UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

Good use, non-use and misuse

Tak, Minhyeok; Kim, Yoon Jin; Rhind, Daniel

[Link to publication on Research at Birmingham portal](#)

Good use, non-use and misuse: safe sport reporting systems in context

Minhyeok Tak, Yoon Jin Kim & Daniel J.A. Rhind

Published online: 28 Feb 2024.

Submit your article to this journal ⏷

View related articles ⏷

View Crossmark data ⏷

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Good use, non-use and misuse: safe sport reporting systems in context

Minhyeok Tak[a], Yoon Jin Kim[b] and Daniel J.A. Rhind[a]

[a]School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences, Loughborough University, Loughborough, Leicestershire, UK; [b]School of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK

ABSTRACT

Reporting systems constitute an essential part of today's safe sport initiatives across the world. Informed by literature on reporting wrongdoings in organisational contexts and a political sociology approach to policy instrumentation, this article examines how abuse reporting systems are utilised in youth high-performance sport environments. Drawing from 51 interviews with both user and provider groups of South Korea's reporting facilities, the results offer three main uses of the country's safe sport reporting mechanisms: (1) 'good use' that relies on their communicative capacity to signal changing organisational culture; (2) 'non-use' that derives not only from the fear of reprisals, but from more subtle relational and situational concerns, such as teams' dissolution; and (3) 'misuse' of the systems as a tool to advance individual agendas as opposed to protecting victims. The findings of this study not only provide evidence for both positive and perverse effects of safe sport reporting facilities *per se*, but also illuminate the importance of social and institutional conditions that can both enable and constrain this newly implemented policy measure for athlete safeguarding.

Introduction

Over recent decades, there have been a plethora of serious abuse scandals in sport across the globe (see Kavanagh *et al*. 2020, Kerr and Stirling 2019 for lists of cases). The frequent occurrence of abuse in sport has led to the development of a range of policies, procedures and practices in relation to safeguarding athletes (Parent and Hlimi 2013, Lang and Hartill 2014, Mountjoy *et al*. 2020, Rhind and Owusu-Sekyere 2020, Gurgis *et al*. 2023). Amongst the key measures, reporting channels constitute an essential part of safe sport initiatives because reporting by victims and/or witnesses set in motion subsequent protective and investigative measures (e.g. victim support, disciplinary procedures). In this regard, (international) sports organisations and/or national governments have introduced reporting functions within and outside the remit of sport governance (e.g. independent, third-party reporting facilities such as the US Center for Safe Sport) with a view to providing fair, neutral, transparent investigation and sanctioning procedures (International Olympic Committee 2018, Johnson *et al*. 2020, MacPherson *et al*. 2022).

Whether external or in-house, reporting mechanisms create additional concerns for sports organisations. For instance, literature suggests that there is a range of barriers to disclosure at individual, relational and organisational levels (MacPherson *et al*. 2022). Hence, sports

organisations need additional resources and expertise to identify every possible area that poses a challenge to disclosure. Moreover, reporting systems as policy instruments do not always operate as expected (Lascoumes and Le Galès 2007). For example, there are likely to be some unintended effects such as: (1) complacency, relying 'almost exclusively' on athletes' reports (Komaki and Tuakli-Wosornu 2021, p. 2), rather than proactively addressing potential harms; and (2) the risk of false allegations that waste organisational time and resources, create secondary victims and undermine the capacity and legitimacy of the reporting functions (Rumney and McCartan 2017, Avieli 2022).

Due to the relatively recent development of reporting mechanisms for safeguarding athletes, there is a dearth of research on patterns and behaviours around reporting safe sport issues (MacPherson *et al.* 2022). While whistleblowing mechanisms feature in relation to doping and match-fixing (see Erickson et al. 2017, 2019, Moriconi and De Cima 2020, Verschuuren 2020, Newman *et al.* 2022), there are still empirical gaps in regards to enhancing our understanding of the obstacles to disclosure. For instance, the focus of previous literature has largely centred on western countries (Rhind and Mori 2020). Although this makes sense given that safe sport policy development is advanced in the Global North, there are calls for a more 'international perspective' (MacPherson *et al.* 2022, p. 12) and consideration of 'cultural sensitivity' (Rhind *et al.* 2017, p. 157). Moreover, barriers to reporting have mostly been discussed at individual or organisational levels (Brackenridge and Rhind 2014, Mountjoy *et al.* 2015, Nite and Nauright 2020, Rhind and Owusu-Sekyere 2020, Roberts *et al.* 2020), whereas wider societal and institutional conditions that may shape organisational practices have not been appropriately considered. Indeed, it is axiomatic that variances in sport development models (including geographical, institutional and organisational particularities) will shape group interests to act differently in the implementation of safeguarding measures. Finally, extant literature has mainly focused on athletes' experiences (e.g. Erickson et al. 2017, 2019, Newman *et al.* 2022) while 'the perspectives of the stakeholders responsible for enforcing safe sport requirements and programming' remain understudied (MacPherson *et al.* 2022, p. 13).

This article aims to bridge these gaps by extending its empirical coverage towards South Korea (hereafter Korea). The country has developed various reporting channels for abuse across sport and education sectors following a series of scandals over the past few years (see Hancocks 2019, Choe 2020). The recent development of these channels has accumulated various cases and experiences that deserve attention from international academics and sporting communities for improving safe sport practices and procedures more globally. Therefore, this article examines various ways in which the reporting systems are utilised in South Korea. More particularly, informed by a political sociology approach that sees policy instruments such as reporting systems as having symbolic functions, as well as diverse, conflicting groups of interests around them (Peters 2002, Lascoumes and Le Galès 2007), this article addresses the following research questions: (1) what are the positive, unintended and potentially perverse effects of the reporting system; and (2) what are the specific mechanisms through which these effects are realised? These questions are investigated by considering the perspectives of a diverse group of stakeholders (practitioners at reporting bodies, young athletes, parents and coaches, etc.) through interviews and document analysis. Such research is significant as it can inform policy and practice to enhance the effectiveness of reporting systems and ultimately facilitate athlete welfare.

The rest of this article proceeds as follows. The next section offers a review of influential factors associated with reporting/whistleblowing and an alternative perspective on reporting systems as policy instruments which can create unintended and perverse consequences. This is followed by an overview of the research context where diverse policies, groups of interests and issues are introduced to set the empirical stage for analysis. Following a section outlining our methodological considerations and procedures, we present three main ways in which the reporting channels are utilised with their specific working mechanisms. The article concludes

by highlighting the theoretical and empirical implications of this study along with suggestions for future research.

Literature review: reporting system as a policy instrument

It is only recently that reporting wrongdoings (e.g. doping, match-fixing, abuse, corruption, etc.) has begun to draw attention from sport studies (e.g. Erickson *et al*. 2019, Verschuuren 2020). This is because establishing a reporting facility has emerged as part of the solution package for integrity issues in sport over the last decade (Moriconi and De Cima 2020, Sam *et al*. 2023). Literature on reporting wrongdoings in general shows various dimensions that explain (non) reporting intentions and behaviours, such as: individual, situational, relational and organisational dimensions (e.g. King and Hermodson 2000, Verschuuren 2020). Personal characteristics inherent in *individual* actors include knowledge (e.g. awareness of 'what counts' and specific reporting procedures) (Russell *et al*. 2021), beliefs (e.g. moral imperatives) (King and Hermodson 2000) and emotions (Solstad 2019). *Situational* factors generally refer to the nature and impact of wrongdoings: e.g. whether the wrongdoings are 'commonly accepted' (King and Hermodson 2000, p. 317), intentional, frequent (Grube *et al*. 2010), consequential (King 2001) and whether reporting could 'make a difference' (Zipparo 1999, p. 276).

