

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Interviewee

Yeah, I think a lot of coaches who do have understanding are maybe some of the younger coaches who have, you know, gone through their degrees or coaching programs that have then introduced to it, but

then I do still think there is still some educational gap in there in terms of the understanding that we have on it. Or like the performance or science department would have on it. So I think that more does need to be done to bridge that gap. Yeah, 'cause I do think it is a really important factor in the buy into it and then people really committing to it

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INTERVIEWER

Yeah, and so just in terms of, say, the application of bio banding based on your own experiences, do you feel like you would not like to apply different practice?

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Interviewee

I'm kind of happy with the work we are doing. I think there's always more we can do when further research comes out about it but as we know it's a hot topic right now. And there's a lot of interest in working it, but I'd say kind of where we're at with it just now we are in quite a good position.

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INTERVIEWER

Yeah, so where you are currently at with bio banding, is it the same application for each development phase? Or does it vary between the phases?

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Interviewee

Varies between the phases, obviously players as they you know, move and transition within bio banding in the season, and so there's some kind of emphasis around PHV players or players who are from an engineering point of view or an engineering aspect need to be mocking the real elements of motor skills and it's about physical development process for those who have undergone the maturational stage of development and then the ones prior to you know, kind of more just along the normal lines of coaching and development and trying to learn motor skills.

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INTERVIEWER

So which phase is it that you feel uses bio banding most efficiently?

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Interviewee

I would say the most efficient and effective stage would be those undergoing maturation closest to PHV. Just because we feel that they probably had the biggest benefit from it in terms of trying to mitigate injury and growth related injury and trying to allow them to keep developing in that stage and not have any time loss injuries. And I think the other two stages try to accelerate the development of those who've been through maturation however the ones who comes out the other side of it. We could maybe push more on that, and so I'd say those undergoing PHV or is close to maturation probably benefit the most because they probably get the most attention on them.

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INTERVIEWER

That's the first section of questions covered but the next ones are based more specifically on your experiences with implementing bio banding and so just to begin, could you give me some details on a positive experience you have had when bio banding?

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Interviewee

Yeah, so I think being able to change the groups and having the different interactions between different

players is obviously positive because you know it changes the dynamic of training and things are, you know very different for players and also the coaching staff in terms of growth and who they are working with sometimes. And so I think in terms of what we have implemented has been positive in terms of just changing dynamic in training and mixing things up because then you start to see players who change their performance levels and how they approach training within the different groups

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INTERVIEWER

Has there maybe been a specific player which stands out for you which has had a positive experience from bio banding?

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Interviewee

It terms of who I have worked with specifically maybe not as much, but there certainly has been examples within the Academy of players who you know at younger ages within their squad have not stood out at all within these sessions, but then coaches have suddenly you know, picked up on them a little bit more because there's been more attention around them and have noticed them more because they stood out and as such they may have been granted, you know, a bit more attention when they go back into their normal chronological team training.

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INTERVIEWER

Yeah, So based on how you've previous experiences, how did you bio band players? Which method did you use and was this to match or miss match players?

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Interviewee

So all the kind training and bio banding was khamis roche and that was basically just based off the percentages we had as a group so it wasn't you know any specific cuff points that had changed year to year and based on and tailoring groups to train within like a normal number of players within the training session? And so it's khamis roche percentage. And yeah, it's just going to natural break points within the groups that we had and that kind of span primarily to 12/13/14 and 15 to 16 is getting get left alone in the younger players left also really kind of. If you reach groups that were used and that was just done one night a week and training would be adapted for that one single night keeping them still training within their chronological age group for the majority of their training week or for one night with just being modified.

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INTERVIEWER

Yeah no, that's great. And the next question is kind of just more broad, and how has like bio banding proven useful for your club?

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Interviewee

In terms of growth related injuries were able to be reduced and compared to years where it wasn't used and whether that was maturation or that was just. Yeah sorry, that was bio banding or you know, just a fortunate year that would be Hard to prove but we would like to think that through bio banding allowed us to mitigate or reduce some of the injuries, especially growth related injuries and then also just the kind of different development opportunities we've had with players allowed the less developed players to compete within training sessions where you know they were just being able to focus on the technical skills allowed and it stand out a bit more to the coaches.