With respect to *relational* concerns, research points out that high group loyalty hinders reporting due to in-group pressures (King and Hermodson 2000). In a sporting context, Erickson *et al*. (2019) show that regarding doping, peer-reporters face a moral dilemma between loyalty and principle (of fairness). Morality of loyalty in this context indicates 'an obligation to people, organisations or groups' they engage with in their daily lives, the value of which almost matches the principle of clean sport (Erickson *et al*. 2019, p. 724). It is also important to note that peer-reporting can be more challenging than whistleblowing against those in higher positions due to the 'norms against snitching' (King and Hermodson 2000, p. 311). For example, Newman *et al*.'s (2022) study on professional football found that 'reporting a teammate is seen as treachery and contrary to the team dynamic' (p. 6). *Organisational* conditions enable or disable reporting of wrongdoings (Vijayasiri 2008). Studies highlight various factors, including individuals' relative statuses and power (Verschuuren 2020, Newman *et al*. 2022), the presence of reporting channels and the potential of reprisals (Moriconi and De Cima 2020). Hence, literature suggests that mechanisms and culture to protect reporters (e.g. Whistleblower Protection legislation, financial support, etc.) can significantly reduce situational and relational concerns (Brackenridge *et al*. 2012), while a certain degree of independence of reporting facilities can secure more trust from potential reporters (O'Leary and Chappell 1996).

Despite such diverse levels of consideration, most previous research is premised on somewhat normative and linear behavioural assumptions: (1) reporting systems are a means of protection and deliverance, and (2) individual actors are willing to report wrongdoings unless there are barriers. However, these can be seen as somewhat simplified understandings of the policy tool and individual agency. In fact, reporting systems are both devised and implemented by various interests and these policy instruments thus have the capacity to redesign the channels of power (Hood 2007, Lascoumes and Le Galès 2007). From this political sociology perspective, reporting systems may not just be static tools that are more or less open to people who are restricted by individual, situational and organisational conditions; they are more active tools that reformulate those conditions. Representing this from an actor's agentic perspective, individual users of the reporting systems may not just be passively facilitated or constrained by the conditions at various levels, but they are influential in the making of the reporting systems, in interpreting the systems' capabilities and using the systems to satisfy their own interests (Peters 2002, Salamon 2002).

This political sociology view offers insights into our approach to reporting systems and practices. For instance, as King (2001) suggested, the function of a reporting system may go beyond the main task of receiving and addressing complaints to include a communication capacity. From an

organisational standpoint, displaying how wrongdoings are dealt with can be as important as the actual transparency and fairness of the process in inducing behavioural changes (O'Leary and Chappell 1996). Moreover, a nuanced understanding of individual agency provides more room for individuals' staying silent to be interpreted as a more agentic decision. For example, research participants in Erickson et al. (2017) study on whistleblowing in doping tended to prefer self-resolving options (e.g. direct confrontation and reporting to coaches) over 'formal reporting' to official reporting bodies. Such patterns could be seen as falling short of an ideal action from a behaviouralist perspective. However, if we admit individuals' own capability to interpret various dimensions in a given context, these seemingly suboptimal actions can be read as well-thought-out solutions. Indeed, Erickson et al. (2017) suggest that those self-resolving options with 'significant others' can work as 'informal sanctions' (p. 52) – i.e. as useful deterrents.

Furthermore, there is a possibility of false allegations. Though it is known to be rare (Pépin-Gagné and Parent 2016), false allegations do arise in intense, conflictual settings where an accusation can have an impact on a high-staked decision, such as an accusation of domestic violence in custody disputes (Mazeh and Widrig 2016, Avieli 2022). Elite sport is one of the areas in which various long term emotional, financial and physical investments can be perceived to conclude with a binary success or failure result. Just as false accusations in couple disputes can be used as 'a weapon of revenge' (Grattagliano et al. 2014, p. 122), there is a chance that some accusations related to safe sport issues can serve as a way of ending a conflict-ridden coach-athlete (and parent) relationship. However, a danger in this line of discussion is the fact that highlighting the possibility of false accusations can create anxiety amongst coaches about being wrongfully accused of abuse (Taylor et al. 2016, Gleaves and Lang 2017), generate distrust of victims, and thus discourage victims from speaking up (Rumney and McCartan 2017). Indeed, studies point out that sports authorities tend to question the credibility of victims and do not take action for fear of false accusations (Parent 2011, Solstad 2019, Johnson et al. 2020). Hence, attention should be paid to the causes of false allegations while remaining mindful of a potential backlash against trusting victims (Rumney and McCartan 2017).

As such, our view of reporting systems as policy instruments attempts to reinterpret their capacity, including associated behavioural patterns within a specific institutional context where multi-faceted agentic individuals make use of the key safeguarding remedy. The next section introduces our research context in which we developed our empirical analysis.

The South Korean context: heavy-handed policies, multiple channels and a high-stakes elite pathway

Korea has developed a hard-line approach to safe sport issues as a reaction to a series of recent abuse scandals. One watershed moment for the current wave of establishing reporting bodies began with the suicide of triathlete, Choi Sook-Hyeon, in June 2020 (see Choe 2020). Before committing suicide, Choi had reported abuse by her senior athletes and coaches to six different organisations, yet none of them began a formal investigation or provided sufficient support (Noh 2020). News revealing extensive inaction across all available reporting functions sparked public outcry which led the government to streamline the reporting system. As a result, in 2020, the Korea Sport Ethics Centre (KSEC), an independent sport-specialised reporting body, was established under the remit of the Ministry of Culture, Sport and Tourism (MCST). The rationale for this separate organisation, external to the sport sector, was due to the sector's overall failure in dealing with safe sport issues.

Despite the creation of the KSEC as a unified, legally-backed reporting centre (the National Sports Promotion Act), there are five further main reporting channels in operation: the National Human Rights Commission of Korea (NHRC), the School Violence Committee, law enforcement agencies (the police), National Sport Governing Bodies (NGBs) and Regional Sports Councils. Hence, those who have experienced or observed abuse or human rights violations in sport can contact and report through any (or all) of these six channels. Amongst those entities, the KSEC is the national agency for

safe sport (equivalent to the US Center for Safe Sport). Fully funded by the government, the KSEC has four main missions: (1) receiving reports and investigating/adjudicating cases, (2) education, (3) providing support services and (4) issuing disciplinary records (Korea Sport Ethics Centre n.d.). The KSEC accepts reports of all forms of abuse in sport (physical, emotional, sexual abuse and negligence) via email, phone, online form submission and in-person visits. All reporters of abuse are protected by the Whistleblower Protection Act (Korea Sport Ethics Centre n.d.).