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INTERVIEWER
So do you feel like I'm all these elements kinda fit into the rationale for the Academy using bio banding, yeah?

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Interviewee
Yeah, actually I think from looking at particular kind of phases or stages of talent identification or you know when you're reaching the end of the season and making decisions on players like that's when it kind of becomes crucial in terms of coaches decision may have been slightly swayed by what they've seen within these sessions, and because they'd notice different traits of the player and within these sessions that they wouldn't normally notice within Chronological setting and part of that may be masked by the opposition or players that are in competition with.

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INTERVIEWER
And I feel like kind of leads nicely onto my next question of like can you give me an example of a session whereby branding has provided a new challenge and that could be for yourself or the other coaches or for even the players?

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Interviewee
Yeah so I mean most of the sessions that we use bio banding in kind of creates or end up with some form of game format. So with our more developers then something becomes a bit more of a physical challenge for all of them. And you know, because obviously you may only have two early matures within the under 13. So it means they could be competing against the 15 players. So first time they're really coming up against, you know, real challenge. So I'd say for the players there's certainly settings like that and were just the format of the session promotes different challenge, but the coaches as well having to think about how they can manipulate a session so if we're looking to reduce the training load on Players undergoing PHV or close to that? Then you know that provides a challenge in itself in terms of how do you. How do you start to integrate? You know, functional movement again within a session for that normally would be thought of you when you're trying to promote different aspects of coaching you know physical competency within a session.

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INTERVIEWER
Even though bio banding you know, based on grouping these players who are physically or technically like similar, why do you feel it's important just to introduce new challenges using bio banding?

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Interviewee
I think mostly to still prepare them for the more senior football game, its not always going to be a very sterile environment where everybody is at the same level and stages. You still need to push them on and you know introduce different challenges so. As much as everyone is going to be as similar physical stature or development stage. To promote that physical challenge for the more developed its going to be good for them and it's also going to allow them to not just solely rely on their physical dominance compared to less developers to be able to know challenge them Technically, technically and it just kind of hopefully promotes different training adaptations you would normally get within the regular session, so by slightly manipulating their training will just push them on to focus on the areas that they may be not focusing on in the normal training.

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INTERVIEWER

And yeah, so do you feel? Do you think that maybe bio banding offers an advantage over traditional approaches, or should they be, you know used simultaneously?

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Interviewee

I think it's certainly got to be a blended approach and I think bio banding offers huge positives in terms of player development, at the younger earlier ages. But you've still got to prepare them for senior football or you know the age bands like under 18's, 20s and under 23 football where they are going to be exposed to players who have different qualities to them where you have more senior players more experience, older players with better stature are greater physical qualities. You still got to be able to compete against them. But I think as a kind of small training stimulus, for them to focus on other areas of the game that we can't get within chronological training. That's important as well. But think itself has got to be a mix of both.

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INTERVIEWER

Yeah, and so do you feel like maybe bio banding places? Too much emphasis on one group of players opposed to another.

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Interviewee

Most of the focus is always going to be around about the players undergoing a biological development period, because that's where most of the research is going to look at in terms of injuries in terms of development terms of what we can do with them, and that's almost that natural breakpoint for them. You know, we know one players either one side of it or the other side of it. You know we're always looking to that, and so I think a lot of the emphasis placed on them. I think on-time PFV players are almost. Not forgotten about, but It's almost like there's not much you can do for them. You don't feel that you get the best training adaptations you don't feel like you're going to get the most physical development out of them, but they're also not much of a heightened increase injury risk from growth related dangerous. So no I certainly think that some of the players undergoing PHV in on-time development don't really have much attention on them

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INTERVIEWER

Yeah, and you almost covered what my next question was of we run the risk of neglecting, any of the groups when bio banding?

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Interviewee

Yes, I think there's a lot more information coming out about those sorts of groups, but I think early kind of research was all about injury prevention and growth-related injuries and, you know, round about that stage. So, I think it is becoming better but yeah, no. I still think there's some form of neglect towards those groups.

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INTERVIEWER

So what we've just been talking about, these questions are now based on barriers of bio banding, and just start off with. If you could just give some detail on maybe a negative experience you have had when bio banding or a challenge you may have faced?

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Interviewee

Yeah. There's not been much in terms of barriers of implementing it, sometimes coaches just want a normal training session with that group. So suddenly, if they're preparing for a game of the weekend

and you're trying to manipulate squads and training groups, that can become difficult. Specially different stage of the season because some teams are preparing for you know, kind of target fixtures or anything so having to try and find the balance between. Wanting to develop the players physically and technically with all the benefits that come with bio banding But I would say that's probably the only bad thing I've ever had in terms of implementing. But I think the other barriers in terms of the actual measurements and negative experiences sometimes coaches resistance to the time that you want to bio band but not actually bio banding itself because for them they're preparing their team for a game then maybe not thinking as much about the long term development effects for the players.

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INTERVIEWER

Yeah, so maybe in more general terms, what are some barriers you feel most academies may face when bio banding?

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Interviewee

No, I'd say that is maybe more kind of far reaching, and I think we find that the more people you speak to have the same issues in different places and I would imagine that potentially the further down the categories you go, just because of the time, cost and people limitations that becomes harder and the higher up you go that could become a little bit more accessible but I feel in general academies do face similar issues.

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INTERVIEWER

Again, you almost answered my next question of do you feel like the rating of academies can alleviate barriers of bio banding, so if there's anything might like to add on that then and feel free.

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Interviewee

I think the higher up the category the more kind of controllable factors that these clubs will have in terms of finances and resources. I think will almost be mediated. And you know that shouldn't go badly for them. For them, it's probably more how much influence and important clubs put on winning at the weekend, I think that would be a barrier to more of your higher ranked category clubs. So yeah for the big cat academies, they're likely wanting to win every game by sticking with the same team in each training sessions as opposed to long term developing every player as they're likely to be recruiting players who are at a more advanced stage of maturation And then other clubs. So again, they might not have as many issues related to bio banding further down the line in terms of under 13 to 14 'cause most of the players by that stage. Maybe you know there are likely to be more early matures within those clubs.

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INTERVIEWER

Yeah, so do you feel there is maybe anyway in which any of these barriers could be alleviated?

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Interviewee

I think it kinda goes back to education and understand of it from most of the professionals. I think once you've kind of got everybody understanding the importance behind bio banding and Introducing it, even if it's not through you know done once a week but a few times a month. I think education is kind of the biggest barrier because. In measurement. It doesn't take that much of a financial implication resources are going to be the biggest one again. If people understand bio banding, then you know clubs may find funding you know it's not a massive expense for club. So I think education would be the primary one.

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INTERVIEWER

Yeah no, that's great and we've been flying through. These questions are almost done to be honest, and so the next one is just. Can you describe how you have bio banded so it was it within match play, in training or S&C? And then why you did you do it this way?

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Interviewee

Yeah. I would be in a full training night. And so all aspects of the on field training and within gym, we still take the players maturational status into account when prescribing the training, so it doesn't matter whether they're in their chronological training group or not when they come to the gym. But primarily within the gym we used their maturational status just to determine kind of what level we we should hope for them to be at. And again when around about that period if there will be increased risk, we'd look to introduce more kind of functional movement work and kind of motor learning. Again, just to ensure there isn't that drop off, you know, we understand that there is a period of adolescent awkwardness, so we're not going to be exposing them to, you know, to exercise is going to. Increased that risk because, again, the benefit from them doing heavy lifting or anything like that isn't going to be a massive help in the academy with development. So we are more just kind of protecting them at this stage. Just allowing them to keep training and keep being footballers at that age and we know that once they're out that stage, that's when we can really then push on. And then the reason for everything on field. It just became a training session again just to allow us to naturally manipulate aspects such as reducing some players load increase other players within games as its just nice to be able to see how they actually perform because there's not many bio banding tournaments going on. So that's really our only chance to see them within games and training as such.

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INTERVIEWER

And typically when you bio banding, it is it more based around like the physical and like injury prevention elements? Or is there also like technical tactical psychosocial elements to it?