One distinctive feature of Korea's safe sport model is that there is another reporting track governed by the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Regional Offices of Education (ROEs) that have a more substantial influence when it comes to elite youth sport (Ministry of Education 2022a). This mechanism's influence derives from the fact that the nation's elite youth sport pathway is embedded within the school system under the supervision of the educational bureaucracy (Kim *et al*. 2020). Thus, one immediate route for student-athletes' safe sport reporting is through the schools to which their athletic teams belong. If a case is reported to the school, the School Violence Committee (violence between students) and Disciplinary Committee (violence by teachers/coaches) are convened (Ministry of Education 2022a, 2022b). As disciplinary action against coaches is about their employment at the school, the result is also shared with Korean Sport and Olympic Committee (KSOC) to be recorded in the disciplinary database (Ministry of Education 2022a).

Another feature that makes Korea's safe sport initiative complex is that there are overly high stakes in elite youth sport development, especially at the high-school stage (Tak *et al*. 2020). This is not only because it is a critical phase for athletic development, but also because the elite development pathway is linked with university admission as a strong incentive for young athletes to join, and remain in, the pathway. Just as the vast majority of Korean high school students fully commit themselves to academic work for their high school years with the aim of gaining admission to a prestigious university (see Sharif 2018), most student-athletes (and their parents) on the elite pathway devote themselves to athletic training at whatever cost, to become a professional athlete or obtain a form of social capital – a university degree (see also Kim *et al*. 2020). Such high stakes in the sporting career pathway constitute favourable conditions for abuse, not only to take place, but also to remain undisclosed. This study investigates how safe sport reporting systems operate in this particular institutional environment.

Methods

With the aim of capturing subtle contexts and individual agendas at work behind safe sport reporting, this study employed a qualitative approach, consisting of document analysis and semi-structured interviews. Our focus was two-fold: (1) the user (beneficiaries/regulatees) group of the reporting systems, such as athletes, parents, coaches, etc.; and (2) the provider group of the systems (safe sport-related organisations). For the former, we delimited our scope to Korea's high-school level elite pathway where safe sport issues are most frequent (National Human Rights Commission of Korea 2019), while for the latter, we widened our coverage including as many formal reporting channels as possible in the sport and education sectors to which the user group is likely to file reports. In short, our empirical design was targeted at the use of safe sport reporting channels by those on the high-school level elite sport pathway.

First, document analysis was conducted to develop a broad map of the research context (i.e. how the safeguarding policies, including reporting mechanisms, have developed in the nation). We began by reviewing the websites of the organisations with safe sport reporting channels. This enabled us to collate a wide range of documentary data produced since 2020 in relation to reporting facilities' establishment, operation, reporting procedures and practices. Overall, official policy reports (*n* = 14), press releases (*n* = 34) and survey results (*n* = 5) were collected. With these organisational documents as signposts, we further searched legal documents (five relevant laws). Some additional internal documents, such as manuals for safeguarding measures (*n* = 5), were also obtained from

organisational interviewees. These documents were reviewed to inform our data collection strategies at the beginning of the study and later used to crosscheck and corroborate interview data.

Second, with respect to the interviews of the user group, we focused on Korea's Elite Sports Schools which provide secondary education optimised for athlete training. As state-funded schools with a special mandate to develop future Olympic medallists, Elite Sports Schools constitute an ideal space in which to observe the tension between two conflicting values: (1) the government's new endeavour to implement safe sport measures; and (2) pre-existing goals to seek higher performance. Out of 15 Elite Sports Schools spread across the country with a similar system and curricula, we selected two schools that are different in their size and sports on offer, in order to consider potential (dis)similarities.

Within an Elite Sports School, there are various groups of actors, such as head teachers, team managers (PE teachers), coaches, athletes and athletes' parents. As their attitudes towards safeguarding measures can vary (e.g. from win-at-all-cost attitudes to wellbeing-first approaches), we recruited multiple individuals from respective groups. From the two Elite Sports Schools, a total of 46 participants were recruited (24 from School A and 22 from School B): one vice head teacher, 12 teacher-managers, 11 coaches, 12 athletes and 11 parents. Given the sensitivity of the topic, we limited student-athlete participants to those who were at the age of 18 (the final year of high school). Eight out of 11 parents were those of the athletes whom we interviewed (See Table 1). Interview questions for the user group were developed around the following areas: key changes in practices at the frontline after strengthened reporting functions; the impact of the safe sport reporting functions on their daily activities and interactions between individuals; and experience of, or observations on, safe sport reporting systems and relevant education.

The provider group consisted of several organisations operating safe sport reporting facilities. From the organisations, we purposely recruited five interviewees who are/were either in management positions or directly involved in the development or operation of their reporting facilities. To ensure organisational participants' confidentiality, their affiliations are not disclosed (Wiles 2013); instead, they are addressed here as SSO (safe sport organisation) Director(s) and Manager (See Table 1). Interview questions for these organisational actors were built around the following themes: the readiness of safeguarding reporting systems; reports' intake, investigation and disciplinary procedures; challenges in reporting-related policy development and implementation; barriers inherent in the sport development system; social, institutional features that work against reporting intention and behaviour; and tensions between different groups of interests.

Before the launch of data collection, ethics approval was obtained from the authors' affiliated institutions. Access to the participants was facilitated through a combination of approaches, including direct contact by the authors, using gatekeepers and a snowballing technique (Tracy 2020). One author's former career as a secondary school teacher helped to access gatekeepers in both groups. All interviews were conducted once, lasting from 30 to 130 minutes. Interviews were primarily performed in person at locations of the participants' choice although telephone interviews ($n = 10$) were also organised for the convenience of participants. All interviews were audio-recorded; recordings were first auto-transcribed verbatim on a digital platform (Naver Clover) and later underwent thorough checks and corrections by two research assistants and the authors. After analysis, selected excerpts and quotes were translated into English.

Table 1. List of participants.

Group	Number of participants	Participants	Gender (Men/Women)
Provider group	n=5	SSO Directors 1–4	M=3 W=1
(Safeguarding related organisational actors)		SSO Manager 1	M=1
User group	n=46	Vice Head Teacher 1	M=1
(Beneficiaries/regulatees		Teacher-managers 1–11	M=8 W=3
of safeguarding policies)		Coaches 1–11	M=7 W=4
		Student-athletes 1–12	M=9 W=3
		Parents 1–11	M=2 W=9

The collected data were analysed through a theory informed thematic analysis which consists of reiterative inductive and deductive processes (Braun and Clarke 2019, Terry and Hayfield 2020). On the one hand, the review of literature on reporting patterns, barriers, false allegations and organisational reactions informed our empirical approach by offering what can be called guiding assumptions in that they were set up to be challenged by empirical data. On the other hand, empirical data were manually processed via an inductive thematic analysis. Interviewees' experiences and opinions were first separated into three broad categories guided by our research questions: (1) positive, (2) unintended and (3) perverse effects of the policy tool. Within these broad categories, interview data was re-reviewed and selected quotes were coded to indicate their key meanings, which included: 'coaches are spied on' (positive), 'we'll meet again in this small world' (unintended), 'delayed report until failure' (perverse), etc. The coded quotes were re-reviewed this time to be interpreted in relation to their situated social contexts (e.g. dynamics of interests) and influential factors for reporting and theoretical assumptions (Lascoumes and Le Galès 2007), which generated nine themes, such as 'prompting coaches' self-monitoring' (positive), 'potential disadvantages' (unintended) and 'reporting as an outlet of frustration' (perverse), etc. While the initial codes were generated through a purely data-driven process, themes were the outcomes of our interpretations of the codes in line with the framework of this study (Danermark *et al*. 2002). Those themes were finally mapped onto the three main categories to construct coherent explanations of how the reporting systems create positive, unintended and perverse effects. During the analysis process, several rounds of internal reviews amongst all the authors were conducted to discuss the emerging codes, themes, categories and arguments, the results of which are now presented in the following sections.

Good use: communicative capacity of reporting systems

Data show that the reporting system plays a key role in changing practices. These changes seem to have been first driven by education programmes that came with the implementation of reporting channels. For instance, every school in Korea must remind their pupils about reporting channels more than four times a year in accordance with the School Violence Act (Ministry of Education 2022b). Indeed, the majority of student-athletes we interviewed were well aware of main reporting channels. Along with the participants' enhanced understanding, we identified three positive functions of the reporting system in operation: (1) cultivating new norms; (2) prompting coaches' self-monitoring; and (3) reassuring parents.

Cultivating new norms

One drastic shift within school bureaucracy since the recent wave of safe sport initiatives is that schools take immediate action against any abuse cases. Schools advise students 'to file a report if they feel a sense of threat no matter how little' (Teacher-manager 1) and 'encourage school staff to proceed with cases in line with the regulations' (Teacher-manager 7). This swift and decisive approach is first encouraged by the MOE's safe sport policy, and in our case, seems to have been further facilitated by (vice) head teachers. Such an execution of policies in the frontline can create an organisational environment where the members of the institution observe the whole processes from reporting to disciplinaries, enabling members to learn new norms and standards. Student-athlete 6 shared how witnessing a safe sport procedure in action changes organisational norms and empowers him to react:

> Recently, a couple of my friends hit some younger athletes and they got serious disciplinary punishment from the school … In the past, the school didn't take similar cases seriously, but now they try to make it public and deal with it quickly … I feel that there've been a lot of changes … So, I'm thinking that if there's something that I can help somebody with, I will report the truth.

Indeed, it is first-hand observations of fair treatment of abuse issues (not a policy announcement) that made our student-athletes participants feel that they are safe to report and that the action of reporting is welcomed. Repeated reports followed by transparent disciplinary procedures set a new standard, albeit in a costly and heavy-handed way, by signalling members of an organisation that some previously taken-for-granted behaviours are no longer acceptable.

Prompting coaches' self-monitoring

The reporting system presses coaches to self-censor their old-fashioned and potentially harmful practices. Almost all of our coach participants acknowledged that the old days of physical punishment had gone, and they tried to follow new guidelines and regulations. Some coaches showed a slightly negative view because they feel 'athletes' eyes are like a surveillance camera that spies on [them] from A to Z' (Coach 10). Coach 4, in particular, confessed that he used to punish athletes physically but has recently modified his approach, knowing that athletes could report him. Although coaches' behavioural change by 'sticks' (Bemelmans-Videc *et al*. 2003) may not be the best possible way to achieve a safer sporting culture, the presence of the reporting system (and active utilisation of it) appears to have the effect of counterbalancing the asymmetry of power between athletes and coaches – one of the major barriers to reporting abuse (Verschuuren 2020).

Reassuring parents

From the perspective of parents, reporting facilities ease their worries about abuse in sport. Parents submit that they are regularly reminded to report violence and abuse of their children and are kept updated on the results of any reported cases. In doing so, they can remain assured that the school's reporting system is working properly and that their child can seek support if anything goes wrong. Parent 6 speaks of her relief:

> In fact, I was really worried about [the possibility of] abusive coaching and kept thinking, 'What if the coaches are violent?' or 'What if they abuse my kid physically and mentally?' But, these days, the school conducts surveys to check for any instances of abuse. They also run the reporting system. When I received the survey results, I was relieved to see that there were no serious problems. This gave me the confidence to send my child to school [athletic team] without any fear.

Our findings in this section highlight the positive effects of the reporting system: (1) empowering potential reporters; (2) addressing power imbalance; and (3) alleviating parents' apprehension, which have rarely been reported in previous studies (e.g. Rhind and Owusu-Sekyere 2020, Newman *et al*. 2022). The majority of our research participants were satisfied with how the school-based reporting system was run, especially because they could see the procedures and results for themselves. These 'good use' cases, therefore, appear to be related not only to the key function of the reporting system, but perhaps more to the system's communicative capacity (Vijayasiri 2008) – the messages the operation of the reporting system delivers to the groups of actors: e.g. 'the system is working', 'you are spied on', and 'your children are in safe hands'.

Communication does indeed matter (King 2001, Vijayasiri 2008). The implementation and active operation of reporting mechanisms *per se* signal that the organisation cares about safeguarding issues, which forms the basic condition for members' willingness to report problems (Zipparo 1999). Moreover, communication of how reported cases are addressed demonstrates the system is on duty. This 'demonstration' function provides reassurance for potential reporters because hesitancy is resolved when they see for themselves the *de facto* functioning of what has been prescribed. Furthermore, communication with parents encourages trust in the reporting system. The trust of potential beneficiaries can lower one of the situational barriers to reporting – whether reporters can 'see a value in reporting' (O'Leary and Chappell 1996, p. 3).

However, the good use cases from the communication functions around the reporting system do not imply that every single individual involved in sports actively uses it to disclose issues. The next section considers people's reluctance to reporting abuse.

Non-use: subtle contexts for non-disclosure

The Korea Sport Ethics Centre's (2022) survey results hint at one main reason why Korean athletes hesitate to report safe sport issues: the fear of potential retaliation. Echoing the survey results, our interviewees said they would engage in a kind of 'risk assessment' before speaking up as seen in Erickson *et al.*'s (2019, p. 729) doping whistleblowers. This means that they apply their own rational and emotional decision-making process through which they consider likely consequences from sporting, relational and organisational perspectives. This process often appears to lean towards non-disclosure for the following reasons: (1) potential disadvantages; (2) relational and situational considerations; and (3) teams' dissolution.

Potential disadvantages: we'll meet again in this small world

Many of the interviewed student-athletes and parents mentioned the possibility of disadvantages. Disadvantages they worried about take the form of more indirect influences that come from the fact that 'we will meet again somewhere in this small world'. This includes concerns about being labelled as a 'troublemaker' or 'rebellious athlete', which can be potentially damaging within the sporting job market, and can result in lost opportunities. Parent 5 shared her observation of another parent agonising over whether or not to report her child's coach:

> Even after finishing high school, coaches can't be far away [if you continue the sport]. The sport's community is very small . . . so if she filed a report, they would come across the coach somewhere. When her son goes to some team, the [current] coach might be speaking ill of her son to coaches there. She kind of worries about such things . . . As long as this kid continues this sport, he'll see the coach again.

In this respect, the issue of non-reporting is not confined to one organisation's remit but concerns a wider sectoral culture. Even if there is a well-developed culture of safe sport in a team or at a particular developmental stage, unless this extends to the entire athlete career pathway, athletes (and parents) might hesitate to engage in the reporting process because their risk assessment is looking ahead. Athletes and parents do not want to do anything that might risk their chances of success in the future, including reporting abuse. When asked if they would report coaches' violence if their children were victimised, Parents 7 and 11 answered that they would not say anything until they are out of the sport because of potential harm to their children's career prospects.