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Interviewee

I would say our understanding is as a lot more of the physical elements of it, so that's kind of been the priority for us. And so it is kind of more related, injury risk and physical development as opposed to technical psychological factors. But that has certainly become. A bit more kind of on the horizon. Been aware of that to try and get all the developments as opposed to just physical developments for players. Or you know you we couldn't say we've bio banded them for these factors right now, 'cause that's certainly not been the case, it has been primarily physical reasons.

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INTERVIEWER

Is such Use a staple of the player and development curriculum?

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Interviewee

Yeah, I think if we are looking at moving players on, you now we manipulate smaller city games for different reasons, we manipulate training sessions for different reasons. For all physical development and technical development, I think we manipulate in actual training groups for physical, technical, psychological, tactical development is always important. But again, it's just kind of getting that buy-in and understanding, that's the most crucial thing to allow that to happen as naturally as everything else does

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INTERVIEWER

Yeah and again for this next question. If you're able to break down the four elements that would be great, so what is it about bio banding which makes you think it does enhance assessment within these areas?

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Interviewee

Right, OK? So I would say that in terms of physical traits they, are you know very easily masked within chronological sessions? Because you'll have some players who just because they're older have more muscle mass, faster, more powerful, stronger. So if you're comparing them at face value, one player is better than the other physically, and it's you know it's just simple as that. From the physical aspect, one player is just naturally going to be more likely better, because at this stage of biological maturation, and so I would say bio banding helps massively with the Physical side in terms of showing players who display more relative qualities in terms of where players should be at. So if we've got that kind of level playing field of maturation of development, we know physically some players should be showing better than others, and then we can make more of a kind of Fair assessment. In terms of technical traits, again. It can be difficult if you're accessing players shooting ability and you are up against someone more powerful, so much more stronger then it's probably likely to be more success. So again, technical qualities probably can't be matched within those sessions that weren't bio banded. Psychological again, it depends. Probably more playoff type as opposed to the maturation showing some players who are quite mentally resilient and you know embrace the challenge of playing against players who are more say stronger then them and actually enjoy it or some players may hide away from it. So again bio binding maybe allows that. It allows more psychological traits to be kind of teased out, and again, I think that's probably not going to get individual specific as well. And situational specific I don't think is going to be the same for physical factors. Where bio banding players just allows you to see physical changes quite easily. Whereas psychological changes are going a lot harder because I think that will depend on which set up the players. As much as I think maturation will account for some psychological factors, I don't think that counts for all. Then tactical again. There's some evidence of some tactical change in gameplay, and I'd say at the younger ages with kind of the games formats there playing with their training sessions. Don't know if they'll be as much tactical change through bio banding as I don't think changing chronological bio banding within Sessions will make much difference. I think you would have to see that within actual eleven aside matchplay at the weekend opposed to just within training. So I'd say its just more kind of more physical, psychological and technical than tactical.

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INTERVIEWER

Yeah, and so kind of based on everything we have discussed, at what age do you feel players should be introduced to bio banding and why?

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Interviewee

Yeah, OK. The YDP is probably one of the most important one, as much as kind of biological developmental differences will exist within the foundational Phase I think all the measurements we've got for that kind of age group are not going to be that reliable. And I think you know the young players. We don't need to be introducing much change, at that stage I don't think we're making decisions based on retention, and releasing players as at that stage. So I don't think it really influences to much there. But the YDP becomes more important because that's when players are starting to have decisions made upon them and have almost selection issues within games at the weekend. You know decisions are made in the class, so We accept differences will exist within the foundational phase and foundation phase so I don't think we need to influence as much we can just let them play train and develop at this point

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INTERVIEWER

Yeah no, that's great and we have actually come to last question, What about this survey made you more likely to implement bio banding?

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Interviewee

I think just kind of thinking about it again. You know you haven't answered questions based on how we do it. What we think we think about it. So I think just kind of almost going back and thinking about our reasoning for doing it. Kind of makes you more determined to implement it because you do realize importance or the research about it. So just actually question the Reasoning for things, or understanding of certain things makes you just kind of question your own understand of it, and I'd say that's saying quite important thing just to reflect on your practices, and you know, kind of reflect on the importance of introducing or using bio banding and then educating people as to why it's being used.