Situational and relational considerations: we raise children together

The issue of non-disclosure mostly derives from relatively straightforward power imbalances. However, whistleblowing is not a 'black and white' issue (Erickson *et al.* 2019, p. 730) and our data reveals more subtle contexts for reluctance beyond the general anxiety about disadvantages. In practice, some parents say that they are loath to report bullying by peer student-athletes because the punishment from the School Violence Committee could completely expel the student-athletes in question. Behind this unwillingness lay what can be classified as situational and relational concerns. A situational concern the parents shared with us was that they feel 'from the heart' that the consequences of the punishment are too heavy for the misconduct of teenagers (Park 2021), especially considering the recent decision of the MOE to ban athletes with a record of school violence from signing with professional teams and representing Korea internationally (Choi 2021). Parent 7 remarked:

> These children, as human beings, aren't entirely evil. They just happened to do something wrong. You might want to report these children to the School Violence Committee, only after you have labelled the child as a totally bad person.

Parents may take into account a range of factors in their interpretation of the severity of bullying (the students' age/maturity, relationship with their parents, gravity of consequences for the students, etc.). In addition, the strengthened punishments in recent years seem to put an additional burden on parents because their report could effectively terminate young athletes' careers.

On the other hand, relational concerns are apparent from the fact that parents are part of a small community that 'raises children together' (Parent 9). This means that there is likely to be some mode of group loyalty amongst parents. Parent 7 mentioned that after reporting a senior teammate's bullying of her child, she received a call from the senior athlete's parent complaining 'Why didn't you tell me first when that happened?' Such a complaint may be based on a close connection established between the parents in which some might expect a form of group solidarity. The closer they become, the more likely taking such matters to an official channel is to be accepted as 'tattling on them'.

Concerns about team dissolution: if word gets out, the team can be dispersed

Lastly, another delicate context behind avoiding formal reports is associated with the possibility of their teams being disbanded. SSO Manager 1, involved in investigating reported cases, stated that school head teachers have the authority to break teams up if they are deemed a nuisance (e.g. by generating negative media publicity):

> One of the hindrances that make protection measures vulnerable is that schools have a really strong authority. That's the same for elementary, middle, high schools and universities. If they want to do away with sports teams, they just do. That's why everyone's like just 'hush, hush'. They create an air of anxiety, like 'if word gets out, the team can be dispersed'. (SSO Manager 1)

Disbanding troublesome elite pathway teams is more common in ordinary schools since they passively run sports teams allocated by ROEs. In particular, given the issue of a plunging youth population in the nation (Mao 2022), athletic teams of ordinary schools have been already struggling to fill the squads (Kim 2022). Therefore, when these teams do more harm than good to hosting schools, the schools are swift to disband the teams to save high operational (and oversight) costs. The problem is that because of such cases, athletes and parents are reluctant to report abuse. Even if a report is made, athletes tend to refuse to testify. Returning to SSO Manager 1, he notes that:

> Even though I want to protect the victims, because of that [a possibility of team dissolution], members' opinions become divided. 'Why did you report it? You could have just covered it up and moved on'. They talk to each other. 'Just move on. We don't have enough athletes already, and what could we do if we lost our coach? We'd be gone'. . . . They don't testify. Without their testimony, we can't take the case any further.

Such an unwanted consequence, however, is not the result of malicious retaliation; it is an unintended consequence of the country's vulnerable sport development system. Therefore, the success of reporting instruments depends not only on their design and users' psychological responses, but also on the stability of the sport development system *per se*. This is because, as highlighted above, potential reporters undertake a thorough assessment of risks that come with their reporting. The next section delves into more agentic ways of using the reporting systems.

Misuse: perverse effects of reporting systems

As discussed in the 'good use' section, the implementation of safeguarding initiatives in Korea, to a certain degree, has the effect of enhancing athletes' and their parents' 'bargaining power' (Teacher-managers 1 and 5). Whereas there are parent participants who scarcely report issues due to concerns about backfire, many parents and athletes often go straight to reporting channels or more strategically utilise them as a means of gaining the upper hand. In this section, we present three cases as illustrative of the ways in which safeguarding measures are misused.

Reporting as an outlet for frustration: only bad outputs make you a violent coach

Many of the interviewees point out that filing a formal report is often sparked by athletes' and parents' dissatisfaction with the end results of coaching, such as deselection, poor performance and failure in university admission. This does not mean that those allegations are baseless; rather, these interviewees observe that there is normally authoritative and potentially abusive training underneath most dissatisfaction-sparked reports. Therefore, the problem is not the fact that reports are made due to athletic failure, but that the reports are delayed until failure. This also means that successful results do not spur the questioning of potentially harmful practices. As Coach 1 confirms, 'good outputs depict you as a charismatic coach, and bad outputs make you a violent coach'. In this regard, dissatisfaction-sparked reports are not entirely about abuse, but fundamentally about the outputs. Teacher-manager 2 described the long-term process of escalation towards filing a report:

> In the final year of high school, things are over. Athletes have been in their sports for almost 10 years and their flow can't change overnight. Parents know this very well, but they don't want to miss out on any opportunities. So, they expect their children to do better this time, and then they fail. And next time they believe . . . and fail again. Yet they keep delaying facing reality. And at some point, they seem to accept their fate . . . But if a fault is found or there is some conflict [with coaches], then they take the frustration [from the failed desire] out on those things . . . such as filing a report.

On the one hand, these 'delayed reports until failure' can be considered a case of non-use in that there might have been some fear of disadvantage. If this is the case, delayed reports until failure can be seen as a belated means to achieving justice. On the other hand, delayed reports also imply parents' (and athletes') expectation that enduring the (potentially) abusive training could bring satisfactory performance results. In this case, delayed reports *per se* can be abuse in that they knowingly expose young athletes to unsafe training environments for the time being.

Reporting as a means of negotiation: abuse becoming an issue when tradable

Our data show some parents may exploit their capability to file a report as a means of negotiation to gain advantage. Coach 4 looked back on a situation where he felt that a parent maliciously threatened to report his inadvertent negligence which had led to a minor injury of the parent's son:

> One of my athletes' parents was a journalist. The athlete was in the final year of high school but wasn't doing well enough to be admitted to university. So, the parent reopened something that had happened in the past and found fault with it. . . . I told the parent, 'I really apologise that this has happened. I'll definitely make sure your child gets admitted to university. So please don't worry'. In the end, the athlete went to a university that he had wanted to go to and it was sorted out well.

In such a case, similar to dissatisfaction-sparked reports, an incident becomes an issue, not when the incident occurs, but when it becomes tradable. For these parents, the issue is not coaches' abusive training *per se*, but the fact that the abuse cannot fulfil their function to deliver results, namely their children's university admission.

Reporting as a weapon for internal politics: not to solve, but to create issues

Reporting systems can also be weaponised in internal politics. Most of our organisational interviewees agreed that many of the reports on corruption received by safe sport organisations are targeted at damaging their opponents. SSO Director 1 stated that 'most sexual abuse cases go straight to the police' whereas 'most reports to safe sport organisations are by-products of rivalries between conflicting factions [in a team and in a sport governing body, etc.]'. The purpose of these reports is not to solve issues, but to 'create issues' to disrupt or blemish other parties (SSO Director 1).

Though the perverse effects of reporting (as a dissatisfaction outlet, negotiating tool and disrupting force) could, on the surface, be seen as a matter of individual morality, it should be noted that there are a couple of institutional conditions that made these misuses possible. The first condition is the incentive design of the elite sport development pathway in Korea, interlocked as it is with university admission and almost entirely dependent on athletic performance (Tak *et al*. 2020). Under this reward structure, parents not only develop tolerance towards potentially abusive coaching and training practices to the extent the practices can guarantee performance outcomes, but exploit the reporting system to the advantage of their children's university entrance. Therefore, 'for parents, failure in their children's university admission is an unforgivable sin of coaches' (Coach 1) as well as a source of faulty coaching to be reported.

The second condition is the ever-escalating heavy-handed approach of safe sport initiatives with recurrent abuse scandals. Severe punishment not only works as a warning sign to potential abusers but can be used as 'an instrument of offense' beyond 'a tool for the defense' of victims (Grattagliano *et al*. 2014, p. 119). According to our interview participants, as everyone now knows that alleged offenders will be punished (or at least suffer) during the adjudication process, some parents and athletes utilise the reporting systems strategically or vindictively. This proffers a new type of safe sport reporter who actively manoeuvres around the protective measure, in addition to the well-known passive, reluctant reporter. These calculating and astute individuals – be they ethically desirable or not – might be created by the institutional conditions (i.e. the athlete pathway's incentive structure and heavy-handed safe sport approach).

The cases of misuse discussed in this section are problematic in that they can cause significant harm to the nascent safe sport protective measure. As the false allegations literature suggests, weaponising reporting systems can create innocent secondary victims (Rumney and McCartan 2017). Moreover, frequent misuse cases could potentially strengthen disbelief about reporters as seen in the false allegation cases in rape and child abuse (Rumney and McCartan 2017). Furthermore, investigators in safe sport organisations, despite intense education about trusting victims' statements, may become sceptical about certain types of reporting, which could result in an error in the cases where protective actions are most needed. That is, filing a report with an individual agenda is, as we call it, misusing or even *abusing* the public system to protect victims.

What the misuse cases of the safe sport reporting system reveal is not the limitations of the reporting system itself, but the chronic issues that are rooted within the sporting environment. In this regard, it makes sense that a sporting environment that is not in favour of athlete safeguarding in the first place is also unfavourable to the operation of safeguarding measures. Without improving those unfavourable institutional conditions where there are strong interests to game the system, there may continue to be certain ratios of misuse cases. Therefore, it is imperative to pay attention to the nature of particular sporting environments in which safe sport policies and procedures are implemented so as to achieve the intended purpose of safe sport initiatives.

Conclusion

This article has examined the positive, unintended and perverse effects of safe sport reporting systems in Korea's high school level elite pathway, which have respectively been labelled here as: good use, non-use and misuse. Our analysis of good use cases has shown that reporting systems

have what can be termed communicative capacity beyond their investigating, adjudicating and supporting functions. In an organisation that transparently communicates how safe sport issues are reported, dealt with and punished, athletes and parents feel less hesitation about reporting and develop trust in the system while coaches develop self-reflection about their coaching and change their behaviour. On the other hand, non-use cases have demonstrated that reluctance, pressure and fear still exist in relation to reporting abuse and violence. In addition to the fear of potential disadvantages and retaliations that have frequently been reported in extant literature, we highlighted relational concerns of parents about ruining careers of young student-athletes and situational concerns of athletes about the possibility of their teams' disbanding. Finally, our misuse cases display new patterns of safe sport reporting where reporters use the system not only as a defensive tool to protect victims, but as a weapon to secure advantage in the competitive elite pathway. We have interpreted such perverse ways of using public facilities as systemic problems that are latent within the particular incentive structure and often activated in relation to the reporting mechanism.

Empirically, the findings of this article have confirmed some of the key patterns in the literature on reporting integrity issues in sport, while also discovering some new worrying patterns. For instance, our good use and non-use cases can add further mechanisms of relational (parents' caring perspectives), situational (worries about team disbanding) and organisational (communicative power) factors to the growing bodies of literature on safe sport management and whistleblowing in general. Also, by listening to various stakeholders, including both users and operators of reporting facilities, we have identified some unintended and perverse effects of reporting issues (e.g. team disbanding, using reporting systems as tools for individual agendas), beyond well-known concerns in western-liberal contexts. Given that safe sport reporting facilities are still at the budding stage in many countries and thus there is relatively little empirical research, our findings offer knowledge for practitioners to further develop good use cases, better understand the subtleties behind non-use cases and guard against misuse cases.

Theoretically, our view of reporting systems as policy instruments offers a political sociology line of discussion to safe sport literature. In previous research, reporting wrongdoings has been predominantly understood as a linear action: reporting is regarded as a means to an end of aiding victims and recovering justice while barriers to reporting are analysed as 'problems'. Therefore, it follows that organisational improvements to remove those barriers (problems) are key to maximising its function as planned. However, in the political sociology view taken in this study (Lascoumes and Le Galès 2007), cultivating a safe sport culture is not only about improving some less advanced system to a certain standard, but about working with and against the socio-cultural and institutional contexts within which a policy instrument takes root and operates (Goodin 1996, Pierson 2000, Peters 2016). Hence, in our analysis, the reporting system is not a one-dimensional instrument, but a multi-dimensional institution that shapes its functions within the particular social context where reporters are not always innocent victims or righteous witnesses, but more agentic individuals who conduct their own normative and rational interpretations for action. Our focus on the institutional arrangements and social environments for the reporting system not only reflects a non-western policy context where different types of challenges arise but highlights the importance of studying the receiving side (soil) of safe sport policies and practices.

This study has several limitations due mainly to its explorative nature and empirical focus on a single country. Although the political sociology approach taken has served as a useful interpretive framework for integrating the different uses and effects of the reporting system as a policy instrument, each of the identified 'uses' may require more specific theoretical and methodological analyses to reflect their distinct characteristics. For example, good use and non-use cases may require large-scale surveys to extract more standardised and generalisable qualities for improving reporting facilities. Likewise, misuse cases may benefit more from ethnographic studies to enable more in-depth understandings of the particularities of sociocultural contexts where these cases tend to occur. Future research, therefore, could consider delving deeper into each of the effects of safe sport reporting facilities. Moreover, despite the new reporting patterns found in our analysis of South

Korea, findings from a single case study admittedly have limited transferability. More empirical research needs to be conducted in other contexts, which might provide insights to the diverse range of existing reporting practices. Furthermore, given that reporting facilities can create varied (unforeseen) consequences in different cultural and sporting systems across the globe, safe sport research might need to expand its focus beyond individual and interpersonal dimensions, to explore institutional, sociocultural and political contexts in which safe sport reporting facilities should be embedded and implemented.

Disclosure statement

Funding

Statement on ethics approval

Approved by Loughborough University's Ethics Review Sub-Committee on 19 April 2021 (2021–4264–3749/Project ID: 4264).

References

Avieli, H., 2022. False allegations of domestic violence: a qualitative analysis of ex-partners' narratives. *Journal of family violence*, 37 (8), 1391–1403. doi:10.1007/s10896-021-00342-w.

Bemelmans-Videc, B., Rist, R.C., and Vedung, E.O., 2003. *Carrots, sticks, and sermons: policy instruments and their evaluation*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers.

Brackenridge, C.H., Kay, T., and Rhind, D., 2012. *Sport, children's rights and violence prevention: a source book on global issues and local programmes*. London: Brunel University Press.

Brackenridge, C.H. and Rhind, D., 2014. Child protection in sport: reflections on thirty years of science and activism. *Social sciences*, 3 (3), 326–340. doi:10.3390/socsci3030326.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V., 2019. Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis. *Qualitative research in sport, exercise and health*, 11 (4), 589–597. doi:10.1080/2159676X.2019.1628806.

Choe, S.H., 2020. South Korean triathlete's suicide exposes team's culture of abuse. *The New York Times*, 9 July. Available from: https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/09/world/asia/korea-triathlete-suicide.html

Choi, M., 23 June 2021. Athletes with more than one year of disciplinary measures against school violence will not be allowed to join a national team. *Moneytoday*. Available from: https://news.mt.co.kr/mtview.php?no=2021062310473459360

Danermark, B., *et al*., 2002. *Explaining society: critical realism in the social science*. London: Routledge.

Erickson, K., Backhouse, S.H., and Carless, D., 2017. Doping in sport: do parents matter? *sport, exercise, and performance psychology*. *Sport, exercise, & performance psychology*, 6 (2), 115–128. doi:10.1037/spy0000081.

Erickson, K., Patterson, L.B., and Backhouse, S.H., 2019. "The process isn't a case of report it and stop": athletes' lived experience of whistleblowing on doping in sport. *Sport management review*, 22 (5), 724–735. doi:10.1016/j.smr.2018.12.001.

Gleaves, T. and Lang, M., 2017. Kicking "no-touch" discourses into touch: athletes' parents' constructions of appropriate coach–child athlete physical contact. *Journal of sport and social issues*, 41 (3), 191–211. doi:10.1177/0193723517705543.

Goodin, R.E., 1996. *Institutions and their design: the theory of institutional design*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Grattagliano, I., *et al*., 2014. False accusations of sexual abuse as a mean of revenge in couple disputes. *La Clinica terapeutica*, 165 (2), 119–124. doi:10.7417/CT.2014.1694.

Grube, J.A., Piliavin, J.A., and Turner, J.W., 2010. The courage of one's conviction: when do nurse practitioners report unsafe practices? *Health communication*, 25 (2), 155–164. doi:10.1080/10410230903544944.

Gurgis, J.J., Kerr, G., and Battaglia, A., 2023. Exploring stakeholders' interpretations of safe sport. *Journal of sport and social issues*, 47 (1), 75–97. doi:10.1177/01937235221134610.

Hancocks, P., 2019. The female athletes speaking out about South Korean skating's culture of abuse. *Cnn*, 20 January. Available from: https://edition.cnn.com/2019/01/18/asia/south-korea-skating-abuse-intl/index.html

Hood, C., 2007. Intellectual obsolescence and intellectual makeovers: reflections on the tools of government after two decades. *Governance-an International Journal of Policy Administration and institutions*, 20 (1), 127–144. doi:10.1111/j.1468-0491.2007.00347.x.

International Olympic Committee, 2018. *IOC guidelines for international federations (IFs) and national Olympic committees (NOCs) related to creating and implementing a policy to safeguard athletes from harassment and abuse in sport*. Available from: https://olympics.com/athlete365/app/uploads/2020/12/IOC_Guidelines_for_IFs_and_NOCs.pdf [Accessed 5 July 2022].

Johnson, N., *et al.*, 2020. US center for SafeSport: preventing abuse in sports. *Women in sport and physical activity journal*, 28 (1), 66–71. doi:10.1123/wspaj.2019-0049.

Kavanagh, E., *et al.*, 2020. Managing abuse in sport: an introduction to the special issue. *Sport management review*, 23 (1), 1–7. doi:10.1016/j.smr.2019.12.002.

Kerr, G. and Stirling, A., 2019. Where is safeguarding in sport psychology research and practice? *Journal of applied sport psychology*, 31 (4), 367–384. doi:10.1080/10413200.2018.1559255.

Kim, Y.W., 2022. Prestigious school athletic teams continuously disappeared and elite sports of Korea is dying. *Kyeong Gi Ilbo*, 26 August. Available from: https://www.kyeonggi.com/article/20220826580004

Kim, Y.J., Dawson, M.C., and Cassidy, T., 2020. Crafting a one-dimensional identity: exploring the nexus between totalisation and reinvention in an elite sports environment. *Sport, education and society*, 25 (1), 84–97. doi:10.1080/13573322.2018.1555660.

King, G., 2001. Perceptions of intentional wrongdoing and peer reporting behavior among registered nurses. *Journal of business ethics*, 34 (1), 1–13. http://www.jstor.org/stable/25074618.

King, G. and Hermodson, A., 2000. Peer reporting of coworker wrongdoing: a qualitative analysis of observer attitudes in the decision to report versus not report unethical behavior. *Journal of applied communication research*, 28 (4), 309–329. doi:10.1080/00909880009365579.

Komaki, J.L. and Tuakli-Wosornu, Y.A., 2021. Using carrots not sticks to cultivate a culture of safeguarding in sport. *Frontiers in sports and active living*, 3, 625410. doi:10.3389/fspor.2021.625410

Korea Sport Ethics Centre, 2022. *Survey on human rights in sport: Primary/middle/high school student-athletes and professional/municipal team athletes*. https://www.k-sec.or.kr/front/board/bs/boardView.do?menuSeq=1121&boardSeq=35&conSeq=3216 [Accessed 20 October 2023].

Korea Sport Ethics Centre, n.d. About us. Available from: https://www.k-sec.or.kr/front/info/introduce.do [Accessed 1 June 2023].

Lang, M. and Hartill, M., eds., 2014. *Safeguarding, child protection and abuse in sport: international perspectives in research, policy and practice*. London: Routledge.

Lascoumes, P. and Le Galès, P., 2007. Introduction: understanding public policy through its instruments – from the nature of instruments to the sociology of public policy instrumentation. *Governance-an International Journal of Policy Administration and institutions*, 20 (1), 1–21. doi:10.1111/j.1468-0491.2007.00342.x.

MacPherson, E., *et al.*, 2022. Evaluation of publicly accessible child protection in sport education and reporting initiatives. *Social sciences*, 11 (7), 310. doi:10.3390/socsci11070310.

Mao, F., 25 Aug 2022. South Korea records world's lowest fertility rate again. *BBC*. Available from: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-62670717

Mazeh, Y. and Widrig, M., 2016. The rate of false allegations of partner violence. *Journal of family violence*, 31 (8), 1035–1037. doi:10.1007/s10896-016-9882-3.

Ministry of Education, 2022a. *The 2022 plan for the enhancement in school sport and physical education*. Available from: https://www.moe.go.kr/boardCnts/viewRenew.do?boardID=294&boardSeq=90895&lev=0&searchType=null&statusYN=W&page=1&s=moe&m=020402&opType=N [Accessed 20 October 2022].

Ministry of Education, 2022b. *The 2022 revised guidebook for the school violence case handling procedures*. Available from: https://www.moe.go.kr/boardCnts/viewRenew.do?boardID=316&boardSeq=90692&lev=0&searchType=null&statusYN=W&page=1&s=moe&m=0302&opType=N [Accessed 20 October 2022].

Moriconi, M. and De Cima, C., 2020. To report, or not to report? From code of silence suppositions within sport to public secrecy realities. *Crime, law and social change*, 74 (1), 55–76. doi:10.1007/s10611-019-09875-0.

Mountjoy, M., *et al.*, 2015. Safeguarding the child athlete in sport: a review, a framework and recommendations for the IOC youth athlete development model. *British journal of sports medicine*, 49 (13), 883–886. doi:10.1136/bjsports-2015-094619.

Mountjoy, M., Burrows, K., and Greinig, S., 2020. Protection of the athlete: activities of the International Olympic Committee. *In*: M. Lang, ed. *Routledge handbook of athlete welfare*. London: Routledge, 351–364.

National Human Rights Commission of Korea, 7 Nov 2019. *NHRC announces the results of the national survey on student-athletes' human rights*. [Press release]. Available from: https://www.humanrights.go.kr/site/program/board/basicboard/view?boardtypeid=24&boardid=7604726&menuid=001004002001.

Newman, J.A., Warburton, V.E., and Russell, K., 2022. Whistleblowing of bullying in professional football: to report or not to report? *Psychology of sport and exercise*, 61, 102177. doi:10.1016/j.psychsport.2022.102177

Nite, C. and Nauright, J., 2020. Examining institutional work that perpetuates abuse in sport organizations. *Sport management review*, 23 (1), 117–129. doi:10.1016/j.smr.2019.06.002.

Noh, Y.G., 2020. Discussion on the introduction of special judicial police control system for the protection of human rights in sport. *ministry of culture, sport and tourism*. https://www.korea.kr/news/contributePolicyView.do?newsId=148880283

O'Leary, M. and Chappell, S.L., 1996. Confidential incident reporting systems create vital awareness of safety problems. *ICAO journal*, 51 (8), 11–13.

Parent, S., 2011. Disclosure of sexual abuse in sport organizations: a case study. *Journal of child sexual abuse*, 20 (3), 322–337. doi:10.1080/10538712.2011.573459.

Parent, S. and Hlimi, K.E., 2013. Athlete protection in Quebec's sport system: assessments, problems, and challenges. *Journal of sport and social issues*, 37 (3), 284–296. doi:10.1177/0193723512467358.

Park, S.M., 19 Feb 2021. School athletic team coaches can be dismissed for even verbal abuse … student-athletes are disqualified as sports specialty students for physical violence. *The Chosun Ilbo*. Available from: https://www.chosun.com/national/education/2021/02/19/G46DV6OGKBCYHBEATRSFBZGVEU/

Pépin-Gagné, J. and Parent, S., 2016. Coaching, touching, and false allegations of sexual abuse in Canada. *Journal of sport and social issues*, 40 (2), 162–172. doi:10.1177/0193723515615176.

Peters, B.G., 2002. The politics of tool choice. *In*: L.M. Salamon, ed. *The tools of government: a Guide to the new governance*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 552–564.

Peters, B.G., 2016. Institutionalism and public policy. *In*: B.G. Peters and P. Zittoun, eds. *Contemporary approaches to public policy: theories, controversies and perspectives*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 57–72.

Pierson, P., 2000. The limits of design: explaining institutional origins and change. *Governance-an International Journal of Policy Administration and institutions*, 13 (4), 475–499. doi:10.1111/0952-1895.00142.

Rhind, D.J., *et al*., 2017. Building a system to safeguard children in sport: the eight CHILDREN pillars. *Journal of sport and social issues*, 41 (2), 151–171. doi:10.1177/0193723517696966.

Rhind, D.J. and Mori, K., 2020. Safeguarding children in sport in Asia. *In*: F. Hong and L. Zhouxiang, eds. *The Routledge handbook of sport in Asia*. London: Routledge, 305–313.

Rhind, D.J. and Owusu-Sekyere, F., 2020. Evaluating the impacts of working towards the international safeguards for children in sport. *Sport management review*, 23 (1), 104–116. doi:10.1016/j.smr.2019.05.009.

Roberts, V., Sojo, V., and Grant, F., 2020. Organisational factors and non-accidental violence in sport: a systematic review. *Sport management review*, 23 (1), 8–27. doi:10.1016/j.smr.2019.03.001.

Rumney, P.N. and McCartan, K.F., 2017. Purported false allegations of rape, child abuse and non-sexual violence: nature, characteristics and implications. *The journal of criminal law*, 81 (6), 497–520. doi:10.1177/0022018317746789.

Russell, H., *et al*., 2021. "Am I making more of it than I should?": reporting and responding to sexual harassment. *Family medicine*, 53 (6), 408–415. doi:10.22454/FamMed.2021.808187.

Salamon, L.M., 2002. The new governance and the tools of public action: an introduction. *In*: L.M. Salamon, ed. *The tools of government: a guide to the new governance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1–47.

Sam, M., Stenling, C., and Tak, M., 2023. Integrity governance: a new reform agenda for sport? *International review for the sociology of sport*, 58 (5), 829–849. doi:10.1177/10126902221125600.

Sharif, H., 26 Nov 2018. Suneung: The day silence falls over South Korea. *BBC*. Available from: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-46181240

Solstad, G.M., 2019. Reporting abuse in sport: a question of power? *European journal for sport and society*, 16 (3), 229–246. doi:10.1080/16138171.2019.1655851.

Tak, M., Sam, M.P., and Choi, C.H., 2020. Too much at stake to uphold sport integrity? high-performance athletes' involvement in match-fixing. *Crime, law and social change*, 74 (1), 27–44. doi:10.1007/s10611-020-09887-1.

Taylor, W.G., Piper, H., and Garratt, D., 2016. Sports coaches as 'dangerous individuals'—practice as governmentality. *Sport, education and society*, 21 (2), 183–199. doi:10.1080/13573322.2014.899492.

Terry, G. and Hayfield, N., 2020. Reflexive thematic analysis. *In*: M.R.M. Ward and S. Delamont, eds. *Handbook of qualitative research in education*. 2nd ed. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 430–441.

Tracy, S.J., 2020. *Qualitative research methods: collecting evidence, crafting analysis, communicating impact*. 2nd ed. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Verschuuren, P., 2020. Whistleblowing determinants and the effectiveness of reporting channels in the international sports sector. *Sport management review*, 23 (1), 142–154. doi:10.1016/j.smr.2019.07.002.

Vijayasiri, G., 2008. Reporting sexual harassment: the importance of organizational culture and trust. *Gender issues*, 25 (1), 43–61. doi:10.1007/s12147-008-9049-5.

Wiles, R., 2013. *What are qualitative research ethics?*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Zipparo, L., 1999. Encouraging public sector employees to report workplace corruption. *Australian journal of public administration*, 58 (2), 83–93. doi:10.1111/1467-8500.00091.